

IN QUEST OF CIVILITY:  
Conspicuous Uses of Household Encyclopedias  
in Nineteenth-Century Japan\*

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PART ONE: an intimate study of surviving copies of *setsuyôshû*

PART TWO: patterns of usage mathematically discovered

PART THREE: identity of the users grouped and their concerns with life

PART FOUR: the state of civilisation in nineteenth-century Japan

**PART ONE: an intimate study of surviving copies of *setsuyôshû***

Ten years ago I published an essay in *Japan Forum* with the title of 'Some notes on the history of Japanese traditional household encyclopedias' [Yokoyama: 1989]. In that essay (referred to hereafter as 'Some notes'), I briefly explained how this genre of literature named *setsuyôshû* (lit. a compilation for occasional use, or for saving use) developed from its initial form as a quick-reference Japanese-

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\* This is a revised and enlarged version of a Visiting Lecture delivered at the Oriental Institute of the University of Oxford on 25 November, 1999<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> I express my gratitude to Dr. I.J. McMullen for his careful as well as constructive criticism of my early draft of the lecture, and to Dr. P.F. Kornicki for his kind stylistic suggestions. Also my gratitude is due to Sir Keith Thomas and Dr. Theodore Zeldin for their stimulating opinions on my later draft. I should also like to acknowledge my debt to Pembroke College, Oxford, for its offer of a Senior Common Room membership for the Michaelmas Term, 1999, when this paper was drafted. Lastly, but not the least important for me is to express my renewed thanks to my long-term collaborators, Professor Sugita Shigeharu and Dr. Kojima Mitsuhiro, whose important roles in this study are duly mentioned in this paper, and also to Mr. Seki Ken'ichi, the computer specialist without whose persistent technical support our analyses would not have begun.

Chinese dictionary in the mid-15th century (about the time of Gutenberg's first printed almanac), into a household encyclopedia with additional pages containing useful knowledge for daily life from the late 17th century onwards. Until these encyclopedias ceased to be widely used in the early 20th century, however, the dictionary portion remained their core. There, Japanese vocabulary was arranged in *iroha* syllabary order with subdivisions of categories of words ranging from the heavenly bodies to insects. This enabled users to convert Japanese vernacular words into their corresponding literary Chinese characters, a long-established practice of Japanese men when writing official documents.

Then I gave a rough sketch of the contents of *Eitai setsuyō mujinzō* (lit. *setsuyōshū* for infinite generations as an inexhaustible treasury/published in an expanded form in Kyoto and Edo from the early 1830s onwards: referred to hereafter as *Eitai setsuyō*) [Fig. 1]. During my field research, I had gradually come to regard this version as the most broadly disseminated and in this sense representative of the various voluminous and popular *setsuyōshū* published during the 19th century [Yokoyama: 1990, 185–186]. The information which *Eitai setsuyō* provided for its readers can be divided into two categories: one helped

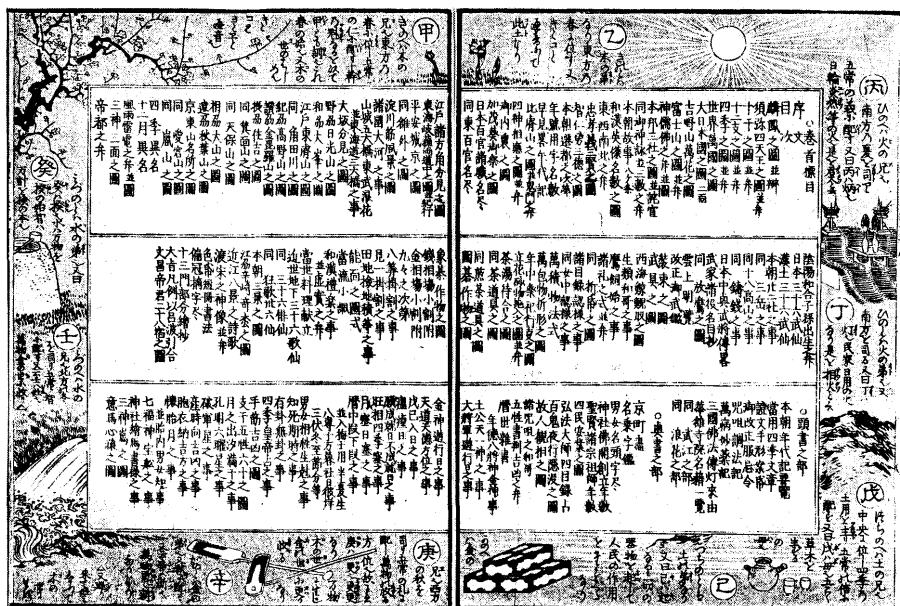


Fig. 1. the list of contents for the 1849 edition

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readers to situate themselves in the universe by providing them with illustrated historical accounts, such as the chronology of the Tennō (lit. the bright god-king of heaven/conventionally translated as ‘emperor’) descending from heavenly gods, and maps of the world and big cities in Japan, as well as many lists of names; and the other instructed readers to learn ‘proper’ civility (*reijō*, ritual propriety) in writing and in other activities ranging over almost every aspect of human life, for example how to fold formal attire ‘correctly’, or how to bow to others to the ‘correct’ depth on given occasions, or how to avoid certain days and directions when undertaking anything serious, in order not to offend various deities both in heaven and on earth. These two categories were interconnected in the readers’ minds and seem to have functioned to give users and their dependents numerous constraints as well as encouragement to sustain or promote civility in their daily lives.

The present writer is using the word ‘civility’ in a broad sense to cover human attitudes even towards the non-human or supernatural. In a monotheistic world where God is transcendental, this usage of the word could never be proper, but in a polytheistic world, where powerful non-human are abundant and not thought of as transcendental, this usage seems acceptable. Etymologically the word meant ‘citizenhood’, but at the moment when a sustainable global civilisation is longed for, a new usage of the word with an extended meaning may possibly be worth testing.

Following that introduction, I proposed a new method of assessing the civilising role played by these volumes by examining the wear and tear on surviving copies. To be more precise, the method involved observing the patterns of darkish lines on the surface of the bottom vertical edge of the volumes, where the lower edges of all the pages can be seen at once. The point of choosing the bottom edge of the volume is that each time any pair of pages is opened and read, the fingers and sleeves of the readers touch the bottom edges of the opened pages and make faint stains without damaging neighbouring pages. Through frequent and prolonged use, the slightest stains can accumulate, turning themselves eventually into a group of darkish lines on the bottom edge surface. One must also note that those books, like most other books of Japan at that time, were always stored flat, leaving their bottom edge surfaces seldom damaged by being pressed directly to the surfaces of shelves or desks. These darkish lines are therefore evidence of how the volume was used. One can point out which pages carrying what kinds of knowledge were more frequently consulted than others. Considering the whole range of polite knowledge that *Eitai setsuyō* contained, these lines can be regarded as a precious record of the pursuit of civility

unintentionally kept by the users.

At that stage of my study in the late 1980s, however, I had to be content with testing the above method only on a restricted number of surviving copies. In 'Some notes', I provided an analysis of two examples of *Eitai setsuyō*, which I believed to illustrate wider trends: one formerly kept in a branch of a traditional craftsman's house in the city of Nara and the other kept in a scholarly merchant's house in Kyoto. The distribution of dark lines on the bottom edge of these examples differed, and I tentatively called the former 'the diffuse type', and the latter 'the dictionary-oriented type'. On the basis of the copies that I had so far seen, the former type seemed to surpass the latter in quantity.

A remarkable feature of the former 'diffuse' type was its interest in literary elegance as well as in observing various taboos prescribed by *onmyōdō*, that is the Yin-yang school of astrology and geomancy (referred to hereafter as 'the Yin-yang school'). This particular combination of concerns reminds one of the mores of the medieval *kuge*, court nobles in Kyoto, and it may be that I had encountered a still-living tradition which was in the course of dissemination among the wider populace during the 19th century. This was a speculation based on the limited data I had at that time. Substantiated by further data, however, it was to provide evidence of an important but so far ignored social phenomenon of pre-industrial Japanese society. In 'Some notes', I ventured to give that tendency a new name, 'kugefication'. This term was designed to grasp the popular trend of emulating various aspects of *kuge* culture. Its meaning, however, was yet to be fully explored.

Norbert Elias's 'courtization' can be compared with this tendency. Elias's term, however, primarily means the decline of violence in the upper strata of society. Kugefication covers not only courtly behaviour but also certain religious attitudes. [Elias: 1982, 270, 275]

The latter, 'dictionary-oriented', type of the distribution of dark lines on the bottom edge was also interesting as it seemed to suggest a certain detachment from the contemporary popular belief in various deities. But it became clear later that my initial observation in a darkish room of the mode of wear and tear on the bottom edge of that particular copy had been insufficient. It was even slightly biased by its current owner's anecdotes about the mode of life of the previous generations of his family. In my later studies, I found more suitable examples of this group, leading me to re-examine the one I had dealt with in 'Some notes'.

The difficulty with this method was that one had to rely on one's own quick observations, often in private houses. It is true that the more opportunities to inspect surviving volumes of such *setsuyōshū* one had, the more one's skill tended

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to improve. But one could not always expect a repeat visit to those houses to confirm initial findings. When I wished to see the above-mentioned diffuse-type copy again, I was saddened to hear that the owner had passed away and his property had been dispersed.

To be consistent in such observations it was necessary to develop a more exact and stable technique. Experiments began in 1988 in co-operation with a computer-scientist, Professor Sugita Shigeharu of the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka. In 'Some notes', a brief explanation was given of my approach to a quantitative analysis of the patterns of distribution of dark lines on those bottom edges. There were three major procedures: first, to take a large (6 × 7 cms sq.) photograph of the bottom edge of each volume under steady conditions, using a specially designed stand; second, to scan a certain central zone [Fig. 2] of the photo-film to construct a data-base for each volume in digital memories of the distribution of darkness in minute dots (50 microns sq.); third, to convert such a data-base into a visible bargraph by arranging the bars to express a numerical accumulation of darkness-degrees on each scanning line, set in accordance with the parallel lines that the lower edges of all the pages produce.

In 1990, these experiments eventually reached a final stage at which it became possible to conduct extensive surveys and construct a data-base. A detailed account of these techniques was published in the *Zinbun Gakuhō* of Kyoto University in

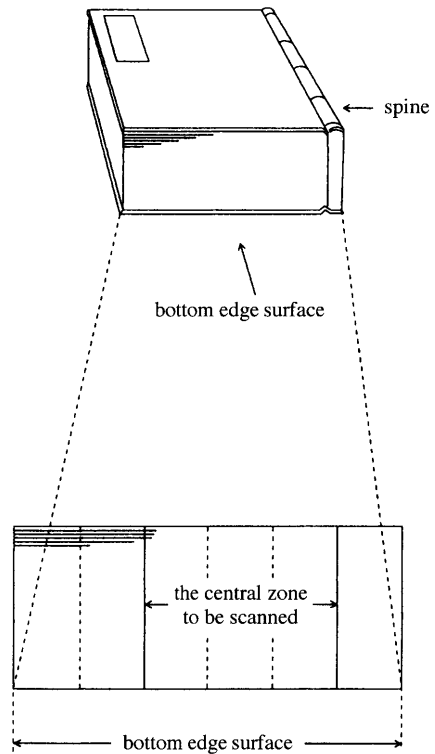


Fig. 2. The part scanned was a central zone in the surface, with 1 sixth of the total length of the bottom surface being cut off from the spine side and 2 sixths also cut off from the front side, as both parts, the former sometimes too whitish and the latter often evenly darkish, are not suitable for effective detection of the patterns of distribution of dark lines.

1990 [Yokoyama: 1990]. The result was a number of fairly varied bar-graphs, each expressing in a mutually comparable form the mode of usage of a surviving copy of *Eitai setsuyō*.

The question left was how to make sense of this diversity. The first step chosen was to categorise, but in what way? The scheme devised was independent of any background information about each copy's users, who were likely to fall into a conventional classification of pre-modern Japanese society, such as the dominant idea of a four-class stratification: samurai, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. It was important, rather, to make the shapes of the graphs speak for themselves. Some multi-variate analyses were tried by Dr. Kojima Mitsuhiro, Senior Researcher of the Central Research Institute of the Electric Power Industry, Tokyo, to assess the mutual 'distance', or the degree of dissimilarity, between the ragged shapes of any two graphs. On this basis, all the graphs were arranged, either by cluster-analysis or by multi-dimensional distance analysis, into sets of categories of mathematical significance. This procedure was designed to make the first step the mathematical categorisation of the usage of *Eitai setsuyō*, and thence to lead to analysis of the composition of each category. An interim short report of this scheme based on the data-bases of 16 surviving copies was published in *Jōhōshori-gakkai Kenkyū-hōkoku*, one of the journals of the Information Processing Association of Japan in 1992 [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1992].

The following part of the present essay is the result of recent research pursued broadly on the basis of this 1992 scheme. This approach, however, underwent some modification during the mid-1990s owing mainly to discussions between Dr. Kojima and the present writer but also partly to the refinement of scanning technology and software for graphic analyses.

## **PART TWO: patterns of usage mathematically discovered**

This part introduces the discoveries that the present writer made with Dr. Kojima's support in data-processing during the period from 1995 to 1997. A cursory report of the newly found patterns of usage of *Eitai setsuyō*, with explanations of the mathematical bases for the techniques involved, was published in a Japanese monograph in 1998 [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998].

The number of surviving copies of *Eitai setsuyō* found, with the aid of numerous informants and published bibliographical lists, was 64. Their geographical distribution ranged over at least 14 prefectures of modern Japan, that is about a third of the total number of its prefectural divisions. Among the 64 copies, 25 were kept either in public libraries or in private collections. There

were three major editions of *Eitai setsuyō*: those of 1831 (2nd year of *Tempō* Era), 1849 (2nd year of *Kaei* Era), and 1864 (4th year of *Bunmyū* Era). In each edition, there always were a few minor variants. These discrepancies were the product of the contemporary mode of woodblock-print publication in Japan, particularly, as was the usual case with the voluminous *setsuyōshū*, where joint-production by more than ten publishers tended to be involved.

The 1831 edition consisted of 401 *chō*, or folded folios. In modern pagination, it totalled 802 pages, whereas both the 1849 edition and the 1864 edition consisted of 433 *chō*, that is 866 pages. The present writer treated these editions as mutually comparable copies of similar composition. The validity of this method can be sustained by the techniques adopted for scanning the bottom edge and standardizing the number of bars of the graph of each set of data, coupled with the basically unchanging arrangement of contents in all three editions [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998, 56–57, 59–65]<sup>2</sup>.

It is useful for later discussion, however, to state the numbers of each edition in the total of 64 copies: 16 of the 1831 edition (including one with a rare colophon of only two publishers, one of Kyoto and the other of Osaka, with the year of woodcut, 'the 13th year of *Bunsei* Era/1830'); 32 of the 1849 edition; and 16 of the 1864 edition.

To present the results first, Dr. Kojima and I found four mathematically eligible categorical divisions for grouping the patterns of usage in those 64 surviving copies: 9, 5, 3 and 2 divisions. A brief explanation of the meaning of 'mathematical eligibility' will be given later. To understand the characteristics of the various categories of usage, it is easier to take up one of these four categorical divisions, the one which divides the patterns into 9 categories. This is the biggest number of divisions among those four and therefore less abstract than the other three. The branched diagram, or so-called dendrogram in Fig. 3, shows the mutual 'distance' among the 64 patterns of usage of the surviving copies that offered data. The 9 bar-graphs shown in Fig. 4 represent the averaged distribution of darkness on the above mentioned central zone of the bottom edges [Fig. 2] in each of the 9 categories, the left-end corresponding with the front page of the volume and the right-end with its last page.

The following description of the 9 categories is based simply on the characteristics of the shape of each of these bar-graphs, showing the average degree of darkness on each scanning line, in which every copy in the category concerned produces its own numerical accumulation of darkness:

**C1** consists of only 2 cases. The shape resembles the letter M, showing the

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<sup>2</sup> For minute differences between the three editions, see [Yokoyama: 1998, 166–169].





users' interest in the earlier parts of the volume, which present information about secular civility [Fig. 5], as well as in later parts in the volume where the long list of Buddhist sects and temples is printed in narrow consecutive head columns on the pages of the later part of the dictionary portion [Fig. 6]. The dictionary portion covers about three quarters of the volume's total folios, ending before the slim concluding part of the volume. Note that in C1 this concluding part is not used; this means that little concern existed among the users with that part, which carried the practical knowledge of the Yin-yang school [Fig. 7].

C2 covers a single case. It suggests a unique indifference on the part of its users to the central pages as well as the later part of the dictionary portion.

C3 consists of three cases. The shape can be described as a plateau with several shallow valleys, accompanied by a towering rise in the concluding part of the volume. Note the existence of interest in the chronology of Tennô that was printed in a lengthy series of narrow head columns in the middle of the volume [Fig. 8], as well as of interest in the Yin-yang school.

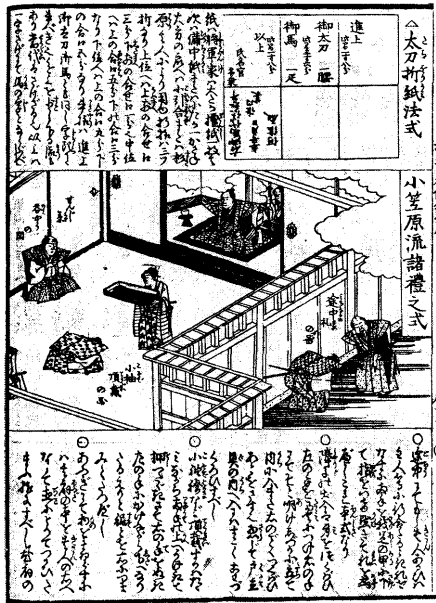


Fig. 5. one of the pages for secular civility (the main column illustrates some postures that the Ogasawara School of Etiquette recommends/ the 1849 edition — see p. 211)

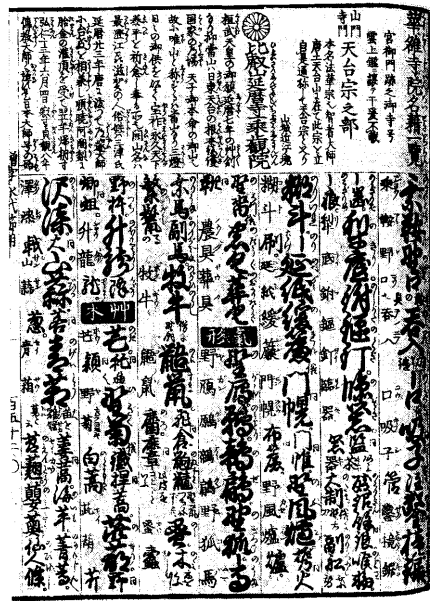


Fig. 6. the beginning of the long list of Buddhist sects and temples in the head columns over a part of the dictionary portion (the 1849 dition)

C4 consists of 9 cases. The shape somewhat resembles the letter W, showing users' interest in secular civility, the chronology of Tennô, and also in the Yin-yang school.

C5 contains the remarkable number of 24 cases, constituting about 40% of total cases. The shape is a slope, reducing height steadily towards the later part but with a sharp rise at the end of the volume, showing the existence of strong interest in secular civility as well as in the Yin-yang school. Note also frequent usage of the dictionary portion.

C6 consists of 6 cases. The shape bears some resemblance to C5, but note comparatively less interest in secular civility and weaker concern with the Yin-yang school.

C7 consists of 15 cases, making the second largest number at about a quarter



Fig. 7. one of the pages carrying the knowledge of the Yin-yang school (the 1849 edition)



Fig. 8. one of the pages of the dictionary portion in the head columns of which the long chronology of Tennô was printed (the 1849 edition/the column shown here covers the years from 1336 to 1338, the beginning of the historic dynastic split — see p. 218)

of total cases. The shape shows a long, gradual reduction of height towards the middle part of the volume, followed by a broad high plateau, with a sharp rise at the end of the volume. This pattern unmistakably demonstrates a keen interest in Buddhist sects and temples, not to mention strong concern with the Yin-yang school.

**C8** covers 3 cases. The shape shows a gradual increase of height accompanied by a fall in the early part of the latter half of the volume. Note some interest in Buddhist sects and temples, but it is not as outstanding as that of C7.

**C9** is another category that covers only a single case. The shape resembles the letter M, but has a horn in the middle. The users' interest in the Yin-yang school is conspicuously weak.

In this essay, explanations of other feasible categorisations, that is those dividing into 5, 3, and 2 categories, will not be elaborated, but even in these categorisations, the shapes of C5 and C7 change little, as the two distinct major patterns of usage. For instance, in the case of the 3-category division, one averaged bar-graph which is very close to C5 covers 30 cases, whereas another averaged bar-graph which looks like C7 covers 19 cases, leaving the remaining 15 cases in the other category with a shape resembling that of C4 [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998, 22–24, 28, 37–41].

One must note that the nature of categorical division based on dendrogram analysis is that each division has equal weight regardless of differences in the number of members. If a nation-wide research project were to be conducted, some categories currently with few members might be found to constitute a higher percentage of total cases. At the moment, all the present writer can do with the 3 categories of less than two members (C1, C2, and C9), is to leave them undiscussed. One needs at least three examples in a given category to formulate its characteristics. By contrast, the remaining 6 categories, and in particular those with the most numerous members, C5 and C7, seem to express some discernible social trends at the time when the books were used.

Thus, graphic representations of at least 6 patterns of usage of *Eitai setsuyō* have been identified.

It is, however, necessary to give here a brief account of the mathematical method which was employed to construct the above mentioned categorisation. There were two major tasks: first to assess the 'distances' between the 64 sets of bottom-surface data to make it possible to represent them in a dendrogram; and second to discover mathematically suitable numbers for categorisation, that is to decide the position of horizontal levels for cutting through the branches of the dendrogram.

To assess, or define, the ‘distance’ between any two of the 64 sets of data, Dr. Kojima, Professor Sugita, and I finalised the method as follows in 1996: to base our calculations on Kendall’s correlation-coefficient figures for the matrix of data that any two copies could constitute. This was, to put it briefly, a method to find the degree of mutual proximity in terms of the order from the highest to the lowest of the height of each bar in the graph. The result was processed into clusters by the average linkage method of statistical analysis, and then put into the form of a dendrogram [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998, 8–14, 69–70, 73–78].

The next task was how to deal with the dendrogram to find feasible numbers of categories. Mathematically speaking, there appeared to be no intrinsic reason to fix specific numbers for such categories out of the consecutive figures between the maximum of 64 and the minimum of 2. Urged by the present writer, however, Dr. Kojima found that at each step of lessening the number of categories, the degree of pressure of simplification upon the diversity varies, as can be expressed in certain statistical figures, such as ‘Semi-partial R square’ [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998, 30]. Thus the conclusion was that some numbers of categories would be more in tune with the data than others. One such particular number was 9, meaning, to be meticulous, better than 10 and 12, slightly better than 11, and far better than 8, if judged from the waving graph of the statistical figures mentioned above [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998, 15, 21–22, 27–28].

Up to this point, the present writer let mathematical procedures operate by themselves. It is now appropriate to examine, in the next part of this paper, which copies with what background were grouped in these 6 categories, in particular the two large groups, C5 and C7.

### **PART THREE: identity of the users grouped and their concerns with life**

This part will consist of three sections with the following purposes: first, to look at the facts revealed by the sources relevant to the identities of the owners in C5 and C7; second, to discuss these owners’ modes of usage of *Eitai setsuyō*, this time based, putting computer-analysis aside, on the present writer’s visual observations of wear and tear on each copy; third, to compare briefly the characteristics of the two categories with those of the other categories with comparatively few members, that is C4, C6, C3, and C8.

Among the total of 24 copies constituting **C5**, there are 13 copies for which there is evidence to show who their users were and where in Japan they were used. Of the remaining 11 copies, there are 3 cases inscribed with their users’ names, with certain indications as to where they were used. The other 8 copies do not offer even the slightest hint concerning the identity of their former users.

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Within the 13 cases offering comparatively solid information, there are 3 copies that belonged to the Court: one to *O Uta Dokoro*, the Palace Office for Odes, another to the house of the *kuge* family of Saionji; the users of the other are unknown but it was kept in the archives of the Imperial Household Agency. Two copies among the remaining 10 were kept by citizens of Kyoto, one belonging to a leading kimono dealer, whose genealogy links him to a minor feudal lord's family in the late 17th century. Successive generations of this family patronised the Shingaku School of Neo-Confucianism founded by Ishida Baigan (1685–1744). The other can be linked to a dentist whose ancestors had for generations been makers of sliding-doors. Outside the city of Kyoto, one copy was found in a village among the hills of Uji, in the south-east of Kyoto Prefecture. This copy had been kept by a branch of the village magistrate's family. In Shiga Prefecture, near the town of Ōmi-hachiman, one copy was found that had belonged to a flourishing tatami-mat dealer of a village in the district formerly called Gamô-no-kôri. Then, up north, 4 copies were found in the Library of the City of Kanazawa, which used to be one of the large castle towns facing the Japan Sea. These had been owned respectively by 4 families with different occupations in or near the town. They were as follows: The house of an *Edo sando hikyaku* (thrice-a-month Edo express messenger) of minor samurai rank; an upper-class samurai house, descended from one of Lord Maeda's original retainers; the house of a scholar of Chinese classics; and the house of one of the *nô* musicians in the service of Lord Maeda. Further to the north, in the city of Sendai, formerly the seat of Lord Date, one copy was found that used to belong to a private physician of the Dates. Finally, back to the south-west again, there was one that used to belong to Wakayama Pedagogical College established in the educational tradition of the domain of Lord Tokugawa in the late 19th century. That the members of these various houses and officials should have unconsciously shared similar daily concerns when using *Eitai setsuyô* at first sight challenges our historical preconceptions.

No substantial information accompanies the remaining copies, except the following 3 vague cases as have been mentioned: One kept in pawn in a shop called Ōmi-ya in Kyoto (a fine copy in a wooden box specially made for the volume by the original user in 1832); another from a village in the province of Tango, in the far north of modern Kyoto Prefecture; and the other sold to a college library in Tokyo by a Kyoto antiquarian book-dealer active in the middle of this century (a copy with a tiny copperplate calendar for 1890 inserted under the endpapers).

Compared with C5, the 15 cases of C7 provide rather limited information. It is only in the following 3 cases that the former users can be identified. One was

owned by a man in the village of Yoshida in Otagi-no-kôri of the province of Yamashiro. The profession of this person, however, is unknown. The other two used to belong to schools: One to Lord Uesugi's school, Kôjô-kan in Yonezawa, the castle town and now the central city of Yamagata Prefecture in north-eastern Japan; and the other to Shiga Pedagogical College.

All the remaining 12 copies had left the houses of their original users and entered various public or private collections. Among them, 4 copies carry, either in handwriting or in seals, the former users' names, including two cases of elegant courtesy- or studio-names assumed probably for literary activities: *Suishô-Tei* (lit. green pine pavilion) and *Ran-Tei* (lit. orchid pavilion). In two other cases among these 12 copies, there is evidence only to suggest from which area they entered the book market. Both are kept in the Library of Dr. Makino Tomitarô in Kôchi Prefecture in the island of Shikoku. Makino (1862–1957), a botanist, built up a massive collection of old dictionaries of Japan to compile his famous illustrated botanical encyclopedia. A receipt from a bookdealer and a note of purchase written by Makino came to light from these books and the following facts became clear: One came through the above-mentioned antiquarian book-dealer in Kyoto in 1946, immediately after WWII; the other from a book-dealer in a village in Kasai-gun in the south of Hyôgo Prefecture in 1952 (The first one has an outer cover made probably by the initial owner of the copy, using a colourful wood-block print with an 'auspicious' pattern of two cranes against the rising sun, which seems to have been the original book-cover for sale made by the publishers.). The remaining 6 copies do not offer any information about their users except that one copy in a collection in Kyoto has a hand-written addendum to the chronology of Tennô down to 1905.

Now, what kind of common characteristics in each of these two categories can be depicted when their modes of wear and tear are subject to careful visual examination? In all the copies in C5, one can observe that the dictionary portion was used frequently. Also, more than 60% of them show strong interest in certain genres of literary activities, such as *nô* and *ko-utai* (selections of favoured sections of *nô* chants), poetry (*waka* and *haikai*), and the diction and forms for elegant letter-writing. In addition to this concern with the performing arts and literature, one can note their almost unanimous interest in Japanese history and geography. As regards the Yin-yang school portion, about 70% of the total copies in C5 show conspicuous wear and tear, and about 60% of these show particular interest in the pages listing hundreds of Chinese characters suitable for personal names, each with one of the *go-gyô* (the Five Cosmic Elements): wood, fire, soil, metal, and water. These pages were intended to help the readers choose

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'harmonious' sets of Chinese characters for giving their sons and other young men new names when they reached adulthood. For example, a combination of two characters with the respective attributes of wood and fire was regarded as ominous. Another conspicuous feature of the wear and tear of the copies in C5 is that the users were not only interested in literary excellence, but also in military valour, as the pages carrying various lists of *busen* (the warrior 'immortals', such as General Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, the conqueror of the northern frontiers in the early 8th century, or Kampaku Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who gave orders to invade Korea during the turn of the 16th century) were evidently consulted many times.

By contrast, the 15 copies in C7 show marked concern with Buddhist sects and temples. Most of the users' interest was not confined to any of the individual Buddhist sects with which every household had, by law, to be registered at that time. Rather, it was notably of a catholic nature covering anything related to Buddhist establishments in Japan. Copies which demonstrate attention paid to the Yin-yang school occupy about 80% of the total. As regards the naming of new adults, a similar proportion can be found as for C5. Those concerned with secular civility such as is characteristic of the Ogasawara School of Etiquette, the then most popular school of household ceremonial, occupy 30% of the total. In C7, the use of the dictionary portion was in general not so frequent as was the case with C5. Only one case, making 6%, showed concern with *nô* and *ko-utai*, making a sharp contrast with the high percentage, that is 33%, of such examples in C5. In only two cases one can discern the users' interest in the list of *kasen* (the 'immortals' of Japanese poetry, including later figures such as Kitamura Kigin, the *haikai* poet of the 17th century and Kamo no Mabuchi, the nativist of the 18th century), and in a further two cases, in that of *busen*. It seems that the users in this category were not so attracted by these 'immortal' figures in history. On the other hand, what mattered seriously for 20% of the users was recipes for home medicine, a genre in which users in C5 showed little interest.

It will be useful to attempt here a brief comparison between these major categories and the others with fewer members. In C4, which consists of total 9 cases, 4 cases have reasonably reliable indications of what their former users were. One was used by a family descended from the Kamo Shinto Priesthood and attached to a minor *kuge* house. This family acted over the generations as *sandayû*, an office of an accomplished concierge entitled to bear swords. Another was found in the archives of Lord Ikeda of Bizen and was possibly used by someone who could be called the private secretary to the lord. Another was used in the library of Kôchi Pedagogical College, and the fourth was kept in the

archives of the popular Shinto shrine, Kotohira-gû of the province of Sanuki in Shikoku. There were 3 cases with more limited information about the users: one that had been owned possibly by a craftsman's house in a 'respectable' district, west of the Palace in Kyoto; another donated to the Ôtsu Women's High School Society by a person whose small seal divulges his or her family name; and the other carrying an inscription as follows: 'Bought this on the 20th of the eighth month of the year *kinoe-ne*, the first year of *Bun'kyû* Era (1861), owned by Yoshikatsu of the Clan of Hayashi'. Of the remaining two, one is kept by Akita Prefectural Library and the other came up in an antiquarian-book market in the island of Kyûshû in the late 1980s. Except for the one that belonged to the pedagogical college, the users' interest in the Yin-yang school is strong. Five copies, that is 55% of the total 9 cases, show a keen interest in instructions during pregnancy (using popular ideas from the Yin-yang school and Buddhism). This rate is fairly high compared with the 20–30% for the same topic in C5 and C7. Interest in literary activities was shown in a few diverse genres, but on average only to a modest degree.

As regards the 6 examples of **C6**, 3 copies were found in the north-eastern regions of Japan. One such copy was used by a family of *gôshi* (farmer samurai) living in the countryside of Lord Niwa's domain of Nihonmatsu, now in Fukushima Prefecture. Another which is kept in Fukushima Prefectural Library has a private library seal, showing that the user was an educated man, and the other was bought by Akita Prefectural Library in 1903, the former users being unknown. Of the remainder, one was used by a village magistrate family in the western suburbs of Kyoto, which was at some stage engaged in the business of dealing in gold thread; their members were for generations devout supporters of the Honganji Sect of Buddhism. In modern times, the national government conferred on this family the privilege of producing standard bamboo measures. Another copy in this group appeared in a book market in the northern part of Kyoto Prefecture. In general, the users in this category show a high interest in literary activities as well as in secular civility such as the Ogasawara School of Etiquette. Most saliently, however, their concerns with the Yin-yang school were negligible. This was particularly so in the case of the Honganji Sect, as one of their principles was to avoid the practice of the Yin-yang school.

Two more categories, each consisting of only three copies, still remain to be discussed. Among the three of **C3**, two reveal only their former users' names and the area where they had been used: One in the Isle of Sado off Niigata, the other somewhere in Kyoto Prefecture. The former user, judging from the seal pressed in the copy, may have been an identifiable island merchant. The three copies as



a whole show very strong interest in the Yin-yang school. Another discernible feature is considerable concern with a section listing legends of literary excellence. But use of the dictionary portion was not frequent.

The last but not the least important category is **C8**. One copy belonged to an influential high-ranking samurai's house of the domain of Nihonmatsu, which produced a chancellor at the domain's Edo mansion and a warden of the castle during the absence of the lord. Another copy seems to have been used by a leader of a *haikai* poetry group based in Kyoto, as a number of copies of printed letters inviting contributions to the group's anthology were found inserted as *aishi*, paper within the folds of the folios. The pages concerned with the Yin-yang school show a conspicuous lack of wear and tear. This tendency was also observed in C6, but in this category it stands out still more. The dictionary portion was used frequently. No particular importance seems to have been attached to the field of secular civility. On the other hand, sporadic interest in history can be discerned. The one belonging to the *haikai* leader shows interest in the performing arts such as tea ceremony or flower arrangement, but these characteristics are not necessarily shared by the other two copies.

Given the evidence so far presented, one possible way to proceed is to give shorthand descriptions to each of the six categories. For this purpose, in the light of the general nature of encyclopedic *setsuyōshū* as a civilising medium discussed in the beginning of this paper, it may be convenient to introduce two dimensions of civility in which to subsume various tendencies that have been observed in each category. One is civility in literary affairs. Here, the major basis for assessing its degree is use of the Japanese-Chinese dictionary. In a broader sense, however, any physical etiquette can also be included in this dimension as its essence is the articulation of polite communal codes. At the same time, the interest shown in literary excellence in history or legend should not be underestimated as it was related, however vaguely, to ideals of self-improvement. The other civility is that directed towards various deities. Such awe-inspiring but occasionally benevolent gods in the Yin-yang school as appear ubiquitously in calendars to regulate the users' daily lives had, however, until the late 17th century, been more or less confined to the knowledge of court nobles and priests, leaving the general public little (or only remotely) affected. In this period editions of both the nationalised calendar (the work by Shibukawa Harumi (1639–1715), supported by the Shogunate in its eagerness to be culturally independent of China) and the handy *Ôzatsusho* (guide to the Yin-yang school) began to be disseminated. My research, however, also suggests that further far-reaching changes took place later in the 19th century. In terms of the simple dichotomy between secular and religious

civility suggested above, the range of deities may be extended further. Civility towards anything beyond the ordinary world is to be included in this dimension. The admiration for immortal literary figures such as *kasen*, however, can well be considered in both dimensions of civility, and this example may explain that the two dimensions share basically the same nature and are often interconnected. This could not have been the case if the deities concerned had transcended the human world.

From these perspectives, how is each category to be perceived and be designated?

C5 was strong in both dimensions of civility, and often showed traces of active concerns in the literary and performing arts. Thus the name tentatively chosen is '**highly literate elegance-oriented**'.

C7 was not so remarkable in the former dimension but strong in the latter with a special inclination to Buddhism. The name could be 'mildly literate nirvana-oriented', or '**mildly literate salvation-oriented**'.

C4 was about the same as C7 so far as the former dimension was concerned. Its interest in the Yin-yang school was, however, strong. So the name given is '**mildly literate gods-fearing**'.

C6 was strong in the former, but weak in the latter dimension. Thus, '**highly literate secular**'.

C3 was weak in the former, strong in the latter, in particular, concerned with divination. So the name would be '**modestly literate divination-sensitive**'.

C8 can be called strong in the former but with interest more or less confined to the dictionary portion. On the other hand, for the latter dimension, 'weak' may not be a proper expression but 'unconcerned' seems suitable. The name should therefore be '**highly literate nonchalant**'.

Having seen these varieties of civility in social activities as well as towards non-human existence, the next question that arises concerns the relationship between these types. Did they preserve a harmonious mutual detachment? In terms of numerical dominance, the 'highly literate elegance-oriented' and the 'mildly literate salvation-oriented' were conspicuous. But the view that has been reached so far is somewhat static and ahistorical, although undeniably rich in variety. What strikes one most is that each type is not exclusive to any occupation, geographical area or social status. Among the different categories, however, there must have been tendencies to rise and fall. If such development can be found within the 6 categories of the usage-patterns of *Eitai setsuyō*, the word 'kugefication' will be given a sharper definition and will contribute to understanding the history of premodern Japanese civilisation in a broader context.

**PART FOUR: the state of civilisation in nineteenth-century Japan**

Certain perspectives can be obtained from the material presented. Most important, it is possible to observe a significant pattern of distribution of the 6 usage types identified above among the three editions of *Eitai setsuyō*. As noted before, the number of copies of the three editions, those of 1831, 1849, and 1864, available for the present study was respectively 16, 32, and 16<sup>3</sup>.

As regards the **1831** edition, the ‘highly literate elegance-oriented’ numbered 7, making 44% of the total of 16 copies; whereas the other three types, the ‘mildly literate salvation-oriented’, the ‘mildly literate gods-fearing’, and the ‘highly literate secular’ numbered only 2 (12.5%) each. Neither the ‘modestly literate divination-sensitive’ nor the ‘highly literate nonchalant’ appeared in this edition.

In the case of the **1849** edition, one can note an increased diversity. The ‘mildly literate salvation-oriented’ numbered 10, making 31% of the total 32 copies; whereas the ‘highly literate elegance-oriented’ numbered 9, making 28%. Next came the ‘mildly literate gods-fearing’, numbering 6, that is 19%. The three groups of the ‘highly literate secular’, the ‘modestly literate divination-sensitive’, and the ‘highly literate nonchalant’ numbered respectively 3, 2, and 1, making in sum 19%.

The case of the edition of **1864** was as follows: the ‘highly literate elegance-oriented’ numbered 8, or 50% of the total 16 copies; the number of copies belonging to the remaining 5 groups was small, one or two each, that is, the maximum share of any of these was 12.5%. It should be noted, however, that the ‘highly literate nonchalant’ numbered two, increasing its previous relative weight, though still small in absolute terms.

Before attempting any interpretation of these trends, it is useful to be reminded of the comparatively slow speed of sale of copies of this genre of book. For example, the inscription in the above mentioned copy of ‘the Clan of Hayashi’ indicates that the purchase was made 12 years after the year of printing. This was not an unusual case. In addition, printed folios were often kept unbound at publishers for some time until the number of orders reached a certain point. Moreover, woodblocks could be repeatedly used. When they became worn and the impressions unclear but the demand remained high, duplicate blocks were usually cut. In the case of *Eitai setsuyō*, the 1864 edition seems to have remained

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<sup>3</sup> These figures are a matter of coincidence, reflecting the range of the present writer’s search. The impression is afforded, however, that the publication of the 1849 edition was more successful than that of the other editions.

in print for a longer period than the other editions since no new edition was subsequently undertaken<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, the time span of usage of *Eitai setsuyō* was long, usually ranging over two or three generations. This means that if a house kept a copy of an early edition, it was unlikely that a new edition would be bought to replace it. Any change in the distribution of the 6 types of usage across these three editions would, therefore, not sharply reflect social changes taking place in the years printed in the colophons of those copies. Yet there were 18 years between the first and the second editions, and 15 years between the second and the last. These intervals must also be taken into consideration. Thus, whatever view the following analysis may suggest, it cannot be a chronology with clear cut divisions. It is rather more like a broad stream accommodating old and new currents.

With these reservations in mind, one can point to at least four historically significant trends shown up by shifts among the 6 types of usage of *Eitai setsuyō* identified above.

First, there was the persistent dominance of the 'highly literate elegance-oriented' type. After the launch of the 1849 edition, however, this type's share in the new edition decreased, striking a balance with the 'mildly literate salvation-oriented', both sharing about 30% of the copies of the new edition. Then came the 1864 edition, and the share occupied by the 'highly literate elegance-oriented' rose to 50%. As the average period of use of *Eitai setsuyō* in each household was so long, the expression 'persistent dominance' is in itself hardly sufficient. Rather 'the increasing dominance from 1831 onwards through the 19th century' is a more appropriate way of describing it.

Second, there was a rise and fall of the 'mildly literate salvation-oriented' type. On a minor scale, the 'mildly literate gods-fearing' and the 'modestly literate divination-sensitive' types followed similar courses. In other words, the diversity in the usages of *Eitai setsuyō* increased considerably (or, was about to grow) when the second edition came out about the middle of the 19th century, but this tendency was not sustained.

Third, there was a continuous decline of the 'highly literate secular'. This type of usage may have been regarded as suggesting, with the 'nonchalant' type, a hint of modern rationalism, being free from the so-called 'superstitions' of the Yin-yang school. But for some reason this type did not flourish during the 19th century.

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<sup>4</sup> The composition of its joint publishers changed at least three times [Yokoyama *et al.*: 1998, 111].

Fourth, the late trend of the 'highly literate nonchalant' showed considerable strength, raising its share at least four-fold after the 1864 edition became available. This tendency contrasts clearly with the other types except the 'highly literate elegance-oriented'.

To summarize, the two highly literate groups, the 'elegance-oriented' and the 'nonchalant', showed consistent strength, whereas all the others were subject to decline. One might think that such change did not necessarily reflect changes in mode of life. But it seems that at least the trend shown by the 'salvation-oriented' was not a simple matter of relative numerical decrease. If one examines the rate at which the *Eitai setsuyō* copies of this type were sold by their original users, the figure is no less than 86%, making a sharp contrast to the 41% in the group of 'elegance-oriented'. For some reason, many houses of the 'salvation-oriented' type became unable to keep the old things that their ancestors had treasured.

At the end of PART THREE, mention was made of two different types, 'highly literate elegance-oriented' and 'mildly literate salvation-oriented', of usage of *Eitai setsuyō* which were numerically dominant, with the former being slightly more frequent in a proportion of 5 to 3. Now it has become clear that this co-existence was not at all a stable phenomenon. On the contrary, if one looks at the situation in the early part of the second half of the 19th century, there were two types of usage, that is two modes of civility, or attitudes towards situating oneself 'properly' in the universe: one increased its dominance to such an extent as to almost make itself an expression of a national aspiration to a certain type of civility, and the other rapidly declined after contributing for a short while to the diversity of civility in Japan.

At this stage, it is important to make clear the essential difference between these two types of usage of *Eitai setsuyō*: one that flourished and the other that was lost. There is one remarkable feature of the 'elegance-oriented' shown in their copies of *Eitai setsuyō*: its concern with the court and the literary tradition associated with it. Among the pages which carried the portraits of *kasen*, the 'immortal' poets, and *busen*, the 'immortal' warriors, in many cases it was the figures on the military side that clearly attracted more interest; the ratio of such cases was in fact three times as high as the cases with *kasen*. Such an imbalance between the two fields of human excellence cannot be noticed among the 'salvation-oriented'. Relevant to this feature is this group's attitude towards the 6-page column entitled, '*Gadan Koji*' (lit. illustrated legends/1831 ed.), or '*Honchō Koji*' (lit. legends in this realm/1849 & 1864 eds.). These pages featured a number of literary figures who were said to have been so successful in their literary activities as to move not only their fellow human beings but also nature

itself by causing rain or changing the behaviour of wild animals. Judging from the present writer's observations, this was probably a universally favoured part of *Eitai setsuyō*. The belief that a great poem can move even deities or heaven and earth had long been held among the literati of East Asia. It finds its first textual expression in the 'Great Preface' to the ancient Chinese canonical text, *The Book of Odes*, one of the Confucian Five Classics. This idea was reinforced in Japan by the poet Ki no Tsurayuki (d. 946), under the influence of the literary theories of the Chinese Six Dynasties. In his Japanese preface to the famous anthology *Kokin Waka Shū* (lit. Japanese odes past and present), Tsurayuki elaborated on this idea. Eventually, this ideal of literary excellence had become a central assumption of the court culture of Japan. One can interpret the small illustrated column in *Eitai setsuyō* as a popularised version of this idea. Some 60% of the 'salvation-oriented' showed keen interest in this column, whereas the rate among the 'elegance-oriented' was 45%, a figure that may not be quite in harmony with the name of the group.

Other worn pages which may demonstrate the users' concern with the cultural tradition of the court are those carrying '*Unjō Yōran*' (lit. above the cloud bulletin, that is, who's who in the court), a detailed map depicting the enclave of the imperial palace in Kyoto, together with the pages in the chronology of Tennō that covered the controversial period of the dynastic split in the 14th century. This period in the history of Japan had been a matter of concern among Japanese intellectuals ever since the schism itself. During the 17th century, however, the dynastic schism became, under the influence of Neo-Confucianism, a theoretical question not only of loyalty, but more broadly, of civility in the universal order, as was expressed by, for example, the encyclopedic thinker Kaibara Ekiken (1630–1714). Whether warring subjects behaved 'properly' towards the 'legitimate' Tennō reflected the degree of national civility towards Tennō, the 'descendants of heavenly gods'. The traditional notions that Japan was a *Shinkoku*, 'divine country', and that the Japanese nation therefore, 'unlike the Chinese', had inherited a heavenly civility, and had never overthrown its imperial dynasty (*kōtō renmen*), were finding increasing support among the populace<sup>5</sup>. The rates of the readers' interest in these pages of *Eitai setsuyō* are as follows: 50% of

<sup>5</sup> Kaibara, E., '*Hompō Hichi-bi Setsu*/the seven merits of this country', in *Jigo Shū*/essays for self-enjoyment (Kyoto, 1714), Vol. 2. For a relevant document, see Matsushita Kenrin's '*Jijo*/self-preface' to his *Ishō Nihon Den*/accounts of Japan in the outer world (Kyoto, 1688); also see 'Gokai Bankoku Jinbutsu Zue/the illustrated figures of all the nations in the world' in ed. Taura Taian, *Daifuku Setsuyō Mujinzō* (Kyoto, Edo, & Osaka, 1863).

the 'elegance-oriented', and 75% of the 'salvation-oriented'.

To understand the difference between the two types of civility, the 'elegance-oriented' and the 'salvation-oriented', attention ought to be given to yet a further aspect of *Eitai setsuyō*, that is to the pages dealing with the Yin-yang school. Let us take the 'elegance-oriented' type first. If one examines minutely the wear and tear of this part as used by this type, one is struck by the fact that their interest was strong but of a somewhat general character and did not show any keen practical interest in specific matters apart from the list of Chinese characters for naming new adults. The only exception is a few cases (including two from the court society) in which anxious consultation of the pages carrying information about man-woman compatibility and care in pregnancy was obvious. On the other hand, the cases of the 'salvation-oriented' show a considerable difference in their attitudes towards the Yin-yang school. Their interest was fairly specified. Among their pressing concerns, the most conspicuous one was how to give to servants names that would have cosmic attributes compatible with that of the house master.

In one of Kaibara Ekiken's unpublished discourses, *Jingi Kun* (lit. instructions on gods in heaven and earth), scornful criticism was expressed against a rising desire among commoners in Japan to become 'gods' in person and to be so called by others, even while still alive [Yokoyama: 1992, 48]. Also, one generation later, Nishikawa Joken (1648–1724), the learned geographer and astronomer of Nagasaki, wrote a satirical account concerning the ambition of ordinary people in Japan to copy the mode of life of *kuge* and high-ranking samurai, including the former's traditional concerns with divination [Yokoyama: 1992, 42]<sup>6</sup>. The aspiration for elite life criticised by these intellectuals seems to correspond with what the current study has revealed in the type of the 'highly literate elegance-oriented', that is, in short, an attitude which fell short of concern with observing civility towards 'fearful' deities or those who were living 'near the heaven', but was generally interested in the forms of civility in elegant society. As was mentioned in PART THREE, interest in *nō* and *ko-utai* was shown almost exclusively by the 'elegance-oriented'. This may be related to their lack of detachment from any 'divine' existence, as the essence of these performing arts is to be trained on stage to transform oneself into the non-human.

By contrast with the 'elegance-oriented', the withdrawn 'salvation-oriented' type seems to have been more or less content with the status quo, more inward-looking, more seriously concerned with harmonious relations within their close

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<sup>6</sup> See Nishikawa, J., *Chōnin Bukuro/a bag for merchants* (Kyoto, 1719), Vol. 5.

communities, and eager to learn respectfully the distinctions of the literary tradition preserved in the court. Apparently, both types showed a similar interest in the varied literary and religious heritage of the civilised *kuge*. This phenomenon seems to support the notion of kugefication. Hitherto, this phenomenon had been only fragmentally documented, for example, by various features of the contemporary popular press<sup>7</sup>, or by the social popularity won by such *kuge* families as the Reizei in Japanese poetry and the Asukai in *kemari* (court football) in the 19th century. In reality, however, the qualitative difference in aspirations between the two types was vast. One aspired to change its life into the highest form, and the other was dedicated to refining its life in its existing form.

The current study demonstrates a dynamic phase of civilisation in 19th-century Japan, characterised by a swift and complex kugefication. This phase constitutes an interlude immediately preceding the later culturally more monotonous period led by the modern government under the slogan of *fukoku kyōhei* (lit. wealthy state with military strength), the period for which the term 'samuraisation' might be appropriate. Just before its deep involvement in the international power struggle began, Japan passed through an interesting phase in its social history, in which it seems to have reached the stage of 'civilisation' in the classical sense of the word.

It was in summer 1858 that Lord Elgin (1811–1863), formerly Governor-General of Canada and later Viceroy of India, wrote a letter to his wife in Britain while he was visiting Japan on a mission to open trade: 'On the whole, I consider it the most interesting expedition I ever made... their joyous, though polite and respectful demeanour; the combination of the sort of neatness and finish which we attain in England by the expenditure of great wealth... made me feel that at last I had found something which entirely surpassed all the expectations I had formed.... Every man, from the Emperor (who never leaves his palace) to the humblest labourer, living under a rigid rule, prescribed by law and custom combined... but, in so far as one can judge, this system is not felt to be burdensome by any. All seems to think it the most natural thing in the world that they should move in the orbit in which they are placed' [Warland: 1872, 269–270]. Of course, this remark by an experienced statesman (from Eton and Merton College, Oxford) ought to be interpreted with many reservations. There had been a strong expectation for

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<sup>7</sup> Popular books for women's polite knowledge published in Japan by the 1860s almost without exception carried illustrations of court ladies in the Heian period. See, as a most gaudy example, *Onna Yūsoku Mibae Bunkola* light book of women's courtly practices (Osaka, 1866).



## IN QUEST OF CIVILITY

something 'civilised' on the British side. After the serious unrest and wars in Europe, in India, and in China, everything that Lord Elgin observed in Japan tended to look better. Obviously, he had known the 18th-century account of Japan by Engelbert Kaempfer, the physician of the Dutch factory in Dejima off Nagasaki, which had emphasized that 'the whole Empire might be call'd a School of Civility and good manners' [Kaempfer, tr. Schouchtzer: 1727, Book V, 447]. Yet, having observed the numerous unconscious records of their lives left by the users of *Eitai setsuyō*, one may feel entitled to say that the picture Lord Elgin drew was not altogether an illusion.

Now, one and half centuries later, the memories thus revived of a Japan that was 'once civilised' may carry a message to a global society which is assuming a certain affinity, though on a different scale, with Japan during the period of her seclusion.

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