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Honors Thesis

Presented to the Honors College of Salisbury University

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To Love Like the West: Analyzing Sociohistorical Trends in Marriage, Westernization, and Marriage in Meiji Japan

My research intends to introduce the topic of studying the Meiji period and analyzing the rise of European influence and occupation on the trends in homosexuality and marriage and the accompanying power dynamics. The field of gender studies and sexual history is a fairly recent one, therefore the research in this topic encourages a greater analysis of the LGBT history outside of the United States and Europe and within East Asia. Throughout the research, the topics discussed will include but not be limited to: homosexual practices in Tokugawa Japan, homosexuality and religion, the sexuality of samurais, male prostitution, and American and European perspectives of Japanese marriage and concubine culture. The primary sources will include numerous pieces of artwork from the time period depicting homosexual relationships between men, as well as journals from an American living in Japan, and the Japanese work, *The Tale of Genji*, which gives an accurate depiction of the time. For secondary sources, various pieces pertaining to East Asian sexual culture and samurai homosexuality will be used in the research. Further research was found in the databases of University of California and Harvard University. From this research, a greater understanding of the rise of imperialism and European thought throughout Meiji Japan (1858-1912) and how it has cultivated a modern perspective of male homosexuality and early modern LGBT ideals can be reached, in addition to the complex relationship between European sexology and Japanese "sex politics."

Introduction

There is no doubt in the minds of early modern and modern East Asian historians that the concepts of sexuality and marital relations carried a certain leniency in Japanese culture. During the rise of the Heian period (794-1185), the influences of esoteric Buddhism and Daoism redefined sexual relations under new orientations that would be considered progressive today alongside a gendered preference for male beauty in the name of religious devotion and earthly acknowledgement.¹ By the Edo period (1600-1868) onwards, the concept of sexuality began to be stratified, romanticized, and masculinized by various institutions within Japanese society. The genderification of sexuality and the acknowledgment of the beauty in the “male aesthetic” prospering over female femininity within early modern Japan led to the rise and commonality of male-specific homosexuality and pederasty within dominating social classes, including the imperial house.² Within this sustainable culture, marriage still prevailed as a formal expression of societal progression and a sociological understanding of one’s obligation in the Japanese culture. Women and men alike were understanding of these practices and accepted the acts of extramarital interactions as a normalcy. However, with the introduction of Westernized culture and influence, Meiji-era Japan began to question its very understanding of sexuality and power in the increasingly globalized world. With the introduction of sexology, Darwinism, and Western sociocultural perspectives, the Japanese were inclined to shun the traditional mindset that had inspired the nation for centuries.³ The acts of *shudo* (the pederastic practice amongst the samurai

¹ Watanabe, Tsuneo, Iwata, Jun’ichi, *The Love of a Samurai: A Thousand Years of Japanese Homosexuality* (Paris, France: Heretic Books, 1990), 77.

² Tsuneo, Jun’ichi, 12.

³ In this research, I will be examining the broad influence of nations and societies with a Western perspective in Japan, primarily the United States and the imperial states of Western Europe during the 15th-19th centuries, including but not limited to France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Portugal. There will be analyses of sociopolitical and influential aspects of these nations independently throughout the paper, however, when referencing all of these states and their Eurocentric influences, they will all be referred to as “The West”.

class) and *keikan* (literally translated as “sodomy”) became the focus of Japan’s push for a sexual revolution discreetly hidden within its political upheaval by the turn of the 19th century. The new generation of Japanese politicians and scholars in the Meiji period would begin an onslaught on tradition and ritualistic behavior that survived through centuries of war and peace. The goal seemed to be the complete erasure of traditional Japanese practices and with it, the “modernization” of sexual tendencies. And yet, the Meiji Restoration carried consequences pertaining to social behavior and identity for a generation of men and women who were now obliged to face not just a modernizing society, but a society conditioned with a Western perception on romance and sexual relations.⁴

The focus for this research is to analyze the Japanese attitudes towards homosexuality and marital behaviorism and its relationship with the rise of European and American cultural imperialism by the end of Meiji Japan (1868-1912). Due in part to the Japanese sociocultural denial of female homosexuality and lesbianism up until the early 1920s, this research will focus primarily on the male aspects of homosexuality as female homosexuality was “largely overlooked” in Japanese history.⁵ To achieve this transition of influence, I will reflect on the construction of male homosexuality within Japan, in addition to the stories and folklore that inspired the rise of the “male aesthetic”. I will place considerable focus on the linguistics within early-modern Japan that cultivated the language often referred to in homosexual culture until the end of the Meiji era. Moreover, an examination of various primary sources, from Buddhist creationism stories to the homoerotic plots within Ihara Saikaku’s *The Great Mirror of Male Love* have been examined to demonstrate the various types of male relationships that may have

⁴ Furukawa, Makoto, “The Changing Nature of Sexuality: The Three Codes Framing Homosexuality in Modern Japan,” *Nichi-Bei josei janaru* 7, no. 58 (1994): 99.

⁵ McLelland, M.J., “Japan’s Queer Cultures,” *The Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, (2011): 1.

existed within the Tokugawa and early Meiji period, the customs of the relationships, and the societal reactions. Finally, I will utilize the perspectives of Europeans in Japan via their writings and journals to their homeland to identify Eurocentric reactions to the homosexual and marriage practices within Japan as well as the changes in Japanese sexual and marital culture within the Meiji era. This research serves the purpose of dismantling the hypocrisies understood by Western historiography of the sociosexual nature of Japan during a period of rapid transition to modernity and globalization, while bringing into modern perspective the values of male homosexuality and their lasting impressions of the state by the beginning of the modern era.

The Linguistics of Japanese Homoeroticism

Prior to the Meiji Restoration, Japan had a large array of definitive terms and descriptions of young boys and adolescences as lovers. Of these descriptive words, the most important was *nanshoku*, which is the most closely related term to “homosexuality” in the English language. This word, while not being the only word to represent homosexuality within Japanese culture, likely gained popular usage following its inclusion within the infamous Edo-period novel *The Great Mirror of Male Love* by Ihara Saikaku.⁶ However, the literal meaning of *nanshoku* is closer to “male colors” or “male love”, denoting the sexual fervor of men with other men. Meanwhile its antonym, *joshoku*, denotes “male-female eroticism” or “male love of females”, therefore heterosexual tendencies.⁷ Note how within its own language system, Japanese breaks down sexual tendencies amongst those who prefer men, those who prefer women, and even those who do not prefer women, but may not acknowledge men romantically either (*onna-giri*),

⁶ Pflugfelder, Gregory M., *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1999): 24.

⁷ Ibid., 25.

leaving female-female eroticism out of the realm of possibility linguistically until the 20th century with a resurgence in sexual literature and social re-evaluation. With this understanding of the interactions of the terms, the dichotomy of the *nanshoku/joshoku* combo gives love and eroticism a predominantly male connotation and association, leading to the idea that pleasure and romance are more likely to be achieved through male partners and male relations, despite the requirement of marriage to women.

The samurai class benefitted from the rise of homoerotic linguistics as well. Specifically, new words were created as connotations to the beauty and necessity of having young male partners, usually around the ages of ten through early twenties, known as *chigos*. Such words included in this jargon were *shudo* and *wakashu*. *Nanshoku*, lexically, is similar to *shudo*, which also means male eroticism and love. *Shudo* and *wakashu* are both shortened, vernacular terms used within the compound term *wakashudo*, meaning “way of beautiful youths”.⁸ Within period literature, it is understood that both *shudo* and *wakashu* have strong male connotations despite the term “youth” supposedly being unisex in its original definition. Even the term “youth” is fragmented in its meaning, ultimately becoming a term meant to identify the male adolescence in the Japanese society.⁹ The definition of *shudo* through the *keikan* practices of Medieval Japan through the beginning of the Meiji era transformed the term’s meaning from the perspective of the youth themselves to the perspective of the men observing and loving the youths and their aestheticism. *Wakashudo* itself was an aestheticism for the way the young men conducted themselves, and how their beauty was revered by men and women alike. As a result, the older men began to have the greater voice in the romanticism of these young men, changing the

⁸ Furukawa, 99.

⁹ Tsuneo, Jun’ichi, 157.

meaning of the word itself. In Pflugfelder's own words, *shudo* was no longer the "way of youths", but the "way of loving youths" by the Meiji era.¹⁰

Religious Tradition and Representations of Homosexuality

Within Japanese historiography, various sources have tried to document the beginnings of male homosexuality within the state. Much of the customs practiced within the homosexual culture of Japan in the early modern age are said to have originated within the formations and mythologies of Buddhism and Shintoism. The earliest implications of male homosexual interactions were found in the works of early Japanese mythologies and folklore.¹¹ Of the religious traditions of Japan, most seem to have leniencies concerning the concept and practice of sexual encounters between men versus their Eastern counterparts. In Shintoism, the native religion of Japan, various freedoms were granted for sexual relations and interactions. Where Western and Judeo-Christian religions defined "non-procreative sexual acts" such as sodomy and same-sex intercourse as blasphemous and condemnable, Shintoism defies this notion, never stating in any Shinto canon that these acts are against the religious practice.¹² In fact, there is a lack of doctrines and verifiable texts concerning the rules and rites of Shintoism. Therefore, within the belief system, there is no outright condemnation of any sexual practices, even on a moral basis because of the lack of written texts and rules. Shintoism itself is focused on the ebb and flow of moral rationalization and its origins, hence the importance of the *yin* and *yang* symbol.¹³ *Kamis*, or the deities of Shintoism, are the essence of people who had committed both positive and negative deeds throughout their life, resulting in their current forms as places,

¹⁰ Pflugfelder, 27.

¹¹ Bernard Faure, "Buddhist Homosexualities," in *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 237.

¹² Pflugfelder, 98.

¹³ Theodore De Bary et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 20.

animals, or objects. From this concept, followers of Shintoism lack the same strict regularities of moral standards as Western religions because they are open to the acknowledgement that various types of humans could become *kamis*. While these humans were emperors or legendary warriors, they were still human, and capable of moral deviancies within their lifetime that others may consider as sinful and gluttonous. It would not be wrong to include the people who were considered as *kamis* as possible practitioners in *nanshoku* and other homosexual activities. Also, Shintoism is a more independently practiced religion compared to Western religions. While it is considered the “national faith” of Japan, the main practices and ways of worship in Shintoism are done in a predominantly private session, with only the family attending the most important rituals of ceremonial dances and offerings at their designated shrine.¹⁴ Morality and understanding was passed down through generations of teachings, much like Confucianism in China, and it was up to the practitioners of Shintoism to uphold their own morality, since the religion lacked the populous gatherings and religious leaders that frequented Western religions. Commoners were expected to know and practice morality and humanism, and since sexual desires and actions were understated in the acknowledgement of sin in Shintoism, *nanshoku* persisted with normalcy as a simple human desire. Under the influence of Shintoism, there was little punishment for those who committed acts of *keikan* besides the required purification process and acknowledgement of their own deviant acts to the *kamis* and gods of their locative beliefs. The purification process in Shintoism was itself the Western equivalent to washing away the sins and pollution of human life. However, with the lack of enforcement by the state and the

¹⁴ Theodore De Bary et al., 19.

followers of Shintoism themselves, many followers were able to bypass even the purification process and confession.¹⁵

When Buddhism began to rise in Japan, the original doctrines and interpretations contained strict regulations of the actions of its followers, especially monks. Included in these interpretations was the concept of abstinence and controlled behaviors in sexual interactions. Early modern records, however, illustrated a lifestyle where self-indulgence and sexual intercourse amongst monks persisted. While early records of *nanshoku* amongst monks are scarce, it is understood that the rise in sources pertaining to monks and their sexual encounters coincided with the rise of neo-Buddhism and the esoteric movements of Medieval Japan. Various movements in esoteric Buddhism by the Medieval period lineated from the previous understandings and rituals of Nara-style Buddhism through their interpretations of early texts. The rise in schools of Buddhist thought, such as the Tendai and Shingon schools, presented more diversity within the practice of rites.¹⁶ More radical interpretations of Buddhism, such as the Pure Land Buddhism, allowed heightened leniency amongst the rules of Buddhist practitioners and monks alike. The monk Hōnen (1133-1212), a former Tendai monk and creator of the Pure Land Buddhism, rejected the key concept of enlightenment (*bodasishin*) for the act of simply praising Amida, the deity of compassion. Of the prohibitions mentioned in popular Pure Land congregations, sexual intercourse is either viewed with compromising attitudes or completely left out of the doctrines. Compared to the other human indulgences that are commonly mentioned, such as gambling and the consumption of animals, sexual interaction was not viewed with the same level of moral necessity as other human acts.¹⁷ Buddhist monks among the various schools

¹⁵ Pflugfelder, 99.

¹⁶ Theodore De Bary et al., 211.

¹⁷ Ibid., 229.

of thought argued about the importance of celibacy and sexual interactions. Some monks and religious intellectuals, such as the Buddhist scholar Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), used the example of sexual intercourse to argue against the older interpretations of Buddhist thought, noting that “there are no living beings...that do not have sexual relations” and that it is the will of the *kami* to have sexual intercourse for “multiplication”.¹⁸ Under this scrutiny, Atsutane acknowledges the sexual prowess of even the most devoted monks, stating that they, too, are human and capable of breaking their own doctrines for the sake of self-indulgence. This all comes with the remaining irony amongst practitioners of Buddhism that intercourse was deemed a temporary material satisfaction that could fracture one’s attempt to reach Nirvana, resulting in the requirement of abstinence in the temples. So why would a religious institution brand itself with the rise of an act that was deemed punishable and pollutive in its own texts? One reason could be the result of Buddhism’s own complex narratives. While sections of Buddhism warn monks against sexual interactions in the name of purity and enlightenment, some passages of Buddhist texts follow stories that incline followers to look upon young people, particularly young men, as heavenly spirits and supporters. In one instance, a Buddhist text from the 15th century tells a story about a monk that fell on love with a *chigo* (beautiful boy) who revealed himself to be an angel, hoping to guide his on a moral path to enlightenment.¹⁹ It also was not uncommon to hear of mature men praying for a beautiful boy or man in a Buddhist fashion during the Heian period in hope of having greater guidance to Enlightenment, as men and women could appear as angelic or divine spirits.²⁰ However, young men were more likely to appear in this form and were loved for their angelic features and ability to reach spiritual lands

¹⁸ Wilburn Hansen, "Chapter 5: The Critique of Buddhism and Defense of Native Religion," in *When Tengu Talk: Hirata Atsutane's Ethnography of the Other World* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 142.

¹⁹ Tsueno, Jun'ichi, 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

that women could not, as sacred lands were considered polluted if women set foot on them. There are various reasons as to why women are considered pollutants of sacred areas, but the main reason may lie in the birthing process. Because blood must flow from a woman in order to have a child, the sacred land becomes associated with the blood spilled, which undermines the holiness of the space itself. As a result, the land, the woman, and the child, become objects of pollution and impurity near the holy sites.²¹ To have relations with boys and men instead of women counteracts this problem, as sexual desires are indulged without the fear of pregnancy and childrearing, which risks tainting sacred sites. It is from this interpretation that the act of male-female coitus was perceived as being far worse morally, with female-female coitus being considered the worst offense towards the path to enlightenment. The Buddhists practiced male-male sexual acts openly, citing that it was less offensive than having a female partner and more respectful to their practices when they needed to confess and be cleansed for their wrongdoings because it lacked the pollutive qualities of the female body.²²

Classical Antecedents of Marriage and Homosexual Relations

Nevertheless, classical thought and literature have captured the essence of sexual interactions amongst men, only to be reinterpreted by the Edo period. According to one classical tale, under the influence of a Chinese-educated esoteric Buddhist monk Kūkai, known posthumously as Kobo Daishi (CE 806), homosexuality was brought over from mainland China to the islands of Japan during the Heian period (CE 794-1185). Once the monk returned to Japan from his studies abroad, sources state that through his teachings and influence on the elites and

²¹ Faure, 235.

²² Pflugfelder, 101.

bakafu children, male homosexuality began to prosper. Eventually, most of the social classes began to participate in the practice,²³

This origin story consists of various implications that generate an understanding of how the Japanese perceived the rise of male homosexuality within their culture. Because the monk received a Chinese-style education, like the religion itself, homosexuality was thought to have been syncretized into the culture through diaspora and intellectual trade. Another implication from the story is that the Chinese had earlier access to knowledge of homosexual practices versus their island neighbor, and that the movement and migration of its sociocultural ideas brought about this practice to Japan. Moreover, there are implications of the integration of homosexuality as systematic throughout the social classes. By the Heian era, the capital of Japan had moved from Nara to Kyoto, where the elite houses were located. Within Kyoto, Kubo Daishi would have the audience of the elites, meaning that the elite would have likely “spread” the homosexual tendencies through the other classes, to later include the entertainment and samurai classes through Buddhist education and apprenticeship. This belief in the rise of homosexuality being the result of a single monk has, of course, been debunked as an urban legend since sources have been found entries describing the sexual relationship between a Koken prince known as Doso and a child-servant (*ji-do*) dating back to CE 757, over fifty years before Kobo’s birth. Furthermore, there has been no evidence found to acknowledge without a reasonable doubt that Kubo Daishi was in fact engaged in *nanshoku* of any kind while he was in China or Japan. Nevertheless, Kobo Daishi’s appearance in the mainland within a period of increasing interest in sexual tendencies and practices made him known as the legendary “inventor” of homosexuality, a title that would later give him and the Buddhist religion a strained relationship with Christian

²³ Iwata, Jun’ichi, 31.

missionaries upon their arrival in the early 16th century, as Buddhism began a common practice of *keikan* and homosexual romances by the end of the Heian period.²⁴ What is canon, however, was the understanding that the Buddhist monks were one of the largest classes to participate in what would become the formal practice of *nanshoku*. A commonly cited theory as to why is often specific to the geographical locations of these monks. Because they were placed at points of isolation from other classes, such as in mountainous regions and private lands (*shoens*), monks had the capability to engage in these pederastic acts with little restraint or consequences from onlookers.²⁵ The young boys who became the apprentices of the monks held them to high regards and trusted them with their heavenly pursuits towards enlightenment and Nirvana. According to this rationale, it makes sense how the young monks considered their sexual interactions with the mature monks as a foundational way to secure trust and cooperation with them and their spiritual endeavors.

The early religious beliefs intersected with the rise of popular aestheticism to create not just an ideal, but an encouragement of pederastic practices amongst men and boys. From the Heian period through the Edo period, the artistic and beautiful nature of simplicity and balance was considered to be the primary aestheticism of its time. Much of the art and culture had a focus on the impermeability of life, and the need for effortless beauty to shine through. As Buddhism and culture advanced, Zen Buddhism became a focus aesthetically for its refinement and focus on simplicity and rejection of regularity.²⁶ So it is no surprise that in the elite classes of Japan, men and women alike are taught to retain this particular aesthetic from a young age, be it in the way they conducted themselves romantically to sexual interactions. Just like their female

²⁴ Ibid, 24.

²⁵ Faure, 227.

²⁶ Donald Keene, "Japanese Aesthetics," *Philosophy East and West* 19, no. 3 (July 1969): 302.

counterparts, it was not uncommon for young men to wear makeup and dress in what might modernly be considered feminine clothing to show off a genderless beauty that pertains to the rules of Zen Buddhism. The growth of *iki* in the Edo period strengthened this concept of androgyny and beauty with its promotion of experimentality and straightforwardness. Young women within the *iki* aesthetic were often considered attractive, but their sensual allure (*bitai*) was short-lived, as it would only last as long as their unmarried lifestyle.²⁷ Young men, however, were more available for longer periods of their young adult life and could remain unmarried for longer periods of time than women. These young men could pursue the *bitai* aesthetic that women lost because of their marital statuses, allowing them to have a higher desirability in the Edo era. By achieving this effortless, genderless look, the aestheticism of these young boys (*wakashus*) was considered as the true nature of beauty and wonder in the Japanese landscape. Another aestheticism that grew in popularity within Medieval Japan was had a similar focus on alluring beauty and the escaping fragility of life.²⁸ This particular aesthetic became known as *mono no aware*, or “the pathos of lost things”.²⁹ It became a beauty of nature to meet tragedy and to know that things—be them time, love, or beauty itself—are always fleeting. By this understanding, *mono no aware* has an underlying Buddhist appeal, which likely bolstered its popularity among the elite class and followers of Zen Buddhism, empowering the popularity of *nanshoku* through this genderless aestheticism and representation of young boys.

The aesthetics of Medieval Japan began to translate themselves into the rising popular literatures and artwork of the Edo (1600-1968). Under the influence of *iki* and *mono no aware*, the idea of love and lost began to prosper as one of the strongest romantic tropes within the era.

²⁷ Nishiyama Matsunosuke, "Iki: The Aesthetic of Edo," in *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997): 56.

²⁸ Shirane, Haruo, *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008): 305.

²⁹ Shirane, 305.

A combination of rising literacy rates among men in the era and printing advancements led to the innovation of literary culture and analyses. Though predominantly heterosexual stories prospered from previous periods, famous works from earlier periods, such as *The Tale of Genji* made some argue that there was greater beauty and analyses to be made in homosensual features and works. This is because *The Tale of Genji* itself carried evidence of underlying *wakashudo* and *nanshoku* from the elite classes through a quiet interaction between Genji himself and the younger brother of a woman he pursued. Here is an excerpt of the scene:

[Genji] "All right, take me to where she is hiding."

[Younger Brother] "She has shut herself up in a little room and has several women with her—I wouldn't dare," her brother replied, desperately wishing to do better.

[Genji] "Very well, then you, at least, shall not leave me." Genji had the boy lie down with him. The boy so appreciated his master's youth and gentleness that they say Genji found him much nicer than his cruel sister."³⁰

The younger brother's willingness to "lie down" with Genji is, in a modern context, surprising to readers but understated in the work itself. It should further be noted that this interaction takes place while Genji was still a young man, likely around his late teens to early twenties, and the brother is implied to be around the age of eleven or twelve. Through this excerpt, a strong understanding of the simplicity and action of *nanshoku* begins to take place. The passage further indicates that the act itself was consensual, as the boy is implied to appreciate Genji while Genji prefers the boy over his sister. A rather necessary focal point of *The Tale of Genji* is not the story itself, but the author—a 11th century lady in waiting by the name of Murasaki Shikibu. Her inclusion of the *wakashudo* and the *nanshoku* practice signifies female acknowledgement, and perhaps acceptance, of the sexual encounters. Even if the *nanshoku* was

³⁰ Murasaki Shikibu et al., *The Tale of Genji* (Hong Kong: Tuttle Publishing, 2018), 44.

utilized in the story as a device for dramatic irony, the presentation of the piece was still elegant and simple—much like the *miyabi* aesthetic itself. In addition, there seems to be no consequence for Genji nor the younger brother for their actions. The only urgent matter to occur was the simple need for the boy to return home to his worried sister.³¹ Whether this concept was dramatized or not, the lack of consequences in the aftermath of the scene may have been representative of Murasaki's own perception and acceptance of the practice—as simple and discreet as heterosexual affairs in the upper class, but often left to be forgotten or unacknowledged as clandestine sexual affairs were.

Another important trope found in homosexual stories was the “romantically unhappy ending” trope. This would often represent itself through the young men dying by the way of the samurai practice of *seppuku* or the couple being forced apart by the societal pressures surrounding them. This trope created a common fictional practice by the 1600s that would draw men and women alike towards the bleak yet thrilling romanticism of male homosexuality that developed within the rising genre known as *ukiyo*, or the floating world. Ihara Saikaku portrays this type of romanticism against the heteronormative culture within the beginning of his longest work, *The Great Mirror of Male Love*, asking the reader if they preferred “lying rejected next to a [female] courtesan, or conversing intimately with a kabuki boy who is suffering from hemorrhoids?”³² This scenario illustrates what Saikaku considered a situation that was not worth considerable thought, as he implies women in his narrative to be troublesome and lacking in beauty and intellect. Even as the young boys were suffering from illness or lacking wealth and class status, the power of their aestheticism and closeness to manhood created a beauty about

³¹ Ibid., 47.

³² Saikaku, Ihara, Schalow, Paul Gordon, *The Great Mirror of Male Love* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990): 53.

them that overcame the feminine allure.³³ There is also traces of sarcasm and irony in Saikaku's explanations and inclusion of the exaggerated male-female comparisons, perhaps signaling his interpretation of lover overall as filled with burdens or overrated. Often, the young boys pursued in each of Saikaku's short stories are met with an untimely death via illness or murder, predominantly in the form of passionate killings. Such is the cause of death for the young character in Saikaku's "Through Bearing An Umbrella," where a young son of a deceased masterless samurai (ronin) named Korin became the lover of an envoy, Sakon, as he travelled to different daimyo. A daimyo who gave Korin a formal status outside of his father's pursued him as well, unaware of his affairs with Sakon. Once the daimyo discovered that Korin was having an affair with one of his courtesans, Korin was asked to reveal the affair under the threat of death. The 14-year old then replied:

“He [Sakon] is someone I swore my life to. I would not identify him even if you tore me limb from limb. I told you [the daimyo] from the beginning that you are not the one I loved.”

Upon the delivery of this line, Korin was dismembered by the daimyo, and died immediately.³⁴ The scene, aside from many of Saikaku's works, was a rather bleak and memorable one, as it contains the violent yet passionate act of a ruler being confronted with his lover's own dismissal of his emotions. In addition to this, Korin shows acceptance of his death as a mature samurai may, never explicitly saying who his first lover was in an act of true love and loyalty, even when he knew it would cost him his title and his life. In a sense, Korin's character appears to be a more relatable and remarkable character to both commoners and samurai of the time for not only his loyalty and courage, but also for his rise to infamy in the house of a daimyo.

³³ Pflugfelder, 35.

³⁴ Saikaku, Schalow, 370. It is also worth noting that following the events of Korin's death, his first lover, Sakon, began a revolution against the daimyo and wins, overturning his house in a plot of revenge. However, instead of taking the new title, Sakon committed suicide in front of Korin's grave. People came to see his body and mourned this sight.

The story is less dramatized than Saikaku's other stories, possibly to show the true commitments that *wakashus* were willing to make for their loved ones, and to bring greater respect and acknowledgement of the love and loss found in male-male relations of the Edo period.

Furthermore, Ihara's own background creates a rather interesting contrast to the stories and protagonists he includes within *The Great Mirror*. Ihara himself was raised in Osaka, Japan during the 17th century, and was a part of the upper classes, having been the son of a wealthy merchant. Because of his upbringing in the elite class, he more than likely overheard stories or even watched the interactions between *wakashus* and their superiors in various classes from the *bushi* to the entertainment classes. He was known as a skilled haikai poet, often writing witty and humorous commentary concerning urban life and commoner lifestyles with colloquial language not seen in many upper-class poems at the time.³⁵ Following the death of his young wife, he turned away from poetry for a time and wrote what would become possibly his most famous novel, *The Great Mirror of Male Love*. Within *The Male Mirror*, the *wakashus* mentioned fell into the categorization of the *iki* and *bitai* aesthetics, and would come to include boys of different backgrounds including page boys for the Imperial houses and elites, young samurai proteges and young monks in training within the Buddhist temples. Events such as prayer for beautiful boys and preference of young boys and their behaviorisms over their female counterparts took place in *The Male Mirror* as well, relaying common practices that took place in the Tokugawa elite society. Another concept to note was the protagonists' defining identities. All of the main characters within *The Male Mirror* defined themselves as *onna-girai*, or "women-haters"—men that were characterized by their sex repulsed attitudes towards women while not necessarily

³⁵ Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900*, Abridged (New York, NY: Columbia University, 2008), 43.

having sexual attraction to men.³⁶ By having the perspective of *onna-girais* who only sought after other men and boys within his work, Saikaku identified a normalized culture within his class and upbringing of homosexuality and eroticism between men of various statuses and specializations. Following the creation of the book, he continued to write pieces that contained homoerotic or erotic situations and prose, such as *The Life of an Amorous Man* (1682), which describes a man having premarital sexual relations with men and women, in addition to enjoying the company of prostitutes of both genders.³⁷ Saikaku became easily recognizable as a primer writer, despite his controversial and explicit tales. He also recognizes, perhaps unmeaningly, the normalization of forced or volunteered bisexuality. Just as the popularity of *mono no aware* worked within his pieces, another reason behind the commonly tragic ends to all the relationships within the novel was likely because of the need to follow societal obligations during the time period. It was not uncommon for a samurai to engage in sexual relations as a young man, only to have a wife and children once he retires. The same would occur with men of the upper-class, who oftentimes continued to have male prostitutes and partners alongside their wives and children.³⁸ In this sense, it is understood that women knew about the social and sexual aspects of their partners, and they accepted their relationships as they would have accepted female concubines. Sexuality was not as important as societal needs and obligations—as long as one achieved a male lineage, (male) sexuality and sensuality was flexible beyond marriage and domesticity.

Normalizing *Nanshoku* in Tokugawa Japan

³⁶ Saikaku, Schalow, 51.

³⁷ Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900, Abridged* (New York, NY: Columbia University, 2008), 46.

³⁸ Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 117.

While homosexual practices were not uncommon in the Japanese culture, the normalization of *nanshoku* reached its peak in the Edo period (1600-1868). Within this era, the Japanese society had reached a state of peace and stability that it had been lacking for numerous decades in the eras prior. The economic growth of this era was also a prominent factor in the rise of stability and power, allowing for the shogunate to rule virtually autonomously, though with some regional political tension.³⁹ Of the various powers the shogunate was given, one such power was over the class division, which remained highly caste-like and rigid throughout the time period. This particular fact assisted in bolstering the practice of *nanshoku* and homonormativity within the society because of the structure of the various institutions allowed them to frequent it with little to no punishment from the state. Of Edo Japan, three different institutions frequented the practice of *nanshoku* and *keikan*. The first institution was none other than the Buddhist monks and the Buddhist temples. Despite the internal battles for celibacy, by the 1600s, various Buddhist institutions and sects began to move away from the prospect of sexual desire and engagement being a barrier towards enlightenment. In fact, *keikan* was so common in the Buddhist institutions that various writings had been kept within the temples concerning the *wakashus* and their relationships with older Buddhist monks. One manuscript in particular tells the story of a Buddhist elder who frequented the company of various *chigos* but favored one chigo above the rest. This chigo took pleasure in the attention and company of his elder and knew how to properly prepare himself for the elder's entertainment.⁴⁰ These manuscripts became known as "chigo stories" and were common biographies written by Buddhists in the temples. While some were fictitious, others were based on true events, such as the story above. The ability to document these stories as normally as other works of literature

³⁹ Phillip Brown, "Chapter 30: The Political Order," in *Japan Emerging: Premodern History to 1850*, ed. Karl F. Friday (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012): 321.

⁴⁰ Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 41.

within the Tokugawa period illustrated a loosening in early trends of celibacy and sexual control within religious institutions.

The second, and possibly the most influential class to engage in *nanshoku* practices, was the samurai class. The samurai class was one of the strongest, if not, the strongest class in Edo Japan for its militaristic prowess and alliance systems with the elites and temples. The samurai class' ties to the Buddhist class may have been a reason that *nanshoku* moved from the temples to the warrior ranks as it was common for young warriors (*chigos*) to be sent to the Buddhist temples prior to their samurai careers for early education. From their time in the monasteries, it is likely that many of these *chigos*, who later went on to become successful samurais, were participants in the *nanshoku* that popularized the temples. Thus, it is not a surprise that with the movement of *nanshoku* from the Buddhists to the samurais, the act began to popularize cities controlled by the *bushi*. The samurai class' popularization of *nanshoku* appeared to have greater structure and meaning than the practices within the temples. Where it was considered an act of enlightenment or sexual release within the temples, the warrior class saw *nanshoku* as a formalized act of brotherhood and loyalty between the *chigo* and his elder. The *chigo*, usually around the ages of 10 through 13, would be in this type of relationship until his early to mid-twenties, where he will then formally end the relationship with this elder and take in a new *chigo* for himself, thus repeating the process of systematic *nanshoku*. All the while, the elder is teaching the *chigo* martial arts, sword tactics, and battlefield methods as a normal teacher would.⁴¹ To the samurais, *nanshoku* was necessary for building trust between the old and new warriors, while giving both groups means to fight and protect their partners as many of these relationships carried emotional attachments with which *chigos* were willing to die for their elders

⁴¹ Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 47.

and vice versa. These emotional attachments can be seen in various letters and pieces written by elder samurais to their *chigos*, such as the letter of Mashida Toyonoshin to his *chigo*. The letter explicitly denotes the fragility and importance of their relationship to Mashida (“...I made my way at night to your distant residence a total of 327 times over the past three years.”), while noting the heartbreak and anger held by him for his *chigo*’s supposed lack of emotional connection (“I find your frequent insinuating remarks very upsetting. By the gods of Japan, I swear that I still cannot forget my anger at your distrust.”).⁴² And yet, despite the emotional turmoil Mashida’s *chigo* has caused him, he continues to express love and compassion for him, even stating that he would willingly die for the young boy. This practice proved effective in the cases of necessary protection and loyalty to other warriors, as *chigos* were encouraged to protect their lovers at all costs, and should their lover die in warfare, they were more likely to commit suicide than continue the battle. But this letter shows the impact of the system on not only the *chigos*, but the elders themselves. *Nanshoku* was not as simple as young boys to have sexual relations with older men and pledging their loyalty, but for older men to have emotional attachments to adolescent boys and to keep that attachment until the boys had reached maturity. In this matter, the odds of romantic relations being a result of the sexual relations was undoubtedly high. Cheating was also rare within the *bushi*, as *chigos* could be killed if it was discovered that they have been with another elder or man besides the ones that chose them.⁴³

The final major class under the influence of *nanshoku* was the entertainment class. This class was thought to have been influenced by its interaction with the samurai class.⁴⁴ While it was a lethal offense for the *chigos* to have sexual relations with other men, the elder samurai had

⁴² “The Gay Letters of a Samurai,” Toyonoshin Mashida to Moriwaki Gonkuro, March 26, 1667, in *Gay Love Letters of the Samurai*, accessed February 19, 2019, <http://rictornorton.co.uk/samurai.htm>.

⁴³ Tsuneo, Jun’ichi, 72.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

the power and authority built over years of service to have various sexual and romantic partners. Within the urban areas that the entertainment class inhabited, the samurai commonly took on young male actors from the *kabuki* theater as temporary partners and nightly prostitutes. Furthermore, the *kabuki* theater had a rather strict ban on women (*onna kabuki*), so only male actors were allowed to perform within the plays by the early 1600s. The goal of the ban was to erase the eroticism and prostitution that enveloped the theater industry and the women within it. The result itself was ironic in the fact that the men of the theater continued with the erotic and profane shows, simply using their young *kabuki* actors in female roles. The young boys of the theater were lusted after just as the women were and became known as the *wakashu kabukis*—the beautiful boys of the theater.⁴⁵ These boys were perceived as the thin line between gender in Edo Japan—someone portraying feminine mystique and refinement all the while retaining the biological and psychological prowess and behaviorisms of a maturing masculine mind. To be an upper-class prostitute during this era was as powerful a status as being associated with power and influence, even for male prostitutes. Prostitution was seen as a way to not only earn money, but to gain connections and possible alliances with elites, therefore the young boys who participated in the sex work were able to have communicative networks with other classes above their own, including the samurai class, and in special cases, shoguns. By having the samurai and upper-class men frequent these kabuki actors, *nanshoku* became a commercialized event within the middle class and urban areas of Japan. The diffusion of *nanshoku* practices into the kabuki theater created a widespread phenomenon that held virtually every part of the Japanese society, from the middle class to the religious class, and thus normalized the connotation of it. Multiple literary pieces were written about the lives and trials of kabuki actors and *onna-girais* by famous writers such as Saikaku and Masuyama, often conveying the underlying distress these young

⁴⁵ Friday, 409.

boys may have suffered with the requirement to have both masculine and feminine qualities and mindsets to meet the demands of their customers.⁴⁶ To participate in *nanshoku* was to be like many of the men in the society already—a rite of passage to those in the Buddhist temples and samurai class, and a practical custom to the youth in the entertainment sector.

Portrayals of *Wakashu* and *Nanshoku* in Art

The representation of beautiful boys and homosensuality did not end with the written works or the theatre. There was an understanding of beauty and femininity of young men among the art produced in the Edo period as well. The common artistic medium of medieval Japan through the Tokugawa period was the *emaki* handscrolls, which included painted illustrations of scenes from stories, folklore, and everyday life. These *emakis* would be representative of important cultural history within Japan, so it is significant that various *emakis* and woodblock prints from the early modern period carry illustrations of *nanshoku* and *wakashus*. In illustrations such as the *emaki* titled *Wakashu and Young Woman with Hawks* (ca. 1803), the beautiful boy is represented as looking quite similar to the woman herself, with little illustrative features to assist in telling which character the woman is and which is the *wakashu* beyond the accessories in the female's hair and the clothing.⁴⁷ This art style was popular for its time, as many of the scroll painting represented include young boys that carry feminine features or look similar to women in the works. If the young boys were represented as feminine in the artwork, then how was masculinity represented? Within the Tokugawa artwork, masculinity and seniority is portrayed in the difference in size as well as the ruggedness in appearance. In an excerpt from an erotic *emaki*

⁴⁶ Earl Jackson, "Kabuki Narratives of Male Homoerotic Desire in Saikaku and Mishima," *Theatre Journal* 41, no. 4 (December 1989): 468, accessed May 6, 2019, doi:10.2307/3208008.

⁴⁷ See Appendix 1.

titled *Gay Encounter Between High-Ranked Samurai and Younger Subordinate* (c.1850s), the difference between the *chigo* (samurai apprentice) and his *sensei* is clear through the portrayal of both the color dimensions and sizing. The *chigo* appears to be feminized in this painting, stylized and wearing makeup to enhance their *wakashu* aesthetic. Even their clothing seems to portray feminized ideals, as it appears to be colorful and whimsical against the darkness of the scene.⁴⁸

All the while, the elder samurai, likely the *chigo*'s partner and *sensei*, has an almost savage portrayal, with darker, facial features than the boy and a dramatized appearance. By having the young boys drawn to look nearly identical to the women, it enforced the beauty and aestheticism of the young men, even amongst heterosexual men and women. They are to be seen as the equivalent in attractiveness to even young women, allowing the *wakashudo* ideal to continue into the late 1800s. The artwork also implies the fleeting beauty emphasized in *mono no aware*, as the elder samurai appears much more rugged and masculine than the young boy, who appears more poised and feminized than the former. An interesting feature of the illustration is the difference in skin tones between the two characters, though they are both Japanese and both samurai. The skin tone differences could be for numerous reasons. One reason is to imply the usage of makeup on the *chigo*, which was common amongst young men through the Edo period. Another is to simply show the angelic nature of the boy versus his superior, instilling the perception of innocence and fragility in this portrayal of the youth.

The *Keikan* Codes and Word Erasure

By the late 1890s, it was clear that from a political and cultural standpoint, the practices of male homosexuality and romantic relationships were on a steady decline within the nation.

⁴⁸ See Appendix 2.

However, it is questionable whether the term “decline” is even an appropriate way to address the disappearance of sexual perversions towards young men, as according to evidence, the practices were more than likely taken away from the public eye and simply disgraced by the government, but never formally eradicated. To read anything that contained homoerotic themes amongst men was considered to be a violation of the *Shuppan jorei*, or publication law, and was punishable by fines and jail sentences.⁴⁹ Books portraying direct sexual scenes, pederasty or open homoeroticism were more likely to be withdrawn from public areas and kept out of the sight of the younger generations. However, it was oftentimes the *shudo* books and homoerotic books, such as Saikaku’s works in 1894, that had mentioning of both these topics, which made them all the more likely to be censored. By the year 1873, only five years after the rise of the new era, the Meiji government instated the *Kaitai ritsuryo*, a law that would become the foundations of the *Keikan* codes for the next seven years until they were revoked by the more encompassing 1880 Penal Codes. The *Kaitai ritsuryo* was the prototype of a law that was subject to criminalizing sodomy of any kind within the nation, in addition to the rape and the sexual assaults of “youngsters fifteen years and under”.⁵⁰ This law was meant to signify male-female intercourse, since the term “*keikan*” is traditionally used in a heterosexual manner in the Japanese language. However, the usage of the phrase “youngsters fifteen years and younger” directly targeted the primary institutions of the former era that commonly practiced pedantry and sodomy; the *bushi* (samurai class) for its *nanshoku* practices, the entertainment class for its commercialized prostitution of young men, and the Buddhist monks for romanticism and sensualism with young monks.

⁴⁹ Pflugfelder, 200.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 159.

Furthermore, the usage of words relating to homosexual culture became taboo beyond their usage in restricted literature due to their blatant representation of the sexual perversions within the culture. Using words such as *wakashu* and *nanshoku* soon became a social abnormality and was considered as an act of rebellion against the rising social norms that fought the concepts of homosexuality and the fading system of *shudo*. Politically, there was a growing need to erase these words from the minds of the incoming generations within the new era, therefore it would not seem far-fetched that if the words themselves could not be erased, the Japanese would simply give them negative connotations and standards of offensiveness. By the late 1880s, many *shudo* texts came under fire for their offensive language and explicit depictions of erotic material. To read anything that contained homoerotic themes amongst men was considered to be a violation of the *Shuppan jorei*, or publication law, and was punishable by fines and jail sentences. However, the publishing laws of the Meiji period contained an open bias against the *nanshoku* themes and set forth a variety of regulatory provisions to break down the literary genre. First, the *Shuppan jorei* created laws and violation codes focused primarily on male homoeroticism. Any text exhibiting male-male relations was set to be banned, yet female-female erotica and heterosexual erotica were still permissible for print. The actual laws stated that during the period when the laws were enacted, the publications should not disturb the “peace and order” of the Japanese society and should not violate the moral codes under which the Japanese stood for. The “peace and order” that the Japanese are defining is that of the sexual explicitness and openness of the human form. Books portraying direct sexual scenes and explicit pederasty were more likely to be withdrawn from the public domain and kept out of the sight of the younger generations. However, it was oftentimes the books that had mentioning of *keikan* and homoeroticism that became the target of censorship. Even plays and theatre works dated

back from the 1600s were subject to censorship through their erotic themes and perceived notions of *nanshoku*. Furthermore, this system created greater difficulties for explicit genres due to its complex system to cancel censorship. Various authors found this system to be a favored system or nearly impossible to bypass with explicit pieces. The only reliable methods for these works to come back to the mainstream was to change the parts that were considered vulgar, or to take them out altogether, avoiding the obscenity and controversial nature. It was not unusual for printers and writers to do the latter, as this was a faster process to regain credit and commerce for their artistic creations. Through a slow but legal process, it became mainstream to synonymize *nanshoku* and *keikan* with illegality and controversy.

The codes, however, were faulty and easy to manipulate between classes. The publishing laws of the Meiji period contained a bias against the *nanshoku* themes of its previous era for a variety of reasons. First, the *Shuppan jorei* created laws and violation codes focused primarily on male homoeroticism, while not incorporating female-female erotica nor heterosexual erotica. The actual laws stated that during the period with which the laws were enacted, the publications should not disturb the “peace and order” of the Japanese society and should not violate the moral codes under which the Japanese stood for.⁵¹ The “peace and order” that the Japanese are defining is that of the sexual explicitness and overt vulgarity of the human form. Furthermore, the *Kaitei ritsuryo* was designed as a maintenance law for mostly rural areas of Japan, where authorities had greater difficulty measuring the levels of pedophilia and male prostitution that occurred. Before the law was instated, the occurrences of male-male sexual acts had no clear description of punishments within the penal code. Because of the gray area of the homosexual acts, all sexual acts, including male rape and sexual assault, were largely ignored by the legal system.⁵² And yet,

⁵¹ Pflugfelder, 200.

⁵² Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 121.

with the creation of the *Keikan* codes, it still proved difficult to enforce the regulations in their desired areas, such as cities. If the act was committed, it was not uncommon for police officers and court officials to turn a blind eye to the actions of the offender, oftentimes citing their relations and alliances with the declining warrior classes and connections with the entertainment class. In the cases where the criminal was caught and charged, the punishments were fairly light and carried a greater weight based on the recognition of the assailant's perversion and disgrace. In other words, following the legal sentencing of a month in prison, legal officials often ruled that the punishment of dishonor was punishment enough and would commonly reduce sentences, if not dismiss the sentencing altogether. This particular type of leniency, however, backfired in various cases with repeat offenders as it promoted the continuation of male-male relations because of the clemency granted to the men. It should also be noted that punishments were stratified based on social and economic classes. Those with a higher social class were capable of getting away with *keikan* over commoners, who would be subject to public floggings and punishments equivalent to those found when theft was committed. In certain cases, two consenting men of different social and economic classes were given different sentencings based on age, wealth, and familial ties to the court system. If one of the men was shown to have higher prestige, then they were given a fine or shorter sentencing than the lower-class man. Even the punishments were limited between the different classes of Meiji Japan, as lower-class men who committed "anal interaction by seduction" were more likely to receive sentences given in the *keikan* regulations, such as lashings from a bamboo stick, or banishment.⁵³ This class-based penal code allowed for the upper, educated classes to continue for longer periods of time with the sexual acts, versus the commoners in more rural lands who were more likely to decrease their engagement in the perversion out of fear of being fined or public humiliation within their

⁵³ Pflugfelder, 161.

homogenous and intimate communities. This resulted in a massive decrease of reported instances of *nanshoku* and male-male relationships in rural areas as opposed to urban areas, where the wealthy, upper-class had greater leniency with their interactions with one another as well as the lower classes by the turn of the century. While the *keikan* codes proved to be an influential opponent to the normativity of homosexual culture in the modernizing Japan, a more powerful influence was beginning to emerge with Western culture's intrusion into the nation. Following the installation of the *Keikan* codes, Japan was increasing its own economic and social relationship with Britain and France. After what the Japanese considered to be a "humiliation" by the European powers during the 1880s, a study of their cultural norms and legal systems began as a way to learn how to conduct itself within a modernizing world.⁵⁴ It is not surprising then, that of the documents studied, the French Penal Code came was examined closely.⁵⁵ It is argued whether or not the actual *Keikan* codes were based off of the French Penal Code, but a similarity in the code seemed to be the vagueness in legal conduct with offenders of sexual violence and sodomy.⁵⁶ The original *Keikan* code was proven to be so vague, that three more codes were formatted and revoked until the Penal Code of 1880 was installed. Even with the placement of the updated Penal Code, a gray area still stood for the criminal rights and conduct of those who committed sodomy and expressed favoritism of male-male homosexual actions, which would prove influential and consequential within the coming decades.

The Meiji Restoration and Internal Changes

⁵⁴ Benson, John, Matsumura, Takao, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation* (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2001): 57.

⁵⁵ Pflugfelder, 158.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

While the reasoning behind the eventual decline of *nanshoku* are subject to the censorships and laws that were generated within the early Meiji period, there are various reasons behind the swift governmental actions towards homosexual relations. The modernization of the various institutions under the Meiji Restoration played a fundamental role in the decline of public homosexuality and *nanshoku*. One of the first institutions to dissolve under the new government of Japan was the samurai class. The influx of Protestant intellectuals and leaders within Japan increased in the Meiji period as a result of the open borders, which led to a rise in Christian values spearheading the movement to end *nanshoku* and open *keikan* practices.⁵⁷ The push was strong enough to result in the decimation of the samurai class for both its classical connotation and its problematic power in the society. But taking away the main class that participated in *nanshoku* practices, the causality and commonality of *nanshoku* and homosexual practices was forfeited from the mainstream—just as many European missionaries and expats wanted it to be. The rise in Judeo-Christian expression in Japan paralleled with the rise in attacks on Buddhist institutions in the late 1800s. Possibly the second-most active participants in *keikan* practices with adolescent boys and men, various religious leaders and government leaders alike took aim at the Buddhist institution for their power and influence over the country in 1868.⁵⁸ Under these attacks, the Buddhist institution began to weaken, causing the practice to come under fire and make monks face the same penal code as common people would. Pressured by their government, the rise of an international audience, and the fear of shame and imprisonment, the Buddhists began to decrease their practice of *nanshoku*—at least to the public eye.

Domestically, the Meiji period stood as a time of restoration and new Westernized values in Japan. There was a growing need to become more like its Western allies, such as the United

⁵⁷ Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 121.

⁵⁸ Benson, Matsumura, 150.

States and Germany. Japan defined itself as a land of impotency politically and diplomatically from its years of isolation, therefore the need to gain strength was also embraced with the need to seek assistance from other more imperialistic nations.⁵⁹ This study began analyzing how to take away the factors in their nation that many have been considered weak and unsophisticated by the Western nations, and the best methods to not only reform the current systems, but what could be done to implement stability with the rising generations. It is no surprise then that with the involvement of Western nations in the political arena combined with Japan's new critical analysis of its own self-conduct, social change was inevitable in the mainland. Even as the Japanese in their very own Preamble of the Meiji Constitution of 1889 pointed to the need for a "national principle" and "national essence", much of their political and sociocultural ideals are borrowed from across the Pacific.⁶⁰

One of the first large-scale sociological changes to occur rather quickly during the Meiji Period was the reconstruction of the nuclear family and familial relations. It was natural for Japanese families during the Tokugawa period to have what was once considered the "standard" family. This family consisted of a wife, a husband, children who were likely married, servants of the estate, and the "unmarried children", which would include both the grandchildren of the wife and husband as well as the children of the married children.⁶¹ This type of family was not a typical family model in Japan, but rather a standard of living and achievement. To have extended family living in the housing or estate with the original parents was a show of wealth and prestige, as is the ability to have servants who will assist the family with their needs. The father was a dominant figure within the household when there, though the emphasis of parental

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁰ Japan. The Meiji Government, *The Constitution of the Empire of Japan*, comp. Hirobumi Ito and Jonathan Dresner, trans. Miyoji Ito (Tokyo, Japan, 1889).

⁶¹ Benson, Matsumura, 189.

acknowledgement and childrearing is maternal. The mother and grandmother, if alive in the household, have the power over the children, therefore are able to influence their psychological wellbeing and romantic persuasions. Within the rural areas of Japan, the "traditional" family was more likely.⁶² This family was made up of wife, husband, and children, but no domestic helpers or, at times, extended family. This family incorporated a strong emphasis on familial ties, just as the "standard" family, but also had a strong background in the reinforcement of reliance and legacy in filial piety. Parents relied on children and vice versa to achieve the tasks necessary to survive day to day, such as rice cultivating or other types of specialized work. In the event of a death of an immediate family member, these types of families could be economically broken and incapable of meeting the demands that often came with the lower-socioeconomic lifestyle of renting and tenant-working.

The perspective of the traditional families, however, was met with an extensive re-evaluation with the entrance of the Meiji period. Under the growing economic power of the Western nations and the rising trade, the economy began to boom. With the rise of the economy came a rise in population in both rural areas and cities, with the populations in urban Japan skyrocketing from just under forty million in 1981 to over fifty million by the beginning of the first World War.⁶³ With the rising population and accelerating economic conditions, servants could afford other careers outside of servitude, and often left their jobs as such to obtain equal, if not higher paying jobs that often gifted them with better treatment than their home jobs, where it was easy to be fired a moment's notice under wealthy families. Furthermore, with the rise of Western propaganda and cultural events in Japan, the acknowledgement of a Western-style

⁶² Ibid., 189.

⁶³ Ian Masser, "Japanese Urban Planning: Some British Perspectives: Introduction," *The Town Planning Review* 57, no. 2 (April 1986): 123. Accessed May 7, 2019, www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40112282.pdf?ab_segments=0/default-2/control&refreqid=excelsior:f43541d100ac3e7593342c08adce3db7.

family began to formulate within Japanese politics. The concept of a nuclear family became popular throughout Japan by the 1980s, and the emphasis was put on traditional families. These families, while not the Westernized families seen throughout the United States and Europe in the late 1800s, were the easy syncretism of Western influence and Eastern practice. The traditional families were oftentimes not wealthy but stressed the values of filial piety and the success through perseverance for the family.⁶⁴ The standard families, on the other hand, began more equated with material wealth and earthly possessions, values that were beyond the ideals Japan wanted to accommodate within their reforms. With this in mind, the Meiji Japan government began a reform system to reinforce the family system within mostly urban areas. This system set up curriculums and educational standards to assist in the teachings of filial piety and collective success for the family. Underlyingly, the standard family system was being phased out of the modernizing Japanese society as a result of the loss of traditional Japanese classes, such as the *bushi* class. These families would soon become either a part of Japan's elite class, or the upper class through their various government connections, but would not be able to retain their family system through the next generation of their children.

With the reforms came various economic and social changes as well. Of the cultural norms brought over from Westernized nations, one of the most influential was the need for a patriarchal household with a wife that is both dutiful and gives full attention to the raising of the children. This particular perspective was pursued by the Meiji government through the Civil Code of 1898, which included the prohibition of women working in various areas in addition to the emphasis on marriage and the housewife lifestyle for urban wealthy Japanese women. Women were now meant to acknowledge a patriarchal society built of official marriage and Confucian values. Within the Meiji period, new restrictions were also set on practices that

⁶⁴Benson, Matsumura, 186.

resulted in nontraditional relationships or bastard children such as concubinage and prostitution, pornography and pornographic media, common-law marriage, pre-nuptial sexual acts, polyamorous relationships, and as Benson and Takao state, “liberal attitudes towards ‘bisexual’ activity...”⁶⁵ Anyone found to be involved in these classes of practices were given jail sentences, regardless of wealth and prestige. Women were further degraded in their power at home and childrearing as it was possible for men to divorce women based on their ability to be a capable mother and a good wife. According to the Ministry of Education in Japan at the time, once a girl marries, she must “serve her husband and parents faithfully, guide and educate her children...and work for the family’s prosperity.”⁶⁶ This particular quote highlights both the need for filial piety and family success while also incorporating the new need for obedience from the wife to the husband. In a sense, a woman was not successful in her work until she was able to bear successful children who would bring a good legacy to the family name. The women who were deemed “incompetent” or incapable of achieving these particular goals under the Meiji reforms were almost always ruined economically and socially, as the husband was more likely to win a divorce settlement and take the children than in Western countries. He was also able to take property away from the wife, as it would be considered his property under the marriage agreement, and if the wife committed adultery (or if she aspired to commit it), then he could immediately divorce her, allowing the children to go to him and his parents.⁶⁷ Little was understood about what made a woman “incompetent” according to the laws, be it an inability to produce successful children, or a prevailing mental illness that went undiagnosed due to psychology’s infancy. But these laws highlight the growing male-dominated household built more on female obedience and family succession than the wealth and prestige of the former eras.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 186.

⁶⁶ *Imperial Rescript on Construction* in Benson, Takao, 186.

⁶⁷ Benson, Matsumura, 187.

Within this analysis of familial systems, it makes sense that homosexual tendencies were also attacked, as men were now deemed responsible for not only their wife, but the rearing of their children as well. Men were now sent to acknowledge the possibility of jail sentencing if the acts of *keikan* were committed, thus bringing shame and humiliation to the family no matter what their social class is. Men of the Tokugawa period had greater protections in place to stop them from the possibility of humiliation, but with the Civil Code of 1898, no one was safe from the rising crackdown of prohibited sexual practices. Furthermore, women were now playing a more active role in the creation of a heteronormative agenda for their sons. To both avoid the possible humiliation and shame of having a bisexual or homosexual son, women and education systems were more stratified in their teachings for girls and boys. Though the woman was still the primary caretaker of the children, it was likely not be uncommon that she encouraged her son to take up more masculine sports while teaching her daughters early on the importance of obedience and house skills, such as cooking—similar to the types of parenting seen by the United States and European states during the time. It was necessary for the woman by the Meiji period to raise her children on a heteronormative ideal for not just them, but for herself as to avoid the social and personal backlash of a child—nevertheless, a male child—bringing shame to the family name for such explicit actions that were often regarded as normal just fifty years before.

Westernization and Outside Influences in Japan's Remodeling

As most of these changes occurred internally during the Meiji Period, the West kept a close eye on its Eastern trading partners. It would be difficult to equate the modernization and systemic changes in Japan to just their own ideas and conceptions for modernization. Much of

the influence of modernization came with the caveat of Europeanization on the island, with various policies implemented being in favor of Western ideals, especially in the realm of sexual relations and marital interactions.

The introduction of Western religion was initially considered as a weak inheritance of culture from the West in Japan, but it may have proven more influential than suspected, specifically on the Buddhist class' decline of power. The first Western interaction within Japan was with Portuguese Jesuit missionaries seeking to gain influence and allies among the island's elites during the 16th century.⁶⁸ Various Jesuit missionaries found the Japanese people and culture to be refined and intellectually capable, an ideal that would stand until the 19th century with the introduction of Darwinism and early racial studies in the West. It was never a question of their culture and political wellness, but rather the morality of their practices and its cultural prevalence. In questioning these factors, Jesuit leaders looked to the Buddhist monks for answers, and instead found what they considered a cause of the moral breakdown. The Buddhist practices of *nanshoku*, according to the missionaries, was an "infidel" practice that was polluting the Japanese people and their moral standards.⁶⁹ The Jesuits quickly revoked their support for the Buddhist class and began to preach the wrongfulness of *nanshoku* to their target audiences—the daimyos and shoguns. The irony of this situation, however, was that the daimyos commonly had good relations with the Buddhist monks, or they were practicing the religion themselves. Furthermore, the elite class was not hidden from the world of male sexual relations. Daimyos and shoguns would have male suitors as well, whether they were page boys, *chigos*, or high-class *kabuki* actors from the entertainment district. Needless to say, when the Jesuit missionaries approached these leaders with their concerns about the falsehood and pollution of the Buddhists

⁶⁸ Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 19.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 20.

who committed sodomy, these leaders would take it as an attack on themselves or their allies, and quickly dismiss or banish these Jesuits.⁷⁰ The religious and moral standards of the Jesuits soon became a problem for the Japanese *bakufu*, or warrior government, and after various uprisings by armed converts in the Southern lands, the *bakufu* instated measures to achieve isolation (*sakoku*) as to avoid further political disruptions.⁷¹

The Portuguese were outlawed from their land, meaning the religious impact was no longer a threat, but some groups, such as the Dutch, were allowed to interact on a miniscule scale with the Japanese. The Dutch had a greater focus on trade relations over religious and intellectual gain, yet it was their literature and book exchanges in Japan that led to the rise in European intellectual interactions between the two groups.⁷² Book exchanges were commonplace in Japan despite the human restrictions in various urban areas, so European knowledge was spread through the acquisition of these books. But it is likely that by the late 19th century, these Dutch pieces included the rising studies of sexology and social maintenance, stating possible inferiority of the sexual practices of the Japanese people through their usage of *nanshoku* and open sexuality with concubines and prostitutes. With the increase in literacy rates among men in this people, a wariness was beginning with the rise in Western perspectives of masculinity and sexual deviancy. Furthermore, the new movement of nativism was starting to sprout throughout the imperialistic world by the turn of the century as a result of increasing immigrant and troubling economic conditions by the mid-to-late 1800s, particularly in the United States.⁷³ This movement spread to through the literature and intellectual exchanges, ultimately reaching Japan and causing

⁷⁰ Friday, 339.

⁷¹ Ekken Kaibara, *The Philosophy of Qi: The Record of Great Doubts* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 27.

⁷² Kaibara, 27.

⁷³ Raymond L. Cohn, "Nativism and the End of the Mass Migration of the 1840s and 1850s," *The Journal of Economic History* 60, no. 02 (June 2000): 367. Accessed May 7, 2019, doi:10.1017/s0022050700000176.

the questioning of their moral conduct and intellectual conduct, a philosophical debate that would ultimately reach their religious class.

Therefore, even with the expulsion of the Jesuits and missionaries in Japan, the line had been drawn by the Western powers in their pursuit of targeting the Buddhist class for their influence over the traditional practices. Utilizing a new educational system, the Meiji government focused on the “‘restoration’ of imperial power” by looking to bring back the traditional and native practices of early Japan while working towards structural and economic progression with their foreign partners.⁷⁴ This neo-traditional movement carried significant ironies, however, as with the case of Buddhists and Buddhist temples. The Meiji Diet argued that was not a native religion of Japan, therefore it had no place in the mainland. While the origins of Buddhism are not Japanese, but India, the diffusion and cultivation of Buddhism in Japan had been a practice that spanned centuries, even coming under the practice of various emperors and leaders of Japan. Another dilemma in attacking Buddhism was the syncretism of Shintoism with the Buddhist practices, a phenomenon that existed since the pre-modern period. Nevertheless, with the formation of the Office of Rites in 1868, the officials of the agency began the difficult task of “separating Shintoism from Buddhism” (*shimbutsu bunri*) as to recall the native beliefs of their past and excommunicate the latter from influence.⁷⁵ During this separation period, Buddhist institutions came under fire, various relics of Buddhism were confiscated or destroyed, and monks were told to conform to the changing ideals of the religious society or face felony charges. In this regard, the persecution of monks was not only a religious genocide, but a cultural one. Monks were considered to be a leading cause in the rise of *nanshoku* and extramarital

⁷⁴ James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1990), 45.

⁷⁵ Ketelaar, 8.

practices during the Edo period, therefore the expulsion and criminalization of their practices resulted in a change in the perspective of their behaviorisms as acceptable and moral. They were no longer to be viewed as idols and role models by any part of the changing society, but instead would be hailed by their own government as “ignorant”, “heretics”, and “priests...saturated with the passions of the flesh”—a similar rhetoric to the Jesuit missionaries that they encountered just three hundred years prior.⁷⁶

Another important introduction during the Meiji era was the rise of European sexology. With the rise of Darwinism and social constructs relating to race, sociology was beginning to cement itself within the far reaches of the Westernized world and the areas impacted by it. By the 18th century, various European countries, such as Spain, France, and Germany, were beginning to social process of medicalizing homosexuality and homosensual tendencies.⁷⁷ In medicalizing and criminalizing their homosexual communities, their concept of racial inferiority and behaviorism began to include the study of masculinity and sexual behaviors within these imperialistic states. As Meiji Japan became more open to the cultural and intellectual influences of the Western nations, more studies of sexual relations and sexology began to flow within the borders. Studies began to be conducted within East Asian countries concerning the predisposition of certain cultures to homosexuality and sodomy. By 1885, Richard Burton, an English explorer and scholar, released a study titled the *Sotadic Zone*. According to the research, citizens within nations near the “Northern Latitudes of 30 and 43”—which includes areas such as the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, China, Japan, and the South Asian Islands—all had a

⁷⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁷ Beachy, Robert, “The German Invention of Homosexuality,” *The Journal of Modern History*, v. 82, no. 4 (Dec. 2010): 802.

predisposition to pederasty, and were to be considered “backwards” by social nature.⁷⁸ These theories combined with Japan’s goal of gaining equal accreditation as a modernized, Westernized country in East Asia led to a whirlwind suppression of homosexual tendencies within various institutions, as well as the *Keikan* codes. Furthermore, the rise in sexology within Japan may have created a link to the rise in new sexual attitudes by the turn of the century. In the earliest days of the Meiji Restoration, it was not uncommon to witness the act of a double murder and suicide as a result of a cheating wife or witnessing a man with multiple partners in one evening, despite having a wife and child.⁷⁹ This was such a commonality in the 1860s, that various European merchants and diplomats recalled the sexual deviancies and lifestyles of the men and women in populous areas of Japan. But by the 1900s, these deviancies and acts have all but vanished from the public eye, dissipating into a world of spousal loyalty and faith. Reasons vary as to why these acts disappeared so quickly from journal entries, be it the quiet censorships on explicit scenes or the updated charges for anyone who engaged in these acts. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a façade of quietness lurking in Japan with such an abrupt end to the open acknowledgment of homosexuality and open marital relations. It seemed that marriage had now become an act within itself.

To better combat the centuries of *nanshoku* and the acceptance of casual bisexuality, sex education in Japan emerged as a gendered education with an emphasis falling primarily on the women to do their part and be a good wife and mother for young men.⁸⁰ Various liberal intellectuals during the Meiji era questioned the sudden restrictiveness of sexual education,

⁷⁸ Beachy, 829.

⁷⁹ Francis Hall and Fred G. Notehelfer, *Japan through American Eyes: The Journal of Francis Hall, Kanagawa and Tokyo, 1859-1866* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 80. Based on the journal entry of Saturday, February 25th, 1860.

⁸⁰ Fu, Huiyan. “The Bumpy Road to Socialise Nature: Sex Education in Japan.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 13, no. 8 (2011): 905.

noting the dangers to young women and men alike of pro-Western understandings of sexual morality versus the traditional Shinto ideals, which were more lenient.⁸¹ Young men were now discouraged to perform the acts of *nanshoku*, or to even perceive other young men as beauty as this was now a legally punishable offense. Young women were encouraged to go out of their way to find good husbands and to be obedient wives to deter their spouse from lingering towards male partners. Should their husband be involved with a male suitor, it would bring shame to not only the wife, but her family and her husband's family. A new feature of the rise in sexual education was the loss of the male aesthetic known for much of the Medieval and early modern period. The de-eroticization of the male body was replaced with the "transfer of beauty" to women, and the requirement to romanticize and sexualize femininity within females only.⁸² At the same time, the criminalization of homosexuality was rising alongside the ethological need for heterosexuality. To be homosexual in the Japanese society now meant being a social outcast, a psychologically damaging notion in a particularly homogenous country. It was considered to be social suicide for men by the 20th century to admit romantic or sexual feelings to other men, as it now began to counteract the very concept of Western masculinity and heteronormativity that was prevalent in their society with the rise of modernization.⁸³

Conclusion

The rise and fall of *nanshoku* and marriage trends were events that had various consequences to the social and sexual culture of Japan by the end of the Meiji period. Westernization is considered an immediate reason behind the changes in homosexual and marital tendencies, but the reality is that Westernization may have merely been an influential push

⁸¹ Fu, 905.

⁸² Tsuneo, Jun'ichi, 130

⁸³ Ibid., 131.

factor. From the introduction of religion and Christian thought in Japan, very little influence had taken place with its presence against the Buddhist powerbases built in the nation.⁸⁴ Christianity itself was not the problem; its lack of cultural assimilation was. It wasn't until literary influences and early psychological thought from the West spilled into the island that there was a second thought given the practices as troublesome in the face of modernization. To the West, the rationale of *nanshoku* practices and open homosexuality denoted a weakened institution with little centralized authority, therefore a weak state. With such leniencies over their bodies and sexual identities, how could a nation be sociologically, nevertheless politically, ready to achieve modernization? The West asked questions about the Japanese state that scientists would ask about evolution and early men. Through its known sociocultural ideals and pseudoscience, European powers and the United States began to question whether or not the Japanese state could survive as a 20th century nation—and it just so happened that Japan was listening. Out of the fear of being left behind in an early modern era combined with the possibility of imperialistic takeovers from Western trading partners, the Meiji government saw it as a risk to continue with the institutions they had known and reformed themselves to be better equipped for a modernizing world, even if it meant turning their backs on a practice that was considered normal in the male society. In this case, modern is synonymous with imperialistic and European, therefore their understanding of power and progress was linked to the Western understanding of society and reformation.

However, one should not confuse the Reformation with exact and finite changes that were set to last. The sudden changes to the sociological culture of Japan resulted in less of a decline of *nanshoku* and sexual relations, but what one may consider more of a transformation within its varying results on how homosexuality was to be treated and observed in public. As the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 125.

marriage rate stayed constant, various incidents concerning adolescent rape became an issue within the suburbs of Tokyo and Kyoto. These incidents were often between university-aged men and high school or middle school-aged boys, and unlike the romanticism of *nanshoku* in the Meiji period, they were often sudden, violent assaults with multiple attackers. Local media blamed the lackluster education system and “traditional thinking” for the rise in these attacks.⁸⁵ The new sexual education system seemed to have failed the last generation of young men born into the *nanshoku*-friendly society, causing them to come of age having to relearn that the display of homosexuality and bisexuality was against the obligations of the Japanese people and their moral commitments to society as a whole. Sexual encounters in early Confucianist works permitted sexual intercourse to be for the simple goal of pleasure and entertainment, allowing the possibility of multiple partners of various genders. But with the introduction of the late Meiji period, sexual intercourse in neo-Confucianist works was described as being an act between married couples only, with the goal of a child being produced at some point with the act.⁸⁶ In this new interpretation, sexual interactions were only available to those who were committed to heterosexuality, celibacy, and childrearing, providing the homosexual and bisexual community with no outlook for their sexual desires. As a result, various generations had different interactions with one another, raising questions about how to handle bisexual or homosexual emotions towards other men that were no longer considered valid in this new society. The modern Japanese military experienced this issue first hand, with cases of *keikan* so high within certain areas of the army that strip searches and body inspections became common occurrences. If a soldier was found to have engaged in *keikan* or any kind of homosexual practices, they

⁸⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁸⁶ Fu, 905.

would be dismissed—even if the soldier was found to have been a victim of rape.⁸⁷ In other cases, the shame and humiliation of being discovered by their colleagues would drive soldiers out of the ranks regularly. In practice was so popular, that one European in Japan during the time noted that the Japanese soldiers during their time of peace was commonly in “intimate relations” with one another.⁸⁸ One could argue that *nanshoku* didn’t necessarily die out, but simply translated itself into a new subculture often hidden from its own citizens, but public to the Westerner who was curious to learn more. Marriage itself did not experience a radical change, either, except for the new obligations of women to raise good children. Western ideals of the modern, obedient housewife and mother were placed on the women as a way to gain greater control of the sexual ideals of men, but to no greater prevail than to have men simply follow the model that the samurais followed themselves—to either engage in homosexual relations prior to marriage, or to have a wife and children and then pursue male lovers. Into the late 20th century, following a nearly century-long erasure of male aestheticism, *wakashudo* culture reignited with the rise of the *bishōnen* genre, a genre known for its use of beautiful or androgynous boys that are romanticized by both men and women in their works. By the 1970’s, genre became a legitimate base for the romanticism and sexualization of androgynous men with similarities to the late *wakashudo* narrative.⁸⁹ There’s also the question as to how strong the *sakoku* truly was in Japan. Would this modernization have occurred even with the closed borders policy and isolation theory of Japan? With the input of intellectual trade, literature, and European educational exchange, it was likely that Japan would have experienced this sort of transition at some point within the rise of globalization in the 20th century. It just so happens that in the time social

⁸⁷ Pflugfelder, 217.

⁸⁸ Tsuneo, Jun’ichi, 122.

⁸⁹ Angles, Jeffrey. *Writing the Love of Boys: Origins of Bish Nen Culture in Modernist Japanese Literature* (Minnesota: The University of Minnesota Press, 2011): 3.

globalization was occurring, Western nations were interpreting sexual nature in a way that it had not in the centuries before. Rather than ignoring this new perspective, in an act on the verge of social sacrifice, the Meiji government willingly showed that they were indeed paying attention to the ways of love and romance through the Westerner's eyes—and modernly, carry no regrets for the social reforms that still leaves a population weary about the acceptance and acknowledgement of sexuality and desire in a supposedly homogenous community.

Appendix 1



Bunrō. *Wakashu and Young Woman with Hawks*, 1803. Illustrated Emaki Handscroll. Ontario, The Royal Ontario Museum. Accessed March 18, 2019.
<https://www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/a-third-gender-beautiful-youths-in-japanese>

Appendix 2



Unknown artist, *Gay encounter between high-ranked samurai and younger subordinate*, c. 1850s. The Shenga Gallery. Accessed February 10, 2019. <https://shungagallery.com/nanshoku/#respond>

Appendix 3

Glossary of Japanese Terms

Bakufu: The military government of Japan from the 12th century through the Meiji Period. They would be replaced by the Meiji Diet in 1668.

Bishōnen: A term meaning “beautiful youth or boy”. The modern term replacing the obsolete *wakashu*. S also the genre of a Japanese manga series concerning the adventures and character portrayals of beautiful boys.

Bushi: The Japanese term for samurais

Bushido: The code of morality and loyalty for the samurais of Japan.

Chigo: Term predominantly used by the Buddhists and samurais concerning young boys and apprentices in the samurai class.

Emaki: Illustrated handscrolls popularized in Heian Japan through the Tokugawa period.

Fujoshi: The modern term for female fans and supporters of male-male eroticism and romanticism; lit. “rotten girl”.

Joshoku: The Japanese term for female-male eroticism; the closest English equivalent to the term “heterosexuality”.

Kabuki: A classical theatre in Japan known for its stylizations and story types. Only men were allowed to perform in it by the mid-17th century.

Keikan: The Japanese term for “sodomy”; mostly used in male-male relations.

Nanshoku: A practice of homosexual eroticism between young men and older men; a predominantly public interaction until the Meiji period’s censorship laws.

Onna-girai: A term used for men who are not sexually attracted to women but can be sexually ambiguous with men. Often used in conjunction with bisexuality.

Sakoku: A Japanese term created describing the “closed” borders and isolation of Japan. This foreign policy prohibited most foreigners from entering Japan and allowed the death penalty as a fair charge should this law be broken. Only in specific areas of Japan were foreigners allowed to reside and practice trade.

Seppuku: An act by a samurai to commit honorable suicide via disembowelment. Also known as *hara-kiri*.

shimbutsu bunri: The act of separating Shinto ideals from Buddhism during the Meiji Period's persecution of Buddhist monks and practitioners.

Shudo: The pederastic practice of sexual relationships among experienced samurai and their apprentices in the samurai class.

Wakashu: the obsolete Japanese term for beautiful boys and adolescence, lit. "beautiful people"

Wakashudo: The obsolete Japanese term for "the way of beautiful boys"; the aestheticism of young men to other men and women.

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