

Flowers on the Battlefield:  
Intimacy and Hierarchy in the Construction of Japanese Warrior Masculinities, 1507–1636

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## **Abstract**

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My project explores the role of affective bonds of a sexual, romantic, and/or mentoring nature between male warriors in the production and maintenance of warrior identity during Japan's Warring States (1467–1603) period. Employing the notion of queer reading as a guiding principle, I examine the traces of intimate bonds between male warriors left behind in poetry, love oaths, personal correspondence, and other documents. I argue that male-male warrior intimacy played a central role, often undervalued by historians due to the conventional disciplinary emphasis on male-female marriage, in the construction of warrior retainer bands and the establishment of warrior alliances. Ranging from the purely hierarchical to the overtly sexual, relationships between warrior youths and their relatively older lords reproduced and reinforced warrior identity through violent oathing rituals and recreational activities, functioning as sites for cultivating future trusted retainers. A young subordinate could also take advantage of the attention and trust given to him by making demands of his ostensible superior, disrupting the power asymmetries of the lord/retainer bond, or even by openly plotting a rebellion.

In considering warrior intimacy, the project occasions a reevaluation of the unification process that marks the Warring States period's central narrative. I contend that the conventional interpretation, which relies on the trope of the Three Unifiers, minimizes the influence of male-male ties on events that effected significant historical change at the macro level, including the circumstances that enabled the Tokugawa clan's ultimate victory, their vision of the social order,

and the form of their sacred authority. I also explore the legacy of these bonds in the Edo period (1603–1868), repurposed as ideals of warrior masculinity and loyal retainership by both samurai attempting to find new purpose in a time of peace and commoners enjoying their newfound wealth and leisure time. Each chapter focuses on an influential warlord and his younger retainer: Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551) and Sue Harukata (1521–1555); Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) and Gensuke (dates unknown); and Date Masamune (1567–1636) and Tadano Sakujūrō Katsuyoshi (dates unknown), respectively.

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## Conventions

Japanese names in this dissertation appear in the order of family name first, personal name second. When I refer to historical figures again after their first mention, I use their personal names, as they are generally better known as such, and they often share their family names with many other people. In the case of scholars, I use their family names instead.

In premodern times, Japanese men had different personal names at different stages of their lives. The main two personal names they took were childhood names for before they became of age and adult names for after. I refer to people almost exclusively by their adult names, unless they are only known by their childhood names. I only employ multiple names to refer to the same person in two cases: when I discuss that person both when he is a child and an adult, and when people change their adult names. In both instances, I use the name most relevant for the point in his life I am mentioning.

Due to the fact that the premodern Japanese calendar does not map perfectly onto Western calendars, I do not use the Latin-derived month names with which readers may be most familiar. For any date before the Meiji period (1868–1912), I use the following format: Xth day of the Xth month, followed by the Japanese era name (*nengō*) and year and/or the Western calendar year that best corresponds to the Japanese calendar year, depending on which is more useful in each instance. Here is a specific example: the fifth day of the seventh month of Tenbun 15 (1546).

I only employ the term “samurai” to refer to the distinct class produced by the policies of the late Warring States period (1463–1603) and the early Edo period (1603–1868), which were designed to distinguish the ruling group from farmers, townspeople, and other types of subjects. When discussing pre-Edo topics, I primarily use the word “warrior.” I also use “warrior” in Edo contexts as a synonym for “samurai.”

Unless otherwise cited, I draw upon standard Japanese reference materials for biographical information. These materials include the historical dictionary *Kokushi daijiten* (literally, “Great dictionary of national history”), *Nihon dai hyakka zensho* (officially translated as *Encyclopedia Nipponica*), and *Seikai dai hyakka jiten* (officially translated as *Heibonsha World Encyclopedia*), among others. The chronology appendix derives its information from the same sources and Yoshikawa kōbunkan’s *Jinbutsu sōsho* (literally, “Person series”) series of biographies, as well as from the various primary and secondary sources directly cited in the main body of the dissertation.

## Introduction

As one of the Three Unifiers who are credited with bringing over a century of warfare to a close, Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) ranks among the most recognizable and popular figures of Japan's Warring States period (1467–1603). The man who overthrew the last of the Ashikaga shoguns, the rulers of Japan's warrior society since 1336, Nobunaga is conventionally viewed as an eccentric iconoclast. His decision to incinerate the temple complex of Enryakuji on Mount Hiei in 1571 was depicted as a brutal act even by many of his contemporaries. Nobunaga committed suicide in 1582 after one of his closest vassals, Akechi Mitsuhide (1528–1582), betrayed him and took him unawares at his lodgings at the Honnōji temple in the imperial capital, Kyoto. Mitsuhide's motivations, along with the question of what Nobunaga would have done had he survived, have fueled speculation for centuries. Nobunaga's personality, the mysteries surrounding his death, and his possible next steps toward unification have also inspired countless books, plays, movies, television dramas, comics, and video games up through the present day.

In literary and artistic depictions of the last few years of his life, from about 1579 to his death in 1582, Nobunaga is routinely accompanied by a young male attendant. Sometimes this attendant appears in even earlier events, and he is almost always portrayed as attractive, in the style of the archetypal *bishōnen* (beautiful youth/pretty boy). His most dramatic moment arrives when he dies as a result of Mitsuhide's betrayal during the Honnōji Incident, where he falls either defending Nobunaga or not long after Nobunaga has committed suicide. While many of Nobunaga's other young retainers met their demise on the same occasion, this single youth appears most prominently in popular culture.

Who is this youth who appears so frequently at Nobunaga's side? He is Mori Ranmaru (1565–1582), third son of Nobunaga's subordinate Mori Yoshinari (1523–1570), who began serving Nobunaga as a page, or *koshō* (小姓), from as early as 1577.<sup>1</sup> According to numerous texts written during the Warring States period, including Nobunaga's biography *Shinchō kōki* (Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga) and the diary of the court noble and priest Yoshida Kanemi (1535–1610), Ranmaru frequently served as Nobunaga's messenger to members of the imperial court and other important political figures.<sup>2</sup> A record of the Mori family written by descendants of one of Ranmaru's younger brothers echoes these accounts while adding that he was physically attractive and Nobunaga's most favored page.<sup>3</sup> When Mitsuhide's army surrounded Honnōji, *Shinchō kōki* states that Ranmaru reported the identity of the betrayer to Nobunaga.<sup>4</sup> Ranmaru fell alongside many of his fellow pages and attendants during Mitsuhide's attack, possibly before he even had the chance to undergo a coming-of-age ceremony.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Kaneyama-ki,” in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, ed. Hanawa Hokiichi, vol. 21b (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kansaikai, 1988), 818. Ranmaru's first mention in *Shinchō kōki*, written by Nobunaga's former retainer Ōta Gyūichi (1527–1613), takes place in 1579, when he served as a messenger to deliver a gift of silver to the head of the Shiokawa family. Even though Gyūichi finished *Shinchō kōki* some years after the Honnōji Incident, historians still consider *Shinchō kōki* reliable enough to be counted as a primary source. See Ōta, *The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, trans. J. S. A. Elisonas and J. P. Lamers (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 311.

<sup>2</sup> Ōta, *Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 311, 407, 425, 429, 445, 449; Yoshida Kanemi, *Shintei zōho Kanemi-kyō ki*, ed. Kaneko Hiraku and Endō Tamaki, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2014), 221–222, 249; Yoshida Kanemi, *Shintei zōho Kanemi-kyō ki*, ed. Kaneko Hiraku and Endō Tamaki, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2014), 41, 45, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Mori Tadaakira and Mori Tadayoshi, *Mori-ke sendai jitsuroku*, 1809, vol. 3, Niimi City Central Library. Yoshinari's sixth son, Tadamasa (1570–1634), succeeded as head of the Mori clan following the death of all his other brothers. After being transferred between domains a couple times during the Edo period, the Mori would eventually become lords of Akō Domain in Harima Province, best known for its association with the Forty-Seven Rōnin incident of 1701–1702. *Mori-ke sendai jitsuroku* was written by the eighth Mori lord of Akō, Tadaakira (1788–1806), and his son and heir Tadayoshi (1794–1824) in the early 1800s. See “Mori-ke sendai jitsuroku,” Mori-ke shiryō chōsakai, last modified 26 June 2008, <http://www.spy.ne.jp/~satomako/001.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Ōta, *Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 469.

<sup>5</sup> No record exists of Ranmaru having undergone his coming-of-age ceremony. Although both *Shinchō kōki* and *Mori-ke sendai jitsuroku* provide an adult name for him, each lists a different one: the former giving Naritoshi, and the latter Nagasada.

Ranmaru's loyal service and his final moments have stirred many imaginations across the centuries since his death. Numerous woodblock prints depict Ranmaru's actions during the Honnōji Incident, including his encounter with the man who slew him, Yasuda Kunitsugu (1556–1597). One such print by Yōsai Nobukazu (1872–1944), entitled “The Burning of Honnōji” (*Honnōji yakiuchi no zu*), shows Ranmaru rushing to Nobunaga's defense as Kunitsugu approaches. Nobunaga dresses in white robes, suggesting that he is about to commit ritual suicide. In this portrayal, Ranmaru attempts to keep Kunitsugu from interrupting Nobunaga and thereby preventing him from preserving his honor in the wake of Mitsuhide's treachery. The print depicts Ranmaru as an honorable, devoted subordinate whom Nobunaga could trust to defend him in life's final moments.

Much as “devotion” can refer both to loyalty and to love, much conjecture has been made about the possibility that Nobunaga and Ranmaru's relationship was romantic and sexual. The reference to his supposed beauty in family records begs the question, who was it exactly who would have considered him beautiful during his lifetime. According to a tale in *Fude no chiri* (Brush traces), an Edo-period collection of anecdotes, Nobunaga counted Ranmaru among his three most cherished possessions, stating on one occasion that Ranmaru was a “hidden treasure that cannot be replaced.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Fuwa Bansaku (1578–1595), a page who served and committed suicide alongside Toyotomi Hidetsugu (1568–1595), has been imagined as the lover of numerous older males, despite the paucity of actual biographical information about him that

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<sup>6</sup> *Fude no chiri*, vol. 1, Okayama Prefectural Library, accessed 4 March 2022, <http://digioka.libnet.pref.okayama.jp/mmhp/kyodo/waso/0002116119/pageframe.htm>; *Fude no chiri*, vol. 2, Okayama Prefectural Library, accessed 4 March 2022, <http://digioka.libnet.pref.okayama.jp/mmhp/kyodo/waso/0002116127/pageframe.htm>. The Okayama Prefectural Library website states that a retainer of the Ikeda family, the daimyo of Okayama domain, likely wrote *Fude no chiri* at some point during the middle of the Edo period. However, the name of the author and the exact date of its publication are unknown.



remains.<sup>7</sup> Numerous stories dating from the Edo period depicted Bansaku as an ideal paramour who lavished attention on all potential suitors, while remaining ever faithful in his heart to his lord Hidetsugu.<sup>8</sup> The interest shown during the Edo period in these two pages, together with the traces of Nobunaga's potential affection for Ranmaru in various documents, suggest that there might just be something that goes beyond a simple lord/retainer relationship.

Extant documents indicate that other famous daimyo of the Warring States period were involved in some romantic or sexual capacity with their younger subordinates. Takeda Shingen (1521–1572), the so-called Tiger of Kai, wrote an oath in his younger years to a young male named Gensuke (dates unknown), promising that he had not been intimately involved with another male named Yashichirō. Like that of Ranmaru, the latter parties' names follow common conventions for male juvenile names, which they would presumably shed upon coming of age and assuming an adult identity. The content of the oath suggests that Shingen was involved in some sort of relationship with Gensuke and was trying to prove his fidelity, as rumors seem to have reached the youth's ear that he might have been cheating on him with Yashichirō.

Similarly, Date Masamune (1567–1633), the One-Eyed Dragon of Ōshū, wrote a letter of apology during the early years of the Edo period to a page named Tadano Sakujūrō (dates

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<sup>7</sup> Hidetsugu's suicide came as a result of a rapid deterioration in his relationship with his adopted father, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). After the death of Hideyoshi's biological son in 1591, Hideyoshi adopted Hidetsugu and made him his heir, ceding the position of imperial regent to Hidetsugu in preparation for the invasion of Korea. However, after Hideyoshi's son Hideyori (1593–1615) was born, Hidetsugu's position became increasingly unstable. In 1595, Hideyoshi accused Hidetsugu of plotting to assassinate him and ordered Hidetsugu and much of his family to commit ritual suicide as punishment. The historian Fujita Tsuneharu posits that discord caused by Hidetsugu and Hideyori's overlapping jurisdictions and competing spheres of influence, as regent and retired regent, respectively, further worsened the situation. See Fujita, *Toyotomi Hidetsugu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2015), 138–144, 172–212.

<sup>8</sup> Iwata Jun'ichi, "Bishōnen Fuwa Bansaku no koi," in *Honchō nanshoku kō / Nanshoku bunken shoshi*, combined ed. (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 2002), 230–241.

unknown). Masamune had evidently gotten drunk the previous night and voiced his suspicion that Sakujūrō had engaged in intimate relations with another man at some point in the past. In response, Sakujūrō had written a vow of fidelity, sealed in his own blood. Masamune pleaded for Sakujūrō's understanding, as his own age and position prevented him from responding in kind. In the case of both Gensuke and Sakujūrō, the youthful pages were able to force their lords into action, despite the power asymmetries of the relationships. The existence of such bonds hint at the possibility that some established form of intimacy enjoyed currency among lords and young retainers, which in turn provided the basis for speculation about Nobunaga and Ranmaru.

The rich documentary record of the Edo period contains numerous references to a kind of relationship common among the warrior class at the time. Under the rubric of *wakashudō* (若衆道, commonly abbreviated as *shudō*, 衆道), literally the “way of youths,” adult males pursued relationships of a sexual, romantic, and/or mentoring nature with youths who had not yet undertaken the coming-of-age ceremony. In general, *shudō* privileged the elder partner, often called the *nenja* (念者), whose superiority in age and/or masculine development made him the subject of what Gregory Pflugfelder calls *shudō*'s “virile gaze.”<sup>9</sup> The erotic object of his gaze was the youth, or *wakashu* (若衆), whose availability as a sexual penetratee was signified by tonsorial and sartorial markers like unshaven forelocks of hair and wide-sleeved robes.<sup>10</sup> *Shudō* bonds reproduced existing power dynamics through the enforcement of age hierarchies, since the warrior *wakashu* normally stood in a position of social subordination to his older lover.

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<sup>9</sup> Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 35. *Nenja* means “one who thinks,” with his beloved the implied object of his thought.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–34; Gregory M. Pflugfelder, “The Nation-State, the Age/Gender System, and the Reconstitution of Erotic Desire in Nineteenth-Century Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 4 (November 2012): 966–970.

However, such relationships also granted the youths involved in them a certain measure of power, as they could make demands upon their lover for trust, attention, and proof of fidelity. The aforementioned examples of Shingen and Masamune suggest that similar dynamics had governed male-male intimacy among the military elite since at least the Warring States era.

Another common expression for male-male sexuality in premodern Japan was *nanshoku* (male-male eroticism), which literally means “male colors.” Modern scholars more frequently employ the term *nanshoku* (男色) than they do *shudō*, perhaps due to the fame of the story collection *Nanshoku ōkagami* (Great mirror of male-male eroticism) by the popular writer and poet Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693). However, the words *shudō* and *nanshoku* seldom appear in texts of the Warring States period touching upon warrior male-male sexuality. Perhaps the era’s widespread material destruction and the numerous spheres of influence of competing powerholders prevented the development of a shared language or idiom. Without a formal appellation through which to categorize and comprehend warrior male-male sexual relations, historians have yet to grasp their specific form and significance.

## **Previous Scholarship**

This dissertation expands the historiography of gender and sexuality in premodern Japan. More specifically, it examines male-male sexual relations among elite warriors during the Warring States era and the early decades of the Edo period. In doing so, it addresses a major lacuna in the historiography of Japanese male-male sexuality, as the bulk of research on the subject so far has focused on the Edo period or the modern era. Aside from a growing cohort interested in medieval monastic male-male sexuality, scholars tend to incorporate pre-Edo developments only minimally, often simply as a prologue to their main areas of interest.

At the time of its publication in 1995, Gary Leupp's *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* constituted the most comprehensive historical work on premodern Japanese male-male sexuality available in English. Although Leupp focuses his inquiry mainly on the Edo period, he discusses some of the predecessors of the commercialized, popularized *nanshoku* of that era, including male-male sexual relations among both monks and warriors.<sup>11</sup> Leupp acknowledges the limitations of the term "homosexuality," but ultimately chooses to employ that word generically to signify "some kind of sexual attraction or sexual intercourse between males."<sup>12</sup> Treating homosexuality, male-male sexuality, and *nanshoku* as virtual synonyms, Leupp introduces a wide array of historical documents and works by Japanese scholars as he examines such topics as the culture of *nanshoku* in the Edo period, the unique construction of gender in *nanshoku* discourse and practices, and societal and legal views of *nanshoku* relationships.<sup>13</sup>

Leupp's analysis is ultimately limited by the universalizing categories he employs. Even though Leupp acknowledges the problematic assumptions built into the terms, he refers repeatedly to the putatively transhistorical tripartite schema of heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality in order to explain Japanese male-male sexuality. Leupp is ultimately compelled to conclude that men of the Edo period were bisexual, since *nanshoku/shudō* did not preclude heterosexual relations with women, which according to Leupp were "compatible, even

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<sup>11</sup> Gary P. Leupp, *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 27–57.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, Leupp only provides secondary sources as evidence for some of the many historical figures he claims engaged in male-male sexual practices.

complimentary, with male-male sexual activity.”<sup>14</sup> Leupp makes several references to the classic reductionistic argument that male-male sexuality arose at least partially due to an absence of women, though he claims that at least some male-male relationships might not be explainable by “situational” sexual behavior.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, he places the commercialization of *nanshoku/shudō* during the Edo period within the context of the rise of a Japanese bourgeoisie, a category that brings with it a host of baggage related to assumptions about the class dynamics of early modern Europe.<sup>16</sup> While Leupp may have intended for such concepts as “homosexuality” and “bourgeoisie” to provide his readers with familiar points of reference, such culture-bound notions obscure the complexities of male-male sexual relations in historical Japan, circumscribing the usefulness of Leupp’s intervention through their reductiveness.

The historiographical starting point for much research on Japanese male-male sexuality is the work of Iwata Jun’ichi (1900–1945), an amateur folklorist and scholar active in interwar Japan. Iwata’s primary interest lay in the historical origins and development of the culture of male-male eroticism in Japan, which he referred to generally as *nanshoku*. Iwata based his research on an extensive investigation of primary documents from throughout Japanese history. *Nanshoku bunken shoshi* (Bibliography of writings on male-male eroticism), a chronologically ordered catalogue of many of the historical documents that Iwata examined, remains the most exhaustive bibliography of texts on the subject. Although left incomplete due to his untimely death, Iwata’s other major work, *Honchō nanshoku kō* (A study of male-male eroticism in our country) offers a narrative account of the history of Japanese male-male sexuality. Iwata tracks

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 3–4, 94–100, 199.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 46, 56–57, 199.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 58–62.

the evolution of *nanshoku* as it purportedly spread from the Buddhist clergy to the imperial court and warrior society. Although Iwata's narrative ends with the Muromachi period (1336–1573), the content of his other publications suggests he would have proceeded next to discuss *nanshoku*'s popularization among Edo-period townspeople.<sup>17</sup>

Despite a rigorously empirical methodology, Iwata encountered many difficulties in publishing his research during his lifetime. After being turned away by the prestigious general-interest journal *Chuō kōron* (Central review), Iwata relied upon his friendship with the popular writer Edogawa Ranpo (1894–1965) to find a publisher for his essays: a somewhat scandalous sexology, psychology, and criminal-science magazine called *Hanzai kagaku*, or *Criminology*.<sup>18</sup> Iwata was compelled to cater to a readership engaged in the pursuit of *ero guro nansensu*, or content that depicted “the erotic, grotesque, or nonsensical.” Iwata included in his bibliography a large number of sexological works from the Meiji period (1868–1912) onward, when Western-derived, ostensibly scientific discussions of “sexual perversion” enjoyed popularity and circulated widely, reflecting his own interest in the subject. Many of the books' titles include such medicalizing terms as “homosexuality,” “perversion,” and “hermaphroditism,” while other entries include references to European sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902).<sup>19</sup> Iwata himself describes male-male sexuality in medieval Japanese monasteries as based

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<sup>17</sup> The majority of Iwata's works, including the entirety of *Nanshoku bunken shoshi* and *Honchō nanshoku kō*, have been published in a single volume: Iwata, *Honchō nanshoku kō / Nanshoku bunken shoshi*.

<sup>18</sup> Edogawa Ranpo, “Dōseiai bungakushi: Iwata Jun'ichi-kun no omoide,” in *Edogawa Ranpo zenshū*, vol. 22, *Waga yume to shinjitsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979), 45.

<sup>19</sup> Iwata, *Honchō nanshoku kō / Nanshoku bunken shoshi*, 419–461. A German psychologist and sexologist, Krafft-Ebing pathologized a number of conditions he had encountered in case studies, all related to what he considered deviant sexual practices, including homosexuality, bisexuality, sadism, masochism, necrophilia, and anilingus. As Krafft-Ebing viewed procreation as the purpose of sex, he argued that homosexuality was a sin that resulted from a combination of early masturbation and biological anomalies, producing “sexual inversion.” His ideas influenced

on the monks' "perverse desires" (*hentai yokujō*), thus pathologizing their relationships with acolytes rather than representing them in their own context.<sup>20</sup> Although Iwata's scholarship remains invaluable for researching Japanese male-male sexuality in almost any period of Japanese history, early twentieth-century sexological notions color his work, partially diminishing its usefulness.

In 1995, the same year that Leupp published *Male Colors*, a Japanese historian of the Edo period, Ujiie Mikito, released a volume provocatively titled *Bushidō to erosu* (Bushido and eros), taking warrior male-male sexuality as its explicit subject. In contrast to Leupp's vocabulary, Ujiie's study relies primarily on the Japanese terms *nanshoku* and *shudō*, such that almost every mention of the word "homosexuality" (*dōseiai*, 同性愛) is accompanied by one or the other of these older expressions. In the book's introduction, Ujiie notes a close connection between love and loyalty, such that intense displays of devotion by a retainer to his lord could easily harbor a sexual undertone.<sup>21</sup> Ujiie's monograph provides various examples of conflicts between warriors that either involved or began as a result of *shudō* relations, including acts of vengeance on behalf of killed lovers and even the assassination of a lord who disapproved of one couple's relationship.<sup>22</sup> Ujiie makes repeated note of the fact that younger subordinates such as pages and sandal-bearers often served as the junior partner in such associations. Although the majority of Ujiie's historical examples derive from the Edo period, the author mentions several friendships and lord/retainer bonds dating from the Warring States era, and even discusses two cases of

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many Japanese people interested in perversion and *ero guro nansensu* in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>21</sup> Ujiie Mikito, *Bushidō to erosu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995), 7–19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–55, 126–127, 128–134.

generals using *shudō* as a form of military strategy.<sup>23</sup> Ujiie usefully highlights the strong emotional underpinnings of *shudō* relations, yet his focus on the anecdotal comes at the expense of substantive theoretical considerations and larger conclusions. That choice makes the book very readable but also leaves its analysis less than incisive.

Pflugfelder assumes a different approach in his 1999 monograph *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950*. Employing Foucauldian discourse analysis, Pflugfelder analyzes popular, legal, and medical discourse on Japanese male-male sexuality, covering the Edo period through the era immediately following World War II.<sup>24</sup> He notes that the component *dō* of the word *shudō*, which may also be read *michi* (道, road, path, or way), evokes a “discipline of mind and body, a set of practices and knowledge expected to bring both spiritual and physical rewards to those who chose to follow its path.”<sup>25</sup> Although male-male sexual practices took place also in prior ages, Pflugfelder understands *shudō* discourses as the product of the shared print culture of the Edo period, built upon the explosive growth of the publishing industry and the new and more easily obtainable forms of leisure that the calm times and newfound wealth of the Edo period afforded.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 90–96. One of the relationships Ujiie mentions is between Shingen and Gensuke. The two instances of *shudō* as military strategy involve the Jinbo clan sending a beautiful youth to attempt to seduce Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578) and Ashina Moritaka (1561–1584) using a retainer’s relationship with an enemy page to gain information about his opponent’s army. A number of stories about Moritaka, who was Masamune’s biological cousin, suggest he held some interest in male-male sexual relationships.

<sup>24</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 1–22.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 28. Pflugfelder likens *shudō* to a wide range of similarly conceived fields, including Shinto (the way of the gods), *butsudō* (Buddhism/the way of the buddhas), *budō* (martial arts/the way of the martial), and *sadō* (the tea ceremony/the way of tea).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 28–29.



Instead of deeming the men of the Edo period universally bisexual, Pflugfelder points out that *nanshoku* and its conceptual twin *joshoku* (女色, female colors/male-female eroticism) focused on the possible objects of sexual interest for an exclusively adult male subject.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the notion of “homosexuality,” which applies to both male-male and female-female relations, would not have been comprehensible in a discourse that afforded agency only to men.

Pflugfelder also examines official concerns about what he calls the “perisexual” elements of *shudō*, as both shogunal and domanical authorities sought to regulate male-male intimacy not because it was ethically improper but because of the unruly behavior it could incite.<sup>28</sup> Legal responses included shogunal regulation of male prostitution and enjoinders to not “go crazy over youths,” as well as domanical efforts to keep retainers from fighting and killing one another either out of jealousy or over *shudō*-based honorific demands.<sup>29</sup> Through a careful analysis of a wide range of Edo-period texts, Pflugfelder establishes the existence of a thriving group of *shudō* discourses while avoiding the pitfalls of relying on categories derived from Western history.

While it is easier to demonstrate the existence of *shudō* discourses than to establish the prevalence of actual practices or discuss specific historical relationships, Pflugfelder’s focus limits the scope of the claims he can make, since, in his own words, “written accounts should not be assumed to encode in any transparent fashion the realities of the behavior that they represent.”<sup>30</sup> Pflugfelder’s concrete examples of *shudō* couples and practices appear for the most part in passing, typically in the course of his discussion of their popular and/or legal

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 97–145.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 18.

representation. In a subsequent 2012 article, Pflugfelder addresses the material realm more directly by describing the clothing and hairstyles that marked males as *wakashu* and the sartorial and tonsorial changes that accompanied social recognition as an adult through the coming-of-age ceremony.<sup>31</sup> Regrettably, Pflugfelder does not consider the antecedents of Edo *shudō* in either medieval warrior or monastic circles and their potential influence on the discourses he investigates. As such, the relationships and discourses of the Warring States period remain largely unexamined.

The sociologist Eiko Ikegami tackles *shudō* as a part of her analysis of samurai honor culture in her 1995 monograph *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*. After establishing the importance of individual honor for medieval warriors, Ikegami examines how the Tokugawa shogunate regulated the use of violence by warriors seeking to maintain their honor through a top-down process of proceduralization and bureaucratization.<sup>32</sup> By valorizing forms of violence that sanctioned warrior rule and the supremacy of the shogunate rather than challenging its authority, Ikegami argues, shogunal officials managed to sublimate honor culture while preserving the right of samurai to defend their reputation.<sup>33</sup> In the course of her discussion, Ikegami notes that male-male sexual relations constituted one frequent cause of honor quarrels, especially between warriors fighting over a beautiful youth.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Pflugfelder, “The Nation-State, the Age/Gender System, and the Reconstitution of Erotic Desire,” 963–974.

<sup>32</sup> Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 241–243.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 243–252.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 209–210.

Ikegami also repeatedly discusses the affective dimensions of lord/retainer relations, both before and during the Edo period. During the medieval era, particularly the Kamakura period (1192–1333), Ikegami identifies a sense of loyalty and solidarity built on personal bonds as one of the central elements tying warrior retainer bands together.<sup>35</sup> For Ikegami, these bonds and their strong emotional dimension arose from what she calls “a sense of shared destiny that led to heartfelt devotion strengthened by shared experiences in battle.”<sup>36</sup> By contrast, warriors of the Edo period navigated the bureaucratized, impersonal lord/retainer relationships they faced through appeals to the more intimate ties of the past. For example, the early eighteenth-century work *Hagakure* (Hidden in the leaves) encouraged single-minded dedication without any expectation of or desire for reward, calling the affection that samurai held for their superiors “secret love” (*shinobu koi*, 忍ぶ恋).<sup>37</sup>

As in Leupp’s case, Ikegami’s analysis produces a number of overgeneralizations due to the underlying structure of her study. As Ikegami herself notes, her goal in analyzing the honor culture of Edo-period samurai is to identify a sociohistorical basis for the combination of individualistic and conformist behavior in contemporary Japanese society.<sup>38</sup> Her focus on the relationship between large social structures and warrior affect produces many valuable insights, but the broad strokes with which she paints samurai leave her with little room to ground her discussion with concrete historical examples. In connecting this schematic view of samurai honor culture with the behavior of modern Japanese citizens, *The Taming of the Samurai*

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 83–84.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 85–86.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 288–293. Ikegami notes the similarities between the language of *Hagakure*’s “secret love” and *shudō*, stating that lord/retainer relationships could resemble and even become romantic ones.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3–13.

inadvertently provides material to exoticize Japan in a scrupulously academic fashion. I nevertheless adopt Ikegami's focus on warrior honor culture as a valuable starting point for understanding changes in the culture of male-male intimacy and violence that occurred during the Edo period, taking care to illuminate general trends through specific historical examples.

In the literary field, Paul Schalow's 1990 translation of *Nanshoku ōkagami* made that critical Edo-period text available for the first time to an English-reading audience. As Schalow notes, the author Ihara Saikaku devoted the first half of *Nanshoku ōkagami* specifically to male-male sexual relations between warriors. Saikaku's stories encourage *wakashu* to respond with "compassion" (*jihi*, 慈悲) and "empathy" (*nasake*, 情け) to the overtures of older warriors, suggesting that an idealized, unconditional love, not unlike the "secret love" that Ikegami identifies, dominated Edo-era conceptualizations of the youth's role.<sup>39</sup> Schalow points out that Saikaku relied more heavily on written sources for the samurai half of *Nanshoku ōkagami* than for the work's commoner-centered second half, as Saikaku experienced less personal exposure to warrior society and culture than to the life of his fellow townspeople, highlighting the partially-imagined character of even the most famous fictional, albeit largely satirical, work on the subject.<sup>40</sup> In introducing Saikaku's story collection, Schalow discusses some of the elements of warrior relations that appear in the work, including the metaphor of brotherhood, the construction of age categories, and the subversive potential of the relationships themselves.<sup>41</sup> I draw upon his insights in considering how Edo-era commoners romanticized and reappropriated

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<sup>39</sup> Ihara Saikaku, *The Great Mirror of Male Love*, trans. Paul Gordon Schalow (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 27–34.

warrior *shudō* and its antecedents, although, as with Leupp, I reject Schalow’s occasional reliance on such anachronistic vocabulary as “homosexuality.”

## Monks and Warriors

In recent years, an exciting body of scholarship has begun emerging that takes as its subject monastic male-male sexuality in pre-Edo Japan.<sup>42</sup> The most frequently mentioned form of relationship in the medieval monastery took place between priests and *chigo* (稚児), who were typically adolescent acolytes. Sachi Schmidt-Hori explores a genre of literature that scholars call *chigo monogatari*, or acolyte tales, in her 2021 monograph *Tales of Idolized Boys: Male-Male Love in Medieval Japanese Buddhist Narratives*. She views *chigo* as liminal beings, neither children nor adults, neither regular humans nor bodhisattvas, and neither male nor female.<sup>43</sup>

While Schmidt-Hori centers her inquiry on a monastic setting, some of the issues she raises hold implications beyond that environment. She criticizes the opinion expressed by certain scholars that sexual relations with *chigo* constituted a form of rape, asserting that age differences and power differentials did not equal abuse.<sup>44</sup> Schmidt-Hori notes the anachronism of this

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<sup>42</sup> The most notable precursor to this developing area of study is the work of Margaret Childs. In her article “*Chigo Monogatari: Love Stories or Buddhist Sermons?*,” which includes a translation of *Aki no yo no nagamonogatari* (A long tale for an autumn night), Childs criticizes the conventional categorization of *chigo monogatari* as being based largely on modern negative views toward homosexuality. She also discusses *chigo monogatari* briefly in her book *Rethinking Sorrow: Revelatory Tales of Late Medieval Japan*, which contains her translation and analysis of *Genmu monogatari* (The tale of Genmu) as a part of her proposed new genre category, revelatory tales. Another noteworthy scholar is Paul Atkins, whose article “Chigo in the Medieval Japanese Imagination” examines *chigo monogatari* through the lens of René Girard’s notion of the scapegoat mechanism. See Childs, “*Chigo Monogatari: Love Stories or Buddhist Sermons?*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 35, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 127–151; Childs, *Rethinking Sorrow: Revelatory Tales of Late Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1991); Atkins, “Chigo in the Medieval Japanese Imagination,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 3 (August 2008): 947–970.

<sup>43</sup> Sachi Schmidt-Hori, *Tales of Idolized Boys: Male-Male Love in Medieval Japanese Buddhist Narratives* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2021), 2–22.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 37–40. The most prominent example that Schmidt-Hori provides is the view expressed by Bernard Faure that *chigo monogatari* functioned as ideological justification for “a kind of institutionalized prostitution or rape” by romanticizing and aestheticizing monk/acolyte relationships. See Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to*

interpretation, as *chigo* were not considered “children” as we understand them today. She urges readers to historicize these bonds in the same way that we compartmentalize other norms and behaviors from Japan’s history, including both honor killing and ritual suicide.<sup>45</sup>

Or Porath, a scholar of religion, has likewise explored the intimate relations of monks and acolytes. Through an analysis of a 1482 text, *Nyakudō no kanjinchō* (Solicitation book of the way of youths), Porath shows how its author incorporated Buddhist and yin-yang cosmological views to argue for the necessity of explicitly sexual relationships, which would provide enlightenment for the monks and a favorable rebirth for their acolyte partners.<sup>46</sup> In another essay, Porath expands upon one of the rituals central to this conceptualization, *chigo kanjō*, a consecration ceremony specifically designed for young acolytes. He demonstrates how the steps and other elements of the ritual ostensibly transformed acolytes into the bodhisattva Kannon, who then saved the participating monk through benevolent sexual intercourse.<sup>47</sup> Porath’s work thus emphasizes the cosmological and ritual concerns involved in monastic male-male sexuality in medieval Japan. I consider the same issues in my analysis of warrior relations, specifically in the context of oathing practices.

Schmidt-Hori and Porath’s work does not, for the most part, discuss male-male sexuality among warriors. Nevertheless, Schmidt-Hori’s corrective regarding relationships between males

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*Sexuality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 265.

<sup>45</sup> Schmidt-Hori, *Tales of Idolized Boys*, 39–40.

<sup>46</sup> Or Porath, “The Cosmology of Male-Male Love in Medieval Japan: *Nyakudō no kanjinchō* and the Way of Youths,” *Journal of Religion in Japan* 4 (2015): 250–252.

<sup>47</sup> Or Porath, “The Consecration of Acolytes (*Chigo Kanjō*): Ritualizing Male-Male Sexuality in Medieval Tendai,” in *Rituals of Initiation and Consecration in Premodern Japan: Power and Legitimacy in Kingship, Religion, and the Arts*, ed. Fabio Rambelli and Or Porath (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 344–376.

with a significant age differential can be applied as well to *shudō* and its pre-Edo precursors.

Interestingly, Schmidt-Hori likens the *chigo* institution to male-female marriage as a method of creating alliances within a larger system of societal interdependency and exchanged human capital, forged among the imperial court, the shogunate, and religious institutions.<sup>48</sup>

Relationships between priests and acolytes provided a concrete connection between monasteries and warrior society, as Porath notes that in medieval times the male offspring of warrior families often served as *chigo*.<sup>49</sup> It is possible that monastic male-male sexuality directly influenced the development of male-male intimacies among warriors, as former *chigo* who had become adult warriors may have sought similar bonds with their own young subordinates.

## **Reconstructing Historical Intimacies through Queer Readings**

The present investigation marries a close reading of specific historical instances with a strong theoretical framework based on the insights of queer theory and the study of men and masculinities, particularly the work of literary scholar Eve Sedgwick and sociologist Raewyn Connell. In order to grapple with the fragmentary nature of the evidence surrounding male-male sexual relationships of the Warring States era, I have adopted a strategy of queer reading as my guiding principle. The “queer” central to this type of reading is, as Eve Sedgwick puts it, “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality, aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically.”<sup>50</sup> Although Sedgwick may not have been referring

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<sup>48</sup> Schmidt-Hori, *Tales of Idolized Boys*, 22–25.

<sup>49</sup> Or Porath, “Nasty Boys or Obedient Children? Childhood and Relative Autonomy in Medieval Japanese Monasteries,” in *Child's Play: Multi-Sensory Histories of Children and Childhood in Japan*, ed. Sabine Frühstück and Anne Walthall (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 20–22.

<sup>50</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Queer and Now,” in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, ed. Donald E. Hall et al.

to the evidentiary sort of gap, her definition nevertheless encourages careful examination of close relationships, affective intensities, and other bits and pieces that do not add up into anything intelligible according to our current understanding of sex and gender, but were still meaningful to the warriors who experienced them. In a provocative essay, Robert Mill has asserted that a queer reading involves challenging conventional methods of documentary analysis in order to counteract heteronormative assumptions.<sup>51</sup>

In this dissertation, I seek to bypass similar assumptions by focusing less on sexual relations, which do not always leave documentary traces, than on intimacy, which neither presumes nor precludes physical involvement. I define intimacy as physical and/or emotional closeness built on trust and reciprocity, regardless of the relative proportion of sexual or hierarchical components. By exploring the affective content of relationships between warriors, this study contributes not only to the historiography of sexuality, but also to our understanding of the cross-cultural history of the affect.

Sedgwick's own meditations on the thorny issue of male-male intimacy and sexual relations serve as an important corrective to presentist views that privilege heteronormative readings of bonds between men. Sedgwick offers the example of Greek pederasty to argue that homophobia is not necessary for the maintenance of patriarchy, even if heterosexuality is, pointing to what she views as a seamless continuity between "men loving men" and "men promoting the interests of men" in that particular sociocultural context.<sup>52</sup> Sedgwick rightly notes that many radical

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(London: Routledge, 2013), 8.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Mills, "'Whatever you do is a delight to me!': Masculinity, Masochism, and Queer Play in Representations of Male Martyrdom," *Exemplaria* 13, no. 1 (2001): 1.

<sup>52</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosexual Desire* (New York: Columbia



feminist and structuralist approaches, including Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of a "male traffic in women," have difficulty accounting for change over time, such that the structures they identify seem to lie outside history, and may even end up reinforcing gender essentialism.<sup>53</sup> If we rely on the "traffic in women" formula alone to approach configurations of gender practice and homosocial relations like those which prevailed among elite sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Japanese warriors, we risk erasing from view a wider range of social actors and modes of affiliation and alliance, in the process, misrecognizing the actual operations of patriarchal power.

Sedgwick offers the notion of "homosocial desire" in an attempt to bring history back into relations between men, much as Connell does by pluralizing our understanding of "masculinities." By combining the notion of the homosocial, which describes "social bonds between persons of the same sex," with the dynamic of desire, Sedgwick underlines the continuum between sexual and social intercourse between men, allowing us to engage with the history of "the *structure* of men's relationships with other men."<sup>54</sup> In a society where the male desire for social relations with other men can easily transform into a socially acceptable desire for another man, male-male sexuality offers additional support for the maintenance of male-dominated social structures.

Another useful tool for examining the historical and sociocultural framework within which *wakashudō* acquired meaning is Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. A sociologist by training, Connell emphasizes that no culture holds a single conception of masculinity, but rather that multiple forms exist at any given time, each standing in dynamic

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University Press, 1985), 2–5.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 12–13.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1–2. Emphasis is Sedgwick's.

relation with the rest, differentiated by such determinants as race and class.<sup>55</sup> Connell views masculinity and its definitional opposite femininity as “gender projects” that result from the process of configuring gender practice, rather than as simple outward expressions of the inner truths of men and women.<sup>56</sup> Connell shares this processual understanding of gender with Judith Butler, who argues that gender is produced through the repeated effect of actions, gestures, and statements, masquerading as inner truth when it is actually exterior and performative.<sup>57</sup>

For Connell, hegemonic masculinity corresponds to “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”<sup>58</sup> Whatever form of masculinity occupies the pinnacle of the hierarchy of masculinities can therefore change, should the existing strategy become no longer viable. Other types of masculinity can be complicit with, subordinate to, or even marginalized by hegemonic masculinity. Complicit masculinities, for example, represent groups of men far from the hegemonic ideal who still benefit from its method of subordinating women.<sup>59</sup> Connell places her

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<sup>55</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 76.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 71–76.

<sup>57</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 185–186. In later works, Butler clarifies her position, stating she does not mean that there exists a subject prior to gender who then begins performing, but rather that the regulatory regime of heteronormativity ensures that subjects only come into being and are made intelligible by the effect of gender uniformity that the repetition of performance creates. See Butler, “Critically Queer,” in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, 18–31.

<sup>58</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 77.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 78–81.

framework firmly within history, stating that the structures of gender relations shift over time and accordingly that gender itself is both produced by and produces history.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the importance of male-male intimate relations to warrior society, scholars frequently devote more energy toward examining the role of women in establishing bonds between different social groups. The most famous attempt at theorizing the importance of women to alliance building is Claude Lévi-Strauss's "exchange of women," which posits this exchange as the central method by families tie themselves together. In Lévi-Strauss' understanding, the seemingly universal incest taboo is not so much a prohibition against as a prescription for the exchange, which grants a social group significance by assigning it a place within the web of alliances.<sup>61</sup> When one woman is given away in marriage, another is received in a cycle of reciprocity that, in Lévi-Strauss's view, raises human communities from the level of biological organization to social unity.<sup>62</sup> Women do possess some degree of agency within this framework, as they are capable of acting and speaking on their own. For Lévi-Strauss, this ambiguity is the source of the "affective richness, ardour and mystery" that exists in the relations between men and women.<sup>63</sup>

The most trenchant critique of alliance theory comes from feminism, particularly the work of Gayle Rubin. In her classic essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," Rubin notes that Lévi-Strauss's concept rightfully locates the origin of the oppression of

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 81–82.

<sup>61</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, rev. ed., trans. James Harle Bell, John Richard von Sturmer, and Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 481–485.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 493.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 496.

women within social systems.<sup>64</sup> However, she argues that alliance theory's greatest failing lies in the fact that, by viewing the exchange of women as constitutive of society and culture, it must conclude that the defeat and oppression of women has always already happened as an inevitability and a prerequisite of complex social organization.<sup>65</sup> Rubin continues that Lévi-Strauss's view of the affective content of male-female relations constitutes a kind of "theoretical repression," whereby Lévi-Strauss stops short of considering the full implications of the exchange of women's claims about female oppression in favor of waxing poetic on "the root of all romance."<sup>66</sup> Instead, Rubin takes the work of Lévi-Strauss and Sigmund Freud as a starting point from which to theorize the complex economic and political interests that underpin each society's own forms of oppression, which a monolithic and oversimplified understanding of the exchange of women fails to grasp.<sup>67</sup> While my work does not deal directly with the oppression of women in late medieval and early modern Japan, like Rubin, I consider the ways in which the methods of alliance-building are interwoven with issues beyond the constitution of social relations. I instead examine the political consequences of intimate relations between male warriors, which ultimately involved all members of society.

## Central Arguments

This dissertation performs a series of queer readings in order to uncover the structures and practices of intimacy among elite male warriors, whether sexual and otherwise, from the

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<sup>64</sup> Gayle S. Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 45.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 58–60.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–65.

Warring States era through the early years of the Edo period. These relationships were shaped by the institutions within which they developed, chief of which was the hierarchically organized retainer band. One of the positions mostly frequently associated with warrior intimacy was that of the page, or *koshō*, whose physical proximity to his lord as a result of his duties allowed him also to enjoy a measure of emotional closeness. As Ujiie’s work shows, pages and sandal-bearers loomed large in the imagination of the Edo period as archetypes of the warrior youth. Many of the warrior couples whose traces survive in the historical record did include one party who was a page, as in the cases of Ranmaru, Gensuke, and Sakujūrō.

Although no systematic analysis of the institution of the page in Japan exists, many scholars have examined its origin and the duties associated with the position. Iwata quotes a number of Edo-period texts that discuss or define the term, which generally focus on the beauty of the pages and their responsibility to attend to their lord. Notably, several texts Iwata cites state that the term evolved from a word meaning “attendance,” which, like the word for page, was read *koshō* (扈從).<sup>68</sup> Naishi Masahiko argues that personal bodyguard units of prior shoguns and powerful daimyo served as precursors to pages, as those units were often composed of beautiful, flamboyantly dressed youths.<sup>69</sup> Naishi views the composition and appearance of youth guard forces as deriving from the high value placed on beauty by warriors of the time, regarding them as a symbol of social prestige that eventually morphed into the page system.<sup>70</sup> Sunaga Asahiko likewise emphasizes the connection between pages and physical proximity to their lords within

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<sup>68</sup> Iwata, *Honchō nanshoku kō /Nanshoku bunken shoshi*, 509–510. Both of the compound’s constituent characters can be read as *shitagau*, “to follow.”

<sup>69</sup> Naishi Masahiko, *Sengoku bushō to nanshoku: shirarezaru “buke shudō” no seisuishi* (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2013), 70–72.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

the context of male-male sexuality. He notes that pages waited upon their lords even in the latter's personal chambers, suggesting a sexual undertone to the phrase *goza wo naosu* (御座を直す, literally, "to fix the honorable seating place," generally referring to attending upon one's master in his bedroom), which frequently appears in the context of pages fulfilling their duties.<sup>71</sup> The above scholars thus associate the responsibilities of pages, which brought the comely youths directly next to their lords in intimate settings, with the development of emotional and sexual ties.

However, more than any specific office or duties, the primary structuring element in intimate warrior bonds of the Warring States period was the lord/retainer relationship itself, in that it defined one male as the other's social superior. Some youths never formally served as their lords' pages, but they were invariably their lords' subordinates or juniors. Although intimate ties between lords and their young subordinates were fundamentally asymmetrical, they were also reciprocal. At least ideally, daimyo provided their young attendants with mentorship, inculcating in them the values of warrior masculinity and therefore warrior identity, in return for loyal service now and in the future. Such bonds were built on a shared intimacy that reinforced ties between lord and retainer, so that lords were encouraged to act benevolently and magnanimously toward their subordinates, who in turn would fulfill their duties to the best of their abilities. In this way, male-male intimacy offered a site for the production and reproduction of the warrior status group, as former youths could foster the next generation of capable retainers by taking their own lovers in the future.

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<sup>71</sup> Sunaga Asahiko, *Bishōnen Nihon-shi* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 2002), 126–127. The phrase that Sunaga as *oza wo naosu* more commonly appears in Japanese dictionaries as *goza wo naosu*.

Unlike Edo-period *shudō*, erotic intimacies between elite warriors of the Warring States period left behind no particular name. While the form of such ties in some respects resembles later descriptions of *shudō*, the latter term assumes a level of systemization and codification that likely did not exist before the seventeenth century. Furthermore, while sources on male-male sexuality produced during the Warring States period include war chronicles and biographies intended for a wide audience, a significant amount of information was encoded in private writings, such as oaths, letters, and memorials, rather than in public documents like popular fiction or law codes.

The most obvious option is *chiin* (知音), or exceptionally close friend, which Shingen uses in his oath to Gensuke to describe how familiar he would like them to be. The term comes from a Chinese legend about a musician named Bo Ya from the state of Chu who refused to play the *qin* (a lute-like stringed instrument) after the death of his friend Zhong Ziqi. Bo Ya asserted that only Zhong Ziqi “understood the sound” of his instrument, implying by extension that he and his friend had understood each other completely.<sup>72</sup> Pflugfelder notes that, by the Edo period, *chiin* had come to refer to “a distinctly erotic form of male–male... intimacy,” citing several domain legal codes that employ the term when forbidding private horizontal ties between samurai retainers.<sup>73</sup> In this context, the unmistakable implications of sexual propositioning and intimate bonds in Shingen’s oath suggest that *chiin* may have started taking on this meaning during the Warring States era.

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<sup>72</sup> The two characters that comprise *chiin* are *shiru* (知る, “to know”) and *oto* (音, “sound”).

<sup>73</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 103, 129–131.

Another related term is *kyōdai no keiyaku* or, “vow of brotherhood” (兄弟の契約), which appears in a document submitted in 1551 by the Ōuchi retainer Sagara Taketō (1498–1551). In the course of describing a plot to overthrow the head of the Ōuchi clan, Yoshitaka (1507–1551) by Sue Takafusa (1521–1555), Taketō mentions that Takafusa had apparently exchanged such a vow with a figure known as Asō Yojirō (dates unknown) as a part of his preparations.<sup>74</sup>

Although the analogy of brotherhood evolved to contain an erotic nuance in certain situations in the Edo period, nothing about Taketō’s account suggests any implicit connection between the vow and a carnal form of intimacy.

Due to the lack of a consistently used idiom for warrior intimacies of the Warring States period in the sources that I quote, I have settled on the previously mentioned term *wakashudō* (“way of youths”) for heuristic reasons. Most importantly, my narrative requires some word or phrase by which to refer in a broad sense to the intimate relations between male warriors of the time. Accordingly, I employ *wakashudō* in a semi-etic fashion, adopting a Japanese term that is not, strictly speaking, present in the texts that I examine, but bears a historical relationship to the discourse they preserve, and may have even been intelligible in some fashion to the actors they involve. The closest option to an emic term, which is to say, one based on actual structures of thought from the Warring States period, would arguably be *chiin*. The term *chiin* does not appear frequently enough in the documents I examine from the time to claim it as the foundation of an effective emic framework in the present study, though I intend to research it in greater depth in the future.

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<sup>74</sup> Sagara Taketō, “Sagara Taketō mōshijō,” in *Dai Nihon komonjo, iewake dai hachi: Mōri-ke monjo no yon*, ed. Tōkyō daigaku shiryō hensanjo (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku, 1970), 459.



The term *wakashudō* brings with it the advantage of etymological relation to hegemonic constructions of male-male sexuality in other social contexts and subsequent eras. The *waka* of *wakashudō* points to a possible link between warrior and monastic male-male sexuality, as the *nyaku* of *nyakudō* is another reading for *waka*. *Shudō* itself is an abbreviated version of *wakashudō*. Writers of the Edo period made note of the historical connection between the notions of *nyakudō* and *shudō*. The author of *Yodarekake* (A bib, 1648–1653), for example, claimed that the latter term had come to replace the former in recent years.<sup>75</sup> Using the term *wakashudō* allows me, therefore, to connect the subject of my research to earlier and later developments in the history male-male sexuality.

Indeed, the intimate relations of the Warring States period may have served as direct precedents for *shudō* and other practices of the Edo period (1603–1868). Among other things, the emphasis on displays of warrior masculinity entailed in such bonds captured the interest of Edo-era Japanese. Through print culture and the melting pot of new urban centers, samurai introduced their vision of male-male sexuality to a broad, cross-class audience as warriors and commoners alike refined it into a properly ordered and aestheticized “way.” Not only did non-samurai such as kabuki actors and male prostitutes begin to engage in what was now frequently called *shudō*, but certain practices meant to prove one’s love and the truth of one’s claims, such as oath writing and self-mutilation, became subsumed into the culture of male-female relations. At the same time, warriors had to curtail their expressions of affection and desire for bloodshed, as the maintenance of public peace required they give up their right to commit violence freely. The members of the new samurai class responded to the regulation of their behavior in a number of

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<sup>75</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 64. The author’s listed name, Baijōken, is a pseudonym that translates to “house of the Japanese plum branch.”

ways. Some refused to abandon the older, combative form of warrior identity, continuing to employ violence in the defense of their honor and the pursuit of *shudō* relations. Others looked for inspiration to the Warring States period for less aggressive solutions.

The present study's focus on warrior intimacy functions simultaneously as an intervention into the historiography of the Warring States period. The dominant, heteronormative narrative of the Warring States period is one of unification built on alliances, primarily those arising from the male-female bonds of marriage and concubinage. However, male-male relations were no less critical to the union of warrior families. Many warriors offered up their male children as pages and attendants to their daimyo, in the hope that the development of a strong connection between lord and youth would help solidify and possibly even improve their family's standing. Yet such closeness could prove a double-edged sword. Intimacy could also be used to disrupt or destroy the retainer band when current or former youths made demands upon their lords that inverted the usual functioning of power relations, or even made use of skills and knowledge gained through that intimacy to betray their lords.

The historical analysis of male-male intimacy offers a challenge to the currently prevailing emphasis on the conventional protagonists of Japan's sixteenth-century unification story: the so-called Three Unifiers. Although male bonds have helped explain why Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) became Nobunaga's subordinate and ally respectively, marriage still features in both historical analysis and popular culture as the primary technique for binding warrior families together. Thus, the 1567 marriage of Nobunaga's daughter Ogotoku (1559–1637) and Ieyasu's eldest son Nobuyasu (1559–1579) and its dramatic collapse

in the late 1570s receive widespread historiographic attention.<sup>76</sup> Yet the bond between the two families may have begun when Nobunaga and Ieyasu were both still young, during the approximately two years of Ieyasu's childhood that he spent a hostage of the Oda.<sup>77</sup> Male-male relations also help explain the fates of many daimyo who do not make it into the standard narrative, turned upon by treacherous retainers and consigned to the margins of history as failures. In order to understand and appreciate the events and historical changes of the Warring States period with greater nuance and discernment, we must also consider the achievements of such figures whose trust proved misplaced.

## Organization

This dissertation is structured around a trio of lord/youth retainer couples and the light their stories shed on questions of male-male intimacy, warrior identity, and historical narrative. The chronological scope of the investigation, which extends from 1507 to 1636, spans the known lifetimes of the members of these various pairs. The chapters are organized chronologically, so as to focus upon developments in the structure of sexual and non-sexual intimate relations among warriors and the changing concerns that motivated that structure's transformation. The final relationship to be narrated points toward shifts in warrior masculinity and identity that took place

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<sup>76</sup> Ogotoku's relationship with her mother-in-law, Ieyasu's first wife and Nobuyasu's mother, was extremely poor, partially resulting from Ogotoku's failure to bear Nobuyasu an heir. Ieyasu's wife was a member of the Imagawa clan, the prior head of which the Oda forces had killed in 1560. Nobuyasu's erratic behavior worsened his reputation among the Tokugawa retainer band and produced friction between Ieyasu and himself. Additionally, numerous documents suggest the possibility that Nobuyasu sought to strengthen Tokugawa ties with the Takeda clan, which would threaten the longstanding Oda-Tokugawa alliance. In 1579, Ogotoku informed Nobunaga of her treatment in a letter. The missive set off the chain of events that ended in her mother-in-law's execution and Nobuyasu's suicide. The Oda-Tokugawa alliance survived this episode, lasting until Nobunaga's death in 1582. See Shiba Hiroyuki, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: kyōkai no ryōshu kara tenkabito e* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2017), 91–96.

<sup>77</sup> The historian Shiba Hiroyuki dates Ieyasu's father's surrender to Nobunaga's father to the middle of the ninth month of 1547. Ieyasu then became a hostage of the Imagawa clan as a result of Oda-Imagawa negotiations around the middle of the eleventh month of 1549. See *Ibid.*, 40–44.

during the early Edo period, as even those daimyo who survived the Warring States period found themselves forced to change with the times.

Chapter One examines Ōuchi Yoshitaka and Sue Takafusa/Harukata, investigating the political consequences and long-term relevance of intimate relations between daimyo and their young subordinates. While no definitive proof exists that the pair's bond was built on *wakashudō*, one of Yoshitaka's poems found in a war chronicle written the same year as his death suggests that the two had been extremely close and affectionate in Takafusa's youth. The episode also underscores the importance of trust in warrior society, as Takafusa took advantage of Yoshitaka's seemingly unshakable faith and his position as one of the Ōuchi's chief generals to plan openly to overthrow his lord, having become dissatisfied with Yoshitaka's turn away from military campaigns toward political and cultural engagements. Building on this basis, the chapter reconsiders the historical role of the Ōuchi, and of Yoshitaka in particular, in narratives of the Warring States period. Incorporating recent scholarly reinterpretations of the Ōuchi and the so-called Three Unifiers, I show how an emphasis on the retrospectively clear process of unification and the privileging of male-female relations have minimized the achievements of Yoshitaka and his predecessors.

Chapter Two focuses on the relationship between Takeda Shingen and his page Gensuke. Through a close reading of Shingen's love oath, I examine the culture of oath-writing, which functioned both in *wakashudō* and in lord/retainer relationships broadly conceived as a means of affirming hierarchical relations. I follow Satō Hiroo's lead in viewing oaths as documents that illuminate the mental universes of the people who wrote and believed in them, arguing that Shingen's choice of which deities to invoke in asserting his innocence helps us map out the

Takeda clan's sacred geography and understand the religious beliefs and practices of a broader population. The oath provides a clear example of how youths could reverse the normal power relations of *wakashudō* by demanding that their older lovers prove their faithfulness, as well as how the latter could avoid actually doing what was expected of them while still placating the former. Additionally, I argue that speculations about Gensuke's true identity and accounts of Shingen's behavior when he was younger shed light on how Japanese of the Edo period employed figures and stories from the Warring States era to establish precedents and serve as sources of legitimation. I take the opportunity afforded by my discussion of Shingen's behavior to reconsider the methodological utility of the enterprise of reconstructing historical personalities.

Chapter Three moves to the beginning of the Edo period with one of the more successful veterans of the Warring States era, Date Masamune, and his page Sakujūrō. I delve into the ten letters that form their extant correspondence to uncover the shifts in the warrior culture of male-male sexuality that they illustrate. Peacetime conditions and the increased desire for sociopolitical stability necessitated a new economy of violence, one which divested the new samurai class of its right to shed blood freely. I assert that Masamune's longest letter reflects the emergence of what would become Edo-period shogunal and domanial officials' standard stance on violence, as his refusal to write his own blood oath demonstrates an interest in modeling restraint and discouraging actions that could be viewed as challenges toward authority. Drawing upon a variety of sources, I reconstruct the lineage of Sakujūrō's family, the Tadano, in order to assess its place within the Date retainer band and the role of Sakujūrō's pagehood in securing that position. Masamune took one of Sakujūrō's sisters as a concubine as well, but the Date

branch family that their son established died out due to its involvement in an infamous intrafamily dispute of the 1660s and 1670s, while Sakujūrō's descendants remained subordinates of the Date until the end of the Tokugawa shogunate. These close Date-Tadano connections occasion a reevaluation of the traditional model of alliance-building, which privileges the male-female bond of marriage.

I conclude with ruminations on the Edo-period afterlives of both specific warrior relationships and of warrior intimacy in general. Although warriors could no longer act in the same way as before due to the new expectations placed upon them, their relationships and behaviors formed the basis for romanticized images that captured the imagination of Edo-era townspeople, many of whom had more money to spend on recreation due to changing socioeconomic factors like the burgeoning wealth of the merchant class. I argue that Edo-period idealizations and reimaginations of Warring States relationships have exerted an oversized influence on current understandings of *wakashudō* and warrior intimacy, and that they tell us more about the concerns and interests of people of the Edo era than they do the actual subjects of their stories. I return finally to the subject of historical narratives, considering how actively incorporating intimate male-male relations into the analysis of events and dynamics of the Warring States period stands to enrich both our understanding of warrior alliance formation and its role in bringing a bloody, chaotic age to a close.

## Chapter 1

### How a Mighty House Could Fall at the Hands

#### of a Disgruntled Former Youth:

#### Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551) and Sue Harukata (1521–1555)

In 1551, the head of one of the most powerful warrior families in Japan committed suicide after several of his most trusted retainers staged a coup. When the rebel army proved to be too powerful, Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551), the lord of Suō Province, fled his base at Yamaguchi with a dwindling group of supporters. The revolt became known as the Taineiji Incident, so named for the temple at which Yoshitaka finally ended his life. The general often described as the coup's mastermind was Sue Takafusa (1521–1555), known later as Harukata, who had once served as one of the leaders of the Ōuchi's armies under Yoshitaka's command. Evidence also suggests that Yoshitaka, who has been described as an avid practitioner of *wakashudō* in both Japanese and European accounts, may have taken Takafusa as his lover when the younger man was of the age to be considered a youth.

One of Yoshitaka's highest-ranking generals whose family had served the Ōuchi for at least two centuries, Takafusa stood in a unique position, as he was well acquainted with how the Ōuchi clan functioned and which of his fellow retainers might likewise resent his lord. He had earned enough trust from Yoshitaka that he was able to prepare for the coup even after his actions had come to light, as Yoshitaka did not believe that Takafusa would ever betray him. Historians have often downplayed the significance of the two men's relationship and of the fall of such a powerful family, as the Ōuchi had experienced their height before more famous clans

like the Oda, Takeda, Uesugi, and their successors, the Mōri, came to power. As such, Yoshitaka and Takafusa's relationship and the destruction of the Ōuchi serve largely as a prelude to the primary story of the age, that of the Three Unifiers and their triumphs over their rivals.

In this chapter, I highlight the two sources that suggest Yoshitaka and Takafusa shared a close intimacy in their early lives, considering them alongside a large body of evidence that Yoshitaka enjoyed the way of youths. The fact that both the former texts involve poems underscores the very issue that Takafusa grew to have with Yoshitaka's change of disposition: his loss of interest in military campaigns. The formation of intimate relationships also served as one of the tools that Takafusa employed in his efforts to overthrow his lord, as Takafusa joined together in a bond of fictive brotherhood with another warrior discontented with Yoshitaka in the years before the Taineiji Incident. I assert in this chapter that Takafusa's choice to use such a strategy illustrates the potential that horizontal bonds within a retainer band held to disrupt and subvert the vertical hierarchy of lord/subordinate relations. Indeed, intimacy proved to be Takafusa's greatest collaborator, enabling him to continue plotting even after Yoshitaka learned of his activities, thanks to Yoshitaka's misplaced confidence in him.

From another perspective the story of Yoshitaka and Takafusa also occasions a reevaluation of the Ōuchi family's place in Warring States period history, as the disregard for their achievements has produced an incomplete picture of the era and an overestimation of the Three Unifiers' innovations and uniqueness. I draw on the groundbreaking work of Thomas Conlan to demonstrate the various ways in which scholars have consistently dismissed the Ōuchi's military, political, and sacred power due to the textual weight of *Ōnin-ki* (Record of the Ōnin war) and the historiographic emphasis on the Three Unifiers as heroes of the unification narrative



of the Warring States era. I also incorporate recent Japanese scholarship to show how distinctly modern interests and sensibilities constructed the dominant image of the Three Unifiers as a trio and suggest the possibility of including Yoshitaka among the Unifiers or discarding the concept altogether, in favor of frameworks based more on these figures' actual goals and contributions.

### **Waning and Waxing Affections**

The most important historical text that suggests a relationship between Yoshitaka and Takafusa is *Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki* (Chronicle of Ōuchi Yoshitaka). Although the identity of its author is unknown, the work goes into great detail about Takafusa's coup, including Yoshitaka's flight to Taineiji and the fates of members of his entourage both before and after he committed suicide. The date written at the end of the chronicle lies in the middle of the eleventh month of Tenbun 20 (1551), the very same year as the coup.<sup>78</sup> As such, it is likely that the author was someone who himself witnessed at least some of the events concerned, as few other people would have been privy to the specifics of how Yoshitaka and his followers met their end so soon after the fact. The text repeatedly casts Yoshitaka in a favorable light, portraying him as a master of the Buddhist way in an age of degeneracy, accomplished in both martial and literary matters and without equal in benevolence.<sup>79</sup> Such a depiction suggests that the author was a close vassal of Yoshitaka's who was seeking to salvage his lord's legacy as Takafusa cemented his control

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<sup>78</sup> "Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki," in *Gunsho ruijū*, ed. Hanawa Hokiichi, 3rd ed., vol. 21 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1994), 431.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

over the Ōuchi. Regardless of this potential bias, scholars have generally viewed *Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki* as a reliable source of information.<sup>80</sup>

While enumerating Yoshitaka's skills and achievements, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki* relays an anecdote about a poem sent by him to Takafusa as an example of his lyrical prowess. The passage begins by stating that the episode in question took place when Takafusa was still known as Gorō, his name before he had undergone the ceremony of adulthood.<sup>81</sup> If accurate, such timing would make Takafusa of an appropriate age category to constitute an object of desire according to the protocols of *shudō*, the dominant discourse of male-male sexuality during the Edo-period (1603–1868). The text states that Yoshitaka, “filled with longing” for Gorō, headed to the Sue headquarters at Tonda to meet with him.<sup>82</sup> The two spent the night together at a temple in a place called Matsugasaki, but Yoshitaka left as dawn broke without saying goodbye, possibly while Gorō was still asleep.<sup>83</sup> Feeling remorseful at having parted from him in such a fashion, Yoshitaka sent Gorō a poem the next day as an apology.

Becoming a cast-off cicada shell, at the very least I intend to leave behind the common sense of this ephemeral world (*monuke nari to semete nokosaba/utsusemi no yo no narai to omoi nasu beshi*).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Fukuo Takeichirō, introduction to *Ōuchi Yoshitaka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959); Kiyonaga Tadao, “Yoshitaka gunki oboegaki,” in *Ōuchi Yoshitaka no subete*, ed. Yonehara Masayoshi (Tokyo: Shin jinbutsu ōraisha, 1988), 254–255.

<sup>81</sup> “*Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki*,” 410.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

The poem highlights the depth of Yoshitaka's affection for Gorō, suggesting that it will last beyond their current lifetimes. Cicada shells serve as a common metaphor in Chinese and Japanese poetry for impermanence, since the insect molts many times over the course of its lifespan. They gesture toward the end of one's corporeal existence, as though the reborn cicada has cast off its mortal body to continue on to its reincarnation.<sup>85</sup> In the context of his swift departure from Gorō's side, Yoshitaka seems to intimate that he wishes he could put aside his worldly responsibilities so that he could spend more time with the youth. The poem suggests the possibility that the two might be able to associate without any obstacles when they reincarnate, whether into a lower realm of being or the next world. No ordinary attachment would last beyond one's current existence, so Yoshitaka must have felt so strongly about Gorō that he could wax poetically about the possibility of karmic bonds tying them together in their next lives.

On the other hand, Yoshitaka may have been employing the analogy of the cicada shell simply to assure Gorō that his silent exit did not mean his fondness for the youth had waned. There are numerous examples of adult warriors having to explain their behavior to their youth lovers, ostensibly their social inferiors, including in the extant correspondence of both Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) and Date Masamune (1567–1633), which the following chapters will explore in detail. Since Gorō was heir to the Sue, one of the Ōuchi's most important vassal families, Yoshitaka certainly had practical and political reasons to keep him happy. Either way, Yoshitaka's poem suggests that his relationship with Gorō was one of great importance and

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<sup>85</sup> In the original poem, the word *nokosaba* (残さば, leave behind) is written *nokofuba* (残ふば). As this makes no grammatical sense, the compiler of *Gunsho ruijū*, Hanawa Hokiichi, speculates that *fu* should be replaced by *sa*. The phrase translated here as “ephemeral world” is *utsusemi no yo* (空蟬の世). While *yo* translates directly to “world,” *utsusemi* refers both to impermanence and to cicada shells. With the use of another word for cicada shells and other forms of molted skin, *monuke* (蛻), at the start of the poem, Yoshitaka infuses the entire verse with the metaphor.

likely filled with strong affective attachments. After all, even if the poem itself was sent simply to cover his bases, Yoshitaka cared enough about Gorō to spend an entire night with him.

As Yoshitaka's biographer Fujii Takashi states, none of the extant texts that discuss Yoshitaka and Takafusa corroborate the idea that the pair ever formed a *wakashudō* relationship.<sup>86</sup> Yet enough stories and suggestive episodes exist to indicate that Yoshitaka harbored a predilection for the way of youths. Fujii himself brings up a letter to Sugi Takayasu (1521–1555), a member of another of the Ōuchi's prominent retainer families. He notes that Yoshitaka uses the honorific suffix *-sama* after Takayasu's name, a level of respect that would be unusual to use toward an adolescent subordinate.<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere, Yoshitaka is described as having been involved with two other lovers near the end of his life. According to *Intoku taiheiki* (literally Hidden-virtue chronicle of great peace), an Edo-period text about western Honshū during the Warring States period, Yoshitaka favored one Yasutomi Gennai, a beautiful youth who flaunted his favored status to the annoyance of Yoshitaka's retainers.<sup>88</sup> A chronicle written during the Meiji period (1868–1912) titled *Ōuchi-shi jitsuroku* (True record of the Ōuchi clan) asserts that Yoshitaka loved a page named Kiyonoshirō, with whom he spent so much time that the author lists jealousy as one of the reasons for Takafusa's coup.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Fujii Takashi, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka: Ruiyō butoku no ie wo shō shi, daimyō no utsuwa ni noru* (Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 2010), 282. Takayasu died during the Mōri invasion into Ōuchi territory after the 1555 Battle of Itsukushima.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>88</sup> Furukawa Kaoru, *Ōuchi-shi no kōbō* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1974), 159. The title *Intoku taiheiki* is based on that of the war chronicle *Taiheiki*, which depicted the turbulent Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392). As it was published in 1717, many years after Yoshitaka's death, scholars consider *Intoku taiheiki* a much less reliable source than *Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki*.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* Kiyonoshirō supposedly attempted to get assistance from one of his relatives during the Taineiji Incident, but he was rebuffed, then captured and executed by Takafusa's forces.

Even Jesuit visitors from Europe seem to have heard of Yoshitaka's fondness for *wakashudō*. The most prominent Jesuit to proselytize in Japan, Francis Xavier (1506–1552), disclosed in his letters, presumably to Rome, that he traveled to Yamaguchi to deal specifically with the reported popularity of the vice of sodomy there.<sup>90</sup> When one of the other Jesuits touched upon the prohibition of sodomy in his explication of Catholic doctrine during an audience with Yoshitaka, the daimyo became visibly angry, and Xavier and his entourage were forced to leave immediately.<sup>91</sup> While the Jesuits may not have fully comprehended the local situation, their accounts must hold some degree of truth, as it is otherwise unlikely that so many contemporaneous and later texts would contain similar reports. Considering how much time Yoshitaka spent with Takafusa and the implications and context of the poem, my analysis will proceed on the hypothesis that the two were indeed once lovers.

The above-cited poem leaves no doubt that there was, at one time, much shared affection between Yoshitaka and Takafusa. In fact, Sakugen Shūryō (1501–1579), a Zen monk, poet, and diplomat who served as ambassador to China's Ming dynasty (1368–1644) on the Ōuchi's behalf on two occasions, suggested as much in another poem that he sent to Takafusa in 1550.<sup>92</sup>

Sakugen wrote:

Distancing oneself from one's feelings, they feel both near and as far as the edges of the heavens. Close friends leave things to others and part for a time. Do not forget the lords who

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<sup>90</sup> Fukuo Takeichirō, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959), 126.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 128; Hubert Cieslik, “Ōuchi-shi to kirishitan,” in *Ōuchi Yoshitaka no subete*, 127–128.

<sup>92</sup> Yonehara Masayoshi, “Yoshitaka no bunji,” in *Ōuchi Yoshitaka no subete*, 127–128.

undoubtedly think of you when the sun rises in the east, and the moon sets in the west.<sup>93</sup>

By this time, Takafusa's discontent was well-known, having been reported by Sugi Shigenori (birth year unknown–1553), the assistant military governor (*shugodai*, 守護代) of Buzen province, at some point before 1548.<sup>94</sup> Sakugen likely intended to persuade Takafusa to abandon his plans for revolt with his poem. Although the rising sun in the east and the setting moon in the west are natural phenomena, Sakugen may have been alluding to the relative positions of Takafusa and Yoshitaka's home bases, as Tonda lies east of Yamaguchi. The implication may have been that Takafusa had still more time left in life to "rise like the sun," so there was no reason for him to ruin his future by betraying his lord.<sup>95</sup>

Sakugen's ambiguous wording insinuates that lord and vassal were once both very fond of each other. The word that translates to "feeling" in the first verse is *jō* (情). While it can refer to feelings in general, it can also mean love in particular. Similarly, *omou* (思 ㇿ, the "thinking" of the third verse) can denote longing and yearning, including of the amorous kind. Regardless of whether or not this poem constitutes proof that Takafusa and Yoshitaka once engaged in a *wakashudō* relationship, Sakugen clearly thought that the two men cared deeply for each other in the past. Such closeness could also be attributed to the strong bonds that linked a daimyo with one of his most valued retainers, built on trust and loyalty. By writing to Takafusa, Sakugen

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<sup>93</sup> Sakugen Shūryō, "Sakugen oshō shishū," in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, ed. Hanawa Hokichi, vol. 13b (1907; Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1990), 811.

<sup>94</sup> Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 260.

<sup>95</sup> Although the poem uses the word *kimigimi*, which refers to multiple lords, I view it as a poetical conceit to maintain the proper number of syllables for the verse. Furthermore, any other lords to whom Sakugen could have been referring would ultimately have been Yoshitaka's subordinates.

presumably sought to rekindle those emotions so that the unruly head of the Sue would stay his hand.

### **Takafusa's Vow of Brotherhood and Rebellious Intentions**

Takafusa's decision to turn against his lord was rooted in his dissatisfaction with Yoshitaka's priorities and how they affected the Ōuchi's fortunes. As a part of the Ōuchi campaign against the neighboring Amago clan, Yoshitaka embarked on a prolonged campaign in Izumo province from early 1542 to mid-1543, ending in a siege of the Amago headquarters at the famous Gassantoda castle. The attack failed catastrophically, as several allies defected to the Amago, Yoshitaka's general Mōri Motonari (1497–1571) barely escaped with his life, and Yoshitaka's adopted son and heir drowned during the retreat. Afterward, Yoshitaka ceased engaging in military expeditions and devoted himself to political and cultural affairs, relying increasingly on his subordinate Sagara Taketō (1498–1551). The Ōuchi retainer band split into two main camps: a militant faction, led by Takafusa and other prominent generals, and a faction that emphasized governance based on law and reason, led by Taketō.<sup>96</sup> The Sue had for generations numbered among the Ōuchi's most trusted retainer families, having served as assistant military governor of the Ōuchi home province of Suō since the days of Takafusa's great-great-grandfather.<sup>97</sup> In the years before Sakugen wrote his poem, Takafusa likely felt marginalized, as Yoshitaka seemed to have forgotten their former closeness in valuing Taketō's opinions over his own.

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<sup>96</sup> Miyamoto Yoshimi, "Yoshitaka no saiki," in *Ōuchi Yoshitaka no subete*, 215–216.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–153.

Several years later, Taketō himself became one of the central figures of an investigation into Takafusa's plans to overthrow Yoshitaka. In a document Taketō wrote in 1551 to explain his behavior over the past few years, he described an incident in which a vassal of the Asō family named Odamura had been executed.<sup>98</sup> Interpretations of the incident in question vary wildly from scholar to scholar. Miyamoto Yoshimi argues that Takafusa and a male named Asō Yojirō (dates unknown) killed Odamura in order to prevent him from telling Yoshitaka about Takafusa's plans for a coup.<sup>99</sup> By contrast, Fujii posits that Odamura and Takafusa were co-conspirators and that Yojirō, whom he identifies as Asō Ieshige, was executed on Yoshitaka's orders.<sup>100</sup> Either way, it would appear that Taketō dispatched Shigenori on Yoshitaka's orders to question Takafusa and Yojirō about the situation.

Shigenori's most notable discovery, as Taketō related, was that Takafusa and Yojirō had exchanged an "oath of brotherhood" at some point in the past.<sup>101</sup> Such vows of fictive kinship were common in both Japan and China as a method of formalizing ties of intimacy, sometimes for the purpose of achieving a specific, stated goal. For the latter reason, Miyamoto's scenario appears more plausible, as Takafusa and Yojirō may well have become sworn brothers so that

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<sup>98</sup> Sagara Taketō, "Sagara Taketō mōshijō," in *Dai Nihon komonjo, iewake dai hachi: Mōri-ke monjo no yon*, ed. Tōkyō daigaku shiryō hensanjo (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku, 1970), 459. Taketō left Yoshitaka's service temporarily on multiple occasions when he felt that his life was in danger for attempting to warn Yoshitaka of Takafusa's plans. attempted to warn Yoshitaka of Takafusa's plans. Taketō addressed the account of the reasons for his actions to Sugi Okikazu (birth year unknown–1551), the assistant military governor (*shugodai*) of Bizen province. Okikazu died a few years later during Takafusa's rebellion, though the exact circumstances of his death are uncertain.

<sup>99</sup> Miyamoto, "Yoshitaka no saiki," 218–219.

<sup>100</sup> Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 260. Yojirō appears nowhere in extant Asō genealogies. Fujii provides no reason for why he views Ieshige, about whom little is known, as the same person as Yojirō. Since Fujii argues that Ieshige became the functional head of the Asō after Yoshitaka chased out its previous leader, he seems to assume that the same person would therefore be charged with dealing with Asō internal matters such as punishing a vassal. See Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 119–120, for his speculation about Ieshige's rise to power.

<sup>101</sup> Sagara, "Sagara Taketō mōshijō," 459.



Takafusa could secure the Asō's aid in his conspiracy. Further proof of collusion between Takafusa and the Asō exists, since Takafusa would send one Asō Yagorō (dates unknown) to the Ōtomo family to act as his representative in the negotiations to bring in Yoshitaka's cousin Ōtomo Haruhide (1532–1557, later known as Ōuchi Yoshinaga) as the next head of the Ōuchi.<sup>102</sup> Following Fujii's line of argument, Yagorō may have assisted Takafusa simply out of resentment at Yagorō's banishment.<sup>103</sup> However, considering his efforts to ally with other major Ōuchi retainer families, Takafusa was likely trying to win over the entire Asō clan.

The other two passages in which Yojirō appears in Taketō's recounting of the incident suggest that both Takafusa and Yojirō were aware of the potential problems that would arise if their lord became aware of their brotherhood vow. In one of them, Taketō relates that Yojirō told Shigenori he did not agree with the way Takafusa had handled Odamura and said that he still valued his lord's wishes, intimating that Yojirō himself was the reason the incident had come to Yoshitaka's attention.<sup>104</sup> In the other, Taketō states that Takafusa had altered the version of the brotherhood oath that he presented to Yoshitaka with the help of another collaborator, presumably hoping to feign innocence.<sup>105</sup> If Yojirō was indeed involved in Odamura's death, his testimony suggests that he was attempting to wash his hands clean of the affair and stay in Yoshitaka's good graces by turning against his sworn brother. Although no copy of the oath, altered or otherwise, survives, Takafusa's edits embodied a conscious attempt to deal with the

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<sup>102</sup> Fukuo, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 200–202; Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 119–120. As with Yojirō, Yagorō's name is not mentioned in any known Asō genealogy.

<sup>103</sup> Yagorō would also have had reason to resent Taketō, who was bestowed his former castle at Hanao in Bizen province after his exile. See Fukuo, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 201.

<sup>104</sup> Sagara, "Sagara Taketō mōshijō," 460.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 464.

situation, presumably to erase any suggestion that their brotherhood might have involved a conspiracy to overthrow Yoshitaka.

Historical examples from the Edo period indicate that oaths of fictive kinship between male warriors could easily be interpreted as subversive and even romantic and sexual. Gregory Pflugfelder notes that multiple Edo-era domains, including Chōshū and Yonezawa, expressly forbid “intimate friendships” and “bonds of mutual aid,” horizontal ties among warrior vassals that had the potential to upset the vertical hierarchy of the retainer band by taking the place of loyalty to their lords.<sup>106</sup> He suggests that brotherhood served as the primary metaphor by which unrelated men might strengthen their ties through oaths, noting that the analogy aptly suited *shudō* in because the relationship of older brother/younger brother central to those vows reinforced the asymmetrical bond of *nenja/wakashu*.<sup>107</sup> Both Pflugfelder and the Japanese scholar Ujiie Mikito provide concrete instances of fictive brotherhood among warriors involving one party who is a youth, including a page in Kanazawa in 1708 and two sandal bearers in Okayama in 1679.<sup>108</sup> As a result of his chapter-long investigation into such oaths, Ujiie goes so far as to claim that brotherhood was a central element of male-male sexual relationships during the Edo period.<sup>109</sup>

It is entirely possible that, long before Edo-era *shudō* relationships, Takafusa and Yojirō similarly had been lovers. In that case, Takafusa might have been seeking a horizontal bond of

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<sup>106</sup> Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 129–131.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 126; Ujiie Mikito, *Bushidō to erosu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995), 127.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

love as part of his revenge on Yoshitaka, who stood at the top of the Ōuchi hierarchy, the lord who no longer listened to his counsel and whose favor now fell elsewhere. Indeed, jealousy is a strong motivator, one that has been used to explain many coups and ruined friendships across the centuries when the subject is male-female sexuality. A relevant Japanese example lies in the medieval chronicle *Ōnin-ki* (written in the early 1500s), which not only casts its narrative around male-female relations, but also has played a major role in minimizing the political influence and historiographic profile of the Ōuchi. According to *Ōnin-ki*, Hino Tomiko (1440–1496), wife of the eighth Ashikaga shogun Yoshimasa (1436–1490), caused the outbreak of the Ōnin War (1467–1477) in her efforts to secure her newborn son’s position as the next shogun. She called upon the assistance of Yamana Sōzen (1404–1473), around whom gathered what would become known as the Western Army. Her son’s rival claimant enlisted the aid of the shogunal deputy (*kanrei*, 管領) Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430–1473), who gathered the so-called Eastern Army, and the two camps formed the opposing sides of the decade-long conflict.

Through a reconstruction of the known series of events during and after the Ōnin War, the historian Ienaga Junji has argued that Tomiko’s role in *Ōnin-ki* is fictitious, reflective more of the interests of the patrons of the chronicle’s writer than of historical fact. Ienaga notes that Tomiko engaged in peace negotiations with her son’s supposed rival Ashikaga Yoshimi (1439–1491) on her husband’s behalf at the end of the Ōnin War, likely due to the fact that her older sister was Yoshimi’s wife.<sup>110</sup> Based on subsequent events and *Ōnin-ki*’s mention of an intimate relationship between retainers of the Hosokawa and Hatakeyama families, Ienaga postulates that the text was written between 1518 and 1521, when the Hosokawa and Hatakeyama supported

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<sup>110</sup> Ienaga Junji, “Gunki *Ōnin-ki* to Ōnin no ran,” in *Rekishi yūgaku: Shiryō o yomu* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan, 2001), 70–72. Many of the Ashikaga shoguns married women of the Hino family, which underscores the fact that Yoshimi was Yoshimasa’s heir at one point.

Yoshimi's son, the tenth shogun Yoshitane (1466–1523).<sup>111</sup> Since Tomiko and her allies had chased Yoshitane out of Kyoto in 1493, Yoshitane's hatred of her provided the justification for turning her into the villain of *Ōnin-ki*. Ienaga notes too that, in order to make its version of the Ōnin War coherent, *Ōnin-ki* elided the fact that Yoshimi and Sōzen enjoyed a cordial relationship before the Hosokawa and the Yamana came to blows, and that Yoshimi ran away from Katsumoto as soon he got the chance.<sup>112</sup> In this way, *Ōnin-ki* ignored an alliance built on the personal interactions of two men as a factor behind the composition of the two camps, much as histories of the Warring States period have ignored the personal and emotional motivations for Takafusa's betrayal of Yoshitaka.

Shigenori and Taketō's repeated entreaties fell on deaf ears, as Yoshitaka never acted to stop Takafusa or plan for the possibility that war might arrive on his doorstep. Yoshitaka was likely unwilling to acknowledge the prospect that someone with whom he had been so intimate and in whom he had placed so much trust might choose to betray him, to the point of ignoring the evidence when it was laid bare in front of his eyes. The sole measure Yoshitaka took of his own accord after the report of Takafusa and Yojirō's oath of brotherhood was to speak with the head of another one of the Ōuchi's most valued vassal clans, Naitō Okimori (1495–1555), who told him that he knew of no evidence that Takafusa was plotting anything.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ienaga Junji, "Sairon: Gunki *Ōnin-ki* to Ōnin no ran," in *Rekishi yūgaku: Shiryō o yomu* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan, 2011), 68–71. In an earlier version of his argument, cited in the previous footnote, Ienaga claims that *Ōnin-ki* was written between 1508 and 1521.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–65.

<sup>113</sup> Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 261. The Naitō family maintained close marital ties with the Ōuchi, reinforcing their centrality in the broader Ōuchi retainer band. Yoshitaka's mother was one of Okimori's cousins, and he took one of Okimori's daughters as a concubine. The Naitō also formed marriage alliances with other Ōuchi subordinates, most notably Takafusa, who wed one of Okimori's granddaughters. As a result, the Ōuchi retainer band offers a clear example of how male/male intimate relations and male/female marriage relations provided complementary strategies

Whether or not Okimori had already decided on his course of action at this juncture, he would ultimately ally with Takafusa. Yoshitaka's repeated inaction lost him yet another formerly loyal vassal, as Shigenori too became dissatisfied with Yoshitaka and ultimately joined forces with Takafusa to overthrow him.<sup>114</sup> Takafusa furthermore managed to convince the Mōri to assist his efforts, having chosen to state his intentions to them explicitly.<sup>115</sup> Taketō fled to Kyūshū and was killed by Sue allies when they attacked his castle around the same time that Yoshitaka committed suicide at Taineiji.<sup>116</sup> Yoshitaka's equivocation, possibly motivated by lingering affection, thus worked in Takafusa's favor, giving the latter additional allies and the ability to act almost entirely in the open without fear of retribution.

Takafusa would ultimately discard the name he bore, which featured the same *taka* character (隆) as Yoshitaka's, in favor of Harukata, symbolizing his rebirth after cutting his ties with his once-cherished lord. In the end, however, the Mōri would prove the true victors of this internal struggle. They turned against Harukata and cornered him at the Battle of Itsukushima in late 1555, forcing him to commit suicide much as he had forced Yoshitaka to do. Two years later, Yoshinaga, who had served as a figurehead since Harukata's takeover, met his demise after the Mōri forces surrounded him at Katsuyama castle in Nagato province. Although the majority of

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for producing overdetermined networks of allegiance. For the Naitō marriage connections with the Ōuchi and the Sue, see Fukuo, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 205; Okabe Tadao, *Hagi-han shoka keifu* (Tokyo: Biwa shobō, 1983), 644–646.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 273. Sagara Taketō included this information in his letter to Okikazu, mentioning that Takafusa and Shigenori were trying to convince Yoshitaka to force Taketō to commit suicide as retribution for attempting to stop Takafusa's conspiracy. See Sagara, "Sagara Taketō mōshijō," 461–462. Shigenori attempted to assassinate Takafusa not long after the Taineiji Incident, but Takafusa discovered his plot, and Shigenori committed suicide while on the run.

<sup>115</sup> Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 281; Miyamoto, "Yoshitaka no saiki," 221–224. Miyamoto mentions that Takafusa initially approached Motonari's second son Kikkawa Motoharu (1530–1586), invoking an oath of brotherhood previously exchanged between the Sue and Kikkawa families to call for his aid.

<sup>116</sup> Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 297.

the Mōri clan sided against Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) during the pivotal Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, the Tokugawa shogunate let the family keep some of the territory it had conquered in the form of the domain of Chōshū. As a result, the Mōri's association with western Honshū would soon eclipse the Ōuchi's achievements in historical memory.

## Reappraising the Ōuchi

Despite his untimely end at Takafusa's hands, Yoshitaka managed to reinforce the Ōuchi's supremacy in western Honshū and their influence over the imperial court, strengthening Yamaguchi's position as a center of political, economic, religious, and cultural power. Thomas Conlan has demonstrated on multiple occasions that traditional narratives of the Ōnin War and the Warring States period (1467–1603) have deemphasized the extent of Ōuchi dominance in both warrior and court society. Conlan notes that *Ōnin-ki* ends with the death of the ostensible heads of the two opposing camps in 1473, even though the conflict continued for several more years.<sup>117</sup> The war only concluded after several stages of peace negotiations between the Ashikaga shogunate and Ōuchi Masahiro (1446–1496). Masahiro withdrew his forces from Kyoto after Yoshimasa reinstated him as the military governor (*shugo*, 守護) of four provinces, recognized the Ōuchi right to control two ports, restored previously confiscated territory, and requested him personally to put an end to the fighting after he and his allies continued to attack Ashikaga supporters.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas D. Conlan, "The 'Ōnin War' as the Fulfillment of Prophecy," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 46, no. 1 (Winter 2020): 56–58. For Conlan's brief description of the prophecy that provides *Ōnin-ki* with its central conflict, see *ibid.*, 41.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 57–58

Conlan identifies discord between the Ōuchi and the Ashikaga shogunate over Yoshimasa's attempt to assert greater control over western Honshū as the cause for the initial outbreak of conflict.<sup>119</sup> Much of the early fighting took place around the port city of Tōsai in modern-day Hiroshima prefecture, which Yoshimasa would return to Masahiro as part of the later peace terms.<sup>120</sup> Whether directly or through its vassals, the Ashikaga shogunate engaged in battle with the Ōuchi more or less continuously from this earlier moment in 1465 until Masahiro's departure from the capital in 1477. Since the two families that *Ōnin-ki* portrays as leaders of the warring factions, the Hosokawa and the Yamana, made peace with each other in 1474, Conlan's shift in focus to the Ōuchi as the leaders of the anti-Ashikaga camp provides a compelling explanation for the war's continuation.

The apotheosis of Ōuchi Norihiro (1420–1465) after the cessation of hostilities indicates the lasting effect of the Ōuchi on the capital and court affairs. In 1486, Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511) proclaimed Norihiro to be the Great Resplendent Deity of Tsukiyama, or Tsukiyama Daimyōjin (大明神), with the approval of the emperor of the time.<sup>121</sup> As Conlan observes, Norihiro had few noteworthy accomplishments to his name, and he had fought directly against the Ashikaga shogunate, on whose behalf Kanetomo had performed rituals to curse the Ōuchi armies during the Ōnin War.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, no one had claimed that Norihiro had become a

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Thomas D. Conlan, "When Men Become Gods: Apotheosis, Sacred Space, and Political Authority in Japan 1486–1599," *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 21 (2016): 89.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 89, 93.

malevolent spirit (*onryō*, 怨霊) who required pacification lest he wreak havoc across the land.<sup>123</sup>

There thus seemed to be no precedent for nor particular reason to deify Norihiro of all people.

Kanetomo's decision can be understood as one element of his ambitious plan to assert the Yoshida family's primacy in all affairs related to the native gods of Japan, the *kami*. In order to become the ultimate authority on *kami* worship, Kanetomo required a strong base of support from a variety of established powerholders. Taking advantage of the fact that the conflict had destroyed many shrines in the Kyoto area, Kanetomo began by constructing a special site that could act as an abode for every single *kami*, called the Saijōsho Daigengū, which can be loosely translated as the Ceremonial Site and Shrine of the Great Origin.<sup>124</sup> Although the complex was destroyed over the course of the war, Kanetomo managed to attract the shogunate's patronage, as shown by his efforts to curse the Ōuchi at the Ashikaga's behest. After the conflict's end, Kanetomo employed forged imperial edicts to assert brazenly that the imperial court had left the supervision of all matters of *kami* worship to him in 1482, allowing him to usurp the official

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 90. Two of the most prominent examples of *onryō* transformed into deities are the disgraced courtier Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) and the exiled emperor Sutoku (1119–1164). Michizane's successes as a politician and scholar angered the Fujiwara family, who accused him of attempting to remove the emperor's successor from power in favor of another imperial prince to whom he was related by marriage. In 901, Michizane was demoted and exiled to Kyūshū. After his death two years later, several natural disasters occurred in succession, and a few imperial princes and members of the Fujiwara family suddenly died. Attributing these calamities to Michizane's angry spirit, the imperial court built the shrine of Kitano Tenman-gū to appease him and revoked his demotion. Over time, he transformed in the popular imagination from an angry spirit into a god of scholarship, now known as Tenman Daijizai Tenjin.

Sutoku reigned as emperor from 1123 to 1142. After the death of his father, conflict began between Sutoku's supporters and supporters of the new emperor, Sutoku's brother. The resulting 1156 Hōgen Rebellion resulted in Sutoku's defeat and exile to Shikoku, where he spent much of the rest of his life devoted to the study of Buddhism. About twelve years after his death, several natural disasters occurred, and numerous people died, including a number of empresses and concubines. A mausoleum was subsequently constructed in Sutoku's honor, and his brother revoked his banishment.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 93. My translation of Saijōsho Daigengū derives from Okuyama Michiaki, "'State Shinto' in Recent Scholarship," *Monumenta Nipponica* 66, no. 1 (2011): 133–134.



jurisdiction of the Ministry of Divine Affairs (Jingikan).<sup>125</sup> Kanetomo then rebuilt the Saijōsho Daigengū, using his connections to the shogunate to bolster his claims and to secure 2000 *kanmon* in funding from none other than Hino Tomiko.<sup>126</sup>

Conlan argues that Kanetomo began to court the Ōuchi at this critical juncture, now that his position within the shogunate and imperial court was secure.<sup>127</sup> Ōuchi Masahiro had proven his religious capabilities during the war, when he enshrined his tutelary deity Myōken, a manifestation of the North Star, in his camp in western Kyoto, seemingly preventing Kanetomo's curses from affecting his troops.<sup>128</sup> As Myōken worship expanded in the capital region, monks began to travel to Yamaguchi to visit local sites sacred to the deity.<sup>129</sup> In attracting Kanetomo, Masahiro managed to enhance further his family's sacred authority, as his own father was now a god protecting his lands.

In 1493, Masahiro sheltered the recently deposed shogun Yoshitane. Kanetomo refused to perform divinations on behalf of the new shogun, and the imperial court signaled that its sympathies lay with the Ōuchi and Yoshitane by changing the reign name to Bunki (文龜, Cultured Turtle) in 1501, in an oblique reference to the soft-shelled turtles that served as

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<sup>125</sup> Conlan, "When Men Become Gods," 96.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. One *kan/kanmon* was equivalent to 1,000 individual *mon* coins, the standard base currency of Japan at the time. According to Allan Grapard, Kanetomo went out of his way to cultivate his relationship with Tomiko specifically. See Grapard, "The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo," *Monumenta Nipponica* 47, no. 1 (1992): 41.

<sup>127</sup> Conlan, "When Men Become Gods," 96.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 95.

Myōken's messengers.<sup>130</sup> A few years later, Yoshitaka's father Yoshioki (1477–1529) would reinstall Yoshitane in Kyoto, occupying the capital for a decade.<sup>131</sup>

In the 1540s, Yoshitaka himself invited Kanetomo's grandson Kanemigi (1516–1573) to perform a number of rites in shrines and temples he had rebuilt across his territory.<sup>132</sup> These efforts are related at the beginning of *Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki* as proof of Yoshitaka's religious devotion.<sup>133</sup> With his death and the Ōuchi's fall, Tsukiyama Daimyōjin was soon forgotten, ending the Ōuchi's influence over the cosmology of Japan. In a sad twist of fate, what may be one of the last mentions of Tsukiyama may be found at the end of Taketō's letter about Takafusa. In the same fashion as in oaths, Taketō lists Myōken and Tsukiyama as the final and most important gods upon whom he calls in order to certify that everything he wrote within was true.<sup>134</sup> Unfortunately, the Ōuchi gods could not save him from Takafusa's machinations, and Taketō met his end at the hands of Takafusa's compatriots not long after Yoshitaka's suicide.

Yoshitaka's boldest display of authority was his plan to move the imperial court to the city of Yamaguchi, which he endeavored to execute during the last few months of his life. According to Conlan, Yoshitaka decided it would be safer to relocate the emperor, Go-Nara (1495–1557), to his territory due to the conflicts raging between the Miyoshi and the Hosokawa in the capital

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 98–100.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas D. Conlan, "The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi and the Fall of the Ōuchi," *Japanese Studies* 35, no. 2 (September 2015): 197.

<sup>133</sup> "Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki," 407.

<sup>134</sup> Sagara, "Sagara Taketō mōshijō," 464.

region.<sup>135</sup> Conlan bases his assertion on evidence from three texts written between 1568 and 1602, all of which state that such was Yoshikata's intention.<sup>136</sup> Other texts indicate that a number of courtiers and priests traveled from Kyoto to Yamaguchi during the 1540s and early 1550s, in addition to Kanemigi, suggesting increasingly strong ties between the Ōuchi and the court in the years leading up to the planned move.<sup>137</sup>

The retired imperial regent Nijō Tadafusa (1496–1551) and his son Yoshitoyo (1536–1551) both found themselves in Yamaguchi starting in mid-1550, and both were killed during the coup.<sup>138</sup> Tadafusa's presence provides Conlan with one of his strongest pieces of evidence: Yoshitaka's plans to have a defunct type of New Year's rite performed in Yamaguchi in 1552.<sup>139</sup> According to records detailing the activities of lower-ranking court officials, Kushida Munetsugu (birth year unknown–1551) came to Yamaguchi at Tadafusa's behest to build a small structure and perform other duties required for the ritual.<sup>140</sup> The rite could only be performed in person by the emperor, so it seems that the emperor was considering the rare step of leaving the capital temporarily.<sup>141</sup> The success of the coup meant that there was no longer any reason for the move,

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<sup>135</sup> Conlan, "Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi," 190. The three texts Conlan cites are: *Chūgoku chiranki* (Chronicle of western Honshū at peace and at war), *Ashikaga kiseiki* (Chronicle of the degenerate age of the Ashikaga), and *Muromachi-dono nikki* (Diary of Muromachi palace).

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 190–191.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 191–192. Conlan also notes that Yoshitaka had funded court rituals and palace repairs over the course of the 1530s and 1540s, providing a larger total sum than any other daimyo at the time. See *Ibid.*, 187–188.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 191; Fujii, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 296. A short description of Yoshitoyo's capture and execution is provided in "Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki," 428–429. Interestingly, the text spends more time on his appearance at the time of his death, including his armor and his "attractive looks." The text also notes he was not yet an adult.

<sup>139</sup> Conlan, "Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi," 193–194.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* Based on the year of his passing, Munetsugu likely also died during Takafusa's revolt.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

and no further efforts were made to transport the court to Ōuchi lands. Nonetheless, Conlan's account demonstrates that the imperial court may have considered changing the capital city for the first time in centuries.

### **The Problem with the Three Unifiers**

The power accumulated by Yoshitaka and other heads of the Ōuchi challenges the currently reigning narrative of the Warring States period, dominated as it is by the supposedly unique successes of the Three Unifiers. Indeed, the deification of Yoshitaka's great-grandfather Norihiro precedes the better-known examples of Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), and Ieyasu by about a century. As Conlan has noted, scholars seldom mention the creation of Tsukiyama Daimyōjin, instead associating the strategy of apotheosis with a new form of authority that supposedly emerged in the second half of the sixteenth century that was perfected by the Three Unifiers.<sup>142</sup> The gradual migration of nobles and monks to Yamaguchi, Kanemigi's direct involvement in the management of the Ōuchi's web of sacred sites, the Ōuchi's relationships with foreign powers and agents, and Yoshitaka's ambitious attempt to relocate the imperial court itself to Yamaguchi all indicate a level of power that has traditionally been viewed as accomplished only by that later power triad.

By tentatively repositioning Yoshitaka as a predecessor to the Three Unifiers, we can examine the Warring States period from a new perspective. Norihiro's deification furnished a precedent for recently-deceased authority figures who had not been identified as malevolent spirits. In fact, the construction of the shrine to Hideyoshi's deified spirit, Toyokuni Shrine, was

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 91–92. For what is arguably the definitive example of this argument, see Asao Naohiro, "Shōgun and Tennō," in *Japan before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500-1650*, ed. John Whitney Hall, Nagahara Keiji, and Kozo Yamamura (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 248–271.

led primarily by Kanetomo's great-grandson Kanemi (1535–1610) and his grandson/adopted son Hagiwara Kaneyori (1588–1660), which suggests that Hideyoshi, at least, may have followed Norihiro's model quite directly.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, Yoshitaka's plan to move the imperial court represents the first attempt in centuries to decenter Kyoto as the capital. Yet even Ieyasu, who managed in the long run to shift the center of political, economic, military, social, and cultural activity to Edo, did not try to move the emperor. As much as historians have viewed the imperial court during the Warring States period as nothing more than a cultural and ritual source of authority with no real power, they have largely overlooked the most obvious effort to change the position of the court and by extension the metaphorical center of Japan. To correct these omissions, perhaps the number of unifiers needs to be increased to at least four.

However, the trope of the Three Unifiers is a modern invention based not only on a retrospective emphasis on explaining the Tokugawa victory, but also on a historically specific interest in promoting Aichi prefecture as the unique birthplace of many of Japan's greatest heroes. The historian Kimura Shinpei has examined the process by which Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu came to be seen as an exceptional triad. Kimura notes that politicians, intellectuals, and museum exhibit designers from Aichi have frequently associated the three with the concept of "native place" or "hometown."<sup>144</sup> He asserts that people could only view them as originating from the same region once the former Owari and Mikawa provinces had been combined into one unit as Aichi, a development of the Meiji period.<sup>145</sup> One of the first figures to connect the Three

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<sup>143</sup> Miki Seiichirō, "Toyokuni-sha no zōei ni kan suru ichi kōsatsu," *Nagoya daigaku bungakubu kenkyū ronshū* 98 (1987): 204–205.

<sup>144</sup> Kimura Shinpei, "'Kyōdo no san'eiketsu' no seiritsu," in *San'eiketsu to Nagoya: Heisei 26 nendo Nagoya-shi hakubutsukan tokubetsuten*, ed. "San'eiketsu to Nagoya" ten jikkō iinkai (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi hakubutsukan, 2014), 140.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

Unifiers with Aichi explicitly was Shiga Shigetaka (1863–1927), who would go on to write the geographically deterministic tract *Nihon fūkei ron* (Theory of the Japanese landscape) in 1894. In an essay published in an Aichi magazine, Shiga argued that the favorable climate and geography of that prefecture had produced all three of the unifiers, suggesting that this fact should offer be a source of pride for its populace.<sup>146</sup>

Kimura tracks the relationship between the trope of the Three Unifiers and a sense of Aichi identity and pride as it developed through the Meiji period and into post–World War II Japan. The dedication of memorial parks to each of the three marked a significant step towards cementing their status as heroes of Aichi. In 1901, in the aftermath of the three-hundredth anniversary of Hideyoshi’s death, a group led by prefectural assemblyman Yoshida Takao (1860–1920) contended that Hideyoshi’s supposed contributions to strengthening Japan’s international standing warranted the construction of a park in his honor.<sup>147</sup> In response, a different legislator proposed that parks also be built for Nobunaga and Ieyasu. An opinion submitted in support stated that the three were as one even though they possessed separate bodies and that it would be unbearably regrettable if Nobunaga and Ieyasu were not given the same treatment.<sup>148</sup> In 1918, prefectural governor Matsui Shigeru (1866–1945) himself argued in favor of the project at a legislative gathering, claiming that the commemoration would help educate the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 140–141.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 142.

Aichi citizenry.<sup>149</sup> In the end, the prefectural government set aside money for all three projects.<sup>150</sup>

The image of the Three Unifiers grew in popularity among the general public through the holding of large-scale events like museum exhibitions as well as through the medium of popular culture. In particular, Kimura singles out exhibits held at the Tokugawa Art Museum and its adjacent garden in 1936 and at the Nagoya Pan-Pacific Peace Exhibition of 1937.<sup>151</sup> The “Three Unifiers Association” that sponsored the former event was lauded as equal to similar cultural societies in Tokyo and Kyoto, and many local businessmen attended, presumably to help promote Aichi’s prefectural economy. The peace exhibition featured life-size wooden statues of the three warriors, built branch shrines for each of their deified forms, and produced a song about them that was later sold as a record.<sup>152</sup> The mass appeal of such gatherings meant that the message of Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu as great heroes of Aichi reached a wide audience, disseminated even further by the goods made to publicize them and the businesses that supported them.

During the postwar era, the Three Unifiers would become further commercialized through the production of dramas, movies, books, comics, and even video games that ossified their presumed personalities and achievements in the mind of the general public. Although this process of memorialization allowed Aichi and other areas to use the Three Unifiers in tourism campaigns, it

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. The former actually used the Japanese phrase that is most commonly translated as the Three Unifiers: *san'eiketsu* (三英傑), literally “three great men.” The use of “unifier” in the English translation indicates a greater emphasis on the process of unification in English language scholarship than is implied by the original expression.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

also caused the “hometown” aspect of their image to fade, thereby concealing a critical element of the trope’s creation.<sup>153</sup>

Through his historical research on Oda Nobunaga, Kaneko Hiraku offers the concept of *tenkabito* (天下人) as a thought-provoking alternative to the Three Unifiers paradigm. The term, whose constituent three characters literally mean “person underneath heaven,” has appeared in scholarship before, having been used by none other than the celebrated historian Asao Naohiro, whose work contributed greatly to the Three Unifiers concept becoming the dominant narrative of the Warring States period. Asao employs *tenkabito* as a synonym for the Three Unifiers/Three Great Men, describing Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu as guardians of the realm (= *tenka*, 天下, or “all under heaven”), which he equates with the entirety of Japan as it was understood at the time.<sup>154</sup>

In contrast to Asao, Kaneko defines *tenkabito* as powerful warriors who attempted to pacify and maintain the realm without relying on the institutional framework of the shogunate.<sup>155</sup> Since the shogun had served as the ostensible head of warrior society ever since Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199) founded the Kamakura shogunate, any form of government that channeled warrior support in alternative directions represented a shift away from an established, centuries-old structure of authority. For Kaneko, only Nobunaga and Hideyoshi count as *tenkabito*, since Ieyasu chose to take the position of shogun, grounding his regime in longstanding precedent.<sup>156</sup> Hideyoshi constituted an even more radical break from the type of warrior government that the

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>154</sup> Kaneko Hiraku, *Oda Nobunaga: “Tenkabito” no jitsuzō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2014), 16.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.



shogunate exemplified, led as it was by persons of esteemed lineages. Far from being a descendant of the hallowed Minamoto or a member of a branch family, he was not born a warrior at all. Hideyoshi ultimately arranged his adoption into the noble Fujiwara family, constructing a new political framework by incorporating himself into the imperial court while still acting as the leader of Japan's warriors.

Kaneko's main historiographic intervention builds upon this redefinition, as he argues that "the realm" did not refer to the whole of Japan. Instead, by examining Nobunaga's actions and the use of the expression *tenka* in *Shinchō kōki* (Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga), a biography of Nobunaga written by his former vassal Ōta Gyūichi (1527–1614), Kaneko concludes that Nobunaga's notion of *tenka* referred only to the regions then controlled by the Ashikaga shogunate, centering on Kyoto and the five surrounding provinces.<sup>157</sup> Kaneko regards Nobunaga's actions in the last few months of his life, which indicated a more aggressive expansionist policy with regard to western Honshū and Shikoku, as influenced by the imperial court's recommendation to give him one of three possible higher ranks, most prominently that of shogun.<sup>158</sup> By contrast, Hideyoshi aimed for total unification starting from fairly early on, as seen in his 1584 invasion of Shikoku. Therefore, even the two *tenkabito* whom Kaneko identifies had very different methods for achieving the goal of bringing peace and order to the *tenka*.

If Yoshitaka had successfully relocated the imperial court to Yamaguchi, the course of the Warring States period and the rest of Japanese history would likely look very different. Even though Takafusa prevented that plan from coming to fruition, the might and influence of the

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 264. The five surrounding provinces, or Gokinai, comprised Yamato, Yamashiro, Settsu, Kawachi, and Izumi.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 273–280.

Ōuchi were unquestionable in the many decades between the Ōnin War and Yoshitaka's suicide. Only a presentist perspective, which focuses on explaining the final triumph of the Tokugawa through the lens of the Three Unifiers, would permit the disregard of the power of a man who ruled what the Jesuits called the "kingdom" of Yamaguchi or what a Ming emperor described as "the capital of a foreign country."<sup>159</sup> A different interpretation might therefore describe Takafusa as equal to Nobunaga's betrayer Akechi Mitsuhide (1528–1582) in his treachery.

Regardless, Takafusa was able to rise to a position of importance and then destroy Yoshitaka's regime by virtue of the intimate connection that the two men shared. While any chief vassal, including Taketō, would enjoy a significant measure of his lord's confidence, few of Yoshitaka's could say that they stayed together for an entire night. Furthermore, the very same person was not only one of Yoshitaka's chief generals, but also the main advocate of what turned into the disastrous attack on Gassantoda castle.<sup>160</sup> It is somewhat ironic, then, that the primary evidence that Yoshitaka and Takafusa were once lovers lies in a piece of poetry, a symbol of Yoshitaka's turn away from warfare that spurred Takafusa to consider rebelling in the first place. Perhaps Takafusa was better able to appreciate it when he was younger, and his affection had not yet transformed into discontent and revolutionary desire. In the long run, the effect of their estrangement on the fortunes of the Ōuchi offers striking proof of the potential that male-male intimacy held to disturb hierarchical warrior relations, a portent of the cautious stance Edo-period officials would take towards both *shudō* and non-*shudō* relations.

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<sup>159</sup> Cieslik, "Ōuchi-shi to kirishitan," 124; Conlan, "Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi," 185–186.

<sup>160</sup> Fukuo, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka*, 155.

## Chapter 2

### The Centrality of Oathing Practices

#### to the Fostering of Intimate Warrior Relations:

#### Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) and Gensuke (dates unknown)

On the fifth day of the seventh month of what is believed to be Tenbun 15 (1546), the daimyo of Kai province, Takeda Shingen (1521–1575) wrote an oath to his young lover, the page Gensuke (dates unknown). In that oath, Shingen, known then as Harunobu, swears before various *kami* and buddhas that he has not had sexual relations with a third party named Yashichirō, presumably another page. No context is given for the circumstances under which the oath was written, but Shingen was likely prompted to compose it after Gensuke got word of something that made him believe Shingen was being unfaithful. Because there are no corroborating documents, we do not know if Shingen was indeed engaging in sexual relations with Yashichirō, or if Gensuke's concerns were unfounded.

The incident provides a glimpse into a world of formal oathing practices, one of the primary modes of establishing and strengthening social relations among late-medieval warriors. For example, Shingen himself ordered many of his retainers to swear oaths to him in order to reaffirm their loyalty in the wake of his eldest son's failed coup. These oaths, preserved at

Ikushimatarushima Shrine in Ueda, reinforced the hierarchy of the Takeda retainer band by confirming that the allegiance of the Takeda subordinates, both old and new, ultimately lay with Shingen. By contrast, the oath Shingen wrote to Gensuke expressed quite openly the vulnerabilities of a man who would go on to become one of the most powerful and best-known daimyo of the Warring States period (1467–1603). For our purposes, the document is noteworthy for preserving an indication of the power that the junior partner in a *wakashudō* relationship could wield against his ostensible superior, in effect mobilizing the latter's methods against him.

This chapter examines in detail the relationship between Shingen and Gensuke, focusing on the aforementioned oath, known only as “Takeda Harunobu's Oath” (Takeda Harunobu seishi), Harunobu being Shingen's formal given name. I analyze the oath section by section, article by article, to assess exactly what Shingen was claiming in it, what the significance of those claims was, and how the format of the document determined that significance. I place the oath within the broader context of oath-writing culture in premodern Japan, as well as in the specific context of Shingen's known uses of the practice, in order to ascertain more generally what oaths can tell us about people's understanding of the sociopolitical and cosmological order of the time. The richest extant source of oaths involving Shingen, a collection of vows of loyalty submitted by his retainers in the years Eiroku 9 (1566) and Eiroku 10 (1567), and still preserved at Ikushimatarushima Shrine in what is now the city of Ueda, serves as a primary point of comparison. Although these loyalty oaths were written about two decades after Shingen's love pledge, similarities in their format suggest that warriors of the Warring States period did not consider loyalty and love oaths to be substantively different. The same genre of writing could

allow Shingen to force obedience from new and old retainers and Gensuke to force Shingen to respond to his accusations of infidelity.

### Shingen's Protestations

Oaths, known in Japanese as *kishōmon* (起請文), served as an established genre of writing with which to prove the sincerity of one's assertions. The historian Satō Hiroo describes the most basic element of an oath as a pledge to the *kami* (Shinto deities) and buddhas, in which the maker of the pledge agrees to be punished by those very same *kami* and buddhas should the contents of the vow be false.<sup>161</sup> Satō divides the oath into two main portions: the *maegaki* (前書き), or “preface,” which contains the items that the vowing party swears to be true; and the *shinmon* (神文), or “divine pledge,” which invokes the guaranteeing *kami* and buddhas.<sup>162</sup>

The oldest extant copy of Shingen's oath lies within the archives of the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo.<sup>163</sup> For the most part, the oath follows Satō's outline, containing both a preface with three items and a pledge. The first item of the preface reads as follows: “I spoke with Yashichirō repeatedly and frequently, but because he had stomach pains, we could make no arrangement. I am absolutely not lying.”<sup>164</sup> The text begins with the assumption that the reader, assumed to be Gensuke, would know exactly why Shingen would

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<sup>161</sup> Satō Hiroo, *Kishōmon no seishinshi: Chūsei sekai no kami to hotoke* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2006), 17–18.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>163</sup> Takeda Shingen, love oath to Kasuga Gensuke, 5th day of the 7th Month 1546, Ashina Moriuji shojō ika jūhachitsū, *Kanda Takahira shozō monjo*, 1889, University of Tokyo Historiographical Institute. The oath is contained in a collection of letters gathered by the politician and economist Kanda Takahira (1830–1896), which was donated to the Historiographical Institute at some point after his death. As Kanda's primary interest lay in free-market economics and translation, his aim in acquiring Warring States-period personal correspondence is unclear. For a summary of Kanda's life and accomplishments, see: Honjō Eijirō, ed., *Kanda Takahira: Kenkyū to shiryō* (Osaka: Seibundō shuppan, 1973), 1–37.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* All translations are the author's.

have been speaking with Yashichirō, without directly referring to sex or any other sort of intimate activity. At first glance, Shingen's claim about Yashichirō's stomach pains seems to indicate that he mentions it to establish a lack of sexual arrangements. In other words, Shingen was turned away at the door because Yashichirō was not feeling well.

However, the second item of the oath focuses exclusively on Shingen's insistence that he never slept with Yashichirō. Its content reads: "I did not sleep with Yashichirō on that occasion, nor did I do so before that time, let alone sleep with him all day and night. I especially did not think of sleeping with him tonight."<sup>165</sup> The historian Kamogawa Tatsuo asserts that viewing the first item as referring to sexual arrangements would make the second item repetitive, running counter to the normal job of items to cover distinct topics.<sup>166</sup> On this basis, he argues that only the second item discusses the issue of sex, while the first item instead refers to Gensuke's desire for Yashichirō to explain himself in person.<sup>167</sup> According to Kamogawa's reasoning, Gensuke sent Shingen to retrieve Yashichirō, but Yashichirō claimed illness as an excuse not to appear. As Kamogawa explains, Shingen included this piece of information in the oath so that Gensuke would not doubt that he tried to follow the latter's wishes.<sup>168</sup>

In contrast to Kamogawa's understanding, the oaths preserved at Ikushimatarushima Shrine provide clear instances of items with potentially overlapping content. For instance, the loyalty oath of Muroga Nobutoshi (birth year unknown–1575), which the compilers of the published

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Kamogawa Tatsuo, "Takeda Shingen no jihitsu monjo o megutte," *Yamanashi-ken shi kenkyū* 12 (March 2004): 25.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

collection selected as a representative example of the content of such oaths, consists of items almost exclusively devoted to issues of betrayal and rebellion.<sup>169</sup> Although Nobutoshi, the vowing party, states categorically in the second item that he will not plot rebellion against Shingen, each of the subsequent items details specific circumstances under which Shingen is concerned Nobutoshi might consider revolting, such as in the event that Shingen's soldiers in the provinces under his control or Shingen's retainers were to rebel. The compilers make particular note of the third item, in which Nobutoshi says he will not defect to the side of Nagao Terutora, also known as Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), Shingen's greatest rival. They point out that Nobutoshi uses the honorific prefix *on-* before the word for enemy, hinting at either sympathies or a healthy respect for Shingen's nemesis.<sup>170</sup>

On the one hand, the above case could still support Kamogawa's general argument, as the third through sixth items simply elaborate on the general theme of loyalty versus rebellion provided by the second. On the other hand, the wording of the document raises the possibility that Shingen himself might choose as a rhetorical device to repeat himself for emphasis, just as he expected Nobutoshi to reiterate his professions of allegiance according to multiple potential scenarios. In an oath, repetitiveness might serve a useful, reinforcing function, perhaps more important than the vow's formal aspects. Kamogawa himself entertains the idea that Shingen could be flexible with regard to format, even in the case of his love oath, when he discusses how and why Shingen chose not to write it on the back of a particular kind of talisman. As such, there

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<sup>169</sup> Ikushimatarushima jinja, Tōshin shigakkai, and Shioda bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed., *Shingen bushō no kishōmon: Jūyō bunkazai, Ikushimatarushima jinja monjo* (Nagano: Shinmai shoseki shuppan sentā, 1988), 14.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

remains room for uncertainty regarding the intention of the first item, though the second item is quite clear.<sup>171</sup>

The third item of Shingen's oath discusses an entirely different topic, focusing instead on his prior attempts to appease Gensuke. Shingen writes: "Wanting to speak with you particularly about this, I ran around everywhere, but that only made you doubt me all the more, leaving me at a loss."<sup>172</sup> Here, Shingen takes on some of the blame, saying that his inability to explain the situation properly simply caused more trouble, leading to the current predicament. It is because his verbal explanations were insufficient that Shingen says he chose to write an oath, hoping to dispel Gensuke's doubts once and for all. Kamogawa also postulates that Shingen wanted to avoid another direct confrontation with Gensuke, which might easily devolve into an argument.<sup>173</sup> Certainly, one can imagine the possibility that Shingen might seek to keep his distance from Gensuke until his temper cooled, a goal the oath was presumably designed to facilitate.

With only three items, Shingen's love oath equals the length of the shortest loyalty oaths in the Ikushimatarushima collection. The compilers explain that, while several of the three-item oaths come from retainers in Shingen's newly acquired territory in western Kōzuke province, the three oaths written in 1566, all of which consist of three items, were submitted by subordinates

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<sup>171</sup> In the *Sengoku ibun* collection of Takeda documents, Shibatsuji Shunroku and Kuroda Motoki read one of the characters in the second item not as 祢 but as 称. Whereas the former character can function as a variant of the phonetic symbol for *ne* (寝) which is a part of the Japanese word for "to sleep" (*neru*), the latter cannot, only bearing the more specific meaning of "to name." Such a reading, however, renders the item near incomprehensible, as Shingen now would be saying he did not name or title Yashichirō rather than sleep with him. See Shibatsuji and Kuroda, *Sengoku ibun: Takeda-hen* (Tokyo: Tōkyō-dō shuppan, 2002), 1:82, for the oath.

<sup>172</sup> Takeda Shingen, love oath to Kasuga Gensuke.

<sup>173</sup> Kamogawa, "Takeda Shingen no jihitsu monjo o megutte."



with close ties to province of Kai.<sup>174</sup> Mutō Tsuneaki (dates unknown), the writer of the first oath in the collection, was both Shingen’s distant blood relative and his cousin by marriage.<sup>175</sup> Close personal ties do not by any means preclude the possibility of betrayal, as Shingen himself showed by rebelling against his father, and his eldest son in turn showed when the son’s advisors conspired to assassinate Shingen. Shingen’s split with said son, Takeda Yoshinobu (1538–1567), took place right around the time that the oaths of the collection were written, providing one of the main incentives for Shingen to demand an affirmation of loyalty from his trusted Kai and Shinano retainers.<sup>176</sup> However, the potential for betrayal and displays of intimacy are not necessarily exclusive. The love oath itself attests to this fact, as Shingen refers to Gensuke as a *chiin*, or exceptionally close friend, even after having possibly had relations with Yashichirō. It seems that, at least in Shingen’s case, only people who were particularly close to him wrote oaths with three articles.

### **The Divine Pledge and the Takeda’s Sacred Geography**

Shingen’s oath continues with a similarly short divine pledge (*shinmon*), which omits a number of frequently-invoked deities. It reads: “If there are any lies contained within these articles, may I be punished by the Daimyōjin (literally, “Great Resplendent Deity”) of the Ichinomiya, Ninomiya, and Sannomiya shrines of this province, [as well as by] Fuji, Hakusan,

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<sup>174</sup> *Shingen bushō no kishōmon*, 3–7, 147.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 162. As part of a tripartite alliance between the Takeda, the Imagawa, and the Hōjō, Yoshinobu married a daughter of the head of the Imagawa in 1552. Shingen began to show interest in invading Imagawa territory in the years after the Imagawa’s 1560 defeat at the hands of Oda Nobunaga, resulting in disputes with Yoshinobu and the pro-Imagawa faction of Takeda retainers surrounding him. Shingen learned of the assassination plot in 1565 and summarily disinherited Yoshinobu, who died two years later in confinement.

and above all else, Daibosatsu (大菩薩, Great Bodhisattva) Hachiman and the Daimyōjin of the upper and lower shrines of Suwa. Therefore, it shall be as stated above.”<sup>177</sup> Aside from Hakusan, all of the *kami* and buddhas mentioned here rank among the top ten most frequently invoked deities in the Ikushimatarushima oath collection.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, the top-ranking deities, Bonten, Taishaku, and the Four Heavenly Kings, receive no mention in this love pledge. According to Satō, most oaths begin with Bonten, Taishaku, and the Four Heavenly Kings, all of whom belong, according to Buddhist belief, to the category of divinities known as devas, or *tenbu* (八部) in Japanese.<sup>179</sup> Each of these deities dwells at a different point on Mount Sumeru, the mountain said to stand at the center of our mortal world.<sup>180</sup> Their omission in this oath is striking, but without other oaths written by Shingen in similarly intimate, unofficial circumstances, we cannot determine whether that omission is significant or not.

Shingen instead focuses on divinities that are in some way closely related to the Takeda family, particularly those connected with his own patronage and worshipping practices. The first *kami* he cites are the Great Resplendent Deities of the Ichinomiya, Ninomiya, and Sannomiya of Kai province. Ichinomiya, Ninomiya, and Sannomiya are designations for the top three ranks within an official hierarchy of provincial shrines that dates back to the Heian period (794–1185), if not earlier, while Great Resplendent Deity was a title given to *kami* considered to hold great spiritual power. The Ikushimatarushima oaths frequently invoke the Ichinomiya, Ninomiya, and Sannomiya shrines of Kai province, while others, like Shingen’s love oath, simply refer to “this

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<sup>177</sup> Takeda Shingen, love oath to Kasuga Gensuke.

<sup>178</sup> *Shingen bushō no kishōmon*, 154–155.

<sup>179</sup> Satō, *Kishōmon no seishinshi*, 32–33.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

province.” Since each of these shrines was patronized directly by the Takeda family, there is no question that Shingen is similarly referring to Kai in this instance.

Asama Shrine, the Ichinomiya shrine of Kai province, is one of the many shrines across the country devoted to worshipping the spiritual power of Mount Fuji.<sup>181</sup> In Tenbun 20 (1551) Shingen provided that shrine with twenty *kanmon* worth of land after defeating the military governor (*shugo*) of Shinano province, Ogasawara Nagatoki (1514–1583), followed by a gift of land in Shinano valued at another ten *kanmon* in Kōji 2 (1556).<sup>182</sup> Shingen had already donated a copy of the Heart Sutra written in gold ink on navy-blue paper by the reigning emperor, Go-Nara (1495–1557), upon the latter’s request the previous year.<sup>183</sup> Regarding the Ninomiya shrine of Kai, Miwa Shrine, a modern geographical encyclopedia claims that the Takeda family’s faith in the Miwa deity was particularly strong, such that Shingen prayed there for victory against Kenshin during his 1554 incursion into Shinano and wrote codes for its proper maintenance in Kōji 3 (1557).<sup>184</sup> Tamamuro Shrine, the Sannomiya shrine of Kai province, in Eiroku 3 (1560) received similar codes from Shingen, who had earlier ordered the main hall rebuilt.<sup>185</sup> In each of these cases, Shingen demonstrated his support of the shrine through clearly documented acts such as the bestowal of land for income, prayer services, and shrine repairs, reflecting his investment in the divine efficacy of their resident *kami*.

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<sup>181</sup> *Kadokawa Nihon chimei daijiten*, vol. 19, *Yamanashi-ken*, compiled by Kadokawa Nihon chimei daijiten hensan iinkai (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1984), 90.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 90–91.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 784.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 584.

The divine pledge of Shingen's love oath continues with the spiritual mountains of Fuji and Hakusan. As Shingen already referenced Fuji worship by invoking the Ichinomiya shrine of Kai province, the inclusion of Fuji may seem unnecessary here. However, Satō provides a potential explanation by pointing to the doctrine of *honji suijaku* (本地垂迹) which claimed that buddhas had manifested in Japan as *kami* in order to save the local population. Satō argues that statues of buddhas constituted a kind of “manifestation” in this world that could be invoked in oaths, in contrast to the original buddhas in their distant pure lands.<sup>186</sup> Each statue represented a distinctive manifestation that could be prayed to separately. Since Mount Fuji's deity was also viewed as a buddha manifestation in the form of the Daigongen (大権現, Great Incarnation) Asama, Shingen may be praying to the manifestation housed in Kai's Asama Shrine and in the main Asama Shrine near Mount Fuji independently.

Hakusan possesses a similar tradition of worship, although its connection to Shingen is unclear. The mountain lay rather far from Kai or Shinano, standing where the borders of Mino, Hida, and Etchū provinces met. As such, it could not be considered a local shrine or deity. A standard reference work lists no branch shrine as having existed during Shingen's time.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, Hakusan appears only in a handful of the Ikushimatarushima oaths. As such, its significance in the context of Shingen's love oath remains uncertain.

The last two deities mentioned, the Great Bodhisatva Hachiman and the Great Resplendent Deity of the upper and lower Suwa shrines, appear after the phrase *koto wa* (殊は), meaning especially, particularly, or above all. Shingen emphasizes, in this way, that his faith in them and

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<sup>186</sup> Satō, *Kishōmon no seishinshi*, 119–120.

<sup>187</sup> A mountain in the modern-day city of Fuefuki in Yamanashi prefecture was and is apparently frequently referred to as Hakusan. See *Kadokawa Nihon chimei daijiten*, 19:658.

their efficacy is even greater than towards the previously-named deities. In addition to serving as a patron of warriors, Hachiman held a special relationship with the Takeda family specifically. One of the other enshrined deities in his branch shrine in Kai province is the deified form of one of the sons of the legendary prince Yamato Takeru, known as Takeda-ō. Shingen's ancestors, a branch of the Minamoto, took the latter's name when they moved into the area.<sup>188</sup> As the shrine of the Takeda family's tutelary deity, Takeda Hachiman Shrine received much special attention from its members, including an elaborate rebuilding of the main hall by Shingen around Tenbun 10 (1541).<sup>189</sup> In addition, just like the Ichinomiya, Ninomiya, and Sannomiya shrines, Takeda Hachiman Shrine was exempted from having to send its clerics to perform duties at Fuchū Hachiman Shrine, according to a code issued in Eiroku 3 (1560).<sup>190</sup> Thus, the Takeda family's commitment to Hachiman and to Takeda Hachiman Shrine in particular cannot be understated.

Although the main Suwa Shrine was located in central Shinano province, a pair of branch shrines patronized by the Takeda family also existed at the time in Kai province, within the present city borders of Minami-Alps. These branch shrines replicated the dual structure of the original Suwa Shrine, albeit they enshrined only one of its two deities, the warrior god Takeminakata.<sup>191</sup> Without the presence of the second *kami*, Takeminakata's wife Yasakatome, it is unclear which of the two shrines, the Suwa shrine in Kai or the Suwa shrine in Shinano, Shingen's oath was invoking. However, at least one source claims that the Takeda family viewed the main Suwa Shrine in Shinano with the utmost reverence, perhaps even more so than Takeda

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 534.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 504. Instead of Takeminakata's wife, the Minami-Alps Suwa Shrine enshrines Takeminakata's brother, Kotoshironushi. The pair of siblings are commonly referred to as the Myōjin (Resplendent Deities) of Suwa.

Hachiman Shrine.<sup>192</sup> While that particular authority does not mention that Shingen had done anything in particular at the main Suwa Shrine, another reference work states that Shingen ordered the revival of festivals at the main shrine in orders he issued in 1565 and 1566.<sup>193</sup> Additionally, Shingen showed his veneration for Suwa by choosing Ikushimatarushima Shrine as the place for all his loyalty oaths to be submitted. As the compilers of the oath collection explain, the current Ikushimatarushima Shrine was known in Shingen’s time as the Shimonogō Suwa Shrine, a site of Suwa worship rather than of the twin *kami* Ikushima and Tarushima.<sup>194</sup> As a series of shrines viewed highly by Shingen and his family, Suwa could serve as a guarantor and collector of the loyalty oaths that confirmed the stability of his warrior band at a time of uncertainty.

As reflections of both widely-shared and personally meaningful cosmological beliefs, expressed in a format that articulates the concrete relations of all involved parties, oaths provide a glimpse into what Satō views as the worldview and values of the time.<sup>195</sup> Shingen’s oath offers an example of how the specific *kami* and buddhas of a divine pledge might vary based on the writer’s individual beliefs and priorities. Nevertheless, such divinities are generally understood

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> “Suwa taisha kamisha honmiya,” *Nihon rekishi chimei taikai*, JapanKnowledge, accessed 17 April 2022, <https://japanknowledge.com/lib/en/display/?lid=30020200000109500>.

<sup>194</sup> *Shingen bushō no kishōmon*, 156.

<sup>195</sup> Satō, *Kishōmon no seishinshi*, 14–20. Although Satō is primarily interested in the Kamakura period (1192–1333), he frames his arguments about oathing within the broader context of “the middle ages” (*chūsei*, 中世) which generally refers to the period of Japanese history from the end of the twelfth century through the end of the sixteenth century. Satō notes that people at all levels of society used oaths.

to be living in the present world and concerned in some way with punishment, rather than buddhas dwelling in far-off pure lands.<sup>196</sup>

## The Truth Behind the Oath

We conclude with the oath's postscript, which raises several interpretive questions. That postscript, along with the final signature, date, and name of the addressee, reads as follows: "I intended to write this on [the back of] a *goō hōin* (牛王宝印, talisman), but as there were many people staying awake in observance of Kōshin (庚申), I wrote it on a blank sheet of paper. Because of this, even if I must do so again tomorrow, I mean to convey this information to you. Seventh month, fifth day. Harunobu. To Lord Kasuga Gensuke."<sup>197</sup> According to Kamogawa, the surname of Kasuga is a later addition to the document housed in the Historiographical Institute, which he identifies as a copy of the original for several reasons, including differences in the thickness of the ink and discrepancies in the way certain characters are written.<sup>198</sup> Kamogawa argues that the copyist may have added the name Kasuga for the purpose of clarifying the identity of Gensuke, associating him with the childhood name of Shingen's general Kōsaka

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>197</sup> Takeda, love oath to Kasuga Gensuke. Although the character *hō* in the compound *hōin* is 法, referring to the Dharma or the universal Buddhist law, rather than the usual 宝, which means "jewel," the Historiographical Institute's database entry for the oath insists that the two characters should be understood as equivalent in meaning. See "Takeda Harunobu (Shingen) seishi kaidai," University of Tokyo Historiographic Institute Database, accessed 14 May 2018, <http://wwwap.hi.utokyo.ac.jp/ships/shipscontroller?cfname=W01/01.ctl&mgno=00011639&pfid=kaid03&mmgn=00024047&kbn=3&session=192168252037E409995882C0F86A08A297BD5D74786F&hcnt=1&nowrec=1>. Kamogawa takes the same position, as seen in his translation of the postscript into modern Japanese. See Kamogawa, "Takeda Shingen no jihitsu monjo o megutte," 27.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 28–29. The original oath is no longer extant, and it is uncertain who made the copy currently housed in the Historiographical Institute. The copy's path from wherever Kanda Takahira found it to the Historiographical Institute is similarly unclear. As such, sufficient reason exists to doubt the authenticity of the oath itself. However, experts at the Historiographical Institute, including Kamogawa, have expressed no reservations about the oath and its contents. As such, I rely on the authority of the Historiographical Institute to assert, for the purposes of my arguments in this dissertation, that the copy housed in the Institute's archives constitutes an imperfect reproduction of the lost original vow, which Shingen wrote himself.

Masanobu (1527–1578), which was Kasuga Gengorō. There are very interesting implications in the idea that one of Shingen’s most trusted subordinates may once have been his lover, which will be considered later.

First, it is necessary to explain the significance of the terms *goō hōin* (literally, “jewel of the ox king”) and *Kōshin*. The former refers to a specific type of talisman, which Satō describes as being frequently used to heighten the sacrality of an oath’s contents.<sup>199</sup> Max Moerman examines their usage for oaths in a wide variety of contexts in medieval and early modern Japan, including for love oaths, loyalty oaths, disputes between landlords and tenants as well as neighboring villages, and even in juridical contexts such as the famous legal code of the Kamakura period (1192–1333), *Goseibai shikimoku* (Institutes of judicature).<sup>200</sup> Moerman asserts that oaths inscribed on the backs of these talismans, in particular those from the three Kumano shrines in modern-day Wakayama prefecture, “constituted the media and the mechanism by which social bonds were established and by which the economic, legal, and political order was secured.”<sup>201</sup> Although Kumano talismans were used most frequently, Moerman notes that Fuji and Hakusan also issued their own equivalents, suggesting that Shingen may have included both sites in his love oath because of their connection with oathing practices.<sup>202</sup> According to the love oath itself, Shingen did not write it on the back of the appropriate talisman, and the copy does not use one either.

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<sup>199</sup> Satō, *Kishōmon no seishinshi*, 18.

<sup>200</sup> D. Max Moerman, “Shugendō as Social Practice: Kumano Talismans and Inscribed Oaths in Premodern Japan,” in *Defining Shugendō: Critical Studies on Japanese Mountain Religion*, ed. Andrea Castiglioni, Fabio Rambelli, and Carina Roth (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 219–230.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 219–220.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.



Kōshin refers to the fifty-seventh day of the sexagenary cycle, when it was believed that three worms living inside the human body would depart and report on humans' sins to the appropriate deities.<sup>203</sup> In order to prevent this from happening, many people in Japan would stay up all night and perform rituals.<sup>204</sup> The oath itself only includes the *shin* character of the Kōshin compound, but it is followed by the character for “waiting” (matsu, 待つ), which together with Kōshin refers specifically to the practice of staying awake through the night.<sup>205</sup> Such an interpretation provides an explanation of why many people would be up and about at what may have been a very late hour. Kamogawa additionally posits that, wherever the *goō hōin* talismans were held, it would have been in a place where Shingen might be seen by such people, a prospect he sought to avoid due to the private and embarrassing character of the oath's contents.<sup>206</sup>

However, Kamogawa goes one step further. He asserts that the true reason why Shingen did not write on the back of a talisman is because he was lying. As the remainder of the postscript states, Shingen was willing to write an oath the next day, even when people would still be present where the talismans were kept, intimating that he could secure one without getting caught. If Shingen made this promise in the hope that Gensuke would relent without actually forcing him to write a proper oath, then Kamogawa's conclusion makes sense. It would mean that, as Kamogawa suggests, Shingen was indeed having sexual relations with Yashichirō, the truth of which he was trying to keep hidden from Gensuke.<sup>207</sup> That deduction seems plausible in

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<sup>203</sup> Livia Kohn, “Taoism in Japan: Positions and Evaluations,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995): 391.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 391–392.

<sup>205</sup> The compound is 申待. Kamogawa bases his analysis on the assumption the passage refers to Kōshin in “Takeda Shingen no jihitsu monjo o megutte,” 27.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

the context of contemporaneous beliefs about the power of oaths, as Shingen would likely have been worried that lying in a true oath would result in punishment from the *kami* and buddhas. In the loyalty oaths, the pledging parties frequently state that, should they disobey, they will be punished with leprosy in this life and rebirth into the Buddhist Hell of Eternal Suffering in the next.<sup>208</sup> For people of the time, who, as Satō argues, believed completely in the punishing power of the *kami* and buddhas, the stakes were very high.

According to Kamogawa's interpretation, Shingen managed to find a loophole so that he could attempt to satisfy Gensuke's need for an explanation without exposing himself to eternal pain and suffering for his actions. Although Shingen was willing to tell a lie, the relationship demanded that he respond in some fashion to Gensuke's interrogations. He could not simply ignore Gensuke, lest he sully their relationship with dishonorable behavior. Naturally, his liaison with Yashichirō had already violated Gensuke's trust and loyalty, but the appearance of adhering to his obligations was more important than doing so in reality. Thus, Gensuke was able to force Shingen to scramble about, making excuses and trying to explain the situation to his satisfaction. We may not know how Gensuke reacted upon receiving the incomplete oath, but we do know how real and powerful a force such bonds could bring to bear on the senior partner in the relationship. Additionally, it is clear that the oath was a flexible genre of document that could be used in response to a variety of different needs, with demands for varying forms of loyalty and the ever-judging gaze of the *kami* and buddhas as underlying elements.

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<sup>208</sup> *Shingen bushō no kishōmon*, 153.

## What Kind of Man Was Shingen?

The question of Gensuke's identity hints at the influence that *wakashudō* relations could have over the fortunes of former pages. Whether or not Kōsaka Masanobu was the same person as Gensuke, at the very least, the copyist who Kamogawa posits added the name "Kasuga" to the oath found it plausible that one of Shingen's most trusted retainers could have been his lover in their younger years. If this is the case, it implies that daimyo saw the position of page/lover as a crucial one for nurturing future loyal retainers. As Pflugfelder notes, Edo-period *shudō* texts, such as *Nanshoku masukagami* (Perfectly clear mirror of male-male eroticism) by the artist Yoshida Hanbē (dates unknown), argued that the *nenja*, if a samurai, was expected to mentor the *wakashu* in both the military arts and the cultivation of proper warrior attitudes and behaviors.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, a structure of mutual indebtedness undergirded both *shudō* relations and lord-retainer ties.<sup>210</sup> As Edo-period *shudō* discourses were in many cases modeled on warrior culture, it may well be that the two forms of bonding were not simply analogous, but originally one and the same. As Eiko Ikegami has argued, pre-Edo lords sought to secure their future by building relations of affection and therefore the utmost loyalty. As such, Masanobu's later position as one of Shingen's renowned "Twenty-Four Generals" was entirely predictable, considering the amount of effort Shingen put into courting him.

Moreover, the Masanobu issue is directly connected to our current understanding of Shingen as an individual. The text *Kōyō gunkan* (Military mirror of Kai province), which has provided both historians and laypeople with arguably the most famous record of Shingen's life and his

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<sup>209</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 71.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

exploits, is believed by many scholars to have been written based on Masanobu's words.<sup>211</sup> *Kōyō gunkan* portrays Shingen as a military genius, incorporating, among other things, the tale of his supposed one-on-one clash with Kenshin during the Fourth Battle of Kawanakajima in 1561.<sup>212</sup> By contrast, the work denigrates Shingen's successor and fourth son, Takeda Katsuyori (1546–1582), intimating that the Takeda side's catastrophic losses during the Battle of Nagashino in 1575 were due to Katsuyori's decision to ignore the advice of veteran subordinates from Shingen's time to avoid battle altogether.<sup>213</sup> Masanobu appears in the narrative as a loyal retainer whose advice falls on deaf ears, when Katsuyori, again listening to the retainers who urged him to fight at Nagashino, rejects Masanobu's suggestion that the Takeda save themselves by entering Kenshin's service.<sup>214</sup>

If Masanobu was Shingen's former *wakashu*, then this episode may reflect not only the devotion of a loyal follower, but also the adoration of a former lover. Such a relationship would then need to be taken into account when analyzing *Kōyō gunkan* and its biases. If it is, in fact, impossible to separate the senior partner/junior partner and lord/retainer elements from one another in such cases of daimyo–page bonding, then the story of Shingen and Masanobu presents a clear case of producing a stalwart subordinate through *wakashudō*. The love oath's

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<sup>211</sup> For a summation of the historiographical debate surrounding the authorship of *Kōyō gunkan*, see Kuroda Hideo, *Kōyō gunkan no shiryōron: Takeda Shingen no kokka kōzō* (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 2015), 13–91. Although Kuroda does not make clear his position on the issue, he does partially end the chapter with a discussion of the implications of *Kōyō gunkan* being written by others who may have based it on Masanobu's verbal statements.

<sup>212</sup> Nakamura Kōya, Isogai Masayoshi, and Hattori Harunori, eds., *Kōyō gunkan* (Tokyo: Jinbutsu ōraisha, 1965–1966), 2:154–155.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:329. The text states that Katsuyori's decision to ignore the advice of his seasoned generals was also due to his youth.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:348–356. The passage emphasizes that Masanobu's advice was based on Shingen's last will, thereby rendering Katsuyori's behavior unfilial.

conspicuous absence from *Kōyō gunkan* suggests two possibilities: either Gensuke and Masanobu were not the same person, so including the vow would not contribute to the text's positive portrayal of the latter as Shingen's devoted retainer; or the compiler had some other compelling reason to omit it.

In order to begin to tease out a possible answer to the question of the love oath's elision from *Kōyō gunkan*, we must first return to the vow itself. In a later examination of Shingen's love oath, Kamogawa changes his view on the issue of overlapping content in the first and second articles. He states two possibilities: either Shingen was simply foolishly admitting that he had tried to seduce Yashichirō and failed, perhaps because Gensuke had already found out about his propositioning; or he was saying that it was regrettable that he had failed, punctuating his wanton behavior.<sup>215</sup> Kamogawa goes on to question whether traditional interpretations of the oath, which understand the first article to refer to Shingen's attempt to woo Yashichirō, had gone so far as to consider the implications of either case.<sup>216</sup>

In fact, there is sufficient evidence from other events to consider the second option. Kamogawa himself subsequently brings up another instance involving Shingen and a possible lover who encouraged poor behavior. One of Shingen's close aides, a mysterious figure called Hikogorō (dates unknown), reportedly spoke ill of a monk named Enshōbō Kyōga (dates unknown) who was serving under Shingen. As a result, not only was Kyōga forced to return to his home temple, but Shingen apparently organized attempts to curse him. In Kyōga's estimation, the curse backfired, ultimately constituting the true cause behind Shingen's untimely

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<sup>215</sup> Kamogawa Tatsuo, *Takeda Shingen to Katsuyori: Monjo ni miru Sengoku daimyo no jitsuzō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2007), 140–143.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

death in 1573.<sup>217</sup> Kamogawa notes that little is known about Hikogorō aside from mentions in letters by Kyōga, including the Tenshō 4 (1576) missive that describes this episode. Tsuneaki also addressed his oath from the Ikushimatarushima collection directly to Hikogorō. It is difficult, therefore, to establish whether *wakashudō* was a motivating factor in any of the parties' behavior.<sup>218</sup> Nonetheless, a page would undoubtedly count among the types of retainers easily able to influence Shingen in a private setting. More importantly, Shingen's behavior toward Kyōga indicates that he was indeed willing to pursue petty grudges, including those of his retainers, to the point of cursing a formerly loyal servant. With that in mind, it seems that Shingen may indeed have been, as Kamogawa mused with regard to his brazen admission of a dalliance with Yashichirō, an "unpleasant fellow."<sup>219</sup>

Even *Kōyō gunkan* contains a section that highlights improper behavior on Shingen's part. Notably, the passage is one of several that end with neither Masanobu's name nor the name of any of Katsuyori's most trusted subordinates. Although this absence places into question the credibility of the story the passage relates, the section's inclusion in such a prestigious text suggests that its compiler viewed it as important in explaining the trajectory of Shingen's life. The narrator of the section, possibly the compiler Obata Kagenori (1572–1663), describes it as a tale he heard from people who had been Shingen's retainers at the time.<sup>220</sup> According to the story, in Tenbun 8 (1539), when Shingen was about nineteen, he would spend long periods of time cooped up in the inner parts of his mansion, composing poetry and otherwise losing himself

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 143–147.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 145–146.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>220</sup> Kagenori was the founder of the Kōshū school of military strategy, one of whose foundational texts is *Kōyō gunkan*. The school would go on to be heavily studied by numerous officials of the Tokugawa shogunate.

in leisure activities.<sup>221</sup> Not even enemy invasions into Takeda territory could draw Shingen's attention away from his revelry, forcing his senior generals to act without his input. Thus, according to *Kōyō gunkan*, people speculated that the Takeda might collapse under Shingen's rule, or lack thereof.<sup>222</sup>

While the bulk of the description of Shingen's behavior focuses on poetry writing, the passage also makes note of whom Shingen invited to join him. Utilizing an either/or parallel construction (*arui wa*, 或いは), the passage states that Shingen would gather a number of young men (*wakaki kotonobara-shū*, 若き小殿原衆) and/or young women (*wakaki nyōbō-tachi* 若き女房たち) for these gatherings.<sup>223</sup> These two groupings are roughly equivalent to the two non-exclusive options for a desiring male according to Edo-period popular discourse: youths, as in *shudō* and *nanshoku*; or women, as in *nyodō* (女道, the way of women) and *joshoku*.<sup>224</sup> The narrator goes on to state that these gatherings took place all through the night, well past when the next day would have been considered to have started.<sup>225</sup> Poetry composition only enters the picture after this description, along with the additional, and possibly scandalous, detail that Shingen invited people who had taken Buddhist vows to participate on such occasions.<sup>226</sup> When poetry was not on Shingen's mind, he may have been doing something else with all those beautiful boys and women.

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<sup>221</sup> Sakai Kenji, *Kōyō gunkan taisei*, vol. 1, *Honbun-hen jō* (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1994), 209–211.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 24–29.

<sup>225</sup> Sakai, *Kōyō gunkan taisei*, 1:210.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

The story's focus on a retainer's remonstrance to Shingen throws the implicit eroticism of the gatherings into relief. Allegedly, Itagaki Nobukata (1489–1548), one of Shingen's senior retainers, joined one of the poetry gatherings in order to convince his lord to change his ways. After proving his newfound skill in writing poetry, Nobukata chastised Shingen for acting in a manner unbecoming of the lord of Kai province, comparing him in great detail to his father, Takeda Nobutora (1494–1574). In addition to punishing loyal subordinates for even the slightest mistake and other shortcomings in leadership, Nobukata noted that Nobutora had been “outrageously lustful” (*in'yoku butō*, 淫欲不道).<sup>227</sup> This criticism stands out as the only one not directly related to Nobutora's lordship and governance. Nobukata goes on to remind Shingen that he chased his father out for his poor behavior and warned him that he would be “a hundred times worse of a general” by acting as he pleased, as he had been doing by ignoring the affairs of his family in favor of poetry gatherings and other activities.<sup>228</sup> In the context of admonition by comparison, the fact that Nobukata singled out Nobutora's sexual improprieties resonates with the previous delineation of the attendees at Shingen's gatherings. Perhaps Nobukata was hinting that, as was the case with Nobutora's son, women alone could not satiate Nobutora's desires.

Regardless of the vividness of some of these accusations, Nobutora's negative portrayal in *Kōyō gunkan* and other texts is based primarily on unverifiable claims made after his banishment, rather than on accounts of the time.<sup>229</sup> Following Isogai Masayoshi's assertion that

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. As one of the Takeda's top generals, Itagaki assisted the young Shingen in removing Nobutora from power. He would therefore have been very familiar with the reasons Shingen usurped control of the Takeda.

<sup>229</sup> Among the few documents supposedly written at the time are several annalistic records of temples in Kai province. Based on the years that such annals give for Shingen's death and the titles they attribute to Nobutora, it is likely that accounts of Nobutora's evil deeds constitute a later addition. See Ōki Takeo, “Takeda Nobutora akugyō densetsu no keisei ni tsuite,” *Takeda-shi kenkyū* 49 (2013): 28–29 for an evaluation of two such temple annals.



such claims about Nobutora's supposed atrocities are nothing more than fiction, the researcher Ōki Takeo examines a variety of chronicles and other documents to interrogate the process by which this view of Nobutora was constructed.<sup>230</sup> Starting with an account in *Kōyō gunkan* that has Nobutora slaughtering a number of his retainers for no particular reason, Ōki plots the trajectory of the allegations against Nobutora as they increase in number and detail. He notes that the allegations are most fully developed in texts written by people affiliated with the Kōshū school of military strategy, founded by Kagenori using Shingen's tactics as a basis. By the time a student of one of Kagenori's pupils wrote *Takeda sandai gunki* (Military chronicle of three generations of the Takeda) over the course of the Shōtoku (1711–1716) and Kyōho (1716–1736) eras, Nobutora had supposedly done such horrible things as cutting open the bellies of pregnant women to examine the development of the fetuses.<sup>231</sup> Following this interpretation, by exiling his arbitrarily violent father, Shingen appears to have restored peace and justice to the Takeda-controlled lands.

### **Remonstrance and the Establishment of the Kōshū School**

As texts written during the Edo period, both *Kōyō gunkan* and *Takeda sandai gunki* reflected one of the major subjects of interest among samurai of the time: the nature of the loyal retainer, one of whose duties was to correct his lord's behavior through admonition. As Ikegami argues in *The Taming of the Samurai*, tracts like *Hagakure* (Hidden in the leaves), set down in writing around the same time as *Takeda sandai gunki*, constituted an attempt to make sense of warrior existences during a time of peace.<sup>232</sup> Through his focus on maintaining personal honor

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 29–30.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 37–38.

<sup>232</sup> Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*

by engaging in fights or committing *seppuku*, Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1719), whose sayings make up the content of *Hagakure*, sought to provide samurai an opportunity to exercise the violence that characterized their identity and that justified their position as the ostensible ruling class of Edo society. Additionally, Yamamoto insisted that a loyal retainer should be able to speak his mind to his lord, even if his opinion contradicted his lord’s opinions and intentions.<sup>233</sup> In doing so, Yamamoto sought to transform the expression of disagreement into a virtuous act that proved a subordinate’s devotion, risking the possibility of being ordered to commit *seppuku* in order to fulfill his duty to his lord and his lord’s family. This type of loyalty justified samurai employment, since any samurai could potentially cultivate himself into a loyal and therefore useful retainer, even as it allowed samurai, in Ikegami’s words, to “restore a sense of active moral autonomy” when so much of their independence had been circumscribed by the Tokugawa shogunate’s new social and political order.<sup>234</sup>

The new samurai ethos espoused by *Hagakure* is inextricably linked with the earlier *Kōyō gunkan*, which contains the first known use of a term that would ultimately come to be associated with *Hagakure* and similar works: *bushidō*.<sup>235</sup> The son of one of Masanobu’s main advisors, Kagenori found employ with the first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu (1543–1616), like many other former subordinates of the Takeda clan. However, by transforming Masanobu’s dictated statements and verbal testimony into *Kōyō gunkan*, Kagenori was able to construct a narrative of the Takeda’s history that extolled Shingen’s virtues and strategic acumen while

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(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 278–282.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Kasaya Kazuhito, *Bushidō: Samurai shakai no bunka to rinri* (Tokyo: NTT shuppan, 2014), 3.

laying the foundation for the Kōshū school of military strategy, which would ensure his own continued employment and social and political importance. Kagenori went on to instruct many famous students; including Hōjō Ujinaga (1609–1670), a surviving member of the Hōjō clan and one of the Tokugawa’s direct subordinates (*hatamoto*, 旗本); and the Confucian philosopher Yamaga Sokō (1622–1685), whose teachings significantly influenced the samurai of Akō domain. Ōki argues that the Kōshū school also went on to become the foundation for the Tokugawa shogunate’s military organization and strategy.<sup>236</sup> As such, the image of Shingen and of warrior behavior that the texts of the Kōshū school promote would have an outsized influence on people’s views in the future, partially through writings related to or inspired by *Kōyō gunkan* and the Kōshū school, including *Kōyō gunkan massho* (Final book of the military mirror of Kai province, compiled around 1621), *Ryōtōbon* (literally, “Dragon’s stored items,” 1642), and *Takeda sandai gunki*.

In the above context, Nobutora’s negative portrayal served retroactively to justify Shingen’s decision, thereby strengthening the positive image of the Kōshū school and its affiliates, while situating Nobutora’s exile and the aftermath as an important step in Shingen’s personal development. As Ōki notes, Shingen faced being labeled an unfilial son for the act of banishing his own father, a major issue for the various schools of Confucian thought that served increasingly as tools of legitimation for the Tokugawa shogunate, the domainial system, and warrior rule more broadly.<sup>237</sup> The gradual accumulation of accounts of Nobutora’s wrongdoings, disseminated far and wide thanks to the fame of the Kōshū school, helped to bury accusations of

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<sup>236</sup> Ōki, “Takeda Nobutora akugyō densetsu,” 34.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 41–42. On political legitimation, see Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

Shingen's unfilial behavior under their weight. Shingen thus appeared to be his family's savior, having put loyalty to his lineage over loyalty to his father.

Nobukata's remonstrance to Shingen as depicted in *Kōyō gunkan* positions his act as a critical intervention in Shingen's life, contributing to the development of the emerging Edo-era conception of the loyal retainer that *Hagakure* would reflect. As Nobukata states in the *Kōyō gunkan* passage, Shingen ostensibly risked becoming an arbitrary, capricious lord like his father, the very man he had exiled not long before. Indeed, Nobukata claims that Shingen was on his way to becoming a hundred times worse than his father in giving himself over to his hedonistic whims. Although *Kōyō gunkan* states that Shingen banished his father in Tenbun 9 (1540), the episode that this passage depicts supposedly takes place in Tenbun 8 (1539), after Shingen took control of the Takeda house.<sup>238</sup> The discrepant chronology underlines the likely apocryphal nature of the entire story. With its inclusion, however, Kagenori could claim that Shingen became a genius strategist who wrote a poem about valuing his subjects so much that he viewed them as his castle, his stone walls, and his moat, all in consequence of Nobukata's words of admonition.

*Kōyō gunkan*'s silence regarding Shingen's oath to Gensuke may have been a deliberate choice to preserve the integrity of this narrative. The inclusion of sexual lust as the only fault of Nobutora's that Nobukata mentions not that is explicitly related to governance suggests a connection between such improprieties and being a poor lord. Shingen was indeed ignoring the Takeda clan's affairs, including enemy invasions of its territory, in order to spend time with favored ladies and youths. By hinting at this connection and Shingen's own lecherous behavior

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<sup>238</sup> Sakai, *Kōyō gunkan taisei*, 1:209–212. More reliable texts, including ones from the Warring States period, date Nobutora's exile to Tenbun 10 (1541).

through his choice of guests, Kagenori used Nobukata to construct a direct parallel between father and son. His decision to do so suggests that male-male sexual interaction was common and potentially normal, if problematic in excess, in the worldview of Kagenori's time. The existence of a love oath written several years after the event in question, in which Shingen admits to desiring one youth while in a relationship in another, would instead spoil the image of Shingen as a changed man after Nobukata's intervention. The possibility that the claims Shingen put forth in the oath were false, as suggested by his failure to write the oath on the back of a talisman, would have made him a liar of the highest order in addition to a cheater. It therefore seems plausible that Kagenori would refrain from discussing it as a part of his carefully curated portrayal of Shingen and his development.

### **Personality and History**

As tempting as it might be to endeavor to reconcile contradictory accounts of Shingen and Nobutora's actions, the various documentary lacunae in their personal histories and the staying power of their dominant portrayals serve as a useful reminder of how problematic the enterprise of reconstructing historical personalities is in the first place. The concept of "personality," individual psychic characteristics that distinguish one person from other people, is itself a modern notion, making its way into common parlance hundreds of years after both Shingen and Nobutora were dead. The historian Warren Susman views its emergence as the result of "life in mass society," where people increasingly sought to "stand out" from metaphorical and literal crowds.<sup>239</sup> Because "being somebody" meant developing certain traits that other people would find attractive and interesting, the literature that developed around

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<sup>239</sup> Warren I. Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 277.

“personality” emphasized individual characteristics while paradoxically encouraging readers to get rid of strange individual mannerisms that others might dislike.<sup>240</sup> Such idiosyncrasies lay largely out of people’s control, as this was the age of psychology, when Sigmund Freud introduced the idea of the unconscious as the source of many problems.<sup>241</sup> Interiority as a concept had little meaning in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Japan and thus provides few clues as to how to understand the people of the time as they understood themselves.

In Nobutora’s case, the continued circulation of unverified stories about his atrocities has thoroughly tainted his image, such that he is eternally viewed as the “bad lord” in contrast to Shingen’s “good lord.” Ōki himself takes Nobutora’s negative portrayal in historical fiction as the starting point for his essay, acknowledging the gap between how historians and the general public view him.<sup>242</sup> By contrast, Shingen is widely regarded as one of the model daimyo of the Warring States period. The reformed Shingen from the *Kōyō gunkan* passage, the lying Shingen of the love oath, and the nasty Shingen glimpsed in Enshōbō Kyōga’s letter cannot be reconciled as all pointing to a person possessed of a consistent, identifiable personality, much less one who called the people his castle. In the end, the logic of “personality” does little more than take us further away from the documents themselves, focusing on what we as modern people expect to find rather than how those figures portrayed and positioned one another and themselves.

Abandoning the idiom of personality does not change the fact that Shingen seems to have been involved in some sort of *wakashudō* relationship with Gensuke, nor does it alter the reality that later generations, including the copyist who added the name Kasuga, viewed such a

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 277–278.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>242</sup> Ōki, “Takeda Nobutora akugyō densetsu,” 28.

relationship as likely, comprehensible, and noteworthy. Shingen's incomplete love oath remains one of the clearly documented examples of *wakashudō* as practiced in the Warring States period, and it constitutes a rich enough primary source to serve as a textbook example of a document written by Shingen, even when the original no longer exists. Although evidence of other *wakashudō* bonds may not be as obvious in the documentary record, the oath provides clues as to what such relations may have looked like and how closely bound they were with the likewise affectively rich links between lords and retainers. In addition to the figures of Shingen and Nobutora, the assumption that ardor was a prominent and important part of lord/retainer relations is one of the only threads that ties together all the documents presented in this chapter. It may seem a less ambitious project, but the pursuit of historical traces of affective intensity has the potential to change how we view the world of the Warring States period and its most prominent players.

## Chapter 3

### Taming the Violent Love of the Samurai:

#### Date Masamune (1567–1636) and

#### Tadano Sakujūrō Katsuyoshi (dates unknown)

One of the most momentous changes in Japanese society at the end of the Warring States period (1467–1603) was the complete separation of warriors and farmers into two distinct social classes. Accomplished through a variety of policies, including sword hunts and the removal of warriors from their land, the division effected the monopolization of the means of violence by the new samurai class while depriving them of the means to function independently of a daimyo's retainer band. Warriors' exclusive right to wage war became the basis for their social preeminence, the swords that samurai wore on their waists symbolizing this position of superiority. Yet warriors found themselves largely unable to commit violence, as shogunal and domanical officials narrowly delimited the circumstances in which bloodshed was permissible so as to minimize disturbances to the new social order.

In the midst of these social changes, the structure of homosocial relations and by extension male-male sexuality also shifted towards a greater emphasis on maintaining stability. While the Tokugawa shogunate focused on townspeople “losing their heads” over youths, including kabuki actors, some of them specialists in female roles, domanical authorities focused their energies on regulating the ability of warriors to form horizontal ties that might undermine the vertical hierarchy of the retainer band.<sup>243</sup> Relationships like the one between Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–

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<sup>243</sup> See Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 97–145, for a detailed treatment of Edo-period legal discourse on *shudō* at both the shogunal and domanical levels.



1551) and Sue Takafusa (1521–1555, see chapter 1) demonstrated the potential that *wakashudō* relations held to upheave existing power relations, even when one of the parties involved was a daimyo. The relationship Takafusa formed with Asō Yojirō (dates unknown), another Ōuchi retainer, as a part of preparations to overthrow Yoshitaka provides one example of the kinds of bond made for the purpose of conspiracy that Yonezawa domain would ban at the start of the Edo period, set out in codes issued in 1603 and 1612.<sup>244</sup> Male-male sexuality among warriors would have to adapt in order to continue to flourish in an age of peace, when officials viewed its more violent and potentially disruptive elements with concern.

At some point between 1615 and 1618, the lord of one of the most powerful domains in the new Tokugawa order found himself compelled to beg for forgiveness from his social and political inferior. Despite his age and experience, Date Masamune (1567–1633), the first lord of Sendai and one of the most famous daimyo of the Warring States period, proved susceptible to rumors when they involved the object of his affection at the time. The reticence that Masamune showed afterward and in his subsequent correspondence with his lover, the adolescent page Tadano Sakujūrō (dates unknown), demonstrates a burgeoning concern with the potential effect of violent protestations of love and faithfulness on the newly-forged stability of the Tokugawa shogunate. Masamune's behavior thus presaged the establishment of a new economy of violence in which shogunal and domanical authorities maintained the warrior class's martial rights while heavily regulating the circumstances in which samurai could exercise them.

Masamune's relationship with Sakujūrō also illustrates the role that *wakashudō* could play in peacetime, repurposed and rechanneled as a source of order. The bond between the lord and his former page functioned much as did male-female marriage in strengthening the ties between

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 130–131.

their two families, helping the Tadano to acquire a respectable rank within the Date retainer band that they held until the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate. By contrast, the branch family established by the son whom Sakujūrō's sister bore Masamune as his concubine met an ignominious end long before the end of the Edo period. I argue in this chapter that Masamune's two relationships with members of the Tadano house suggest the inadequacies of traditional alliance theory in explaining how Edo-era warriors forged interfamilial bonds. Although generations of historians have slighted the topic, samurai viewed male-male sexual relations as one feasible strategy for reinforcing the hierarchical bonds between lord and retainer, intimacy and affection between men serving as seemingly central elements in both cases.

### **Masamune's Misplaced Mistrust and Letter of Repentance**

One night, Masamune apparently voiced his suspicions that Sakujūrō had been involved in a *wakashudō* relationship of some kind before the two became lovers, suggesting that this history somehow made the page unfaithful. Upon hearing the accusation, Sakujūrō cut his flesh so as to write a *keppanjō* (血判状), an oath sealed with a thumb print in his own blood, avowing his innocence and asserting his fidelity.<sup>245</sup> The particulars of the incident are recorded in a letter Masamune sent to Sakujūrō the next day to apologize for his behavior. Masamune states that he has been greatly shamed by a letter that Sakujūrō seems to have sent him at some point after the previous night's upset. That letter appears to be a separate document from the *keppanjō*, as Masamune relates that receiving the former made him feel "as if he had received an oath." The timeline of the preceding night's events remains unclear, as Masamune states subsequently in the letter that Sakujūrō wrote the *keppanjō* after Masamune had already had the opportunity to

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<sup>245</sup> Date Masamune, letter to Tadano Sakujūrō, date unknown, in *Date Masamune monjo*, Sendai-shi hakubutsukan shūzō shiryō zuroku 9 (Sendai: Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, 2017), 68–69. All translations are the author's.

explain himself. Masamune blames his behavior on alcohol at four different points, intimating that he would not normally have taken such allegations seriously had he not been drunk. The alcohol also provides an excuse for why Masamune does not describe his drunken accusations, as he claims that he has no memory of what he actually said during the party.<sup>246</sup> Masamune brings up his fondness for sake as a reason for delaying a hawking trip in one other letter and for not going to Sakujūrō to discuss some matter about the winter daphne flower in person in the postscript of another letter, so Sakujūrō was likely used to this sort of deflection.<sup>247</sup>

The origin of the doubts that led to Masamune's poor behavior was apparently a letter dropped by an unnamed monk, who conveniently disappeared afterward without a trace. Masamune refers to the monk with the four-character compound *kojiki bōzu* (乞食坊主), or “beggar monk,” a mocking expression for Buddhist priests.<sup>248</sup> Masamune may have hoped that by belittling the cleric, he could impress upon Sakujūrō how unimportant his admittedly embarrassing actions were in the end, since the claims against Sakujūrō were brought to his attention by such an insignificant personage.

The phrase that Masamune uses to refer to the supposed object of Sakujūrō's affection is *kano mono* (彼者), or “that person.”<sup>249</sup> *Kano* is a directional marker that can either be used to identify something far away from the speaker or something that was mentioned previously. Masamune first mentions the monk after the phrase *kano mono*, and he again uses the word “monk” while later describing how he had run away. As such, it is unlikely that the monk himself was the

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Sendai-shi shi hensan iinkai, ed., *Sendai-shi shi: Date Masamune monjo*, vol. 3 (Sendai: Sendai-shi, 2005), 135, 493; *Sendai-shi shi: Date Masamune monjo*, vol. 4 (Sendai: Sendai-shi, 2007), 207, 452.

<sup>248</sup> Date Masamune, letter to Tadano Sakujūrō.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

person in whom Sakujūrō allegedly was interested. Rather, Masamune’s use of *kano* suggests that it might be some other person about whom he and Sakujūrō had already spoken. Thus, Masamune could expect that Sakujūrō knew exactly to whom *kano mono* referred even without mentioning him by name or describing him in any other way.

Masamune does admit that his inaction at several points in the course of events did not result in the best outcome. He brings up some of the actions he chose not to take instead of letting his feelings come spilling out in a drunken stupor and then remaining silent, including detailing his concerns in a letter, answering Sakujūrō’s *keppanjō* with his own, or even stabbing himself in either an arm or a thigh.<sup>250</sup> Masamune seems to imply that the difficulty of the situation left him at a loss as to how to proceed, equivocating first between wanting an answer to the letter’s claims and believing in Sakujūrō, then between following *wakashudō* protocol and refraining from another emotional response. It is impossible to determine whether Masamune’s irresolution was honest or whether he was affecting confusion so as to seem more innocent or charming and thus earn forgiveness. Whether honest or fabricated, Masamune’s admissions constitute a rare display of vulnerability, indicating how intimate he was willing to be with his subordinate and lover.

Masamune uses the word *shinjū* (心中)—literally “what is in the heart”—three times in the letter: once to say that he should have written to Sakujūrō if he had doubts about the page’s feelings; once to say that Sakujūrō would likely have sought to follow the rules of *shinjū* to the letter if Masamune had explained everything to him from the start; and once to refer to his own emotions.<sup>251</sup> While the first and last instances use the word literally, the second is a metaphor describing a kind of oath. *Shikidō ōkagami* (Great mirror of the erotic way), an Edo-period

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

treatise on the contemporary world of institutionalized prostitution written by Fujimoto Kizan (1626–1704), describes *shinjū* as a “symbolic act that expresses the fidelity of a man and a woman to each other and their ties of the deepest intimacy,” a kind of external articulation of their inner feelings.<sup>252</sup> Kizan lists what were considered the main forms of *shinjū* during the seventeenth century, including stabbing oneself to draw blood and the writing of *keppanjō*.<sup>253</sup> He notes that stabbing oneself was originally favored by *shudō* practitioners, though he goes on to list several examples of female prostitutes violently spilling their own blood to show their love for favored patrons.<sup>254</sup> As stabbing oneself and *keppanjō* appear repeatedly in Masamune’s letter, his use of the term *shinjū* suggests that, as Kizan would later assert, warrior *shinjū* in male-male contexts predated its subsequent repurposing by female prostitutes and their clients.

Masamune uses the opportunity that the letter provided to explain why he ultimately did not respond in kind to Sakujūrō’s *keppanjō*. Although he suggests that Sakujūrō was a strict adherent of the dictates of *shinjū* and thus would have expected him to perform some kind of oath, Masamune proclaims that he could no longer simply shed his blood for youths, as he was now at an age when he had children and grandchildren to consider. According to Masamune, a new physical wound on his body would only make him the target of ridicule by the other pages in attendance upon him when he was bathing. Masamune maintains that his body is already covered with scars from previous professions of love in past relationships. He invites Sakujūrō to examine his body, asserting that his arms and thighs “look as though there is no more space left”

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<sup>252</sup> Lawrence Rogers, “She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not: *Shinjū* and *Shikidō Ōkagami*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 49, no. 1 (1994): 40. Little is known about Kizan, but he was likely a commoner. Kizan wrote a number of other works related to the “floating world” and composed *haikai* verse in the style originated by the poet Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1654).

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 43–47.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

for him to accommodate another blemish. Masamune goes so far as to insist that the very gods to whom Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) once improperly professed his innocence would now view such an oathing practice as outrageous and inappropriate.<sup>255</sup> Surely he could not go against the gods, no matter how much he might love Sakujūrō.

However, much like Shingen and Gensuke (dates unknown), Masamune still had to placate Sakujūrō, who had received nothing but a letter to confirm Masamune's contrition. In the final portion of the missive, Masamune acknowledges that Sakujūrō would likely still be concerned about the state of their relationship and offers a solution that would involve subjecting himself to less scorn. He offers to write an oath, specifically a *keppanjō*, in front of a person named Denzō.<sup>256</sup> While the particulars of this oath are left undescribed, it would presumably include an apology for Masamune's prior behavior and a reaffirmation of his love for Sakujūrō.

The sole named person in the letter, Denzō appears to have functioned as a go-between for the couple, much as trusted servants were known to do in discreet affairs between men and women of high birth. Masamune first mentions Denzō, whose name is masculine, at the beginning of the letter as someone whom he could have ordered to investigate the veracity of the discarded letter's claims. He reappears again at the very end of the letter, when Masamune states that Denzō will explain anything else Sakujūrō wants to know or clarify.<sup>257</sup> Masamune had no known subordinates by the name of Denzō, so it is unclear why he was selected above all of Masamune's pages and other retainers to handle so sensitive a topic as his love life. His existence underscores the similarity of the courtship strategies of both male-female and male-

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

male relationships, hinting that the reasons for their parallelisms may go beyond a common language of love. For elite male warriors, both types of personal bonds reinforced ties between families, so that, regardless of the genders of the involved parties, a go-between played the same mediating role, entrusted with conveying the couple's messages and feelings back and forth while keeping the intimate details of the relationship secret.

Masamune ends the letter with a request that Sakujūrō show him compassion, presumably in the form of understanding and forgiveness for his behavior. Since Masamune instructs Sakujūrō to report his answer to Denzō, Masamune likely dispatched Denzō as the letter's bearer. It is possible that Denzō waited by Sakujūrō's chambers until he received a response that he could relay to Masamune. Next to the main body of the letter, Masamune also added a postscript, as he did frequently in his personal correspondence. He acknowledges that his actions have shamed Sakujūrō and asks the latter to understand his innermost feelings.<sup>258</sup> Masamune uses the word *shinjū* again here, but this time it is in reference what it is that he wants Sakujūrō to understand (“what is in my heart”), rather than as a shorthand for oathing practices.

As the publishers of a portion of his archive note, Masamune's language in the above letter is extremely polite and self-deprecating.<sup>259</sup> On top of the typical language of *sōrōbun* (候文) correspondence used by warriors of that time, Masamune frequently adds the polite prefix *o-/on-* (御) to any noun or adjective related to Sakujūrō, including before “uneasy,” “without worry,” and “compassion.”<sup>260</sup> Additionally, Masamune uses humble verbs such as *tsukaeru* (仕える) to

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, ed., *Date Masamune monjo* (Sendai: Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, 2017), 104.

<sup>260</sup> Date Masamune, letter to Tadano Sakujūrō.

refer to his own actions toward Sakujūrō.<sup>261</sup> Such word choices belie the lord/retainer hierarchy at the heart of the two's relationship, highlighting *wakashudō*'s potential to disrupt the asymmetricality of that hierarchy in youths' favor.

### **Excavating the History of the Tadano Family**

Sakujūrō's assignment as page and his favored status in Masamune's eyes beg the question as to whether or not his family's social standing played a role in his success. Although the Tadano family has not left a deep impression on the historical memory of the Edo period, they occupied an important position within the Date family retainer band. They were originally relatives of the Waga family, rulers of what is today's Waga district in Iwate prefecture. The Waga family itself was destroyed after the Iwasaki Disturbance (1600–1601), goaded on by Masamune himself to attack the Nanbu family in a bid to reclaim their former lands and thereby increase the size of the territory under the control of the Date. Afterwards, Sakujūrō's father, Yoshihiro (dates unknown), took the family name of Tada and became a *rōnin*, a masterless samurai wandering the land.<sup>262</sup> There is no further information on Yoshihiro's activities, and it is unclear when exactly the Tada family began serving the Date. We do know, however, that the Tada only became the Tadano after Sakujūrō began serving as Masamune's page in Keichō 13 (1613).<sup>263</sup> The upswing of the family's fortunes, which included Sakujūrō's new position, was significant enough to warrant a change in surname, one that would last for the rest of the Edo period.

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Tanabe Marefumi, Tanabe Maremoto, and Tanabe Maretsugu, *Date seishin kafu*, Sendai sōsho, second series, 2–7 (Sendai: Sendai sōsho kankōkai, 1936), 122; Kikuta Sadasato, ed., *Sendai jinmei daijisho* (Sendai: Sendai kyōdo kenkyūkai, 2000), 667.

<sup>263</sup> Tanabe, *Date seishin kafu*, 122; Kikuta, *Sendai jinmei daijisho*, 667.



At this point, Yoshihiro largely disappears from the historical record, and Sakujūrō, later known by the adult name of Katsuyoshi, takes the lead role in accounts of the Tadano's history. A list of Date family retainers states that Katsuyoshi was raised to the position of *kinjū* (also pronounced *kinju*), denoting a samurai who personally attended his lord.<sup>264</sup> At that time, Katsuyoshi was given land with an estimated productive value of 1000 *koku*, one *koku* equaling the amount of rice needed to feed one person for a year, and his family was promoted to the rank of *chakuza* (着坐).<sup>265</sup> Within the hierarchy of the Date retainer band, *chakuza*, or “taking a seat,” was a mark of prestige bestowed on families whose heads were entitled to serve as *bugyō*, or magistrates in charge of any one of a number of possible administrative duties. While the exact responsibilities that Katsuyoshi was assigned are unknown, records state that he served Masamune's second son and heir, Date Tadamune (1600–1658), both in Sendai and at the latter's residence in Edo.<sup>266</sup> Afterward, Katsuyoshi in turn served Tadamune's first heir Date Mitsumune (1627–1645) as the head of his guards.<sup>267</sup> Thus, despite not being a member of one of the Date's longstanding retainer families nor of another warrior clan of note, Katsuyoshi was entrusted repeatedly with positions that involved protecting the present and future lords of Sendai.

The period in which the false cheating incident likely took place falls only a few years before the birth of Masamune's tenth son, Date Munekatsu (1621–1679). That their names share the character *katsu* (勝), or victory, is no coincidence. Although very little is known about Munekatsu's mother, several histories of the Date family and other accounts state that she was

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Tanabe, *Date seishin kafu*, 122.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

Katsuyoshi's sister.<sup>268</sup> One source maintains that her name was Katsume and that her Buddhist name upon taking the tonsure was Hōshō-in, *shō* being an alternate reading for *katsu*.<sup>269</sup> The presence of the *katsu* character in both Katsuyoshi's name and possibly his sister's name suggests that their father, whose own name did not feature that character, recognized in them analogous possibilities for promoting the Tada/Tadano's prosperity through the formation of intimate relationships with their new lord, Masamune. In addition, the combination of *katsu* and the *mune* (source/origin), of Masamune's name implies that Munekatsu was a product of the wedding of these two families and therefore embodied both Yoshihiro and Katsuyoshi's hopes for a prosperous future for the Tadano. Their victory began with Katsuyoshi and culminated in Munekatsu.

At about the age of twenty, Munekatsu received the territory that would eventually become the foundation of Ichinoseki domain.<sup>270</sup> Of all Masamune's sons, only Munekatsu and his eldest brother Hidemune (1591–1658) were able to establish themselves as independent daimyo. Although Hidemune was Masamune's illegitimate son, his exploits during the winter siege of Osaka castle in 1614 earned him Uwajima domain in Iyo province, which had been given to the Date family.<sup>271</sup> Munekatsu, on the other hand, had no such opportunity to distinguish himself on

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<sup>268</sup> Hanso Date Masamune-kō kenshōkai, ed., *Date-ke chika kiroku* (Sendai: Hanso Date Masamune-kō kenshōkai, 1938), 747; Kikuta, *Sendai jinmei daijisho*, 668; Sakunami Kiyosuke, *Tōhan-shi kō*, rev. ed., vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shugyokudō, 1915; reprinted with annotations by Taira Shigemichi, Sendai: Gyokubundō, 1976), 7.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. Despite the fact that *Tōhan-shi kō* was written in modern times, the author based its content on one of the official records of the Date family history, *Date seike kiroku*, so that it is viewed as one of the most fundamental accounts of Sendai domain's history.

<sup>270</sup> Ichinoseki-shi hensan iinkai, ed., *Ichinoseki-shi*, vol. 1, *Tsūshi* (Ichinoseki: Ichinoseki-shi, 1978), 621–622. Cadastral-survey notes list Munekatsu and his subordinates as the cultivators (*kōsakusha*, 耕作者) of land around Ichinoseki starting in 1641.

<sup>271</sup> See Takahashi Tomio, *Mutsu Date ichizoku*, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2018), 133–142, for a discussion of Hidemune and the foundation of the Uwajima branch of the Date family. Masamune sent Hidemune when he was just four years old to serve Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). Takahashi views Hidemune as constituting a “bridge”

the battlefield, and he was only the tenth son. Instead, he involved himself heavily in the governance of Sendai after Tadamune's death, insisting in a letter to another high-ranking Date retainer that the stability of the domain and the of clan must serve as the guiding principle in the wake of a change in rulership.<sup>272</sup> A few years later, Munekatsu received additional territory after being appointed one of the guardians of the young fourth lord of Sendai, making him daimyo in of the newly established Ichinoseki domain.<sup>273</sup> He also married his son to an adopted daughter of Sakai Tadakiyo (1624–1681), *tairō* (大老, chief elder/advisor) of the fourth Tokugawa shogun. In this way, Munekatsu established himself as one of the chief powerholders of the Date family.

Munekatsu's increasing involvement in the affairs of the main branch of the Date family caused internal feuding and a massive scandal known as the Date *sōdō* (house dispute), which later generations would remember and romanticize as one of the greatest house disputes of the Edo era. In 1660, Munekatsu led a group of Date relatives and retainers to petition the Tokugawa shogunate to force the third lord of Sendai, Date Tsunamune (1640–1711), to retire on the basis of his repeated improprieties.<sup>274</sup> As Tsunamune's son was still a child, Munekatsu became one of his two guardians and took control of much of the governance of Sendai domain. Tension continued to mount after another member of the extended Date family brought the infighting to the shogunate's attention. In 1671, one of Munekatsu's allies, Harada Munesuke (1619–1671,

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between the Toyotomi and the Date clans. After the suicide of Toyotomi Hidetsugu (1568–1595), Hideyoshi bestowed upon Hidemune the use of the *hide* character (秀), had him undergo the coming-of-age ceremony, and made him serve as page to Hideyoshi's new son and heir. Hideyoshi even attempted to force Masamune to retire in Hidemune's favor during the last few years of his life. Hidemune's case illustrates some of the unique connections that could emerge between male hostages and their hosts.

<sup>272</sup> Kobayashi Seiji, *Date sōdō to Harada Kai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2015), 81.

<sup>273</sup> Ichinoseki-shi hensan iinkai, *Ichinoseki-shi*, 1:627.

<sup>274</sup> Takahashi, *Mutsu Date ichizoku*, 143–144. Date Mitsumune, Tsunamune's older brother and Tadamune's original heir, died suddenly at the age of nineteen during a trip to Edo. Tadamune had no other choice but to name Tsunamune, his sixth son, as the new successor.

also known as Harada Kai) attacked two members of the opposing faction during the official shogunal hearings about the feud, in no less inappropriate a location than Tadakiyo's own manor in Edo. All three died from their wounds either immediately or the very next day.<sup>275</sup>

While the fourth lord of Sendai, Date Tsunamura (1659–1719), was cleared of all involvement due to his age, the shogunate punished Munekatsu severely for his despotic behavior and for indirectly causing the fight on Tadakiyo's estate. The shogunate confiscated Munekatsu's domain and exiled him and his family to different parts of Shikoku. Despite Munekatsu's disgrace, the main branch of the Tadano family managed to escape the chaos of the Date house dispute unscathed. The names of Katsuyoshi's successors appear in such texts as *Date seishin kafu* (Genealogies of hereditary retainers of the Date), which provides detailed information about the lives of the third through the seventh family heads as well as important siblings.<sup>276</sup>

Among Katsuyoshi's notable successors was the family's eight head Tadano Tsurayoshi (birth year unknown–1812), who took as his second wife Tadano Makuzu (1763–1825), a notable female thinker and poet and author of *Hitori kangae* (Solitary thoughts).<sup>277</sup> Tsurayoshi inherited the family alias of Iga, which it had held since before Yoshihiro became a retainer of

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 144. Munekatsu's family, the Harada, held the same rank of *chakuza* as the Tadano. Most of his family subsequently committed suicide under order from the Date clan leadership, putting an end to the Harada line.

<sup>276</sup> Tanabe, *Date seishin kafu*, 122–124. See also Kikuta, *Sendai jinmei daijisho*, 667. Yoshihiro was considered the first family head and Katsuyoshi the second head, as it was during Yoshihiro's tenure that the clan was renamed Tadano.

<sup>277</sup> Bettina Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking Like a Man: Tadano Makuzu (1763–1825)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 97–98; Kikuta, *Sendai jinmei daijisho*, 667. In *Hitori kangae*, Makuzu argued for a space within intellectual discourse for women to participate and for significant socioeconomic reform that embraced the new money-driven order for the benefit of Japan as a whole. Her thinking demonstrated a high level of sophistication and familiarity with philosophical trends and canonical texts, so much so that she received praise from the celebrated author Takizawa Bakin (1767–1848).

the Date.<sup>278</sup> In 1757, during the time of Tsurayoshi's father, the Tadano received an actual fief in Nakaniida, a rarity during a time when most warriors found their connections to direct land ownership severed on principle as a method of control.<sup>279</sup> Regardless of what service Tsurayoshi's father or other heads of the Tadano rendered to the Date, they earned the position necessary obtain a fief only by building on the foundation of the two families' relationship that had been laid down by Masamune, Katsuyoshi, and Yoshihiro. The same could be said for Makuzu, who Bettina Gramlich-Oka describes as developing a literary and political voice through the experiences she accrued after marrying Tsurayoshi.<sup>280</sup>

The Tadano family survived at least until the early twentieth century. According to a 1933 biographical dictionary, the eleventh family head, Keinosuke, passed away in 1907, succeeded by the last known head, Torajirō.<sup>281</sup> Not only was the Tadano family able to weather the Date house dispute, despite its blood ties to Munekatsu, but it was also able to maintain their respected position throughout the entire Edo period and survive the conflicts of the Meiji Restoration. If anything, the marriage connection between the Date and Tadano families proved more ephemeral than the one forged originally between Masamune and his page Katsuyoshi. Munekatsu, his wife, and his children and grandchildren all either died in exile or at a young age, so that the entire line was extinguished by the end of 1707.

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<sup>278</sup> Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking Like a Man*, 97–98; Tanabe, *Date seishin kafu*, 122; Kikuta, *Sendai jinmei daijisho*, 667.

<sup>279</sup> Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking Like a Man*, 97.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>281</sup> Kikuta, *Sendai jinmei daijisho*, 667.

## The Day-to-Day Affairs of the Relationship

In contrast to the dearth of information about Masamune's relationship with Munekatsu's mother, a total of ten extant letters from Masamune to Sakujūrō still exist. Besides the letter already quoted, the other nine letters focus primarily on hawking expeditions, one of Masamune's favorite pastimes, and on inquiries about Sakujūrō's health when he was feeling ill. As with the letter about the false cheating incident, full dates appear on none of them. However, the Sendai City Museum has determined that one of the letters was written on the twenty-eighth day of the eleventh month of Genna 3, which corresponds to 1617.<sup>282</sup> The letter mentions a hawking excursion, which matches with a trip Masamune took to Musashi province around that date. As Musashi and Sendai lay far apart, and Masamune mentions potential plans with Sakujūrō on the very day that the letter was written, Sakujūrō likely accompanied him to Musashi for this expedition.

This particular letter is also the most explicit about Masamune and Sakujūrō's relationship. Masamune cancels some prior plans to meet that day, asserting that his daily life is difficult to manage presently (*kono bun ni te mo kurashi-gataku zonji-sōrō*, この分にも暮らしがたく存じ候う).<sup>283</sup> After claiming that the next day was inauspicious (*higara waruku*, 日柄悪く), Masamune invites Sakujūrō to his bed (*warera toko e*, 我ら床へ) on either the last day of the month, two days hence, or the first day of the next month, so that Sakujūrō could relay some story to him.<sup>284</sup> Masamune also expresses a desire to spend night after night together in the same place with Sakujūrō (*yoyo ni mo issho ni mōshi-uketamawaritaku sōraedomo*, 夜々にも一緒に

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<sup>282</sup> Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, ed., *Shishi Sendai*, vol. 24 (Sendai: Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, 2014), 81–82, 106.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

申し承りたく候えども), though he ultimately blames the deity Hachiman for all the obstacles that keep them from spending time together.<sup>285</sup> As Hachiman is a god of both war and archery, perhaps Masamune was blaming Hachiman for somehow being responsible for making him so tired from hawking, one of the preeminent leisure activities of warriors. Alternatively, something related to Hachiman might have been the reason for the next day being so inauspicious. As one part of the construction of Sendai's castle town, Masamune had arranged for the portion of Hachiman believed to reside in the small shrine in his previous castle to be relocated to the newly-constructed Ōsaki Hachiman shrine.<sup>286</sup> Masamune could easily make the claim that either participating in the rituals of or heeding the words of one of the patron deities of his domain's capital was enough of a reason to be unavailable for Sakujūrō.

In a postscript beginning in the right margin of the letter, Masamune attempts to mollify Sakujūrō further by way of an emotional appeal. He claims that he is more and more impressed by what he sees in Sakujūrō's heart as the days go on (*naonao, kisama no onkoto, hi ni mashi-sōraite, goshinjū mo miage mōsu koto bakari ni te sōrō*, 尚々、貴様の御事、日に増し候いて、ご心中も見上げ申す事ばかりにて候う).<sup>287</sup> While it is possible that Masamune refers to the depth of Sakujūrō's feelings for him, it is more likely that he is praising Sakujūrō's development as a warrior as he learns and grows in Masamune's service. The two meanings are not even necessarily mutually exclusive, as showing an appropriate amount of fondness toward one's significant other in a *wakashudō* relationship such as theirs would also indicate both a respect for the lord/retainer hierarchy and for Masamune's benevolence as lord. Nevertheless, in

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> "Ōsaki Hachiman-gū," Kuni shitei bunkazai nado database, Bunka-chō, accessed 28 July 2021, <https://kunishitei.bunka.go.jp/heritage/detail/102/116>.

<sup>287</sup> Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, *Shishi Sendai*, 24:81–82, 106.

another reversal of that relationship, Masamune then asks Sakujūrō to bestow his compassion upon him and show some understanding about the obstacles discussed earlier in the letter.<sup>288</sup>

Masamune seems to have been expecting the kind of flexibility for which later generations praised Fuwa Bansaku (1578–1595), as it was the duty of the *wakashu* to strive to accommodate his lover's whims and desires.

In one sense, this flexibility constituted a restating of the traditional hierarchy. If it fell upon the youth to change his schedule and more based on his lover's needs, then the senior partner held more power to determine the pace of the relationship and thereby dampen the youth's ardor. The ideal was someone like Bansaku, who would allegedly try to satisfy every claimant while remaining loyal to Hidetsugu. While wild, uncontrolled displays of affection such as self-mutilation were suitable for a time of warfare, in which warriors had to demonstrate their fitness for battle, they were deemed excessive in peacetime, when the new samurai class served primarily as officials rather than combatants. Thus did the popular imagination of the Edo period reconstruct Bansaku as the perfect *wakashu* of an age of stability. Likewise, Masamune encouraged Sakujūrō to foster his warrior spirit in a more respectable fashion, through such activities as hawking, while gently diverting his attention away from the fact that Masamune had gotten his way.

Of the remaining eight letters, two discuss hawking and spoils from hawking expeditions, three discuss Sakujūrō's health, and three discuss both. The numerous discussions of planned and completed hawking expeditions indicate that this particular activity must have been an important one for the couple. In addition to providing an enjoyable form of leisure, hawking also offered an opportunity for Masamune to instruct Sakujūrō in the ways of warrior homosociality,

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.



general comportment, and appropriate methods of sublimating the warrior desire to do violence. As Morgan Pitelka states in his discussion of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) and his love of the pastime, the gifts that hawking produced, in the form of both the birds of prey themselves and the animals they killed, functioned as reminders of the structural relationship between the gift giver and recipient within the hierarchy of warrior society.<sup>289</sup> Pitelka notes that hunting with hawks or falcons “served as an idealized substitution for the messy reality of war, a kind of theatrical restaging of the potentially fatal work that defined warrior identity.”<sup>290</sup> For someone like Sakujūrō, born around the time of Ieyasu’s victory at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600), such opportunities to pursue a sanctioned form of violence in an age of order were likely precious.

Masamune discusses birds that he hunted or could have hunted in four different letters. In one, Masamune expresses his hope to go hunting for both Japanese pheasants and hawks the next day and requests Sakujūrō’s presence if the youth can join him, though he seemingly downplays how much he would like Sakujūrō to participate.<sup>291</sup> In another letter, Masamune relates that a wild goose suddenly appeared while he was waiting for the horses he wanted to show Sakujūrō to arrive, and that he shot it before returning home. Although there is no indication that hawks were involved in killing this goose, Masamune states his intention to go hawking the next day, hinting that he would like Sakujūrō to join him since he expects him to have recovered from his illness by that time.<sup>292</sup> In a third letter, Masamune mentions a quail he gave to Sakujūrō the

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<sup>289</sup> Morgan Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation: Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016), 95–96.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 114–115.

<sup>291</sup> Sendai-shi shi hensan iinkai, *Sendai-shi shi: Date Masamune monjo*, 4:207, 452.

<sup>292</sup> Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, ed. *Shishi Sendai*, vol. 21 (Sendai: Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, 2012), 98, 112.

previous day based on some prior promise.<sup>293</sup> This was a gift from both a loved one and a lord who, as Pitelka puts it, was demonstrating “benevolent authority” by “literally feeding” his subordinate.<sup>294</sup> In the fourth letter, Masamune announces a desire to go hunting for both pheasants and hawks in two days’ time, as the day’s plans had been ruined by snow.<sup>295</sup>

Over the course of his service as Masamune’s page, Sakujūrō seems to have gotten ill rather frequently. Half of the extant letters that Masamune sent him involve discussing or inquiring after his health, suggesting that Masamune took great interest in his page’s physical well-being. No fewer than four letters contain passages in which Masamune declares his intention to give Sakujūrō medicine for whatever was ailing him.<sup>296</sup> In the second letter, Masamune describes Sakujūrō’s malady as *mushike* (虫気, literally, a “buggy feeling”), the same kind of stomach pains that had troubled Yashichirō, according to Shingen (see chapter 2).<sup>297</sup> In another letter, Masamune expresses his desire to spend more time with Sakujūrō, as their last visit made him joyful and yet did not suffice. While Masamune is in Fushimi for the day, he tells Sakujūrō that it would be appropriate for him to focus on recuperating from whatever illness was troubling him at the time.<sup>298</sup> Although Masamune made regular changes to his plans with Sakujūrō for such reasons as weather conditions and hangovers, he seems to have been equally willing to exempt Sakujūrō from a day or two’s duties when Sakujūrō was not in good health. He may or may not

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<sup>293</sup> Sendai-shi shi hensan iinkai, *Sendai-shi shi: Date Masamune monjo*, 3:133, 490.

<sup>294</sup> Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation*, 95–96.

<sup>295</sup> Sendai-shi shi hensan iinkai, *Sendai-shi shi: Date Masamune monjo*, 3:135, 493.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:192, 434; *Ibid.*, 3:196, 438; *Ibid.*, 441; Sendai-shi hakubutsukan, *Shishi Sendai*, 21:98, 112.

<sup>297</sup> Takeda Shingen, love oath to Kasuga Gensuke, 5th day of the 7th Month 1546, Ashina Moriuji shojō ika jūhachitsū, *Kanda Takahira shozō monjo*, 1889, University of Tokyo Historiographical Institute. All translations are the author’s.

<sup>298</sup> Sendai-shi shi hensan iinkai, *Sendai-shi shi: Date Masamune monjo*, 4:134, 492.

have given his other retainers similar consideration, but such care for a page clearly suggests a fondness that exceeded institutional obligations.

### **A New View of the Process of Warrior Alliance Formation**

The ostensible equivalence between Masamune's relationships with Sakujūrō and his sister suggests a model of alliance-making that does not necessarily depend on male-female marriage. In Claude Lévi-Strauss's understanding, women are important to the social primarily in their function as objects of exchange between men. This begs the question of whether they would be necessary if men could establish social relations directly between themselves. The practice of adoption, common among Japanese households, including warrior houses, when a biological heir could not be produced, shows how biological organization need not automatically connect or lead to social organization. If a son is adopted who is not related to the adopting family, and the latter has no daughter for him to wed, the biological unit of the family has failed to achieve its goal of reproduction. However, the social unit has succeeded in continuing to reproduce itself, so that its name and legacy can continue into future generations. The Sanada family, former subordinates of the Takeda, provide one example of such an adoption. After losing all but two of his children, both daughters, to tuberculosis, Sanada Yukihiro (1740–1815) adopted a son in 1785 from the Ii family to whom he had no biological connection. In turn, this boy, who would become known as Sanada Yukitaka (1770–1828) and marry one of Yukihiro's daughters, adopted a child from the branch of the Matsudaira family that ruled Shirakawa domain.<sup>299</sup> As such, the currently extant Sanada family is no longer descended from the storied Sanada of Ueda castle.

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<sup>299</sup> "Sanada-ke to wa," Sanada hōmotsukan/The Sanada Treasures Museum, accessed 22 July 2021, <https://www.sanadahomotsukan.com/sanadake.php>.

If Lévi-Strauss considers the partial transformation of woman into sign as detracting from or impeding the “affective richness” that “doubtless originally permeated the entire universe of human communications,” then relations between men, who are not so transformed, should in theory be all the more passionate.<sup>300</sup> Men have had no portion of their being turned into signs in Lévi-Strauss’ framework, as they are instead the actors between whom women are exchanged as a form of communication. Perhaps this is the reason that loyal retainers would sometimes commit suicide when their lords passed away, overwhelmed by such intense devotion that language failed to express it suitably. These emotions inexpressible in language instead find release with the rupture of the boundaries of the human body, pouring forth alongside the blood and innards of warriors.

In fact, affection shared between men was entirely expressible, as the letters, oaths, poems, and other documents introduced in this dissertation attest. As Lévi-Strauss attributes much of the affective content of male-female relations to their connection to an imagined pre-social, pre-linguistic reality in which women have yet to become signs, he provides no explanation for how males in a decidedly social and language-mediated reality could develop intimate, caring relationships. Regardless of whether pre-social, pre-linguistic relations are possible, we can address the question of bonds between males by rejecting one of Lévi-Strauss’ implicit assumptions: that the exchange of women and the kinship systems they produce are necessarily built upon the prohibition of male-male sexuality. In a framework that regards social relations between men as arising from the mediation of the exchange of women, both adoption and intimate male bonds only become intelligible once marriage has been accomplished. Thus, as

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<sup>300</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, rev. ed., trans. James Harle Bell, John Richard von Sturmer, and Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 496.

Luce Irigaray puts it, male-male sexual relations would “paralyze all commerce,” making male-male sexuality the organizing principle of the sociocultural order.<sup>301</sup>

Such a conception of sexuality and social relations ignores the possibility of societies that are not built upon obligatory heterosexuality. Even disregarding the fact that heterosexuality and homosexuality are modern concepts, Eve Sedgwick’s discussion of ancient Greece in *Between Men* suggests that no causal connection need exist between social relations and Irigaray’s law. In Japan’s case, male-male sexual relations provided an essential element of warrior homosociality during the Warring States and Edo periods, serving as a sort of social glue congruent with class, age, and gender hierarchies. The exchange of youths helped strengthen bonds among male members of the warrior social group, enabling the perpetuation of warrior society in general and specific warrior kin groups in particular without replacing the function of male-female marriage. The retainer bands whose hierarchies were supported by *wakashudō* relationships did not require marriage to establish those hierarchies, as the bonds between lord and subordinate came first. They too were built on oathing practices like the exchanging of cups of sake, as did the bonds of marriage. Both *wakashudō* and marriage relations reinforced the hierarchical relations between lord and retainers that preceded them and gave them context and meaning, as even marriages between the families of two lords were only significant because each lord had subordinates by whose existence he could function as lord. To maintain and reproduce these structural social relations, the way of youths and marriage represented equally viable means.

For the Date and Tadano, Masamune’s relationships with both Sakujūrō and his sister formed social linkages built on affective bonds between the two families. Regardless of how many

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<sup>301</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 192. Irigaray uses the term “homosexuality” but refers to male-male relations exclusively.

excuses Masamune made to Sakujūrō over the course of their relationship, numerous elements of their extant correspondence attest to the intimacy and devotion they held for each other: the length of Masamune's apology letter about the false cheating incident; the apparent fervor with which Sakujūrō cut himself and wrote the lost *keppanjō*; Masamune's frequent worries about Sakujūrō's health; Masamune's aborted invitation to Sakujūrō to join him in bed; Sakujūrō's no-longer-extant letters expressing longing for and desire to see Masamune when they had been apart for a long time; and Sakujūrō's willingness to stay outside in the rain for a long time waiting for Masamune, among others. As a result of the trust fostered between the two while Sakujūrō served as Masamune's page, Masamune awarded the Tadano family a position within the Date retainer band that they would hold for the rest of the Edo period. Similarly, the establishment of the Ichinoseki branch domain demonstrates that Masamune held some degree of affection for Sakujūrō's sister and the child he fathered with her, enough that he trusted their descendants in particular to serve as a pillar of support for the Date main branch. To focus on marriage at the expense of the way of youths would provide an incomplete picture of the history of the two families' connections and the role that direct homosocial relations, with no woman involved, played in securing the Tadano's position in the Date retainer band and thus their future.

### **Curbing the Dangerous Excesses of Warrior Intimacy and Violence**

In one way, the relationship between Masamune and Sakujūrō represents a triumph of another kind: that of the order of the Tokugawa shogunate over the unruly behavior that *wakashudō* could bring about during the Warring States period. Although the bond between Yoshitaka and Takafusa had promoted Takafusa's advancement within the Ōuchi retainer band and the initial rise of the militarist faction, it also enabled Takafusa to amass enough power to

succeed in his coup. The chaos it generated within the ranks of the Takeda continued well after Itagaki Nobukata (1489–1548) supposedly chastised Takeda Shingen for his promiscuous behavior, to the point that Shingen wrote a fallacious informal oath to avoid the repercussions of cheating on Gensuke. By contrast, Masamune refused to write a blood oath in response to Sakujūrō's, on the basis of the shame that it would cause him as a father, a grandfather, and a daimyo. The spilling of blood, whether over beautiful youths or in serious clashes like the Date house dispute, was no longer an act that displayed the talents and masculinity of the warrior. It had instead become a sign of potential unrest, chaos, and upheaval. *Wakashudō* had to be regulated as one element of what Eiko Ikegami has aptly called “the taming of the samurai.”

As Ikegami notes, the stratification of Japanese society accomplished by the demilitarization of the non-samurai population and official employment of the metaphor of the Confucian four occupations heightened the contradictions produced by warrior rule in peacetime, as warriors could no longer pursue the defense of their honor through violence unsanctioned by the shogunate.<sup>302</sup> Ikegami identifies a process by which honor became increasingly proceduralized through a series of laws permitting warriors to enact violence in defense of their honor under specific circumstances, including slaying disrespectful commoners, dispatching a cheating wife and her lover, and seeking revenge for a murdered family member whose killer had escaped justice.<sup>303</sup> In the final case, warriors had to apply formally to authorities to be allowed to go out to seek revenge, after which their lords would technically “command them” to do so.<sup>304</sup> These procedures forced warriors who might be inclined to violence either to fit their goals within a

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<sup>302</sup> Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 155.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 243–253.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 248–250.

framework that was ideologically acceptable to shogunal and domanical authorities, abandon it, or act on their own and thereby prove their own dishonor by abrogating their duty to their lords.

Even suicide could no longer function as a method by which a warrior could preserve his honor both on and off the battlefield. In the Edo period, the symbolic meaning of *seppuku* changed in the context of peacetime authority. By the middle of the Edo era, officials had become concerned that the act of cutting open one's belly and pulling out one's intestines, known as *munen bara* (無念腹), the "belly of mortification," was too aggressive, intimating that the warrior committing *seppuku* was expressing inappropriate and misplaced indignation toward those who were actually permitting him to preserve his honor in death.<sup>305</sup> Instead, the second assigned to behead the condemned warrior would decapitate him before he could even touch the dagger, which was sometimes replaced by a wooden fan.<sup>306</sup>

Although it dates from long before these changes in the honor culture of warriors, Masamune's response to Sakujūrō's blood oath at the time of the false cheating incident attests to his concerns about the potential effect of bloody displays of violence on the social order. Masamune avoided escalating the situation by not answering Sakujūrō's act of *shinjū* with his own. Rather than dramatically and publicly displaying his remorse in the language of oath-making, he quietly sent a letter to Sakujūrō to beg forgiveness and explain his actions. He kept the messy business of reconciliation from becoming common knowledge, thereby proving his ability to keep scandals from interfering with the appearance of a well-ordered, well-governed domain. At a time when warriors could no longer draw their swords and fight without the

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<sup>305</sup> Ikegami, *Taming of the Samurai*, 256.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.



possibility of facing severe penalties, even from their own lords, the forms and practices of male-male intimacy had to adjust to the new realities of the samurai class.

Masamune's concern over what his other pages might say after seeing his scars suggests that their significance would still be easily understood at the time. Their traces being legible to those who knew how to read them, the marks left by bloody professions of faithfulness could be deciphered by anyone familiar with *wakashudō* and its oathing practices. Not only were pages who attended upon him in the bath physically proximate enough to him to see the scars, but according to Masamune, they would have recognized them as signs of *wakashudō*. In other words, *wakashudō* was alive and well in Sendai well beyond Masamune's personal relationships, at least to the degree that any page could understand what such a scar meant.

Oathing practices involving self-mutilation continued to thrive during the Edo period, although they ceased to be unique to male-male sexual relations or even warriors. It is likely that samurai customers introduced *shinjū* to Edo-period pleasure districts in an attempt both to display the veracity of their claims of affection and faithfulness in a symbolic language familiar to them and to produce another opportunity to exercise the prerogative of violence, even upon themselves. Historians have extensively documented and analyzed the breakdown of class barriers as a result of socioeconomic and cultural trends during the Edo period. Despite the efforts of shogunal and domanical authorities to maintain their ideal, clearly-delineated social hierarchy, commoners emulated and appropriated the mores and culture of the samurai in order to partake of the prestige of the supposed elite stratum of society. The popularization of *shinjū* only served to underscore the gap between the ideal and the reality of the Edo social order, as non-samurai increasingly gained access to the symbols and rituals of violence that purportedly belonged to warriors alone.

In the end, the sacrifices that *wakashudō* practices and discourse made to become acceptable in peacetime may have deprived samurai of one of the most meaningful ways in which they could express their affection for one another. While Masamune may have avoided a spectacle in refraining from responding in kind to Sakujūrō's *keppanjō*, the fact that he felt compelled at least to offer to write one later indicates that he knew what the page would expect from him. Whether he followed through on that offer or attempted to mollify Sakujūrō by other means, his initial response decoupled violence toward the self from the articulation of intense feelings. Thus, the subdued samurai of the Edo period could no longer wield his sword nor show his emotions freely without fear of ostracization or punishment.

## Conclusion

### Remembering and Reconsidering Warrior Intimacy

The stories of Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551) and Sue Harukata (1521–1555); Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) and Gensuke (dates unknown); and Date Masamune (1567–1636) and Tadano Sakujūrō Katsuyoshi (dates unknown) underscore the complex emotional universe of a warrior society that is frequently mischaracterized as built on stoicism and loyalty. Rather, each relationship involved intense displays of emotion, often based on longing or jealousy, vestiges of which can be found in documents that have survived to the present day. The case of Yoshitaka and Takafusa (chapter 1) demonstrates how a bond that should have formed one of the pillars of the Ōuchi retainer band, reinforced by shared affection and experience, could evaporate, with Takafusa misusing Yoshitaka's trust in order to overthrow his lord. In the tale of Shingen and Gensuke (chapter 2), we observe how the discovery of infidelity could force even the mightiest of daimyo to plead for forgiveness, revealing the ubiquity and flexibility of the formal oath and providing a glimpse into the personal cosmologies of individual warriors. Finally, the letters sent to Sakujūrō by Masamune (chapter 3) richly convey the emotional content of scarification as an oath practice and the power of lasting attachment, which ensured the Tadano's prosperity for the entire Edo period (1603–1868).

These intimate warrior relationships also connect microhistorical issues with macrohistorical change. The collapse of the Ōuchi clan and the effect that its destruction had on the rulership of western Honshū, Japanese relations with foreign polities, and the development of sacred authority among warriors cannot be fully explained without accounting for the change in the relationship between Yoshitaka and Takafusa and the long-term effects of that change. The

history of Nakaniida, now a part of Kami district in Miyagi prefecture, is inextricably linked to the Tadano family, who were only able to receive it as territory thanks to the hereditary position earned by the adult Sakujūrō. This dissertation, therefore, suggests the necessity of weaving micro and macro approaches together in order to produce more textured, nuanced scholarship that attends more fully to the complexities of history.

Furthermore, the form of intimate warrior relations that these chapters have outlined and the oathing practices they have depicted indicate continuities between Warring States-period and Edo-period customs. The same oath format that Satō Hiroo describes, employed by Shingen to mollify Gensuke, reappears in the Edo period in both male-male and male-female contexts. Fujimoto Kizan (1626–1704) lists cutting or stabbing oneself as one of the ways in which a female prostitute and her male client could seal their relationship in a text published almost seventy years after Sakujūrō stabbed himself to write a blood oath to Masamune. The latter case, just like Takafusa's reliance on vows of brotherhood in staging his revolt, similarly provides a context for understanding the origins of Edo-period concerns about the connection between intimate relations between male warriors and violence that disrupted the social order. The multiplicity of these bonds meant that they could either reinforce or topple the traditional lord/retainer hierarchy. Ultimately, Edo authorities decided that warriors' emotions and affections, inconstant and unruly as they were, could not continue to roam freely and pose a threat to peace and stability.

The new political and socioeconomic policies enacted by the Toyotomi regime and the Tokugawa shogunate in the late 1500s and early 1600s completely changed the structures and culture of warrior society. One of the major goals of both governments was the separation of

warriors from farmers. By confiscating swords and other weapons from the common folk while relocating warriors from their local bases in the countryside to castle towns, officials created a distinct samurai class for the very first time. In so doing, they ensured that samurai would remain physically under their daimyo's supervision and prevented them from using rice from their land as provisions to wage war on their own or in groups. Taken as a whole, these measures effected the samurai's monopolization of violence, symbolized by the unique right to carry two swords. Violence ostensibly became the sole prerogative of the samurai class, which had brought about peace through its exercise.

At the same time, the Tokugawa shogunate sought to maintain peace and stability by ensuring that none of the daimyo or lower-ranking samurai under its authority could fan the flames of conflict without its approval. In addition to removing warriors from their fiefs, the shogunate built upon the tradition of hostage-taking to create a system of alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*), requiring daimyo to spend every other year at their mansions in Edo and leave their wives and children in residence there, starting from 1635 for daimyo who did not hail from Tokugawa retainer families and in 1642 for those who did.<sup>307</sup> Not only did alternate attendance allow the shogunate to keep a closer eye on daimyo and their subordinates, but it also forced the daimyo to spend large amounts of money on both expenses and the upkeep of their Edo residences, preventing them from becoming financially secure enough to exercise significant autonomy.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 11–15.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

## The Crisis of Warrior Identity and Cultural Memory Studies

Interactions between samurai and townspeople (*chōnin*, 町人) in Edo and other major cities help explain the spread of certain forms of male-male sexual relations from warriors to the rest of the urban population. The historian Constantine Vaporis has argued that the unidirectional model of cultural flow that conventionally emphasizes the dissemination of Edo culture to localities ignores warriors' transmission of local culture to Edo. Vaporis instead posits samurai as metaphorical and literal "carriers of culture."<sup>309</sup> Although Vaporis concerns himself mainly with material culture and genteel practices such as poetry and education, his model is equally applicable to *wakashudō*. The enlarged samurai population of Edo that arose from alternate attendance likely resulted in numerous interactions previously found in warrior practice being transmitted directly or indirectly into commoner circles. Townspeople were free to reimagine or repurpose such practices, which non-samurai writers such as Nankai no Sanjin (dates unknown), writing in the 1730s, dubbed the "flower of the military estate."<sup>310</sup> The publishing industry helped codify and popularize this conception of warrior male-male sexuality, which esteemed warrior behavior as interpreted by commoners in what would become the discourse of *shudō*. Eventually, practices of the Warring States period (1467–1603) would even be coopted by male-female couples within the context of the flourishing demimonde, as shown by the types of oath-making listed in *Shikidō okagami* (Great mirror of the erotic way).

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 205–206.

<sup>310</sup> Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 69–70. Nankai no Sanjin is a pen name that translates to "mountain man of the south sea." Some scholars have been speculated that his true identity is the artist and printmaker Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671–1750).

Although samurai supposedly constituted the ruling class, the changed conditions caused by the shogunate's policies challenged some of the core tenets of their identity. As the example of Masamune and Sakujūrō illustrates, shogunal and domanial regulations produced a new economy of violence in which samurai could no longer freely pursue the bloodshed that stood as one of their class's main distinguishing characteristics. Warriors could no longer prove their strength and honor in duels and increasingly lost control over the violence they could commit upon themselves, whether in the form of oathing practices or in the form of ritual suicide. The new controls on bloodshed simultaneously limited or outright prohibited the intimacy that such acts expressed, so that samurai lovers could no longer write blood oaths, and retainers could no longer follow their lords into death, without the risk of incurring reprisal toward themselves and/or their families.

Samurai even found their social supremacy contested as merchants and townspeople became wealthier due to unforeseen economic changes, while their own stipends stagnated. Sartorial codes issued by both the domains and the shogunate demonstrate the anxiety that the newfound riches of the non-warrior population occasioned, as authorities sought to preserve the visible markers of samurai status by prohibiting commoners from wearing clothes made from certain materials and other opulent displays unbecoming of their station.<sup>311</sup> Yet daimyo and their retainers progressively turned to loans from merchants to finance their expenditures, giving what was officially viewed as a less-valued social class considerable sway over the ruling one.<sup>312</sup> Samurai

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<sup>311</sup> Susan B. Hanley, "Tokugawa Society: Material Culture, Standard of Living, and Life-Styles," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall et al, vol. 4, *Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall and James. L. McClain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 537–538; Donald H. Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964): 124–131.

<sup>312</sup> Vaporis, *Tour of Duty*, 2–3; Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status," 123–124.

had to find new forms of expression and new tools to make sense of this unprecedented state of affairs.

The field of cultural memory studies provides insights that help explain how Edo-period reinterpretations of Warring States male-male intimacy allowed warriors to navigate their changed circumstances. To explain the ways in which certain stories and people become enshrined and lauded within the minds of a given population, Aleida Assmann describes the “active cultural memory” of a society through the model of the canon.<sup>313</sup> The fields of religion, art, and history all select which texts, artworks, or events and figures become a part of their canons, and canonization then ensures continued interest and attention as interpretations and commemorations accumulate.<sup>314</sup> By contrast, according to Assmann, passive cultural memory functions like an “archive,” protecting objects from becoming forgotten while they wait to find meaning in the recontextualizations of a new canon.<sup>315</sup>

One of the important ways in which memories of history emerge from the archive and reenter the canon is by serving as metaphorical narratives that can help people make sense of their present circumstances.<sup>316</sup> Paul Cohen has explored how various modern communities reinterpreted stories of the past in order to provide meaning to crises that they were currently experiencing.<sup>317</sup> Cohen argues that the revival of such stories in popular memory helps produce

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<sup>313</sup> Aleida Assman, “Canon and Archive,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. Astrid Eril, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 100.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 100–102.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 102–104.

<sup>316</sup> Paul A. Cohen, *History and Popular Memory: The Power of Story in Moments of Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), xi–xiv.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 193–194.



imagined communities united by a shared knowledge and a common language for discussing the crisis, built on both horizontal and vertical bonds. Such links often help strengthen national communities in that they tie people to a past that can be mobilized for producing national history.<sup>318</sup>

If we apply Cohen's logic to the topic of the present study, romanticization of and speculation about figures of the Warring States period constituted the production of a canon of *shudō*, which both warriors and commoners could draw upon in their search for precedents and to emulate in the peacetime of the Edo period. Popular texts of the Edo era recast Mori Ranmaru (1565–1582) and Fuwa Bansaku (1578–1595), as well as Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) and Toyotomi Hidetsugu (1568–1595), as a part of what Gregory Pflugfelder has called an “indigenous iconography” that stretches back as far back as the sixth century.<sup>319</sup> To a large degree, this canon and the *shudō* discourse it underpinned arose from the combination of increased interaction between samurai and townspeople in the expanding urban environment of castle towns and the development of a publishing industry. Nowhere did the two social groups mingle more frequently than in the largest city of the age, Edo, thanks to the official regularization of the alternate attendance system. As if to underscore this point, all three of the stories that the twentieth-century bibliographer Iwata Jun'ichi provided in his discussion of Bansaku were published after 1642.<sup>320</sup> The models that the *shudō* canon furnished could be employed by anyone who chose to pursue the way of youths, contributing further to the spread of *shudō*'s

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 204–207.

<sup>319</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 87–88.

<sup>320</sup> Iwata Jun'ichi, “Bishōnen Fuwa Bansaku no koi,” in *Honchō nanshoku kō / Nanshoku bunken shoshi*, combined ed. (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 2002), 233–241. The three stories were written in collections published in 1653, 1749, and 1848.

popularity across class lines. In modern times, the influence of the sexological language of “perversion” convinced many Japanese people to ignore their shameful “homosexual” past, while contemporary views of the period rehabilitate explicitly sexual warrior relations as a kind of incorporation of those memories into a new canon.

The threat to samurai identity that emerged during the Edo period constituted a crisis that warranted the reinterpretation of intimate male-male relations as they had been understood during the Warring States era. While Cohen’s conceptualization centers around the nation-state, his framework proves equally enlightening when we replace national community with the community of the warrior class. Samurai devised two strategies from the examples of the past to deal with their present situation. The first entailed glamorizing the male-male relationships of the Warring States period: warriors could live vicariously through the consumption of fiction, a space in which what they imagined to be the ideal bonds of a prior age could flourish with as much affection and as much tragedy as they liked. An example of this approach lies in Edo-period writers’ valorization of Bansaku as the perfect *wakashu*, which was facilitated by the fact that Bansaku was a relative blank slate who could be repurposed for almost any goal. For those samurai who refused to temper their behavior and channel their emotions toward more socially acceptable purposes, the threat to their dominance that the rise of the merchant class posed may have served as one of the factors that pushed them to protect their honor with violence regardless of the consequences. Warriors continued to pursue the way of youths in unseemly ways, including by writing blood oaths and fighting to the death over *wakashu* favors.

The other option for samurai to maintain their importance and sense of self was by demonstrating their affection for and loyalty toward their lords by serving as loyal retainers. The

most famous and bloody display of this devotion, the Akō Incident of 1701–1702, also known as the revenge of the Forty-Seven Rōnin, illustrated how warriors could still justify violence in the cause of seeking vengeance for their wronged, deceased daimyo. By contrast, the view of remonstrance put forth by *Kōyō gunkan* (Military mirror of Kai province) and *Hagakure* (Hidden in the leaves) provided warriors with a new form of service to their lord while he was still alive. By arguing and demonstrating the importance of a loyal retainer's admonition to a lord's development and the continuation of his benevolent leadership, texts like the above created a new space for samurai to show affection toward their daimyo while justifying their continued employ, without any necessary reference to male-male sexual relations as one of the sources of that trust and fidelity.

### **Back to the Archive**

The Edo-period canonization of Warring States figures and relationships has disproportionately influenced modern scholarship and popular depictions of the prior era. Nothing written about Bansaku during the Warring States period remains, yet he is still lauded as one of the most beautiful youths of the age. Although the trope of the Three Unifiers was invented only later, texts such as *Intoku taiheiki* (Hidden-virtue chronicle of great peace) downplayed the power and influence of Yoshitaka and his family, focusing instead on their successors the Mōri clan, who ruled Chōshū domain for the duration of the Edo period. Even the conventional portrayal of Shingen as a cunning yet compassionate daimyo is the product of *Kōyō gunkan* and other texts from the Kōshū school of military strategy. In examining Edo-era sources that deal with the Warring States period, historians must take into account the potential biases and distortions they may include as a result of the distinct interests of their writers.

At the same time, intimate warrior relations, whether sexual or not, deserve a thorough reappraisal. For too long have scholars uncritically reiterated narratives, like that of *Ōnin-ki* (Record of the Ōnin war), that regularly privilege marriage and other male-female relationships in influencing historical events. The catastrophic consequences of the rupture of the relationship between Yoshitaka and Takafusa have retroactively minimized the historiographic importance of the Ōuchi family, such that the role that the two males' prior intimacy played in enabling the success of Takafusa's coup has gone virtually unexamined by scholars. Likewise, the history of the Tadano family and the connection that existed between its position in the Date clan and the bond between Masamune and Sakujūrō have largely been forgotten, save for in connection with a later but largely unrelated family dispute and a female poet who married one of the Tadano's descendants.

The excision of such relationships from the historical canon has done serious damage to our understanding of the historical dynamics of the Warring States period and the processes of alliance-building that helped bring it to an end. The contributions of the Ōuchi to a model of authority backed by a divine founder or ancestor have been overlooked, while a single European reference to Nobunaga's supposed apotheosis has helped to justify the construction and staying power of the Three Unifiers trope.<sup>321</sup> Scholars have so routinely viewed lord/retainer and even lord/lord bonds from the perspective of male-female marriage that male-male ties, such as the

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<sup>321</sup> The Jesuit missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597) claimed in his letters and his book *History of Japan* (1595) that Nobunaga had made himself the main focus of worship at the temple of Sōkenji in Azuchi's castle town, promising worldly rewards for those who complied and punishment in the afterlife for those who refused. Fróis compares Nobunaga with the infamous king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and asserts that his death was God's punishment for his arrogance. Up until Nobunaga's death, Fróis had enjoyed a cordial relationship with the daimyo and spoken positively of him in other writings. No other texts from the time, Japanese or otherwise, corroborate his claims, and all of Nobunaga's contemporaries who were deified were done so posthumously. For an analysis of the questionable nature of Fróis's account, see Jeroen P. Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus: The Japanese Warlord Oda Nobunaga Reconsidered* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000), 217–224.

one between Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), seem to be imbued with meaning only once someone's daughter has been wed. This project has made a case for restoring intimate relationships between warriors to the canon of historical memory. By placing them in a new framework that incorporates the full range of the methods of the warrior strategies of alliance, we can better appreciate the power and significance of warrior intimacy in shaping the events of the age.

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## Appendix:

### Chronology

1232 (The 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Jōei 1): The promulgation of the *Goseibai shikimoku* (Institutes of judicature), the legal code of the Kamakura shogunate.

1465 (Kanshō 6): As a part of his attempts to strengthen the Ashikaga shogunate's hold on western Honshū, shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa confiscated the harbor Tōsai in modern-day Hiroshima prefecture from the Ōuchi family and ordered an attack on the Kōno family of Shikoku. Ōuchi Norihiro initially complied, then allied with the Kōno to fight back against the shogunate. The Ōuchi and the shogunate would fight continuously in some capacity until the end of the Ōnin War.

1477 (The 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of Ōnin 1 (1467) to the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of Bunmei 9): The traditional start and end dates of the Ōnin War. The former refers to the start of the Battle of Upper Goryō Shrine, while the latter is the date when Ōuchi Masahiro withdrew his forces from Kyoto after the conclusion of peace negotiations.

1473 (The 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Bunmei 5): The death of Yamana Sōzen.

1473 (The 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of Bunmei 5): The death of Hosokawa Katsumoto.

1474 (The 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month of Bunmei 6): The Hosokawa and the Yamana, the ostensible leaders of the two warring camps according to *Ōnin-ki*, completed peace negotiations.

1476–1477 (Bunmei 8 to Bunmei 9): Hino Tomiko engaged in peace negotiations on behalf of her husband, retired shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa, with his younger brother, Ashikaga Yoshimi,

who had become one of the main generals of the Western Army. The resulting talks brought an end to the open discord between Yoshimasa and Yoshimi.

1477 (Bunmei 9): The Ashikaga and the Ōuchi began discussions at the beginning of the year to end the Ōnin War. Among other concessions, Ōuchi Masahiro convinced the Ashikaga to ban their retainers from attacking his territory, pardon his ally Kōno Michiharu (birth year unknown–1482), and confirm his right to a pair of ports. In the 10<sup>th</sup> month, the Ashikaga also reinstated him as military governor (*shugo daimyō*) of four provinces. Masahiro finally withdrew his forces from Kyoto on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, bringing a close to the conflict.

1482 (Bunmei 14): Yoshida Kanetomo employed forged imperial edicts to assert that the imperial court had left the supervision of all matters of *kami* worship to him allowing him to usurp the official jurisdiction of the Ministry of Divine Affairs (Jingikan).

1482 (Bunmei 14): The year in which *Nyakudō no kanjinchō* (Solicitation book of the way of youths) was written, according to the text itself.

1484 (Bunmei 16): Yoshida Kanetomo received 2000 *kanmon* in funding from Hino Tomiko to rebuild the Saijōsho Daigengū (Ceremonial Site and Shrine of the Great Origin). The original complex, which he had built during the Ōnin War to house all the deities displaced by the damage caused by the fighting, had been destroyed by the Ōuchi armies.

1486 (Bunmei 18): Yoshida Kanetomo proclaimed Ōuchi Norihiro to be the Great Resplendent Deity of Tsukiyama, or Tsukiyama Daimyōjin, with the approval of the reigning emperor, Go-Tsuchimikado (1442–1500).

1493 (The 4<sup>th</sup> month of Meiō 2): The Meiō Coup. Hosokawa Katsumoto's son Masamoto (1466–1507), who had opposed Ashikaga Yoshitane's appointment as shogun, took advantage of

Yoshitane's involvement in a Hatakeyama succession dispute to depose him. Masamoto then replaced Yoshitane with a different member of the Ashikaga family and secured his own position as shogunal deputy (*kanrei*), a post his father had also held. Hino Tomiko assisted Masamoto, as her relationship with Yoshitane had soured since he had become shogun. Yoshitane fled to Yamaguchi, where he was sheltered by Ōuchi Masahiro for a time.

1501 (The 29<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of Meiō 10): The imperial court changed the reign name to Bunki (Cultured Turtle), in an oblique reference to the soft-shelled turtles that served as messengers of the tutelary deity of the Ōuchi, Myōken. This decision indicated that their sympathies laid with the Ōuchi and Ashikaga Yoshitane.

1508 (The 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of Eishō 5): Ōuchi Yoshioki entered Kyoto and reinstalls Ashikaga Yoshitane as shogun. He goes on to occupy the capital region for a decade.

1518 (The 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Eishō 15): Ōuchi Yoshioki left the capital region, returning to Yamaguchi on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month.

1518–1521 (Eishō 15 to Eishō 18/Daiei 1): The period of time during which Ienaga Junji postulates that *Ōnin-ki* (Record of the Ōnin war) was written, based on the portrayal of figures who were close to and enemies of the Hosokawa and Hatakeyama, as well as the tenth shogun, Ashikaga Yoshitane. The heads of the Hosokawa and Hatakeyama actively supported Yoshitane during these three years, after Ōuchi Yoshioki returned to Yamaguchi.

1539 (Tenbun 8): *Kōyō gunkan* (Military mirror of Kai province) purports that, during this year, Takeda Shingen would spend long periods of time cooped up in the inner parts of his mansion, composing poetry and otherwise losing himself in leisure activities with both women and youths. After Itagaki Nobukata admonished him for ignoring his duties, Shingen changed his ways.

1541 (The 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 10): Takeda Shingen confines his father Takeda Nobutora upon the latter's return from Shinano province and forces him to retire. Shingen exiles him from Kai province shortly later.

1541 (Tenbun 10): Takeda Shingen rebuilt the main hall of Takeda Hachiman Shrine.

1542 – 1543 (The 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of Tenbun 11 to the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 12): The Ōuchi campaign into Izumo province, culminating in the siege of the Amago headquarters at Gassantoda castle. The Ōuchi army's defeat led to Yoshitaka drastically reducing his engagement in military expeditions. Instead, he devoted himself increasingly to political and cultural affairs.

1543 (The beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Tenbun 13): During his time in Yamaguchi performing newly-rebuilt shrines and temples, Yoshida Kanetomo initiated Ōuchi Yoshitaka into Yoshida Shinto in some capacity.

1546 (The 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 15): The date on which Takeda Shingen wrote the love oath to Gensuke.

1547 (Tenbun 16): The retired imperial regent Nijō Tadafusa began residing in Yamaguchi.

1547–1549 (The beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 16 to the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 18): As a condition of his father's surrender after the Oda clan's invasion of Mikawa province, the young Tokugawa Ieyasu became a hostage of the Oda. During this period, it is possible that he met Oda Nobunaga for the first time. Eventually, the Oda gave him to the Imagawa family as a part of a hostage exchange for Nobunaga's illegitimate older brother.



1548 (The 1<sup>st</sup> month of Tenbun 18): Sue Takafusa and Asō Yōjirō, who had exchanged an oath of brotherhood at some prior point, killed the Asō retainer known as Odamura. News of the incident quickly reached Yoshitaka, and Yoshitaka ordered an investigation. Sagara Taketō dispatched Sugi Shigenori, who learned of the oath and of Takafusa's plans to overthrow Yoshitaka. Yoshitaka dismissed Taketō and Shigenori's concerns, but he did consult with Naitō Okimori on Taketō's suggestion. Okimori insisted that Takafusa had done nothing to his knowledge, and Yoshitaka decided not to pursue any further inquiries.

1550 (The 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 19): Nijō Tadafusa's son Yoshitoyo arrived in Yamaguchi.

1550 (The 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 19): Sue Takafusa sent a letter to Kikkawa Motoharu, taking advantage of the vow of brotherhood exchanged between their families to request aid from the Mōri in removing Ōuchi Yoshitaka from power. Mōri Motonari would eventually agree to allow Takafusa's to execute his coup, and the Mōri armies would occupy key strategic positions in Aki province to ensure Takafusa's success.

1550 (Late Tenbun 19): The Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier traveled to Yamaguchi to earn permission to proselytize in Ōuchi territory and to deal with the reported popularity of the vice of sodomy there. When one of the other Jesuits touched upon the prohibition of sodomy in his explication of Catholic doctrine during an audience with Ōuchi Yoshitaka, the daimyo became visibly angry, and Xavier and his entourage were forced to leave immediately.

1550 (Tenbun 19): After returning from a diplomatic trip on the Ōuchi clan's behalf to Ming China, the Zen monk Sakugen Shūryō wrote a poem to Sue Takafusa, encouraging him to remember the affection that he and Ōuchi Yoshitaka once shared. Presumably, he had heard the

rumors about Takafusa's plans for a coup and sought to dissuade Takafusa from going through with it.

1551 (The 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of Tenbun 20): The date inscribed on the letter Sagara Taketō wrote to Sugi Okikazu explaining his behavior over the past few years, including his repeated retirements from Ōuchi Yoshitaka's service. He described the results of Sugi Shigenori's investigation, including the details of Sue Takafusa's vow of brotherhood with Asō Yōjirō and the two's attempts to downplay it. He also claimed that Takafusa and Shigenori, who had decided to join Takafusa's coup plans, sought to convince Yoshitaka to force him to commit suicide.

1551 (The middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 20): Aside from Emperor Go-Nara and the palace ladies, all the court officials and ritual specialists needed to perform the *sechie* (literally, “seasonal meeting”) New Year's Day rites had arrived in Yamaguchi by this period.

1551 (The 28<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 20): The Taineiji Incident, when Sue Takafusa led discontented Ōuchi retainers to overthrow Ōuchi Yoshitaka. Yoshitaka and a number of close associates northwest to the temple of Taineiji in Nagato province. When Takafusa's forces cornered them there, Yoshitaka and several others committed suicide. The remainder of Yoshitaka's retinue was killed by the rebel army. Sagara Taketō committed suicide in Hanao castle in Bizen province at roughly the same time, besieged by Takafusa's allies.

1551 (The middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 20): The date when *Ōuchi Yoshitaka-ki* (Chronicle of Ōuchi Yoshitaka) was completed, according to the text itself.

1551 (Tenbun 20): Shingen provided Asama Shrine, the Ichinomiya shrine of Kai province, with twenty *kanmon* worth of land after defeating Ogasawara Nagatoki (1514–1583) during one of his forays into Shinano province.

1552 (Tenbun 21): Takafusa received the right to use the character *haru* in his name from the new head of the Ōuchi, Ōtomo Haruhide (who would soon rename himself Ōuchi Yoshinaga). Takafusa then renamed himself Harukata, symbolizing his rebirth after cutting his ties with his once-cherished lord Yoshitaka, from whom he had been given permission to use the character *taka*.

1554 (Tenbun 23): Takeda Shingen prayed at the Ninomiya shrine of Kai, Miwa Shrine, for victory against his rival Uesugi Kenshin before beginning his latest incursion into Shinano province.

1555 (The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun 24): The Battle of Itsukushima between the Ōuchi army, led by Sue Harukata, and the Mōri forces, led by Mōri Motonari. The Mōri's overwhelming victory spelled the end of Ōuchi preeminence in western Honshū and the beginning of the Mōri's ascendance.

1555 (Tenbun 24/Kōji 1): On the request of the reigning emperor, Go-Nara, Takeda Shingen donated to Asama Shrine a copy of the Heart Sutra written by the emperor had written in gold ink on navy-blue paper.

1556 (Kōji 2): Takeda Shingen gifted additional land in Shinano valued at ten *kanmon* to Asama Shrine in Kai province.

1557 (Kōji 3): Takeda Shingen wrote codes delineating the proper maintenance of Miwa Shrine.

1560 (Eiroku 3): Takeda Shingen wrote similar codes for the maintenance of Tamamuro Shrine, the Sannomiya shrine of Kai province.

1560 (Eiroku 3): Takeda Shingen issued a code exempting the monks of Takeda Hachiman Shrine from having to perform duties at Fuchū Hachiman Shrine.

1561 (The 10<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of Eiroku 4): The Fourth Battle of Kawanakajima between the Takeda army, led by Takeda Shingen, and the Uesugi forces, led by Uesugi Kenshin. The most famous of five battles in the area of Kawanakajima in modern-day Nagano Prefecture. The personal clash between Shingen and Kenshin is arguably the most commonly-depicted part of the fight.

1565–1566 (Eiroku 8 to Eiroku 9): Takeda Shingen worked to revive festivals that had gone out of practice at the main Suwa Shrine in Shinano province.

1566– 1567 (Eiroku 9 to Eiroku 10): Many Takeda retainers submitted oaths of loyalty to Takeda Shingen, which are ultimately stored at Ikushimatarushima Shrine in Shinano province. The order to write these vows came in the wake of the discovery of a plot to assassinate Shingen, led by a number of close aides of Shingen's heir, Takeda Yoshinobu. All of the oaths bear one of three dates: The 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Eiroku 9 (1566), or the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> days of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Eiroku 10 (1567).

1567 (The 27<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of Eiroku 10): Oda Nobunaga's daughter Ogotoku marries Tokugawa Ieyasu's heir Nobuyasu, further strengthening the bonds between the allied families.

1571 (The 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Genki 2): Oda Nobunaga ordered his army to encircle Mount Hiei. The Oda forces destroyed all of the surrounding villages and temples, and the people living there fled up to the mountain. Nobunaga then had his army burn down most of the

Enryakuji temple complex on top of Mount Hiei and kill every monk and civilian they found. In doing so, he removed as a threat one of the most militarily powerful Buddhist temples, which had already earned his ire by sheltering his enemies the previous year. However, even Nobunaga's contemporaries, including Takeda Shingen, decried this as a brutal act.

1575 (The 21<sup>st</sup> Day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of Tenshō 3): The Battle of Nagashino between the Oda-Tokugawa allied forces, led by Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the Takeda army, led by Takeda Katsuyori. The Takeda's defeat would spell a downturn in their fortunes, ending in the extermination of the main branch of the family.

1576 (Tenshō 4): A monk named Enshōbō Kyōga, who had once served under Takeda Shingen, wrote a letter to a friend alleging that he had been forced to leave Shingen's service due to one of Shingen's subordinates repeatedly speaking ill of him. Kyōga claimed that Shingen's attempts to curse him afterward backfired, causing Shingen's death in 1573.

1577 (Tenshō 5): Mori Ranmaru began serving Nobunaga as a page from as early as this year.

1579 (The 29<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of Tenshō 7): Acting at least partially on information conveyed to Oda Nobunaga by a letter from Ogotoku detailing her mother-in-law's offenses and cruel behavior, Tokugawa Ieyasu attempts to force his wife to commit suicide. She refuses, and one of Ieyasu's subordinates summarily executes her. The exact details of Ieyasu's wife's crimes are unknown, though they may have included collusion with the Takeda family in addition to poor treatment of her daughter-in-law. It is believed that Ieyasu had her killed in order to prevent her from interfering with his plans for their son, Nobuyasu, so her offenses may have been at least partially manufactured to retroactively justify this act.

1579 (The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Tenshō 7): Tokugawa Ieyasu orders his son Nobuyasu, who he had confined in two separate castles starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month, to commit suicide. Although Nobuyasu and his mother-in-law have frequently been depicted as attempting to kill Ieyasu with the help of the Takeda, the evidence for such claims is questionable.

Nobuyasu's relationship with his father had worsened in recent years, and Nobuyasu was not popular among the Tokugawa retainer band. Furthermore, Nobuyasu may also have been frustrated with Ogotoku's failure to produce a male heir.

1582 (The 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month Tenshō 10): The Battle of Tenmokuzan, between the Oda army and the remnants of the Takeda forces. After losing castle after castle, Takeda Katsuyori fled with a number of his retainers, attendants, and family members to the mountain of Tenmokuzan. Many were killed by the Oda soldiers, and Katsuyori, his son, and his wife all committed suicide. The battle spelled the end of the main branch of the Takeda family, though Takeda Shingen's sixth son successfully fled to the Uesugi and became one of their subordinates.

1582 (The 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> month of Tenshō 10): Talks occurred between Oda Nobunaga, his subordinates, and the imperial court about the possibility of granting him one of three ranks: chief minister (*daijō daijin*), imperial regent (*kanpaku*), or shogun. Who originally suggested the idea and what Nobunaga intended to do remain matters of historiographical debate to this day.

1582 (The 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Month of Tenshō 10): The Honnōji Incident, when Akechi Mitsuhide betrayed Oda Nobunaga and took him unawares at his lodgings at the Honnōji temple in Kyoto. Although the Oda clan would survive the death of its head and heir, Toyotomi Hideyoshi would ultimately occupy the resulting power vacuum and unify Japan.

1582 (The 13<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Month of Tenshō 10): The Battle of Yamazaki, between the forces of Akechi Mitsuhide and the forces of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, whose surname was Hashiba at the time. After making peace with the Mōri, Hideyoshi quickly marched back to the region around Kyoto to attack Mitsuhide, the two armies clashing at Mount Tennō near the town of Yamazaki. The Hashiba decimated the Akechi forces, and Mitsuhide met his end at the hands of an armed group of commoners while attempting to flee.

1588 (The 8<sup>th</sup> month of the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Tenshō 16): Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued the Sword Hunt Edict, ordering the collection of all weapons from commoners. The collected weapons were ultimately melted down to make nails and clamps for the giant buddha statue he had constructed for the temple of Hōkōji. Hideyoshi exhorted commoners to devote themselves to farming to achieve prosperity. The edict constituted one of the main measures by which the Toyotomi and Tokugawa regimes effected the separation of warriors from farmers, constructing a distinct samurai class whose members were identifiable by the weapons only they bore.

1591 (Tenshō 19): Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued the Social Status Regulation Edict, prohibiting warriors from becoming commoners and commoners from becoming merchants. The edict encouraged commoners to investigate any new arrivals to their villages to see if they were warriors who had abandoned their posts and states that anyone hiding absconding warriors or concealing the participation of commoners in commerce will be punished. It also discouraged warriors from hiring anyone who had left his previous position without permission. Although this edict itself did not directly lead to the rigid social status system of the Edo period, it influenced the further separation of warriors and commoners into separate classes.

1595 (Bunroku 4): The Jesuit Luís Fróis completes his annalistic work, *History of Japan*.

1595 (The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Bunroku 5): Toyotomi Hidetsugu and his pages, including Fuwa Bansaku, commit suicide in the Mount Kōya temple complex in Kii province. Hidetsugu's relationship with his adopted father, Hideyoshi, had worsened since the birth of Hideyoshi's biological son two years earlier. Rumors began a few months prior to Hidetsugu's suicide that he was planning a coup, though it is likely that Hideyoshi caused those rumors so as to get Hidetsugu out of the way, allowing his biological son to become his heir unimpeded. Hidetsugu's family was executed at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> month.

1598–1599 (The 9<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 3 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Keichō 4): Toyokuni Shrine, the shrine dedicated to Toyotomi Hideyoshi's deified spirit, is constructed in Kyoto, under the supervision of Yoshida Kanemi and his grandson/adopted son Hagiwara Kaneyori.

1600 (The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 5): The Battle of Sekigahara, between the Eastern Army led by Tokugawa Ieyasu and the Western Army led by Ishida Mitsunari. After Toyotomi Hideyoshi's death in 1598, rival factions coalesced around these two figures, the latter of whom sought to prevent Ieyasu from wresting control from the Toyotomi clan. The Western Army initially possessed numerical superiority, but a number of critical defections, most notably by Kobayakawa Hideaki (1577–1602) and Kikkawa Hiroie (1561–1626) heavily weakened their forces, enabling the Eastern Army to prevail. Ieyasu's victory left his supremacy uncontested, leading to his appointment as shogun three years later.

1600–1601 (The 20<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 5 to the 26<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 6): The Iwasaki Disturbance. The Waga family, goaded on by Date Masamune, sought to retake their old territory from the Nanbu clan, who had been given the land by Toyotomi Hideyoshi after the Waga had participated in an uprising protesting Hideyoshi's reorganization of land ownership in Mutsu province from 1590 to 1591. They took advantage of the fact that much of



the Nanbu army was otherwise occupied by one of the battles connected to the Sekigahara campaign. Although winter interrupted the fighting, the Nanbu army ultimately defeated the Waga forces, which had been holed up in Iwasaki castle. The head of the Waga family committed suicide shortly later, though his son became a retainer of the Date. A relative of the Waga family, Yoshihiro, took the family name of Tada and became a *rōnin*, a masterless warrior. A few years later, he also became a Date retainer and founded the Tadano family.

1601 (Keichō 6): Date Masamune moved to Sendai in Mutsu province and established Sendai domain. Sendai's estimated productive value at the time placed fourth among all the domains at the time.

1603 (The 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of Keichō 8): The imperial court appointed Tokugawa Ieyasu to the position of shogun, marking the official beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate.

1603 (Keichō 8): The Uesugi clan, rulers of Yonezawa domain, prohibited conspiracies described as “intimate ties” or “compacts of mutual aid” between retainers and youths.

1605 (The 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 10): Tokugawa Ieyasu retired as shogun, allowing his heir Hidetada (1579–1632) to accede to the position so as to ensure a safe transition of power. Ieyasu continued to function as the head of the Tokugawa shogunate in actuality until his death.

1608 (Keichō 13): The Mōri clan, rulers of Chōshū domain, banned all “intimate friendships” between retainers and youths, exhort samurai to end any current relationships of the kind, and proclaim that anyone caught in such relationships will be punished.

1602 (Keichō 8): Building upon their prior edict, the Uesugi clan, rulers of Yonezawa domain explicitly forbade all “intimate friendships,” particularly with youths.

Keichō 18 (1613): Tadano Sakujūrō began serving as Date Masamune's page.

1614 (The 19<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month to the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 19): The Winter Siege of Osaka castle, between the forces of the Tokugawa shogunate and an army of samurai and rōnin dissatisfied with Tokugawa rule, gathered under the banner of the Toyotomi family. Tokugawa Ieyasu sought to eliminate the Toyotomi, the source of warrior authority unconnected with his shogunate. The siege ended after peace negotiations that permitted the Toyotomi a continued degree of autonomy. Date Masamune's eldest son, Hidemune, earned Uwajima domain in Iyo province, which had been given to the Date family, for his participation.

1615 (The 26<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month to the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of Keichō 20): The Summer Siege of Osaka castle, between the forces of the Tokugawa shogunate and an army of samurai and rōnin dissatisfied with Tokugawa rule, gathered under the banner of the Toyotomi family. Tokugawa Ieyasu learned that Toyotomi Hideyoshi's son was violating the terms of their peace treaty by gathering additional troops and trying to prevent the castle's moat from being filled. Once it became clear that the battle was lost, Hideyoshi's son and wife committed suicide. Hideyoshi's grandson was executed by the Tokugawa army. The siege marked the end of the conflict between the Tokugawa and the Toyotomi, leaving Tokugawa rule unchallenged for over two centuries.

1615–1618 (Keichō 20 to Genna 4): The period of time during which the Sendai City Museum has determined that Date Masamune wrote the letter apologizing to Tadano Sakujūrō for questioning his fidelity.

1617 (The 4<sup>th</sup> month of Genna 3): Tokugawa Ieyasu was reburied in what later becomes Nikkō Tōshō-gū, a shrine dedicated to his deified form. Unlike in the case of Hideyoshi, Ieyasu's

apotheosis employed the methods of Mount Hiei's Sannō school of Shinto, rather than Yoshida Shinto.

1617 (The 28<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of Genna 3): The day on which Date Masamune wrote a letter to Tadano Sakujūrō while on a hawking expedition in Musashi province to plan to meet in two or three days.

1621 (Genna 7): The year when Obata Kagenori was estimated to have completed editing and compiling *Kōyō gunkan* (Military mirror of Kai province) and *Kōyō gunkan massho* (Final book of the military mirror of Kai province).

1635 (Kan'ei 12): The Tokugawa shogunate officially requires *tozama daimyō* (outside daimyo), those daimyo who only became Tokugawa retainers after the 1600 Battle of Sekigahara, to spend every other year at their mansions in Edo and leave their wives and children in residence there. The upkeep of the mansions was the daimyo's responsibilities. This system came to be known as alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*).

1641 (Kan'ei 18): Cadastral–survey notes list Munekatsu and his subordinates as the cultivators (*chōsakusha*) of land around Ichinoseki starting this year.

1642 (Kan'ei 19): The Tokugawa shogunate expands alternate attendance to include their hereditary vassals (*fudai daimyō*).

1642 (Kan'ei 19): Obata Kagenori completes the compilation of *Ryōtōbon* (literally, “Dragon's stored items”).

1648–1653 (Shōhō 6/Keian 1 to Jōō 2): Baijōken publishes his *shudō* text *Yodarekake* (A bib) in multiple volumes over the course of these five years.

1653 (Jōō 2): The publication of *Inutsurezure* (Idleness of dogs), a story collection parodying the fourteenth-century classic *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness). The second volume includes a story about Fuwa Bansaku and his relationship with a person known as Ogasawara Shinano no kami, who may or may not have been imagined to be a relative of Ogasawara Nagatoki.

1660 (The 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Banji 3): Date Munekatsu wrote a petition, cosigned by a group of Date relatives, requesting the Tokugawa shogunate to order the third lord of Sendai, Date Tsunamune (1640–1711), to retire on the basis of his repeated improprieties.

1660 (The 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Banji 3): The Tokugawa shogunate forced Date Tsunamune to retire, appointing his two-year-old son Date Tsunamura as the next daimyo. Date Munekatsu and another relative became Tsunamura's guardians. On this occasion, Munekatsu also received additional territory worth a considerable sum, allowing him to establish Ichinoseki domain, a subsidiary domain of Sendai.

1664 (Kanbun 4): Date Munekatsu marries his son to an adopted daughter of Sakai Tadakiyo (1624–1681), *tairō* (chief elder/advisor) of the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu.

1670 (The 12<sup>th</sup> month of Kanbun 10): A member of another Date branch family submitted an appeal to the Tokugawa shogunate asking for their intervention with regards to Date Munekatsu's grip on the governance of Sendai domain. In response, an investigation began the next year.

1671 (The 7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of Kanbun 11): Harada Munesuke attacked two members of the anti-Date Munekatsu faction during a hearing at Sakai Tadakiyo's manor in Edo.

1687 (The 4<sup>th</sup> Month of Jōkyō 4): The publication of *Nanshoku ōkagami* (Great mirror of male-male eroticism).

1687 (Jōkyō 4): The publication of *Nanshoku masukagami* (Perfectly clear mirror of male-male eroticism).

1687 (Jōkyō 4): The completion of *Shikidō ōkagami* (Great mirror of the erotic way).

1701–1702 (The 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Genroku 14 to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>nd</sup> month of Genroku 15): The Akō Incident, also known as the Revenge of the Forty-Seven Rōnin. In Edo in 1701, Asano Naganori (1667 – 1701), daimyo of Akō domain in Harima province, attacked Kira Yoshinaka (1641–1703), one of the shogunal retainers in charge of ceremonial matters, for the latter's perceived rudeness and possible demands for bribes. An attack on the shogunal estate was considered completely unacceptable, and Naganori was ordered to commit suicide. Word of the incident, as well as the Asano clan's punishment, reached Akō, and one of the chief retainers of the Asano, Ōishi Yoshio, evacuated the Asano family before the shogunate confiscated the domain. Yoshio gathered up a number of Asano retainers dissatisfied with their lord's punishment and plotted to kill Yoshinaka, who had survived the attack. In late 1702, after months of planning, Yoshio and his compatriots attacked Kira in his mansion in Edo and successfully slew him. The shogunate praised them for their admiral pursuit of vengeance and allowed them to commit *seppuku* in order to preserve their honor while still punishing them for their actions. A few years later, the Mori family became the new lords of Akō domain. The entire affair, which has been lauded as one of the greatest stories of vengeance-seeking in Japanese history, served as the subject of numerous works of fiction, most including several kabuki plays and one *bunraku* puppet play.

1702 (Genroku 15): Date Munekatsu's son Muneoki (1649–1702) dies in Yoshida domain in Iyo province, ruled by a branch family of the Uwajima Date (Date Hidemune's family). His wife and children all die there in the follow years, bringing an end to Munekatsu's line.

Over the course of the Shōtoku (1711–1716) and Kyōho (1716-1736) eras: The compilation of *Takeda sandai gunki* (Military chronicle of three generations of the Takeda).

1716 (Shōtoku 6/Kyōhō 1): The year in which *Hagakure* (Hidden in the leaves) is believed to have been written.

1716 (Shōtoku 6/Kyōhō 1): The publication of *Intoku taiheiki* (literally Hidden-virtue chronicle of great peace).

1749 (Kan'en 2): The publication of *Shin chomonjū* (New collection of well-known tales), a story collection compiled by the samurai Kamiya Yoyūken (dates unknown). It includes a story about Fuwa Bansaku and a warrior so obsessed with him that the warrior requested leave every time he heard that Toyotomi Hidetsugu would be in the area.

1757 (Hōreki 7): The Date clan replaced the Tadano family's stipend with an actual grant of land in Nakaniida in Sendai domain.

1785 (The 4<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of Tenmei 5), Sanada Yukihiro adopted a son from the Ii family as his heir. This boy took the name Sanada Yukitaka and married Yukuhiro's daughter.

1815 (Bunka 12): Sanada Yukitaka adopted a child from the branch of the Matsudaira branch family ruling Shirakawa domain.

1817–1818 (Bunka 14 to Bunsei 1): Tadano Makuzu wrote *Hitori kangae* (Solitary thoughts) over the course of these two years.

1848 (Kaei 1): The publication of *Harusame monogatari* (Tale of spring rain), at least partially compiled by the parodist Takai Ranzan (1762–1839). It includes a story about the romance

between Fuwa Bansaku and a priest named Imyō (presumably a pun on the Japanese word for nickname, *imyō*).

1888 (Meiji 21): The publication of Shiga Shigetaka's essay about the Three Unifiers and the geography and climate of Aichi prefecture in *Aichi gakugei zasshi*.

1901 (Meiji 34): The Toyokuni-kai, established for the festival honoring in the three-hundredth anniversary of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's death, submitted a proposal arguing for the construction of a park in Hideyoshi's honor. One of the chief members of the group, prefectural assemblyman Yoshida Takao, asserted that the park would help commemorate Hideyoshi's supposed contributions to strengthening Japan's international standing. Other legislators then suggested that Nobunaga and Ieyasu deserved parks as well

1907 (Meiji 40): The death of the eleventh head of the Tadano family, Tadano Keinosuke. He was succeeded by the last known head, Torajirō.

1918 (Taishō 7): Aichi prefectural governor Matsui Shigeru supported the establishment of parks for each of the Three Unifiers during a legislative gathering, claiming that the commemoration would help educate the Aichi citizenry. The prefectural government then added money to the budget for Nobunaga and Ieyasu's parks.

1936, October 25<sup>th</sup> (Shōwa 11): An exhibit about the Three Unifiers, held by the Three Unifiers Association, opens at the Tokugawa Art Museum and Tokugawa Garden.

1937, March 15<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> (Shōwa 12): The Nagoya Pan-Pacific Peace Exhibition is held in Nagoya Harbor.