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Jingū Kōgō *Ema* in Southwestern Japan

Reflections and Anticipations of the *Seikanron*

Debate in the Late Tokugawa and

Early Meiji Period

Abstract

Preliminary investigation suggests that *ema* (votive paintings) featuring a fourth-century legendary empress (Jingū Kōgō) of Japan as their subject were used by local elites in southwestern Japan in the nineteenth century to justify the need for overseas expansion—in particular the need for an invasion of Korea. Jingū Kōgō *ema* exhibit two basic motifs, both of which allude to her alleged invasion of Korea. From *ema* surveys in Yamaguchi Prefecture and Fukuoka Prefecture I have discovered that a geographical and temporal correlation emerges from the distribution of these *ema*. I contend that the prevalence of different motifs in these areas, and the dating suggest that local elites were using Jingū Kōgō *ema* as an iconographic “text” to discuss and comment on the advisability/feasibility of invading Korea (*seikanron*). This spillover of political themes into religious artifacts is an interesting and potentially very fruitful area of study that has received inadequate attention.

Keywords: *ema*—*seikanron*—Jingū Kōgō—folk art—Japanese-Korean relations—*minshūshi*

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JAPANESE-KOREAN RELATIONS have evolved over a long and often contentious history.¹ The record of nearly two thousand years of contact between Japan and Korea includes the introduction of Buddhism into Japan through Korea; the exchange of tribute and trade; repeated raids by pirates; two invasions and occupations of portions of the Korean peninsula (from the fourth to sixth centuries and in the latter part of the sixteenth century);² a major debate by Japanese government officials in the 1870s over whether to invade Korea a third time; and, finally, the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1905 until the restoration of its independence in 1945. The three Japanese incursions or planned incursions into Korea share a number of revealing similarities. First, Japanese history has been characterized by brief periods of foreign contact and influence followed by long periods of isolation; thus it is meaningful that up to 1894 the only foreign invasions undertaken by Japan focused exclusively on the Korean peninsula. These three periods of active Japanese interest and involvement in Korea also resemble one another in their common reliance on the figure of Jingū Kōgō 神功皇后, a legendary empress of Japan, to legitimate the Japanese subjugation of Korea. The appearance of Jingū Kōgō as the instigator and leader of the first expedition in the fourth century, and then later to legitimate Hideyoshi's invasion in the latter part of the sixteenth century are well documented. Less well known is the use of Jingū Kōgō by peasants and local elites to comment on the state of affairs in Japan from the end of the Tokugawa period to the early Meiji period. This essay analyzes the role that Jingū Kōgō³ played in Japanese-Korean relations during this critical period in Japanese history. The material I use for my exploration of the subject are the survey results of *ema* (votive paintings) undertaken in two areas of southwestern Japan. The two predominant motifs that appear on the *ema* and their dating provide insights into local attitudes towards Korea and the perceived need for overseas expansion among the local elites in rural and urban areas in these two prefectures, and also provide a local perspective of international relations during a very tumultuous period of Japanese history.

MINSHŪSHI, FOLKLORE, AND POPULAR CULTURE

Ema were originally paintings of horses offered to shrines and temples by a donor (or donors) who was usually requesting assistance from the gods or thanking them for help previously granted. The oldest extant *ema* date to the eighth century. According to IWAI Hiromi, the subject of the paintings changed sometime during the Muromachi period (1392–1573) from its exclusive focus on horses, which were considered messengers of the gods, to include numerous other motifs—especially scenes from Japanese legend and myth (1974, 40–72).

My use of such material (folk paintings) generated by local elites to comment on their thoughts during the late Tokugawa–early Meiji period might initially appear unusual, but this approach has been successfully used by a group of Japanese historians who write *minshūshi* (people’s history), that is, history that focuses on local elites using materials generated by wealthy peasants and commoners.⁴

An acknowledged leader of the *minshūshi* movement is Irokawa Daikichi, and those who share his perspective such as Kano Masanao and Murakami Shigeyoshi, criticize other Japanese historians for their reliance on foreign historical approaches (e.g., Marxism and modernization theory) in their study of Japanese history. Irokawa feels it is necessary to develop indigenous methods for analyzing Japanese history; he has therefore turned to the work of Yanagita Kunio, the founder of Japanese folklore studies, for inspiration and guidance.⁵ IROKAWA, in one of his major works, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, directly criticizes the great-man theory of history and claims that the “thought and ideas of ordinary people in modern Japan have followed very different routes from those of intellectuals” (1985, 14–15). In focusing on ordinary people, Irokawa wants “to honor the subterranean glimmer and give a just appraisal of the latent powers of Japan and the exceptional talents of its people. That is why [he] begin[s] ... with consideration of the silent world of folklore” (1985, 19). Irokawa’s best known work centers around documents from the late Tokugawa period that he found in an old storehouse in the small village of Fukasawa in present-day Kanagawa Prefecture. From these documents he has reconstructed the lives of a number of local elites who were deeply interested in the political movements of the time. After an initial analysis of these documents, IROKAWA states that three discoveries surprised him most:

that the impact of the Meiji Restoration had reached even such a remote mountain village; ...that the shock caused by the coming of Perry’s black ships had aroused a profound sense of nationalism not only among the national leaders and patriots but even among ordinary peo-

ple at the lower levels of society; [and lastly] the empirical confirmation of the fact that the movement toward a modern consciousness and thought in Japan was advancing steadily deep within mud-mired traditions at the lower levels of society. (1985, 46–47)

Irokawa's observations here have important implications for my discussion in this essay of the Jingū Kōgō *ema* of southwestern Japan, since I similarly maintain that the people in small hamlets and villages were sufficiently concerned about national and international political situations to comment on them in the subjects they chose to have painted on *ema*. My data will suggest that Jingū Kōgō *ema* were a mode of representation that can be viewed as a "text" of a conversation that people in small villages were having among themselves about matters of great import to Japan in the nineteenth century. This essay, therefore, can be seen as not only a contribution to late Tokugawa–early Meiji period history, but also as responding to recent calls in anthropology for more in-depth research on world historical political economy, that is, how international events impinge upon the lives of peasants and commoners in small villages;⁶ and in popular culture circles where related calls have been made "to take popular culture more seriously as a terrain of political and social conflict and a weapon of political mobilization" (MUKERJI and SCHUDSON 1991, 1). My data will also allow me to enter, in a tangential manner, an academic debate that has raged for over thirty years: whether Japan's imperialistic designs on their East Asian neighbors actually began in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and whether these actions were planned in advance or were "a reaction to 'various unexpected happenings'" (OH 1983a, 122).⁷

JINGŪ KŌGŌ AND THE FIRST INVASION OF KOREA

The earliest recorded references to Jingū Kōgō occur in the *Nihon shōki* and the *Kojiki*. Although Jingū Kōgō reportedly lived a long and eventful life, reigning for sixty years, this essay concerns only her expedition to Korea. The story of denial of a divine oracle by her husband, Emperor Chuai, his subsequent death, and Jingū Kōgō's invasion and conquest of Korea appear in both the *Nihon shōki* (ASTON 1972, 221–35) and the *Kojiki* (PHILIPPI 1968, 257–63). I cite from the *Kojiki* version here since it concisely summarizes the events leading up to and including the invasion.

In those days the Empress Okinaga-terasi-pime-no-mikoto⁸ often became divinely possessed.

[It was] at the time when the emperor dwelt at the palace of Kasipi in Tūkusi and was about to attack the land of the Kumaso. The emperor was playing the

cither, and the opo-omi Takeshi-uti-no-sukune abode in the ceremonial place in order to seek the divine will.

Then the empress became divinely possessed and spoke these words of instruction:

“There is a land to the west. Gold and silver, as well as all sorts of eye-dazzling precious treasures, abound in this country. I will now give this country [into your hands].”

Hereupon the emperor replied:

“When one climbs to a high place and looks toward the west, no land is visible. There is only the ocean.”

Saying [that this was] a deceiving deity, he pushed away the cither and sat silent without playing it.

Then the deity, greatly enraged, said:

“You are not to rule this kingdom. Go straight in one direction!”

At this time, the opo-omi Takeshi-uti-no-sukune said:

“This is a dreadful thing. My lord, continue to play the cither!”

Finally, then, he drew the cither to him and began to play reluctantly.

After a while, the sound of the cither stopped. When they raised the lights, they saw that he was dead. (PHILIPPI 1968, 257–58)

Upon the emperor’s death, court priests held a great exorcism, sought the divine will, and presented offerings “to all the heavenly deities and the earthly deities, as well as to all the deities of the mountains and of the rivers and seas” (PHILIPPI 1968, 260). The gods then instructed them how to proceed to Korea.

Then, exactly in accordance with these instructions, they put their army in order and marshalled many ships.

As they were crossing [the sea], all the fish of the sea, the small as well as the large, bore the ships across on their backs.

Then a favorable wind began to blow strongly, and the ships moved along with the waves.

These waves washed the ships ashore in the land of Siragi, [and they came to rest] halfway across the country.

At this time the king of the country, struck with awe, said:

“From now on I will obey the will of the emperor and will become your royal stable-groom. Every year I will arrange the many ships in line, without giving their bottoms time to dry, and without letting their oars and rudders dry; together with heaven and earth, unceasing will I serve.”

In accordance with this, the land of Siragi was designated as the royal stable-groom, and the land of Kudara was designated as the overseas *miyake*.

Then she stood her staff at the gate of the king of Siragi and worshipped the rough spirit of the great deities of Sumi-no-ye, whom she made the tutelary deities of the land. Then she crossed back over [the sea]. (PHILIPPI 1968, 262–63)

This text of Jingū Kōgō's invasion of Korea serves to justify later Japanese incursions into the Korean peninsula. Significantly, much of the material presented in the *Nihon shōki* and the *Kojiki* is considered to be mythical or legendary and not based on historical fact. The stories of Jingū Kōgō are considered largely legend, and therefore controversy surrounds her as to whether she was an empress or a regent, and whether she was even an historical person. Most contemporary scholars agree that an invasion of the Korean peninsula by Jingū Kōgō did not in fact occur,⁹ though one scholar has recently argued that there is a core of historical fact in the myths surrounding Jingū Kōgō (AKIMA 1993). A debate has also raged for a number of years over whether Japan had a colony called Mimana in southern Korea for approximately 200 years during the Yamato period (ca. 300–710). A number of earlier studies¹⁰ supported this thesis of a Japanese colony while present-day scholars,¹¹ based upon detailed archaeological studies in Korea, claim that they have found no evidence to support the claim of a Japanese colony in Korea during the Yamato period.¹² Since this essay focuses on the myths and legends about Jingū Kōgō and their use to legitimate later invasions of Korea, the factual basis of these stories of Jingū Kōgō is not at issue here.

HIDEYOSHI'S INVASION OF KOREA

Japan's first clearly documented invasion of the Korean peninsula did not occur until the late sixteenth century, over a thousand years after Jingū Kōgō's foray, when Toyotomi Hideyoshi organized a large invasionary force. Relations between the two states in the intervening years between Jingū Kōgō's invasion and that of Hideyoshi can be characterized by two major activities: the paying of tribute by Korea to Japan, which over time evolved into a trade relationship; and raids on Korean cities by Japanese pirates. The level and intensity of tribute, trade, and raids waxed and waned throughout this period and depended, to a large extent, on the relative strength of each state.¹³

The idea for an invasion of mainland Asia is attributed to Oda Nobunaga—the first of the three great unifiers of Japan in the latter part of the sixteenth century. In 1582 Nobunaga declared “his intention to subdue China by force of arms once he had made himself ‘absolute master of all the sixty and six reigns of Japan’” (ELISONAS 1991, 266). Unfortunately for Nobunaga, his plans came to naught; he was assassinated by one of his retainers in 1582. The idea of invading the Asian continent did not die with Nobunaga, however, since Hideyoshi, in a letter to Hitotsuyanagi Ichinosuke dated 1585, mentions the conquest and unification of Japan under his rule together with that of China (ELISONAS 1991, 267). Active planning for the invasion could not begin, however, until all of Japan had

been conquered and unified; so it was not until 1591 that plans were laid for an invasion. Negotiations with Korea for safe passage of Japanese troops, so that they could attack China, had failed, so an invasion and subjugation of Korea had to be planned and executed first. The Japanese invaded Korea in 1592 and scored a number of early military successes, but the intervention of Ming China on the side of Korea eventually turned the tide. The resulting conflict dragged on for six and a half years, and the Japanese finally withdrew in 1598 after the death of Hideyoshi.

The justification given by a number of people directly involved in the Hideyoshi invasion is of interest because, despite their diversity of perspective, they concur in their explanation:

...the Japanese participants who wrote accounts of the invasion—men of varied background, from the appropriately named Yoshino Jingozaemon, a samurai of Matsuura, to Shukuro Shungaku, a Zen monk in the retinue of the general Kikkawa Hiroie (1561–1625)—invariably invoked the myth of a primordial conquest of Korea by Japan’s empress Jingu as a historical precedent that justified their venture. (ELISONAS 1991, 265)

As far as I am aware, this is the first time Jingū Kōgō, in a nostalgic look to a golden past of Japanese domination, is used to legitimate an invasion of the Korean peninsula. The precedent was thus established in the sixteenth century, and we will see Jingū Kōgō employed again in the late Tokugawa–early Meiji period for similar purposes.¹⁴

LATE TOKUGAWA–EARLY MEIJI PERIOD

With the death of Hideyoshi, the retreat from Korea, and the establishment of the Tokugawa regime, Japan entered an approximately two-hundred-fifty-year period of relative peace and isolation from the outside world. During this period, Japanese were not allowed to leave the country; and contact and trade with foreigners, mostly Chinese and Dutch, were limited to the port of Nagasaki in southwestern Japan. Direct relations with a foreign country were limited to Korea, which sent twelve embassies to Japan during the Tokugawa period.

Knowledge of the outside world, while scarce, was not entirely lacking during this long period of national seclusion as information was imported through Nagasaki in the form of books and treatises written in Chinese and Dutch.¹⁵ More unpleasant to the authorities, because they could not be controlled and regulated, were the visits and incursions into Japan by foreign fishing, trade, and naval vessels, which increased steadily during the early

nineteenth century.

Internally, Japan was experiencing numerous problems. The early years of the nineteenth century were relatively peaceful and prosperous compared to the misery and dislocation of the disastrous Temmei era (1781–89), but by the beginning of the Tempō era (1830–44), the situation had begun to deteriorate. From 1833 to 1837 the weather was so bad that crop failures as high as eighty percent were reported in many parts of the country, and famine of epic proportions struck Japan. Coupled with this was the spread of various illnesses, among them smallpox, measles, and influenza, which took a heavy toll among the physically weakened populace. Famine and illness led to civil disorder in the Tempō era, which “in the frequency, scale, and violence of its popular protests... came to surpass any previous period in Japanese history” (BOLITHO 1989, 120). Civil disorder reached an explosive peak in 1837 in Osaka when Ōshio Heihachirō, a retired government official, strongly criticized the authorities for their handling of the crises and led an armed rebellion. The uprising was quickly crushed, but not before large sections of Osaka were put to the torch and great quantities of rice destroyed.¹⁶

Along with the civil disorder that rocked the Tokugawa bakufu, the foreign threat also began to loom more ominously. Two of the greatest shocks to the Tokugawa leaders were the Opium War (1839–42) in China and the arrival of Matthew Perry’s black ships in Tokyo Bay in 1853. China’s loss to England in the Opium War came as a great surprise to many Japanese, since England, at that time, was viewed by the Japanese as a second-rate power. England’s quick and complete victory provided many Japanese officials with a view of what the future might hold in store for Japan if drastic changes were not instituted in domestic and foreign policy.¹⁷ The initial fear that the foreign barbarians would demand entry, extra-territorial privileges, and trading rights, as they had in China, escalated into a near panic. In 1853 when Perry’s fleet sailed into Tokyo Bay and forced the Japanese to accept a letter from President Fillmore, it seemed that their worst fears were confirmed. Perry threatened to return the next year for a reply to his demands, and when he did in fact return, with approximately one quarter of the U.S. Navy, bakufu leaders were at a loss as to how to respond. It became clear to many of the leaders, that Japan was going to have to open itself to the world—the question was whether it would be on its own terms or those imposed by an outside force.

SEIKANRON

The cluster of internal and external problems, as well as a host of others, eventually led to the overthrow of the Tokugawa bakufu and the “restoration” of the imperial rule in 1868. Although the Restoration is a complex

topic, I focus here solely on the Korean issue which surfaced in the early 1870s and came to be known as *seikanron*.¹⁸ *Seikanron* became the major foreign relations problem, it caused a split among the men who had spearheaded the Meiji Restoration, and ultimately it led to the last great challenge to the newly formed government—the *shizoku* (samurai) revolts in southwestern Japan. Hilary CONROY has described the severity of the crisis caused by the *seikanron* debate:

The argument split the Restoration leadership, which had hitherto operated as a closely knit group, squarely down the middle. It resulted in assassinations, riots, and rebellions, including a full-scale war (the so-called Satsuma Rebellion). It resulted in the death of several of the leading protagonists, including both the loser of the argument (Saigō Takamori) and the winner (Ōkubo Toshimichi). Indeed, at its height, the pressure of the quarrel reached such intensity that worry over it ruptured a blood vessel in the brain of the Prime Minister, Sanjō Sanetomi, who had desperately tried to find a compromise. (1960, 19)

The leading role in the overthrow of the Tokugawa bakufu was assumed by a group of men, almost all of whom were members of the samurai class from southwestern Japan—predominately men from the Satsuma and Chōshū clans.¹⁹ While these two clans had long been antagonistic toward each other, they managed to overcome their differences and unite to form a new political order. Cooperation among the men in this group, many of whom had very strong personalities and differing opinions on the governing of Japan, could not last forever. Finally, in 1873 the question of how to respond to the deteriorating relations with Korea openly split their ranks.

The Korean government issued an edict banning trade with Japan, and it also refused to establish diplomatic relations with its neighbor to the east, thus precipitating the crisis. The leadership in the Meiji government was split as to how to respond to these perceived insults. One group, headed by Saigō Takamori, wanted to send a diplomatic mission to Korea demanding that trade and diplomatic relations be established—backing up these demands with the threat of war. The other group, the peace party led by Iwakura Tomomi and Ōkubo Toshimichi, both of whom had just returned from a tour of the United States and Europe, opposed Saigō's plan.

Iwakura and Ōkubo, after seeing firsthand the wealth and power of the United States and Europe, argued that Japan must build up its strength prior to embarking on any overseas adventures. In the struggle to determine which course to follow, the peace faction prevailed. As a result, Saigō Takamori and a number of other leaders resigned from the Council of State

and returned to their homes. One of these men, Etō Shimpei, returned to Saga in Kyushu and led the first *shizoku* revolt in 1874, which was “directed specifically against the government’s ‘weak’ policy toward Korea” (MORRIS 1975, 259). This revolt was crushed in two weeks. In the next two and a half years other *shizoku* revolts broke out, almost all in Kyushu, but they were quickly defeated. The last and greatest of the revolts, the Satsuma Rebellion, was led by Saigō Takamori in 1877 and lasted seven months before the government troops finally prevailed.²⁰

Typical elite histories of *seikanron* make no mention of Jingū Kōgō;²¹ rather they focus on individual members of the Council of State and whether they favored or opposed an invasion, specific leaders’ vacillation for or against *seikanron*, and the influence of the Satsuma and Chōshū clans in the debate. One thing, however, is clear: in this very fluid situation, people’s allegiances and ideas changed over time. Hilary CONROY, in his detailed study of this period, claims that all the major participants were

of samurai heritage, all participants in the work of the Restoration, and even on the subject of conquering Korea, many writers have argued, it was to become not so much a question of *whether* but of *when* ... a question of timing. At any rate if we look closely at the attitudes of the key participants early in the dispute, before the final crystallization into pro-conquest and anti-conquest camps, we see that many of them, especially of the latter group, were indefinite or unclear in their attitude. (1960, 19–20 [emphasis in original])

CONROY goes on to argue that the *seikanron* debate was an exercise in Realpolitik, that is, the question was not whether Japan should subjugate Korea, but a question of when it would be feasible at the least possible cost both domestically and internationally (1960, 71–77).

JINGŪ KŌGŌ *EMA*

Accounts of the *seikanron* debate typically focus exclusively on high government officials, in this case the Satsuma-Chōshū oligarchs, who were the power brokers during the early part of the Meiji Restoration. Of equal interest, but almost completely absent from the official histories, are the thoughts and reactions of people in rural Japanese villages, small towns, and cities concerning *seikanron*. One wonders whether people in these areas were aware of this debate and, if so, what their views were of Korea and the international situation.²² Jingū Kōgō *ema* from southwestern Japan provide an interesting preliminary response to this question.²³

Surveys were conducted in the 1980s of the *ema* in Shinto shrines located

in Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu,²⁴ and Shinto shrines located in Yamaguchi Prefecture.²⁵ Both of these surveys provide several pieces of information: the name of the shrine where the *ema* is located, the subject of the painting on the *ema*, and a transcription of all writing still legible on the *ema*, which usually includes the date it was dedicated to the shrine and the name(s) of the donor(s). An analysis and comparison of these elements provide insights into the views of donors toward Korea and the international situation in the nineteenth century. The social status and identity of *ema* donors in the nineteenth century offers clues to understanding their motives and worldviews. From information supplied by the fieldworkers and museums involved in the investigation of these *ema*, it is possible to make some tentative generalizations about the donors.

The decision of whether to donate an *ema* to a shrine in Fukuoka Prefecture often was not made by an individual or group, but resulted from chance. When a group (or individual) decided that it wanted to petition the shrine god for something, members would approach the shrine priest who then performed a ceremony and selected an *omikuji* (fortune) that stated what the group must do for its petition to be granted. Various possibilities ranged from staging a children's sumo tournament, paying for a ballad drama (*jōruri*), or cleaning the shrine, to offering an *ema*. If the *omikuji* called for an *ema*, then the group contacted a professional *ema* painter, chose the subject they wanted painted, and placed an order. Since the vast majority of the shrines surveyed are located in rural farming areas, the overwhelming majority of donors consisted of farmers and to a lesser extent small merchants. A large number of *ema* were donated by *ujichū* or *mura-chū*—terms used to signify a group of farmers in a village—and many of the *ema* petition the gods for such things as good harvests, protection of crops from damage by typhoons and insects, and protection of livestock (usually cows and horses).²⁶

The data from Yamaguchi Prefecture covers the whole prefecture and therefore includes shrines located in small villages, towns, and larger cities. In parallel with the Fukuoka *ema*, we can assume that the *ema* donated to shrines in villages were primarily given by local elites and farmers. *Ema* donated to shrines in towns and larger cities were probably given by groups of commoners in the area, local elites, and in the largest cities occasionally by elites.²⁷

JINGŪ KŌGŌ MOTIFS

Both surveys reveal that the most common subject appearing on *ema* in these areas is Jingū Kōgō; her relative popularity, I would argue, is not accidental. Rather, it is related to the internal crises in Japan and the interna-

tional situation in the nineteenth century. From the Jingū Kōgō *ema* listed in these two surveys, two basic motifs emerge. The first is referred to as “Jingū Kōgō crossing the sea” (*Jingū Kōgō no tokai*) and characteristically depicts a large ship on the right side of the *ema* in which Jingū Kōgō sits surrounded by Japanese warriors who are heavily armed and eagerly anticipating battle; the ship approaches Korea, which is on the left side of the *ema* (see Fig. 1). This motif directly refers to the legends of Jingū Kōgō’s invasion of Korea and presents a very aggressive, bellicose image of both the empress and the Japanese. Japanese intentions are made explicit: a military invasion and subjugation of Korea.

The second motif pictures Jingū Kōgō standing in full military dress, usually under an overarching pine tree, with her advisor Takenouchi no sukune kneeling in front of her holding her infant son Ōjin. This *ema* is usually referred to as “Jingū Kōgō and Takenouchi” (*Jingū Kōgō to Takenouchi*—see Fig. 2). The interpretation of this motif determines its meaning and consequently its function. According to legend, Jingū Kōgō was about to give birth to Ōjin just prior to the invasion of Korea. Realizing this would hamper her military exploits, she placed two stones under her clothes to delay the birth until her return to Japan.²⁸ This second motif therefore depicts Jingū Kōgō following her successful subjugation of Korea and return to Japan. The martial aspects of this *ema* are considerably more subdued than in the previous motif, symbolized here only by Jingū Kōgō’s warrior clothing. Rather than the aggressive tone of the *Jingū Kōgō no tokai ema*, in this one the calmer elements prevail. For example, Takenouchi, who in legend is depicted as a wise counselor to the rulers of Japan for over three hundred years, suggests prudence and restrained diplomacy; Ōjin is an infant and not a threatening figure; and the overarching pine is a well-known symbol in Japan not only of strength over time, but also of the need to have patience and wait.²⁹ These elements all suggest a more moderate, less bellicose image and, by extension, approach to Korea.³⁰

The relative popularity of these two basic motifs and the dates when the *ema* were dedicated exhibit both significant variations and similarities between Fukuoka and Yamaguchi. These differences point to the different views of the “Korean problem” that existed among members of the peasant class and local elites, who may have been anticipating the *seikanron* debate, or may also have been reflecting the thoughts of local and national leaders, in different regions of southwestern Japan. The connection between Jingū Kōgō paintings and the thoughts of peasants and local elites in southwestern Japan in the nineteenth century might at first appear tenuous. It could perhaps be argued that the legend of Jingū Kōgō invading Korea was merely a popular story in the area, which made an interesting subject for *ema*, but

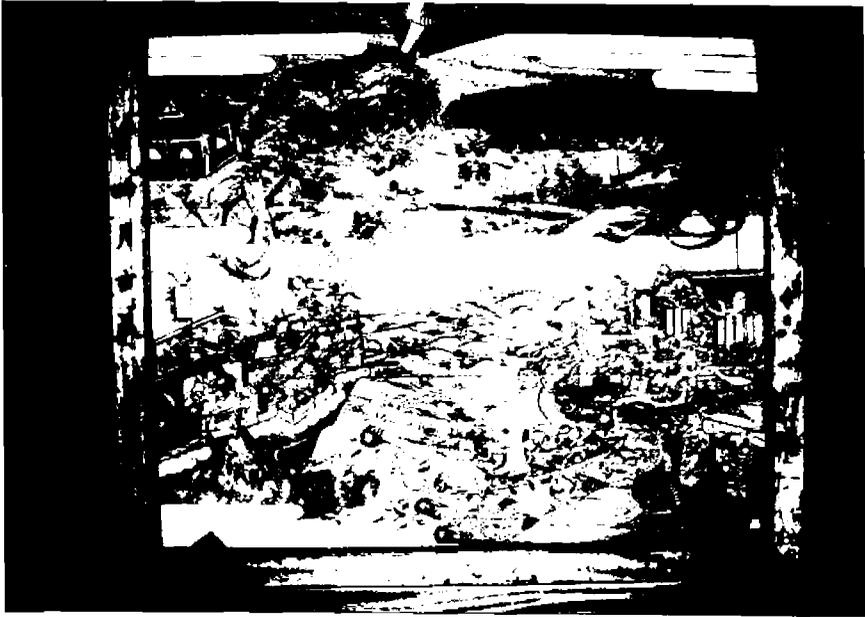


FIGURE 1. An *ema* in which Jingū Kōgō sits in the ship on the right surrounded by Japanese warriors, and approaches Korea on the left.



FIGURE 2. Jingū Kōgō (right) and Takenouchi (left) holding Ōjin.

had no further socio-political ramifications. A close analysis of data on the *ema*, however, suggests that this is not the case.

The *ema* data that I have for Fukuoka represents about seventy percent of the prefecture. There are a total of 249 Jingū Kōgō *ema* (174 of which are dated), making it the most popular *ema* motif. The first point to note is that the *ema* are almost equally divided between the two different motifs: there are 129 of the peaceful motif³¹ and 120 of the bellicose motif, while among the dated *ema* the figures are 86 of the peaceful motif and 88 of the bellicose motif, which illustrates that the motifs were equally popular over an extended period of time (see Table 1).

If the year 1873, the year of the *seikanron* crisis, is taken as the dividing point, we find that 86 of the *ema* were dedicated before and 88 were dedicated after this pivotal year. Again they are equally divided, but of the 86 *ema* made before 1873, 66 are of the bellicose motif and only 20 are of the peaceful motif. That is, over seventy-five percent are of the bellicose motif before 1873. The frequency with which this image of a bellicose invasion of Korea appears, suggests that it was not only a subject of great interest in this area, but, I would also suggest, might have been considered by many people to be a viable solution to some of Japan's problems at the time.

The results for the post-1873 *ema* are exactly the opposite, that is 22 *ema* are of the bellicose motif and 66 are of the peaceful motif, so that now seventy-five percent of the *ema* are peaceful. It is hard to imagine that such a dramatic shift in popularity is due to pure chance. After the defeat of the pro-invasion faction in 1873, the people in villages and hamlets in Fukuoka Prefecture must have realized that an invasion of Korea was not a viable possibility at that time, and they accordingly shifted their thoughts, as did their leaders, to the slower longer range goal of occupying Korea, that is, a less bellicose approach.

I would suggest that during these years prior to 1873, which cover a period of popular unrest and political instability, the people of Kyushu, who had always been much closer geographically to the Asian continent and its trade, military fortune, and travails than people who lived in other parts of Japan, may have considered and even discussed the possibility of invading Korea as a way of averting the disaster of Western imperialistic domination that had befallen China. This exchange of ideas could have been carried on at a number of different levels and in different ways—one of them being a ritualized, religiously-sanctioned pictorial representation of an idealized imperial past when an empress of Japan invaded and subjugated Korea. This becomes even more plausible when one realizes that the small shrines where these *ema* were dedicated and displayed also functioned in the nineteenth century as community centers where meetings to discuss affairs that

Fukuoka Jingū Kōgō <i>ema</i>		
Jingū Kōgō and Takenouchi	(JK fishing)	Jingū Kōgō Crossing the Sea
1802		1738, 1752, 1776 1778, 1785 (2), 1801 1809, 1818, 1821, 1822 1823 (3), 1824, 1827
1836 (2)		1829, 1832, 1836
1842 (2)	1840	1837, 1838 (2), 1841 (2)
1844		1842 (2), 1843 (2), 1844 (2) 1845 (2), 1847 (2), 1848 (2)
1852	1854	1849 (4), 1854, 1855
1856 (4), 1857, 1859		1856 (4), 1858, 1860
1863		1861, 1862 (3), 1863
1867 (2)	1868	1864 (2), 1866 (3), 1867 (4)
1873		1870 (2), 1871, 1873
Seikanron Debate/Crisis (1873)		
Totals: 17 <i>ema</i>	3 <i>ema</i>	66 <i>ema</i>
1875, 1876, 1878 (3)		1878
1879, 1880 (4), 1881 (2)		1879 (2), 1880, 1881
1883 (2), 1884, 1885 (2)		1884, 1885
1886 (2), 1887 (3), 1889		1886, 1887, 1889
1890 (5), 1891, 1893 (2)		1890 (3)
Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895)		
1896 (4), 1897 (4), 1898 (4)		1896 (2)
1903 (2)	1900	1901, 1902 (2), 1903
Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905)		
1904 (2), 1905, 1907 (2)		
1909, 1910, 1912		
1915, 1916, 1919 (3)		1916
1922, 1923, 1930 (2)	1924	1927
1984, 1991		1960
Totals: 64 <i>ema</i>	2 <i>ema</i>	22 <i>ema</i>

TABLE 1. Numbers in brackets after a date indicate the number of *ema* dedicated that year.

Yamaguchi/Chōshū Jingū Kōgō <i>ema</i>		
Jingū Kōgō and Takenouchi	(other)	Jingū Kōgō Crossing the Sea
		1808, 1811, 1817
1839	1839	1838
1850, 1857, 1859	1860	1856 (2)
1867, 1868, 1873	1873	
	Seikanron Debate/Crisis (1873)	
Totals: 7 <i>ema</i>	3 <i>ema</i>	6 <i>ema</i>
1874, 1875, 1876 (2)	1874	
1879, 1880 (2), 1881		
1883 (2), 1885 (2)		
1887 (2), 1888	1889	
1890 (2), 1891, 1892		
	Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895)	
1894, 1897, 1898, 1900		
1903		
	Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905)	
1921		
Totals: 26 <i>ema</i>	2 <i>ema</i>	0 <i>ema</i>

TABLE 2. Numbers in parentheses after a date indicate the number of *ema* dedicated that year.

affected the village were held.³² We also recall that the Jingū Kōgō legend was used by the Japanese two and a half centuries earlier to legitimate an invasion of Korea. These *ema*, therefore, suggest that the idea of invading and subjugating Korea as a way of protecting and strengthening Japan during a time of Western colonial expansion in Asia may have surfaced among people in villages and towns in Kyushu long before the famous debate between Saigō and Ōkubo in the Council of State.³³

The *seikanron* debate that took place in the 1870s pitted individuals and regions against each other, but as Hilary Conroy has noted, all of the participants favored Japan subjugating Korea—the major question for them was merely when and how it would be carried out. The differing opinions on this

complex subject are also reflected in the *ema* of the period, which is clearly illustrated by comparing the Jingū Kōgō *ema* in Yamaguchi Prefecture to those in Fukuoka Prefecture.

As in the Fukuoka *ema* survey, the most common motif among *ema* in Yamaguchi Prefecture is also Jingū Kōgō: the survey yielded 67 Jingū Kōgō *ema* of which 43 are dated.³⁴ These dates reveal a significant difference between Fukuoka and Yamaguchi. Whereas interest in Jingū Kōgō *ema* in Fukuoka was fairly constant throughout the nineteenth century in Yamaguchi, they proliferated at the beginning of the Meiji period, and interest in them waned after 1894 when Japan actually invaded the Asian continent. The later dating, when compared with the Fukuoka Jingū Kōgō *ema*, suggests that in Yamaguchi, interest in the Korean invasion increased significantly at the onset of the debate in the Council of State and began to wane after the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895).

The distribution of the two Jingū Kōgō motifs also varies greatly from that in Fukuoka Prefecture. Of the 67 Jingū Kōgō *ema* in Yamaguchi Prefecture, 50 of them are of “Jingū Kōgō with Takenouchi” and only 6 of “Jingū Kōgō crossing the sea,” the other 11 *ema* either show Jingū Kōgō astride a horse or in council with her advisors, the latter *ema* therefore resembling “Jingū Kōgō and Takenouchi.”³⁵ Thus less than ten percent of the Jingū Kōgō *ema* are of the bellicose type and significantly all six were dedicated in the Edo period, that is, they all appeared before the *seikanron* crisis. I stress these important dates: from 1808 to 1866 (i.e., just before the Meiji Restoration) half of the 12 Jingū Kōgō *ema* dedicated in Yamaguchi Prefecture were of the aggressive *Jingū Kōgō no tokai ema*, whereas after 1856, not one of these aggressive *ema* was dedicated. It is unlikely that this is a chance occurrence; rather, it appears directly related to the political situation at the time. This major difference from the Fukuoka *ema* suggests that in Yamaguchi not only did an interest in invading Korea peak later, but that the people in this area (including both peasants and local elites) may have favored a more diplomatic approach to Japanese relations with Korea, supported by force if necessary. In this context one should remember that the majority of leaders in the Meiji government, who resigned in 1873 over the defeat of *seikanron*, came from Kyushu, and many of these men either led or joined in the *shizoku* revolts, were defeated, and subsequently were executed or committed suicide.

The connection between Jingū Kōgō paintings and the thoughts of peasants and local elites in southwestern Japan in the late Tokugawa–early Meiji period might at first appear tenuous. It could perhaps be argued that the legend of Jingū Kōgō invading Korea was merely a popular story in the area, which made an interesting subject for *ema* but had no further socio-

political ramification. Evidence from other *ema*, however, suggests that this is not the case. In both surveys it was discovered that the number of Jingū Kōgō *ema* decreased after the Russo-Japanese War. In Fukuoka only 19 Jingū Kōgō *ema* were dedicated after 1905, and only three of these are of the bellicose motif. In Yamaguchi, on the other hand, we have seen that the period of greatest interest in Jingū Kōgō *ema* coincides with the beginning of the *seikanron* debate (1870) and ends around the time of the Sino-Japanese War (1894). Only five Jingū Kōgō *ema* were dedicated after the Sino-Japanese War and only one of these after the Russo-Japanese War—and it must be emphasized that all of these *ema* are of the peaceful motif. Of pivotal concern for my argument is that of the 217 dated *ema* from both areas only three of the bellicose motif (1916, 1927, 1960) were dedicated after 1905—that is, after the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the beginning of the annexation of Korea. The need for Jingū Kōgō *ema*, especially of the bellicose type, had ceased to exist at this time since Japan's imperialistic prayers, as it were, had been answered with victories over China and Russia, and the occupation of Korea.

Other *ema* motifs assumed the place of Jingū Kōgō. In Fukuoka and Yamaguchi, *ema* depicting the Sino-Japanese War were dedicated between 1895 and 1904, and *ema* depicting the Russo-Japanese War were dedicated after 1905. The appearance of these *ema* of foreign wars and victories obviate the necessity for Jingū Kōgō *ema* because Japan no longer had to look to a golden imperial past when its power was supreme, but could now look forward to the real possibility of Japanese influence spreading throughout Asia.

CONCLUSION

On 12 November 1990 the Enthronement Ceremony for the emperor was held at the Chowaden Palace in Tokyo. In the months preceding this event the Japanese mass media bombarded the public daily with descriptions of the ceremony and the differences between this one and the previous Enthronement Ceremony, held for Emperor Showa in 1928. One of the major differences between the two ceremonies noted in the mass media was that the 1990 ceremony

[would] not include banners covered with traditional embroidery in the form of mythical fish and birds, which are associated with the legendary Emperor Jinmu's conquering of the nation and the invasion of Korea by Empress Jingu, the wife of Emperor Chuai.

(*The Japan Times*, September 7, 1990, 2)

This reference makes clear Jingū Kōgō's changing role in contemporary

Japanese society.³⁶

Historians views of the past also change and are affected by the present, as Carol Gluck notes when she states that “*minshūshi* scholars agree with the Marxists and the modernists in regarding the Sat-Cho [Satsuma-Chōshū] oligarchy as the archvillains of people’s history in the Meiji period” (1978, 45). Whereas most of the material Irokawa Daikichi used in his studies of people’s rights movements came from small villages in eastern Japan,³⁷ the material for my study comes from southwestern Japan—the area from which the “archvillains” of the Satsuma-Chōshū oligarchy sprang. During the mid-nineteenth century many differing Japanese opinions were voiced on the direction the nation should take. Due to circumstances of geography and history, many of these voices in southwestern Japan favored a militant policy not only internally, but also externally in regard to Japan’s Asian neighbors. Some of these voices from southwestern Japan carried more weight as they belonged to members of the ruling oligarchy, while the silent voices of the common people were occasionally represented in pictorial fashion. The oligarchs’ opinions were not only reflected in, but importantly may have been anticipated in some seemingly insignificant votive paintings that were offered to small rural Shinto shrines.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Misake Yasunori, Ōtsuki Takahiro, and the late Miyata Noboru for their encouragement and help with the research undertaken for this essay. This essay is dedicated to the memory of Miyata *sensei*.

2. The historical veracity of the first invasion and occupation of Korea by Japan is still being contested, though the majority of scholars today argue that it did not occur. In this essay I will write as if the invasion and occupation actually occurred to avoid the awkward use of “alleged invasion” and, more importantly, because during the time period I am studying most Japanese accepted it as historical fact.

3. For studies of Jingū Kōgō, see AKIMA 1993, AOKI 1991, TAKAHASHI 1987, and TSUKAGUCHI 1980.

4. For an overview of the social and intellectual contexts and methods of these scholars, see GLUCK 1978.

5. For in-depth analyses of Yanagita’s life and work, see KAWADA 1993 and MORSE 1990.

6. See, for example, MARCUS and FISCHER 1986.

7. For brief discussions of the two basic positions in this debate, see the essays in WRAY and CONROY 1983 by OII, HARRINGTON, CONROY, OKAMOTO, and DUUS.

8. Another name for Jingū Kōgō.

9. See YOUNG 1958 for a concise discussion of this “invasion.”

10. See, for example, SUEMATSU 1949 and TSUDA 1948–50.

11. Among them are KIM 1984 and NISHITANI 1990.

12. For an interesting, though convoluted, discussion of how this debate over Mimana has been presented to the Japanese public through the mass media, see OBLAS 1995.

13. For a more detailed discussion, see ELISONAS 1991.

14. It is significant to note that many references to Jingū Kōgō appear in histories and *monogatari* (e.g., *Kogoshūi*, *Heike Monogatari*, *Gukanshō*, and Kitabatake Chikafusa's *Jinnō Shōtōki*) between her appearance in the eighth century *Kojiki* and *Nihon shōki* and mention of her in late sixteenth century diaries. See, for example, KATO and HOSHINO 1972 [1926], 39, 41; MCCULLOUGH 1988, 166, 230, 372; BROWN and ISHIDA 1979, 21–22; VARLEY 1980, 91, 101–104, 126, 167, 269.

15. For detailed discussion of this contact with the Chinese and Dutch, see JANSEN 1989 and WAKABAYASHI 1990.

16. For a discussion of Ōshio Heihachirō, see MORRIS 1975, 180–216.

17. For an excellent discussion of Japanese knowledge of and reactions to the Opium War, see WAKABAYASHI 1992.

18. Hilary CONROY, in his detailed analysis of *seikanron*, states that the term “with its Confucian overtones . . . means ‘the argument [Ron] over whether Japan should inflict righteous punishment [for the insult] by conquering Korea [Seikan]’” (1960, 18). There are a number of works that deal with Japanese-Korean relations during this period and more specifically with *seikanron*. See, for example, MAYO 1972, KIM 1980, and CALMAN 1992.

19. Satsuma is present-day Kagoshima Prefecture in Kyushu; and Chōshū is present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture at the southern tip of Honshu.

20. For a detailed discussion of these revolts, see VLASTOS 1989.

21. It is significant to note that Jingū Kōgō did not disappear from the scene between the late-sixteenth century and the early nineteenth century. One of her most prominent appearances is in Chikamatsu's famous play “The Battles of Coxinga,” which was first performed in 1715 in which “the narrator invokes the fourth-century Empress Jingu and her invasion of Korea” (JANSEN 1980, 22–23) when the hero is planning an expedition against the Manchus. See also KEENE 1961, 220, 247.

22. One scholar has stated that “contrary to most accounts of the event [*seikanron*], outside the limited official circles, in this period there was almost no public outcry in Japan for war with Korea” (KIM 1980, 185). As will become clear in what follows, I would argue that while there might not have been a “public outcry” there were certainly discussions about the feasibility and advisability of an invasion of Korea.

23. In this essay I use *ema* survey material from two areas in southwestern Japan. When I began this study I wrote to all of the major art, history, and folklore museums in Kyushu inquiring about *ema* surveys they may have conducted or knew about. The only materials I was able to obtain were from Yamaguchi and Fukuoka prefectures. It would be interesting to compare data from other prefectures in Kyushu if and when this material becomes available.

24. I would like to thank Horiguchi Yukio and Yamamura Atsuhiko of the Chikushino-shiritsu Rekishi Minzoku Shiryōkan for providing me with a copy of their *ema* research on Shinto shrines in Chikushino (No title, 1987, mimeograph copy), and the Fukuoka Kenritsu Bijutsukan for allowing me to use their, as yet unpublished, *ema* survey materials. The staff at the Fukuoka Kenritsu Bijutsukan estimated that the material I was able to peruse represented about seventy percent of the shrines in the prefecture.

25. See YAMAGUCHI-KEN KYŌIKU IINKAI BUNKAKA #4 1986 and YAMAGUCHI-KEN KYŌIKU IINKAI BUNKAKA #7 1990.

26. I am deeply indebted to Horiguchi Yukio and Yamamura Atsuhiko of the Chikushino-shiritsu Rekishi Minzoku Shiryōkan for the above information, and to Iwai Hiromi for a discussion on the general topic of donating an *ema*. The staff of the Yamaguchi Kenritsu Yamaguchi Hakubutsukan agreed that a similar process occurred in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

27. I am indebted to Professor Yukawa Yōji of Yamaguchi University and Yamada Minoru

of the Yamaguchi Prefecture Cultural Department for this information.

28. For this story, see PHILLIPPI 1968, 264–65.

29. For an example of the “customary pun [used in Japanese literature] on *matsu* (to wait) and *matsu* (pine),” see KEENE 1961, 59.

30. Describing these motifs as “peaceful” and “bellicose” may seem problematic since this judgment is being made through the eyes of a twentieth-century American male. During my fieldwork I showed photographs of both motifs to numerous Japanese (both scholars and non-academics) and they overwhelmingly agreed with my designations. Unfortunately, even though they are using Japanese eyes and sensibilities, they are using twentieth-century eyes and sensibilities. I have been unable to find any written source that describes how nineteenth-century Japanese viewed these two motifs; but I feel the dating of the two motifs and my arguments concerning its importance demonstrate the feasibility of this reading.

31. There is actually a third Jingū Kōgō *ema* motif that appears in Fukuoka. It is a painting of Jingū Kōgō standing on the shore fishing. Only five examples of this *ema* were recorded in the data, and since it is a very non-threatening scene I have grouped them with the peaceful motif. These *ema* appear in the central column of Table 1 under the heading “JK fishing.”

32. This interpretation is supported by a modern-day development: next to a number of the shrines in this survey there now stands a modern hamlet meeting hall.

33. In a catalog for an exhibition of *ema* in Miyagi Prefecture it states that certain *ema* motifs, including Jingū Kōgō, were used “to promote national defense about the time the foreign ships came to Japan” (TŌIOKU REKISHI SHIRYŌKAN 1991, 51). It should be clear that I think this statement does not go far enough to explain the importance of Jingū Kōgō *ema*.

34. The popularity of the Jingū Kōgō motif is discussed in YAMAGUCHI-KEN KYŌIKU IINKAI BUNKAKA #4 1986, 6.

35. Since the pictorial representation on these *ema* is of a non-threatening nature, I have included them with the peaceful motif and listed them under “other” in Table 2.

36. It is significant to note that IENAGA Saburo, in his controversial indictment of Japanese imperialism begins his study with “the military foray in the [Korean] peninsula in the fourth century” (1978 [1968], 3–4) and the establishment of Mimana.

37. For a map of Kanagawa Prefecture and the sites where material was located, see IROKAWA 1985, 49. The most important cache of documents came from the village of Fukasawa.

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