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PRO GRADU THESIS

Manufacturing The Meiji Era

**Portrayal of The Meiji Restoration in Kagoshima Museums and
Heritage Sites**

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The passing of the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration was commemorated in various parts of Japan in 2018, causing an upsurge in discussions regarding this historical event. This was especially visible in Kagoshima that was home to many of the leaders of the Meiji Restoration. Promoting itself as “The Home of the Meiji Restoration”, it hoped to capitalize on this anniversary by drawing in visitors to its historical sites and museums related to the Meiji Restoration and the surrounding events.

This work's objective is to find out and discuss what kind of portrayal two of the most popular history museums in Kagoshima, the Museum of the Meiji Restoration and Shōko Shūseikan Museum, offer of these events through their textual and audio-visual materials, and compare them to other narratives on these events and surrounding issues as presented by various sources both within and without Japan. The selection of these comparative sources includes speeches and discussions by Japanese government officials, academical works from both Japan and the West in addition to newspaper articles. This work also investigates motivations that drive Kagoshima to promote these sites and reinforce its connection to the developments surrounding the Meiji Restoration. For this purpose, documents plans from various departments of Kagoshima City has been utilized as well.

As this work will show, the narrative of the two museums is rather conservative, and it is based on the traditional narratives of the Great Man Theory of History, assigning significant importance to the leaders that rose from Kagoshima in the events of the Meiji Restoration. Museums utilize this and other elements to build up national and local pride. It is a narrative that is mutually beneficial to the dominant Liberal Democratic Party and Kagoshima itself. It legitimizes preexisting institutions and power structures promoted by the Liberal Democratic Party, and elevates Kagoshima to a location of national relevance, while it and its museums remain financially dependent on funding from the central government.

Keywords: Japan, Meiji Restoration, Kagoshima, history, museum, narrative, portrayal

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1. Introduction

With the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 in 2018, there was an upsurge of commemorative events, presentations and works being released all across Japan related to the Meiji Restoration. However, there were a few places that were as eager to welcome it than the prefecture and city of Kagoshima. Located in the southern tip of Kyūshū island, Kagoshima boasts itself as *Ishin no Furusato*, Home of the Meiji Restoration. Accordingly, Kagoshima has been vigorously promoting figures like Saigō Takamori and Ōkubo Toshimichi¹ who emerged from Kagoshima during the Meiji Restoration to become its leading figures, as well as promoting early industrial experiments that were committed there to solidify its claim as the Home of the Meiji Restoration, especially through its museums.

Following these events and proceedings as an outside observer in 2018, one could not help but be intrigued by some fundamental questions on this matter. How exactly are the Meiji Restoration and the surrounding events and developments portrayed in Kagoshima's museums? How do they compare to other narratives on these events, both within and without Japan? What could motivate and drive Kagoshima to promote its connection to Meiji Restoration this thoroughly? These are the questions that form the core of this work.

Meiji Restoration is considered one of the key events in Japanese history, and as will be shown in throughout this work, even after 150 years, its nature is still being discussed about and it is still used to promote contemporary political goals in Japan. Therefore, it is more than warranted to discuss about it among researchers of East Asia and Japan today as well.

Focus of this work will be on the museums of Kagoshima, specifically Museum of the Meiji Restoration and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shōko Shūseikan. As museums are one of the methods that can be used to convey and construct history, they are worthy a object of inquiry, especially as there has been no research in English language of these particular museums in question.

¹ In regards to Japanese names, this work will be following the Japanese convention of writing the surname first and forename last.

2. Methods and Key Concepts

In this chapter I shall explain the methods used in this work and theoretical frameworks and conceptions it is based upon. Since the focus is on the narratives presented by Museum of the Meiji Restoration and the Shōko Shūseikan museums on major historical events, it is vital to explain the nature of museums as institutions and the role they serve in society. It is likewise important to explain how I conducted my fieldwork in the said museums so that the readers can better understand how I arrived at these conclusions, and that they may even test these results if they ever head to Kagoshima themselves. That is of course presuming that the museums and their exhibits remain largely unchanged from the way they were in March of 2020, which is when the fieldwork that these interpretations are based on was conducted. I will also explain my historiographical conceptions, as it is important for a reader to understand how the author conceives history in a work that is primarily concerned on how history is being built and presented to the wider public.

2.1. Presentation of Data

The selection of museums for this work was primarily based upon their popularity and relevance. As the Museum of the Meiji Restoration and UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Shōko Shūseikan are seemingly the most popular museums in the City, and were thus included as objects of analysis. This judgment is based upon the inclusion of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration in Kagoshima City's Annual Tourism Statistics of 2018, compiled in 2019, as one of the primary tourist facilities in the city.² Likewise, locations and museums in Kagoshima attached to the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining" UNESCO World Heritage Site were included not only due to the prestige of being attached to such a list, but also because they are outright stated to be one of the cornerstones of Kagoshima City government's strategy to attract visitors to the city by using the appeal of

2 Kagoshima City Official Website, Kagoshima City Tourism Statistics 2018, 20. 2019.

the World Heritage Sites. Also of importance in drawing attention to the prefecture and city were the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration in 2018 and the simultaneous airing of a period drama called *Segodon*³, which portrays the events of Bakumatsu period, Meiji Restoration and the early Meiji era from the viewpoint of Saigō Takamori, while also including other notable figures from Kagoshima who took part in the Meiji Restoration of 1868, in order to promote the locale's particular and rich history and culture to visitors.⁴

Other sites will have a more minor role in this work, such as the Saigō Nanshū Memorial Museum and various other statues and monuments stretching out across the city, such as “History Road” that stretches across former Shitakayamachi, where various key figures of Meiji Restoration from Kagoshima lived during their childhood and youth. These were included due to them being included as suggested destinations in various promotional materials, both in route maps provided for free in Kagoshima City buses and in Kagoshima City's Official Tourism Guide website.⁵ While it would have been wonderful to include all the museums that were visited as part of data gathering more thoroughly, due to space constraints of this work, in addition to the fact that narrative in Kagoshima museums tends to be quite united across the board, they unfortunately have been cut out of this work.

Together these various museums and other historical sites form a rather cohesive narrative, which is part of the reason why this work will approach these museums from thematic angle, rather than going through the museums and their exhibits in order. Not only would the latter approach make for more tedious reading, it would also make it more difficult to convey what these museums and historical sites are striving to convey to the visitors, and what their central messages are. This will also ensure that repetition across and within the museums is minimized, as there are a few points that get stressed repeatedly even within the same museums.

The main focus will be on the textual presentation of the narrative that is

3 Kagoshiman dialect for Saigō-san

4 Kagoshima City Official Website, 3rd Kagoshima City Future Strategy for Tourism, 32, 2017.

5 Kagoshima City Tourism Guide Website, Recommended Course for Getting to Know the World of Segodon, 2020; Kagoshima City Sightseeing Guide Map, 2020.

conveyed through museums' information boards, but audio recordings and audio-visual materials will also be included in this work, albeit in a more minor part as they formed a minority within the exhibitions themselves.

In regards to the texts presented in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration, while most information boards had both English and Japanese titles, the texts were primarily in Japanese, with full English translations being only occasionally present. Shōko Shūseikan Museum on the other hand was almost fully Japanese, with English texts being present in the information boards in the Sengan-en Park next to the museum. Primary focus of this work is on the analysis of the Japanese texts, with differences to English translations being noted in the analysis if present, but such discrepancies are minimal. If there is an English title that was presented by an information board, as was the case with large majority of the items, this English translation is used in the footnotes to refer to that item.

In order to give perspective to the narratives presented in Kagoshima museums, it is necessary to investigate works of history on the Meiji Restoration. For this purpose, this work will include a number of works on the events and developments that surrounded Meiji Restoration both from Western and Japanese authors. These sources have been used and combined to construct an account on the Meiji Restoration that offers background and context to the narratives presented in Kagoshima's museums that have been selected for this work. This selection was made through the combination of availability of the works, credibility of the authors and how the accounts could contribute to form a cohesive picture on the Meiji Restoration.

Selection of documents and plans from various divisions of Kagoshima Prefecture's and City's government and tourism departments have also been included in this work in discussions surrounding Kagoshima's demographics, economic situation and promotional efforts, as these are relevant to the part the museums discussed in this work have in the economy and tourism of Kagoshima. Japanese newspaper sources and official government sources have also been used in this work to bring up points of discussion related to the Meiji Restoration or narratives that are present in these museums.

2.2. Museums as Institutions

This work's understanding on the nature of museums is expressed well by Susan Vogel's quote as used by Erica L. Tucker in her article "Museum Studies" for Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research: "The museum is teaching—expressly as part of an education program and an articulated agenda, but also subtly, almost unconsciously—a system of highly political values expressed not only in the style of presentation but in myriad facets of its operation."⁶ Tucker further clarifies this quote by opening her chapter by explaining how museums act as venues in which knowledge is constructed to provide visitors "a window into social attitudes toward the objects, peoples, events and places on display, as well as how these understandings change over time."⁷ Knowledge is constructed through curators and other related personnel's decisions on what to display and how, in addition to which voices are given authoritative status in labels, signs and audiovisual materials. Even subtle elements such as building's architecture, lighting, sound effects and background music as well as juxtaposition of exhibit items can impact visitors' impressions.⁸

Tucker's and Vogel's views on museums as sites where political messages and values are conveyed to visitors via constructed combination of exhibit items and their placement in addition to labels and audiovisual elements that support them has highly influenced the lens through which these sites are interpreted in this work. In certain regard, museums are not that different from other presentations of history. It has a message that it wants to convey to its visitors, and it strives to make its case through combination of historical materials, artifacts, written text and audiovisual presentations. The distinctive difference to other works of history is in the way this information is presented.

Further credence to this can be seen in Graham Black's characterization of museums that is rather similar to Tucker's vision. To Black museums are institutions that collect, conserve and document material evidence of the past and also make it publicly available. In the process of selecting their exhibition

⁶ Tucker 2014, 341.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

items and constructing expository texts and audiovisual presentations, they essentially determine what is or is not history, at least in the context of their own narratives. They can construct meanings in support of an authorized collective memory, that is frequently linked to a view of linear narrative of triumphal progress, or give greater voice to marginalized groups that in the past have not been represented in history, something that Black identifies as an ongoing conflict in constructing contemporary museum displays.⁹

According to Black, with the rise of centralized nation states in 19th century, control over the official memory of the past, at least seemingly, was placed in the hands of the history profession. They were tasked by the states to promote a triumphal narrative of progress that presented a narrative of unified past that reinforced the conception of common national identity among states' citizens. Therefore, museums have been one of the instruments that states have used in order to build and reinforce a unified collective memory that shows the state in a positive light, and many museums have persisted in this role to this day.¹⁰ This sort of reinforcement of collective memory can take place in local level as well. As Macdonald points out, local history museums and the perspective on the past they provide can be perceived by visitors as a potential resource of constructing one's identity, and they often advertise themselves as allowing local visitors to refine the expression of their local identity to be more 'authentic'.¹¹ Both Black and Macdonald's accounts are very applicable to Kagoshima museums as well, as will be shown in later chapters.

Black also presents that through selective preservation and presentation of materials museums tend to prioritize narratives of the elite, while ignoring the voices of the poor and marginalized people. This effect has partly been born out of the fact that experiences of the elite tend to be recorded more extensively than those of lower or marginalized classes. On the other hand it can also reflect collection policies and interests of forces behind the museums, which often tend to be of the elite ruling class. Through this selection and presentation process, museums create knowledge that is going to be unavoidably biased in

9 Black 2011, 415.

10 Black 2011, 420-421.

11 Macdonald 2013, 224.

some way, assigning different level of authority to different voices even in cases where multiple voices are included, usually leaning towards the interests of the elite.¹² After all, running such institutions is not that cheap, and usually one can find government forces or wealthy private interests behind such museums, as is the case with various museums that are addressed in this work. Like Black points out in quoting Davison, it may be better to consider museums as sites of selective memory rather than collective one¹³.

Black also points out developments in Britain from 1960s onward with the rise of new social history and its critique of traditional museum displays that subsequently has led to a surge of new exhibits and museums that have given increased representation to previously marginalized perspectives along with decreased importance of historical objects and artifacts in museums. In contrast, there has been an increase in the weighted importance of other sources of information such as archives, photos, film and oral histories.¹⁴

In contemporary times museums have grown less reliant on historical objects in their messaging. There are even some museums that have done away with them entirely. This is because faith in objects alone being able to convey knowledge and tell stories has diminished and thus other methods have been adopted to gather and transfer knowledge. Therefore it can be claimed that historical objects and artifacts are not an essential component of museums and their objectives.¹⁵

Instead of storing and displaying historical objects, modern museums are more about providing experiences to their visitors, with historical objects acting as “vehicles for delivering experiences”¹⁶. This is true in Kagoshima museums as well. Although they have not completely done away with historical objects or reconstructions, there are sections in every exhibition that do not have any historical objects or artifacts. Even sections that do are primarily reliant on text or audiovisual elements in conveying meaning behind objects in display. After all, historical objects themselves cannot talk. They need to be given context by

12 Black 2011, 421.

13 Ibid.

14 Black 2011, 421-422.

15 Conn 2010, 7.

16 Bautista 2013, 10.

text or audio to have meaning. This conception has further led me down the path of interpreting museums as experiences that are striving to convey a message primarily through text and audio, with visual elements such as images, video, historical objects and reconstructions being there to evoke a sense of authenticity that aims to make the museum's narrative more convincing.

As Moser points out, the increased focus on the entertainment value of museums has been criticized for moving away from the perceived original purpose of museums, that being the presentation of historical artifacts and establishing connections between the historical objects on display and the visitors. However, she also notes that this design shift reflect that museums are growing increasingly interested in communicating ideas to their visitors through the use of various methods, rather than perceiving their purpose to be collection and display of historical artifacts.¹⁷ In an era in which competition for securing both public and private funding has intensified and with high visitor counts and their important social and educational roles being used to justifying their existence, museums are encouraged to design their exhibits to be engaging and socially relevant to contemporary times. This has been combined with strives to popularize museums in order to attract as many visitors as possible.¹⁸ These market considerations are a necessary component of any museum's functioning, that it cannot ignore if it wants to stay open¹⁹.

Black further stresses that museum visitors must not be considered to be passive recipients who will internalize everything presented and claimed by museums' exhibitions, but instead these presentations will add to their preexisting knowledge and understanding of history, upon which they will extract their own meanings from the exhibitions that may not line up with what curators did not intend.²⁰ All of the authors discussed in this chapter agree on the primacy of visitor experience, and that every single individual visitor has their own experience on the museums and the information they convey may not be significantly determined by institutional intentions. As this work will focus on the curatorial intent, this is something that should be remembered when reading

17 Moser 2010, 29.

18 Bautista 2013, 2.

19 Luke 2002, xxi-xxii.

20 Black 2011, 415.

this work.

While Tucker is writing her view in the context of American museums and Black from the context of British museums, among with all the other accounts in this chapter being written from the viewpoint of western museums, there are nevertheless elements in their views on museums as institutions and challenges that they face can be rather easily applied to museums in general, regardless of which nation or region they are in.

2.3. Researching Museums

Exhibit Analysis as described by Tucker in Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research is the key method I utilized in my fieldwork when visiting Kagoshima's museums and analyzing it afterwards. This method is quite simple. In order to extract meaning from museum exhibits and their labels and juxtaposition, detailed description and analysis of the audio, visual and written elements is necessary. Furthermore, she also recommends to take note of the juxtaposition of items and texts, as that can also effect the way visitors consume the information.²¹

Textual analysis as described by Tucker is the most vital component of this work's analysis, as textual explanations make up a huge majority of all communicative methods that museums in this work used and without them these museums would not be able to tell a cohesive narrative. Indeed, Stephanie Moser has also written that "The subject and message of any exhibition and how it is presented in textual accompaniments to the displays is a critical factor that needs to be considered in museum display analysis."²²

In analyzing texts out on display in museums, attention should be paid to what extent museum in question is relying on written text, what is the authorial intent and whether texts are merely descriptive or whether they offer extensive interpretation.²³ When analyzing labels and text, attention should also be paid to the voice and font that they use, as they can strongly shape how audience

21 Tucker 2014, 343.

22 Moser 2010, 26.

23 Moser 2010, 27.

interacts with it. In Tuckers typification, text can assume many different voices, such as that of a teacher, a preacher or a gossip among many others, and used voices can strongly influence visitors interpretation of the texts and their authority.²⁴

Additionally, taking a note of the level of language used is also important, as it can reflect the intended audience of any piece of text²⁵. This is especially important and noticeable in Japanese, as extensive presence of furigana can indicate that a certain piece in the exhibit is intended to be directed at or to be comprehended by younger visitors as well, while complete absence of furigana could indicate the opposite. In the case of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration, there is extensive furigana on most texts, which would indicate that they are very much intended to be understood by younger visitors as well. This is very helpful for foreigners with some level of Japanese skills as well, as this author can attest.

Taking note of the order and style that exhibits are presented in is also important. If the exhibition is presents itself in chronological order, visitors can be encouraged to interpret the exhibitions more as narratives of rise and fall of civilizations or as tales of progress towards a better future or as dark tales that advance towards ever greater tragedies and horrors.²⁶ Witcomb mentions that this type of chronological way of presentation has been criticized, as they cast the visitors into passive roles, as actors that do not have much agency in the process beyond being receivers for the information and narrative that the museums strive to convey²⁷. As museums in Kagoshima primarily follow this chronological presentation style with minor deviations to it in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration, it is important to cover this more in detail. Witcomb says that there have been two major critiques that have been launched towards linear presentation style.

First is an ideological critique that has been primarily presented from the academia's point of view, is that such a strong linear narrative style leaves almost no space for alternative narratives, and therefore such style tends to tie

24 Tucker 2014, 343.

25 Ibid.

26 Moser 2010, 26.

27 Witcomb 2003, 128.

museums into their traditional roles of supporting imperialism, colonialism and nation-building. This line of criticism has mostly been presented by representatives of New Museology, who have argued that museums utilizing strong narratives with linear and sequential perspectives that require visitors to take a strictly determined line through the exhibit tend to lean towards conservative ideologies, while more thematically organized weaker narratives that allow for interpretative freedom for visitors tend to lean politically towards progressive positions.²⁸ This viewpoint recognizes that exhibit design matters, while also underlining the political impact that museums can have, and it is a great tool in contextualizing types of narratives one can find in various museums.

Second critique towards chronological presentation style, which has emerged primarily from within museums' themselves, is that these types of linear narratives tend to be authoritative, and this risks alienating visitors thus making them less engaged. There have been efforts to fix this by making the museums more accessible not only through exhibit design, but also by introducing new media technologies in order to engage and outright entertain the visitors by alternating between various forms of presentation.²⁹ It should be noted however, that new media forms can just as easily be used to reinforce a traditional type of narrative, as can be seen in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration. This was noted by Witcomb as well, as he noted that if new museology's criticism of strong linear narratives being the problem hold true, it cannot be solved by mere adoption of multimedia and interactive elements³⁰.

Thus attention should also be paid to interactive elements as well³¹, but this is where I ran into a slight problem particular to the unusual conditions in Japan during the spring of 2020. As this fieldwork took place during the beginning stages of COVID-19 pandemic in Japan, certain precautions had already been taken by museums in Kagoshima as well, with most museums having disabled many interactive exhibitions that required touching various surfaces or buttons. Therefore many of them could not be accounted for in the

28 Witcomb 2003, 128-129.

29 Witcomb 2003, 129.

30 Witcomb 2003, 130.

31 Tucker 2014, 343; Witcomb 2003, 129.

data

However, these interactive items form only a small minority of the exhibitions, and in the case of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration such interactive elements were still in use. In this museum, only the “Restoration Experience Hall” portion of the exhibit that includes a presentation of a movie titled “Satsuma Students, To The West” and a play using animatronic puppets called “The Road to Restoration” were closed due to the pandemic. While it is regrettable that I could not analyze all of the elements present in the museums, I believe this work is still able to give a representative and faithful picture of these museums.

It is important to consider motives behind presentation of selected exhibits and what museums would want their visitors to learn from the exhibits. In order to extract the motivations and intellectual and political goals of any exhibition, it is vital to pay attention to all the details available³², but these objectives can also quite often be apparent already from texts alone, or even from museums’ mission statements. Therefor this work will also take into consideration the funding and ownership behind these museums based on the information available from public sources in order to present plausible reasons for the types of narratives they present.

2.4. Identity

As identity construction in Kagoshima through its local museums will be one of the themes of this work, it is necessary to address what is meant with identity. According to Vinogles, Schwartz and Luyckx, the most simple and universal definition that can be provided, is that identity fundamentally “involves people’s explicit and implicit responses to the question ‘Who are you?’”³³

This is a more complicated question than one might initially consider, as identity can refer to the self-definition of a single individual, which itself can contain multiple elements such based on for example on one’s occupation,

32 Moser 2010, 23-24.

33 Vinogles & al. 2011, 2.

hobby or nationality among numerous other elements. In addition to this, identity could also refer to self-definitions of social groups, both small and large ranging from an identity of a family to the entire nation. Thus the question of identity is not necessarily contained to one's perception of self both as an individual and part of wider social groups, but also "who you act as being' in interpersonal and intergroup interactions."³⁴

Existing approaches often approach identity from three different viewpoints, those being individual, relational and collective. On individual level, identity consists of individual person's self-definition and individual's role in creating their own identity is emphasized. This may consist of one's personal goals, values believes and one's self-evaluation.³⁵

Relational identity refers to conceptions of one's identities in relation to other people. These include for example one's identity as a child, parent, co-worker, boss, student or teacher. Common emphasis within this perspective is that identities cannot be established in a vacuum, and that individual identities "need to be recognized by a social audience if they are to be secure."³⁶

Collective identity refers to beliefs and attitudes one adopts as a result of identifying with various social groups, both small and large. This approach focuses on how inter-group contexts role in shaping individuals' understanding of themselves, and how they can make people view themselves as group members instead of individuals.³⁷ This chapter's focus will be on this collective level, and in the ways Kagoshima museums strive to shape visitors' understanding of Kagoshima, and thus how people both from within or outside the prefecture conceive Kagoshima as an identifier. The topic of identity will be delved into deeper at its respective chapter.

34 Vinogles & al. 2011, 2.

35 Vinogles & al. 2011, 3.

36 Vinogles & al. 2011, 3.

37 Vinogles & al. 2011, 3-4.

2.5. Historiography

Since this work is going to deal with narratives on history both in Kagoshima museums and wider Japanese society, it is necessary to explain upon what kind of conceptions on history this work is based upon and what other theories and historiographical concepts are presented in this work.

When talking about the question of what is history, it is very fitting to start from the quite aptly named Edward Carr's *What is History*. Carr was highly critical of the view on history that saw the central task of history and historians to be, in words of Leopold von Ranke, to "show how things really were." According to this view of history, historian's work is essentially that of a collector of facts who assembles a collection of facts from various available documents and then edits them together. These collected facts need to be free of bias and interpretation so that strong bedrock of facts can be formed from them.³⁸ This type of history writing that dominated the craft from the times of antiquity all the way to the beginning of the 20th century is described by Iggers to pursue the reconstruction of a real past through three basic assumptions: First is the acceptance of theory of truth that believes history to "portray people who really existed and actions that took place". Second is the presupposition that actions by past actors are intentional and that it is up to the historians to discover what these intentions were in order to construct a narrative. Third assumption is the centrality of constructing a temporal sequence of events in which each event follows one another in a coherent manner. To summarize, the three key assumption were that of reality, intentionality and temporal sequence.³⁹

This view that was prevalent among historians of the 19th and early 20th century has persisted among the public as the common sense view on what history is; a collection of objective, ascertained facts⁴⁰. Carr argues that this view of history is insufficient, as it ignores how selectively facts on history are formed. Historians, or in fact anyone writing a work of history based on materials about past events, are ultimately the ones who give facts meaning

38 Carr 1987, 8-9.

39 Iggers, 2012, 3-4.

40 Carr 1987, 8-9.

through their subjective selections and interpretations⁴¹.

In the end, there are so many events in the past that vast majority of them will be mostly ignored, and it is the events that are perceived to be of significance that are picked to become facts of history, and these selections are largely subjective and based on individual judgments and preferences of the interpreter. To Carr, the very thought that a corpus of objective historical facts can exist free of interpretation is impossible, as the very beginning steps of the fact selection process are influenced by subjective preferences and interpretations on what events are important or not.⁴²

Even the documents and materials that these facts are gathered from are affected by the subjectivity and judgments of their authors. Like those interpreting their writings or recordings on events, the producers of these primary materials likewise recorded facts that they perceived to be important to them or the society.⁴³

An excellent allegory of what this selective choice of materials results in and why it is done is provided by John L. Gaddis, who likens the works of history and the process of making them to making maps. Replicating all the minute details of any particular area or landscape with its roads, natural features, buildings and topography would not only require an immense effort, it would also make such a map incomprehensibly complicated to its potential users. To avoid this excess overflow of information, maps are therefore made for specific purposes with narrow focus, such as a map depicting the highway network of a nation with only certain large cities being included on the map. Certain exclusions from these maps have to be made in order to make them intelligible, albeit limited representations of the landscape they endeavor to depict.⁴⁴

Unavoidably, this also means that any work of history will never be completely neutral, objective or value free. They will always hold a set of values that reflect the morals and concepts that the author has, both of which are tied to their time, personal background and society. Author's values will inevitably

41 Carr 1987, 11-12.

42 Ibid.

43 Carr 1987, 16.

44 Gaddis 2004, 31-34.

make their way into one's interpretations in some way or the other, even if one were to carefully keep oneself in check.⁴⁵ Just like a book, museums also from their own narratives, crafted by their respective authors and curators, and thus this work applies Carr's claim of the impossibility of complete detachment of one's values from one's work to be valid for not just for literary works, but for museums as well.

Great Men Theory and Progressive History

As Kagoshima museums rely heavily on a narrative that is known as the Great Men Theory, it is necessary to cover what it is in this part as well. This is a theory that was especially popular among historians in the 19th century, but it has persisted in the modern world, especially in various popularized presentations of history. This is largely based on the aforementioned Rankean conception of history, that focuses its pursuit of finding objective history to the records written by and of the "great men", few exceptional individuals that moved the wheels of history through their talents and leadership. New social sciences that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century has been particularly critical of this narrow focus on few individuals active in the world of politics, as it tends to neglect the broader contexts within which these individuals operated, thus also ignoring the political and social influence of the masses.⁴⁶

History writing focusing on great men tends to neglect wider social and historical trends due to the excessive focus on individuals and the particular. Rankean historiography rarely strives to explain societal changes through laws or theories, instead insisting that historians' role is to understand, not to explain. These critiques spearheaded by new social sciences have managed to broaden the scope of what is considered to be acceptable topics for historical research and representation, widening its perspective from the world of politics and great men to wider society and broader segments of the population, thus making it possible to reach deeper understanding of the development of human

45 Carr 1987, 107; 120; 130-131.

46 Iggers 2012, 3-4.

societies.⁴⁷

The focus on the world of politics and actions of a few great men that are presented as larger than life figures whose actions changed the course of history that comes at the expense of clouding wider social changes and their impact on people's lives still persists in many works and representations of history, as is the case in the various museums of Kagoshima, as future chapters will show.

In accordance with Rankean historiography, many historians likewise tended to and still do believe that history is operating under what Iggers calls a notion of modernization or progressive rationalization, that gives history coherence.⁴⁸ One example of this type of attitude is shown by Progressive Historians that first emerged in the early 20th century America but spread out from there first to Britain and then rest of the world as well, who held firm assumption that history was headed towards a certain course, that of ever greater progress. While the term "progressive" has quite a different connotation today, many of these progressive historians in the United States generally held values and conception that saw their own civilization as superior to all others, a notion that lent itself well to justifying imperialism. While they were not seeking to discover specific laws, they generally held the belief that the world as a whole was heading towards ever greater democracy and civilization, that civilization of course being the Western one.⁴⁹

The reason as to why this Anglo-American dominated school of historiography is relevant to Kagoshima museums is that narratives presented in them leans itself heavily towards this type of narrative of progress in their representation of the Meiji Restoration. Its various processes are dominantly explained as progress towards ever greater technological achievements, growing national power and better forms of government, type of narrative that seems to be heavily influenced by progressive history. Concrete examples of this narrative will be presented in future chapters themselves.

47 Donnelly & Norton 2011, 40-41; Iggers, 2012, 4.

48 Iggers, 2012, 4.

49 Iggers, 2012, 34-35.

3. Narratives of The Meiji Restoration

Before advancing to the narratives that are presented by Kagoshima's museums, it is essential to contextualize them to the wider frame of Western and Japanese historiography on the topic. For that purpose, this chapter will offer a brief explanation of the historical events and processes that led to the Meiji Restoration and the events of the early Meiji Era through Western and Japanese history writing. In regards to Japanese works, focus will be primarily on recent publications that have been released in recent years around the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration in order to give an up to date image of perceptions that are held towards it and its legacy in contemporary Japan, within the limitations already covered in previous chapter.

3.1. Background to the Meiji Restoration

Leading up to the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan had been ruled by the Tokugawa shoguns, or *bakufu*, since the beginning of the 17th century after their victory over their opposition in the decisive Sekigahara campaign, ending following a century long period of constant internal warfare known as the warring states period.⁵⁰ Their rule restored stability to Japan that lasted for around 250 years and initially oversaw a century of socioeconomic growth⁵¹, while following a policy of isolationism called *sakoku* between 1639 and 1853, during which Tokugawa regime strove to isolate Japan as much as possible from the rest of the world, reducing its trade and contact with the outside world to minimum ostensibly in order to stabilize the new shogunate and to combat Christian and European influence in Japan. Tokugawa shogunate's *sakoku* policy denied Japanese the permission to go abroad, refused entry of Catholics to Japan and decreed that foreign trade and diplomatic contacts were to be conducted through Nagasaki alone. This policy is quite widely perceived as a response to the Shimabara rebellion of 1637-1638, which was primarily

50 Totman, 2013, 203-219.

51 Totman, 2013, 236.

supported by Christians, and the persisting perception of Christianity as a destabilizing element.⁵² Additionally, the Portuguese were suspected of having supported the rebellion, thus driving the Tokugawa shogunate towards the decision to close Japan from the outside world⁵³.

While Tokugawa Japan initially prospered these fortunate times did not last. From the beginning of the 18th century Japan witnessed an end to the long period of sustained economic growth that it had experienced for four centuries, something that had not been broken even by the warring states period. This cessation of growth was followed by a period of stagnation in terms of population and agricultural growth that lasted all the way to the end of the Tokugawa shogunate.⁵⁴

This period of stagnation was exacerbated by Japan's isolation, which had only deepened as Japan entered the 19th century. Despite the *sakoku* policy, limited trade and flow of information from the outside world remained, including books on western sciences imported primarily through the Dutch trading station in Nagasaki, which allowed the study of Western sciences and societies to continue in some capacity⁵⁵. In addition to this, limited trade connections with China were also maintained through Nagasaki port, along with some more illicit routes through Tsushima and the Ryūkyū islands. Nevertheless commercial trade with the rest of the world nevertheless dwindled as Tokugawa reign continued, with Japan's internal markets had become largely self sustaining albeit stagnant.⁵⁶

At the same time, 19th century was also the period when various great powers of the western world began to properly expand their spheres of influence and colonial empires towards East Asia. Japan started to witness increasing number of encounters and incidents with the Russian Empire in the north, and with the British Empire and the United States from the south. Early encounters with Russia in the first decade of the 19th century were not that amicable, as the unclear boundaries between Russia and Japan in the Kuril

52 Simonini 2016 324-325.

53 Meyer 2009, 106.

54 Totman 2013, 252-253.

55 Jansen 2000, 257

56 Meyer 2009, 106.

Islands and Sakhalin island led to tensions between the two parties, including few violent alterations. This made Japanese authorities all the more vigilant and suspicious of the Western powers⁵⁷

Next big shock came in the form of the First Opium War between the United Kingdom and the Qing Empire in 1839-1842⁵⁸. This war ended in a resounding British victory and in the subsequent treaty of Nanking in 1842, China was forced to open itself to foreign trade on the conditions forced upon it by the British, entering into what is called a treaty port system not just with the United Kingdom, but with all the other major Western countries. Thus the privileges Britain secured for itself in 1842, like legal extraterritoriality and free trade access, were extended to all the other major Western nations.⁵⁹

Defeat of the traditional regional hegemon of the Qing Empire came as a shock to the Japanese elite. If the mighty Chinese Empire could not stand militarily against a Western great power, what hope could Japan have against such an overwhelming might? This gave birth to concrete fears that western powers may come for Japan next, especially so after Dutch report on the outcome of the war delivered to the capital Edo in 1842 warned that the British were preparing to make similar demands to Japan as they had to China.⁶⁰

Efforts were commenced to construct coastal defenses in various domains in different parts of Japan along with local experiments on western military technology, with hopes that through these improved defensive measures Japan could dissuade western powers from interfering with Japan. Preservation of *sakoku* policy was after all perceived to be vital for both the preservation of social order and the Tokugawa power.⁶¹ What should be noted for future reference is that these preparations and experimental measures took place in various domains in Japan, not just in Satsuma domain and its capital Kagoshima, which is a perspective that can be lost in Kagoshima's museums that have a very local focus.

57 Jansen 2000, 258, 260.

58 Jansen 2000, 270.

59 Ibid.

60 Totman, 2013, 288.

61 Totman, 2013, 288-289.

Commodore Perry's Arrival and Internal Dissent

Although Japan's markets were meager enough to not catch British interest, Japan's geographical position drew the interest of United States towards it for numerous reasons. One was the desire to secure good treatment and repatriation of shipwrecked American sailors. Likewise, America was also interested in gaining access to the Chinese markets, and as the United States had recently expanded to the Pacific coast, its interest towards the other side of the Pacific naturally grew as well. As Britain's victory in the First Opium War had opened up the doors to China for Western powers, United States was now also in the position to reap the benefits from the lucrative China trade. In order to reach the Chinese markets across the wide Pacific Ocean, securing coaling stations for American vessels across the Pacific was necessary, and for this purpose, Japan was well positioned on the sea route between United States' West Coast and China.⁶²

While Captain Jame's Biddle's expedition of 1846 did not achieve any results, expedition of 1853 led by Commodore Matthew Perry was more successful, as his expedition was more thoroughly prepared, basing his approach to Biddle's unsuccessful expedition of 1846 and translated Dutch writings on Japan. Based on these materials, Perry came to a conclusion that following a subservient approach that the Dutch and Biddle had shown would not work and he was resolved to, in his own words "demand as a right, not as a favor, those acts of courtesy which are due from one civilized nation to another." These acts of courtesy Perry was referring to were a guarantee for the protection of Western sailors and property, obtaining the rights for foreign vessels to enter one or more of Japanese ports for trade and the right to establish a coaling station in Japan.⁶³

In what appeared to be an intentional snub to the *bakufu* desire to conduct foreign diplomacy through Nagasaki, Perry's fleet set sail directly for Edo Bay, arriving there on July 2 1853. From the very beginning of the negotiations, Perry assumed a rather threatening tone. After Perry's issued his

62 Jansen 2000, 275.

63 Jansen 2000, 275-276.

demand to have the letter he was carrying from the president to be delivered to the Emperor, the Japanese side responded that he should conduct his affairs through Nagasaki as was standard. Perry did not back down however, sending a separate letter accompanied by white flags to the Japanese authorities, with the message explaining that if his demands were not met, there would be war. As Japan would certainly lose this war, they would be needing the white flags in order to indicate their surrender in accordance with the Western way.⁶⁴

While such threatening methods had not worked in the past, with the memory of the Opium War still fresh in the minds of the Japanese leadership, they relented and agreed to receive the letter Perry was carrying to the Emperor, and eventually they were also forced to relent to the American demands. After these one sided negotiations a treaty was signed, opening ports of Shimoda on Edo Bay and Hakodate in Hokkaido to American and other foreign ships, through which western sailors could be repatriated and where they could resupply. Japan also granted a most favored nation position to United States, ensuring that Americans would gain same rights that Japan were to grant to any other government. British and Russians came soon after Perry's mission to form similar treaties.⁶⁵

Commodore Perry's arrival and the demands he presented proved to be a decisive turning point in Japan's internal affairs as well, as this sudden foreign pressure and capitulation to it also meant that the piled up domestic discontent that the Tokugawa shogunate had managed to keep suppressed up until that point became unmanageable, with anti-Tokugawa opposition starting to gather around the issue of Japan opening itself up to foreigners and criticizing the concessions that the *bakufu* had made. By the 1850s there were plenty of forces in Japan that could be easily motivated to mobilize against the Tokugawas. For example, there was discontent among the peasants, as even though there had been advances in agriculture, the profits from the fields flowed almost exclusively to few rich landowners and large farmers, rousing discontent among the peasants.⁶⁶

64 Jansen 2000, 277; Sacki 2012, 19.

65 Jansen 2000, 278-279; Totman 2013, 289.

66 Stalker 2018, 210.

In addition to the peasants, there was also widespread dissatisfaction among the supposed elite of the Tokugawa Japan, the samurai. This was mostly due to the commercialization and growth of the economy in the cities, through which the supposedly lowest class within the Tokugawa Japan's social hierarchy, the merchants, were able to reap huge profits and live quite comfortably, while many of the samurai who were still solely dependent on stagnant stipends were unable to cover even for bare life necessities. Many samurai families had to rely on side activities for extra income or outright loans from merchants which left many families deeply indebted and embittered. Even though they were supposed to be part of the elite, lower ranking samurai were often just as poor as the poor peasants. This was something that caused deep resentment among the samurai class.⁶⁷

Likewise, there were numerous *daimyō* who had grounds to bear grudges towards the Tokugawa *bakufu* even before their capitulation to Perry's terms. Among these were numerous so called *tozama daimiyōs*, who were descendants of families that either opposed Tokugawa Iyasu in the Sekigahara campaign of 1600 that solidified his and Tokugawa clan's rule over Japan, or whom switched sides only during or after the decisive Battle of Sekigahara. While some of these *tozama daimiyōs* had large and wealthy domains, they were located in the peripheries far away from the capital. They were also completely cut out from any government positions in Edo. These positions were reserved for the so called *fudai daimiyō* families, who were the descendants of the first Tokugawa shogun's, Tokugawa Iyasu's inner circle members who had fought for him throughout the Sekigahara campaign.⁶⁸

As the shogun at the time of Perry's arrival, Tokugawa Iesada, did not take active part in the decision making⁶⁹, the main responsibility fell to the shoulders of senior councilor of the Council of Elders at the time of Perry's arrival, Abe Masahiro. He was aware of the potential threat the *tozama daimiyō* could cause if they witnessed a moment of weakness in Tokugawa order. Therefore he had tried to co-opt the *tozama daimiyō* by involving them for the

⁶⁷ Stalker 2018, 210.

⁶⁸ Totman 2013, 221; Clements 2017, 149.

⁶⁹ Jansen 2000, 282.

first time in national level decision making. He had started these maneuvers already prior to Perry's arrival in 1840s and early 1850s, consulting them to an extent that had not been previously seen before in Tokugawa Japan. However, his bridge building and consensus seeking approach backfired, as his actions set a precedent of consultation and discussion on national level issues among all *daimyō*, which only increased the demands from *tozama daimyō* to have a greater say in national level politics. Likewise, as he also had put the question on how to respond to Perry's demands up to debate between the *daimyō*, he also inadvertently ended up strengthening the discord that this divisive question created, as there was no consensus to be found on this issue.⁷⁰ After Abe's death in 1857, the turnover speed of the office of senior councilor's seat he held would accelerate, reflecting the growing instability of the Tokugawa order⁷¹.

In short, by the time of Perry's arrival, there already was a large internal opposition in Japan that the Tokugawa regime had managed to keep suppressed up until this point, but with the external shocks added into the equation and the avenue of critique they opened up, the house of cards that was the Tokugawa *bakufu* came tumbling down just a little over decade after it had agreed to Perry's demands.

3.2. Bakumatsu Period and The Meiji Restoration

The 15 year long period between Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853 and the Meiji Restoration of 1868 is known as the Bakumatsu period. If this term were to be literally translated, it would mean "end of the bakufu"⁷², which is a very concise description of this era's events. This is an extremely complicated period with shifting allegiances and political movements with different objectives that eventually led to the Meiji Restoration, which itself has many contending views questioning the motives that drove the various actors and factions that were a part of it, and whether it truly was justified, or whether it actually

⁷⁰ Sakata & Hall 1956, 40-41.

⁷¹ Jansen 2000, 279.

⁷² The kanji for this word are 幕末, 幕 being an abbreviation from the first character *baku* word 幕府, *bakufu*, referring to the shogun's government, and *matsu* 末 stands for an end.

constituted that large of a change.

The initial agreement with Perry was soon followed by a much broader Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1858, which finally opened Japan fully for trade. This treaty required Japan to open up additional ports for trade, along with demands for expanded travel rights and extraterritoriality.⁷³

Seeing no way for Japan to resist these demands, Abe's successor Hotta Masayoshi agreed to sign this treaty. However, in an unprecedented event under the Tokugawa shogunate he faced opposition from the Imperial Court, that initially refused to grant the treaty its sanction. This was in part due to lobbying efforts of the government officials and *daimyō* who opposed it, primarily led by *fudai daimyō* and lord of Mito domain Tokugawa Nariaki, and in part due to the court nobles and Emperor Kōmei's reservations towards making any concessions to the Western powers. Faced with this opposition, Hotta resigned from his post, passing the responsibility to Ii Naosuke. Ii decided to ignore the Court's opposition, and went forward with enacting the treaty spite of the opposition.⁷⁴

Ii Naosuke saw this treaty as necessary evil that Japan had to abide by while it adopted Western military advances in order to gather the strength necessary to oppose the Western powers.⁷⁵ To reinforce the weakened *bakufu* rule, Ii embarked on series of purges directed at the nascent anti-foreign and anti-treaty movement that had been empowered by *sonnō jōi* activists and ideologues in addition to the Imperial Court's opposition to the concessions. As expressed by the translation of their rallying call and core ideal of *sonnō jōi*, "revere the emperor, expel the barbarians", they publicly based their opposition to the foreign presence in Japan to their reverence towards the emperor's desires. Due to *bakufu* being the organ that had made concessions to the western powers, this movement soon turned into a rallying point for anti-bakufu forces.⁷⁶

Purges committed by Ii Naosuke did not manage to stifle dissent for long, as many samurai from Mito were furious over the fact that Ii had not only placed

73 Jansen 2000, 279; Totman 2013, 289.

74 McNally 2016, 73. 76; Jansen 200, 283-285.

75 Jansen 2000, 281-282.

76 McNally 2016. 75-76.

their lord Tokugawa Nariaki under house arrest as part of his purges, but that he had also blatantly ignored the emperor's will. Thus in 1860, a small group of Mito samurai assassinated Ii on his way to Chidoya Castle, the shogun's official residence. The success of this blatant attack launched a decade of instability, through which the external and internal weakness of the Tokugawa shogunate became increasingly apparent.⁷⁷

After Ii's assassination, *bakufu* leadership grew increasingly fragile, which allowed many court nobles and *tozama* domain officials, such as those from Chōshū and Satsuma, to gain greater prominence in national affairs.⁷⁸ Likewise, the direct involvement of the Imperial Court in the decision making through its protest, and then the assassination of Ii Naosuke both represented a decisive break with the unwritten rules of conducting politics in Tokugawa Japan. They opened the flood gates to actors soliciting for favor and involvement of the Imperial Court along with normalizing violent activism to those with grievances towards the status quo.⁷⁹

Especially direct action, encouraged by Ii's assassination and nativist sentiments became increasingly common among lower ranking samurai. They launched attacks against foreigners and *bakufu* government officials that had allowed them to enter Japan with increasing ferocity, thus decisively shifting the nature of the political conflict. In early 1860s *bakufu* officials started to see the actions of these activists as more threatening to their power than the Westerners, leading to crackdowns against these activists across Japan.⁸⁰

Despite the attempted suppression of these activists, there was no more return to prior state of affairs. Incidents with Westerners caused by the activists' actions and Imperial Court's encouragement of those actions increased in number, culminating in an imperial order to expel the barbarians issued by the Imperial Court in 1863, resulting in large scale attacks against westerners and their property in Japan. In response, various European powers launched a number of punitive expeditions against Japan, further displaying the *bakufu's*

77 Jansen 2000, 295.

78 Jansen 2000, 298.

79 Totman 2014, 291.

80 Totman 2014, 291.

weakness and lack of control.⁸¹

Satsuma domain, modern Kagoshima, was also subject to some of these actions, as after the murder of an English merchant by a Satsuma samurai in 1862, British warships sailed up to Kagoshima Bay to bombard Kagoshima after they had refused to hand the murderer over to the British for judgment. Likewise Chōshū domain officials, who were strong supporters of *sonnō jōi* movement, began to enact the Imperial Court's order to expel the barbarians by attacking foreign shipping within their domain. This led to response by a multinational fleet of Western ships, that arrive to bombard the domain in 1864. Radical Chōshū domain's ambition was not limited to expulsion of Westerners, as in the same year they tried to occupy Kyoto and assume control over the Imperial Court. This attempt was repulsed however, and Chōshū was forced to submit to *bakufu's* authority once again after a punitive expedition launched by the government under Imperial Decree.⁸²

Formation of the Sacho Alliance

Chōshū did not stay down for long however, as the conservative faction that had rose to power in Chōshū after the successful punitive expedition soon fell in a coup in 1865, with the radicals regaining power. While *bakufu* began planning for second punitive expedition against them, opposition against the expedition was far more widespread this time around.⁸³

Among the most notable defections from the last punitive expedition was the Satsuma domain. While Satsuma forces were among the troops that opposed Chōshū's attempt to seize Kyoto in 1864, by the time of the Second Punitive expedition against Chōshū in 1866, Satsuma had switched sides, deciding to support Chōshū in the coming conflict instead.⁸⁴

Some explanations offered of Satsuma's sudden switch range from the domain starting to feel threatened by potential consequences of Chōshū's fall to *bakufu* forces, as it could mean that Satsuma, that itself had not been in

81 Totman 2014, 292; Jansen 2000, 301, 304-305.

82 Totman 2014, 293; Jansen 2000, 303.

83 Totman 2014, 293.

84 Ibid.

bakufu's good graces ever since the Battle of Sekigahara, could become the next target for *bakufu* to suppress. Likewise, the work of anti-bakufu activist and representative of anti-bakufu Tosa domain, Sakamoto Ryōma, who acted as an intermediary between the two domains in the alliance negotiations is likewise seen as an important factor in the birth of this powerful alliance.⁸⁵

Like Handō and Deguchi suggest, it is possible that Satsuma domain and its high ranking officials Ōkubo Toshimichi and Saigō Takamori were primarily motivated by opportunism, seeing a chance to ally with Chōshū against their common enemy, the Tokugawa *bakufu* in its moment of weakness and seize power for themselves. If *bakufu* was allowed to regain its strength and carry out its plans to reform the system and reinforce its legitimacy and authority through the planned *kōbu gattai*, a marital and political union between the imperial family and the shogun, Satsuma and Chōshū would most likely be excluded from positions of power in the future as well. Therefore they saw this as a unique opportunity to change the political hierarchy of Japan in their favor and pay back for the defeat suffered at the Battle of Sekigahara.⁸⁶

While this new Sachō Alliance as it would be called utilized the rhetoric of earlier *sonnō jōi* movement, at this point in time the core ideal had very much morphed from “revere the emperor, expel the barbarians” to “revere the emperor, overthrow the shogunate”, as “expel the barbarians” part of the movement’s goal had been thoroughly shown to be futile by the various punitive expeditions by Western powers against Japan in the first half of the 1860s that it was powerless to resist, so much so that even the Imperial Court had given up on it by the time Sachō Alliance was formed.⁸⁷

It is worth noting however that many anti-foreign activists with *jōi* sympathies remained more attracted towards anti-bakufu stances, especially as it started to increasingly seem that the *bakufu* was deepening its cooperation with foreigners. Even though Sachō Alliance itself with its cooperation with the British was no better in this regard, the perception of *bakufu* as the side who was capitulating and cooperating with the foreigners remained⁸⁸. Nevertheless,

85 Jansen 2000, 306, 309.

86 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 59-60.

87 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 58-59.

88 Jansen 2000, 307-308.

historian Narita Ryuichi goes as far as to say that after the shocks delivered by the foreign interventions in the first half of the 1860s, organized *jōi* movement had essentially ceased to be, and with that the Sachō Alliance's opposition to the *bakufu* was mainly characterized by its opposition to the Tokugawa dominance.⁸⁹

Backed by Satsuma and imported weapons, The Second Expedition against Chōshū ended in the defeat of the *bakufu* forces, and they were forced to sign a truce in 1866. Other significant events of that very same year were the inauguration of the last shogun of Japan, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, and the death of Emperor Kōmei, allowing young Emperor Meiji to take his place.⁹⁰

At this point in time, on the eve of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the main movements at work in Japan can be divided into three main categories. One was shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu led government, that was seeking to cement its place at the center of Japanese politics for the coming era through *kōbu gattai*, marital union between the Tokugawa family and the imperial family. Then there were the likes of Tosa and Fukui domains, that were seeking to form a more inclusive political system through reform, where the imperial court, *tozama daimyō* and lower ranking samurai could also participate more actively in politics and make their voices heard in national level decision making through assemblies and public debate, an idea that had been growing ever stronger since the 1850s. This was also the approach that Satsuma leaders had before their decision to align with Chōshū. That leads to the third faction, one that sought to overthrow the *bakufu*, even through military action if necessary. Long spearheaded by the Chōshū domain, it was now joined by the Satsuma domain as well.⁹¹ Together, they would strike down the Tokugawas.

Fall of the Tokugawa Order, Rise of the Sachō Alliance

Tokugawa Yoshinobu was considered to be one of the most promising political figures of his time and he had plans for extensive modernization of Japan's

89 Narita 2019, 58-59.

90 Jansen 2000, 307.

91 Narita 2019, 54, 60-61.

military force in accordance with the example of the French military, alongside with governmental reform that sought to create a council through which all the powerful *daimyō* of Japan could have a voice in government affairs.⁹²

These plans would be undone quickly however, as the forces seeking to depose the Tokugawa shogunate were on the move. In November 1867, Tosa representatives presented Yoshinobu with a proposal from their domain. According to it, Yoshinobu would resign from his office as shogun, and his office's power would be returned to the emperor and the court. However, he could remain head of a new council of *daimyō* and court nobles that was to be established under the emperor that would advise him, the first step towards a system in which the imperial court and greater number of *daimyō* would be allowed to participate in the government. Yoshinobu accepted this proposal, content with reforming the system as under this proposal he would have still remained first among his peers under the emperor, thus preserving Tokugawas at the center of the political power.⁹³ This resulted in him handing the political power held by the shogun back to the emperor and the Imperial Court on October 10th 1867 in an event that is called *taisei hōkan*, or restoration of the imperial rule. This was a first step towards a new system.⁹⁴

While Tosa domain leaders who were seeking for reform of the system were content with this development⁹⁵, this was not enough for Sachō Alliance, as they wished to establish themselves at the center of the new system and exclude the Tokugawas from central positions of power. Even after Yoshinobu had agreed to Tosa domain's demands, Satsuma leaders Ōkubo and Saigō continued working through the Imperial Court, increasing their influence over it and seeking to secure an imperial decree that would legitimize their planned overthrow of the Tokugawa *bakufu*. This aim can be seen in Ōkubo's letters to high ranking court noble Iwakura Tomomi, in which he argued that the shogun had to be reduced to the same level as ordinary *daimyōs*, and that he should be made to return his domains to the Imperial Court. Reform of the system was not enough. Ōkubo and Sachō Alliance wanted to dismantle Tokugawa dominance

92 Jansen 2000, 307.

93 Jansen 2000, 310.

94 Narita 2019, 61-62.

95 Narita 2019, 62.

in politics for good. By the end of the 1867, Sachō leaders had managed to secure imperial authorization for their action against the Tokugawas from court nobles sympathetic to their cause.⁹⁶

This Decree for the Restoration of the Imperial Rule issued in January 3rd 1868 called for Yoshinobu Tokugawa to resign from all of the offices he still held, and that Tokugawa family returns their lands to the emperor. It also declared a new provisional government with officials from Satsuma and Chōshū domains at its center.⁹⁷ This imperial decree gave Sachō Alliance legitimacy for its actions that would later be used to present the coup as a righteous restoration of the power to the Emperor⁹⁸. Following the deceleration, Sachō Alliance quickly assumed control over Kyoto and the Imperial Court. However, this would not go unopposed as following consultations with his still loyal vassals, Tokugawa Yoshinobu decided to stand against Sachō Alliance with his own military force.⁹⁹

This was the start of a conflict what would be known as the Boshin War. It started with forces loyal to Tokugawa advancing towards Kyoto in hopes of recapturing the city from Sachō Alliance. The two armies clashed in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi, resulting in a rout for Tokugawa forces. This first battle of the war proved to be decisive, as Tokugawa Yoshinobu was forced to retreat all the way to Edo, where he later surrendered himself and the city of Edo to Sachō Alliance forces commanded by Saigō Takamori without a fight, outside of a battle against a small force of Tokugawa loyalist who had decided to make their stand in Ueno.¹⁰⁰

This did not mean that the war was over. Many northern domains such as Aizu and Shōnai who were still loyal to the old government continued fighting. These bases of resistance to the new government were crushed by June of 1869.¹⁰¹ Handō and Deguchi claim that the northern domains were ready for negotiations with the court for imperial pardon, so with some leniency

96 Jansen 2000, 311.

97 Narita 2019, 63-64.

98 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 65.

99 Jansen 2000, 312.

100 Narita 2019, 65; Handō & Deguchi 2018, 66.

101 Narita 2019, 65.

on part from the new government and the imperial court this portion of the war could have been avoided, and that the fighting only escalated because the new government's armies attacked the northern domains first before negotiations could proceed, thus forcing the domains to defend themselves.¹⁰²

Likewise according to Narita, the new government's occupation of the northern domains and its punitive measures were quite harsh, as many of the domains deemed rebellious saw their domains reduced in size, and some top ranking samurai of the domains were executed in the aftermath¹⁰³. As Handō and Deguchi point out, this war has been perceived as one of aggression by some in Northern Honshū. Additionally, the punitive measures after the war have caused some lingering resentment among the citizens of these former northern domains located in modern Tōhoku region that can still be seen today, as many people from this area did not even participate in the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration.¹⁰⁴

Concrete example of this can be seen in the former capital of the Aizu domain, Aizuwakamatsu City located in modern Fukushima prefecture. It declared the year 2018 to be a year of commemoration of the Boshin War, while ignoring the commemoration of the Meiji Restoration completely. The official deceleration of the commemorative year by the city government stated that the focus would be on remembering the tragedy of that war, while consoling the spirits of those that died in the war. In addition, respect and gratitude would be expressed to those who died defending Aizu and those individuals who rose to do great things after the war despite their difficult postwar situation. Declaration also expressed desire to advance new history research, that would ensure that Aizu domain's history would be understood correctly.¹⁰⁵

102 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 66-67.

103 Narita 2019, 67.

104 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 67;

105 Aizuwakamatsu City. "Aizuwakamatsu City Declaration of the 150th Anniversary of the Boshin." 2018.

Significance and Meaning of the Meiji Restoration

The memory of the Meiji Restoration is thus contested, and its purpose in addition to the motivations behind the actions of Sachō Alliance leaders such as Ōkubo and Saigō have been called into question both in Japan and outside of it.

Nevertheless it is fully possible to argue for Meiji Restoration as being worthy of being presented as a revolution given the massive changes Japan would undergo in the coming years and decades following the Restoration. Reforms that were enacted in the immediate years following the Restoration of 1868, such as centralization, abolishment of the old domain system and its replacement with the prefectural system that has remained to this day in addition to the abolishing of the Tokugawa era caste system all constituted a major change to the political and social structure of the country¹⁰⁶. Narita also argues that given the large scale peasant political movements that would start during the Meiji era and with the birth of new ideals of this era, it is not possible to conceive Meiji Restoration as a mere change of governments. He also credits Meiji Restoration as the starting point for development towards constitutional governance, founding of the Imperial Diet and formation of Japan as a nation state.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, in terms of oligarchic nature of its government and similar general objectives of modernization and national strengthening, it did not constitute a major departure from the deposed Tokugawa Yoshinobu's government. Even though the caste system was abolished, former samurai continued to dominate both the government and the newly formed Imperial Army and Navy. The highest tiers of leadership during the Meiji Era were also largely dominated by former samurai from Satsuma and Chōshū domains, now renamed Kagoshima and Yamaguchi prefecture respectively after the domain system was abolished¹⁰⁸. Indeed, while Narita writes that Meiji Restoration should not be portrayed as a mere regime change, he finds that holding the Meiji Restoration up as something comparable to the French Revolution in its

¹⁰⁶ Jansen 2000, 348.

¹⁰⁷ Narita 2019, 74, 118.

¹⁰⁸ Handō & Deguchi 2018, 80-86.

extent as used to be the standard in the past to be naive and unsophisticated¹⁰⁹.

Additionally, in the Five Public Notices issued by the Meiji government in 1868, the day after the Charter Oath was issued, the new government swore to follow the five relationships of Confucianism, those being hierarchical relationship between the ruler and the ruled, father and son, husband and wife, elders and youth, in addition to the bond of trust between friends. In regards to how it effected the life of individual Japanese, it did not constitute a revolutionary change of any kind. It prevented the peasants from fleeing their lands, prohibited people from making direct petitions to the Imperial Court and government, as well as banning travel to outside of Japan and practice of Christianity and “evil cults”¹¹⁰ by the Japanese. In this sense, the new government constitute any kind of significant departure from Tokugawa era.¹¹¹

Many of these points in Five Public Notices would be dropped just within a decade in part due to pressure from the West¹¹² alongside with the abolishment of the structures of the old order while new ones were established in their place¹¹³. But far from being based on any ideology or grand plan, this was a gradual ad hoc process that took decades to complete, and its goal of modernization and strengthening of the country in order to gain the strength to stand against Western powers was not at all dissimilar from that of the old Tokugawa government's¹¹⁴, thus calling into question whether the new government can truly be called revolutionary.

The new government's objectives were thus very similar to the objectives of the Tokugawa government, that also wished to modernize Japan and expand public debate through inclusion of lower ranking samurai, while still keeping the masses out of the political process. It is important to note that even though expansion of public discussion was a much talked about topic by both Tokugawa Yoshinobu and the new Meiji oligarchs alike, in both cases it should not be interpreted as them supporting a full parliamentary system, but mere

109 Narita 2019, 75.

110 Jashūmon 邪宗門

111 Narita 2019, 75-76.

112 Jansen 2000, 357.

113 Totman 2014, 297.

114 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 88.

expansion of the oligarchy, as it had been used in that context throughout the Bakumatsu period up until the early Meiji Period¹¹⁵. Indeed, Narita also makes an indirect warning against hastily interpreting the rhetoric on establishing deliberative assemblies and the expansion of public debate of the time as first steps in the path towards democracy in Japan, which is a rather common argument¹¹⁶.

But as alternative history is something that cannot be tested, it is impossible to say for certain what form Japan would have assumed if Tokugawa governance had continued, and any further speculation on this topic than has already been covered risks crossing into the territory of speculative fiction.

3.3. Satsuma Rebellion

It would be impossible to talk of Meiji Restoration from Satsuma's context without talking about the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877 and the chain of events that led to it. The beginning of this chain is commonly traced to 1873 and the split of the Sachō Alliance. This year majority of the leading figures of the new government, including Ōkubo, were touring Europe and North America as part of the Iwakura Mission between 1871 and 1873, objective of which was to renegotiate the unequal treaties signed in past decades in addition to learning and gathering information from Western institutions and sciences that could be used in modernizing Japan.¹¹⁷

During the absence of the Iwakura Mission members, reigns of governance were left to a caretaker government, with Saigō being one of its leading figures. This caretaker government was not supposed to undertake any major changes while the Mission was away, but it nevertheless made some important reforms in the fields of taxation and enacted conscription as well. However, the issue that would lead to the irreversible breakup within the new government was the question over Japan's stance towards Korea that arose in 1873. In its closing days, Tokugawa government had already tried to open up

115 Jansen 2000, 312.

116 Narita 2019, 74.

117 Jansen 2000, 355-356.

relations with Korea in accordance with the Western standard of interstate relations, but these were denied. As with so many other policies, the new Meiji government continued with *bakufu*'s line and tried to open up relations again, only to be rebuffed once more. These constant refusals on part of the Korean government to form relations with Japan engendered talks within the Meiji leaders of a need for a punitive expedition of its own against Korea. These discussions would be called the *Seikanron*, debate over whether Japan should subjugate Korea through war, or deal with this issue in some other manner.¹¹⁸

Ogawara Masamichi, claims that when the issue of dispatching troops to Korea in order to protect the interest of the Japanese merchants there whose illicit trade was being cracked down upon by the isolationist Korean government initially came up in the cabinet meetings of the caretaker government, Saigō opposed the use of military force at this stage, and instead suggested that a high ranking government member from Japan should be sent to Korea to reach an understanding on the issues of trade between the two countries. Saigō put himself forward to be this representative.¹¹⁹ Following Saigō's suggestion in 1873, the caretaker government decided to send him on a diplomatic mission to Korea. The Imperial Court however delayed this decision, as it wanted to include the soon returning Iwakura Mission members in the debate surrounding this question.¹²⁰ This coming debate would lead to a deep divide between the Iwakura Mission members and the members of the caretaker government, leading to a quick breakup of the government that had toppled the Tokugawa rule.

Split in the Sachō Alliance

While Saigō's motivations behind his diplomatic mission to Korea could be dressed up as mere desire to reach an understanding between the two countries, his private letters sent to another member of the caretaker government, Itagi Taisuke, paint a more questionable picture of his motivations.

¹¹⁸ Jansen 2000, 361-362.

¹¹⁹ Ogawara 2012, 13.

¹²⁰ Jansen 2000, 363.

In these letters Saigō writes that if he himself were to be sent to Korea during these times of heightened tensions, he would make for an utmost enticing target for potential assassins. He also expressed desire to go to this mission without bodyguards of any kind, making him all more enticing of a target. His potential assassination during his visit could thus offer Japan a convenient excuse for declaring war against Korea.¹²¹

In Saigō's eyes, this war would have been beneficial for Japan as it could unite the country and divert attention of the once again increasingly dissatisfied lower ranking former samurai towards a war against Korea¹²². Saigō himself described the end goal to be "Focusing the hearts desiring civil war to the outside, a grand scheme to revitalize the nation¹²³." Handō and Deguchi also invoke him as an early representative of the line of advantage type of thinking, that saw either friendly or Japanese controlled Korea as essential for purposes of national defense¹²⁴, given the peninsula's proximity to the home islands.

These calls for war were opposed by the members of the now returned members of the Iwakura Mission, which included Saigō's close ally and friend Ōkubo Toshimichi. Based on what they had learned during their travels in the Western world, they argued that Japan was not yet ready for such war, and that the country could not afford to do anything that would risk an intervention from China or Western powers at this stage¹²⁵. Japan still had to gather its strength and bide its time, as the new government's foundations were not yet strong enough for it to afford a war¹²⁶.

In addition to their difference in experience in regards to the world outside Japan, one additional rationale offered by Handō and Deguchi over Saigō's and Ōkubo's different views on the matter were their different roles in the new government. Whereas Saigō was an idealist military man above all, and thus focused on immediate military concerns, Ōkubo was a pragmatic

121 Ogawara 2012, 13.

122 Jansen 2000, 364.

123 Naisen wo Koinegau Kokoro wo Soto ni Utsushite, Kuni wo Okosu no Enryaku.内乱を冀う心を外に移して国を興すの遠略; Ogawara 2012, 13.

124 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 94.

125 Jansen 2000, 364.

126 Handō & Deguchi 2018, 95.

statesman who thought of the longer perspective in his considerations.¹²⁷ This is the type of characterization of these two figures that is present in Kagoshima's museums as well, as will be shown in later chapters.

This disagreement over what stance should be taken against Korea was the issue that led to the split of the new oligarchy. After Ōkubo's and Iwakura Mission members' more cautious views won out, Saigō resigned from government altogether and left Tokyo for his home of Kagoshima. His resignation was followed by a large number of his supporters and allies. Figures such as Etō Shinpei, Itagi Taisuke, Gotō Shōjirō also resigned the government alongside him. Jansen quite reasonably suggests that it is unlikely this mass exodus was over the Korean question alone, and instead was more about struggle for power between the more military oriented faction led by Saigō and Itagi and the reform bureaucrats led by Ōkubo and Kido.¹²⁸

The Southwestern War

Breakup of the governing oligarchy after the *Seikanron* debate of 1873 led to a period of instability in the following years, during which a number of revolts broke out in Southern Japan in the former domains of the new ruling elite, usually inspired or even led by the people who resigned from the government in 1873.¹²⁹

These revolts culminated in the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, a conflict that in Japan is more commonly called "the Southwestern War."¹³⁰ This conflict owns its origins to the private schools founded by Saigō Takamori after he had returned to Kagoshima following his resignation from the government¹³¹. Curriculum of these schools were heavily oriented towards military training¹³², and many of the students were former samurai who were dissatisfied with the direction the government was taking. The reforms undertaken by the new Meiji

¹²⁷ Handō & Deguchi 2018, 92, 94-95.

¹²⁸ Jansen 2000, 364.

¹²⁹ Jansen 2000, 369.

¹³⁰ Seinan Sensō 西南戦争.

¹³¹ Narita 2019, 115.

¹³² Jaundrill 2016, 136.

government had not only removed their privileged status, but also exchanged their stipends to much more meager pensions that made the financial situation of numerous lower ranking samurai even worse than it was before the Restoration. Likewise, unemployment among the former samurai remained high, and the new government had been unable to provide them with new opportunities contrary to their expectations before the Restoration. Resigned Saigō however remained a figure who these disillusioned former samurai could rally around after his breakup with the new government.¹³³

Additionally Ogawara lists dissatisfaction with the government's westernization and seemingly submissive foreign policy towards the Western powers along with the new central government's perceived corruption and lack of principled policies that made the governments actions seem arbitrary and lacking a clear plan of action as key motivators for the soon to be rebel students, in addition to their economic hardships and poor personal circumstances¹³⁴. Narita sums up that the largest motivator for many former lower ranking samurai to rise up in rebellion was the simple fact that they felt like there was no place for them in the new centralized system that the Meiji government was now creating, even though they were the ones who had fought for them¹³⁵. As was already shown during the Bakumatsu period, unemployed former samurai in dire financial straits can be a serious destabilizing element.

In regards to the Meiji governments lack of a plan, it is indeed notable that despite the tendency of some historical narratives to portray otherwise, the Meiji government did not have a long term plan or program on how to modernize or change Japan, and most policies were experimental or made on ad hoc basis in response to immediate concerns and problems. It is also noteworthy that just as was the case with the Sachō Alliance when they rose up against the Tokugawa *bakufu*, anti-foreign sentiments were once again used to rile up anti-government sentiments, something that would remain a regular feature of Meiji-era politics until the very end.¹³⁶ The dynamite of anti-foreign populism that was once used by the Meiji oligarchs for their own benefit had

133 Jansen 2000, 368-369.

134 Ogawara 2012, 4, 31.

135 Narita 2019, 117-118.

136 Karlin 2014, 8-10.

now turned against them.

In addition to having a pool of dissatisfied former samurai to draw from as a base for the rebellion, local Kagoshima authorities were also sympathetic both to Saigō and his private schools, with the two parties developing a cooperative relationship and connections. One of Saigō's lieutenants even simultaneously served as a principal at one of the private schools and as a district chief within the local government. Likewise, Kagoshima governor's office under Ōyama Tsunayoshi was sympathetic to Saigō and thus slow to enact government policies, often ignoring directions from Tokyo outright.¹³⁷

This anti-government movement is often referred to as *Shigakkōtō*¹³⁸, which was a name derived from the schools founded by Saigō around which this movement was organized. According to Ōkubo Toshimichi biographer Masakazu Iwata, the schools were meant to produce loyal followers with whom Saigō could one day challenge the central government, though this claim has been contended by pro-Saigō historians.¹³⁹

Quite understandably, the central government in Tokyo was deeply concerned over the dissatisfied former samurai population along with Saigō's paramilitary schools and local Kagoshima government's dubious loyalties. Therefore, the government dispatched police officials to investigate the situation in Kagoshima in early 1877.¹⁴⁰ These officials were apprehended by *Shigakkōtō* activists, and after undergoing interrogations involving torture, one of the officials confessed that they were conspiring to assassinate Saigō¹⁴¹. While Jaundrill correctly points out that a single confession obtained through such means cannot be considered credible evidence,¹⁴² and thus bringing into question whether such a plot actually existed, it still poured fuel into the already existing anger towards the government among the student body, and it would be used as an immediate justification for raising an anti-government army in Kagoshima¹⁴³.

137 Jaundrill 2016, 136.

138 私学校党, literal translation would be "Private School Party".

139 Iwata 1964, 246.

140 Jaundrill 2016, 136.

141 Ogawara 2012, 53.

142 Jaundrill 2016, 136.

143 Ogawara 2012, 53.

Alongside this development, another direct cause for the outbreak of the rebellion was the dispatching of a government force with the steam ship Sekiryū Maru to Kagoshima in January of 1877 to evacuate the arms and gunpowder away from military storage facilities in the prefecture¹⁴⁴, something that shows that the central government was quite clearly concerned about a potential outbreak of a rebellion there.

These concerns were well founded as at the same time this ship was on the way to Kagoshima, a group of *Shigakkōtō* activists were planning to seize the arsenals in the prefecture in order to prevent the government from doing exactly what they were just in the process of doing. Saigō's students managed to act before Sekiryū Maru's arrival, taking over Sōmuta Army Arsenal in January and then the Kagoshima shipyard in the beginning of February, taking ammunition and arms stored in both of these sites for their own use. At the same time, *Shigakkōtō* activists that had control over much of the prefecture at this point started to suppress any information sources that were not loyal to them, and spread news of the central government's alleged assassination plot to win the support of the local population for an armed uprising.¹⁴⁵

With situation developing ever closer towards war Saigō, who had been away from Kagoshima on a long hunting trip while the situation had escalated, was summoned back to Kagoshima by his lieutenants for talks in one of Saigō's schools on how they should proceed with the current situation.¹⁴⁶

At these discussions with his lieutenants that took place in early February, it was very quickly determined that next course of action should be to directly question the government or petition the Emperor over the alleged assassination plot directed against Saigō. However, to achieve this Saigō and his allies would need to travel to the capital to do, and with the trust towards the central government's intentions being nonexistent, peaceful options were quickly ruled out. War and march to Tokyo was left as the sole option on the table.¹⁴⁷

As these talks with Saigō and what could be considered *Shigakkōtō*'s

144 Ogawara 2012, 59-60.

145 Ogawara 2012, 60-61, 62.

146 Ogawara 2012, 61-62.

147 Ogawara 2012, 62.

inner circle were underway, central government dispatched Admiral Kawamura Sumiyoshi to investigate what was going on in Kagoshima. In response, governor Ōyama informed him that the prefecture was planning to take up arms against the government, as they believed that central government was preparing to attack Kagoshima based on the forced confessions from the aforementioned apprehended police officials.¹⁴⁸ As Saigō's talks with his lieutenants concluded around the same time, he announced that he would lead a march to Tokyo to petition the Emperor over the central governments recent actions. While expressed in rather diplomatic way, this statement signaled that Saigō was assuming leadership over the nascent rebellion.¹⁴⁹

According to Ogawara, the decision to go to war was made rather hastily in a state of anger over the perceived betrayal by the central government of the former samurai along with the rumored assassination of Saigō Takamori, who was a very popular figure in Kagoshima even during his lifetime¹⁵⁰. Independent actions of lower level Shigakkō activists in apprehending the government police officials and raiding the arsenals, that do not seem to have been part of any grand plan of Saigō's, also had a central part in escalating the conflict past a point of now return, driving Saigō and the now forming Satsuma Army as the rebel force would be called to fight a war against the superior government forces, against which their prospects were very slim.

The war began in earnest on February 15th 1877, when Satsuma Army under Saigō's command departed Kagoshima to attack the government army garrison in Kumamoto to the north. The initial stages of the advance towards their target proceed well, with Satsuma Army beginning to lay siege to government army forces who had withdrawn behind the walls of the Kumamoto castle in the 20th. However, Satsuma Army's lack of artillery and disadvantage in small arms soon materialized, as they were unable to break through the government troops' fortified positions at Kumamoto castle.¹⁵¹ Thus the garrison in Kumamoto was able to hold out for two months until the siege was relieved by concurrent successful breakthrough action by the besieged forces on April

148 Iwata 1964, 247.

149 Jansen 2000, 369; Jaundrill 2016, 136.

150 Ogawara 2012, 62.

151 Narita 2019, 115; Iwata 1964, 248.

8th and with the government's reinforcing army re-establishing lines of communications with Kumamoto castle on 14th of April¹⁵².

With the relief of the Siege of Kumamaoto Castle, the outcome of the war had essentially been decided for good. Although recognizing the war situation as hopeless, Saigō still decided that he would fight until the bitter end.¹⁵³ The final battle of the war would be fought on September 24th at Mount Shiroyama on the outskirts of Kagoshima city¹⁵⁴. The battle ended in decisive defeat of the Satsuma Army and Saigō Takamori committed suicide the very same day, signifying an end to the Southwestern War¹⁵⁵.

One interpretation presented of the significance of the Satsuma Rebellion is that it signified the end of the hopes of former Satsuma samurai, who had supported Saigō so that they could restore the privileges they had held during the feudal period, and maintain the highly autonomous position of their domain that was being removed step by step due to the government's centralization efforts. It also represents the end of the power struggle between Saigō and the central government.¹⁵⁶

Satsuma Rebellion would be the largest and also the final rebellion in the series of uprisings by former samurai between 1873 and 1877, showing quite aptly its significance. With the defeat of Satsuma Army and Saigō's death, The new Meiji government had now managed to solidify its control over the nation, allowing it to complete its institutionalization in the coming decades after a difficult start. Although Ōkubo Toshimichi was assassinated just year later on 14th of May 1878 by a group of former samurai who were angry over his part in the governments centralization efforts, the new clique had by this point solidified their control over Japan, and thus the core of the Meiji state formed out of the Sachō Alliance was able to continue to hold on to their power for decades to come as the de facto power behind the throne.¹⁵⁷ They would thus be credited with many of the developments of the Meiji era, such as adoption of the

152 Ogawara 2012, 116.

153 Ogawara 2012, 148-149.

154 Iwata 1964, 248.

155 Narita 2019, 115.

156 Iwata 1964, 249-250.

157 Jansen 2000, 370-372.

constitutional governance and establishment of the Diet as a representative body, as is the case in Kagoshima museums.

This sort of representation ignores the pressure that would be put on to the governing elite by opposition groups, such as the Freedom and People's Rights Movement and the press that was sympathetic to them, whose advocacy and criticism of the Meiji government for expanded citizens' rights had a significant role in raising national consciousness over social and governmental issues and that helped push many of the era's reforms forward, such as the aforementioned adoption of the Constitution and establishment of the Diet. The government was forced to make many of these reforms partly as concessions due to combination of public dissatisfaction and lack of legitimacy that stemmed from the perceived corruption and elitism of the new system in addition to its undemocratic nature, and the fact that Sachō Alliance's seizure of power was characterized as usurpation of power by a small clique of former samurai by the opposition groups already during the early Meiji period¹⁵⁸.

3.4. Meiji Commemoration in Postwar Japan

Before proceeding to the analysis of the narratives offered of the Meiji Restoration by the museums in Kagoshima, it is essential to explain how Meiji restoration and the era itself are perceived in postwar Japan and how different groups have sought to utilize it so that it can be contextualized within wider frame. Although this has already been partly done through the texts of Japanese authors in the previous sub-chapter, focus of this sub-chapter will be in the events and discussions surrounding the Meiji Centennial in 1968, government plans and motivations for its commemoration, and public reactions to the said plans. It will also focus on the discussions and events around the recent 150th anniversary of 2018, and how the discussions around it have been conducted, comparing them to the discussions surrounding the 1968 anniversary. Focus here will be on the national and governmental level, while the local level and the question of how the Meiji Restoration and Meiji Period

158 Narita 2019, 123-126; Karlin 2002, 48, 51-52.

have been and are commemorated in Kagoshima around the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration will be covered later through the lens of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration and its World Heritage site.

The Meiji Centennial in 1968

When Satō Eisaku's government in 1966 announced its plans for the 100th year anniversary of the Meiji Restoration to be held in September 23 1968 exactly hundred years since the beginning of the Meiji Era, various historical societies and journals, which were dominated by Marxist historians after the postwar opening up of the academia and discrediting of the wartime ultra-nationalist historiography, came together in their criticism of Satō government's plans. These historians saw these plans as "an attempt to revive the prewar emperor system and set Japan back on a path to militarism and war." In this grand plan, the role of the centennial commemoration would have been to strengthen nationalist emotions and ethnic solidarity within the population in order to lay the groundwork for the restoration of the prewar ideal of harmonious and classless society united under the Imperial institution. They were afraid that eventually this development would lead to the overturning of the Article 9 of the Constitution and rearmament of the Japanese military.¹⁵⁹

In addition to these more grandiose accusations regarding the objectives of the commemoration, criticism was also directed towards the members of the centennial celebration's planning committee. Especially the inclusion of Hayashi Fusao, the writer of "In Support of the Greater East Asian War"¹⁶⁰, in which he argued that Japan's war against China and the Western colonial powers in the Second World War was justified, utilizing a narrative very reminiscent of the wartime Japanese propaganda. Additional concerning figure in the committee was Yasuoka Masahiro, an ultra-nationalist intellectual who had been active since 1920s and whom was involved with the government as an advisor and ideologue during both the pre- and postwar Japan. In 1930s he had advocated for an emperor centered political structure in which the ideal citizen would be a

159 Kapur 2018, 307309, 311; Botsman 2018, 290.

160 Daitōa Sensō Kōteiron 大東亜戦争肯定論

loyal subject of the emperor, immune to radical ideologies through appropriate cultivation of spirit, and in which the power of the political parties was weak enough so that the “men of talent”, the bureaucrats, could operate free of party politics in service to the emperor.¹⁶¹ It is understandable why presence of such figures would cause concerns and why some would go as far in their concerns as to predict that the government was aiming to restore prewar Japan.

Prime minister Satō Eisaku’s actions and words leading up to the centennial did not help alleviate the concerns towards the motivations behind the commemoration of the Meiji Restoration. Not only did he show personal interest towards the project by assuming the chairmanship of the centennial planning committee himself, his comments in the committee meetings through 1966 also gave further cause to be concerned to those suspicious of the motivations behind the commemoration. In his opening remarks to the committee, he stated that “We will renew our national resolve and this will be deeply meaningful as the next step in the development of the Japanese race.”¹⁶²

Even more damning were his comments in the committee’s fourth meeting, in which he lamented the loss of the political, cultural and economical achievements of the Meiji statesmen in the Pacific War. He declared that in economic terms, Japan had already recovered, but in political and cultural terms Japan had not yet done so. Thus Satō thought that Meiji centennial should be utilized as a chance to “walk once again in the footsteps of our predecessors and think deeply on what they achieved.” Likewise, in his speech given to the Diet on December 15th 1967, Satō laid out his belief that he later attributed to the inspiration given to him by novelist Ryōtarō Shiba’s *Ryoma Goes His Way* and the works of Meiji era writers Katsu Kaishū and Fukuzawa Yūkichi, that the Japanese people should “have the spirit to defend their own country with their own hands”, a quality he thought that the Japanese people had lost in the postwar era, and that would no doubt make the Meiji founders ashamed of the postwar Japan. The Meiji centennial commemoration was to be a part of the

161 Kapur 2018, 310-312; Brown 2013, 116,119.

162 Kapur has translated 民族 as race, but it should be noted that it could be translated into a more neutral “nation” or “people” as well.

efforts to revive this spirit.¹⁶³

Additionally the perceived inspiration drawn from the 2600th anniversary of the founding of Japan by the mythical emperor Jinmu held in 1940 further added to the suspicions towards the motivations behind the centennial celebrations. These accusations were based on the presence of yet another figure whose role as one of the leading members in the planning committee was perceived as problematic, Iinuma Kazumi. He had previously served as the executive director of the aforementioned 2600th anniversary celebrations in 1940. Kapur also draws attention to the similarity of the program in the two events, noting them to being near identical with the exception of short speeches by dignitaries and youths in addition to a seven minute mass musical performance added to the 1968 ceremony. Additionally the staging was rather similar, with the emperor and empress being placed on raised dais in front of the audience behind two tables covered by golden silk. Like in 1940, the 1968 event ended in three banzai cheers, although this time not for the emperor, but for the Japanese state, with Satō leading the cheers from a smaller dais facing the emperor, just like Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro had done in 1940. However, these three cheers were then followed by three additional cheers dedicated to the emperor, which according to the government's report were caused by spontaneous cheers from the audience, and thus were "completely unplanned and entirely unexpected".¹⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that this is exactly what supposedly happened in the April 2013 ceremony commemorating the restoration of Japan's sovereignty from the United States, as the contemporary Chief Cabinet Secretary and future prime minister, Suga Yoshihide claimed that the cheers directed at the Heisei emperor in this event were "completely unplanned and spontaneous."¹⁶⁵

In the end, Satō's grand visions failed to enamor the Japanese people. Not only did his plans draw criticism from historians, but as contemporary historian and one of the central critics of Satō's efforts Tōyama Shigeki pointed out, these commemoration events did not gain significant interest among the

¹⁶³ Kapur 2018, 314-316.

¹⁶⁴ Kapur 2018, 317-321.

¹⁶⁵ Nihon Keizai Shimbun. 30.4.2013.

wider public. This is also reflected by cabinet office's opinion polls conducted in 1966, according to which 53% of the respondents were either not aware that 1968 was going to be the 100th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration, or they were not aware that the government was going to organize events in order to commemorate it. Additionally, 48% of the respondents thought that “looking back at the history since Meiji period and holding events that hold the hopes of the next hundred years” was necessary. 33% did not consider such commemoration to be necessary, while 19% of the respondents chose the “I do not know” option.¹⁶⁶ Given the ambivalent way the question was set to also state that the commemoration events would signal “the hopes of the next hundred years”, it is possible that the amount of people feeling indifferent or even opposed to Satō's vision may have very well been larger. In any event, it seems well founded to say that the commemoration events of the Meiji Restoration's 100th anniversary did not manage to meet the lofty goals that Satō government placed on them.

The Meiji Sesquicentennial in 2018

Given the issues and criticism that government's commemoration of Meiji Centennial faced, it may not come as a surprise that Abe Shinzō did not strive to repeat his great uncle's grand scale project, but elected to organize a much more subdued and smaller affair. This time the emperor was not involved, the official ceremony hall was much smaller, and the mass performances were absent¹⁶⁷. Nevertheless when compared to the 1968 celebrations, the basic objective of portraying Meiji Restoration as a starting point of a triumphalist national story in order to instill national solidarity and patriotism to the population seems to have remained, even if the official festivities were much more meager.

Viewed from the perspective of the Abe government, and indeed the subsequent Suga government, Meiji era related commemoration still retained

¹⁶⁶ Botsman 2018, 289-290; Kapur 2018, 314; Cabinet Office Public Opinion Poll. 1966.

¹⁶⁷ Kapur 2018, 321-322, 324; Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. Meiji Memorial Ceremony. 23.10.2018.

the aim of promoting nationalism and establishing a connection between contemporary and prewar Japan, while mostly skipping over the controversial years of the early Shōwa era from the late 1920s to 1945 as missteps from the correct course. This is reflected quite clearly in a statement issued by contemporary Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga in a press conference in 2016, in which he explained that in the government's view "The Meiji Sesquicentennial is a significant milestone for our nation. It is of the utmost importance to learn from the spirit of Meiji and reaffirm the strength of Japan."¹⁶⁸ This statement would signal that the base motives and goals have remained quite similar since Satō's years.

D.V. Botsman, who has researched Japanese government's projects to celebrate the 100th and 150th anniversaries of the Meiji Restoration, claims that LDP hopes to utilize the commemoration of Meiji Restoration and the entire Meiji period in order to engender support to its own objectives of constitutional revision to loosen the restraints placed on the JSDF and to promote patriotism among the Japanese people. Botsman also sees this as a part of a wider push by Japan's conservative establishment to create a new source of legitimacy for itself. This means replacing the promise of continued economical growth and personal enrichment, that had served as the main source of legitimacy for LDP during the Cold War, with nationalism as the new rallying point.¹⁶⁹ This argument is very believable, as maintaining the promise of constant economic growth and personal enrichment is very much becoming a promise that the conservative LDP dominated Japanese government most likely cannot keep in an age of near zero percent annual economic growth, increasing job insecurity and frozen wages.

Additionally, Botsman sees the government's Meiji commemoration to be very superficial. It focuses on promoting "the spirit of Meiji" or "successful modernization", instead of delving deeper to the collapse of the Tokugawa regime or any negative effects it may have had to some groups, like to the aforementioned Tokugawa loyalists in Tōhoku, rural populations that had to bear the brunt of the cost of industrialization, or people in the nations around

¹⁶⁸ Botsman 2018, 291.

¹⁶⁹ Botsman 2018, 291-292.

Japan that would become targets of its expansion. From the government's perspective, commemoration of the Meiji Restoration should primarily serve to reinforce its own position and policy goals. Thus focus is drawn to elements such as the spirit or inventiveness of the era, rather than more tangible and concrete elements or actual experiences of the people of that era that would have a more negative side to them, and that would thus take some air out of the triumphalist narrative that is supposed to raise people's spirits.¹⁷⁰

One window into the narrative that the Japanese government seems to want to push is offered by a video with a title that can be roughly translated as "Meet the Meijinnovation", published in the Japanese government's internet television. In this video, Meiji is presented as an era when Japan not only adopted plenty of innovations that revolutionized their way of life, such as sanitary sewers, railways and telephones, but also as a period when the Japanese people were able to adapt to rapid social changes without being fearful of them, something that should be done now as well, since things will not improve without changes.¹⁷¹ In this narrative, Meiji era is merely used as a window dressing to push a message that encourages people to show similar kind of spirit now, during an era when Japan is facing and undergoing considerable social changes. Like Botsman states, in this narrative role of the average Japanese citizen seems to be rather passive. Their role is to simply adapt to changes and follow government's decisions, instead of questioning or challenging them¹⁷².

Botsman's perspective is given additional credibility when reflected against Prime Minister Abe's speech given at the official 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Meiji Era in September 23rd of 2018. In this speech Abe stressed the need to take pride in and learn from the great men of the Meiji period, who did everything in their power both home and abroad to acquire new information in order to lay the foundations for contemporary Japan's industries, parliamentary political system and constitutional form of government. All of these reforms was all done in order to protect Japan's independence from

170 Botsman 2018, 292-293, 295; Huffman 2018, 25-26.

171 Japanese Government Internet TV. 24.5.2017.

172 Botsman 2018, 295.

colonial powers at the time of a national crisis. These efforts also involved bringing in foreigners, whom played a huge role in Japan's development into a modern nation. He also brought up how the dissolution of Japan's traditional caste system allowed everyone regardless of their background, young people and women included, to participate and move upwards in society. Abe compares the current state of Japan to a national crisis similar to the one Japan faced 150 years ago, as Japan faces a rapidly changing international situation around it, in addition to an aging and declining population. In this difficult period, Japan should learn from its past by following the example of the courageous, determined and diligent people of the Meiji period, whom opened Japan's doors to the outside world.¹⁷³

Abe's speech contains number of interesting elements. Especially the ways he ties the Meiji period and its developments to contemporary Japan and his own policies and aims is notable. For example, him bringing up women specifically in this speech was most likely related to do his own government's stated aims of improving employment and advancement opportunities among women, even though women faced much more severe challenges and limitations to their social involvement during the Meiji period than Abe's words would imply. Likewise, mention of the role of foreigners and opening up to the world in the context of Japan's modernization also most likely strives to create a parallel to contemporary policies of increasing migrant workforce and formation of free trade agreements¹⁷⁴. This way in Abe's speech, complicated and multifaceted historical events and developments of the Meiji era are oversimplified to a significant degree so that they may be utilized to serve contemporary political goals.

In accordance with Botsman's claims, Abe's speech's contents seems to support the perception that the Japanese government wants to present Meiji era specifically in a way that supports its current policy goals and as a period when the Japanese managed to overcome a major challenge by rallying together in a common undertaking regardless of their social standing for the sake of the

173 Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. Prime Minister's Address. 23.10.2018.

174 For examples of contemporary policies, see Okina 2018, 27-28; Solis & Urata 2019, 106-123; Endoh 2019, 324-352.

nation. It should be noted that Abe does encourage the youth to learn both from "the light and the dark"¹⁷⁵ of the Meiji period, thus admitting that Meiji period and the modernization process had its problems as well. However, he does not go into any specifics in this speech what this "dark" might have been, maintaining ambivalence in talking about the negative aspects.

With all of this considered, the view of the Meiji Restoration and Meiji Period emphasized by the government is that of an era of top-down changes imposed by the government that the population simply accepted as necessary reforms and thus adapted to them obediently, a narrative that would no doubt suit any government. Hiroshi Takagi likewise concludes that the Japanese government's interest in Meiji has been primarily due to its desire to promote a narrative of national greatness that would not wish to acknowledge the problematic and traumatic side of the Japanese modernization, industrialization and imperialism of the late 19th and early 20th century.¹⁷⁶

Furthermore, as Botsman points out, the government seems to generally avoid talking about the event or term of Restoration, *ishin*, itself. This is because the term has strong political connotations in contemporary Japan. Various political parties and movements, both pre- and postwar, who promise to radically change the status quo have quite often adopted the term *ishin* as part of their political program or movement name, as was the case with 2.26 coupists in 1936 whom wished to bring about a "Shōwa Restoration", and more recently with Japan Restoration Party. Taking a page out of Yamaguchi Keiji's interpretation of the government's commemoration of the Meiji Restoration in 1968, Botsman proposes that the government does not talk about it more specifically because it wishes to avoid sending any kind of signal that could be seen as an endorsement of anti-government action, which Meiji Restoration very much was.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the Japanese government does not wish to reflect on the era too much or touch anything that might be controversial about the era in general. They mainly wish to use it to build support for their own policies and rally the people together to take pride over Japan's successful modernization

¹⁷⁵ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. Prime Minister's Address. 23.10.2018.

¹⁷⁶ Hiroshi 2018, 339-340.

¹⁷⁷ Botsman 2018, 292-293.

and national strengthening.

Discussions on how the Meiji Restoration is commemorated and remembered came up in the discussions of the Diet as well during the 150th anniversary. For example, on 26th of January 2018, Secretary General of the Japanese Communist Party and House of Councillors member Koike Akira criticized government's apparent intention to glorify the Meiji period and forgo reflections about the negative aspects of it, specifically the period of aggressive wars and colonialism that characterized prewar Japan. In Koike's words, it is impossible to connect prewar and postwar period into one and characterize it all as positive. He accuses that the prime minister is attempting to dilute prewar history and present it all in positive light, and through that eventually free himself and the LDP from the constraints placed by the postwar regime, such as Article 9 of the Constitution.¹⁷⁸ This very much reflects the critical voices of the left-wing historians of the 1960s, whom perceived the Meiji period and any commemoration towards it to be interchangeably linked to apologia towards the imperialistic prewar Japan. In the narrative of leftist historians, the thick dividing line between the pre- and postwar periods is quite apparent.

It is also notable that in his response to Koike, Abe sidestepped these concerns by stating that the quick modernization that Japan achieved in the 19th century midst "the wave of colonialism that descended on Asia", was possible due to the efforts of all the people coming together to work together regardless of their wealth or social standing. In regards to Koike's concerns about the government wanting to get rid of the postwar constraints, Abe stated that Japan is committed to never again repeating the calamity of war, and it is committed to continuing on the road of peace. However, Abe adds that maintaining peace requires deterrence through JSDF and maintaining Japan's alliance with the United States¹⁷⁹. This is very much in line with the general conservative efforts to present Meiji era as a time of national unity, and present the issue of Japan's imperial and militaristic past as something that have already been resolved and that Japan has already learned everything it needs to from it.

When compared to 1968, the critical reactions to the commemoration

178 National Diet Minutes Search System. 26.1.2018.

179 Ibid.

events in 2018 were much more subdued. There was no large group of historians or conglomeration of historical societies coming together to condemn the government plans for its commemoration. Instead these are mainly voiced by individual opposition figures or opposition minded newspapers such as Asahi Shimbun, who for example published an article that reflects similar attitudes as Koike's earlier comment. This article, titled "The Light and Shadow of Modern Japan", mentions the perceived positives of Meiji era reforms, like dissolution of the traditional class system, fast modernization, and formation of the Diet and constitution. These are very much the same positives that Abe mentioned. However, the article also calls for continued reflection on the "shadows" of the period as well, which in line with Koike, are perceived to be colonialism, militarism and aggressive wars that were a result of the dominant "rich nation, strong army" mentality of the Meiji era, a mentality that led to much suffering in the countries that became targets of Japanese imperialism, and eventually brought complete ruin to Japan itself by the end of the Second World War. But from the ruins of the destroyed Imperial Japan, a new Japan, one ruled by the principles of popular sovereignty and democracy was able to rise up. The article sees that the existence of these two "contemporary Japans", the one born out of Meiji Restoration, and the other from the ashes of the Second World War, as something that makes the evaluation of the Meiji Restoration rather complicated and contentious.¹⁸⁰

Indeed, looking at the national level discussions both around the centennial and sesquicentennial celebrations in addition to the way this topic has been addressed in Japanese history writing would suggest that a divide in regards to the starting point of contemporary Japan does indeed exist, and the importance of the key turning point to Japan seems to vary based on one's political leanings. For Japan's left wing, 1945 seems to be the beginning point of contemporary Japan, while the right wing seems to blur the line between pre- and postwar Japan, thus making 1868 the beginning point of contemporary Japan. The commemoration of Meiji Restoration as the starting point for the modern Japan that also exists today by Japan's right wing can thus tacitly

180 Asahi Shimbun. 22.8.2018.

legitimize and glorify the Empire of Japan. This is the reason why its commemoration is still so controversial to the Japanese left, even if the critical voices towards it seem to be increasingly fewer.

4. Meiji Restoration in Kagoshima Museums

With the common and more critical narratives regarding Meiji Restoration that are present in Japan having been covered, this chapter will go through a the Museum of the Meiji Restoration and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shōko Shūseikan in the city of Kagoshima and the type of narratives they present. Then the reasons behind these representations will be considered and analyzed as well.

Located just about a 15 minute walk away from Kagoshima Central Station on the bank of the Kotsuki River, The Museum of the Meiji Restoration covers the events of the Bakumatsu period leading to Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the subsequent changes Japan underwent in following decades, primarily from Kagoshima's perspective, with specific focus on great figures from Kagoshima. This is apparent immediately upon stepping into the museum and into the *Yukusa Osaijashita*¹⁸¹ Street section of the museum, as visitors are immediately greeted with a reception desk followed by nine banners dedicated to various famous figures from Kagoshima who were active during the Meiji Restoration and the reforms and historical events of the Meiji Era.

If one spends any time visiting cultural sites in Kagoshima, most of the names of these nine figures described shortly in these banners will surely become very familiar to any visitor, as they take the center stage in the narrative that Kagoshima's museums tell. As previously mentioned and shown in the following, the museums in Kagoshima do not stray from the Great Man Theory of history that traditional history writing and number of popularized historical works utilize.

¹⁸¹ Kagoshima Dialect for Welcome.

4.1. The Great Men Theory in Kagoshima Museums

Characterization of Saigō Takamori

There are two figures from Kagoshima who tower above everyone else in any individual focused Meiji Restoration narrative. First of these figures is Saigō Takamori, a character that is the most prevalent one of Kagoshima's historical figures among the Japanese public consciousness, as can be seen in the wide representation he receives both in non-fictional and fictional materials. In his banner titled in English as “Forgiving and Affectionate”, the Japanese title going a bit further in describing him as “Great Man of Magnanimous, Affectionate and Virtuous Character”, with a little wordplay attached to describing him as *daijin*¹⁸², which could refer both to his large size and strength in comparison to his contemporaries, in addition to his virtuousness.¹⁸³

The banner goes on to describe Saigō's immediate family and how he was born in 1827 to a low ranking samurai family in Shitakajiya-machi, Kagoshima, but was able to rise in ranks of Satsuma domain's government after his ability was recognized by *daimyō* Shimadzu Nariakira, after which he took active part in domain and national level politics during the Bakumatsu and early Meiji period, contributing significantly to the formation of the Sachō Alliance, its victory in the Bōshin War and the bloodless capture of the Edo Castle. Afterwards, he would contribute to founding the new government, but would eventually end up in disagreement with Ōkubo Toshimichi over the issue of sending envoys to Korea, after which he returned to Kagoshima and founded his aforementioned private schools. Finally in 1877, he would act as the leader of Satsuma Rebellion, in which he would be defeated, meeting a tragic end on Shiroyama mountain in Kagoshima.¹⁸⁴ This short summary of his life is certainly not inaccurate in anything it states, but given its shortness many key details are left out, such as the nature and purpose of Saigō's schools or his reasons for leading a rebellion, which are questions that can be quite contentious as was

182 Using Characters 大人 with furigana for *daijin*, a word that can be translated either as “giant” or “virtuous person”

183 Saigo Takamori, Forgiving and Affectionate. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

184 Ibid.

presented in the chapter regarding the Satsuma Rebellion.

Saigō's significance is established in a text board describing his accomplishments deeper within the museum. He is called one of the "Three Great Nobles of the Restoration" alongside Ōkubo Toshimichi and Chōshū samurai called Kidō Tadayoshi, who is largely ignored in this museum which is understandable considering the museum's focus on Satsuma and Kagoshima. In addition to repeating some points from the banner at the entrance, this text board further adds that he was one of the key figures in overthrowing the shogunate as in addition to being the key figure in forming the Sachō Alliance, he acted as the commander of Imperial loyalist forces in the Bōshin War, and was leader of the forces responsible for the conquest of Edo, Nagaoka, Aizu and Shōnai. After the formation of the new government, he would be made the first general of the new Imperial Army, and he also received a seat in the new government. As part of the government, he would take part in abolishing the old domain system and replacing it with the prefecture system, land tax reform, education system reform in addition to the establishment of a conscription system. In this way, the exhibit claims, he was one of the central figures in the establishment of modern Japan.¹⁸⁵

The museum goes to great lengths in building up Saigō's character. A feature of Saigō that is particularly emphasized is his large size and strength. These attributes are brought up both in texts and interactive exhibits. For example, there is a replica of his uniform that visitors are encouraged to try on in order to get a sense of his size. One can even find a game where visitors are encouraged to try out sumo against Saigō by pushing their hands against the hands of a drawing of Saigō. The game would then measure the force that the visitor was able to generate in kilograms, and the score would be displayed on the right side of the drawing. On the left side, there is a short description on how Saigō was said to be so strong when he was 13 that there was no one who could beat him in sumo.¹⁸⁶

These types of exhibits that praise Saigō's strength and robust build

185 Saigo Takamori's Accomplishments. Museum of the Meiji Restoration 2020.

186 Trying on Clothes Corner; Goju Education and Sumo. Museum of the Meiji Restoration 2020.

stand out, but it should be noted that this is something the museum generalizes and assigns to all Satsuma samurai, as there is an exhibition item that claims the average height of a Satsuma samurai of the 19th century to have been 178cm, when is quite high in comparison to the height of an average Japanese man at that time, which was 156cm. This difference is explained by greater meat consumption in Satsuma due to the influence of Chinese trade and meat based cuisines that could enter Satsuma through its illicit trade with it through the Ryūkyū Islands.¹⁸⁷

In addition to his physical prowess, Saigō's personality is also described in detail. Later on in the museum in a more detailed text label, he is described as a man of virtue who was deeply trusted even by his enemies. This text goes on to describe how during the Bōshin War in 1869, when Saigō was acting as commander of imperial loyalist troops, he treated the defeated *bakufu* loyalists of Shōnai domain very benevolently after their surrender. Another text board describes more in detail how the defeated Shōnai forces expected harsh reprisal from the victors, as they had resisted Saigō's forces to the last. However, such reprisal did not come and even after the war the domain only faced minor reduction in their land ownership. Thanks to these events, Shōnai domain samurai developed a deep debt of gratitude towards him. Apparently so much so that after the war in 1870, *daimyō* of the domain, Sakai Tadazumi even went to study under Saigō with a group of his retainers.¹⁸⁸

Additionally, when Shōnai domain's chief retainer Suge Sanehide met with him in Edo in 1871, only two years after the end of the Bōshin War, it was recorded in the Shōnai domain's records that they "respected Saigō as if he was their own brother". This respect towards Saigō is presented as one of the key reasons why many former samurai from Shōnai domain would later join the rebellion led by their former enemy in 1877. Likewise, after Saigō resigned from the government in 1873 over the *Seikanron* debate, or if we are to use the museum's terminology, over the issue of sending envoys to Korea, hundreds of people, followed his example by resigning from their posts in the government

187 Satsuma Samurai were Giants. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

188 Trusted Even by His Enemies; Bonds Formed by Saigo Takamori's Generosity. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

and military, and followed him to Kagoshima. Most of these people would later join the Satsuma Rebellion at his side, and after the rebellion was put down and Saigō was disgraced as a traitor, former Shōnai samurai would work to restore his reputation.¹⁸⁹ This is quite the contrast, when compared to the accounts of the treatment allocated to Aizu domain that was covered in the previous chapter.

The reason as to why so many people followed Saigō like this is largely attributed to personality of Saigō himself. Within the museum he is characterized as an exceptionally charming individual, who was very compassionate towards the weak and warm towards all people. He is also described to have been a passionate man who usually acted based on his feelings above, and whose charm and magnanimous intentions always attracted people to his side. This nature is further reinforced by the giant kanji for emotion, passion and compassion¹⁹⁰ located at the bottom of the text board.¹⁹¹ No deep consideration is offered of the social and economic factors that drove people and former low ranking samurai to Saigō's side, as was covered in the previous chapter.

Saigō is put in quite a pedestal in this museum, but it is far from the only one to do so. Indeed, in another museum called Saigō Nanshū Memorial Museum, another site recommended by the Kagoshima City guide maps distributed on the city's tourist buses for free¹⁹², has quite a clear mission statement that is enshrined on a sign just outside the museum, and in front of the bus stop city's sightseeing buses drop visitors off at. It states that the museum sees its purpose to be the transfer of knowledge on Saigō Takamori and other pioneers of the Meiji Restoration and their great achievements for state and society to future generations so that they too will be prepared to carry the future of the nation on their shoulders by learning from Saigō's actions and teachings.¹⁹³ While this museum presents a very interesting and detailed

189 Trusted Even by His Enemies; Bonds Formed by Saigo Takamori's Generosity. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

190 情, 情.

191 The Men Who Entrusted Their Lives to Saigo. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

192 Kagoshima City Sightseeing Guide Map, 2020.

193 Saigō Nanshū Memorial Museum, 2020.

narrative of Saigō's life that would have been worthy of analysis as well, due to the constraints of this work, it will not be discussed in further detail here.

Saigō Takamori and the Kyūshū Danji

Descriptions of Saigō's strength, size and various personality traits attached to him fall rather close to a common stereotype that is held of the Kyūshū men, the so called *Kyūshū danji*, or to translate it simply, "Son of Kyūshū".

Origins of this ideal lay within the Meiji period itself. During the early Meiji period, elite of the new regime began to see the Western powers as examples of the Civilization Japan should emulate not only in terms of technology, but in lifestyle, manners and fashion as well. Meiji elite perceived them to be components of progress and civilization, as opposed to the perceived backwardness of the pre-Restoration Japan. However, this emulation of the Western bourgeois lifestyle became a subject of criticism and mockery by peripheral elites outside of the government who not only saw this mimicry as superficial, but also effeminizing in its focus towards fashion and consumption.¹⁹⁴

The fears of feminization of the Japanese male are quite clear in these criticisms and this led to development of two polarized representations of masculinity, that of a feminized masculinity represented by the westernized Japanese gentleman and its anti-thesis, masculinized masculinity that rejects the Western influences and embraces "authenticity and spiritualism".¹⁹⁵

Karlin describes that the common image of feminized masculinity of the era, or the image of a westernized Japanese gentleman, was that of a man who was part of the new governing elite and dressed in Western clothing along with following Western style in outward appearance and mannerisms, most of which were based on trends of Victorian Britain. Meiji leaders argued this to be necessary in order for Japan to present itself as civilized in the eyes of the Western powers and thus elevate its status to their level.¹⁹⁶

194 Karlin 2002, 41,43.

195 Karlin 2002, 42.

196 Karlin 2002, 44-45.

As the Western dressed gentleman would soon become a caricature of the government first used by opposition press sympathetic to the Freedom and People's Right's Movement, it would also be picked up by other anti-government outlets and become attached to a number of negative traits, such as superficiality, corruption and decadence.¹⁹⁷ This was also the case with nationalists and populists outside the governing elite, who saw this Westernization as threat to the national polity itself. One of such critics of the era, Tani Kanjō, expressed disgust at Meiji government's perceived obsession with form and decorations of the West, instead of focusing on exclusively furthering militarization and productivity of the nation. He saw this as sign of weakness and effeminacy of the government elite, elements that should be discarded if Japan were to achieve greatness.¹⁹⁸

United by their opposition to the Sachō Alliance monopoly of power, Freedom and People's Right's Movement and the anti-government nationalists found themselves in the same side of the aisle, and thus took part in constructing an alternative masculinity to oppose the new Westernized gentleman. In their eyes the ideal man was represented by the image of the *sōshi*¹⁹⁹ who acted as activists for the People's Right's Movement. They were constructed as proud Japanese men that did not care for fashion or other Western superficialities, usually dressing in traditional Japanese clothing. They were aggressive, strong, decisive and patriotic men who were ready to take violent action in order to bring social change.²⁰⁰ This image would outlast the *sōshi* activists, as the similar features would later be assigned to the so called *bankara*²⁰¹ of the late Meiji period, male ideal that would embody many similar traits as the *sōshi* ideal did, but with additional portrayals of them as gallant defenders of the weak.²⁰²

Definitions attached to the term *Kyūshū danji* bear many similarities to the Meiji era masculinities that emerged in opposition to the ideal of a

197 Karlin 2002, 49-51, 54-55.

198 Karlin 2002, 56.

199 壮士. Can be defined as strong willed young man in his prime.

200 Karlin 2002, 58-59.

201 ばんから, scruffy, rough. Usually written with kana only

202 Karlin 2002, 68, 72-73.

westernized gentleman that Karlin described, as can be seen in a certain Asahi article from 2015 which discusses the *Kyūshū danji* image that gives perspective on how the term is conceived in modern Japan. Some of these are positive such as hearty, social, brave, trustworthy, compassionate, caring and assertive, forward facing leaders who are not afraid of risks. In the article this belief is expressed by Ōba Sōichi, as he believes that this set of traits of Kyūshū men is the reason why so many men from Kyūshū have been successful in private sector and government alike, and argues that leaders like that are especially needed in these contemporary times when there are so few people willing to be in the firing line. Indeed, he uses both Saigō Takamori and Ōkubo Toshimichi as concrete examples of *Kyūshū danji*, men who were able to move the country forward in large part due to the self confidence they possessed in their abilities, an essential component of *Kyūshū danji*.²⁰³ It is indeed quite interesting how qualities that were originally constructed as critiques of the Meiji oligarchs have now become attached to them in modern Japan.

On the other hand the term has negative connotations as well, as it is also perceived to be tied to male chauvinist ideals that believe in highly gendered social structure where men take the center stage in the public life, while women are left to a support role behind the scenes. This in turn usually leads Kyūshū danji to be associated with domineering husbands who barely communicate with their partners and who leave the household chores and childcare entirely to their wives. According to Amono Shūichi, the founder and president of *Zenkoku Teishu Kanpaku Kyōkai*²⁰⁴, an association dedicated to teaching husbands how to be more submissive to their wives²⁰⁵, this sort of image of an ideal man is ultimately harmful to men, as it does not lead to happy and healthy marriages, and completely fails to recognize that women are not happy in subservient relationships and that number of women who wish to live independently has also risen. Therefore, he proposes that the ideal of *Kyūshū*

203 Asahi Shimbun. 20.6.2015.

204 *Teishu Kanpaku* in its common meaning would be translated to 'domineering husband', meaning that this name could be translated as "National Association of Domineering Husbands", but the Association has different views on the etymology of the term, which would flip its meaning to a husband that serves their wife.

205 Zenkoku Teishu Kanpaku Kyōkai. 18.5.2021.

danji and its “feudal conception of marriage” should be discarded.²⁰⁶

Ōba in turn defends *Kyūshū danji* ideal of a marriage, saying that *Kyūshū danji* respect women, and that men can do their best and grow due to the support and care they receive from their wives. Still, he acknowledges that times are changing and that various tasks that tended to be entrusted to women, such as childcare and cooking, can be shared without compromising this principle. In his mind, only *Kyūshū danji* men are capable of firmly supporting their families.²⁰⁷

Third commentator in this article, Maeda Akiko, likewise sees *Kyūshū danji* as being close to the feudal ideal of a gallant samurai and the more modern concept of *nikushokukei*, the carnivore man. She describes that in her home city of Miyazaki, the ideal of *Kyūshū danji* might be propagated among conservative families, which includes ideals such as “men are not supposed to cry, men are supposed to be strong.” Additionally, Maeda expresses her belief that there are no *Kyūshū danji* in these contemporary times of the herbivore men, and that these “Saigō Takamori like figures only exist in the world of fiction.” Curiously enough, although she expresses sadness over this reality, she adds that although she would like to meet one, she would still consider it “difficult to have one as part of her family or a co-worker.”²⁰⁸

It is worth noting that Saigō’s relationship with his wife Saigō Ito is described in quite a similar fashion in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration as well. Her role as the wife of Saigō Takamori is what is brought up as the most relevant fact about her, as her banner in the museum’s entrance hall is simply titled “Wife of the Revolutionary Leader, Saigo Takamori.”²⁰⁹ Likewise, the text goes on to mention her role as a mother and caregiver, both in giving birth to three sons, along with raising the two children from Saigō’s previous marriage. After the rebellion, she is described to have experienced terrible hardships as the wife of the defeated rebel leader, until Saigō’s reputation was restored. It is likewise brought up in an apparently positive light, that she did not even once

206 Asahi Shimbun. 20.6.2015.

207 Asahi Shimbun. 20.6.2015.

208 Asahi Shimbun. 20.6.2015.

209 Wife of the Revolutionary Leader, Saigo Takamori. The Museum of the Meiji Restoration. 2020.

grumble about her experiences.²¹⁰ The role that is assigned here to Ito, as a quiet supporter for her socially and publicly engaged husband from the background, is very similar to the traditional gendered role assignments that are part of the *Kyūshū danji* ideal.

While the exact origins of the term *Kyūshū danji* are unknown, as Ōba's and Maeda's comments display that this term is widely associated with Saigō Takamori. Indeed, a survey carried out by Nishina Nobuhara in 2002, who back then was affiliated with Fukuoka Institute of Technology, reported that when 1300 university students were asked "Who comes to their mind when they hear the words *Kyūshū danji*", 55% of the respondents answered with Saigō Takamori.²¹¹ When asked to describe traits of *Kyūshū danji*, most common answers were stubborn, robust built, practical men, who have a strong sense of duty and humanity, and who are uncompromising in their values. Unsurprisingly, all of these are traits strongly associated with Saigō as well.²¹²

It is possible that the construction of Saigō's character has been influenced by this concept of what a proper "Son of Kyūshū" is supposed to be like. Likewise, it is possible that his characterization by historians, by popular media and by museums like this one could have lived on to not only become the stereotypical image of a Kyūshū man, but it has also developed into a localized ideal image of what a proper man is supposed to be like to those who are concerned about the perceived loss of masculinity among contemporary Japanese men. In that sense, Meiji era concerns about the feminization of men have not disappeared anywhere.

Discussions surrounding masculinity and concerns relating to its perceived decay and pressures felt by men to conform to traditional masculine ideals are far from being an issue specific to Japan.²¹³ Given the similarity of some of these ideas and expectations held towards Kyūshū men by the *Kyūshū danji* ideal to some elements of traditional masculinity both within Japan and outside of it, it is relatively safe to tie *Kyūshū danji* together with other traditional

210 Wife of the Revolutionary Leader, Saigo Takamori. The Museum of the Meiji Restoration. 2020.

211 Yomiuri Shimbun. 1.1.2007.

212 Ibid.

213 Frühstuck & Walthall 2011, 11.

masculine ideals present in Japan and the West. Especially expectations of confidence, physical and mental strength, sense of duty and expectation of assuming leadership role in society and within family are all requirements that are quite similar to western traditional masculinity and the old Meiji era's masculinized masculinity.

As is the near universal consensus in the scientific community, sex and gender are two separate elements, and maleness does not automatically produce masculinity²¹⁴. Like femininity, masculinity is something that needs to be constructed, and representation of Saigō as an ideal figure and propagation of *Kyūshū danji* image are both a part of this construction, and communicate masculine ideals to their recipients.

Researching this issue alone, the relationship between great men theory based narratives and promotion of traditional masculine ideals and what they may cause are definitely issues that would deserve a thesis of their own, but as there is still a lot to unravel in regards to the political messaging and narratives of these museums, it is for the best that this issue for another research project.

Depiction of Saigō Takamori in the Seikanron Debate and the Satsuma Rebellion

One element that also stands out in the way Saigō is depicted in Kagoshima museums in general is the way his involvement and position in the *Seikanron* debate is depicted. It is notable how the term *Seikanron*, which literally translated stands for “Debate on the Subjugation of Korea”, that is commonly used is avoided. Instead the term Problem Over Dispatching Envoys to Korea²¹⁵ and its abbreviations are used.²¹⁶

The use of this term may have a purpose of obscuring some of the issues at hand in these discussions. As was addressed in the chapter regarding Saigō's breakup with the rest of the new Meiji government, one of the key

214 Frühstuck & Walthall 2011, 11.

215 Chōsen Shisetsu Haken Mondai 朝鮮使節派遣問題.

216 Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

questions on the table in these discussions was whether Japan should go to war against Korea in order to force it into opening its doors to Japan for diplomacy and trade in a similar manner that West had opened up China and Japan. There is also rather convincing amount of evidence that would point out that Saigō was sympathetic towards the idea of declaring war against Korea, and was seeking to facilitate development towards it, as was covered in the previous chapter.

However, this question is not addressed at all in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration. Instead it is sidestepped completely and the contents of what this issue was about is not addressed at all. The debate is portrayed and explained in the vaguest of manners possible, as the museum's depictions do not go into any depth beyond saying that there was disagreement between Saigō and Ōkubo along with rest of the government over the issue of dispatching envoys to Korea, which led to a breakup of their mutual friendship and Saigō's resignation from the government along with around 600 other government and military officials.²¹⁷ What this disagreement was about is never addressed in the museum, only that there was a disagreement that was significant enough to lead into a split within the Meiji government. This depiction of the debate is quite evasive when compared to the way both Western and Japanese historians have approached this topic, as has been displayed in chapter three.

Satsuma Rebellion is not avoided in a similar fashion as the *Seikanron* debate and the way it is portrayed is largely in line with the way it has been portrayed in the works of history covered in the previous chapter, but there are still some details that are not discussed upon in depth. The most pivotal of these is the alleged assassination plot of Saigō Takamori that was obtained from detained police officers sent by the central government to Kagoshima in January of 1877. While the museum states that the confession was obtained under torture, this information's dubious nature is never pointed out.²¹⁸

While the reasons for the museum's selections in what topics to not

217 Composed and Broadminded, Devoting his Entirety to the Common Good, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020; Saigō Takamori's Accomplishments, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020; Causes for Satsuma Rebellion, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

218 Causes for Satsuma Rebellion, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

speak about in detail is a mystery, there are a few possibilities. Both the avoidance of the term *Seikanron* when talking about the debate in question as well as the avoidance of addressing what was being discussed in this matter would indicate a wish to avoid talking about it and thus saying out loud that the local hero and icon Saigō Takamori may have been advocating for war against Korea. This may be the reason why the validity of the assassination plot is not questioned either. In addition to not wishing to stain Saigō with anything controversial, presenting the person that has essentially become a mascot of Kagoshima as an advocate of an offensive war or leader of a rebellion with shady justifications may not fit well together with the polished image that the prefecture wished to project of him, and through him themselves.

Ōkubo Toshimichi, The Ideal Politician

To move on into another element of the narratives presented in this museum, it is necessary to talk about the other famous Kagoshima figure from the Bakumatsu and Meiji Restoration era. Alongside Saigō, the second figure to receive a lot of attention in this museum and in wider Japan in general is Ōkubo Toshimichi, even though he is still largely overshadowed by Saigō. This is not only outright stated within the museum's information board on Ōkubo²¹⁹, but additionally, at the time of visiting this museum, Ōkubo was also decisively behind Saigō in the museum's own popularity contest conducted among the visitors as part of one of the interactive exhibitions, as the vote leader Saigō held 8575 votes, and second placed Ōkubo was distant second with 3219 votes²²⁰, in yet another example of Saigō's predominance among the consciousness of the people.

Introduction to Ōkubo and his characterization that persists throughout the museum is already given in his banner in the museum's entrance hall. Its English title is "Composed and Dedicated to the Public Good", but more tellingly, the Japanese title contains the expression "Throwing 'his self' away,

219 Tragedy of Ōkubo Toshimichi, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

220 Handsome Guys and Great Women Ranking, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

devoting himself to the public”²²¹, giving a much more self-sacrificial image that is further reinforced in later items of the museum. Like with Saigō, Ōkubo’s banner describes the timeline of his life in short fashion; He was born in 1830 in Korai-chō, but his family soon moved to the same Shitakajiya-machi where Saigō’s family also resided. He would be later picked up by Shimadzu Hisamitsu, and would from then on go to work at the heart of the central government during the early Meiji Period. After returning from an observation tour to the West, he ended up in disagreement with Saigō over the question of sending envoys to Korea, and in the end would lose his close friend Saigō in the Satsuma Rebellion. Ōkubo also worked as Lord of Home Affairs, aiming to turn Japan into a Prussian styled monarchy and supported industrial development. However, he would be assassinated in 1878 by a disgruntled former samurai just one year after Saigō’s death.²²²

Exhibits related to Saigō and Ōkubo tend to be juxtaposed right next to each other in various parts of the museum and their connection as childhood friends from the same neighborhood of Shitakajiya-machi is emphasized. One good example of this is an information board on Ōkubo Toshimichi’s life, personality and achievements placed right next to one describing similar information in regards to Saigō’s accomplishments that was covered earlier. The two spaces are separated by small space with the text “To a New World: Two Great Men” written vertically between them. Next to that title there is a smaller text that describes that they were tied together by an inseparable bond that the two shared throughout their entire lives. Furthermore, like in exhibitions and commemorative plaques throughout the city, their kindness and warmth is also emphasized.²²³

While publicly appearing cold and distant, Ōkubo is described to having been quite warm individual in private, who valued his friendship with Saigō immensely. Likewise, his private letters between him and his wife and children are used as evidence of him being warm and affectionate towards them as well,

221 Watakushi wo sutete, ooyake ni tsukusu. 私を捨てて公に尽くす.

222 Ōkubo Toshimichi, Composed and Dedicated to the Common Good, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

223 To a New World: The Two Great Men. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

along with various other accounts from his friends and family that show his private persona to have been very different from the cold realist that the public saw him as.²²⁴

Ōkubo and Saigō are also represented as being complimentary to each other, with passionate and emotional Saigō being complimented by more calmer and rational Ōkubo, who always thought things through carefully before making a decision.²²⁵ Furthermore, just as Saigō's information board had the giant character kanji for emotion, passion and compassion²²⁶, Ōkubo's information board has a giant kanji for reason and logic²²⁷, further solidifying the description of two as opposite personalities but complimentary to each other, thus making the perfect pair to lead Japan to the new era.

Indeed, it is outright stated that a man like Ōkubo was the perfect type of leader for Bakumatsu period Japan, as his calm and collected personality along with his good decision making ability are mentioned as indicatives of him being a good leader. In addition to him being portrayed as a calm realist, his self sacrificial nature is also emphasized. He is described as someone who had no personal ambitions of his own and was instead entirely dedicated to serving the nation, so much so that he had little time to cultivate his personal image. He is described as having been quite unpopular in Kagoshima during the first years of the Meiji Government. This was especially so after the failure of the Satsuma Rebellion, as he was perceived to have become a corrupt politician of a central government who only cared for amassing wealth and power for himself, caring little for Kagoshima.²²⁸

However, after his assassination in 1878, public perception about him began to change, as it was revealed that he had not in fact embezzled a massive fortune for himself, but was instead revealed to have only been in possession of 75 yen²²⁹, and that he was severely in debt, owing over 8000 yen²³⁰ to various interests, after having taken numerous private loans in order to

224 Warm Love for his Wife, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

225 Tragedy of Ōkubo Toshimichi, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

226 Jō. 情.

227 Ri. 理.

228 Tragedy of Ōkubo Toshimichi, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

229 Around one million yen when converted to modern currency.

230 Around 140 000 000 yen when converted to modern currency.

supplement the state budget. In this way, the exhibition claims, he truly threw his self interest away in order to give his everything for the good of the state.²³¹

Like with Saigō, these museums' characterization of Ōkubo is above all striving to construct an ideal. In this case, an ideal politician and leader who completely dedicated himself to the service of the state. This in addition to the way his personality is described as a calm and collected rationalist bears a very close resemblance to an idealized conservative image of what a politician is supposed to be like.

This ideal fits in quite well with the writings of Fukudome Tamio, emeritus professor of Bunkyo University. In addition to using history to visualize the ideal Japan and Japanese man for the 21st century, he also writes about his image of an ideal politician for the new era. In his eyes, politicians are supposed to be learned, visionary and moral individuals, whose policies should always be based on acting on the behalf of the people, advancing national interest of the state, promoting peace in addition to advancing national and global development. Their morality should be based on being objective, and on the "just laws of Nature"²³², which is the exact same wording used in the Charter Oath issued by the Meiji government in 1868²³³. Additionally, the traditional Confucian ideal of the "Kingly Way"²³⁴ is also brought up as the ideal foundation for moral political leadership.²³⁵

According to Kim Sungmoon, Kingly Way is an ancient Confucian conception of ideal governorship through virtue, rituals and heaven bestowed morality that was allegedly employed by the old Chinese sage-kings in the service of the people's welfare. It is a term that has a history over two millennia old, and it was already advocated by the likes of Mencius and Xunzi during the Warring States Period of China in 3th and 2nd century BC, although even they had disagreements on what the Kingly Way exactly was, with Mencius placing more emphasis on virtue and morality of the leaders that was in his view essential in order to restore and retain morality and order in society, while Xunzi

231 Tragedy of Ōkubo Toshimichi, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

232 Ametsuchi no Kōdō. 天地の公道.

233 Meiji Shrine Website. Charter Oath. 2021.

234 Ōdō. 王道.

235 Fukudome 2002, 30.

emphasized the importance of proper rituals and penal codes.²³⁶

However in this context it would be best to focus on how Fukudome himself conceives this term, which seems to be more focused on the term's moral aspects. Fukudome defines his conception of Kingly Way by stating that politicians should make "virtue"²³⁷ their basis. In his eyes, virtue seems to mean admonishing and avoiding "deceitfulness, selfishness, slackness and indulgence"²³⁸, in addition to being impartial, open and honest. If politicians have these characteristics, they are able to follow the Kingly Way.²³⁹ And if Fukudome is indeed relying on Mencius' conception of Kingly Way like Kim presents it to be²⁴⁰, virtuous leaders and politicians who have cultivated their moral character by following the Kingly Way will make both the society and its governance more just, moral, virtuous and benevolent through their exemplar leadership.

This reflects a rather Confucian view on what ideal governance is supposed to be like, and it is quite compatible with idealizing Ōkubo. After all, Satsuma's education system ensured that its samurai were deeply learned on the Four Books and Five Classics, the Four books being classical commentaries on Confucianism by Zhu Xi,²⁴¹ while the Five Classics were an important part of education for government bureaucrats in China as well and formed a core component of Confucian education throughout East Asia²⁴². These works were the main conduct through which Confucian thought had been spread throughout Japan since the 16th century. The museum suggests, that the influence these works had on Ōkubo and Saigō deeds and achievements during the Restoration is not inconsequential.²⁴³

Fukudome also writes that politicians should also have a sense of responsibility, be venturous, have a strong sense of justice, and that they should be willing to devote their lives to serve the state. He ends his synopsis with an

236 Kim 2011, 375.

237 Toku. 徳.

238 Gishihōsha. 偽私放奢.

239 Fukudome 2002, 30.

240 Kim 2011, 375.

241 Goju Education and the Four Classics. Five Books. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

242 Nylan 2001, 1-2.

243 Goju Education and the Four Classics. Five Books. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

adapted quote that is originally attributed to Saigō, saying that politicians should take note of the principle of “Not caring for one’s life and not desiring for fame, rank or money.”²⁴⁴ Fukudome then proceeds to explain his views on the ideal public servants, and his points for ideal public servants are very much identical to his points regarding an ideal politician.²⁴⁵

Similarities with qualities of leadership described by Fukudome to the way Ōkubo’s character is build up is quite noticeable, and there are some implications that can be drawn from it. In the conservative leaning narratives on what ideal Japan or Japanese are like, focus seems to often turn towards the Meiji Restoration and the turbulent Bakumatsu years. More specifically, the view turns towards the perceived founding fathers of modern Japan, the leaders of the Satchō Alliance, like Satsuma’s Saigō and Ōkubo. They are often portrayed as ideal leaders and figures whom should be emulated and used as models for future decisions and actions, figures people should look to for guidance. This seems to be the common thread among more conservative leaning portrayals of the Meiji Restoration period’s main actors on the Imperial loyalist side.

What these positive and dominantly uncritical views on Saigō and Ōkubo does is produce consent to the preexisting power structures and systems, as it portrays these individuals not only as people with wide range of admirable and desirable personal qualities, but also as those that laid the groundwork for modern Japan’s most sacred state institutions. It would be apt to call the image constructed of them to be that of the Founding Fathers of Modern Japan.

4.2. Kagoshima as the Pioneer of Japanese Modernization

In addition to building up the leaders that arose from Satsuma as exceptional individuals that laid the foundations to modern Japan, the domain of Satsuma, and through that the city of Kagoshima itself, are described to have had an indispensable role in the Meiji Restoration and the following Industrial Revolution. Credit for this development is given of course in accordance with the museums’ general narrative to the leadership of the Satsuma domain, but

244 Seijika wa, inochi mo irazu, mei mo irazu, kani mo kane mo irazu, shusshoshintai wo kokorosubeshi. 政治家は、命もいらず、名もいらず、官位も金もいらず、出处進退を心すべし。

245 Fukudome 2002, 30.

also to other special features described to be unique to Kagoshima.

Shimadzu Nariakira as the Pioneer of Japan's Industrialization

Among the individually credited people, the largest praise in regards to Satsuma's, and through that Japan's industrialization is given to Shimadzu Nariakira, the lord of Satsuma domain from 1851 until his death in 1858 and member of the Shimadzu family, the hereditary *daimyōs* of the Satsuma domain, is another figure that is very prominent throughout Kagoshima's museums and another figure who is built up as an exceptional individual that led Japan's modernization. The banner at the entrance hall that introduces him to the visitors in the Museum of Meiji Restoration is titled "Promoting Modern World View, Rich Country, Strong Military · New Industries"²⁴⁶, which sets the tone of how he will be described from now on quite well²⁴⁷.

The banner goes on to describe how he early on perceived the advance of Western powers towards Asia as a threat, and thus started at an early stage to demand that Japan should transform itself into a modern nation state along the lines of the Western nations. After becoming the lord of Satsuma, he started to act immediately in order to develop his domain's military and economy²⁴⁸, experimenting and producing Western style warships, mines, torpedoes, gas lamps and constructing a reverberatory furnace and blast furnace facilities in addition to advancing glass manufacturing as part of the Shūseikan Project, that strove to build modern industries in Kagoshima. Already in this part, he is praised as an outstanding leader who was excellent at discovering talent, as proven by him finding and promoting figures like Saigō and Ōkubo from lower ranking samurai families.²⁴⁹

Shimadzu Nariakira is generally described as a visionary pioneer who saw the path that Japan should take early on due to the increasing

246 Kindaiteki Sekaikan, Fukoku Kyōhei · Shōsankōgyō. 近代的世界観・富国強兵・殖産興業を推進.

247 Shimadzu Nariakira, Promoting Modern World View, Rich Country, Strong Military · New Industries. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

248 Han no Fukoku Kyōhei no tame. 藩の富国強兵のため.

249 Shimadzu Nariakira, Promoting Modern World View, Rich Country, Strong Military · New Industries. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

encroachment of the Western powers towards Asia. He saw that realizing the ideal of Rich Country and Strong Military²⁵⁰ was necessary years before Commodore Perry's expedition's arrival, and he took it upon himself to turn Satsuma domain into a model domain for the rest of Japan to follow. In order to strengthen and modernize the navy, he would also intensify learning from the West in order to replicate Western shipbuilding techniques in Satsuma.²⁵¹

These efforts led to construction of the first full scale Western styled warship in Japan, Shōhei Maru, that the exhibit describes as the pride of Satsuma. This project began with him assigning one of his retainers, Tahara Naosuke, to acquiring and studying the blueprints of Dutch warships. Based on these blueprints, work on the ship began on the May of 1853, a month before the arrival of Perry's expedition to Japan. It was completed in 1854, and sent to Edo to be presented to the shogunate in 1855 under the *Hinomaru* flag.²⁵²

The museum goes as far as to assert that it was Shimadzu Nariakira who came up with the proposal to use the *Hinomaru* flag, the red circle on a white background, as the general identifying flag for all Japanese ship, separating them from the foreign ones, instead of just using the flag as a symbol for ships used by the imperial court and the shogunate. This notion was approved by the Shogunate in 1854, and thus the museum claims that Shimadzu Nariakira was the one who laid the foundations for the *Hinomaru's* adaptation as the national flag of Japan.²⁵³

The image of Shimadzu Nariakira as a pioneer and vanguard of the Japanese industrialization is built up further in other parts of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration through exhibits on various technological innovations introduced to Satsuma during his reign. One physical display of this is in the oldest known photograph that is known to have been taken in Japan, that of Shimadzu Nariakira from 1857 with a camera made from imported Dutch parts and blueprints.²⁵⁴ The Museum likewise contains replicas of the first telegram

250 Fukoku Kyōhei. 富国強兵.

251 Sea Connecting Satsuma and the World. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

252 Shōhei Maru, Pride of Satsuma, Japan's First Western Warship. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

253 Hinomaru as the First Symbol of Japan. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

254 The Oldest Extant Photograph Taken by Japanese. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

machines developed in Japan, likewise based on Dutch technology that were adopted in Satsuma by 1857, with encouragements and instructions on how to use them to send simple messages, along with bold deceleration that these machines made under the orders of Shimadzu Nariakira laid the foundations for Japan's telecommunications industry²⁵⁵. Likewise, a small scale replica of the first steamship constructed in Japan, named Unkōmaru, that was constructed in Kagoshima and completed in 1855 is likewise included in the museum²⁵⁶. All of these reconstructions and descriptions aim to reinforce Satsuma domain's, and through that Kagoshima's and Shimadzu Nariakira's positions as pioneers in Japan's technological and industrial leap forward in the latter half of the 19th century.

Presentation of Shimadzu Leadership at the UN World Heritage Site of Shōko Shūseikan

The museum located at the UN World Heritage Site of Shōko Shūseikan gives more praise to Shimadzu leadership's role in Satsuma's, and through that rest of Japan's development. Located at the coast of Kagoshima Bay facing the volcano of Sakurajima, the UN World Heritage Site in question is part of the wider "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining" site, which was admitted into the list of World Heritage Sites in 2015 due to the Outstanding Universal Value based on two criteria.

The first of these criteria, criterion ii, being that the site exhibits "important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology"²⁵⁷, and second, criterion iv, being that the site is "an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history"²⁵⁸. In advisory body's review of the site, criterion ii was fulfilled because the site represents "an exceptional interchange of industrial ideas, know-how and equipment", which led to "an unprecedented

255 Telegraphy Learned From Dutch Books. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

256 The Unkōmaru, Japan's First Steamship. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

257 ICOMOS, 2015. 95.

258 Ibid.

emergence of autonomous industrial development in the field of heavy industry which had profound impact on East Asia.”²⁵⁹ This evaluation was accepted by the World Heritage Committee’s 39th session in Bonn, 2015.²⁶⁰ The criteria iv was likewise considered to be fulfilled because the site is seen as a ”testimony to Japan’s unique achievement in world history as the first non-Western country to successfully industrialize.”²⁶¹

While the wider World Heritage site is extensive and consists of large number of locations across Japan, for the purposes of this work, only the Shōko Shūseikan portion is relevant. It consists of the remains of a Reverberatory Furnace, Former Machine Factory and the Former Engineers Residence, which were originally respectively constructed in 1857, 1865 and 1867 around and within the Shimadzu family’s secondary residence around the Sengan-en Park²⁶², which itself is originally from 1658, and which was recognized as National Site of Scenic Beauty in 1958.²⁶³

In its application to receive recognition to Shōko Shūseikan as part of the World Heritage site, the state of Japan describes that the site was “developed to help equip the Satsuma Lords in their defense of Kagoshima and the Ryūkyū Islands from foreign threat. Shūseikan was principally developed with cannon manufacturing and warship building in mind and marks the beginnings of the process of Western technology transfer to Japan from 1850.”²⁶⁴ This viewpoint that sets Kagoshima as the site where Japan’s Industrial Revolution, and thus modern Japan started is a narrative strongly reinforced by the exhibitions in the sites themselves.

The Narrative that the exhibits at the Shōko Shūseikan area and the Sengan-en Park present is not that different from the one at the Museum of the Meiji Restoration. Leadership of not just Shimadzu Nariakira, but the entire Shimadzu lineage is elevated quite unreservedly. One of the first signs visitors arriving by bus see is an introductory label along the road leading to the Shōko

259 ICOMOS, 2015. 95.

260 UNESCO World Heritage Committee. 2015. 177-178.

261 Ibid.

262 World Heritage Nomination. 2015. 80-83, 86.

263 Sengan-en. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020; Sengan-en National Site of Scenic Beauty. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

264 World Heritage Nomination. 2015. 85.

Shūseikan Machine Factory Museum that instructs visitors in English to “Follow the course of the Shimadzu family over 800 years and see how the international relations they forged led to the development of industrialization in modern Japan.”²⁶⁵ Interestingly, this grand deceleration is absent from the Japanese portion of the label, as it merely declares that museum’s purpose is to present materials handed down by the Shimadzu family, alongside the statement that the Shōko Shūseikan Machine Factory building from 1865 is the oldest remaining Western styled factory building in Japan.²⁶⁶

Entering the grounds of the Sengan-en past the ticket gates, visitors are soon greeted by a board that introduces visitors to the basic information on the site, furnished with the photo of Shimadzu Nariakira as well. Akin to the Museum of Meiji Restoration, this board offers the very same explanation that as Western nations began appearing in East Asia in increasing numbers, Lord Shimadzu Nariakira commenced the Shūseikan Project from 1851 onward in order to modernize the domains military, develop its industry, and through that strengthen and enrich Japan.²⁶⁷ In both of these locations this narratives serves to communicate the view that both Kagoshima and its leader, Shimadzu Nariakira, were the vanguards for Japan’s industrialization and an integral part of creating the contemporary state of Japan.

Here Shimadzu Nariakira is also credited for encouraging the development of modern styled Satsuma glassware and decorated pottery for purposes of export to the West. The small stone slab that this small label is embedded on states that Kagoshima was the place where this style of pottery that is also called “The Jewel of the Far East”²⁶⁸ was born, a variation of traditional Satsuma pottery that was substantially more ornamental than in previous eras. Curiously, the portion about the term “Satsuma” becoming a catch-all term in the West for all pottery imported from Japan is left only for the English version of the label.²⁶⁹ In this way, Shimadzu Nariakira is also given

265 Shoko Shuseikan Museum, Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

266 Ibid.

267 Feudal Lord Landscape Garden “Sengan-en” and Pioneering Industrial Complex “Shuseikan”. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

268 Kyokutō no Hōseki. 極東の宝石.

269 The Birthplace of Modern Satsuma-ware. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

credit for development of a significant Japanese export.

Leaving the Sengan-en Park and entering the Former Machine Factory building now turned into a museum, one can find further narratives portraying Shimadzu leadership of the former Satsuma domain in positive way. Following the suggested counter-clockwise route through the museum, one is taken through a chronological narrative from 17th century to the late 19th century. Immediately from the first exhibits, it is made clear that Satsuma under Shimadzu leadership has always been outwards facing, all the way from 17th century when the first Western matchlock rifles, the so called Tangesima guns, were acquired from the Portuguese through the island of Tangesima, which is part of the modern Kagoshima prefecture.²⁷⁰

Moving on, the next portion of the museum gives praise to Shimadzu Shigehide (1745-1833), who as the lord of the Satsuma domain is described as having been interested in foreign cultures, specifically Chinese and European, and that he developed Satsuma through promoting foreign medical knowledge, culture and sciences.²⁷¹ This information is near identical to the way he is presented in brief in the Museum of Meiji Restoration as well²⁷². Next Shimadzu lord presented along the route is Shimadzu Narioki, father and predecessor of Shimadzu Nariakira, who is briefly mentioned as having given the order to start with the production of western styled bronze cannons already in the 1840s²⁷³. All of this is utilized to strengthen the narrative that both Shimadzu leadership and Satsuma domain have always been outwards facing and at the forefront of Japan's development.

Shimadzu Nariakira is given significant attention in Shōko Shūseikan as well. He is given very much the same credit for early experimental industrial and armament efforts of Satsuma domain in the 1850s. In a series of video presentations that are played in loop in the westernmost room of the museum, Shimadzu Nariakira is portrayed as a leader with a grand vision that was not merely contained to Kagoshima or Satsuma, but that he already in the 1850s dreamed of a rich and strong Japan, and that the idea of a unified nation was

270 Former Shuseikan Museum. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

271 Ibid.

272 Shimadzu Shigehide. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

273 Former Shuseikan Museum. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

the key concept that inspired the Shūseikan Industrial Project. His ideas at this point are already characterized as an early embodiment of the *fukoku kyōhei* ideal, the ideal of a rich nation with a strong military that would become the central mantra of the future Meiji government after the Restoration.²⁷⁴ Once again, Kagoshima and Shimadzu Nariakira are presented as pioneers of Japan's development that were at the forefront of adopting the ideals of the future Meiji government as early as the 1850s.

Especially notable is the video presentation titled "Shimadzu, Satsuma and the Sea" in the main hall of the museum, which offers a rather convenient general overlook on the central message that is being constructed in this museum. This presentation stresses the centrality of Satsuma and the Shimadzu to Japan's modernization, declaring quite boldly that modern Japan started from Satsuma, and that the Shimadzu and Kagoshima have always been looking beyond the seas, even during period of national isolation of *sakoku*.²⁷⁵

This positive tone on Shimadzu leadership at the UNESCO World Heritage Site is not that surprising when one considers the organization that is entrusted with the care for the site, the Shimadzu Limited. It is a private Kagoshima based company that according to its own words in its Japanese website sees its mission to be the continuation of the Shimadzu tradition and their ambition, and that endeavors to become an "indispensable company to Kagoshima"²⁷⁶. For this end, it is engaged in local tourism industry through the management of Sengan-en Park and Shōko Shuseikan museum, but it also has a wider corporate profile through ownership of the Kagoshima Golf Club, and it is also engaged in raw resource extraction and management through its Forestry and Crushed Stone Divisions²⁷⁷.

Shimadzu Limited defines this Shimadzu legacy and ambition as being Shimadzu Nariakira's and his successors' ambition to make Japan into a strong and rich country, a goal which according to Shimadzu Limited, began in Kagoshima with the Shūseikan Industrial Project, which started a process of

274 Former Shuseikan Museum. Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

275 Ibid.

276 Official Japanese Website of Shimadzu Limited. 2021.

277 Official Japanese Website of Shimadzu Limited, Business Overview. 2021.

rapid advancement not seen anywhere else before.²⁷⁸

The fact that Shimadzu Limited and its facilities have such a positive view on Shimadzus is not surprising, considering the company leadership. A simple look at corporate information shows that the company's chairman and executive director is Shimadzu Nobuhisa.²⁷⁹ He has a rather close relation to the people presented in the company ran facilities, as he is not only a direct descendant of the Shimadzu lords, but he is also the current head of the Shimadzu family at the time of the writing. Additionally, he is married to great granddaughter of Saigō, with Ōkubo Toshimichi's descendant, Ōkubo Toshiaki, acting as the official matchmaker between the two. Shimadzu Nobuhisa joined the Shimadzu Limited in 1966, eventually rising to his current post in 2001. In addition to this post, he also acts as the chief priest of the Tsurugane Shrine, where the heads of the Shimadzu household are enshrined.²⁸⁰

Being entrusted with the Shōko Shūseikan museum, Shimadzu Limited is also entrusted with the curation of the museum, with Yamauchi Yuki being employed as the curator of the museum at the time of writing. The page presenting him in the company website explains the company's aims with the museum quite clearly. That aim is to change the image of Kagoshima. It is described quite candidly that the desired image is one in which Kagoshima is presented as a location that has had a long history as the place at the cutting edge of innovation in Japan, a location that was facing the outside world even during the *sakoku*, and served as location where the foundations for Japan's modernization were laid, image that is not as widely spread and widely held as the company would desire.²⁸¹

While the interests behind Shōko Shūseikan museum have their biases, this of course does not mean that the information or material that the museum is spreading is false, on the contrary it does not seem that any of the information in it is incorrect, but what should always be considered is not merely

278 Official Japanese Website of Shimadzu Limited, Business Overview. 2021.

279 Official Japanese Website of Shimadzu Limited, Corporate Information. 2021.

280 Lords of Satsuma, 10-13, 2008; Official Japanese Website of Shimadzu Limited, Corporate Information. 2021.

281 Official Japanese Website of Shimadzu Limited, People Working at Shimadzu Limited. 2021.

whether any corpus of information is factual or not, but also what it decides to focus on and what it leaves unexplored. After all, as has been covered in the historiography section of this work, specific historical narratives can be constructed and promoted through a selection of facts that are most effective in supporting the claims being made, while some other sets of facts that could support another narrative or question the one you are striving to promote are either ignored or given a smaller degree of importance. This does seem to be the case with the exhibitions at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shōko Shūseikan, where the Shimadzu management behind these museums could certainly partially explain the heavy emphasis placed on the qualities of Shimadzu leadership in these facilities, instead of other potential histories and narratives that could be conveyed.

Satsuma as the Vanguard of Modern Japan

While individual achievements are clearly prioritized through their sheer volume and prominence alone, all the praise of Satsuma's role in Meiji Restoration still does not go solely to individuals. There is still some space allocated to other factors that made the domain of Satsuma itself and the city of Kagoshima so important in the Meiji Restoration and the development of modern Japan.

Reasons given as to why Satsuma ended up having such a central role in the Meiji Restoration and Japan's Industrial Revolution, besides the leadership, are accredited to geographic factors. As in other issues, both the museum of the Meiji Restoration and the Shōko Shūseikan are quite united in this matter as well. Both portray Satsuma's location on the southern tip of Japanese home islands as a key factor as to why the Satsuma domain and Kagoshima were able to become the vanguard in Japan's modernization, and why it was able to maintain connections to the outside world even during the era of *sakoku* policy.

As one moves on from the entrance hall of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration to the first proper section of the museum, one is quick to come across information regarding Satsuma domain's conquest of Ryūkyū Kingdom

in 1609, a small kingdom whose area largely corresponded to that of the modern Okinawa prefecture. Satsuma did not however annex the kingdom, but instead installed themselves as its overlords. Through its connections and trade routes with Ryūkyū, Satsuma was able to maintain trade routes to China, thus making Kagoshima one of the few locations in Japan with access to foreign trade during *sakoku* period outside Nagasaki, something that would help provide Kagoshima not only greater profits through trade, but also more ready access to information from the world outside of Japanese islands.²⁸²

Alongside this information on Ryūkyū island, one's attention may be drawn to the large information board that one would find under one's feet in this space, right in the middle of the corridor. This board shows quite clearly all the trade connections Kagoshima had with Ryūkyū islands, alongside with five listed benefits that Kagoshima had due to its trade connections to the Asian continent: First is that Satsuma would be among the first in Japan to receive information from abroad. Second, it also "sprouted consciousness in regards to national defense"²⁸³. Third, It allowed for the inflow of culture and technology. Fourth, were the profits Satsuma gained from trade. Fifth and final benefit is that it allowed for the emergence of enlightened leaders.²⁸⁴

Some of these points may need some further elaboration not provided by this information board itself, but looking at the rest of the items in the museum, their meaning becomes quite clear. In regards to awakening consciousness on the importance of national defense, this is quite clearly referring to the increased awareness of Western powers' strength and encroaching presence in East Asia that is explained in other parts of the exhibition. Due to the approaching external threat, it became apparent to those with knowledge of external affairs that national scale defensive preparations and industrialization were necessary in order to create a strong and prosperous nation capable of maintaining its independence.²⁸⁵

282 Satsuma Domain's View to Overseas, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020; Satsuma Connected to the World by the Sea, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

283 Kokubō Ishiki no Mebae. 国防意識の芽生え.

284 Satsuma by the Ocean, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020;

285 Satsuma, the Forerunner in Japan's Industrialization, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

In regards to the fifth point, the emergence of enlightened leaders is explained both through Kagoshima's access to up to date information from abroad which enabled Satsuma's elite to stay well informed of the developments outside of Japan. This is displayed in practice for example by Shimadzu Nariakira being well aware of the developments of the Opium War between United Kingdom and the Qing Empire.²⁸⁶ In other parts of the exhibition credit of its ruling class' enlightenment is given to the *Gojū* education system, something that the museum boasts as having been a system completely unique to Kagoshima, that is credited to having been the driving force behind Meiji Restoration²⁸⁷, and that its success can be seen in the rise of great statesmen like Ōkubo Toshimichi who were educated within this system²⁸⁸. The museum gives repeated and detailed explanations on how the *Gojū* education was structured and how it worked. It is in fact so extensive that the entirety of the middle section of the first floor is almost entirely dedicated to exhibits and information boards about this system. This is so extensive in fact that it will be covered on its own in the next chapter.

Connections of Kagoshima Museums' Narrative to the Contemporary Political Objectives of the Liberal Democratic Party.

One point that is notable about these elements that are presented as benefits from being connected to the rest of the world is that there are some similarities between these presented benefits and the current leading party's, the Liberal Democratic Party's, contemporary objectives. A simple look at LDP's policy program shows that it has the increase of Japan's involvement in international affairs and strengthening of national defense as one of its central objectives. LDP states quite clearly in its official website that its aim is to resolutely oppose unjustified criticisms surrounding the nation's history, and defend its honor and

286 Satsuma Domain and Western Great Powers' Advance to Asia, History Road "Road of the Hometown of the Restoration", 2020.

287 Driving Force of the Meiji Restoration·Gojū Education System Unique to Satsuma Domain, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

288 Great Person of Satsuma Brought Up by the Gojū Education, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

national interest by strengthening strategic external communication.²⁸⁹ Based on this and the comments made by LDP government members in regards to the Meiji Restoration as presented in the chapter regarding Meiji Commemoration in Postwar Japan and comparing them to the narrative offered by Kagoshima museums, it can be claimed that the narrative that Kagoshima museums promote could be the type of narrative that LDP wishes to see spread.

Additionally, given that the management of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration is entrusted to Kagoshima Convention and Visitors Bureau²⁹⁰, which in its own words is a public interest corporation that is dedicated to utilizing Kagoshima prefecture's and city's cultural, social and economic characteristics to promote the area and draw in visitors, which in turn will contribute to Kagoshima's economic revitalization and elevation of its culture²⁹¹. This organization owes approximately 50% of its income and funding to subsidies provided by the local government in Kagoshima, the largest singular source of income unless one were to combine income from all the properties managed by the organization into a single item.²⁹² This level of local government funding has been maintained at the very least from 2019 onward²⁹³. Given Kagoshima local governments' dependency on funding from the central government, for example with Kagoshima prefecture's total income in 2020 being 67.3% dependent on external revenue sources²⁹⁴, a figure that will be addressed more in detail later, it becomes quite clear that Museum of the Meiji Restoration is by proxy quite dependent on central government funding. As the prefecture is dependent on funds from the central government, there is plenty of incentive for Kagoshima to promote narratives that do not question or challenge the preexisting narratives of great man theory based narratives of history that are convenient for Tokyo and Kagoshima alike.

It is also worth to note that LDP has been the dominant postwar party not

289 LDP Official Website. Protecting National Interest Through Vigorous Diplomacy and Defense, 2019.

290 Museum of the Meiji Restoration Official Website, Overview of the Establishment, 2019.

291 Kagoshima City Tourism Guide Website, Overview of the Organization, 2021.

292 Kagoshima City Tourism Guide Website, Budget for Income and Expenditure, 2021.

293 Kagoshima City Tourism Guide Website, Budget for Income and Expenditure, 2019.

294 Kagoshima Prefecture's Local Public Finance Division, 2020, 4.

only in Japan, but in Kagoshima as well. Although its hold of Kagoshima has not been entirely unproblematic, with the latest gubernatorial elections in 2020 going to a non-LDP backed candidate²⁹⁵, it has nevertheless maintained dominance in local legislature. According to the Kagoshima Prefectural Assembly's own website, updated in the June of 2020, LDP holds 38 out of the 51 seats in the Prefectural Assembly²⁹⁶, granting them a rather comfortable majority. Back in the local elections of 2007, LDP also managed to win 31 out of the 46 seats available²⁹⁷, so LDP dominance of Kagoshima's local politics is not a new phenomena. Most importantly LDP has also dominated Kagoshima's single member districts in the general elections. In the latest general elections of 2017, LDP won 3 out of the 4 single district seats²⁹⁸. Even in their most disastrous outcome in the prefecture, the 2009 elections, they managed to win 3 out of the 5 districts.²⁹⁹ Therefore, it could be stated that Kagoshima is an LDP stronghold, a situation that is most likely going to further ensure the continuation of the preexisting narratives and the current funding arrangement.

Women in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration

When it comes to the representation of women in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration, they take a more minor role next to the men of Kagoshima and are limited to a relatively low number of information boards and other material. In the entrance hall of the museum among the nine banners displaying select figures from Kagoshima of the Bakumatsu and Meiji periods, there are a few women included, such as Tōgō Masu, Tenshōin, Saigō Ito and Nogi Shizuko. What combines them in this context is that they are all brought up due to their relation to notable male figures of the period. Tōgō Masu is introduced as mother of Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō, the commander of the Combined Fleet during the Russo-Japanese War³⁰⁰, Tenshōin as the wife of shogun Tokugawa

295 NHK, Kagoshima Gubernatorial Elections, 2020.

296 Kagoshima Prefectural Assembly. Kagoshima Prefectural Assembly Members of the Liberal Democratic Party, 2020.

297 Asahi Shimbun, 2007 Nationwide Local Elections, Kagoshima Prefecture, 2007.

298 Asahi Shimbun, 2017 House of Representatives Election, 2017.

299 Asahi Shimbun, 2009 General Elections, 2009.

300 Tōgō Masu, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

lesada³⁰¹, Saigō Ito as the wife of Saigō Takamori³⁰² and Nogi Shizuko as the wife of General Nogi Maresuke, military commander during the Russo-Japanese War, although his participation in the 1st Sino-Japanese War is left unmentioned³⁰³, as is the general trend in all of the museums in Kagoshima.

However, the museum justifies this type of representation right in the beginning of the primary information label dedicated to women titled simply as “Women of Satsuma.” As Bakumatsu period and the Meiji Era were both male dominated societies where prearranged marriages were common, many women were destined to be housewives tied to their husbands. This was the case in Satsuma as well, and thus many women who could have excelled in sciences and other fields were nurtured from birth to be submissive and devoted housewives.³⁰⁴ Therefore, the museum concedes that prospects for women were rather poor during the Meiji era.

Nevertheless, this information board presents, there were still a number of women from Kagoshima who would excel in sciences and politics who would become pioneers to contemporary Japanese women³⁰⁵. Yet again, Kagoshima’s role as the pioneer in Japan’s development is being constructed in this context as well. Concrete example brought up in this regard include Machida Eiko, who is credited for her actions in taking care of the wounded during the Satsuma Rebellion, and who would later go on to teach nursing at Japanese Red Cross Hospital. Other figure is Tange Umeko, who became the first woman to complete a doctorate at the Imperial University’s Agricultural Sciences department, modern University of Tokyo with her dissertation on Vitamin B2.³⁰⁶ It is worth noting that Tange completed her doctorate in 1940 at the age of 67³⁰⁷, which is something that is left unmentioned, most likely due to the lack of space as only two rows of text in the information board are dedicated to her. Absence of examples of Kagoshima women in politics is also quite striking, despite them

301 Tenshōin Atsuhime, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

302 Saigō Ito, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

303 Nogi Shizuko, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

304 Women of Satsuma, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

305 Ibid.

306 Ibid.

307 Kagoshima City Tourism Guide Official Website, “Tange Umeko” 2021.

being brought up in the introductory portion of the text.

Quite strikingly, it is Tenshōin, also known as Atsuhime, who gets the most space in this museum. In addition to being introduced in one of the entrance hall banners, she has a small section of the museum named the Tenshōin corner dedicated to her on the ground floor of the museum. Like with Saigō and Ōkubo, the banner in the entrance hall gives a short description of her life, stating that she was born in 1835 in Satsuma domain as daughter of Shimadzu Tadatake, who was a head of a Shimadzu branch family. She was adopted to the main line by *daimyō* Shimadzu Nariakira, until she was married at the age of 19 to Tokugawa Iesada, who would die just two years after the marriage. While Satsuma domain would rise up against the *bakufu* in the Boshin War, Tenshōin dedicated herself to ensuring that the Tokugawa family would survive the war through petitioning for leniency from the Satsuma Army. In the end Tokugawas were not wiped out in the war, and after the Restoration she would nurture the heir of the family, Tokugawa Iesato to adulthood.³⁰⁸

Tenshōin corner section describes her role in acting as an intermediary between the Tokugawa family and the Sachō Alliance during the Boshin War. After the defeat of Tokugawa forces in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi and having been declared the enemy of the Imperial Court and the new government, the former shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu fled from Osaka to Edo. There he tried to get Tenshōin, as she was a Shimadzu, to act as an intermediary between him and the new government. Although initially pensive, she eventually agreed to Yoshinobu's request, also convincing Princess Katsu, the wife of former shogun Tokugawa Iemochi and daughter of former emperor Ninkō, to help Yoshinobu gain an imperial pardon. After Yoshinobu had voluntarily confined himself to the Kanei-ji temple in a display of fealty to the imperial court, Princess Katsu and Tenshōin were left to the Edo castle to face the challenge of ensuring that the Tokugawa family would be preserved beyond the Boshin War, an effort in which they would be successful³⁰⁹.

In addition to this, the section contains a reconstruction of Tenshōin's

308 Tenshōin Atsuhime, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

309 Atsuhime at the Time of the Outbreak of the Boshin War, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

living room in the Edo Castle³¹⁰, as well as a map detailing the route her procession took when she moved from Kagoshima to Edo for her marriage according to historical records, along with showing the route she took in Miyao Tomiko's novel *Tenshōin Atsuhime*, that is the work that the NHK period drama *Atsuhime* is also based upon³¹¹.

Indeed, although it is not stated outright why Tenshōin has been elevated to a much more visible position than other women in the museum, it is possible that it has something to do with her being the main character of a popular period drama, as this fact is lightly alluded to in the museums as displayed above. Just like would be the case with the more recent *Segodon* series, in the Kagoshima City's official documentation from 2008 detailing the state of the revitalization plan for the city center, similar desire to utilize the broadcasting of "Atsuhime" drama along with launching of "Atsuhime" related theme museums and exhibitions to boost the city's and prefecture's tourism is stated quite clearly³¹², meaning that the decision to focus on Tenshōin to this extent may be related to hopes of her being a more recognizable Kagoshiman woman from the Bakumatsu-Meiji Restoration period to the wider public than her other contemporaries, and thus more useful in drawing in visitors, as is the case with likewise well known and recognizable Saigō and Ōkubo. Thus market interests could direct curatorial decisions.

In the end, the way women are depicted in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration falls very much in line with Mara Patessio's observations on the way Meiji era women are often depicted in Japanese history. They are depicted as powerless, and this lack of power is explained due to their lack of social and political rights that had not been granted to them by the government, and thus they had no choice but to act in very limited fields and in very limited manner.³¹³ The powerful exceptions that the museum brings up of the Meiji era women, with the exception of Tange Umeko, are generally depicted as having attained

310 Reconstruction of Atsuhime's Living Room in Edo Castle's Inner Palace., Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

311 Atsuhime Corner., Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

312 Report on the Follow Up to the General Revitalization Plan of the Designated Downtown Area, Kagoshima City, 2008.

313 Patessio 2020, Chapter 1.

positions of influence through marriages or motherhood, like Tenshōin, or they operated in limited fields such as nursing, as is the case with Machida Eiko.

Thus the focus tends to be on individual women in very particular environments, which runs a risk of limiting perspective on the wider social and political women's movements of the time or how women of the Meiji period already worked to improve their own social standing by their own means³¹⁴, which is an issue this museum's depictions generally run into as well. The powerless are left without representation and only acknowledged in a couple of sentences, while exceptional individuals are elevated.

4.3. Constructing Kagoshima's Identity

Kagoshima's tourism promotion materials, museums and heritage sites have one element that is very pervasive, and that is their effort to promote local features and elements. While these elements have already been alluded to in previous chapters, this chapter will dive deeper into these elements and on the ways they are used to construct and strengthen Kagoshima's identity.

Building Kagoshima's Identity Through the Gojū Education System.

Elements that are claimed to be unique to Kagoshima are prevalent throughout the city's museums and the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Among them one of the most extensively represented is the *Gojū*³¹⁵ education system. This education system is especially a major component in the Museum of Meiji Restoration.

According to the museum, *Gojū* education was a system of education in place in Satsuma domain during the feudal period and all the way to the Meiji era education reforms, and it was dedicated to the education of the young samurai so that they would be ready to assume positions appropriate of their class as adults, primarily in the domain administration. This system divided

314 Patessio 2020, Chapter 1.

315 Consists of characters 郷中, which refers to Edo period term for township, group of villages or district. This was the basic unit of organization of this system.

children to three different levels roughly based on their age with some leeway. The youngest bracket was called *kochigo*, which included children around the ages of 6 and 10, while those in the second bracket covering children from ages of 11 to 15 were called *osechigo*, while the oldest group ranging from ages of 15 to 25 were called *nisei*. Furthermore, each district or neighborhood of around four to five town blocks had their own separate education groups. For example, both Saigō and Ōkubo were from Shitakajiya-machi, and thus were part of the Shitakajiya-machi group.³¹⁶

The Museum offers extremely detailed descriptions of each group's standard daily schedule. Within these groups, *kochigo* and *osechigo* would study reading, writing and Confucianism in their respective groups for about four hours a day, primarily through materials such as the Four Books and Five Classics. Physical education was also an important part of studies, with around 6 hours a day dedicated to various different physical activities like martial arts, horseback riding and archery. There were no full time teachers, and instead it were the *nisei* who primarily acted as teachers to younger students, with lessons being held in *nisei*'s homes, with the belief that engaging in the act of teaching itself would embed these lessons further into the minds of the *nisei* teachers as well. *Nisei* would also start getting introduced into work life through posts in domain administration if there were any vacancies, or alternatively they would study in Kagoshima's domain school if they were unable to find employment³¹⁷, which was a common issue in late Edo period and Bakumatsu era Japan, as has been addressed in previous chapters.

With the heavy promotion of the *Gojū* system, it is quite clear that both education and factors that differentiate Satsuma domain and Kagoshima from rest of Japan are being pushed as an important factors as to why Satsuma domain gave rise to exceptional individuals, and as to why it became the vanguard of Meiji Restoration and Japan's industrialization. Nevertheless, explanations as to why this education system was superior in contrast to systems in place in other domains is something that the exhibits do not

316 Driving Force of the Meiji Restoration・Gojū Education System Unique to Satsuma Domain, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020;

317 A Day of Gojū Education, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

elaborate that much on. One of the tangential benefits that the Gojū education system is said to have provided is that since the students went through the same system together with other children and youth from their neighborhood, it allowed them to forge bonds that lasted for a lifetime³¹⁸. Although if one were to be pedantic, one could point to the fallout after the *Seikanron* debate between Saigō and Ōkubo that it still was not enough to prevent fundamental political disagreements from dismantling those ties.

It should be noted that although *Gojū* system is portrayed as unique, it bears many similarities to education of samurai in rest of Japan. Focus on the Confucian classics in education was universal, as was the vocational preparation for positions within the government, along with the cultivation of one's morality and ability both in arts of peace and war along Confucian lines.³¹⁹

In this sense, curriculum was not that different. Where the *Gojū* does differ however is in the way education was organized and provided, but it is still difficult to offer a generalized example to compare it to as there was no unified educational system in place in Tokugawa Japan. While home schooling or education provided by specialized samurai and monks who took students in to their homes and temples to teach them were not unusual especially in the beginning of the Tokugawa period, by the time of the Bakumatsu period, samurai education was most commonly provided by schools staffed by specialized teachers ran by domain authorities.³²⁰ As noted above, while Kagoshima also had domain schools like these, based on the descriptions offered by the museum they did not focus on education of younger children like is described by Dore in his example of Yonezawa domain school, which he uses as an example of a standard domain school of the period. It is noteworthy though that even in Yonezawa domain school located in northern Honshū in the contemporary Yamagata prefecture, the education of younger students between the ages of six and fourteen was entrusted to *shosei*, older students in their twenties that had been selected for their aptitude, albeit only from the upper

318 A Day of Gojū Education, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

319 Dore 2011, 34,36; Duke 2009, 11-12.

320 Dore 2011, 68-69.

ranks of the samurai class³²¹.

In this sense function of these *shosei* appears quite similar to *nise*, although drawn from a much more limited pool, and with more secure prospects in domain administration or education as full time teachers³²². Since other contemporary forms of education in Japan are not touched in the museum, the perspective on *Gojū* system's similarities and differences to them may be lost on the visitors. This could be useful in constructing the *Gojū* system to seem more convincingly unique than it actually is.

In regards to the other benefits provided by Satsuma education and to differentiate it from other systems, Shimadzu involvement is once again brought up through "*Jisshin Kō Iroha Uta*", a poem containing 47 precepts on how to conduct oneself by lord Shimadzu Tadayoshi from the 16th century that the museum claims to have been one of the central text of the *Gojū* education, and that it inspired the people of Kagoshima who took part in the Meiji Restoration. The museum has chosen 8 precepts to bring up in its exhibit, and it is indeed interesting to see what points the museum saw to be most central and relevant to contemporary times. Since the author's understanding of classical Japanese is a bit limited, translations and interpretations of Alex Bradshaw, head of overseas business for Shimadzu Limited, were used alongside consultations with a version of the poem translated into modern Japanese. The first one brought up is "Listening to or repeating the wisdom of the old is useless without action", or in other words, simply memorizing and repeating old teachings out loud is useless, and that one should above all focus on implementing them and putting them into practice.³²³

Message behind this is quite interesting as it does reflect quite a conservative view on the nature of how past knowledge should be interpreted, as it seems to imply that proper course of action and morals can be found in the writings of the past. Other verses presented here give a rather wide range of advice on how to rule properly and how to cultivate oneself, such as using the actions of one's friends as mirrors upon which to cultivate and reflect on

321 Dore 2011, 74-76.

322 Dore 2011, 74-76.

323 Bradshaw 2020; *Jisshin Ko Iroha Uta*, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

oneself. Likewise, an example of advice on leadership is the need to educate people on the purpose of the laws before implementing them, as it would be unjust to punish a person for breaking a law that they did not know about or understand.³²⁴

The reason as to why the *Gojū* education system and the “*Jisshin Kō Iroha Uta*” are brought up and emphasized like this is seemingly because the museum strives to construct and display them as unique features of Kagoshima that can be used in enforcement of local identity. They are a way for Kagoshima to reinforce their own unique identity that differentiates them from other localities. According to the definition of local identity provided by Anthony Rausch, local identity is something that is rather difficult to identify, and it is difficult to accurately describe any specific local identity, as identity is always something that stems from and varies by the individual. Nevertheless, there are still various elements that are used in order to reinforce collective identities, such as local and national identities. These elements are, for example, ethnicity, culture, space, economy, legal and political systems, various institutions, myths, habits, sentiments, traditions and values. Just as national identities are constructed upon these elements, so are local identities, and they are only realized as actual collective identities only after a sufficient number of people believe in it being real.³²⁵

Kagoshima Dialect in Local Identity Construction

Use of Kagoshima dialect in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration is rather noticeable. The Museum has an exhibit that consists of recordings in the local Kagoshima dialect, a dialect which the information board itself describes as being “gentle and serene”³²⁶, which describes Saigō Takamori’s character and everyday life and habits.³²⁷ Additionally, the museum also has an interactive screen with a number of common expressions in standard Japanese that can

324 Bradshaw 2020; *Jisshin Ko Iroha Uta*, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

325 Rausch 2005, 124.

326 Nyūwade Ōrakana 柔和で大らかな.

327 Saigō as spoken by Iwayama Toku, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

be selected on a touchscreen, which the machine then reads out loud in old Kagoshima dialect, which the information board next to the touchscreen describes as being so unique in its intonation and vocabulary that it sounds like a foreign language. If one were to for example press “Otsukaresama”, a set phrase used in various contexts, but especially among colleagues in the workplace both as greeting and parting words, in this screen, the machine would say out loud “Oyattosaa.”³²⁸

Language can be of utmost importance in construction of an identity. It is after all the means that heritage and believes are passed through by, and differences between local dialects and can become important cleavages that can be used in identity construction. Indeed, sometimes the very line between dialect and language can be quite blurry. For example, although common distinction between language and dialect is made to be mutual intelligibility, this does not work on all cases. For example, although Norwegian and Danish are highly intelligible between each other, they are defined as separate languages instead of dialects. On the other hand, some southern Chinese dialects can be considered to be quite unintelligible to northern Chinese dialects when compared to intelligibility between Norwegian and Danish, but nevertheless their classification as dialects is maintained and defended by their grammatical similarity and perceived common cultural heritage, something that could be done with Norwegian and Danish as well. It could indeed be as Max Weinreich suggested, that “language is a dialect that has an army and a navy.”³²⁹

When it comes to the relation between standard Japanese and its dialects, the power imbalance as alluded to by Weinreich is quite clearly visible between standard Japanese based on the Japanese spoken in Tokyo area and various dialects outside of capital region through the efficacy of the standardization of the Japanese language. The standardization trend of the Japanese language was strong throughout the 20th century, with standard Japanese advancing into every single domain among younger speakers, leaving primarily elderly speakers of dialects with ever decreasing space³³⁰.

328 Try to Listen to the Old Kagoshima Dialect, Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

329 Edwards 2018, 17-18.

330 Heinrich 2018, 218-219.

Inoue goes as far as to say that this effort to standardize Japanese language has been one of Japan's great projects of the past century. One concrete example he gives of its effectiveness is through a pair of surveys conducted on the rate of usage of the common language, that means language used without local dialectal flavor, in Kansai area. The first survey was conducted in 1981 and involving informants born around 1895, while the second one involving junior high school students born around 1985 was conducted in 1997. The first survey showed a common language usage rate of 37%, while the latter revealed an average usage of 76%, which would suggest that common Japanese has doubled in its share over local dialects in the space of three generations in the Kansai area³³¹. Therefore, younger speakers' understanding of their own region's dialect tends to be increasingly limited, but it is still sufficient enough that they can insert their speech with terms from their regional dialects, and thus enabling them to express their desire for distinction³³².

While Heinrich focuses on the disappearance of local dialects and the popularization of the formerly dialect tied expressions and sentence ending particles to common spoken language all over Japan by speakers wishing to exhibit certain stereotypical traits associated with the various regional dialects, such as using terms and sentence ending particles from traditional southern dialects to express masculinity³³³, it would seem that at the very least in Kagoshima's case the localities are not simply content with relinquishing ownership over their local dialects, as performative use of the dialect is still clearly visible in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration and Kagoshima's tourism promotion materials, with Kagoshima dialect being strongly pushed by both in order to create and reinforce local distinctiveness and identity.

This seems to be very much in line with Inoue's perceptions of a standardization process of Japanese language and its recent countertrend. While in the past, attitudes towards local dialects ranged from outright hostility during imperial Japan due to their perceived backwardness as opposed to the

331 Inoue 2010, 110.

332 Heinrich 2018, 218-219.

333 Heinrich 2018, 220.

modernity that standardized language represented, to more neutral attitudes that were adopted in the postwar period. While the more neutral stance in postwar Japan sought to establish coexistence between the common Japanese and dialects by allowing dialects to exist in informal and private contexts, due to standardized education, increasing internal migration and popularization of radio and television all contributed to the decline of dialects and the spread of common Japanese. However, as regional dialects have started to grow increasingly rare and the Tokyo colloquial has become the norm, attitudes towards local dialects have started to change since 1990s with reinvigorated appreciation towards them, even though Inoue clearly stresses that there will be no return to the wide use of local dialects that existed in the past.³³⁴

It could very well be that use of expressions of Kagoshima dialect in Kagoshima's museums and heritage sites could represent similar desire to express local distinction from rest of the country. It also could be counted as one method of preserving and spreading some expressions of the old Kagoshima dialect so that younger speakers from Kagoshima can at the very least color their own speech with some expressions and terms from their native region's dialect, and through that propagate Kagoshima's identity through language as well.

Rausch presents that what localities use to define themselves as something unique, like language, systems and traditions is no different from the way nations define their own national identities. Indeed, they are promoted in a similar fashion as well through reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories and myths.³³⁵ All of these elements that are assigned with a quality of being local and promoted as such, like Kagoshima's geographical realities, the local dialect, the *Gojū* education, "*Jisshin Kō Iroha Uta*", in addition to something as simple as the near universal use of the Shimadzu clan symbol not only in the city flag, but also around the city of Kagoshima in various advertisements, business signs, street lamps, manhole covers are all elements that Rausch³³⁶ is referring to when he is talking of reproductions of patterns;

334 Inoue 2010, 113-114, 116-117, 122; Heinrich 2018, 219.

335 Rausch 2005, 124.

336 Ibid.

values and symbols that are spread and repeated in order to reinforce a common local identity.

Thus the museums and heritage sites of Kagoshima serve not only as an institutions through which Kagoshima City hopes to draw in visitors or as institutions that solidify the traditional narrative on Japanese history based upon conceptions of progressive history and great men theory. They also serve the function of building and enforcing local identity among the citizens of the city and prefecture of Kagoshima. This also serve in establishing Kagoshima as a distinct location among the visitors from outside of the prefecture.

What makes constructing local identity so important is that a strong sense of local identity can be turned into resources that can then be used to develop the locality³³⁷. As to how this local identity can be converted into resources, Christopher Ray offers an interesting model for this. Even though he primarily writes from the perspective of rural areas in Europe, his model is nevertheless fitting for the position that peripheral Kagoshima finds itself in. Ray describes a “cultural economy approach to rural development”, which is an attempt by rural areas to localize economic control and to valorize their locales through their own local cultural identity. Rural and peripheral locales can pursue this type of development through utilization of four mutually compatible modes.³³⁸

Mode I is called the commodification of local culture. In this mode, certain products and services with local identity are created so that they can then be either marketed directly or used in the marketing of the location. Ray counts cultural tourism within which culture and history are being sold as prime example of this mode. The reason as to why local authorities and interests pursue this type of mode, is that by fixing certain products and services to the locale, territory itself will be more able to retain the economic benefit of various activities within the locale itself, while also giving them greater control over the activity.³³⁹ This is a mode that can be quite aptly applied to Kagoshima’s museums and heritage sites as well, even if Ray may have been considering as

337 Rausch 2005, 125.

338 Ray 1998, 3.

339 Ray 1998, 6-7.

urban of a setting as the city of Kagoshima.

Additionally, Mode II is described as being construction and projection of territorial identity through integration of local cultural resources into local identity in order to promote a region to the outside world. This mode covers active promotion and selling of locations for tourism and attracting investment³⁴⁰. Thus, advertisements directed towards crowds outside of Kagoshima area with the aim of attracting visitors to Kagoshima can be counted within this mode.

Thus, everything that can be branded as Kagoshiman, is branded as such in order to tie them down to the location, and thus allowing the prefecture and the city to reap the benefits out of all the properties it can integrate to the location and all the associations it can tie to the word “Kagoshima”. This is relatively uncomplicated to do with items in question, as the people and events of the 19th century discussed in this chapter and the former Satsuma domain are spatially so strongly affiliated with Kagoshima. Therefore, branding all these elements as local peculiarities and using them for purposes of promotion, attracting visitors and strengthening local identity both inside and outside of Kagoshima is a very convenient stratagem that the city and prefecture can utilize for contemporary promotional purposes and economic benefit.

Building Kagoshima Identity through Meiji Heritage

As is the case with large majority of prefectures in Japan, Kagoshima is also struggling with depopulation issues, both in its rural and urban areas. Most recent projections by the prefectural government show that the prefecture has witnessed 24 consecutive years of population decline, with the most recent estimation from 2019 recording a estimated annual population decline of 0.76%, a rate that has been constantly growing. While faring better than the rest of the prefecture, even Kagoshima City itself has not been spared of this development, as its population has dropped from the record 604 846 people in 2010 to 595 319 people in 2019.³⁴¹

340 Ray 1998, 7.

341 Kagoshima Prefecture, Population Change Survey, 2019; Kagoshima City Census Results, 2017.

These prefectures that are in midst of depopulation are faced with ever decreasing income base, and are thus largely reliant on external sources of revenue for their budgetary needs. Kagoshima prefecture is no exception to this with its dependency on external sources of revenue. Central government provided support through local allocation tax, national treasury disbursements, local bonds and local transfer taxes made up to 67.3% of the prefecture's income in 2020, and judging by the prefecture's annual income and expenditure reports, this rate of dependency has remained the same for a while now, only witnessing a minor increase from the levels reported in 2015 when the dependency rate was 66.9%.³⁴²

One good additional indicator of Kagoshima's financial situation and indicator of its dependency on the central government can be seen in its local tax income levels per capita. In a comparative report compiled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications on local tax income in all of Japan's 47 prefectures between 2013 and 2017 for the White Paper on Local Public Finance of 2019, Kagoshima prefecture was ranked as one of the lowest in Japan, being placed as 42nd, only coming above Aomori, Kōchi, Akita, Nagasaki and Okinawa prefectures.³⁴³

Given these indicators for Kagoshima's demographic and economic state, research that has been conducted on more rural areas suffering from similar depopulation and economic issues with high degree of dependency on central government are usable in Kagoshima prefecture's case as well, as it can be safely assumed that Kagoshima local authorities are acting under similar impetus as the authorities in these regions as well. Thus, given this similarity peripheral nature of both locations, Jones', Nagata's, Nakajima's and Matsuyama's work on branding and tourism promotion measures in Nagano prefecture can assist in interpreting the reasons as to why these museums and heritage sites are being financially supported by the local government and what benefits Kagoshima can achieve through them.

What their work points out is that one strategy that these regions in midst

342 Kagoshima Prefecture, Draft Budget Outline, 2015, 3; Kagoshima Prefecture's Local Public Finance Division, 2020, 4.

343 Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2019.

of fiscal troubles use to survive, is to turn towards new service industries such as tourism. What helps these regions in boosting tourism sector is that the Japanese government is indeed quite eager to fund these struggling regions, both in order to gain votes from the said regions and to preserve cultural heritage. Fueled in parts by regional pride, competition between regions over central government funding and potential tourists has led to an upsurge in various regional branding initiatives, which attempt to make the regions stand out. Jones presents that while some authors like Rainisto see this application of marketing techniques to promote localities as something relatively new, others like Kavaratzis and Ashworth see this shaping and promotion of “a specifically-designed place identity” as something that is “almost as old as civic government itself.” In case of Japan, such activities truly began to spike in 1980s as part of local revitalization projects in rural areas in reaction to urban migration and fiscal problems.³⁴⁴

While calling Kagoshima City itself a rural area can be stretching the definition, it is still quite peripheral, being located so far from Tokyo while also being in the midst of population decline and having a large degree of dependency on funding from the central government. Therefore, it can be justifiably fitted into the category of struggling peripheral regions that have turned to local brand construction and promotion tied to attracting tourism and external investments to the locale. In Kagoshima’s case, the city and the prefecture are using their ties to the events and figures of the Meiji Restoration in addition to their local dialect, traditions and other special features in order to make an appeal for the distinctiveness and importance of their cultural heritage, and thus justify the investment they receive from the government in addition to attracting visitors.

Kagoshima Prefecture and City have their own promotional activities as well that are very wide in scope. Its tourism promotion leading up to the Meiji sesquicentennial in 2018 relied heavily on its local history and heritage. This emphasis placed on strengthening and capitalizing on the city’s “Home of the Meiji Restoration Kagoshima City”³⁴⁵ identity in the year of Meiji

344 Jones et al, 2009, 193-194.

345 Ishin no Furusato Kagoshima-shi 維新のふるさと鹿児島市

sesquicentennial can be seen in Kagoshima prefecture's tourism promotion policy review of 2015-2019, where the year 2018 is listed as a positive one for Kagoshima's tourism, listing its 150th anniversary related activities and simultaneous airing of the period drama *Segodon* on the life of Saigō Takamori in national television as the key reasons for this anomalously high number.³⁴⁶

Indeed, the sites in Kagoshima are even now utilizing the legacy of this series quite extensively, as the Museum of the Meiji Restoration has a small corner dedicated to the series, which includes a costume of Shimadzu Nariakira that was used by Ken Watanabe during the filming³⁴⁷. As parts of the series was filmed in Kagoshima and at the UNESCO World Heritage site's Sengan-en Park and the Shimadzu residence, the area also has a number of information boards at sites of the scenes filmed for the series.³⁴⁸

While focus on Saigō Takamori and the Meiji Restoration was at the forefront in 2018, after the passing of the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration there have been measures that are targeting at expanding the what Kagoshima is presented as. Not limiting their scope, they utilize other local elements, such as Kagoshima's nature and hot springs, in tourism promotion as well.³⁴⁹ Kagoshima understandably placed a lot of faith in activities to promote its historical sites and museums in preparation for the Meiji sesquicentennial in 2018, but counting on them alone to attract a growing number of visitors might not be sufficient going forward. While 2018 was a record year in the number of visitors arriving to the prefecture, that being 8.86 million visitors, the number fell to 8.37 million the following year, falling short of the 9.5 million visitors that the prefecture had set as its target for that year back in 2015, even if it had grown from 7.32 million recorded in 2015³⁵⁰. Desire to diversify is thus understandable., as it would hold the greatest economic potential.

346 Kagoshima Prefecture. Kagoshima Prefecture. Summary of the Report on the Results of the Prefectural Tourism Promotion Policy 2015-2019. 2020.

347 Ken Watanabe's clothing for his role as Shimadzu Nariakira. Museum of the Meiji Restoration, 2020.

348 Historical Drama "Segodon" Filming Location, Former Shuseikan World Cultural Heritage Site. 2020.

349 Kagoshima Prefectural Visitor's Bureau, "Main Page", 2021.

350 Kagoshima Prefecture. Summary of the Report on the Results of the Prefectural Tourism Promotion Policy 2015-2019. 2020, 8.

Back to the Past. Constructing Kagoshima as a Gateway to Japan.

This desire to widen Kagoshima's appeal is not limited just to other Japanese, but to those abroad as well can be seen in Kagoshima's "Next Asia Kagoshima Future Innovation Strategy" presented in 2018. In this plan, Kagoshima City's Policy Planning Division presents a vision of the future, that is framed as being rooted in its past. The plan presents pre-Tokugawa Kagoshima, akin to the museums already presented in this work, as a place where ships from abroad, especially China and Southeast Asia, would first arrive in when coming to Japan, and from where people from other parts of Japan would come to in order to travel abroad. This past is presented as a period of prosperity for Kagoshima. Likewise, it describes how information exchange and trade with China continued through Ryūkyū islands, and how this helped in leading up to the Meiji Restoration and creating a local culture seeped in exoticism. What this plan suggests is that using the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration as a turning point, Kagoshima should once again direct its attention to East and Southeast Asia, and facilitate a deepening exchange of people, information and products with rest of Asia in order to grow and revitalize itself.³⁵¹

One of the central aims of this plan is to engender innovation by fostering increased connections and networks between Kagoshima citizens and other Asians, thus intensifying the exchange of goods and information in the process. In an information graph illustrating this desired process, the plan proposes that Kagoshima could gain vitality and visitors from Asia, while also being able to sell its products to Asia by focusing its marketing abroad. In the process, Kagoshima would become increasingly familiar with rest of Asia, and the city and its population would become more international, which in turn would produce nebulous innovation, a term that the plan does not define in more concrete terms.³⁵²

At the end of the plan, its central goals are laid out in four points. First is

351 Kagoshima City Policy Planning Division, 2018.

352 Kagoshima City Policy Planning Division, 2018.

to make Asia into something that is close and familiar to its citizens. Second is to increase the number of exchange students and residents from Asia. Third is to increase the flow of tourist and business visitors. Fourth goal is to actively promote Kagoshima and its businesses towards the rest of Asia.³⁵³

Given this history, in addition to recent explosion in a number of external visitors from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan that is cited in this plan as well, a shift towards a strategy that is more oriented towards making Kagoshima's name known and appealing to the rest of Asia is certainly grounded, as the city's close proximity to Taiwan and China can certainly be turned into an advantage. Regardless of whether the plan is successful or not, it has some interesting implications that serve to point to wider trends that the rise of other Asian economies, above all China, Taiwan and South Korea have caused. Kagoshima City's Policy Planning Division's plan explicitly states that it is targeting China, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam Taiwan and Hong Kong as its markets, both in marketing its local products and tourism³⁵⁴, which is in line with the increasing economic integration between Japan and China that has been one of the significant trends of the 21st century so far. This can be seen, for example, in the way China has risen to become the largest trading partner for Japan within the past two decades, passing even the United States, while its trade to other East Asian countries has like South Korea and Taiwan has followed just behind these giants³⁵⁵. This stresses the vitality of other East Asian markets to Japan's economy, something that Kagoshima could indeed be in the position to benefit from given its geographical proximity to China and Taiwan.

In aspects of tourism promotion, the most relevant portion to this work, the plan emphasizes the need to polish up its local resources and events in addition to improving systems accommodating tourism in order to enhance its appeal. While there are plans of widening the types of tourism to the city, Kagoshima's World Heritage Site and narratives crafted in the city's museums are also a part of this, as the particular story they present of Kagoshima's

353 Kagoshima City Policy Planning Division, 2018.

354 Ibid.

355 World Integrated Trade Solution. Japan Trade Summary. 2000 & 2018.

uniqueness is intended by the plan to be used in enhancing the location's appeal.³⁵⁶

Offering further introspection in regards to Kagoshima's promotional strategy, LDP assembly member of Kagoshima's Prefectural Assembly, Yonemaru Makiko, describes viewpoints that very much mirror the aforementioned innovation strategy alongside the messages of the museums that strive to build a conception of Kagoshima as Japan's gateway to the outside world that keeps its eyes on the rest of the world. In her article for Public Lab, an outlet focused on covering public and private sector cooperation for concerned parties, she echoes the narrative that is present in the museums. She writes that through interactions with outside world, people can become aware of ideas and possibilities that they would have never even thought about if they had never look outside their hometowns or their own country³⁵⁷

Yonemaru particularly brings up Germany and how its regional cities have managed to maintain their unique identity and economic strength as something that Japanese locales should learn from. She builds a stark contrast between Japan, where all large enterprises concentrate in Tokyo, and Germany where localities remain vigorous as companies remain in their home regions, cooperating with smaller local businesses, universities and research institutes, while developing their local economies through partnerships with other locations. Yonemaru proposes that the idea of a local hub, in which regional cities are the centers for local economic activity while cooperating with other locations without being dependent on metropolitan support, is something that should be adopted in Japan as well, as it would make local revitalization possible.³⁵⁸

Additionally, as Nomura Research Institute's evaluation of hundred different cities in Japan in 2017 based on the metrics of acceptance of diversity, efforts to promote new companies and innovation, infrastructure for high variety of industries, diversity of human resources, ease of living and attractiveness of the city, Kagoshima's growth potential was ranked second best in Japan,

356 Kagoshima City Policy Planning Division, 2018.

357 Yonemaru 2020.

358 Yonemaru 2020.

coming only behind Fukuoka. It was also ranked to be the second most attractive city overall. In addition to this, in lifestyle rankings Kagoshima was rated the best in terms of work environment for immigrants and as a place to live for retirees.³⁵⁹ Yonemaru is overjoyed that the top two positions in terms of growth potential are held by Kyūshū cities, and she calls this evaluation a recognition of Kagoshima's ability to live in harmony with nature and its welcoming environment towards receiving new people and goods. She suggests that this may be due to Kagoshima's long history as Japan's gateway to the rest of the world, a position in which it has been the foremost place in Japan to interact with foreign cultures.³⁶⁰

In Yonemaru's perspective, in order for Kagoshima to become a proper local hub it has to above all improve its economy, which she notes to be in dire straits. For this purpose, she suggests the same option that many economically struggling regions in Japan have cast their eyes to as well; tourism. She sees great potential in Kagoshima in this regard, but acknowledges that it is difficult for Kagoshima to distinguish itself among the vast selection of other potential tourist destinations not just within Japan, but in the world. She proposes that in order to differentiate itself, Kagoshima should promote its own unique features, so that when one thinks of Kagoshima, they think that there is something unique there, something that they cannot see or experience anywhere else. Therefore, Kagoshima needs to highlight these unique features and their value. This is something that could make potential visitors choose Kagoshima over other potential destinations. Thus constructing a story that shows Kagoshima as a location that is of unique value in this world is necessary for the prefecture's economic rejuvenation.³⁶¹

While Yonemaru herself does not consider about utilizing Kagoshima's World Heritage sites or history in this, her thoughts and Kagoshima City's Policy Planning Division's plan have similar vision, and that is the necessity of constructing Kagoshima as a distinctive place that has a unique story that only it

359 Nomura Research Institute, "Ranking the Growth Potential of 100 Cities within the Nation." 2017.

360 Yonemaru 2020.

361 Yonemaru 2020.

can tell. Accordingly, Kagoshima as the Home of Meiji Restoration is one of these brands that the local authorities, World Heritage Site and museums are striving to depict as something that could have only happened in Kagoshima, and thus make it so that when people think of Kagoshima, they will think of it as the place where Meiji Restoration started and where modern Japan was born, thus making it one important component of the city's and prefecture's strategy for attracting visitors.

What Yonemaru's local hub objective and Kagoshima City's Next Asia Kagoshima plan are seemingly striving to do in order to counter the concerning economic and social trends Kagoshima is facing is to tap into the trend of increasing foreign visitors coming to Japan. The number of foreign visitors to Japan has been expanding rapidly since 2013, with only the international outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic breaking the trend in 2020³⁶². Before this outbreak, majority of these visitors were from China, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan, which together constituted 70,1% of all foreign arrivals to Japan in 2019³⁶³. This huge influx can be seen in Kagoshima Prefecture's review of the prefecture's tourism promotion policy as well, as the number of foreign visitors the prefecture set as its target in 2015 for the year 2019, that being 430 000 visitors, was surpassed convincingly, as the number reached a record high of 839 900 foreign visitors, a substantial growth from 215 000 visitors prefecture recorded in 2015³⁶⁴. In terms of countries of origin for these visitors, they are quite reflective of the influx of tourism from other parts of East Asia, as in 2019 approximately 83,5% of the foreign visitors were from Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan or China³⁶⁵.

In the light of this development, an increased focus to appeal more to foreign visitors is understandable. While Kagoshima museums convey messages that stress Kagoshima's international and outwards facing nature, there are still some messages and oversights that may not be received well by

362 Japan National Tourism Organization, Trends in Visitor Arrivals to Japan.” 2021.

363 Japan National Tourism Organization, “Visitor Arrivals to Japan by country/area, 2019 Breakdown”. 2021.

364 Kagoshima Prefecture. Summary Version of the Final Report on the Results of the Prefectural Tourism Promotion Policy 2015-2019. 2020, 10.

365 Kagoshima Prefecture PR and Tourism Strategy Department, Tourism Division. “Trends in Kagoshima Tourism”. 2020, 20.

foreign visitors in these facilities, especially by visitors from Korea or China. Meiji Restoration and the subsequent industrialization and militarization would eventually lead to imperialism and wars of conquest that Korea and China would become the targets of already during the Meiji era. The fact that these topics related to Japan's wars and imperialism are avoided in these museums with the exception of the Russo-Japanese War, a war that was against a European imperial power and thus can be considered to be less controversial, is noteworthy.

One example of this avoidance is the uncritical account of Field Marshal Ōyama Iwao that is presented in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration. Ōyama acted as the commander of the Second Army during the First Sino-Japanese War, and thus the senior commander of the Japanese troops who conquered Lüshunkou, commonly called Port Arthur in the West. Therefore he could be considered to be in a position of responsibility for the troops that perpetrated the Port Arthur Massacre of 1894³⁶⁶. Contemporary American war correspondent for New York Times, James Creelman, wrote that the city's population had almost completely been slaughtered, while more pro-Japanese reporters such as A.B. de Guerville outright claimed that no massacre had taken place³⁶⁷. Nevertheless, modern scholarship estimates that the number of non-combatants killed in the massacre is at the very least around 1500 people³⁶⁸.

As this massacre was widely reported among American and British media, Japanese officials were forced to give statements on it. In a response given by Ariga Nagao, who served as legal advisor to Ōyama's Second Army during the war, he rationalized and defended Japanese military's actions by claiming that vast majority of those killed in this massacre were young men, who had in fact been soldiers posing as civilians, and who had been conducting sneak attacks on the occupying Japanese soldiers. Ariga also defended Japanese actions by pointing to the atrocities committed by the Chinese soldiers on the Japanese prisoners of war such as beheadings, which had enraged the Japanese troops. Based on this, Ariga claimed the actions of the

366 Borgen 2006, 49-50.

367 Kane 2005, 23.

368 Howland 2007, 195.

Japanese soldiers upon capture of Port Arthur to be a justified, as they were but a natural human reaction to Chinese brutalities.³⁶⁹

Given that Ōyama's guidelines to his subordinate commanders had been based on Ariga's advice³⁷⁰, his responsibility over their actions cannot be cast aside. It is controversial and potentially difficult topics like this that the museums included in this work seem very keen to avoid, and thus the First-Sino Japanese War and how these notable figures from Kagoshima participated in it also goes completely unmentioned.

Kagoshima's local government's desire to open up and internationalize the city in order to deepen exchanges with rest of the world, particularly the other Asian countries in close proximity to Kagoshima is clear. However, these cultural and heritage sites that have been primarily made to appeal to a domestic audience with their triumphalist narratives are committed to prasing the achievements of Meiji Era while leaving its negatives, above all the atrocities of colonialism and imperialism that were interchangeably a part of it, mostly unaddressed. While these sites contain messaging designed to present Kagoshima as an international location that has always been open to the rest of the world, this narrative can be to an certain extent deafened out by the lionization of the Meiji Era.

Although these museums and heritage sites only make up one component of a much wider strategy that is designed to make Kagoshima more attractive to an international audience, the message they convey does appear to be slightly off tune with that objective, and it is questionable whether these museums and their narratives can appeal to or leave a good impression on visitors from countries such as China or South Korea, who suffered greatly from Japanese imperialism.

On the other hand, it is not that surprising that these museums have not altered their presentations that much and still continue with narratives designed for domestic consumption. After all, despite the recent trends, huge majority of the visitors are still estimated to be Japanese. Of the total number of 8 864 320 visitors recorded in 2019, 839 900 were foreigners. Thus foreigners only make

369 Howland 2007, 195-196.

370 Bargaen 2006, 50.

up approximately 9,5% of the total visitor count³⁷¹.

However, as this ratio was clearly on the rise before the outbreak the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains to be seen whether that trend will continue after pre-outbreak travel conditions have been restored, or whether these sites will some day face pressure from to make changes in the future. But as it stands, there seems to be no evidence that would suggest that there has been a major backlash against these sites that would drive them to make these alterations.

371 Kagoshima Prefecture PR and Tourism Strategy Department, Tourism Division. “Trends in Kagoshima Tourism”. 2020, 16&19.

5. Conclusions

What is noteworthy above all in Kagoshima's museums is that they portray Meiji Restoration and the events surrounding it in a very similar fashion that can be seen in speeches of leading LDP politicians. When looking at Abe Shinzō's and Suga Yoshihide's addresses around the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration in 2018, they seem to perceive Meiji Restoration as the beginning of modern Japan, an event in which the founding stones of the contemporary sociopolitical order were laid by the great forefathers of modern Japan. In Abe's words, its legacy can still be seen today through industrialization, constitutionalism and parliamentarianism alike.

This very much seems to be the same stance that Museum of the Meiji Restoration in Kagoshima and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Shōko Shūseikan are taking as well, as the museums present a narrative of progressive and great men theory based history that fits in well with promotion of LDP's general aims of strengthening national pride, deepening international connections and trade in addition to increasing military preparedness.

These objectives can be seen reflected in the way the museums portrayed in this work present the Bakumatsu period and the early Meiji period. Political and military leaders from the old Satsuma domain, above all Saigō Takamori, Ōkubo Toshimichi and Shimadzu Nariakira are portrayed as exceptional figures who possessed great foresight on the course Japan should take and were ready to act in order to enact the changes they saw as necessary. This course is portrayed to have included strengthening the country through industrialization, developing international connections and trade, learning from the outside world in addition to strengthening the military. This is what Suga and Abe were referring to in their speeches in 2018, when they called for a need to learn from Meiji spirit and follow the example of the people from that time. In these times that were framed as times of economic and social troubles along with the uncertainty surrounding the security situation in East Asia, major reforms that were alluded to being somewhat similar to those of the Meiji Restoration in scale were presented as necessary.

In addition to being well aligned with LDP aims and rhetoric, these museums and the World Heritage site build consent to the preexisting institutions. As the Meiji Restoration and the reforms that followed it are stated in no uncertain terms to have formed the foundations for the institutions that are at the core of the Japanese state even today. Thus these museums fulfill their traditional institutional role in legitimizing modern Japanese state.

It is notable that the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shōko Shūseikan is especially focused on the contributions of Shimadzu Nariakira in the pioneering efforts to construct local western styled foundries and weapons in Kagoshima. This is consistent with the way he is portrayed in Museum of the Meiji Restoration as well, but it is worth noting that the site is being operated by a private organization called the Shimadzu Foundation, which is led by direct descendants of the old Shimadzu *daimyōs*, which could in part explain the focus of the narrative.

What is interesting in Museum of the Meiji Restoration's approach is the issues it decides to only address in vague mentions and issues they decide not to touch at all. These include the *Seikanron* debate, the debate over the subjugation of Korea, which is only addressed by the alternative title of "Issue of Sending Envoys to Korea", is never described beyond surface level mention of it as the source for Saigō and his supporters resignation from the government along with causing an irreconcilable split between lifelong friends of Ōkubo and Saigō. Likewise, while Russo-Japanese War and Kagoshima military leaders contribution in it are spoken of unreservedly, the First Sino-Japanese war goes completely unmentioned. This selection could be due to the desire to avoid addressing any issues that are more controversial, or that could paint figures from Kagoshima in more negative light. Traditional heroes of Kagoshima are maintained in their pedestals in this regard.

Kagoshima museums' narratives tend to lean towards great men theory history, although minor concessions have been made to this approach by including some representation of women in the Museum of the Meiji Restoration. While the museum correctly points to the severely lacking state of women's rights in Meiji Japan, these items are still quite minor when compared

to the entirety of the rest of the museum. These items also tend to focus on women from rather narrow perspective, viewing them primarily as mothers, wives and caregivers, while not drawing attention to women who were active in Meiji era political rights movements. In this sense despite these minor concessions, the narrative still remains quite traditional.

However as was previously stated, this type of view on Japanese history is by no means the only narrative that exists. As can be seen from the works of Japanese historians and comments from opposition minded sources included in this work, there is a considerable strain of thought that is critical towards Meiji Restoration and the reforms that followed. These sources question the motives of the Sachō Alliance leaders that toppled the Tokugawa rule and they point out Meiji government's lack of clear course of action. They also question whether the Meiji era reforms and developments can be attributed solely to the Meiji leaders, encouraging one to think of the pressures from the population as well instead of presenting a purely top-down model of the reforms that the Kagoshima museums have the tendency to do.

Given that there are alternative narratives they could choose to portray, what has driven Kagoshima museums to decide upon the more traditional approach? This could be because such approach stands to benefit Kagoshima in quite a few conceivable ways. Kagoshima Prefecture is in a rather dire financial straits, and like many other struggling prefectures in Japan it has turned to tourism in hopes of revitalizing the region. These museums are a part of this revitalization through tourism strategy, as the prefecture and city of Kagoshima hope to draw in visitors to the location by relying on and solidifying its connection to the events of the Bakumatsu period and the Meiji Restoration in its advertisement campaigns in addition to hoping that period dramas based on figures from Kagoshima will also help draw in visitors to the locale. This is why Kagoshima is projecting itself as The Home of the Meiji Restoration.

At the same time as a financially struggling location, Kagoshima has remained heavily dependent on funding from the central government. This in turn may influence some decision making, as most of the funding of the Museum of the Meiji Restoration also comes from the central government.

Given that the traditional narrative elevates Kagoshima into an important role in the creation of modern Japan that it can use to market itself to potential visitors and that most of its funding is reliant on the conservative government establishment, it is quite understandable why publicly owned museum such as the Museum of the Meiji Restoration would not challenge these narratives.

There has also been a push to market Kagoshima to visitors from rest of East Asia with the recent general tourism boom in Japan that has also had an effect in Kagoshima. In this campaign Kagoshima officials utilize the conception that Kagoshima has been the historical gateway between Japan and the rest of the world, idea that is also strongly reinforced in the museums as well. Although there are some elements in the museums way of portraying, or rather lack of portrayal, of certain controversial events and elements of the Meiji era that may cause some issues with visitors from China or Korea, there seems to have been no notable controversy on that regard.

Although fitting in well with the traditional progressive narrative of Meiji history, Kagoshima museums have a strong strain of localism injected into them as well. Many elements ranging from its education system, local texts, dialect, spirit to geographical features and location are brought up and constructed as locally unique to Kagoshima in order to project Kagoshima as a unique location that the visitors should be aware of and the locals should be proud of. It is presented that thanks to these unique elements that Kagoshima was able to become the pioneer of modern Japan and Home of the Meiji Restoration. Therefore construction and reinforcement of local pride and identity among local visitors can also be considered one of the key functions of these sites.

Therefore, museums in Kagoshima continue to fulfill the traditional institutional role that the museums have had for centuries in building consent to the preexisting structures and reinforcing national identity. At the same time Kagoshima museums build local pride in their capacity as local museums while striving to draw in visitors also from outside of the prefecture through the use of Kagoshima's Home of the Meiji Restoration brand. Both of these are objectives that are in no ways opposed with reinforcing the traditional foundational tale of the contemporary Japanese state.

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