

**Asia Research Institute
Working Paper Series No. 191**

**Formation of History as a
Modern Discipline in Meiji Japan**

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October 2012



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Formation of History as a Modern Discipline in Meiji Japan

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the creation of history as a modern academic discipline in the context of ideological formations of nationalism and imperialism in 1880s and 1890s Japan. The formation of modern historiography in Meiji Japan has been the subject of several major studies, which looked at the issue primarily in terms of the political relation of historiography with the state; this paper complicates and expands on current scholarship by looking at the ideological implications of modern historiography formation. By so doing, this paper hopes to shed light on some dimensions of the complex relationship between history and the contested nature of ideological formation in mid-Meiji Japan.

Ōkubo Toshiaki's 1988 work, *Nihon Kindai Shigaku no Seiritsu*, is becoming a classic in itself even while it does not take up the questions of nationalism and imperialism.¹ A collection of essays written over a span of twenty five years (1939-1964), it traces the transformations of thought and schools of historical studies in the context of political changes from late Tokugawa to early Showa periods with an apparent focus on the formative Meiji period. While detailed and insightful, the work situates modern historiography formation in an evolutionary trajectory. Nagahara Keiji's more recent *20-seiki Nihon no Rekishigaku* places Meiji historiography in a longer, if more schematic, temporal framework without focusing on developing new analysis.² Margaret Mehl's *History and the State in Nineteenth-Century Japan* is the only English-language monograph-length study on historiography in the Meiji period.³ This work is an empirical and narrowly focused study of the formation of historiography in the first three decades of the Meiji period, tracing institutional changes and power struggles that involved the modern historians.

Besides these monograph studies, scholars have in particular focused on the so-called Kume Incident of 1892, in which one of the first generation of modern historians, Kume Kunitake, was contested by Nativists (*kokugakusha*) and Shinto activists resulting in his fire from the professorship at the Tokyo Imperial University for his study of ancient Japan and his argument that the Japanese imperial house originated from a human, not divine, and Korean, not indigenous, ancestry.⁴ An event of almost iconic status, the Kume Affair has been examined primarily in terms of scholarship-state relationship in the context of the origin and consolidation of the prewar state as an authoritarian regime known as the "emperor system." Reading the incident as a case of state suppression of academic freedom, most of these studies start from an idealized conception of history as a modern discipline that should and could be independent from the interests and control of the state, a stance this paper calls into question through examinations of its relation with nationalism.

¹ Ōkubo, Toshiaki. *Nihon Kindai Shigaku no Seiritsu*. (Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1988).

² Nagahara, Keiji. *20-seiki Nihon no Rekishigaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003).

³ Mehl, Margaret. *History and the State in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (London: Macmillan 1998).

⁴ Shinto Bunkakai. *Meiji Ishin Shinto Hyakunenshi* (Tokyo: Shinto bunkakai, 1967). Miyachi Masato. *Tennosei no seijishiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Azekura shobo, 1981). Ōkubo Toshiaki, ed. *Kume Kunitake no kenkyū*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1991). Margaret Mehl. "Scholarship and Ideology in Conflict: The Kume Affair, 1892," *Monumenta Nipponica*. Vol.48, No.3 (Autumn, 1993), pp.337-357. John S. Brownlee. *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu* (Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press, 1997).

This paper broadens discussions of the formation of historical studies in Japan by placing it in the larger, contemporary context of the same process of institutionalization of history in Europe and the U.S. Formation of history was a modernizing process in late nineteenth century that took place in many countries including Japan. Recent critical discussions about Europe and the U.S. have pointed to the co-terminus and indeed interconnected nature of the process of formation of history with historical development of nationalism in the West, which gave rise to a “profound tension” between the central claim that defined history as a profession and an academic discipline, i.e., the claim to objectivity, and historians’ actual practice which was closely tied to the goals and interests of the nation-state.⁵ Placing Japan in this cross-border contextualization raises the same question as to how scholarship became interrelated to ideological formations of nationalism and imperialism.

With this question in mind, this paper connects the formation of modern historiography to ideologies of imagining the nation in Meiji Japan. It first traces how the historians espoused objectivity and scientificity as the ethos of a new type of historical study even though these historians all received training in Confucian classics and maintained many of the ideas and methods of the earlier training. The paper then looks into the history of ancient Japan formulated by these historians. I will show that despite of the historians’ claim for objectivity and their use of seemingly objective methods, this ancient Japanese history, by arguing for the Korean Peninsula being part of Japan, was complicit with Japan’s colonial expansion in the peninsula and directly supported Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910. I argue it is by assuming the new subject of history, the nation, that history became interdependent with and mutually constitutive of political ideologies of nationalism and imperialism. The paper then conducts a rereading of Kume Kunitake’s essay *Shinto Is an Ancient Heaven-Worshipping Custom*, the work that led to his fire from the Tokyo Imperial University. More than an example of objective historical scholarship, I argue, Kume’s paper was dealing with one of the most vital ideological questions in mid-Meiji Japan: how to define Shinto which was identified with the imperial genealogy in relation to the challenging category of religion. He attempted to use scientific and objective historical method, that is, without resorting to the idea of the divinity of the imperial house, to elevate Shinto beyond religion while at the same time establish political supremacy of the Japanese nation symbolized by the imperial institution above all nations of the world. Kume’s historical theory was put to exile by Shinto activists but the ancient history of Japan constructed by Kume and his colleagues prepared the ground for later development of “secular” articulations of the identity of the supreme imperial nation.

FORMATION OF HISTORY AND THE IDEAL OF OBJECTIVITY

I will start by first briefly introducing formation of history in Europe and the U.S., noting the connection of history with nationalism. Formation of historical studies in higher learning institutions first developed in 19th century Germany and spread to other European countries, the United States and Japan in the second half of the 19th century.⁶ The emergence of history as a discipline was deeply related to philological studies of classical and Biblical texts which were first systematized in German universities. As the German university system stressed its role in both education and research, history there increasingly became a craft furnished with a well-defined methodology and professional principles. The German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) was often credited with the role of establishing both, i.e., why and how to do history.

⁵ Georg Iggers, “The Professionalization of Historical Studies and the Guiding Assumptions of Modern Historical Thought,” in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*. (Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 235, 239.

⁶ Iggers. “The Professionalization of Historical Studies,” pp. 229-232.

Ranke viewed history as a science which, based on rigorously critical research and examination on primary sources, is 'able to rise in its own way from the investigation and contemplation of the particular to a general view of events and to the recognition of their objectively existing relatedness.'⁷ What was to guide this rigorous textual criticism and to guarantee history as a science is the principle of objectivity. As its own basis upon which history is to stand as an objective science, objectivity meant strict presentation of facts and to let sources speak for themselves.⁸ Historians must be impartial, that is, withhold judgment on the past and observe the past as it was. At the same time Ranke was convinced that there were objective forces of a "spiritual" and "moral" character at work in history. Objectivity consisted in recognizing these forces and the political and social order shaped by them.⁹

Marking the emergence of history as an academic discipline was founding of scholarly journals and associations. In the course of the last third of the nineteenth century new historical journals sprang up in almost all Western countries. Associations of historians were formed and annual meetings started to be held.¹⁰ The professionalization of history, however, has what Georg Iggers calls a "contradictory character." He points to the profound tension which has existed between the claim to objectivity of professionalized historians and their actual practice. The formation of history went hand in hand with development of nationalism in the West. Many historians had at the same time been civil servants of the state and there existed a close relationship between their scholarship and the interests of the state. Ranke himself saw nationalism as the driving force of history which historians were supposed to identify. His notion of objectivity was thus tightly tied to nationalism. Professionalization meant independence of history as a discipline free from outside interference including that of the state; however, historians and university administrators often identified themselves with the established political order.¹¹

In Japan, establishment of history as an academic discipline went hand in hand with the Meiji state-building. After the Meiji Restoration the new government revived earlier practice of state-sponsored historiography and set out to compile history as a means to justify its new political power. The early Japanese state of the eighth century was keen on using history for the purpose of political legitimation. The imperial court compiled six histories modeled upon Chinese chronological style over the span of five centuries until the twelfth century. These official histories were later grouped together as *Rikkokushi*, or *The Six Histories of Japan*. The largest Confucian-style history project was the 402-volume *Great History of Japan (Dainihonshi)* of the Mito domain which started in 1657 during the reign of the Tokugawa bakufu. The *Dainihonshi*, which itself did not complete until 1907, provided the direct model for Meiji historians.

In 1872 the Department of Historiography (*shūshika*) was established in the government, known as Council of State (*daijōkan*), for the compilation of the official history of the new state called *Chronicle of the Restoration (fukkoki)*. A plan to compile a general history of the country or *kokushi* was also made and the Department started collecting historical materials from all over the country. In April 1875 the Department of Historiography was upgraded to the Office of Historiography (*shūshikyoku*) and the historiographical project, now under the title of *The Chronological History of*

⁷ Ranke, Leopold von, *The Theory and Practice of History*, quoted by Iggers, "The Professionalization of Historical Studies," pp. 226.

⁸ Iggers. "The Professionalization of Historical Studies." 232.

⁹ Iggers. "The Professionalization of Historical Studies." 234.

¹⁰ Iggers. "The Professionalization of Historical Studies." 232.

¹¹ Iggers, "The Professionalization of Historical Studies." 235.

Great Japan (Dainihon hennenshi), started in 1882. Responsible for the project were a group of scholars under the leadership of three who came to be credited with laying the foundation for modern Japanese historiography: Shigeno Yasutsugu (1827-1910), Kume Kunitake (1839-1931), Hoshino Hisashi (1839-1917). They all received solid training in Confucian classics in pre-Restoration years and the new history project was to be completed in Chinese. While they started to critique Confucian types of history as moralistic and to be discarded, their training in the method of textual criticism as the standard Confucian approach to history prepared their reception and espousal of the idea of objectivity, introduced from the West, as the benchmark of a new style of history writing.

In October 1888, the Office of Historiography was transferred from within the government to the newly founded Tokyo Imperial University and came to be known as the Historiographical Institute in English. When in June 1889 the Department of Japanese History (*kokushi ka*) was established in the University, Shigeno, Kume and Hoshino were appointed professors of Japanese history of that department. They became the first generation of professional historians and professors. In 1887, Ludwig Riess, an assistant of Ranke, was hired by the Japanese government to develop history education at the Tokyo Imperial University. He would work there until 1903. Riess's influence on Shigeno, Kume and Hoshino was probably not significant because as a hired teacher Riess did not occupy an institutionally prestigious position at the university. These Japanese historians on the other hand were consciously learning Western style of history. In 1879, Shigeno called for a shift from Chinese style history writing to Western one and requested the English historian George G. Zerffi for an exposition on Western historiography. Zerffi sent him his 700-page *The Science of History* and Shigeno had it translated and used the text as the guideline for the new project of history.¹² In November 1889, with the assistance of Riess, the professional association for historians, The Historical Society (*shigakkai*), was founded. At the same time, it began to publish its journal, The Journal of Historical Society (*Shigakkai zasshi*, renamed *Shigaku zasshi* in 1892). The Society was open to anyone interested in history and authors of articles in the journal too came from various intellectual background including for instance literary figures and anthropologists. But the tone and to large extent the themes of the journal were determined by Shigeno who remained the president of the Society until his death in 1910.

Shigeno inaugurated the Journal of Historical Society by extolling the principle of objectivity in a key-note-speech-style passage titled *Historians Must Be Impartial* where he defined the gist of history as "to portray the situations of different times and verify the laws of history based on examination of these situations."¹³ Historians should not work in service of the political teachings (*meikyō*) of the time otherwise history will result in distortion of historical facts and principles (*jitsuji jitsuri*). Kume in August 1893 published an article titled *The Independence of Historical Studies (shigaku no dokuritsu)* in which he characterizes history up to his time as being the slave of morality. "Upon examination, more than half of the Confucian classics (*keishō*) are history. Besides, starting from Zhou Dynasty histories were compiled but the materials were selected based on moral values and basically they are histories directly recording facts of past used as references for political rule. ...This is the distant reason for the enslavement of history for morality."¹⁴ The more recent reason was the introduction of neo-Confucian learning in Tokugawa period (*kinsei*). Kume termed this learning the Studies of Morality (*dōtokugaku*) reducing history to simply "moralistic criticism" (*dōtokuteki hihyō*).¹⁵

¹² Ōkubo, *Nihon kindai shigaku no seiritsu*, pp. 43, 54-58, 88. See also Mehl, *History and the State in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, pp. 97-101.

¹³ Shigeno, "Shigaku ni jūjisuru mono ha sono kokoro shikō shihei narazaru bekarazu," in *Shigakkai zasshi*, No.1 (Dec. 1889), pp.1-3.

¹⁴ Kume, "Shigaku no dokuritsu," in *Shigaku zasshi*, Vol.4, No. 45 (Aug. 1893), pp.4.

¹⁵ Kume, "Shigaku no dokuritsu," pp.4-5.

This moral politics having been abolished and society becoming one permeated with interests (*rieki shakai*), the independence of history has become an urging need. To de-politicize and de-moralize history, Kume defined the duty of history as studying societies consisting of speech (*gen* 言), action (*kō* 行) and intention (*i* 意). The realization of intentions, whether good or bad, constitutes events which cannot be morally judged. But beyond these speeches, actions and events there exists an order (*jōri* 条理), “The point of historical studies is to observe and examine the society and the order [running through it]. History is not to make judgments on good or evil, right or wrong”¹⁶ and “good history is those kinds of history which record the events of various periods as they happened.”¹⁷

Like Shigeno and Kume, Hoshino Hisashi explicated on the same principles of independence and objectivity. The role of history is not to propagate virtue and chasten evil – “this is the misunderstanding of Chinese Learning scholars.”¹⁸ Echoing his two colleagues, Hoshino critiqued popular belief in legendary stories as truth. He emphasized the objectivity of historians as free from the prevalent emotional attachment to heroic figures in legends like the 14th century military tale *Taiheiki*. History writing should not be influenced by public opinions which only worry about whether accurate historical studies would render the ‘righteous loyalists’ fictitious without thinking of whether the legends they chose to believe are true or false. Such public opinions should be dismissed. History, to qualify itself as a science, should “verify the authenticity of traces [sources] of past events, clarify the casual relationships between things, and study the basis of the country and the origin of consciousness and customs.”¹⁹

Confucian-style historiography shared with the Rankean history a critical and rational approach to historical sources: historical knowledge is based on careful examination and verification of sources. Kume was especially steeped in the scholarship of evidential textual criticism of Qing China.²⁰ While the specific claim for objectivity was not made by Tokugawa and Qing Confucian scholars, it should be noted that in Tokugawa period not all Confucian scholarship remained its identification with the state. It seems the ideal of objectivity enabled these Meiji historians simultaneously to articulate a difference from what they denounced as moralistic history of earlier times so as to be abreast with the West, or be modern, and to continue the style of Confucian scholarship such as critical approach to sources. But at the same time, following upon Tokugawa developments, objectivity facilitated the emergence of a conscious commitment to independence of history as a discipline, freedom from moral judgment and political interference. Writing the past involved showing things “as they happened” and making manifest the laws inherent in history. History now began to be understood as serving no other purpose than history itself.

History as an independent and scientific discipline reinforced the rational approach to historical materials of earlier Confucian scholarship. Kume articulated a distinction between historical documents/history as records (*kirokuteki rekishi*) and rhetorical documents/history as tales (*monogatariiteki rekishi*), based on which he ranked materials heretofore used as historical sources.²¹

¹⁶ Kume, “Shigaku no dokuritsu,” pp.17.

¹⁷ Kume, “Kanchō no kyūshū wo araitte rekishi wo miyo,” in *Shigakkai zasshi*, Vol.2, No.19 (June 1890), pp.134.

¹⁸ Hoshino, “Shigaku ni taisuru sehyō ni tsukite,” in *Shigaku sōsetsu*, pp.38.

¹⁹ Hoshino, “Shigaku ni taisuru sehyō ni tsukite,” in *Shigaku sōsetsu*, pp.41.

²⁰ Kano & Imai, “Nihon kindai shisoshi no naka no Kume jiken,” in *Kume Kunitake no kenkyū*. Edited by Ōkubo Toshiaki. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1991. 282.

²¹ Kume, “Waga rekishi shisō no sandairyū,” in *Chūō kōron*, Vol.26, No.7 (July 1911). Collected in *Kume Kunitake rekishi chōsakushū*, Vol.3, pp.236-243.

He highly valued early texts including *Kojiki* and the six histories because he regarded them as records rather than tales which he dismissed. “Tales do harm [to history]. I often suspect that tales contain too many imagined stories and over half of the content is just false. ...They cannot become historical evidence.”²² However scholars believed these tales causing harm to historical studies. Particularly, the medieval military tales, starting from *Taiheiki*, neither showed knowledge on political ruling nor military strategies. Kume regarded rhetorical effects of tales as incompatible with objective historical representation.

Kume asserted that such kinds of materials as historical records (*kirokuteki rekishi*) belong to the category of most important historical materials. He established four standards for historical studies, i.e., four elements basic to historiography: old records (*koki*), old artifacts, geography and astronomy. Among them, the most important are old records that include histories compiled later, documents of the time (*komonjo*) and dairies (*nikki*).²³ Old records and old artifacts were the vital prerequisite for history to become a scientific discipline comparable to natural sciences, “Old records and artifacts can be considered the power [of history] and geography implies distance and year and month imply time. This corresponds with laws in natural sciences that power, distance and time are the prerequisites for objects’ movement. Whether material things, animals, or emotions, there is always a consistent law (*jōri*). In history, since events are none other than the actions of objects they change with a law like that of physical objects.”²⁴

Occupying such overwhelming importance in historical studies, histories compiled earlier like the Six Histories for Kume commands unsurpassable authority. This sense of authority clearly shaped his view on the narratives on the Divine Ages in *Nihon shoki*.²⁵ Refuting those who saw the History of Divine Ages as absurd and obscure stories, Kume argued that the mythological texts reflect the not-yet developed form of consciousness and thinking of ancient people. For minds of those times, gods and human were not distinguished and the sky was understood as a broad and free world. The actual human events were recorded as those of deities. Kume here was specifically following the Confucian rational approach to the mythic narratives of Tokugawa Confucians such as Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725).²⁶ Now as an objective scientific discipline history definitely would not allow the existence of gods but only human ancestors. Since history’s duty is to find out the thought of the times, these mythical texts should be read with the intentions (*i* 意) of those times rather than with that of our modern minds.²⁷ Thus instead of reading the mythologies as literally true, like Shinto scholars do, or dismissing them as nonsensical, historians should and can interpret the texts “as they are” (*honbun no gotokuni* 本文の如くに) and read traces of human events out of these legends so as to retrieve the original intentions. In other words, from behind the screen of mythological texts can be excavated a human history based on a historicist understanding of the intentions of the time.

²² Kume, “*Rekishigaku no susumi*,” in *Shigaku zasshi*, Vol.9, No.7 (July 1898). Collected in *Kume Kunitake rekishi chōsakushū*, Vol.3, pp.181-185.

²³ Kume, “*Shigaku no hyōjun*,” in *Shigaku zasshi*, Vol.5, No.9 (September 1894). Collected in *Kume Kunitake rekishi chōsakushū*, Vol.3, pp.21-37.

²⁴ Kume. “*Shigaku no hyōjun*,” pp.37.

²⁵ Kume takes *Kojiki* as a tale (*monogatari*) whose value as a historical source cannot be compared with *Nihon shoki*. But this does not affect the production of the ancient history since the stories in the two texts follow the same basic narrative.

²⁶ Oguma 1995, pp.56.

²⁷ Kume, “*Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū*,” in *Shūkyō* Vol.13, No.75-76 (Jan., Feb., and Mar., 1898), collected in *Kume kunitake rekishi chōsakushū*, Vol.2. 10-11.

Hoshino Hisashi also expressed the similar approach to the mythological texts of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in an article titled *Examining Ancient Events as Human Affairs* in the *Journal of Historical Studies* (September 1891). The ideal of objectivity demands study of ancient Japan to render it into history, “as the civilization of the world progresses, [and...] as history has become a discipline, it is inexcusable to leave our country’s ancient past in unstudied darkness. I will start the study and give a historical explanation to the so-called obscure ancient legends (*kodensetsu*).”²⁸ History was going to unveil the obscured texts, the records of the past which metaphorically is none other than “the ancestor of our nation (*kuni no sosen*).”²⁹ These historians then set out to give a scientific and objective account of the origin of the newly born nation-state of Meiji Japan.

THE OBJECTIVE HISTORY OF ANCIENT JAPAN

In the 1880s and early 1890s, these historians were still in search of an appropriate form for history as the old chronological style was losing legitimacy, culminating in the cancellation of the project of the Chronological History of Great Japan in 1893. The first general history of Japan was not finished until 1908 when the private Waseda University published the *Dainihon jidaishi* in ten volumes. In the 1880s and 1890s historians mainly wrote in the form of journal articles or gave lectures in universities. In these forms Kume and Hoshino constructed a trans-territorial ancient Japanese history that generated contestations and multiple ideological implications. They were in particular challenging the Nativists who were hostile to these Confucian-originated historians.

Hoshino published his ancient history on the eleventh issue of the *Journal of Historical Society* (October 15, 1890). Giving the essay a deliberately long and polemic title, *Presenting My Humble Research Concerning Race and Language of This Country and Questioning the Truly Country-Loving People*, Hoshino waged a direct challenge against Nativists’ views on history, geography, and on what he charged as their narrow and insular perceptions of race, language, and the Japanese nation.³⁰ While polemical the essay conducts a sophisticated textual and philological analysis based on his command of a great amount of historical texts in mapping out his ancient Japanese history. The thesis of this fairly long article, running for twenty-six pages double the usual length of most submissions, was that in ancient times (*jōsei*) Korea and Japan were once one single country inhabited by a single race sharing a single language until the rule of Emperor Tenchi when Korea broke with Japan. Hoshino specifically pointed out that revealing of this history would by no means defile the Kokutai, the National Body symbolized by the emperor, but rather prove the brilliance of the imperial rule, the Kokutai, in ancient times. In a nutshell, Hoshino’s history goes like this. First the imperial ancestors ruled over the Korean Peninsula. At certain point, they discovered the Japanese archipelago and came to settle there while another ancestral group led by the hero named Susanoo stayed in Korea as its ruler. In succeeding ages, although there were frequent traveling and exchanges between the Peninsula and the Archipelago, conflicts and fighting took place between Susanoo in Korea and the group led by Amaterasu in Japan, which led to attacks of Korea by emperors and empresses resulting in its final subjugation and control by Japan until a war was fought in 663 between Japan and Kudara 百濟 on one side and Tang China and Shiragi on the other side, which ended Japanese rule and resulted in the regrettable separation of Japan and Korea, a situation lasting to the modern time.

²⁸ Kume, “Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū,” pp.3.

²⁹ Kume, “Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū,” pp.3.

³⁰ Hoshino, “Honpō no jinshū gengo ni tsuki bikō wo nobete yo no shinshin aikokusha ni tadasu,” in *Shikakkai zasshi*, Vol.1, No.11 (Oct. 1890), pp.105-125.

Hoshino's history of ancient Japan results from a series of complex philological analysis of the narratives of the Divine Ages in *Nihon shoki*. The sections of the narratives Hoshino focused on tell the stories about the Sun Goddess Amaterasu and her brother Susanoo. Because Susanoo maltreated the Sun Goddess, he was expelled from heaven after which he went to a number of places. One version of the narratives says Susanoo descended to the land of Izumo and started a clan of deities. Another version tells about his trip to Shiragi on the Korean Peninsula. After staying briefly at a place called *Soshimori* 曾屍茂梨, he returned to the archipelago settling at the Izumo region. According to yet another version, Susanoo after descending to the archipelago went to fetch great amount of gold and silver from Korea for his offspring. When he retired into *ne no kuni* (a roundabout way of saying dead), he settled himself in a mountain named *kumanari no take* 熊成峰. Susanoo's son Okuninushi pacified the land for human life. But eventually he was forced by the Sun Goddess to surrender the land to her grandson who then ruled the archipelago. The rule evolved into the genealogy of the Japanese emperor.

Hoshino relied on primarily on the two versions which told about Susanoo's visit to Shiragi and his final settlement at the Kumanari Mountain. Hoshino corroborated his reading of these versions with other authoritative historical texts, among them the tenth-century court ritual records *engishiki* 延喜式 and a fifteenth-century history text compiled by the Korean court, *tōgoku tsūgan* 東国通鑑, to demonstrate that the place called *soshimori* and the Mountain of *Kumanari* 熊成 were respectively the Mountain of Ox's Head (牛頭山, with 牛頭 pronounced, according to Hoshino, *soshimori* in Korean) and *kumanari* 久麻那利, a place name designating middle part of the Korean Peninsula. This identification of places names shows, Hoshino claims, that Susanoo remained in Korea after he died, i.e., losing his human form, and continued as its ruler.³¹

The next step of his analysis is to establish that the son of Amaterasu, i.e., father of Ninigi who descended to rule the archipelago, came from Korea. Hoshino referred to an entry in *Shoku Nihongi* (791), one of the Six Histories, which records the origins of the Hachiman shrine in Kyushu enshrining three deities named *Karakuni-okinaga-ōhime-ōme-no-mikoto* 辛国息長大姫大目命, *Oshihoko-no-mikoto* 忍骨命 and *Toyohime-no-mikoto* 豊比羊命. These deities had long been said to come from the Korean Peninsula. Hoshina saw these gods as a group and based on a philological investigation into the names argued that *Oshihoko-no-mikoto* was none other than Amaterasu's son *Oshihomi-no-mikoto* 忍穗耳命 and *karakuni* 辛国 referred to *karakuni* 加羅国 which he further identified with Shiragi. By this series of philological identification, Hoshino confirmed the knowledge that these gods had their origin in Korea and one of them was none other than Amaterasu's son. In other words, Hoshino showed that the Sun Goddess's son came from Korea to rule over the Japanese archipelago and bequeathed the rule to his son Ninigi and so on.³²

Hoshino went on to establish the trans-territorial history of ancient Japan: The imperial ancestors were the Lords of Korea, two of whom, Izanagi and Izanami, discovered the Japanese islands and moved there to develop the islands. Susanoo and his son Okuninushi continued the work of development after which Susanoo returned to Korea. Before long, the imperial grandson Ninigi descended to rule the Land of Japan.³³ These ancestors moved freely and frequently between the

³¹ Hoshino. "Honpō no jinshū," pp. 106-108.

³² Hoshino. "Honpō no jinshū," pp.109-114.

³³ Hoshino. "Honpō no jinshū," pp.114-115.

peninsula and the archipelago. However, peace did not last long, Hoshino continued. There developed a hostility and eventually warfare between the ancestral people in the peninsula (under the leadership of Susanoo) and in the archipelago. Hoshino moved swiftly here from the Divine Ages chapters of *Nihon shoki* to later chapters telling stories of human emperors. Dispatching army from Japan, the eleventh emperor, Suijin, subdued the hostile ancestors in the peninsula and established a colonial government called *Mimana* 任那 to maintain imperial control. The fifteenth empress, Ōjin, again brought the peninsula to subjugation and made it pay tribute. The people in the peninsula gradually developed into different kingdoms and one of which, Shiragi, borrowing Tang China's forces, destroyed *Mimana* and further the battle with Tang China led to Japan's eventual loss of Korea.

Notably, Hoshino transposed the confrontational relationship between the deities of the Izumo region, Susanoo and Okuninushi, and the Heavenly Deities starting from the Sun Goddess, in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* narratives to a relationship of conflict between ancestral peoples in Korea and Japan. For him, however, this was not a history of Korea and Japan because Korea and Japan was one, as one single race with one single language. On the one hand, as pointed out before, although Hoshino assigned himself to infer from the mythological narratives a historical account, this process was essentially a direct transformation of mythologies to history. On the other hand, both in terms of form and content, Hoshino's analysis possessed its coherence and persuasiveness. In the textual sources he used, *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and many others, there are numerous names of clans and places that are explicitly or implicitly related to Korea. Hoshino showed a solid grasp of these sources which then served as the basis for his discursive re-construction. But most importantly, his analysis derived its validity and authority from its use of scientific methods based on the newly established standards of history studies, objectivity and independence. Postwar historians interpret the Korean-related records in historical sources as traces of early immigrants from the peninsula who brought more developed culture and techniques to the islands. Commanding technical and cultural authority, they maintained a visible existence in contemporary society who then left their marks in historical records. Hoshino, however, read these records the other way around and established a primacy of the islands over the peninsula.

Kume also developed his trans-territorial ancient history of Japan, sharing many analysis of Hoshino. He started by clarifying the historical changes in the geographical size of Japan. He argued in an 1889 article that in ancient times Japan encompassed the archipelago, Korean peninsula and southern part of China. He substantiated it by conflating the two spatial terms appearing in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, *tokoyo no kuni* 常世の国 (the world of death and/or happiness), and *unabara* 海原, alias *haha no kuni* 妣国 (also thought to refer to the world of death) respectively with south China and Korea. This conflation was achieved through a philological analysis of the names of deities and places, with a complexity similar to that of Hoshino.³⁴ He also pointed to the variant versions in *Nihon shoki* about Susanoo's visit and stay in Shiragi and maintained that this further proves Susanoo's lordship of Korea.³⁵ Within this geographical framework, he constructed his ancient history. (Nevertheless along the way the southern part of China drops off the history).

Kume made an interesting re-reading of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* mythological narratives. He interpreted the three prime deities at the moment of beginning of heaven and earth to be the human ancestors of the emperor and two other clans. These three aristocrat clans, through conjugal relationships, formed the original Japanese state. "These three deities embody the history of early

³⁴ Kume, "Nihon fukuin no enkaku," in *Shigakkai zasshi*, Vol.1, No.1, 2, & 3 (Dec. 1889).

³⁵ Kume, "Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū," pp.37.

moment of our nation and the ancient form of the kokutai.”³⁶ Kume did not define the geographical location and size of this state called the Heavenly High Plains in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. The imperial house then delegated the two lords, Izanagi and Izanami, to subjugate and pacify the Central Land or the Japanese archipelago. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* narratives about the birth of islands through sexual union of the two deities, according to Kume, should be read metaphorically as the pacification of the islands by the two lords. He further argued that the sexual union of the two deities actually referred to an agreement between two states, the Heavenly High Plains and the state of the Izumo people which included Shiragi, to form a union.³⁷ This was an agreement based on the marriage relation between a king, Izanagi, and a queen of Izumo, Izanami. This ruler couple traveled in warships among the islands bringing barbarous and fierce tribes to submission and civilization.

One of the tribes, the fire tribe, however, fought and killed Izanami (here Kume was making reference to the birth of the fire deity in *Kojiki*). This caused the breakup of the agreement of the two states. Izanagi went to the capital of Izumo trying to reach a new agreement with the Izumo people but was traced back by the Izumo army (Kume was re-reading the story of the death-land deities in *Kojiki*). Building on one particular version of the *Nihon shoki* narratives which tells about Izanami’s giving birth to Susanoo before her death, Kume believed the true history was like this. Although Izanagi wanted to strike a deal with Izumo by letting the Izumo deity Susanoo rule the land in support of Amaterasu who ruled the heaven, Susanoo nevertheless wanted simply to return to stay with his mother in Izumo. Eventually Izanagi gave up and Susanoo returned to Izumo and later went to rule Shiragi, part of the Izumo state. Soon the imperial ancestress Amaterasu would require the surrender of the archipelago part of Izumo state from Susanoo’s son Okuninushi who was ruling the Izumo state. Okuninushi’s surrender resulted in the prolonged division of the country between the archipelago and the peninsula.

Presenting this history as an article in the journal *Religion (Shūkyō)* in early 1898, Kume stopped his narrative at the continued division of the country without, like Hoshino, proceeding to reconstruct later historical narratives. His complete and more detailed version of Izumo discourse appeared in the first volume, *Nihon kodaishi*, of the ten-volume *Nihon jidaishi* (1909), compiled by Waseda University. There, Susanoo retired himself into *ne no kuni*, which Kume held was located in middle part of the peninsula.³⁸ Susanoo’s retirement led to arising of local lords which established their own kingdoms, i.e., the three Koreas (*sankan*). From there Kume adopted the narratives in *Kiki* and took as historical facts the invasion and colonization of Korea by emperor Sujin and empress Jingū, and Japan’s eventual loss of Korea in 663.

Based on their reading of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* narratives, Kume and Hoshino portrayed the ancient Japan as a large society filled with vigor and openness. Ancestors traveled from islands to islands and between Korean peninsula and the archipelago. Engaged in trade and seafaring, they were active and had cosmopolitan views about the world.³⁹ They were physically and mentally strong constantly involved in fighting primitive tribes and untamed nature. Note the trans-territoriality of their ancient history. The Japanese nation-state Kume and Hoshino conceptualized did not spatially correspond to the archipelago. It was (and as they suggested, should be) a larger political and social space encompassing the archipelago and the peninsula. For Kume and Hoshino, the ancient Japanese nation-state was not trans-territorial because the Korean Peninsula was a part

³⁶ Kume, “Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū,” pp.7.

³⁷ Kume, “Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū,” pp.17.

³⁸ Kume. “Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū,” pp.118.

³⁹ Kume. “Nihon kodai rekishi no kenkyū,” pp.120.

of Japan. In other words, the Korean Peninsula existed only spatially not politically. Rather, for them, the present situation of division of Japan was not normal and should be corrected. The Korean Peninsula was to be brought into reunion with the islands. Hoshino specifically pointed this out. In this polemic article he lamented the loss of the Peninsula and praised the military campaign in occupying Korea in the 1590s. However, “today’s people avoid the fact that Korea and Japan are of the same race, forget the fact that our emperors were once the lord of Korea, and no longer feel angry about the separation of the nation.”⁴⁰

The trademark of modern history, the pursuit for scientific objectivity, reinforced Kume and Hoshino’s Confucian-style metaphorical interpretation of the mythological narratives in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. A critical approach to historical documents meant to put them into their own times, to read them as revealing the words, actions and intentions of the time, rather than applying modern standards and values to judge them. Their ancient history resulted from this re-articulated methodology. In carrying out an objective approach to these old stories, Kume and Hoshino differed from the Nativist scholars who held the mythic stories in high regard and prefer to leave them unexamined, and from the Civilization historians (*bunmeishika*) who dismissed the mythic narratives as absurd concoctions.⁴¹ Kume and Hoshino believed they were reconstructing the words, actions and intentions of the ancient ancestral lives, with a scientific and objective approach to historical sources. They believed the critical examination of reliable historical documents and equally critical understanding of these documents would secure an objective history.

However, what they took for granted and did not problematize was that the subject of the objective and scientific history, the nation of Japan, was already pre-determined. The nation was the automatic subject of history, although vocabulary denoting the subject (Japan, *kokutai*, *kokumin*, *tenno*, etc.) and methods in interpreting the past may vary. Regardless of the specific topic to write they would write from the point of view of the nation. Whatever sources materials they were to use the examination and understanding of these materials would be circumscribed by the meanings defined by the subject, the nation, despite of their conscious efforts to liberate themselves from morality, didacticism, interference from public sentiment and personal predilection to achieve the goal of historical objectivity. This prior assumption of the subject of the nation distinguished the Meiji historians from Tokugawa Confucian scholars even while the former succeeded the critical textual approach of the latter. In the production of the ancient history, the critical approach to historical sources enabled Kume and Hoshino to value the sources which included reference to Korean records. However, they would interpret the numerous Korean-related records in Japanese histories in a way bolstering the primacy of the historical subject, the Japanese nation rather than tracing out the cultural importance of Korean immigrants in the Japanese history. Ranke saw nationalism as an objective historical force which history should identify. Similarly the intentions (*i* 意) embodied in different times for Kume and Hoshino amount to an objective force running through time. This intention, at the deep level, was none other than the underlying subject of history, the Japanese nation.

For Kume and Hoshino, there existed no incompatibility between objectivity and the nation because history for them was the history of the nation. Like Ranke, they did not see their judgment and valuation of historical sources as personal opinions emanating from the historian himself. Rather,

⁴⁰ Hoshino. “Honpō no jinshū,” pp.30.

⁴¹ Civilization historians refer to a group of early Meiji intellectuals who adopted from the West the notions of development of civilizations based on individual’s development and historical progress. Represented by Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901), Taguchi Ukichi (1855-1905) and Naka Michiyo (1851-1908), they regarded the narratives of Divine Ages as simply myths. See Nagahara Keiji, *20-seiki Nihon no rekishigaku*, pp.19-28.

they saw their histories reconstructed out of historical sources as revealing the veiled objective truth. They saw themselves as presenting the objective historical facts secured by critical and scientific methodologies. They recognized that materials were already embedded with values but perceived these values not as theirs but as objective quality of the materials themselves. That does not follow, however, that what they perceived as the nation was shared by everybody else. Professionalization of history gave rise to a particular kind of imagining and articulating the nation; this idea of the nation was contested by another kind of national imagining, that of Shinto activists and Nativists, to which we will now turn.

THE KUME INCIDENT

In this final section I examine the Kume Incident of 1892, not in terms of state suppression of academic freedom but in terms of relationship between history and nationalism. I do so by conducting a rereading of Kume Kunitake's essay *Shinto Is an Ancient Heaven-Worshipping Custom*, which was the direct reason for the attack from Shinto activists and Nativists and his fire from the Tokyo Imperial University. The essay is an example of objective historical scholarship espoused by Kume and his colleagues, but at the same time by writing this work Kume was trying to deal with the vital ideological question of the time: how to define Shinto, which was identified with the imperial genealogy, in relation to the challenging category of religion. He set out to apply historical method to develop a "secular" definition of the imperial nation, that is, without resorting to the idea of the divinity of the imperial house, in order to elevate Shinto beyond religion. While Mehl argues that the Kume Incident "represented a threat to academic freedom by state intervention and must be regarded in the context of an emerging national ideology and increasingly intolerance of any ideas incompatible with it,"⁴² and similarly Miyachi Masato asserts the Incident manifests the "historical study of citizens in correspondence to the emerging civil society"⁴³ that was made a sacrifice to the reactionary trend of the 1890s, I would argue that we need to recognize the ideological nature of Kume's essay, that is, it was involved in the political ideological issues of the time as much as the Shinto activists and Nativists who pressed the government to fire him.

Before examining the paper itself, let's take a look at the highly charged political context of 1891 and 1892 to which I argue Kume's paper was responding. The political intensity of the time was manifested by the emergence of a hot debate on the relationship between the state and Christianity, but framed as conflict between public education and religion (教育と宗教の衝突). This debate emerged in the wake of an incident in January 1891 where Uchimura Kanzo, a school teacher who was a Christian, failed to bow appropriately to the image of the emperor at the school ceremony, and was charged as disrespect and disloyalty to the imperial house by his colleagues and students. Mass media was active in taking up the issue which came to be framed in terms of the relationship between Christianity and the kokutai, or the imperial state. Inoue Tetsujiro, the president of the Tokyo Imperial University, where Kume was employed, was quick in responding to the debate and in November 1891 wrote a paper arguing religion should be subject to public education. Inoue's paper triggered reactions from leading Christian priests in Japan and the debate between them continued till 1893. This debate shows that in early 1890s, despite that the Constitution and the Education Rescript had been promulgated respectively in February 1889 and October 1890, the relationship between religion and the state remained an unsolved problem. The essential issue was how to define the relationship between the divinity of religion and the emperor who was divine yet could not be perceived as religion because as the sovereign that would mean confusion of state with

⁴² Mehl 1993, pp.350.

⁴³ Miyachi 1981, pp.47.

religion. Kume was engaging this ideological issue by trying to define Shinto without resorting to the substantive notion of gods, or kami, so as to elevate the emperor above the category of religion. The fact that Kume did not write or talk about Shinto until this essay of 1891 lends more credibility to my interpretation.

Kume published his essay in three installments in the Journal of Historical Society in October, November and December of 1891, amidst the raging debate on religion-education relation. The very title, *Shinto Is an Ancient Heaven-worshipping Custom*, indicates Kume's definition of Shinto as a non-religion, a definition Kume states explicitly at the beginning of the essay, "Shinto is not religion and does not lead people to good or facilitate life. It just worship heaven (*ten* 天) and perform rituals to invite good fortune and expel disasters.... Worshiping gods [which are heaven]... is the foundation of imperial governance of Japan."⁴⁴ More than releasing Shinto from religion, defining it as a heaven-worshipping custom enables Kume to formulate a historical explanatory scheme that establishes the "secular" supremacy of the imperial house and the Japanese state in the world. Kume argues that historical development of human societies started from worshipping the heaven. Because of simplicity of human minds and their sense of awe toward the power of nature, early peoples thought that in the deep, broad heaven (*ten* 天) resided forces that controlled the world. They imagined these forces as gods (*kami* 神) and worship them.⁴⁵ So what is called gods in all countries is essentially heaven (*ten*) or gods of heaven (*tenjin*).

As human intellect developed, people started to imagine more and more kinds of gods including ox, snakes and insects as gods. They also developed theories about the gods who can replace heaven in saving humans. In India there was the teaching of Shakyamuni. His followers went to the West and Jesus arose from them in Rome. This is the origin of religion. On the other hand, Shinto of Japan, having the earliest origin, does not have a savior, does not teach karmic retribution, but singularly worship heaven. Heaven worshipping became the custom of the whole country and indeed the origin of the imperial genealogy and the kokutai. Here children of the heavenly gods were upheld as the emperor of the state, who governs on the principle of the unity of ritual and rule, conduct state affairs according to divine wills received through rituals.⁴⁶ This committed practice of heaven worshipping as political governance contrasts with the adulterated polytheistic worshipping of China where not only human ancestors and ghosts were enshrined but the state created and worshipped the so-called gods of the earth. The difference between Shinto of Japan and the polytheistic worshipping of China reveals the authenticity and purity of Shinto and, by extension, the supremacy of the imperial state of Japan. Kume thus redefined the kokutai as a human genealogy that worshipped the heavenly gods. Thus defined "secularly," that is, differentiated from religion, the kokutai takes on the political significance of supremacy over all other nations because of its commitment to the pure origin which no other nation retains.

Kume's Confucian-style rational historical approach to Shinto, however, ran counter to Nativist (*kokugaku*) and Shinto activists who had for long harbored strong hostility against Confucian scholars and were particular averse to Confucian reduction of the kami to humans. So when the popular journal of history, *shikai*, republished Kume's essay in January 1892 and the journal editor Taguchi Ukichi added a provocative passage challenging who he called "passionate believers of Shinto" to respond, Shinto activists and scholars waged a fierce and persistent attack which resulted in Kume's fire in March 1892. That Shinto activists were able to press the government to fire Kume reveals the

⁴⁴ Kume 1891, pp.271.

⁴⁵ Kume 1891, pp.273.

⁴⁶ Kume 1891, pp.274.

insecure institutional positions of academic historians in the early 1890s but it is equally important to understand why and how Shinto activists were able to command such strong political influence. For this, we need to look at the institutional consolidation of Nativist and Shinto activists.

Nativists and Shinto activists were politically influential in the first half of the Meiji period. While what constituted Shinto was unclear in the early years, by the 1880s the imperial theology centering on the emperor and Amaterasu, or kokutai, became the unifying slogan and doctrine for Shinto. Nativists and Shinto activists became unified in articulating themselves in terms of kokutai. When the Meiji government implemented the policy of religion-state separation in the early 1880s, however, Shinto priesthood and Nativists lost previous political role and influence as government officials. In response to the Meiji government's announcement in 1881 that a constitution would be promulgated in 1889, Shinto activists and Nativists formed associations and journals, like the Confucian historians, to express their opinions in the emerging public media. In Tokyo, Ōyashima Gakkai 大八洲学会 came into being and began to publish its journal *Ōyashima Gakkai Zasshi* in 1886, Meijikai 明治会 with its journal *Meijikai sōshi* in 1888, Nihon Kokkyō Daidōsha 日本国教大道社 with its journal *Nihon Kokkyō Daidōsha Sōshi* in 1888, kokkōsha 国光社 with its journal *Kuni no hikari* 1889, Kamunagara Gakkai 惟神学会 in 1890 and published its journal *Kamunagara*.⁴⁷ (Kano & Imai, 232). Their central agenda was to promote the status of Shinto, identified with kokutai, to eventually have it established as a state doctrine. To have Shinto re-established as a state doctrine was their means for regaining power and status as government officials. Although the Constitution did not establish Shinto as a state doctrine, Nativists and Shinto activists remained committed to this goal. Associations and journals sustained their activities in the volatile discursive space after the Constitution was promulgated.

Partly agitated by the journal editor's provocative preface but particularly felt threatened by Kume's definition of Shinto, priests waged an all-out campaign against Kume. By early June, no less than eighty articles were published in four major Shinto journals bashing and critiquing Kume for blaspheming the imperial house and kokutai.⁴⁸ In February of 1892, four Shinto activists visited Kume's house and carried on a five-hour debate with Kume. They brought into question how Kume approached the ancient history of Divine Ages and how he dealt with the imperial house. These four activists made reference to three specific "doubts" about Kume's definition of Shinto and the ancient history composed by Kume and Hoshino: 1, interpreting deity as product of human imagination; 2, regarding Ise Shrine as a place for heaven worship; 3, interpreting the imperial ancestress' son as coming from Korea.⁴⁹ In other words, for these Shinto activists, kami were gods, a qualitatively different type of existence from humans. If there were no gods, the divinity of the emperor and the Sun Goddess would be negated, yet it is on this very divinity that these activists built their belief and ideology of the Japanese nation. Not just in conflict with the historians on the point of divinity, these activists imagined the nation in conflation with the archipelago as the divine land created by the gods in the earliest moment of history. Historians' reading of the origin of the nation in the larger context of connection with the continent struck the activists as sacrilegious of the pure kokutai.

⁴⁷ Kano & Imai 1991, pp.232.

⁴⁸ Ōkubo, *Kume Kunitake no kenkyū*, pp.219-27.

⁴⁹ Ōkubo, *Kume Kunitake no kenkyū*, pp.214-6.

Kume's public apology and agreement to withdraw the article did not satisfy the priests. They appealed to the Imperial Household Agency, the Ministry of Education, and the Home Ministry against Kume who, as a result, was released from his professorial post at the Tokyo Imperial University in March. At the same time, the organs of Shinto priests associations carried on the censure of Kume and positivist historians in their journals. Their campaign triggered a public discussion on methods and objectives of academic historians' scholarship and historical scholarship's relation with the imperial house and the nation. Major newspapers and journals altogether carried about a hundred and sixty articles through June 1892 expressing a spectrum of opinions on above issues.⁵⁰ This widely participated debate foregrounded the conflict between two modes in which to imagine the nation: in terms of kami, the gods, or without; in terms of the archipelago or the continent.

The firing of Kume had direct implications for how history was to be practiced. Nativists took advantage of this incident to convince the government to terminate the Chinese-language historiographical project underway at the University based on the claim that national history should be written in Japanese rather than foreign language.⁵¹ The project of the Chronological History of Great Japan was terminated in 1893. Released from the assignment of compiling history for the government, the Historiographical Institute at the University became solely responsible for collecting and preserving historical materials for research and educational purposes of the University.⁵²

The transformation of institutional history, however, should not blind us to the ideological significance of the type of national imagining formulated by the historians. Even though Kume was fired, his attempt to define Shinto without the gods gave a precedent for later development of study of mythology (Shinto itself, on the other hand, remained an ambiguous category, wavering between notions of religion, ceremony, and national culture). More significantly, the human origin of ancient Japanese history continued to circulate in society, partly because the theory now came to be reinforced by archaeological and anthropological theories which shunned the existence of gods. Eventually historians' ancient Japanese history became part of a larger discourse about the origin of the nation. While the specific origin of the imperial house itself became almost a taboo topic (unlike Hoshino who argued explicitly for the continental origin of the emperor), the trans-territorial ancient history of Japan joined the widely popular discourse of the same origin of Korean and Japan (*nissen dosoron*), directly bolstering and justifying the colonial expansion of the Japanese forces into the peninsula and the nation-state's transformation into an empire.⁵³ The ideological significance of history is nowhere else more apparent than in 1910 when Japan went on to outright annex Korea, Kume, now teaching at the private Waseda University, still committed to his "secular" version of national origin, confirmed this Korea-Japan-Same-Root discourse in a lecture at the Historical Society entitled "On Japan and Korea Both Becoming the Divine Japanese Nation" (*Wakan tomoni Nihon shinkoku naru wo ronzu*), triumphantly reaffirming his history of ancient Japan and the correctness and indeed prescience of his study of history.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ōkubo, *Kume Kunitake no kenkyū*, pp.220-227.

⁵¹ Nagahara, *20-seiki Nihon no rekishigaku*, pp.39-40.

⁵² Ōkubo, *Kume Kunitake no kenkyū*, pp.83.

⁵³ See Oguma Eiji, *Tan'itsu minzoku shinwa no kigen* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1995), pp.87-118. Oguma introduces archaeological and anthropological scholarships which posed the continental origin of Japanese. He also shows the wide circulation of the ancient history discourse in mass media in 1910 when Korean annexation took place.

⁵⁴ Kume. "Wakan tomoni Nihon shinkoku naru wo ronzu," *Shigaku zasshi*, Vol.22, No.1 & 2 (Jan. & Feb. 1911).

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the formation of modern historiography in relation to ideologies of national imagining in mid-Meiji Japan. It first looked at how the first modern historians espoused scientific objectivity as the ethos of a new type of historical study even though these practices remained influenced by their pre-Restoration training in Confucian tradition of historiography. This influence was evident in the history of ancient Japan formulated by these historians who like Confucian scholars in the early modern period interpreted the stories of the gods as those of humans. But the main point I have made in the first part of the paper is that despite of the historians' claim for objectivity and their use of seemingly objective methods, their ancient Japanese history, by arguing for the Korean Peninsula being part of Japan, was inherently ideological because it assumed the subject of history, the nation. In this sense, scientific and objective history was mutually constitutive of ideologies of nationalism. This became clear when this history of ancient Japan justified Japan's colonial expansion in the peninsula in support of Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910.

The second half of the paper conducted a rereading of Kume Kunitake's essay *Shinto Is an Ancient Heaven-Worshipping Custom*, which was the direct reason for his attack by Shinto activists and his fire from the Tokyo Imperial University. While so far scholars have looked at this so-called Kume Incident as an example of suppression of objective, progressive historical scholarship by the authoritarian state, I argue Kume's paper was ideological itself because it was meant to engage the vital ideological question of defining Shinto, which was identified with the imperial genealogy or the imperial state, in a way that could differentiate it from the category of religion so as to realize, at least discursively, the separation of religion and the state, a necessary political tenet for becoming a civilized modern nation-state. What Kume attempted was building on objective and scientific historical research methods, that is, without resorting to the idea of the gods and the divinity of the imperial house, to elevate Shinto beyond religion, and construct a "secular" historical scheme with which to establish political supremacy of the imperial institution above all nations of the world. Kume's attempt to solve the ambiguous relationship between Shinto and religion did not have immediate success as the idea of Shinto retained its ambiguity in pre-1945 Japan, but this attempt at defining Shinto without the gods and the ancient history of Japan constructed by Kume and his colleagues prepared the ground for later development of "secular" articulations of the identity of the supreme imperial nation such as studies of Japanese mythology (*shinwagaku*).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Kano & Imai 1991, pp.268-270.

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