

Chapter One

Introduction Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering

Today it is not unusual for historians and other historically minded analysts of culture to speak of the relatively recent "invention" of some of our most taken-for-granted customs, practices, symbols, ceremonials, and institutions. "Traditional" folk songs, national anthems, flags and costumes, monarchies, and many conventionally accepted practices have come under a new and critical scrutiny. The pomp of British royalty, "splendid, public, and popular," is now understood to be a construct of the years between the late 1870s and 1914 and not a venerable tradition at all. Bastille Day, it turns out, was not a spontaneous festival originating immediately after the French Revolution; rather, it was invented in 1880. In the United States as well, daily worship of the national flag apparently became a regular school practice only in the 1880s, during the great drive to make recent immigrants into Americans. This current focusing on the invented quality of many un-critically accepted traditions, this historicizing of the details of everyday culture, has contributed to a new kind of skepticism about some of our most deeply held notions. Not least of these has been the naturalness or timelessness of the nation and of national identity. ¹

Interestingly, Basil Hall Chamberlain, the learned pioneer in English-language studies of Japanese history and literature, had already made the same sorts of points about invented traditions more than three-quarters of a century ago. In 1912 he published a short, brilliant, but for the most part now long-forgotten essay titled *The Invention of a New Religion*. Chamberlain argued that while Japan's governing elites had begun to convince the Japanese people and the rest of the world

that the "new Japanese religion" of "Mikado-worship and Japan-worship" was of ancient vintage, they were in fact inventions of extraordinarily modern times. From a critical perspective that sounds surprisingly fresh today, he maintained that "every manufacture presupposes a material out of which it is made, every present a past on which it rests. But the twentieth-century Japanese religion of loyalty and patriotism is quite new, for in it pre-existing ideas have been sifted, altered, freshly compounded, turned to new uses, and have found a new centre of gravity. Not only is it new, it is not yet completed; it is still in process of being consciously or semi-consciously put together by the official class, in order to serve the interests of that class, and, incidentally, the interests of the nation at large." ²

As proof of the newness of this religion Chamberlain pointed out that Shinto, "which had fallen into discredit," had been "taken out of the cupboard and dusted" in order to assist in the construction of the imperial cult. Only in recent years, he noted, had the Shinto priesthood been allowed to conduct burial rites and marriage ceremonies. Quite correctly, as we shall see, Chamberlain reminded his readers that historically the marriage ceremony had not been a religious rite at all; as for the "traditional" Shinto-style marriage, that was a complete invention. In schools, too, the emperor's portrait had only recently become an object of worship, and festivals celebrating official imperial holidays were also an innovation. In fact, despite a glowing emperor-centered official history filled with "miraculous impossibilities," he asserted that "no nation probably has ever treated its sovereigns more cavalierly than the Japanese have done, from the beginning of authentic history down to within the memory of living men. Emperors have been deposed, emperors have been assassinated; for centuries every succession to the throne was the signal for intrigues and sanguinary broils. Emperors have been exiled; some have been murdered in exile. From the remote island to which he had been relegated one managed to escape, hidden under a load of dried fish."³

But in his documentation of the apparently amazing gullibility of the Japanese people, Chamberlain's most acute observation concerned the credulity of people in general toward cultural inventions. The Japanese, he reminded his readers, were not the only ones who made up ideas and then fervently began to believe in them. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, had simply sat in a forest, invented man in a state of nature, and then imagined a "pseudo-history of man from his own brain." But, even more incredible, Rousseau "fanatically believed in this his pure

invention, and, most extraordinary of all, persuaded other people to believe in it as fanatically." In other words, Chamberlain did not assume that the Japanese governors, the manufacturers of the cult of the emperor and of the nation, remained cynical and detached as they busily tried to persuade others of the truthfulness of this new religion. Rather, he concluded that even those who had concocted the new creed had become believers in their own myths. ⁴

But how could a religion, so recent a fabrication and so completely alien to the great masses, have come to have such veracity for enormous numbers of people that, as Chamberlain put it, a whole generation was "growing up which does not so much as suspect that its cherished beliefs are inventions of yesterday"? And more surprisingly, how could even the creators of the new ideas have come to believe in their own innovations? Chamberlain's main explanation for the phenomenon of mass belief was that "the spread of new ideas has been easy, because a large class derives power from their diffusion, while to oppose them is the business of no one in particular." As for the second matter, Chamberlain conjectured that the governing elites believed in their own inventions because people in general tend to take up ideas that will further their own interests. Since the Japanese rulers wished to have all the masses come under the sway of the new religion, the result was their belief in that very fabrication.⁵

Chamberlain was probably right, insofar as he went; but he might have gone further in addressing the issue of how it had come to pass that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Japanese people, governors and governed alike, learned to forget the invented quality of the modern cult of the emperor and of the nation. Most people must have experienced a massive and sudden case of what Pierre Bourdieu has termed "genesis amnesia." History had somehow produced a forgetting of history, to the extent that recent fabrications had quickly passed into the subconscious area of the seemingly natural and self-evident.⁶ For while historians are generally agreed that common folk had little or no knowledge of the Japanese emperor during the Tokugawa period, during the Meiji era and later it became commonplace to think of the flow of time, the organization of political space, and even Japanese culture as converging on that very emperor. Even today high government officials and respected scholars continue to espouse the belief that history and culture for the Japanese people have almost always centered on the imperial institution.⁷ And the Constitution of Japan proclaims that "the Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and

of the unity of the people." This paradox of emperor-centered nationalism is much like one of the great paradoxes of nationalism itself, in which, as Benedict Anderson has put it, "the objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye" exists alongside "their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists." ⁸

I am proposing that we remember—not the entire history of the imperial institution, for such a project, even if it were to be a critical one, would inadvertently contribute to the myth of the imperial institution's continuity. Rather, following a Foucauldian genealogical method that sees the principle of continuity itself as a metaphysical a priori,⁹ I want to remember the instant of historical rupture, the moment of the imperial institution's new emergence in modern Japan. Thus my approach is absolutely opposed to the overall project of many new and widely read works on the Japanese emperor that either attempt to produce generalizations about Japanese kingship over time,¹⁰ or explain modern kingship in Japan by resorting to metaphysical assumptions about Japanese mentality.¹¹ This is not to say that these books do not contain interesting and useful details about the imperial institution in particular historical periods. Moreover, I do believe that insights about kingship in other times and places can be used metaphorically to illuminate the nexus of culture and power in modern Japan. Rather, it is to say that the overall approach of these books—which tends toward hypostatizing and thereby essentializing Japanese kingship or mentality—runs the great risk of mystifying all those forces that came together in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to throw the emperor and the nation onto the center stage of Japan's modern history.

Nationalism and the Emperor in Tokugawa Japan

As a first move in this project of remembering discontinuity, it would be useful to briefly sketch the Tokugawa period as background to the later rise of nationalism and the modern imperial cult. It is obvious to sensible historians today—and it was all too apparent to the Meiji regime's leaders—that during the Tokugawa period the common people had neither a strong sense of national identity nor a clear image of the emperor as the Japanese nation's central symbol. Nowadays Japan appears to form an almost natural political community,

with its people possessing a remarkably uniform culture and national identity. Surrounded by the sea and set off at a considerable distance from the powerful cultural influences of the Asian continent, geographical circumstances also seem, at least superficially, to have been congenial to the development and preservation of a unique national culture. Even one of the most thoughtful of Japanese writers argued not long ago that Japan's physical insularity, complemented by "the same language and the same system of gestures[,] has unite[d] the population so that they feel almost as though they were distant relatives."¹² But the strong sense of national consciousness and identity that has characterized the modern Japanese is less a product of natural circumstances that can be traced back in time to the geological formation of the Japanese archipelago than of strategically motivated cultural policies pursued by Japan's modern ruling elites.

During the earlier Tokugawa period, the official discourse on ruling stressed that both society and polity were to be maintained by the accentuation of social, cultural, and even to some extent political differences, not by an ideology of social, cultural, and political sameness. Society was stratified into functionally interdependent but sharply distinctive horizontal estates or statuses—primarily the samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants. The duty of the ruling elite, the samurai, was to see that rigid status distinctions were maintained so that the organically related parts of the body politic could function harmoniously. One historian of Japan has aptly called this system "rule by status."¹³ Society, culture, and politics were also separated into vertical compartments. On the one hand, under a system that has been likened to a "federation,"¹⁴ the political order was institutionally separated into largely autonomous domains, or *han*. On the other hand, particular local cultures characterized by distinct and often even mutually unintelligible dialects contributed to the insularity of local communities from each other within Japan, rather than the insularity of Japan from outside cultural influences.

In short, politics, society, and especially culture under the ideal Tokugawa system of rule were marked by both horizontal and vertical distinctions and separation—a situation that the anthropologist Ernest Gellner has described as being typical of agrarian societies with a literate class of elites and not conducive to the formation of a modern nationalism, which is based upon "an ideal of a single overriding and cultural identity."¹⁵ In his sociological formulation, Anthony Giddens would call this a "class-divided society," one in which "system integration . . . does

not depend upon the overall acceptance of symbolic orders by the majority of the population within these societies." ¹⁶

It is certainly true, as some Japanese historians have argued, that the faint glimmerings of a sense of national identity at the folk level did emerge as early as the late seventeenth century in the cities of the Kyoto/Osaka region, that is, in the area near the imperial court. They maintain that at least within this energetic urban environment common people developed a consciousness of distinctly Japanese cultural traits, as opposed to Confucian ones, as well as an awareness of a land of the emperor or of the gods that was distinct from China. As evidence they cite such representative works of popular culture as the writings of Ihara Saikaku and the plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon.¹⁷ And in his brilliant reading of Tokugawa nativism, H. D. Harootunian has argued that in the early eighteenth century new discourses began to challenge neo-Confucianism's overly simplistic division of society between the rulers and the ruled, between mental and manual labor, because this official discourse had become increasingly incapable of representing "the complexity and plurality of the social urban environment." Tokugawa nativism, in particular, contested the official representation of order while emphasizing that which made "the Japanese irreducibly Japanese—the same and thereby different from the [Chinese] Other."¹⁸

There were also opportunities for common city folk to learn about the existence of the emperor and his court. For example, during periods of mourning for deceased members of the imperial family there were sporadic public injunctions against the playing of musical instruments (*nari mono choji*), and official notices of such deaths even reached villages far from Kyoto. Many people, ranging from those in some "outcast" groups to others as diverse as physicians and confectioners, also sought social prestige by claiming connections of their houses with the imperial court. In fact, Amino Yoshihiko has shown that many nonagriculturalists (*hinogyomin*) in the even earlier medieval period traced their lineages back to emperors or other imperial ancestors. In 1840, when the Tokugawa system of rule was rapidly breaking down, peasants in Shonai *han* even talked of the possibility of a direct petition to the emperor and his regent after exhausting other avenues of protest.¹⁹

Yet all of this points to the existence of only an emergent and geographically limited consciousness of national identity at the *popular* level. When the Meiji rulers ushered in what they called the restoration of imperial rule, many of the common people looked with great expec-

tation to the arrival of a world renewed by the new regime; but this does not mean that they held strong beliefs about either the nation or the emperor. Rather, they longed for a bettering of their lives, for such concrete benefits as the reduction of taxes or the redistribution of land. When their hopes were shattered—by representatives of the state who attacked their religion and way of life, by compulsory education that was costly in terms of tuition and children's labor lost, by military conscription, and by even heavier taxation than they had experienced in the past—they reacted immediately and violently. The first decade of the Meiji era was rocked by a series of violent antigovernment uprisings, some of which—like one in Mie Prefecture in late 1876, touched off by demands for reduced and deferred taxes—began with a specific demand and exploded into wholesale attacks upon the central government itself. In the Mie uprising the rioters attacked all local figures and institutions connected with the central government: headmen (*kocho* and *kucho*), schools, post offices, and central and local government offices. In the Mikawa region peasants led by Buddhist priests demonstrated their rejection of the new government by spearing and decapitating a government official, then burying him halfway in mud in an inverted position. When some of these rioters called the officials of the national government "traitors to the *kuni*, enemies of Buddhism (*ho*)," they obviously did not mean by *kuni* "nation," as it can mean, but "province."²⁰

From the rulers' perspective, a major reason for the instability of the early Meiji government was the inadequacy of the existing popular image of the emperor. Susaki Bunzo, born on Amakusa Island (Kumamoto Prefecture) into a long line of fishermen, and a centenarian at the time he was interviewed in the early 1960s, remembered that one of the major reasons for the reluctance of villagers to become recruits to fight against Saigo Takamori's rebellion in 1877 was that they were not sure who the emperor was. Elderly women were saying, he recalled, that "even though it's said that the emperor's taken the place of the shogun, what kind'a person is he (*dogan hito ja*)? Must be the one in the *kyogen* play who wears the gold crown and the full-sleeved robe with gold brocade."²¹

A remarkable woodblock print depicting popular images of the emperor on the occasion of his first progress to Tokyo in 1868 reveals that some craftspeople of Edo, where little traditional knowledge of the emperor existed, surmised that he was in fact Shotoku Taishi, a deity of popular Edo folklore. In "Craftspeople Praying to the Deity Prince



Figure 1.

Woodblock print representing Edo craftspeople's images of the emperor around the time of his first entry into Tokyo. "Shotoku kotaishi no mikoto e shoshokunin ritsugan no zu," 1868. Courtesy of Asai Collection.

Shotoku," the deity is seen descending on a cloud while Tokyo crafts-people implore him to grant them simple worldly favors (see Figure 1). A young apprentice woodblock cutter says, "I want to become head cutter quickly and fill up my belly with tempura and dumplings." The wife of a tilemaker would like to have something done about her husband: "I pray that my mate be cured of his laziness, that he earn lots of money, that I have *kimono* for summer and winter, and that we do not fall in arrears in our rent." A roofer asks "Taishi-sama" to protect him from falling off roofs and for plenty of work worth "three or four yen" to come his way. An ambitious carpenter prays for no less than "one hundred apprentices" and a lifestyle to match. "Please grant this wish," begins a plasterer, "that I get work in hundreds of mansions of the aristocrats and that I'll have nothing to do with such things as tenement houses (*nagaya fushin*)."
A proud woodworker, apparently also a bachelor, fancies a sharp saw and the ability to do work vigorously. But that

is not all, for he also wonders if the deity can "fix him up" (*osewa*) with a "wife who can make a lot of money and feed" him. "My son is too good-looking," mourns the mother of a joiner, and "all the young girls in the neighborhood fall for him and he won't begin to work. Since his loafing around just won't do, please prevent girls from falling in love with him." ²²

In general, popular images of the emperor before the Meiji era tended to be nonpolitical and rooted in folk religions, rather than political and representational of the national community. The historian and ethnographer Miyata Noboru has used collections of popular legends of emperors to argue that the belief in emperors and imperial princes, which existed in some areas of Japan, overlapped with folk beliefs in *marebito*—that is, sacred beings who were thought to make visitations on the village world and who supposedly dispensed tangible this-worldly benefits to the people. The common folk believed that these emperors had brought or continued to bring such benefits as the creation of sacred rivers, bountiful and often unique crops (such as chestnuts bearing imperial toothmarks), and protection against various natural or magical threats to crops. Moreover, the *tenno* (emperor) was often fused in the popular mind with another *tenno*, *gozu tenno*, the deity of popular folklore believed to ward off evils and calamities.²³

During the Tokugawa period, then, Japan was populated by a people separated from one another regionally, with strong local rather than national ties. Horizontal social cleavages also marked off each social estate from the others, thus precluding the development of a strong sense of shared cultural identity. In addition, the common people's knowledge of the emperor, potentially the most powerful symbol of the Japanese nation, was nonexistent, vague, or fused with folk beliefs in deities who might grant worldly benefits but who had little to do with the nation. Thus the leaders of the Meiji regime needed novel and powerful means of channeling the longings of the people for a better world and the inchoate and scattered sense of identity as a people in the direction of modern nationalism.

Mnemonic Sites

The new rulers could and did use speech and writing to explain the centrality of the emperor in national life. From the early

Meiji years, government authorities in the provinces often wrote public notices for the common people about the emperor. An early notice drawn up by the Nagasaki courthouse explained in the easily understood vernacular that "in this land called Japan there is one called the Emperor (*tenshisama*) who is descended from the Sun Deity (*tensho kotai jingusama*). This has not changed a bit from long ago and just like the Sun being up in the heavens He is the Master (*goshujinsama ja*)." In the "Official Notice to the People of Mutsu and Dewa" (*Ou jinmin kokuyu*), the authorities explained the political and religious significance of the emperor in a similar way: "The Emperor is the descendant of the Sun Deity and has been the Master (*nushi*) of Japan since the beginning of the world. All the rankings of the various deities of the provinces, such as 'first rank,' have been granted by the Emperor. Therefore, He is indeed loftier than the deities, and every foot of ground and every person belongs to the Emperor."²⁴ Such government agents as *senkyoshi* (state propagandists) and later *kyodoshoku* (national priests), who were appointed in the early Meiji years to preach to the masses, continued to edify the people with homilies. In late 1870 in Kikuma *han*, for example, the local representative of the central government designated two local Buddhist priests as educators (*kyoyushi*). They spoke on patriotism, the worship of national deities, Confucius and Mencius, and the proper method of prayer for worshipping at shrines.

While the central government could not strictly control all the activities of the *kyodoshoku*, it directed these preachers especially to encourage patriotism and reverence for the emperor and the national gods. The government also instructed them to instill in the people a wide range of values and learning that together were deemed to form a core of knowledge for all Japanese. This knowledge ranged from the moral value of loyalty to international relations and "civilization and enlightenment."

The verbal exhortations sometimes brought completely unintended results. The people in Mikawa, for example, thought that the *kyoyushi*, dressed as they were in unfamiliar green garments and preaching what were to them unusual doctrines, were "Christians" bent on transforming their world. An antigovernment uprising ensued. Since the government appointed local religious leaders as *kyodoshoku*, appointees often were more interested in using their positions to preach their own particular religious beliefs than in educating the masses about matters of national and political significance. The people also sometimes misconstrued the messages and hence the significance of the official agents.

This happened, for example, when the abbot (*monshu*) of the Nishi Honganji denomination of the Shinshu sect preached in Kyushu. The Shinshu believers treated the *monshu* as the Shinshu religious leader he was by spontaneously throwing money offerings (*saisen*) at him and reciting the Shinshu *nembutsu* prayer to Amida. Nevertheless, by 1880 there were more than a hundred thousand *kyodoshoku* throughout the nation who expounded on the centrality of the emperor and the gods in national life.²⁵

Yet the rulers' attempt to involve the common people in the culture of the national community was not limited to words and preaching. As a result of policies that Chamberlain described as "consciously or semiconsciously put together by the official class, in order to serve the interests of that class," the everyday world of the masses came to be filled with an extraordinary profusion of nonverbal official signs and the dominant meanings, customs, and practices associated with them. In this book I am attentive to two types of what I will call mnemonic sites:²⁶ that is, material vehicles of meaning that either helped construct a memory of an emperor-centered national past that, ironically, had never been known or served as symbolic markers for commemorations of present national accomplishments and the possibilities of the future.

The first such site was that of ritual. It is not at all difficult to establish that ever since the Meiji Restoration, ritual making has been a central concern of Japan's governing elites. This modern obsession with ritual can certainly be traced back to thinkers of the late Tokugawa era and to the policies of several important domains in that period.²⁷ But during the Meiji years and later, Japan's governing elites invented, revived, manipulated, and encouraged national rituals with unprecedented vigor. Through rites the rulers hoped to bring this territory, which had been segmented into horizontally stratified estates and vertically divided regions, under one ruler, one legitimating sacred order, and one dominant memory. From an early date the leaders of the Meiji government fostered rites at the tens of thousands of shrines scattered throughout the nation. Through an edict issued on 5 April 1868²⁸ only months after the restoration, they resuscitated the anachronistic-sounding Department of Shinto Affairs (*Jingikan*), encouraged rites for the national gods, and attached all shrines and Shinto functionaries directly to the *Jingikan*. During the course of the Meiji-Taisho period the government established uniform guidelines for rites to be performed at all shrines throughout the nation. The government's specialists on Shinto rituals generally modeled these newly prescribed rites for local shrines on rites

performed within the imperial household and thereby gave local rites an imperial and a national significance.²⁹ Just as they had promised in their early declarations calling for the "unity of rites and governance" (*saisei itchi*), the rulers had made the performance of rituals an inextricable part of governance. Local rites had become politicized as they became sites of official memories, and through them national politics became ritualized.

National holidays were also an invented site or device for the remembrance of a mytho-history which had never been known. In the period through 1945, and even to some extent after the Second World War, Japan's national holidays have expressed the idea that the national community and the imperial institution are coterminous both forward and backward in time. The invention of Japan's national holidays began in January 1873, with the establishment of two holidays: one to celebrate the accession of Japan's first ruler, Emperor Jimmu, and the other to celebrate the reigning emperor's birthday. In November of the same year the government added six holidays, and in June 1878, another two. The ten official national holidays celebrated in the period between June 1878 and 1927 were the following: (1) Empire Festival (*genshisai*, 3 January), which commemorated the descent to earth of the Sun Goddess's grandchild, Ninigi-no-mikoto, and therefore commemorated the beginning of eternal rule over the nation by the Sun Goddess's descendants; (2) New Year's (*shinnen enkai*, 5 January); (3) Emperor Komei Festival (*Komei tenno sai*, 30 January), which was intended to memorialize each previously reigning emperor and which was therefore replaced by Emperor Meiji Festival (30 July) and Emperor Taisho Festival (25 December) during the next two reigns; (4) National Foundation Day (*kigensetsu*, 11 February), meaning literally the beginning of time, history, or narrative, which commemorated the accession of Emperor Jimmu; (5) Imperial Ancestors' Spring Memorial Festival (*shunki koreisai*, vernal equinox); (6) Emperor Jimmu Festival (*Jimmu tennosai*, 3 April), which memorialized Jimmu's death; (7) Imperial Ancestors' Autumn Memorial Festival (*shuki koreisai*, autumnal equinox); (8) Offering of the First Fruits Festival (*kannamesai*, initially 17 September but moved to 17 October in 1879), which consisted of the offering of the first fruits of the harvest at Ise Shrine and from 1871 at the Imperial Palace's *kashikodokoro*; (9) Emperor's Birthday (*tenchosetsu*, during Meiji's reign 3 November); and (10) Rice Harvest Festival (*niinamesai*, 23 November), which, although an agricultural festival, had from prehistoric times become associated with the ritualized regeneration of the

imperial soul within the reigning emperor. In 1927, the total number of holidays increased to eleven with the addition of Emperor Meiji Day (*Meijisetsu*, 3 November), a holiday commemorating Meiji's virtues.³⁰

While the political rituals described above focused on the emperor's material traces, that is, on signs of the emperor's absent presence, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architects of the modern imperial institution also fabricated an enormous number of new rituals performed by the emperor himself. Murakami Shigeyoshi, a tireless compiler of information on religion and politics in modern Japan, has pointed out that the great majority of even those archaic-looking rites performed within the innermost recesses of the palace, the Imperial Household Rites (*koshitsu saishi*), were invented after the Restoration; moreover, eleven of the thirteen rites performed by the emperor himself had no historical precedents.³¹

In fact, every major political event seemed to warrant the production of some new imperial ritual. On the day after the rulers established the Jingikan in April of 1868, the emperor conducted a specially devised ritual within the Kyoto Palace to set out the basic principles of the regime as outlined in the famous Charter Oath. A few days later he officiated at a military ritual held before the national gods to report a military expedition to the east against the last supporters of the Tokugawa *bakufu* (central government). The ritual makers also refashioned the imperial accession ceremonies, one of which took place in Kyoto (*sokui shiki*, 10 October 1868) and another in Tokyo (*daijosai*, 28 December 1871).³²

The most spectacular state ceremonials of Japan's modernity, however, were the great imperial pageants that brought the emperor, his family, and the military and civil members of his regime directly before the masses, and these constitute the main focus of this book. Until the late 1880s, the dominant form of public imperial pageantry was the progress—a style of ritual in which the emperor traveled around the countryside watching and being watched by the people who were becoming the Japanese. These progresses began with a trip from Kyoto to Osaka in the spring of 1868 and then another to Tokyo later that year. Such large-scale progresses continued through most of the first two decades of the Meiji era, taking the emperor as far north as Hokkaido and to the southern tip of Kyushu.

From the late 1880s, however, the Meiji regime's public rituals took on their full-blown modern form, with Tokyo and to some extent Kyoto used as central and open stages for a dazzling new assortment of

imperial pageants. All of these were influenced by Western models, even the most archaic looking of them, and some of them—such as imperial weddings and wedding anniversary celebrations—had no precedents whatsoever in the ceremonial vocabulary. The most spectacular pageants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included celebrations of political accomplishments such as the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution, war victory ceremonials, and imperial funerals, weddings, and wedding anniversaries.

The power of these ceremonials as mnemonic sites may perhaps be gauged from a particularly revealing memoir by the writer Tayama Katai. In his reminiscences of more than thirty years spent in Tokyo beginning in the early 1880s, Tayama recalled the days preceding the most dramatic of the national pageants he was ever to witness, the funeral of Emperor Meiji. The newspapers, he remembered, had informed the public of the emperor's critical illness in late July 1912. Within four or five days an endless stream of people began flowing into the area of the plaza facing the Nijubashi entranceway to the palace to pray for the emperor's recovery. The following passage describes Tayama's feelings:

His Majesty (*heika*) the Emperor Meiji, Mutsuhito the Great, the Lord of Restoration—as a young child His Highness (*seijo*) grew up through adversity, then overcame numerous difficulties and dangers, finally leading Japan to its exalted level of civilization in the world today. In reflecting on the life of His Highness there was no one who could hold back a flood of tears.

I knew that I would someday have to bid His Majesty farewell. I could not have been alone. Surely all the Japanese people (*kokumin*) must have thought so. The Great Ceremony of Accession, the Rite Transferring the Capital—these I was too young to have seen; but whenever His Majesty's honor guards rode majestically through the streets I always mixed into the crowds of roadside onlookers and beheld his dignified countenance, if only from a distance. Then came the move from the Aoyama Palace to the Imperial Palace, the Rites of Investiture as Crown Prince, and the Grand Marriage Ceremony for our present emperor; at that time my wife and I went all the way out to Akasaka Mitsuke to view it. Yet I had never imagined that the Imperial Funeral would come so soon, before we could take part in the jubilee for the fiftieth year of his reign.

The announcement of Emperor Meiji's death came on a hot, hot, day in late July that I will not forget . . . "Ahh, he has finally passed on."

In thinking this an inexpressible feeling came over me. My mind was filled with a confusion of all sorts of things. The Saigo Rebellion (1877)—my father had died in that campaign. Then came the Sino-

Japanese War. During the Russo-Japanese War I served in a photography unit and saw with my own eyes the splendor of His Majesty's august virtue shine over the Eight Quarters of the World (*hakko ni kagayaku miitsu*). When I saw the Rising Sun flag glittering from the enemy position at Nanshan in Jinzhou my heart leapt with joy. I could not help but feel that within my blood flowed the warm blood of the Japanese people. Philosophically, I am a "freethinker," but in my soul I am one of the Great Japanists (*dainihonshugi no hitori*) after all. ³³

By the end of the Meiji period the Japanese people had become accustomed to the observance of spectacular public ceremonies marking important moments in the life of the nation. For Tayama the death and funeral of Emperor Meiji brought back a torrent of memories in which these imperial ceremonies, national symbols, national wars, the nation in world civilization, the imperial family, the national monarch, and national sentiments came together in a dizzying circulation of signs and meanings. These memories evoked feelings of love and respect for the emperor, pride in being Japanese, and a sense of communion with other Japanese ("I could not have been alone. Surely all the Japanese people [*kokumin*] must have thought so") and helped overcome ambivalence about his father's death. They left him with the tragic conviction that while a "freethinker," he was in spirit a die-hard supporter of the Japanese empire who could even rejoice in the expansionist enterprise.

Yet imperial ceremonies, the many symbols of which they were made, the space in which they were performed, the sacred places that gave the ceremonies their cosmological meaning—these had not existed in their early twentieth-century forms since ancient times. In fact, many had been created out of whole cloth during Tayama's lifetime.

The invention of Japan's modern national ceremonies was, quite simply, a response to specific domestic and international political forces of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before then the open area in front of the Imperial Palace where the Japanese people went to pray for the emperor's recovery had not existed. The Imperial Palace had been an old and dilapidated castle. Nijubashi, one of the most powerful of Japan's national symbols to which busloads of Japanese citizens still make their pilgrimages, had been little more than an aging bridge. The Japanese had neither a national flag nor an anthem. The great majority of common people did not recognize the emperor as the central symbol of the Japanese nation; nor did they have a sense of national identity. Thus, Tayama's memories—made of national symbols, imperial pageants, strong national sentiments, and adoration of

the Japanese monarch—were those of a Japanese who had experienced the modern governing elites' energetic creation of a culture of nationalism.

These imperial pageants, themselves mnemonic sites and vehicles of meaning, tended to generate further signs in the official system of representations. For example, they led to the creation of nationally significant memorial days. Because the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution took place on *kigensetsu*, the Japanese people celebrated 11 February of each year as both Constitution Day (*kenpo kinenbi*) and as the holiday solemnizing the founding of the Japanese empire.³⁴ The day is still observed today as National Foundation Day (*kenkoku kinen no hi*). In 1917 the annual spring and fall festivals at Yasukuni Shrine were changed to 30 April and 23 October to commemorate the Triumphal Military Review of 1906 and the Triumphal Naval Review of October 1905, respectively.³⁵

Written and visual representations of these ritual events also proliferated. They have been the subjects of numerous anecdotal reminiscences of life during the first half-century of Japan's modern regime (for example, in Natsume Soseki's widely read novel *Kokoro*). And nearly all Japanese are familiar with at least a few of these late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century pageants, not only through written testimonies, but also because impressive visual images of them remain. These include a huge number of colorful woodblock prints and other pictures (such as the paintings in the Memorial Picture Gallery), lithographs, photographs, and commemorative stamps and postcards, as well as reproductions of all the above in places such as school textbooks.

The pageants left permanent imprints on the city as well as on other places in the nation, especially Kyoto. Most important, those directing the rebuilding of the Imperial Palace—with the area in front cleared of nearly all structures in order to accommodate great crowds and ceremonies—timed the completion of the construction to coincide with the Meiji Constitution's promulgation ceremonies; and the Tokyo city government, under the guidance of the central government, built the broad thoroughfares now crisscrossing the Outer Garden of the Imperial Palace (*kokyo gaien*) as triumphal avenues (*gaisen doro*) for the Triumphal Military Review of April 1906.³⁶ Emperor Meiji's funeral site became in 1926 the location for the Memorial Picture Gallery (Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan), the centerpiece of a cluster of Meiji commemorative structures situated in the Meiji Shrine Outer Garden (Meiji Jingu Gaien). Dominating the end of an expansive ginkgo-lined avenue, it houses

some eighty large murals depicting important events in the lives of Emperor Meiji and his consort, Empress Dowager Shoken. Behind the gallery building a camphor tree—or *kusunoki*, surely not coincidentally a homophone of the name of the famous fourteenth-century loyal imperial retainer Kusunoki Masashige—marks the place where the Emperor Meiji's funeral carriage was put out for public viewing following the obsequies. Nearby is a small *enoki* tree commemorating Emperor Meiji's numerous military reviews at what was then the Aoyama Military Parade Field.³⁷ At Ueno Park the impressive Hyokeikan edifice (completed 1909), an addition to what was then the Imperial Museum, stands as a monument commemorating the wedding of Crown Prince Yoshihito (Emperor Taisho). The building had been a wedding gift from the citizens of Tokyo.³⁸ In the southeastern hills of Kyoto the Fushimi Momoyama Mausoleum, completed shortly after Emperor Meiji's funeral, sits in subdued grandeur on the highest point in an expansive imperial forest of native trees and shrubs.

The second type of mnemonic site this book attempts to identify and analyze is, in fact, the material sign on the physical landscape. As in most other newly forming nations, the leaders of the Meiji regime initially found themselves with a fairly meaningless natural terrain, from the point of view of a dominant national memory and discourse. However, through a calculated transformation of the physical appearance of various shrines, buildings, and other public places, they gave new meanings to the acquired territory. On a rather unpretentious level, the people witnessed a veritable wave of "statumania," beginning in 1893 with the erection of a bronze of the national and military hero Omura Masujiro. Before that time there had been no tradition of public statuary celebrating national heroes. Japan's rulers also built new shrines to national gods, past emperors, and national heroes and merged, destroyed, or otherwise manipulated shrines that did not contribute to the emperor-and-nation-centered memory. An example of the latter was the demotion of the great anti-imperial rebel Taira no Masakado in 1874 from one of two central deities of Kanda Shrine in Tokyo to one of several secondary deities there because of the unfortunate counter-memory he represented. A modern monumentalism in the building of gateways (*torii*) to national shrines also dates from the late nineteenth century.³⁹

On a much more grandiose scale, Japan's two capital cities (in an administrative sense modern Japan has had one capital, but in a symbolic sense it has had two) and Ise Shrine were manufactured into three of the most important points on what might be thought of as Japan's

modern symbolic topography. Kyoto, filled with physical reminders that it had served as the seat of the imperial court for more than a millennium, became a representation of the depth of the imperial institution's historical past. It became the nucleus of the officially prescribed notion of "tradition." Ise Shrine, reconstituted from its importance during the Edo period as primarily a center of a nonpolitical folk religion, gave visible form to the official assertion that both the imperial institution and the nation had emerged out of a past that blended into the "age of the gods." In the final decade of the nineteenth century, Tokyo, physically different in many respects from both Edo and Tokyo of the early Meiji years, had become an official sign of Japan's progress and prosperity. These dominant meanings had not simply existed "out there," as a part of the natural terrain. They were purposely invented, created, as a part of the culture of the modern nation. ⁴⁰

Toward a Historical Ethnography of the Nation-State

The production of an official "memoryscape,"⁴¹ located materially in time and space, and indeed the obsessive manufacturing of official culture in general, must be placed within the context of a dramatic transformation in the attitude of the rulers toward the ruled, which began in the late Tokugawa period and culminated in the years following the Meiji Restoration. For most of the Tokugawa period, the governing samurai elite had separated themselves from the governed and ruled under the premise that politics was the special prerogative of their estate. Under this system of rule, as the historian and political scientist Maruyama Masao put it many years ago, "Tokugawa feudal society remained divided into two parts. On the one hand the samurai class functioned as the sole political agents vis-à-vis the common people and took all political responsibility upon themselves. In contrast, the common people, who constituted more than 90 percent of the total population, were forced to 'depend' (*yorashimu*) passively on the given order as no more than the objects of political control. How could one speak of a unified nation when rulers and subjects were rigidly separated socially?"⁴²

However, as historians such as Yasumaru Yoshio have noted, the last decades of the Edo period witnessed a radical reversal in the attitude of

the rulers toward the ruled. While the samurai political elite under the earlier Tokugawa system had been content with the passive compliance of the common folk, the ignorant masses (*gumin*), the new Meiji rulers began to demand the active spiritual participation of the common people in the realization of national objectives.⁴³ As I would describe it, they hoped to reconstitute the people into more than simply objects of rule, so that they could become knowledgeable and self-disciplined subjects in the dual Foucauldian sense—that is, subjects who were not only subjected to "control and dependence" but who were also subjects possessed of their own identity by a "conscience or self-knowledge."⁴⁴

This new conception of rule unleashed a torrent of policies aimed at bringing the common people into a highly disciplined national community and a unified and totalizing culture. A kind of cultural terror, understood as being pedagogical, swept through local communities as the state's agents attacked folk religions through the destruction or manipulation of local shrines and the suppression of "irrational" beliefs—whether they were of shamans, diviners, or what were called *inshi*, evil deities—while also instructing them in proper modes of worship. The new rulers preached ideas about "civilization and enlightenment" while also prohibiting numerous folk practices, such as extravagance in festivities, either to gods or Buddhas, or excessive leisure and gambling.⁴⁵ From a very early date, in fact, the state's cultural policies reached down to the most mundane level. In Tokyo, for example, the authorities launched aggressive campaigns against mixed bathing, public nudity, and urinating in public (*tachi shoben*). In 1876, the Tokyo police arrested 2,091 people for nudity and 4,495 others for urinating in public.⁴⁶ And in what was then called Toyooka Prefecture, the authorities prohibited a seemingly innocuous summer custom, daytime napping.⁴⁷

This attention to the culture of everyday life, I believe, reflected not simply an impatience with the stupidity of the common people but a great faith in their ability to be educated—that is, a conviction that if properly instructed, the formerly despised commoner could become an informed and responsible member of the national community. This of course does not mean that the Meiji state abandoned physical violence as an instrument of social control or that it did not attempt to place limits on the spread of certain types of knowledge. But it is important to recognize that Japan's modern political leaders, no less than their counterparts in the liberal nation-states of Europe and the United States, conceived of the entire cultural apparatus of the modern state as

a mechanism for enlightening the masses. Control through official culture was not understood in the negative images familiar to most students of Japan's so-called emperor system—such as shackling, enslaving, blinding, and making submissive, frustrating the development of a modern subjectivity⁴⁸—but rather in positive terms, as a means of sweeping away ignorance, inflexibility, or darkness, and thus as knowledge in the positive sense. For example, in a memorial urging an imperial progress to Hokkaido, probably drawn up in July 1875, Sanjo Sanetomi, then grand minister of state (*dajo daijin*), argued that "the people in remote regions are almost all accustomed to old thoughts and mired in ancient customs" and that the "extension of the emperor's power to the remote regions" would result not only in an increase in "national prestige" (*kokui*) but also in "the advancement of the narrow and inflexible people into enlightenment" (*koro no jinmin yoyaku kaimei ni susumi*).⁴⁹

The Meiji Restoration was thus revolutionary in the sense that such historians of the French Revolution as Lynn Hunt and Mona Ozouf have ascribed to the revolutionary politics of that more famous historical moment. They have argued that a central, if not the central, feature of the French Revolution was its faith in the ability of politics to refashion the everyday life and mentalities of a people.⁵⁰ The Meiji Restoration was every bit as revolutionary. For like its French counterpart the Japanese revolution set off a double movement of the "political." By this I mean that while it expanded, once and for all, the shape of the polity so that government became, most preeminently, that of the nation-state, at the same time the Meiji Revolution, propelled by a faith in human plasticity and a new civilizing mission for the state, extended the state's reach into the very souls of the people.

What Yasumaru and others have been writing about is the intellectual background to and the creation of what I call the folklore, in the broad sense of the term, of the modern Japanese regime. I have borrowed the idea of a "folklore of a regime" from the French historian Maurice Agulhon; and by it I refer to that homogenized, official culture fostered by the state, which has included various rites, symbols, customs, beliefs, and practices.⁵¹ These were perhaps even more important to ruling than the formally written down ideas supporting the regime, because they could more easily infiltrate everyday folk life, because they could in many instances be unconsciously inscribed in daily practices and on bodies (for example, in the form of clothing, hairstyles, modes of physical deportment, and the like), and because their recent invention could

more easily be forgotten. This folklore contrasted with the conventional folklore of the populace—that is, with the rites, symbols, customs, beliefs, and practices that made up the life of the common people before the rise of the new regime. By its nature the conventional folklore was localized and diverse—heterogeneous, fragmented, and dissonant within itself—thus contrasting with the national, uniform, and totalizing nature of the new folklore. The modern Japanese experience was by no means unique, for wherever ruling elites have attempted to form nation-states, they have fabricated such folklores for their regimes.⁵² Whatever else it may also have been, the modern nation-state's eruption into history was thus a cultural emergence, and the method of approaching its history should include a cultural analysis.

Methodologically, we need to begin by subjecting the folklore of Japan's modern regime to the ethnographer's near-obsession with the description and analysis of signs, however trivial they might at first seem. Thus in looking at the mnemonic device of imperial pageantry, for example, we ought to be attentive to the minutiae of ritualized representations, for there we will discover a host of meanings that were apparently congenial to the interests of Japan's modern state—ideas about the sacred, the emperor, the nation, the family, prosperity, tradition, gender, and much else. Official ideologies were meticulously displayed in the multiple scenes of the performances, painstakingly inscribed directly onto the bodies of the emperor and members of his entourage, and brilliantly represented in the *mise-en-scènes* upon which the symbolic action took place and in the costumes worn by the many actors. Details as seemingly arbitrary as a moustache, a hairstyle, a particular clothing fashion, an intimation of gender, the choice of a mode of transport (ox-drawn wagon, English carriage, or open car, for example)—all these were intentionally fabricated and meaningful signs, together forming systems of signs designed to convey particular messages to the Japanese people and to the world. We must begin by taking these performances as seriously as their creators did, by describing and analyzing their representations with the same recognition of their importance that they took in producing them.

In this I, like many others who have turned toward the study of "rites of power,"⁵³ follow the lead of Clifford Geertz, who has put the ethnographic approach at the center of his methodology and who has urged us to view the symbolic as an integral and not epiphenomenal dimension of politics. "The real is as imagined as the imaginary," he has said. "The dramas of the theater state, mimetic of themselves, were, in

the end, neither illusions nor lies, neither sleight of hand nor make-believe. They were what there was." ⁵⁴ Yet Geertz's brand of analysis is too assuming of a cultural unity or consensus—both over time and within a political system—so that he prevents us from seeing how those in power serve their own interests by inventing rites, signs, customs, and practices and by constructing dominant meanings.⁵⁵

The bulk of Geertz's work is profoundly ahistorical. His nineteenth-century "theater state" in Bali, for example, does have a dynamic temporal movement—but it is a circular and repetitive one. In this scenario lords and lineages rise and fall in a constant struggle for power, but culturally nothing significant ever changes. Rather, the divine king cult at the heart of his poetics of power turns out to be "an essentially constant cultural form." In fact, Geertz's state theater is not the theater of a particular court at all: it is "a conceptual entity, not a historical one." And with the proper adjustments made for time and space, the model can be used to guide one through all of "Indic civilization in Indonesia and beyond"! The model of *negara*, Geertz claims, "is a guide, a sort of sociological blueprint, for the construction of representations, not necessarily or even probably identical to it in structure, of a whole set of relatively less well-known but presumptively similar institutions: the classical Southeast Asian Indic state of the fifth to fifteenth centuries."⁵⁶ Culture, it seems, is not only essentially frozen in time, it is transportable from one place to another.

Here there is no room for a consideration of cultural discontinuity, for a Foucauldian attention to the historical ruptures behind which lie the play of power. While Foucault's genealogical method is based upon a distrust of the seemingly similar over time, Geertz actively seeks out and simply assumes historical continuity. Thus, "Bali in the latter half of the nineteenth century may not have been a mere replica of Bali in the middle of the fourteenth, but it was at least fully continuous with it, a reasonably regular development out of it. . . . No cultural fossil, this tight little island was nonetheless, like Tibet or Yemen, culturally quite conservative."⁵⁷ While there is more than a touch of Orientalism here, the same sort of attention to continuity can be found in Geertz's statements about Western cultures. Cultural idioms may differ from place to place, and they may change over time to some extent, but according to his argument, "cultural frame[s]" or "master fictions" construct politics and political leaders, and not the other way around. This is the same everywhere, whether it be "Germany or France, India or Tanzania (to say nothing of Russia or China)."⁵⁸

In short, for Geertz rites of rulers are sensible because they dramatize the cultural values that have been shared by rulers and ruled alike—since who knows when. Rulers are recognized as legitimate because they place themselves in the cultural frameworks that already unify a people. Though culture for Geertz may not be quite the neat, "seamless web of significances" propounded by Max Weber—perhaps, he has argued, it more closely resembles a gangling octopus⁵⁹—it is still a consensual web. Power is in large part actualized through the performance of ideas already in everybody's head.

Yet the production of official culture in Japan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries testifies to the fact that elements in the symbolic dimension of politics can be as much invented as inherited. This is clear, for example, in the area of official culture that has occupied much of Geertz's attention—namely, state pageantry. Though not always successful, political elites in modern Japan manufactured ideas through the manipulation of publicly ritualized imagery, and they were often quite conscious of doing so. Ito Hirobumi, for example, understood that there might be a vast gap between folk culture and the newly created national culture centering on Japan's emperor. In a talk presented to the Survey Bureau for Imperial Household Institutions (*Teishitsu seido chosakyoku*), of which he had just become president, he explained that with regard to the construction of imperial funerals, popular traditions should not constrain official inventiveness. He concluded, "The imperial household should not by any means emulate the popular customs and practices which have developed naturally in accordance with such religions as Buddhism."⁶⁰

The "folklore of a regime" concept facilitates a move toward a more truly historicized ethnography. On the one hand, by disjoining the cultures of the masses from the official culture at a particular historical moment, it allows us to recognize the historical contingency of the national culture that was imposed by those in power and that now tends to be assumed as natural and timeless. On the other hand, by suggesting the importance of ethnographic detail, it forces us to get at the meanings of rites, symbols, customs, and practices, so that we are not left with a simple functionalist interpretation of the culture of the nation—that is, that culture was invented to foster and reflect a sense of national unity. Such a Durkheimian argument would not be so much wrong as it would be too reductionist, privileging culture's function to the exclusion of its content.

A comprehensive historical ethnography of the modern Japanese

regime's folklore would consider all those areas of culture the rulers created, treating them as a result of the decisive shattering of their old perception of ruling the populace through a fragmented rather than unified culture. This book focuses on the invention of the emperor and his traces—that is, the purposeful fabrication of the modern monarch and his cities, shrines, death monuments, commemorative buildings and monuments, pageants, and more. But because the imperial institution has for so many been seen as central to the Japanese nation and culture, this exercise of remembering its invention—which is to say, of dismembering official memories ⁶¹—is also an exercise in the interrogation of nationalism.

Visual Domination

While I have thus far been able only to introduce the topic of the new visibility of the emperor and his signs and traces to the people and have merely touched on the idea of the people's visibility, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the people too became discernible to the emperor, or his agents. The emperor was not only a visible symbol that could represent the national totality; he was also a sign with an ability to look back at the people. All of the Meiji period's imperial pageants—whether the progresses, which had been modeled on the archaic rites of a reclaimed past, or the late Meiji spectacles, which adopted a new and international ceremonial idiom—helped establish historically unprecedented relationships of sight or visibility between the emperor and the Japanese people.

From one point of view, these public ceremonies made the emperor and his spectacles visible to all the people of the nation. In this relation the crowds viewing the pageantry (that is, the people) were the subjects of sight and the emperor and his ceremonies the objects of their observation. Yet the imperial pageants also coerced the people into becoming objects of the emperor's gaze. In this inverted ocular relationship, it was rather the people who became visible to him as he traveled throughout the country or as he looked upon them from his central location in Tokyo. Imperial pageantry was part of a cultural apparatus that helped fashion Japan's modern emperor into a transcendental subject, one who could be imagined as casting a single and centralizing gaze

across all the nation and into the souls of all the people. Put in the obverse, it was a mechanism whereby all the people of the empire—not simply the people of a certain region (for example, in the area around the Kyoto Court) or the members of an aristocratic class (for example, the Kyoto courtiers)—were made visible to one dominating and all-seeing monarch. If this project had been completely successful, and there is no doubt that its successes were considerable, we can imagine the making of a modern citizenry with an interiorized sense of themselves as objects of an unremitting surveillance.

In other words, the great imperial pageants of the Meiji era were central to the construction of a kind of ocular domination in modern Japan, one that was both fully comparable to and yet different from the visual domination that, according to Michel Foucault, emerged in France around the time of the Enlightenment. As is well known, Foucault argued that Jeremy Bentham's model for the penitentiary—with its prisoners made completely visible to an anonymous gaze located in the structure's central tower—was a diagram of modern power. Because the Panopticon's arrangement made the prisoners in their cells visible from one central point in the structure's center while rendering the prison's Overseer invisible, prisoners could never know whether they were being observed. As a consequence they would always have to behave as if they were being watched—that is to say, they would have to internalize their own surveillance. Yet what we must recall about Foucault's postulation was that he was less concerned about the Panopticon as an instrument of the penal system than as a model of modern power that was replicated in practice throughout the social formation.

This is the way that I choose to think about the construction of the visionary emperor in Japan. I believe that Foucault's model explains better than any other how representations or demonstrations of the effects of the emperor's gaze upon the people both diagrammed and helped to produce the suspicion that the nation's subject-citizens might at any moment be objects of surveillance. While certainly not the only apparatus through which the disciplinary society came into being, the image of the seeing emperor facilitated the production of the nation-state as a bordered space of visibility within which the people could imagine themselves as objects of observation. The aspect of pageantry considered here does not so much concern ideologies but rather discipline, a dimension of both the emperor system and modern nationalism that has received scant attention. In this sense my proposed

historical ethnography of the nation-state is nothing other than an ethnography of Japan's modernity.

This approach to analyzing the modern monarchy in Japan, like that of remembering its recent invention, forces us to abandon once and for all readings of the monarchy as a sign of the feudal, premodern, or backward. In this respect I consider myself to be among a number of scholars of the so-called emperor system who have begun in various ways to critique the view long espoused by Japanese Marxists of the *koza* school, as well as modernists such as Maruyama Masao, that treated the prominence of the monarchy in modern history as a reflection of and reason for the incompleteness of Japan's modernity.⁶² By resituating the emperor at the center of a modern panoptic regime, as I propose, we see not only that the cults of nation and emperor were created in relatively modern times, but also that what has been called the emperor system, far from being characterized by its "feudal" characteristics, was central to the production of Japan's modernity.

But herein also lies a major difference between my appropriation of a Foucauldian framework and Foucault's own historicization of what he calls the "surveillance society." While he sees the rise of this modern society coming in conjunction with the decline of the monarchy, or at least of "monarchical power," I describe both sorts of power as coming together at the same historical moment in Japan. What I mean by this should become clearer as I proceed, but suffice it to note at this point that it would be wrong to replicate earlier work done on the Japanese monarchy, whether of the Marxist or modernist variety, insofar as they unwittingly accept the post-Enlightenment narrative of historical stages that is also to be found even in Foucault's framework. This narrative, originating in the Western European and North American experiences, reads monarchical regimes as the temporal "others" of the modern, a stage, in other words, that must be overcome in order for modernity and progress to appear in their plenitude.

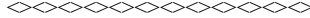
To be sure, it could be argued that the misrecognition of the Japanese monarchy as feudal or premodern served at a particular historical juncture—especially during the 1930s—as a means by which to achieve an exteriority and thereby to enable a critique of the modern regime itself. Yet today such a mode of criticism would be disabling because it would play into the idea that politically, Japan and its people have never been modern enough. Such a view, though critical of contemporary politics in Japan, would continue to allow the displacement of our discontent

with modernity onto a Japanese past called "feudal"; furthermore, it would preclude the possibility of turning the gaze emanating from the modern West back onto itself. Most important, it would keep us from recognizing that the subject-citizen produced by the Japanese emperor-centered regime no longer appears so different from the hero of modern bourgeois civil society, the supposedly autonomous subject that people like Maruyama Masao have so long sought.

In the limited sense that I am placing the Japanese monarchy at the heart of Japan's modernity, it is true that (oddly enough) my position bears some similarity to that of the modernization theorist John Whitney Hall. For in his highly influential essay, "A Monarch for Modern Japan," Hall argued that the Japanese monarchy was not only compatible with modernity, but that it had in fact played an important role in Japan's modernization. Yet at least two irreconcilable differences distinguish my perspective from that of such modernization theorists. First, while mine is critical of the monarchy and the nation-state in Japan, Hall's was a defense of the monarchy against the polemical writings of Marxists and such modernists as Maruyama. In effect, Hall praised the monarchy for its ability to provide social stability—whether in the post-Meiji years or in the years following the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific—and to inspire the Japanese people toward capitalism and democracy. Moreover, his essay was fully compatible with U.S. cold war policy in East Asia and ought to be considered an ideological text that legitimated restitution of the monarchy in postwar Japan in order to hold back a more radical social transformation.

Second, when he did have something mildly negative to say about the monarchy—for example, that it had been used by the right wing in the dark days of Showa—this was attributed to "the most traditional and irrational inheritances which the emperor had brought with him out of the Japanese past." Thus in contrast to my interpretation, Hall's is characterized by the attribution of all negative aspects of Japan's nineteenth- and twentieth-century experience to some vaguely understood premodern past. Hall wore the friendly face of liberal-rationalism and was full of confidence about "progress," defined as emulation of the Western capitalist democracies; and he was completely uncritical about national modernity as it had emerged in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan, let alone anywhere else. Put differently, within his post-Enlightenment framework of knowledge, or epistemology, and despite attacking them, Hall in fact shared the perspective of the

Marxists and modernists that the tragedies of modern Japan had stemmed from the country, and perhaps even the monarchy, not being modern enough.⁶³



My own examination of the monarchy and national modernity in this book is made up of three main parts. Part 1 focuses on the years in which the primary form of state pageantry was the imperial progress. During that time the Meiji political elite constructed the emperor as the roaming Ruler who ministered to the people while integrating the territory under his visible and visibly seeing presence. This was the period when the emperor's court became a court in motion, and it was also the historical moment during which minimal thought was given to fashioning either Kyoto or Tokyo into symbolic and ritual centers. I argue that the emergence of such an understanding of Kyoto's and more centrally Tokyo's potential as centers of national meaning and as public arenas for imperial pageantry set the stage for the decline of the progresses and for the appearance of a new and more cosmopolitan style of public state rituals. Part 2 analyzes these new types of pageants and considers their relationship to the ritual and symbolic spaces on the physical terrain that had been constructed in the first two Meiji decades, and which are also discussed in Part 1. It is in Part 2 that I delve most deeply into the imagery of the modern monarchy; I argue that in the same way that the national landscape contained two capitals, Tokyo and Kyoto, the imperial body was in fact two bodies. Moreover, Tokyo, the center of progress, prosperity, military power, and Civilization, corresponded to—that is to say, was homological to—the masculinized, human, and politically engaged emperor, while Kyoto, the official representation of the past and Tradition, corresponded to the largely invisible, divine, timeless, and transcendent emperorship. Part 3 attempts to look at the newly constructed official world of mnemonic sites and the emperor's panoptic gaze from the point of view of the common people. One of my major arguments here is that however limited the Meiji regime might have been in producing a uniformity of belief or a uniformly self-disciplining population, its successes were considerable. Moreover, the imperial pageants as well as other elements in the regime's folklore certainly succeeded in producing a new sense of national simultaneity—a sharing of time among people who could not possibly have had face-to-face contact.