



MONOGRAPHIES DU T'OUNG PAO
VOLUME II

YOSHIDA SHŌIN
FORERUNNER
OF THE MEIJI RESTORATION

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

BY

H. VAN STRAELEN S.V.D., Ph.D. (Cantab.)

Professor at Nanzan University, Nagoya



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MONOGRAPHIE II

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YOSHIDA SHŌIN
FORERUNNER OF THE MEIJI RESTORATION

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CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

A new chapter of Japanese history begins after the battle of 關ヶ原 *Sekigahara* in the year 1600. The Tokugawa family takes over the Government of Japan and for more than two hundred and fifty years guides its destinies. The country, extremely weakened by the numerous civil wars of the 戰國時代 *sengokujidai*¹ (1490-1600), found in Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) a far-sighted statesman who reshaped it not only for his own lifetime, but also for generations to come. He had studied carefully the causes contributing to the rise and fall of the preceding military governments. In order to exert a firm grasp on the whole country, to secure the Shogunate for his family for ever and to bring about the unity of the country, he adopted the following measures:

He kept the distinction of the three classes of daimyōs which were already in existence, namely the 國主 *kokushu*, the lords of the provinces, the 領主 *ryōshu*, the lords of territories and the 城主 *jōshu*, the lords of the castles². To these three old classes of daimyōs, Ieyasu added a fourth, that of the 旗本 *hatamotos*, whose position and revenues varied greatly. They were to be the immediate vassals of the Shōgun³. Ieyasu created further the 御家人 *gokenin*, a kind of intermediate class between the *hatamoto* and the ordinary *samurai*. Furthermore, he

¹ Period of the country in war.

² These last ones mentioned were also called 小名 *shōmyōs* (small names) and were often completely dependent on the *kokushu* of the province and consequently called 附庸大名 *fuyō daimyōs*, dependent daimyōs.

³ Originally they were also termed *shōmyōs* in distinction to the daimyōs and they took precedence immediately following the latter, the main distinction between the two being that none of the *hatamoto* possessed estates or annual incomes exceeding 10,000 *roku* (see p. 5). They were divided into three classes: 交代寄合 *Kōdai-Yoriai*,

寄合 *Yoriai* and 小晋請 *Kōfushin*.

divided all the daimyōs into two categories, the 譜代 *fudai* and the 外様大名 *tozama daimyōs*. "The *fudai* are those samurai who followed me and proffered me their fealty before the overthrow of the castle of Ōsaka. The *tozama* are those lords who returned and submitted to me after its downfall, of whom there are 86."¹ The Tokugawa Shogunate leaned entirely upon the *fudai daimyōs* and the important responsible posts in the Shogunate were always held by them and not by the 外様 *Tozama* lords, among whom Satsuma and Chōshū were the most distinguished. During the rule of Ieyasu and his successor Hidetada (1605-1623), the powerful *Tozama* feudal lords were—because of their former relationship and associations—regarded by the Shōgun in some respects as allies rather than as subjects. They were the daimyōs who were later to rise against the Tokugawa on behalf of the Imperial Throne. The 毛利 *Mōri daimyōs* under whom Yoshida Shōin served were of the *Tozama* class. In his letters² Shōin mentioned repeatedly the privileges of the *Mōri daimyōs* because of their being *tozama* lords. The *fudai daimyōs*, who were formerly retainers of the Tokugawa families, remained always subjects of the Shōgun.

As to commoners, in order to exert a firm grasp on the whole population the 五人組 *gonin gumi* (five household group system) was instituted and this worked like a most elaborate spy-system³.

¹ 遺言 *Yuigon* (Legacy) of Ieyasu Chap. 7. Although this law of 100 chapters was written a considerable time after Ieyasu's death, yet it reproduces substantially his policy. It exists in several editions and it has been supplemented at a later period. This Legacy of Ieyasu has been translated into English by J.F. Lowder in 1874. It was published in pamphlet form. It has been reprinted and inserted in *A History of Japan* by J. Murdoch, Vol. III, as Appendix V, p. 796-814. Some notes on this translation have been published by W. E. Grigsby in the T.A.S.J., Vol. III, Part II, p. 131-140. In 1919 the translation of Gubbins was published, with various readings of the different editions. It is to be found in the Transactions of the Japan Society London, Vol. XVII, p. 128-184. Besides there exists a German translation which has been published in the N.O.A.G.

² For instance: *Shōkan Hen no Ichi*, p. 443, 488 a.o. All the letters of Shōin are collected in the fifth and sixth volumes of the 吉田松陰全集 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, 書簡篇の — *Shōkan Hen no Ichi* consisting of 497 pages and 書簡篇の二 *Shōkan Hen no Ni*, consisting of 466 pages. The *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, published in 1935 by 岩波 *Iwanami* in Tōkyō consist of ten volumes.

³ The official register of the *gonin gumi*—dated January 1723—says:
"In a town every five houses located together shall form a *gonin gumi*, and in a village any five houses located in the neighbourhood of each other, shall form a *kumiai*. The members of the 五人組合 *gonin gumiai* are in duty bound to keep watch not

This system formed the real basis of the administration of Japan during the whole Tokugawa period. At the head of every *gonin gumi* stood a 組長 *kumichō*, headman of the *kumi*. The laws and regulations of the *gonin gumi* pertained to taxation, transportation, religion, civil law cases, police and criminal cases, practically the whole of local administration. Only if one has actually seen the *gonin gumi* in operation¹, can one understand how this system makes every citizen a spy on his neighbour and how consequently the whole population becomes imbued with a spy tendency². Shōin was in this respect certainly no exception. Several times he went out spying himself, more often he sent out his friends or pupils to get some secret information³. The reason that a man like Shōin contracted this habit of spying, lies—I think—a great deal in the *gonin gumi* system.

In order to exert a strong grasp on all the daimyōs the 参勤交代 *sankinkōtai*, "alternate attendance" was invented, again an elaborate spy system according to which every daimyō had to visit Edo every other year and stay there for one year in personal attendance on the shōgun. Their families had to reside always in Edo, where they were held as hostages⁴. As long as this system was strictly enforced, there was no opportunity for any daimyō to conspire or to make a pact against the Shogunate. When later—through inside pressure—the system was revised to the extent that the daimyōs had to visit Edo only every third year and stay there for three months only and that their families were no longer obliged to reside in Edo, the Shogunate lost its strongest weapon⁵.

only over the doings of their families, but also of their employees and tenants, as they are responsible to the government for the actions of these people."

¹ It has been revived during the last war and the present author has some experience of its working.

² "In studying the workings of the Tokugawa régime, one cannot help feeling that it was conducted in an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust." Vide: *Japan, A Short Cultural History* by G. B. Sansom, Revised Edition, p. 460.

³ In his 幽室文稿 *Yūshitsu Bunkō*, 吉田松陰全集 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. IV, p. 106, we read: "You (six men) go out to Kyōto, keep your ears and eyes wide open and find out what you can about the people and the state of affairs." A like message we find in *Zenshū*, Vol. VI, p. 64.

⁴ At the numerous barriers there were severe examinations. Especially the Hakone barrier officials—in order to prevent the escape of the daimyō women from Edo—strictly examined all females going to the West. "Passports were closely scrutinised. The examining officers had to guard in particular against 'outward women and inward guns' (*de-onna irideppō*)." Vide: G. B. Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

⁵ In the *Story of a Dream in the period of Genji*, the effects of the abolition of compulsory residence in Edo, are described as follows: "In consequence all the daimyōs and

This weapon consisted always in the complete subjugation and unquestioning obedience to shogunal authority, in default of which hostages were imprisoned or executed. The daimyōs had to conduct their local administration in strict accordance with the provisions of the 武家諸法度 *Buke Shohatto*¹, the various ordinances for military families, which were framed and promulgated by Ieyasu.

In fact *jōi*², the will and the desire of the Shōgun, was absolute law and even as far as personal and family affairs were concerned, the daimyōs were extremely dependent on the shōguns, just as the people in the provinces and districts were dependent on the former. Chapt XI of Ieyasu's *Yūigon* says: "If there be any, be he *kokushu*, *ryōshu* or *jōshu*, *tozama* or *judai*—none are excepted—who shall disobey the laws to the injury of the people, his territory or castle shall immediately be confiscated, that martial severity may be revered. This is a part of the Shōgun's duty." In fact, even if violation of the *Buke Shohatto* was only suspected, the feudal lords were punished even without a trial, often exiled or put to death, their families and local governments destroyed, and all their estates and property confiscated³. Family ties were not taken into consideration in case of punishment. A few years after the death of Ieyasu, Hidetada exiled his younger brother because of unbecoming conduct and confiscated his whole estate. Iemitsu put to death his only brother Tadanaga on grounds of ungentelemanly conduct and lack of brotherly devotion.

In order to bring about the unification of the country which he desired, Ieyasu adopted two policies of seclusion. In the first place he thought that for the sake of a safe and prosperous existence of his Shogunate government (*bakufu*)⁴, the Imperial Throne should

hatamotos who owned lands sent their wives and children to their country residences, and in the twinkling of an eye the flourishing city of Edo became like a desert.... And so the prestige of the Tokugawa family, which had endured for three hundred years, which had been really more brilliant than Kamakura in the age of Yoritomo on a moonlit night when the stars were shining, which for more than two hundred and seventy years had forced the daimyōs to come breathlessly to take their turn of duty in Edo, and had day and night 80,000 vassals at its back and call, fell to ruin in the space of one morning." Quoted from *The Progress of Japan*, by J. H. Gubbins, p. 142.

¹ Promulgated in 1615. Vide Appendix I.

² This 上意 *jōi*, should not be confounded with 攘夷 *jōi*, the expulsion of the barbarians (see Chapter IV).

³ The second Shōgun Hidetada for instance destroyed thirty three feudal families, and under the rule of the third Shōgun Iemitsu, thirty five feudal lords met with a similar fate.

⁴ 幕府 *Bakufu*, "tent-government" — headquarters of the 將軍 *Shōgun*, general. Vide G. B. Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 553 and p. 544.

be completely isolated from the national life of Japan¹. The Emperor was not to have relations with powerful military families so that he could use them to serve the Throne against the Shōgun. Military lords on the other hand would not be able to approach the Throne to gain imperial confidence in order to prepare a rebellion.

The relations between the Shogunate and the Emperor (*Tennō*) were fixed as follows: The Tennō and his family were to receive an income of 119,230 石 *Koku* rice and 2000 兩 *ryō* cash². He was to act as mediator between the gods and the people. In his spare time he would practice poetry and the other five arts, but not study history, economics, political science or any other subjects connected with governmental or national affairs³. Only the heir to the Throne was allowed to marry. The other imperial princes and princesses had to retire to Buddhist monasteries or nunneries. The court life of the princes and court nobility (*Kuge*) their duties, education, ceremonies and so on was minutely regulated by the 公家諸法度 *Kuge Shohatto*⁴.

The highest place among the court nobility was held by the 五攝家 *go sekke*, the 5 Fujiwara families: Konoe, Kujō, Ichijō, Nijō, and Takatsukasa. Only out of these a wife might be taken for the Tennō. The Tennō was considered too sacred to expose himself to the sight of the people and he was thus confined to the Imperial Palace. This rule was so strictly observed that the Emperor could not even leave the palace grounds. Not only the ruling Emperor, but also the retired ones had to remain withdrawn from public view⁵. Even the court nobles were hidden from the

¹ From Minamoto Yoritomo's time on (1147-1199) until the Restoration, there has existed a dual system of Government in Japan with the Shōguns practically ruling the country. Yet Ieyasu made the seclusion of the Imperial Throne more complete.

² 1 *Koku* = 10 *to* = 4.96 bushels, was considered the average livelihood of one person for one year; a *ryō* is a gold coin with the same weight in gold as £ 2.

³ Vide 概観維新史 *Gai Kan Ishin Shi* (Survey History of the Restoration) p. 9-20.

⁴ It consists of 17 articles. The final draft was arrived at after several consultations between Ieyasu, Hidetada, and the Kampaku (highest court dignitary) Nijō Akizane. "It was usual to re-enact this law on the accession of a new Shōgun, and it was amended from time to time. Various editions therefore exist, differing in many respects one from the other." (Vide: *Some Features of Tokugawa Administration*, by J. H. Gubbins, T.A.S.J., Vol. I, p. 62).

⁵ During the whole Tokugawa Shogunate this has been enforced to such an extent, that it has become known as a historical event that during 264 years only three emperors—after their abdication—were allowed (and this only on one occasion) to go outside the palace grounds in order to visit Buddhist temples or Shintō shrines.

common people and known as the 雲上人 *Kumo no ue bito*, "the people above the clouds".

The *Kuge shohatto* were promulgated in the same year as the *buke shohatto*. This was the first time that a military man made laws for the nobles. The court nobles through their misconduct had furnished an opportunity for Ieyasu's interference. A court scandal assumed such dimensions in 1607 that the Emperor ordered the Bakufu to investigate the matter¹. Matters were arranged in such a way that neither the court nobles nor the Emperor could communicate with the outside world, save only through Bakufu channels and under Bakufu supervision. The sole privilege reserved to the Throne was that of conferring titles and ranks, but even this power was merely nominal. The Shōgun always decided which feudal lords should receive certain of the official ranks and titles of the Imperial Court. The spy system and the police state surrounded even the Imperial Throne. For this purpose Ieyasu allotted all the districts and provinces surrounding Kyōto, the Imperial capital, to his former retainers who later were raised to the ranks of feudal lords. Thus they could spy on every movement of the Emperor and his family and it became impossible for other feudal lords to approach the Imperial Court².

The second policy which was started under Ieyasu, and completed under his son and grandson, was that of the seclusion of Japan from the outside world. This policy was adopted to prevent the Japanese from coming under the influences of Occidental civili-

¹ Vide *A History of the Japanese People*, (1915 Edition) by F. Brinkley, p. 573.

² In order to show how thoroughly the Imperial Court was shut off from the outside world, I quote here some of the instructions given by Iemitsu to the Lord Commissioner: (i.e. the feudal lord attached to the palace of the Emperor, the Empress Dowager, and the Ex Emperor; the task of this Commissioner, nominated by the Shōgun, was to restrict the Imp. authority):

"There shall be no music, dancing, or any other sort of entertainment in the presence of the Emperor or the ex-Emperor, but when Their Majesties the Emperor, the ex-Emperor and Empress-Dowager, are together in the palace of the Empress-Dowager, there may be music and dancing. The Lord-Commissioners shall so arrange that the Emperor or ex-Emperor can have an interview with the Imperial princes and princesses only on New Year's Day. On no other occasion shall an audience be given by their Majesties even to nobles descended from princes of the blood.... No diviner shall be admitted to the Court of the ex-Emperor without the permission of the Commissioner, and when the ex-Emperor proposes to make some gift to these diviners, His Majesty shall do so with the consent of the Commissioner. When the Court ladies in the ex-Emperor's service go in and out of the palace, they shall show a pass to the guard every time. They may go home three times a year, if they wish. The gates of the ex-Emperor's palace shall be closed and bolted day and night, and, if necessary, they will be opened in the daytime only." Vide: *The Economic Aspects of the History of the Civilization of Japan*, Vol. II, by Takekoshi Yosaburō, p. 24-25.

zation, especially that of Christianity, "that false and corrupt school" ¹.

In matters of commerce Ieyasu himself was very liberal. He believed that foreign trade should make the country prosperous. He maintained, therefore, commercial relations with Korea, Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England. Japanese ships went to Macao, Annam, the Philippines, Siam, Malaya, and Mexico. With regard to Christianity, however, Ieyasu held the same views as Hideyoshi, that is to say, that the Christian teachings were entirely contrary to the national traditions and doctrines and that therefore Christianity and a prosperous national existence were incompatible. Consequently he issued an edict for the expulsion of the missionaries. Yet his primary efforts were not successful, partly because their enforcement was not nation-wide, but were only applied in the cities, provinces and districts that were under the direct control of Ieyasu, partly because of the great resistance of the Japanese Christians among whom were several daimyōs. A few years later (1614) he asked a Buddhist priest to prepare a new anti-Christian law. Although this new law was promulgated in the name of his son Hidetada, it was in fact the work of Ieyasu. When the Japanese nation entered the 鎖國 *sakoku* period, the period of isolation, Christianity had practically vanished from the face of Japan ².

The *sakoku* period lasted from 1639, when Japan under Iemitsu promulgated her third and last seclusion law, until 1854. The seclusion edict issued on May 19th 1636 runs as follows:

"No Japanese ship nor boat whatever, nor any native of Japan, shall presume to go out of the country; whoever acts contrary to this, shall die, and the ship with the crew and goods aboard shall be sequestered until further orders. All persons who return from abroad shall be put to death. Whoever discovers a Christian priest shall have a reward of 400 to 500 sheets of silver and for every Christian in proportion. All 南蠻 *Namban* (Port. and Spanish) who propagate the doctrine of the Catholics, or bear this scandalous name, shall be imprisoned in the 御羅 *Onra*, or common jail of the town.

¹ Yuigon of Ieyasu Chapter 31: "High and low alike may follow their own inclinations with respect to religious tenets which have obtained down to the present time, except as regards the false and corrupt school."

² Save only in Kyūshū where it remained until the present time.

"The whole race of the Portuguese with their mothers, nurses, and whatever belongs to them, shall be banished to Macao. Whoever presumes to bring a letter from abroad, or to return after he hath been banished, shall die with all his family; also whoever presumes to intercede for him, shall be put to death. No nobleman nor any soldier shall be suffered to purchase anything from a foreigner."¹

The seclusion measures had far-reaching effects upon the Japanese national life. As Brinkley writes: "Whatever losses Japan's policy of seclusion caused to the nations which were its victims, there can be no doubt that she herself was the chief sufferer. During two and a half centuries she remained without breathing the atmosphere of international competition, or deriving inspiration from an exchange of ideas with other countries."²

More than even the tools of the police state—the *gonin gumi* and the *sankinkōtai* institutions—Japan's seclusion was instrumental in the framing of a uniform and homogeneous attitude of mind among the people. This goal the authoritarian Shogunate Government desired as well as required for its functioning. This goal the Shogunate had so thoroughly attained that the Japanese people has become psychologically and emotionally one, as has no other nation in the world. And when nowadays democratic reforms do not succeed very much, the reason lies here. The Japanese themselves say often: "*Tokugawa jidai no kangae kara, mada kanzen ni wa dappi shite inai*, We have not yet cast off our feudal ideas." It is perhaps a debatable point in how far the "pattern" life³ has become an asset for the individual as well as for the nation at large, and in how far it has become a decided drawback. However, the author thinks that Dr. Nitobe has summarized well the effects of the seclusion when he writes:

"Here reigned peace, perhaps the longest continued peace ever enjoyed by any nation. . . . The Pax Tokugawa was fruitful of a culture peculiar to Japan. As the artists and literati of that age had

¹ Hishide, *Japan among the great Powers*, p. 55. The original text is in *Dai Nippon Shōgyō Shi*, by Suganuma, p. 568-570.

² F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 657.

³ In the school system of the clan schools (see Ch. II, p. 32) the pupils were taught how to live according to a certain code and uniform. In the clan school where Shōin himself has studied, the students learned for instance how to bring tea or water, how to give and to take money, how to squat on the tatami, how to pour in sake and even how to look at the head of an enemy, when it was exposed 首實檢 *Kubijikhen*. Also for the ordinary people the most trivial things were prescribed and regulated.

no access to foreign pattern¹, they had to look into their own souls and to produce some original works. Working under a vigilant government and in a hierarchical society, art and literary productions failed to rouse any great spirit, or, if there were any, did not give it utterance; but in minutiae of workmanship, in delicacy of design, few peoples can excel those who were trained in the age of isolation and feudalism.

"Though the Chinese classics were taken under direct government patronage and control, official commentaries on the works of Confucius were spread under compulsion, while great heretics, such as Laotze, Mencius, Wang Yang-ming, were connived at. No great systems of philosophy were invented, and the best minds were engaged in writing commentaries on classics or in grinding out second-rate Chinese verses.

"The authorities were afraid of any originality of ideas or boldness of expression. Inventions and discoveries were carefully watched with suspicion and rigorously suppressed. Rigid conventionality reigned supreme. Everything was moulded to a regulated pattern. Every person was labelled. The interferences of the state extended to the size and shape of cakes. Sumptuary laws prescribed the colours and designs of dress for both sexes. Needless to say, class distinctions were insuperable. In the ordinary life of private citizens there was safety as long as laws were obeyed. They led a careless, merry life. Not having even a hypothetical enemy or a rival country to compete with, men lacked incentive for exertion. They were self-contented. What they wanted for food or clothing or housing was produced in the country. They had not learned to miss things from abroad, so entirely self-satisfied was the country. The population naturally remained stationary, and this was due not to birth control, but to abortion and infanticide. In many a daimiate Draconian laws were in operation against these inhuman practices, but they were ineffective in checking the evil.

"Such, then, were the general effects of the isolation policy—detrimental to the free play of the human mind, depriving the people of a foreign incentive, checking the flight of imagination by denying the knowledge of the larger world, reducing the energies of land and people to their lowest level, keeping down population to a small number, preventing the more energetic from engaging in bold

¹ Except of course the influence of the Rangakusha and the Chinese learning, mentioned later.

enterprises. The policy of isolation made of Japan a sort of garden, small and dainty, tended by little people who knew nothing beyond the pretty little things within the hedges. She knew nothing of the world, and the world nothing of her. She became an enigma, an unreality, as much as the great world became a puzzle to her. She just kept herself alive. To continue existence even in the state of complete torpor is the object of hibernation. . . ."¹

Two causes, one from within and the other from without, were finally to bring about the downfall of the Shogunate and the end of the "hibernation". During the whole Tokugawa period, the shōguns and daimyōs had fostered in many ways the development of literature and art. The daimyōs—perhaps as a means of spending leisure hours—had always given attentive ears to the readings and lectures of learned men². During the reign of the Shōgun Ienari (1786-1837) intellectual activity became more and more focussed on historical research. National history came to be recorded with more truthfulness and boldness than even before and the result of these investigations was the discovery that the Shogunate was after all nothing else but a military usurpation and the Tennō was the real source of power. The natural conclusion followed: the military usurper must be overthrown and the rightful ruler recognized. The Mito scholars³—more than any other—became the apostles of the old, yet newly discovered, doctrine. Popular preachers⁴ like 高山正之 *Takayama Masayuki* and 蒲生君平 *Gamō Kumpei* popularized the teachings of the Mito school and stirred up the feelings of the people. In 1827 appeared

¹ *Lectures on Japan*, by Inazo Nitobe, p. 60-63. It has not been my intention to stress only the gloomy side of the isolation. During the Tokugawa period the Japanese have indeed achieved a remarkable refinement of their own culture. Yet, I fully agree with G. B. Sansom, when he writes: "(In Europe) As a matter of sheer arithmetic the chances of progress were improved as more minds were brought to bear on the same problems, and this advantage was increased by the interplay and the competition of nationalities. An astonishing variety of ingredients went to the formation of Western learning, from Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Hebrew, and Arabian to elements out of all the national categories of modern Europe; and in examining the great names in the intellectual history of Europe one is struck by the diversity of their origin. . . . In striking contrast was the position of the Japanese, so placed that they could draw direct inspiration only from the almost static and uniform culture of China." Vide: G. B. Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 457-58.

² Shōin himself has often given explanations before his own daimyō Mōri (Vide: *Chronological Record of Yoshida Shōin*).

³ See chapter IV.

⁴ Murdoch seems to have overlooked the influence of these preachers, because he writes in his *History of Japan* that the influence of the Mito School on the common people was not extraordinarily great, because the teachings of the Mito School were too scholarly. No modern Japanese historian will hold this opinion.

the 日本外史 *Nihon Gaishi* by the historian 賴山陽 *Rai San'yō* (1780-1832) in which the injustice which he claimed was done to the Tennō was clearly expounded. In his 政記 *Seiki* (political history) he traced the history of the Imperial family and mourned with pathos the decadence of the Imperial power. The growing dissatisfaction with the Shōguns became still greater owing to their luxurious private lives and complete disinterest in the poor. Ienari himself was by no means an example for the people and the corruption of his court became really appalling¹.

This was the situation when Shōin was born.

When in 1841 the retired 家齊 *Ienari* died, the Minister 水野忠邦 *Mizuno Tadakuni* took the initiative to rebuild the country by means of the so called 天保改革 *Tempō Kaikaku*, the reform of the Tempō era. He asked the new Shōgun 家慶 *Ieyoshi* (1837-53) if he might be entrusted with the reform of the court and threatened resignation unless he was given a free hand. After having dismissed nearly a thousand court ladies whose influence had overshadowed that of the Shōgun, he turned his eyes to the reform of the administration. The well meant intentions were often nullified because of the impatience of the reformer who desired immediate results. The severe measures often bore the opposite effects and the dissatisfaction with the government was constantly growing among the common people.

The outward cause which brought about the end of the seclusion, came from foreign countries, in the first place Russia. With the appearance of foreign ships, there naturally arose the great problem with regard to foreign policy. With a general survey of this problem which—apart from the restoration of the Imperial power—was almost the only thing, Shōin thought about during the latter part of his life, I will conclude this short account of the historical background.

Yoshimune had already mitigated the seclusion policy to a certain extent and thus awakened interest in foreign countries and their civilization among scholars, politicians and samurais. He had been shown some Dutch books with engravings and had conceived a high opinion of the Dutch cultural achievements². In 1721 he had

¹ For details see Takekoshi Yosaburō, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 227.

² I have not mentioned the trade relations with the Dutch on Deshima. The reason is that I have treated this subject elsewhere, *Modern Japan*, p. 35-39 in the first ed. or p. 40-44 in the second ed.).

abolished the old law of 1630, forbidding the translation of European works and he had encouraged scholars and Samurais to learn as much from the Dutch as they could. The first fruits of Yoshimune's broadmindedness were the translation of several Dutch books into Japanese, principally astronomical, mathematical, geographical, and medical ones. The first book to be translated was the *Tabula Anatomica*, by the Dutch physician J. A. Culmus. The records how the 蘭學 *Rangaku* "Dutch Learning" entered Japan, are highly interesting, especially those from Dutch sources¹. They are at the same time very valuable for the study of the Japanese mentality. With the growing interest in things foreign and the appearance of foreign ships, there naturally arose the important question: Will Japan keep herself secluded or will she again enter into relation with foreign countries? To answer this question satisfactorily we have first to distinguish between the attitude of the Bakufu and that of the Imperial Court, the daimyōs and the samurais. Regarding the attitude of the Shogunate we have again to distinguish between the periods before and after the arrival of Perry. In the first period the Shogunate was decidedly against the opening of the country as we know from the treatment of the Russian envoy. The idea of sending the first Russian ship to the hermit empire came from Catharine II, who had long been thinking of opening up relations. To that purpose she instructed the Governor of Siberia to send ship-wrecked Japanese sailors home and to despatch an envoy along with them. Lieutenant Laxman was selected for the mission. In 1792 he arrived in Hokkaidō. In Hakodate the Japanese authorities handed him a document to the effect "That although it was ordained by the laws of Japan that any foreigners landing upon the coast, except at Nagasaki, should be seized and perpetually imprisoned, yet considering the ignorance of the Russians, and their having brought back the ship-wrecked Japanese, they might be permitted to depart on condition of never approaching, under any pretence, any part of the coast except Nagasaki. As to the Japanese brought back, the Government was

¹ I have treated this in previous publications. For further information vide: *The Early Study of Dutch in Japan*, by K. Mitsukuri, T.A.S.J., Vol. V, Part 1; *The Infiltration of European Civilization in Japan during the 18th Century*, by C. C. Krieger; *Tadataka Inō The Japanese Land-Surveyor*, by Otani, p. 11-34; *Dutch Learning in Japan*, Chapt. XV of Murdoch's *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 537-569; *The Penetration of the Copernican Theory into Feudal Japan*, by B. Szczesniak, J. R.A.S., 1944, Parts 1 and 2; *Jan Compagnie in Japan*, by C. R. Boxer.

much obliged to the Russians, who, however, were at liberty to leave them or take them away again as they pleased, it being a law of Japan that such persons ceased to be Japanese, and became the subjects of that government into whose hands destiny cast them. With respect to commercial relations, these could only take place at Nagasaki and a paper was sent authorizing a Russian vessel to enter that port for that purpose."¹

Yet the foreign menace was sufficiently real to suggest the sending of an expedition for making maps of the coasts, a work in which later Shōin was to indulge with great zeal.

The Japanese seem to have expected the speedy arrival of a Russian mission at Nagasaki. At all events the daimyōs whose territories bordered the sea were notified that the appearance of Russian vessels off their coasts might be looked for. However it was not until 1803 that Russia decided to use the privilege given to Laxman, the pass for one Russian vessel to enter Nagasaki. Nicolai Petrovich Rezanov became the first Russian Ambassador plenipotentiary whose task was to be the opening up of regular trade relations between Russia and Japan. But the Japanese objected strongly and after six months of useless discussions, the expedition left Nagasaki. However Rezanov, still intent on arranging trade relations with Japan, conceived the plan of terrorizing the Japanese into submitting to his demands and several raids on Karafuto and other islands followed. There the Japanese settlements on the shores were raided, setting fire to dwellings and seizing supplies. Many Japanese historians—writing of the Russo-Japanese war—begin their accounts with references to these raids. In 1844 the Dutch warship *Balenburg* arrived at Nagasaki with a letter from the King of Holland, explaining the situation of the world, pointing out the dangers for Japan if the seclusion should go on. Yet his advice was disregarded. "The traditional isolation must be observed, and should foreign ships come, divine interposition, as in the case of the Mongol invasion, would defeat them."²

Then Perry arrived and on July 8th 1853 he entered the bay of Edo with four warships which greatly aroused Shōin's indignation. The records of Perry's visits—both American and Japanese³—are

¹ J. Murdoch, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 512. Vide also: *The Western World and Japan*, by G. B. Sansom, p. 213.

² Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 239.

³ Several diaries of Bakufu officials have been translated, one in the N.O.A.G., one in T.A.S.J., Second Series, Vol. VII.

highly interesting. His chief object was protection for ship-wrecked American seamen and property, permission to secure supplies—especially coal—and the opening of one or more ports for commerce. The intention was for these objects to be obtained by argument and persuasion, but if unsuccessful, he was to state “in the most unequivocal terms, that American citizens wrecked on the coasts of Japan must be treated with humanity”. He was further instructed to be “courteous and conciliatory, but at the same time firm and decided”. The history of the expedition has shown how well the American Commodore carried out these instructions. Only after considerable hesitation the Bakufu changed its foreign policy and concluded a treaty in 1854. “After considerable hesitation”, for after the first appearance of the American ships the Shogunate had the intention of sending the Americans away without any concessions.”

With regard to the attitude of the Imperial Court, the daimyōs and samurais, there was a great difference of opinion. Some were in favour of relations with the outside world, some were against. Those who were in favour of the opening of the country were called 開港論者 *Kaikōronsha*. To them belonged the revered teacher of Shōin 佐久間象山 *Sakuma Shōzan* (assassinated in 1864)¹, 橋本左内 *Hashimoto Sanai* (1834-59)² and many others. Their opponents were called jōironsha or 尊王攘夷論者 *sonnōjōironsha*³, who were in favour of the isolation policy and who would only listen to the Tennō. To this group

¹ After he had been appointed private adviser on matters concerning the coast defense, by the daimyō of Shinano, he made a report in 1842 in which he advocated trade and other relations with foreign countries, this being essential to the national development, the fortifications of all the strategical points on the coast and the building of warships. Shōzan was a scholar in Japanese, Chinese and foreign learning. Actually Shōin studied under him only from the 4th year of Kaei, but he admired him to the very end. Correspondence between them was very frequent. Shōin said that Shōzan was Japan's first scholar at that time. When Shōzan was confined, Shōin asked for his instruction through his disciples. In the second year of Ansei, Shōin sent his Yūin Roku to Shōzan and asked him to correct and criticize it. Shōzan consented and wrote at the end: “Must our friendship which was not from this world, end now?” Just as Shōin, he was a voluminous writer. His intellectual growth is neatly summarized in a few lines which he wrote in 1854: “When I was 20 I knew that men were linked together in one province; when I was 30 I knew that they were linked together in one nation; when I was 40 I knew that they were linked together in one world of 5 continents.” However, he did not acquire a pacific, global philosophy. On the contrary, just as Shōin he remained the fiery patriot. For further information, vide: *The Western World and Japan*, by G. B. Sansom, p. 233-39.

² Sanai strongly advocated the conclusion of a Russo-Japanese alliance.

³ See Chapt. IV.

belonged in the first place the Tennō himself and his kuge, besides quite a number of daimyōs and their samurais. The most fanatical adherents were the people of the Mito clan, especially 齊昭 *Nariaki*, and the people of the Chōshū clan, especially Yoshida Shōin. Yet the latter was on the whole more anti-foreign because of his hatred of the Shogunate¹. Without asking the Imperial Court, the Bakufu had concluded the first treaty with the foreigners. This, I think, was the principal reason why Shōin during the last years of his life became so fanatically anti-foreign. This he showed clearly in the bitter tone of hatred which pervades his later letters. Yet, I am convinced, that if he had lived only ten years longer, he would—with the same fanatical ardour—have welcomed foreign intercourse, in order to build up the new Japan².

¹ This is clearly explained by 徳富吉田松陰 *Tokutomi, Yoshida Shōin*, p. 259-280 and by 奈良本 *Naramoto* in his book on Shōin, published in 1951, p. 120.

² In fact Shōin did not favour the seclusion. "It is shortsighted, it is like a person in a dark room holding his breath." *Tokutomi, op. cit.*, 256-57.

CHAPTER TWO

LIFE OF YOSHIDA SHŌIN

The South of Honshū witnessed the development of many of the events which finally led up to the Meiji restoration which officially took place on January 1st, 1868. The 山口縣 *Yamaguchi Ken*, especially, was the scene of great events. From Yamaguchi a dangerous mountain road leads over the Ichino Saka pass to 萩 *Hagi*. Small as this country town is, it has given birth to two great figures in Japanese history. For here were born 近松門左衛門 *Chikamatsu Monzaemon*, the "Japanese Shakespeare", in 1653 and nearly two centuries later one of the most prominent figures of the later Tokugawa period, Yoshida Shōin, in 1830. I have spent a considerable time in this typical samurai town situated on the blue Japan Sea, to get first hand information about this great example of the 日本精神 *Nihon Seishin* "Japanese Spirit". The place where he lived and taught has become a national shrine and all his manuscripts and many objects related to his life, are kept in this place and well guarded by Shintō priests¹. Hagi—nowadays a quiet little provincial town, a mere shadow of its former glory—is built in a remarkable way. The town is dotted with the 夏蜜柑 *natsumikan* trees, the trees with the yellow summer oranges, which give the whole place a delightful atmosphere. When one enters, a great statue reminds one that here was formerly the residence of the mighty Mōri daimyōs and when one meets the people on the spot, they soon tell you that the great leaders of the Meiji Restoration came from this hidden country town. Shōin himself describes his birthplace as follows: "The Nagato province is situated at the West end of the Japanese mainland in the shadow of the Hagi mountains and it overlooks the Korean Strait. In this country, with its damp climate, stands, East of the Hagi castle, the little village Matsumoto where I

¹ After some hesitation, the author was allowed to study on the spot the beautiful handwriting of Shōin and a few kakemonos painted by him.

was born ¹. On the South of this village flows the Ō river of which the source is unknown and where probably the Taira Descendants live in hiding. To the North East of the river two mountains are situated, the larger of which is called 唐人山 *Tōjinzan*, where Korean captives bake pottery. The smaller is called 長添山 *Nagasoezan*. Here are the castle ruins of the Matsukura and Iga families. Between the mountains and the river stand a thousand houses. The population lives partly from agriculture, partly from the house-industry" ². The 吉田松陰年譜 *Yoshida Shōin Nempu* ³ adds to this that Matsumoto lies at the foot of the 護國山 *Gokokusen*, the mountain that keeps watch over the country.

His father's name was 杉百合之助 *Sugi Yurinosuke*. He was a very simple man with a small income of 26 *koku* ⁴ only. "Most of his time was devoted to agriculture, yet he was an ardent book reader just as well. Even when he pounded the rice, he kept a book on a shelf in front of him, in order to read from time to time. He practised the same while working in the field" ⁵. His son was later to develop this custom to the extreme. Despite the fact, that Shōin was—when still very young—adopted in the sixth year of Tempō (1835) by his uncle 吉田大助 *Yoshida Daisuke*, he remained always attached to the traditional family spirit of the Sugi's. In one of his letters ⁶ which he wrote to his sister 千代 *Chiyo*, he enumerates the great advantages of the Sugi family: "The family law of the Sugi's has really great

¹ Matsumoto is a small hamlet, only a few hundred yards separated from Hagi. Therefore one reads now and then Hagi as his birthplace, another time Matsumoto.

² From 徳富猪一郎 *Tokutomi Ichirō*, *Yoshida Shōin*, p. 32. It has been translated into English by H. E. Coleman and published in the T.A.S.J., Vol. XLV, Part I. I used the original. The translation has many errors. For 長門 he reads Yamato, the dates are incorrect a.o. Yoshi S. Kuno writes in *The Japanese Expansion on the Asiatic Continent*, II, p. 354: "Coleman made serious errors in his translation."

³ See next chapter.

⁴ See Chapt. I, p. 5.

⁵ Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 37. This author must be read with a critical mind. Often he is carried away by his own style and he gives rather the impression of being an exaggerated hero worshipper. I used the revised edition of 1896.

⁶ 書簡篇の一 *Shokan Hen no Ichi*, p. 253-65.

advantages over other family laws, namely it prescribes ancestor worship, without which any family will soon go to pieces, worship of the Gods, charity towards relatives, study of literature, to avoid being submerged in Buddhism and finally it prescribes agriculture."

Although the family did not belong to a high samurai rank, the Bushidō spirit and Shintō tradition were kept very much alive. From olden times there existed loyalty towards the Mōri daimyōs and worship of the Imperial family. Shōin kept until his death a real veneration for his father. Many of his letters show this very clearly ¹. When Shōin was adopted, he took his uncle's family name. This uncle Yoshida was an upright man and very ambitious. He studied diligently the Chinese classics and wished to establish his reputation as a scholar. An early death frustrated this plan. He died when he was 29 years of age². Loyalty towards the Emperor had also taken deep root in the Yoshida family. In addition, Confucianism and Strategy were also diligently studied. The Yoshida's belonged to the 山鹿流 Yamagaryū, the school of 山鹿素行 Yamaga Sokō³. Shōin stood therefore from his early youth under the influence of Sokō and this influence was to grow with the years. That Sokō had to suffer such a long time from the Bakufu—accused of writing "useless books", he was expelled from Edo in 1666 and sent to Akō, where he lived in exile during ten years—aroused great sympathy in Shōin, who called him later his teacher⁴ and developed his ideas.

The keen interest in study which Shōin showed in later years, originated in his early youth. When he went out, he always took a book with him, 風を上げる *Tako wo ageru*, or 獨樂を廻す *Koma wo mawasu* and other children's games were never practised by him, according to his younger sister Chiyo⁵. "I have

¹ Those to his father are to be found in *Shōkan Hen no Ichi*, p. 32, 82, 191, 201, 227, 287, 312, and in *Shōkan Hen no Ni*, p. 161, 173, 206, 240, 336, 395.

² Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

³ 山鹿素行 Yamaga Sokō (1622-1685) studied military science from 16 and later originated a theory of his own, called the New Yamaga Theory on Military Science. Vide Chapt. IV.

⁴ When we meet in the works of Shōin the word 先師 *senshi*, then Yamaga Sokō is always meant. When we read the word 吾師 *Waga shi*, Sakuma Shōzan is meant.

⁵ 吉田松陰 Yoshida Shōin by 香川政 — *Kagawa Masaichi*, p. 59.

never seen him going out for a walk or taking exercise." ¹ Among the many stories—too good to be believed—we are told that the showed from his earliest youth a deep devotion towards the Emperor, making a model of the Imperial palace with mud and saying, that he was imitating the repairing of the desolated Imperial Court by 信長 *Nobunaga* ². In 1838 he entered the clan school 明倫館 *Meirinkan* ³. Another important influence for his later development was that of his uncle 玉木文之進 *Tamaki Bunnoshin*. This uncle of his was a great personality and became later the teacher of the famous general 乃木希典 *Nogi Maresuke*. "When you really desire to serve your country well", Tamaki often told his pupils, "then take the utmost care not to fall into mediocrity." And: "A hundred arts (百術 *hyaku jutsu*) have not the value of one pure act ⁴." Tamaki could be very severe. Once he threw Shōin with his table into the garden ⁵.

When 9 years after the Restoration the pupils of Tamaki participated in the 前原一誠 *Maebara issei* revolt, Tamaki felt personally responsible and ended his life in the real Japanese fashion ⁶. About this time 山田亦介 *Yamada Matasuke* arrived from Edo with news from the outside world: "Lately foreign countries have made great headway and they have invaded many countries of the East; very soon the foreign poison will reach Japan, the whole nation is greatly worried and the people are confused; we must make defences at all costs." ⁷ These words did not fall on deaf ears and at once Shōin started his study of the 長沼 *Naganuma* style of military science. "The day of to-day is an important page in my life and I cannot

¹ Kagawa Masaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

² Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

³ See p. 20.

⁴ 吉田松陰逸話 *Yoshida Shōin Itswwa*, by Kagawa Masaichi, p. 7.

⁵ 日本精神と武士道 *Nihon Seishin to Bushidō* by 仁木笑波 *Nishi Shōha*, p. 79. One of Tamaki's 意見書 *Ikensho*'s (personal opinion) is to be found in 吉田松陰全集第十卷 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū Daijūkan*, p. 37.

⁶ Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁷ Vide *Yoshida Shōin Nempu*.

leave it unwritten." This maxim which he once expressed when still very young, was followed up until his death. When he was seventeen years old his fame gradually spread to such an extent that the daimyō himself came to visit his lessons and to inspect the geographical maps, made by Shōin and his disciples. A little later he was even invited to come up to the Hagi castle in order to discuss current events with the daimyō. These things were certainly not very helpful towards building up a humble character. For centuries we find in Japan young men who are audacious enough to write to grey-haired statesmen about their inner and foreign policy. Shōin was in this respect certainly no exception. When he was eighteen years old he wrote an 意見書 *Ikensho*¹ in which he described his views about the reform of the Meirinkan. This school was one of the clan schools which came into existence as the result of the Genwa Yenbu, the policy of suppression of militarism in the Genwa era, of Ieyasu. After the announcement of Ieyasu's policy, the daimyōs vied with one another in establishing schools, a rivalry which resulted in establishing quite remarkable institutes of learning².

Generally the boys entered these schools when they were nine years old. The first three years were for the greatest part occupied with the learning by heart of texts, with a very small or even no idea at all of the contents. After that—at the thirteenth year—the memorized texts were explained. In addition, four years were spent in learning etiquette (10-14th year) and in calligraphy. At their thirteenth year, the boys started to learn archery. From their

¹ None of Shōin's works was printed during his lifetime. They always remained in manuscripts. The printing of some of his works occurred for the first time during the Meiji era.

² The most noted ones were the 聖道 *Seidō* in Edo, the 養賢堂 *Yōkendō* in Sendai, the 興讓館 *Kōjōkan* in Yonezawa, the 弘道館 *Kōdōkan* in Mito, the 知道館 *Chidōkan* in Kagoshima, the Meirinkan in Hagi, the 時習館 *Jishūkan* in Kumamoto, the 造士館 *Zōshikan* in Kagoshima, the 日新館 *Nissinkan* in Wakamatsu, the 尊聖堂 *Sonseidō* in 大津 *Ōtsu*, the 養老館 *Yōrōkan* in 岩國 *Iwakuni*. There exists a German translation of the schoolrules of the Kōdōkan, made by Dr. Horst Hammitzsch, *Die Institutsordnung des Kōdōkan*, Tōkyō 1939, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- u. Völkerkunde Ostasiens. A short bibliography of Japanese works to be consulted for a study of Japanese education during the Tokugawa period, is to be found in: "*Jiō jinsai*", by J. J. Spae, pag. 137.

fifteenth year, more time was spent with the study of the Chinese classics. After their sixteenth year, tuition in groups came to an end and private tuition began. At their eighteenth year, the young samurais started a special study under the guidance of a specialist. This went on generally until their 22nd year after which time they were free to continue or to leave off.

In this Ikensho, Shōin's first writing, he treats of the necessity of 賞罰 *Shōbatsu*, rewards and punishment, rules, etiquette, examination, election, and so on. "The reform of the Meirinkan could not be justified if the life of the people went on in the same way. We have had a long period of peace and consequently the people have begun to lead luxurious lives and they do not tread any more the true path. When under a good government literary and military science will be promoted among the people, their way of life will become more simple and solid."¹

Shōin obtained the post of a regular teacher at the Meirinkan when he was eighteen years old, but his work was to be interrupted by many travels for the purpose of acquiring a better knowledge of the country and of studying all sorts of possibilities for defence. It was during these travels that he came into contact with a great number of the scholars and patriots of his time. When he was twenty years old, he travelled to Kyūshū and a year later to Edo. Of these travels Shōin wrote an extensive account in his 西遊日記 *Saiyū Nikki* and his 東遊日記 *Tōyū Nikki*, diary of the journey to the West and diary of the journey to the East². A year later he went with two soldier friends 宮部 *Miyabe* and 江幡 *Ebata* to the North. This journey brought him into contact with the scholars of the Mito School which had an enormous influence on his later life³. Studying his diaries one gets the impression of a young man feverishly dashing forward, constantly inquiring, interviewing, making notes, writing down in detail his expenses, copying books, studying languages etc. This attitude of mind he kept more or less until his death. An atmosphere of imma-

¹ Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 144-45. Shōin has written many other Ikensho's.

² They are to be found in 吉田松陰全集第七卷 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū, Dai shichi Kan*, p. 98-172.

³ "Until now I did not know why Japan was a 神州 *shinshū*, a land of the Gods. The Mito School has taught me so". Vide: Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 161-62.

turity pervades his whole life and all his writings. When therefore Tokutomi writes: "In point of fact, Shōin had no childhood. As soon as he came to the age of reason, he was already a man,"¹ I think that, on the contrary, he kept the inexperience of youth until his death.

An accident is connected with Shōin's Northern journey that brought him into conflict with his daimyō. During the Tokugawa period a samurai always needed a special travel permit from his own daimyō for travelling through other clans. Yoshida had applied for the permit, but the issue of it took some time. As he had agreed with his friends to leave on a certain date, he did not wait until the travel permit was issued. "One promise is heavier than a mountain," he said. "Even though I must give up my hereditary income and my samurai title, the work through which I perform my duty for my country, does not mean being tied down by unimportant rules", and quoting a Chinese poem, he went on: "When I raise my head, I see the Universe and the wide road that I take leads everywhere."² And according to Kagawa, Shōin said about this event: "When I, as a true man, have made the promise to leave my province, I bring honour to my country by keeping it, and I disgrace my country by not keeping it. Therefore the honour or the disgrace of the country depends on my deed."³ Thus, he left and went up to the North. However, he did not escape a just punishment. Lord Mōri, his daimyō, called him back to Hagi and ordered detention in his home. This did not last long; he was soon free again and even got from his daimyō a permit for a ten years journey for the purposes of study. So far, I think, Shōin was treated very generously. In 1853, then, he left again and went to Edo via the 中仙道 *Nakasendō*⁴. At the end of the same year Shōin tried, with the help of Sakuma Shōzan, to board a Russian ship, but when he arrived at Nagasaki, the ships had already left⁵. Yet his determination to go abroad became stronger and stronger, especially

¹ Lit.: he was already *hitoridachi no danji*, an independent man.

² Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

³ Kagawa, *Yoshida Shōin*, p. 53.

⁴ From olden times there were between Kyōto and Edo two highways, one along the coast the 東海道 *Tōkaidō* and the other over the mountain ranges of Central Japan, the 中仙道 *Nakasendō*.

⁵ Here is meant the visit of Count Admiral Putiatin who entered Nagasaki harbour on the 21st of August 1853 with 4 Russian men-of-war.

when he had seen for the first time American warships in Uraga. Clearly he saw the superiority of the foreigners as regards their technical achievements. Again encouraged by Sakuma, he was determined to go abroad. In the face of the great urgency and importance, all the prohibitions of the Bakufu were of no binding force for him whatsoever. To his brother he wrote his determination: "I have made a resolution, and the time is ripe to put it into practice, whatever might happen, even if Mount Fuji should fall asunder and the river beds should become dry."¹ Yet unsurmountable obstacles were put in his way. When the fleet of Perry went to Shimoda, he went there with his friend 金子重輔 *Kaneko Shigesuke*. They made five definite plans to board the ships and five times they failed. Then at long last they stole a fisherman's boat and planned to go direct to the warships.

So far I have followed Japanese sources, but as to how the last attempt to go abroad failed, we are better informed from American sources. The American ships remained for several days in Shimoda and the officers of the squadron visited the shore daily. On one of these occasions a party had gone out into the country, when they found two Japanese following them, these being Shōin and his friend. They first made on the Americans the impression of being spies and they therefore took little notice of them. Their short contact with the Japanese had already taught them enough about the tendency of the Japanese to suspect. Observing, however, that Shōin and Kaneko seemed to be approaching as though desirous of seeking an opportunity of speaking, the American officers awaited their approach. Shōin and Kaneko gave the American officers the impression of being men of position and rank.

"Their manners showed the usual courtly refinement of the better classes, but they exhibited the embarrassment of men who evidently were not perfectly at their ease, and were about to do something of dubious propriety. They cast their eyes stealthily about, as if to assure themselves that none of their countrymen were at hand to observe their proceedings, and then approaching one of the officers and pretending to admire his watch-chain, slipped within the breast of his coat a folded paper. They now significantly with the finger upon the lips, entreated secrecy, and

¹ Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 178. Tokutomi interprets (certainly in his own way) Mount Fuji as meaning the police, residing in Kamakura and the riverbed as meaning the American ships.

rapidly made off." ¹ Thus runs the account of the Expedition to Japan, written by Francis L. Hawks. The paper proved to be a letter of which I give here the literal translation as made by Williams, the interpreter of the American squadron ².

"Two scholars from Edo, in Japan, present this letter for the inspection of the high officers and those who manage affairs. Our attainments are few and trifling, as we ourselves are small and unimportant, so that we are abashed in coming before you; we are neither skilled in the use of arms, nor are we able to discourse upon the rules of strategy and military discipline; in trifling pursuits and idle pastimes our years and months have slipped away. We have, however, read in books, and learned a little by hearsay, what are the customs and education in Europe and America, and we have been for many years desirous of going over the five great continents, but the laws of our country in all maritime points are very strict; for foreigners to come into the country and for natives to go abroad, are both immutably forbidden. Our wish to visit other regions has consequently only gone to and fro in our own breasts in continual agitation like one's breathing being impeded or his walking cramped. Happily the arrival of so many of your ships in these waters, and stay for so many days, which has given us opportunity to make a pleasing acquaintance and careful examination, so that we are fully assured of the kindness and liberality of your excellencies, and your regard for others, has also revived the thoughts of many years, and they are urgent for an exit."

"This, then, is the time to carry the plan into execution, and we now secretly send you this private request, that you will take us on board your ships as they go out to sea; we can thus visit around in the five great continents, even if we do, in this, slight the prohibitions of our own country. Lest those who have the management of affairs may feel some chagrin at this, in order to effect our desire, we are willing to serve in any way we can on board of the ships,

¹ *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the Chinese seas and Japan*, compiled from the original notes and journals of Commodore Perry and his officers by F. L. Hawks, p. 484-85.

² The 吉田松陰全集 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. VII, p. 420-21 has the original under the heading 投夷書 *Tōishō* (Paper thrown to the foreigners). The original was written by Shōin himself. Dr. S. Wells Williams, who was first a very distinguished American missionary, was a very good Oriental scholar. After the Perry expedition, he became official interpreter to the U.S. Legation at Peking. His translation is very accurate.

and obey the orders given us. For doubtless it is, that when a lame man sees others walking he wishes to walk too; but how shall the pedestrian gratify his desires when he sees another riding? We have all our lives been going hither to you, unable to get more than thirty degrees East and West, or twenty-five degrees North and South; but now when we see how you sail on the tempests and cleave the huge billows, going lightning speed thousands and myriads of miles, skirting along the five great continents, can it not be likened to the lame finding a plan for walking, and the pedestrian seeing a mode by which he can ride? If you who manage affairs will give our request your consideration, we will retain the sense of the favor; but the prohibitions of our country are still existent, and if this matter should become known, we should uselessly see ourselves pursued and brought back for immediate execution without fail, and such a result would greatly grieve the deep humanity and kindness you all bear towards others. If you are willing to accede to this request, keep 'wrapped in silence our error in making it' until you are about to leave, in order to avoid all risk of such serious danger to life; for when, by-and-by, we come back, our countrymen will never think it worth while to investigate bygone doings. Although our words have only loosely let our thoughts leak out, yet truly they are sincere; and if your excellencies are pleased to regard them kindly, do not doubt them nor oppose our wishes. We together pay our respects in handing this in. April 11." ¹

A little note was attached to it, asking for a meeting with the officers the following night, in order to take them away to the American ships. The above letter was revised and corrected by Sakuma Shōzan ². They did not sign with their own names. Shōin signed under the name of 瓜中萬二 *Kwa no Uchi Manji* and Kaneko under the name of 市木公太 *Ichigi Kōta* (Isagi

¹ F. L. Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 485-86. The original is also to be found in Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 191-93.

² In *Makers of Japan* by J. Morris, we read that Sakuma had given to Shōin an encouraging letter of which the following is a part: "He has journeyed a hundred leagues and though he has not yet disclosed to me the trend of his thoughts, I perceive that he is meditating some explicit out of the ordinary. An intelligent person would not fail to profit hugely in a tour of the globe by the opportunities presented of acquiring expensive views of men and things. Unless a man achieves something wonderful in life, he cannot hope to bear a high reputation after his death." This letter fell in the hands of his political foes who promptly denounced Sakuma to the Government as having instigated a Japanese subject to transgress the laws and his arrest and imprisonment speedily followed, *op. cit.*, p. 110. He was freed in 1862 but later in 1864 assassinated in Kyōto. Vide also: Armstrong, *Light from the East*, p. 192-93.

Kooda). During the succeeding night, about two o'clock, the officer of the watch on board the Mississippi was aroused by a voice from a boat alongside and going to the gangway, he found there the two Japanese. With the help of the deck light thrown upon them, Shōin wrote: "We wish to go to America. Would you kindly ask the commander this?" The officer of the watch however did not understand very much and directed them to the flagship to which they pulled off at once: "Heaving reached her with some difficulty, in consequence of the heavy swell in the harbour, they had hardly got upon the ladder and mounted to the gangway, when their boat got adrift, either by accident, or from being let go intentionally."¹

When Perry heard of their arrival, he immediately sent his interpreter to learn the purpose of their visit. Though the two adventurers had strenuous days and nights behind them and though they had lost part of their clothing and their swords, they made a good impression on the Commodore. This seems to me of some importance, because Stevenson speaks of Shōin's outward stature, "as being ugly and disfigured with the smallpox"². Hawks, however, writes in his account: "They seemed much fatigued by their boating excursion, and their clothes showed signs of being travel-worn, although they proved to be Japanese gentlemen of good position. They were educated men, and wrote the mandarin Chinese with fluency and apparent elegance, and their manners were courteous and highly refined."³

"When the Commodore learned the purpose of their visit, he told them, through the interpreter, that they first needed permission from their Government. Shōin and Kaneko were greatly disturbed by this answer and explained that if they returned to the land, they would lose their heads. A long discussion followed in which they used every possible argument. However, without avail. A

¹ F. L. Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 486. The interpreter has read Isagi Kooda instead of Ichigi Kōta.

² R. L. Stevenson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. This is one of Stevenson's short stories. He tells us something about Shōin—not very important—"on the authority of an intelligent Japanese gentleman, Mr. Taiso Masaki". Of the matter in this short story some facts are historical, other belong to fantasy. As the narrative of Hawks has great historical value and because it shows a keen observation on the part of the Americans, we can safely dismiss Stevenson's remarks about Shōin's outward stature. Full information about this subject is to be found in the good study of 廣瀬豊 Hirose

Yutaka 吉田松陰の研究 *Yoshida Shōin no Kenkyū*, p. 150-57.

³ F. L. Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

boat was now lowered, and after some mild resistance on their part to being sent off, they descended the gangway, piteously deploring their fate, and were landed on a spot near where it was supposed their boat might have drifted."¹

This apparent failure was the beginning of Shōin's sorrowful journey that was to end on the scaffold in Edo. "That the country of my Ruler may enjoy peace, I would gladly give my life away."² This was his last *waka* which he wrote, when he left Hagi for the last time and set out on his final Edo journey. Yet his apparent failure was the beginning of the last short period of his life that was to set him high on his country's roll of fame.

When the American officers, a few days later, went ashore again, they passed an open prison and there recognised Shōin and Kaneko in a kind of cage of small dimensions (which still exist in Japan in modern times). "They seemed to bear their misfortune with great equanimity, and were greatly pleased apparently with the visit of the American officers."³ When one of the visitors was approaching the cage, one of the Japanese—and this must have been Shōin—wrote on a piece of board the following:

„When a hero fails in his purpose his acts are then regarded as those of a villain and a robber. In public have we been seized and pinioned and caged for many days. The village elders and headmen treat us disdainfully, their oppressions being grievous indeed. Therefore looking up while yet we have nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves, it must now be seen whether a hero will prove himself to be one indeed. Regarding the liberty of going through the sixty States as not enough for our desires, we wished to make the circuit of the five great continents. This was our hearts' wish for a long time. Suddenly our plans are defeated, and we find ourselves in a half-sized house, where eating, resting, sitting, and sleeping are difficult; how can we find our exit from this place?

¹ F. L. Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 486-87.

² かけまくも
君が國こそ
安ければ
身を捨つるこそ
賤が本意なれ
Kakemakumo
Kimi ga Kuni koso
Yasukereba
Mi wo tsuturu koso
Shizu ga hoi nare.

³ F. L. Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

Weeping, we seem as fools; laughing as rogues. Alas! for us; silent we can only be."

Kwa no Uchi Manji, Ichigi Kōta.

When Perry was informed about the two prisoners, he tried to do something for them, telling the officials that he thought the whole episode very insignificant, even praising the commendable curiosity of the two. "It is a comfort to be able to add", ends the American narrative of the event, "that the Commodore received an assurance from the authorities, upon questioning them, that he need not apprehend a serious termination."¹

From now on a whole series of imprisonments begins. The Yoshida Shōin Nempu relates thus: "On the 12th of May 1854 Shōin was taken to the 傳馬町 *Demmachō* prison in Edo."² He stayed here 150 days only. By order of the Bakufu his imprisonment was

¹ F. L. Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 488-89. The account given by J. W. Spalding of the U. S. Steam-Frigate *Mississippi*, reads as follows: "That night the officer of the mid-watch of the *Mississippi* heard the words 'American! American!' pronounced in a low tone from the top of the gangwayladder, and immediately two young Japanese descended to the deck. They made signs to him of great fatigue, held up their tender though blistered hands, and desired to cast off their boat from the ship, which they were not permitted to do. An attempt was made to comprehend them by means of a Chinese servant, who was awake for the purpose, but the domestic celestial insisted that they had 'rice for sale'. The commander of the *Mississippi* directed them to be put on board of the flag-ship. Here it was ascertained they were from Yedo; that they were desirous of coming to our country, and that, unable to effect that object or have communication with us when we lay off Yokohama, they had followed us, at much risk, in an open boat, from the bay of Yedo to our anchorage at Simoda. Their plan was, after getting on board of us, to permit their boat to go adrift, allowing their swords to remain in her, which family relics the Japanese regard as very heir-looms, not to be parted with but in the last extremity, and by this means to produce the belief that their owners had been drowned when the boat should be picked up. Fearing there might be some deception in the matter, perhaps a ruse to see in what faith we were prepared to observe their laws, which we were aware prohibited any of their people from leaving Japan for a foreign country, they were ordered to be put ashore in a ship's boat at a point where they would not be liable to observation, which was done, the hour being nearly two in the morning. On reaching the beach they soon disappeared in the woods.

A few days afterwards, some of our officers in their strolls ashore, ascertained that there were two Japanese confined in a cage at a little barrack back of the town, and on going there they were found to be the persons who had paid the midnight visit to our ships, and they also proved to be my unfortunate friends of the letter. They did not appear greatly down-cast by their situation

The commodore, it is said, did not bear of their capture and confinement, until the next morning, when he sent some officers ashore to see what might be done in the way of intercession, but on reaching the barrack, it was found that they had that morning been sent to the city of Yedo, and as the attendant at the place made sign, for the purpose of being beheaded." "Japan and Around the World", by J. W. Spalding, p. 281-83.

² Vide: *Yoshida Shōin Nempu*. For further information regarding the *Demmachō* prison, vide F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 642.

changed into confinement in the house of his daimyō at Azabu (Edo). From there Shōin and Kaneko were sent to Hagi where they arrived on the 14th of December. Shōin went to the Noyama prison and Kaneko to the Iwakura prison. From this time on Shōin's literary and educational activities began to develop more and more. Within a year he was allowed to change the prison for confinement in the house of the Sugi's. Again, I think so far Shōin has been treated generously. Already when in prison, he had started to teach his co-prisoners. But during his confinement in the Sugi family, he began to be very influential indeed as a teacher. First he taught in secret, later openly. In 1857 Shōin was allowed by special permission of his daimyō to take over the private school of his uncle Tamaki, the 村塾 *Sonjuku*, which was to become famous in the history of modern Japan. All in all the time of his teaching did not last longer than two years and a half. Yet during this short time he could impress his mind and his ideas on the great future leaders of the Meiji restoration¹. On orders of the Bakufu, his detention became more severe in 1858. The frank statement of his pupils brought him again under suspicion in Edo, but definitely after his plot to kill 間部詮勝 *Manobe Norikatsu*², which was discovered by the Shogunal police, he was ordered to Edo, where he was condemned to death. In order to put Shōin's arrest, and his subsequent condemnation to death, in a truer light, I think it necessary to say a little more on this subject. During the last years—especially between 1930 and '45—something like a legend has been built up round Shōin. In children's books, in the readers of the primary and secondary schools of Japan—no one who knows modern Japan will wonder at this—but also in the biographies of him which are considered in Japan to be objective and critical³,

¹ For instance 伊藤博文 *Itō Hirobumi* (1841-1909), a long time Prime Minister and the author of the Japanese Constitution, 木戸孝允 *Kido Kōin* and 前原一誠 *Maebara Issai*, both 参議 *sangi*, "State councillor" in the beginning of the Meiji period, 山縣有朋 *Yamagata Aritomo*, another Prime Minister, and the Cabinet Ministers 品川彌次郎 *Shinagawa Yajirō*, 野村靖 *Nomura Yasukichi*, 山田顯義 *Yamada Ahiyoshi*, etc.

² 1802-1884. Vide Chapt. III.

³ 香川政一 *Kagawa Masachi*, 松陰逸話 *Shōin Itsuwu*,

practically the whole blame of Shōin's condemnation has been put on the Bakufu officials. They were "narrow minded", they never "discovered Shōin's greatness", their accusations against Shōin were not "sufficiently founded", or at any rate the punishment was far too severe. It is the author's opinion that on the part of the Bakufu, no injustice was done to Shōin. In order to make this clear, I will first try to shed some light on the circumstances. I repeat "some light", because the time from 1850-1860 was perhaps one of the most troublesome Japan ever had in her history and Japanese historians confess themselves that a very great amount of research has still to be done covering those ten years¹.

There were three Prime Ministers during this period: 阿部正弘 *Abe Masahiro*, 堀田正睦 *Hotta Masamutsu*, and 井伊直弼 *Ii Naosuke*. About the former the Japanese historians are divided. Some extol him very much as a wise statesman, others regard him rather as a man with a narrow horizon who was able to keep his position thanks to the shrewd way in which he placated the immediate environs of the shogunal court, especially the ladies.

In the first years of his prime-ministership he advocated a strong policy against foreigners and insisted that the foreign warships should be driven off at once. Later, seeing that these aims were not attainable, his foreign policy became more moderate. From this time on, the daimyō of Mito 徳川齊昭 *Tokugawa Nariaki* became his fierce opponent, expressing at the same time openly his adherence to the Imperial Court. As far as I can judge, he was

廣瀬豊 *Hirose Yutaka*, 吉田松陰の研究 *Yoshida Shōin no Kenkyū*,

後藤三郎 *Gotō Saburō*, 吉田松陰とその教育 *Yoshida*

Shōin to sono Kyōiku, 關根悦郎 *Sekine Etsurō* 吉田松陰, *Yoshida*

Shōin. It is however not the intention of the author to blame these writers severely. I know of two historians, who had simply to comply with the Japanese military authorities regarding some historical views expressed in their manuscripts. Otherwise they would have met with the greatest difficulties.

¹ For instance Professor 幸田成友 *Kōda Naritomo*, History professor at the 慶應大學 *Keiō Daigaku*, the leading modern writer on the history of the great cities, writes concerning this fact: "There are few historical materials available for the last ten years of the Bakufu rule, as the end was in sight and much confusion developed. It is essential that investigation should be made to fill this gap. This applies not only to economic history. From every point of view I would emphasize the need for the study of the history of this period, which must be undertaken, however great the difficulties facing the student." *M.N.*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 171.

perfectly right. He knew that sooner or later Japan had simply to open her country, yet the anti-foreign sentiment was growing so fiercely, that he was placed in a serious dilemma. He, then, asked the advice of the daimyōs who were in charge of the coast defence. This was: first the coast defence must be completed and after that foreign policy has to be considered¹. This course, although perhaps theoretically not completely impossible, could not be brought into practice and he was again at a loss to know what to do. After the first visit of Perry, he tried hard to make Nariaki change his views on foreign policy. Yet Nariaki remained obstinate and privately he even suggested a surprise attack on the Americans when all aboard should be made prisoners. In my opinion, he was perfectly right in opposing Nariaki and his party, who were carried away by their strong feelings in a somewhat exaggerated way².

¹ The daimyōs who were not in charge of the coast defence were almost unanimously against the opening of the country. Only a few suggested opening the country temporarily and trying the experiment for three, five or ten years.

² In a memorandum he gave his views to the Shōgunate. I give them here as translated by Nitobe (quoted from *Japan*, by D. Murray, p. 318-320):

"1—The annals of our history speak of the exploits of the great, who planted banners on alien soil; but never was the clash of foreign arms heard, within the precincts of our holy ground. Let not our generation be the first to see the disgrace of a barbarian army treading on the land where our fathers rest.

"2—Notwithstanding the strict interdiction of Christianity there are those guilty of the heinous crime of professing the doctrines of this evil sect. If now America be once admitted into our favor, the rise of this faith is a matter of certainty.

"3—What! Trade our gold, silver, copper, iron, and sundry useful materials for wool, glass, and similar trashy little articles! Even the limited barter of the Dutch factory ought to have been stopped.

"4—Many a time recently have Russia and other countries solicited trade with us but they were refused. If once America is permitted the privilege, what excuse is there for not extending the same to other nations?

"5—The policy of the barbarians is first to enter a country for trade, then to introduce their religion and afterward to stir up strife and contention. Be guided by the experience of our forefathers two centuries back; despise not the teachings of the Chinese Opium War.

"6—The Dutch Scholars say that our people should cross the Ocean, go to other countries and engage in active trade. This is all very desirable, provided they be as brave and strong as were their ancestors in olden time; but at present the long-continued peace has incapacitated them for any such activity.

"7—The necessity of caution against the ships now lying in harbor (i.e. Perry's squadron) has brought the valiant samurai to the capital from distant quarters. Is it wise to disappoint them?

"8—Not only the naval defence of Nagasaki but all things relating to foreign affairs have been entrusted to the two clans of Kuroda and Nabeshima. To hold any conference with a foreign power outside of the port of Nagasaki—as has been done this time at Uraga—is to encroach upon their rights and trust. These powerful families will not thankfully accept an intrusion into their rested authority.

"9—The haughty demeanor of the barbarians now at anchorage has provoked even the illiterate populace. Should nothing be done to show that the government shares the indignation of the people, they will lose all fear and respect for it.

"10—Peace and prosperity of long duration have enervated the spirit, rusted the armor and blunted the swords of our men. Dull to ease, when shall they be aroused? Is not the present the most auspicious moment to quicken their sinews of war?

Even later, when Nariaki became fully convinced that a war with America was simply out of the question, because of the poor state of the national finances, he insisted on clinging to his former opinions out of fear of the people, all of whom knew his strong anti-foreign sentiments, and for fear of being criticised for lack of backbone and for being led by others. When finally a treaty with America was concluded, the relation between Nariaki and the Imperial Court became closer and closer. On the instigation of the Mito people, the Emperor asked the opinion of Lord Mōri what to do and Shōin—before his daimyō had answered—privately sent his own opinion 對策 *Taisaku* (counter-move) to the Emperor in which Shōin insisted fiercely on opposing the foreigners.

In the meanwhile Abe was succeeded by Hotta Masamutsu in 1856 who now announced openly for the first time the policy of the Shogunate favouring foreign intercourse. Here, I think, Hotta was right as Townsend Harris¹, who often acted as diplomatic adviser to the Shogunate, had explained in great detail to him the conditions in the world, the strength of foreign navies and so on. On the other hand, the Imperial Court remained uninformed of these things. They tried to bring Japan again to her former isolated position. The Imperial Court became further stiffened in their attitude, because Nariaki gave the Court in Kyōto to understand that his clan and many others², were determined and ready to fight the Shogunate and the foreign countries and at the same time would work for the restoration of the Imperial power. This confirmed the attitude of the Imperial Court so much that when later Hotta visited Kyōto personally and gave all details regarding the circumstances attending the signing of the treaty with the U.S., they would not listen. Moreover, things became confused, and were still more complicated through the contention over the choice of the heir to the Shōgun. Ii Naosuke, who followed Hotta as Prime Minister of the Shogunate, had accepted the foreign policy of his predecessor, but was at the same time determined not to concede in any question that might have a fatal bearing upon the future of the Shogunate, which now became seriously menaced by the Mito, Chōshū and other clans, and by the court nobles in Kyōto. I consider, too, that Naosuke was right in his firm endeavour to

¹ First American Consul in Japan. His diary is highly interesting.

² Chōshū, Satsuma, Tosa, Hizen, etc.

crush all revolutionary attempts against the Shogunate; and that when, at the 安政の大獄 *Ansei no taigoku* (the great execution of the Ansei era) which followed, Shōin was one of the many who were arrested, that no injustice was committed. Time and again Shōin had plotted against the Shogunate, inciting his pupils to take action, but in particular he was the "auctor intellectualis" of a conspiracy to kill the 老中 *rōchū*¹ 間部詮勝 *Manobe Norikatsu*², the right hand of Ii Naosuke, who was sent to Kyōto by Naosuke in order to imprison several *kuges* and samurais. When, therefore, Ii Naosuke finally condemned Shōin to death, no injustice was done to him³.

Nearly all the biographers of Shōin, when they describe his last year, become sentimental and dramatic. Shōin himself gave ample occasion for this. It was indeed in keeping with the style of his life to colour his last months with pathos. His final writings (the best he ever produced) prove this very clearly.

Before Shōin started on his final journey, he was allowed to pass the last night at home. His younger sister and all the members of the family waited impatiently for his arrival. His (real) mother went out to meet him and conducted him immediately to the bath-room. There she washed him and gave him many little attentions. "My dear mother, you really give yourself too much trouble over me," he replied. When, early next morning, the gong of the Myōan temple sounded, the guards arrived to inform him that the hour of the departure had come. Then Shōin's foster mother asked him: "Won't you write something for your mother as a remembrance?" Out of her kimono sleeve, she took a roll of paper and gave it to Shōin. Standing outside and holding the paper against the door post, he composed his *Kahemakumo*, quoted above⁴. Before climbing into the sedan chair, he walked for the last time to the little 村塾 *sonjuku* and admonished the assembled pupils that they should never forget his lessons. After that he climbed into the sedan chair for the last journey. The rain was pouring down when the porters started. Although it was forbidden to accompany him, his prin-

¹ *Rōchū* = member of the Shōgun's Council.

² Vide: *Nempu*, p. 48.

³ Certainly Shōin's motives were unselfish and his final goal extremely laudable, however: *finis non sanctificat media*.

⁴ P. 27.

cipal pupils followed at a distance till they came to a place 涙松 *Namidamatsu*, "pinetree of tears". Here the porters put down the chair in order to change their straw sandals. In the meantime Shōin composed the beautiful *waka*: "This is the journey, I presume, from which I shall never return. We all are drenched here, at the pine-tree of tears."¹

During the journey to Edo he composed several other poems which are called 涙松集 *Ruishōshū*, "Collection of the pinetree of tears". From his prison in Edo, he wrote to his parents the lovely poem that every Japanese knows by heart and in which Shōin exalts parental love above filial piety: "The heart of a child that thinks of its parents, is surpassed by parental affection. How will they receive to-day's news?"²

This news was his condemnation to death. During his last days³ he wrote his well known 留魂録 *Ryūkon roku*, which he finished with the *waka*: "In this world, I have nothing else to do save wait for the voice that will summon me."⁴ (And 4 other *waka*'s, vide p. 117.)

In the life of Shōin written by Ikeda Nobumasa the author treats extensively of the calmness in which Shōin took his death⁵. In his last letter to his parents, he took the guilt to himself: "Because my knowledge was too superficial and my sincerity not enough to move heaven and earth, therefore it has come thus far."⁶

When all was over, his pupils 飯田正伯 *Iida Seihaku*, 尾寺新之丞 *Odera Shinnojō*, 木戸孝允 *Kido Kōin*, 桂小五郎 *Katsura Kogorō*, and 伊藤利輔 *Itō Toshisuke* came to take the body, which was refused. Three days later,

¹ *Kaeraji to Omoi sadameshi Tabi nareba*
Hitoshio nururu Namidamatsu hana."

² "Oya omou Kohoro ni masaru Oyagohoro
Kyō no otozure Nan to hikuran."

Of this and the foregoing *waka* another suggested translation is given later.

³ From the 19th of November until the 20th late in the evening.

⁴ "Yobidasshi no Koe matsu haka ni Ima no yo ni
Matsubeki koto no Nahari keru hana."

⁵ He excused himself before the 首斬 1) *Kubikiri* (executioner) called 山田淺右衛門 *Yamada Asaemon*: "I thank you very much for the service which you are going to do", and thus speaking, quietly he led down his life. 吉田松陰 *Yoshida Shōin*, 池田宣政 *Ikeda Nobumasa*, p. 301.

⁶ Vide, p. 106.

however, they were allowed to approach the body and covered it with new clothes and buried it in the 下屋敷 *Shimoyashiki* grounds of the 回向院 *Ekōin* cemetery in 小塚原 *Kozukabara* (Edo.)

In the life of Prince Itō, by Kengi Hamada we read:

"Upon his arrival at Edo, Ito was beset by the first great sorrow of his life. For the rumors which had first sent him on that mission to Kyōto, had actually materialized, not in the abduction of the Emperor, but in the prostration of the Imperial Court under Lord Ii's direction and the arrest, punishment and beheading of its most eminent leaders, including Shōin himself.

"Ito and his new master Kido, set foot in Edo in time to receive Shōin's remains from the Shogunate authorities. The two, together with Iida, a Chōshū physician, attended to the preparations of his burial. Kido first disrobed himself and with the juban, or innermost garment which he wore, he wrapped the lifeless form that once contained Shōin's animating spirit. Then Iida who followed next, covered it with his own shitagi, or mid-garment of black silk. Over all this Ito placed his own silken sash, the obi, to complete the ceremonial robes of the deceased. Thus clothed, Shōin's remains were placed in a casket and lowered into his tomb close to the graves of other distinguished royalists whose spirits had preceded his. It was a sorrowful moment for the youthful Ito. It filled him with an added sense of the tyranny of the Shōgun's Government, with the ever increasing spirit of revolt against this tyranny which animated the faithful followers of the Emperor." ¹

Four years later, in 1863, the body was taken and definitely buried in the 世田ヶ谷 *Setagaya* cemetery where it is still at the present moment, and where a beautiful Shōin Jinja has been built in 1932 only a few yards from the grave.

¹ *Prince Ito*, by Kengi Hamada, p. 22-23.

CHAPTER THREE

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF YOSHIDA SHŌIN

The following is a translation of the 吉田松陰年譜 *Yoshida Shōin Nempu*¹, the chronological record of the life of Yoshida Shōin. I have written the dates according to the European Solar Calendar. The original Japanese text runs literally: First year of Tempō, 2490 years after the foundation of Japan, the fourth day of the eighth month..., etc. I have therefore left out the names of the periods during which Shōin lived².

1830 Shōin was born on the 20th of September 1830 in the hamlet of Matsumoto near Hagi at a place called Dangoiwa, which is situated in the province of Nagato at the foot of a mountain, known as "Guardian of the country" (*Gokoku*). He was the second son of the retainer Sugi Yurinosuke Tsunemichi, who had an income of 26 *koku*³. His mother's name was Kodama taki. His name in youth was Toranosuke. Later his name was changed three times: Daijirō, Matsujirō, and Torajirō. His samurai name was Norikata. Besides he was often given the 字 *azana* (nickname) of Shigi⁴. Shōin's pen name was 二十一回猛士 *Nijū Ikkai Mōshi* (the 21 times audacious samurai). From time to time he took as pen name: Hotosei, Muitsu, Hyōichibō, Matsu no Tasaburō; Kwa no Uchi Manji, he used only on one occasion⁵.

1834 In this year Shōin was pledged by his parents to become the adopted son of Yoshida Daisuke Kenryō. The house of Yoshida served from olden times the daimyō Mōri as teachers of the Yamagaryū⁶. Their income was 57 *koku*, 6 *to*⁷.

¹ Published as a kind of preface to the first volume of the *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*.

² Shōin lived during the eras: Tempō, Kōka, Kaei, and Ansei.

³ Vide Chapt. I, p. 5.

⁴ For the terminology of Japanese names, vide B. H. Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 317-321 (second edition) or p. 344-348 (fifth edition). Besides: Koop and Inada, *Japanese Names*, p. 68.

⁵ Vide Chapt. II, p. 23.

⁶ Vide Chapt. II, p. 18.

⁷ Vide Chapt. I, p. 5.

1835 Daisuke died on the 3rd of April at the age of 28¹. Shōin took the name of Yoshida, but he remained still in the Sugi family. His name was changed this year into Daijirō. Because Shōin was too young, by the order of the daimyō the teachers in military science, Watanabe Rokubei, Hayashi Shinjin, Tamaki Bunnoshin, and Ishizu Heishichi, were made tutors and legal representatives. Thereafter, there were a few changes among those tutors.

1838 In January Shōin put on for the first time the samurai's ceremonial dress (袴 *Kamishimo*)². In the same month he entered the clan school Meirinkan as pupil of the 家學 Kagaku (Yamagaryū). From this time until 1851 he lived partly with the Sugi family, partly with Tamaki Bunnoshin.

1839 At the end of November—when attending the Meirinkan—he acted for the first time as pupil-teacher. By order of the daimyō Shōin's tutors were changed. From now on Hayashi Shinjin, Ishizu Heishichi, and Yamada Uemon acted as such.

1840 In May Asano Kogenta became tutor of the *kagaku*. In this year the daimyō Yoshichika³ assembled the teachers of literary and military science in his castle to be instructed by them. On this occasion Shōin explained before them the three arts of warfare from the 戦法 *Sempō*⁴ chapter of the *bukyō zensho*⁵. He quoted now and then the 經書 *Keisho*. The daimyō very much admired the dextrous handling of the subject and he asked the name of the teacher of Yoshida. Those present answered: "It is Tamaki Bunnoshin".

1841 He learned horsemanship under the skilful guidance of Hatano Genzaemon.

1842 In July Asano Kogenta ended his tutorship at the *kagaku*. In September Tamaki Bunnoshin commenced his tutorship at the *kagaku*. In December Ishizu Heishichi ended his tutorship at the *kagaku*. In this year the daimyō inspected personally the clan school. Shōin explained again the *bukyō zensho*. After having

¹ According to European reckoning. Vide B. H. Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 12 (fifth edition).

² For a short description of the *Kamishimo* vide E. Papinot, *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie du Japon*, p. 288.

³ For further information regarding the Mōri daimyōs vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 468-73.

⁴ *Rules of Warfare*.

⁵ Vide Chapt. II.

chosen a subject, he wrote a poem on it. In this year Tamaki Bunnoshin opened the Shōka Sonjuku¹. Sugi Umetarō, Yoshida Daijirō (Shōin), Yasuda Tatsunosuke, Kubo Seitarō, Fukasu Tamon, and Asano Ōrai became pupils.

1843 In March of this year Kagawa Senzō became tutor of the *kagaku*. In the same month his father, Sugi Yurinosuke, became the master of a hundred footmen; at the same time he was appointed warden of the thieves. In this month Tamaki Bunnoshin ended his tutorship of the *kagaku*.

1844 In March Inoue Shichirōjirō became tutor of the *kagaku*. On the 18th of October the daimyō inspected in person the *kagaku* during which visit Shōin again explained the *bukyō zensho*. The daimyō by his special desire asked for an explanation of the *hsü-shih* chapter (No. VI) of Sun-tzū². The daimyō rewarded Shōin with a copy of the 7 Military Classics with commentary by Liu Yin³. In this year Shōin's uncle Kubo Gorōzaemon made his son Seitarō his heir, and retired. Shōin began to assemble the children of the village in order to teach them. Later this school had taken over the name of Shōka Sonjuku. At the beginning of this year the samurai Yamada Uemon returned from Edo, and highly recommending the *Konyo zushiki*⁴ by Mitsukuri Seigo, he impressed on Shōin the necessity of studying the international situation.

1845 In this year, following the advice of the samurai Yamada Uemon, Shōin took up the study of the Naganuma style of military science under Yamada Matasuke. The latter said to Shōin: "Lately the foreign countries have made great headway and they have invaded many countries of the East; very soon the foreign poison will reach Japan; the whole nation is greatly worried and the people are confused; we must make defences at all costs". These words inflamed Shōin very much and indignantly

¹ Vide Chapt. II, p. 29.

² Vide L. Giles, *Sun Tzu On the Art of War*, p. 42-54.

³ *Cā'ā-shu chū-chieh* (Shichi Sho Chokkai).

⁴ This 坤輿圖識 *Konyo zushiki* world atlas was published in 7 volumes, including a supplement of 4 volumes. It was widely read, because it was the first that appeared in print whereas its predecessors had remained in manuscript form, i.e. the 輿地誌略 *Yochi Shiryaku* (Short Geography of the World) by the Dutch Scholar 青地林宗 *Aochi Rinsō*. A general survey of the contents of the *Konyo zushiki* is to be found in the T.A.S.J., Second Series, Vol. XVIII.

he decided to participate in the affairs of the country. In this year Shōin entered the Shōka Sonjuku (Tamaki Bunnoshin was still headmaster), and studied together with Matsumura Bunshō and many others.

1846 During the spring of this year Shōin lived temporarily with one of his tutors, the samurai Hayashi Shinjin. Accidentally a fire broke out and Shōin lost his books and clothing¹. On the 29th of March he received from Yamada Matasuke a diploma of the Naganuma style of military science and a book (which was kept as a clan secret) called 兵要録 *heiyōroku* (short summary of military science). Moreover he studied 西洋陣法 *seiyō jimpō*—European Camp rules (formation)—under Iida Inosuke. In December Kagawa Senzō ceased to be tutor to the *kagaku*. In this year the daimyō came to inspect the *kagaku* in person. In this year also Shōin became—under the influence of Yamada Uemon—more and more distressed on account of the damage done by the foreigners and he was roused to great activity, even to the extent of forgetting his food, and plunged himself into the study of the 邊防 *hembō* (defence of the frontier). He composed 外夷小記 *Gaii Shōki* (Short Notes on the Foreign Barbarians).

1847 In this year the daimyō came twice to the Meirinkan, once on the 18th of March and again during April. He listened to the lectures and inspected the maps made by the disciples. On the 12th of May Shōin travelled to Yuda, in the country of Suwa. About the beginning of July, he again entered the Shōka Sonjuku. During October an autumn examination was held at the Meirinkan. Shōin wrote 平内府論 *Heinai furon* (Discourse on the Peace in the Country). Afterwards he entered the *hei* section of the Meirinkan. On the fifth of December Shōin received from Hayashi Shinjin 大星目録の免許返傳 *Daisei mokuroku no menkyo henden*, a certificate of proficiency in the *Daisei mokuroku*.

1848 From February he held several offices at the castle of the daimyō. Hayashi, Yamada, and Inoue ceased to be his tutors and he became now for the first time independent teacher of the Meirinkan. On the fourth of July the daimyō called Shōin and his disciples to the castle and inspected the works of the *kagaku*.

¹ This small incident has been greatly magnified by Shōin's biographers (e.g. Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 144) in order to show that he was only concerned about the belongings of other people and did not care for his own.

During the autumn of this year a personal inspection was again held by the daimyō. On the 31st of October, Shōin presented to the daimyō an 意見書 *Ikensho*, concerning the reestablishment of the Meirinkan and Shōin's personal views regarding punishment and rewards, rules for the school, etiquette, how the examinations and elections should be held, etc. In the same year the Sugi family moved to Shimizuguchi¹ in the Matsumoto village. Umetarō, the elder brother of Shōin became boarder in the Meirinkan.

1849 On the 14th of March the new building for the Meirinkan was finished, whereupon the daimyō bequeathed a 章服 *shōfuku* (special kimono with clan crest) and made a donation. Shōin divided the pupils into several classes. On the tenth of April he wrote 水陸戰略 *Suiriku Senryaku* (Scheme for War on Land and Sea) and presented it to the defence authorities. Afterwards he was appointed to a certain post in the castle. On the fifth of July he wrote a letter to Hayama Sanai at Hirado, in which he asked to be accepted as his pupil. On the 24th of July the daimyō came again to inspect in person. Shōin explained the 用士 *Yōshi* chapter of the *bukyō zensho*. Shortly afterwards by order of the daimyō he made a tour of inspection round the coasts of Susa, Ōtsu, Toyoura, and Akamagaseki². On the 16th of October the daimyō visited the Meirinkan in order to inspect the works of the pupils. On Nov. 26th he led his pupils to Hagadai, situated to the East of the Hagi castle, in order to make military manoeuvres. He appointed the pupil Masuda Tadamasa—an important samurai—as leader. A day later Shōin presented to the clan officials a copy of his 對策一道 *Taisaku Ichidō* (counter measures). Certain of Shōin's writings of this year are signed under the name of Shigi. In this year he composed the following writings: 廻浦紀略 *Kaiho Kiryaku* (Résumé of the Travels round the Bays), 稽古事控 *Keikogoto Hikae* (Notes Concerning the Exercises), 明倫館控 *Meirinkan Hikae* (Notes Regarding the Meirinkan).

1850 On the 26th of September the daimyō came again to inspect the Meirinkan in person. Shōin explained the 守城 *Shujō*

¹ Probably a street.

² For the actual condition of Japan's coast defence at this time, vide Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 283.

(castle defence) chapter of the *bukyō zensho*. The daimyō was very much impressed and thought of sending Shōin to other parts of the country for study purposes. On the first of November he left Hagi, travelled through Kyūshū, and returned on the 31st January 1851. He travelled through Kogura, Saga, Ōmura, Nagasaki, Hirado, Amakusa, Shimabara, Kumamoto, Yanagawa, and Kurume. He stayed for 50 days in Hirado. He saw Hayama Sanai and Yamaga Bansuke and asked them several questions regarding the teachings of Yamaga Sokō. During this time he read many books. In Nagasaki he learned Chinese from a Chinese interpreter called 鄭幹介 *Chêng Kan-chieh* and visited the houses of the Chinese and the Dutch. He also visited a Dutch ship. In Kumamoto he often called on Miyabe Teizō. In Saga he visited Kusaba Heisen and Taketomi Inan. Everywhere he visited renowned scholars. He inquired intensively about the manners and customs of foreign countries. In Kumamoto he went to the Kiyomasa temple¹ and prayed there for the recovery of his younger brother Toshisaburō, who was dumb. From this time on he signed often himself: "Gikei". His works during this year were: 西遊日記 *Saiyū Nikki* (Diary of the Journey to the West), 未忍焚稿 *Minin Funhō* (an untranslatable name for some of his poems; Shōin had chosen this name in order to indicate his great efforts in composing them and his anxiety of preserving them²), 上覽控 *Jōran Hikae* (Notes Regarding Imperial Inspection), 公事記 *Kōjiki* (Chronicle of Public Affairs).

1851 Lord Mōri completed, under Shōin, the Yamaga military course. On the 15th of March Shōin lectured on Sun-tzu before the daimyō. On the 6th of May he went to the East with the daimyō, in order to do some research work on military science. On the 19th of May he visited the Nankō temple³ and composed a poem. On the 28th of May he visited Edo and obtained information from Azumi Konsai, Koga Sakei, Yamaga Sosui and Sakuma Shōzan⁴. Hiraoka Yasube taught Shōin the art of fencing. With

¹ This refers to the Buddhist temple Hommyōji, dedicated to 加藤清正 *Katō Kiyomasa*. For further information vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 300-301.

² *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, dai ikkan, p. 245.

³ Vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

⁴ Vide Chapt. II, p. 25.

the four scholars, Toriyama, Shinzaburō, Miyabe Teizō, Nagahara Takeshi, and Saitō Shintarō, Shōin discussed literary and military science. On the 28th of May Shōin received an order to lecture twice a month on military science in the 藩邸 *hantei* (the residence of the daimyō) ¹ in Edo. On the 10th of July he held a speech in the presence of the daimyō on "An inquiry into the immediate duties of the subjects". On the 12th of July he went to Kamakura with Miyabe Teizō and visited Chikuin ², his uncle, the buddhist priest, who lived at the 瑞泉寺 *Zuisenji*. Afterwards he visited the coasts of Kanagawa and Chiba. On the 19th of July he returned to Edo. On the 6th of January (1852) he left Edo without permission of the daimyō ³. Shōin called this his first audacious act. He assumed the name of Matsuno Tasaburō.

1852 On the 11th of January he arrived in Mito and went to Nagai Masasuke. Ten days later he left Mito with Miyabe. During 1851 and the first month of 1852 Shōin wrote: 東遊日記 *Tōyū Nikki* (Diary of the Journey to the East), 武教全書講章 *Bukyō zensho Kōshō* (Explanation of the *Bukyō zensho*), 辛亥日記 *Kanotoi Nikki* (Kanotoi Diary).

On the 21st of February Shōin returned to Mito. Three days later he went to Chōshi with Miyabe and Nagai Yoshinosuke. At this time he visited the Kashima temple ⁴. In Itako he visited Miyamoto Shōichirō. On the 4th of March he returned to Mito and visited Ezawa Yasushi and Toyoda Hikojiro. He was deeply impressed by the scholars of the Mito School. Nine days later he left Mito with Miyabe and Ebata and went to the North, visiting Shirakawa. Here he parted with Ebata and went to Aizu. Passing through Niigata, he went to Sado island. Here he visited the tomb of Emperor Juntoku ⁵ and composed a poem. Shortly afterwards he returned to Niigata, went to Akita, Hirosaki, Aomori, Morioka, Sendai, and Yonezawa. On the 24th of May he returned

¹ Lord Mōri had three different residences in Edo. "Even the smallest daimyō had 2 or 3 residences in Edo, surrounded by huge gardens of about 15,000-20,000 square metres." T.A.S.J., Vol. XVII, p. 251.

² In the *Shōkan Hen no Ichī* and *Shōkan Hen no Ni* there are many letters written by Shōin to Chikuin and Miyabe Teizō.

³ Vide Chapt. II, p. 22.

⁴ According to the legend, founded by Jimmu Tennō. The temple had to be rebuilt every 21st year.

⁵ During centuries Sado has been a place of exile. The emperor Juntoku lived in exile from 1221-1242. Vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 272 and 610; F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 341 and 344.

to Edo. Here he visited Toriyama Shinzaburō and stayed a few days with him. Upon the advice of his friends Shōin reported to the daimyō on the 29th of May. At the same time he wrote him a letter in which he asked for a punishment. As a result he was ordered to return to Hagi. On the 9th of June he left Edo and arrived in Hagi on the 30th of the same month. Awaiting the order of his lord, he remained in confinement at the Sugi's. During this time he read a great deal of the history of the country and the 國典 *Kokuden* (State ceremony). Secretly, children came from the neighbourhood and Shōin gave them lessons. At the beginning of October he took as pseudonym Hōtōshi. During this year he wrote: 東北遊日記 *Tōhokuyū Nikki* (Diary of the Journey through Tōhoku, with an appendix called 東征稿 *Tōseikō*), 猛省錄 *Mōseiroku* (Examination of conscience)¹, 睡餘事錄 *Suiyo Jiroku* (Notes written during my leisure), 業餘漫錄 *Gyōyo Manroku* (Jottings in my spare time), 雜錄 *Zatsuroku* (Miscellaneous Records), 舊鈔 *Kyūshō* (Selection of old notes), 屏居讀書 *Heikyo dokusho* (Reading During my Confinement), 辛亥筆記 *Kanotoi Hikki* (Kanotoi Notes).

1853 On the 19th of January Shōin lost his income and his samurai title. Henceforth he depended on his father Sugi Yurinosuke. This same day he changed his name into Matsujirō. Shortly afterwards his lord showed mercy and gave Shōin a travelling scholarship for a period of ten years. On the 7th of March he left Hagi and passed through Sanuki, Settsu, Kawachi, and Yamato. On the 15th of June he went to the Ise shrine. Hereafter he passed through Mino, Shinano, Kōzuke, and arrived in Edo on the first of July. Here he lived with Toyama Shinzaburō and met many people (follows a list of persons with whom he conversed). The next day he went to the Zuisenji in order to visit Chikuin. On the 6th of July he returned to Edo. Hearing about the American vessels anchored in Uruga, he went there on the 9th of July to obtain information and he returned to Edo 6 days later. About this time he presented to the daimyō his 將及私言 *Masa ni shigen*

¹ Vide Yoshida Shōin, Vol. VIII, p. 101-103. This is not an examination of conscience in the ordinary accepted way, but Shōin gives 20 examples of famous Chinese and he finds himself lacking in spiritual greatness.

oyoban to su (I dare to give my personal opinion), whereupon the clan officials accused him of great presumption. Shōin however—with complete disregard of the consequences—developed his point of view and presented the 3 following books to the daimyō¹:

急務條議 *Kyūmu Jōgi* (Articles on how to attend to immediate duties), **急務策** *Kyūmu Saku* (Measures to counter immediate

duties), **接夷私議** *Setsui Shigi* (Personal opinion with regard to foreign relations). With Sakuma Shōzan he discussed many things concerning the relation between Japan and the foreigners.

On the 16th of October he again visited Chikuin, and returned to Edo on the 18th. From now on he was determined to go abroad. He therefore left Edo in order to go to Nagasaki, where Russian ships were anchored. On the first of November he arrived in Kyōto and visited Yanagawa Seigan. On the second of November he composed the famous poem: **鳳闕を拜し奉る** *Hōketsu wo haishi*

tatematsuru (Respectfully I worship the Emperor). On the third of November he went by ship to Bungo, passed through Kumamoto and arrived in Nagasaki on the 27th. However the Russian ships had left². Passing again through Kumamoto, he arrived in Hagi on the 13th of December. On the 20th of December he was visited by Miyabe Teizō and Noguchi Naonojō and on the 24th they left together for Suwa. On the 26th they took a ship to Ōsaka. There he met Ōkubo Kaname. During this year he wrote: **將及私言** *Masa*

ni shigen oyoban to su (I dare to give my Personal Opinion), **鳳闕を拜し奉る** *Hōketsu wo haishi tatematsuru* (Respectfully I worship the Emperor), **長崎紀行** *Nagasaki Kikō* (Nagasaki Travel Account).

1854 On the 3rd of January he arrived in Kyōto and there he met Umeda Umpin and many other people. The following day first Miyabe left for Edo and three days later Shōin left together with Noguchi Naonojō, passed through Ise, Owari, and arrived in Edo on the 26th of January via the Nakasendō. At this time Shōin drew up a scheme for sea warfare and presented it to his lord. Wishing to go abroad with an American vessel, Shōin left Edo on the third of April together with Kaneko Shigesuke and arrived

¹ Shōin considered this his second audacious act.
² Admiral Efimil Vasilievich Putiatin left Nagasaki with his four ships on the 11th of November. Thus Shōin arrived 16 days too late.

in Kanagawa. He followed the ships to Shimoda. At this time he took the name of 瓜中萬二 *Kwa no Uchi Manji*. In the evening of the 25th April, he went aboard an American ship, but his request to go abroad was refused by the Americans. The next day he reported to the police who arrested him. On the 12th of May he was taken to the Demmachō prison in Edo. He called this deed his third audacious act. On the 9th of October he left the prison on order of the Bakufu and was confined in the mansion of his lord in Azabu (Edo) together with Kaneko. Shortly afterwards, they were both sent to Hagi where they arrived on the 14th of December. Shōin went to the Noyama prison and Kaneko to the Iwakura prison. On the 21st of December he wrote 二十一回 猛子説 *Nijū ikkai Mōshi Setsu* (The Opinion of the 21 times audacious Samurai). During this year he wrote: 幽囚録 *Yūshū Roku* (Record of an imprisonment), 回顧録 *Kaiko Roku* (Record of the past).

1855 On the first of March Kaneko Shigesuke died in prison. Shōin composed a poem in which he exalted Kaneko¹. From now on he took the name Muitsu. During the same month he wrote the 7 rules of the Samurai².

On the 26th of May the Buddhist priest Gesshō went to Hagi and wrote a letter to Shōin. On the 28th of May Shōin started to give lessons on 孟子 *Meng-tzū* before the prisoners. From this time on, the whole spirit of the prison improved. On the 24th of October he started a correspondence with the Buddhist priest Mokurin³. During this year he wrote: 野山獄文稿 *Noyamagoku bunkō* (Manuscript written in the Noyama Prison), 野山雜著 *Noyama Zattcho* (Noyama Miscellaneous Writings), 獄中俳諧 *Gokuchū Haikai* (Haikai Written during my Imprisonment), 回顧録 *Kaiko Roku* (Record of the Past), 書物目錄 *Shomotsu*

¹ In the Noyama prison a haikai group was formed under the leadership of Yoshimura zensaku. When they heard of the death of Kaneko, all the members of the group composed a poem on the deceased. Shoin's haikai was:

Chiru totemo Ka wa todometari Sono no umi.

He has fallen, this plum of the garden, (yet) the fragrance (of his virtues) remains.

An alternative translation of this haikai is given later.

² Vide Chapt. V.

³ Letters to and from Mokurin are to be found in *Shokan Hen no Ichi*, p. 364, 365, 406, 407, 408, 410, 419, 420.

Mokoroku (Catalogue of Books), 賞月雅草 *Shōgetsu Gasō* (A collection of wakas, praising moon and flowers), 冤魂慰草 *Enkon Isō* (Consolations of an unjustly accused soul).

1856 On the 22nd of January Shōin left the prison and was from now on confined to the house of the Sugi's. He was not allowed contact with the outside world, yet secretly gave lessons to children of the neighbourhood. On the 18th of May he made a statement called 七生説 *Shichishōsetsu* in which he dedicated himself completely to the service of his country. In the middle of September Mokurin went to Hagi and wrote a letter to Shōin. From now on Shōin gave lessons on the *Bukyō Zensho*. Gradually more pupils came who formed the beginning of the later *Shōka Sonjuku*. He studied the *sonnō jōi*¹ doctrine with the pupils. Shōin wrote the 松下村塾記 *Shōka Sonjuku Ki* for Kubo. Up to this time he had been teaching the pupils of his uncle Kubo Gorozaemon in a neighbouring house, which later took the name of *Shōka Sonjuku*. On the 12th of November most of the prisoners of the Noyama prison were released, thanks to the influence of Shōin.

During this year he wrote 講孟餘話 *Kōmō Yowa* (Additional Notes in Explanation of Mêng-tzū), 武教全書講錄 *Bukyō Zensho Kōroku* (Record of the *Bukyō Zensho* Explanations), 丙辰幽室文稿 *Hinoetatsu Yūshitsu Bunkō* (*Hinoetatsu* Dark Room Manuscript), 丙辰日記 *Hinoetatsu Nikki* (*Hinoetatsu* Diary).

1857 On the 25th of April Kubo Seitarō (Shōin's uncle) spoke with Shōin on the progress of the studies. The number of pupils who went to Shōin increased considerably. On the 14th of September he became director of the *Shōka Sonjuku*. On the 19th of December Shōin enlarged a little house on the property of the Sugi's and this became the new *Sonjuku*. There were now 20 pupils and the school attracted attention everywhere.

During this year he wrote: 幽室文稿 *Yūshitsu Bunkō* (Dark Room Manuscript), 吉田語略 *Yoshida Goryaku* (Yoshida Short Tales), 二十一回叢書 *Nijū ikkai Sōsho* (*Nijū Ikkai* Library), 吉日錄 *Kichi Nichi Roku* (Record of a Lucky Day),

¹ Vide Chapt. IV.

野山獄讀書記 *Noyama Goku Dokushoki* (List of the Books read in the Noyama Prison), **討賊始末** *Tōzoku Shimatsu* (Treatise on how to conquer enemies), **外蕃通略** *Gaiban Tsūryaku* (Outline history of foreign countries).

1858 At the beginning of this year he wrote **狂夫ノ言** *Kyōfu no Gen* (Words of a Fool). Besides he wrote an *Ikensho* on the development of Takeshima. He handed this over to Kusaka in order that the message might be conveyed to Katsura Kogorō in Edo. On the 3rd of April a difference of opinion arose between the Shōka Sonjuku and the Meirinkan. Shōin had a meeting with Gesshō and afterwards he wrote a letter which brought reconciliation between the two schools. Since the 25th of March the number of pupils of the Shōka Sonjuku went up again and the school had been enlarged. One month later he wrote for the encouragement of his pupils **策問** *Sakumon* (Enquiry). During the middle of this month Shōin caught an influenza and he was confined to bed for several days. In the meantime an Imperial Edict arrived at Hagi. Shōin expressed his own opinion in **對策一道** *Taisaku Ichidō* (One method of Counter-attack). This he sent together with his **愚論** *Guron* (Stupid Essay), to Yanagawa who presented it to the Emperor. A few days later he sent his **續愚論** *Zoku Guron* (Sequel to *Guron*) to Yanagawa. While he worried more and more about the political situation, he began to write his **論策謀議** *Ronsaku Bōgi* (Treatise on Strategical Measures). The daimyō returned from Edo and studied the **狂夫ノ言** *Kyōfu no Gen* (Words of a Fool). Afterwards the daimyō informed Shōin through Masuda Tadamasa that it would be presented to the Bakufu. Shōin completed his **大義ヲ議ス** *Taigi wo Gisu* (I discuss the Great Justice). A few days later he completed his **時義略論** *Jigi Ryakuron* (Outlines on Contemporary Justice) and **兵庫海防ノ辭ヲ議ス** *Hyōgo Kaibō no Ji wo Gisu* (I argue on Hyōgo's Coastdefence). Both works were presented to the daimyō officials. They granted Shōin permission to teach pupils the *Kagaku*. Shōin was overwhelmed by the kindness of the daimyō. In the meantime Shōin was informed about Ii Naosuke's plan to invite the Emperor to Edo. Hereupon Shōin wrote a treatise in which he advocated that 10000

soldiers should be called to the colours and be prepared for all eventualities. The Shōka Sonjuku had reached the height of its fame. So far the students of the Sonjuku had undergone a stern military training. From now on they focussed their attention especially on artillery, together with some 26 men from the Heta village in Suwa. They held a manoeuvre together, at the outskirts of Hagi at a place called Ōihama. On the 16th of October Shōin sent a letter to Matsuura Shōdō in Edo, in which he gave instructions on how to assassinate Mizuno. On the 2nd of November Shōin wrote 時勢論 *Jiseiron* (Treatise on the Present Situation), in which he discussed the necessity of an Imperial Edict, the calling to the colours of the samurais and the counter measures against the invading foreigners. The following day Shōin wrote a letter in which he asked Ōhara Sammi to come to Nagato. This letter, together with the *Jiseiron* were sent through Itō Dennesuke to the Lord of Ōhara in Kyōto. A few days later Shōin gave instruction to Akane Takehito to break the jail at Fushimi. On the 11th of December Shōin decided with 17 partisans to attack and to kill Manobe Norikatsu. In the meantime he appealed to the daimyō officials for help and he wrote a farewell to his father, brother and uncle. On the 16th of December he wrote 已未御參府議 *Tsuchinotohitsuji Gosanpugi* (Suggestion concerning the daimyō's Report to the Bakufu in the Tsuchinotohitsuji year) in which Shōin dissuaded the daimyō to go to Edo. In the meantime the plans for the assassination of Manobe were completed and arrangements were made to leave for Kyōto. The daimyō became greatly disturbed.

During this year he wrote: 幽室文稿 *Yūshitsubunkō*, 幽窗隨筆 *Yūsō Zuihitsu* (Jottings from my prison window), 讀網鑑錄 *Dokukō Kanroku* (Collection of readings), 急務四條 *Kyūmu shijō* (Four Points of Imperative Necessity), 西洋步兵論 *Seiyō Hoheiron* (Discourse on Western Infantry), 松陰詩稿 *Shōin Shikō* (Manuscript of Shōin's Poems), 松下村塾食事人名控 *Shōka Sonjuku Shokuji Jimmei Hikae* (List of the Pupils who take their meals in the Shōka Sonjuku).

1859 On the 3rd of January Shōin was arrested and confined to his house because of his plot against Manobe. On the 9th of January he was put into prison again. 8 of Shōin's pupils

went to the officials in order to ascertain the charge made against Shōin. All of them were confined to their houses. However, shortly afterwards he was—on account of his father's illness—allowed to stay several days at home. On the 18th of February Ōtaka Matajirō of the Harima Province and Hirashima Takejirō of Bichū Province arrived in Hagi. Here they plotted the 要駕策 *Yōgasaku* affair¹. Shōin was delighted to hear of the plot and asked his pupils to take part in it.

On the 26th of February Ōtaka and Hirashima left Hagi. A day later Shōin started a fast, but on the advice of his father and elder brother he gave it up after one day. He was overwhelmed with joy because of the release of Irie, Yoshida, Nomura and Shinagawa and would even take meat and drinks once again. He tried to finish the 清末策 *Seimatsu Saku*² which was started by a fellow prisoner Yasutomi Sōsuke. Shōin failed however in this undertaking. He sent Nomura to Kyōto for reason of the Yōgasaku affair. Upon this occasion Shōin sent his 大原三位に差し出す書 *Ōhara Sammi ni Sashidasu Sho* (Document to be presented to the Lord of Ōhara) together with his 墨使申立の趣論駁條件 *Bokushi Mōshitae no Omomuki Rompaku Jōken* (Debate on the import of the treatment of the American envoys) to Ōhara Sammi. Yasutomi Sōsuke left the prison and was banished to Ōshima. Sōsuke attempted to follow Wasaku, under instructions from Shōin, but he failed. Shōin completed the first part of his 要駕策主意 *Yōgasaku Shui* (Explanation of the Yōgasaku affair) and a few weeks later the second part. On the 8th of April the daimyō went to Edo against the advice of Shōin. His desire to die became more intense. With Irie and Nomura, his two beloved disciples, he discussed problems of life and death. On the 21st of May the Bakufu gave orders to send Shōin to Edo. These orders were delivered to Hagi by Nagai Raku and Ogura Genuemon. A week later Shōin wrote to Sakuma Shōzan on the political situation. On the 14th of June Shōin's disciples came to the Noyama prison in order to say farewell to Shōin. On the 24th of June Shōin was permitted

¹ This affair consisted in urging the daimyō (when he was on his way to Edo) to go to Kyōto in order to advise the Emperor to undertake measures against the Bakufu. This plot never materialized.

² Vide 吉田松陰全集 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. VI, p. 202.

to go home to take leave of his parents. The next morning he returned to the prison and the cage left Hagi. On the same day his father Sugi Yurinosuke and his brother Umetarō lost their posts and were confined to their house. On the 23rd of July Shōin arrived in Edo in the residence of the daimyō at Sakurada. Here the preliminary trial took place. On the 7th of August on the orders of the Bakufu the judicial examination took place and Shōin was put into the Demmachō prison. On the order of the Bakufu two other judicial examinations took place, one on the 30th of September and the other on the 31st of October. On the 15th of November he wrote a farewell letter to his father, his uncle and brother¹. On the 19th of November he began to write his *ryūkonroku* which he finished on the 20th of November. The following morning he was sentenced to death, after which he was executed at 10 o'clock (or at 12 o'clock²) in the morning in the Demmachō prison. On the 24th of November Odera Shinnojō, Iida Seihaku, Katsura Kogorō, and Ito Toshisuke received Shōin's corpse and they buried him in the Shimoyashiki grounds of the Ekōin cemetery in Kozukabara.

During this year he wrote 正氣の歌 *Seiki no Uta* (The Song of the Spirit of Rectitude), 東坡策批評 *Tōbasaku Hikyō* (Criticism of the Eastern Dam Scheme), 己未文稿 *Tsuchinotohitsuji Bunkō* (Writings during the Tsuchinotohitsuji year), 李氏焚書抄 *Rishi Funsho Shō* (Selections from Ri's Funsho), 李氏續藏書抄 *Rishi Zoku Zōsho Shō* (Selections from Rishi) 鴻鵠志 *Kōkoku Shi* (Aspirations of a hero), 坐獄日錄 *Zagoku Nichiroku* (Prison Diary) 照顔錄 *Shōgan Roku* (Clarifying Record), 孫子評註 *Sonshi Hyōchū* (Commentary on Sun-Tzū), 東行前日記 *Tōkō Zen Nikki* (Diary up to the time of the Eastern Journey), 縛吾集 *Bakugoshū* (Collection of a prisoner in bonds) 淚松集 *Ruishōshū* (Collection of the pinetree of tears), 留魂錄 *Ryūkon Roku* (Record of an everlasting spirit).

¹ *Zenshū*, Vol. VI, p. 407.

² With respect to the actual hour, the authors disagree.

CHAPTER FOUR

INFLUENCES ON SHŌIN

Before penetrating further into Shōin's ideas, it will be necessary to say a few words about the two greatest influences that moulded him: the teachings of 山鹿素行 *Yamaga Sokō* and of the 水戸學 *Mito Gaku*. They may be discussed together because the ideas of the 古學派 *Kogakuha*, the "School of Ancient Learning" of which Sokō is a co-founder, are practically the ideas of the Mito Gaku. The latter School developed many of the ideas of the Kogakuha and considerable parts of Sokō's works could have been written by the Mito scholars just as well¹.

Shōin was a great exponent of Sokō and he called him often his 先師 *senshi*. Throughout his writings, especially the discussions on the theory of the state, the expansion of the national power and on *bushidō*, we find abundant traces of Sokō's thought. The works that influenced Shōin most were Sokō's *Bukyō Shōgaku* "Military Principles", *Shidō* "The way of the Samurai" and *Haisho Zampitsu*² "An Exile's Jottings". The latter is often compared with Shōin's most important work: the *Ryūkon Roku*.

In the 3rd year of Ansei (1856), while he was confined to his house, Shōin was permitted to carry on a home school there and began a series of lectures on Sokō's *Bukyō Shōgaku*. In order to appreciate to the full his influence on Shōin, it will be worth while to describe briefly Sokō's life and teachings.

He was born in 1622 and began his studies in Edo when he was still young. Under 林羅山 *Hayashi Razan*³ (1583-1657), a

¹ As to the origin of the Kogakuha, vide: *Itō Jinsai*, by J. J. Spae, p. 72-74

² 配所殘筆, also called 配所殘草, *Haisho Zansō*; it runs in the 山鹿素行文集 *Yamaga Sokō Bunsshū* from p. 459 to p. 501.

³ Also called 林道春 *Hayashi Dōshun*, secretary of the Bakufu, vide Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 168. About his attitude towards Buddhism, vide Murdoch, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 117-19. About his other teachings, vide M.N., Vol. II, No. 1, p. 4-6, *Itō Jinsai*, by J. J. Spae, p. 58, 59, 67 and *Light from the East*, by R. C. Armstrong, p. 48-57.

great scholar of the Shogunate Government, he studied the Confucian teachings. At fifteen he gave lectures on the Ta-hsüeh, the "Great Learning", and was asked by the lords 大森信濃守 Ōmori Shinano no Kami and 黒田信濃守 Kuroda Shinano no Kami to deliver a course of lectures on Mêng-tzu when he was no more than sixteen years old.

After that he began his military studies under 小幡景憲 Obata Kagenori and 北條安房守氏長 Hōjō Awa no Kami Ujinaga, and completed them at 21 when he received a diploma of proficiency in strategy. By this time Sokō was already known far and wide for his knowledge of Chinese and of military science. Many offers from local lords who desired to engage him, were declined. It was only in 1653, when Sokō was 31 years old, that he accepted a feudal allowance of 1000 *koku* rice from the daimyō of the Akō clan Asano Takumi no Kami Naganao. At the age of 40 he began to refute the teachings of the orthodox neo-confucian school of Ch'êng Hao, Ch'êng I, and Chu Hsi, which, he said, were Confucian only in appearance, but, in fact, had nothing in common with the teachings of Confucius and Mencius¹. He thus challenged Hayashi, his teacher and the great authority on the Ch'êng-Chu school. This together with the attendance of 5000 followers² at his lectures on military science, incurred the displeasure of the government officials. Subsequently he was kept in confinement for 10 years. However, he was not treated as a criminal, but rather as a guest³. On this footing he stayed with Lord Asano during a decade and succeeded in winning over to himself the sympathies of the young samurais of the clan. Among his pupils was Ōishi Kuranosuke who gained for himself immortality in Japan for a deed which no Occidental can admire⁴. When Sokō withdrew from Akō in 1676, Ōishi was only 17 years of age, but even so, the teachings of the exile are said to have made a permanent impression upon his youthful mind.

In the field of strategy and tactics Sokō appeared as an innovator. There were numberless schools of military science in Japan, but

¹ Vide Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 194.

² Dr. Komao Murakami gives the number of Sokō's followers as 2000. Vide *Das Japanische Erziehungswesen*, p. 42. The number of 5000 is to be found in Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 194.

³ As to his complaints about his treatment, vide M.N., Vol. II, No. 1, p. 7.

⁴ The vendetta of the 47 rōnin, vide p. 108.

most of them were variants of the old Chinese schools or of the school of Nankō¹. The distinctive feature in Yamaga's school was the great importance he attached to the full and advantageous employment of artillery and fire arms and the strict subordination of tactical units to the general order of battle.

In 1675 Sokō was released on an appeal, made by the chief abbot of the Tōyeizan temple, and settled down in Asakusa (Edo) in the Tawara Chō, where he died in 1685. His remains were buried at the 宗三 Sōzō temple in Benten Chō, Ushigome (Edo).

On his many travels, Shōin often visited this temple to pay his respects to the spirit of his great master. When Shōin taught in his famous little Shōka Sonjuku, the little village school at Matsushita, it was the teaching of Sokō that he constantly kept before his pupils.

During the days of Sokō, the Chinese culture was so much admired in Japan, that the Japanese called China 中華 *Chūka* (*Chung-hwa*) the "Flowery Land of the Centre", while their own country was regarded by them no better than the 東方夷國 *Tōhō Ikoku* "Land of the Eastern Barbarians". But Sokō used the ideographs 中國 not for China, but for Japan², and still later in his life he wrote a book which he named 中朝事實 *Chūchō Jijitsu*, in which he dealt with the history of ancient Japan³. It was Sokō above all who, amidst the prevalent surrender of many scholars to Chinese culture, retained a strong native bias.

Among the books of Sokō, the most important are: 士道 *Shidō*, the "Way of the Warrior", 武教本論 *Bukyō Honron*, a book in three volumes which deals with military tactics, and 武教小學 *Bukyō Shōgaku*. He wrote the latter in 1665, because he was dissatisfied with the 小學 *Shōgaku* (*Hsiao-hsüeh*) which was generally taught to the children at his time. This *Shōgaku*, written by Chu Hsi (during the Sung dynasty) for Chinese children, he thought not suitable for the Japanese. So he wrote a book of moral teachings on the basis of the Japanese spirit and called it *Bukyō*

¹ Vide p. 108.

² Vide "Japan. Some Phases of her Problems and Development", by Inazo Nitobe, p. 360.

³ In this work he develops especially the "Kokutai" idea (vide p. 61). It runs in the Yamaga Sōhō *Bunshū* from p. 209 to p. 436. A sample of his exaggerated thinking is to be found in Armstrong's: "Light from the East", p. 212.

Shōgaku. It consists of 10 chapters which I shall treat later together with Shōin's explanation of them. In the following I give a short summary of Sokō's *Shidō*:¹

Every samurai has to know what his true function in life is. It is his constant duty to reflect on himself, to have a lord² whom he will serve loyally, to be faithful to his friends, and to take heed of the rectitude of his own life. Because of the fact that farmers, artisans, and merchants³ have not enough time to fulfil their natural duties as parents, brothers, and husbands, the samurais—who are not called away into the fields, the workshop or business houses—have to be more diligent in these natural duties so that men of other classes may regard them as their teachers and reverence their guidance.

The desire to go to Kyōto would be fruitless without knowing the way to get there. Therefore in order to discharge his duties well, the samurai should endeavour to know "the way", and thus he has to look for a trustworthy guide. If there is no one available, he should try to come to a real understanding of "the way" by inward reflection. If there is no real diligence in seeking "the way", our true purpose will not be realized. The constant determination of reforming oneself can be kept up only if we are truly ashamed of ourselves and are convinced that we are not the men we ought to be⁴.

When we consider nature, we see often things growing in a disorderly way, one time exuberant, another time deficient. We see the same thing happen in man's nature. We have therefore partly to dissect and partly to nourish. In this way our minds and conduct will be cultivated properly. Man's mind should be as vast as the ocean capable of containing everything like the fathomless depths. Without such greatness of mind, a samurai cannot adapt himself to the times, cannot keep his freedom of mind and maintain unwavering fortitude in the face of death. "Books possess the knowledge of thousands of years. We are born to die tomorrow and yet

¹ The whole work runs in the *Yamaga Sokō Bunsō* from p. 45 to p. 206.

² In 1651 the rōnins were exceedingly numerous in consequence of the expropriation of many of the great feudatories under Hidetada and Iemitsu. How the Shōguns often dreaded these lordless samurais, vide Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 11-12.

³ The feudal regime was built on the distinction of the four classes: *Shō*, merchant, *Kō*, artisan, *Nō*, farmer, and *Sai*, samurai. For an interesting "flower" arrangement symbolizing these four classes, vide M.N., Vol. I, No. 1, p. 168 b. How the legislation followed the class distinctions, vide G. B. Sanson, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

⁴ After this Sokō describes further the determination to reform.

through books we are able to know events of thousands of years. Therefore one should read much and brighten thus his intellect."

(*山鹿素行文集全 Yamaga Sokō Bunshū Zen*, p. 81). It is good when a samurai is ambitious and keeps the highest ideals constantly before his mind and is not satisfied with moderate achievements. A samurai should be warned against ideals which disparage the world as dust, as Buddhism, without the correcting influence of Confucian doctrines, would lead men to seek after a life of detachment and seclusion.

Roughness of manners is no indication of the man of virtue, as many wrongly suppose, for a man of virtue should be genuine and clear like autumn springwater in a flask of crystal or like ice in a diamond cup. It should charm by its naturalness as the moonlight on the Paulownia leaves, and as the breeze on the willows. A true samurai should have a clear judgment of right and wrong¹. For him it is a disgrace to become selfish, cowardly or covetous, and he should govern his passions according to his judgment. Human nature shrinks from the idea of death, calamity, poverty, and loneliness. Yet the mind of the true man should be at peace even in suffering. Mental equilibrium should be kept under any circumstances. The differences between people of high and people of low standing, between rich and poor, are ordained by heaven. Therefore no discontent should ever disturb the peace of mind. To remain constant in all circumstances is the great secret.

If a man craves after money, he will become corrupt. The determination never to be influenced by bribery and never to drink stolen water, however thirsty, will be the guardian of the mind. Miserliness is the mother of theft. The firm ground upon which the samurai ought to stand is honesty. He should be honest in all his judgments, and through his honesty maintain his independence. The pine-tree does not bend, even when it reaches heaven, the orchid diffuses its scent even if there is no one to smell it. This indeed is true honesty. The dishonest samurai can never advise his master when he is in the wrong, but he will flatter him and covet a large income².

¹ Among the Japanese one seldom finds clear distinctions between right and wrong. — G. B. Sansom is very correct when he writes: "In the history of Japanese thought little part is played by the personal sense of sin.... The Japanese have cared little for abstract ideas of Good and Evil." *Op. cit.*, p. 483.

² Hereafter follows a long dissertation on the cultivation of virtue and talents.

A samurai should always maintain a great dignity in his outward behaviour. True dignity consists in gravity of countenance and speech and an impressive self-control over one's eyes, ears, and tongue¹. He has to choose his words properly and should shun speaking of himself, his own cleverness and courage to win praise. The expression of the face is the index of the mind. If there is dishonesty in thoughts, this will become visible in the countenance. The inner character of the true samurai should be gentle, reverent, and quiet, in which case he will show a great dignity in his outward behaviour.

The purpose of observing diet is good health, and temperance stands between self-indulgence and fasting. We do not live for food or drink, but these have the purpose of preserving our health. "To eat whenever you feel hungry and to drink whenever you feel thirsty, is no temperance. The saints lived for a long time, because there were temperant in their food. To keep oneself just clear of starvation, is real temperance (*sic!*). (Very strange enough, the text goes on:) One is allowed to eat every three hours, because all the phenomena of this world go in cycles of three. One is allowed to drink every hour and a half." (山鹿素行文集全 *Yamaga Sokō Bunshū Zen*, p. 120.) Kitchens and the like should always be kept at a distance lest the smell or the sight of food provoke the appetite². The purpose of dress is to cover man's body and to protect it from heat or cold. A true principle in the manner of dress is, that it should mark a distinction between lord and subject, father and son, rich and poor³. A samurai should always observe strictly this principle and always be on his guard against vanity

¹ To which degree this self-control of the most natural affections should be practised, vide "*Bushido*" by Inazo Nitobe, p. 93-121 (12th edition).

² After this Sokō describes extensively the rules for the proper behaviour at the table, how to use chopsticks, how the dishes follow, how to preserve silence, etc. "When you eat, you should not look to all four directions. You should never have your mouth full. You should eat with a grave countenance. While you hold your chopsticks, you must sit erect. Do not wet your chopsticks further than *nissun*."

(2 inches) 山鹿素行文集全 *Yamaga Sokō Bunshū Zen*, p. 127.

³ Among the principles of administration, laid down by the third Shōgun Iemitsu, we read: "As to the materials of clothing, there must be a distinction in accordance with the social standing of the men who wear it. Shiraya silk is not to be worn except by the court nobles, white silk clothes only by the chief retainers or by their seniors, and silk clothes of purple colour are not to be worn except by the privileged class. The retainers under feudal lords have been forbidden from olden times to wear expensive clothes made of brocade or some good quality of silk, and men must bear this in mind." Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 19.

and extravagance as much as he should against slovenliness. "The saints have always taught that tidiness of dress helps us in acquiring virtue. There should be a class distinction in clothing. If difference in clothing between nobles and the common people is not maintained, the latter will become extravagant in their dress. Consequently, think of your rank and your income and dress yourself accordingly." (山鹿素行文集全 *Yamaga Sokō Bunshū Zen*, p. 130-31). Tidiness of dress is helpful to keep dignity. The same principles should be applied in the matter of housing. Each room and place in the house should have its proper purpose. Utensils and furniture should be regulated according to needs. The samurai has to remind himself that he has no true treasure except his arms. All kinds of curios, pictures, and jewels are in reality no treasures at all ¹. Pride in old relics which have lost their use, is dishonouring to ancestors who prized them because of their usefulness.

A samurai should make most of his time and he should act as if his life-span was only one day. He has to live from day to day, from hour to hour, even from minute to minute. Every minute needs his full attention ². Entertaining friends or wise men, playing music to bring our hearts in harmony, moon viewing, the enjoyment of spring blossoms are all good things, provided they are used moderately. With regard to hunting and shooting, the special pleasures of the samurai, one has to take care not to overdo such things. Finally the samurai should daily set aside some time for introspection and self-examination, taking this exercise very seriously as it will have a great bearing upon the formation of his mind ³. "One should examine his deeds and in doing so polish his own character. Sōshi examined himself three times a day. Chūyū, another of Confucius disciples, was always glad to hear about his own shortcomings" ⁴.

¹ Shōin has practised this to a high degree. His sword was his constant companion. In several of his letters, he speaks about the futility of furniture, curios and treasures.

² Shōin has taught this constantly to his pupils. He himself was a living example of it.

³ Shōin has practised this to a high degree. One of the texts from 論語 *rongo* (Lunyu) most beloved by Shōin was: "I daily examine myself on three points: — whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; — whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; — whether I may have not mastered and practised the instructions of my teacher." (*Analects* I, 4, transl. Legge).

⁴ 山鹿素行文集全 *Yamaga Sokō Bunshū Zen*, p. 93.

The second great influence of Shōin's ideas came from the Mito School. It was at the end of the 4th year of Kaei that he travelled to Mito. This was the first time that he came into contact with the scholars of the Mito School. How they affected him, he tells us himself: "I was born in my Emperor's country and yet I did not know the reason for our national existence. I have no right to stand on my country's soil." The historians of the Mito School inspired him to delve into the national history. In all his writings we meet the ideas of the Mito Gaku. Because of this, I shall give a brief account of the school and its principal teaching:

The spiritual and intellectual outlook of Japan during the Tokugawa period has been moulded by three different schools. In the first place the 漢學 *Kangaku*, the different "Chinese Schools" among which the neo-confucianist followers of Chu Hsi were the most important. A great reaction against these ideas, actually imported, forms the 國學 *Kokugaku*, the "National School". The purpose of this school was the resurrection of the original and pure ideas of Japan. Shintō should become again "the Way" of Japan and remain so. The Kokugaku started with the old literature of Japan. Later a transition took place from the field of literature to that of economics and politics. Gradually the Kokugaku could push aside the Kangaku and fulfil the aspirations of the 大和魂 *Yamato Damashii*¹. The Mito School perceived the exaggerations of both the Kangaku and the Kokugaku and learned from both. It is therefore, that the Japanese scholars say: the Mito Gaku belongs partly to the Kokugaku and partly to the Kangaku².

The name Mito Gaku is derived from Mito, the principal town of the province of Hitachi. The town has three divisions: the lower section, the upper section, and the castle enclosure which lies between the other two and was the seat of the lords of Mito. When under Tokugawa Ieyasu the national tendency towards the military spirit—long predominating—was diverted to literary pursuits in order that lasting peace and prosperity might be attained through

¹ Vide *Kangaku and Kokugaku*, by Horst Hammitzsch, M. N., Vol. II, No. 2, p. 1-23. Vide also J. J. Spae, *op cit.*, p. 53-63.

² Vide 水戸學精神 *Mito gaku Seishin* by 伊藤千真三 *Itō Chimanō*, p. 46.

cultural development, the daimyōs of Mito who formed a branch of the Tokugawa family were primarily responsible. Preparatory work was done by 徳川頼房 *Tokugawa Yorifusa* (1603-1661), but the real founder of the school became his son 光國 *Mitsukuni* (1628-1700). He planned that enormous work, the 大日本史 *Dai Nihon Shi*. This work was so important, that the Mito School was also called the 史學 *Shigaku*, the "Historical School". In the Eikōkan institute¹ a staff of scholars was engaged in the compilation of the history. However the point which I should like to stress here is the fact that Mitsukuni entered upon these historical activities at a time when the people were well satisfied with the Government and when a change from the Tokugawa administration was not even dreamed of. Mitsukuni and his scholars, though they upheld the Imperial cause, bore no malice towards the Shōgun and neither opposed nor criticized the administration and policies of the Shogunate. In fact, they recognized the "Golden Rule" of the Tokugawa². At the same time, they were convinced that the benefits of this rule should be extended to the Throne as well. Yet they were not aggressive in advocating their principles, but appealed in a scholarly and quiet way to intellectual men; by means of their historical and literary works they clarified the concept of national organization, together with the relations of all the individuals to one another, accepting the Throne as the centre of ruling authority in the nation. They concluded that although the emperors were both holy and sacred in their persons, yet, as national histories bore evidence, the maintenance of their existence, far away from human affairs, had not been the Imperial practice in previous times. Therefore Mitsukuni and his first collaborators were no revolutionaries. They expounded the ancient national practices and were no agitators. The evolution in that direction came only later.

The founder of the Mito School did not live to see the completion of his monumental *Dai Nihon Shi*, but his followers have continued it until modern times³. Great scholars of the Mito School were:

¹ Vide p. 20.

² This "Golden Rule" was that men of lower rank owed unquestioning obedience to those of higher rank. Accordingly, the Shōgun exercised absolute ruling authority over the feudal lords, and they in turn exercised absolute authority over the samurais. The Shōgun was the only man in Japan who violated this "Golden Rule", because he did not recognize the absolute ruling authority of the Emperor.

³ About Mitsukuni's contributions to literature, vide *Japanese Literature* by W. G. Aston, p. 316, and F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

藤田幽谷 *Fujita Yūhoku* (1773-1826), 藤田東湖 *Fujita Tōko* (1806-1855),¹ 德川齊昭 *Tokugawa Nariaki* (1800-1861)², and 會澤正志齋 *Aizawa Seishisai* (1782-1863).

Mitsukuni was inspired to write his great historical work when he read at the age of 18 the great Chinese historical work 史記 *Shih-chi* of Ssü-ma Ch'ien³. He became especially impressed by the noble character of 伯夷 *Po I*⁴ and he wanted to show to his country examples of equally great loyalty with the help of Japanese history. He wanted to plant very deeply into the hearts of his people the ideas of 忠 *Chū* (*chung*) "loyalty" and of 孝 *Kō* (*hsiao*) "filial piety", with other words *Sonnō* (see further). Thus originated the idea of the *Dai Nihon Shi*⁵. Mitsukuni knew very well that to stir up loyalty and patriotism, he could do no better than to play on the theme of pride in the great events of the past. In the hands of the masters of historiography, history has always aroused peoples to self-assertion and action. "Le véritable patriotisme, c'est l'amour du passé, c'est le respect pour les générations qui nous ont précédées."⁶ In every land the historian has been as an inspiration to his country, and this role has been played eminently by Mitsukuni and the scholars of the Mito Gaku. The selection of materials and the manner in which they presented their theme were determined by their great desire to give respect to the Throne and to glorify the country.

¹ He was to be the father of the last shōgun 德川慶喜 *Tokugawa Yoshinobu* or Keiki (1837-1903). Yoshinobu has been only two years in office. The historical Tosa memorial appealed so strongly to his own convictions, that he handed in his resignation to the Emperor. This took place on the 14th of October 1867, and the answer of the Emperor on the 15th of December marked the end of the Shogunate.

² Vide Chavannes, *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma ts'ien*, 5 vols, 1895-1905.

³ Supposed to have lived in the 12th century B.C. Vide Chün, *Biogr. Dict.*, p. 631.

⁴ The *Dai Nihon Shi* consists of about 300 volumes. Although the most essential part of it was finished within the lifetime of Mitsukuni, yet this *Dai Nihon Shi* was not completed until the latter part of the 19th century, thus requiring nearly 200 years to write. It is the most elaborate work of scholarship ever produced in Japan. The Throne and the Imperial Rule are its centre of interest. All the historical events and personal acts of statesmen and soldiers, as well as their allegiance to the Throne and the nation were verified by documentary evidence. It is divided into the following 4 parts: 本紀 *kongi* "main annals",

列傳 *retsuden* "biographies", 志 *shi* "monographs", and 表 *hyō* "tables", in imitation of Ssü-ma Ch'ien's *Ssü-chi*. (Vide "Die Mito Schule und ihre programmatischen Schriften" by Horst Hammitzsch, p. B. 14; vide also F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 645.)

⁵ "Questions historiques" by Fustel de Coulanges.

The central thought of the Mito School is well expressed in the two characters 尊王 *Sonnō*¹, revere the Tennō, and with this fundamental precept the Kokutai idea is developed.

There is little evidence of a clear and concise explanation of this Kokutai idea (repeatedly mentioned by Shōin as well). To construct sharp and exact definitions is not the strongest side of the Japanese and it is indeed according to their way—when touching this half mystical subject—to escape into elusive words which speak more to the heart than to the mind². Nor do we find complete clarification by such European authors as Horst Hammitzsch and Holtom³. This being so, I would suggest a more detailed inquiry into the matter. First, it must be remarked, that 國體 is originally a Chinese term (*Kuo-t'i*), used for the first time in the *Ku-liang-chuan* (Chuang 24; 3rd century B.C.) in the meaning of "organ of the State". Later we find it used in a rescript of 23 B.C. in the meaning of "organization of the state" (Han-shu 10, 4a). In Japan it has assumed a special significance. During the last three centuries it has been used—with slight differences according to different authors—to denote the peculiar and basic characteristics of the Japanese State, according to which on one hand, the ruler, people, and country are sacred. The former because of his being a direct descendant of 天照大神 *Amaterasu Ō Mi Kami*, the people, because of their mystical union with their divine ruler and the country, because it had been elected as the land over which the divine offspring should rule forever. On the other hand, it implies that the whole Japanese nation is like one big family with the Imperial Family as the 宗家 *Sōke*, the "Head Family" and the Emperor as the father over all, who is duly worshipped and whose benev-

¹ Also written 尊皇

² Time and again the author has discussed this subject with Japanese who more than once told him: "Foreigners can never understand this. They should even never make use of the word Kokutai." To them it was something like an "innate idea" with which every Japanese comes into the world.

³ Horst Hammitzsch writes: "Japan ist ein mit einem Kokutai gesegnetes Land. Dieses Kokutai ist seit ältester Zeit fest begründet und durch die ununterbrochene Tennō Nachfolge rein überliefert. Der Mensch braucht es nicht zu erlernen, ja, kann es nicht erlernen, denn es ist zusammen mit dem Wege in seinem Herzen." (*Die Mito Schule*, p. B 57). And further: "Kokutai ist eigentlich Staatskörper, Staatsleib; nur dem Götterlande ist dieses Grundprinzip staatlichen Denkens zu eigen und hat auf das Leben des Staates einen tiefgehenden Einfluss." (*op. cit.*, p. B 77). These words—the author thinks—give us not much light. D. C. Holtom mentions twice the word Kokutai in his "*The National Faith of Japan*" (p. 133 and 136), but he gives nowhere an explanation of it.

olence towards his people is promptly responded to by 忠 *Chū* "loyalty" and 孝 *Kō*¹ "filial piety" of the latter.

Japan was for the Mito scholars a highly privileged land, a real 神國 *Shinkoku*, "land of the Gods", and worthy of the deepest affection of all its people. Indeed, the *aikoku*, the patriotic love for the country, has been stimulated by no school as much as by the Mito School. This patriotism lead naturally to the elimination of all influences harmful to the kokutai. The Mito scholars saw at the same time a great danger in European expansion, which had to be checked at any price. Thus, with the Sonnō became connected a second idea, expressed in another two characters: 攘夷 *Jōi*, "expel the barbarians". Especially during the later years of the Mito School, this slogan comes to the forefront. Tokugawa Nariaki, Fujita Tōko, and Aizawa Seishisai fought for it with great conviction². It might seem to us exaggerated, as it indeed was, yet we have to remind ourselves that these scholars saw in European expansion a real menace to the soul of the country. The same conviction guided the kokugaku with regard to Chinese thought.

In the religious field, the scholars of the Mito School tried to connect Shintō with Confucian thoughts. This influence of the Confucian ideas was spread through the two teachers of Mitsukuni:

朱舜水 *Shu Shun sui* (Chin. Chu Shun-shui, properly 朱之瑜 *Chu Chih-yū*) and the zen master 心越 *Shinetsu* (Hsin-yüeh).

Chu Shun-shui was born in 1600 near Ning-po in the Chekiang province. When the Ming dynasty had to give way to the Manchus, he left his country. For many years he lived far away from his native land with the great desire to see the resurrection of the Ming dynasty. He travelled to Annam and went several times to Japan. During his third visit he was invited by Mitsukuni to act as guest teacher in Mito. This he did for 18 years and died in Mito in 1682. What sort of man he was, we learn from Kiyohara Sadao: "During

¹ These two, being in reality one 忠孝無二 *Chūkō mu ni*, or as it is more used in modern Japanese: 忠孝の道は一つにして二ならず *Chūkō no michi wa hitotsu ni shite, ni narazu*, "loyalty and filial duty are one and the same thing." (Constantly mentioned by Shōin).

² Especially the latter may be considered as the intellectual initiator of the Sonnō Jōi idea. His *Shinron* gives an ample explication of it. Yoshida Shōin said of this work that it encouraged the hearts of the people and stimulated the martial spirit.

his teachership, he received a considerable income. Yet, he lived a very poor life and spent very little in the way of money, and hence he was considered a miser. But when he knew that his end was near, he gave all the money saved to Mitsukuni saying, that he did not need any more money because his heart's desire—the return of the Ming dynasty—would not be realized. For this purpose only he had lived in great poverty, to give all his money to the dynasty to maintain an army. When the people who had laughed at his parsimony, heard this, they became very much ashamed."¹ Thus has Chu given a great example to the Mito Scholars.

The zen master Shinetsu was also invited by Mitsukuni to come to Mito. He was born in 陽浦 *Pu-yang* and from his earliest age he won high esteem by his virtue and knowledge. He came to Mito in 1684 and lived and worked in the Taijisan Tentoku temple.

These two scholars had a great influence not only on Mitsukuni, but on all the scholars of the Mito school. An interesting example of how Confucianism and Shintō were melted together, is given to us by Hayashi Razan. He compares the three divine treasures of Japan² with the three Confucian cardinal virtues: "The mirror represents wisdom, the sword courage and the jewels humanity (love). When they are in the heart of men, we call them wisdom, courage, and humanity (love). When they are objects, we call them mirror, sword and jewels."

Yet notwithstanding these Confucian influences, Shintō remains the fundament and the centre. Another thing which is peculiar to the Mito scholars is their idea that knowledge and its practical use are two inseparable entities. In thinking one has constantly to keep before one's eyes the practical application of theoretical knowledge. Here the influence of the Yōmei Gaku³ is clearly discernible and we can understand why among the many names which

・ 清原貞雄 *Kiyohara Sadao*, 國史と日本精神の顯現 *Kokushi to Nihon Seishin no Kengen*, p. 319. The principal works of Shun-sui are:

朱子談綺 *Shushi Danks* and 朱徵君集 *Shuchōkunshū*.

¹ The 三種の神器 *San Shū no Shinki*. Vide p. 109.

² From 王陽明 *Ō Yōmei* (Wang-Yang-ming), 1472-1529. Vide *La Philosophie Morale de Wang Yang-ming* by Wang Tch'ang-Tche, p. 97-120. The reason why the teaching of Ō Yōmei was more durable in Japan than in China, vide p. 192-93. Vide also Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

the Mito School was given by the Japanese, was that of a "Branch" of the Yōmei Gaku. The later Mito Scholars especially were strongly influenced by the 知行合一 *Chikō Gōitsu* maxim of Wang, the "oneness of knowledge and action". What is the use of brilliant speculation if it remains unworkable? As one can easily understand by now, the scholars of the Mito School were no mere theorists, bent over dusty books, but people who took active part in the political movements, especially during the later years of the Tokugawa period. They were constantly driven by a sense of reality to such an extent, that another name for the Mito School was 實學 *Jitsugaku* "School of realities" ¹. When for instance the menace of a foreign invasion hung over the scholars of Mito, they tried to acquire foreign knowledge. Characteristic of the attitude of the later Mito School are the words of Nariaki: "The Kokugaku helps us to determine and to shape the heart of man, the kangaku provides us with the principles of morals and justice, the Yōgaku "foreign school" teaches us astronomy, geography, the making of ships and guns to guard and protect our country."

The influence of the Mito School did not end, when the son of Nariaki—the last Shōgun 慶喜 *Yoshinobu*—handed in his resignation ². Ever since then the ideas of the Mito School have exercised their influence and will continue to do so in the future. When in November 1900, thirty two years after the Imperial Restoration, Meiji, the 122nd Emperor, passed through Hidachi, the home Province of Mitsukuni, he became deeply impressed by the loyalty and patriotism of the founder of the Mito School. He issued an Imperial Edict, addressed to his departed soul. This Edict eulogized Mitsukuni as follows:

"You, Mitsukuni, early in your life were greatly grieved because of the rapid decline of the Imperial Power and the increasing obscurity of the Throne. You also feared the possible consequences of the growth of the arbitrary attitude of the ruling military family. You therefore endeavoured, first of all to clarify the moral and political relations of individuals to one another, taking the Throne as the center of reverence. You succeeded in training the national tendencies into right and just channels. By means of historical and literary works, you severely criticized the men of yore for their

¹ Vide Horst Hammitzsch, *op. cit.*, B 19, B 33 and B 36.

² Vide Appendix II.

actions relative to the Throne and to the Nation. You thereby made the men of your time differentiate between right and wrong and also between loyalty and disloyalty. You praised and upheld the men who held to the right and loyal cause and you inflicted moral punishment upon those men who were disloyal and selfish. You thus taught the men of your generation to lead upright and loyal lives. You proved to be the originator of the movement for reverence and loyalty to the Throne, thus making of yourself a wise forerunner of the Imperial Restoration of 1868. I am now in your Province of Hidachi. Being greatly impressed and gratified by your creditable accomplishments in the cause of the Throne, I hereby confer the rank of Shō Ichi I upon your departed soul."¹

After all that has happened in Japan during the last years, we may visualize some minor changes in the structure of the Japanese State. Yet, the ideas of the Mito School will continue to exert their influence. To what extent this will be, only the future can tell.

¹ "Japanese Expansion on the Asiatic Continent", by Y. S. Kuno, Vol. II, p. 129.

CHAPTER FIVE

HIS BASIC CONCEPTIONS

The greatest influence which Shōin exerted during his life, was during the short time of his teachership, as we shall see in the following chapter. But the exact ideas which bore fruit in the Meiji restoration, may be mentioned here.

In the centre of his thought stood the worship of the Emperor as it was expressed by the Mito Gaku: Sonnō. National greatness and unity must be embodied in the Emperor. But why this reverence¹ of the ruler? Obviously because of his mysterious connection with heaven. When Shōin starts to develop this theme, he follows closely Motoori Norinaga. After having drawn up the genealogy of the Imperial Family, he concludes: "From the foregoing it is clear that the reverence and worship of the Emperor, must be preceded by 敬神 *Keishin*, 'worship of the Gods' ". On the other hand, this worship of the Imperial Ancestors duly done guides us quite naturally again back to a deep veneration for the living Emperor, "to whom all citizens look up as a *kami*"². A great, mighty and united Japan must have its living centre in the Emperor. From him the entire country receives a kind of consecration and that sacred character, expressed already a century earlier which we find repeated in Shōin's works time and again: 我が日本は神國なり "*Waga Nippon wa Shinkoku nari*, our Japan is a sacred country." Using this as his weapon, Shōin tried to arouse loyalty and a strong national consciousness. In his *Noyama Goku Bunkō*, he writes: "Our imperial line has continued without interruption for a thousand generations. The basis of the imperial ways lies in this, that when Amaterasu Ō mi Kami handed down the sacred

¹ 尊ぶ *tōto(bu)*.

² As regards the exact significance of the word *kami*, "one of the most difficult—if not indeed the most difficult—of the problems connected with Japanese philology", vide the excellent article of D. C. Holtom: "*The Meaning of Kami*", M. N. Vol. III, No. 1, p. 1-27, and Vol. III, No. 2, p. 32-53.

treasures to her descendants, she swore this oath: 'The imperial reign will be prosperous and eternal like heaven and earth.' This we should let sink deep into our hearts in order that our loyalty may become endless." And he says a little further on: "Our country has a history of uninterrupted successions and China and other countries cannot compare with this. Therefore the loyalty of China is like that of a servant who remains in one job for a short time only. He goes where he can get most. I hear that in recent times there is a tendency to despise our country and to look for wisdom in foreign countries. How can I suppress this tendency? There is in my mind no other way than to explain the superiority of our 國體 *kokutai*¹ above all other countries. Let him who serves the country die for the country, him who serves his clan die for the clan, and let the vassal die for his Lord."²

His 尊皇 *Sonnō* idea was in no way original, neither was his slogan 攘夷 *Jōi*, "expel the barbarians"³. He carried it through with great fanaticism. In defence of this attitude he invoked time and again the authority of the Mito scholars as well as that of his ancestral teacher Yamaga Sokō. In Shōin's lectures on Sokō's *Bukyō Shōgaku* he writes: "Although my distinguished teacher Sokō was born in the midst of mediocre scholars who admired foreign countries and despised their own, he stood bravely alone and cast aside these inferior opinions and investigated the way of our ancient, holy emperors."⁴ And Sokō's words: "If young people spend too much time in memory work, recitation and literature (Chin.), they will forget the true Japanese manners in favour of the foreign ones", were taken well at heart.

We saw already in the second chapter how loyalty towards and worship of the Imperial family were alive, both in the family in which he was born and in the family which adopted him. There was still another special reason for Shōin to be loyal to the Emperor, namely because of his being a samurai of his lord Mōri. This daimyō

¹ Repeatedly mentioned by Shōin.

² This theme is repeated several times with slight variations in the *Noyama Goku Bunkō*, *Noyama Zatchō* and *Yūshitsu Bunkō*. Vide also *Anthology*.

³ Vide p. 72.

⁴ *Bukyō Zensho Kōroku*. As for Sokō's influence on Shōin Vide 素行子
山鹿甚五左衛門 *Sōkōshi Yamaga Jingozaemon*, by 松浦厚
Matsuura Atsushi, p. 320-60.

family had through centuries given heroic examples of loyalty towards the Emperor. We read in the *Nihon Gaishi* that 毛利元就 *Mōri Motonari* once offered a gift of money to Ōgimachi Tennō (1558-86), at the inception of his reign. As a reward the Tennō called the son of Motonari: 大膳太夫 *daizen dayū* (honorary title), a title which became hereditary. Later the son of Motonari, called Takamoto, was permitted to carry the imperial crests on his weapons. This favour became a family privilege and the Mōri family was subsequently called: the immediate subjects of the Imperial Family. It was for this reason that the Mōri daimyōs had the exceptional privilege of possessing a residence in Kyōto. The Mōri's alone were allowed to enter Kyōto with a procession of officers carrying lances. The Mōri daimyōs and the Shōgun stood more or less on the same footing. Both were immediately responsible to the Emperor. A quite exceptional loyalty was therefore to be expected from the Mōri daimyōs, and it pervaded the whole Chōshū (Mōri) clan. Shōin was a very significant incarnation of this spirit of loyalty. In a letter to the Buddhist priest Mokurin, which Shōin wrote in the third year of Ansei (8th month), it says: "I am the vassal of Mōri, therefore I must strive to serve him day and night. The Mōri family is subject of the Emperor, therefore service to the Mōri family, is service to the Emperor. When we serve the daimyō, we serve at the same time the Emperor and yet for 600 years we have forgotten to serve the Emperor. How grievous a sin this is! It is our duty to compensate the Emperor for this offense."¹

Many of his letters begin by mentioning the health of his Lord: "*Tonosama masu masu go kigen*". "The health of the Lord is very good."

But again first in the order comes the worship of the Gods. We read in one of his letters to his sister Chiyo: "We must worship the Gods. Yamato is called the land of the Gods. Therefore nobody who has been born in this sacred country should despise the Gods. But there are many among the common people who are far from the true attitude of mind, although they believe in the Gods. Those who come for worship and clasp their hands and pray for success, a long life, wealth and honours these people err indeed. The Gods love sincerity and purity. Therefore if one worships the Gods, he

¹ *Shokan Hen no Ichi*, p. 410.

should have a true and sincere heart, clean his body and worship without any other purposes. Only this is real piety. If one maintains this piety, keeps his true heart and cleans his body, **之は徳と申すなり** *Kore wa toku to mōsu nari*, this is what we call virtue. The famous poem of **菅原道真** *Sugawara Michizane* runs ¹: 'When our hearts are in harmony with the true way, then God will protect us, even if we do not pray.' And it is commonly said: 'The Gods reside with those who have a sincere heart.' Where there is real belief (*shin*), there indeed is virtue. Meditate seriously on these words."

And a few days before his death, he exhorts his relatives in Hagi in a letter with the following words: "Because of the fact that our sacred country will not be put to shame—for the Emperor in serenity reigns above and below are his countless subjects—I beg you, do not lose heart."²

It is superfluous to add, that when he spoke during his lessons in the Sonjuku about the Emperor, his words were glowing because of his deep inner conviction. His sincere devotion towards the ruling Emperor ³ whose helpless state he deeply regrets, is clearly expressed in his: *Hōketsu wo haishi tatematsuru*. He composed this famous poem on one of his travels, when he passed the Imperial palace in Kyōto ⁴. It runs as follows:

"Surrounded by mountains and streams, firm fortress, holy

¹ The well known Bungaku Hakase Georges Bonneau, who translated much Japanese poetry into beautiful French, makes rather a great overstatement, when he writes in the dedication of his "*Anthologie de la Poésie Japonaise*": "Ce livre est placé sous la sauvegarde du seigneur Sugawara no Michizane qui, en la première année d'engi, la neuf cent-unième de notre ère, à l'aube du Kokinshū, injustement exilé en Chikuzen, gravissait chaque jour une haute montagne pour adorer, tourné vers l'est, celui qui l'avait banni, et qui redescendu vers la vallée paisible, donnant son cœur aux rythmes immortels, fit en langue du Yamato le plus beau poème qu'il y ait au monde:

心だに	<i>Kokoro dani</i>	Pourvu que ton cœur
誠の道に	<i>Makoto no michi ni</i>	Au chemin du Bien
かなひなば	<i>Kana'inaba</i>	Soit fidèle,
祈らずとても	<i>Ineazu tote mo</i>	Même sans que tu pries,
神や守らん	<i>Kami ya mamoran.</i>	Les Dieux te protègent."

² *Shokun Hen no Ni*, p. 407.

³ 孝明天皇 *Kōmei Tennō*, 1847-57.

⁴ Vide Chronological Record, p. 44.

Miyako! Day by day I think of you as I travel Westward. Now at dawn, after my cleansing, I bow in reverence to the noble Tennō's palace. Melancholy grips my heart at this holy spot. The palace is decayed. Will it ever rise again in splendour? Mountains and streams alone have continued without change. An old message tells: 'Brightly shines Tennō's radiant virtue, worshipping Heaven and merciful to the people. His heart is pure. At cock's crow he rises, performing the sacred ablutions. Banishing the powers of darkness. His prayer for peace ascends! But no more shines into the world the Tennō's exalted wisdom. His followers at court, forgetting their duties, have not used the favourable times. How can the Tennō—now a prisoner—again command his men? How can the power of his virtue once more rule over Nippon? The love of men is unsteady like the waves. When can I again bow in reverence before Tennō's rising sun?'¹

In the fourth chapter of *Shōin Itsuwa*, we read: "Shōin had trusted his Taisaku² to Yanagawa Seigan, a famous poet, in order to have it shown to the Emperor. When he got word, that his writings had been seen by the Emperor, Shōin exclaimed: 'Our holy Emperor deigned to know my name which is as insignificant as a speck of dust. There is no glory to add. (*Nan no ei ka kore ni kuwaen*). How slow is death in its coming! (*Shisuru koto nanzo osoki ya!*)'."³ And we read in *Nihon Seishin to Bushidō* by Niki Shōha the following story: "One day, when Shōin was in the Demmachō prison in Edo, he saw the director of the prison irreverently sitting facing towards the South West. Shōin went immediately to him, squatted down beside him in a position full of inner devotion and told him:

'Do you know that—with complete deference to the augustness of the Sovereign of the whole realm (一天萬乗の君 *itten-banjō no kimi*)—you are sitting with your back towards Kyōto's Imperial palace! For a man of your status you show a great lack of respect. Born a citizen of the land of the Gods and then not worshipping the Emperor, without any respect towards the Im-

¹ All the translations of Shōin in this book are my own from the originals except this one. It has been translated into German by H. Dumoulin, vide M.N., Vol. I, No. 2, p. 66-67. This has been re-translated into English by H. Freyn and published in the Far Eastern Quarterly, Aug. 1942, Vol. I, No. 4.

² Vide Chronological Record, p. 40.

³ Kagawa Masaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

perial Court, do you really know what an offence you are committing! You should behave better!"

Together with his deep veneration towards the Emperor, Shōin ascribes to him—irrespective of his behaviour—absolute authority over the life and death of each Japanese, as one can read in the Anthology. The Japanese state belongs to one single person and this holy person's power embraces everything. This theme Shōin develops time and again, showing at the same time the great difference in this respect between Japan and China¹.

As far as Confucianism is concerned, Shōin was a real follower of the Mito Gaku and since this school tried to connect Shintō with Confucianism, it is not surprising that Shōin did likewise. From his early youth he was an ardent student of the Chinese sages; their works were his constant companions on his travels and during his imprisonment. As teacher in the Sonjuku, he lectured regularly on the Chinese classics and his comments on them form an important part of his publications. (Vide Anthology). His teachers Tamaki Bunnoshin and Sakuma Shōzan were real Confucian scholars and from them he received his love for the great Chinese authors. Yet, as a true follower of the Mito Gaku, he did not belong to any of the Chinese schools. Things purely Japanese were always much more important to him. Certainly the teachings of the Chinese Sages should always be used to explain moral precepts, but as the soul of Japan has been moulded from times immemorial by Shintō, it is in no need of foreign teaching. We see by this how close Shōin was to the Mito School. In one of his letters to his brother Umetarō, Shōin writes: "I cannot completely share your views that knowledge is of no importance if it is not based on Confucian principles. My teacher Sakuma Shōzan was also a Confucian scholar and he has advised me to study thoroughly Confucianism, yet, I think, it is still more important to study our own history. Is it not K'ung-tzū himself who writes that deeds are greater and brighter than empty words? In order to stimulate real patriotism nothing is better than to read history and to look up to the great personalities of the past. Now, we find that these personalities abound in our own Japanese history² and in studying them thoroughly, we are well on the way to deep and solid learning."

After having received a letter from his brother who wrote:

¹ Vide Anthology, p. 86-87.

² Yet, he wrote and spoke about Chinese examples as well. Vide Anthology.

"There can be no lucidity neither discipline without Confucian learning. It is impossible to face the difficulties in our personal lives and in those of the nations without Chinese teaching", Shōin replies: "The great personalities of bygone days show the way of virtue with great clarity. Those who look up to these examples, are indeed able to face the difficulties in life."

In a letter to Irie Sugizō he writes further: "It is indeed important to study the different principles and the different teachings, but I think it useless to belong to the Chu-tzū school or the school of Yang-ming. As foundation we have simply to take these words: *Sonnō Jōi*, "revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians." We should try to select the best of every book and every school. The school of Motoori Norinaga and the Mito School are quite different, but they agree in their fundamental principles of *son* "pay reverence" and *jō* "expel".

During the time when he was a teacher, Shōin stressed repeatedly the importance of introspection and the searching of one's heart and in this respect K'ung-tzū was his great teacher. In the foregoing chapter mention was made of one of Shōin's beloved texts from the Analects. On a certain day, when Shōin had gone to the second floor of the Sonjuku, he called for his great pupil Itō and asked him to quote the text about the daily examination of conscience. When the pupil, who was to become the greatest Japanese statesman of the Meiji period, answered correctly, Shōin exclaimed: "These words, Itō, you must never forget, but you must take them with you as a treasure through life."¹

However more than once Shōin expressed dissatisfaction with K'ung-tzū and Mêng-tzū, especially because they left the state of their birth (Vide Anthology).

Shōin's attitude towards Buddhism is less favourable than towards Confucianism. The Tennō and the people are as one great family, tied together by the same descent, and all untrusions from outside should be eliminated. This refers in the first place to the barbarians, but includes also the teaching of Buddha. The teaching of Buddha is not in harmony with "the way". "The way" is positive, is vital, energetic, and impelling. It makes life enjoyable. How different is Buddhism! A type of escapism, looking too much to the other world. Happiness begins in the other world and for that world one has to live; furthermore there is too much passivity

¹ *Shōin Itsuma*, by Kagawa Masaichi, p. 56.

and no initiative, too much calmness and no dynamic forces¹. It is clear that these tenets would not be welcomed by a man who was constantly driven by a great longing for deeds, for reform and all sorts of plans, a real follower of the jitsugaku "school of realities". Despite Shōin's esteem for the Zen Shū and its contempt for death, despite too, his personal friendship with his uncle Chikuin, head priest at the Zuisenji of Kamakura², and with Gesshō, a priest of the Myōenji in Tōnosaki³, his heart remained far from Buddhism. In one of his letters to his sister Chiyo he writes: "I do not think that it is necessary to have faith in Buddha⁴, but on the other hand, to go so far as to vilify Buddha is not sensible."

Mention has already been made of the family law of the Sugi's⁵ which contained prescriptions to prevent the submergence of the members in Buddhism. Buddhist scholars, however, will have the opinion that Shōin did not know very much about Buddhism, that even the fundamental tenets were unknown to him. Yet, he never opposed Buddhism and his reason was rather one of practical policy: "We know that bees can be harmful; they have stings which can become very dangerous. So it is with Buddhism, that has been introduced in our country some 1300 years ago⁶. People are very much attached to it and we must therefore be very careful. Is it not true that a rat, in danger and trapped, will even fight a cat! Such strength will come to Buddhism, if we oppose it openly."

In a letter, written from the Noyama prison to his sister Chiyo, who was at that time in Hagi, Shōin says: "I have still got many things to tell you, but I stop here at the 9th page⁷. The other day I was profoundly touched by your letter in which you recommended me to eat the rice blessed by 観音 Kannon, and to

¹ "Shake off your delusions, and enter resolutely on the path which will lead you away from these restless, tossing waves of the ocean of life; the path to the joy and rest of the Nirvana of Wisdom and Goodness and Peace." *Buddhism*, by T. W. Rhys Davids, p. 105.

² Shōin's letter to Chikuin is to be found in 書簡篇の二 *Shokan Hen no Ni*, p. 16.

³ Shōin's five letters to Gesshō are to be found in 書簡篇の一 *Shokan Hen no Ichi* and in 書簡篇の二 *Shokan Hen no Ni*.

⁴ *Hotoke to mōsu mono wa shinkō zuru ni oyobanu hoto nari.*

⁵ Vide p. 15.

⁶ For the introduction of Buddhism in Japan, vide *Geschichte Ostasiens* by F. Krause, Vol. I, p. 223-27; F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 131-135; furthermore, *Oud en Nieuw Japan* by M. W. de Visser.

⁷ Shōin has added this line, after having finished his letter.

abstain for three days from meat and fish. I agree with you that abstinence and the habit of cleanliness (潔癖 *Keppēki*) are very helpful in fortifying the soul and therefore I have taken neither meat nor sake from the 25th of the second month until the end of the third month. During that time I have eaten only what people brought as offerings. Since an abstinence for an extra three days is not difficult to observe, I should very much like to follow your advice on this point, but if I should add to the days, already set aside for it, another fast, that would certainly attract the curiosity of the other inmates here and that of the guards who would certainly ask for an explanation. Therefore I will fast only on the 8th, the day of the religious festival. You recommend me also to believe in Kannon, undoubtedly to ward off misfortune. With regard to this subject, I should like to speak more extensively. I have not yet read the Kannon sutra ¹, but I have read the Lotus sutra in which the miraculous powers of Kannon are extolled, the most important of which are: 'If one prays to Kannon, the bonds ² with which one is tied, will break; if one is in jail, the locks will spring open; and if one has already reached the place of execution, the sword that is to cut off one's head, will break into pieces.' I have read this sutra repeatedly in the prison in Edo. Because there is nothing more desirable for the ordinary man than this faith, one can understand that people will believe it with gratitude in their hearts." ³

A few pages on he writes in the same letter: "To trust in Kannon and without personal merits to pray for happiness is indeed useless.

佛法信仰はよい事ぢやない "*Buppō shinkō wa, yoi koto ja nai*. The belief in Buddha is not a good thing." Immediately after this, Shōin writes the beautiful haikai:

長閑さよ	<i>Nodokasa yo</i>
願ひなき身の	<i>Negai naki mi no</i>
神詣	<i>Kammōde.</i>

"What a tranquillity do I not experience before God without asking him anything!" ⁴

¹ 観音經 *Kannon Kyō*.

² 縄目 *namame*.

³ *Shōkan Hen no Ni*, p. 295-96.

⁴ *Shōkan Hen no Ni*, p. 300-03.

In a letter to his brother Umetarō, he expresses himself more strongly and goes so far as to quote—with full agreement—Mitsukuni, saying: "*Buppō wo shinzu bekarazaru koto!* Do not believe the law of Buddha."

It may be said in concluding this chapter that Shōin stands before us as a strong anti-foreign Shintoist who kept aloof from Buddhism. Yet at the same time he had a discerning mind towards Confucianism. In this frame of mind he passed the last years of his life.

CHAPTER SIX

THE READER AND TRAVELLER

Under the heading *Dokusho no hito* "The great reader", we find in Shōin's biographies¹ statements which make us really wonder. For instance we are informed by Kagawa Masaichi that "Shōin during the first year of Ansei from the end of the 10th month until the 12th month of the same year has read (only!) 106 volumes. And from New Year's day of the second year of Ansei until the end of the same year (only) 520 volumes."² Although the "volumes" of that time often contained just a few pages and were written with large characters, yet we must agree that Shōin was a voracious reader. At the same time we find here an explanation of his prolific but probably a little superficial knowledge. One wonders how much he actually digested! It will not be difficult to concur with the remarks about Shōin's lack of familiarity with the fundamental teachings of Buddhism mentioned before. Here we find also an indication why Shōin had so few original ideas of his own and why his influence upon future generations was achieved through his personality rather than through his doctrinal writings. These are more a conglomeration of different authors. But a great reader he was indeed. Already in his early youth we see him going out into the fields, book in hand. "Through a constant reading during day and night, the soul is purified." And we read further in his *Saiyū Nikki*: "After a long and tiring journey I arrived in Ura. Here I did not accept any invitations to social gatherings, but went straight to Hayama's house and paid my respects to him. Afterwards I went on his advice to the Kami hotel and borrowed many books there." On the same journey he copied some ten books and read another eleven besides. When he was in Nagasaki, he stayed there for three weeks and was very busy sightseeing, making observations for coastal defence, having social intercourse and various other occupations. Yet at the same time Shōin himself gives a list

¹ Kagawa has a chapter 讀書の人 *Dokusho no hito*.

² Kagawa, Yoshida Shōin, p. 55.

of 26 books that he read, of which he copied the most important ones. It was his custom, while reading a book, to have his writing brush constantly in his hand. He followed scrupulously the advice of Yamaga Sokō never to lose a minute and to make the most of his time. He thoroughly agreed also with Sokō about the 文武不岐 *bunbufuji*, "the indivisibility of brush and sword".

Regarding his constant reading, his biographers tell us hundreds of stories. A few of these may suffice here. His passion for study and reading was such that he even deprived himself of necessary rest. When he grew drowsy over his books he would, if it were summer, put mosquitoes up his sleeve and, if it were winter, take off his sandals and run barefoot on the snow in order to keep himself awake. On a Kakemono of the Shōka Sonjuku, Shōin wrote the words: "We call a library of 100,000 volumes rich. If we read 10,000 books, we become men of universal learning."¹ And also: "If you do not read 10,000 volumes, how can you become a man of 1000 autumns?"²

Generally Japanese use at least three brushes when they write; Shōin used only one. During the winter he used his brush as poker as well, until it was nearly burnt up and only then did he take a new one.

From the foregoing chapters, the reader can guess fairly accurately what the main subject of his reading was: Sokō's works, the teachings of the Mito Gaku, the Chinese classics, but also the works of the Rangaku, the "Dutch learning". Apart from Chinese, Dutch was the first foreign tongue with which the Japanese became acquainted. Dutch was the only channel to Western learning. Which branches of it the Japanese were most eager to learn I have mentioned before. How far Shōin advanced in the Dutch language is difficult to discern accurately. We have only at our disposal some of his papers which indicate that his knowledge was hardly even elementary. The principal reason for his study of the Dutch language was the defence of the country. In all this he was a real follower of

・ 藏書十萬卷これを富と言ひ、讀書萬卷これを博と言ふ, "*Zōsho jū man gun, kore wo tomi to i. Dokusho man gun, kore wo haku to iu.*"

・ 萬卷の書を讀むにあらざれば何ぞ千秋の人たる事を得ん, "*Man gun no sho wo yomu ni arazareba, nanzō senjū no hito taru koto wo en.*"

the teachings of the Mito Gaku, as embodied in the words of Nariaki, mentioned before¹: "The foreign school teaches us astronomy, geography, the making of ships and guns to guard and to protect our country." In his 夷狄防禦之急務 *Iteki bōgyo no Kyūmō* "The Urgent Need of the Defence against the Foreigners", the same Nariaki writes: "The most essential thing is that we should know the foreign learning and there is no better way to this end than the *rangaku*."² Especially after the arrival of Perry, Shōin's exhortations to study the *rangaku* become more urgent. In a letter of 1855, he divides the Schools on strategy into three classes: I—The old Japanese military science, II—The semi scientific mixture of Chinese and European arts of war, III—The European Strategy. Then he writes: "Of course the European strategy is the most important one. The old Japanese military science and that semi scientific mixture are not completely useless, but they are not suited to modern circumstances. A thorough study of European strategy is absolutely necessary." The numerous travels of Shōin, about which mention has been made before, were all undertaken from the point of view of defence. He explored especially the coasts, the harbours and the depth of the sea to protect the island country against attacks from foreign fleets.

Through his constant travels, Shōin got at the same time some knowledge of the folklore of his own country. To the companion of his sufferings 金子重輔 *Kaneke Shigesuke*, he wrote: "You cannot separate man from the earth and you cannot separate things from man; if you wish to discuss things and man, you have to study geography"³. Shōin's study of geography started in the first year of Kōka, when Yamada Uemon had impressed on Shōin's mind the absolute necessity of the study of the Konyo Zushiki (Vide Chronological Record p. 38).

This is the place to mention Shōin's plan for the national expansion of Japan. At the end of 1854, Shōin wrote his *Yūshū Roku* in which he outlined his imperialistic designs. Remarkable for the influence of his personality is that he converted to his views not only his fellow prisoners who in the beginning did not show

¹ Vide p. 64.

² *Nihon Tetsugaku Zenshū*, p. 322 (not quoted from the original, but from "Die Mito Schule").

³ "Chi wo hanarete hito nashi; hito wo hanarete koto nashi; jinji wo ronsen to kosoeba, chiri wo miyo." Kagawa Masaichi, *Shōin Itsumo*, p. 23.

any interest in the subject, but also the prison guards and even some of the visiting officials¹. The outline of Shōin's plan for expansion was as follows: "Those who know how to look after the welfare of their country should not be satisfied with maintaining and protecting that which their country already has, but at the same time should aim to reform and improve upon that which their country already possesses. They should also strive to gain and add that which their country has not, thereby extending the power and glory of the nation beyond its borders. Present day Japan should first of all complete her military preparations, by building the necessary battleships and by providing herself with all sorts of military weapons and ammunition. Then she should develop and colonize Yezo and entrust its rule to worthy feudal lords. At her earliest opportunity, Japan should occupy Kamchatka with an army and place the Sea of Okhotsk under her sole control. Ryū Kyū should be instructed to make her king come in person to pay homage to Japan so that he and his kingdom may pay reverence to Japan as do all the feudal lords in the homeland. Japan should upbraid Korea for her long negligence in the observation of her duties to Japan, and have her send tribute-bearing envoys; Japan should also instruct Korea to give hostages to Japan for her good behaviour, as she did during the glorious Imperial period of ancient Japan. In the North, Manchuria should be sliced off (from China for the benefit of Japan). In the South, Japan should receive Formosa and the Philippines. In this way, Japan should demonstrate her policy of expansion to the outside world. We should always look after the welfare and interests of our people. At the same time we should raise and train our fighting men to meet the needs of the nation. Then our country and the far-off lands in our possession will be well guarded and protected. By pursuing these policies, Japan may go forth into the world and proclaim that she is able to maintain her national standing. If a nation in this struggling world should be surrounded by nations of aggressive inclination and should remain inactive, she would certainly be destined to decline and become obscure."

These were Shōin's ideas about a great future Japan—differing only slightly from the opinions of previous expansionists. Hideyoshi already planned and actually undertook to conquer Korea, Manchuria and to place Ryū Kyū, Formosa and the Philippines under the

¹ Kagawa, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

rule of Japan¹. Besides, in the latter part of the eighteenth century **木多利明** *Honda Toshiaki* advocated a great program of national expansion and proposed that the national capital should be moved to Kamchatka and that a second fortified capital for defensive purposes be established on Sakhalin, thus making Japan a great Imperial power that might rival China and Russia².

From the foregoing we see that Shōin's aspirations towards a great Japan were by no means original. Yet during the last decades, whenever Japanese nationalists put forward their exaggerated claims, Shōin's vision was quoted³. Hideyoshi, Honda, Hayashi Shihei⁴ and other expansionists were comparatively unknown among the common Japanese people. Shōin only was the great torch-beater by whose light Japan should march. What then was the reason that his words made such an impression on contemporaries and on the people of later generations?

This we will try to explain in the next chapter.

¹ After having announced his purpose of crossing to Korea and making that country the basis of a campaign against China, Hideyoshi is quoted as saying: "When that is effected, the three countries China, Korea, and Japan will be one. I shall do it all as easily as a man rolls up a piece of matting and carries it under his arm." F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 489.

² "Honda's plan for the future development of Japan was formulated and based upon either imaginary or unreliable information given by so-called explorers. He advocated that Japan should occupy Yezo and establish her ruling power there before the Russians should come and gain control over both the land and its people.... Honda further devised a plan for transforming and developing Japan into the best and greatest nation in the world: he proposed that the national capital of the Empire should be removed to the Southern part of Kamchatka at about latitude 51° N, and that a military city should be established on the island of Sakhalin at about latitude 46° or 47° N, thus placing Kamchatka and Sakhalin in the centre of Japan's political and military control.... While thus planning to make Japan the greatest of world empires, Honda made no inquiry with regard to either the financial or the military strength of Japan.... Honda placed sole reliance upon the so-called inexhaustible output of the gold, silver, and copper mines in Yezo and in the adjoining islands, with which to cover the costs of the conquest. As for geographical features, Honda's ideas were purely imaginative.... However, Honda in particular may rightfully be credited as the first Japanese to outline how a greater Japan might be begun. The Japanese of their time, as well as those of future generations, were greatly inspired by their plan, notwithstanding that it was impractical," *Japanese Expansion of the Asiatic Continent*, by Y. S. Kuno, Vol. II, p. 235-37.

³ In the monthlies, newspapers, and many popular magazines.

⁴ **林子平** *Hayashi Shihei* (1754-1793), also called Rin Shihei. He wrote **海國兵談** *Kaikoku Heidan* "Talks on a Sea Nation" and **三國通論** *Sankoku Tsūron* "Survey of Three Countries", which discussed the diplomatic problems of the past and present between European nations, prophesying that at some future date Russia would menace the Northern Shores of Japan, and that it was necessary to be prepared and to manufacture arms. He was a noted Dutch scholar and well informed upon foreign affairs. Vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 168-69; J. Murdoch, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 426; Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 161-63-67; F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, 659.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TEACHER

When one visits Hagi, one of the things that make a deep impression is the Sonjuku, Shōin's little private school where he taught for the short period of two years and a half. The classroom—measuring at first eight *tatami* (12 × 2 feet) and later increased by ten and a half *tatami*—looks very poor and shabby, yet it is carefully guarded like a precious gem by Shintō priests. From this poor, little village school a very considerable influence has gone out. Here were educated the great men of the Meiji Restoration: Itō Hirobumi, Yamagata Aritomo, Shinagawa Yajirō, Nomura Yasushi, Kido Kōin, Maebara Issei, Yamada Akiyoshi¹ and many others. Shōin's personality must have left behind something of itself. How can we explain otherwise the numerous glowing accounts given of him by nearly all the great Meiji leaders, how explain the great impression his personality still makes on the youth of modern Japan. During the summer of 1857, Shōin became a regular professor of the Shōka Sonjuku, the village school founded by his uncle Tamaki². The number of pupils was 3 in the beginning, but later increased to ± 25³. Many more wished to come, but there was not sufficient place. Moreover, Shōin was not quick to accept pupils, when he once refused a candidate, he adhered to his decision and no change could be expected. Of course Shōin could never be influenced by money. He would not even tolerate the appearance

¹ Of most of these great men of the Meiji period, the 講談社 *Kōdansha* has published short popular biographies. In *Prince Ito* by K. Hamada many of them are mentioned. Vide further E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 250, 315, 401, 873, 875, and M. N., Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 53-87.

² Vide, p. 19.

³ Their names were: 吉田無逸 *Yoshida Muiwa*,¹ 松浦松洞 *Matsuura Shōtō*, an artist who painted—on the occasion of Shōin's last departure for Edo—the well known Shōin kakemono, 増野無咎 *Masuno Mukyō*, (From 廣瀬豊 *Hirose Yutaka*, 吉田松陰の研究 *Yoshida Shōin no Kenkyū*, p. 308). If we consider all those who partly and indirectly participated in Shōin's teaching, the number of pupils may be given as 300.

of a bribe. Once a merchant brought his son to the school and asked for admission and he gave him at the same time a considerable amount of money. But Shōin refused to accept it and launched into such an outbreak of indignation that the matter became public in school¹. There are numerous stories, mentioned by Shōin's biographers, about his great spirit of sacrifice towards his pupils. With great politeness and kindness he was day and night at their disposal and the pupils took such an advantage of this that the housemaid often declared: "Our teacher never slept."² When he spoke about loyalty towards the Emperor—this he did nearly every day—he became enthusiastic. On special occasions Shōin allowed a free discussion among the pupils about contemporary problems. When the dispute got out of hand, Shōin asked a pupil who could sing beautifully, to sing a song to calm the atmosphere³. Shōin's educational principles are to be found in what we may call the most complete of all his works: **講孟劄記** *Kōmō Tōki*, later called **講孟餘話** *Kōmō Yowa* (Additional notes in explanation of Mêng-tzū), which he had written while in the Noyama prison⁴.

On the whole he was in favour of general education for everybody, but especially for the gifted ones. One's **長所** *chōsho* (strong points) should be developed without paying much attention to the weaker side of one's character. Every pupil should receive some kind of private tuition and should be individually treated. One should be most careful not to theorize too much but rather keep in mind the practical application.

The curriculum of the *Shōka Sonjuku* was divided in **武科** *Buka* (Military department) and **文科** *Bunka* (Literary department). The former was again divided in **陸軍科** *Rikugunka* "Army section" and **海軍科** *Kaigunka* (Navy section). For his upkeep Shōin considered the income which he received from his daimyō more than sufficient and he never accepted a **月謝**

¹ In this he was a real follower of Sokō, who wrote in his *Shidō*: "If a man craves after money, he will become corrupt. The determination never to be influenced by bribery, will be the guardian of the mind." Vide p. 55.

² "Uchi no sensei wa nerareta koto wa nai." Kawaga, *Yoshida Shōin*, p. 83.

³ Kawaga, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁴ **吉田松陰全集第二卷** *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū, Dai nikun*, p. 263-249.

Gessha (monthly fee) from his pupils. Only remuneration in the form of food was allowed. The teaching hours in the *Sonjuku* were very irregular and there were no holidays. One of his favourite dicta, often used during the last war to arouse patriotic feelings, was 至誠にして動かさるものは未だこれあ

らさるなり *Shisei ni shite ugokazaru mono wa, imada kore arazaru nari*¹ (Complete sincerity never left a man unmoved). Shōin's educational principles were based to a great extent on the teachings of Yamaga Sokō, especially on his *Shidō* and *Bukyō Shōgaku*². The formation of the true personality always dominated his teaching. The seven rules for the warrior, written by Shōin on a *kakemono*, give us much insight into the spirit of the *Sonjuku*:

A. "All human beings should be well aware of the reason why men differ from birds and beasts. Man alone has the five human relations³. The most important of these are the relations between ruler and subject and between father and son. Therefore man is man by reason of his loyalty and filial piety.

B. "All men born in our Empire should know the reason for its loftiness. After all, our Imperial Dynasty has continued uninterrupted from time immemorial. The vassals receive their fiefs from generation to generation. The rulers feed the people and in return the people have a great debt of gratitude towards them. Ruler and people are one body⁴. Loyalty towards the ruler and piety of children towards their parents are one and the same. This is characteristic of our country alone.

C. "The way of the samurai consists in the 大義 *taigi* Great Justice. This is put into practice by courage and the courage increases through its practice.

D. "The deeds of the samurai must be simple and true without a shade of falsehood. To excuse oneself with skilful lies, is shameful.

¹ 廣瀬豊 *Hirose Yutaka*, 吉田松陰の研究 *Yoshida Shōin no Kenkyū*, p. 320.

² Vide Chapt. IV.

³ 五倫 *Gorin* (Chin. *Wu-lun*) are the relations between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, between brothers and between friends. The 五常 *gojō* (Chin. *Wu-ch'ang*) are the five virtues: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faith.

⁴ 君臣一體 *Kunshin ittai*.

If we refrain from these, all our dealings will be fair and just ¹.

E. "He is indeed poor who does not know modern and ancient history nor the teaching of the sages. To read books and to have intercourse with friends, makes the true gentleman (*makoto no hito*).

F. "The exercise of virtue and the development of one's talents, will inspire a debt of gratitude towards the teacher and it will bring advantage to pupils and friends alike; therefore the true gentleman will be prudent in the choice of his acquaintances.

G. "To take rest only after death ². This is a maxim, short yet charged with meaning. Perseverance, dogged determination. There is no other way."

Immediately after these 規則 *Kisoku* Shōin added in small characters: "If you do not keep this last rule, all things are useless." We find on a separate kakemono the following five rules, written by Shōin as well:

A. "You should never disobey the orders of your parents.

B. "You should inform your parents of your exit and entrance.

C. "You should get up early in the morning, wash your face, order your hair, worship your ancestors, worship in the direction of the castle (*daimyō*) and with your face towards the East worship the Emperor. Even if you are ill, you should never forget this.

D. "You should follow your elder brother and honour those of high rank. Never be impolite. Always be gentle towards your younger brother, those of lower rank and those who are younger than you. In the Sonjuku you should observe propriety in your talk and behaviour." ³

If someone sinned against the first rule, *zazen* ⁴ was ordered and as punishment for infringements of the other four, an appropriate penance was given according to the degree of transgression.

These were the principles with which Shōin worked and which he instilled into his pupils, not without success. The favour with which these principles have been received by the Japanese, has caused him to be compared with the great educators of the West.

As so often happens in Japan, it is not long before their mind

¹ 公明正大 *Kōmei seidai*.

² 死して後止む *Shishite nochi yamu*.

³ 吉田松陰 *Yoshida Shōin*, 武藤貞一 *Mutō Teiichi*, p. 340.

⁴ Lit. "to sit as a monk in contemplation".

discovers a Japanese counterpart to any great feature of the Occident. So they have their Rhine and Alps, their Manchester and Solingen, their Beethoven, Shakespeare and Goethe. Shōin was elected as their Pestalozzi. But the "striking" similarities which Shōin's biographers¹ have discovered between both are too artificial to deserve serious consideration.

¹ Kagawa and Tokutomi. Especially the latter's comparisons are very strange. So for instance when he writes: "Shōin was not a Bismarck, but a Rousseau". To my mind Shōin has nothing in common with these two highly differing characters. Vide Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, p. 51-59.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ANTHOLOGY OF SHŌIN'S WORKS

幽室文稿 YŌSHITSU BUNKŌ¹

Why should I not eat the 河豚 *jugu*, "globefish"?

They say that the globe-fish is poisonous. Many eat it, I do not. It is not that I am afraid to lose my life, but I am afraid to lose my good name. Death is inevitable for man; there is therefore no reason to fear it. However, life and death are serious matters. If we bring on death which is great through a fish which is very small indeed, do we not dishonour ourselves? It might be objected: the globe-fish is not always poisonous. Death comes to man sooner or later and cannot be anticipated. Everyone knows that many die without having been ill. If a man eats a thing that is poisonous because he likes it, and dies by chance, does he not disgrace himself! Perhaps it will be said: The taste of the globe-fish is unsurpassed. Without having eaten it one cannot fully appreciate how delicious its flavour is. The opium that the Chinese smoke is certainly not tasteless. The nicer its taste, the more potent the poison. Those who like the globe-fish, will not be slow to develop a taste for opium as well.²

CRITICISM OF THE OPINION WHICH HOLDS: THE STATE DOES NOT BELONG TO ONE PERSON³

The State does not belong to one man alone. That is the opinion of the Chinese⁴. It is true in China, but in the land of the Gods (神州 *Shinshū*), it is not so. The dynasty, founded by the 皇祖 *Kōso*⁵ of the Imperial family, holds the succession through its

¹ This "Dark Room Manuscript" covers more than 400 pages and is to be found in the *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. III, IV, and VII. It was written between 1856-58. Quite a number of pages of it treat unimportant subjects.

² *Yōshitsu Bunkō*, *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. III, p. 24-25.

³ *Yōshitsu Bunkō*, *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. III, p. 31-33.

⁴ Cf. *Lü-shih ch'ün-ch'ün*, I, 4; *Lü-t'ao*, I, 1.

⁵ The founder of the Empire, Jimmu Tennō.

descendants generation after generation and like the Universe it is endless. Other people can neither desire nor aspire to it. Therefore it is evident that the State belongs to one man alone and for this reason it is not just to attempt to establish a state of affairs which in fact is unattainable. Suppose that in our country our Emperor oppresses us as 桀 *Chieh* and 紂 *Chou*¹ have done. In that case the whole people can do nothing but offer their heads to the Emperor. They incline their heads before him bowing deeply down to the ground in front of the Imperial Palace and they all begin to weep. Then they turn their heads heavenwards begging that the Emperor may change his ways. If unfortunately, however, the Emperor gets angry and begins to massacre his people, then, if there are no more descendants, the land of the Gods perishes. Let us suppose that one subject escapes death and presents himself to the Palace and meets the same fate as the others, we call him a subject of the people of the land of the Gods. If, however, he does not present himself to the Palace to die, then he does not belong to the country of the Gods. And when at that time a man like 湯 *T'ang*² or like 武 *Wu*³ appears and begins to fight the Emperor, then, however well-meaning his intentions, however just his deed, he will be a Chinese, or Indian or a European or an American, but certainly not a man of the country of the Gods. The case is the same in the provinces. Nowadays the 防長兩國 *bōchō ryōkoku*⁴ belong to one single person. Their existence depends on that single person only. If he perishes, the two provinces perish. Let us suppose that unfortunately he behaves badly, then—after they have tried to convert him—the two peoples are exposed to death. If one survivor flees to another province, he does not then belong to these two provinces. Or perhaps he hides himself in the mountains; in that case also he does not belong to those two provinces. If he kills his Lord to revenge his people, to console the

¹ Vide p. 104.

² 成湯 *Ch'eng T'ang*. He overthrew Chieh Kuei, the last Emperor of the Hsia dynasty, and mounted the throne in B.C. 1766 as first Emperor of the Shang dynasty. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 116.

³ 武王 *Wu Wang*, B.C. 1169-1116 In 1122 he assembled an army and routed the forces of Chou Hsin. The dynasty of Shang was thus brought to a close. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 891.

⁴ The two provinces Suwō and Nagato.

souls of the massacred people—as they call it in China—well, in that case he is a wolf, a tiger, a rhinoceros, or a jackal (*sai*), but certainly not a man.

Therefore I conclude that the state does belong to one single person alone. The opposite is only found among the Chinese. However, among a people, thus united, everyone does his duty towards the State, and serves the Emperor until death. Rich or poor, noble or commoner, it is always thus. That is the way of the land of the Gods. Is it not true that the state belongs to one single person?

In the foregoing explanation, Shōin develops to the extreme the ideas of 本居宣長 *Motoori Norinaga*¹, who rejected the Mencian doctrine of lawful revolution and objected to Mêng-tzū's refusal of any claim of a divine right to a sovereign who failed to exercise his rule for the good of the people. Mêng-tzū said: "If the sovereign has great faults, they ought to make remonstrances; if this is repeated without receiving any attention, they may change the occupant of the throne."²

"The people are the most important; next come the spirits of the land; the ruler is of least importance. If a prince brings these guardian spirits into danger, he is to be deposed."³

Referring to these doctrines of Mêng-tzū, Motoori says: "As foreign countries, China and India, particularly the former, are not the special domain of the sun-goddess, they have no permanent rulers, and evil spirits, having found a field of action, have corrupted mankind. In those countries any bad man who could manage to seize power became a sovereign. Those who had the upperhand were constantly scheming to maintain their positions, while the inferiors were as constantly on the watch for opportunities to oust them. The most powerful and cunning of these rulers succeeded in taming their subjects, and having secured their position, became an example for others to imitate. In China the name of *Seijin*⁴ "Saints" has been given to these men. . . .

¹ Vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 476; F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, 644-49; D. C. Holtom, "The National Faith of Japan", p. 48-49; and especially the three last numbers of the M.N.

² Translation of Faber, to be found in "The Mind of Mencius" by E. Faber, p. 244.

³ E. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 78. Vide also, passages collected by Legge, *Mêng-tzū Prolegomena*, p. 46-48.

⁴ 聖人 *Shōng-jén*.

"The Holy Men of China were merely successful rebels. The Tennō is the Sovereign appointed by the pair of deities, Izanagi and Izanami, who created this country. The Sun Goddess never said 'Disobey the Tennō if he be bad'. Therefore, whether he be good or bad, no one attempts to deprive him of his authority. He is the immovable ruler who must endure to the end of time, as long as the sun and the moon continue to shine. In ancient language the Tennō was called a god, and that is his real character. Duty therefore consists in obeying him implicitly without questioning his acts. During the Middle Ages such men as Hōjō Yoshitoki, Hōjō Yasutoki, Ashikaga Takauji and others violated this duty and took up arms against him. Their disobedience to the Tennō is attributable to the influence of Chinese learning."¹

¹ *Kojiki Den*, translation of Satow, T.A.S.J., III, part 1, p. 24. Compare with this the translation of Motoori's 直毘の電 *Naobi no Mitama*:

"Da China nicht das Land Amaterasu O Mi Kami's ist, hat es kein bestimmtes Herrscherhaus. Es ist zum Tummelplatz des bösen Kami geworden, die sich bei ihm zusammenscharen wie die Fliegen im Sommer. Deren Unheil stiftendem Wirken ist es zuzuschreiben, dass die Herzen der Menschen verdorben und ihre Sitten verwildert sind. Die Folge davon ist Umsturz. So kommt es, dass auch Leute niedriger Herkunft ohne weiteres Herrscher werden. Daher treffen, die oben sind, Vorkehrungen, dass sie nicht von den Menschen, die unten sind, gestürzt werden; während die Menschen, die unten sind, Pläne machen, wie sie diese (die oben sind) stürzen können. Sie nehmen keine Rücksicht auf einander. So schaden sie sich gegenseitig und machten von alter Zeit an die Regierung des Reiches sehr schwer.

Wenn nun unter diesen Umständen ein mächtiger und weiser Mann, der die Zuneigung der Menschen gewonnen hatte, die Herrschaft an sich riss und gute Vorsorge traf, dass sie ihm nicht wieder entrisen werde, und endlich lange Zeit regiert hatte und so der Nachwelt zum Vorbild geworden war, nannte man ihn in China einen Heiligen. So wie z.B. aus einer aufrührerischen Zeit durch die Gewöhnung an Kampf ganz von selbst viele gute Feldherren hervorgehen, so brachten auch Zeiten, in denen die verschiedensten Massnahmen erdacht und ausgeführt wurden, um mit Gewalt eines sittenverdorbenen und schwer zu regierenden Landes Herr zu werden, weise Männer hervor. Aber es ist falsch zu glauben, dass diese Heiligen gleich den Kami aus dieser Welt herausgehoben und vor sich aus mit einer wunderbaren Kraft ausgestattet seien. Was diese Heiligen nun ausgedacht und bestimmt haben, ist der sogenannte "Weg". Deshalb hat der Weg in China letzten Endes auch nur die beiden Ziele, nämlich ändern die Herrschaft zu entreissen, und zweitens Vorsorge zu treffen, dass sie einem selbst nicht wieder entrisen werde.

Da nun die Heiligen mit ganzer Seele dabei waren, wenn sie den Plan gefasst hatten, einem andern die Herrschaft zu entreissen, und keine körperliche Mühe scheuten, nur Gutes taten und so die Zuneigung der Menschen gewannen, hatten sie zwar ganz den Anschein guter Menschen. Auch die Art ihres Weges, denn sie ausgedacht haben, ist in allem zufriedenstellend und lobenswert. Aber die Heiligen verstiegen selbst zuerst gegen ihren Weg, da sie die Herrschaft an sich rissen. So ist ihre Lehre Lug und Trug, und sie selbst sind wahrhaftig keine guten Menschen, sondern überhaupt die schlechtesten." (Translation of H. Stölte in M.N., Vol. II, No. 1, p. 195-97).

講孟餘話 KŌMŌ YOWA¹

The first advice I have to give you when you read the Chinese classics is that you should not have a blind admiration for the saints and the sages. This is an essential point. If your admiration is even a little blind, you will be unable to see clearly "the way". To study in that way is not only useless, but even harmful. Confucius and Mencius—it is said—leaving their native country gave their attention to other countries. This is unpardonable. After all the Lord (*daimyō*)² is for us also like a father. To look for a Lord in another province, leaving one's country of birth, because the Lord is foolish and stupid, is the same as to take as father an old man from a neighbouring house, leaving one's own house, just because the father is stupid. Confucius and Mencius committed this error. (Parted with this duty, relationship.) We cannot find any excuse for their behaviour³.

It might be said: 'The way of K'ung-tzū and Mêng-tzū is great. They desired to do good to the whole world at the same time (*kanete*). Why then must they limit themselves to their own country?

Furthermore, if we attach ourselves to a (neighbouring) *daimyō* who is enlightened and wise, in order to tread "the way", then it will be at the same time advantageous for the whole world, consequently also for our native country.'

At this I answer: To leave one's own country in order to do good to the whole world, is the same as to attempt to govern the country while leading a bad life. It is written in the beginning of the Great Learning:

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts."⁴

One should not disobey these words. To neglect oneself and one's house in order to govern the world, is something that even servants

¹ Additional notes in explanation of *Mêng-tzū*; *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. II, p. 263-64.

² Lit.: "Daimyō and father belongs to the same relationship." Shōin uses 君 *Kun* for the Emperor, the Shōgun, but far more often for his own Lord Mōri.

³ Lit.: "Is unreasonable" 辨へのない *wakimae no nai*.

⁴ Transl. Legge, I, 4.

can do. It is the same as to collect fowl while ignoring the way of justice. He who serves his Lord will object: 'If our actions do not produce positive results, we cannot do any good for the State.'

This is a great error. One must clarify "the way" without expecting to do great deeds or to have great success. One must always follow justice without thinking of profit. If we cannot have harmony with our Lord, then it is better to die, proclaiming his injustice (remonstrating with him), and even better to be condemned to starvation in a dungeon. If these things happen to us, we seem to have no results whatsoever, no merits and no honour, but in reality we have done our duty as subjects by giving a good example to our descendants, who certainly will appreciate this deed of ours and imitate it. Thus, at last, good morals will be established in the country and the sages, the nobles and the common folk, all will respect loyalty and justice. Therefore, although deprived of merits and immediate honours, yet our act of loyalty can influence the people, even a thousand years later. History provides us with plenty of examples of this ¹. This is what we call the great loyalty (*daichū*). Yet this depends upon and is connected with the nature (*Kokutai*) of the State. In China for instance, the way of the Sovereign is different. He who surpasses others in intelligence and wisdom, becomes sovereign. Thus we can understand that Yao and Shun ² transferred their place to others and thus we can understand that T'ang and Wu ³, after having killed their sovereign, are still called saints. But in our country, from the Emperor down to the simplest daimyō, the succession is uninterrupted. This does not exist in China. In China the subjects engage themselves only for half a season like servants. If their masters are good, they stay with them, if they are bad they leave them. The subjects of our country, however, being *fudai* (hereditary) ⁴ share with their Lord life and death, joy and sorrow. These subjects will never leave their Lords, even when they must die. Ah! To which country belongs my father and my mother? From whom (which country) do I get my clothes and food? Thanks to whom I read books and know "the way"? When I leave my Lord suddenly, because of some discord between us, what kind of man am I to be considered? On this

¹ Lit.: "All brought together how many to count!"

² Vide Shōin's letters, p. 103.

³ Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 116, 882, 891. Vide also *Anthology*, p. 87.

⁴ Vide Chapt. I, p. 2. This being "*fudai*" holds true for daimyō as well as for ordinary samurais.

point, I should very much like a discussion with K'ung-tzū and Mêng-tzū, if I could make them come to life again. I heard that some foreign barbarians have recently insisted¹ on their sages reshaping their manner of governing, and these countries have become so mighty that they now menace ours. How can we repel this threat? There is only one thing to do: To make clear to the people the difference of the nature (*Kokutai*) of our state—discussed before—from that of foreign countries. The entire people sacrifice themselves for their fatherland, the people of a province for their province², the subject for his Lord, the child for his father. If we are determined to this, then there is no reason to be afraid of foreign barbarians.

May all my friends pursue this strongly!

講孟餘話 KŌMŌ YOWA³

"Being wise and good, they have pleasure in these things. If they are not wise and good, though they have these things, they do not find pleasure."⁴

In this chapter light is thrown on what is the real joy. The joy of 文王 *King Wên* was not to enjoy the towers, lakes, birds, and beasts, but it was to enjoy what the people enjoyed. The joy of the people was neither to enjoy the towers, lakes, birds, and beasts, but to enjoy what King Wên enjoyed. The sovereign enjoys what the people enjoy and the people enjoy what the sovereign enjoys. This is what we call to rejoice mutually. The joy of King Chieh⁵ was not of this nature. He enjoyed the towers, lakes, birds, and beasts, but his joy was divorced from that of the people; his was a solitary joy. Now, there are people who like sake, voluptuous love, gambling, tea, and thousand other things, they all are followers of King Chieh. If we like to possess the joy of King Wên we have to learn that father and son, Lord and subject, brothers, parents, relatives, friends, companions, all should rejoice mutually. If we

¹ 推舉 *Suishyo* is lit. "recommendation".

² *Kōhoku no hito wa, kōhoku no tame ni shi shi, kōhan no hito wa, kōhan no tame ni shi shi*, means lit.: "Those in favour of closing the country, will die for it and those in favour of closing the province, will die for the province."

³ *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. II, p. 266-67.

⁴ Transl. Legge, I, I, II, 2.

⁵ Vide p. 87.

do so, how could we possibly be unhappy! But today I am in prison with you, my friends, and we all are deprived of these joys. But if studying these things (this way) together, we could forget the pain caused by the shackles and the prison, would that not be the joy of joys! I hope to join with you, my friends, in this rejoicing.

講孟餘話 KŌMŌ YOWA ¹

Benevolence is an attribute of human beings. If you are not a human being, you have no benevolence. This is the case with animals. If you have no benevolence, you are not a human being. In that case you are nearer to animals. The result of the intimate union between man and benevolence, is The Way. There are many people in the world who have no benevolence. There are also many people who speak of benevolence as distinct from humanity. In order to attain The Way 道 *dō*, we should devote ourselves to learning.

武教全書講錄 BUKYŌ ZENSHO KŌROKU ²

In the following pages I give first the text of Sokō's *Bukyō-Shō-gaku* ³ and afterwards Shōin's explanation of it;

I—ON RISING EARLY AND GOING EARLY TO BED

A samurai should get up early in the morning, wash his face and dress his hair. After he has clad and armed himself properly, he should nourish the calm morning air and remind himself of the benevolence of his Lord and his father. After that he should consider the family affairs and reflect upon the teachings:

"This body of mine, down to the very skin and hair, is a gift of my father and mother. It is the first part of my filial duty to keep it safe from harm. To walk the right path and to make a name for myself in posterity in order to honour my father and mother, is its fulfilment."⁴

Afterwards he should then give instructions concerning his family affairs and receive his guests or visitors.

In his official service, he should attend to his duties earlier than

¹ Yoshida Shōin Zenshū, p. 413.

² Vide p. 46.

³ Chapt. I, III, V and VIII. The whole *Bukyō Shōgaku* consists of ten chapters.

⁴ *Hsiao-ching*, § 1.

his colleagues and also retire later in the evening. Returning home, he should first greet his father and mother, 氣を下す *ki wo kudasu*, soften his own spirit and calm his temper. During his time of leisure he should inspect the daily affairs of his family, study the classics and biographies in order to foster the right path of the samurai.

When the sun sets, he should go round on his nightwatch and he should prepare himself for the night and go early to bed in order to rest both mind and body ¹.

III—ON THE PROPER USE OF WORDS

A samurai should always use correct words and never effeminate or vulgar ones, otherwise he will misbehave. He should carefully avoid 柔弱 *jūjaku* affectation and vulgar sayings. He should often talk about the principles of right and wrong, about old battlefields, about brave and noble deeds ancient or modern, and about the rise and fall of the samurai class. He may well comment on any of these subjects and warn against any defects. To laugh at the faults of others, to attack the contemporary policy, or to talk about the pleasures and frivolities, will not only stain your heart, but also degrade your actions. The hearts of men are inclined to these things. Therefore, watch your words. ²

V—ON CLOTHING, FOOD AND HABITATION

No samurai should be ashamed of simple food and clothing, nor should he ever long for a comfortable life. If his expenses in any of the three are greater than he can bear, his military equipment will be insufficient. The completion of military defence remains always the most important thing. Clothes should be of a special size and tailoring. The meals should be simple and the rice unpolished. The residence of a samurai should be simple as well. A comfortable and beautiful dwelling will only make a samurai homesick, which is contrary to the way of the warrior. (Follows the example of the very frugal Chinese Emperor 帝堯 *Teigyō*.) ³

¹ 武教小学 *Bukyō Shōgaku*, p. 27-8.

² 武教小学 *Bukyō Shōgaku*, p. 31.

³ 武教小学 *Bukyō Shōgaku*, p. 33-35.

VIII—ON HAWKING AND HUNTING

Hawking and hunting are traditional practices¹. If birds or other animals devastate the fields and the gardens, it is the duty of the samurai to kill them. He has to know exactly where dangerous and difficult places are situated and note the position of mountains and rivers, which information can be gathered on the spot. He has to penetrate marshes, mountains, and forests; he has to shoot arrows and wield the sword and halberd. Therefore he should try to keep himself fit and supple. He has to study the capability of all his soldiers. Every season has its own work. If we let pass the time suited for outdoor work, fields and gardens will become like a wilderness. Such devastation is worse than the damage wrought by birds and beasts².

Shōin's explanation of these chapters is as follows³:

ON RISING EARLY AND GOING EARLY TO BED

Thoroughly think about it that this chapter contains all the advices and warnings regarding the daily timetable of the *bushi* (samurai) and also will think about it, that this chapter is the basis of all the other ones. The contents of this chapter are important and concise. It is necessary that we apply every word to cultivate our virtue.

The cultivation of the 平旦之氣 *Heitan no Ki*, "the breath of life of an ordinary morning", as Mōshi explains⁴, brings us to 浩然之氣 *Kōzen no Ki* "the profuse breath of life"⁵.

¹ We read in the *Tokugawa Jikkō*: "When you go out into the country hawking and hunting, you learn to understand the military spirit and also the hard life of the lower classes. You exercise your muscles and train your limbs. You have any amount of walking and running and become quite indifferent to heat and cold, and so you are little likely to suffer from any illness. Getting up early in the morning is good for the digestion, and gives one the keenest appetite for breakfast, while after a day at this sport you sleep splendidly at night. This is all very good for the health. Hawking is not only for the purpose of getting a large bag of game. In times of peace like these, all classes are apt to grow slack and become enervated so that they cannot act quickly in an emergency. In stag-hunting and hawking all must be in training and go on foot and climb up steep places and wade streams and exert themselves to the utmost. It is a good opportunity to note the strong and weak among the retainers, and the hard exercise keeps them all strong and ready for their duties." Quoted from *The Maker of Modern Japan* by A. Sadler.

² 武教小半 *Bukyō Shōgaku*, p. 37.

³ *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. III, p. 101-03, 107-08, 112-13, 117-19.

⁴ *Mêng-tzu*, 6.1.8.2. *Mêng-tzu*—as the early Chinese authors—assumes that the vita energy renews itself every night and reaches its optimal state in the mornings.

⁵ It is the "breath" as source of all life. *Mêng-tzu*, 2.1.2.12-15.

If one does not possess the "profuse breath", one cannot use intellect and wisdom. This breath is not just animal vigour. It is something that comes up from the bottom of our soul just as the mist comes up from the earth. It is not afraid of a great enemy or of a great assault, yet it does not despise the small enemy or the puny attack. No difficulty, however great, brings it to submission. It does not give itself over either to peace or to exultation. It keeps a constant watch. The cultivation of the profuse breath of life begins with the cultivation of the "ordinary morning's breath". To get up early in the morning, to wash and dress the hair, to put on the garments in the right way, to put on arms properly, these are the means to cultivate this breath. One should remind oneself of the benevolence of his Lord and father. Then one should consider the family affairs and reflect on piety. All these things are very important for the cultivation of the "ordinary morning's breath".

What follows is more or less the same as Yamaga Sokō's.

ON THE PROPER USE OF WORDS

This chapter is very important. If we read this chapter with much attention, and if we do not neglect even one word, then we can be called true samurais. In the following are three important things which we should keep in mind:

I—To know the etiquette with regard to lucky or unlucky circumstances and to think on the nature and meaning of every word.

II—To know what one must say.

III—To know what one must not say.

In the beginning of Sokō's text we meet the incorrect words, the effeminate words and the vulgar ones. All these words must be considered, keeping in mind the three points mentioned above. One must hear much, know much, but it is not of the first importance. To say the right word on the right place, this indeed is of far greater importance. If we receive a messenger from other provinces, or if we are sent to other provinces or to foreign countries the appropriate advice is: to be extremely careful with the use of one's words. The importance of this advice cannot be exaggerated. One single word even can bring either honour or disgrace to the homeland, one word can bring peace or war upon two countries. In order to favour the knowledge of *ōtai* (address), I have written several essays after having consulted the Chinese history. It goes without saying that one has to change one's words according to

the circumstances. I do not think I am capable of giving this chapter the full treatment it deserves. So though there is a fair amount I could say about it, I will restrain myself.

With regard to the third point—mentioned above—because it treats about how to know what one must not say, I do not think it necessary to say much about it.

ON CLOTHING, FOOD, AND HABITATION

The sentence which is found at the heading of this chapter reads as follows: "No samurai should be ashamed of simple food and clothing, nor should he ever long for a comfortable life." These words are a résumé of two sentences of the Lun-Yü¹. Shishi is the samurai who desires to follow 'the way'. He who is born as a samurai and who endeavours himself to the exercise of weapons and who is grateful towards the state, and endeavours to exalt the name of his family, he indeed is a true *shishi*. If a samurai earnestly strives after these things, he will not be ashamed of simple food and simple clothing. There are two ways in which one may avoid being ashamed:

A. If one attaches oneself to virtue and if the heart gives due importance to charity and justice, then external things like clothing and food will be of no concern whatsoever, and will never attract. Shiro (Tzū-lu), one of the disciples of Kōshi (Confucius), having poor clothing, was not ashamed to stand next to a man clothed in a fox's skin². Ganen (Yen Yüan), enjoyed life, contented with a single bowl of rice and a single gourd of drink, living in a miserable quarter³.

B. If a man puts his trust in something of which he is really proud, he will not envy the nice clothes and good food of others. On the contrary he will despise them. The words of Sōshi (Tsêng-tzū): "The countries Shin (Chin) and So (Ch'u) attached themselves to wealth and nobility. I attach myself to love and righteousness."⁴

¹ *Lun-yü*, IV. 9 and 11. It runs in Legge's translation as follows: "A scholar, whose mind is set on truth, and who is ashamed of bad clothes and bad food, is not fit to be discoursed with".

"The superior man thinks of virtue; the small man thinks of comfort". Shōin took the great freedom of translating 志士 as samurai.

² *Lun-yü*, IX. 26: "Dressed himself in a tattered robe quilted with hemp, yet standing by the side of men dressed in furs, and not ashamed." (Transl. Legge.)

³ *Lun-yü*, 6.9.

⁴ *Ming-tzu*, 2.2.2.6.

These words of Sōshi correspond with the words of Mōshi (Měng-tzū): "He who is satiated with benevolence (love) and righteousness, does not wish for the fat meat and fine millet of men. A good reputation and far-reaching praise fall to him, and he does not desire the elegant embroidered garments of men." (Transl. Legge).

If a bushi should have these preoccupations—which absorb the soul—then he has not the right to be called a true bushi.

With regard to the regrets which follow in the train of comfort-seeking, we read in Sokō's *Bukyō Shōgaku*: "The residence of a samurai should be simple. A comfortable and beautiful dwelling will only make a samurai homesick which is contrary to the way of the warrior." I do not think that any further explanation is necessary.

ON HAWKING AND HUNTING

They have six advantages and two disadvantages.

The first: To kill wild boar, deer, pheasant and hare which devastate the gardens and fields; this saves the people from ruin.

The second: To know the lay-out of the land and the possibility of developing the country. To know the disposition of the mountains and the rivers and to think out the advantages and disadvantages of agriculture in times of peace and plan the defence of the country in times of war.

The third: To walk through the villages and to learn the customs, the folksongs and the (political) rumours.

The fourth: By going through mountains and rivers, hands and legs become very supple and the bones become well developed. Besides it gives us an opportunity of practising the arts of archery, shooting, fencing, throwing the javelin and the like, which we always learn in our exercise rooms.

The fifth: It gives us an opportunity to test the strength or the weakness, the courage or cowardice, the dexterity or clumsiness in military arts of our subjects. It gives us also an opportunity of testing the speed of their reaction.

The sixth: It enables us to learn on the spot how to make straw sandals, cotton trousers, how to escape the wind, the rain, frost and dew, how to carry the bow and the gun, how to know the facilities or otherwise as to the transport. All the things enumerated in this sixth advantage have to be practised much more by the samurais, than by other people.

The two disadvantages are savagery and violence (*kō* and *bō*). With the first I mean the chasing of all sorts of animals without exception with the results that we become completely absorbed in hunting and avaricious of game, thus forgetting the real duties of the bushi.

With the second I mean the ravaging of the fields, and the abuse of the people's kindness. He who commits *bō*, commits necessarily *kō* and he who commits *kō*, commits necessarily *bō*. Although these disadvantages are two, in reality they become one. I hope that what I have said so far, will make clear the text of Sokō.

Recently I have heard people saying, that according to the will of the Lord, the under-minister went out to hunt hares in Mitsumi, accompanied by his subordinates. The minister also accompanied by his subordinates had practised with canons. Both went out because they knew well the six advantages of hawking and hunting. And this is indeed laudable. The other day one of my acquaintances visited me and said: A bakufu order for the defence of the coast has been in force for some time. They are building fortresses, make weapons and hold military manoeuvres in order to train the soldiers. Yet all these things belong to land warfare. Therefore I ask myself whether these soldiers will be capable of fighting a sea war. They say that in Obata-ura, they are occupied in the building of a warship. But soldiers who are not accustomed to sea-warfare cannot make use of a warship¹. I hear that a group of whalefishers in Ryō-ōzu are accustomed to the waves and storms of the sea. If these people are paid and disciplined, we can use them very well for sea-warfare. When people came and asked me about these things, I replied, that these things were all right, but that it is still better to send those people whalefishing who receive already money from the daimyō. Nowadays the samurais are not forbidden fish-hunting. If nowadays the samurais are permitted fishhunting and if samurais of high standing now and then go to the sea with ships and thus give an example to others, then one day there will be very good results.

¹ "When the Americans arrived, the Japanese went out in mere cock-boats and with these sampans they made a circle around the American ships in order to attack them if the circumstances necessitated it. So tiny were they, that they became upset by the waves created by the movements of the American warships. Besides, the men who manned these poor fighting boats were all soldiers trained for fighting on land, but knowing nothing about the sea. When their boats were rocking about around the American warships, these soldiers became seasick, and the officers too, and presented a ludicrous scene at which the Americans could not but laugh." Takekoshi, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 290.

I have been to Aizu in the fifth year of Kaei (1852)¹. And here a samurai told me: "Because my country is mountainous, our samurais have never seen a ship save only in the Inawashiro Lake, five ri to the East of the castle. There are even people who have never seen a ship at all." Some time ago, when the order was given to make defences at the Chiba coasts, the samurais had many difficulties in making these defences. But after having done many exercises on the sea day and night, they have become well informed of these things. Nowadays they can rival the fishermen of the country in the manoeuvring of ships and in swimming.

On another day I have been to Hirado and because it lies at the sea, nearly all the samurais have vessels to fish on the high sea. A certain man called Hayama Sanai² who has a high income and who is a man of high rank and more than 60 years old goes to the minister on a horse instead of in a sedan-chair and occasionally he goes fishing on the high seas. He tells me always, if one does not use a horse or a ship for a long time, then one experiences difficulties if something unforeseen happens.

Concluding we can say: there will be no difficulty to bring my plan into practice: to form a group of whalefishers out of the samurais who receive their income from their Lord.

SHŌIN'S LETTERS

I will give here a few translations³ of some of Shōin's letters. *Shokan Hen no Ichi* contains 393 letters and they cover the period from the 2nd year of Kaei, 10th month (the 15th of Nov. 1849) until the fourth year of Ansei, 12th month (the 15th of Jan. 1858). *Shokan Hen no Ni* contains 474 letters and they carry on from the 15th of Jan. 1858 until Shōin's death. The following letter⁴ was written by Shōin to his younger sister 千代 *Chiyo*.

My brothers and sisters, I send you my greetings for the New Year. Would you kindly listen to me on the occasion of this feast? May the New Year be welcome. I hope it will be favourable to you. *Shinnen o medetō gozarimasu* "Happy New Year".

¹ Vide p. 42.

² Vide p. 41, 76.

³ I wish to thank Dr Kataoka for the help given me in the course of these translations.

⁴ Letter of the second year of Ansei, New Year's Day, (the 17th of Febr. 1855). The letter is to be found in *Shokan Hen no Ichi* p. 293.

First then, what does *Shinnen* "New Year", mean? It means that the year is new just like a cloth and a piece of furniture that is new. Well think about it. When a thing is new, it has no stain, nor fault. It is perfect. Then, what does it mean: the year is perfect, and what does it mean: this perfect year is happy? (目出度い *medetai*). If you do not understand this, I am going to explain it to you. The year, when it becomes old, is getting dirty and bruised¹.

The ordinary man has a difficult temperament. Does he not say at the end of the year rather in a tired way: only a few days remain. There is nothing more to do. So it is with the old year, that is dirty and bruised. But when the last night has passed, the soul is invigorated with a renewed heart. Thus—I hope—the meaning of New Year has become clear.

Then, what does it mean: *o medetô*? *Me* is not the character for eye.² Would it not be something awful when our eyes would come out (*deru*) from the first New Year's day? ³ *O me* means the buds of the trees, the new blades of the grass. The buds are dead during the winter. When the spring air begins to pervade the Universe, then the trees and the herbs blossom forth. Because this spring air awakes the development of living things it is not only desirable for heaven and earth, but also for man, just as a charitable heart is desirable for him. Therefore we desire that when they receive the spring air, the herbs and the trees will bud forth. Has it now not become clear that the New Year is *medetai* (happy).

As I have said before, when the last night has passed, the soul is invigorated, the tired and bruised heart is washed and our conscience is refreshed. We become charitable. Is it not in the same way that the trees get new buds and the grass springs up! Therefore we say: *Shinnen o medetô gozarimasu*, "Happy New Year"!

This explanation makes us understand the expression: *toshi wo toru* "to become older", to gain, to take years. When I was a child if one said: *toshi wo toru*, I could never understand how one could gain, take age. It is certain, that we "take", "gain in" age,

・きずが付く *Kizu ga tsuku*.

² The idea of *Shōin* is: although we write *o medetô* with the character 目, we really mean the *me* of 芽 bud. In fact we can nowadays write *medetai* 目出度い as well as 芽出度い.

・目が出る *Me ga deru*.

when we sleep, but how, I often thought? At that time I was a real child. To take, to gain a good year¹, is nothing else than to refresh our spirit. Without that, it is in vain to gain 100 years or even 200 years. For then we should never gain a true year at all. When a child is scolded, it is said: "Where have you left the years"², that you have gained. Therefore in order to become a year older, we have to gain it in fact. Besides I should like to add: Where have we to gain our years, our age? I answer: We have to gain it on our whole body. In the first place it is our conscience that must gain it in order to distinguish good and bad. The ears have to gain it, also the mouth, the head and the feet. To gain a year on the whole body, that is indeed to gain a year.

Thus I end my greetings of the New Year which were the first things that I have written in this New Year. Chiyo, would you kindly ask an explanation—if you do not understand—from our elder brother?

In this simple and touching letter, we see that Shōin was not always a diehard, but also capable of delicate feelings. And he certainly knows how to express them. The style of this letter is quite different from the others. It has been written in the ordinary conversational style. At the present moment the grandfathers and the grandmothers in the country, still speak the same language. What pleases me so much in this letter, is the fact, that Shōin forgets himself for a while. In his other writings he is too often egocentric, speaking always about himself as if suggesting a kind of martyr complex.

LETTER TO MOKURIN I³

I am a subject of the house of Mōri. Therefore I bind myself day and night to the service of the house of Mōri. The house of Mōri is subject to the Emperor. When we are loyal to our Lord, then we are loyal to the Emperor. For over 600 years our Lords have not bound themselves completely to the service of the Emperor. This crime is evident. It is my intention to make him expiate (償ふ

・よい歳を取る *Yoi toshi wo toru.*

・歳をどこへ取つたか *Toshi wo doko e totta ka?*

¹ This letter—written on a certain day of the 8th month of the 3rd year of Ansei (Sept. 1856)—is to be found in *Shokan Hen no Ichū*, p. 410-13.

tsugunau). But because I am condemned to confinement in the house, I can neither write nor speak with him directly. I can only speak about this with my brother and my parents and I await with patience the occasion to speak about this with the samurais and the loyalists. This opportunity will occur, when—pardoned—I can freely visit those who have the same opinion as I. Then I shall undertake with them: I—to show to the Shōgun his crime committed during more than 600 years and to show him his actual duty, and II—to show also to our daimyō and all the other daimyōs their crimes, and III—to show to the whole Bakufu all their crimes¹ in order to make them serve the Emperor. If I am condemned to death before I can realize these things, I cannot help it. If I die in prison, after me another will execute this intention and certainly there will be an occasion for my successors to do this. I should like to write this to you with the following words: The sincerity of one single man touches the hearts of millions. I hope that you will understand me. By nature, it is repugnant to me to speak lightly about things that touch my innermost heart, but to you alone I confide my thoughts. Observe well how I dedicate my life to it. I know only too well that the Emperor is just as 堯 Yao, and 舜 Shun² and that the Shōgun is just as 莽 Mang, and 操 Ts'ao³. Because I know this, therefore I give myself up to study and cultivate my spirit in order to accomplish some day something grand. I have a reason why I do not speak night and day about the crimes of the Shōgun. Namely it is in vain when I accuse him, because I am imprisoned. And because I live here without speaking openly of the crimes of the Shōgun, therefore I can say that—in a sense—I take part in his crimes. This is also the case with my Lord⁴. Never—even if I should have to die for it—shall I disclose the crimes of others, unless I have corrected my own fault. There-

¹ The idea of Shōin is following: From the time on that Yoritomo became 征夷大將軍 *Sei-i tai Shōgun* (1192), there has been constantly a great encroachment upon the prerogatives of the Imperial Throne. For this crime the whole Shogunate and all the daimyōs are responsible.

² Half mythical, model Chinese Emperors, supposed to have ruled from 2357 to 2208 B.C.

³ 王莽 *Wang Mang*, founder of the "New" dynasty, 9-23 A.D. He was commonly called "the usurper". Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 831-32. 曹操 *Ts'ao Ts'ao*, A.D. 155-220

Regarded as the type of a cunning unscrupulous rebel. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, 761-63.

⁴ He is also silent about the Shōgun's crimes.

fore, until the time that I get an occasion—as I have told you above—I am satisfied to ponder over these things in my thoughts or to give advice to my acquaintances. If one day, I explain the wrongs to my Lord and he does not listen, I shall sacrifice my life in order that he might repent. Among the three virtuous Chinese 比干 *Pi Kan*, 箕子 *Chi-tzū* and 微子 *Wei-tzū*, only *Pi Kan* is my master¹. I shall not leave my Lord in order to go to another province, when my Lord does not listen. I hope, that also my descendants may share this same conviction and do like *Pi Kan*. Those who would not act like *Pi Kan* but rather like *Chi-tzū* and *Wei-tzū*, I do not consider as my descendants. I swear this from the bottom of my soul before the Gods of Heaven and Earth². When my Lord listens to me and sees clearly the crimes he committed during more than 600 years, then he shall be in a position to correct the wrongs of the other daimyōs and those of the Bakufu as well. Although my Lord is supposed to be independent of the Shōgun³, we must grant that the Mōri family has obtained from the Shōguns many favours (*ongi*) during more than 200 years⁴.

It would be a very good thing for my Lord to admonish the Shōgun frequently about his abuses, so that eventually he might correct them. But if the Shōgun does not correct his wrongs—and all the daimyōs agree on the point—my Lord must bring the case before the Emperor and obtain a commission to prosecute their plan⁵.

If, however, he will not listen, we may compare the shōgun with 桀 *Chieh* and 紂 *Chou*⁶ or even call him so. Yet, although we may

¹ *Pi Kan*, 12th cent. B.C., uncle of the tyrant Chou Hsin, the last ruler of the Shang dynasty, killed by Chou Hsin when remonstrating with him. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.* p. 626.

Chi-tzū, another uncle of Chou Hsin. Imprisoned by him but left the country afterwards, and believed to have founded the Kingdom of Korea. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 121.

Wei-tzū, a brother of Chou Hsin, who went over to King Wu of Chou and received from him in fee the dukedom of Sung. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 868.

• 天地神明に誓ふ *Tenchi Shimmiei ni chikau*.

² There existed always a special relation between the Mōri's and the Shōguns. They stood more or less on the same footing. Vide Chapt. I, p. 2.

³ Shōin reckons from the time of 毛利秀就 *Mōri Hidenari*, who built in 1601 the castle in Hagi and took up residence there. In 1608 he received the title of 長門頭 *Nagato no Kami*. Vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

⁴ Nempe: restoration of the Imperial Power and action against the foreigners.

• 桀癸 *Chieh Kuei*, the last Emperor of the Hsia dynasty. He is said to have indulged in cruelty and lust almost unparalleled in history. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 139-40. Similar accusations are raised against 紂辛 *Chou Hsin*, the last Emperor of the Shang dynasty. Vide *Chin. Biogr. Dict.*, p. 161 and 626.

call the Shōgun Chieh or Chou, we have in fact no right to accuse him of his crimes, because my Lord and myself are lacking in loyalty and devotion towards the Emperor¹. The first thing therefore we have to do, is to recognize our own defects.

There is a point about which I hold an opinion which differs from yours. It is that you think that "an unjust power can be killed by the pen"². This is indeed the idea of Kōshi (K'ung-tzū) who wrote the 春秋 *Ch'un-ch'iu*³ and I cannot see that this was a bad thing. However to-day the country is menaced by thousands of dangers and in this case we cannot expect very much from our writings.

If you consider the Shōgun like Chieh or Chou, then my Lord is like 飛廉 *Fei-lien* of 惡來 *O-lai*⁴. It is your practice never to admonish people like Chieh and Chou. You think that even to-day those who make a plot, are traitors of the State. Again, there is for you—apart from the brush—no other way. This idea of yours I regret very much indeed. This attitude impedes us in correcting a man of his wrongs and to make him better. If a man does not correct himself, if he does not become better, what use is it to say: "An unjust power can be killed by the pen."

If you take the trouble to ponder thoroughly on the opinion which I dare to present to you, not only myself, but also the souls of my ancestors will be very happy. I should very much like to speak with you about it personally, but unfortunately, I am deprived of my liberty, because the warders have bound me with cords.

LETTER TO MOKURIN II⁵

During the past few days I have been so depressed that I could not even sleep. Umetarō has just brought your letter and I have read it. I cannot express the joy which it has brought me. There can be no longer any doubt that you are of the same mind in these matters as I am. If one does not ask explanations, one cannot know

¹ One of Shōin's ideas was that only when we ourselves are perfect, are we allowed to accuse others. Yet in practice he often went against it.

² 一筆奸權を誅する *Ippitsu kanken wo chūsuru*, "One line (brush) kills a wicked power".

³ Supposedly to criticize bad rulers and ministers by exposing their wicked deeds.

⁴ Both bad ministers of Emperor Chou Hsin.

⁵ This letter was written on a certain day before the 9th month of the 3rd year of Ansei (before the 29th of Sept. 1856) and is to be found in *Sōkan Hen no Ichū*, p. 419.

the truth. For the first time I have understood your ideas completely. Up to the present moment, I knew you only superficially. I feel ashamed about it. You are now resolved to take practical steps to make clear the relations between sovereign and subjects ¹. How then will your thought not be mine? Your ideas reflect my heart's deepest desires. I leave the case of Tominaga ² in your hands. If it is very inconvenient, there is no need for you to answer him. Tominaga is a lad who is not afraid of difficulties. But would you kindly do just as you like? When Heaven is favourable, we shall meet each other one day. If Heaven does not give us this favour, we will see each other in heaven (*tenjō*). Even if I should die in prison like a dog, yet a small part of my spirit is immortal. With you it is likewise. We can therefore expect to meet each other in heaven. Anyhow at this moment, when the state is besieged by thousands of dangers, I am very glad that you are resolved to take positive action. I should very much like to have a talk with you about it. Unfortunately however I cannot so do, being detained by the will of the daimyō.

LETTER TO SHŌIN'S FATHER, UNCLE AND BROTHER ³

Because my knowledge was too superficial and my sincerity not enough to move heaven and earth, therefore it has come thus far. I am sure you all will be most grieved and wounded.

親思ふ	<i>Oya omou</i>	The heart of a child
心に勝る	<i>Kokoro ni masaru</i>	That thinks of its parents
親心	<i>Oyagokoro</i>	Yet greater still its parent's love
今日の音づれ	<i>Kyō no otozure</i>	How will they hear
何と聞くらん	<i>Nan to kikuran.</i>	This day's tidings.

However, if you look at the letter that I wrote to you on the 6th day of the 10th month of last year, your grief will be alleviated.

¹ 大義名分を明らかにする *Taigi meibun wo akiraka ni suru*, to define, to make clear the relations of sovereign and subjects. This expression — often repeated by Shōin — was especially dear to the scholars of the Mito School. Fujita Yūkoku writes about it in his 正名論 *Seimeiron*.

² One of Shōin's pupils.

³ This is Shōin's last letter to his family. *Zensha*, vol. VI, p. 407.

Furthermore, after having read my letter of the 5th month of this year, you will be completely informed and consequently I have nothing more to add. I should be very much obliged if you kindly would read the letter addressed to my friends. The Bakufu has lost all sense of justice and the foreigners dominate the Government. However our sacred country has not yet been ruined, because we have our heavenly Emperor on high and the loyal hearts below. So, please be confident about the general state of affairs. Be of good cheer and live long.

正氣の歌 SEIKI NO UTA

THE SONG OF THE SPIRIT OF RECTITUDE

This poem is without doubt the most representative of Shōin's poetry. The lines are clear and strong, each of them accentuated, each a *chi no namida* "tear of blood". Against a cosmic background of stars, mountains, seas and great immortal souls, Shōin sings of the heroes of long ago. The poem is pervaded throughout by the spirit of rectitude, of one convinced of his own purity and blameless sincerity. It would seem that his last suppliant hope was not altogether in vain: "to add some colour to the mountains and waters" of the Japanese island empire. For here indeed he has added some beautiful contours to the Japanese mental landscape which by now have been inseparably woven into the Japanese character.

The poem is a pure *kanshi* and it was not easy to translate. The rhythm of it is rather free. It reminds me a little of the majestic grandeur of Milton and after reading this poem, we can no more be in doubt with regard to Shōin's artistic talents. When, during the last war, the Japanese youth marched to the battlefield, they often recited it. It is evident to those who know the Japanese, that the poetic and stirring lines of this *Seiki no Uta*, caused the Japanese blood to boil up impetuously.

The spirit of rectitude fills heaven and earth.
To it the saint gives full surrender,
This spirit which is eternal
And which can rival the light of the sun and the stars.
Ah, me, I am but a humble creature!
Like a small grain fallen in the seas.

I am but poorly gifted and but of humble birth,
 Above me far indeed are the clouds and the Imperial Palace.
 When in the East I journeyed,
 Each place I passed reminded me,
 Of the glorious deeds of the men of old.
 In Itsukushima where traitors had suffered ¹,
 Memory of knightly loyalty rejoiced my soul.
 Red seem to run the rivers with the blood of these bold
 Whose death was like the fall of cherry blossom ².
 Wake has left the fame of his loyalty ³
 Which will bespeak his glory for ever.
 I think of the flute played by the warriors in Ichino Tani
 And recall the loyalty of Yoshitsune's mistress ⁴.
 The sad sepulchre of Nankō draws my tears ⁵.
 Ōsaka's castle ⁶ recalls Toyotomi's loyalty ⁷.
 I think of Yamato conquering Ezo
 And of Tamura making the savages tremble ⁸.
 (After the enumeration of these historical events, Shōin goes on:)
 Ah, these noble men
 Have saved "the great way" from ruin!
 In Owari and in Ise

¹ Alluding to the defeat of 陶晴賢 *Sue Harukata* by Mōri Motonari in 1555.
 Vide Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 707-8.

² Probably, here is meant the death of the 47 rōmōs. Vide G. B. Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 502-3; B. H. Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, 175-78, second ed., or J. Murdoch, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 218-237.

³ 和氣清賢 *Wake Kiyomaro*. Vide Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 866; F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 199; Y. Hibino, *op. cit.*, p. 26-27.

⁴ 靜御前 *Shizuka Gozen*. Vide F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 322-23; Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 683.

⁵ 楠正成 *Kusunoki Masashige*. Vide Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 384, F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, 380-81. How present day Japanese educators look at Kusunoki, vide Y. Hibino, *op. cit.*, p. XXIV-XXVII. Vide also p. 25-27. For what Kusunoki means in the national education of former and present day Japanese vide *Masashige im nationalen Bewusstsein Japan* by J. Roggendorf, M.N., Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 132-35. For a translation of Masashige's character in the epic *Taiseiki*, vide *loc. cit.*, p. 135-65.

⁶ How this huge fortress—a novelty in Japanese defensive warfare—was built, vide F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 496-97.

⁷ 豊臣秀吉 *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*. Vide Papinot, *op. cit.*, 817-23.

⁸ Here is meant Tamuramaro, to whom tradition has ascribed supernatural qualities. Vide F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 221-23.

The sacred treasures are safe for ever ¹.

Fuji's unsurpassable image reflects in Biwa lake ².

Heian's Palace—image of Imperial glory—commands the
sacred lands around.

Thus was the "great way" born.

With the coming of the foreigners

The Bakufu has failed

Allowing an alien religion to bewitch us ³,

Opening the ports to the South and to the North,

Thus giving great grief to the Tennō to-day.

Everywhere there threatens the Spirit of the dark.

But the three Lords of the Tennō will obey His command ⁴.

The Palace will be entered by the barn-door fowl ⁵.

The serious samurais ineffectually brood

But a decade will see vicissitudes of fortune,

And happily we have our heavenly Emperor.

So we will see restored the country of the Gods.

But oh, why does the Shōgun delay

To drive all foreigners away!

Our cause and its justice are clear ⁶

Here are meant the 三種の神器 *Mi Kusa no Kandakara* or *Sanshō no Shinki*. Vide *The National Faith of Japan* by D. C. Holtom, p. 127-136; *The Japanese Enkronement Ceremonies* by D. C. Holtom, p. 1-54, and E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

² This is geographically impossible. From the Biwa lake one cannot see mount Fuji; first I had another translation because 芙蓉 *fuyō* is generally translated as *hibiscus* *mutabilis* (or as *lotus*). It stands here however for mount Fuji. Because of its beauty, mount Fuji is called *fuyō*. This expression is rather frequent especially in popular songs and all Japanese know that 芙蓉の高嶺 *fuyō no takane* means "the top of mount Fuji". That it is geographically impossible, is no difficulty, because as my source of this note (Dr Taknoka, *bungaku hakushū*) says: "When it is a question of Japanese poetry, the only thing of importance is sentiment, atmosphere." Shōin has put here together the Biwa lake and mount Fuji because they are both symbols of Japan's beauty. (Vide also *La Sensibilité japonaise* by Georges Bonneau, p. I and II, and his interesting article *Le Problème de la Poésie japonaise* in *M.N.*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 20-41).

³ 妖教 *Yōkyō* bewitching religion. However at the time Shōin wrote his *Seiki no Uta*, Christianity was still proscribed. Placards offering rewards for denouncers of Christian believers still stood in all public places and were still to stand there for yet another decade.

⁴ The daimyōs of Satsuma, Tosa, and Chōshū.

⁵ Shōin is upset by the neglect of the Shōgun with regard to the Imperial Family. The Emperor had not even enough money to look after the Imperial estate. The walls and the surroundings were so far neglected, that fowl could enter (actually did not). 鷄棲み鳳凰食ふ.

Kei sumi hōō kusu.

⁶ Lit. the *taigi* is self-evident, 大義自ら炳明 *taigi onozukara himeimi*.

Who can fail to see a path so right.
 Life is short though heaven is eternal
 I cannot contend with the sage and the Saint
 But my hope is with the heroes
 And my mind is with the Saints—
 To have left a trace of the spirit of rectitude
 And may this in turn enrich the beauty of the country ¹.—

This poem is to be considered as a counterpart of *Cheng-ch'i-ko* by Wén T'ien-hsiang ². Shōin has written it in the last year of his life, when he was in prison, in order to encourage himself ³. There exist several other *Seiki no Uta*'s. Of the one, written by Fujita Tōko there exists a German translation made by Dr Horst Hammitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. B 74-76 ⁴.

SHŌIN'S SHORT POEMS

When Shōin was in the Noyama prison the inmates formed a *haikai* group under the leading of Yoshimura Zensaku ⁵. Shōin regularly received lessons in poetry from him. One evening during a full moon in the autumn of the second year of Ansei, Shōin made the following two *haikais* ⁶:

名月に	<i>Meigetsu ni</i>
香はめづらしき	<i>Ka wa mezurashiki</i>
きのこかな	<i>Kinoko kana.</i>
At full moon	At full moon
Thine exotic scent	The rare scent
Oh, mushroom.	Of the mushrooms.

名月や	<i>Meigetsu ya</i>	Full moon!
木の葉にたる	<i>Ki no ha ni taruru</i>	On the tree leaves
玉の露	<i>Tama no tsuyu.</i>	Dewdrops are falling.

聊か山水の色を添へん *Itasaka sansui no iro wo soen.*

Lit. May this — although a little — add to the colour of the landscape.

¹ Written in 1281. A shortened translation is to be found in H. A. Giles' *A History of Chinese Literature*, p. 248-49.

² Vide Chron. Record, p. 50.

³ Vide also Armstrong's *Light from the East*, p. 180-83.

⁴ Vide Kagawa Masaichi, *Shōin Itsuwa*, p. 74.

⁵ *Zenshū*, Vol. II, p. 182, 184. As for *haikai* (*haiku*). Vide: *Japanese Traits and Foreign Influences* by Nitobe, p. 113-41.

When Kaneko ¹ had died, the haikai group held a special memorial service during which poems were made on the deceased by all the members.

Shōin wrote:

散るとても	<i>Chiru totemo</i>
香はとどめたり	<i>Ka wa todometari</i>
園の梅	<i>Sono no ume.</i>

He has wholly fallen	He has fallen completely
Still lingers the perfume	But the perfume (of his virtues) remains

(This) Plumtree of the garden. (This) Plumtree of the garden

In one of his letters to his sister Chiyo, Shōin wrote after having listened to a nightingale:

さなきの	<i>Sasa naki no</i>
聲聞かまほし	<i>Koe kikama hoshi</i>
小春かな	<i>Koharu kana.</i>

I should like to hear	The nightingale's voice
The gentle warblings of your birds	I should like to hear

Oh, twilight summer!	In this St. Martin's summer.
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小春日に	<i>Koharu bi ni</i>	In St. Martin's summer (In the twilight summer)
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咲くを待つなり	<i>Saku wo matsu</i> (nari)	The flowers await
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かへり花	<i>Kaeribana.</i>	Their second blossoming.
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Shōin wrote a letter to Mokurin ² and he enclosed a chrysanthemum. Shōin speaks as follows to the Kiku:

千里経て	<i>Senri hete</i>	Going a thousand miles
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香なりとどけや	<i>Ka nari todoke ya</i>	Offer him at least your scent
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菊の花	<i>Kiku no hana.</i>	Chrysanthemum bloom.
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¹ Vide p. 23, 25.

² *Shōkan Hen no Ichi*, p. 422.

A few days before Shōin left Hagi, friends came to visit him in the prison. The evening bell had rung and the visitors had to leave. Shōin expressed beautifully the mood of parting, the 名残りの氣持 *Nagori no kimochi*, "the lingering mood of the reluctant farewell". I feel here distinctly something of the Buddhist expression 會者定離 *Esha jōri*, "to meet is to part". (At least twice as strong as the French: *partir c'est mourir un peu*.)

別れかな
入相はやく
露の空

Wakare kana
Iriai hayaku
Tsuyu no sora.

It is now the hour of parting
How quick comes the evening
bell

Now is the hour of parting
How soon tolls the evening bell

Sky of the wet season.

(How swiftly lowers) The Sky of
the rainy season.

It is the author's opinion that Shōin succeeded better in his *wakas* than in his *haikais*. The *haikais* which I have mentioned above, are most certainly the best he ever composed. In one of his letters to his brother Umetarō¹, Shōin wrote:

浦山し *Urayamashi*
心の禰に *Kokoro no mama ni*
踏行かん *Fumi yukan*
春の東の *Haru no higashi no*
山の霞を *Yama no kasumi wo.*

How I envy
The mist of spring
At it moves freely
Over the Eastern mountains

And when Shōin was imprisoned in Edo, he thought with great longing of his home in Hagi:

旭さす *Asahi sasu*
軒端の雪も *Nokiba no yuki*
消えにけり *Kienikeri*
わが故郷の *Waga furusato no*
梅やさくらん *Ume ya sakuran.*

The morning sun shines
The snow on the roof
has melted
The plumbtree at home
Will be in blossom.

¹ As for *waka* (tanka), Vide: M. N. Vol. I. No. 1, p. 36-8, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 3. "Japanese Literature" by W. G. Aston p. 28-9.

On one of his journeys he passed the Hakone mountains after which he wrote:

箱根山	<i>Hakone yama</i>	When I think
峻き道を	<i>Kewashiki michi wo</i>	The steep roads
越す時は	<i>Kosu toki wa</i>	Of mount Hakone
過ぎにし友を	<i>Suginishi tomo wo</i>	I recall the friends
猶ほ思はれん	<i>Nao omowaren.</i>	Who have travelled too.

And when he passed the graves of the 47 rōnin ¹, Shōin composed the following poem:

かくすれば	<i>Kaku sureba</i>	If we act in this way (practise the same loy- alty)
かくなるものと	<i>Kaku naru mono</i> to	We become like them.
知りながら	<i>Shiri nagara</i>	Knowing this,
已むに已まれぬ	<i>Yamu ni yama- renu</i>	We cannot refrain from so acting,
大和魂	<i>Yamato damashii.</i>	It is our Japanese spirit.

To my mind this beautiful waka is full of rhythm and music. During the last war, one could see it often written on posters in stations and schoolbuildings in order to excite patriotic sentiments.

In a letter to his sister Chiyo we find the following wakas:

頼もしや	<i>Tanomoshi ya</i>	Oh, joy!
誠の心	<i>Makoto no kokoro</i>	Our loving (sincere) hearts
かよふらん	<i>Kayou ran</i>	Seem to communicate
文みぬ先に	<i>Fumi mi nu saki ni</i>	Before I read your letter,
君を思ひて	<i>Kimi wo omoite.</i>	I thought of you.

¹ Vide p. 52.

たちねの	<i>Tarachineno</i> ¹	The name
たもふその名は	<i>Tamou sono na wa</i>	Your mother gave
あだならず	<i>Ada narazu</i>	Is not without pur- pose (unavailing)
千世萬世へ	<i>Chiyo yorozu yo e</i>	Bequeath it down
とめよ其名を	<i>Tome yo sono na wo.</i>	A thousand, thousand years.

Practically all Japanese children know the following poems by heart²:

かけまくも	<i>Kakemakumo</i> ³	That the country
君が國こそ	<i>Kimi ga kuni koso</i>	Of our august ruler
安ければ	<i>Yasukereba</i>	May remain in peace,
身を捨つるこそ	<i>Mi wo sutsuru koso</i>	Gladly would I give
賤が本意なれ	<i>Shizu ga hoi nare.</i>	My life away.

身はたとひ	<i>Mi wa tato i</i>	Even were my body
武藏の野邊に	<i>Musashi no nobe ni</i>	To moulder on the Musashi plain
朽ぬとも	<i>Kuchinu to mo</i>	Would like
留置まし	<i>Todome okamashi</i>	My Japanese spirit
大和魂	<i>Yamato damashii.</i>	Remain forever.

Of a great beauty and full of noble feelings is the following waka:

親思ふ	<i>Oya omou</i>
心に勝る	<i>Kokoro ni masaru</i>
親心	<i>Oyagokoro</i>
今日の音づれ	<i>Kyō no otozure</i>
何と聞くらん	<i>Nan to hikuran.</i>

The child's heart
That holds his parents in
loving memory

The heart of a child
That thinks of its parents!

¹ *Makura* — *Kotoba for haka* (mother).

² Vide p. 27.

³ *Makura* — *Kotoba for Kimi*.

Is surpassed by the parents'	Yet greater still its parents' love
heart.	
How will they react	How will they hear
To this day's news!	This day's tidings.

In order to remind his three sisters Chiyo, Hisa and Fumi of the heavy burden of upbringing future samurais, he composed the following waka:

心あれや	<i>Kokoroare ya</i>	Keep in your heart
人の母たる	<i>Hito no haha taru</i>	You who are mothers
ひとたちよ	<i>Hitotachi yo</i>	The great sadness
かくなる事は	<i>Kaku naru koto wa</i>	Which is the common
		fate
武士の常	<i>Mononofu no tsune.</i>	Of the samurai.

In this waka we find Shōin speaking to the cuckoo and so to say identifying himself with the bird. The whole is an expression of selfpity.

鳴かずては	<i>Nakazute wa</i>	If you do not sing,
誰か知らなむ	<i>Tare ka shiranamu</i>	Cuckoo,
郭公	<i>Hototogisu</i>	How can we know
		you!
さみだれ暗く	<i>Samidare kuraku</i>	All through the
		night.
降りそそぐ夜は	<i>Furisosogu yo wa.</i>	Falls the darkning
		May rain.

The following two wakas were quoted at the beginning of the last war; as poetry they are rather poor.

備とは	<i>Sonae to wa</i>	Our defence
艦と礮との	<i>Kan to hō to no</i>	Is not the warship and
		the canon
謂ならず	<i>Iinarazu</i>	But it is
吾數洲の	<i>Waga shikishima no</i>	Our Japanese spirit.
大和魂	<i>Yamato damashii.</i>	

亞墨奴が	<i>Abokuto ga</i>	Even if the Americans
歐羅を約し	<i>Yōra wo yaku shi</i>	With the Europeans as allies
來るとも	<i>Kitaru tomo</i>	Come to invade us,
備へのあらば	<i>Sonae no araba</i>	If our defence is strong,
何とか恐れん	<i>Nadoka osoren.</i>	There is nothing to fear.
<hr/>		
阿美理加は	<i>Amerika wa</i>	Although we do not know
奈とて来ぬか	<i>Nani tote konu ka</i>	Why the Americans
知らねども	<i>Shiranedomo</i>	Do not invade,
變の無こそ	<i>Hen no naki koso</i>	This is no calamity
御愛でたう	<i>O medetō</i>	But a matter for re- joicing.

In a letter to 白井小助 *Shirai Shōsuke* he wrote in the first year of Ansei¹:

世の人は	<i>Yo no hito wa</i>	The people of the world
よしあし事も	<i>Yoshiashigoto mo</i>	May speak of me
言はばいへ	<i>Iwaba ie</i>	Good or ill,
賤が誠は	<i>Shizu ga makoto wa</i>	God knows
神ぞ知るらん	<i>Kami zo shiruran.</i>	That I am sincere.

When Shōin started his last journey from Hagi to Edo, he paused when he was just a few miles outside his birthplace and composed the following poem²:

歸らじと	<i>Kaeraji to</i>
思ひさだめし	<i>Omoi sadameshi</i>
旅なれば	<i>Tabi nareba</i>
ひとしほぬる	<i>Hitoshio nururu</i>
涙松かな	<i>Namidamatsu kana.</i>

¹ *Shōkan Hen no Ichī*, p. 205.

² Vide p. 33.

This is the journey	This is the journey
May be	From which probably
From which I shall never return.	For me there shall be no return.
The showers fall upon me	Wholly drenched
'Neath the pinetree of tears.	Is the pinetree of tears.

It is the author's opinion that the foregoing waka has a great expressive power and it is full of deep feeling. Only a few hours before his execution, Shōin composed the following wakas¹:

呼だしの	<i>Yobidashi no</i>	In this world
聲まつ外に	<i>Koe matsu hoka ni</i>	I have nothing else to do
今の世に	<i>Ima no yo ni</i>	Save wait
待つべき事の	<i>Matsubeki koto no</i>	For the voice
なかりける哉	<i>Nakari keru kana.</i>	That will summon me.

In its grammatical form the following waka is extremely strong:

七たびも	<i>Nana tabi mo</i>	Even if I return
生かへりつゝ	<i>Ikikaeri tsutsu</i>	Seven times from the dead.
夷をぞ	<i>Ebisu wo zo</i>	I shall never forget
攘はんこゝろ	<i>Harasan kokoro</i>	To drive away
吾忘れめ哉	<i>Ware wasureme ya.</i>	The foreigner.

Only a few minutes before his execution, Shōin wrote:

此程に	<i>Kore hodo ni</i>	The departure
思ひ定めし	<i>Omoi sadameshi</i>	Of which I pondered so much
出立ちを	<i>Idetachi wo</i>	Is made known today
今日聞くこそ	<i>Kyō kiku koso</i>	How joyful I am.
嬉しかりける	<i>Ureshikarikeru.</i>	

These are a few of Shōin's short poems. It is the author's opinion that, whichever way Japan will follow in her future course and even when Shōin will be discarded in other respects, never shall his fame completely die as author of the beautiful wakas which the Japanese

¹ Vide p. 129.

know by heart and future generations will always cherish. And I think the Japanese are perfectly right. For it is certainly true that the feelings expressed in his poems, are simple and sincere. These poems have by now so intimately been woven into the Japanese mental make-up, that they will be united for ever. It is my sincere conviction that the Japanese have been definitely enriched by this process.

If I had the expressive power of a Herman Heuvers¹, an Arthur Waley², or a Georges Bonneau, I should certainly have translated more poems, but the facility which they exhibit—each in his own tongue—is only attainable in the mother language.

留魂錄 *RYŪKON ROKU*³, RECORD OF AN EVERLASTING SPIRIT

Finally we have come to Shōin's last work of which I had great expectations. Shōin's biographers invariably extoll it as "splendid like the moon and the sun", "the hope of the Japanese boys", and the like. The title indeed is wonderful, and knowing that this *Ryūkon Roku* is his swan song, I expected here something sublime, something in which the *chi no namida*, "the tears of blood" would flow profusely. The reader is still more strengthened in his anticipation of beautiful ideas and magnificent style, when he has read the lyrical outburst of the Yamato Damashii which the author uses as an opening: "*Mi wa tato, Musashi no nobe ni, Kuchinu to mo*". But then one becomes later a little disappointed. It would seem that his inspiration dies down into an almost pathetic and weak echo

¹ Regarding the great difficulty of translating Japanese short poems into European languages, he writes: "Japanische Kurzgedichte erregen wegen Ihrer Kürze unser Verwundern. Jeder, der es unternommen hat, solche Gedichte in eine europäische Sprache zu übertragen, wird bescheiden von sich und milde von andern denken." *M.N.*, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 3. Vide also *Aspect et Tendances Actuels du Phonétisme Japonais*, by J. Drans, p. 63-71.

² Regarding Waley's translation of the *Genji Monogatari*, we read in *A Short Cultural History*: "Mr Arthur Waley's translation is masterly, and itself comes very near to being a work of creative genius." Vide G. B. Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 242. I am inclined to say the same with regard to his translation of Japanese short poems.

³ It is to be found in the *Zenshū*, Vol. IV, p. 503-15. Besides, I used the edition of Kakimura Takashi. In his latest thorough study: *The Western World and Japan*, G. B. Sansom devotes some five pages to Yoshida Shōin, the greatest part taken probably from Coleman's translation of Tokutomi's work. (Vide p. 27, second footnote). However, distinguished and learned the author is, on p. 273 he translates *Ryūkon Roku* erroneously when he renders it as: "Record of an Uneasy Spirit". *Ryū* can be read as a verb (*idomeru*) and also as an adjective (*idomenashi*). In the last case the English equivalent would indeed be: uneasy. However—I have it on good Japanese authority—here, it has certainly to be read as a verb and the English translation must consequently be: everlasting.

as he calmly puts down his brush to gaze at the gathering evening shadows. Of the closing five *wakas*, four are rather poor poetry. Yet, I do not mean to say that there are no occasional bright flashes of his poetical mind or that his style is mediocre, or that beautiful ideas are totally lacking. However, nowhere is he transported to the almost sublime heights of his *Seiki no Uta* and he often wanders off into digressions which seem rather meaningless. When he tries to set up something like a syllogistic reasoning, he falls into a mere play of words. His interior life seems subject to erratic moods. At times he takes the pose of the martyr, pure and immaculate through his matchless sincerity, "pleasing to the God of Heaven and Earth, being His reflection", at other times he feels himself worthless, a failure in life, not having accomplished one single spectacular deed.

Referring to his style, and considered in its entirety, his thoughts are expressed in a clear cut and strong *bungo no bun*. At rare intervals, for example when he compares himself to a growing grain, still young, but nearing the fullness of time, his prose becomes elevated and brighter. Yet, he does nowhere reach the peak of his *Seiki no Uta*. But let the reader judge for himself in so far as an opinion can be formed from reading a translation.

身はたとひ	<i>Mi wa tato i</i>
武蔵の野邊に	<i>Musashi no nobe ni</i>
朽ぬとも	<i>Kuchinu to mo</i>
留置まし	<i>Todome okamashi</i>
大和魂	<i>Yamato damashii.</i>

Even if my body decays on the fields of Musashi, my Japanese soul will live forever ¹.

I can hardly recall, much less enumerate, the many changes that have taken place since last year. Particularly I was longing for 實高 *Kuan Kau* of 趙 *Tsau* ², and I looked with respect

¹ Vide p. 114.

² Kuan-Kau was indignant, when his Lord, the King of Tsau was insulted by Emperor Kao of the Han dynasty. He planned to kill the Emperor, while he said: "If I am successful it is all due to the King; if not, I myself will bear the whole responsibility". Shōin identified himself with Kuan Kau.

on 屈平 *Kū-ping* of 楚 *Tsu*¹. All my friends and acquaintances knew this. For this reason 子遠 *Shien* wrote in his farewell address: "In 燕趙 *Yen-tsau* were many retainers, but there was only one man like 實高 *Kuan-Kau*, and only 屈平 *Kū-ping* was deeply grieved, because of 楚 *Tsu*." Since the 11th day of the 5th month, when I was informed that I should have to go to Kantō, my thoughts could well be expressed by the single word: "sincerity". At that time Shien² had sent me a message which contained but one word: "death". I did not think that this applied to myself; so I wrote on a piece of white cotton this phrase of Mêng-tzū: 至誠而不动者未之有也 "Never has there been one possessed of complete sincerity, who did not move others."³

I sewed this on to my hand-towel and took it with me to Edo, where I placed it in the highest Court of Justice, thus indicating on what my defence would rely. It is to be said with reverence that no bond of sincerity existed between the Imperial Court and the Shogunate. I told myself that if Heaven deigned to acknowledge my sincerity, however small, surely I could expect the officials of the Shogunate to recognise my teaching as upright. But, like a mosquito or horse-fly, which has to carry a mountain on its back, I was unable to make any impression, even to the present day. Being a man of little virtue, I cannot claim the right to condemn or to display indignation.

When I was called for the first time before the Court of Justice, the three judges present questioned me on two points: firstly, as to the nature of my secret deliberations with 梅田源次郎 *Umeda Genjirō*⁴, whom I had met on his arrival in Nagato; secondly, as to whether I remembered a letter alleged to have been dropped

¹ Kū-ping was grieved, because his Lord, the king of Tsu had been deceived by the Emperor of the 秦 *Tsin* dynasty. He admonished him several times, but without avail. On the contrary he was calumniated and finally he committed suicide. Also here Shōin identified himself with Kū-ping.

² 子遠 *Shien* (the pen name for 入江九一 *Irie Kuichi*) was a disciple of Shōin. When the latter was taken to Edo, he informed him about his condemnation to death. Shōin, however, could not believe it. He thought that the officials at Edo would be moved by his sincerity.

³ Transl. Legge, IV, I, XII, 3.

⁴ Usually known by his pen name: 雲濱 *Umpin*. Ever since his first meeting with Umeda, Shōin disagreed with him.

by me within the Imperial Palace, the handwriting of which according to Genjirō and others resembled mine. These two questions and no others were asked.

In reply, I said that Umeda was untrustworthy and therefore I had no desire to communicate my intentions to him. Personally, I was always frank and open, and so it would be absolutely against my nature to write secretly an anonymous letter. I informed the judges that it was only after enduring the hardships of prison life for six years that I had finally asked the Lord of 大原 *Ōhara* to come to the West. Also, I confessed that I was planning to lay an ambush for Lord 間部 *Manobe*¹, and because of this, I was again imprisoned.

Being of violent disposition, I was rather quick-tempered. My aim was to keep abreast with the trend of modern thought, and I considered of importance those things which were of benefit to my fellow creatures. Accordingly I declared that it was inevitable that the Shogunate should disobey the Imperial Command². But some appropriate measures had to be taken, and it was because of this that I studied and devised precise countermeasures. Therefore, these members of the Shogunate, officials though they may be, had no grounds for undue anger.

To this they immediately replied: "We cannot accept your statement as being entirely appropriate, and, moreover, since you are of humble birth, it is intolerable that you should discuss State affairs."

I continued mildly, saying that if the judges were correct in their opinions, I would not deny my guilt, and so concluded my declaration.

The law of the Shogunate 幕府の三尺 *Bakufu no sanjaku* forbids people of humble birth 布衣 *Fui* to discuss the affairs of the State. I myself have never known this law³. I have heard only

¹ Vide p. 48.

² To drive the foreigners away.

³ In the beginning of the Tokugawa period no code was in existence. Certain general principles and certain important statutes on special points were, of course, matters of common knowledge among the officials. Outside of this, an accurate knowledge of the law was far from common even among those whose duty it was to administer it. As for the common people the authorities had hitherto gone upon the Confucian maxim that "the people should be made to follow, but should not be made to know the law". Commoners were kept in ignorance of the penal laws. Under the Shōgun Yoshimune (1716-44) some change was introduced. He held that crimes were often due to ignorance of law and he tried

that when 日下部伊三次 *Kusakabe Isaji*¹ stood before the Shogunate officials, he severely criticised the defects of the Government. He declared that if matters continued as they were for another three or five years, some ill-effects were bound to result. That angered the officials, but Kusakabe retorted that even if his statement constituted a capital crime, he did not regret it, in fact, he could not even see his way to regretting it. Thus, also, it was with me when Shien warned me that I would have to die. Look at 段秀實 *Tuan-siu-si*, a minister of the Tang-dynasty. How sincere and loyal he was towards 郭晞 *Kuo-hi*, and how violent towards 朱泚 *Tsu-tsi*. A hero's behaviour and attitude are always correctly moulded and dictated by existing conditions. My own conscience told me that I had nothing to be ashamed of. I regarded it as vital to know the character of men, and also to wait for the opportunity to act. My virtues and vices will be properly known, however, only after the lid is nailed on my coffin.

On the 9th of the 7th month 此回の口書甚草々なり *Kono Kai no Kuchigaki hanahada sōsō nari*², the affidavit was drawn up in a great hurry. After the general statement of the crime, I was not questioned very much on the 5th of the 9th month, neither on the 5th of the 10th month when I was summoned before the court. On the 16th of the 10th month they read to me the 口書 *Kuchigaki*. Immediately after this, I was ordered to give my 書判 *Kakihan*,³ signature. My carefully prepared treatise regarding the reception of the American Ambassador and the encouragement of navigation, were not mentioned at all. My alleged statement ran as follows: "For the time being the opening of some ports should be postponed; but once having strengthened the nation, all the foreigners should be expelled." I have never entertained such 迂腐 *ufu* useless and stupid ideas. It was clear to me,

therefore to make laws and statutes to a certain extent known to the common people. He rested, however, content with communicating no more than the elements of criminal law. Even after the revision of the 103 articles by Matsudaira Sadanobu (called Tokugawa Hyakkajō), it must not be supposed that these laws were disclosed to the general public. They served simply for purposes of official reference. Vide J. Murdoch, *op. cit.*, p. 335-42; F. Brinkley, *op. cit.*, 639-41; G. Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 461-65.

¹ One of Shōin's friends. His samurai name was 信政 *Nobumasa*. He was a samurai of the Satsuma clan.

² The Japanese text is extremely vague.

³ This can be a signature, as well as a *kan*, or both.

that all my words would be of no avail. Therefore I refrained from speaking anymore. I was extremely dissatisfied. If you compare this affidavit with the first article of the one concerning the encouragement of navigation¹, you can easily see that both differ like heaven from earth.

I have also made a general statement concerning the ambush on the rōchū Manobe. I thought at first that it would be better to make a detailed statement, as these matters must be known to the Shogunate through their secret agents. However during the course of this statement, it became apparent that they were not aware of the facts. Therefore, I decided that I would not dispel their ignorance by unnecessarily supplying the required information. It often happens, that the innocent has to suffer for the crimes of one accused man. For this reason—instead of using the expression 要撃 *Yōgeki* to lay an ambush for the Lord of 鯖江 *Sabae*²—I used the word 要諫 *yōkan* to remonstrate with the Lord of Sabae. As far as possible, I concealed the names of those who went to and came from Kyōto, and of those who pledged support—this being my effort to safeguard my followers. I was therefore pleased when I alone was punished by the Court of the Shogunate.

According to that article of the remonstrance, I had declared that if my ambush had failed I myself wanted to die while actually stabbing Lord Manobe, and should guards be lying in ambush, they were to be exterminated. I had never said that, and hence could not, in conscience, agree to its veracity. I disputed the point vigorously with 石谷 *Ishitani* and 池田 *Ikeda*, two of the judges of the tribunal. I said that I could never agree to their acceptance of the falsified statement, and, as I had declared at the previous examinations on the 5th of the 9th month and the 15th of the 10th month, I had never personally attempted to kill Lord Manobe, nor had I planned to stab him while exposing myself to the same fate, nor had I arranged for the extermination of the guards. I declared that to assert otherwise was absolutely dishonest, and that the tribunal knew that³.

¹ Here is meant the affidavit which condemned Shōin to imprisonment for his attempt to go abroad. It runs into 160 pages.

² This Lord of Sabae is the same as 間部詮勝 *Manobe Norikatsu*.

³ The Japanese expressions used leave us in some doubt as to Shōin's real intentions.

My companions feared that I was forcing matters too far by my stubborn attitude to the tribunal's accusation, but personally, I had no fears. However, I considered and reconsidered the situation, and finally decided to die for benevolence's sake¹ and not to worry whether the words, I was using in my statements, were condemning or not. To-day, I, Yoshida Shōin², am about to die because of the enmity of one in power. I am, however, pleasing to the God of Heaven and Earth, being his reflection³, and so I have nothing to fear.

As I had done previously, I adhered to my original decision not to struggle for my life, nor yet to regard my death as inevitable; I would remain sincere and trust in God for everything⁴. However, since the 9th day of the 7th month I was reconciled to die. Therefore I quoted the following poem: "繼盛 *Ki-tseng* submitted without complaining to his death punishment and 倉公 *Tsang King*, why should he hope for returning to life again?"⁵ During the examinations mentioned above I was treated well, and so I thought that perhaps, after all, I would not have to die. I desired happiness, but I can truly say my desire was not covetous or selfish. However, even though it seemed that my hopes were well founded, I had been deceived. On the last day of last year a Council had left the deciding of the case entirely to the Shogunate, and in the spring of this year, on the 5th day of the 3rd month to be precise, the palanquin of my Lord had left the residence at Hagi. These facts crushed my hopes, and so I was reconciled to die in the near future.

At the end of the 6th month, I arrived at Edo, and there I saw and heard of the attitude of foreigners. Shortly afterwards I was imprisoned. Having reflected and pondered on the course of events in the whole country, I understood I had much work to do for it. It was then I realised that life was really a blessing. Should I

¹ The phrase 成仁の一死 *seijin no issai* to die for benevolence's sake, can also be translated: to carry benevolence beyond the grave. The sentence is taken from 論語 *rongo*.

² Here he uses his pen name 義郷 *Gikei*.

³ Lit. The God of Heaven and Earth is shining above me like a mirror reflecting me.

⁴ Leave everything to the natural cause of 天命 *Temmei*, Providence.

⁵ Shōin identified himself with these two heroes who were condemned to death unjustly. Ki-tseng lived at the time of the Ming dynasty and Tsang-King during the Han dynasty.

survive, I will work untiringly for my country, invigorated by a strength gained by a life long devotion. But, unfortunately, there is no question of such a survival, because, now, I know that the three judges are intent on my execution.

To-day I am to die. But when I think of the four seasons of the year, I am comforted. In spring we see the seed sown, in summer the young plants growing; autumn is the harvest time, and the crops are stored in the granary for the winter. When autumn and winter come all the people rejoice over the results of their efforts during the year. They brew 酒 *sake* and 醴 *amazake* and shouts of joy are heard in the villages and over the fields. I have never yet heard of people who when the time of fruition had approached were sad at the results of the year that is passing. I am only thirty years old ¹ and I die without having accomplished anything. I resemble a crop which sent forth ears but did not ripen, and it seems to be pitiful. While applying this to myself, I can say that the time of ripening has come. Nevertheless it is not necessarily a sad thing. After all a long life is not granted to every man. It is not the same as a crop that has to pass through the four seasons. He who dies at the age of ten, has his four seasons within his ten years; he who dies at twenty, within his twenty years; he who dies at thirty, fifty or hundred, has his four seasons within thirty, fifty or hundred years. If you think ten years is a short life, it is as if you wished the short-lived 蟪蛄 *Keiko*, cicada to live as long as the 靈椿 *reichin* ². If you think a hundred years too long, it is as if you wished a *reichin* to live as short as a cicada ³. In neither case, in your opinion, is destiny fulfilled. Yoshida Shōin, though only thirty years old, has already had his four seasons; he has sent forth his ears with ripe grain. Whether they are blasted ears or corn, I do not know myself ⁴. If my companions have pity on my misfortune, and take over my task, the seed of the future will not die, and I will have fulfilled my four seasons. My companions, please, think this over!

堀江克之助 *Horie Yoshinosuke*, a countryman of Mito, is

¹ According to Japanese reckoning. He became twenty-nine years old according to European reckoning.

² A camellia flower, supposed to live 8000 years.

³ Western logic argues along different lines.

⁴ Yet in his heart he was certainly convinced that his life was full. In one of his letters to 久保清太郎 *Kubo Seitarō* he writes: "However long we may live, life is always short and of no value, unless it is crowned with a glorious deed."

in the 東口楊屋 *Higashiguchi Agariya*¹ part of the prison of Edo. Though I have never met him, he is an intimate and useful friend and he has written me several letters. In one of these, he wrote: "In bygone days 矢部 *Yabe*, a man from the province of 駿河 *Suruga*, started a hunger strike since the day he was given in charge of the Lord of 桑名 *Kuwana*; he died while cursing the enemy and thus he frustrated the enemy's retaliation. Because you are now expecting death, intensify your prayers against all enemies, that they may leave us our own spirit." Thus he kindly admonished me and I admire his words.

鮎澤伊太夫 *Ayuzawa Idayū*, a samurai of the Mito clan, stays together with 堀江 *Horie*. He wrote to me as follows: "I have just been told about you. When I am exiled to an island, I will leave all earthly things to Heaven's Providence. But I trust my companions with what is useful for the country, for I wish to leave this to those who come after me." These words reflect my mind. My sincerest prayers are that my followers inherit my true spirit, that they may render distinguished service to the Emperor and that they may expel the foreigners from our country. I hope and pray that even after my death my followers preserve friendship with these two men Horie and Ayuzawa, whether they are in prison or exiled on an island. Besides, in the 龜澤 *Kamezawa* street of the 本所 *Honjo* ward of Edo lives a physician called 山口三輔 *Yamaguchi sanyū*. He seems to be an honest man and he rendered service to Horie and Ayuzawa. For when both asked the physician to do a favour to Home Minister 小林 *Kobayashi*, he agreed immediately, although he did not know him. How extraordinary a man! (Follows a sentence which is untranslatable.)

Horie follows the Way of the Gods and has great veneration for the Tennō. He wishes to spread over the whole country a clear knowledge of the "Great Way", and abolish all heresies and false doctrines. In his opinion it would be best to have the ordinances published by the Imperial Court and so spread over the whole country. I am convinced that we must not confine ourselves to the plan of publishing ordinances but establish also a school for higher

¹ The prison was divided into five parts according to the social status of the prisoners. In the *agariya*-part Buddhist priests and samurais were incarcerated.

learning at Kyōto, which will teach the whole country the august learning of the Imperial Court and attract to Kyōto the greatest talents of the country. Then all true doctrines and certain teachings of ancient and modern time throughout the country will be collected, and made into a book and in participating in all this unified knowledge the Imperial Court will have found the way of uniting the minds of all the people. So I decided that together with the plan of the 尊攘堂 *Sonjō Dō* (Hall of reverence for the Emperor and expulsion of the foreigners ¹) concerning which I had long discussions with Shien, they should consult with Horie and trust Shien with the task of carrying it out. If Shien persuades his companions to accept the idea and makes a small beginning, my aspirations will not be frustrated. Is not the plan concerning the school at Kyōto something remarkable?

Kobayashi says that the 學習院 *Gakushūin* of Kyōto ² should be accessible on certain days for the farmers and citizens as well, who will be allowed to attend the lectures. The lectures for the members of the Kuge families will be given by lecturers from the 菅原 *Sugawara* and 清原 *Kiyowara* families assisted by some Confucian scholars. If this is possible some excellent results must develop from it. At the 懷德堂 *Kaitoku Dō* ³ hangs a *Kakemono* painted by Emperor 靈元 *Reigen* ⁴ himself. Kobayashi believes that it is an excellent idea to establish still another school on the same lines as the *Kaitoku Dō*. The Kobayashi families were during several generations the 太夫 *dayū*, Lord-stewards of the 鷹司 *Takatsukasa* family. This same Kobayashi was banished and sent into exile to a far-off island. His punishment was one of the heaviest inflicted on numerous Kyōto citizens. He is skilful in several arts and he is also well versed in literature. When he was in the Nishioku Agariya prison I was with him. Afterwards they transferred him to the Higashiguchi prison. Yamaguchi Sanyū renders great service to Kobayashi. Therefore my retainers must preserve intercourse with Kobayashi through

¹ Vide p. 72. This hall is now part of the Kyōto University.

² School founded in 1842 in Kyōto by Emperor Ninkō (1817-46) for the education of the children of the Kuge.

³ An ancient school at Amagasaki near Ōsaka.

⁴ The 112th Emperor (1063-86). Vide E. Papinot, *op. cit.*, p. 595.

the kind help of Yamaguchi, even if he is later exiled to an island. **長谷川 Hasegawa**, a samurai of the **高松 Takamatsu**-clan of **讃岐 Sanuki**, remonstrated for years with his Lord, and had great troubles because of the friendly relation of his clan with the Mito scholars. He is now in the Higashioku Agariya prison, and his son, **速水 Hayami**, is in the Nishioku prison. What may be the offence of the father and son, I do not yet know. I earnestly beg all my friends to remember them. When I met the aged man, Hasegawa, for the first time, the prison guards stood on either side of him. The law does not permit us to speak with each other in private. He said, as though speaking for himself alone: "I would rather be a bead broken into pieces than to survive my usefulness". I was deeply moved by his meaning. My companions, please realise what he meant.

I have not written these lines without a purpose. If you do not make known your intentions to the influential men of the country, it is impossible that state matters should be carried out well. But as I have recently made acquaintance with the above-mentioned persons, I notify my companions about this. **勝野保三郎 Katsuno Hosaburō** has already left jail. Make detailed inquiries about him. Although Katsuno's father **豊作 Toyosaku** remains in hiding, I hear that he is of a like mind. Wait until things have become quiet and then make investigations about him. My companions, concerning the present happenings you must learn from the other companions—those companions who were wounded and overcome by defeat. They are discouraged by a single defeat. How could they be brave men? My companions, I earnestly, most earnestly beg you, be of good cheer.

橋本左内 Hashimoto Sanai, from the Province of **越前 Echizen**, was put to death at the age of 26. He was executed after having been only five or six days in the Higashioku prison, together with Katsuho. Afterwards Katsuho was transferred to the Nishioku prison where he stayed with me. When I heard what Katsuho told me about him I regretted that I had never met him. Sanai, while in prison, read the **資治通鑑 Shiji Tsūkan**¹ and he made a

¹ History book written by **司馬光 Shībakō** (Vide p. 60).

commentary on it as far as the Han period. During his imprisonment he made many efforts to improve the conditions of the prisoners ¹. Katsuho informed me about these things. I agreed wholeheartedly with his plans for prison reform. I was all the more sorry that I had never met Sanai. How I would like to show to like minds in this country the 護國論 *Gokokuron*, Treatise on the Defence of the Country, and the poems of 清狂 *Seikyō* ² and also the poems 口羽 *Kuchiba* ³. I give permission that these books be sent to Ayuzawa Idayū. If this will be done, I should feel extremely happy. I leave behind a report on matters concerning my friends ⁴. I leave also behind a report on matters concerning the Sonjuku.

(After having finished this memorial, Shōin wrote:)

心なる	<i>Kokoro naru</i>	Nothing do I regret
ことの種々	<i>Koto no kusagusa</i>	Of the many things
かき置ぬ	<i>Kakiokinu</i>	I had in mind.
思ひ残せる	<i>Omoi nokoseru</i>	And turned to words.
ことなかりけり	<i>Koto nakarikeri.</i>	

呼だしの	<i>Yobidashi no</i>	In this world
聲まつ外に	<i>Koe matsu hoka ni</i>	I have nothing else to do
今の世に	<i>Ima no yo ni</i>	Save wait
待べき事の	<i>Matsubeki koto no</i>	For the voice
なかりける哉	<i>Nakari keru kana.</i>	That will summon me.

討れたる	<i>Utaretaru</i>	You who pity me
吾をあわれと	<i>Ware wo aware to</i>	A stricken man
見ん人は	<i>Min hito wa</i>	Behold with reverential

awe

¹ 獄中教學工作 *Gokuchō Kyōgaku Kōsaku*

² Pen name of 月性 *Gesshō*, Vide p. 47.

³ 口羽徳祐 *Kuchiba Norisuke*, a friend of Shōin.

⁴ In the text a whole list of names is mentioned.

君を崇めて	<i>Kimi wo agamete</i>	Your Emperor
夷拂へよ	<i>Ebisu harae yo.</i>	And expel the foreigner.

愚なる	<i>Oroka naru</i>	All of you
吾をも友と	<i>Ware wo mo tomo to</i>	Who love me
めづ人は	<i>Mezu hito wa</i>	The fool I am
わがとも友と	<i>Waga tomodomo to</i>	Love my friends
めてよ人々	<i>Mede yo hitobito.</i>	As you love your own.

七たびも	<i>Nana tabi mo</i>	Even if I return
生かへりつゝ	<i>Ikikaeri tsutsu</i>	Seven times from the dead
夷をぞ	<i>Ebisu wo zo</i>	I shall never forget
攘はんこゝろ	<i>Harawan kokoro</i>	To drive away
吾忘れめ哉	<i>Ware wasureme ya.</i>	The foreigner.

The 26th day of the 6th month, written in the evening.
*Nijū Ikkai Mōshi*¹.

¹ 黄昏書 *Tasogare Kaku*. 二十一回猛士. The next morning
 Shōin was executed.

CHAPTER NINE

SHŌIN THE MAN AND HIS INFLUENCE IN PRESENT-DAY JAPAN

Thus far, I have attempted to give within the framework of a short historical survey the life of Yoshida Shōin. After having traced and explained the sources from which he mainly drew his inspiration, I have tried to give some insight into the basic ideas of his mind, and thus how Shōin can be regarded as a thinker. We have seen him as an enthusiastic and convinced believer in Shintō, who however did not at the same time neglect the Chinese classics, but who kept aloof from Buddhism as being not in conformity with the path which the true Japanese should tread¹. We have seen him, moreover, as an exaggerated expansionist, who wished to see a great Japan, spreading to the North, to the South, and to the Continent of Asia. We saw, furthermore how, by means of his educational qualities and of his personality, he was able to impress his ideas on the men of his own generation. Again, through the anthology in which I have given translations of Shōin's most important works or parts of them, I have attempted to give some idea of Shōin, as man of letters. In this final chapter I shall attempt to give in a few words, in the first place my views on Shōin as a man, and secondly, as to what he means to modern Japan.

As a man, he was not of that calibre which makes a pleasant and accomplished Japanese gentleman: "diehards", such as he, do not on the whole belong to the more likeable types. Therefore—apart from his relations with his own family, to whom he was extremely devoted, and with those of his followers who were imbued with similar traits and desires to his own—he was in his behaviour, as in his ideas, too much of the extremist to be popular among his contemporaries. When any of them knew that he was coming to visit them, they would hang up a poor *kakemono*, put away the silken cushions and the slightest vestige of luxury, and prepare some frugal

¹ Christianity, at that time called 邪教 *Jakyō*, did not occupy his mind. At any rate he knew nothing about it.

food for him, because that was 松陰式 *Shōin shiki*, "in Shōin's style". One day he went on an outing with several friends, amongst whom was a certain 和尚 *oshō*, bonze, and they visited together a well-known and popular holiday resort, 江ノ島 *Enoshima*, which had from the earliest ages been held sacred to 辨天 *Benten*, one of the seven Gods of luck¹. The *oshō* had ordered an appetising meal, with some delicious fish. However, to the great surprise of all, and with the result that a shadow of depression was cast over the whole party, they observed that Shōin did not touch the fish, which had been specially ordered for him². I could mention a dozen of such instances, told by his Japanese biographers, all of which go to show that he was not on the whole, exteriorly either a pleasing or a lovable character. These sharp edges of his, however, are largely compensated for, and as it were, polished, by the beautiful and outstanding side of his character, namely, his great spirit of sacrifice which he displayed towards his pupils and acquaintances. There is no doubt that he was unselfish to an heroic degree; this he showed clearly throughout the time when he was a teacher and during the long period of his imprisonment; right up to his last days he thought of the welfare of others³.

In trying to give an objective assessment of his value as a man, I neither could, nor even would, underestimate this. Numerous, indeed, are the illustrations of this great virtue of his—some of which are doubtless exaggerated here and there, but which are on the whole true⁴. My greatest objection to Shōin on his human side is his consciousness of his own justice, and still more of his own sincerity. In his *Ryūkon Roku* he writes: "To-day, I Yoshida Shōin, am about to die because of the enmity of one in power."⁵ To every

¹ Vide B. H. Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 280 (sec. edition).

² Kagawa, *Yoshida Shōin*, p. 76.

³ Vide p. 128.

⁴ I have not taken into account here, of course, the numerous small popular books about Shōin, which have no value whatsoever (though there always remains the danger that they strengthen or even aggrandise the legend which is built up round his personality (see p. 29). The Yoshida Shōin film made by the Hassei Film Company gives the impression of a fairy-tale. By means of the Government-sponsored pilgrimages to Hagi, much exaggerated information is spread amongst all types and classes of people. During the time I spent in Hagi, I mentioned to the often quoted Kagawa Masaichi—with whom I had some lengthy conversations—the ill effects of the doubtful Shōin propaganda and he was in complete agreement. He is considered in Japan to be a great Shōin scholar. He gives the impression of being a well-balanced man. When I visited him, he had been for the past 25 years Headmaster of the Chūgakkō, "middle school", in Hagi.

⁵ Vide p. 124.

reader of this biographical attempt it will be clear that this was simply not true. There were enough just reasons for his condemnation to death¹. Still less can I agree with Shōin when he writes—as he does repeatedly—about his own sincerity. His words are always 眞實のある言葉 *shinjitsu no aru kotoba*. As regards his 至誠 *shisei* there could never be any doubt, because he treads the 誠の道 *makoto no michi* and in his breast beats the 真心 *magokoro*. All the above-mentioned Japanese words, used time and again by Shōin, are usually rendered as “sincere, true, honest”. Thus, Shōin’s words were sincere, he was guided by sincerity, he trod the true and sincere way, and he was the man with the sincere heart. In *Yoshida Shōin no kenkyū*, Hirose Yutaka gives the explanation of Shōin’s 至誠 *shisei*, as being clear, always objective and the starting point of all morality². However in this point I cannot agree with the distinguished author.

When one lives for some time in another country³, and tries to discern some of the finer shades of the language (generally not mentioned in grammars or syntax), one can in exceptional cases make some discoveries. One of these, I think, is the phenomenon that there are words which have a different meaning according as they are used by men or by women, and also according to the class of person using them. This, to my mind, is the case with the above-mentioned *makoto*, *seijitsu*, *shinjitsu*, and the like. If used in the mouth of a Japanese woman, it comes very near our “sincerity”; yet when used by a Japanese patriot these words give the implication of a single-minded devotion, a determination to attain a certain goal⁴, regardless of cost or of the means, or if need be, duplicity, involved. At any rate, this is the meaning of these words in the writings of Shōin⁵. So far, I have translated the above words as “sincere”, keeping always in mind, however, that some detailed attention to this would be necessary in the final chapter. His words are, in his opinion, always sincere, yet time and again he takes refuge in what, to a European, would simply be considered as untrue.

¹ Vide p. 29-33.

² 廣瀬豊 *Hirose Yutaka*, 吉田松陰の研究 *Yoshida Shōin*

no Kenkyū, p. 198.

³ The author lived for eight years in a purely Japanese environment.

⁴ Generally where Emperor-worship, national greatness, etc. are concerned.

⁵ Subjectively, however, he was probably all right.

His actions are—again in his own opinion—invariably honest, true, sincere and pure; yet he has no scruples about an assassination attempt on the rōchū Manobe, or about the incitement of young people to revolt against lawful authority¹.

It is outside the scope of this study to give lengthy and detailed explanations as to the reasons why a Westerner judges differently from an Oriental on such things as above; but the fact does remain that this duplicity of Shōin puts no small blame on to his character. Were it a European who was under discussion, we should in all probability refer to him as being of mean character, or a base or cunning man. However, this was certainly not the case with Shōin. There were, indeed, some very fine and even beautiful sides to his character. For this reason it is exceedingly difficult for the writer to give a well-balanced and objective judgment of his character, in which so many contrasts and inconsistencies are to be found. We come up against a kind of mysticism, which blocks out all logic. My own opinion of Shōin will always be, and must remain, different from that of a Japanese. During the course of my lectures in Japan I often tried, gently and with all the tact at my command, to show something of the darker side of Shōin's character to the Japanese; for example, by mentioning his extreme violence, his exaggerations, and how he merely affected humility. I did not, however, meet any response whatsoever. The Japanese simply do not approach him in these terms; and it is, after all, in Japan that his influence holds and will probably continue to hold, if nothing unforeseen happens, for centuries to come.

This brings me to my second point: Shōin's influence in present day Japan.

In the foregoing pages we have seen how Shōin's best pupils and most enthusiastic followers became prominent members of the first Meiji cabinets², and that consequently his influence during

¹ As about his real intention to kill Manobe, we are by no means left in any doubt.

In 吉田松陰全集 *Yoshida Shōin Zenshū*, Vol. IV, p. 62-64 we find a letter addressed to his father, uncle and brother in which Shōin writes: "With great speed I will call together my 同志 *Dōshi* fellow sympathizers and go with them to Kyōto, take the head of Manobe and put it on a bamboo pole. Thus I will show my love for the Emperor, and I will raise the fame of my clan. And then I will instigate the subjects in revolt against the Bakufu."

² With regard to Shōin's influence on the Cabinet Minister Yamagata Aritomo, Dr. Fujisawa Rikitarō writes: "Although Yamagata studied under Yoshida Shōin for only a short while, Shōin's influence seems to have made a lasting impression upon his gifted

the Meiji period is not to be underestimated. His influence, however, did not end there; it is, in fact, continuing up to the present day.

In connecting with this, I have myself tried to do some research while in Japan. During my stay in Hagi for instance I spent several afternoons at the 松陰神社 *Shōin Jinja* and the 村塾 *Sonjuku*, when school teachers were being shown round. I mixed with them in order to study their response to the enthusiastic explanations given by the Shintō priests. The impression I received was that the record of the brave deeds evoked a considerably less strong response when the teachers came from the large cities than when they came from country districts.

During the last war Shōin was extremely popular, and he was constantly quoted both in monthlies and in dailies¹. The latest information to reach me from Japan is that between the years 1941 and 1950 no less than four new biographies of him have appeared. From this, it would appear safe to conclude that the light of his torch is very far from being dimmed in present-day Japan. Yet, this does not mean that the evaluation of Shōin's character and personality should not be subject to fluctuation. On the contrary, I visualize some slight change in this respect in the future. There is no doubt that after all that happened, Japan has a new future before her. The hierarchy of values is reexamined in the light of new experiences. And it is the author's sincere wish, now that Japan revises her material and spiritual resources in order to make them more accommodating to modern trends and new developments, that she may regard Shōin in a somewhat different,

pupil. The first idea of the formation of the modern Japanese army may be traced to Yoshida Shōin." (*The Recent Aims and Political Development of Japan*, p. 31-32).

With regard to Shōin's influence on Itō Hirobumi, we read in "Prince Itō": "Itō was now on the threshold of a significant decision. A one-time rabid extremist whose miraculous journey to Europe had transformed him into a decided friend and admirer of the foreigners, he found himself confronted with a peculiarly paradoxical situation inevitable in a change so fraught with conflicting passions and beliefs. Since it was a cardinal principle in Chōshū that to be anti-foreign was synonymous with being anti-Shōgunate, it followed logically that to become pro-foreign, as did Itō, was to concede the justice of the Shōgunate's historic stand and, therefore, to vindicate its foreign and domestic policies...."

"But here Itō's penetrating mind delved beyond the superficial aspects of a groping, changing Japan. He took occasion to weigh the fundamentals, the venerable ideas of a race dedicated to something essentially higher and nobler—the spirit of Yamato. In this he was sustained by Shōin's immaculate example. Shōin had disclosed during his brief but exemplary career, this higher and nobler objective, this indispensable spiritual essence of a true patriot of Dai Nippon in all its pristine brilliance." Kengi Hamada, *op. cit.*, p. 46-47.

¹ Information received from Japanese who lived in the home land throughout the war. Vide also p. 107, 113.

I should say a little more objective light. I do not mean to say, that his personality should be disregarded. Rather I should wish that the Japanese, following Emperor Meiji's advice which he expressed so beautifully in his famous waka:

よきをと	<i>Yoki wo tori</i>	May our country
あしきをすて	<i>Ashiki wo sutete</i>	Taking what is good
外國に	<i>Totsukuni ni</i>	And rejecting what is bad
おとらぬ國と	<i>Otoranu kuni to</i>	Be not inferior
なすよしもかな	<i>Nasu yoshi mo ga</i>	To any other.
	<i>na.</i>	

would select only the precious stones out of Shōin's raw material to be used in the building of her new edifice. If then, this little study—however incomplete and however deficient it may be—should contribute to this purpose even in the slightest degree, the author who wishes nothing but the best for the noble people of Japan, will feel his efforts richly rewarded. May it be so!

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御聖徳, Mizushima Shōsuke 水島莊介

PERIODICALS IN JAPANESE

Chūō Kōron 中央公論

Kaizō 改造

APPENDIX I

武家諸法度 BUKE SHOHATTO

VARIOUS ORDINANCES FOR THE MILITARY FAMILIES¹

1—The way of letters and arms, of archery and horsemanship must be cultivated with all the heart and mind.

First letters and then arms was the rule of those of old. Neither must be neglected. Archery and horsemanship are essential for the Military Houses. Militarism may be an ill-omened expression, but it is an unavoidable necessity. In times of order we cannot forget disorder; how, then can we relax our military training?

2—Drinking parties and amusements must be kept within proper limits. In the observation of this article strict moderation must be insisted on. Devotion to women and gambling is the primary cause of loss of one's fief.

3—Law breakers shall not be allowed refuge in any fief. Law is the foundation of etiquette and social order. Law may be contrary to reason, but reason is no excuse for breaking the law. So those who break it will not be excused.

4—Feudal lords both greater and lesser and other feudatories shall expel from their fiefs any retainer in their service who shall be guilty of rebellion or homicide.

Savage and unruly retainers are edged tools for overthrowing the Empire and deadly weapons for destroying the common people. How can they be tolerated?

5—From henceforth there is to be no intercourse with the people of other fiefs outside one's own province.

The customs of the various fiefs are commonly different. Revealing the secrets of one's own fief to another or reporting the secrets of another fief to one's own is a sign of a desire to curry favour.

6—Even when castles are repaired the matter must be reported to the authorities. Much more must all new construction be stopped.

¹ Promulgated by Hidetada in 1615 after the summer campaign of Ōsaka. Ieyasu was at that time in the Nijo Castle in Kyōto. The translation is taken from *The Life of Tokugawa Ieyasu* by A. L. Sadler, p. 373-75.

A castle with a wall more than 100 *chi* (10 feet by 30 feet), i.e. 1,000 feet, is harmful to a fief. High walls and deep moats are the cause of great upheavals when they belong to others.

7—If any innovations are attempted or factions started in a neighbouring fief, the fact is to be reported to the authorities without delay.

People are always forming parties, but few ever come to anything. Still there is disobedience to lords and fathers, and strife between neighbouring villages on this account. If the ancient precepts are not respected there will probably be restless scheming.

8—Marriages must not be privately arranged.

Marriage is the harmonious combination of the male and female principle. It must not be lightly undertaken. It is written in the *Book of Changes*: "Not being enemies they can arrange marriage and should make known their wish, for when they become enemies they lose the opportunity." A good thing must be hastened. Also in the *Odes* it is written: "Men and women should act correctly and marry at the right time. Then there will be no widowers in the country. But to form parties through marriage, that is the source of nefarious plots."

9—Concerning the manner of the daimyōs coming up to render service. In the *Shoku Nihongi* it is written: "Except when on public service, no one is to assemble his clan within the capital or go about attended by more than twenty horsemen". So it is not permitted to lead about a large force of retainers. Lords below a million *koku* and above two hundred thousand must not exceed twenty horsemen. For those above a hundred thousand the number is to be in proportion. But when on public service his forces are to be according to his means.

10—There must be no confusion about the materials used for costume. There must be a clear distinction between lord and vassal, superior and inferior. White figured material, white wadded silk coats, purple lined garments, garments with purple lining, wadded silk coats (of *nerinuki*) without crests may not be worn casually without permission. Of late ordinary retainers and soldiers have taken to wearing costumes of figured material and brocade, a thing quite contrary to ancient rule and very objectionable.

11—The common herd are not to ride in palanquins.

There are some who have had the right to ride in palanquins from ancient times, and there are others who have received per-

mission afterwards. But lately ordinary retainers and soldiers have been riding in them. This is flagrant insolence. Henceforth only lords of provinces at least and distinguished members of their families are to be allowed to ride thus without permission. Beside these high retainers, doctors, and astrologers, persons over sixty years, old and sick people may be given permission to ride. If ordinary retainers and soldiers ride it will be considered the fault of their lords. But these rules do not apply to Court Nobles, Imperial Abbots, and priests.

12—The samurai of all the fiefs are to practise economy.

The wealthy are apt to be ostentatious and so the poor ashamed of their inequality. This is a common weakness. Nothing is more reprehensible. It must be strictly repressed.

13—Lords of provinces must select men of ability for official positions under them.

The art of government lies in obtaining the right men. There must be clear discrimination between merit and demerit and accurate distribution of praise and blame. If there are capable men in a fief it is sure to be prosperous. But if there are none it is as sure to be ruined. This is the clear admonition of the ancient sages.

The above regulations must be observed.
Keichō 20, 7th month, 1615.

APPENDIX II

MANIFESTO ANNOUNCING SHŌGUN'S RESIGNATION ON THE 8th OF NOVEMBER 1867¹

Looking at the various changes through which the Empire has passed, we see that when the monarchical authority became weakened, the power was seized by the Ministers of State, and that afterwards, owing to the civil wars of the periods 保元 *Hogen* (1156-9) and 平治 *Heiji* (1159-60), it passed into the hands of the military class. Later on again my ancestor received special favour from the Throne (by being appointed Shōgun), and his descendants have succeeded him for over 200 years. Though I fill the same office, the laws are often improperly administered, and I confess with shame that the condition of affairs to-day shows my incapacity. Now that foreign intercourse becomes daily more extensive, unless the Government is directed from one central point, the basis of administration will fall to pieces. If, therefore, the old order of things be changed, and the administrative authority be restored to the Imperial Court, if national deliberations be conducted on an extensive scale, and the Imperial decision then invited, and if the Empire be protected with united hearts and combined effort, our country will hold its own with all nations of the world. This is our one duty to our country, but if any persons have other views on the subject they should be stated without reserve.

¹ Extract from *Kaikoku Kigen, The Beginning of the Opening of the Country*, p. 2930.

APPENDIX III¹

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR SHŌGUN'S RESIGNATION PRESENTED BY JAPANESE MINISTERS IN EDO TO FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES IN NOVEMBER, 1867²

The Shōgun of Japan has of his own free will decided to return to the Tennō the administrative authority which has been handed down to him by his ancestors through a period of more than 250 years. Fearing that at this moment of political change people's minds may be led astray by false rumours and idle reports, we think it necessary to make the following explanation of the circumstances of the case to all countries.

More than two thousand years ago, when the ancestors of the Imperial House came down from heaven they governed the country by personal rule, and so did their descendants after them. They were then actually as well as in name the sovereigns of Japan, and were known to foreign countries by the name of Mikados.

After a time the condition of the country deteriorated, and the governing power fell into the hands of a distant branch of the Imperial House, the family of Fujiwara, the Mikados reigning, but taking no part in the administration. After this family had assumed power, its members gave themselves up to luxury and effeminacy, and though the Court was supposed to be composed of officers combining civil and military duties, this state of things existed only in name, and military power was in the hands of hereditary military officials. Whenever there was trouble in the country, the Government were unable to cope with it. So when there were rebels, the Government relied on these hereditary military officials to carry out their chastisement. These hereditary military officials were grouped under two chief houses, the Minamoto and Taira. They

¹ The translation is taken from *The Progress of Japan* by J. H. Gubbins, p. 306-11.

² Extract from *Bakumatsu Gaikōdan, The Story of Foreign Relations in the last days of the Shōgunate*, pp. 524 et seq.

divided the country between them, the Minamoto having authority in the East, and the Taira in the West. Then there was a quarrel regarding the Imperial succession, and the whole country ranged itself under the rival banners, even the house of Fujiwara taking sides. At first the Taira were victorious, and they succeeded to the position of the Fujiwara, and ruled the country for twenty years. But they acted arrogantly, and wrongly made use of the Imperial name to cloak their arbitrary designs. The Mikado thereupon called the Minamoto to his assistance, and caused them to destroy the house of Taira. The Minamoto destroyed their ancient enemies, and preserved the Imperial House. The latter, in reward for the service rendered, entrusted the whole country to the military authority of the Minamoto. The military class thus, as a result of the events of several years, came to the front everywhere, and, the power of the Court being unable to restrain it, in all parts of the country military chieftains rose to the head of affairs. None had any influence in the administration save members of the military class, and they gained it by service to the Throne, by lineage, and by gaining the confidence of the nation. In the end all power became concentrated in the military class. This was about A.D. 1200., according to Western reckoning. The political change thus introduced was very great. The official title of the new administrator was 征夷大將軍 *Sei-i Tai Shōgun*. His position was conferred upon him by the Court, but his rule extended over the whole country. This is how the Tycoon¹ came to preside over the Government under the Emperor of Japan.

Afterwards, any one disputing administrative authority in the country at once assailed the position of the Shōgun, civil war continued for nearly 400 years; great chieftains established themselves in all parts of the land, and fought with one another; both Mikado and Shōgun were nonentities, and the condition of the Empire became more disturbed than ever.

¹ Tycoon: The literal meaning of this title is "great prime". It was adopted by the Shōguns in comparatively recent times, in order to magnify their positions in the eyes of foreign powers. Perhaps it may have been suggested by the title 大君主 *Tai-aww-saw*, used to denote the Queen in English treaties with China. In any case the idea was produced in the minds of European diplomats that the Shōgun was a sort of Emperor, and he was dubbed "His Majesty" accordingly. B. H. Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 450-51 (second edition).

This was the state of affairs when 東照宮 *Tōshōgū*¹, the ancestor of our Tycoon, stepped on the scene, and by immense exertions put an end to this disorder.

The Mikado of that day highly appreciating his great services, appointed him to be Shōgun, and entrusted to him all the administrative affairs of the country, both civil and military. The ancestor of the ruler who became known to foreign countries as our Tycoon, far surpassed all previous Shōguns in regard to services rendered. His authority also exceeded that of any other Shōgun who had preceded him. Consequently he caused the various feudal chieftains throughout the country who had previously established themselves by force of arms in various places, and had enjoyed independent power, to assemble in Edo, his own place of residence, and take an oath of fealty to him. He also acquired the right of investing these feudal lords with their territories, or depriving them of them, and this investiture was conferred by special written grant. *Yashikis* were also established in Edo, and the system of attendance there every year, or every alternate year, was introduced. All *daimyōs*, both great and small, throughout the Empire, accepted these laws, and submitted to them, and there was not one dissentient voice.

The descendants of this ancestor have succeeded one another for several generations, and have continued to govern the country in this way for over 200 years with the approval of the Court, the feudal nobility submitting thereto and the people pursuing their avocations in tranquillity and enjoying the blessings of a long peace.

At the beginning of the long period (we have described) foreign ships came to Japan, and Japanese vessels traded abroad, and there was no hindrance to foreign commerce. But from a certain foreign country there came missionaries, who conspired with certain rebellious Japanese and plotted to create disturbance. In order to preserve the peace of the country severe edicts were issued, this religious movement was proscribed, the missionaries were driven away, and in the end the visits of foreign ships were prohibited, and Japanese vessels were forbidden to go to foreign countries, trade being permitted with only one or two foreign countries at the single port of Nagasaki. The closing of Japan was a step rendered unavoidable by the circumstances of that time.

Of recent years, however, the conditions of the world have

¹ The posthumous name of Ieyasu.

greatly changed, and, an Envoy having come from the United States, the country was opened. The Tycoon of that time, and one or two leading statesmen in the Government realized that in modern times, from the moment when the invention of steam navigation had brought all countries near to one another, it was impossible for one island country in the East to refuse to have intercourse with all other nations in the world. They, therefore agreed (to the Envoy's proposals), and it was decided to establish foreign intercourse and trade, conclude treaties, and generally to revert to the condition of things which existed under the rule of the founder of the line.

This was indeed a great change in the affairs of the country, and people who were contented with the old condition of things became very dissatisfied. Consequently the cry of 'Close the country and expel foreigners' was heard everywhere. The Tycoon's Government, suiting its action to circumstances, took the excellent and suitable decision above-mentioned; but those who were dissatisfied mistook what was done for submission to foreign demands from fear of hostilities. And they slandered (the Tycoon) to the Court, saying that he was neglecting the military duty entrusted to him. The Court did not understand the state of things, and at once agreed to what was suggested, ordering the Tycoon's Government to break off intercourse with foreigners. Consequently many foreign complications occurred, and indescribable inconvenience was caused. With these the Foreign Representatives are well acquainted, so they need not be mentioned here.

We confess with shame that it cannot be said that since foreign intercourse was established by the Tycoon's Government all its measures have been attended with complete success. But we can say this, that ever since the conclusion of foreign treaties those who have advocated the closing of the country, and have been hostile to foreigners, have gradually been suppressed, and that the Government has never swerved from its fixed intention to carry out every clause of the treaties.

That it has been possible to settle the rules for the opening of the country, and carry out all treaty stipulations, is due most certainly to the fact that our present energetic and sagacious Tycoon, who is endowed with heaven-sent intelligence, has filled the post of ruler of Japan in succession to his ancestors. The Foreign Representatives know well what cordial feelings he manifested to them when in the

course of this year he received them in audience in the castle of Ōsaka, what sincere friendship he showed, how careful he was to respect treaty engagements, and how many obstacles, incidental to his duties as Tycoon, were met and overcome before the present position was attained.

The form of administration under which (the Tycoon) has governed the country, holding a rank one below that of the Emperor, is one peculiar to Japan, which is the natural result of circumstances, and has lasted for the last six hundred years. By virtue of the authority thus wielded tranquillity was maintained, but now that relations have been established with the whole world much inconvenience is caused owing to the name under which this intercourse is carried on. Moreover, the fact that at present, men's minds throughout the country are in a state of confusion and are not in harmony, is due chiefly to the same cause. Therefore our enlightened Tycoon, making up his mind of his own accord, has arrived at the momentous decision to restore the administrative authority to the Mikado, and convoking a council of the heads of the great houses, and inquiring fully into the present condition of affairs, to set up a suitable Government, and establish a political constitution which nothing in the future can disturb, and in this way enable the country to hold its own with other nations, and become rich and strong. Of a surety never had such great solicitude for the welfare of a country been shown before.

Matters have thus arrived at the present situation. But it is unnecessary for us to give an assurance that the change will in no way affect unfavourably our relations with foreign countries, and that everything will be arranged quietly and harmoniously as before. There is no reason for anxiety.

All the provisions of the treaties concluded with Foreign Powers have been carried out by the Tycoon, and he has thoroughly recognized the importance of foreign relations. The Council of feudal nobles, great and small, which is shortly to assemble, will, as soon as the circumstances of foreign affairs have been explained to them, all respect what has been done. And in view of the fact that eight or nine in every ten persons have enjoyed the benefits conferred on them by the Tokugawa rule, although there may be some people who are in favour of old institutions, there is no chance of their being able to gain the day. We earnestly trust, therefore, that the Foreign Representatives will support our views with their usual

friendliness, and will in the spirit of the exertions already made by their countries for the prosperity of all concerned look at things as they really are.

We have ventured to undertake this explanation of the past. With regard to other matters, as was stated in our recent letter, we shall communicate with you again as soon as we have heard from Kyōto.

WITHDRAWN

DS881.5

.Y6S7 Straelen, H. V.

AUTHOR

Yoshida Shōin, forerunner
of the Meiji restoration.

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