Seinendan: Youth Associations as Social Technology in Late Meiji and Taishō Japan

by

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Abstract
This thesis is an investigation into the rise of the rural youth association (seinendan) movement in Japan, focusing on the period from around 1890 to the first years of World War I. Treatment is also given to genealogical connections and differences between these associations and earlier rural social groupings, which the Greater Japan Federation of Youth Associations (est. 1925) narrativized as its historical antecedents and a primordial expression of Japanese national essence. Modern seinendan provided new opportunities for local notables and the state to deal with problems of governance and promoting rural reform. Using primary sources, extended attention is given to how elite bureaucrats conceived of self-governance as an organizational paradigm for administrative units and, eventually, individuals. Lastly, the origins and instrumentalization in Japan of the concept of youth as a stage distinct from childhood are discussed in transnational context, with particular focus on the rise of youth psychology.
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Introduction

This thesis is an investigation into the rise of the rural youth association (seinendan) movement in Japan, focusing on the period from around 1890 to the first years of World War I. However much one might hope to avoid an overly teleological narrative, this history must be articulated in relation to the establishment in 1925 of the Dai Nippon Rengō Seinendirō (which presented itself in English as the “Federation of Young Men’s Leagues of Japan;” hereafter DNRS) as the umbrella organization for all youth associations in the country. By 1937, it sat atop a state-established pyramid of regional and district federations, the base of which comprised “more than 18,000 young men’s leagues in Japan proper alone, whose members are estimated at above 2,700,000 in all.”¹ Based on the census of 1930, which gave a total figure of more than 6,800,000, this was approximately forty percent of Japan’s population of young men (ages 14-24). Nonetheless, DNRS claimed that it was “not meant to merely amalgamate the [individual leagues] into bigger bodies;”² rather, its aim was “to facilitate mutual communication and to promote cooperation among the young men’s leagues throughout the country and thus strive for the attainment of their common progress and development.”³ It promoted cultural edification, healthy physical growth, and moral and technical training of young men and pushed its vision and ideals for youth through a variety of pamphlets and newspapers intended for its membership as well for overseas audiences.

Of course, by 1937 the DNRS was essentially a paramilitary organization. It operated within a militaristic and nationalistic ethos, often in close association with the Imperial Reservists’ Association (teikoku zaigō gunjinkai). If the seinendan are mentioned in English-language scholarship, it is usually in this capacity. Richard J. Smethurst’s A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism is the only monograph-length treatment of this subject in English, and
has thus naturally come to inform other works that treat the *seinendan* tangentially.\(^a\) This is somewhat limiting, for Smethurst’s purpose was to explain “why rural Japan’s loyalty never wavered” before and during World War II.\(^4\) Essentially:

[t]he Japanese army was able to guide its nation’s destinies in the wartime era because it molded an obedient rural following before the crisis decade of the 1930s and continued to solidify what one observer called its ‘electoral constituency’ thereafter. They established branches and subbranches of their organizations [youth and reservist associations, women’s defense leagues, etc.] in every agricultural village…and used long-standing internal social stratification, cooperation, cohesiveness, and sanctions against nonconformity for army purposes. In other words, the army leaders did not search for new methods to build their rural support; they looked to village conventions instead….Each local branch became a microcosm of the hamlet and village as a whole…. In other words, the army’s success at building rural support was based on its use of each villager’s parochial commitment to the hamlet’s social order and to the hamlet itself as the center of his world.\(^5\)

Smethurst’s focus on the army is justified, and I would not like to minimize the cunning with which the army sought to weave itself into the fabric of local life. Moreover, he highlights the army’s sensitivity to local conditions and variations and its realization that a successful organization would have to be founded on the strength of parochial bonds, a point which I too develop in Chapter Three, though from the perspective of Education and Home Ministry bureaucrats rather than the army.

However, arguing that the army forged a network of support for militarism by co-opting the “cohesive organic society” of the village, relies not just on a rather stereotyped picture of rural society, but also on the tired argument that “submissiveness to authoritarian leadership” and a “willingness to subordinate the individual to the group” underlay the development of Japanese fascism.\(^b\) This emphasis on the role of the army and state—the narrative of instrumentalization and

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\(^b\) Smethurst, *A Social Basis*, 179-184. See also R. P. Dore and Tsutomu Ouchi, “Rural Origins of Japanese Fascism,” in *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, ed. James William Morley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 181-209. This discourse still carries weight in popular understandings of WWII and still circulates within academia: “[T]he crucial issue is… the ideology that made for the fanatical loyalty of the Japanese people to their emperor, unshaken even after the dropping of two atomic bombs and the destruction of the Meiji state. Few men in history have commanded such total loyalty and devotion from the masses as did the Japanese emperor in prewar Japan. How else can one explain why on August 15, 1945, Japanese subjects prostrated themselves before the imperial palace to apologize to their sovereign for their inability to win the war? This work hopes to shed some light on the origins and the development of the powerful and pervasive emperor centered ideology of radical Shinto ultranationalism in prewar Japan that, from the findings of this study, had achieved a ‘virtually totalitarian “spiritual” control over
subordination—does not engage with 1) the ubiquitous language of self-governance and concern with the individual subject that featured so prominently, even during the 1930s, in thinking about the *seinendan*; 2) the fact that for every youth association activity designed to foster obedience, patriotism, and group cohesion, there were an equal number of activities that called for individual self-advancement and competition; and 3) the role of the *seinendan* in helping constitute the idea of youth (*seinen*) itself, a term that had emerged as a biological and moral category only during the Meiji period. More recent scholarship, whether on pre-war reform movements or youth specifically, bring a much-welcome consideration of transnational history, but have tended to emphasize the urban at the expense of the rural.6

This thesis represents an attempt to redress some of these imbalances. Focusing on the period before the end of WWI foregoes the temptation to narrate a descent into fascism, and has the added advantage of not retracing the ground that is well covered in the above English-language scholarship. Throughout, my aim is to deny neither the militaristic character of the *seinendan* nor the importance of subordination. Rather, it is to show how discourses of subordination and self-determination interacted and combined to underwrite the ideology of the DNRS. That is to say, I examine how a massive umbrella organization such as the DNRS, essentially an arm of the state, could claim in all seriousness that the *seinendan* “came into existence without special organizers. Nor were these juvenile organizations started with any definite objects beforehand. They were, indeed, associations which sprang spontaneously out of the common life and interests of young people in accordance with local customs and habits.”7 Rather than dismissing this rhetoric out of hand as cynical or duplicitous, I feel it is more illuminating to consider how it came to be. One

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6 Militaristic parades and patriotic seminars and lectures co-existed with harvest and savings competitions that rewarded the individual, not to mention techniques that allowed individuals to measure personal progress and growth by means of bookkeeping, bodily measurements, diaries, etc. National projects could always be framed in terms of competition between individuals.

reason for this is that prominent supporters of the seinendan in government genuinely agonized over the tension between allowing spontaneous development and local intervention, and they did not have ready-made solutions, whether in theory or in practice. The ideology of the DNRS, far from being a foregone conclusion, was the result of diverse historical encounters between multiple elements of Japanese society and multiple elements within the state during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

For the DNRS, this spontaneity nonetheless had deep historical roots: the organization, root and branch, was a “new modern structure built upon an old foundation, and not one built extempore in the Meiji era.” Age-based social groups had existed in Japanese villages since at least the Edo period, and the DNRS insisted upon weaving these groups into its evolutionary narrative. In its moralistic, militaristic, or nationalistic elements, the DNRS was no more remarkable than other contemporary youth associations outside Japan. But by sourcing itself in pre-Meiji youth groups, the DNRS presented itself as a miniature of the nation. Thus, perhaps uniquely among youth associations that emerged across the world before WWII (such as the Boy Scouts and the YMCA), it conceived of its mission, indeed, its very organizational structure, not merely as service to the nation, but as a fundamental, organic expression thereof.

Japanese scholarship on the seinendan has engages explicitely with this supposed prehistory, though not always in a manner critical of the DNRS line. Prior to WWII, youth associations became a prominent theme in the burgeoning field of ethnology (minzokugaku) and fell into a positive feedback loop with the DNRS narrative. Postwar scholarship from the 1970s made some criticism of its ideological and obsessively enumerative aspects, while also admitting to the deficiencies of certain presumptions in ethnology. But in some respects it also preserved minzokugaku’s erroneously utopian image of pre-Meiji youth groups as well as the central
element of DNRS ideology: the assumption of genealogical continuity between pre-modern and modern youth groups, that is, the youth group as an immutable feature of village life in Japan.\textsuperscript{d}

Some more recent Japanese scholarship, to which my analysis is indebted, has been more critical of \textit{minzokugaku}'s influence in thinking about the \textit{seinendan}. Nevertheless, the DNRS narrative of spontaneity and evolution is hard to pull apart because many aspects of it are true. There are several areas in which it is legitimate to describe pre-Meiji youth groups as the precursors of the modern \textit{seinendan}. Thus, rather than skirt the issue or uncritically present the image of pre-Meiji youth groups that can still be found in encyclopedias today, in Chapter One I provide an extended discussion of this important subject. I also set out the DNRS narrative, as well as its connection to ethnology, in more detail. My goal has been to strike a balance between the valuable contributions of \textit{minzokugaku} to understanding of youth associations in Japan and the need to correct its less solid positions. Although abbreviating treatment of these themes would have saved time and space for aspects of the history of the \textit{seinendan} that I have not been able to cover here (there are several, which I address briefly in the conclusion), I had a personal connection to the subject matter that inspired lengthier involvement. My interest in the \textit{seinendan} grew out of my time living and working in Wakayama Prefecture, where I had the opportunity to participate extensively in \textit{seinendan} activities. Though there remain scant vestiges of the kinds of practices that took place under the DNRS, today, the local \textit{seinendan}’s purpose is largely confined to the rural festivals long associated with village youth groups. My time in a \textit{seinendan} provided me with good friends and fond memories. I thus felt I owed an extended account of the history that made these life-changing experiences possible.

\textsuperscript{d} E.g., Satō Mamoru’s massive \textit{Kindai Nihon Seinenshūdanshi Kenkyū} (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 1970). This fed directly into the image of the “cohesive organic society” described above in English language scholarship. See Smethurst, \textit{A Social Basis}, 30-31, in which he cites Satō’s work directly.
Chapter Two examines the history of youth groups over the course of the Meiji period from two complementary perspectives: the attenuation of the “traditional” youth group and the rise of the seinendan movement. The first section deals with how grand modernizing reforms of the Meiji state, such as compulsory education, conscription, new administrative divisions, cut across the former’s sphere of action, establishing structural limits to their autonomy and unsettling their various social bases. Extended treatment is given to the government’s shrine amalgamation policy (including its pre-history) following the Russo-Japanese war because of the intimate connection between festivals and shrines and wakashū activities. The common thread running through these various reforms was how they undermined localism and radically altered the relationship between local elites and the wakashū. The second section goes back to the early Meiji to describe how modern reforms opened new avenues for local elites to deal with particular challenges to their interests, specifically by establishing supplementary educational institutions, which resulted in the first seinendan, to control what they saw as youth delinquency. In combination with the large-scale reforms discussed in the first section, local elites’ enterprising efforts created cracks in communal solidarity that widened as village youth groups ran up against the new social structures informed by modern imperial family-state ideology. To illustrate this process, I proceed through a discussion of traditional village sexual practices. This is followed by an examination of how war elicited from youth groups various and widespread grassroots efforts in support of soldiers, which finally garnered the attention of the central government and encouraged local reformers to begin pushing for national policies on youth associations.

Chapter Three presents an analysis of a series of lectures associated with Japan’s early twentieth century Local (or Rural) Improvement Movement (chihō kairyō undō; LIM hereafter), which took both local administration and institutions, as well as rural people’s everyday lives and
practices, as targets of far-reaching reforms designed to strengthen Japan as a burgeoning imperial power. Given primarily by officials of the Home and Education Ministries, the lectures brought together representatives across the levels of government, from top bureaucrats to village leaders, to discuss strategies, philosophies, and model examples of local reform (*chihō kairyō*): agriculture and land rights, public works, hygiene, statistics, education, local governance and finances, as well as youth associations, were but a few of topics covered. I have done a close reading of the lectures on youth associations given between 1909 and 1916. The topic of youth associations represented something of a crossroads in the panoply of LIM discourse, bringing together problems of state and society as well as discourses on youth psychology and effective group organization. There are thus many potential avenues of inquiry in a movement as diverse as LIM. This chapter, however, traces through the LIM lectures the various articulations of an ideal to which youth (and the nation) should aspire and by which they should govern their behaviour and practices: independent self-management (*dokuritsu jiei*). In singling out this discursive thread, I address the historical importance of the call to manage the self in shaping discourse on the *seinendan*. While the analysis of the historical constitution of modern, self-disciplining subjects is by no means new to the field of Japanese history as a whole, I feel it important to contrast the LIM lectures’ emphasis on the balance between self-governance and guidance towards national integration against previous scholarship on the history of Japanese rural youth associations. The lectures also provide insight into the changing mindsets and strategies of bureaucratic, governmental, and local elites with regard to what they saw as a vital site for intervention, rural youth, while providing their perspective on what has been described in recent work on Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany as “energizing the everyday,” the process whereby ordinary people “bonded” with the regimes that
governed them and so “were caught up in the excitement of active involvement in a process of fundamental transformation of things both large and small.”

This will provide an approach to the history of the category of youth itself, which is the subject of Chapter Four. While it would be wrong to posit a uniform understanding of the idea of youth in Japan (let alone transnationally) at any point in history, even those who sympathized with, or sought to embody, the various counter-cultural or subversive elements that came to be associated with “youth”—whether delinquent, consumerist, or socialist, etc.—shared the real estate of a single term with their detractors. However it was defined and used in different places and by different people, under modernity the transition from immaturity to maturity constituted a category in which all, from individuals to nations, had a stake, and so seemed to demand signification and theorization. It had a certain translatability, if not in its particulars, then as an issue on which one could not avoid engaging in some way, as a discursive space that demanded occupation. Moreover, whatever the nature of the moral qualities or obligations imputed to young people in thinking on youth, these readily fused with what was portrayed, with ever increasing ebullience in academic and popular scientific discourse, as biological reality. Ideas from physiology and psychology circulated globally during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they still do today, structuring and guiding state intervention in society as well as everyday, personal attitudes to physical and mental development, both individual and collective. The assumptions about youth in the Local Improvement lectures were especially powerful and unquestionably part of this global phenomenon. The significance attributed by recent studies on the role of ideas and practices of hygiene—not coincidentally another key object of LIM—in constituting modernity is equally valid for youth: “it became an organizing principle in
governance, a site of contestation over the relationship between the people and the state, and ultimately an indicator of the power of Japan vis-à-vis the rest of Asia.”

Note: I have used the footnotes marked by superscript lower-case letters (a, b, c, etc.) for significant supplementary information and observations. Source references without additional comment are marked by superscript Arabic numerals and have been collated as endnotes.
Chapter One
An Ambivalent Past

The advent of these juvenile social bodies, practically identical in form, which sprung up everywhere throughout the country was not due to the influence of some guiding spirit from higher up, but was prompted by the deep-rooted racial instinct. As to the functions and operations of the associations, therefore, there was no uniformity. Each of them had its own peculiar development, always taking its special character from local traditions and special circumstances.

— a 1937 English-language pamphlet published by the Dai Nippon Rengō Seinendan

From what one might suppose to be the perspective of a participant in the early twentieth-century youth association movement (seinendan undō), chronicling the rise of the rural seinendan as state-sanctioned vehicles for social reform and individual advancement would not seem to require much engagement with pre-Meiji history, except perhaps as a dark age against which to narrate a heroic overcoming of the fetters of tradition. Indeed, as will be shown below, many socio-cultural phenomena involving young people in villages became just such foils for Meiji-period discourses of modernization. For ruling elites and village leaders, some of these practices, particularly festivals, had already proven worrisomely disruptive of social and economic order during the Edo period; the new Meiji regime, despite its commitment to civilization and enlightenment, found itself saddled with a social legacy that it deemed representative of backwardness and ignorance.

However, certain aspects of village life also came to have positive meaning for the nation-state. In both its encyclicals and its public relations (domestic and foreign), the Greater Japan Federation of Youth Associations (DNRS)—established in 1925 to nest the thousands of tiny local seinendan into successively larger associations that corresponded to the state’s administrative divisions of village, county, and prefecture—portrayed itself relentlessly as the culmination of a “deep-rooted racial instinct,” peculiar to Japanese collective life, to form age-based social groupings. In order to support this evolutionary claim, the DNRS, even while insisting on the need to root out the “evil practices” (heigai) of the past, nonetheless funded
extensive historical and anthropological research into the origins and structural variation of such groupings in villages, with special focus on the pre-Meiji village “youth groups” (wakashū) that supposedly had served as the “womb” of the modern seinendan.

My choice of wakashū to refer to youth groups as a long-standing ethnological feature of Japanese societies requires some explanation, for the name by which such groups are commonly known to contemporary scholarship is wakamonogumi. I will take up this issue in more detail below, but suffice it to say here that the availability of the category wakamonogumi is a direct result of DNRS-sponsored research and thus tied to an anachronous projection of nationhood onto the past. Though Japanese ethnologists acknowledged the diversity of pre-Meiji youth groups early on, that very diversity came to be understood as an expression ethno-racial identity under the sign wakamonogumi. To establish a critical distance from the entanglements of this term, which was in fact a neologism of Yangita Kunio’s, I have chosen to use wakashū, which has the advantage, among others described below, of actually being attested to in historical usage (in addition to wakaren, wakamono nakama, wakashū, or wakarenshū).a

In DNRS literature, wakashū simultaneously represented an Other to be overcome and the diachronic presence of the Japanese nation. In this respect, wakashū became a metonym for the rural generally: alternately a font of pernicious backwardness and a stabilizer for a rapidly modernizing nation. This ambivalent, yet generative tension provides more than enough reason to engage with the history of wakashū, if only to better understand their discursive role in the establishment of the seinendan and new concept of youth itself. Yet it also seems necessary to relieve some of the teleological burden placed by the DNRS on the figure of the wakashū. After

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a Additionally, my choice of term has to do with various various distinctions some Japanese scholars have attempted to make among these other possibilities, particularly wakamono nakama. Wakashū is, in my estimation, the least inflected. In any case, there is little basis for making a solid correlation between the organizational form of a local group and its choice of name. See Furukawa Sadao, Mura no asobibi: kiyiritsu to wakamonogumi no shokaishi (Tokyo, Heibonsha, 1986), 245. Wakamonogumi, with its connotations of strong coherence, is an apt label for some groups in the alter Edo period, which I will describe below, but not the primordial groups argued for by Yanagita Kunio and other ethnologists.
all, even if we allow for significant genealogical ties between the *wakashū* and the *seinendan*, the former had significance in various pre-Meiji contexts beyond being both the seed and scapegoat (real or imagined) for the development of the latter. However, the DNRS’s discursive monopoly on such research into this topic during the first half of the twentieth century casts a long shadow over historiographical approaches to the *wakashū*.

Yet an analysis of the *seinendan* in relation to the modern concept of youth, the ultimate objective of this thesis, would be incomplete without presenting the DNRS’s understanding of its own origins. In so doing, one could easily end up using historical phenomena of the Edo period in much the same way the DNRS did, that is, to emplot the *wakashū* and the *seinendan* as points a on a common developmental arc. Without paying closer attention to their own contexts, the various histories of the *wakashū* are set marching to a goal, the national *seinendan*, which at the time could not have been envisioned, let alone shared. As such, this chapter will attempt to negotiate the tension between the need, on the one hand, to historicize the knowledge produced about youth associations and, on the other, to speak concretely to the *wakashū* in their own context as well as to any material developmental connections to the *seinendan*. This tension is most palpable in the diversity of the *wakashū*: their high degree of regional variation and local idiosyncrasy in organization, duties, and membership would not seem to provide support for an articulation of national racial instinct; but early social reformers and, later, ethnographers and the DNRS came to advocate that there was just such a transcendent unity in this diversity.

Tracing such discursive uses and dispersions of unity and diversity forms a central narrative thread in this thesis, but dissecting this chimerical fusion is difficult because it is held together by a fundamental, and historically accurate, acknowledgement of regional and local difference. In order to unfurl the constitutive elements in the DNRS’s claim, and thereby to
illuminate the historical reasons for making it, I will begin with a general account of the mass of social functions and organizational forms that have been attributed to the *wakashū* by scholarship both before and after the World War II. Next, I will move into a brief discussion of terminology and historiography that will also help pull apart the seams of the DNRS’s vision of its development. Finally, I will attempt to come to some conclusions about the historical significance of the *wakashū* and any concrete genealogical connections they may have had to the *seinendan*.

**Nation’s Treasure: *Wakashū* as Immemorial Social Organ**

Associations of youth have a long history in Japan as a feature of village social organization. In his lengthy post-WWII study, Satō Mamoru describes them as one link in a graded system of age-based groups (*nenreikaitai shūdan no ikkan*) that marked the stages of socialization through which men and women of a village community (*sonraku kyōdōtai*) passed over the course of their lives (prototypically, children—youth (*wakamono*)—the middle-aged—the elderly).\(^1\) These were not abstract categories; inclusion in a given group carried with it communally defined responsibilities. Perhaps the function most ubiquitously attributed to the youth group (i.e., the *wakashū*) is the provision of labour for the common good and other essential services:

This was communal work which was only indirectly related to rice cultivation and it included projects such as building bridges, repairing roads, and managing communal property. In many villages there were tracts of land, called *iriaiyama*, which were owned by the community as a whole and provided lumber, firewood, and cut grass for use as fertilizer in the rice paddies. This land was managed at the communal level as the upkeep involved so much labor that no one family could assume responsibility. The community work force also tended the village temple and local shrine and was in charge of organizing the various festivals throughout the year.\(^2\)

In addition, *wakashū* could be responsible for constructing river embankments, conveying messages, patrolling the village at night, firefighting, and responding to various other calamities. The imperatives of the common good were especially strong in fishing villages, where social
forms and roles associated with the wakashū could persist well into the twentieth century because, “while individual families might have owned their own boats, the launching, docking and unloading of these craft required a great deal of strenuous labor which could be accomplished only on a cooperative basis. Fishing villages usually had a group of able-bodied men ready at all times to put the boats out to sea and dock them on their return with their catch; their duties also involved aiding disabled boats and shipwrecks.”

Of course, the need for these services and distribution of duties could vary according to a village’s economic, geographic, and social situation. But in any case, the wakashū were associated with some activity deemed essential by their villages, which were generally left to their own devices in such matters by the Tokugawa bakufu (1603-1867) and its local representatives. The age of admission to a wakashū typically hovered around puberty, but the upper limit, often another area of considerable local variation, could be anywhere between thirty and forty-five (or might be ignored if there was no new member to replace a senior one). Thus, although wakamono (literally “young people”) made up the “membership” of the wakashū, the concept of youth is this case is better understood as referring to the communally defined “active” or “working” population of a village. As such, the wakashū could have a great deal of heft in village affairs (even to the point, as illustrated in the final section of this chapter, of becoming a nuisance to village leaders). Ultimately, the possibility of ostracization from the village (murahachibu) stood as a powerful incentive to participate, for any household whose eligible members did not risked not receiving the group’s assistance in time of need, or even losing the right to the use of common lands. Likewise, once an individual became part of the group, the constant inertia of peer pressure and the closing of

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ranks against any member found derelict of duty (nakama hazushi) provided guarantors for cohesion.

Another social function attributed to village youth groups by ethnologists, which, if true, likely further ensured participation and conformity, was mediation of marriages (kon’in no baikai) for their members. According to Yanagita Kunio, the seminal figure in Japanese ethnography, it was “difficult to think that there might have been any need for such groups other than to ensure appropriate conjugal life [tekitō na haiō seikatsu].” Of course, wakashū were only one half of what was, according to Yanagita, an ancient institution. Some villages had an equivalent to the wakashū in young women’s groups, which he usually termed musumegumi, though local nomenclature could be just as diverse as it was for the wakashū (e.g., musumenakama, onnagumi, onagowakashū, onna no wakanaka, etc.). In villages where this type of mediation thrived, young men and women, on reaching a given age, would spend the evenings together with their peers (even staying the night in some cases) in sex-segregated communal lodges called yado. There young people could learn from their seniors the skills and manners expected of them as members of the community at large and in their roles as husbands and wives. A young man might go to sleep in the young women’s yado to signify the marital bond, or he might have to get his yado leader’s permission to associate with, or marry, a particular woman. In other villages, young men and women met in groups “and eventually marriages were arranged by the leader of the young men’s association or the group as a whole.”

Where yado did not exist, Yanagita held that the life of the youth groups was concomitantly less intimate, but where they did, he broadly posited two types for each the wakashū and the musumegumi: the former were distinguished by the age of the person in charge, either someone from among the ranks of the wakashū, or else the proprietor of the building, usually a man of
appropriate age to supervise the group. As for the latter, Yanagita could not speak with confidence as to the character of *musumegumi* leadership,¹ but the central difference in female *yado* was whether the young women habitually spent the night in the *yado* or not. Where they did, the *yado* could be held at the home of a notable family, to which the lodgers commuted in small groups. Where it was not customary to spend the night away from home, young women would simply gather for a few hours before returning their parents’ houses.² In either case, women worked together at such tasks as thread spinning, ramie fibre making, flour grinding, needlework, etc., all in a space where advice could be sought and given regarding prospective marriages and sex. As for the long-term evolution of village marriage practices, Yanagita also asserted that, before the institution of the patriarchal right to the selection of spouses (i.e., mediation by the head of the household), the *wakashū* had held this right autonomously. He took this a step further, claiming that selection of spouse originally was completely free, and that though various restrictions later came about, individual freedom had been the underlying rule until recently.³ He did eventually admit to some uncertainty in this regard, but remained firm in his position on the fundamental connection between the *wakashū* and marriage mediation, which greatly influenced the field of ethnography (and dovetailed with that taken by several works published through the DNRS; more on this point later).⁴

In spite of Yanagita’s penchant for sweeping historical statements based on observations of Shōwa-period villages, ultimately there is not much concrete evidence for such primeval freedom of choice (perhaps allowing a greater likelihood for sons after heirs apparent⁵) or for the role of

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¹ He did take the position that *musumegumi* were generally subordinate to the *wakanonogumi*. See Hirayama Kazuhi, *Seinen shūdan-shi kenkyū* (vol. 1) (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1978), 315.
² See Hirayama Kazuhi, *Seinen shūdan-shi* (vol. 1), 317-318. As Hirayama notes, there has been very little work done on *musumegumi*.
³ Segawa Kyoko, a Yanagita disciple, suggested that the phenomenon of allowing only first sons or one member from each household into the *wakashū*—obviously understood here, in accordance with Yanagita’s perspective, first and foremost as an institution for marriage mediation—as a result of the penetration of patriarchy and primogeniture into villages, thereby implying that these were adopted from the customs of the ruling class. Needless to say, the merits of this thesis can be debated.
the wakashū as marriage mediator during the Edo period. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to suppose that some wakashū may have played a role in match-making, even if an informal one secondary to family oversight. The internal conditions of village life certainly would have provided ample rationale for such a system. After all, marrying within a village’s pool of eligibles was by far the norm—no matter the endogamous sub-group (usually status or occupation) to which an individual belonged—and generally the only excuse for looking outside the village for a match was the inability to find one of appropriate family rank inside. What is more, exogamy could potentially represent a burden for each villager who had to compensate for the loss of the bride’s labour power. Externally, apart from these village-level social and economic considerations, the bakufu authorities imposed severe restrictions on inter-domainal marriages, in addition to the more well-known procedures required to travel licitly between locales. Such strict policies likely had some connection to the tax system, because while the village was responsible for a certain amount of tax as a whole, it was also “divided into goningumi or groups of five households responsible for paying a specified share of the community tax burden.”

Along with labour for the common good and marriage mediation, the third major aspect of village life widely attributed to the wakashū was their involvement in festivals (matsuri) and related religious rites. Even a casual observer today will note the tremendous number and variety of festivals still found throughout Japan. The most important of these festivals and rites typically coincide with significant calendric and agricultural events: the New Year (shōgatsu), the first full moon (koshōgatsu), the five seasonal turning points (gosekku), and rice seeding, planting, and harvesting (naeshiro, taue, inekari). All auspicious occasions, and all fit for celebration with a festival for the gods. Although festivals as they exist today are certainly not perfect preservations of the past, having been subject to historical changes in both form and meaning, they nonetheless
contain relatively stable core elements that give a good idea of what significance they likely had for villagers in the Edo period and even earlier. In other words, festivals have a history, and similarity and difference are equally plausible relationships to the past.

In the absence of comprehensive historical records, anthropological speculation will have to suffice. In his accessible English introduction to Japanese festivals, Herbert Plutschow offers a serviceable explanation for the basic social role and powerful draw of festivals:

On a cosmic level, too, *matsuri* is a drama, bringing together people and gods. The festival allows them to interact in dramatic action and allows people to influence or dominate forces beyond their control. But, in order to effect this, the people must become that which they would dominate, representing both deities and the natural forces the deities are believed to control. When the festival deity appears, it incarnates these dangerous yet divine forces. As a drama, the festival allows its participants to resolve both internal and external conflicts. People act out their frustrations with the dangers they might and do face. They anthropomorphize their deities into dramatic characters, bringing them to a human level so that the people may interact with them and control nature in their own interests. That is, people try to influence forces beyond their control by giving them a human face and personality and forcing them to behave according to human desire and interest.

Though anecdotal, my observations of numerous festivals during four years living in rural Wakayama prefecture bear out the essential points of this statement. Generally, the biggest and most elaborate festivals celebrate the harvest and typically involve carrying a *mikoshi* (a portable float that can weigh more than a ton and serves as the seat of the god associated with a shrine) on a course through the community and back in order to spread the god’s benevolent influence. There may be a variety of smaller floats associated with different districts of a village, which serve as a kind of honour guard for the *mikoshi*.

The most conspicuous roles in the festival are the *oni* (masked “demons” bearing a ritual spear and bamboo rattle) and the *shishi* (a mythical beast resembling a lion and represented for the purposes of the festival by a large puppet head attached to a cloak that covers two or more dancers/puppeteers). Counterintuitively, the *shishi*, not the “demons”, is the baleful influence; *oni* and *shishi* act out a lengthy ritual confrontation (often set to drum and flute, but sometimes done in silence) through a dance which sees the *shishi* alternately awakened and suppressed, and is
performed multiple times in the shrine precincts and along the processional route. While this is happening, Shinto priests make offerings at various altars in the shrine and at a special station halfway through the circuit. At a particularly famous festival, there may be a story associated with the event. For example, the *warai-matsuri* (laughing festival) of Hidakagawa Township in Wakayama, where the floats follow an extremely drunk clown through their circuit, is said to have first been put on by villagers in order to lift the spirits of Nyûtsu-hime, who had overslept and missed a meeting of the gods. Generally, the course of the festival can be described as movement through a sequence of bringing down/welcoming the god into the community (*kami oroshi*), feting/appeasing/entertaining the god (*kami asobi*), and finally seeing it off again (*kami okuri*). 

For the purposes of our discussion, however, the important point is that the smaller floats are usually manned by the local *seinendan*. Though the mikoshi itself is usually borne by more senior men (often attired in abbreviated Shinto garb) and while not all festivals restrict participation to the *seinendan*, historically the *wakashū*, too, often held this right exclusively. Plutschow is again helpful in explaining how this may have come to be the case: “In early *matsuri* all members of a community had to participate in the ritual to make it effective. Renewal could be assured only by the power of the entire community.” With increasing abstract representation of formerly collective rites, however, “instead of all the community participating, a selected group of members, or professional actors, would perform the ritual….Ritual holism gives way to ritual specialization and the divine becomes a role.” Indeed, today the roles of *shishi* and *oni* (especially the transmission of the particulars of the dances to the next generation) are also often exclusive to the members of the *seinendan*. While neither the *seinendan* of today nor the *wakashū* should be understood as the central figure of the festival (this being the priest in the role of intercessor with the gods), without the participation of *wakamono* a festival would be quite a sorry sight: “During the Kansei reforms
of the late 1780s, shogunal officials decided that lavish, expensive festivals were inappropriate during a period of government fiscal austerity and retrenchment. Consequently they proclaimed that the traditional display of Buddhist lanterns during the Hikawa Festival would be suspended, and they instructed the people to wear simple clothing[.]

The youths became angry, and not a single one of them participated in the festival. As a consequence, only middle-aged and older men took part. It was painful to watch. … Since the youths did not join in the festival as usual, there were no quarrels, fights, or brawls. But perhaps the gods were not pleased by the absence of the youths, because one of the middle-aged men was injured when the mikoshi crashed down on his head.21

Terminology and Historiography

It is worth emphasizing again that an individual wakashū may have performed only one, several, or all of the functions described above, and that regional patterns did not preclude anomalies.22 Variations on form and function were probably a great as the number of villages and shrines. As regards the multiplicity of terms used to refer to the wakashū, however, it should be noted that while the relevant historical materials do evince regional preferences for particular terms, it is difficult to make any substantial correlation between local parlance and the organizational form or role taken by a youth group in a particular village.23 Certain terms, however, are of special relevance to this chapter in connection with the knowledge produced about the wakashū by the DNRS and Japanese ethnographers: wakamonoren/wakarenchū and wakamonogumi. The first two were used in Nakayama Taro’s seminal A History of Japanese Youth (1930) and the official history of the DNRS (1942) by Kumagai Tatsujirō. The second was Yanagita Kunio’s appellation, and even though it may have been his own creation rather than a word actually used by villagers, he never explained why he chose it, and thus wakamonogumi subsequently became a technical term in ethnography and a part of general knowledge (while also finding use by the DNRS).24
Though I have just noted the lack of evidence for correlating local nomenclature and organizational character, it is telling that both the DNRS and Yanagita chose terms connoting strong, formalized bonds that fit well with the “deep roots” in Japanese village culture that the authors ascribed to the *wakamono ren*/wakarenchū/wakamonogumi.\(^\text{1}\) The DNRS no doubt found such terms useful in articulating the supposedly ancient history of the *seinendan*. But that these signs were also stretched thin by the diversity of their referents is evident from postwar scholarly efforts to make some basic taxonomic distinctions. Ethnographers such as Segawa Kyoko, Maeda Akiko, and Amano Takeshi, while supportive of the basic ideas regarding the *wakashū*, advanced the term *wakamono nakama* (which Yanagita sometimes used) to distinguish groups of a more amorphous character from those that were more formally regulated (*wakamonogumi*).\(^\text{2}\) In any case, these possibilities were all rolled into the above umbrella terms favoured by the DNRS and Yanagita Kunio. It may seem spurious to subsume such a variety of social forms under one term—all the more so because of the DNRS’s claim for a generalized racial instinct informing a fundamental pattern behind that diversity; yet it would also be quite a jump to deny that age-based/age-associated social groupings may have comprised a substantial part of village life during, and even prior to, the Edo period. Given this dilemma, I chose to use the term “*wakashū*” because the character *shū* simply means many people, and thus denotes a collective without either imputing a strongly defined, formal organizational character or denying the possibility thereof. It also has the advantage of being attested to in the historical record, in use among villagers from at least 1677.

\(^{1}\) The character *ren*’s most basic meaning is to stretch out in a row or to link together, and is used of federations, alliances, and other unions (e.g. the DNRS: *Dai Nippon ren*gō *seinendan*); *kumi* (*gumi*) means to bring together, to intertwine, or a product thereof, and is used of gangs and other groups with a well-defined membership.

\(^{2}\) That is, they distinguished between 1) groups whose bonds were founded on the intimacy of the *yado*, or the simple fact of being roughly the same age in a small community and therefore belonging to the same loosely defined pool of eligible mates (*wakamono nakama*), and 2) those groups with formal procedures of admission/retirement, an age hierarchy used to distribute duties, and various attendant regulations (*wakamonogumi*). See Iwata Shigenori, *Mura no wakamono, kuni no wakamono* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1996), 12-13 and Furukawa, *Mura no asobihi*, 245.
1677 was the year of the earliest jōmoku (stipulations, regulations) discovered in a DNRS-sponsored search for evidence of the historical presence of the wakamonogumi. Ultimately, eighty-three such records pertaining to the wakashū were collected from village warehouses in fifteen prefectures throughout Japan. While approximately fourth-fifths date from between the late 1700s and the first few years of Meiji (six have no date), the remainder are quite evenly dispersed over the hundred years from 1677. They variously define age upper age limits for participation, when exceptions to those rules could be made, and the numbers and duties of leaders; they also lay out procedures for choosing those leaders and resolving disputes, as well as codes of conduct governing life in the yado and contact with other villages when delivering messages, etc. The jōmoku are by no means identical in their details, but taken together they illustrate well how quite a formal character might plausibly be attributed to the wakashū, even at a relatively early date.

However, in presenting the jōmoku as pieces of a larger puzzle (i.e., a diachronic socio-cultural organ), the DNRS brushed over historical developments separating early and late jōmoku and thereby formed the basis for the “deep-rooted racial instinct” understanding of the history of wakashū. The jōmoku were collated and analyzed by two DNRS officials, Noguchi Takanori and Shimura Yoshio, and the resulting tome was published in 1936 as Wakamono seido no kenkyū (Research into the Institutions of Youth). On page one the authors presented a concise and evocative statement of the relationship between the wakashū and the DNRS: “Needless to say, it is these youth organizations and their institutions [wakamono dantai mata wa wakamono seido] which are the forebears of our country’s current seinendan, and have served as the womb thereof. It is precisely because there was this womb, or foundation of tradition, that we have such vigorous

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9This phrase comes from an English-language pamphlet published by the DNRS in 1937. Though it is clearly a fusion of DNRS ideas published elsewhere in Japanese, the author (and/or translator) chose to remain anonymous. Here “racial” is likely a rendering of minzoku (“ethnos/nation”), not jinshu (“race”). Nevertheless, even if the author was not entirely conscious of the niceties of English usage, the basic idea—a primordial social formation grounded in the soil of an ancient imperative in Japanese communal life—comes through clearly.
[ryūryū-taru] development of our youth as we see today.”27 This same basic presumption of a primordial organizational identity for the wakashū was echoed, albeit in language less strident and not overtly to do with the DNRS, by Yanagita Kunio and other ethnographers influenced by his work on the subject.1 During the 1930s—that is, the years bracketed by Nakayama’s A History of Japanese Youth and the DNRS official history by Kumagai (see above)—the unearthing and publishing of the jōmoku overlapped with famous ethnographic surveys of mountain and coastal villages under Yanagita’s direction (beginning 1934 and 1937, respectively). Of course, wakamonogumi was one of the basic categories of data collection. This overlap was not only discursive: when Segawa Kyoko, “a loyal Yanagita follower,” visited a village in Aichi prefecture as part of the survey of coastal villages in 1938, “like always,” she came with letters of introduction from “Noguchi-san and Kumagai-san.”28

Following the release of the jōmoku, the DNRS published an illustrated pamphlet in 1937 called Seinendan: Young Men’s Leagues of Japan, which outlined the organization’s structure, activities, and history. Significantly, it rendered the DNRS’s standard line on those subjects in a meticulous, if at times florid or awkward, English translation. Although, or perhaps because, it was intended for a non-Japanese audience, this tract uniquely captures the essence of the contemporary ethnographic theory of the wakashū. It speaks for itself more vividly than any possible paraphrasing, so I will quote at length some sections of it that both summarize the above discussion and provide a particularly illustrative contrast to the next and final section of this chapter:

There is no nation in the world that does not possess something prominently peculiar to its own land, which can hardly be copied by any other nation. And as these things are, in most cases, products of so-called racial instinct, quite natural and spontaneous, they always play one of the most fundamental roles that are essential to the development of its national life, though even the nation itself sometimes has not a very clear idea of their significance. We can rightly say that our “Seinendan” or Young Men’s Leagues are exactly of this kind. We are apt to compare them with

1 Varner, who I have cited liberally here, is basically guilty of the same move, even as he was careful to emphasize the wakashū’s diversity; however I do not feel that this compromises his reading of individual jōmoku.
such organizations as the Y.M.C.A., the Boy Scouts, Hitler's Youths, etc., which were all founded by certain individuals or authorities, with definite objects specified at the very start. But if we tried to study the “Seinendan” with such an idea, we could hardly expect to arrive at a right understanding of it. Originally, the Japanese young men's associations came into existence without special organizers. Nor were these juvenile organizations started with any definite objects indicated beforehand. They were, indeed, associations which sprang spontaneously out of the common life and interests of young people in accordance with local customs and habits.

That those juvenile associations at that time…were generally recognized as social institutions of great significance is amply proved by many documents (called “Gojomoku” or “Okite”).... In spite of this fact, however, it is impossible, it must be admitted, to ascertain exactly when the first organization of this kind of young men's associations was formed. Most students along this line agree…that the young men's associations existed already in the Kamakura period ... under the new regime of a Shogunate [no source is given for this]. Judging from the fact that the young men's associations...had no special originators nor were created under government mandate, and that local lads maintained their corporate life living together in the public boarding house which was their headquarters, and also by studying the old folklore relating to their customs and practices, it is quite presumable that they owe their genesis to the ancient customs and habits of Japanese people in the very early stage of their national development, that is to say, in the primitive age of the Yamato race.[30]

It was indeed members of those juvenile organizations, as it is even today, who chiefly undertook the planning and holding of Shinto festivals....This ancient custom of the Japanese young men's associations of enlivening and entertaining tutelary deities, which has survived till the present day exercising strong influences upon the youthful hearts, has contributed a great deal towards the cultivation and upholding of the purity and sincerity innate to young people and of other noble qualities peculiar to them, generation after generation among the Yamato race. At the same time it is mainly due to this ancient custom that the former young men's associations have survived till this day, though much modified in form and function.[31]

As these passages make abundantly clear, constructing an ethnological basis in ancient custom was essential to the seinendan movement. The DNRS did not survive WWII, but although the above ethnographers were generally not so strident and, moreover, nuanced their positions after the war, they still did not give due consideration, even in several lengthy studies, to the political and social artifice involved in constructing the figure of the wakashū. Thus when they and their scholarly successors described the developmental course of reorganization (saihensei katei) from wakashū into local seinendan—an admittedly common phenomenon during the Meiji and Taishō periods—as a natural, grassroots response to capitalism and modernization, they also preserved the kernel of DNRS ideology.[32] In contrast, I now turn to the aspects of the wakashū that did not commend themselves so readily to the modern state and the seinendan movement.
Nation’s Refuse: *Wakashū* as Uncouth Vestige

In his 1886 work *On Japanese Ethics* (*Nihon dōtoku-ron*), the noted educator Nishimura Shigeki bemoaned a plague that beset Japan’s countryside in the form of:

> young good-for-nothings who gather together in bands to drink or gamble or run after women. Assuming command of festivals and celebrations, they forswear reason or morality and run rampant over the community. They neither pay heed to the words of their elders nor obey the local laws, and they inflict no end of hardship on others. A good wholesome lad cannot safely walk the streets without joining their organization, and having been forced into it, he eventually becomes so used to its ways that he too becomes a ruffian. The spread of primary schools over the country has done much to curb the activities of these groups, but in many places they are still offending against the public morals and causing harm to innocent people.\

We have just seen how the *wakashū* could be made to represent the immemorial presence of the Japanese nation. But as Nishimura’s denunciation suggests, there was another side to the story. Certainly festivals, exceptional by their very nature, had always provided a temporary loosening of the normal order of everyday life in the village. But the *wakashū* were supposed to be an organic part of that order, not a wrench in the works. In this final section I will explore how such antagonisms proliferated, and thus also how the figure of the *wakashū* came to embody a past that had to be discarded, not just treasured.

It turns out that Nishimura’s observations were not merely cantankerous, nor all that exaggerated. By the time he published his work, the commission and lamentation of such malfeasances had become a paired tradition at least a century old. From roughly the late 1700s in the countryside, towns, and even Edo itself, bands of youths such as Nishimura described increasingly attracted the ire of village leaders and bakufu authorities alike, as attested to in their various ordinances. The DNRS’s collection of *jōmoku* actually helps speak to this development, as the great majority of these records also date from the late Edo through early Meiji periods. Such a remarkable proliferation of stipulations and regulations would at least seem to suggest that there was a problem being addressed. However, the relationship between this later development and the *wakashū* as discussed in the first section is not clear cut. That is to say, the “gangs” (*kumi*) referred
to in regulatory ordinances may well have been established partially, or entirely, outside the framework of the wakashū.¹ Furukawa Sadao, who has examined this phenomenon in detail, downplays the possibility of formal, well-articulated youth groups in villages prior to the emergence of these gangs, arguing instead that the terms favoured in ethnography (originally Yanagita’s) have been misused as vague diachronic categories of the sort discussed above, and that they properly refer to a temporally specific historical development:

The Wakamonogumi and wakamon nakama were established from the end of the eighteenth though the nineteenth centuries. Wakamon ‘gumi’ and ‘nakama’ were different from the simple age-graduated associative organizations that may have existed [in villages] from long ago. To this [later] age alone belong the strong, sworn, organized [youth groups], which, freed from the yoke imposed upon them by the family units of the village’s leading classes, sealed agreements by thumb prints or sometimes blood and were represented by those among their number who commanded popular confidence.³⁵

I find this terminological distinction compelling and will use wakamonogumi accordingly from here on. I would also not dispute this timeframe for the formation and mobilization of such groups, save to allow for the possibility that wakashū, whatever form or role in villages they may have had theretofore, they could also have come into, and asserted, a newfound authority as single units coextensively with their prior identities.⁶

In any case, these wakamonogumi were firmly entrenched in the larger economic and social changes of the late Edo period. Though it is impossible to fully disentangle these developments, economic changes—regional and local specialization in farming, the shift in manufacture from cities to countryside and the accompanying percolation of currency, proliferation of markets, trade and moneylending, advancements in agricultural technology (especially commercial fertilizer), the rising cost of labour and basic commodities—set off and/or exacerbated, however spottily or gradually, social changes such as the decline of

¹ This would have been especially plausible when participation in a wakashū was restricted in some way, such as to first sons, or one person from a family at a time, etc.
⁶ Though the irony of making recourse to a source whose uses I have just critiqued is not lost on me, a small but significant number of the jōmoku sho that wakashū could take on a more formal character, even a century before the proliferation of the wakamonogumi.
hereditary farm servants and rise of labour hired for a fixed period and price (even as the availability thereof was restricted by losses to industry), increased migration to Edo and urbanization generally, atomization of farm-family units, the rise of tenant cultivation, and the sharpening of class divisions and concentration of landownership. Most significantly for cooperative village groups such as the wakashū, “labor was being slowly lifted out of the context of the social group and recognized as having an economic value independent of social relations.”

Politically, the bakufu was becoming ever more beholden to wealthy merchants and increasingly promulgated sumptuary laws, calls for austerity, and moral reform, all the while attempting to restrict the flow of people from the countryside to the cities.

Though this ferment unfolded over more than two centuries without major war, it was punctuated by the fires, floods, bad harvests, and other disasters. Not surprisingly, protests and riots became more and more common in both rural and urban areas from the late 1700s. Both urban and rural wakamonogumi made their appearance against, and in no small part due to, this background: “by the 1790s youth gangs were emerging as potential troublemakers in many merchant neighborhoods across Edo, and the shogunate was becoming concerned.” It promulgated a law regulating such groups in 1791, as part of the Kansei reforms, observing that:

> [c]ommonly, there are difficult persons in every residential quarter who call themselves "youths" [wakamono], and they extort money from landlords during festivals. Moreover, they make unreasonable impositions on landlords, homeowners, and shop renters for so-called religious contributions during the All Souls' Festival [bon] in the Seventh Month. They put forth similar demands when sacred objects on loan from other temples are displayed in their own neighborhood temples; whenever believers meet; or when priests circulate subscription lists so as to gather

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1 See Thomas C. Smith, The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 116 for quotation and ibid., Part Two, for in depth discussion of the above changes. Smith’s narrative is detailed and complex, so I can offer only an imperfect summary here: the application of new seed varieties, technological improvements, commercial fertilizer, and the spread of urban commercial farming, and, later, of rural industry, increasingly rewarded individual observation, initiative, and even proto-entrepreneurship in agriculture. The family unit became the most efficient means of implementing these improvements with the necessary attention to detail, leading smaller holdings to have better production per capita. Large holders were thus encouraged to entrust more production to small holders, leading to the development of tenancy. Simultaneously, labour-saving agricultural improvements made cottage industry possible, and exchange of its products was encouraged by specialization. This put pressure on the social system, opening the door to conflict within the village for political power and rights to determine resources.
pledges for a specific religious project. The youths harbor grudges against those who refuse to make contributions, and they take their revenge later.\textsuperscript{m}

If the law had some effect, it did not last long, for in 1796 the author of an entry in the Sensōji \textit{nikki} complained that youths from around that famous temple (in present-day Tokyo’s Asakusa district) “frequent archery galleries and teahouses, strutting around haughtily. Moreover, they appear in front of sake shops [and] yell out for drinks and other favors. On top of that, those same young men carry the \textit{mikoshi} during the Sanja Festival, when they mass in front of the houses of merchants who earlier have refused demands. In revenge, the young men break into those shop-residences.”\textsuperscript{38} This same description also hinted at the structural character of the \textit{wakamonogumi} in taking “note of the role played by the leaders (\textit{wakamonogashira}) of bands or gangs of youths. The details are not clear, but one probable inference is that a youth leader directed the activities of a loosely organized gang of young men in each quarter. Thus what the officials of Sensōji feared was not the isolated misbehavior of individuals but rather the more sustained and spirited offenses of gangs of young men.”\textsuperscript{39} Of course, gangs could be formed along many lines (such as occupation), especially in a city as massive as Edo. Firefighters, who were by day primarily roofers and construction workers, could naturally become quite disciplined rioters. At one point, not long after the great rice riots of 1787, the bakufu even issued an ordinance forbidding peasants in the countryside from imitating Edo’s firefighters, who would apparently sometimes use the occasion of a fire to destroy the home of a person they did not like, citing urgent need for a fire break\textsuperscript{40}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{m} Quoted in Takeuchi Makoto, “Festivals and Fights: The Law and the People of Edo” in \textit{Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era}, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, Ugawa Kaoru (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 402. Takeuchi claims that this was the first such law. True or not, his note on this text confirms that \textit{wakamonogumi} had not been much of a problem before this time: “Before this time there were no laws regulating youths; for instance, the word \textit{youths} appears not a single time in the three-volume documentary collection \textit{Shōhō jiroku}, ed. Kinsei Shiryō Kenkyūkai (Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, 1964-1966), which contains shogunal decrees issued from the \textit{Shōhō} (1644-1648) through the \textit{Hōreki} (1751-1764) periods.”}
That remarkably similar developments were taking place in the countryside, even accounting for considerations particular thereto, suggests the pervasiveness of socio-economic change at this time. Rural wakamonogumi were no less a product of these larger patterns. Paraphrasing Furukawa, the late 1700s saw incipient class distinctions brought into sharp relief: the lower-middle strata of peasants demanded, on the basis of new horizontal solidarities which the old family system had precluded, a greater say in the affairs of the village. At the same time, increasingly debt-ridden tenants banded together and rioted furiously against the powerful landholding families. Though the persistence of large familial structures in the village should not be underestimated, the new horizontal solidarities certainly made for a fluid environment. The wakamonogumi emerged at this time from these same transformations.

As the case of the youths of Asakusa indicates, the element of licentiousness inherent in celebratory occasions provided a ready point of coalescence for gang activity. With their roots in the rhythms of agricultural life, festivals and holidays became the nexus of wakamonogumi mobilization in the hinterlands. During the late Edo period and into the Bakumatsu, the number and frequency of festivals and holidays for a year increased tremendously, a fact easily drowned

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"Though he is open to the many critiques of modernization theory, and perhaps places inordinate (or even anachronistic) emphasis on the nuclear family, Smith provides a good general sketch of the village family system. His basic narrative runs as follows: "taking the country as a whole [agricultural changes] fell mainly in the Tokugawa period, and their central feature was a shift from cooperative to individual farming…[In] the end the individual family nearly everywhere clearly emerged as the center of production organization and economic interest." In part one of his study he illustrates what the Edo-period village was like before the erosion of the market. He describes the concentric circles of immediate and extended family and the dispersion of various "classes" therein, posing "a breathing organic unity" between the oyakata (family heads) and the nagō, the "conjugal units" entrusted with a small plot of land on the larger holding; the arrangements of borrowing and resource management allowed one to rest while the other worked. There were also the fudai (hereditary servants) whose basic needs were provided by the oyakata in return for their labour. Smith draws these distinctions only to show how they collapsed as the gradual outsourcing of labour on the holding blurred the lines between nagō, fudai, and branch families. Yet the tendency was to harmony, founded ultimately on the precariousness of rural life: the narrow margins of error in pre-modern agriculture incentivized cooperation, guaranteed by the threat of ostracism (murahachibù) as a last resort.

Furukawa, Mura no asobihi, 254-255. On this point, Smith perspective is again instructive (though he perhaps errs in emphasizing even the appearance of harmony): "While turning increasingly to trade and industry, then, wealthy peasants did not liquidate their landed holdings; rather, they generally added to them. This is a factor considerable significance. Land might be given over to tenants, but it still had to be farmed within the framework of the communal allocation of taxes and management of common land and water rights. Along with other factors, such as the duty to care for family graves and shrines, this served to keep local families from deserting the country for the town. Only by staying in the village could they protect and promote their landed interests, which the action of the community touched at a thousand points. So they remained, deeply involved in local politics. As a result the class antagonisms being generated by changes in agrarian society were, at one and the same time, both more and less dangerous for the peace of the countryside than would otherwise have been the case. Tensions were more quickly and intimately felt, but overt expression of them was more resolutely suppressed in favor of an appearance of community harmony—and they were the more explosive for that reason. Deep beneath the everyday appearance of propriety and friendliness there were in many Japanese villages suppressed hatreds that merely needed some shock, some momentary lapse of customary restraint to send them boiling to the surface." (169 and 172)
out by the discursive prominence of issues of class, markets, and politics. Though there were substantial regional differences, where once a peasant could expect between twenty and thirty holidays in a year (generally accompanied by a festival of some sort), over the first half of the nineteenth century this number increased to a base of thirty or forty, and in some places to fifty or sixty, reaching a maximum of eighty.\textsuperscript{41} In part, this trend was tied to the great profusion of new gods to worship resulting from the activities of religious associations and popular fashions. Pre-existing celebrations generally became more elaborate and petitions for extra holidays (\textit{negai asobihi}) more numerous. To give but a few examples, in addition to days off that had been formally scheduled at village New Year’s meetings, petitions might call for celebrations of rain, holidays to pray for rain, good weather festivals, day-before-the-festival festivals, festival practice, post-festival dance, pest control days, celebrations for 210\textsuperscript{th} day of the year, sick days, tax reduction celebrations, etc. Village leaders granted many of these requests, perhaps in the hope of at least preventing a rash of spontaneous mass absences (\textit{katte/naisho asobihi}), which would, being violations of village rules en mass, debase their authority\textsuperscript{42}

But who were the petitioners? According to Furukawa, they might be the new class of contracted labourers (\textit{hōkōnin}) or perhaps the lowermost strata of the village’s inhabitants, many of whom increasingly could not make a living exclusively, or even mostly, through agriculture and thus grew dissatisfied with festivals that adhered largely to the rhythms of cultivators’ lives. But first and foremost in demanding time off was the \textit{wakamonogumi}. I would reemphasize, though, that the \textit{wakashū}’s venerable association with festivals makes it quite plausible that they may have been transformed into \textit{wakamonogumi}, partially or as a coherent unit. In any case, the proliferation in the number of festivals and holidays, along with the tendency to make them more
lavish, meant ever more occasions for sex, drink, gambling, performance, and, therefore and above all, neglect of the fields at a time when:

[the Shogunate and the baronial governments (han) were both alarmed by the labor shortage in agriculture, which proved one of the most acute and intractable economic problems of the latter half of the Tokugawa period....Drastic steps were therefore taken to relieve or soften the effects of the labor shortage in agriculture. Government attempted to stop immigration to Edo and even to return recent immigrants to their villages; to prohibit the migration of labor from one lord's jurisdiction to another; to prevent labor in the village from following occupations other than farming; to stimulate the birthrate, to fix wages, and much else.]

And now those peasants who were left on the land were spending more and more of their time occupied with activities that took them away from their fields, not to mention offended against practically every tenet of Confucian morality. Village leaders, whom the bakufu held responsible for taxes and whose social position was ultimately underwritten thereby, were in the same boat. It is thus no surprise that both internal village stipulations and government edicts regarding festivals and wakamonogumi proliferated, eventually coming to treat both as two sides of the same coin.

However the bakufu edicts, even those that banned the wakamonogumi outright, had little effect. This was in part because gangs and even rioters could make recourse to several discursive strategies to safeguard themselves from punishment. Despite the terrifying array of punishments that the authorities had at their disposal, the worst of which were reserved for conspirators (totō), some actions stood outside the law (hōgai). Included among these were spontaneous fights, quarrels, and brawls (kenka), all favourite activities of the wakamonogumi. With the exception of cases involving serious injury or death:

the shogunate refused to become mired in private disputes because it was almost impossible to determine who was at fault. It preferred to categorize fights among commoners as "cases of mutual harm," and it almost always left the contending parties to resolve their own differences. [More significantly for the wakamonogumi, because festivals took place on the sacred soil of the gods, and because so fights and brawls broke out during the unlicensed moments that always seemed to be a part of commoner celebrations, the shogunate let people indulge themselves in whatever pleased them during festival days.]
The religious significance of festivals gave the *wakamonogumi* even more leverage. After all, the rites were intended to bring the presence and favour of the gods into the community and to provide amusement during their stay. But, as illustrated above, a festival in which the youth did not participate could fall flat.\(^{47}\) In any case, the strength of the *hōgai* defense was such that even after a disturbance like the Edo riot of 1787, which lasted for five days and resulted in massive property damage and almost one thousand arrests, only thirty people were actually punished.\(^{48}\)

As for the countryside, until the mid-Edo period the authorities, informed by their basic policy of leaving villages to their own affairs, likewise regarded holidays as days of free merriment and did not interfere beyond the occasional austerity campaign aimed at religious festivals generally.

Yet even as festivals came to be viewed as a threat to socio-economic order during the late eighteenth century, when the great sumptuary laws were promulgated, the bakufu held to its basic policy of non-interference and left the village leadership to deal with the wakamongumi. This is ultimately the more interesting story, because these leaders, with few exceptions, did not follow through in enforcing the bakufu’s bans. Recognizing that there could be no reversal of the socio-economic developments that had produced horizontal solidarities and vertical antagonisms in the village, they instead sought a solution in recognizing the *wakamonogumi*’s position and authority in exchange for their drawing up self-regulatory stipulations such as the *jōmoku*.\(^{49}\) As the basis for this strategy, local elites were likely counting on the fact that group solidarity inherently demands some form of self-regulation. After all, the *wakamonogumi*’s assertiveness was possible only through unity: however antagonistic to its social milieu, a group nonetheless requires maintenance of a basic internal order if it is to act as one. Sanctions against deviance and non-participation are essentially neutral. As with the *wakamonogumi*’s festivals, such
sanctions may promote participation in activities that disrupt the dominant social and economic order; but they may equally work to ensure more normative behaviour.

Faced with the proliferation of festivals and growing social antagonisms, village leaders may well have had no other option than to attempt to co-opt this homeostatic mechanism in the wakamonogumi. But in so doing they also demonstrated a level of sophistication of which the bakufu simply was not capable, holding itself as it did in generally immiscible suspension above the populace through the fundamental ideological and physical division of the warrior class from the peasantry and concomitant policy of non-interference in village affairs. It could only issue ineffectual bans, while the village elite could attempt integration. In the end, however, the underlying social tensions could not be resolved. The boisterous, lewd, and sometimes violent festival culture of the wakamonogumi only proliferated during the nineteenth century, reaching a fever pitch in the carnivalesque abandon of the ee ja nai ka celebrations in the Tokugawa regime’s final year. And it could prove stubbornly persistent thereafter, as indicated by the observations of Nishimura that began this section; even as late as 1909, Yamamoto Takinosuke, the supposed father of the seinendan movement, felt it necessary to publish a list enumerating the “evil practices” of youth in the countryside:

1) The mischief known as “mushiokuri” [a technique for pest control; villagers would walk through fields with smoking torches, often driving insects to neighbouring communities]
2) Disorder in manners due to the mixing of men and women

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See Smith, Agrarian Origins, 203 204: “As villages grew through immigration and the proliferation of families, a hierarchy of lineage, wealth, and political rights formed naturally in each, through the operation of the inheritance system and discrimination against immigrants. Cooperation in farming and the distributive system both were organized around these hierarchies; the villages were governed by them insofar as villages governed themselves. The evolving structure within the village was not radically modified until it was finally disrupted by the market, but the relations of the village to outside authority underwent many changes. The problem of government for successive military rulers was to make full administrative use of, without being menaced by, these stable local systems of power, typically headed by warrior families. By far the most successful attempt to solve this problem was the last, under the Tokugawa. It gave the village an extraordinary degree of autonomy after removing the warriors from it: an arrangement that brought the country two and a half centuries of peace, together with an unprecedented measure of popular welfare and justice.

But no balance between local government and higher authority could be final, and the sources of strength in the Tokugawa system were potentially sources of weakness. Power had been delegated downward so far, and on such a scale, that it could no longer be easily recovered. The system worked amazingly well; but everything depended on the continuing loyalty and discipline of the peasants. No breakdown of these supports of government was likely to occur—and none did, in fact—so long as the economic and social systems of the traditional-village remained undisturbed. But what if these structures were violently upset: if the hierarchy of lineage, wealth, and political rights were disrupted from the outside?”
3) Punishing girls from good families who do not participate in the bon dance
4) Helping youths involved in gambling or fisticuffs to evade arrest
5) Antagonizing youths from other districts and fighting during festival.
6) Soliciting at wedding celebrations
7) Making requests for time off from the fields to the district headman
8) In the yado: vulgar flute playing, obscene ballads, lewd chat, boastful stories of fights
9) Gambling on the result of board games or similar activities
10) Holding drinking parties on a member’s joining or retiring from the group
11) Sneaking into businesses and factories to make mischief

Certain of these elements are preserved today by those seinendan whose local festivals still carry the reputation of kenka matsuri, as anyone who has participated in one can attest. Drink flows copiously, the authorities may look the other way at indiscretions, and the usual order is still suspended, if less thoroughly than it once was. But any truly subversive potentialities have been circumscribed. The threat of the bacchanal’s bleeding into the everyday is contained by the calendar. The spontaneous festivals of the wakamonogumi are no more, in part because of the history traced in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Before moving on, let us return briefly to the issue of the double discursive duty that the wakashū came to perform: on the one hand, a testament to the nation’s immemorial antiquity; on the other, a pernicious legacy to be overcome. As demonstrated in the first two sections of this chapter, the former is clearly a construct based largely on speculative extrapolations of ethnographic data and elaborated by the partisans of the DNRS. Using the term “wakamonogumi” to describe the latter allows us to circumscribe the question of the existence of wakashū before the late seventeenth century, and thus all the significations of nation and race in which it is mired. And yet the various wakashū observed by ethnographers during the 1920s and 1930s clearly manifested social functions (such as marriage and communal labour) that have little to do with the tumultuous history of the wakamonogumi and cannot be described as developments thereof. Even the festivals clearly have meaning and history independent of their significance for the late Edo period. Though
delving into this problem is beyond the scope of this thesis, we may say that the uses to which ethnographic observations have been put do not preclude the possibility of an ancient past for the wakashū, nor delegitimize serious inquiry into their origins.

In any case, as one can see from Yamamoto’s list, the problems caused by the wakamonogumi for the Tokugawa bakufu and village elites continued to vex the modern Meiji state and its local representatives even into the twentieth century. But here was also a crucial difference. Over the Meiji period the state worked methodically to root itself in localities in a way the bakufu never could have. Local representatives were now in principle to function as filaments of the state—transmitting authority from, and funneling knowledge back to, the centre—rather than as mediators representing autonomous productive units in which the state had little to no interest as long as taxes were paid.

And yet even as the Meiji state abrogated autonomy of this sort, it came to understand self-regulation to be fundamental to the governance of a modern nation. Under a modern regime ready and willing to meddle in local affairs, local elites may have perceived an opportunity to address problems that had been threatening their interests for some time, such as the wakamonogumi. At the very least, the modernizing reforms and discourse of the Meiji state potentially offered fresh support for the basic strategy of encouraging the wakamonogumi’s self-regulation. It is likely that such hopes lay behind the petitions of local actors for the state to take an interest in local youth groups. Such petitions marked the beginning of the modern seinendan movement, and thus provide an interesting window on state-society relations in this period, especially in how “society” may have helped teach the “state” what to take an interest in. In concert with the state’s push for rural reform following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the modern seinendan movement, whose stock in trade lay in exploiting the dynamic relationship
between group and individual, may have helped distill the reformers’ understanding of the application of the principle of self-regulation to the level of the subjective self. This is the subject of the next two chapters.
Chapter Two
The Encounter with the Modern State

This chapter examines the history of youth groups over the course of the Meiji period from two complementary perspectives: the attenuation of the wakashū\(^a\) and the rise of the seinendan movement. The first section deals with how grand modernizing reforms of the Meiji state, such as compulsory education, conscription, new administrative divisions, cut across the wakashū’s sphere of action, establishing structural limits to their autonomy and unsettling their various social bases. I give extended treatment to the government’s shrine amalgamation policy (including its pre-history) following the Russo-Japanese war because of the intimate connection between festivals and shrines and wakashū activities. The common thread running through these various reforms was how they undermined localism and radically altered the relationship between local elites and the wakashū.

The second section goes back to the early Meiji to describe how modern reforms opened new avenues for local elites to deal with particular problems and guard their interests, specifically by establishing supplementary educational institutions to control what they saw as wakashū delinquency, which resulted in the first seinendan. In combination with the large-scale reforms discussed in the first section, local elites’ enterprising efforts created cracks in communal solidarity that widened as the wakashū ran up against the new social structures informed by modern imperial family-state ideology. To illustrate this process, I proceed through a discussion of traditional village sexual practices. This is followed by an examination of how war elicited grassroots efforts in support of soldiers on the part of wakashū and seinendan alike, which finally garnered the attention of the central government and encouraged local reformers to begin pushing for national policies on youth associations.

\(^a\) For simplicity’s sake, I will re-collapse into the term “wakashū” the distinction drawn in the last chapter between assertive wakamonogumi and those groups that remained more harmoniously integrated into their social milieu.
The Attenuation of the *Wakashū*

Thus, having no useful work to arrest their attention now, the habit of diligence and industry that had hitherto so markedly characterised [the *wakashū*] gradually gave way and was replaced by indolent habits. All sorts of vice, never before known to have been indulged by members of former associations, gradually found their way among them, and with the natural relaxation of moral discipline characteristic of an age of transition, these associations came simply to constitute rendezvous for a lot of lads, and thus to fall into disrepute with the public.

— DNRS pamphlet

The DNRS was most glaringly wrong on one point: as illustrated in the last chapter, many “members of former [i.e., Edo-period] associations” were no strangers to vice, though they could demonstrate considerable “diligence and industry” when it came to rioting.\(^1\) However, it was true that after 1868 the *wakashū*/*wakamonogumi*, regardless of how formal their structure or antagonistic their relationship to their social milieu, increasingly found their organizational identities and practices at odds with the reforms and policies of the Meiji state. This is not to say that the new government immediately and explicitly took such groups as a target for intervention;\(^h\) rather, Meiji period reforms presented inadvertent existential challenges to the *wakashū*. Though no one policy can be said to have singlehandedly toppled the *wakashū*, over more than forty years they amounted to a series of body blows punctuating the steadily accelerating deterioration of communal life by industrialization and commercialization.

The roll-out of compulsory education, first announced in 1872 and implemented and elaborated over the following decades, both reduced the *wakashū*’s pool of eligible members and presented graduates with new prospects for advancement, all the while diffusing among the population modern, state-sanctioned ideals and values that cast many village traditions in a negative light. Similar effects were produced by universal conscription at age twenty (beginning in 1873) and the consequent diffusion of military culture among the population. Though initially

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\(^{h}\) In fact, the first official directive from the Diet on the subject of youth associations was not issued until 1915, and even then only provided four short guidelines as to membership, area of operations, leadership, and funding prefaced by a general statement of what the broad social mission of such groups should be.
there were many ways to exempt oneself from the draft, and many young men did so (illicitly) to great effect, an 1889 amendment to the conscription law closed most of these loopholes and evasion rates dropped drastically. Nevertheless, even at the end of the Meiji period it was still difficult for some to comprehend why the state could simply “snatch [people] up,” indicating how profoundly disruptive conscription could be to social and psychological experience.\(^2\) The land and tax reforms of 1872-1873 were no less extreme: the rationalization of land ownership according to the principle of private property paved the way for a tax “that was easy to collect and difficult to evade, and … that would not fluctuate according to the harvest.”\(^3\) Thus the new land tax was based not on the harvest, but on land’s assessed sale value and was collected not in kind, but in money at a standard national rate that made no allowance for bad years. Many peasants fell into arrears and suffered the expropriation of their lands by the state. Other policies, such as the establishment of constabularies in rural areas and national standards for fire brigades (1894), either obviated the need for the wakashū’s services in such matters or at least made sure that these received sanction from local state authorities. The reconfiguration and reallocation of fishing rights (1901) had a similar effect.

Of course, such policies were set within, and facilitated by, a new administrative framework. The formal establishment of newly amalgamated cities, towns, and villages as a system of local authorities (chihō jichi seido) in 1889 (with counties and prefectures following in 1890) represented the most fundamental alteration of the village's position in the larger social

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\(^1\) Takashi Fujitani, “Technologies of Power in Modern Japan: the Military, the ‘Local,’ the Body,” 5-6 (see bibliographic entry for publishing information). With regard to the 1873 law, “postponements or exemptions were given to those who were sick, those whose parents were ill or had died recently, those under five feet one inch in height, those 'congenitally weak, inveterately diseased, or deformed,’ those who were government officials and semi-officials, those training for military or naval service and living in military or naval schools, heads of families, heirs and lineal grandsons, those temporarily managing household affairs in place of fathers or elder brothers, and those who paid substitution fees.” As such, draft evasion (chōhei kihi) could take a variety of forms. Potential conscripts “forged names and ages, pretended to be adopted as heirs, faked illnesses, fled, or even mutilated themselves physically.” This was so widespread that from July 1875 to June 1876, “[w]hile there were some 296,086 twenty-year-olds in the pool of potential conscripts nationwide, 242,860 of them had found ways to be exempted. This left only 53,226 men placed on the register of those who were to be given medical examinations. But even among these some 24,901 men failed the exam.” This continued to be a problem during the Russo-Japanese War (Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 91-92), though at much reduced rate. See also Kikuchi Kunisaku, Chōhei kihi no kenkyū (Tokyo: Rippū Shobō, 1977).
order. For all the socio-economic changes they had undergone during the late Edo period, villages had maintained a constant sphere of responsibility and, concomitantly, spatial identity vis-à-vis the bakufu (with its use of the village as a unit of taxation and its policy of general non-interference), as well as in relation to the leadership and territory of neighbouring villages. But under the new system these formerly autonomous units were thrown together into great clumps: by the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the more than 76,000 Edo-period villages (buraku) had been reduced to approximately 12,000 administrative towns and villages (chōson). Although attributing a pastoral harmony to pre-Meiji villages is ahistorical, the sudden imposition of these new divisions offended deep-seated ties to the buraku as well as the centuries-old customs governing relations with ruling authorities, while no doubt aggravating many rivalries and disputes between localities along the way.

In and of itself, the new administrative system may not have meant much for those wakashū sedately providing opportunities for marriage (or sexual encounters) and other communal functions. But the implications for more assertive, wakamonogumi-style groups were grave. The leverage that they had exerted in late Edo-period villages, and which village elites had tried to bracket through stipulations and codes of conduct, was ultimately based on the bakufu's policy of non-interference in village affairs and the sphere of autonomy it allowed. In other words, so long as

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4 Knowing that these new local organs of the state would require a sound financial base, the government planned to secure their position by giving them control, as part of the act of amalgamation, of village common lands. It could do this because such lands, not being amenable to simple, undisputed designation as private property during the 1872-1873 distribution of title (chiken) and later surveys, were instead designated kan'yūchi ("government lands", which former Tokugawa bakufu territory had already become by default). Though villagers may have retained de facto control of these territories, which also included large areas recorded as village commons but not demonstrably being put to (even secondary) use, by 1888 this had amounted to approx. twenty million acres (7,700,000 chōbu) of de jure government property, a majority of recorded land area. See Fujita Yoshihisa, Nihon no sanson (Kyoto: Chijin Shobo, 1981), 270-271

However, "[i]n order to minimize resistance at the time the administrative towns and villages were created, the government allowed most of the buraku [Edo-period village] to retain some of their forests, meadows, cemetery grounds, shrines, and other commonly-owned property [i.e., lands that were under active use]." In 1905 the acreage of buraku land was more than three times that owned by the towns and villages. Four-fifths of public forest land belonged [de facto] to buraku. [Following up on earlier intentions, in 1906 the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce increased their efforts to bring this property under control of the administrative towns and villages in order to strengthen their financial base and to provide a more efficient use of local resources. Such efforts of the government are sometimes referred to as 'Japanese-style enclosure acts' and there was bitter resistance from peasants who depended on these communal lands for fuel, fodder, and fertilizer." See Kenneth B. Pyle, "The Technology of Japanese Nationalism: The Local Improvement Movement, 1900-1918," The Journal of Asian Studies 33, no. 1 (1973): 59. In many cases these lands were worked by wakashū, to whom appropriation thus posed an existential threat that might well have inspired them to take the lead in resistance.
the bakufu was not willing to enforce its edicts physically, the wakamonogumi's transgressions effectively held village leaders hostage to their own responsibility to maintain order, especially since any leader that gave up and called in the bakufu cavalry would only debase himself in the eyes of both his lord and the village as a whole. Under pressure from both above and below, village leaders actually ended up shielding the wakamonogumi from bakufu bans. The new administrative system radically altered this dynamic: local government gave the modern state a depth of penetration the Tokugawa bakufu had disavowed in its separation of warrior and peasant classes. Furthermore, these local authorities were ready and willing to use new institutions, such as the police, to bring order to the areas under their purview. Yanagita Kunio captured the power and reach of modern governance in his account of a fishing village in Niigata Prefecture, where:

In a similar account, a young woman from the Gotō islands in Nagasaki Prefecture observed that “[p]eople who stay at home will not get married, and everyone should be sent to the yado. We quit going to the yado because of the police order and a girls' association was set up instead. But it's not much good because it doesn't help us to find a husband, and all they want is our money for dues.”

Of course, there was some leeway to be had both because material and technological limitations slowed the penetration of state institutions into the countryside, and because too heavy a hand always risked inspiring resistance. As such, wakamonogumi were not necessarily brought to heel easily or for long, as evidenced by Yamamoto Takinosuke's 1909 list of their still-prevailing misdeeds (see previous chapter).

But the field of play was certainly now restricted, thereby introducing fault lines along which group solidarity could crack open: wakamonogumi were beginning to lose the leverage by
which they had moved village leadership to formally recognize their de facto authority over their own affairs (in exchange for what often turned out to be less than perfect adherence to behavioural stipulations). The two above anecdotes illustrate well the enforced limits that traditional youth groups—by the late nineteenth century even wakamonogumi delinquency could be called traditional—were increasingly running up against. They also introduce the figure of youth associations supported by local state authorities, to be discussed in the second section of this chapter as a part of the rise of the seinendan movement. First, however, we must examine the history of a policy that overlapped with, and quite possibly furthered, the growth of state interest in incipient seinendan after the Russo-Japanese War. In seeking to trim the fabric of communal life to fit the new administrative system, the Meiji government’s 1906-1912 campaign for local shrine amalgamation attacked the spiritual loci of parochialism and, in so doing, undermined a key social basis for wakashū and wakamonogumi activities.

Under the slogan “one [administrative] village, one shrine” (isson, issha), the goal of amalgamation was to re-route the affective, spiritual, and material investments spread over Japan’s multitude of minor local shrines into single sites that coincided the still superficial divisions of the chōson system. The mass of victuals, libations, and monetary offerings made at minor shrines, as well as the lands associated therewith, collectively represented significant capital, and the government hoped to channel these previously dispersed devotional resources into one shrine per village. The sacred precincts and groves of merged shrine lands were often ploughed over and transferred to the receiving shrine. Thus enriched, shrines would be able to maintain grounds, structures, and rites of sufficient dignity to serve as symbols for the Japanese nation. Though he was speaking after the peak of the merger movement, in 1918 the chief of the Home Ministry’s

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c “One village” was figurative, not literal; the amalgamation policy was understood to extend to urban areas. See Wilbur M. Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers 1906-1912: State Shinto Moves to the Grassroots (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1973), 26.
Bureau of Shrines, Tsukamoto Seiji, distilled the essence of what a proper shrine should be and the motivations behind the movement: “At the very least, a shrine should be a place where, when people enter, they will spontaneously feel like bowing their heads in gratitude. …In short, the intention is to exalt the majesty of the shrines and deepen the people’s spirit of reverence.”

But minor village shrines were generally humble, even rather shabby, in appearance, whether due to lack of resources or simple disinclination to ostentation (in his speech, Tsukamoto painted a sordid picture of caved in roofs, rampant weeds, and even storage of night soil). Moreover, the vast majority of the archipelago’s shrines generally existed to house tutelary kami exclusive and intimately connected to particular natural features, communities, and their ancestors, and therefore did not inherently lend themselves to ideological identification with the nation. Nevertheless, turning them to that purpose had long been a goal of the Meiji regime, beginning with its abortive attempt to make Shinto the state religion soon after 1868. Although this failure resulted in a period of quiescence for Shinto policy during the 1870s, the government later returned to the issue with renewed vigor, especially after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889.

Article 28, which guaranteed freedom of religion for Japanese subjects “within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects,” ironically provided a more sophisticated basis to transform shrines into national symbols. Already in 1882 the government had introduced a distinction between “shrine” and “sectarian” Shinto, which it continued to elaborate on well into the 1920s. The former referred to the hierarchical system of official shrines, comprising kansha (national/governmental shrines), minsha (those at or below the prefectural level), and finally the multitude of ungraded shrines; the latter referred to privately organized and financed religious bodies. Only official shrines could be referred to as jinja, but more importantly, their priests were forbidden from conducting funerals and providing moral or
religious instruction. Article 28’s importance in nationalizing shrines lay in giving clear precedence to national interests (“their duties as subjects”) over religious affiliation. If the shrines of the official hierarchy (i.e., the vast majority, including even tiny buraku shrines) could be defined as non-religious entities by associating them with patriotic rituals, the government would gain the benefits of the universality a state religion while still keeping up the (modern) appearances of neutrality. Essentially, the government bracketed out a theoretical space for “sectarian” activities to occupy, while using state sponsorship, regulation, and (later) mergers of shrines to suture itself into, and thereby secularize, the mass of institutions that actually stood at the centre of religious and communal life for the vast majority of people. Because of the order of priorities established in Article 28, whatever practices or spaces the government managed to associate with the life of the nation-state, no matter how obviously religious in nature, became secular by default while preserving their numinous power.

War was instrumental in facilitating this “non-religious” thesis. The decade bracketed by the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars (1894-1895 and 1904-1905) saw intensive re-engagement with Shinto policies. Six months before the war with China, the Meiji government restored to minsha priests their status as government officials (which it had abrogated in 1879), and during both wars national and local shrines became invested with new meanings:

Family members visited their local shrine when they sent a son off to war, and they prayed at the shrine for his safety during his absence. If he was killed in the line of service, he was afforded the extraordinary honor, otherwise virtually unattainable by the average Japanese, of having his spirit individually enshrined as a national kami. This enshrinement took place in impressive ceremonies at Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. Here the emperor accorded the deceased serviceman and his parents the

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1 Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers, 2. Fridell also notes that names of organizations associated with official and sectarian shrines were to be kept distinct. Furthermore, leaders of the latter were forbidden from proselytizing, lecturing, or performing ceremonies on the grounds of official shrines, even if specially invited, and in 1923 private sects were prohibited from imitating official shrine architecture.

2 First held in May 1905, these ceremonies had to be repeated seven times to accommodate the total war dead, defined as all military service people (twenty-two women were enshrined) who had died in action or had succumbed, on or before 16 Oct. 1909, to injuries and illnesses acquired during the war. Enshrinations often went along with posthumous promotions and inductions into the Order of the Golden Phoenix (consisting of seven classes), which included a pension (ranging from 100-1500 yen) paid to veterans for life and to bereaved families for one year. Naoko Shimazu notes that the government invited more than 9,000 bereaved families (approx. 25,000 people) to Yasukuni for three days of festivities following the first enshrinement ceremony, subsidizing travel and accommodation expenses. During this time, Yasukuni’s grounds families could worship, take in exhibitions of war trophies and materiel, and enjoy sumo, no, kyōgen, fireworks, kagura dances, martial arts demonstrations, and even pastries exquisitely decorated with military and imperials symbols, which had been specially commissioned (the
unusual honour of coming himself on stated occasions to worship the departed spirits of the war
dead. As profound personal emotions of pride and grief thus came to be intimately associated with
feelings of reverence for Shinto and imperial symbols, the shrines acquired an increasingly important
place in the sentiments of Japanese people.\(^4\)

Of course, shrines had equally profound significance for their immediate locales, entirely unrelated
to the nation. But the genius of state involvement in shrines was to forge a symbiotic relationship
between the idea of nation and pre-existing religious feeling, rituals, and basic human emotions.

This could prove a highly unstable mix, however. Though the government encouraged
prayers for victory (senshō kigan) and would certainly not take issue with prayers to ward of
bullets (tamayoke kigan), families and friends were equally likely to ask for protection from
conscription (chōhei no garekigan), especially in rural areas, where the majority of conscripts
originated, absences from small, tight-knit communities were more obvious than in cities, and the
loss of a young man’s labour more deeply felt. Patriotic feeling was still not well-entrenched—at
this time many middle-aged people still would never have attended school,\(^1\) and younger people
sometimes only intermittently—and its intensity varied among places and people. Moreover, any
feelings of pride or machismo could well have been more parochial than national in scope, and in
any case people generally were just as, or perhaps more likely to be more concerned with the fate
of friends and relatives than that of the nation. The physical spaces of shrines were thus a crucible

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\(^4\) Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers, 4. These are important points, but they also require qualification. Certainly, so far as the state was concerned, enshrinement at Yasukuni was a great honour. The issue is to what extent the general populace shared this perspective. As Naoko Shimazu points out, “it was not until the 1930s that Yasukuni was to have an impact on popular consciousness.” For one thing, it did not appear in primarily school ethics textbooks until 1910 and only rarely in the correspondence of village and county officials. And the notion of enshrinement at a central location, one far removed from the site of families’ ancestral kami, was not self-evident. Thus we might question, as Shimazu does, “how much awareness there was amongst the people, including local elites, that the local commemoration ceremony was ultimately linked to Yasukuni Shrine at the national level.” Moreover, the central authorities left local officials to their own devices to commemorate war dead after repatriation to their hometowns, primarily because of the expense that would have been required to orchestrate almost 74,000 local ceremonies (the military effort was costly enough). In so doing “the state had effectively relinquished the opportunity to choreograph what stood as the most significant collective war experience of the nation to date.” This does not overturn Fridell’s points, however, particularly as regards bereaved families. The government clearly recognized that it had to underline the symbolic act of enshrinement with material efforts to affix hearts and minds to the idea of the nation. Thus while the site of Yasukuni in and of itself was not yet the symbol it would later become, people were likely very much conscious of the honour implicit in act of enshrinement itself. Even if the central government did not have the resources to influence local commemorations and celebrations immediately, the beginning of the shrine merger movement overlapped with the homecoming of troops in 1906, demonstrating an eagerness to make up for the missed opportunity.

\(^1\) While by 1902 the national primary school attendance rate was ninety percent, in 1882 it was barely over fifty (Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 61).
where desire for invisibility to the state apparatus (conscription wards, etc.) was alloyed with desire for victory, the potentially deleterious effects of which the state feared.⁹ Overt expressions of patriotism could in fact serve to give vent to various resentments and, later, war-weariness (*ensen kanjō*).

Of particular concern to the government during the early part of the war with Russia was the proliferation of *hadaka-mairi*, a type of collective prayer carried out at shrines across the country. Groups of young men, often wakashū or early seinendan, wearing nothing but a thin white kimono, would gather to perform ritual ablutions and pray for victory. Though national symbols found abundant use during these gatherings, they erupted into anti-state violence on more than one occasion. For example, in Shizuoka prefecture in early 1904, some thirty sparingly attired young men tried to go to Ōi Shrine in Shimada-chō to pray for “continued luck in the fortunes of war for the men of the army and navy” (*rikukai gunjin no bu’un chōkyū*). The Shimada police attempted to convince them to go back, as they had successfully done the previous day with a similar group from a neighbouring township that had crossed the river in the dead of night to pray at the same shrine for their conscripted fellows. This time, however, after several hours discussions grew heated and the young men (and onlookers) showered the police station with stones.¹⁰

This anecdote illustrates how the police (and by extension local administrations) feared the mercurial potential of mass gatherings more than they valued the prospect of any spectacular, even rabidly enthusiastic, expression of patriotism. This was because the young men’s victory prayers simultaneously ensconced intercessory requests to ward off bullets and conscription alike (the young men in the Shimada incident had been trying to reach a mountain famous for such activities).¹¹ I would add that this does not show only how many people naturally hoped to avoid participation in the state’s war, and, concomitantly, that the authorities were conscious of the liminal, Janus-like nature of popular patriotic displays; additionally, in what I think is more than...
coincidence, the young men’s attempts to legitimize their gatherings by using patriotic language harkens back to late Edo-period wakamonogumi’s use of the concept of hōgai (“outside the law;” see last chapter) to articulate and defend a space for autonomous action during riots and festivals. Though such a connection is difficult to substantiate, only four individuals were arrested following the Shimada incident. Regardless, it is clear that certain wakashū activities (recall that this term simply refers to a collection of people) were more profoundly threatening to the authorities than were simple vices and youthful mischief, embarrassingly “backward” mannerisms and licentiousness, or the Dionysian pleasures of festival culture.

_Hadaka-mairi_ increasingly attracted the ire of local governments, became rarer as the war progressed, and was not much in evidence after 1905.¹² This dissipation did not mean, however, that there was no more cause for concern. Although the push for shrine mergers had much earlier antecedents, as discussed above, it is not surprising that it followed so closely on the end of the Russo-Japanese War. The effective, but in many respects ambivalent and provisional patriotism, which had seen Japan through to a victory against a Western power, would have to be more firmly entrenched, if for no other reason than that the rigours of modern war and imperialism demanded a society that could sustain them. Shrine amalgamation was supposed to incentivize devotion to the state, but more fundamentally it also simply reduced the number of sites around which troublesome practices and groups (particularly of young men) could coalesce.

State authorities employed both benevolent and coercive means to tie shines to the nation-state or else to instigate mergers. The beginning of the merger movement in August 1906 followed the activation in April of a 1902 law that restored direct financial subsidies to the grand national shrines, and, for lesser ones, defrayed the often significant financial burden of shrine upkeep by
paying for offerings. Rather than a direct infusion of cash, which could easily be misused at the local level, this indirect method also helped signify that the nation was not above worshipping before the local ancestral kami, and so invested the state with directly appreciable presence relevant to local sentiments. Perspicaciously, it also reserved to the state’s local representatives the immediate strategic benefits of this benevolent and reverential image: local state officials donned priestly robes and presented state offerings in person. Additionally, the national Bureau of Shrines also required priests (recall that they had been re-deputized as official agents of the state) at shrines of all ranks to read standardized ritual prayers suffused with imperial imagery and language obeisant to the throne. School children could also be sent on fieldtrips to such shrines. Though these efforts, shrines became a key support for the ideological complex that the government sought to promote, that is, a superstructure of grateful reverence upheld by familism, filial piety, and patriotism:

The reason for this official endorsement of kinship ties and ancestor veneration is not hard to fathom. Any belief which sanctified ancestors and gave religious support to the institutions of the house (ie), which was viewed as an unbroken line extending from revered ancestors (founders and transmitters) to present family members (inheritors of privilege and responsibility). The sanctity of ancestors especially rubbed off onto parents. A close bond between ancestors and parents was doubly advantageous, for familism stood to gain both by the transfer to ancestors of filial emotions associated with parents, and by the transfer to parents of the sacredness attributed to ancestors. The total effect was to lend cosmic sanction to familism. Government leaders believed that in strengthening the shrines and Shinto faith they were at the same time strengthening this important socio-ideological complex, which they valued as a stabilizing and unifying influence in Meiji society at all levels, especially in its culmination in the family state.

The patronage had its limits, however: the intention of these policies was not just to instantiate and safeguard the nation-state as an object of reverence, but also to actively cut off perniciously stubborn localisms at their source. Local loyalties orbited around shrines, first and foremost houses of inextricably local ancestral kami, and the heart of the highly idiosyncratic festival traditions that punctuated communal agricultural life and therefore represented a key support for a community’s

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1 Fridell, *Japanese Shrine Mergers* 11 and 69. In not having the wherewithal to influence local commemorations during the Russo-Japanese War, the government knew it had missed a prime opportunity to splice the nation-state into local life. Subsidizing shrine offerings was a step in that direction.

2 Ibid., 66. The various elements of this ideology were captured in such pithy slogans as kazoku kokka, keishin aikoku, keishin sūso, hishon hanshi.
(or wakashū’s) particular identity. While we have just seen how the government attempted to tap into local reverence for ancestors, the requirements of modern governance demanded a rationalized administrative system and amply authorized the disposal of local traditions deemed superfluous or intractably resistant to national integration. Shrine mergers directly attacked the basis of such parochialisms by violently uprooting the focal point of buraku loyalties: the parishioners of a shrine slated for merger were required to “swallow their tears” 14 and send the physical embodiment of the local kami (generally a small object such as a rock or mirror, etc.) away to the larger shrine, sometimes many miles distant, that had been designated to represent the new administrative unit.

While local governments did not make the mistake of trying to remove kami by force (or even explicitly mandating amalgamation), it had equally effective coercive methods at its disposal. They could introduce deadlines for lesser shrines (the minsha) to meet rank-based standards for number and size of shrine buildings and torii gates, as well as for the land area of shrine precincts (if they were to be designated to receive the above-mentioned state-subsidized ceremonial offerings). Additionally, shrines could be required to make financial investments generating a certain minimum return, to set up separate reserve funds for maintenance and reconstruction, to keep and submit detailed records of accounts, and to open these for inspection by local authorities.

Because they were technically government officials, priests could be ordered not to serve at more than one shrine, or to complete all their itinerations in single day. Their salaries could also be set beyond the level a small shrine could sustain. Amalgamation thus became the only option for many locales to meet these deliberately inflated standards. Still, though physical opposition was rare, community resistance could include making ramshackle additions on shrine buildings to increase

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1 Fridell, *Japanese Shrine Mergers*, 116-117. Not to miss a plum chance, the particularly enthusiastic government of Mie Prefecture brilliantly wedded shrines to national capitalist institutions and removed the ambiguities of shrine lands held in common, all by specifying that that cash investments were to be made “in the form of postal savings, or on fixed deposit with some reliable bank; stocks must be of the registered variety; land and buildings must be registered in the name of the shrine.”
floor-space, having their priests misrepresent their salaries to comply with the stipulated one, submitting paperwork indicating a completed merger without actually having done one, stealing back local kami after official inspections confirmed transfer, or registering shrine lands in the name of an individual.\textsuperscript{15}

As might be expected, the results of the merger movement were mixed. From 1903-1920, the number of village (i.e., buraku) and ungraded shrines fell by 41\% nationally (most precipitously, of course, after 1906), from almost 190,000 to approximately 111,000.\textsuperscript{16} This was a significant figure, but regional differences could be extreme, with merger rates as low as 4\% (Aomori Prefecture) and as high as 89\% (Mie Prefecture). Geographic remoteness undoubtedly contributed to this discrepancy—Mie was, after all, home to Ise Shrine, the heart of Imperial Shinto—because many villages still rarely felt the presence of local state authorities, whose enthusiasm for reform in any case may have been dampened by distance from the central government. On average, mergers in administrative villages probably stopped at the level of the old buraku.\textsuperscript{17} People may have been quite happy to consolidate their resources into the main shrine housing the buraku’s tutelary kami, and local authorities could report some compliance without going to too much trouble. What is more, as the movement passed its peak doubts emerged within the central government itself as to the value of dogmatically insisting on the “one village, one shrine” policy and of the often ham-fisted efforts to realize it. In 1912, a Diet representative for Mie Prefecture (whose governor had been most ruthless in pushing mergers) pointed out the basic contradiction between the state’s ideological ontology (that reverence for the emperor and for local ancestral kami were “virtually identical in meaning”) and the government’s policy of “destroying” though merger the shrines where those same kami were housed.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers, 76-79. Of course, the representative took care not to appear to be questioning the legitimacy of this ideology.
Even though the merger movement petered out with uneven results, shrines were never allowed to un-merge. That many of the same people who had once despondently carried their ujigami away to be merged went to bring them back in the years after 1945, poignantly demonstrates how the policy of one shrine per administrative village, where it was realized, profoundly disrupted communal life: it stripped people of their protectors, taking away the core reason for festival celebrations, and attacked their sense of place, the memory of which could still demand redress after forty years. In what is likely more than coincidence, the regions most affected by mergers—prefectures in Western Japan such as Mie, Wakayama, and Hyōgo—were also where wakashū were most entrenched and where their assertiveness and vices, as well as the proliferation of festivals, were most obvious to local authorities. Along with the new laws on land rights, state presence in rural areas, administrative division, and land appropriations, the shrine merger movement eroded many existential bases for the various activities of wakashū. Despite its uneven results and the resentment fostered by its very successes, the movement showed both central and local governments that more effective, realizable, and sophisticated approaches to universalizing local reform would be required. And regardless of failure or success, it helped reorient upwards the interests and sympathies of local community leaders and notables (such as priests), thus deepening their transformation from representatives of specific places to focusing lenses for state interests. It was these authority figures who were most instrumental in bringing delinquent wakashū to heel and turning them to new purposes. Their various efforts to set up seinendan were encouraged by shrine mergers’ enervative effect on wakashū assertiveness, and provided local authorities novel, more promising prospects and instruments for reform and governance. But these efforts, too, had their beginnings earlier in the Meiji period.
The Rise of the *Seinendan* Movement

It is to be noted, however, that a reform movement of those juvenile bodies thus impregnated with impure atmosphere[—]so as to make young members conscientiously grasp the new spirit of the age and get them inspired with new moral ideas, and particularly for preserving the good effect of school education they had received at primary schools and turning it into account[—]had already been started in various places of the country as a matter of imperative necessity even in the earlier part of the Meiji Era. Educational organs such as evening classes, continuation schools, etc. were established for the purpose[;] but strange to say, leaders of this movement were not the Government authorities nor intellectual people of national repute, but indeed, elementary school teachers and other public-spirited local men, who lived in villages together with those young men and who had the first-hand knowledge of the actual state of the associations.

— DNRS pamphlet

That the image of impregnated “juvenile [male] bodies” went unnoticed by the DNRS translator(s) perhaps captures something of their earnestness. But if the upheavals in the larger socio-political context discussed above inadvertently undermined *wakashū* activities, then the early history of the *seinendan* movement represented direct, though localized, attempts to reform the morals and behaviour of rural youth. The movement’s raw genetic material consisted in various independent efforts by local notables to establish associations for the edification of youth, which the DNRS understood as evidence of a modern entrepreneurial spirit flowering hand-in-hand with an irrepressible and resourcefully protean racial instinct. But as was typical of the DNRS, its ornate rhetoric was draped over a serviceable frame of historical fact: these associations were not part of any central government policy and did not receive state patronage. Rather, they generally embodied new responses to old problems for local elites, who took Meiji reforms as an opportunity to adjust or reinvigorate their approach. Their various stratagems formed the strands that were later twisted together in the *seinendan* movement’s push for a national federation.

Over the 1870s and 1880s associations for evening study (*yagakkai*) began to emerge, mushrooming along with the increase in the number of primary schools (by 1882, ten years after the new school system had been promulgated, the national attendance rate for primary schools stood just over fifty percent). Their purpose was two-fold. First, they were supposed to provide a place for those who had finished primary school (or were temporarily unable to attend due to
family need, etc.) to maintain and reinforce what they had learned, since further education was only available to a small minority. Thus organizers might hire a local primary school teacher or other qualified person to provide such supplementary education to local youths for two or three hours in the evenings, often charging the students a fee of several sen to help pay the instructor and/or rent a study hall. In providing for these opportunities, local (elite) entrepreneurial spirit was attempting to make up for the inevitable lag in the permeation of national policy and institutions throughout the country, at least according to the DNRS, whose 1938 pamphlet aptly captured the yagakkai’s second purpose: local notables “knew that, owing to the lack of proper educational organs to give mental and moral training to those young primary school graduates, many of them joined the [wakashū] in their respective localities, which were no longer ideal homes for them, with the inevitable result that in many cases the fruits of the school education they had received previously were entirely spoiled.”

Local elites may have seen an ally in the discipline and deference taught in primary schools as part of the state’s ideological complex of familism, filial piety, and patriotism, though they perhaps valued such training less for its nationalistic purposes than for its relevance to the persistent and more immediate problem of how unpredictably antagonistic wakashū could be. Preventing the spoilage of these moral fruits, however incompletely developed, was thus eminently desirable, perhaps most pressingly for village leaders. Yagakkai could establish “rules for study” (gakusoku) stipulating the duties and conduct expected of students. If this sounds similar to the Edo-period jōmoku that attempted to regulate the wakashū, it is because lessons were in large part organized and funded by rich peasants, newly strengthened as a class (by government policies that increased tenancy rates and the concentration of wealth). That yagakkai were held in the evenings, as the name indicates, and might be suspended entirely during agriculturally critical

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*Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 65. Jōmoku continued to be produced during this time alongside the spread of evening schools.*
months, was of course a requirement of these productive interests. Further to this point, the actual contents of study typically focused on such reading, writing, and arithmetic as would be helpful in farming and cottage industry, rather than attempting to provide higher schooling.

But that this leading class, despite its tightening grip, still found itself plagued by wakashū assertiveness and the excesses of festival culture was reflected in the very purview of rules for study and the fact that it had often to be repeatedly amended to cover new vices. The rules might, for example, forbid participants from gambling, “chatter and giggling, or bringing shabby book bags and [thereby] disrupting other attendees.” Gambling was perhaps the most persistent vice, drawing in not only young men, but even local officials, village councillors, housewives, and elementary school students alike, and moreover was often ignored by police. Yagakkai themselves could even degenerate into a front for young people to gamble. But the focus on the students’ appearance here is notable for being a material instantiation of more general prohibitions against “engaging in wild and rude conduct” (sobō no kyōdō). Regardless of their effectiveness, such stipulations set out behavioural modalities indicative of social, moral, and economic superiority and sanctioned by the modern discourse of civilization and enlightenment. In principle, these could work as wedges upon which dormant fault lines, established in wakashū solidarity (or shared village culture) by modern reforms, might split open. Before continuing the subject of yagakkai, it will prove useful to take an extended look at one example of this disintegrative process, namely, the decline of traditional courting and sexual practices in the village, which naturally involved members of the wakashū and went directly to the reasons for holding study sessions at night.

Known principally as yobai (or yoasobi), these practices could take a wide variety of forms but typically involved social gatherings between a few young men and one or more young women,

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*Iwata, *Mura no Wakamono*, 64-66. Cockfighting was particularly popular during the 1800s.*
or, between individuals, sexual trysts. In the former case, young men might drop in on a group of women to chat while helping them with their tasks or even impose upon a family to let them spend the evening in the company of their daughter(s). In the latter, the two parties might make an agreement, verbal or tacit (a woman might indicate consent by accepting a small token or gift from the man) to meet in some outbuilding of the woman’s dwelling (the need for surreptitiousness could vary depending on a village’s particular culture). From various ethnographic observations of twentieth-century yobai, Yanagita Kunio extrapolated a chimerical picture of pre-modern relations between the sexes that was part free association and equitable consent, and part romantic, gentlemanly courtship by the male matched by the female’s monogamous good faith towards the current suitor. As he was wont to do, Yanagita located this ideal primarily in the distant past, when the practice of yobai supposedly accorded more fully with its etymology derivation (“to call upon continuously”) and “meant for a suitor to go at night to sleep at the house of his prospective bride. This was the method of securing a girl’s consent in the days when marriages involved the young man’s working for the bride’s family for a time [possibly a year or more].”

Of course one suspects here that Yanagita was draping in marital purpose what may often have been casual sex. Confirming this element of prudishness in his thinking, he held that “[t]he local organizations of young people acted as a force that prevented love from becoming libertinism.” Under this awkward pairing of banners—free, yet somehow ultimately normative,
monogamous romantic love—Yanagita nonetheless tilted against Meiji state morality and familial authority that supposedly undermined an innocuous primordial style of yobai:

In the Meiji period and afterward, however, a number of misguided educators, feeling that the customary courtship practices were immoral, or perhaps unaware of the restrictions imposed by the group, saw fit to teach that by ancient and proper Japanese custom marriages were decided by parents, and that love is not a prerequisite to marriage, but something that comes afterward.

As the type of marriage in which the bride moves immediately to her husband’s home became dominant, the practice of yobai came more and more to be considered wicked. Simultaneously, the control exercised by young people’s associations grew weaker, and in fact yobai degenerated to the extent that it was little better than rape. In many areas, the term was given a folk-etymology that meant literally “night crawling” and implied extreme promiscuity.¹

What Yanagita saw as degeneration found a more kindly reception with the equally prolific Minakata Kumagusu, though the latter apparently agreed that the purpose of yobai was marriage:

There is today [1914] no place in the countryside where yobai does not occur every evening and this is practiced as a sine qua non of local life [kyōdo sonritsu no dainyōken]. With the exception of prominent families [more on this below], all marriage is concluded thereby; because the match is only confirmed after the couple has had some experience, the evils of resentment and separation are avoided. As in ancient India and the contemporary West, men and women choose for themselves and come to mutual agreement, this being requisite for the village’s peace and prosperity.²

Regardless of their accuracy, when juxtaposed against other sources these two positions help bring to light the erroneous assumptions underlying them, but also the fault lines in wakashū solidarity and village culture referred to above.

First, and unsurprisingly, young men did not necessarily engage in yobai in order to find a marital partner, though the birth of a child may well have led to marriage in some instances.²⁰

Mutually consensual sexual trysts (i.e., the kind where a man might by prior agreement knock softly on a side door to be let in) might occur only a few days before the woman was to become the

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¹ Yanagita, Manners and Customs, 166 (original italics). Given that Yanagita published most of his thinking on marriage shortly after WWII, Iwata observes that in postulating an originally democratic form of yobai Yanagita may have been an attempting to provide a native source of inspiration for postwar reforms, simultaneously critiquing what he saw as the fallacious equivalence between democratization and Americanization. See Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 122.

² Quoted Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 118. Citings Alan Christy, Mark Driscoll gives a very loose rendering of this same passage in his Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living Dead, and Undead in Japan’s Imperialism, 1895-1945 (Durham: Duke University Press 2010), which, as I will explain below, illustrates the persistence of an equally idealistic, albeit for different reasons, understanding of yobai. For reference, Minakata’s original statement (as quoted in Iwata, but including a preceding sentence) is as follows: kyonen tōchi kinbō ayukawa mura nite, yabai kinsei no tame sōtei yoru kanarazu chūchin wo tomoshi ikashimaru hō wo mōke, iroiro to muzukashiki sei ki wo sadametari. Makoto ni tsuqō no hito ga kikaba warafu beki no hanahadashiki nari. Shikashi so wa warafu mono no suginitte, jūsutsu wa kyō mo chihō ni yobai to iku kato no hitoya mo okonaharenaru tokoro naka, kore wo kyūdo sonritsu no dainyōken to shite murakata ni okonahare-iru nari....Kon’in no seiritsu oyā ni arazaru kaigiri wa mina kono yobai ni yorite sadamaru koto de, iroiro shiken shite ato ni kakutei suru ōbū yue, kaette hanni no rōdo mo wazawai mo sukanaka, ko-indo ya ima no obei de danjo mizukara erande ai-jōyaku suru gotoku murazato anzen banjō jizoku no tame no ichidai yōken nari.
wife of another man, with the affair continuing thereafter. Women could and did attempt to abort yobai pregnancies and, even if unsuccessful, might leave the child with their parents and marry someone entirely different. Furthermore, according to historian Hattori Shisō, having a love child (or being one, for that matter) was not necessarily a matter of shame, especially for unmarried women, because the prevalence of yobai made parentage ambiguous; with the issue of responsibility dissolved among a community’s young men, engaged as they were in a practice sanctioned by precedent and wide participation, there was no basis in the social structure for embarrassment or scandal. Though they were clearly wrong about its relationship to marriage, in the universality of custom that sustained yobai lies a fault line, which Minakata hit upon in his above quotation and which Yanagita observed elsewhere: the non-participation of elite families.

As described in the previous chapter, village social stratification along economic lines was already pronounced during the late Edo period, and Meiji reforms only exacerbated it. Given these conditions—the modern imperial ideology of family and state was in large part based on warrior-class practices and values and so played to incipient village-level class distinctions—it is not difficult to imagine why “[l]arge farmers often kept their daughters out of the girls’ groups,” as Yanagita claimed, or why “[t]he young people’s groups of the past often came into conflict with the family system....Families frequently attempted to secure their own position by making profitable marriages, regardless of what the youth in the community thought.” Here Yanagita correctly points us towards an antagonism grounded in elite families’ contravention of the village

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*Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 143-144. Here Iwata reproduces large sections of Hattori Shisō, “Nekonaki” in Bishi no shigaku (Tokyo: Fukumura shuppan, 1970). Another anecdote in Hattori’s essay illustrates how carnivalesque abandon, reminiscent of the ee ja nai ka ethos, could be facilitated by anonymity. Apparently, until the first year of Taishō, on a certain night during obon the men and women of Hattori’s hometown in the mountains of Shimane Prefecture would costume themselves “any way they pleased” (omoiomoi ni) and dance together en mass. Even wives, young and old, would dress as maidens, being sure to hide their faces and to keep from their husbands the individual particulars of their costumes. The bonds of matrimony were thus temporarily suspended in this “world of the masquerade” (kasō no sekai), and the village’s women were free to consort with any man. Noting that the custom of enabling promiscuity through anonymity was well-attested to around the world, Hattori argued that it could only be sustained by a core cultural presumption that in principle the community’s unmarried women, before becoming a particular person’s wife, collectively functioned as a body of communal wives (kyōdō no tsuma) for all unmarried men. Yobai was just such a custom, according to Hattori. In light of these practices, Yamamoto Takinosuke’s inclusion of “Punishing girls from good families who do not participate in the bon dance” in his list of rural evils (see last chapter) should come as no surprise.*
practice of *yobai*. But the bone of contention in this conflict was not a customary right held by village youth to more or less free and equitable choice of mate or even solely the imposition of modern “civilized” values; rather, to a very important extent, it was control over women.\(^v\)

Certainly, friction between village leadership and the *wakashū* expressed class conflict along economic lines unrelated to sexual equality, as we saw previously in the discussion of the proliferation of holidays and festivals. I also do not mean to foreclose on the possibility that certain aspects of “premodern” life could be more equitable than what modernity offers us. As we have just seen, Hattori, for instance, noted utopian elements in village customs (in festival occasions [see footnote \(u\)], lack of shame about love children, etc.). However, he also overlooked the obvious incommensurability of sexual power in *yobai*, even as he noted therein the more abstract play of power that subordinated both male and female individuality to the universality of a communal custom. Thus, though the role of *wakashū* was not what Yanagita averred—they certainly did not shield romantic love from sexual promiscuity—we must take seriously his use of “rape” in association with *yobai*.\(^w\)

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\(^v\) In fact, Yanagita posited *wakashū* control over *mussenmegumi* even as he elsewhere held fast to his free love/equitable choice thesis on marriage. He never resolved this contradiction. See Iwata, *Mura no wakamono*, 120-121.

\(^w\) Iwata claims that Yanagita and ethnography as a whole have done nothing but “beautify *yobai* into a prank” (*tada itazura ni yobai wo bika saru dake; Mura no wakamono*, 146), which, as we can see from his use of “rape,” is not entirely accurate. Yanagita did say, for instance, that “[m]uch of the mischief of young people’s associations is preserved in form today, but it amounts to no more than the American custom of tying tin cans to the automobile in which newlyweds are about to go off on their honeymoon” (*Manners and Customs*, 168). But by “today” he was referring to the period after World War II.

While I might have incorporated *yobai* into the previous chapter’s discussion of the *wakashū*’s role in marriage (particularly to qualify Yanagita’s views on freedom of choice), I thought it better to treat the subject in this chapter because it militates against the idea that subversively rambunctious *wakashū* and the Dionysian pleasures of festival culture were tragically destroyed by the hegemonic modern state—seductive because such an easy narrative plays to a kind of schadenfreude against Edo merchants and Meiji reformers based in nostalgia for a place outside the temporal imperatives of capitalist production and the strictures of bourgeois morality. In his *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque* Mark Driscoll falls into this trap in discussing the different outlooks of Yanagita and Minakata: the latter connected the former’s “erotophobia to the way local authorities, following the lead of metropolitan elites, wanted to discipline older erotic practices in the countryside. As Alan Christy points out, Minakata had complained that in a neighbouring village, the police had just issued regulations outlawing the old custom of “hooking up” (*yobai*), or recreational sex: "Tokyoites might chuckle when they hear of this, but there’s hardly a village in Japan where cruising doesn’t occur every evening" (8).

Clearly, Christy has translated the same original passage that I have rendered quite differently above. Although Driscoll’s book goes on to detail the depths of Japan’s domestic and colonial violence, both discursive and physical, against women, here he uncritically conveys an image of hip and cool “older erotic practices” by relying on Christy’s questionable use of such terms as “hooking up” and “cruising.” Grammatically, in the original Japanese (given by Iwata) the object of laughter for “Tokyoites” (*tsugō no hito*; literally, “proper people”) is not the “cruising,” but the preceding sentence (either untranslated by Christy or left out by Driscoll) describing a law that obligated men to carry lanterns at night. Driscoll apparently drew this quotation from Christy’s *Ethnographies of the Self: Japanese Native Ethnology, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). However, in fairness to Christy, no such monograph is listed in that press’s catalogue. It appears to have been published as *A Discipline on Foot: Inventing Japanese Native Ethnography, 1910-1945* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012). Also, the quotation in question seems not to have made it into this book.
After all, it is important “to remember that no modern regime has ever articulated its enterprise of constructing the nation-state as a project of limitations and restrictions:”

In the Japanese case the new Meiji order was represented as one that demolished boundaries of exclusion or limitation: thus there was freedom to move from place to place, to choose one's occupation, to be educated and literate, to be free of disease and ignorance; and there was a dismantling of social estates, the demolition of road and highway barriers as well as of gateways obstructing entrances to castle towns; and then there was the building of infrastructure, railroads and bridges that represented unhindered movement and progress. Even service in the military was represented as a freedom, since peasants and other commoners could now take part in a privilege that had in feudal times been reserved for the samurai elite.

To this list of liberations—admittedly double-edged insofar as they undermine community and enable the development of capitalist social relations—we could well add the attenuation of the wakashū because much of yobai, even if it was antagonistic to the family-based morality enshrined in the principles of the Meiji state, was itself a kind of patriarchy that could descend into gangsterism, pimping, and rape.

For example, wakashū could be highly possessive of their community’s young women and often jealously defended their territory against unauthorized incursions by young men from other villages (even as the defenders made excursions of their own). In one incident in Kōchi Prefecture in early Meiji, a young man was beaten to death on the spot when he tried to sneak into a yado in another village. That degree of violence was probably unusual, but given that village endogamy was the norm (see previous chapter), “as late as 1890,” Yanagita noted, wakashū could “put up considerable resistance to the importation of brides from different communities. Often they employed annoying tactics, such as throwing mud or rocks at the house of the newlyweds or persistently arriving uninvited as supper guests. In order to avoid being victimized, those about to marry persons from other communities began to send presents in advance to the local youth and to try in various ways to secure the assistance of the ring leaders.” In the twentieth century, however, absolute prohibitions against outsiders were less and less the rule. In any case, such gifts often facilitated young men’s excursions to neighbouring villages, especially when there was a
festival on (though apparently a simple announcement of intent would have secured permission in
the Kōchi incident). Visiting young men made sure to present the local wakashū in a certain district
in Shizuoka (again early Meiji) with sacred wine (omiki). Gifts might even be necessary within the
same village if cliquishness was particularly strong (due perhaps to multiple yado).

Of course, young women too could be punished by the local wakashū for illicitly
consorting with outsiders: in a township in Shiga prefecture the members of the local wakashū
were said to barge into the offending woman’s family home to demand drinking money (on pain of
ostracism) in compensation for her breach of the group’s expectations of propriety. But the threat
of punishment might also be used to compel a young woman to sleep with a visitor against her
will, in stark contrast to Yanagita’s primordial ideal of yobai, as happened in the above district of
Shizuoka. After receiving tribute, a representative of the local wakashū would apparently proceed
to a local young woman’s home to get her parents to “lend” him their daughter to entertain the
visitor(s). Though she would be returned home that evening, thereafter when the visitor came she
would have to sleep with him (soine) at least once, even if she had no desire to marry him. If she
got pregnant the visitor would be made to take in the child and pay a birthing fee.25 In this case the
parents were supposedly quite pleased with the arrangements, though this was naturally not always
the case. While some parents had their daughters sleep in areas of the house easily accessible for
yobai, others made sure they slept together as a family to prevent it.26

However, in the latter cases the wakashū had bride stealing (yomenusumi) as a trump card.
If a young man sought to marry a young woman but was trenchantly opposed by her family, he
could enlist the support of his peers to show up in force at her home to press the issue. Failing that,
they could and did scheme to kindnap young women and hide them away until the family gave up
their consent. A particularly egregious incident of bride stealing in Kōchi illustrates how profound
and long-lasting was the tension between custom and the family’s privileged position under the
modern state. In 1919 a man was sentenced to death for murdering his bride’s parents. In his statement to the police, he claimed that in accordance with local custom (*katsugi yome*; lit., “shouldered bride”) he had taken their daughter to his home and “had lived as if in a dream” for four or five months until she left him and returned to her parents’ home. The man attempted to persuade the father to return her, even cutting off his own little finger to show his commitment, but was sternly rebuffed. A week later, he set fire to the home, shot dead the father as he rushed out and then the mother as he fled, and took his bride back to his home.\(^{27}\)

Unfortunately, while there are scattered references to *yobai* by women, most first-hand insights into the practice are found in the accounts of men who claim to have participated in their youth.\(^{28}\) At times they do suggest a kind of playful back and forth, but are also peppered with unsettlingly ambiguous phrases that can be read either as implying a reciprocal lewdness between men and women untrammeled by bourgeois morality or as expressions of domineering sexual aggression: “I’m going to come by later, you know.” “In those days most girls didn’t wear panties so *yobai* was easy.” “She’ll do anyone!” No matter which interpretation more accurately described *yobai* in a particular time or place, both jovial licentiousness and gang-style patriarchy flew in the face of Meiji family-state ideology and propriety.\(^{x}\)

Returning to the subject of evening schools, we can see how they appealed to village elites for more than economic reasons. If young men were at *yagakkai*, they were not prowling around. And leaders could devise various measures to guard against the possibility of mischief after class let out, perhaps ringing the temple bell to let families know when the young men left and thus

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\(^{x}\) Before moving on, regional variations in the practice of *yobai* and related practices must be addressed. While significant local idiosyncrasy in this regard does not permit absolute certainty, scholars have noted broad patterns related to variations in *wakashū* organizational structure (or lack thereof), which were discussed in the last chapter. Yanagita noted that the extreme practice of bride stealing became less common as one moved east, being most concentrated in Kyūshū and largely unreported in Tōhoku, due, he claimed, to a corresponding patter of distribution for strong patriarchal rights. See Iwata, *Mura no wakamono*, 117. Iwata himself agrees, though he points out that Yanagita failed to acknowledge that bride stealing was far from a mutually consensual practice. But Iwata also argues that in areas of eastern Japan where *wakashū* had a strong organizational identity as a village institution (i.e., Kantō, not Tōhoku), *yobai* was practiced more individually, with less of the gang-like character that obtained in the west and fed into such practices as bride stealing (131). Preference for practicing *yobai* within or outside of the village does not seem to have presented as a pattern.
making obvious any unusual delay in returning home. Perhaps because of their usefulness in this regard yagakkai became common enough to draw the attention of the central government. The Primary School Directive (shōgakkōrei) of 1886 was amended in 1890—it had initially established various standards governing the establishment and management of schools (subjects of study, number of students, teachers, and days of class, etc.)—to include yagakkai as a type of primary school under the appellation “supplementary vocational schools” (jitsugyō hoshū gakkō).

Regulations pertaining to this new type of school were promulgated three years later, but basically did no more than to officially enshrine the productive purposes and interests which yagakkai had already been serving for some time, namely, 1) “to provide review of primary education and, by simple methods, occupational knowledge and skills to juveniles [jidō] engaged in vocations or attempting to do so” and 2) “to educate within limits dictated by local circumstances and the seasons.”

Beyond defining their general mission in these broad terms, the state did not exercise control over the curriculum of these schools and many yagakkai simply continued on as they were, perhaps adopting some variation on the new official name.

However, after the government announced more detailed regulations for the contents of classes in January 1902, the number of organizations identifying as supplementary schools exploded, which did include some entirely new establishments, but mostly renamed and reorganized yagakkai. For example, from 1896 to 1901 in Shizuoka Prefecture the number of such schools focusing on agriculture was at most three, with never more than two hundred students. But over 1902 the numbers increased to twelve schools and 614 students, each total more than tripling by the next year, and then more than doubling over the next four years. By 1908 they had jumped to 255 and 12,356 respectively. It was these supplementary schools that were merged in 1935

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1 Naimushō Chihō-kyoku, Dairokkai chihō kaigiyō kōenshū (Tokyo: Hōbunkaku, 1987), 544. Such measures would likely have complemented more general efforts by local authorities. Near Minakata Kamagusu’s home in Wakayama Prefecture, a ban against yobai was issued and all men in their prime (sōtei) were obligated to carry a lit lantern at night (Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 118). It was a simple, yet ingenious double-bind because yobai thrived on stealth and anonymity, but anyone not carrying a lantern immediately drew suspicion.
with the infamous “youth training sites” (seinren kunrenjo, essentially boot camps) to form “youth schools” (seinren gakkō), which integrated vocational and military training for working youth. These, of course, operated in cooperative parallel with the DNRS both before and after amalgamation. But this is getting ahead of the topic at hand. From the 1890s until the start of the Russo-Japanese War, the significance of supplementary schools to the rise of the seinendan movement lay more in the promotion of literacy and exposure of youth to state-sanctioned morality. This, as discussed above, helped puncture the hermetic seal of wakashū solidarity by offering individual young men the chance to plug themselves into the discourse and technical knowledge of modernity and thus open new paths for personal advancement. This kind of supplementary vocational education would become central to the new seinendan, which were already beginning to emerge by the end of the nineteenth century.

Yanagita Kunio did not date the incidents in which he recounted wakashū and musume-gumi being abolished by police action and replaced by seinen-kai but during the 1890s groups using the term seinen instead of waka(i) to denote youth were organizing support activities for conscripts. More will be said of the significance of this shift in terminology in the Chapter Four, but suffice it to say that seinen signified a new consciousness of youth (and various meanings invested therein) that had arisen over the Meiji period and which exhorted young people to “educate and discipline themselves to become ‘youth of the nineteenth-century civilized world.’… [Y]outh was a period of preparation and the husbanding of one’s energies.” The new epithetic term connoted “law abiding and public-spirited,” yet still vigorous, youth in contrast to the “degenerate and corrupt” wakashū’s seemingly capricious alternation between indolence, debauchery, and thuggery.

See the examples from the Gotō islands and Niigata above. Though the term “seinendan” may have been in use at this time, I will reserve it for the period when one can start to speak of a national movement, i.e., approximately 1910 (culminating in the establishment of the DNRS in 1925).

Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 74. It should be noted that as the term seinen rose to prominence, it may have been used by social commentators of groups that still identified as waka(i) -shu-monol-nakama, etc.
The smoothest transition from a buraku wakashū to a seinenkai occurred when there was continuity of membership. The jōmoku of Arari buraku in Shizuoka provides a well-known example. It dates from 1760 and, being one of the earliest extant jōmoku, featured prominently in the collection published by the DNRS (see last chapter). Most remarkably, until 1961 every time a new person became leader of the Arari youth his personal name was appended to the document. From 1760 to 1910, this individual was referred to as the (wakamono) oyakata, or “(youth) boss;” in 1913, however, a short note preceding the new leader’s name indicated that henceforth the wakamono would be renamed “seinenkai,” and the oyakata “seinenkai-chō.” And without comment, the 1919 leader signed as “seinendan-chō.” But this is a late and uncontexualized example of a single buraku wakashū. The most common means for the systematization of the seinenkai began with integration at the level of the administrative village. Just as the new administrative villages comprised several buraku, so the establishment of a seinenkai might involve multiple wakashū. While each might remain physically and socially rooted in its immediate environs, together they in principle became branches of a larger whole, rather than autonomous units. Although some wakashū may have taken such organizational efforts upon themselves, more typically local officials and enterprising authority figures (school teachers, wealthy peasants, etc.) cooperated to establish a seinenkai. Kadono village, also in Shizuoka, exemplifies such a developmental course.

The presence of a wakashū in Kadono is attested to during the bakumatsu period. In 1887 it was reorganized as a fire brigade (shōbōgumi) and then as a seinenkai in 1900. This youth association kept a detailed journal from 1907 to 1913 that sheds light on how a buraku-based seinenkai became federated with other nearby through the efforts of local notables as well as how the group maintained and modified its traditional practices while integrating new ones characteristic of its new position as a seinenkai. The young men of Kadono continued to hold their
first meeting shortly after the New Year, at which new members of the youth group were welcomed by seeing if they could cut and carry the number of logs expected of a full man (ichininmae). Likewise, the new association put on summer and harvest festivals as the wakashū had always done, but the journal attests that in 1912 the former was cancelled in an act of “self-restraint” (jishuku) in deference the death, only a few days beforehand, of the Meiji emperor and the latter on an order from higher up.\textsuperscript{bb}

The yagakkai, however, was entirely new. Evening classes had been part of the Kadono seinenkai’s independent operations from at least 1900, but in 1909 they were brought under the umbrella of Shimokariya (administrative) village’s umbrella seinenkai, which had been established in 1904 to “integrate the youth associations of each district (ku; i.e., the former buraku).” In cooperation with the principal of the local elementary school, the chairman of the Shimokariya seinenkai brought the various yagakkai under his purview by dividing them into east and west subsections. His success is evident in that while Kadono held its own opening ceremony (yagakuhajime no shiki) marking the beginning of evening classes on 9 Jan. 1909, only ten days later a similar ceremony was held together with the other eastern districts. From late January 1910 to the end of March evening classes for the whole eastern subsection were held forty-one times in Kadono’s fire hall. And integration did not stop there, for in 1911 the Kadono seinenkai’s leaders participated in a Shimokariya-wide plenary meeting to discuss the yagakkai and, from then on, eastern and western subsections came together for joint opening and closing ceremonies.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{bb}Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 95-97. In the case of the harvest festival, the Kadono youth held a meeting only a few days beforehand at which it was resolved to hire entertainers, but, in deference to the period of Imperial mourning (taišō), the decision was overturned by the village (i.e., former buraku) headman (who at this point, thanks to the new administrative divisions, was technically a kuchō, or “district leader”). Together both cases illustrate the penetration of the imperial throne into popular and local elite consciousness, as cancellation of village festivities for such a purpose could only have happened under the modern state. As Takashi Fujitani notes, “the most important national symbol of the modern era has been the monarchy, but popular recognition of it as such is a Meiji product. Although there is no doubt that the imperial institution is of ancient vintage, popular consciousness of the emperor during the Tokugawa period did not exist in many areas and was weak or fused with folk beliefs about wandering sacred beings (marebito) in others.” See James L. Huffman, ed., Modern Japan: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism (New York: Garland Publishers, 1998), 148.
Since 1904, the Shimokariya seinenkai had held one or two plenary meetings a year, which doubled as an occasion for lectures and a sports festival (undōkai). In 1909, however, the youth of Shimokariya found themselves part of yet another administrative body, the Takata County Youth Association (Takata-gun seinenkyōkai), whose mission was to “promote the establishment and unification of youth associations in the [county’s] towns and villages.” To this new body, its primary purpose being to hold plenary meetings and publish a magazine, the chairman of each village seinenkai nominated representatives, from among whose number was chosen a president. Crucially, none of these systematizing integrations were instigated by the central government—the first official directive from the Diet on the subject of youth associations was not issued until 1915—although it was, as is discussed below, aware of youth associations’ potential. Thus in Kadono buraku we see a very much grassroots initiative proceeding upwards from the former buraku. Even in other cases it would certainly have behooved wakashū quashed by police action to adopt a different, modern name (seinen) under which to reconstitute themselves, and entirely natural to do so where the local wakashū had fallen into abeyance in the face of economic and social change and a brand new association was being organized under the patronage of a local notable. In some areas, seinenkai arose without disturbing the purpose or integrity of the older organization and were maintained separately.\textsuperscript{cc}

The modern state’s wars were an instrumental in sowing the seeds for the transformation of buraku wakashū to seinenkai. A most desirable form for burgeoning youth associations to express their public spiritedness was, naturally, support for soldiers, and the formal send-offs occasioned

\textsuperscript{cc} Even when it later became mandatory for each village to have a DNRS branch, this division of labour might be maintained. For instance, in the Tōhoku region the Edō-period hōkōnin system of contractual agricultural labour/servitude—surplus offspring would leave or be sent from their homes (in the modern period only after graduating from primary school) to work for a larger landholder in order to reduce the burden on their families (kuchi herashi)—persisted well into the 1930s, by which time the DNRS had extended its branches throughout the countryside. As hōkōnin, young people collectively constituted a kind of wakashū in that a large landholder might employ several individuals, and while they ate, worked, and slept on their employers’ family farms, they had relative autonomy during evenings and holidays. They might gather together for communal festivities or simple recreation (including yobai), even venturing to other villages. And hōkōnin could come into conflict with their employers over holidays and festivals, much like wakashū of a more defined organizational character elsewhere. On hōkōnin activities see Iwata, Mura no wakamono, 164-174. For a more general discussion of the hōkōnin system, see chapter eight in Smith, Agrarian Origins.
by conscription provided ample opportunity to live up to their eponymous ideals. Of course regional discrepancies were the norm, not to mention that an otherwise delinquent wakashū may well have celebrated departing or returning of conscripted members, just as the most earnest of seinenkai may still have been involved in village festivals, etc. The ambivalence of the situation could be reflected most strikingly during actual armed conflicts. Though evidently on a much smaller scale than the support activities seen during the war with Russia (given that the central government appears to have taken nowhere near the same level of notice), the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) led in some localities to the establishment of seinenkai especially for the purpose of sending off mobilized troops and furnishing them with care packages.\textsuperscript{dd} Support might also be expressed in a style predictive of the hadaka-mairi of a decade later (see above), with the local youth “praying nightly for the soldiers’ safety at [the area’s] various minor shrines [sōchinjusha] and even ensconcing themselves for seven nights in the main [ujigami] shrine.”\textsuperscript{37} Similarly, some groups took it upon themselves to donate funds set aside for the local festival or to save their leisure money, in one case “collecting six yen, twenty sen in all to be sent to the Navy’s soldier support office [juppeibu] for the comfort of the soldiers deployed to China.”

However, with the start of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, these small-scale support activities (kōen katsudō) became a widespread social phenomenon in response to the unprecedented degree of mobilization of people and materiel required for war with a Western power:

A million men were sent to the front; casualties mounted over 100,000; the financial cost was immense. To sustain this heroic effort, the war was justified as a great popular (kokuminteki) undertaking. Such aroused political consciousness was worrisome, as Tokutomi Sohō, a confidant of [Prime Minister] Katsura, observed in his autobiography: “The Japanese authorities were more afraid of their own people than of the enemy. Only the officials in the government knew of the

\textsuperscript{dd}See Kumagai, Dai Nihon, 83 – 85. Yamamoto Takinosuke, mentioned last chapter and about whom more is said below, took an early lead in such activities. According to the DNRS, “[d]uring the Sino-Japanese war, members of the young men's association of [his] village made a large number of straw sandals working for hours together every night under the guidance of Mr. Yamamoto, and sent them to the front through the Army authorities for use of soldiers. This was the first instance of local young men's organizations having rendered services to the State in connection with emergency as localities, howsoever small service it might have been” (DNRS, Seinendan, 33).
serious internal weakness and overall vulnerability of the nation. They kept their knowledge strictly secret lest it have an adverse effect upon the morale of the people. One may criticize the government's attitude for its lack of sincerity toward the people, but the actual situation was that nobody could tell what might happen if the whole truth were revealed. The government therefore chose to keep whatever it could strictly confidential, even if later, when the truth came to be known, it had to contend with the people's indignation."38

These fears no doubt informed the authorities’ suspicion of even obviously patriotic mass gatherings, which would seem to be an ideal means to express the values of seinen. Rallies occasioned by news of success in battle, etc. represented a confluence of, yes, local pride/relief and nationalism; but therein dwelled also, to reiterate the previous section’s discussion of hadaka-mairi and anti-conscription prayers, increasingly profound war-weariness and popular dissatisfaction with the government, especially for its taxation policies, which were already burdensome before the war and even more so during and after. Nonetheless, great victories in the war, particularly the Battle of Liaoyang (Aug.-Sept. 1904) and the surrender of Port Arthur (1 Jan. 1905), inspired festivities held over several days. Pictures retelling the course of the war, music, costume and flag-flying parades of all kinds, followed by lantern parades at night, were all possible features of the celebrations. This was where local youth associations really made their mark, whether such events were brought off by associations of the new seinen or throngs of wakamono channeling the new energies of national life into the kind of crowd revelry traditionally associated with local festivals.

Other support activities were equally impressive. The prototypical wakashū duty of providing labour for the common good found new expression in the war’s do-or-die atmosphere. Money for donations to military relief funds could be raised by making sandals and rope, collecting firewood, repairs to roads, construction of river embankments, or even giving haircuts. As the war went on, local youth associations helped families of enlisted men in maintaining their lands, and, crucially, in planting and harvesting the labour-intensive rice crop. The homestead was a source of great anxiety for common soldiers, given the precariousness of rural life, so the
report of this kind of solidarity in letters from home, some from members of the youth associations themselves, did much for morale. In cooperation with local reservist associations, the associations also organized the collection and sending to the front of care packages (imonbukuro) containing letter writing materials, towels, tobacco, and other small luxuries. In what was clearly an elaboration on the idea behind night classes and supplementary schools, efforts at fundraising for the war also continued through soliciting donations from audiences at lectures—given by teachers, reporters, or representatives and paid for with money raised by youth associations—on the progress of the war and its international context. These were often accompanied by images projected from the magic lantern (gentō), an early kind of slide projector, prefiguring similar media strategies used in promoting Japan’s occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s. 39

The state was both surprised and pleased by youth associations’ material contributions to the war effort against Russia. In a pamphlet published for the general public in July 1905, Home Minister Yoshikawa Akimasa recounted his experiences during an extended inspection tour of Western Japan, making special note of the excellent “preparatory education for youth that is essential to the recruitment situation” provided by evening schools and youth associations. 39

When the inspection was passing through Hiroshima Prefecture in April, Yamamoto Takinosuke, later of DNRS fame, had an opportunity to speak with an official in the Minister’s entourage (Inoue Tomokazu, later governor of Tokyo fū), to whom he stressed the youth associations’ potential. Yamamoto was uniquely qualified to speak on the subject, having established a youth association in his home village in 1890 at the age of seventeen. And in 1896 he had garnered some public attention for a lengthy self-published monograph decrying the widespread

39 See Hirayama Kazuhiko. Seinenshūdanshi Kenkyū Josetsu, Vol. 2. (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1978), 11. Kumagata Tatsuijiro, the DNRS historian, pointed to Yoshikawa’s publication as the first reference in print to the youth associations on the part of the central government. It also illustrated the scale of the war support activities: Yoshikawa noted that since the start of the war, in a single county in Hyogo Prefecture, 918 various youth associations (comprising about 4,300 people) had been established. See Kumagai, Dai Nihon, 90-91.
attention of nothing but vice and delinquency to rural working youth. Given the dominance of this derogatory narrative—in public discourse at this time, *seinen*, with its overtones of civilization and progress, was primarily associated with ambitious, educated urban youth and the ethic of *risshin shusse* (“getting ahead”)—the title of Yamamoto’s work (*Inaka seinen*, “country youth”) would have appeared oxymoronic, but it captures the essence of his argument that there were forward-looking young people in rural areas too.\(^{40}\)

Yamamoto’s 1905 entreaties must have made an impression, if not on Inoue, then certainly with the local education establishment: in August, as negotiations to end the war were taking place, the humble (in station if not in vision) rural primary school teacher Yamamoto served as the Hiroshima Educational Association’s spokesman at the fifth National Assembly on General Education (held in Tokyo under the auspices of the Imperial Educational Association).\(^{41}\) Most representatives to the assembly were middle school principals, so his nomination was highly unusual. But Yamamoto was not merely a curiosity called up from the trenches of rural Japan to be a mouthpiece for the ideas of his local superiors. Rather, he was instrumental in preparing the proposals submitted by the Hiroshima delegation in answer to the question that the Education Ministry had, in advance of the Assembly, put forward as a key issue, i.e., “the most simple and effective methods to direct the development of supplementary education.” These proposals called for 1) a law mandating the establishment of supplementary schools and 2) central government support and guidance for local youth associations. When the latter was not admitted to the conference agenda, Yamamoto, instead of confining himself to the former, used the occasion to give a “once in a lifetime” address on the subject of his true passion—youth associations. Yet this was no one-off, as Yamamoto had done his homework: on the way to Tokyo he had stopped off to enlist the support of prefectural governors and, on arrival, met with
various Education Ministry bureaucrats. As a result, the Assembly resolved to include “guidance and support for local youth associations” in its recommendations to the Ministry.42

These efforts prompted a torrent, relatively speaking, of bureaucratic activity over the remaining months of 1905. At the end of September, three weeks after the Treaty of Portsmouth concluding the war with Russia, the director of the Home Ministry’s Local Affairs Bureau (chihō kyoku) issued instructions to top local officials to report on “seinenkai and other organizations and enterprises considered exemplary,” as part of a broader post-war survey of cities, towns, and villages.43 This seems to have been the first memorandum (tsūchō) on the subject of the associations from the central state apparatus to local officials, likely motivated by the results of the Home Minister Yoshikawa’s inspection tour and, at least in part, by the recommendations of the Assembly. Naturally, however, the Education Ministry gave more detailed attention to the issue, not least because Yamamoto, not content with his success at the Assembly, kept up his efforts to promote state involvement over the following months. In October, the Survey Committee for Popular Education (tsūzoku kyōiku; more on this in the next chapter) petitioned Minister of Education Kubota Yuzuru, who just so happened to be a former principal of Hiroshima Normal School,44 “to survey organized bodies of local youth (wakarenchū, wakashū, seinenkai, and any variations thereof):”

Believing that to amend these organizations and ensure their wholesome development is extremely effective for popular education, the Committee hopes that you will devise means to improve the guidance thereof by investigating the present condition of these organizations and, concurrently, collecting and taking into consideration the opinions of local authorities on this matter. [Accordingly, we recommend the following measures:]

1) Issue orders jointly with the Home Ministry to local officials to execute such a survey
2) Have said officials compile their survey reports according to the following criteria:
   a) Historical Development [enkaku]
   b) Purpose
   c) Organization (sex and age restrictions, territorial divisions, etc.) and Internal Regulation
   d) Activities
   e) Any aspects to be recognized as beneficial [rieki ari] either for the betterment of popular education and manners/customs or promotion of industry
   f) Any elements considered pernicious
   g) Local populace’s disposition toward the organizations
h) Any appropriate methods to promote leadership and guidance vis-à-vis the organizations.45

In December 1905, the director of the Ministry’s Standard Education Bureau ordered local officials to include youth associations in the larger survey of popular education using the above framework. While seemingly obvious areas of interest for a modern government, these categories aptly capture the dissonance between the elite’s keen understanding of requirements of modern governance and the still insufficient depth of its penetration.

In the first place, the survey categories are quintessentially modern, perhaps most tellingly in the placement of “Historical Development” at the top of the list, wherein one can see the seeds of the obsession the DNRS came to have with the same question. More broadly, despite the tendency to characterize the Edo period as “early modern” (kinsei) on the basis of proto-capitalist developments, etc., the Tokugawa bakufu, outside of what was necessary to organize tax collection, would have had little institutional interest in acquiring the detailed knowledge sought by the survey committee as to the character and genealogy of village social patterns, whether regionally shared or locally specific (with the possible exception of item f, pernicious elements). Essentially, the old regime understood and treated villages as miniature tributary states—self-contained, largely self-regulating organic units that periodically bore the fruit of taxes. With village agricultural production black-boxed by the separation of warriors and commoners (heinō bunri), the feudal authorities “had ruled under a system that had permitted what we might think of as an infinite range of invisibilities. Most importantly, they had countenanced the in large part invisibility of the people and local communities to themselves, the ruling class.”46

There was simply no paradigm to inspire sustained elite interest or intervention in village social terrain—any connection between social organization and productive capacity was irrelevant as long as the tax output of the black box was relatively consistent—let alone in how that terrain acquired its contours over time. Lineage, even in something as unassuming as a
family name, was supposed to be the sole prerogative of the warrior class (and of the nobility that theoretically legitimized the warriors’ authority to rule). Under this feudal weltanschauung, which allowed for the kind of autonomy we saw in the previous chapter’s discussion of hōgaï (“outside the law”), the dynamics of (increasingly commercialized) agricultural life were normally considered unnecessary for (even beneath) the ruling authorities. They could only become of obvious interest when perceived as a protracted, pervasive crisis existentially threatening to warrior rule, by which time the problem was beyond redress.⁴⁶

Essentially, Meiji central authorities had to relearn how to integrate themselves into the countryside. Hence the above survey categories give voice to the modern imperative to simultaneously widen the areas of governmental concern and know them in ever finer detail, that is, “to transform the entire territory of the nation-state into a vast space of visibility.”⁴⁸ Naturally, “almost from its inception the Meiji government developed a near obsession with the collection and manipulation of numbers and data as they related to the control, management, and reform of the population, the land, and all the other resources of the territory.”⁴⁷ The Army Ministry, for one, in early 1872:

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⁴⁶ Thomas C. Smith gives an example of such a crisis: “The Shogunate and the baronial governments (han) were both alarmed by the labor shortage in agriculture, which proved one of the most acute and intractable economic problems of the latter half of the Tokugawa period.…Not only was the warrior class sensitive to any threat to land revenues or the stability of the peasant class, but they rightly sensed in trade and industry new social forces subversive of the warrior’s style of life, perhaps ultimately even of his political supremacy. Drastic steps were therefore taken to relieve or soften the effects of the labor shortage in agriculture. Government attempted to stop immigration to Edo and even to return recent immigrants to their villages; to prohibit the migration of labor from one lord’s jurisdiction to another; to prevent labor in the village from following occupations other than farming; to stimulate the birth rate, to fix wages, and much else. It was all to no avail: despite everything, labor would go where material rewards and freedom were greatest—and if that was not always off the farm, at least it was not in the fields.” See Agrarian Origins, 111-112.

⁴⁷ Fujitani, “Technologies,” 3. However, in calling attention to the kind of visibility required by modern governance we must be careful not to impute “blindness” as a general feature of all “pre-modern” states, even if this quite accurately describes the condition the Tokugawa bakufu imposed on itself in its adherence to the separation of social estates and its general policy of non-intervention in village affairs. It is true “that social scientific statecraft needs to reduce the complexity of the social world into a specific kind of abstract, calculable, and legible order for scientific intervention. However,” as Tong Lam has noted in the context of late imperial China, “evidence from the Qing suggests that the so-called premodern state was not more or less blind. To be sure, the Qing dynastic state did not produce the kind of information that would be required for modern governance. Still, it was fully capable of rendering its vast and diverse population and territory into a legible, knowable, and governable order in its own terms. It even demonstrated flexibility, sensibility, and sophistication in managing a complex empire by mastering multiple governing and enumerative systems simultaneously, something that is often conceptually and ideologically inconceivable for the modern nation-state, which emphasizes equality and uniformity. Or, put differently, if the dynastic state was indeed partially blind due to its inability to see the social world the way the modern state does, then the modern state, too, … was equally blind in its own way because of its failure to understand crucial aspects of human life that were not accessible through scientific rationality alone.” Thus, Lam argues, “the transition from the so-called “premodern” to the “modern” should not be portrayed as the emergence of a legible and governable world[,] but rather as “the shift from one form of legibility and governmental rationality to another as a result of a change in the political order.” See Tong Lam, A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900-1949 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 73.
ordered all prefectures (the order says han and ken) to compile extremely detailed reports on the areas of their respective jurisdictions, and continued to do so through the Meiji years. The data requested ranged from purely topographical information—including maps and descriptions of castle towns, villages, fields, plains, rivers, mountains, valleys, and seashores—to demographic statistics (number of households, configuration of population by gender and status background), and inventories of horses, cows, carts, natural and manmade products, and total annual productivity.\(^{48}\)

However, while such a thoroughgoing inventory of the populace’s productive and demographic characteristics was new, the value of cadastral surveys and family registers, even if frequent revision was logistically impossible, had been obvious to Japanese ruling elites for centuries.\(^{hh}\) What was truly unprecedented, then, was the governmental imperative to gather and systematize detailed information about individual bodies, especially the kind of medical knowledge that aided conscription. The need for military preparedness inspired army efforts—precocious in comparison with the plodding expansion of civilian bureaucracy—to gather these statistics. Subsequently, “the problem of draft evasion pressed the state not only to improve its ability to oversee a limited section of the male population, it also served as a major catalyst to the state's drive to more accurately objectify and hence police the entire population, young or old, men or women.”\(^{49}\)

And yet in the very act of proposing to collect information on youth associations, the 1905 survey committee was admitting to the state’s dearth of knowledge about a significant part of the rural social fabric that had just demonstrated great potential to either support or subvert national purposes. Thus, even after the almost forty years of nation-building that were put to the test in the Russo-Japanese War, the central government was still finding significant gaps in its understanding of the population over which it ruled. And it had to rely, to an important extent, on local initiative and reform-minded individuals (such as Yamamoto) to call attention to such gaps. Through this exchange, the social field(s) demarcated and presided over by the Meiji state

\(^{hh}\) The information collected by the Army Ministry would have been eminently desirable to any previous regime because a more accurate picture of the land would have expanded its tax base. Moreover, even during the seventeenth century the Tokugawa regime had been using registries to intervene in the religious composition of the populace, compelling families to enroll at Buddhist temples as a means of rooting out Christianity (the terauke system).
became visible in higher resolution, revealing various micro-textures obscured by (the army’s) early statistical efforts, which, in meticulously tallying up mobilizable resources, amounted more to an inventory than to a sophisticated sociological analysis. In other words, the categories proposed for the survey of youth associations in 1905 demonstrate how not just aggregated individual features of the social landscape—conscriptable bodies and family units—but also their patterns of coalescence were increasingly legible as resources thanks to new abstract concepts such as *seinen*.

**Conclusion**

It is important to note that the attenuation of the *wakashū* and the rise of the *seinendan* movement proceeded unevenly and with much overlap. Despite the promise that Yamamoto Takinosuke must have seen in government interest in youth associations after 1905, it took the central government ten years to issue even basic regulations governing youth associations, and another ten years for a national federation to be established (the DNRS). Thus during this period the pressure of the state’s reforms eroded some old cultural forms and social arrangements more slowly than others, whether because of geographic distance or local resistance, often leaving islands of stubbornly persistent “backwardness”: people were still complaining, as we have seen, about *wakashū* vice in the 1910s and practices such as *yobai* continued into the 1930s in some locales.

Nonetheless, this surface pressure could be, and was, accelerated where it could wedge its way into fault lines in village solidarity—already incipient in the late Edo-period thanks to more than a century of economic pressures—which split wide open in the Meiji rush towards industrial and cultural modernization. At a microscopic level, the concentration of wealth and power to local elite individuals and families rendered the village an emulsion of social contradictions that would separate as soon as a new network of power relations and a coercive apparatus presented novel
means of securing their position and resolving persistent conflicts, such as those with the wakashū and festival culture.

Of course, increased sophistication in the state’s knowledge apparatus, such as resulted from the early army and land surveys, did not necessarily translate immediately into more sophisticated modes of intervention. As discussed above, shrine mergers were a ham-fisted approach to combating localism. But such rude policies came as a natural consequence of the geopolitical urgency that motivated the uncompromising, top-down nature of Meiji period reforms generally—not to mention that after centuries of physical removal from, and non-intervention in, rural life, there was practically no institutional framework (or even memory) to support a sophisticated and subtle engagement with locales. By the time of the Russo-Japanese War, the ramrodding of change from above had become a well-exercised modality of governance.

The Meiji state’s origins in an elite revolution echoed in the almost exclusive emphasis on promoting top-down leadership and guidance in initial post-war thinking on youth associations, such as was evident in item h) of the 1905 survey categories. In other words, the problem of controlling the wakashū and seinenkai was at first conceptualized on the analogy of surgery rather than holism, piloting rather than orchestration. Soon enough, however, the supplementation of top-down guidance with individual inculcation of the drive to self-reform and management suggested itself as a more effective means of controlling youth associations. This development is reflected in the Local Improvement lectures discussed in the next chapter.
The urgency of national integration—underscored for Japanese leaders by the Qing Empire’s disastrous experience with Euro-American imperialism—required jury-rigging a serviceable modern state apparatus whose social foundation could be strengthened later. Yet even as Meiji leaders and bureaucrats introduced such grand reforms as the new administrative system, they demonstrated some awareness that eventually they would have to cement the state’s impressive, yet still skeletal, structure into place not only by means of social policy, but also by entrusting some elements of governance to local civil society. Yamagata Aritomo, the Meiji state’s first Home Minister, twice Prime Minister, and chief architect of the administrative reforms: 

recognized almost from the start that his system of local government would not alone suffice to mobilize local loyalties. In December 1889, shortly after institution of the system, he told a conference of local government officials: “What is necessary in governance is to get close to the people, to overcome the gap between high and low, and to find a way outside of laws and regulations to govern the people.” As the urgency of mobilizing local society to meet national demands increased, efforts to find ways outside of laws and regulations intensified. Many bureaucrats began to speak of finding “strong middle elements” or “middle men” or “stable core individuals” (chūken jimbutsu) who could mediate between the administrative system and local society.¹

Yamagata’s palpable desire “to get close to the people” was certainly novel, given the Tokugawa preference for non-intervention, but was still in large part wedded to the idea of governance as top-down social intervention and control. One can feel the leader’s urge to slip his hands into the openings provided by the chūken jimbutsu, as if using a laboratory glove box, to manipulate the minutiae of the social field under his purview. Thus the ideal core (chūken) individual here was an intermediary lens that could focus, rather than filter, central state authority. This mode of governance was congenital: the so-called Meiji Restoration was not a popular revolution. As noted at the end of the last chapter, the sweeping reforms required to establish a modern state (and to secure its position against foreign and domestic threats) made reliance on the imposition of change from above a habit hard to shake off, even given the incipient openness evinced by Yamagata. After
all, even after the Russo-Japanese War fifteen years later, the government remained ready and willing to adopt such blunt-instrument policies as shrine mergers. These made for a neat and tidy blueprint, which must have appealed to a bureaucratic fetish for mandalic consistency, but ultimately had mixed results, often inspiring significant popular resentment.

The institutional instinct to resort to such measures in the immediate postwar was certainly understandable, being an extrapolation from the kind of control and coercion of the populace demanded by mobilization for an extremely risky war. This reflex was further incentivized by the animosities that lurked under the surface of such ostensibly patriotic displays as hadaka-mairi. These latent antagonisms remained a threat in the postwar because the enormity of the war effort left the country in a state of exhaustion vulnerable to seditious, i.e., socialist, elements (hence the early emphasis on leadership and guidance for youth associations). Victory, moreover, far from providing a breathing space, meant that the social and financial burden placed on the populace during (and before) the war could not truly be eased, for the government now had to recoup its expenses while maintaining its drive for modernization:

The requirements of armament, new colonial possessions, and industrial expansion had rapidly inflated government spending. Central government expenditures tripled in the decade prior to the Russo-Japanese War, reaching 289 million yen in 1903, more than doubled in the course of the war and then remained at just under 600 million yen down to 1913, by which time nearly half of the government's entire budget was devoted to the army and navy, military pensions, and war debt service. Since the cost of the Russian war was over six times the ordinary revenues for 1903 extensive recourse was had to borrowing, particularly abroad. Taxes were progressively raised and lower and middle income classes bore an increasing share of the burden. There was some increase in the land tax, but the sharpest rise was in various excise taxes on such consumer commodities as textiles, kerosene, sugar, and salt. Indirect taxes rose from 96 million yen in 1903 to 152 million in 1905 and to 231 million yen in 1908. Responsibilities for public works and education were increasingly delegated to local government, causing local taxes to grow alarmingly and bringing their total to over forty per cent of national tax revenue after the turn of the century. Dominated by wealthy families, the town and village assemblies resorted to a variety of regressive taxes, the most oppressive being the household tax (kosūwari). Levied on all families, it became the most important source of local government revenue, more than doubling between 1900 and 1909.²

This downloading of costs to local government was certainly expedient (even necessary), but also corrosive to the social body that was supposed to constitute the nation on which the edifice of state rested. Clearly, the foundational cells of that body had to be strengthened.
But the socially disintegrative effects of these burdensome conditions provided ample incentive to rely on the heavy hand of central government policy (and policing) to quarantine the threat they posed. Initially, that is exactly the direction that was taken: the policy of shrine mergers, intended to bolster feelings of reverence for the nation-state, was one of the foremost examples of this kind of overbearing epidemiological strategy, which likely grew in part out of the government’s desire to make up for not having been able to coordinate local and national commemoration during the war with Russia. Ideally, concentrating devotion to the nation in single sites would form a wellspring of adrenaline that could prevent the social body from falling apart in the face of the unrelenting individual and collective exertions required to sustain capitalism and empire.

In actuality it was the equivalent of amputating a limb in hopes of curing a systemic infection. The need for local reform was perceived aright, but reliance on top-down, boilerplate policies threatened to cripple the very body that was supposed to sustain the whole enterprise. Industrialism, war, and imperialism incentivized such strategic policies as stopgap measures to address the social crises they themselves created. The solution lay in the tactic of mustering localism to the service of the nation rather than smashing it indiscriminately. In seeking “a way outside of laws and regulations to govern the people,” Yamagata implicitly opened up discursive space for this more sophisticated approach, even if it took some time for its value to be realized and for the right opportunity to come along. Social control and intervention could never be abandoned, but were

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4 Discursively, the push for local reform grew out of: “the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai (the Social Policy Association) which was formed in 1896 by a group of Tokyo University professors but which came to include “progressive” businessmen and bureaucrats as well. The thinking of its leading ideologues, Kanai En and Kuwada Kumazō, was dominated by the concerns of Japanese imperialism. Kanai, who was one of the “seven professors” (shichi hakase) agitating for war with Russia in 1903, wrote that “the two most critical responsibilities of the modern nation are foreign policy and social policy. By foreign policy I mean establishing ideal relations with the powers and achieving an imperialist policy of sending migrants overseas. Social policy basically plans conciliation of all social classes at home and thereby attempts to bring about a perfect unity of the entire nation. The highest goal of social policy is to bring classes together in mutually supporting and helping roles. ... Social policy must go together with imperialism.” See Pyle, “The Technology of Japanese Nationalism,” 54,
qualified by the realization of the need to have the people step up, both individually and collectively, of their own accord.

Youth associations came to be understood as a primary means of inculcating this ethos: yes, by direct leadership and guidance when necessary, but, crucially, also indirectly by providing a social environment along whose contours young people’s physical and mental development would channel itself. The process of negotiating that environment was to take place with as little coercion as was practical. Thus the experience and the (supposed) final product—a self or unit of selves—could be narrativized as the result of autonomous development, the environment of the youth association like a chrysalis whose instrumental formative role is not obviously inferred from the organism that emerges from its walls. The indispensability of corrective intervention was thus cast into dynamic tension with this emerging appreciation for the need to capture, not suffocate, the delicate but powerful immanent energy of self-germination. Top bureaucrats attempted to negotiate a tricky balance between these dual imperatives. Their efforts with regard to youth associations are reflected in the Local Improvement lectures to which this chapter now turns.

The first Local Improvement Conference (chihō kairyō kōshūkai) began on July 11, 1909, at Kokugakuin University in Tokyo’s Handa-cho (now a part of Chiyoda Ward) with an address by Home Minister Hirata Tōsuke. It inaugurated more than a decade of such annual meetings. Lasting for twenty days, the conference had more the character of an intensive workshop. It brought together top bureaucrats, academics, teachers, prefectural governors, and even county and village heads. Rather than the high-level organizational reforms that might typically concern elite bureaucrats, more important to note is the equal attention to the concrete structures of rural life.

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In his autobiography, Fukuzawa Yukichi related an incident that encapsulates the tension between the intervention and the need for self-activation. One day a farmer on horseback immediately dismounted when he saw Fukuzawa, even though he did not have to according to new Meiji laws. Incensed at the farmer’s ignorance of having been liberated and his reluctance to remount when ordered, Fukuzawa threatened, “Now, get back on your horse. If you don’t I’ll beat you.” The irony was apparently lost on him, but this parable well illustrates how a contradiction between freedom and coercion would one day have to be resolved in a more sophisticated manner. See The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 243-244.
Topics such as “The Consolidation and Use of Buraku Assets,” “Essentials of Administering Hygiene,” “On European Carpentry,” “Essentials of Promoting Saving,” and “An Outline of Management in Sekishi Village” are but a few examples of the range of the presentations. Even the grander-sounding presentations (such as Deputy Home Minister Ichiki Kitokurō’s “The True Meaning of Self-Governance”) are replete with anecdotes and model examples of reforms being carried out at the everyday level. As will be become clear below, the often quaint, seemingly mundane examples given in the presentations belie their larger significance: elite bureaucrats understood that if their goals for national integration were to be realized, reforms would have to bring about changes in the very texture of people’s everyday lives.

Ushio Shigenosuke: The Rehabilitation of the Buraku

In his aptly titled presentation “Self-Governance and Youth Associations” (Jichi to seinenkai), the Home Ministry official Ushio Shigenosuke captured the theme that underlay the conferences as a whole: the problem of how best to achieve the goals of local reform within the framework of the system of local authorities (i.e., the new administrative cities, towns, and villages). Despite Yamagata Aritomo’s concomitant injunction “to get close to the people,” this proved to be a stubborn problem. Politicians, bureaucrats, functionaries, and local officials did not necessarily share Yamagata’s comparatively sophisticated understanding of governance, and in posing the problem Yamagata himself would not necessarily have considered buraku loyalties and organizations as a possible solution. Accordingly, even in his 1912 presentation, Ushio could still confess, “I cannot help but feel that the things we think about in [the Home] Ministry do not fit

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*Ushio (1881-1955) would later become head of the Home Ministry’s Local Affairs Bureau, the office behind the LIM conferences, and eventually Deputy Home Minister. He became a member of the House of Peers in 1931 and served as both Education and Home Minister in the Hirata cabinet (1936-1937).*
with reality [jissai to awanu]. In other words, there is a feeling that our hands are not quite reaching the itchy spot.”

But there was a solution ensconced in the term jichi itself, which is composed of the Chinese characters for “self” and “govern.” While it was (and still is) used to refer to locally autonomous units of the administrative towns and villages, an equally valid interpretation of the word is a process of governance localized in the individual, self-managing subject. As is shown below, one can see the emergence of just such an interpretation over successive LIM conferences. Facilitating the local application of governance in successively smaller units (down to the level of the individual) was the task of the chūken jinbutsu ("nuclear" person). While this term literally refers to a person—and though local notables who interfaced with the state were, as discussed last chapter, enormously significant in the history of youth associations—it should also be understood as a highly adaptable concept that could be instituted at any level of the administration or social body to facilitate the governance thereof. After all, in terms of administrative structure, local authorities (jichitai) themselves, as successive layers of bureaucratic cells, amounted to a structural intermediaries, or nucleation points, for the state. Likewise, though at a smaller scale, youth associations had the potential to become ideal intermediary cogs in the push for national integration because of their proximity to exactly those aspects of rural life that needed reform. Ushio gave the presentations on youth associations for the first several LIM conferences (1909-1913), and reading them across the years reveals an increasing sophistication of the concepts of jichi and the intermediary organization.

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4 Though I have not been able to locate precise dates for the conferences after 1909, the transcripts of the second and third conferences were published in a single 1910 volume and thus seem to have been held in the same year. Though the conferences were held for at least fifteen years, the archive I had access to contained the transcripts only for seven of them, namely conferences 1-3 (1909-1910), 6-9 (1913-1915, 1917), and 16 (1923). The transcripts for the intervening conferences do not seem to have been published, which a search of the National Diet Library catalogue corroborated.
Ushio began his 1909 presentation by stating that he was concerned with what kind of activities youth associations were engaged in and how these should be guided by local intermediaries, who made up his audience. Acknowledging that there were many potential methods of advancing local reform and governance, he located the foundation of civil governance (minsei) in what he termed min’iku (his own neologism comprised of the characters for “the people” and “to raise, or to rear [children, etc.]”), defining it not only as education by schooling, but as “the disciplining of the people by means of all sorts of organizations.”\textsuperscript{5} This formulation reflected the influence of the tradition of “popular (plebeian) education” (tsūzoku kyōiku), which dominated the Meiji period and whose “programs attempted to inculcate patriotic sentiment and Confucian values through moral stories conveyed in the guise of entertainment, using story-tellers, films, and illustrated books written in simple language.”\textsuperscript{6}

Accordingly, much of popular education was concerned with reforming deleterious, pre-modern holdover manners and customs. This informed Ushio’s understanding of the old wakashū as being given to indolence and indecency, a collection of “young good-for-nothings,” as Nishimura Shigeki had described them thirty years earlier (see Chapter One). Nevertheless, in contrast to the condescending attitude of popular education, Ushio noted that:

\begin{quote}
not only did Ushio imply that min’iku could evolve, he also recognized in the figure of the pioneer the role of local initiative and innovation in establishing model youth associations as potent intermediary organizations. His various examples thereof made up the bulk of his talk, and were based on personal observations made during ministry-sponsored inspection tours of the countryside. He praised one association for its role in convincing “superstitious” villagers to accept Shinto shrine amalgamation, and another for organizing supplementary evening classes (yagakkai;
see last chapter) and instituting a children’s club attached to the association. He was quite taken with the effectiveness of putting elementary school children under the supervision of people they would actually listen to.

Other praiseworthy activities included collective purchasing and cultivation experiments, patrolling for drinking and gambling, setting up “informer’s boxes” so villagers could secretly report on bad behaviour, constructing war memorials, participation in parades, promoting saving (or making it mandatory for membership in the youth association), competitions to see which youth could produce the most from a plot of land, and convincing villagers to adopt more efficient farming techniques (especially in rice planting). He reserved his highest praise, however, for a county in Okinawa Prefecture, whose organization of youth associations at three successive administrative levels—complete with representative assemblies of the lower in the higher—prefigured the federation of all Japanese youth associations into a national body in 1925.

In any case, every association described by Ushio functioned as an exemplary intermediary for some aspect of local reform, and in his concluding remarks, he noted the efficiency of jichi as a means of differentially governing the diversity in the mass: “that the work of youth associations in city or village should vary according to local conditions is a matter of course; there being absolutely no need to expect uniformity in every locality, it would be best if each chose the work most appropriate to itself…I do not think there is any need for town, village, and city forcibly to become one.” Despite its seeming contradiction of the push for national integration embodied in the system of local authorities, this deference to local conditions, along with respect for the spirit of pioneering research, competition, and entrepreneurship, contained the seeds of the distillation of jichi into the call for individual people to self-manage, which became ever more insistent in the lectures after 1909.
As was often the case with the LIM conference presentations, the bulk of Ushio’s 1910 talk was again made up of examples and anecdotes. These he framed with another simple introductory question: “To what points should we devote caution when it comes to our nation’s present-day youth associations, and how should we lead them?” The framing of this question in terms leadership recalled his 1909 lecture—he was always careful to emphasize the need for guidance and supervision of the youth associations, going so far as to suggest the ideal meeting place for a youth association would be an elementary school teacher’s home—but was balanced this time by his insistence that the establishment of an association be experienced by the youth involved as a result of their own spontaneous efforts:

In recent years there has been quite a remarkable tendency, due to the increasingly vigorous promotion of youth associations, for various authorities (whether of the counties, prefectures, or even villages) to set them up one after another. Accordingly, while there certainly are associations that pioneering youth have spontaneously formed, there are many more that have been set up as the result of some external influence…Today, of the thousands of youth associations, there are many lackluster ones, ones that do not demonstrate any concrete effects as a result of their founding…Thus in the future, when setting up a youth association in an area without one, though encouragement is all well and good, I believe in the end it would provide more and better results if [local intermediaries] were to avoid being overly insistent [muri na shōrei wa hikaete] and, as much as possible, to have youth advance on their own, to wit, spontaneously [jihatsuteki ni]. Of course, by leaving it entirely to the youth it would be impossible to know when this will happen, so some encouragement is needed; however, how to lead them out is an extraordinarily difficult thing. Whatever the locale, I feel it is best to take situational peculiarities into consideration and, as much as possible, to have youth advance on the basis of a true feeling of necessity [narabeku makoto ni hitsuyō wo kanjite seinen kara susunde karu to iu fu ni shite itadakita].

As this passage illustrates, Ushio’s 1909 formulation of min’iku as organizational methods of disciplining a population underwent quite a shift between the first and second conferences. Jordan Sand notes a similar transition in educational policy, during and after World War I, away from the “condescending tradition of ‘popular education’” (mentioned above), and towards “social education” (shakai kyōiku, a term still in use today):

Norisugi Kaju, one of the leading ideologues of the new social education, envisioned a broader relationship between the state and the masses, and a style of education that would foster a nation of individuals with "little governments in their hearts," as he put it, rather than merely dictating the law. Norisugi entered the ministry [of education] in 1913, and became section chief in charge of popular education (soon changed to social education) in 1919. The ministry began publication of a periodical dealing with morality and social welfare titled Society and Moral Susasion (Shakai to kyoka) in 1920 and issued a directive to regional offices in the same year ordering the establishment of one post in each region for a “secretary of social education.”
In this connection, Sand extensively discusses the Home Ministry’s Movement to Foster the Nation’s Strength (Minryoku kan’yō) and the Everyday Life Reform League (Seikatsu kaizen dōmeikai), whose reform efforts, though remarkably similar in spirit and practice to those of the Local Improvement Movement, devoted most of their attention to urban spaces, only moving into the countryside in the 1920s.¹³

As is clear from LIM literature, however, reforms targeting everyday life and practices in rural areas were already in motion well before WWI.² Top bureaucrats admitted the unique role of the city in “civilization and enlightenment,” but insisted on the importance of the rural:

In 1919, Tokonami Takejirō, Chief of the Home Ministry's Local Affairs Bureau, recalling the reasons for undertaking the Local Improvement Movement, wrote that “the city (tokai) is the first to feel the various social stimuli: it is the first to receive both the blessings and the baneful influences of civilization. In contrast, the countryside (chihō) is slow to receive these influences; and it has the function of slowly absorbing them and shaping them to our national temperament. Promotion of a strong, and spartan national spirit depends above all on the countryside.” Tokonami stressed too that the countryside was particularly important in Japan because the rural-urban demographic ratio had not altered to the degree it had in Western societies. No doubt one of the important reasons bureaucrats devoted their attention to the towns and villages was because that was where four-fifths of the population lived in 1900. The best prophylactic for social tensions, they believed, was a deliberate program to strengthen the cohesion of local communities where the great majority of people lived.¹

To be sure, officials sought to strengthen this cohesion on the basis of the new administrative divisions, but methods such as shrine mergers were proving inadequate or even counter-productive. Thus it should come as no surprise that in his 1910 talk (precisely when doubts were starting to emerge about shrine mergers) Ushio presented a much more nuanced vision of the system of local authorities, one that softened the opposition between the administrative unit (chōson) and the buraku.⁵ He did this by calling attention to an important contradiction in the

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¹ This is important to note, given the emphasis on the urban at the expense of the rural in recent scholarship on Japanese youth and social reform movements. For example, see Ambaras, Bad Youth and Mark A. Jones, Children as Treasures: Childhood and the Middle Class in Early Twentieth Century Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010).
² Pyle, Technology,” 58. The educator Sawayanagi Masatarō (1865-1927) expressed similar themes at the 1909 LIM conference in a presentation entitled “City and Country.” He was nominated to the House of Peers later that year and soon became president of Tōhoku and Kyoto Imperial Universities.
³ Both Yanagita Kunio and Minakata Kumagusu became vocal opponents of mergers in 1911, though differing in the details of their arguments: Yanagita characteristically focused on the human element, while Minakata’s argument emphasized the ecological role of shrine grounds. “The natural community [both] promoted is local, physical and fecund in contrast to the apotheosized community of the ancestral dead abstracted to the national level” (We should note, however, that Yanagita’s admiration for the local did not prevent his ideas [on the wakashū’s role in marriage,
Home Ministry’s message to rural locales: “the Ministry’s grand policy is based on the administrative village [chōson hon’i de atte] and yet when it comes to the issue of youth associations, it elevates buraku-based associations [through commendations and citations as model examples], regardless of the repeated solicitations not to acknowledge the buraku.” Ushio noted that buraku-based youth associations tended to be the most motivated and therefore produced the best results, and cautioned his audience that it was not necessarily true that buraku resentment (buraku no hankan) had to be prevented by crushing local attachments and unifying the chōson at all costs.

To justify his repudiation of the generally presumed need for the utter effacement of the buraku, Ushio simply held up the tremendous difficulty of expecting the chōson to become the basis of youth associations, given that the new administrative divisions clumped together youth who did not even know each other’s faces, let alone exchange words. Rather, he positioned the basis for a strong organization precisely in the buraku-style intimacy that the chōson lacked. In any case, he continued, the patchwork of youth associations was gradually becoming more systematized with the emergence of prefectural, county, and village associations above the buraku, so it would be better to bunch these emerging structural “sinews” (suji) together and “bind them to etc.] from supporting the nation in different ways, as seen in Chapter One’s discussion of ethnography and the DNRS). See Julia Adeney Thomas, “Naturalizing Nationhood: Ideology and Practice in Early Twentieth-Century Japan” in Sharon A. Minichiello, ed., Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930 (Honolulu: University Of Hawai‘i Press, 1998), 122.

Additionally, the Diet representative who inveighed against the wisdom of shrine mergers in 1912 (see Chapter Two) actually had first raised the issue in 1910. Just one month after this initial foray, Home Minister Hirata Tōsuke, who, as noted above, introduced the 1909 LIM lectures, “instructed an assembly of regional officials to correct certain excesses of the merger program and proceed with greater care.” Shrines were not to be merged just because they could not raise stipulated funds, or when merging would require people to travel prohibitively long distances, and shrine groves were not to be harmed destruction . “One notes a new willingness to abandon bureaucratic strong-arm methods for a more flexible consideration of individual circumstances and particular cases.” In what was probably part of the causal background to Hirata’s promulgation, Mie, the poster-prefecture for shrine mergers, had begun to encounter “various problems regarding mergers” around 1910. See Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers, 90-91.

To further underline the remarkable discursive shift (from top-down imposition/intervention to accommodation of localism ) that took place during this short span of time, in 1909 the Home Ministry had issued a statement explaining the recent transfer of buraku common lands to the administrative units (see Chapter Two): “The first object…is to check the evil custom of independent hamlet [buraku] authority and place the cities, towns and villages, which are coming to serve as the units of the nation, on a firmer footing” (Fridell, ibid., 50-51; original emphasis). Despite the this shift, however, the dissonance between “pro-” and anti-localist positions persisted for some time: in 1918 it was still necessary for Home Minister Mizuno Rentarō to reiterate Hirata’s 1910 admonishments on shrine mergers, urging regional officials to conduct them “in such a way as to cause no offense to the people” (ironically, Mizuno had headed the Ministry’s Bureau of Shrines in the early years of the merger movement and extolled its theoretical benefits); yet also in 1918, his successor at the Bureau was still acclaiming the movement’s original purposes (see Chapter Two; on Mizuno, see Fridell, ibid., 53-54 and 91-92).
a single point” (hitotsu no ten ni shibari-tsukeru). Leaving the buraku youth associations in their fragmentary state might well lead to “deleterious effects” (heigai), but so would destroying the buraku in “complete contradiction to local circumstances” (tochi no jijō ni mattaku sogo shita) and the strength of face-to-face affective ties. Better to channel these pre-existing bonds into the basic unit of the system of local authorities, the chōson, rather than to dogmatically insist on the destruction of anything to do with the buraku. In his 1912 lecture, his last on record, Ushio would distill the importance of such an immediate connection between youth associations and their specific local conditions into a pithy statement that embodied the imperative of Yamagata Aritomo’s original injunction to get close to the people: “If they do not maintain connection with the local, the rural youth association will have no value.”

While Ushio’s three talks exhibit a growing sensitivity to local conditions (and a concomitant insistence that youth associations should advance of their own accord), he never dispensed with the need for proper leadership and guidance (shidō, kantoku, kanri). In 1910, when he spoke most extensively on the issue of spontaneity (jihatsu), he devoted equal attention to the “human centre” of youth associations (jinteki no chūshin), referring to local authority figures or volunteers that took youth associations under their wings. Even if an association should become capable of self-governance, “the need for guidance and supervision would not end.” As is evident, however, Ushio was working to resolve the tension between the two imperatives of spontaneous self-governance (efficient and adaptable) and top-down guidance (necessary for national integration). In 1910 he repeated his prior suggestion that youth associations would do well to make a school or a teacher’s home their meeting place, but this time with the caveat that, whatever the actual location, the “material centre” (butteki no chūshin) of an association must be a

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8 This talk is contained in the collected transcripts of the sixth LIM conference (1913). Due to an accident with the stenographer, the talk Ushio gave for the 1913 conference was not transcribed, and in its place the publishers put Ushio’s talk at the fifth conference (presumably 1912). It is fortunate that they did so, since the collected transcripts for 1912 are not available.
place where youth could “reveal their inner beings [kantan wo hireki shite], eat, drink, fool around, a place to gather and get close to one another.” Further to his attempts at a resolution, in 1912, even as he stressed the need for caution in “personnel selection” (jinsen), his concept of the “human centre” (as an external authority figure) had shifted to “principal figures” (omodatsu mono) for youth associations, which now included executives from within the ranks of the youth themselves.

Indeed, Ushio insisted that it was necessary to think of every person in the village as being a mentor for the youth association. Practically in the same breath, he then held up the elementary school teacher as the figure most adequate to that task. To justify his position, he pointed to the fact that teachers would have actually taught many members of the youth associations, and ascribed to teachers the power to “prevent youth from getting involved in various rural movements.” The relationship between the school teacher and the youth association was thus analogous to that which would ideally obtain between the buraku and the larger administrative system: a balance between prescriptive authority and the magnetism of the affective bonds created through face-to-face contact. Ushio recapitulated the tension between jichi and kantoku, evident even in the finer points of his talk, as he qualified this invocation of external authority by immediately stressing that local youth associations (chihō no seinendantai), to have any purpose at all, would have to be treated as such: they were “simultaneously local organizations and youth associations.” In this formulation, he again sought to negotiate a balance between locally grounded spontaneity and the requirements of the nation. Being “local” entailed primarily a certain modesty of purpose with regard to local reform. Choosing one or two projects urgent for the locale and gradually making advances thereby would be sufficient. This call for modesty had a two-fold implication. On the one hand, it undoubtedly grew out of Ushio’s concern that “youth advance on the basis of a true feeling of necessity” (described above) rather than being compelled to form
associations, many of whose charters enshrined “exorbitantly grand” (*toppyōshi mo nai erai*) projects and enterprises that were simply not feasible (*jikkou ga dekiru mono de nai*). On the other, there existed the very real danger of youth associations’ getting involved in politics. To make his case for the necessity of preventing the associations from “running wild” (*kyōhon*) during upcoming local elections, Ushio noted that there had been several instances where the police had to be called in to subdue rural youth that had mobilized to call for the resignation of village heads.

True to form, however, Ushio juxtaposed the need to contain any such immodest ambitions with the need to let youth associations be true to their youthful nature (*seinen rashiku yarashite itadakitai*). He reiterated the need to contain local spontaneity without snuffing out its energies, noting that some commentators had observed that so-called “model youth” (*mohan seinen*) not yet twenty had become as subdued (*otonashiku natte iru*) as people in their forties or fifties. Taking up prematurely aged youth as a metaphor for the danger of too much guidance and control, Ushio exhorted his listeners not to “interfere [*kanshō*] too much in the youth associations. If everything they are involved in is done with the mentality of an aged person, then that is too much intervention. In the end, this will result in their decay and decline. It would be for the best if you could somehow pull them along without meddling too much.”

Antithetical both to decrepit quiescence and to undisciplined energy, the “spirit of the age” (*jisei*) a ubiquitous trope referring to the global race for empire and economic development, demanded a lively and energetic youth capable of disciplined self-mobilization and self-management. As the essence of *jichi*, these qualities were also at the centre of *dōtoku* (typically rendered in English as “morals”), insofar as both terms implied the capacity to internalize a larger principle as the basis for one’s behaviour and action in the world. This shared ground between the two concepts allowed Ushio to compare

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1 This concept had many different formulations, including *shizen no ikioi, hitsuzen no ikioi, shizen no säsei, sekai no taisei, jisei no yökū*, etc.
Japan and the West in terms of the relative energy (his defining characteristic for youth [seinen]), of their dōtoku:

Overseas, the people generally evince vigour in their self-activation [dōtoku wa kakki wo obite iru] not only in times of crisis for the state, but even during times of peace and normality. However, I find that Japanese citizens’ self-mobilization in peace time is rather passive and half-hearted [tokaku ni shōkyoku de aru]. When there is a war or some other matter of national importance they give forth extraordinary zeal, but when things return to normal it seems that such self-mobilization somehow slackens and their notion of everyday mobilization [heiji no dōtoku ni kan suru kannen] is not well-defined.25

Essentially, Ushio was calling for the generalization of a war-time mentality into the realm of everyday life. When it came to youth associations, this was a problem of how to capture, sustain, and build on the tremendous individual and social energy that youth demonstrated during the Russo-Japanese War. The primary obstacle to this end was the difficulty of balancing self-governance and guidance, but Ushio was not able to overcome it in his extant talks. He ultimately resorted to a negative injunction, calling for youth associations to be guided “without getting carried away with intervention, but also without abandoning them to their own devices.”26 The problem would be taken up again at the 1914 Local Improvement Conference.

Tago Ichimin: The Magic of Self-Governance

In 1914, Tago Ichimin (1881-1963) was a high-level bureaucrat in the Home Ministry.1 Though he gave the presentation on youth associations only once, he remained active in social reform into the 1920s, becoming a member of the Everyday Life Reform League and even publishing in women’s magazines.27 Of all the conference presenters on youth associations, Tago provided the most visionary portrayal of the potential of spontaneous self-governance. Of course, like Ushio, Tago circumscribed spontaneity within certain limits, which he established by way of an introductory observation and question: “Is it not the case that the mentors [shidōsha] of these [youth] associations have neglected the issue of what kind of youth they must raise for young people of the

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1 Tago went on to become head of the Home Ministry’s Social Affairs Bureau (shakai kyoku) in 1922, before later serving as the governor of Mie Prefecture. Beginning in 1928, he was elected to the Diet nine times, becoming speaker of the lower house in 1941.
Greater Japanese Empire to rise to the occasion? ... How are we to induce Japan’s youth, whom we currently research, to step up of their own accord?”

The need for external stimulus in the form of guidance was clear, but Tago’s main interest lay in “what kind of youth,” that is, in the realm of character and thought (seinen no kifū/shisō). At first glance, this concern would seem to be no different from the elite’s long-established moralizing on the people’s unenlightened manners and customs, but Tago quickly distanced himself from this position. He noted that the problems of what knowledge and virtues were most important for youth today, of what Japan lacked in comparison with other nations, and of fostering loyal and patriotic thought (chūkun aikoku no shisō)—had been done to death (kenkyū shi-tsukusareta mondai).

Of foremost importance, however, was the question of how to instill knowledge and virtue. Yet youth association leaders lacked the discernment and confidence to show, concretely and compellingly, how it was through the associations that the weak points of Japanese youth would have to be addressed. To get at the “how,” Tago set aside for the moment the thoroughly investigated nature and function of the connection between youth associations and local authorities, and focused on problems of character, thought, and spirit. Essentially, if these could be set upon a new foundation, everything would fall into place through the magic of independent self-management.

The character flaw most urgently in need of reform was Japanese youth’s lack of the “autonomous, self-made spirit” (jishu jiritsu seishin) and “self-governance thought” (jichi shisō). Actually, it was less a simple lack than the “pervasion of every corner of Japan” (nihon no sumizumi made biman shite iru) by what he termed “dependency” (sugaritsuki-shugi, literally “cling-ism”), a kind of thinking whose roots Tago saw in Japan’s family system (kazoku seido) and the custom of neighbourly mutual aid (rinpo aitasukuru fū). While he acknowledged that mutual

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NCK, Dainanakai, 312. This sentence was quite difficult to render into readable English, but I believe I have been faithful to its intent, if not its literal wording. For reference, I give the original here: gutaiteki ni shikamo setsujitsu na taido wo motte, aru toku ga nihon no seinen ni kakete iru kara, kono ten wo seinenkai ga shōrei shite ikanakereba naranu to iu kenshiki aru shinnen ga seinen wo shidō suru hito ni kakete iru.
aid could be a laudable custom (*bifū*) and had to be respected as such, he insisted that it could have harmful effects that would need to be eliminated (*jokyo*). These he saw in youth associations’ (even the model ones’) dependence on soliciting donations (*kifukin*) from their communities for various projects. The system of local authorities itself amounted to a chain of dependence, with the village “latching on to” (*yorisugaru*) to the county, the county onto the prefecture, and the prefecture onto the national treasury. In fact, his first example of this dependency was *furigana*, the phonetic readings printed above Chinese characters in school readers to help children learn to read. “Every corner” was thus anything but an exaggeration for Tago. Though it seems absurd that an elite bureaucrat should obsess over the smallest details of everyday life, this compulsion speaks to the depth of the reformist vision. Ushio’s tales of youthful mischief, dreadfully scandalous folk songs, and governance-by-candy, so quaint to read today, belie the state’s growing realization, evidenced in the LIM lectures, that the success of any project of national integration turned on getting as close as possible to the people, thus extending Yamagata Aritomo’s original insight down to the level of the buraku and on into the fundamental unit of society: the individual subject.

While the articulation of self-sovereignty could be dismissed as a cynical attempt to conceal the state’s hegemonic ambitions, the “argument of obvious duplicity,” well-worn in studies of Japan’s imperial ideologies, belies real historical changes. That Tago was not alone in articulating the need for self-management is shown by his working definition of *jichi*. He borrowed it from the second lecture on the 1914 conference’s program, which distilled the concept of self-governance into a pithy formula equally applicable to the whole system of local authorities

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1 In his 1909 talk, Ushio recounted a story of a New York preacher and his wife who called the police when gangs of hooligans were vandalizing their church, but found they would every time “scurry away like baby spiders,” only to return when the police left. In a stroke of entrepreneurial genius, and a perfect example of local initiative (which is probably why Ushio chose the story), they decided next time to invite the youths inside for refreshments. Though wary at first, some of the bigger ones eventually went inside. The others saw that their fellows came to no harm, and soon followed. The vandalism stopped, and after getting them used to this treatment over a period of time, the preacher was eventually able to speak to them of religion, schooling, etc.
or to an individual: “doing one’s job with one’s own power” (*jibun no shigoto wo jibun no chikara de yaru*). This was supposed to be the essential spirit of the system of local authorities, and yet the citizens, residents, and officials supposed to be constituting that system all had the dependency mentality (*mina sugaritsuki no shugi no atama de aru*).

To achieve fundamental change, one would have to replacedependency thinking with an ethos of independent self-management. Tago saw industry and frugality (*kinken*) as the most suitable means to do so. Practically speaking, this meant youth associations should be encouraged to give up solicitation, instead raising funds through useful work. But what is more interesting here is how Tago called for a shift in how values themselves were valued (much like Ushio had done implicitly for *dōtoku*). Industry and frugality had long been held in high esteem, but Tago put aside the benefits they had in and of themselves (whether spiritual or physical) to call attention to their potential as a method:

To construct the foundation of each individual’s independent self-management and to continually deepen that foundation in the self [*kaku kojin no dokuritsu jiei wo kizukiage sono onore ni kizukiaigerareta kontei wo masumasu fukarashimete iku ichishudan*]. Hard work increases production, and if one increases production, not only does that create a scaffold on which to raise oneself up [*jibun no tatte iku ashiba*], it continually strengthens that scaffold. The same is true for frugality. One could understand it for its own benefits, but it is actually the way to strengthen the foundation of independence. Interpreted in this manner, to strive for industry and frugality in the youth associations is to foster the autonomous, self-made spirit [*seinenkai ni oite kinken wo tsutomeru to iu mono wa tsumari jishu ji ritu wo yashinau tame de aru*].

Tago qualified this statement by cautioning that independent self-management could not be a goal in itself, but had to operate within the bounds of national purpose. Still, the importance and efficiency of spontaneity that Ushio had tried to articulate in his lectures from 1909-1913 actually found a clearer expression through Tago.

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6 NCK, *Dainanakai*, 315. The second lecture, “The True Spirit of Rural Self-Governance,” was given by Kobashi Ichita (1870-1939), then head of the Home Ministry’s Local Affairs Bureau, and later Deputy Home Minister (1918), Education Minister (1929), and Mayor of Tokyo (1937).
7 See NCK, *Dainanakai*, 334-335. Tago also spoke of the need to let the market decide which kind of project an association should apply itself to (*hairo ni yotte nogyō, kōgyō, shōgyō to iu koto ga kimaranakereba naranu*).
As Tago saw it, if the autonomous, self-made spirit could attain substance in the social fabric, then the indolence (yūda) and extravagance (shashi) that resulted from dependency thinking, and which could be reinforced through the old customs of mutual aid, would be swept away (issō sareru). There would be no way (dekinai hazu) for youth to wallow in these vices, but rather a built in check against being carried away by them (nagareru to iu koto mo mizukara dekinaï). Precisely because the subject was managing itself, the tendency to fall by the wayside into extravagance—almost certainly doing double-duty here, given Tago’s later comments, as a euphemism for involvement in political movements—“would disappear without a trace all by itself” (mizukara sono ato wo tatsu koto to naru). His final remarks on this subject were as concise a statement as one could make of a totalizing vision for self-governance: “People speak of the reform of customs and manners, but this too will come about without having to call for it. When the self rules its own actions, there is no need for external guidance. This will be the result of fostering the autonomous, self-made spirit.”

Gotō Fumio: The Power of Explication

While Tago evocatively articulated the promise of that spirit in its purest form, Gotō Fumio, who presented in 1915 and 1916, brought such exuberant theorizing back down to earth by reiterating the importance of external guidance and by grounding the pursuit of the ideal of independent self-management in what he considered organizationally and pedagogically feasible for youth associations. He also, especially in the latter lecture, made certain to reassert the importance of loyalty, filial piety, and patriotism, which Tago had by no means questioned, but certainly failed to

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* Gotō Fumio (1884-1980) was a only a secretary in the Home Ministry when he gave the LIM lectures, but he went on to have an illustrious career in government and the seinendan movement. He became head of the Home Ministry’s Security Bureau in 1922, then Director of General Affairs in the Government-General of Taiwan in 1924 (no relation to the famous Gotō Shinpei), and was appointed to the House of Peers in 1930; he was chosen as the third director of the DNRS in 1929, serving until 1934, when he resigned to become Home Minister. Apparently, Gotō was “so vigorous and sport-minded” as director “that he made it a rule to participate in the annual [staff] athletic meet…Sometimes he won the 100 metre dash.” See Kumagai, “The Japan Young Men’s Associations,” 29-30.
emphasize, taken as he was with the elegance of the theory of self-management. This did not mean, however, that Gotō did not see great promise in what he liked to call dokuritsu jiei and the capacity of youth associations to foster it: he concluded in 1915 that seinendan were a superlative means to “arouse good tendencies” in order to “do away with the evils that infest society [shakai ni minagitte iru heigai].” Accordingly, in 1916, he averred that the guidance of seinendan would have an “extraordinary influence on the future development of our nation-state” and “preserving the expansion of [its] momentum [kokuun shinten wo hoji].” Gotō’s two lectures are important because in them we can see the seeds of later DNRS thinking much more explicitly than in previous ones. Moreover, he couched his position in a highly schematic understanding of the psychological and developmental characteristics of youth in general, which reflected larger intellectual trends. Finally, together his lectures aptly demonstrate the devilishly persistent tension between the dual imperatives of self-management and intervention.

For the sake of thematic continuity, let us begin with Gotō’s understanding of self-management, in which Tago had seen an almost magically powerful potential. In line his predecessors’ views on the importance of grassroots development, Gotō argued that leaders had to make seinendan, within the limits of local circumstances, “as autonomous [jishuteki] as possible” and “refrain from applying external coercion” (gaikai no appaku kyōsei… wo sezu shite), such that the associations “execute their activities, whatever these may be, through the power of spontaneity and as their own plan” (seinen dantai jihatsu no chikara, jibun no keikaku to shite nanigoto mo sono shigoto wo jikkō shite iku). Accordingly, allowances had to be made for special conditions that might affect what was feasible to accomplish in a given locale. Just as Ushio and Tago took a kinder view of buraku loyalties (even if for pragmatic reasons), Gotō was willing to subordinate congruency between a seinendan and its administrative unit to a higher goal.

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*Gotō’s understanding of seinen will be mentioned as necessary here, but the subject is taken up in detail in the next chapter.*
So long as a youth association was serving its true purpose—according to Gotō, this was to imbue youth with the wherewithal, broadly conceived, to lead a *dokuritsu jiei* life (more on this below)—then conformity and harmony with the *chōson* was not an overriding priority. The territorial basis for an association did not matter, even if it were half a *buraku*. Further, just because there already existed a *chōson*-level association did not mean that there was no need to set up others. The former could be more ceremonial, with most practical educational activities left to smaller branches. Amalgamation was all well and good, but “where it was more convenient to achieve the organization’s purpose” in multiple smaller units, “there was no need to forcibly create a youth association using the units of city, town, and village.” For Gotō, the cardinal sin was to force a “spiritless, mere shell” (*tamashi no nai, keigai dake*) of a *seinendan* into existence.

Gotō could actually give more concrete examples of flexibility that his predecessors. While, in keeping with the spirit of independence, funding for a *seinendan* ideally came from members’ dues and activities, where required (and local resources permitted), taking public money was nothing to be ashamed of (*hazuru koto wa nai*). After all, *seinendan* provided a public good in supplementary education. Again, because of this higher purpose, he was similarly flexible on the issue of age limits. While people in their forties or fifties obviously did not belong in a youth association (as they sometimes did with *wakashū*), in Gotō’s estimation membership should not be limited by a standard cut-off age, but to whatever “age range in which supplementary self-cultivation was deemed necessary” (*hoshūteki na shūyō wo histuyō to suru nenrei*; i.e., people who had not yet achieved a solid measure of independent self-management). Thus where established local precedent admitted members of a relatively advanced age (as might well be the case for a renamed *wakashū*), there was no need to boot them out; and where those beyond a certain age became support members, they were not simply to be excluded (*jogai shite shimau no de wa nai*) from the purview of the association’s educational goals.
With regard to leadership, Gotō unsurprisingly suggested that a person somewhat older than the membership would be preferable, an elementary school principal (suggested in previous LIM lectures) being a generally safe choice. This was not to be construed as an iron-clad rule, however. If there were a more qualified person (a priest, policeman, reservist, etc.), then meritocracy should be allowed to take its course. Moreover, cooperative or distributed supervision among several leader figures could prove most appropriate, particularly in larger administrative units. Gotō would have disapproved if a dogmatic fixation on having a principal lead the association somehow led to an unwarranted or unnatural merger. Local adaptation and patience, not forced uniformity and haste, was to be the guiding principle for establishing, running, expanding, or reforming a youth association.

The activities Gotō proposed as a means of cultivating *dokuritsu jiei* ranged from unassumingly mundane to ambitiously complex, but all provided the opportunity for young people to practice management. Above all, they were to be attempted only if a particular association had the wherewithal to do so. On the simpler end of the spectrum, an association might try its hand at keeping chickens and pigs or perhaps hire an itinerant instructor (*junkai kyōshì*) to teach members about local products. Gotō held that the reason “local government in Japan does not develop is that Japanese still do not receive enough training [*kun’iku*] as public citizens [*kōmin*].” Thus, in support of this loftier purpose, a youth association could provide opportunities for civic education (*kōmin kyōiku*) by modelling the regulation of its internal affairs on the practices of the local administrative unit. For instance, members could hold elections for leadership positions (i.e., treasurer, etc., not the adult supervisor of the group) or adopt parliamentary procedures for group
decisions, thus acquiring not only exposure to “civic virtue” (kōtoku), but also practical training in the physical act of, and discipline required for, casting votes and forming assemblies.4

Apparently, this training was deeply necessary in the economic sphere (kasei kyōiku) as well. Taking note of foreign observers’ “criticism that Japanese people do not have a head for calculation” (nihonjin wa keisan no zunō ga taranu to iū yō na hihyō), Gotō held that in terms of properly “organizing and managing a household” (ikka wo seiri shite iku) the rural populace was “almost invariably naïve” (hotondo hidasanteki):

The practice of making a good and proper plan for household finances (chanto-shita kakei no keikaku), with income measured, expenses in order, and some cushion (ichibu no yoyu) set aside, is extremely uncommon (kiwamete sukunai). People in the know might be doing it, but if one goes to a rural agricultural household there will be almost no calculations for annual management. Just taking what comes in and spending whatever is necessary by mere habit (shūkanteki dake). Neither are there any account books to make expenses clear. Sometimes they end up suffering in debt without even knowing it. This constitutes an extraordinary defect in the economic power of Japan’s national body (nihon kokumin no keizair yoku no hijō na kekken). In the future… people will have be much more numerate and calculating than those of today (ima no kokumin yori zutto dasanteki de, keisūteki de nakereba naranu). It would be appropriate to provide this education by means of the power of youth associations.43

As supposed proof of Japanese people’s general incompetence in these matters, Gotō pointed to the deplorable (imu beki) track-record of chōson financial administration, which, he alleged, was not just the result of poor performance, but sometimes embezzlement (ōryō) and profligate spending (hishō). But one would not see any improvement in this state of affairs though prefectural and county officials’ berating chōson financial officers during periodic inspections. Rather, the people of towns and villages themselves would have to attain some proficiency with accounts (kaikei jimu ni akarui). In a remarkable statement for one who could be quite conservative, Gotō averred that “local citizens must be made capable of keeping local officials in line” (chōsonmin ga chōson riin wo kantoku suru koto ga dekiru yō ni shinakereba naranu).44 Hence his advancement of the seinendan as a potential vehicle for this end and exhortation that they manage their own financial

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4 Gotō, Daihachikai 7-8 and 20. Gotō was careful to distinguish “getting [a seinendan’s members] used to the general operation of constitutional politics” (ippan no rikken seiji no un’yō ni nareshimaru) from actual politics, especially in his 1916 lecture: “political activities…are to be engaged in after becoming an independent self-manager,” which the members of a seinendan, by definition, were not (seijiteki katsudō wo suru to iū kotogara wa [kono kyōiku wo owatte karaf dokuritsu jiei no hito to nate ato ni su beki; see Gotō, Daikyūkai, 26).
affairs. With such a foundation they might even try forming small credit association to drill, essentially, members in the rituals and disciplines of lending, borrowing and repaying. Further, passing the duty of treasurer among their members would strengthen the group’s sense of organizational identity and common responsibility while giving individual members the chance to practice the basic skills of household economics. Putting accounts in order could even be made a competition (kyōsō) among, externally, nearby youth associations or, internally, those members who cycled through as treasurers, etc.45

Gotō framed his suggestions for, and understanding of, the seinendan within a schematic theory of pedagogy and division of institutional labour in education, in which respects he went beyond previous LIM lecturers “Broadly,” he said, “by ‘education’ we may refer to all things that exercise influence on the developmental progress of human life [jinsei no hattasu shinpo].” Accordingly, there was both conscious and unconscious education (ishikiteki/muishikiteki na kyōiku). Gotō understood the latter, which he sloganized as “fuiku”, to be the sum total of the influence of external and internal environmental influences—atmosphere (kūki), inborn traits/nature (kifū, tennen), human affairs (jinji).6 He divided the former into cultivation through others (ta-iku) and cultivation by the self (ji-iku). Ta-iku occurred in the presence of a strong guide [shidōsha] who either leads or inculcates knowledge [chishiki wo tsugikomi]; this, Gotō observed, was what “education” brought to mind for most people, namely, schooling. By contrast, ji-iku

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45 Gotō, Daihachiki 12.
6 Gotō’s neologism “fuiku” was aptly composed, for the character ふ ("wind") obviously connotes environmental influence, but is also found in other words in Japanese (and Chinese) that denote traits or natural character (individual or collective): for example, おじじ/isu (manners, customs), ふき (public morals) and ふじ (disposition, temperament). However, Gotō may not have been aware of the resemblance of his concept of ふiku to ancient ideas about sickness, health, and inborn traits, which is why the character ふ is used in these terms to begin with. As Shigehisa Kuriyama notes in The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine (New York: Zone Books, 1999), in China (and ancient Greece until sometime after Hippocrates) "[w]inds sculpted the shape and possibilities of the body, molded desires and dispositions, infused a person’s entire being. People who live in districts exposed to northerly winds, [a Chinese treatise reports.] are ‘sturdy and lean, tend to constipation […] good appetites […] fierce [characters] rather than tame.’ By contrast, those living in areas exposed to winds from the quarter between north-east and south-east, ‘have loud and clear voices, and…are of better temperament and intelligence than those exposed to the north.’ Plato likewise cites diversity of winds as a major reason ‘why some places produce better men and others worse,’ and why different laws have to be crafted for each locality” (235; this aspect of Plato’s thought is interesting to consider in relation to Carl Schmitt’s preference for the word nomos [usually “law”, but Schmitt relates it to the role of land appropriation and division in founding communities] in a key passage of the Odyssey, which he presented in The Nomos of the Earth). Japanese dictionaries offer 質 おじじ and 矢田 (disposition, nature) as synonyms for ふじ, which Gotō included under ふiku; ふじ crystallizes the ancient association between wind and character in, being composed of the ideograms “breath/vital force/chi” and “wind”. As Kuriyama notes, in Han China two characters were frequently interchangeable, and in classical Greek pneuma referred to breath, wind, soul.
meant to “exercise knowledge by oneself, to reflect on oneself, and to fix oneself,” to “nurture oneself of one’s own accord though the exercise of individual will,” and to “apply oneself to progressive development.” This kind of learning was life-long, never to be neglected, whether one was a student or already leading an independent life, or somewhere in between (shinuru made jinsei to iū no wa gakumon de aru).

Crucially, self-cultivation could be accomplished individually or in a group, which was why Gotō could define youth associations as “educational organizations for self-mastery” (jishūteki no kyōiku dantai). His explication of, and emphasis on, the group dynamic of self-cultivation—in seeming contradiction to the language of individual self (jibun, jiko, mizukara) he used to define ji-iku—was what set him apart from other LIM lecturers. But (before delving into this point), in terms of his general outlook, it informed his appreciation for diverse pedagogical methods and his progressively pragmatic outlook on their role in Japan’s educational system. For instance, Gotō had a keen appreciation for the importance of instruction grounded in practice rather than lectures based on books, which connected directly with his thinking on youth associations. He held that “institutional education, as an organization of rules and regulations, cannot sufficiently achieve its objectives” and, therefore, “youth associations had the responsibility to compensate for this defect” through the ji-iku approach normal schools could not provide.

Thus Gotō called on his audience to see that supplementary education (hoshū kyōiku) live up to its name, a true supplement, an essential service, not just an optional addition that was often meant, as we saw in the previous chapter, more to keep unruly rural youths off the streets. He admitted that it was already generally understood that supplementary education existed to bridge

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1 Gotō, Daihachikai, 12. Two related, but crucially different words are pronounced “jisshū” in Japanese. They both can mean self-study, but the more common, in which shū is written with the character for “learn” (naru), refers to the kind of self-study school children might be told to do when a teacher has to leave the classroom. The character Gotō used is read “osameru”, which can mean to acquire a skill (tenth entry in the Nihon kokugo daijiten), but whose primary meaning is to “reform oneself in deeds, attitude, heart, etc.” Osameru itself can also be written with the character meaning “govern” (the chi in jichi). Though there are other meanings for osameru, the above dictionary goes so far as to treat the use of these two characters in particular under a single entry.
the gap between “school life and real life” (gakkō no seikatsu to jissai no seikatsu). However, just as most people thought of education as inculcation, according to Gotō, so they attributed an “extremely narrow” (hanahada semai) meaning to supplementary education as the mere provision of school review or simple, practical skills for business or industry (jitsugyō). For Gotō, these could not be ends in themselves. The purpose of youth associations did indeed lie in supplementary education, but what was really being supplemented was not a lack of practical skills and knowledge: that education is supplementary which, “by means of business and industry, provides practical, appropriately targeted education in every capacity required to lead an independent life of self-management as a local public citizen.”

It is important to note, however, that while Gotō’s discourse of independent self-management emphasized holistic individual metamorphosis (and the consequent pedagogical differences between supplementary education and normal schooling), his vision for the seinendan was formulated as a solution to a crisis of governmentality. Namely, after finishing elementary school, millions of youths passed beyond the reach of state institutions until they were conscripted. Gotō’s statistics painted a grim picture for any committed statist: of the approximately 800,000 young people who completed primary schooling each year, no more than 240,000 went on to any kind of secondary schooling. Adding together a similar number for every age between fifteen and twenty—an “unsettled” (kotei shinai) period “of tremendous significance for both [youths’] individual lives and the future of the nation”—resulted in a figure of more than three million

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*See Gotō, Daikyūkai, 8 and Daihachikai, 5-7. By law (see Chapter Two), supplementary education included evening classes (yagakkai) and practical schools (jitsugyō hoshū gakkō), many of which were closely associated with seinendan. *Gotō, Daikyūkai, 3-4. Secondary education here includes middle school (chūtōgaku) as well as “higher primary school” (kōtō shōgaku) and the simple skill-focused supplementary schools that were discussed in chapter two. Gotō did not actually give the figure of 240,000 explicitly, but it can be calculated from his statement that 100,000 went on to actual middle school and “not more than one fifth” of the other 700,000 participated in any other educational options.
bundles of developmental potential “left completely outside any disciplinary facility [kun’iku no setsubi].” Invisibility on such a scale was, even in principle, an affront to modern governance."

But it was also keenly perceived as a great and present danger: “Komatsubara Eitarō, Minister of Education, wrote to local officials in 1910 that …‘Socialism and anarchism have not yet deep roots in our country, but unless we learn a method of prevention they will spread and bring disaster.’”49 In the same year the former Minister Kubota Yuzuru (whom Yamamoto Takinosuke had courted in 1905) was presumably not referring to petty rural vulgarities when he addressed the Diet in 1910, warning of “extraordinary damage” and “terrible iniquity” if the government did not develop a centralized policy for youth associations: “Those involved in overt political movements will be taken care of by the Public Order and Police Law (chiankeisatsuhō) [but] how will you handle things if [they] decide to arrange their votes to elect someone to the village and town assemblies?”50 In a fine example of what an intractable problem the balancing of state intervention and local initiative was for policy, the next year Kubota expressed fear that the government might also transform youth associations, which had been “recognized as extremely valuable,” into a force for disorder by indiscriminately suppressing them.

To overcome this problem, Gotō worked towards the kind of tight definitions that could provide his listeners with a flexible general protocol or formula. Having established two fundamental axioms—youth associations existed specially for self-improvement (shūyō) and practiced this by various means of self-education (ji-iku)—he could claim that resolution of “any and all issues” (kakushu no mondai) relating to a seinendan’s organization, operation, and financing could be derived naturally from this original function (honryō).51 With this in mind, we can return to the question of precisely how and why independence and self-management could be

* While admitting no direct comparison could be made, Gotō observed that the West faced a similar problem and that “human beings in the period of youth” (seinenki no ningen) were a major focus of many plans to supplement defects in education. See Gotō, Daikyūkai, 4.
cultivated in the *group* environment provided by a youth association. For Gotō, a keen, instrumentalized understanding of social dynamics made the tension between self and group legible not as antithesis, but as a generative crucible that offered a solution to the larger governmental problem of the balance between allowing spontaneity and external coercion. True to his proclivity for hermeneutics and axiomatic argumentation, Gotō began from first principles: essentially, a youth association was an organization (*dantai*). He then proceeded to unpack this seemingly unremarkable tautology:

An organization tries to accomplish by its eponymously unitary power what an individual cannot....The bad points that the individual tries, but fails, to reform on their own are more easily reformed through the power of the group. This is a phenomenon that appears clearly when a youth association achieves a reform of rural public morals (*fūki no kaishō*). At any other time youth are not yet independent (*dokuritsu jiei no hito*), and so do not possess significant means (*shiryoku*), but when they come together they can accomplish something visible to all. Essentially, striving to accomplish the objective of supplementary education by the power of what we call an ‘organization’ is one of the special characteristics of youth associations.52

Unity of purpose and action at the level of the organization was certainly a kind of *dokuritsu jiei*. However, though Gotō was speaking here of a *seinendan*’s concrete action on an external object of reform, it was only a short intellectual step to apply this argument to the group’s internal dynamics and the constitution of the individual subject, a move which he made explicitly in his 1916 lecture:

What we call an ‘organization’ is a variety of power (*isshu no chikara*). It is a particular kind of power vis-à-vis its exterior, and a particular kind of power vis-à-vis its interior. Essentially, to put a youth association to use by means of this organizational power is the basis for making it achieve its purpose....It is quite difficult for people to reform (*aratame-gatai*) their individual misdeeds and failings solely by their own resolve (*jibun dake no kesshin*). But realizing this becomes easier as one absorbs strictures (*kōsoku wo ukuru*) by means of the conventions of the group (*dantai no kiyaku*), of its spirit as an organization (*dantai taru seishin*). The power of the unified crowd becomes manifest, and so gathers together the power of the organization and each individual, yes; but what is more, it subordinates (*reizoku*) the self and drives it on (*bentatsu*).

“This,” Gotō matter-of-factly concluded, “is the mechanism (*sayō*) of organizational power; that we must use it to guide the youth associations, I need not tell you who are already absorbed in the

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5 Gotō, Daikyūkai, 18. The glossed terms in the last sentence have quite evocative connotations that are not fully captured by the terms I have used. *Reizoku* can refer to outright slavery or vassalage; *bentasu*, written with two synonymous characters for “whip/flog”, can mean encourage—Fukuzawa Yukichi used it in that sense in *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*—but only as an extension of its primary, literal meaning. Gotō’s original is as follows: *gunshū ga danketsu shita hitotsu no chikara ga dekite dantai to kakaji no chikara wo atsumeru no de aru ga, sore ni jishin wo reizoku shite bentatsu shite iku to iū koto ni naru*.)
task thereof. It constitutes the special characteristic of these groups, which in this respect differ greatly from normal educational institutions.”

For Gotō the purest form of organizational spirit (dantai teki seishin) was soldier spirit (gunjin seishin), which in explains why he discussed martial education (buiku) in some detail, whereas previous lecturers had only done so briefly, if at all. All organizational activities required the spirit of sacrifice, the virtue of obedience, and adherence to rules (giseiteki seishin, fukujū no bitoku, kiritsu wo mamoru), which happened to be exemplified by the military, but could actually be cultivated without “doing things militaristically” (guntaiteki ni mono wo yaranakute mo). Gotō could maintain this razor-thin distinction without contradicting his (equally strong) emphasis on independence because—and this was a key insight—submission can actually be experienced as a strengthening of the capacity to exercise control over the self.

As described in the above block quote, personal resolve becomes easier in the presence of the group. Like an echo chamber, consciousness of bounded organizational identity provides the reflective limits required for a process of constructive interference to occur between individual selves, which, thus synchronized and amplified, produce an organizational self whose existence is rooted in, but also larger than, the elements that constitute it. It functions as a feedback control system, which, once in place, exerts a governing effect on the very elements that make it up. Put differently, the organizational self is an immaterial force evidenced by its effects, like a gravitational field that snaps into existence when multiple bodies are brought into a certain proximal configuration. Each element in the system retains coherence—movement is experienced individually—but is now subject, as well as contributory, to the dispersed forces produced by that

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7 Gotō, Daikyūkai, 18. Of course, these dynamics could be in operation in a school classroom, but Gotō understood them to be especially potently concentrated in the wakashū heinendan because of the strength of face-to-face buraku intimacy. A class was in principle just multiple individuals in the same room, not an organization.

8 Gotō, Daikyūkai, 14-15. However, in what is in retrospect a haunting caveat, Gotō noted that someday “in consideration of our nation’s international position and the development of our Yamato race, it might become necessary to adopt in general education a pedagogical policy slightly [[!] inclined towards militarism” (shōrai wagakuni no kokusaiteki kachi [likely an error; ichi is the only word that makes sense here] wo kangae waga yamato minzoku no hatten to iū ten kara tashō gunkokushugi ni katamuku kyōyō no hōshin wa ippan kyōiku in mukatte toranakereba naranau ka mo shirenai). See ibid., 11.
system as a whole. Power grows out of bodies embedded in networks, but, unlike systems of inert matter, when the constitutive elements are, like human beings, biologically and neurologically plastic, the power they produce in concert—sometimes dispersed, sometimes focused—goes back to suffuse and reconstitute the very bodies from which it arises. The erosion of personal idiosyncrasies by the dialectic between individual and group makes self-reform less daunting, while fear of falling out of sync with the group standard incentivizes the exercise of the will to keep up. This can be as liberatory and empowering individually as it is politically useful collectively.

These were, of course, only the theoretical implications of Gotō’s vision. But the mechanism of group synchronicity directly informed his perspective on the importance of guidance by a dependable leader. After all, this “group psychology” (dantai no shinrī) was extremely strong, no matter what purpose it was made to serve. Structured intervention was necessary to ensure it was channeled in desirable directions: “in organizations whose main purpose is self-cultivation, to direct how their members synchronize [kikyō] requires a person of higher character and ability.”

But this was the genius of Gotō’s resolution to the problem of guidance and spontaneous self-management in seinendan. The former is only a problem when the dynamics of group power remain obscure; hence his injunction that those these associations’ leaders “must understand through and through (yoku ryōkai shite) youths’ psychological and physiological state and intervene in a manner appropriate thereto.” Once these dynamics are explicated, that is, made legible to political rationality, a shift in modes of intervention and coercion becomes possible from targeting the individual self with strictures to targeting its environment, whereupon mechanisms of

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a I prefer “synchronize” here to a bland word like “bond” for kikyō because it literally means “to bring hearts together” (kokoro wo yosera), which reflects the previous paragraph’s discussion of the implications of Gotō’s understanding of organizational power (also, the character kyō’s Japanese reading is mukau, “to face a certain direction”). For reference, the original lines are as follows: kono dantai no shinri to iū mono ga yoi hō ni mukeba warui hō ni mukeba warui tsuyoi chikara to naru…mizukara yashinai koto ga omo to matte iru dantai ni wa, dō shite mo sono mono no kikyō suru tokoro two, shidō suru tame sore iji no jinkakusha, iji no nōryoku wo mettu mono ga nakereba naranu. See Gotō, Daihachikai, 22.
group synchronization can be left to take their course. Intervention thus no longer appears as an imposition, which rebellious youthful minds would instinctively reject.54

If previous LIM contributors shared these insights, they did not say so. Tago Ichimin perhaps came the closest, referring to the seinendan’s “special purpose” (tokuyū no mokuteki), which he understood to be the nurturing of “communal spirit” (kyōdōshin), and highly valuing self-governance’s potential to automate reform. He even averred that “strength of organization, rather than relying on a single great person, was one of the demands of this new century.”55 But he did not truly explain how these ideals were to be instantiated, merely that they would bring benefits. Gotō Fumio, however, advanced a theory that explicated precisely how and why such goals could be accomplished, and which compellingly integrated self-management and external guidance.56

In lieu of a concluding summary, let us examine a few more aspects in which Gotō advanced discourse on youth associations. Most importantly, he was the first LIM lecturer to begin stitching together the narrative elements of what later became the DNRS line on the origins of the seinendan in the wakashū. Ushio and Tago had mentioned the latter in passing, and even though they dismissed these groups as nothing impressive, they did nonetheless imply a genealogical relationship with the new seinendan. But they never used the language Gotō did to begin his 1915 lecture, portraying the “essentials” of Japan’s “present system of civilization”—he admitted its external forms (school and administrative systems, etc.) were Western imports—as a “result of three thousand years of Imperial history” and a “sign [ato] of the three thousand years of development of the Japanese race.”56 On this analogy, unlike Western youth groups such as the Boy Scouts—comparatively few members, narrow of purpose, and only a recent development—Japan’s seinendan supposedly had existed in some form throughout the country (tsutsu-uraura) for

56 Gotō’s certainty that he had distilled protocols flexible enough to be applied in all instances is evident from the fact that he gave not a single real-life example of seinendan activities. Ushio, by contrast, devoted the bulk of his talks to such examples. Tago was less given to examples and raised important questions, but did provide the kind of answers Gotō did.
centuries, even if most of them were “nothing more than a collection of youths and their cons were greater than their pros.”

This qualification did not really matter, however, because national narratives can put rude beginnings to good use as a stage for the dialectic of racial development to play out. What is remarkable, however, is that Gotō was pushing this thinking well before serious ethnographic study of *wakashū* and more than twenty years before the DNRS unearthed the documents (*jōmoku*) it used to support its position. Moreover, while previous LIM lecturers used nationalistic language to call openly for *seinendan* to be put to state purposes, it was Gotō who laid the groundwork for understanding them as expressions of a singular racial instinct. In recounting Gotō’s tenure as the third director of the DNRS, its official historian (Kumagai) made special note of Gotō’s “conviction that the Young Men’s Associations were born in Japan as the natural sequel to the development of the Yamato race. Wherever the Yamato race goes, [they are] sure to follow.”

This discourse certainly climbed upward on the framework of the *seinendan*’s supposed ubiquity and antiquity, but actually grew out Gotō’s fixation on their “special function/purpose” (*honryō*) as wellsprings of *dokuritsu jiei*, and therefore the first principle from which all solutions could be derived: “I believe deeply that if we can cause Japan’s youth associations, unlike any others in the world, to develop adequately, if we can cause them to manifest their core instinct [honnō], they will prove to be extraordinarily instrumental in the advancement and progress of the Japanese nation-state [*Nihon kokka no shinpo hatten*].”

As the individual strove on the path to independent self-management in the environment of the group, so the group as a whole strove to advance itself as a cell in the body of the nation. This fractal vision was reflected in Kumagai’s observation that “Mr. Goto held that the Young Men’s

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57 Gotō, *Daikyūkai*, 5. Gotō claimed that the oldest groups originated in the Kamakura period, but did not offer any sources.
58 Gotō, *Daihachikai*, 3. This point in particular shows the still raw state of later ideology. The DNRS eventually pushed a more pastoral picture of the originary *wakashū*, whose rehabilitation was made possible in large part by the work of ethnologists (discussed in Chapter One). The DNRS then worked this into a story of racial instinct rising to the challenges posed to the nation (made retroactively present) by modernity.
Association is a miniature of the race, reflecting the latter’s development and destiny.” Though Gotō did not go quite so far in his lectures, the idea was present in embryonic form. Almost all his suggestions for seinendan activities represented miniature instantiations of government procedures, whether elections or bookkeeping, and he held this up as a standard against which to measure all activities. Though he did not focus on the term jichi itself, as did Ushio and Tago, Gotō actually gave a most literal example of the concept at two points, local administration and social group, on a sliding scale of governmentality that spanned the distance between individual subject and nation.

Behind all these aspects of Gotō’s thinking on seinendan lay a clear idea of the psychological, physiological, and developmental characteristics of youth. He was the first LIM lecturer to refer to all these disciplines, even if he found their insights more important for their instrumentality than academic interest. The next and final chapter looks at the origins and nature of the ideological complex of physical/mental attributes and moral imperatives that accrued to the sign seinen and the role the seinendan had in shaping and perpetuating them.

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Gotō, Daihachikai, 9 (jichitai no yaru shigoto wo chiisaku shita yō na mono to seinen dantai mizukara ni yaraseru to iū koto ni sureba kono kaoren ga dekiyō). This recapitulation in miniature, a kind of theory of play, was essential in constituting ideas of childhood and youth.
Chapter Four  
Youth

Before looking at youth specifically, we must engage with an important body of scholarly literature dealing with childhood broadly because it discusses the crucial role of the idea of childhood in constituting modernity and the nation-state, particularly as a signifier for both immaturity and past times. Many of the insights provided in this regard are highly applicable to the concept of youth. Though Stefan Tanaka is perhaps the most prominent scholar writing (in English) on this theme in the Japanese context, in showing childhood to be a relatively recent historical construct he follows the general line of deconstruction that other scholars have taken in the Euro-American context. In the first part of this chapter, hoping to complement rather than contradict this valuable work, I argue for the importance of interrogating the idea of childhood through the various stages into which it is has been divided historically (infancy, early childhood, adolescence, etc.).

To do so is certainly not to accept these categories as given—either as periods of development written indelibly in biological reality, or as sites invested with such sentimental significance as to be exempt from critical inquiry. I also do not question the usefulness of discussing childhood at the level Tanaka and other scholars have done, that is, as a way to highlight how notions of progress and teleological history—the Janus faces of modernity—are worked into totalizing developmental schemes that organize relations within and between human collectives and the somatic, psychic, and social lives of their members. It is important to approach childhood from this grand perspective because the binary between maturity and immaturity, the latter term of which Tanaka (and other scholars I reference) seems to denote by “childhood”, can be observed operating in multiple ways and at multiple scales, from individual nostalgic retrospection to relations of colonial domination.
However, I see a need to foreground the spectrum within “immaturity”—the elision of which is an unfortunate side-effect of the perspective of these scholars’ meta-analyses—in order to acknowledge the vigour with which certain historical actors sought to distinguish its developmental stages and to make these manifest in the organization of the social body. The assumptions specific to youth in the Local Improvement lectures are especially representative, particularly as theorized by Gotō Fumio, and were unquestionably part of a global phenomenon. Tanaka, despite his many important insights, brushes over such distinctions in noting rather vaguely that “[w]hile today we use several categories to mark stages of human development—infant, toddler, adolescent, and so on—I use the child as a concept for this early period that historically was not precisely defined.” Therefore, I show below that distinctions between stages of development, however contrived or loosely defined, ultimately bear greater historical significance than can be articulated using the umbrella term “childhood”. Focusing on the historical constructedness of the stages of childhood, however important, can distract from the real historical developments those stages have facilitated, one of which, of course, is the important (and global) phenomenon of youth associations. Nevertheless, let us begin with the characteristics and functions of the idea of childhood as a general feature of modernity.

Childhood and Nation

Discussing “early Meiji Japan”, Tanaka notes that childhood “bore more similarity to Wolfgang Edelstein's description of the child in premodern rural Europe than to childhood in modern Japan: ‘the bond of meaning and mutual responsibility [is] in a world of work that does not know

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*a Stefan Tanaka, “Childhood: Naturalization of Development into a Japanese Space,” in Cultures of Scholarship, ed. S.C. Humphreys (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 50. In her seminal work on childhood and the idea of human interiority over a century and a half, Carolyn Steedman makes a similar observation: “I have found myself as puzzled as other historians by the extraordinary plasticity of the terms ‘childhood’ and ‘child’ in the period under discussion….Hugh Cunningham notes how for the purposes of early nineteenth-century campaigns against child labour, when the work of children in factories was being compared with slavery, great boys and girls in their late teens might be described as infants.” See Carolyn Steedman, Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 7.*
childhood as an age of play but, rather, an age of transient functional imperfection.”…Children in premodern or early modern Japanese society did not exist as future citizens but as members of their locale. Childhood was not a unifying category that represented children as some empty vessel, a metaphor for some romantic period, or an early stage of linear growth.”¹ This split between the modern and pre-modern is also maintained by other scholars. Joan Scott observes that “secular notions of individual freedom, and so, too, of morality, depended on channeling sexuality within marital bonds and devoting it to the production of children. Indeed the very conception of childhood as a separate stage of life is an aspect of modernity.”² Citing Philippe Ariès, whose work Tanaka, too, frequently calls on, Scott continues: “the sciences of childhood—pediatrics, age-based pedagogy, the identification of adolescence as a developmental stage, specialized clothing for children, as well as visual representations that portray children as children and not as small adults—all date from the late seventeenth century [in Europe].” Though these scholars’ individual emphases may differ slightly, the contrast is complimentary; as will become clear below, they mutually reinforce, rather than contradict, a general understanding of what is at stake in the idea of childhood.

As mentioned above, there is more to do than show how the observations pertaining to a developmental schema as a whole are accurate for youth as well. This is an easy rut to fall into, for these scholars give many pithy statements in which ‘youth’ could easily be substituted for the words “child” and “childhood” without substantial error, thus clearly demonstrating both shared focus on childhood as broad developmental framework as well as the close genealogical links between their arguments. Carolyn Steedman, another resource for Tanaka, provides such an example, closely paralleled by the central arguments in his New Times in Modern Japan: “Child-figures, and more generally the idea of childhood, came to be commonly used to express the depths of historicity within individuals, the historicity that was ‘linked to them, essentially’.
‘Childhood’, ‘the child’, as this kind of configuring of the past, emerged at the same time as did the modern idea of history and modern conventions of historical practice.” However, given that speaking of a ‘stage’ presupposes some kind of developmental horizons, I would be remiss to discuss youth without first presenting the idea of modern childhood, as understood by the above scholars, in some detail.

Concisely, the modern idea of childhood helps constitute discourses of nation, family, and self, drawing them into a nexus of mutually reaffirming, seemingly organic dialogue, while also facilitating their introduction and entrenchment into lived experience. When, through these new forms of discipline, the experience of one’s own physical/biological growth is brought into sufficient proximity with new imperatives to collective progress, analogy and mimicry become the path of least resistance, and circuits of consciousness and affective investment are into being between the self and social formations to form the modern mythos of development. The bonds thus formed are strong, the strategy simple and effective; one need only observe how readily discourses of progress and development siphon the authority, however spurious, of physical and biological sciences, as in social Darwinism or eugenics, in order to give modern contours to associations between (supposed) physical reality and social meaning. Thus Tanaka notes that childhood, signifying anything not deemed fully mature, “has become a common metaphor that orients behaviors and expectations without calling attention to itself;” its historicity obscured by a looming analogy to physical fact: “It is a site where the ambiguities and contradictions of modernity are ameliorated into a coherent whole personified through the child. That is, the human body serves as an object that makes the abstractions of modernity seem natural.”

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3 Tanaka, *Childhood*, 21. Analogical thinking is often considered characteristic of the premodern, as does Steedman, for example, in a discussion of Foucault’s account of the ancien régime: “[N]o real separation was perceived between human beings and the earth from which they sprang…[Men] and women thought analogically, perhaps saw all the objects and entities of the natural world as being like something else, so that a plant or root shaped like a part of the human body must necessarily correspond to it and provide a cure for any ill that it might summer, and a
Moreover, childhood helps splice both past and future into this circuit of signification: “childhood is always a category of the past. Few, if any, children understand childhood until after they have left it. As a temporal category in a developmental structure, it also reinforces change; people must leave childhood.” Here lies the utility of the idea of childhood for the nation: “[it] becomes a political tool; it is part of the effort of a nation-state to monopolize those mnemonic devices that reinforce its vision of what society should be[.]” Tanaka thus aptly captures the imperative to occupy the past to ensure the future. The child’s transitory nature, its very growth, implies movement away from a point of origin. Extrapolating forward and backward along this line paves the way for the rails of a personal developmental narrative; the normative course, but also any transitions (even deviations) therein, are marked by key bodily and social signifiers that can be retraced in memory or anticipated as goals, just as a national chronology seeks to make the past legible as a causal slope leading inexorably to the present and on into the future.

Using the term “reproductive futurism,” Scott makes a similar point, noting that “[b]iological reproduction becomes not only the sole legitimate aim of sexual intercourse, but the guarantee of immortality, securing life’s meaning by deferring its realization to succeeding

monstrous birth could be explained by what a woman had thought, eaten or dreamed during her pregnancy” (Strange Dislocations, 12). Tanaka also observes that “modernity is built upon a transmuted past, that functions as a dead, inert past.” (New Times, 189)

Nuancing this point, I think that that the past is also kept alive, for example, in analogical, albeit abstracted, thinking in the conflation of physical and modern development aptly, which illustrates how modernity does not make a radical, absolute break, but repurposes modes of thought. In his The New Century, Eric Hobsbawm has made a similar observation of how capitalism uses the institutions required for its historical as a kind of fuel for further development in a kind of catabolism: family and communal solidarities, foresight, thriftiness, delayed gratification, etc. that helped propagate capitalism, and which would seem to be to its advantage as stabilizing agents, are today being dissolved in a more pathological mode of capitalism, one which glorifies great risk and in which the economy depends on ultra-short term fluctuations in share prices. This self-immolation may eventually bring the whole system down, but in the meantime progress is made, but it is like using support pillars from the foundation to add height to a tower. Jenga!

In anticipation of the discussion of youth below, one of its special functions, as opposed to youth generally, is to domestic all forms of recalcitrance (including counter-conduct) under the sign “young and foolhardy/headstrong”, etc. Resistance becomes a finite stage, dismissed on the basis of biology, similar (but not identical) to how the concept of hysteria has been used to explain non-normative behaviour in women.

Charles Taylor “describes the development of a ‘disengaged, particular self, whose identity is constituted in memory.’ This identity is expressed in self-narration: ‘the life at any moment is the causal consequence of what has transpired earlier…[and] since the life to be lived has also to be told, its meaning is seen as something that unfolds through events’.” Quoted in Steedman, Strange Dislocations, 11. For original see Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 289.
generations.” Childhood thus becomes an ally of the nation and its new discipline of history, as Steedman observed above. Crucially, however:

The power of childhood, in contrast to the abstraction of nation, is that it is a temporary position through which all people pass; it potentially unites people to the idea of nation. [It] embodies the physiology of a group of people and cuts across other existing divisive categories, such as class (hereditary), wealth, or region, as well as new categories, such as class (economic), knowledge, or putative ability. For a place attempting to establish its unity from a mass of local communities to a developmental whole, childhood also provides a language for the naturalization of a national space, for integrated within it is an expectation of reproduction of society as well as of a better future, a horizon of expectations. Difference is now altered into temporal hierarchies of the Same—that is, through the diachrony of human growth and progress—and childhood signifies the synchrony of ethnicity or race. Childhood becomes the originary moment of the race, but unlike history, the child perpetually recurs as if the past and present are not separated. It orients society around a diachronic epistemology, and at the same time, the child is also a visible form (body and images), the “like us,” that facilitates the construction and maintenance of a national “we.”

Childhood thus recapitulates the logic of a national history/chronology vis-à-vis the past, present, and future, but also supplements it in being a uniquely dispersible means to traverse idiosyncrasy: one might even say that the modern child existed only through the body of the “the Japanese”. Unlike official history, however, the logic of childhood can slip past even relatively strong resentment or resistance towards the intrusions of the nation-state by coating the logic thereof in the pablum of sentimentality, acceptance requiring not conscious devotion to the nation-state, but merely exposure to its prescribed developmental markers masquerading in one’s immediate, seemingly organic social environment. Concomitantly, “[t]he potential of childhood to the nation-state is as the site to turn the idea of the nation into material practices.” To this Tanaka appends “in both the idea of edification and the educational institutions,” which hints at

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6 Joan Scott, “Reproductive Futurism.” She continues, “The implementation of reproductive futurism is what Foucault called biopower, the designation of life as a political object, indispensable to the development of capitalism, both for ‘the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.’” See Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 140-141.

7 Tanaka, Childhood, 48. See also ibid., 47: “The reorientation of the archipelago into a nation-state during the early Meiji period can be described as an effort by intellectuals and the political elite to create a rational order that, through synchronization, could account for the great diversity that existed.”

8 Tanaka, New Times, 135. Tanaka, Childhood, 38 is also instructive on this point: “[T]ransformation of the individual and national body into categories of experience is made possible by an inversion where the socially constituted child becomes everyday experience; but it is an experience that is only meaningful in connection with nationally constituted norms. A principal goal of any new nation-state is to convince all people to accept and participate in, actively or through a lack of resistance, the parameters and goals established by the state—to paraphrase Chatterjee, to act as a collectivity because of previously and always existing bonds of solidarity. As suggested above, this reorientation necessitates the dissolution of regional or local ties, or, more accurately, the superimposition of national over individual relations.”
another important difference from history, namely, ease of intervention: “because [childhood] perpetually recurs, it is a rare site of an early stage where adults can not only study and ‘know’ (like history), but also correct for a better future.”

The idealized nuclear family, a transnational phenomenon with national/local inflections, opens new approaches for the control of social reproduction by demarking an environment in which the variables affecting the child’s psychosocial development can be isolated, and therefore altered, in a scientific manner:

蓬 of the transformation of society is changing the way people think and the way their lives are oriented, from the local to the nation. To do so it is necessary to create different reasons, an ideology, apprehended through everyday experience to tie them to the whole. The family becomes a caricature of the various units that were part of a local economy; it is now the primary site that specifies, on an everyday level, the roles of good citizens. The analogy between filiality and loyalty further binds citizens to the nation by locating childhood as the moment when citizens become indebted to the nation-state.9

“To foster ties between the individual and the nation, leaders turned to the family, or more broadly, to affect. The idea of the family, as Philippe Ariès has pointed out, rose in tandem with the concept of the child; indeed, it is difficult if not impossible for the idealized family to exist without the child.”10 Tellingly, Scott and Tanaka come to a practically perfect accord in defining the nature of this relationship: “this reproductive futurism...put extraordinary emphasis on marriage and the conjugal family as a primary unit. It was the institution that mediated private

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9 For instance, in acknowledging “the global nature of modernity,” Mark A. Jones notes that “the middle class [broadly understood as the primary site for the development of the nuclear family] in Japan shared important components of their identity—a commitment to moral living, the employment of scientific knowledge within daily life, the championing of educational achievement based on merit, the pursuit of leisure, and a flirtation with antimodern sentiment—with similar groups in the United States, England, France, and Germany.” Nevertheless, “middle-class identity [in Japan] was associated less with politics or home ownership than it was with the family’s quest for educational achievement.” See Mark A Jones, Children as Treasures: Childhood and the Middle Class in Early Twentieth Century Japan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), 16. See also Tanaka, New Times, 190: “In both Japan and Europe, the family played an important role in the constitution of the social. But in Japan, the pasts that constitute the social turned into ahistorical ideas, whereas the pasts of the European family tend to stay in the past. In other words, in Japan, the process of historicization of society returns the past into the present as a way of maintaining some distinction from the social, that, when connected to the mechanistic process, is conflated with Westernization. This past is relegated to culture, those remnants that have defied the full implementation of modernity. It distinguishes a Japan from the West, but it also organizes that society within a straitjacket of identity, that is, reinforced by mnemonic objects such as architecture and childhood.

10 See footnote b on the repurposing of analogical thinking.
The family also performs crucial ideological work in helping elide a “potential contradiction of modernity between stability and change.”

As described above, the alliance mediated by the child between bodily and national development is founded on the notion of progressive and linear historical time. Yet there is a catch, which Scott illustrates through the comparative perspective provided by two historians of Iraq and France, respectively:

Sara Pursley [suggests] that the temporality of modernity is, paradoxically, static. The nation state and the family, she says, are the two institutions that produce modern forms of timelessness. Citing Benedict Anderson and Reinhart Koselleck, she notes that “the clock time and calendar time that measure modern homogeneous linear time, and which emerge with the rise of the modern nation-state, are predicated on uniform duration and endless repetition.” Michelle Perrot offers a similar observation: “the family embodied two contradictory qualities. It was regular, owing to the repetition of periodic family rituals. Yet this regular and cyclical time, smooth and uninterrupted—a time that was not oppressive to individuals, but that flowed through them, as it were, in a biological continuum—was meant to establish a kind of eternity.”

Tanaka too notes this theme: “Ideas of growth, development, and nurturing suggest an inner time of the nation, but one that while connected to, indeed formed by, the historical, is also timeless….Even though the nation is created through history, those diachronic narratives that

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1 Joan Scott, “Reproductive Futurism.” Cf. Tanaka, Childhood, 46: “[T]he transformation of childhood elevated the family into a public institution that mediates between individual desires and national prescriptions.”

2 Tanaka, New Times, 112. Here Tanaka positions literature and art history, on the one hand, and history and the idea of childhood, on the other, in this mediating role: “A history in motion and its linguistic possibility is closer to the inherited understanding in which the past is not separated from the present. A past history and its linguistic reproduction is akin to our current notions of history. During the 1880s various intellectuals worked through these different temporalities. But in the resolution that leads to the modern nation, both temporalities coexist. Simplistically, and according to our current categories, disciplines such as Japanese literature (kokubungaku) and art history fill the temporality of the former, while history (rekishi) and notions of childhood give form to the latter.” See ibid.


4 The section of Pursley on which Scott draws is particularly helpful in parsing the paradoxical elements of modern time: “Different scholars have theorized various ways in which the time of modernity, when conceived in all its fullness, is a paradoxically timeless time. The whole concept of the modern is predicated on a radical rupture with the past and on notions of perpetual newness and the linearity of a historical time stretching into infinity. Yet equally central to the production of modernity is its spatialization as a place to which some (nations, races, classes) have already arrived. What Timothy Mitchell has analyzed as the characteristically modern ‘spatialization of time’ enables what is described by Koselleck as the ‘contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous’ and by anthropologist Johannes Fabian as the ‘denial of coevalness.’ Numerous scholars, including Fabian, have explored the violence that the denial of coevalness has unleashed on those determined to be non-modern, anti-modern, or not-yet-modern. Others have looked at various ways in which a fully realized modernity might be understood as a static temporality. Two institutions have been seen as particularly charged domains for the production of modern forms of timelessness: the nation-state and the family. As Anderson, Koselleck, and other scholars have noted, the clock time and calendar time that measure modern homogeneous linear time, and which emerge with the rise of the modern nation-state, are predicated on uniform duration and endless repetition. As these forms of time become the basis for modern experiences of governance, they come to mean ‘precisely not innovation or anything new but rather stability and routine both in the everyday and in the modes of organization of a political society…through repetition, precisely that which is new in it turns into the everyday and loses its meaning as new time.’ What James Scott calls the ‘administrative grid’ of the modern state paradoxically produces mobile people and objects by first rendering them stable.” See Pursley, “A Race Against Time,” 17-18. Original emphasis.
provide and order details of the national experience are now conflated with the nation-state; they exist prior to history. Past, present, and future are merged[.]

This idea of *inner* time brings us to a brief consideration of childhood vis-à-vis the self, subjectivity, or interiority. Steedman notes that one of the most important means through which modern individuals are located “within time and chronology [is] by possession of their own personal past.” This is not to say that pre-modern people had no consciousness of self (especially as a sense of belonging to a lineage, hierarchy, etc.) or interior psychic life. Rather we might more profitably understand this aspect of modernity through “the mapping of a change in sensibility” in order to trace “the historical development of lexes of feeling, the social structuring of ways of thinking, and the bringing of feeling and response into the realm of cognition.” Thereby one notes the establishment of a new location for the self, as does Steedman, following Michel Foucault: “The modern self is imagined as being on the inside, and it is this spatial sense that the term ‘interiority’ seeks to describe: the self *within*, created by the layering down and accretion of our own childhood experiences, our own history, in a place inside.” Thus the figure of the child performs a double function, simultaneously embodying a special significance for each individual as the narrative structure of their person, and (consequently?)—the relationship is too close to say definitively—acquiring social currency as a primary paradigm for engaging the world.

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1 Ample literary and archaeological evidence suggest otherwise, even taking into account the possibility of reading such evidence through an inappropriately modern lens. Ahistorical psychologizing is always a danger, but to deny the potential of the Other (historical or cultural) for rich interior life is a pernicious modern conceit that has seen, and still sees, much use in justifying all sorts of exploitation and domination.

2 Steedman, *Strange Dislocations*, 9-10. Steedman adds “in particular societies, at particular points in time.” I do not think she means to imply an ossified developmental hierarchy of modernity, but she leaves this unexplored, as will I; while important, it is somewhat outside the scope of this paper. But this is a good place to note, as Tanaka observes, “while childhood is useful in constituting the nation-state, it is also a metaphor used among nation states. Here, it is especially problematic for nonmodern places that must confront their position as a child.” See Tanaka, *Childhood*, 24.
In other words, the phylogeny of the nation echoes in the ontogeny of the individual. This happens in large part because the events that articulate the narrative of this personal past have become imbricated, in a very literal sense, with the nation-state. This newfound proximity, in combination with the disorientation and delocalization caused by revolutions in all aspects of life under modernity, dislodges (admittedly, to varying extents) cathexis in the locale and makes it available for reinvestment in prescribed markers and standards of development. This “tutelary complex,” a term Tanaka borrows from Donzelot, incorporates not only the state’s educational institutions, but “a whole series of circles that envelop the child, [including] governmental programs, local aid groups, and social reformers.”

This recapitulatory resonance between the “apprehension and understanding of the self” and society propagated, not only in discourse having explicitly to do with children and childhood, but throughout “many fields of inquiry in the nineteenth century,” including: physiology (particularly cell theory), evolutionary biology, philology, and developmental linguistics. In particular, the dominant ideas of growth and development that were used in the investigation of all living forms … and in the investigation of the forms of human culture …, implied a material progress in individual lives, which increased in symbolic importance during the course of the century, whereby that which was traversed (the course of an individual life; the growth through childhood to maturity; the development of a people or a nation) was, in the end, left behind and abandoned. In this way, childhood as scientifically described was always about that which was temporary and impermanent, always described as a loss in adult life.

This loss—deeply felt both personally and collectively, and doubly fetishized through childhood’s providing an object of nostalgic reflection-for-redemption, and through real children-as-redeemer’s serving as screens on which to project hopes for the future—is put to

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* The connection to the family is critically important in structuring these events: “The convergence of family and nation-state valorizes the private of the family but only as the everyday subject to the public of the nation-state. Ostensibly the everyday is separate from the nation-state, connected only when participating in its “important” events (such as holidays). But by constituting the everyday as proper behavior of nationals, the family is simultaneously political—the materiality of the state—for its activities are now framed by the responsibility to train and oversee the maintenance of good citizens.” See Tanaka, *New Times*, 185.

* For the latter, see Ashis Nandy, *Traditions, Tyranny, and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 63-64: “[O]lder generations are allowed to project into the child their inner needs and to use him or her to work out their fantasies of self-correction and national or cultural improvement. For instance, parents may try to realize through the child their own status ambitions or to negate through him or her their own sense of economic and psychological insecurity, or they may ‘bring up’ the child as a double who has marital, professional and other life choices no longer open to them. Such a system can be both effective and lasting, because parents constitute the immediate environs of the child. The society, too, perceives them as providing a benevolent encapsulating context for childhood. So when a
work for the nation in what Tanaka calls “museumification,” in which “objects within society
present a narrative of diversity (that is, change and conflict) but usually through now fixed
notions of that history.”

Accordingly, one may note, as Tanaka does, how “[t]he metamorphosis of the child out
of childhood overlays the alterity of childhood with another temporality, that of an idealized
past. The child also serves as the embodied site for the future of the nation; it reminds adults of
what is wrong with the present and provides the possibility for reform. In this case it is a hope
for improvement—progress—but improvement based on an imagined experience.” Yet this,
for all its insight, is childhood seen in a rear view mirror. This is partially to be expected, for
generally it is generally adults who write history, and, as Steedman notes, children “are the most
temporary of social subjects—they grow up, they go away[;]” much more accessible (and
compelling) is a history of “how adults used the idea of childhood and the figure of the child, in
various social contexts and psychological terms.”

Nevertheless, it does not follow from having the humility not to presume to speak for
children that we should, as in the above formulation, let the overarching power of the
mature/immature binary draw close attention only to the discursive workings thereof and the
single, abstract, generic figure of immaturity implied therein. We must attempt to say something
more interesting about youth, as it was historically constituted, than demonstrating how the
features of childhood that the above authors observe, at the broadest level of socially conceived
schemas of development, are everywhere found duplicated in miniature at the sub-stages
comprising such schemas.
Youth as Kind

If the broad concept of childhood as is described above was so powerful and ubiquitous, what made it necessary to distinguish youth from children? That is, not just superficially, but as a defined object of sustained, exhaustive, and transnational scientific enquiry, moralizing, and reform. Even as late as the first half of the nineteenth century, the figure of the child could be deployed in discourse with great flexibility (see footnote a). Thereafter, however, youth became a more stable sign for a specific referent. The first problem with working from the meta-level of the critique of childhood is that we do not engage adequately with the emergence of youth as a concept distinct from early childhood. In Japan the “nature” of youth (seinen) was well established in discourse by the early Taishō period. For a representative example, we need only make a brief return to the LIM lectures. Of all the presenters, and as with much else, Gotō Fumio gave the most explicit and systematic description of youth as a developmental category:

Physiologically speaking, a youth is one whose body’s tissues are still developmentally incomplete (shintai no soshiki ga hattatsu no mada tochū), one who has emerged from childhood (yōnen, shōnen) and is in the midst of acceding to the period of full maturity, in which one becomes independent and individual (dokuritsu shite, ichinin ni naru kansei no jidai ni tassuru chūkan)….The muscles suddenly begin their development, height and weight increase rapidly, and sexual desire (seiyoku) manifests itself. Psychologically speaking, youth is a time of sudden changes in thought and of extraordinary development of emotions; a time of inclination towards new things and endlessly changing one’s thoughts, of easy excitability and forgetting of consequences. Physiologically or psychologically, it is a time of storm-like change. It is in this period that human beings decide the general tendency of their personalities, whether they will sink or swim in life (isshō no fuchin no wakareru tokoro).20

We must ask: why did modernity come to demand that a certain age bracket in the population be marked out and defined so obsessively? Michel Foucault’s concepts of biopolitics and governmentality provide a solid general framework for this chapter’s answer to that question.

Foucault described biopolitics as a “new technology that is…addressed to a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form, on the contrary, a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic
of birth, death, production, illness and so on.”

Intervening in these phenomena required a more sophisticated approach than simple imposition by sovereign will:

with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics—to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved…. Whereas the end of sovereignty is internal to itself and possesses its own intrinsic instruments in the shape of laws, the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes which it directs.

Thus Foucault observed that “the transition…from an art of government to a political science, from a regime dominated by structures of sovereignty to one ruled by techniques of government, turns on the theme of population and hence also on the birth of political economy.” Yet he immediately presented an essential qualification:

[S]overeignty is far from being eliminated by the emergence of a new art of government, even by one which has passed the threshold of political science; on the contrary, the problem of sovereignty is made more acute than ever. As for discipline, this is not eliminated either…. Discipline was never more important or more valorized than at the moment when it became important to manage a population; the managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects, it also implies the management of a population in its depth and details…. Accordingly we need to see things not in terms of the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which as its primary target population.

To this we might add that sovereignty does not necessarily remain a discrete category, even in its reduced role. The three are (usefully) distinguished as concepts, but in the reality of their application there is significant bleed between them. This is a subtle distinction, but when sovereignty loses its paradigmatic monopoly, I would argue that it does not become a mode to be reverted to on demand, like how, in the triune model of the brain, the reptilian brain is overlaid by the mammalian brain, which is in turn surrounded by the neocortex. Rather than a regression, throwback, or reversion, the exercise of sovereignty becomes a technique to be used judiciously and whose power can be applied in shades and by degrees. This is evident from the previous chapter’s discussion of the problem of inculcation and intervention (as aspects of guidance and leadership) with regard to the seinendan. The problem was the how much and when of these
micro-exercises of sovereign power. They could never be dispensed with, even as the benefits of *dokuritsu jiei* were championed, but their intensity could be adjusted to compliment new (e.g., Gotō’s) understandings of power.

Foucault’s triangle is thus less a triumvirate than tri-axial spectrum wherein each point represents a different combination of intensities. Sovereignty was less unseated, demoted, or even complimented by government, which in Foucault’s language “overturns the constants of sovereignty,” than it was dispersed within government. Sovereign power lost its monopoly not by becoming a measure of last resort, but by being diverted and mediated though a multiplicity of channels and, therefore, both less perceptible and more scalpel-like in focus. It does not merely persist as an ace in the hole, but is transformed by the logic of science. Youth and other subcategories of childhood, when understood scientifically, offer different channels for the application of this power in intensities specifically tailored to produce certain effects.

That is to say, they allow one to parse the field of governance and intervene therein with the appropriate force, timing, and focus because these categories are presumed to represent taxonomic distinctions grounded in biological reality. Here we brush up against Foucault’s thinking on the function of race in biopolitics. Because biopolitics deals with the shaping of population, it was imperative:

to intervene at the level at which these general phenomena are determined…[R]egulatory mechanisms must be established to establish an equilibrium… [to]compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field. In a word, security mechanisms have to be installed around the random element inherent in a population of living beings so as to optimize a state of life. Like disciplinary mechanisms, these mechanisms are designed to maximize and extract forces. Unlike disciplines, they no longer train individuals by working at the level of the body itself…[It is a matter] of using overall mechanisms and acting in such a way as to achieve overall states of equilibration or regularity[,] of taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized. Beneath…the power of sovereignty, and which consisted in the power to take life, we now have the emergence [of biopower.] It is…the power to make live. Sovereignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power…of regularization, and it, in contrast consist in making live and letting die.25
The question then becomes how this power is to let die (let alone continue to exercise the sovereign right to kill), which it evidently does, when its defining characteristic is to make live, “to improve life, to prolong its duration, to improve its chances, to avoid accidents, and to compensate for its failings?”

Foucault’s answer was racism, which “is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die. [Racial discrimination] is a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls[,] a way of separating out the groups that exist within a population….This will allow power to treat that population as a mixture of races[,]…to subdivide the species it controls into the subspecies known, precisely, as races.” When the field is fragmented, undesirable elements can be identified and either excised or left to wither and drop off. Foucault understood this exposure to death quite liberally, not only as “murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on.” Accordingly, his conception of race is better understood as kind or type, rather than exclusively black, white, etc.

With keen insight, Foucault also observed that the “death” of the Other feeds into the idea of “make live” by promising not only physical safety for the biopolitical in-group, but also to make life in general “healthier and purer.” Moreover, the concept of “let die” can even circulate through in-group itself as a constant, generalized exposure to death—exemplified for Foucault in the Nazi regime—“as a way of regenerating one’s own race. As more and more of our number die, the race to which we belong will become all the purer.” “Let die” thus serves as a protocol not only for closing ranks against those identified as Other, but also the self-regulatory process of the in-group’s internal dynamics. As Michelle Murphy notes, “Foucault
offered the insight that...society came to be at war with itself, concerned with the enemy to life within as much as the enemy without.”

Despite all this—“race” was closer to “kind”; “fragmenting the field of the biological” was in itself a neutral concept (“a way of separating out the groups that exist within a population”); “make live” was not separate from, but could be suffused with, “let die”—Foucault focused on the lines of fracture that produced “the break between what must live and what must die” and left implicit the way in which race/kind structured biopower’s life-affirming application. I would argue that childhood and youth were just as much “races” insofar as they determined not necessarily who was excluded from the positive sphere of biopower (and to what degree), but rather the categorization of various subgroups inside that sphere so as to differentiate precisely how each could most effectively be made to live.

Of course, the parsing of the in-group could also determine those who would first face the purifying effects of that more generalized exposure to death, a process perhaps most concretely embodied in the determination of the age of conscription. However, though we must always bear in mind that exclusion occurs in a spectrum and fluctuates within time and space—inseparably from life—the topography of the space internal to “make live” need not be mapped only on a scale of more or less access to positive biopower. In observing that “[i]t was through this multiscaled differential governing of the diversity within the mass, for the greater good of that mass, that individuals in the twentieth century were so often enjoined to participate in the governing of their own potentialities and reproduction”—we should remember that differential governing cannot be fully described by degree of exposure to death. In other words,

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8 We might also understand this generalized exposure not exclusively as a literal race war (à la the Nazi regime), but abstractly as the devil’s bargain required for admission to the sphere of “make live”—namely, to die for the state when necessary—which is constantly in the background and which Foucault sloganized as “Go get slaughtered and we promise you a long and pleasant life.” Quoted in Takashi Fujitani, “Right to Kill, Right to Make Live: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During WWII,” Representations 99, Summer 2007: 33. For original see Michel Foucault, “The Political Technology of Individuals,” in Technologies of the Self, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 147.
fragmentation within the biological field did not necessarily take place only along lines that divided “make live” from “let die”.

The difference between childhood and youth is a case in point. One was not necessarily more exposed to death than the other. Even if biopolitical nurturing takes place ultimately with a view to enabling self-sacrificial death, focusing on “let die” blinds one to certain subtleties in that same way that the binary of mature/immature distracts from the sub-distinctions in the latter term. These subtleties consist in how the art of government apprehended its objects and, based on this dialectic encounter, demanded differentiated techniques and strategies for applying sovereign, disciplinary, and biopolitical power. In other words, the exposure, however necessary, of biopolitics’ scandalous necropolitical mode easily draws attention from the code-switching aspect of power. Knowing when and where to insist on a certain type of power and when and where to relent requires a taxonomy of the objects in the field of governance, an encyclopaedia of modes of stimulus, possible vectors, and likely responses. Such indexation is only becomes possible by establishing essential characteristics.

Hence Gotō’s pithy description of youth which began this section and why he found it so useful with regard to the seinendan. The explication of youth’s essential nature was what allowed him to theorize an appropriate balance of powers for the seinendan and so to move beyond the apparent contradiction between intervention and self-governance. For Gotō, youth was a physical reality that the education system had to accommodate, and he organized his typology of pedagogy accordingly. “First and foremost,” he declared, “youth is to burgeon [seishun]. You must never forget that their blood is surging [chi no waite iru].” Collectively, the “evolution of youth’s thought is extraordinarily intense….Regardless of the whether the trends of the times [yo no naka no fūchō] are for good or evil, they follow right behind….If youth are already caught up in bad currents, it is too late to stop them. You must always pay
attention to the movement of their hearts, and nip things in the bud [hōga] if they threaten to descend into an egregiously evil way.”

Individually, “[t]heir knowledge and experience are not sufficient to let them be autonomous and independent [jishu dokuritsu]. Yet, brazenly [namaiki ni], they want us to treat them as such. It is necessary to guide them on the understanding that they are in this transitional zone [kato no iki].”

Thus, inculcation (ta-iku) was fine for children, but there had to be a shift to practical self-education (ji-iku) in order to accommodate (if only to ultimately control) the volatility of youth’s personalities and ambitions.

Seinendan enthusiasts argued that this kind of education could best be obtained through youth associations because the environment provided thereby—that is, a structured outlet for the desire for autonomy and independence—was in many ways more suited to the developmental (scientifically sanctioned) reality of youth than that of standard schooling. Being composed of youth, the seinendan were “organizations whose members brim with vitality [kakki no ōitsu shite iru]. You all know the nature [seijō] of youth well enough that I need not tell you. If they are indiscriminately burdened with restrictions, they will rebel [midari ni sokubaku wo kuwaerareru to kaette hanpatsu shiyō to suru]. One cannot attempt to control them in every little detail [komakai tokoro made] according to standardized rules and criteria [ittei no kikujunjō de]. Inevitably, they have to be given a certain degree of freedom [aru teido no jiyū].”

“A certain degree of freedom” distills the logic of the seinendan to its essence. Structurally speaking, the well-led youth association provided a space of freedom relative to the inculcatory logic of the classroom. But this was a calculated move, for disciplinary strictures were not removed entirely, but loosened to the point where their role in structuring one’s environment faded into the distance and, as we saw in the previous chapter in Gotō’s explication of organizational power, became hard to distinguish from the immediate social dynamics of the group. The logic of the iron maiden, in which the slightest slackening of posture is sharply corrected by limits hovering
threateningly just beyond the body’s contours, is replaced by the logic of the terrarium, in which one is free to experience growth within an enclosure magnanimous by comparison.

The difference is that which separates pouring something into a mould from having it self-assemble into the desired shape. In the latter, the traces of the formative environment are less visible and, crucially, experienced from within as having been not just free from coercion, but as self-actualization and agency. When top-down guidance and intervention percolate through the spontaneous equilibrium dynamics internal to a social group, their origin is obscured even as it results in intervention at a higher resolution than would be possible without the intermediary step. External constraint can actually be experienced as subjective agency because at this level it is transmitted through an environment that appears natural. Unconscious conformity or mimicry may thus underlie what consciously experienced as assertive acts. The terrarium is quite an apt analogy Gotō’s vision of the seinendan, for as a self-contained miniature ecosystem it embodies nurturing, freedom from overt coercion (excepting occasional light pruning), and local self-regulation, while also being a form of quarantine, that is, a means of circumscribing independent self-management within limits that, from the inside, are only minimally perceptible as such.

The logic of inculcation might be likened to that of topiary, in which an external actor imposes and maintains a particular shape. Growth that exceeds the defined boundaries is pared back immediately, but what goes on under the surface—the pattern of branch growth—is of secondary importance to external conformity. The logic of Gotō’s seinendan, on the other hand, more closely resembles that of espalier, in which a framework is provided to channel growth in the desired directions. Here the pattern of internal branching is everything; superficial conformity is not enough. Constant attention is required in both cases, but with the former the logic of intervention is drastically invasive whereas with the latter it is discerningly minimal, though the resulting transformation can prove just as remarkable and, what is more, radically
inherent. Importantly, the gaze of the intervener and the subjective experience of the intervened upon are fundamentally different. One sees an ideal form to be carved out from raw material, from whose perspective the intervention is experienced as reductive or injurious. The other, by contrast, envisions and lays out a developmental course; their logic is anticipatory encouragement, not reactive reduction. Moreover, the subject experiences its growth as an expansion that encounters more gentle pressure than sharp checks and therefore has neither reason to suspect nor the perspective to understand how structured its growth really is. The intervention is dispersed across the environmental horizon rather than being a sharp curtailment. For Foucault, this was one of the essential features of the art of biopolitical government.\(^9\) Up to a certain intensity of application, the direct mode may compliment the indirect, but thereafter it becomes counterproductive. This is the crucial point. The success of either method depends entirely on the nature of the organism. In Gotō’s pedagogy, the transition from inculcation to self-education was dictated by what he and others like him considered to be the nature of youth (as described above). Youth would simply not respond well to excessive intervention. Their nature was an elemental property that had to be worked around because head-on opposition would prove at best ineffective and at worst disastrous.\(^7\)

\(^{9}\) C.f. Foucault’s above block quote (marked by endnote 22), especially on “the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes which it directs.” See also Society Must Be Defended, 245: “Biopolitics’ last domain is...control over relations between he human race...and their environment, the milieu in which they live.” Foucault was speaking here of natural and man-made physical environments, but the concept is easily extended to the immaterial environment of group dynamics, the environment of organizational power described by Gotō. In Terror from the Air (Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2009), German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk associates the twentieth century in particular with the “explication” of the environment, that is, “the revealing-inclusion of the background givens underlying manifest operations.” He illustrates the “discovery of the environment” by the gas attacks first employed during WWI. Essentially, this is the “transition from classical warfare to terrorism.” “Soldiers on both sides had rendered themselves so inaccessible to the bullets and explosives intended for them that the problem of atmospheric war could not but become pressing.” Thus, “the attacker is forced to make [the target’s] continued existence impossible by [the latter’s] direct immersion into an unlivable milieu.” In this, the very “fact of the living organism’s immersion in a breathable milieu arrives at the level of formal representation, bringing the climactic and atmospheric conditions pertaining to human life to a new level of explication.” Gotō’s vision for education through the seinendan represented a more subtle application of environmental explication, in that its aim was not to annihilate, but to modify behaviour. In either case, the logic consists in enveloping the target “for a long enough period...until he falls victim to his natural breathing reflex.” Gotō’s “gas” was formative social pressures and cues, i.e., organizational power.

\(^{7}\) It is interesting to consider this point in relation to Foucault’s observation that “the art of government, instead of seeking to found itself in transcendental rules, a cosmological model or a philosophico-moral ideal, must find the principles of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state.” See ibid., 97. While “philosophico-moral” ideals certainly accrued around youth, they became, as I argue below, rooted in visions of scientific reality.
This is why it is important to discuss the spectrum of immaturity, rather than focusing exclusively on the logic of its binary opposition to so-called maturity. However much they are constructs, the categories of childhood and youth must, to a certain extent, be taken at face value because of the real work they have done to structure strategies for intervention in the social body. They have determined the contours of the interface between power, whether institutional or discursive, and the individual subject. The distinctions between childhood and youth became an essential technology for governmentality because they could provide answers to the questions of when and where to apply what kind of intervention.

The Genealogy of Youth and Self-Education

I have taken Gotō as an example because he was clearly an important conduit between conceptions youth, the seinendan, and the ideology of the later DNRS. Let us now turn to the discursive environment in which his ideas were embedded. Of course, the significance of seinen is inseparable from the larger idea of modern development in that it began to be articulated during the mid-Meiji period as an alternative, civilized ideal for youth: “During the late 1870s and early 1880s, the heyday of the Movement for Freedom and Popular Rights, many students entered public space as activists or shock troops for the new political parties[.]” Known as sōshi (and to Basil Hall Chamberlain as “juvenile agitators”), these youths, as well as political activism, fell out of favour with the waning of the Movement, but inspired in public discourse the construction of eponymous figures of ruffians who “distinguished themselves not by a specific political ideology but by a particular style. They wore torn clothes and high geta sandals, carried thick clubs or staffs, let their hair grow long, and hunched their shoulders in a menacing manner.”37 The word sōshi came to refer to “juvenile agitators” only by way of its primary
meaning (as found in the *Nihon kokugo daijiten*), “gallant or spirited man,” which later gave rise to a secondary meaning: “a man in the prime of life” (*sōnen*).

This word was used in Japan from at least the seventh century and does not explicitly refer to age; in this respect, it resembles the term *wakamono*. As demonstrated in Chapter One, *wakamono* were frequently involved in riots and gang violence, a legacy that easily fed into Meiji-period discourse on juvenile delinquency.38 Against the foil provided by *wakamono*, the new concept of *seinen* was:

advanced by writers such as Tokutomi Soho [1863-1957].…Drawing on (and modifying) the writings of Herbert Spencer, Tokutomi argued that Japan was following an inexorable, global pattern of evolution from a military society toward an industrial-commercial “commoner” society. He recognized that "student youth" had been principal agents in major historic events such as the Meiji Restoration, but warned that their energy was extremely dangerous. The *sōshi* represented this “destructive” political practice of the “old” Japan; in contrast, the new, constructive phase of Japanese history required that *seinen* educate and discipline themselves to become “youth of the nineteenth-century civilized world.” For Japan's aspiring elites, in other words, youth was a period of preparation and the husbanding of one's energies.

The word “*seinen*” itself had existed in the late eighteenth century, but it was not common. It gained traction in large part thanks to Tokutomi’s 1887 publication *Shin-Nihon no seinen*, in which he advanced the above ideas. The prominent Christian Kozaki Hiromichi (1856-1938), who founded Japan’s first YMCA in 1880, claimed his translating “Young Men’s” as *seinen* was the first use of the term in that sense. True or not, the link with youth associations was made early on, and it became widely used among Christians, which is likely how Tokutomi came across it.1 He described *seinen* as friends of progress (*shinpo no hōyū*) and the vanguard of the age (*jidai no sentōsha*), and emphasized independence of spirit (*seishin no dokuritsu*).
Naturally, this discourse was bolstered by easy analogies to the relative youth of the Meiji period itself and the fact that so many of the revolutionaries had been young men.

Similarly, these moral connotations surrounding seinen fused readily with discourses of self-actualization, especially as required by the capitalist nation-state. The 1871 translation of the English author Samuel Smiles’s enormously popular *Self-Help* (*saikoku risshi hen*) by Nakamura Keiu—a Confucian scholar who also studied Western works and was, at the behest of the Tokugawa bakufu, in England at the time of the Meiji Restoration—was a resounding best-seller and circulated far and wide, becoming a favorite of Meiji leaders and intellectuals. Smiles stressed a character ethic, in which “accomplishment and advancement were the products primarily of individual virtues of character: hard work, diligence, frugality, perseverance, attention to detail, and so forth. Developing these virtues was a task for the individual himself, and they and his performance were depicted as the sole factors determining achievement and advancement. The character ethic did not rely on any mechanisms outside the individual[,]” which allows us to appreciate how much thinking on the *seinendan* contributed to explicating the role that the small group could play in fostering its virtues.\(^1\)

To an important extent, the new principle of self-help could be approached through the virtues, such as personal advancement (*risshin shusse*) and frugality, espoused in moral treatises popular among samurai during the Edo-period. While character ethic could be described as an enterprise of the self, Smiles and Nakamura did not really challenge the samurai class bias against commerce and physical labour; they illustrated the virtues of character and advancement primarily through examples of effective military and

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\(^1\) Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man*, 12-13. This emphasis on the individual is likely behind a common misreading of Smiles as an advocate of base materialism. Also, though the individual reigned supreme in his text, Smiles evidently did not disavow the group. In fact, *Self-Help* grew out of a series of lectures Smiles “gave in 1845 to a mutual study group organized by young workmen in the city of Leeds.”
governmental management (even as he made liberal use of *Self-Help*, Tokutomi sought to dismantle its bias by bringing honest, practical labour of all kinds under the umbrella of the kind of “commoner” virtue that he tied to his concept of seinen). As might be expected, therefore, Smilesian values and rhetoric suffused the culture of competitive pursuit of higher education, the goal of which was admission to (and thereafter advancement within) the bureaucratic ranks of corporations, government, and academia. Additionally, the discourse of self-help also shared significant conceptual ground with the long-standing, widely diffused Confucian ethic of self-cultivation, the vocabulary of which aided Nakamura in his translation. Undermining the “black and white contrast of an individualistic tradition versus a collectivistic tradition[,]” “Smiles, Nakamura, and late Tokugawa activists all regarded the individual as the unit of performance and achievement.”

However, unlike these earlier forms, modern self-help discourse was also explicitly popularized and politicized by the state. During the 1870s, *Saikoku risshi hen* was distributed as an ethics text by the Ministry of Education along with a series of woodcut prints illustrating its parables so that even small children could digest the message. Education and learning were held up as a universal duty, not just the province of a select few. Moreover, in *Saikoku risshi hen*, there was “an immediacy and concreteness…that was lacking in Tokugawa writers[, who] had had to make their assertions as pure abstractions or link them to Sage-Kings and mythic Japanese or Chinese Kingdoms. Smiles explained the wealth and power of the far more real British world presence and offered a promise of similar prosperity through the generalization of the values in *Self-Help*."

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* Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man*, 33. Nishimura Shigeki, who later cast aspersions on the *wakashù* (see Chapter One), effusively praised the text and avidly consumed translations of Smiles’s other works.
After the dwindling of the popular rights movement, enterprise (jitsugyō) became the buzzword for personal advancement, in part as “a temporary outlet for frustrated ambitions for political risshin.” The term naturally fell into this role due to its association with commercial expansion and wealth accumulation, and contemporary observers noted a veritable enterprise fever; but those who used it most effusively (educational ladder climbers) did not actually alter their narrow goals (the bureaucracy) or methods (study): business schools actually faced low enrollment and enterprise was discussed more as an ethic than in relation to actual engagement in business. In this context, the term was thus a hollow discursive fad. But the moral connotations thrust thereby upon jitsugyō (and a more general term associated with business, jigyō, “purposeful action”) proved more durable: the LIM lectures insisted above all on the seinendan’s special role in introducing youth to concrete, practical (jicchi) activity.

Far from being empty rhetoric, this vision of the seinendan was based on observations of enterprise, broadly conceived, that was being put into practice at the local level. As we saw last chapter, Gotō emphasized that it was not about merely providing skills, but rather a comprehensive education for becoming a self-managing individual. A great part of the seinendan movement’s significance lies in having filled in the capacious, but unsubstantiated enterprise rhetoric of the urban culture of educational competition with practical action. It provided an alternate “career path” for personal advancement outside the narrow spectrum of secondary education, while promoting seinen as a culture of striving for goals and methodical self-improvement: as Gotō put it, self-education, an exercise of personal will, was an imperative that “each individual must never neglect, whether as a school pupil or even after having come to lead an independent life. A life of learning until death!”
These imperatives, along with the practical educational methodology that was theorized for the seinendan in the LIM lectures, were adopted and elaborated into the DNRS organizational program as a vision for holistic and, uniquely, collective enterprise of the self:

Numerous and varied as the kinds of work each [seinendan] undertakes are, its objectives may be epitomised as (1) elevating the level of general culture of youths, (2) augmenting their capacity as working men, (3) developing their “public” competency as natives of the soil and as members of the nation, with a view to preparing themselves for the greater work in future. Needless to say, the central idea of loyalty towards the Emperor runs consistently through all these channels.

However, it must be borne in mind that a young men's league is not merely a body of those who are to be educated, but one in which the members themselves teach each other or rather an institute of what may rightly be termed “mutual education”. It is needless to say that all members are yet young and consequently they need good guardians and leaders, who, however, are quite different from ordinary school masters in many respects. It is a desirable thing that everything the Seinendan does should be done through the corporate life of the youths, and that both the system and the operations of a young men's league should be in accord with the natural development of fraternal spirit among them.

There are two most important things that demand [sic] their special attention…, namely, (1) each member should always be original in his daily life, (2) he should conscientiously shoulder his own responsibility for the collective life of the association. These two guiding principles are embodied in the slogans of "One research for one man" and "One job for one man" …, with a result that a great number of young people have come to be engaged in some research work or another in accordance with their special interest in their respective occupations. It is also urged that as many members in a body as possible be engaged in a concrete form of duty, big or small as one of the collective league operations. In this manner, young men's moral and technical training as faithful workers is carried on in every department of the association.

In short, it is ideal for a young men's league to develop self-governing spirit through the cultivation of mutual friendship, to achieve good enterprises through the attainment of good self-government, and to elevate and deepen fraternal sentiments by cooperating in these works, while, at the same time, trying to improve the character and wisdom of each member, and for each one to learn his own occupational technique in the meantime.44

Gotō prefigured these developments in his lectures generally, but never more compactly than in a 1916 formula: “youth is a kind of societal enterprise [shakaiteki jigyō].” From this germ could be derived the relationship between the group and the individual, the role of the seinendan in society, both the need for leadership and the imperative of self-governance, and, of course, the significance of youth for the nation.

These moral imperatives of seinen were not discursively sutured to the bodies of young people simply by way of loose analogy between the virtues required for self-advancement and the acceleration of the biological process of maturation. But on the basis of this general concept, social commentators, reformers, and experts in a variety of scientific and technical fields, sought
to instantiate, police, and flesh out the boundaries of seinen by distinguishing its chronological, behavioural, and moral characteristics from those of young children. As we have seen above, real young people in a broad age range were not considered ready for true independent self-management, however much they might desire it. Through the seinendan, the forms and practices of full maturity were to be rehearsed in miniature, as a kind of serious play, and independence granted in a quarantined environment. Nevertheless, these had to be offered, because it was the nature of youth to reach for them.

Even as discourse of self-help helped structure seinen as a moral concept, the emerging field of youth psychology was instrumental in making legible the mental and bodily nature of real, living seinen. If self-help made a powerful set of values available for the seinendan movement to couch its mission in, then youth psychology provided the schema for constructing a mission strategy. To illustrate, let us turn to a lengthy survey written in 1910 by Tsukahara Masaji, an early popularizer of the subject and later a principal of the Tokyo Higher School and president of Hiroshima Normal School (now Hiroshima University). Early on in his monograph, Tsukahara made explicit the utilitarian value of youth psychology (kono gaku no ōyō) as a discipline fundamentally underwritten by an understanding that “only by attaining a thoroughgoing knowledge of the special characteristics of the ‘educatee’s’ body and mind can we begin to carry out a complete education,” whether secondary, polytechnic, or military.45

Moreover, the results of psychological research were “necessary not just for academia,” but indispensable for “real society” (jissai shakai), whether the “conveniences and advantages” (bengi) achieved thereby were put to use by leaders of youth associations in the prefectures, or factory and store managers who employed young men and women. * Youth psychology thus held

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* Tsukahara’s explicit reference to rural youth associations (kinrai fuken ni sakan ni bokkō shikuru seinenkai) shows the attention the movement had attracted and, crucially, a consciousness of what kind of portrayal of youth psychology would likely appeal to prominent figures therein.
the promise of new and better new tools for political governance and smooth socio-economic management because, as Tsukahara’s claims imply, it could be applied to a wide swath of the population, regardless of geographic or occupational context. Naturally, this applicability derived from youth’s essential characteristics, which youth psychologists’ findings explicated. Tsukahara proceeded to weave these data into a schematic description of seinen.

Citing French, German, and American theorists, Tsukahara tacked a couple years onto the upper limit of the ages they gave for youth, defining seinen as the period from age fourteen or fifteen (i.e., puberty) to twenty-five. He began his discussion of its characteristics by deterministically grounding the most overarching of them—the volatility of developmental liminality—in the body: “[Y]outh is a transitory period of trying to move from childhood to the prime of life [sōnen] and is accordingly dangerous and highly mercurial. The cause of this is entirely corporeal, lying in the body’s vigorous efflorescence” (shintai no hatsuiku no ōsei naru ga tame). Therefore, young people’s imaginations, as another special characteristic, “become extremely active, but of course, like children, they lack experience and are prone to fantasies far removed from reality [jissai yori tōzakaru kūsō ga sakan de arimasu]. In thought, they tend to rash decisions, generally lacking the capacity for deliberation. They easily become suspicious of others, not believing what they say.” Rather like a laboratory technician annoyed at the loss of test subjects without apparent cause, Tsukahara lamented, “[g]enerally youth are prone to emotional volatility and programmatic selfishness (shinkeishitsu nite wagamama), which

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46 Tsukahara, Seinen shinri, 21. Tsukahara gave special attention to the work of German-Russian gynecologist Carl Heinrich Stratz (1858-1924), an early pioneer of research into human growth and development who noted the precocious physical maturation of females relative to males. Tsukahara noted the results of a survey of school health and hygiene the physician Mishima Michiyoshi (1866-1925) confirmed Stratz’s work. See ibid., 23. Stratz, for his part, was deeply interested in Japan, publishing in 1902 a volume entitled Die Körperformen in Kunst und Leben der Japaner (“The Bodily Form in the Art and Life of the Japanese”), which was translated into Japanese in 1954 as Nihonjin no karada, seikatsu to geijutsu ni arawareta. On the theme of sex-based difference, Tsukahara also claimed that while males seek companionship during puberty, girls seek solitude (ibid., 29). His more interesting observation was that while menstruation clearly marks the beginning of seinen for females, with males there was no such remarkable indicator (ibid., 21). If youth psychology was to live up to the utilitarian promise Tsukahara gave it, the comparatively implicit beginning of male maturation posed a special problem for pedagogical approaches based on the supposed nature of youth: one could not be as sure about when the insights of youth psychology could be applied in this case, and thus keen observation was required.
sometimes results in extreme incidents. For example, whether in suicide or murder, they tend to regard death lightly. That would be fine if it were a patriot’s casual [lit., lighter than soft down] disregard of death for the sake of the ruler, but that is not usually the case; time and again they choose death for the stupidest, most trifling reasons.”

Tsukahara moved methodically through other markers associated with *seinen*, discussing head/body size ratios, neural development, and brain weight. Desire for strenuous exercise and development of the will accompanied skeletal-muscular growth. Idiosyncrasies of the body and personality—supposedly latently present, but softened by younger children’s “extraordinary resemblance to each other” (yōji no sōgo ni sukoburu ruiji shite iru)—increasingly became distinctly manifest, and thus made provision of “the widely called-for ‘personal education’ [kosei kyōiku] correspondingly difficult.” The similarity to Gotō’s depiction of *seinen* (see above) is striking. His explicit references to psychology and physiology made the link concrete. What is more, that fact that he could begin his 1916 lecture by “rattling off [zatto] youth’s meaning [igi]” in these terms—and with the concision that can be had only when a concept has become common-sense—shows how effectively biological deterministic thinking had adhered to the concept of *seinen*. It informed his philosophy of pedagogy as well: “extraordinary resemblance” in mind and body underwrote Gotō’s claim that that regular schooling (i.e., inculcation) sufficed for younger children, while fostering the capacity for self-education in youth was a natural response of physical idiosyncrasy and often recalcitrant mentality.

The positivist link between, on the one hand, mentality and behaviour, and, on the other, physical constitution and change, was a prominent feature of the psychology of this time.

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7 C.f. Tuskahara’s statement that “true moral action beings during youth. That is, the individuals do what is right, feeling of their own accord that it is right, only after becoming youths [seinen to natte hajimete mizukara makoto ni tadashii to kanjite tadashii koto wo nasu]. Young children [jidō], too, exhibit what must be called moral behaviour [dōtokuteki kōi], but this is due to external imitation, absorption, or authority [mohō shūkan oyobi kei’i ni yotte].” See Seinen shinri, 27.
Characteristically, Tsukahara discussed both deviancy and genius in a single chapter, “Mental Abnormalities and Delinquent Youth” (seishin no ijō oyobi furyō seinen). He presented in detail the theories of noted Italian criminologist and physician Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), a proponent of atavism and anthropometry who put down the most serious criminal behaviour to inherent abnormality—which he at first explained as an evolutionary throwback, but later as arrested development and degeneracy—but who also noted acquired biological causes and social influence for lesser offences. Actually, the difference between the idea of evolutionary throwback and arrested development was not all that large, thanks to the prevalence of theories of developmental parallelism, most famously formulated as “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny” by the prolific German naturalist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). Gotō shared these ideas, ss is evident from his thinking on the seinendan as a “miniature of the race” (see Chapter Three).

In the field of psychology, recapitulation theory found a prominent advocate in G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924), founder of the American Journal of Psychology and the first president of the American Psychological Association. Hall initiated the Child Study Movement (mentioned by Tsukahara in his discussion of investigative methodology) in the United States in the 1880s, and, even after his methods’ rigour was criticized by his colleagues, became the popular authority in the Parent Education Movement and an enthusiastic supporter of the Child Welfare Movement. The first saw perhaps 100,000 children surveyed in the mid-1890s; the second, centering around the National Congress of Mothers (which became the Parents-Teachers Association), prompted great numbers of middle-class mothers to keep developmental diaries and view child-rearing as a challenging enterprise or even a “postgraduate experience.” The third targeted lower-classes, focusing on the “elimination of undesirable social conditions that lead to negative outcomes for children.” In 1904, Hall published a 1300-page tome in two volumes entitled Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and
Education (later abridged in 1925 as Youth: Its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene), in which he famously sloganized adolescence as “storm and stress.” The staggering scope of the work clearly influenced Tsukahara attempt to provide a condensed, but similarly comprehensive picture of the state of the field. We can also, perhaps, see in Goto’s description of seinen as a time of “storm-like change” (arashi no gotoku; see above) an indication of how far Hall’s influence travelled.

In a strange mirroring of the mercurial, ambivalent potential widely attributed to youth, pragmatic, sometimes irate, evaluations of seinen (like Tsukahara’s) attained a sort of discursive balance as the idea of youth was festooned with notions of youthful prowess, studiousness, and entrepreneurship—the vocabulary of self-help discourse. One can see how the pathological understanding of seinen lends itself to the dismissal of non-normative behaviour, whether labelled as undesirable politics or mere delinquency: if the cause of undesirable behaviour is absolutely physical and inherent to a transitory period, there is no need to grant it the legitimacy of serious consideration on equal terms. Youth’s ambiguous potential, which implied a need for careful intervention if things were to turn out right, fell into a feedback loop with what psychologists, through men like Tsukahara, were saying about the nature of seinen: youth’s seemingly capricious behaviour (the prevalence of which was often blown out of proportion in popular consciousness of delinquency) became legible through discourse on the “special characteristics” of youth; at the same time, that behaviour, real or imagined, could be taken to confirm the authority of psychological and other developmental theories.

However, the liminality of the category itself was useful, for it could be used mark the immaturity as well as to celebrate the vigour of growth as the physical incarnation of the values of vigorous, unrelenting personal development and advancement that self-help discourse. This portrayal of Japan as an organism fervently striving forward in its very flesh intensified during the
1930s: “The foundations of our patriotism originate in our desire to live (*seikatsuyoku*), and our life flourishes through this patriotism. Life is love of one’s country and vice versa. Put simply, self-interest is altruism. We might also say to love our body is to love our family; to love our family is to love our native place; to love our native place is to love our nation; to love our nation is to love all of humanity…In sum, the self is united with the world.” Ultimately, the shared genealogy of self-education and *seinen* allowed the DNRS to claim that the *seinendan* “do not operate as departments under direct control of a government office, the principle that [they] belong to nobody but the young men being strictly held to by the leaders. Moreover, they believe that this makes it exceedingly effective to combine closer than ever, or rather identify, the corporate life of a local young men’s league with the spontaneous life of an autonomous body.”
Conclusion

Chapter Two ended in 1905 with the Home and Education Ministry order for the survey of youth associations. By way of conclusion, here I sketch the main developments in the seinendan movement over twenty years until the DNRS was formally established in 1925. As was mentioned previously, it was not until 1915 that the national government issued any kind of public order pertaining to the organization and management of youth associations. In the intervening decade, however, seinendan continued to spread due to the efforts of local intermediaries, and the bureaucracy continued its engagement with the matter. In 1906, the Education Ministry issued an internal report on the state of youth associations, while Home Minister Hara issued instructions on the guidance of youth associations at the meeting of prefectural governors (chihō chōkan kaigi; the contents of his address were distributed as a pamphlet to all county heads in Japan). In similar veins, Education Minister Makino and the new Home Minister (Hirata, who presided over the first LIM lectures) addressed the same assembly in 1907 and 1908 respectively. In 1909, the Home Ministry’s Local Affairs Bureau published pamphlet (entitled Chihō jichi to seinenkai), which gave examples of model youth associations.¹

¹910 was a watershed year for the seinendan movement. Kubota Yuzuru raised the issue of youth associations in the House of Peers (see Chapter Three; not satisfied with the response, he made other attempts in 1911 and 1912). Education Minister Komatsubara honoured eighty-two youth associations for excellence in supplementary education, which was the first time the government had given formal public recognition to the seinendan.² Shortly thereafter, the Aichi Prefectural Youth Association hosted a national youth convention (zenkoku seinen taikai), where Komatsubara and the Deputy Home Minster gave speeches and the assembly resolved on key
objectives for implementation and twelve guidelines for youth associations.¹ 1910 was also the year that General Tanaka Giichi, a protégé of Yamagata Aritomo, established the Imperial Reservists’ Association (teikoku zaigō gunjinkai). Reservists’ associations had been active before this time, but were organized on a local basis, much like the early youth associations. Tanaka’s organization, therefore, was to reservists what the DNRS would become to rural youth. In the following years, Tanaka worked assiduously to cement the roots of his organization in the countryside, which would exert a great influence on the seinendan movement from around 1914-1915. In the meantime, however, the Home and Education Ministries continued to issue awards to outstanding seinendan and organized new surveys.

In 1914 Tanaka left on a tour of Europe and America “to investigate reservist and youth groups.” He had had reasonable success with his reservist association in the countryside, but sought a way to promote it in urban areas as well. He found his answer in Germany: “the German Chief of Staff, Erich von Falkenhayn, lectured Tanaka on the efficacy of factory branches. Tanaka reported Falkenhayn as saying that Germany's military strength was based partly on the spiritual and industrial strength gained from organizing reservist branches in the nation's factories. The German general believed that soldier workers worked harder, produced more, and obeyed the factory's rules more often than their nonmilitary coworkers.”³ Prior to his trip, Tanaka had been focused on the growth of the reservist organization and had not really considered the role the seinendan might play in furthering his goals. Also in Germany, however, Tanaka had the chance to observe youth associations, which apparently impressed him so deeply

¹ Hirayama, Seinenshūdanshi, 14. Gluck Japan’s Modern Myths, 199 describes this event as the “All-Japan Youth Association Meeting,” but no such organization existed in 1910. The gathering was a convention, not a plenary meeting of a formally established organization.
“that he thought it advisable to reorganize the existing Young Men’s Associations in Japan along German lines of organization and control.”

Armed with these new visions and protocols for his great project of shoring up the foundations of national strength, Tanaka “returned from Europe in 1914 convinced not only of the need for reservist factory branches, but also for a centralized youth association oriented toward nationalistic and physical education.” He contacted Yamamoto Takinosuke (see Chapter Two) and:

Tadokoro Miharu, a division chief in the Education Ministry and reservist association adviser, [who] also believed that a youth association could complement the educational system if it were used to propagate patriotic ideals and increase the health and physical conditioning of teenagers. These two men in turn acted as intermediaries between Tanaka and the appropriate cabinet ministers in the Ōkuma Shigenobu government of the time. These ministers, Home Minister Ōura Kanetake, and Education Minister Ichiki Kitokurō, both of whom were among Yamagata's closest civilian followers, agreed with Tanaka's ideas about youth groups....Tanaka persuaded Tadokoro, who soon became Vice Minister of Education, to serve as a zaigō gunjinkai adviser and frequent contributor to Comrades in Arms, the reservist monthly, and Ichiki to write in that magazine on youth group-reservist relations.4

In 1915, the back-channeling of this group resulted in the issuing of the first public guidelines for Japan’s seinendan from the central government:

1) Organization of Youth Associations: youth associations are to be organized for persons who have finished compulsory education in their district, or persons of equivalent age, and are no older than twenty.

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4 Kumagai, “The Japan Young Men’s Associations,” 902. Tanaka was not the first prominent Japanese state personage to take notice of Western youth associations. General Nogi, (in)famous for his role in the Russo-Japanese war, was apparently impressed by the activities of the Boy Scouts when he accompanied an Imperial family member to London for the coronation of George V. There he had the chance to meet Baron Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts. In his 1930 History of Japanese Youth (see Chapter One), Nakayama Tarō claimed that Baden-Powell was surprised that Nogi did not know the origins of the Boy Scouts, since they were organized based on research into the strengths of Satsuma-han’s kenji no shia, a kind of educational association for young Satuma retainers during the late Edo period (see Nakayama, Nihon wakamono-shi, 2). The story is almost certainly apocryphal, but it does illustrate well an understanding of Japan as a seminal contributor to a global phenomenon of youth groups.

5 Smethurst, A Social Basis, 27 describes this as a “joint order to establish a national youth group headquarters,” but there is no such reference to a headquarters in either the text of joint prefatory statement put out by the Home and Education Ministries nor the body of the guidelines itself. The original texts are reproduced in full in Kumagai, Dai Nihon seinendanshi, 199-200 (appendix). Tanaka and his allies did establish a youth department in the Central Virtue Society (chūō hōtokukai seinenbu) in 1916 (the Hōtokukai “had been founded by progressive landlords in the early Meiji period. Invoking the example of the Tokugawa agricultural moralist Ninomiya Sontoku, they encouraged technical improvements and the repayment of virtue [hōtoku] through honesty, diligence, and mutual cooperation. The Home Ministry began to support these societies in 1903 [...]” encouraged the formation of additional local societies and...gathered them together under a central organization, the Hōtokukai, in 1906. See Gluck, Japan’s Modern Myths, 190-191). In any case, the chūō hōtokukai seinenbu soon split off as an independent organization renamed “Youth Association Headquarters” (seinendan chūōbu), which seems to be the basis for Smethurst’s reference to a headquarters and Gluck’s to a “National Youth Association” (ibid., 199). However, Kumagai tells us that this was “not ‘national’ in the exact sense of the word and did not function as such.” Of course, he did not disavow the work of the earlier organization, but did emphasize that it “was taken over, systematized, and largely widened in scope by the [DNRS].” See Kumagai, “The Japan Young Men’s Associations,” 899.
2) Boundaries of Youth Associations: youth associations shall take their administrative subdivision as their area of operations. However, according to local conditions, they may operate or establish branches on the basis of buraku or school route boundaries.

3) Instructors of Youth Associations: instructors of youth associations shall be a primary school principle or the head of the local administrative unit, or else a notable person associated therewith; in this case, the most appropriate persons for this role are as follows: members of the local administrative unit, school employees, police officers, reservists, Shinto or Buddhist priests, or any person recognized as having the necessary earnestness of demeanor.

4) Upkeep of Youth Associations: funds necessary for the running of youth associations must be earned through the labour of their members.

Tanaka’s interests were clearly manifest in the age limit, for twenty was the age of conscription and he wanted to have a neat and smooth transition between youth associations, military service, and the reservist association. The age limit became a point of serious contention, since an upper age limit, as discussed in Chapter One, was not an issue for many seinendan based around former wakashū. As such, many local communities ignored the new regulations. Moreover, seizing upon the age of twenty as evidence, “[m]any civilians in the Home and Education Ministries, but particularly in the press and the lower house of the Diet, believed Tanaka's goal was the militarization of Japanese youth.” To diffuse the situation, he publicly disavowed any “intention of making youths into soldiers or giving them military preparatory training as in Russia or in France. The order clearly states that our goal is to make youths into healthy future citizens…[T]he seinendan is not a work organization, not a research organization, not an organization to aid in production, but an association for building character.”

This was, of course, disingenuous in the extreme. Tanaka’s motives were clear, and the developments of the 1930s seem to put the lie to the language of self-cultivation (shūyō) that featured so prominently in the statement that accompanied the guidelines. Here we run into the argument of obvious duplicity which was mentioned in the introduction, and to which I will

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4 Smethurst, A Social Basis, 33. The concerns of Tanaka’s skeptics in the bureaucracy would also have grown out of institutional rivalries, not necessarily out of opposition to militarization per se. The Navy, for one, initially refused to participate in the Reservists’ Association for fear that it would essentially become a lobby group for the Army, allowing it to secure a greater share of the budget. See ibid., 19.

5 Quoted in Smethurst, A Social Basis, 33-34. Kumagai’s paraphrasing of Tanaka’s denial asks the reader to make an essentially non-existent distinction: “the Government had no intention whatever to make [the seinendan] a medium for training to become soldiers…but was anxious to train [them] to become useful members of the State” (Kumagai, “The Japan Young Men’s Associations,” 901). In 1920 the government finally relented and formally de-regulated the age limits, leaving them to local judgement.
return below. In any case, in the years following WWI, the *seinendan* movement accelerated rapidly. During the construction of Meiji Shrine (1919-1920) to honour the deceased emperor, more than three hundred youth associations (totaling some 300,000 individual members) contributed money and labour to the project. Representatives from these associations were permitted to pay special homage at the shrine immediately following the dedication ceremony in November 1920, and only a month later the Crown Prince (Hirohito), along with the Home and Education Ministers, received them at his Takanawa residence for a personal message emphasizing the youth associations’ importance to national development.

This recognition set off a campaign to establish a central headquarters, which apparently was funded by single-yen donations from each of the 2,254,820 members enrolled in youth associations throughout Japan (the process of tying local *seinendan* into successively larger administrative units, as described in Chapter Two, had continued over the fifteen years since the Russo-Japanese War). The building was completed in Tokyo in October 1921, and, around this new centre, the DNRS was organized over six months beginning in October 1924. The inauguration ceremony was held in Nagoya (the site of the first national youth convention) in April 1925,\(^6\) and later that year the Imperial Household made a massive donation of 750,000 yen to the DNRS and a further 100,000 specifically for the headquarters.\(^6\)

The Army was not idle during this time. Around the same time the DNRS was being established, Tanaka’s successor as Army Minister, General Ugaki, began to press hard for the establishment of youth training centres (*seinen kunrenjo*) in order to expose youth to the supposed physical and mental benefits of military drill. Only a year after the DNRS was inaugurated, his efforts were successful:

\[^{6}\text{At the time of the inauguration, there were approximately 16,000 local youth associations that made up the base of the DNRS. See Sakata, } Yuasa karuchai-shi, 140.\]
According to the April 20, 1926 order establishing the centers, and several subsequent Education and Army Ministry orders, local communities were required to set up and finance four year schools for the 80 percent of the Japanese male youths who did not continue with higher education after completing compulsory education. These young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty, the majority of whom simultaneously held jobs or labored on their families' farms, received eight hundred hours of education, including four hundred of military drill and one hundred of ethical education, over a period of four years in the new centers. Although the Education Ministry alone had official jurisdiction over the youth training centers, the army's influence was inescapable. Reservists directed the 400 hours of drill, provided 40,000 of the 110,000 teachers, and the army's regimental area commanders had the duty to inspect annually the state of the student's military proficiency. From 1926 on, the army worked through both organizations. It used the centers for military drill and patriotic training and the youth association branches for broader military, physical, and patriotic training, to maintain army-community ties, and thus to recruit students for the youth training centers.⁷

Ten years later, these youth centres were merged with the network of supplementary schools (jitsugyō hoshū gakkō; see Chapter Two) to form “Youth Schools” (seinēn gakkō). The DNRS claimed that its organization and these new schools “are not competitive, but on the contrary are complementary,” and, further, that its executive membership was closely linked with that of the schools.⁸ By 1943, eighty percent of Japanese sixteen- to twenty-year-olds participated in the youth schools, and “provided a large part of the labor in Japan's factories in the closing two years of the war.”⁹

Given these developments, how can the language of independence and self-management that suffused the LIM lectures and later DNRS ideology be understood as anything other than duplicitous? As noted in the introduction, my aim is not to deny the importance of the military machinations, especially in light of how thoroughly militarism has dominated the globe in the early twenty-first century and how complex and sophisticated have become the public relations campaigns and economic leverage of the arms industry, which the military-industrial complex uses to justify their massive budgetary appropriations and to cultivate popular devotion. Yet however much duplicity and propaganda deserve to be unmasked, understanding the history of the seinendan entirely in these terms is insufficient. In the first place, it presumes a monolithic and teleological drive to militarization against which the language of self-advancement and independence becomes mere fluff that we can simply strip away to reveal the true nature of the
past, as if that language was not inextricably enmeshed in and constitutive of that past. The story of the subordination of the seinendan (and Japanese society generally) to the military is partially blind to the consequences of using such language, the variety therein, and the ways in which points of tension—between militarization and independence, intervention and self-governance, group and individual—were negotiated and resolved thereby for both state and local actors.

Focusing on obvious duplicity may actually distract from the question of why how the language of independent self-management had to be used. It was not simply lipstick on the pig of militarism. Such discourse was more than an echo chamber of Orwellian group-think and doublespeak within which was maintained an illusion that cast subordination as freedom. It was also a calculated response to the problem of what the nature of youth was understood to be. Even as they intervened in and helped shape the concept of youth, the figures in the seinendan movement did not stand above the discursive space constituted by seinen. The LIM lecturers’ presentations were sincere efforts to think through the problems of guidance and self-governance. This fact did not diminish the manipulative theory and exercise of power that went into nationalizing the seinendan. Gotō Fumio, who articulated his 1916 presentation against the background of the new guidelines, is a case in point. He demonstrated a sophisticated and highly instrumental understanding of organizational power.

Yet, I would argue, it was the fact of having to think through the tension between intervention and self-governance, of having to work around the significations that accrued around the sign of seinen that produced the keenness of his vision. Serious engagement with concrete, yet discursively constituted problems, not simply dreaming up a duplicitous ideology pleasing to the ear, sharpened, and, most importantly, explicated the mechanisms of manipulation that could be brought to bear on the problem of youth. Even given a sound and compelling analysis of how political and institutional power formations suture themselves into
the social body through organizational and financial strategies, claiming obvious duplicity can disincentivize serious discursive analysis of ideology and the historical context that shaped it. It would be as if the difference in “make live” can only be described in shades of “let die”. At worst, duplicity feeds into an Othering whereby historical persons, indeed, whole historical moments, become dupes juxtaposed against the rationality of the retrospective observers of that history, as if the latter were somehow immune to deception. Much of the ideology of youth and independent self-management had common currency across modernity. The grammar and tropes of the dynamic relationship that I have described in this thesis between subordination, independence, and the self were quintessentially modern, not essentially Japanese. Moreover, domination and freedom have been, and remain today, as inextricably linked as the fundamental biopolitical calculus of “make live” and “let die”.
Endnotes

Introduction

2 Ibid., 14.
3 DNRS, Seinendan, 7.
5 Smethurst, A Social Basis, xiv-xv.
6 For instance, see David R. Ambaras, Bad Youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) and Mark A. Jones, Children as Treasures: Childhood and the Middle Class in Early Twentieth Century Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010).
7 DNRS, Seinendan, 1
8 Ibid., 28.

Chapter One

5 Ibid., 474.
7 Quoted in ibid., 69.
9 For these observations on Yanagita’s position and influence, see Hirayama, Seinen shūdan-shi, 66-69.
10 Ibid., 69.
11 See ibid., 66-67


Ibid., 41-58.

Ibid., 92. Original emphasis.

Hirayama, *Seinen shūdan-shi*, 123.


See chapter four in Hirayama, *Seinen shūdan-shi*.

Furukawa, *Mura no asobihi*, 245.


Ibid., 465-471.


*DNRS, Seinendan*, 1.

Ibid., 24-25.

Ibid., 26.

Iwata, *Mura no wakamono*, 16.


For examples and detailed analysis of such ordinances, see Furukawa, *Mura no asobihi*, 182-267.


Quoted in ibid., 397.

Ibid., 397. Original emphasis

Ibid., 391.

Furukawa, *Mura no asobihi*, 269-270

Ibid., 271.


Ibid., 386.

Ibid., 403.

Ibid., 388.
Chapter Two

5 Yanagita, Manners and Customs, 220.
8 Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers, 2.
9 Ibid., 76-77.
10 Ibid., 77.
11 Ibid., 78.
12 Ibid., 78.
13 Fridell, Japanese Shrine Mergers, 70
14 Ibid., 88 and 96
15 Ibid., 89-90
16 Ibid., 20.
17 Ibid., 39.
18 Ibid., 94.
19 DNRS, Seinendan, 32.
20 For this general conclusion and supporting evidence cited here, see Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 124-132.
21 Yanagita, Manners and Customs, 167 and 170
23 Unless otherwise noted, this and the following examples are taken from Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 110-132.
24 Yanagita, Manners and Customs, 168.
25 Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 128.
26 Ibid., 148.
27 Ibid., 116.
28 Ibid., 132-133.
29 Ibid., 69.
30 Ibid., 70.
33 DNRS, Seinendan, 35.
34 Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 94-95
35 Satō, Kindai nihon, 537-538.
36 Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 98-99.
37 Ibid., 74-75.
39 The support activities I mention here are as described in Iwata, Mura no Wakamono, 80-81.
41 Kumagai, Dai Nihon, 92.
42 Hirayama, Seinen shūdanshi (vol. 2), 213. See also Kumagai, Dai Nihon, 92.
43 Ibid., 211-212.
44 Ibid., 15.
45 Kumagai, Dai Nihon, 92-93.
48 Ibid., 3.
49 Ibid., 7.

**Chapter Three**

3 See Shimazu, Japanese Society, 122.
5 NCK, Chihō kairyō jigyō kōenshū (Tokyo: Hōbunkaku, 1987), 486 (kakushi no soshiki wo motte jinmin wo kun’iku shite iku).
7 NCK, Chihō kairyō, 489-490.
8 This phrasing is borrowed from Michelle Murphy, Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 13.
9 NCK, Chihō kairyō, 506 (shiite machi to mura to toshi to issho ni narō to iu hitsuyō wa nai).
11 Ibid., 224-225.
14 NCK, *Dainikai*, 227.
15 Ibid (ika naru jijō no aru ni mo kakarawazu...chōson hitotsu ni seneba naranu to iu hodo demo nakarō).
16 Ibid., 228 (yoku kao mo shiri, kokoro mo shiriatta mono wo yoriawasete koso...kiso ga kyōko ni nariuru mono de wa nai ka).
17 NCK, *Dairokkai*, 528 (chihō to iu mono to no renraku wo tsukete ikanai to chihō seinen dantai no kachi ga nai).
18 NCK, *Dainikai*, 229-230 (yahari shidō kantoku no hitsuyō wa yamanai).
19 Ibid., 231.
20 NCK, *Dairokkai*, 524-525 (chōson-nai no subete no hito ga kono seinenkai no shidōsha to iu kangaee wa hitsuyō de aru).
21 Ibid., 525 (chihō ni okimasuru kakushu no undō ni kankei wo motasenai).
22 NCK, *Dairokkai*, 529 (chihō no dantai de aru to dōji ni seinen no kaigō de arimasu).
23 Ibid., 530 (kinsetsu naru jigyō wo hitotsu futasu erande botsubotsu to ayumi wo susumete ikeba sore de jūbun).
24 Ibid., 527.
25 Ibid., 529.
26 Ibid., 529.
28 NCK, *Dainanakai*, 311 (korekara donna seinen wo tsukureba kono daiteikoku nihon no seinen to shite tatte ikeru de arō ka to iu ten wo kankyaku shite iku de arumai ka...wareware ga ima kenkyū shimasu nihon seinen no to iu mono wo dō iu yō ni shimukete ikanakereba naranu de arō ka).
29 Ibid., 312.
30 See ibid., 314.
31 Ibid., 313.
33 NCK, *Dainanakai*, 315-316.
34 Ibid., 316-317 (Fūzoku kyōsei to iu koto wo iimasu ga, korera mo tonaezu shite okonawaru koto de aru. Jibun wa jibun no koi wo shihai shite iku no de arimasu kara, hoka kara shidō wo ukeru yō na okonai no aru beki hazu ga nai. Korera wa jishu jiritsu no seishin wo yashinatta kekka ni natte kuru de aru).
37 Ibid., 20-21.
41 Gotō, *Daikyūkai*, 20.
42 Ibid., 24.
Chapter Four


2 Joan Scott, “Reproductive Futurism,” second of three lectures given for the 2014 Priestly Lectures held March 26-28 at the University of Toronto.

4 Tanaka, *Childhood*, 22.
6 Tanaka, *Childhood*, 23.
9 Tanaka, *Childhood*, 41.
10 Ibid., 39.
11 Ibid., 39-40.
12 Ibid., 39-40.
14 Ibid., 12. Original emphasis.
18 Tanaka, *Childhood*, 45.
24 Ibid., 101-102.
26 Ibid., 254.
27 Ibid., 254-255.
28 Ibid., 256
29 Ibid., 255.
30 Ibid., 257.
31 Murphy, *Seizing*, 13.
32 Ibid.
33 Gotō, *Daihachikai*, 34.
34 Ibid., 35.
35 Ibid., 15-16.
36 Ibid., 15.
38 See Ambaras, *Bad Youth*, 9-29.
39 For Smiles’s bias towards military and governmental figures, see Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man*, 39; for Tokutomi’s perspective, see ibid., 102-103.
40 Ibid., 32 and 30.
41 Ibid., 43.
42 Ibid., 113.
Gotō, Daihachikai, 13 (kaku kojin ga gakkō seito de atte mo, gakkō seito no owari koro kara, kono jishu dokuritsu no seikatsu wo itonamu ni itattemo taezu okotatte wa naranu koto de aru; shinuru made jinsei to iū no wa gakumon).

44 DNRS, Seinendan, 16-17.


46 Ibid., 26.

47 Ibid., 29-30 (sōjite kibun teki henji yasuku shinkeishitsu nite wagamama no tame ni shi ga kunkoku no tame ni shi wo miru koto ga karui koto ga arimasu; yūkoku no shi ga kunkoku no tame ni shi wo miru koto kōmō yori karushi to iō no wake naraba moto yori kekkō naredo, sonna no de wa naku, tada chotto shita tsumaranai gen’in no tame ni shi suru koto ga ōō arimasu).

48 Ibid., 25.

49 Gotō, Daikyūkai, 2.


52 Hashimoto Hiroshi, Seinen Kenkokuron (Tokyo: Daikōsha, 1933), 5.

53 DNRS, Seinendan, 13-14

Conclusion

1 Hirayama, Seinenshūdanshi (vol. 2), 14 and Gluck, Japan’s Modern Myths, 199-200.


3 Smethurst, A Social Basis, 18.

4 Smethurst, A Social Basis, 26-27.

5 Hirayama, Seinenshūdanshi (vol. 2), 22.

6 Kumagai, “The Japan Young Men’s Associations,” 899.

7 Smethurst, A Social Basis, 39-40.


9 Smethurst, A Social Basis, 43.

10 For similar observations (to which I am indebted) on the discourse of racial equality in Japan’s empire, see Takashi Fujitani, Race for Empire, 47-48.
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