Space and Time in the *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō:*

Collective identity and imagined community in early modern Japan

Steffen Remvik

ii

Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate how collective identity and community are imagined through a book called *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō*. This is a book in the so called *setsuyōshū* genre, a kind of household encyclopedia/dictionary that was very popular during the early modern period (1600-1868) in Japan. The book has information on a variety of subjects, including for instance history, etiquette, geography, poetry and much more. Because the concepts of space and time is seen as important constituents of any imagined community and collective identity, some of the parts in the book that are dealing with representations of these concepts will be analyzed. This investigation provides valuable insights into popular tendencies in the community of early modern Japan. It also contributes with useful information to the history of the book in Japan, as well as to the long neglected field of *setsuyōshū*.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis I will take a look at a specific book called *Dai Nippon Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō* 大日本永代節用無尽蔵 or just *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō* 永代節用無尽蔵 (abbreviated as *Eitai Setsuyō* from here on)[1], and try to identify how identity and community is imagined through representations of the two concepts of space and time within the book. The *Eitai Setsuyō* is a book in the so called *setsuyōshū* 節用集 genre which emerged in the Muromachi period (1336-1573) and gained wide popularity during the early modern period (1600-1868) in Japan. *Setsuyōshū* were books that first and foremost contained a dictionary part, but from the early modern period and onwards also started to include encyclopedic parts with illustrations. The *Eitai Setsuyō* is one of these so called encyclopedic *setsuyōshū*, and I seek to investigate some of the encyclopedic parts in the book.

1.1 Whys and wherefores

The superficial reason for choosing this particular book for study is that I had a desire to take a closer look at some of the material that is available at the University of Oslo Library, first of all because I believe that these books deserve to be looked at as many of them have barely been taken out of their boxes since they arrived at the library. Second of all I wanted to be challenged and learn something new, something I knew I would when studying early modern texts. I therefore contacted the librarian responsible for the Japanese section, Naomi Yabe Magnussen, and she introduced me to the *Eitai Setsuyō*. At first I was overwhelmed by the amazing volume of seemingly random content and the difficult *hentaigana* 変体仮名 script and the cursive rendition of the characters in which most of the book is written. But the more I looked into the book, into the genre of *setsuyōshū*, and into books of the early modern period in general, the more convinced I became that making this book the main focus of my thesis has real value. First of all, the time period makes sense. Although the main focus of the thesis could be said to be dealing with the later part of the period, the beginning of the early modern period, also referred to as the Tokugawa period or the Edo period, marks a turning point in many different ways. First of all, it is an era of long awaited peace, political unification, economic and population growth, urbanization and a flowering popular culture.

---

[1] The title on the cover and the title within the book at the beginning of the dictionary part differ in this manner.

Not to say that other periods are uneventful, but to say that a lot is happening in the early modern period is an understatement. It is also a tremendous new time for books and print, as the printing industry is commercialized and an astonishing amount of material gets published each year. The study of books in Japan has only in recent times begun to make satisfying progress, and because of the incredible body of existing books and other printed material there is still an amazing amount of material left untouched.

The genre of *setsuyōshū* is not different, as very few, if anyone, apart from Yokoyama Toshio has studied the encyclopedic parts of the early modern *setsuyōshū*. What "encyclopedic" refers to here is new parts of information on various subjects added to the *setsuyōshū* in the early modern period, whereas previous *setsuyōshū* were only dictionaries. There are other reasons for choosing *setsuyōshū* as an object for study too, apart from it being by and large an untouched subject. First of all they were very popular and spread to a large part of the population. Moreover, *setsuyōshū* can be seen as a collage of many other genres that were popular at the time, thus making the *setsuyōshū* a gateway into a universe much larger in scope than the actual book itself. This is significant, because I have borrowed from Mary E. Berry the term "library of public information", which is a metaphoric library that everyone has access to, collecting all the descriptive, empirical and cataloged data that were prominent in so many books across so many genres from the period. Since the *setsuyōshū* is a patchwork made up from many of these genres, it is reasonable to assert that the *setsuyōshū* are good representations of this "library".

As for the choice of the *Eitai Setsuyō*, the reason closest to the surface has already been mentioned; it is what is available here at the University of Oslo. Fortunately, there are reasons for choosing this particular *setsuyōshū* that are more satisfying academically as well. Among an already popular genre, the *Eitai Setsuyō* is likely to have been one of the most popular, if not the most. It is also one of the most voluminous versions and thus includes most of the topics included in other *setsuyōshū,* and it can in that respect be regarded as representative for the genre. Yokoyama Toshio has also come to the conclusion that this is one of the most popular:

During my field research, I had gradually come to regard this version as the most broadly disseminated and in this sense representative of the various voluminous and popular *setsuyōshū* published during the 19th century.[2]

The *Eitai Setsuyō* has also been the main focus of Yokoyama's research, and he has produced several articles on the subject. This also contributes to making the choice for the *Eitai Setsuyō* an easy one, as there are at least some secondary sources that are directly relevant to the subject.

Identifying a research question was a little bit less straight forward. For most master students when they are to make their research question, they first think about something they would like to find out more about, and then they would find material and do the research. Of course, the process is somewhat more complicated in real life, but the core idea is to do it in that order. When working with a completely unknown text, however, the process must necessarily be different. First you have to get an idea of what the text is about and what kind of text it is, then find material and then decide what you want to find out more about. This is exactly what I did. I went back and forth through the pages of the book trying to create a good picture of what kind of contents it included. While I did this, I also had to struggle with learning how to read the unfamiliar characters, which in itself was a time consuming challenge.

As I got more and more familiar with the contents of the book, I started to see a pattern emerging in many of its parts. These parts all seemed to give the reader orientation in the world, both spatial and temporal. The book starts out with mapping out a geography all the way from a universal scale down to cities and roads. It also maps out time by explaining the change of seasons, how various gods travel across the sky as time passes, and by giving the chronological history of Japan. Furthermore it gives instructions on how to behave properly and how to address others in a respectful manner according to rank. The book was in a way telling the readers who they were, giving them something to identify with. As we shall see later, this also fits well with the way Yokoyama has categorized the contents of *setsuyōshū.* Moreover, as I was reading I realized that the book constantly referred to the land where it was situated as Nihon, Dai-Nippon or other words for Japan. Was this a representation of some kind of national identity? If so, this would contradict what I had read

---

[2] Toshio Yokoyama, "In Quest of Civility: Conspicuous Uses of Household Encyclopedias in Nineteenth-Century Japan," *Zinbun* 34, no. 1 (1999)., p. 198

and heard so many times elsewhere: that the nation and national identity was first invented when Japan entered the modern era in the Meiji period (1868-1912).

My interest in these subjects deepened further when I started reading more about books and print in the early modern period. It was first then that I realized that many of the different parts of the *setsuyōshū* were in fact just boiled down versions of other genres published in other books. Combining this fact with the concept of "the public library", can *setsuyōshū* be considered to be a representation of a collective identity and a contribution to the imagining of community? What does this identity look like? These were the main questions that I started to grapple with and that eventually became the research question of this thesis.

To summarize, the research question(s) can be formulated as follows:

How is community imagined and how are time and space represented in the Eitai Setsuyō? *Can we discern some kind of "identity" through these representations and other parts of the book? Is it reasonable to assume that this "identity", if found, is a representation of some kind of collective identity?*

In addition to the reasons stated above, I find these questions interesting because they enable me to look at several parts from a relatively big portion of the book and at the same time are satisfyingly narrow in scope. In investigating these matters, it is my ambition to make a contribution, however modest, to the understanding of Japanese history, of early modern identity and the history of books in Japan.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

In order to gain a thorough understanding of the *Eitai Setsuyō*, I will employ two different perspectives in my investigation; using the book as a focal lens to understand the context, and using the context to get a better understanding of the book. In other words, I will both try to look from the inside and outwards, and from the outside and inwards. This is not to say that the investigation necessarily will be split into two separate parts, however, but rather that these two approaches will be used more or less concurrently. The outside in approach will be most apparent in chapter 3, however, while the inside out approach will be most important in chapter 4.

In many ways the structure of this thesis might appear fragmented, dealing with seemingly random elements of random topics. This, however, I perceive to be inevitable, because the *Eitai Setsuyō* itself is structured in a way that is fragmented and random. I could avoid this fragmentation in my thesis by choosing one specific topic from the book and stick to it, but then the rationale for studying *setsuyōshū* would disappear because I might as well have chosen to study the genre that that specific part of the book was based on. Neither would such a narrow focus give any meaningful contribution to the study of *setsuyōshū*—a study which is, as stated above, long overdue.

In this chapter I have introduced the topic of the thesis and formulated the research question, as well as tried to argue why I feel this is important.

In chapter 2, I will go through some theoretical concepts important for the thesis. It is of course important to look at the concepts of time, space and identity here, but I will also go into some theory about social constructs and different forms of capital.

Chapter 3 will survey the contextual background. Although the main focus of this thesis is the *Eitai Setsuyō*, it is essential to have a good understanding of the context in which the book was produced, reproduced and consumed. First we will examine the four social orders, as they are assumed to be important for the construction of identity, and also because they had consequences for literacy and education and thus also for the reception of books. It is also important to understand how this ideology relates to social reality in the early modern period. Then we will review urbanization and economic growth, because it is one of the premises for the advent of commercialized print and the blossoming of popular culture. Moreover, in order to understand what kind of impact the *setsuyōshū* might have had on the imagining of community and collective identity, it is essential to understand who were able to actually read the contents of these books. Therefore we will also look at how literacy and education developed through the early modern period. Next, we will look at books and the printing industry, because it is crucial to understand how big this industry actually was. We will also take a brief look at travel in early modern Japan, because the way in which travel contributed to collective identity in this period is applicable to books and print as well. At last, I will give a brief overview of the *setsuyōshū* genre and try to highlight its continuity with other genres.

Chapter 4 is the main part of this thesis, where we will investigate closely some of the parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō* and make an attempt to discern representations of time and space and see how they contribute to the imagining of community and identity. Not supposed to be a

rigid structure, but rather as a loose guideline, I will put the subjects that are dealing with space at the beginning and those dealing with time towards the end. These concepts are closely interlinked, however, so there will inevitably be some overlap.

And last, in chapter 5, I will summarize my findings and give some concluding remarks.

1.3 A note on translation

Throughout chapter 4 I will include some translations from the text, so a note on translation seems appropriate. The ideal translation is equivalent to the original text on all levels, such as all the words having the same meaning, the grammatical structure being the same, the meaning and tone of the text is the same, and so forth. To accomplish this, however, is virtually impossible. It is often said that translation is an eternal compromise, because languages do not correspond to each other one-to-one. The translator must therefore choose on what level he wants to make the target text equivalent to the original text. In this thesis I have chosen to keep the main focus on maintaining the meaning of the original text, then secondly to make it sound as natural as possible in English. This implies that the structure of the text will be somewhat different, some words will be added and that certain things will inevitably be lost in translation. Where this loss in translation occurs, I will try my best to bridge the gap using footnotes or give explanations in the comments to the text.

Chapter 2: Theory

In this chapter I will present a theoretical framework which the rest of the thesis will build upon. The goal here is not to delve deep into theoretical discussion, but rather to prepare some concepts for a better understanding of the main topic of this thesis. The main concepts that will be discussed in here; community, identity, space and time, are all big abstract concepts that hold different meanings in different contexts. Therefore, it is important to somehow pin these concepts down and make them useful for the designated purpose. To achieve this, I will use the thoughts and theories of some prominent thinkers on society and culture. All of the concepts discussed here are intimately connected, but I have tried to divide the chapter into sub-chapters. However, some overlap and skipping back and forth is inevitable.

2.1 Social Constructs

A general idea running through most of the theory discussed and employed in this thesis is that of social constructs. Time, space and identity are all malleable concepts which hold different meanings in different contexts. This is because they are all socially constructed. One of the most important works dealing with the subject is Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's book *The Social Construction of Reality* first published in 1966. The main argument of the book is, as the title suggests, that reality is socially constructed and it studies how this "reality" becomes internalized as a subjective reality. The concept of "reality" is juxtaposed with that of "knowledge", and it is emphasized that these two concepts are taken for granted in daily life:

> The man in the street does not ordinarily trouble himself about what is 'real' to him and about what he 'knows' unless he is stopped short by some sort of problem. He takes his 'reality' and his 'knowledge' for granted.[3]

This reality and knowledge that the person takes for granted is something that has been internalized into the subject through socialization over time.

---

[3] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1967)., p. 7

The individual […] is not born a member of society. He is born with a predisposition towards sociality and he becomes a member of society. In the life of every individual, therefore, there *is* a temporal sequence, in the course of which he is inducted into participation in the social dialectic. The beginning point of this process is internalization […]. Internalization in this general sense is the basis, first, for an understanding of one's fellowmen and, second, for the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality.[4]

To put it in other words that are commonly used in sociology, social reality is habituated into us; it becomes our habitus. The idea of social constructionism is further developed by subsequent case studies to identify social constructions such as for instance identity and nationalism.[5]

This concept of "reality" is closely linked with another concept called "collective representations" that was first introduced by Émile Durkheim. The term refers to the

[…] beliefs, ideas, values, symbols and expectations that are general and enduring within a particular society or a social group and that are shared as its collective property.[6]

These collective representations become visible when they are materialized in different objects such as for instance books, newspaper, video or other kinds of media.[7] In addition to being a representation of collective "reality", books containing this "reality" also work as important tools for spreading this particular "reality" and making it available to everyone.

This notion of collective representations materializing in books becomes then a basic premise for this thesis, where the *Eitai Setsuyō* is taken as a representation of the collective "reality" that is shared between different individuals of society, and also that the book plays an important role in imaging the community on a "national" scale. The ideas of social constructs and collective representations will not necessarily be referred back to frequently

---

[4] Ibid., pp. 149-150
[5] Cornell Sandvoss, "Social Constructionism," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006)., p. 569
[6] John Scott, "Collective Representations," in *Sociology: the key concepts*, ed. John Scott (London: Routledge, 2006)., p. 33
[7] Ibid., p. 34

throughout this thesis, but together they represent a basic assumption of how important functions in society work and constitute a platform from which the argument of this thesis becomes possible.

2.2 Identity

In social theory it is common to divide identity into three major types: social identity, personal identity, and collective identity. These types are interconnected, however, and "overlap in the fashion of a Venn diagram."[8] Simply explained, social identity is based on the different social roles an individual might have, and how this is seen from an outside perspective. Personal identity is how an individual perceives him or herself from an inside perspective. Collective identity refers to when a specific group is conscious of certain similarities, and shares a feeling of "we-ness".[9] The most important type of identity for the purpose of this thesis is collective identity.

The concept of identity is in some ways the nucleus that connects the other concepts discussed in this thesis. In the introduction to the book *Landscape, Memory and History,* Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern write that:

> In terms of identity, our view is that two crucial elements are at work: notions of *memory* and notions of *place*. Together these occupy a conceptual space analogous to that which *community* once held in the social anthropology of some societies.[10]

Memory and place can also be understood as representations of *space* and *time*. When looking at the *Eitai Setsuyō*, the notions of memory and place are mostly visible through the representation of history and through geography. History is portrayed by a chronology of Japan and also through the portrayal of various famous heroes and personalities. Geography is visible in the different maps and also through the information of various famous places such as for instance mountains and scenic landscapes. Representations such as these will be examined more closely later.

---

[8] David A. Snow, Sharon S. Oselin, and Catherine Corrigal-Brown, "Identity," in *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, ed. George Ritzer (Thousand Oaks, London and New Dehli: Sage Publications, 2005)., p. 390
[9] Ibid., p. 391
[10] Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, "Introduction," in *Landscape, memory and history: anthropological perspectives*, ed. Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (London: Pluto Press, 2003)., p.2

Memory and place are not the only factors that are important in constructing identities; notions of *similarity* and *difference* are also central. Richard Jenkins defines identity (or identification) in three points:

• 'Identity' denotes the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations with other individuals and collectivities.
• 'Identification' is the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference.
• Taken – as they can only be – together, similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identification, and are at the heart of the human world.[11]

In other words, in order to have a process of identification, there is a need for something similar to identify with and something different to distance oneself from. Although Jenkins argues that the process in which individual identity and collective identity is produced and reproduced is analogous,[12] differentiation seems most apparent when looking at collective identity, such as for instance national identity.

2.3 Community and National identity

In the modern world the concept of nationality is seen as a universal socio-cultural concept which everyone "should" have.[13] Nation and individual are seen as intimately connected, a notion summarized by Anthony D. Smith in this fashion:

The individual has no meaning apart from the community of birth. Individuality is predicated of the group. The individual can realize himself through it alone. It has a life history, it is self-generating and self-sufficient, a seamless, mythic entity, ascertainable through objective characteristics – of history, religion, language and customs. Nations are "natural" wholes, they constitute the sole historical realities.

[11] Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity*, ed. Peter Hamilton, 3rd ed., Key Ideas (London and New York: Routledge, 2008)., p. 18
[12] Ibid., p. 38
[13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006)., p. 5

Therefore the individual is primarily distinguishable in terms of his nationality, and only secondarily by social and personal traits. To opt out of the community is to risk the loss of a man's individuality.[14]

This connection between individual and nation has not, and *can not* have, always been there. This is rather obvious, as the concept of nation has not always been there. Thus, it must at some point have been socially constructed; something must necessarily have come before it. Eley and Suny puts it this way:

Most successful nationalisms presume some prior community of territory, language, or culture, which provide the raw materials for the intellectual project of nationality. Yet those prior communities should not be "naturalized," as if they have always existed in some essential way, or have simply prefigured a history yet to come. Religious, linguistic, ethnic, and regional communities are themselves always already in the process of historical formation and change.[15]

and:

[…] to work on this reservoir of cultural meanings is at the heart of the process of building the nation. A common memory of belonging, borne by habits, customs, dialects, song, dance, pastimes, shared geography, superstition, and so on, but also fears, anxieties, antipathies, hurts, resentments, is the indistinct but indispensible condition of possibility. For nationalism to do its work, ordinary people need to see themselves as the bearers of an identity centered elsewhere, imagine themselves as an abstract community.[16]

Following this argument, the *setsuyōshū* can in fact be regarded as a representation of this "identity centered elsewhere" as it contains representations of exactly this "common memory of belonging". These "collective representations", customs, history, language, geography, superstitions, pastimes, songs; they are all present within the *setsuyōshū*.

---

[14] Quoted from Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny, "Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation," in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)., p. 5
[15] Ibid., p. 9
[16] Ibid., p. 22

This idea of an abstract community is also the key idea in the theory of Benedict Anderson and his popular book *Imagined Communities*.[17] All communities above the level of "primordial villages" are in fact imagined. What he means by "imagined" here, is that as communities grow larger, there is no direct contact between the different individuals within that extended community and thus it becomes an abstract concept. His argument throughout the book is that the "nation" as well is such an imagined community. One of the important points he mentions when examining the process of imagining the nation is that in order to become a nation, it is important to first be able to *think* the nation. He especially puts great emphasis on the importance of print and also on the use of maps in constructing this ability to think about a nation. [18] The examples he use, mostly from Europe and South East Asia, have many similarities with early modern Japan, when both the industry of print and map-making flourished.

The importance of map-making demonstrates the close relationship between identity and geography. In the words of David Hooson:

> Identification with the shared experiences of like-minded groups, or cultures, within a familiar and stable territorial setting has, of course, been a natural process inherent in the history of human settlement. Communities have come to inhabit particular places and, over the centuries of occupation, have gradually come to identify with their regional environments, perceived as archetypal, endowed with love and celebrated in song and poetry, as well as understood in terms of appropriate land use and economic development.[19]

What about Japan then? Considering that the "nation" had not yet taken form, is it reasonable to even talk about "national identity"? In her book on *Kokugaku, Before the Nation*, Susan L. Burns discusses a similar problem. *Kokugaku* scholars were trying to define what it meant to be Japanese; what is "Japaneseness". Burns asserts that this construction of a Japanese identity makes it possible for national consciousness to take shape:

---

[17] Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*.
[18] Ibid. See especially the chapter named "The Origins of National Consciousness", p. 37-46 for information on print and the chapter named "Census, Map, Museum", p. 163-185 for information on maps.
[19] David Hooson, "Introduction," in *Geography and National Identity*, ed. David Hooson (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994)., p. 1

[…] it is precisely the discourse on Japanese identity that predates modern nationalism that I seek to interrogate.[20]

She also identifies the difficulties of "thinking beyond the nation" because the idea of the nation has been so thoroughly ingrained in our way of experiencing the world.[21] She circumvents this problem by adopting the term "community".[22] This approach will be beneficial for this thesis as well. So rather than using the term "national identity" I will refer to the "collective identity of community" or just "community" which has the geographical entity of what is called Japan as its framework. My understanding of the term "community" follows that of Anthony P. Cohen:

> [A "community" is] a group of people [that] (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. 'Community' thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference.[23]

When discussing Japanese identity in the early modern period, it is compulsory to also mention *kokugaku.* The word *kokugaku* is usually translated as "national learning" or "nativism" and is opposed to *kangaku* 漢学 or "Chinese learning". Although there are many differences also within the tradition, the main idea in *kokugaku* thought was that there existed an old authentic Japan that had become tarnished by foreign influences, mainly from China. This authentic Japan could be accessed and restored through stripping away all of these foreign influences. Much of the discourse around identifying the "true" Japan was based on the study of ancient texts, most notably the *Kojiki* 古事記. The most famous of these studies is the *Kojikiden* 古事記伝 written by Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). Norinaga believed that if the Kojiki was read correctly, it would reveal the language and mindset of a natural perfect community that pre-existed the arrival of foreign influences.[24] It is very likely that also some of the content in the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other *setsuyōshū* are influenced by *kokugaku*, but it is important to understand that they also diverge from it in one important aspect. Whereas

---

[20] Susan L. Burns, *Before the nation: Kokugaku and the imagining of community in early modern Japan* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2003)., p. 8
[21] Ibid., p. 15
[22] Ibid., p. 3
[23] Anthony P. Cohen, *The symbolic construction of community* (London: Routledge, 1989)., p. 12
[24] Burns, *Before the nation: Kokugaku and the imagining of community in early modern Japan.*, p. 1

kokugaku scholars wanted to rid society of all foreign influences, the *Eitai Setsuyō* puts the foreign and the Japanese side by side, and reveres Chinese heroes as well as Japanese. On this note it is important to also remember that although they are juxtaposed, they are not equal, as Japan is indeed referred to as superior to other countries as we shall see later in this thesis.

Thus, what is going to be explored in this thesis is how *setsuyōshū*—and other types of print—contribute to the imagining of a collective identity of community within the geographical borders of Japan. Although the topic here is community and collective identity, it goes without saying that within a given community, especially when talking about a community as large in scale as a whole country, there are also many smaller communities, and they all have a collective identity of their own. Within the communities there are also several personal identities, as many as there are persons. Or even more, as one usually talks of any person as having several identities, each suited for different contexts. These identities on a smaller scale will not be focused on in this thesis, but it is important to acknowledge and remember the existence of these identities, and not fall into the trap of seeing the whole of any community, in this case early modern Japan, as homogenous.

2.4 Concrete space and abstract space

Space can mean many different things. First, and maybe the most obvious, is concrete geographical space. Positions of mountains and distances between rivers are more or less immovable and measurable. However, this concrete can take on the function of abstract space, such as symbolical or sacred space. One of the ways in which concrete space can be transformed into sacred space is when an object is seen as the center of the universe, also called *axis mundi*. The most famous religious historian who wrote about this subject is Mircea Eliade:

> Such a cosmic pillar can be only at the very center of the universe, for the whole of the habitable world extends around it. Here, then, we have a sequence of religious conceptions and cosmological images that are inseparably connected and form a system that may be called the "system of the world" prevalent in traditional societies: (a) a sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; (b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld); (c)

communication with heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images, all of which refer to the *axis mundi*: pillar (cf. the *universalis columna*), ladder (cf. Jacob's ladder), mountain, tree, vine, etc.; (d) around this cosmic axis lies the world (= our world), hence the axis is located "in the middle," at the "navel of the earth"; it is the Center of the World.[25]

The concept of *axis mundi* is important to understand the role of mountains and how they are represented within the *Eitai Setsuyō*.

Allan Grapard has explored sacred space in the Japanese context in great detail and he argues that the notion of sacred space in Japan has developed over time:

[…] sacred space was gradually expanded from the sacred site to the sacred nation, and which ultimately resulted in a sacralization of the total human environment and all of human activity.[26]

When discussing sacred space—or the sacred site as he calls it—he is particularly interested in mountains, because mountains were particularly important for the development of Japanese sacred space.[27] The idea of a sacred nation he argues might have existed as early as soon after the introduction of Buddhism, but the term *shinkoku* 神国 ("divine nation") became popularized first around the time of the Mongol invasions.[28] Both mountains and the idea of Japan as sacred space are prominent in the *Eitai Setsuyō* and both will be discussed later in this thesis.

2.5 Social space and different forms of capital

A different kind of abstract space that is important for the coming discussions in this thesis is social space. To understand the concept of social space, Bourdieu's theory of different forms of capital seems the most applicable. In his words:

---

[25] Mircea Eliade, *The sacred and the profane: the nature of religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961)., p. 37
[26] Allan G. Grapard, "Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions," *History of Religions* 21, no. 3 (1982)., p. 221
[27] Ibid., p. 199
[28] Ibid., p. 216

15

Social space is constructed in such a way that agents or groups are distributed in it according to their position in statistical distributions based on the *two principles of differentiation* which, in the most advanced societies, such as the United States, Japan or France, are undoubtedly the most efficient: economic capital and cultural capital. It follows that all agents are located in this space in such a way that the closer they are to one another in those two dimensions, the more they have in common; and the more remote they are from one another, the less they have in common. Spatial distances on paper are equivalent to social distances.[29]

Bourdieu seems to have had mostly modern society in mind when building this theory, but there is no reason why it should not also be applicable to earlier societies, such as early modern Japan. Economic capital refers of course to the command of economic resources. Cultural capital refers to knowledge, literacy, education, arts etc. Cultural capital can further be divided into three categories:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.[30]

Bourdieu also operates with two other forms of capital, namely social capital and symbolic capital.

This notion of different forms of capital will be used here to better understand the dynamics of change in the structure of society and social space in the early modern period, especially the dissemination of cultural capital. The idea of social space also becomes important in chapter 4.5 where the mapping of social space is discussed.

---

[29] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Space," in *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, ed. Craig Calhoun, et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002)., p. 271
[30] ———, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986).

2.6 Time and history

The concept of time has occupied the minds of philosophers, physicists and religious thinkers for as far as anyone can remember. We all exist within time, and experience time on a daily basis. Without going into any complicated theory of physics or deep philosophical debate, we all assume that time is a universal concept, with any given moment at any given time necessarily following the moment before it. In other words, time moves forward and forward only. However, *how* this "irreversibility of time" is conceptualized within different cultures can vary. In the words of Cornelius Castoriadis:

> The irreversibility of time belongs to the first natural stratum of which every institution of society must take account. However, just as for everything that belongs to this stratum, it is immediately evident that social-historical development has to take account of it *in a certain way* and not 'absolutely'. This amounts to saying that in its being-thus, in the case of each society, the irreversibility of time is, nevertheless, instituted. In fact, whether in an archaic society or in Western science in its most advanced form, all that the development must absolutely account for is a *local* irreversibility. Beyond this, it may, as the case in a wide number of known cultures and scientific or philosophical cosmologies, place this local irreversibility within a time that, taken as a whole, is cyclical, posit it as an illusion, consider it a mere 'probability', even though an extremely likely one, or say that this is simply one obligatory way of grasping the multiple, related more to the characteristics of the 'observer' than to what is 'observed'.[31]

Thus, time is something that is socially constructed and also something that is an integral component of the collective identity of any given community.

Representations of time can be either linear, cyclical or both.[32] In the *Eitai Setsuyō*, we will look at two such representations: time as linear in representation of history; and time as cyclical in the form of the old Japanese calendar and religion. The relationship and distance between history and myth is often blurred, and historical narratives can themselves be

---

[31] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The imaginary institution of society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987)., p. 128. Parenthesis excluded.
[32] Anthony F. Aveni, "Time," in *Critical terms for religious studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)., p. 316

considered to be mythical representations.[33] When in daily life we encounter the word "history", we generally tend to think of it as some objective truth about what happened before us. In reality, however, it is a bit more problematic. History is subjective and flexible, and historical narratives are constantly being produced and re-produced. Historians pick out and emphasize "important" events based on interest, paradigm or political agenda, writing history as a long, thick unbroken line, whereas "real" history is likely to be a multitude of many broken lines. Nevertheless, whether we see history as myth or as objective truth, history is important for how we perceive ourselves and how community is imagined; it has deep connections with collective and personal identities.[34] In their article *Social Memory Studies* Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins systematically go through the history of ideas surrounding collective memory (social memory or any other name it has been given). In the subsection on identity they review the work of several scholars and assert that:

> National and other identities are established and maintained through a variety of mnemonic sites, practices and forms.[35]

We will examine some of the representations of history in the *Eitai Setsuyō* and how they contribute to constructing or maintaining the collective memory of the community.

The difference in perceptions about time across cultures is evident in the way in which different cultures have structured time through devices such as calendars. The most widely used calendar today is the Gregorian calendar, which based on the earth's movement around the sun divides time into years of 365 days. Further it is also divided into twelve months and 52 weeks. Other calendars such as the ancient Egyptian divided the year into 360 days with twelve months and ten-day weeks. The early modern Japanese calendar, based on the ancient Chinese calendar system, was a so called lunar-solar calendar with 12 months consisting of alternating 29 and 30 days and leap months every 3-4 years in order to adjust to the solar year. In many cultures, such as for instance the Maya, the calendar and time were intimately connected with the sky and celestial bodies and the Maya "forged links between the sky and just about every phase and component of human activity."[36] This is not so different from the

---

[33] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Kampen om fortiden: et essay om myter, identitet og politikk* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1996)., p. 20
[34] Ibid. pp., 48-70
[35] Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1998)., p. 124
[36] Aveni, "Time.", p. 319

early modern Japanese case, where seemingly mundane daily activities were influenced by religious information about the movement of heavenly gods across the sky which was stored in the calendar. Some of the beliefs concerning time and the calendar that appears in the *Eitai Setsuyō* will be discussed later in this thesis.

Chapter 3: Contextual Background

It is important to understand what kind of society the *setsuyōshū* existed in. This thesis seeks to investigate certain aspects of the early modern period in Japan, which spans over more than 250 years. This is a fairly long period of time, and that might seem like a problem because of the danger of treating this long period of time as one homogenous whole, but the point is that there are many things happening in this period that set it apart from all the periods before it, and that have great implications for books and reading, and thus also for the *Eitai Setsuyō*. The idea here is not to give a thorough review of Japanese early modern society, but rather to look at some facets that are relevant to other parts discussed in this thesis. We will start with a very brief general overview of urbanization and the four social orders, before becoming more specific and looking at literacy and education, the history of books and print, and then an introduction to the genre of *setsuyōshū*.

3.1 The four social orders

In the last decades of the sixteenth century, Toyotomi Hideyoshi introduced several reforms, some of which were also adopted by the Tokugawa regime. One of these reforms was to divide the population into four different hierarchical social orders, or classes: warriors, peasants, artisans, and merchants (*shinōkōshō* 士農工商). The reform was introduced in order to decrease social mobility and thus providing for a more stable society. Before these reforms there had been a relatively high degree of social mobility, but from their introduction movement between classes was in principle prohibited.[37] Up until the early modern period there was no clear cut distinction between samurai and farmers, and many of the farmers had the right to bear arms. When the reform was introduced, however, they had to choose between the samurai class and then move away from the countryside and into a castle town, or if they wanted to be a farmer and thus relinquishing their swords in the process.[38] The reason why it is important to bring this matter to attention here is that this division of society necessarily would have an impact on people's identity. Moreover, as Rubinger has pointed out, this division of society, and especially the separation of warriors and peasants, had implications

---

[37] Charles D. Sheldon, "Merchants and Society in Tokugawa Japan," *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983)., p. 478

[38] Arne Kalland, *Japans historie: fra jegersamfunn til økonomisk supermakt* (Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forl., 2005)., pp. 184-187

for literacy. Because the samurai from then on took on a much more bureaucratic role, the daimyo domains found it necessary to establish schools to educate them and thus make sure that more samurai became literate.[39] It also had implications for the peasants, because as the samurai moved from the villages, the villages now needed literate village headmen, who evidence shows were often actually on par with the samurai elite in terms of literacy.[40] In fact, literacy was a requirement imposed on the village headmen, as Rubinger writes:

> With respect to literacy specifically, the feudal authorities were well aware of what competencies their farmer agents could not do without. Literacy is repeatedly and explicitly mentioned as a prime requirement for village leadership.[41]

Although the hierarchical social system of the period placed the warriors on top and the merchants on the bottom, this does not really reflect the actual social position of people accurately. First of all, there were big differences within each social order. There were both very wealthy and very poor people in all of the four orders. This is why, Kalland argues, it is wrong to treat these four orders as classes.[42] Furthermore, the possession of different forms of capital shifted downwards during the course of the early modern period and status boundaries started to fade.[43] This is perhaps most visible when looking at economic capital, because we know that as the samurai experienced increasing economical problems, they started borrowing from the increasingly wealthy merchants.[44] The flow of capital was not limited to the economic form, however, as cultural capital also spread to commoners. Up until the early modern period, cultural capital had for the most part been in the hands of the warriors and the nobility.

Additionally, it is important to note that the *shinōkōshō* division was an ideological Confucian system brought in from China that was an important part of early modern discourse, but did not necessarily correspond to social reality. There are many social groups that fall outside of this system, such as *kuge* (court nobles), monks and priests, and social outcastes

---

[39] Richard Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007)., p. 15

[40] Ibid. pp., 22-30

[41] Ibid. p., 22

[42] Kalland, *Japans historie: fra jegersamfunn til økonomisk supermakt.*, p. 185

[43] David L. Howell, "Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998)., p. 126

[44] Kalland, *Japans historie: fra jegersamfunn til økonomisk supermakt.*, p. 204

like the *eta* and *hinin*.[45] There are discrepancies within the system as well, as artisans (*kō*) was not a real separate social category, and it is more common to refer to both merchants and artisans as one group called *chōnin* 町人, or townsfolk. This makes the *shinōkōshō* system into a kind of conceptual map that does not correspond to the actual landscape. Nevertheless, the idea of *shinōkōshō* was an important part of the collective identity, and as we will see the *Eitai Setsuyō* as well contributed to maintaining this idea.

3.2 Urbanization and economic growth

During the early modern period, Japan experienced maybe the greatest period of urbanization the world has ever seen.[46] By the end of the seventeenth century, Edo had become the largest city in the world and Kyoto and Osaka were getting close to the population sizes of London and Paris, the largest cities in Europe.[47] We have already seen that the warrior class was forced to move from the countryside and into the castle towns or they had to give up their swords. This of course had great implications for the growth of towns and cities. Another policy brought forth by the Tokugawa regime that had significance for urban growth was that of *sankin-kōtai* 参覲交代. From 1635, by law all daimyo had to spend at least half their time in Edo. Moreover, when the daimyo went back to their fiefdoms their families had to remain in Edo, becoming potential hostages.[48] The consequence of this was that the daimyo and their houses needed retainers who also had permanent residences in Edo. Furthermore, these new residents required goods and commodities which in turn instigated the movement of merchants and artisans into the city.

Along with this urbanizing process, the economy flourished and internal national trade expanded. To satisfy the demands of a growing national market, new roads and naval routes were established, effectively connecting the metropolises with each other and with the rest of Japan. The most famous of these roads is the Tōkaidō road, but there are others as well, such as Nakasendō, Kōshūdō, Nikkōdō and Ōshūdō.[49] In the medieval period, most people did not

---

[45] Marius B. Jansen, *The making of modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000)., pp. 96-126

[46] Kalland, *Japans historie: fra jegersamfunn til økonomisk supermakt.*, p. 210

[47] Nakai Nobuhiko, "Commercial change and urban growth in early modern Japan," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Vol.4 Early Modern Japan*, ed. John W. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)., p. 519

[48] Kalland, *Japans historie: fra jegersamfunn til økonomisk supermakt.*, p. 179

[49] Moriya Katsuhisa, "Urban Networks and Information Networks," in *Tokugawa Japan: the social and economic antecedents of modern Japan*, ed. Chie Nakane, Conrad Totman, and Shinzaburô Oishi (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1991)., p. 104

know much about life outside their own village. When these roads were developed, however, this was about to change. Although she is careful to declare that the notion of Japan as a nation was not clearly defined at this point in time, Jilly Traganou argues that the roads were instrumental in developing a national consciousness:

> The development of the highways that crossed different domains leading to ultimate symbolic destinations (Edo, Kyoto, Ise) became a means of strengthening the consciousness of Japan as a unified country. The highways connected previously isolated areas and became the carriers of national knowledge. Via the highways, products and cultural forms, western and Asian novelties, images of foreign ambassadors and lords of remote regions were spread throughout the country. […] In this sense, the highways were equivalent to contemporary media, spreading information and cultural modes.[50]

The highways, and especially the Tōkaidō road, were also a popular subject for different forms of popular cultural representations. Great and famous woodblock print artists such as Hokusai and Hiroshige, and haiku poets such as Bashō are famous for, among other things, such representations. Books containing detailed information and illustrations from the different stations also circulated, such as for instance the *Tōkaidō meishoki* (1661), the *Tōkaidō bunken ezu* (1690), and the *Tōkaidō meisho zue* (1797). A map of the Tōkaidō road is also contained within the *Eitai Setsuyō*. Such representations being available suggest that people did not need to be able to travel themselves to partake in the imagining of the national consciousness provided by the growing geographical knowledge. Moreover, as Rubinger mentions, it is unlikely that literacy would have developed and expanded as it did in the early modern period, had it not been for roads and networks such as these.[51]

The urbanization and improved living conditions instigated by economic growth also gave rise to popular culture in Japan. As Susan B. Hanley puts it:

> During the period just prior to Japanese efforts to industrialize, the Tokugawa period (1600-1867), cities grew to include at least one in every ten Japanese, developing into cultural and economic centers from which ideas, knowledge, and products were

---

[50] Jilly Traganou, *The Tōkaidō road: traveling and representation in Edo and Meiji Japan* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004)., p. 210
[51] Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan*., p. 88

diffused throughout the country. The first urban commoner culture in Japan, which flourished in the late seventeenth century and again in the early nineteenth century, was possible because of the rise in urban income, and the steady transmission of culture and goods throughout the countryside was a result of the rise in rural income. Largely a population of self-sufficient cultivators in the early-seventeenth century, the Japanese by the mid-nineteenth century were able to buy books, furniture, sweets, fresh fish, hair ornaments, and all sorts of small luxuries even in remote villages.[52]

It is in the middle of this popular culture that the *Eitai Setsuyō* and the other *setsuyōshū* with encyclopedic nature emerged.

3.3 Literacy and education

In order to understand what kind of impact *setsuyōshū*, and also books in general, might have had on people at the time, it is important to take a closer look at contemporary literacy. It is also important to note, however, that literacy is not an absolute requirement for books to have some kind of value. For instance, there are many examples of books or other texts being read out loud by literate people to illiterate people.[53] Moreover, many books were filled with illustrations in such a way that you would need no knowledge of reading to enjoy them. We must also take into account that information contained within these books most likely did not spread only as far as the reader. It is quite reasonable to assume that much of the information from the books was also spread by word of mouth and also by people imitating the actions of those who did read books, such as for instance books on proper behavior.

Although we should assume that the impact of books could reach beyond the boundaries of literacy, it goes without saying that literacy is an important prerequisite for the history of books. As both Kornicki and Rubinger suggest, it is also important to keep in mind that there is a broad spectrum of different literacies between full literacy and total illiteracy. For instance, in order to be able to read and comprehend everything in the *Eitai Setsuyō*, the reader had to be proficient in the reading of Chinese characters, all the different variations of

---

[52] Susan B. Hanley, *Everyday things in premodern Japan: the hidden legacy of material culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)., pp. 1-2

[53] Peter F. Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*, Handbuch der Orientalistik, 5. Abteilung, Japan (Leiden: Brill, 1998)., p. 34

the kana, as well as an understanding of *kanbun* 漢文.[54] If a reader could understand most of the contents, but not for instance the parts written in *kanbun*, we would still not call him or her illiterate.

What, then, do we know of literacy in the early modern period? Vasily Golovnin, a Russian naval officer who was held in captivity by the Japanese between 1811 and 1813, saw his captors as having very high levels of literacy:

> […] comparing nations as a whole, the Japanese are the most educated in all the world. In Japan there is no person who cannot read or write and who does not know the laws of his country, which are very rarely altered, and the most important of which are written on large boards and displayed on squares and other visible places in cities and towns.
>
> The Japanese are all well informed about their own history and geography, the reading of historical books constituting their favorite pastime.[55]

This is most likely quite an overstatement, but it does tell us that at least among the people he encountered levels of literacy were indeed quite high. Also, from looking at the sheer volume of published material in the early modern period, we must assume that this required relatively high levels of literacy in a big portion of the population. The reason for this is simple: if no one could read, there would be no one to buy the books, and the publishers would go out of business. This was certainly not the case, as the publishing industry only grew bigger as years went by. This is not sufficient as evidence for a high level of literacy, however, and needs further qualification.

Unfortunately, the research on the subject is far from abundant. Many scholars have blamed the scarcity of empirical data for not being able to give any reasonable assessment of literacy, something Richard Rubinger disagrees with:

> The historian is always restricted by the data available. But though there is a widespread assumption that materials for the study of literacy in Japan either do not exist at all or are so limited as to prevent any reasonable assessment, the contrary is true. [This book utilizes] a diverse array of sources from personal monograms or

---

[54] Ibid., p. 33 and Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan*., p. 3
[55] Quoted in William McOmie, ed. *Foreign images and experiences of Japan: Vol. 1 First century AD to 1841* (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2005)., p. 417-18

"signatures" in the seventeenth century, to diaries, agricultural manuals, encyclopedias of general knowledge, rural poetry contests, village literacy surveys, election ballots, family account books, and finally army conscription examinations during the Meiji period (1868-1912).[56]

In his book, *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan*, Rubinger tries to map out the development and the levels of popular literacy in the early modern period and his main focus is commoners in rural areas.[57] As mentioned before, the early modern period refers to a long period of time, and it is therefore rather obvious that the levels of literacy would differ over time within this period. In his discussion on popular literacy in early Tokugawa villages, although he is careful to emphasize that the evidence is circumstantial, he concludes that there is evidence of a high level of functional literacy among the village leaders. Furthermore, he concludes that maybe 50 percent or more of the farming population in total, including ordinary farmers, may have had high levels of functional literacy.[58] The village headman had many responsibilities and was "defined so broadly that he was, in effect, responsible for every facet of the villagers' daily lives."[59] Among his responsibilities were: tax calculation, record keeping, village administration, and representing peasants to higher authority, all of which would require quite high levels of functional literacy.

The position of village headman refers to only a small portion of the farmers, however, and it is not likely that all farmers had such high levels of literacy. Nevertheless, evidence does exist which indicates relatively high levels of literacy among ordinary farmers as well. There is documentation of several instances where ordinary farmers complained to the authorities about the unfair tax computations of the village headmen. Also, following an edict in 1643, all headmen and landowning farmers had to gather at the beginning of the year and publicly look at the village records, and all in attendance had to certify that they had inspected the documents by marking it with their stamps. Furthermore, in 1644 all village headmen in the Kantō and Kansai regions had to show all the farmers their methods for "calculating, distributing and collecting tax payments," for then to receive the farmers' stamps in a record book as confirmation that they had seen their methods. Such public scrutiny of documents is only sensible if the farmers have the skills to interpret them. This, together with the fact that

---

[56] Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan*., p. 4
[57] With 'commoners' he refers to non-samurai.
[58] Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan*., p. 41
[59] Ibid., p. 22

many farmers did complain to the authorities about their village headmen, suggests that many ordinary farmers were in fact literate even as early as in the seventeenth century.[60]

As for the samurai, it is widely accepted that most of them had high levels of literacy. The early modern period was an era of peace, which consequently made the value of military skills diminish. The military arts were still highly revered, but a growing emphasis was also put on civil arts and samurai were required to cultivate both, as is evident in the principle of *bunbu ryōdō* 文武両道, or "cultivation of both martial and civil arts". So important was this cultivation of both civil and martial arts that it became mandatory by law in the early sixteenth century, as it is written in the Laws for the Military Households (*Buke shohatto* 武家諸法度).[61]

In the Genroku era (1688-1704), literacy in the cities expanded greatly. According to Rubinger this has mainly three reasons:

> First was the development of a merchant class that required literacy to negotiate economic transactions at local, regional, and ever-expanding national systems of exchange. Second was the emergence of large publishing industries in the cities, catering to a composite audience of samurai, merchants, and priests who were reading and writing both for vocational needs and for pleasure. Third was the establishment of private academies, both religious and secular, in large cities, teaching not only basic reading and writing but also various ethical systems and practical knowledge of an advanced sort.[62]

It was not only in the cities that literacy developed further, but also in the countryside. This improved rural literacy was not as much a quantitative spread of literacy to the lower ranked commoners, however, but rather a qualitative development of the literacy skills of the already literate rural elite. This was a result of the booming urban industry of popular print culture in the metropolises.[63] This popular culture spread to the villages through the ever expanding and improving national networks, such as for instance the Tōkaidō road. The development of literacy in the countryside in the eighteenth century is evident in the profusion of books in those areas. Among these books, one very important type was in fact *setsuyōshū*, which

---

[60] Ibid., pp. 32-34
[61] Conrad Totman, *Early modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)., p. 161
[62] Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan*., p. 82
[63] Ibid., p. 80-81

"almost certainly brought rural families into closer touch with the standards of behavior practiced in the cities."[64] Another important genre in the countryside was what is generally known as *nōsho* 農書, or agricultural manuals. These manuals were for the most part practical manuals for effectively cultivating the earth, and were written by farmers for farmers.[65] Needless to say, it makes little sense for a genre such as this to exist if there was not a substantial group of literate farmers.

Coming into the nineteenth century, literacy and learning started to spread to the popular masses at a rapid pace. This was to a great extent due to the continuing spread of education from late in the eighteenth century. During the eighteenth century and earlier, education had for the most part only been available for the samurai and the more wealthy urban commoners.[66]

Schools in the early modern period came mainly in four different forms. First, there were the private schools, or *shijuku* 私塾, which were the dominant form of formal education for the most of the eighteenth century. Second, there were the domain schools (*hankō* 藩校) and their branch schools, which mainly targeted samurai. Third, there were private schools affiliated with semi-religious movements, such as for instance *shingaku* 心学, which in general were directed towards commoners. Fourth, there were small local schools called *terakoya* 寺子屋 which taught children both in the cities and in rural areas.

The term *shijuku* refers to a large group of different institutions, ranging from small schools with only a few students to large institutions with over two hundred students.[67] By the end of the early modern period there had been established just over a thousand *shijuku* schools.[68] Rubinger lists three general features which were incorporated in most of the *shijuku* schools.[69] First of all, they were privately run and often highly influenced by the character and personality of the person running it. Secondly, the curriculum was different from the other types of schools and free from interference from the authorities. Third, the constituency was different:

---

[64] Ibid., pp. 94-95
[65] Ibid., p. 88
[66] Totman, *Early modern Japan*., p. 429
[67] Richard Rubinger, *Private academies of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982)., p. 12
[68] Ibid., p. 11
[69] Ibid., pp. 8-9

The shijuku imposed no geographical or class barriers to entrance. They thus became the only educational institutions of the period that could attract a truly national constituency from the various classes and from all parts of the country.[70]

He further argues that the *shijuku* schools "contributed significantly to breaking down regional barriers and to the development of a more unified, integrated, and 'national' culture."[71]

The different subjects various schools specialized in also varied a great deal. Among them, we find for instance Chinese studies (*kangaku* 漢学), calligraphy schools (*shodō* 書道), calculation schools (*sangaku* 算学), western studies (*yōgaku* 洋学), military studies (*budō* 武道), and several others.[72]

The domain schools (*hankō* 藩校) were as mentioned mainly for samurai and, as Ronald P. Dore suggests, the majority of samurai children above foot-soldier rank might have been enrolled in such schools by the end of the early modern period.[73] There are, however, a few records showing that commoners as well were admitted into the domain schools, although this seems to have ceased rather quickly. The curriculum of these schools was mainly Confucian, although from around the 1830s it was expanded to include other topics such as for instance *kokugaku* 国学 and Dutch learning.[74]

The establishment of domain schools started very modestly in the seventeenth century with only 8 schools being founded between 1620 and 1690. Going into the eighteenth and nineteenth century however, the numbers climbed dramatically, with 38 schools being established between 1690 and 1770, and 144 between 1770 and 1860.[75]

Among schools associated with religious movements, *Shingaku* schools are the most notable. The goal of the *Shingaku* movement was a spiritual quest of cultivating the mind and teaching people how to lead an ethical life. The origin of the *Shingaku* movement is traced back to the founder, Ishida Baigan (1685-1744) in Kyoto. But it was really his disciple, Teshima Toan (1718-1786) who organized it into a national religious movement.[76]Janine A.

---

[70] Ibid., p. 9
[71] Ibid., p. 15
[72] Ibid., p. 13
[73] Ronald P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1965)., p. 68
[74] Totman, *Early modern Japan.*, p. 432
[75] Ibid., p. 431
[76] Janine Anderson Sawada, *Confucian values and popular Zen: Sekimon Shingaku in eighteenth-century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993)., p. 1

Sawada affirms that Shingaku has long received attention as an important educational force by Japanese scholars, although it has not gathered as much attention in the west.[77]

Much like the other types of educational institutions, the number of Shingaku schools increased rapidly throughout the early modern period, especially towards the end. The history starts with a single lecturing hall in Kyoto in 1765, increases to 22 in 1786, 34 in 1789, 56 in 1795, 80 in 1803, 134 in 1834 and finally over 180 in 1867.[78] An important thing to consider is that Shingaku programs were open to everyone and not restricted by class or gender.

Most of the learning associated with Shingaku was group oriented and one of the methods of learning adopted by the movement was reading groups.[79] There were also programs for children, and after each class the children who attended would get a leaflet with a summary of the day's lesson.[80] Taken together, these two parts of Shingaku education show us that the attendees already knew how to read, or they learned how to read at school.

The last kind of educational institution we will look at here is the *terakoya*. Whereas Shingaku schools had a religious overtone, *terakoya* schools were mostly secular. This is evident in Dore's description of the schools:

> The schools developed, though partly from charity, largely in response to an effective economic demand. And they served practical vocational ends. They provided a training in the basic skills of writing, reading and arithmetic, together with a certain amount of useful information and some of the accumulated practical wisdom needed by the ordinary citizen to get along in a closely regulated feudal world. It was not an idealistic education, and it did not usually cater for those who wished to 'improve themselves'.[81]

The numbers of *terakoya* schools also grew rapidly during the early modern period, with only 47 being established before 1750, 194 during 1751-88, 1,286 during 1789-182, and 8,675 during 1830-1867. This is a total of 10,202 for the entire early modern period.[82] The teachers at these *terakoya* were many different kinds of people, including Shintō priests, doctors, Buddhist priests and samurai, but the largest group was commoners.

---

[77] Ibid., p. 6
[78] Totman, *Early modern Japan.*, p. 434
[79] Sawada, *Confucian values and popular Zen: Sekimon Shingaku in eighteenth-century Japan.* p. 93
[80] Ibid., p. 111
[81] Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan.*, p. 255
[82] Rubinger, *Private academies of Tokugawa Japan.*, p. 5

The implications of this rather massive spread of education and literacy were of course tremendous for the further development of Japan, and many scholars have emphasized the importance of already having well trained bureaucrats for the process of modernizing in the later nineteenth century. More importantly, for the purpose of this thesis we must have this development in mind when working with texts from this period, as it gives us information about how far we can assume the readership of those texts extended. All in all it is relatively safe to assume that the contents of books were accessible to a quite large part of the early modern population.

3.4 Books and the printing industry

Literacy is of course superfluous unless you have something to read. And in the early modern period, there was indeed an abundance of books and other readable material. This is mostly due to the astounding boom in the printing industry during this period. The technology of print had already been available for a long time, going back as far as the eighth century. It was not until the seventeenth century, however, that printing was commercialized and we can start talking about a fully fledged print culture.[83] The vast majority of books printed in the early modern period used woodblock technology, despite the fact that moveable type was also available. Moveable type was brought to Japan on two different occasions towards the end of the sixteenth century. One was by a Jesuit mission led by Alessandro Valignano in 1590; then again when Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded the Korean peninsula he brought back printing types.[84] The reason for choosing the woodblock technology over moveable type was likely due to the fact that with moveable type, even a single font would need several thousand pieces. And even if you had all the fonts needed, you would only be able to have one book in production at any given time, and if you wanted to reissue a book, you would have to rearrange the type once again. Another reason might have been the esteem for calligraphic variety. With moveable type, any one character would look the same on every occasion, unless you made several different pieces for each character. With woodblock print, every character had its own distinct calligraphic value, very close to the calligraphic hand of the

---

[83] Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*., p. 112
[84] Ibid., pp. 125-129

author (or rather the writer, who was of course not always necessarily the same person as the author). Moreover, it allowed for a seamless integration of text and illustration.[85]

The number of published books during this period is by any standard impressive, although it is hard to ascertain any exact number. A scholar named Raymond G. Nunn[86] has estimated this number to be more than 3000 titles on average each year for the entire period. His methods have been criticized, however, for being problematic and inaccurate.[87] Kornicki agrees on this problem of accuracy, but argues that the estimate is more likely to be too low than too high.[88]

Most of the printing took place in the three metropolises of Osaka, Kyoto and Edo, with Osaka and Kyoto being the most important cities for printing early in the period. Edo gradually became more and more culturally important, however, and had by the middle of the nineteenth century become the most important centre of culture and also for print. Kornicki emphasizes the importance this had for language and the process of establishing a national consciousness:

> Since, […] the market for books had already long since spread to cover almost all areas of Japan, it is evident that the language of Edo, as reproduced in books circulated throughout Japan, became one of those 'unified fields of exchange and communication' that Benedict Anderson has associated with print languages and 'laid the basis for national consciousness'. As Edo came in the late eighteenth century to dominate commercial publishing and to disseminate its products by means of networks of book distributors and lending libraries that covered all urban communities of Japan, so the language of Edo was carried to readers who had never been there and became for them the language of access to mass-market popular literature and culture, a language that was uniformly transmitted throughout Japan.[89]

---

[85] Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006)., p. 31.Kornicki as well investigates the relationship between calligraphy and woodblock print in Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*., pp. 26-30

[86] Referred to through Kornicki and Smith, as I was not able to find Nunn's article (Nunn, G. Raymond 1969, 'On the number of books published in Japan from 1600 to 1868', in *East Asian occasional papers 1*, Asian studies at Hawaii 3 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii), 110-19)

[87] Henry D. Smith, "The History of the Book in Edo and Paris," in *Edo and Paris: urban life and the state in the early modern era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Kaoru Ugawa (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994)., p. 335

[88] Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*., p. 140

[89] Ibid., p. 33

The connection between printing culture and national consciousness is discussed at greater length by Berry in her book Japan in *Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*. An important term in her discussion is what she calls 'the library of public information'—a term we already encountered above. She defines this library as follows:

> This library is no particular archive but a metaphorical place where we can array the many early modern sources that fit together because of their common purpose: to examine and order the verifiable facts of contemporary experience for an open audience of consumers.[90]

It refers to a vast spectrum of different genres of print seeking to categorize and classify the world in a systematic way. The contemporary market was abundant with such descriptive material, like for instance maps, dictionaries, travel guides, biographies, directories of elite samurai, incredibly detailed guides to the pleasure quarters and their prostitutes, agricultural guides, calendars, shopping guides, city guides, and much more. There are of course examples of many of these genres from before the early modern period also, but there are several important differences. First of all, the volume of published material brought on by the commercialization of print is so much greater than what was published preceding this period that they become hard to even compare. Secondly, the content changes. Much of the material in the early modern period has "an investigative style that is generally empirical in method and mundane in outlook."[91] This is not to say that all the material from this period have this investigating quality, but rather that there is a new trend that values observation of facts higher than before. Third, the audience of books also changes. Whereas in the classical and medieval period the target group for published books was an elite for the most part concentrated in Kyoto, early modern texts are geared towards a much wider range of the population, both socially and geographically.[92] This is an important point that we will see repeated several times throughout this thesis. Also, what had previously been esoteric knowledge possessed by closed circles was now gathered in the information library and made available to everyone.[93] In other words, cultural capital spreads "downward" socially, and outwards geographically, which is a result of a combination of urbanization, economic

---

[90] Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period*., p. 15
[91] Ibid., p. 18
[92] Ibid., p. 21
[93] Ibid., p. 35

growth, improved national networks, increased literacy skills, and the new and prospering printing industry.

Berry argues that this "public library" lays the basic premise for a national consciousness to take form among the populace, mainly because the texts of this library frequently use the large-scale category of Japan as the place of study for all the information stored in the library:

> For all its attention to the manifold particularity of mundane experience, the most remarkable aspect of the new library is the holistic and taxonomic coverage of big subjects. The great subject became the place variously called Nihon, Dai Nihon, Honchō, and Yamato. Again and again, writers made the whole country, conceived of integrally as a singular national space, the site of analysis. The myriad details of their topics—political administration, social geography, religious organization, work, food, festival life, transport arteries, famous places and products—were parsed within this unifying frame.[94]

As we shall see, the *Eitai Setsuyō* as well uses this notion of Japan as a unifying frame.

The idea of the "library of public information" closely resembles some of the ideas put forth by Marcia Yonetomo in her book *Mapping Early Modern Japan*. She also emphasizes the systematizing and categorizing nature of books and other media at the time and calls for a wider definition of the word "mapping":

> A broad definition of mapping is particularly important in studying the early modern period, for as subsequent chapters show, writers and artist "mapped out" imaginary or discursive spaces just as mapmakers did actual places.[95]

Both of these ideas—the idea of the "public information library" and a wide definition of "mapping"—become very helpful also when looking at *setsuyōshū*.

---

[94] Ibid., pp. 22-23
[95] Marcia Yonemoto, *Mapping early modern Japan: space, place, and culture in the Tokugawa period, 1603-1868* (Berkeley ; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003)., p. 2

3.5 Travel and representations of travel

In his book *Breaking Barriers,* Constantine Vaporis examines the relationship between government policies and travel in early modern Japan and highlights the disjunction between them. During the medieval period physical mobility was for the most part very limited because of obstacles such as "political fragmentation, warfare, social instability, mountain bandits, pirates, and the proliferation of economic tolls"[96] and up until the end of the seventeenth century travel was for the most part something people did out of necessity, not for recreational purposes.[97] By examining government policy in the early modern period, it appears as if physical mobility was severely limited and restricted throughout the entire period. The social reality, however, was something quite different.[98] Throughout the period, and especially from the nineteenth century and onwards, people from all walks of life ventured upon the various roads for recreational purposes.[99] Travel generally took on the guise of pilgrimage, but as Vaporis has pointed out, travel took on a more and more secular nature in addition to the religious.[100] Vaporis investigates many interesting aspects of travel in the early modern period, but the most relevant to this thesis we find in the final concluding lines of his book where he emphasizes travels contribution to the imagining of community:

> By travelling, the people of Tokugawa Japan expanded their knowledge of the world in which they lived. Or, as Jippensha Ikku said, the "Edo man can make acquaintance with the Satsuma sweet potato." The Japanese, in other words, were coming to know themselves and their land more fully. Through social intercourse between people from diverse localities, the exchange of ideas and popular culture could take place, building the solid foundation which was necessary for the formation of a national identity in the years after the arrival of the black ships.[101]

Even though travelers took to the roads in great numbers during the early modern period, there were of course many people who for different reasons did not have the

---

[96] Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Breaking barriers: travel and the state in early modern Japan*, Harvard East Asian monographs (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994)., p. 13
[97] Laura Nenzi, *Excursions in identity: travel and the intersection of place, gender, and status in Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008)., p. 1
[98] Vaporis, *Breaking barriers: travel and the state in early modern Japan*., p. 5
[99] Ibid., pp. 12-13
[100] Ibid., pp. 236-242
[101] Ibid., pp. 260-261

opportunity to leave one's place and see the various parts of the country. For the vast majority of commoners, this was probably the case. This does not, however, mean that these non-traveling commoners did not in any way have access to much of the same knowledge that the travelers gained during their travels. We have already discussed the booming printing industry of the early modern period, and a large portion of the books published dealt with traveling in one way or another. Books about the Tōkaidō road were mentioned previously, but there were several other genres that helped spread information about the world, such as travel literature, travel diaries, travel handbooks, maps, woodblock prints, gazetteers, and even board games.[102] Matthew W. Shores has made a nice analogy between early modern travel in Japan and international travel today, as not everybody these days experience traveling to foreign countries but still have a relatively high degree of access to knowledge about the outside world through various forms of media.[103]

Although there are not many parts in *setsuyōshū* books that deal directly with travel—except for information about the Tōkaidō road—the books contain much of the same type of information. There can be little doubt that *setsuyōshū* as well as travel literature formed people's knowledge about the world and gave them a sense of belonging and community. Indeed, as Laura Nenzi observes, travelers often already had thorough knowledge about the locations they visited from reading and so forth.[104] In turn, the beautiful illustrations and vivid descriptions of roads, cities and scenery contained within various media surely lured many people out from their homes and villages to see the world.

3.6 What are setsuyōshū?

In this subchapter I will give a brief introduction to what the *setsuyōshū* are. There is, however, a need to make some generalizations in order to keep this brief. The development and history of the different types and varieties of *setsuyōshū* is somewhat more complicated than what is portrayed here, but for the purpose of this thesis this short generalization will suffice.

---

[102] Constantine N. Vaporis, "Caveat Viator. Advice to Travelers in the Edo Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 44, no. 4 (1989)., p. 462

[103] Matthew W. Shores, "Travel and "Tabibanashi" in the Early Modern Period: Forming Japanese Geographic Identity," *Asian Theatre Journal* 25, no. 1 (2008)., p. 106

[104] Laura Nenzi, "Cultured Travelers and Consumer Tourists in Edo-Period Sagami," *Monumenta Nipponica* 59, no. 3 (2004)., p. 285

Setsuyōshū is first and foremost the name of a genre of dictionaries used for looking up the Chinese characters for Japanese words. The name of the genre literally means "[…] a collection for saving expense, or a collection for occasional use."[105] The entries in the dictionary are ordered according to the *iroha* syllabary—the ABC of pre-modern and early modern Japan—and further divided into sub-categories. There were usually around a little more than ten of these sub categories, but that varies among different versions. To explain in concrete terms how the *setsuyōshū* works, say you were looking for the Chinese character for the word *hana* 花, the Japanese word for flower. Then you would first go to the part of the dictionary which corresponds to the first syllable of the word you are looking for, in this case *ha*, and then you would find the sub-category that you think your word belongs to, in this case *kusaki* 草木, the category for grass and trees. Within that category you would look for the *kana* 仮名 spelling out *hana* and in that way finding the character you were looking for and also the *on*-reading (Chinese reading of the word).

The first *setsuyōshū* was made in the Muromachi period (1336-1573). These *setsuyōshū* were copied by hand and only contained a dictionary. These early *setsuyōshū*, commonly referred to as *kohon setsuyōshu* 古本節用集, or old-book *setsuyōshū*, were for the most part used by Buddhist priests and court nobles for composing Chinese poetry and for use in official documents.[106]

---

[105] Toshio Yokoyama, "Setsuyōshū and Japanese civilization," in *Themes and Theories in Modern Japanese History: Essays in Memory of Richard Storry*, ed. Sue Henny and Jean-Pierre Lehmann (London and New Jersey: The Athlone Press, 1988)., p. 78

[106] ———, "Some notes on the history of Japanese traditional household encyclopedias," *Japan Forum* 1, no. 2 (1989)., p. 243

Fig. 1 Left: The first page of a medieval type *setsuyōshū*.[107]

Right: The first page of the dictionary part in *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō*

From the early modern period onwards, however, the *setsuyōshū* underwent big changes, due to the commercialization of the printing press, a flourishing popular culture and an expansion in literacy. Two major differences can be seen between the Tokugawa era *setsuyōshū* and the *kohon setsuyōshū*. First, the *setsuyōshū* was now no longer only a dictionary, but was expanded with various encyclopedic entries on a wide variety of subjects. Secondly, just like the users of books and texts in general changed, the users of the *setsuyōshū* also changed. The *setsuyōshū* are from then on no longer a commodity reserved for the elite, but also spread to the common people.[108]

The structure of *setsuyōshū* can generally be divided into three parts. At the beginning there is usually a part containing encyclopedic information, then in the middle there is the dictionary itself, then some more encyclopedic information at the end as well. An important note, however, is that the dictionary part also usually has a top row containing encyclopedic information. (See Fig. 1. The top row on the right side picture shows the first page of the chronology of Japan.) The encyclopedic pages too are for the most part divided into two or three rows. (See Fig. 2. The page on the left side has three rows, while the one on the right has two.) How much encyclopedic information the *setsuyōshū* includes varies greatly between different versions, but the dictionary part is always the biggest.

---

[107] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/i03/i03_00608/index.html
[108] Yokoyama, "Some notes on the history of Japanese traditional household encyclopedias.", p. 243

The encyclopedic parts, according to Yokoyama Toshio's analysis, can be divided into two categories.[109] The first category helps readers to orient themselves in the world. This category consists of, for instance, maps of the world, Japan, cities and even the cosmos; paintings of Mt. Fuji and various other beautiful sightseeing spots; and maps and information about certain famous roads. The second category deals with teaching the reader to act with "proper" civility. Yokoyama further divides this category into three: civility towards material objects, civility towards others, and civility towards deities.[110] Civility towards material objects means the correct treatment of things, like for instance the correct way to peruse a sword, or how to correctly place fish on a platter. Civility towards others means correct manners. For example, the *setsuyōshū* usually contains information on how to properly blow one's nose, and how to address others in letters in accordance to the person's social status. Yokoyama quotes this amusing passage from the *Eitai Setsuyō*:

> Instruction was offered on almost every aspect of human activity, such as how to blow one's nose "properly"; that is, one must face the opposite way to the honourable point of the room and blow 'three times, first in an under-tone, second high and loud, and the last under-tone again.'[111]

The final category, civility towards deities, gives the reader instructions on for instance how to avoid offending certain deities by avoiding certain taboos.

These *setsuyōshū* enjoyed massive popularity, and "it is estimated that about 500 printed editions of *setsuyōshū* had appeared by the end of the 1860s."[112] A quick glimpse at the entry for *setsuyōshū* in the *Kokusho sōmokuroku* 国書総目録 gives a good illustration of the great volume of these books, spanning over several pages.[113] In fact, many people also had some kind of special reverence towards their *setsuyōshū*, almost as if they were sacred objects:

> During my research, I heard in almost all the houses that kept encyclopedic *Setsuyōshū* that the fathers and grandfathers of the current generation had shown a special attitude

---

[109] ———, "Even a sardine's head becomes holy: the role of household encyclopedias in sustaining civilisation in pre-industrial Japan," in *SANSAI: An Environmental Journal for the Global Community* (2006)., p. 45
[110] ———, "Some notes on the history of Japanese traditional household encyclopedias.", p. 244
[111] ———, "Even a sardine's head becomes holy: the role of household encyclopedias in sustaining civilisation in pre-industrial Japan.", p. 45
[112] Ibid.
[113] *Kokusho sō mokuroku,* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1967)

towards their *Setsuyōshū*: they used to regard these volumes as a kind of precious treasure, or even as sacred books.[114]

As an interesting analogy, *Setsuyōshū* in the early modern period can be compared to modern day Wikipedia. Just like many people use Wikipedia as a good source for finding quick information on almost anything today, early modern Japanese people most likely went to the *setsuyōshū* to find answers to their questions. Moreover, much like the fact that a lot of the information stored on Wikipedia is information taken from somewhere else without any sources being named, many parts of the *setsuyōshū* also have the same kind of "cut and paste" feel to them.

Among these *setsuyōshū*, the most popular and widely circulated was the *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō*,[115] the subject of this thesis. As a testament to the popularity of *setsuyōshū*, advertisements for *setsuyōshū* were also quite common. For instance, on the last page of an edition of the *Kannon* sutra from the Edo period, also available at the University of Oslo Library, one of these advertisements can be seen.[116] A small leaflet or poster for a *kashihon'ya* 貸本屋, a book renting store, available at Waseda University's library home page writes that they among other things have *setsuyōshū*.[117] The fact that people were able to borrow *setsuyōshū* is an important one. *Setsuyōshū*, and books in general, were quite expensive, so accessibility of books for most people came mainly through such *kashihon'ya*.[118]

Up until now, the majority of the work that has been done on *setsuyōshū* has dealt only with the dictionary parts. Yokoyama wrote in 1988 that:

"[…] there is practically no research focused on the whole gamut of miscellaneous descriptive contents of setsuyōshū at the time when they took the form of an encyclopedia for daily use."[119]

---

[114] Yokoyama, "Some notes on the history of Japanese traditional household encyclopedias.", p. 248
[115] ———, "Even a sardine's head becomes holy: the role of household encyclopedias in sustaining civilisation in pre-industrial Japan.", p. 45
[116] *Kannon kyō hayayomi eshō: Rakuyō Ōsaka sanjūsanjo junrei engi*, (Kyoto: Suharaya Heizaemon, 1739).
[117] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko10/bunko10_08034_0006/index.html
[118] Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan*., p. 83-4. For more on *kashihonya*, see Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*.
[119] Yokoyama, "Setsuyōshū and Japanese civilization.", p. 81

Since then, not much seems to have changed and Yokoyama remains one of the only few authors publishing anything of interest on the subject, and certainly the only one publishing in English. Yokoyama reflects on this again in an article from 2005, 17 years later:

> "To date, however, no research has focused on the wide range of miscellaneous information that the encyclopedic, illustrated Setsuyōshū of the later period contained."[120]

This, I believe, makes the study of these encyclopedic parts of *setsuyōshū* all the more interesting, although maybe also a bit more challenging.

What then, does the encyclopedic part of *setsuyōshū* usually contain? Some of the content was mentioned earlier, but a bit more thorough explanation will be given here. It is not the intention here to give the impression that all of the *setsuyōshū* published in the early modern period always include the same type of content, or that they always follow the same formula, for there are indeed many differences between individual *setsuyōshū*. But there are also many similarities and parts that frequently appear in different editions.

A very important feature of the *setsuyōshū* is that it can be seen as a collage of several different genres. This means that most, if not all, of the encyclopedic parts are concentrated versions of other individual genres which in fact were published as books (or other kinds of text) in their own right. In the scope of this thesis it is impossible to give a complete overview of all the different parts, so I will only give a brief overview over some major themes that are present in a wide range of *setsuyōshū*. Some of these themes will be examined further in the next chapter, so they will not be given much attention here.

Typically, *setsuyōshū* will include some maps, usually going from large scale with a map of the world first, then of Japan and later of cities and roads. Maps were of course published as independent items as well. Following the maps, or sometimes spread throughout the *setsuyōshū*, are illustrations of famous places such as for instance Mt. Fuji and other famous mountains. Such depictions of famous places also had their own genre, namely the *meisho zue* 名所図絵. Maps and famous places in the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other books will be discussed in the next chapter.

---

[120] ———, "The Illustrated Household Encyclopedias that Once Civilized Japan," in *Written texts - visual texts: woodblock-printed media in early modern Japan*, ed. Susanne and Sepp Linhart Formanek (Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005)., p. 48

The *setsuyōshū* usually also contain information pertaining to samurai culture with detailed illustrations of weaponry and armor showing the names of all the different parts. There are also usually illustrations of Japanese samurai heroes with accompanying text. These depictions of both items and people span over many pages, illuminating the admiration and awe people had for this culture. Interestingly though, *setsuyōshū* also often included similar illustrations and text about Chinese war heroes and weaponry, showing a clear contrast to the anti-foreign *Kokugaku* tradition.

Another important part of the *setsuyōshū* that dealt with samurai was the directories of elite samurai called *bukan* 武鑑. Bukan first started circulating in the early seventeenth century and was catalogues over the current daimyo. They included information on the daimyo's name, his court title, how much was produced by his domain, the name of his castle headquarters, and which province his domain was located in and also an illustration of the crest of his family.[121] Taking the wide definition of "mapping" discussed earlier, these *bukan* can be seen as effectively mapping out certain parts of social space. Interestingly, the same kind of information contained within the *bukan*, although in condensed form, was often also included in the borders around city maps.[122] These *bukan* were incredibly popular, and were constantly revised and updated. According to both Kornicki and Berry annual copies were in the tens of thousands.[123] As time went by the *bukan* were expanded to include much more information. *Bukan* most definitely had their purpose among high ranking samurai and merchants who constantly were in contact with daimyo and samurai officials, but the fact that these books were so popular and that they found their way into *setsuyōshū* as well indicates that the genre reached far into the commoner ranks. What use could regular commoners possibly have for this information? It is very likely that this is but an indication of a voyeuristic desire among the people.

---

[121] Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period*., p. 104

[122] Yonemoto, *Mapping early modern Japan: space, place, and culture in the Tokugawa period, 1603-1868*., p. 20

[123] Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*., p. 211 and Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period*., p. 104
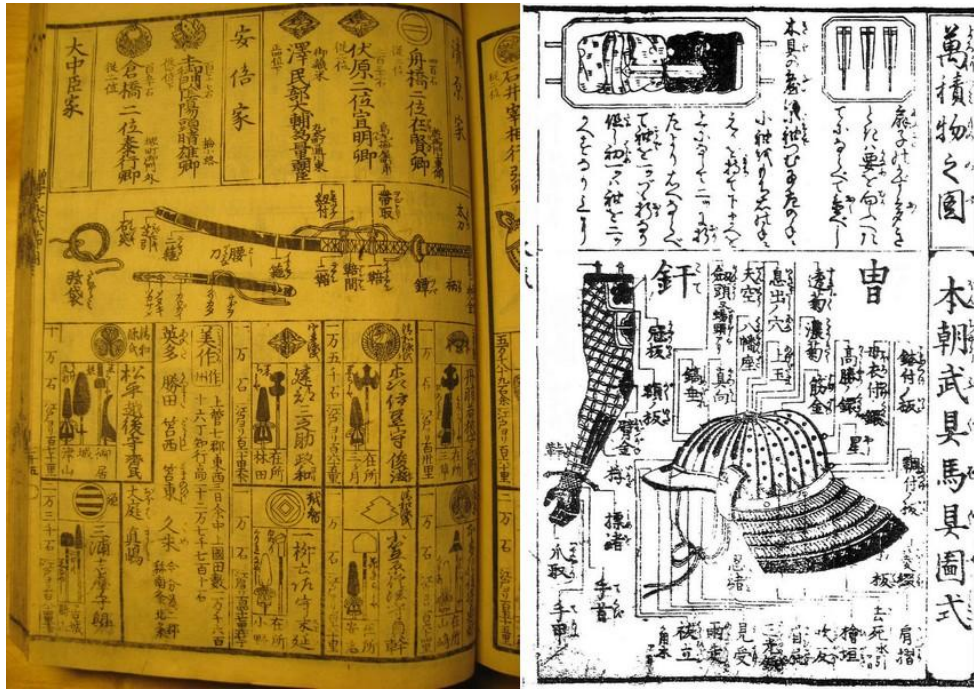
Fig. 2 *Left*: The middle row shows a Japanese sword with the names of the different parts. The bottom row shows one of the pages from the *bukan*. From *Eitai Setsuyō*. *Right*: A samurai helmet from *Taisei Musō Setsuyōshū* (1821)

There is also practical information on things important in daily life, such as for instance how to use the abacus, rules and tactics for the games of *go* 碁 and *shōgi* 将棋, chronological tables of yearly festivities, and how to calculate using the multiplication table. Information on different arts such as the art of *nō* 能, the tea ceremony, the various forms of poetry, the Ogasawara School of etiquette, and flower arrangement are also important to include.

In the back of most *setsuyōshū*, after the dictionary part, there is another encyclopedic part. Many of these pages refer to different beliefs that come from the Yin Yang School, also called *onmyōdō*. It would be wrong, however, to call this part of the book for "the *onmyōdō* part" or anything similar, because there is also other information stored here, and *onmyōdō* beliefs are also prominent in other parts of the book. These parts containing information on *onmyōdō* beliefs are for instance: information on how to keep yin and yang in balance in connection with childbirth and pregnancy; man and woman compatibility charts using the first character of their name; information on things usually written in the calendar; how to tell people's fortune by analyzing signatures or read palms; and information on how the various heavenly gods move across the sky over time. This kind of information was also published in a genre by itself, namely the *ōzassho* 大雑書. *Ōzassho* will be referred to later in this thesis,

so they deserve some introduction. The first *ōzassho* were published around the early 1630s and much like *setsuyōshū*, the *ōzassho* grew bigger in content over time.[124] And to be brief, it can be said that the contents were more or less the same kind as we find in the "yin-yang parts" of the *setsuyōshū*, only that the articles were longer, more numerous and focused exclusively on supernatural matters.

The different entries mentioned in this brief introduction by no means cover all of the information stored in a typical *setsuyōshū;* this is but a small sample, but it felt necessary to give a glimpse into the depth and variety of what is usually included.

---

[124] Toshio Yokoyama, "On the Civilising Role of Ozassho, the Household Encyclopedia for Divining in Premodern Japan," *Zinbun* 37(2005)., p. 131

Chapter 4: *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō*

4.1 General overview

As mentioned earlier, the *Eitai setsuyō* was among the most popular of all the different *setsuyōshū*. It was first published in the third year of Kan'en (1750) and edited by Kawabe Sōyō 河辺桑揚. This underwent several revisions before it was enlarged in Tenpō 2 (1831) by Hori Genpo 堀原甫 and Hori Gennyūsai 堀源入斎. This was again reissued twice, first in Kaei 2 (1849) and then in Bunkyū 4 (1864).[125]

The edition we have at the University of Oslo Library is the one from 1849 and was most likely brought here by Adolf Mauritz Fonahn (1873-1940) who travelled to China and Japan in the winter of 1917-1918.[126] Unfortunately we do not know anything about the original owner of this book. This library copy is bound in three volumes, a change that was probably done after release, since most *Eitai Setsuyō* came bound in only one volume. This means that the original cover is also lost, leaving out the possibility of finding any additional information on the sleeves.

The first volume contains only encyclopedic information and is 227 pages long. The second volume contains the first half of the dictionary with a row of encyclopedic information on top and is 300 pages long. The last volume continues the dictionary and top-row encyclopedia before it ends with 40 more pages of encyclopedic information, totaling 343 pages. This makes the total of pages in this version of the *Eitai Setsuyō* 870 pages.

4.2 A brief note on Yokoyama Toshio's study of usage

Before going deeper into the material of the *Eitai Setsuyō*, a short presentation of Yokoyama Toshio's studies seems in its place. Perhaps the biggest contribution to the study of *setsuyōshū* made by Yokoyama is his study of how the *Eitai Setsuyō* was used. Yokoyama has studied the wear and tear of 64 different editions of the *Eitai Setsuyō* found in 14 different prefectures, a number that can appear both large and small according to your point of view.

---

[125] _____, "The Illustrated Household Encyclopedias that Once Civilized Japan.", p. 48-50
[126] Thanks to Naomi Yabe Magnussen, subject specialist in Japanese at the University Library of Oslo for this information.

The method he used to unveil the usages of these books can be summarized as follows. On the bottom of each copy, on the bottom edges of the pages, faint marks of dirt would accumulate little by little every time a page was consulted. After a while these marks would appear as dark lines on the bottom of the volume, making it possible to actually see which parts of the book were consulted most frequently. To study these patterns of wear and tear, Yokoyama together with a computer scientist, developed computer software to mathematically analyze digital pictures of the patterns. The analysis produced distribution graphs of the black lines, and according to the similarities and dissimilarities of these patterns from various copies of the book, patterns of usage were divided into nine groups. We will not discuss the method or the results at great length here, but suffice it to say that interest in secular civility, the chronological history of Japan and the Emperor, Buddhist sects and temples and matters concerning *onmyōdō* (the Yin Yang School) were prominent in most of the cases.

For the purpose of this thesis the most important finding in Yokoyama's work is not only his discoveries of usage, but also the fact that he has proven that the *Eitai Setsuyō* was widely spread both geographically and socially. In his own words:

> What strikes one most, as a whole, is that each category is not exclusive to any one occupation, geographical area or social status.[127]

This discovery becomes invaluable information when investigating the impact that the *Eitai Setsuyō* might have had on collective identity and the imagining of community in the early modern period.

4.3 Language as space

The importance of language for a community to be able to be imagined was briefly discussed in chapter 3.4, but I would like to discuss it further here. Although the edition of the *Eitai Setsuyō* that is the main focus of this thesis was published quite late in the early modern period, it is part of a 250-year old printing tradition that brought what Anderson calls a "new fixity to language".[128] The advent of print slowed down the process of change that languages inevitably go through. Moreover, and more important for this thesis, print-language became

---

[127] Yokoyama, "The Illustrated Household Encyclopedias that Once Civilized Japan.", p. 63
[128] Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.*, p. 44

an important tool for the imagining of community. Anderson examines Europe for his analysis, but the idea is applicable for Japan as well:

> [Print-languages] created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community.[129]

Furthermore, when we see how material is copied and reproduced within the *setsuyōshū* genre and also how the genre copies material from other genres to create a kind of collage, combined with the wideness of usage, it becomes even more likely that these books contributed to a fixity, or a degree of standardization, of language.

Utilizing wide definitions of space and mapping, it is possible to view language as a kind of abstract space. This space can in turn be mapped out, which the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other *setsuyōshū* do. First of all, the main purpose of the *setsuyōshū* is indeed to be a dictionary—a map of characters and vocabulary. Dictionary *setsuyōshū* had of course circulated since the Muromachi period (1336-1573), but as repeated frequently throughout this thesis it was not until the early modern period that such information spread to a large audience. From the dissemination of *setsuyōshū* throughout the country, people from all walks of life got access to a more or less standardized written language; everyone could turn to the *setsuyōshū* and find the "correct" way(s) of reading and writing characters, both in their native reading and Chinese reading.

The set of *hiragana* used today were not standardized until 1900 in the Elementary School Order (*shōgakkōrei* 小学校令).[130] The texts throughout the *Eitai Setsuyō* are therefore written using a variety of different *hiragana* for each syllable. However, there is an indication that ideas of standardization had already begun to take form much earlier in the early modern

---

[129] Ibid., p. 44

[130] Bjarke Frellesvig, *A History of the Japanese Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)., p. 160

period. On the last page of the first encyclopedic part there is a chart containing all the *hiragana* that are in use today ordered in the *iroha*-order. The same set of *hiragana* can be seen in many other *setsuyōshū* as well, such as for instance the *Bunkan setsuyō tsūhōzō* 文翰 節用通宝蔵 showing us that this "standardization" can be seen at least as early as 1770.[131]

The usage of language is relatively uniform throughout the *Eitai Setsuyō,* with the vast majority of text being written in a mix of Chinese characters and kana. There are also several instances of text written in *kanbun*, but these occurrences are insubstantial compared to the usage of Japanese. This shows a clear favoritism towards the Japanese language over Chinese, but at the same time tells u s that there is little or no animosity from the author towards the Chinese language. The author also in some places shows an inclination towards using *kun*-reading or *yamato kotoba* 大和言葉 (indigenous reading of words) instead of the "normal" reading of the word. This is especially used in parts discussing Japan, such as for instance reading the word for Japan 日本 as *Ōhi no moto* instead of *Nihon* or *Nippon*. This gives the impression that these words are in a sense different, and more "Japanese". As a side note here, all characters in the dictionary part is listed with both *kun*-reading (Japanese) as well as *on*-reading (Chinese).

Throughout the *Eitai setsuyō*—and other *setsuyōshū* as well—there can also be seen a general trend in having keen interest in the etymology of words. It is also typical to list several words that refer to the same thing—such as the many names of Japan, Mount Fuji or the seasons and months—and using different characters to write the same words, such as for instance for, again, Mount Fuji. Such occurrences is not limited to *setsuyōshū*, of course, and as an extreme example, ten different writings of the word *sasayaku,* which means to whisper, have been discovered in Ihara Saikaku's work.[132] This enthusiasm for words and their etymology reflects the idea that words and characters are intimately connected with reality; words are more than *just* words.

This perspective on language can be seen other places in the *setsuyōshū* as well, where a more specific magical or sacred reality of words and characters is emphasized. Here is an example taken from the book to illustrate:

---

[131] I have not conducted any thorough investigation into this matter and have only looked through *setsuyōshū* readily available to me when writing about this. It is therefore quite possible that this can be seen much earlier as well.
[132] Christopher Seeley, *A history of writing in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2000)., p. 132

When hiring a young servant and the person is for instance born in a water year, you should then give the person a name with a metal character first, then followed by a water character. This should be done because metal gives birth to water, and modeling the name in this manner assures a good relationship.

This brief explanation is followed by an extensive list of different characters where they are coupled with one of the five elements (*gogyō* 五行); wood, fire, water, earth or metal. This system of thought was imported from China and is in Japan often referred to as *Onmyōdō* 陰陽道, and is a recurring theme in *setsuyōshū* that will be discussed again later. This tells us that language is regarded as something much more than merely a tool for communication; it has metaphysical and religious meaning with the power to affect human relationships within the community. The text above indicates that it is intended for people of higher social standing who had the opportunity to take servants, which the majority of *setsuyōshū* readers probably did not. This represents a growing tendency in early modern Japan where commoners started showing a strong fascination and interest in culture traditionally belonging to samurai and court nobility, something that will also be discussed further later in this thesis.

The system is, however, applicable in other ways as well, and the choosing of auspicious characters is used in a variety of different occasions. This can for instance be seen in another list directly following the list already discussed. In this other list you can find instructions on how to predict the fortune of a future relationship between a man and a woman according to the first character in each person's name, also based on the elemental attributes of the characters. According to Yokoyama Toshio's study of usage, the pages containing this kind of information shows strong signs of wear and tear in many of the editions he studied, so this kind of information must have been important to many people in most of the layers in society.

One last aspect of language in the *Eitai Setsuyō* that will be discussed here is respect in language. In Japanese language there are several ways of showing respect through various devices, such as for instance putting the word *go, o,* or *mi* (all written with the character 御) in front of another word. Another way that can be seen in certain parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō* is to put a blank space right in front of the word that is shown respect. This is seen in the book several times, and all of them occur in front of words that are referring to Japan as "Empire"

(*mikuni* 皇国)[133], one of the emperors or Amaterasu. This illustrates a reverence for the emperor that also became more and more popularized throughout the early modern period. In contrast, this kind of demonstration of respect through the language is not used when dealing with the Shogun or any other person from the warrior class. As we will see later, this is but one of the instances where reverence for the emperor as true ruler of Japan shines through.

4.4 Mapping the cosmos

Fig. 3 Text from the *Eitai Setsuyō* concerning man's place in the cosmos.

At the beginning of the *Eitai Setsuyō*, preceded only by the preface, we find two pages with text surrounded by a decorative border showing images of four gods. These pages tell us about the cosmos and the position of mankind within it, fitting it into Yokoyama's first category of man's orientation in the world. This is a very fine example of how the *Eitai Setsuyō* contributes to the construction of an identity by delineating space. The book starts out with first giving the reader a sense of place in the universe, because despite being Japanese he still shares the same universe as all other men and women. In the following pages after this universalistic viewpoint, the *Eitai Setsuyō*, as we will see later, gives the reader a sense of

---

[133]To emphasize the connotations of emperor worship I have chosen to translate this as "Empire" where the word occurs.

place on a smaller and smaller scale. Here, it first shows mankind as one big community in the universe, then next where the Japanese belong in the world as a smaller community within the community of mankind, before moving further down the scale and shows the reader a more detailed map of Japan and at last its major cities. Following is the full translation of the first two pages regarding universal community, followed by comments and analysis:

The Heaven is yang. It is positioned above us and it covers everything. It is the virtue of the father. The Earth is yin. It is positioned below us and everything is on top of it. It is the way of the mother. Furthermore, yin and yang intertwine and give birth to the five elements. The essence circulates in Heaven and conducts the four seasons. The form covers Earth and gives birth to the human as well as birds, beasts, fish, insects, grass and trees. Therefore we call Heaven and Earth the Great Father and Mother. Because the human is born from this great essence of the five elements, it is said to be the spirit of all things. Therefore it is said that abiding by the Heavenly Father and the Earthly Mother is an act of filial piety. Obeying the Sun Emperor and the Moon Empress is said to be loyalty. Truly because man derives his nature from Heaven and Earth, there is no thing within Heaven and Earth that is not also within man. Because Heaven is round, the head of man is also round. Because Heaven has the sun and the moon, man has two eyes. In heaven there are constellations, in man there are teeth and nails. In Heaven there are wind and rain, in man there are happiness and anger. In Heaven there is thunder, in man there is voice. In Heaven there are both yin and yang, so in man there are both man and woman. In Heaven there are four seasons, so man has four limbs. In Heaven there are fire and cold, so in man there are fever and cold. In Heaven there are day and night, so man rises and goes to bed. In Heaven there is the pentatonic scale, so in man there are the five viscera. In Heaven there is the (Chinese) chromatic scale[134], so in man there are the six internal organs. In Heaven there are the ten calendar signs, man has ten fingers. In Heaven there are the twelve zodiac signs, so in man there is the ten toes of the feet and the penis and the scrotum. Since the woman does not have this [penis and scrotum], it is the placenta and the uterus [instead]. Because there are twelve months in a year, man has twelve large joints. Since there are 360 days in a year, man has 360 bones. Or, because of the shape of Earth, man is shaped with legs. Because there are twelve rivers on Earth, man has

---

[134] 六律. Usually a scale with twelve tones, but sometimes referred to as six as here.

twelve veins. Like Earth has tall mountains, man has shoulders and knees. Earth has underground rivers, man has streams of life energy and blood. On earth there is grass and trees, man has hair and muscles. The Earth has sand and small stones, man has bones and meat. Other than that, of all the things between Heaven and Earth, there is nothing that can be said to not also be in man. Also when talking about Mt.Sumeru, which is explained in Buddhist sutras, representations of its parts are all contained within the body. Just like at the top of Mt. Sumeru there is *Tōriten*, man has his skull. Mt. Sumerus Round Tree of Growth is the hair that grows on the round head of man. *Taishaku*, or his castle, is the eyebrows of man. This is the origin of the expression "Opening the eyebrow of happiness".[135] The Hall of the Fine Dharma is the Buddha mind inside all humans. In the four heavenly directions of Mt. Sumeru, the Four Heavenly Kings, *Jikoku*, *Zōjō*, *Kōmoku* and *Tamon* reside. Firstly, *Kōmoku* is the two eyes. *Tamon* is the ears. *Zōjō* is the nose. The mouth is a country in itself because it eats all the food, so therefore it is *Jikoku*. The nine mountains of Sumeru are the nine parts of the body: the shoulders, the elbows, the breasts, the stomach, the genitals, the knees, the back, the hip and the buttocks. The Eight Seas is the flow of the eight consciousnesses of the mind. The four continents are the four limbs. Moreover, the Poem of Sumeru says that the north is yellow, it points to the color of the night of *Kōkoku*. Like it says that the east is white, it points to the glowing color of the dawn in the east. Like it says that the south is blue, it points to the bright and blue sky of noon. Like it talks of the deep red of the west, it points to the red shadow of the setting sun. This is just like the day and night of this world. Sumeru is the sun; it rises in the Eastern Mountain, sets in the Western Mountain and is resurrected again in the east at daybreak. Also man is born in the yang of the east and dies in the yin of the west, and slowly returns to the east where he is resurrected. Upon seeing this, people are in awe of the preciousness of this and have to study the Way of Heaven and follow the Truth of Earth.

It is impossible to determine the importance of these two pages through Toshio's technique of analyzing the wear and tear of the pages. His technique is brilliant for detecting pages containing difficult to remember information that needed to be consulted over and over again, but that does not necessarily mean that the pages not showing strong signs of wear and

---

[135]喜びの眉をひらく

tear were not important to the reader. In other words, these pages do not contain any information you would need to consult in order to perform certain tasks in daily life, such as for instance finding auspicious days for activities or kanji for names as discussed in the previous chapter. It is quite possible that these pages were read by readers only once, and then never looked at again. Looking back on what was said to be important parts of community earlier, with religious beliefs or superstitions being an integral part, pages such as these must certainly have helped in the imagining of community or helped maintaining the imagined community. This text is also a good starting point for understanding the rest of the book, because it illustrates the sacredness of the world, all the way from a cosmic scale all the way down to humanity itself. As will become clear throughout the thesis, one of the things the *Eitai Setsuyō* does is imagining the world as sacred space.

When reading the text, we can discern three different types of "maps". First cosmological space is mapped out, telling us how the universe is built up and structured. Second, social space is mapped out, showing the relationship between parent and child and also encouraging reverence for the Emperor. And then at last, the human body is mapped out. These maps are somewhat interconnected, however, which is also one of the key points of the text; man as micro cosmos and the universe as macro cosmos, everything is connected. The "cosmological map" is the one connecting it all together, giving cosmic meaning to the existence and shape of man and cosmologically legitimizing filial piety and loyalty to the Emperor.

One of the interesting things about this text is how comfortably it refers to different religious doctrines. First there are the Daoist or *onmyōdō* concepts of yin and yang and the five elements (*inyō-gogyō* 陰陽五行). Then there are the Confucian concepts of filial piety and loyalty. And at last we have the Buddhist cosmological thought in the idea of Mt. Sumeru. Shinto, however, is conspicuous by its absence. The reason for this is that this text might be a translation of a Chinese text. I believe this is the case because of reference to terms from Chinese medicine and Chinese proverbs which do not seem to have been in widespread use in Japan.

As mentioned above, the first thing that meets us in this text is the five elements philosophy. This way of thought has had a tremendous impact on different aspects of Japanese culture, such as for instance the tea ceremony, gardening and traditional theatre.[136] It

---

[136] For more information on this see for instance Yuko Yoshino, *Inyō gogyō to nihon no bunka: uchū no hōsoku de himerareta nazo wo toku* (Tokyo: Daiwa shobō, 2003). And Wai-ming Ng, *The I ching in Tokugawa thought and culture* (Honolulu, HI: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).

is also commonplace in many different sections of *setsuyōshū*. It was discussed briefly above and will also be discussed again later. Yokoyama quotes this passage about illness from the *Edo Ōsetsuyō Kaidaigura*, another popular *setsuyōshū*:

> A person is ill. To find out how serious the illness is first ask the patient's age and then the day and month of the onset of the illness. For example, let us assume the person is forty-seven years old, and became ill on the ninth day of the third month. To compute this case, you first enter 47 on the abacus, adding 9 and 3 to it. Take the total, 59, and multiply it by 3 arriving at 177. Divide this figure by 9, and the remainder of 6 in the answer tells you that the illness is a serious one. When 3 is the remainder, the illness is mild, but if 9 is the remainder, the illness is critical and difficult to cure.[137]

He continues telling us that the text gives no explanation for making a diagnosis based on this arithmetic method, but it is in all likelihood due to the qualities of yin and yang and the five elements which are assigned to each number. This shows us just how deeply this system of thought runs. In the translated text we see that yin and yang are the "mother and father" of all things, in other words they are the basic building blocks of the universe. Yin and yang are further divided into the five elements, which among other things run the cycle of the seasonal year.

In yin and yang thought, yin is often identified with the mother and yang with the father. This makes the leap in connecting it with Confucianism very short. The translated text does not go further than stating that abiding by Heaven and Earth is an act of filial piety, and that obeying the Sun Emperor and the Moon Empress is an act of loyalty, but this is an excellent example of the diffuse borders between different doctrines. We also see that they manage to include loyalty to the empire, confirming the authenticity of the emperor in cosmological terms.

The majority of the second page refers to the mountain Sumeru 須弥山 and relates it to man's position in the universe. Belief in Mt. Sumeru has its origin in ancient Indian religion and was transmitted to Japan through Buddhism. I have not encountered depictions of Mt. Sumeru in any of the other *setsuyōshū* I have looked through, but I have found illustrations of it in several *ōzassho*, and it seems to have been standard to include it together with an illustration of the great catfish believed to encircle Japan and cause earthquakes when

---

[137] Yokoyama, "Setsuyōshū and Japanese civilization.", p. 81

it moved.[138] The illustrations in the *ōzassho* are mostly just a map of the mountain and do not contain the comparison with man like in my translation. Interestingly though, most of them include the "Poem of Sumeru" referred to in the text:

北はきに　南はあをく　ひがししろ　西くれなゐに　そめいろの山[139]

Kita wa ki ni, minami wa aoku, higashi shiro, nishi kurenai, someiro no yama

North is yellow, south is blue, east is white, west is red, Mount Sumeru

The poem is actually a nice play with words. The word used for Sumeru is *someiro* 染め色 which means dying color. The same play on words is present also in the two last instances of the usage of the word for Sumeru in the *Eitai Setsuyō*, but was unfortunately lost in translation. In the *Eitai Setsuyō* there is actually a double wordplay. The character used for writing the syllable *so* in *someiro* 蘇命路 is the character for "resurrect" 蘇, which is also a major theme of the text. 命 means life and 路 means road, so *someiro* written with these characters then gives the meaning "The road of resurrecting life". This referral to the poem in the *setsuyōshū* illustrates the intricate intertextual relationship between different texts that was common in the early modern period.

According to Miyake Hitoshi, belief in this view of the universe was widely accepted in Japan, and that beliefs surrounding mountains around Japan with *Misen* and *Myōkō* in their names have their origin in belief in Mt. Sumeru. Buddhist temples also have *shumidan* 須弥檀, small models of Mt. Sumeru.[140] Essentially these kinds of mountains are seen as sacred and the *axis mundi,[141]* the center of the universe, a belief prominent also in other sections of the *Eitai Setsuyō*. Also, a digital copy of a work explaining Mt. Sumeru called *Shumisen no zukai* 須弥山の図解[142] made by Takai Ranzan 高井蘭山 (1762-1838) is available online from Waseda University and as an interesting sidenote, Takai Ranzan was actually a compiler of *setsuyōshū* himself.[143] That information on Mount Sumeru proliferated in various parts of the "information library" suggests that it was something that people found interesting and

---

[138] Kazutaka Unno, "Maps of Japan Used in Prayer Rites or as Charms," *Imago Mundi* 46(1994)., p. 68
[139] From *Ōzassho* (Edo: Eijudō, 1680), but can also be found in other *ōzassho*.
[140] Hitoshi Miyake, *Nihon no minzoku shûkyô* (Tôkyô: Kôdansha, 1994)., p. 259
[141] Eliade, *The sacred and the profane: the nature of religion*.
[142] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ni05/ni05_02533/index.html
[143] Michael Kinski, "Admonitions Regarding Food Consumption: Takai Ranzan's Shokuji kai – Introduction, Transcription and Translation. Part One," *Japonica Humboldtiana* 7(2003)., p. 123

important. Later in the *Eitai Setsuyō,* as we will see, Mount Fuji is compared to Mount Sumeru as well.
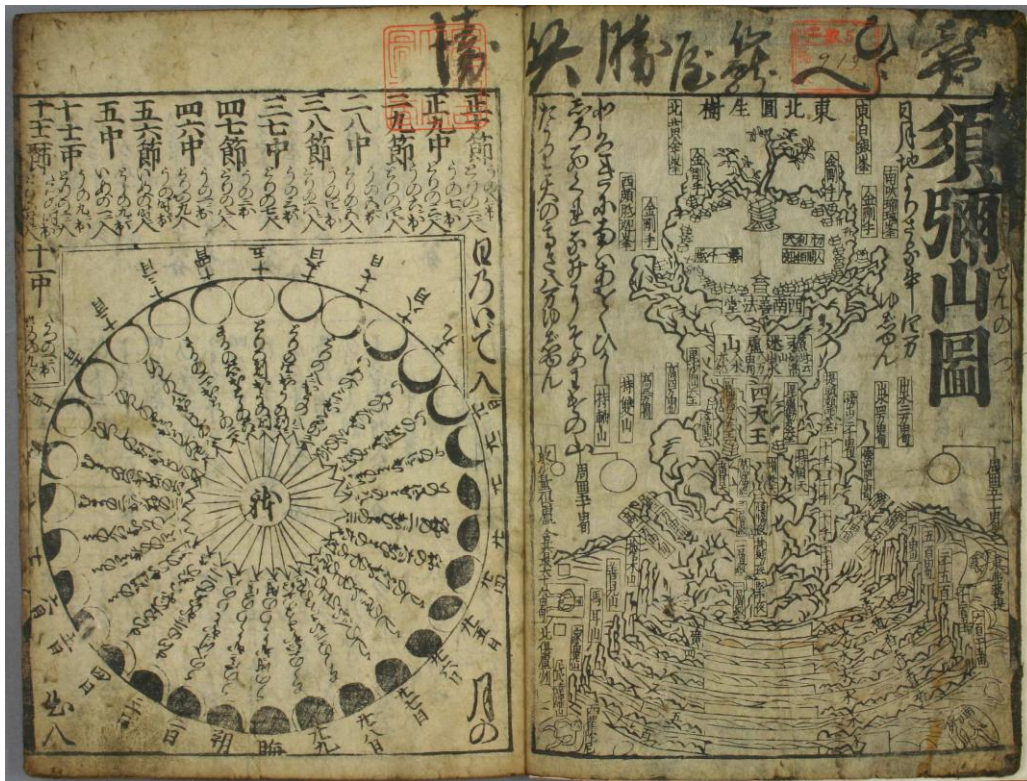
Fig. 4 From *Ōzassho (1680).* The right page shows an illustration of Mt. Sumeru.[144]

The illustrations in the *Eitai Setsuyō* do not show much of the shape and structure of Mt. Sumeru, as it does in the *ōzassho*. It only shows very small illustrations and gives the names of some of the mountain peaks and the continents surrounding the mountain. The main part of the illustration is of the Four Heavenly Kings, or *Shitennō* 四天王, also referred to in the text.

On the upper right of the first page we see *Kōmokuten* 廣目天 (Sanskrit: Virūpākṣa), holding a scroll in his left hand and a brush in his right. Below him we see *Jikokuten* 持國天 (Sanskrit: Dhṛtarāṣṭra), holding a *kongōsho* 金剛杵 (Sanskrit: Vajra) in his left hand above his head. On the upper left on the left-hand page, *Zōjōten* 増長天 (Sanskrit: Virūḍhaka) stands with a spear in his hands, and below him *Tamonten* 多聞天 (Sanskrit: Vaiśravaṇa) with a halberd in his right and a pagoda in his left hand.

---

[144] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ni05/ni05_00913/index.html

In Japan, the first three of these appear only in a set as the Four Heavenly Kings, and only *Tamonten*, more commonly referred to as *Bishamonten* 毘沙門天[145] is worshipped outside the group. Bishamonten is known for being one of the Seven Lucky Gods, or *shichi fukujin* 七福神, popular among people in the cities.[146] The *shichi fukujin* appear also towards the end of the *Eitai setsuyō*, illustrated with the seven of them in a boat and accompanying text. The text does not give much information and only this on Bishamonten: "Bishamonten is the lucky god that wards off evil spirits from Taishakuten." Nevertheless, the *Eitai Setsuyō* shows some degree of interest in many of the various gods, even though it does not seem to be very keen on detailed descriptions of them.

As mentioned earlier, the way in which the text refers to different religious doctrines is particularly interesting, and this is not the only part of the book where it can be seen. Already in the introduction we see the three doctrines of Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism mentioned together. (A translation of this passage is included below.) Here, however, Shinto has the superior role. Although the word "Shinto" is not actually used, the text refers to Japan as The Land of the Gods (*kami no mikuni* 神乃御国) and refers to the "two ways of Buddhism and Confucianism" only as supplementary to the gods.

A little bit further back in the book the three doctrines are again put together as a group of three. Each section is accompanied by colorful illustrations and the doctrines are explained briefly with text. To illustrate the dominance of Shinto over the two other doctrines, Shinto is awarded a double page for itself, while Confucianism and Buddhism have to share a double page.

Such presentation of the three doctrines helped establish the religious universe of the community where different doctrines could live side by side without excluding each other, while at the same time demonstrating the superior position of Shinto. Indirectly, but still rather openly, this also confirms the superior position of Japan since it is the land of the gods and that both Buddhism and Confucianism are imported from China. Interestingly, however, much of the religious information contained within the *Eitai Setsuyō* comes from none of these three doctrines, but from *onmyōdō*.

---

[145] Tetsuei Tsuda, "Tenbu to wa nani ka," in *Butsuson no jiten: sōdai naru bukkyō uchū no hotoke tachi*, ed. Shunichi Sekine (Tokyo: Gakken, 1997)., pp. 151-153

[146] Miyake, *Nihon no minzoku shûkyô*. 94

Fig. 5 The three doctrines of Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism shown side by side.

4.5 Maps as space

Even though a wide definition of mapping is adopted in this thesis and we look at many different things as "maps", there are invariably also several instances of what we normally refer to as maps within most *setsuyōshū*. Usually there is a map of Japan and of the three metropolises Kyoto, Osaka and Edo and sometimes also the world. The maps of the world and of Japan vary greatly in quality among different *setsuyōshū*, but the ones in the *Eitai Setsuyō* is of quite good quality and is also printed in color whereas in most other *setsuyōshū* they are printed in black and white.

As seen in Fig. 6, the map in the *Eitai Setsuyō* also spans three pages (actually you could say four, as the next page you see the edges of the Ryūkyū Islands and Chōsen, another name for Korea) as opposed to normally only two. A feature not present in the *Eitai Setsuyō* which can be seen in many other *setsuyōshū* is the surrounding border around the map of Japan in Fig. 7, showing representations of people of different nationalities.

58

Fig. 6 Map of Japan from the *Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō*
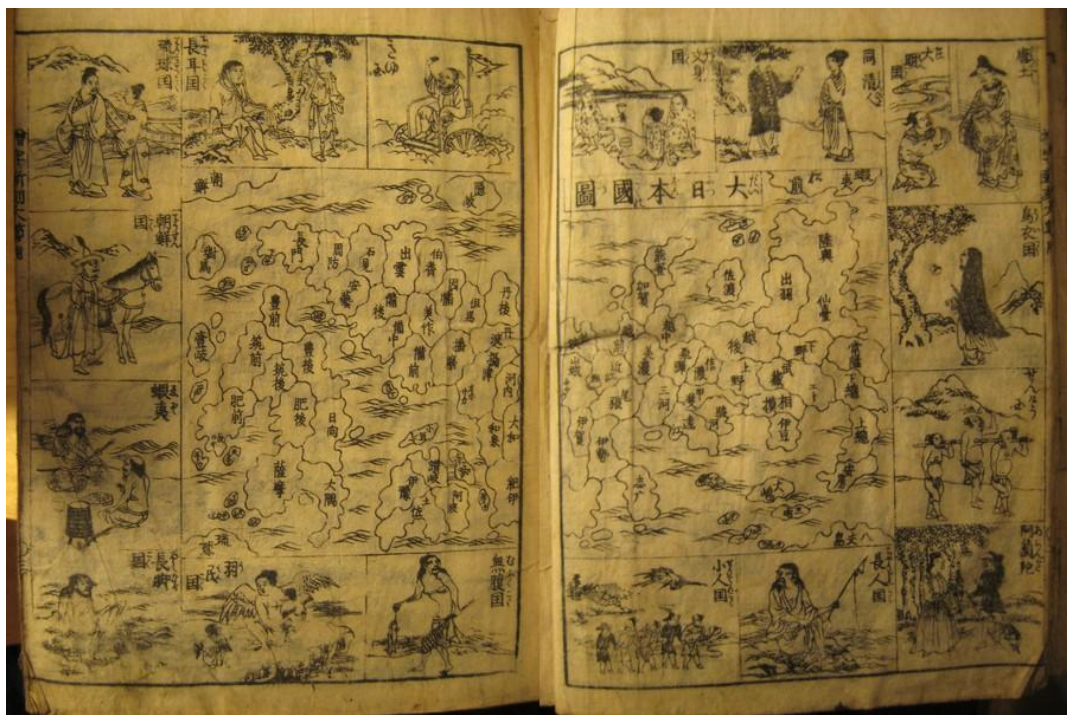
Fig. 7 Map of Japan from the *Tokai Setsuyō Hyakka Tsū*

The illustrations show representations of people from Holland, Ezo (Ainu), Chōsen (Korea), Ryūkyū (Okinawa) and China. But along with these representations of actual peoples, there are also representations of fantastic beings from fantasy lands, such as for instance the land of winged people, the land of people with long ears, the land of giants and the land of people with a hole through their torso. Of all the illustrations, the one with the people with a hole

through their torso is the most peculiar. (Fig. 7 on the far right, third from the top) We see two men, both with holes through their chests, carrying a third man who has a pole extended through the hole of his body. These figures, fantastic or not, clearly represents something foreign, or the non-Japanese. They are all surrounding the map of Dai-Nippon, and therefore act as "the other" or "the different" which is so important for defining your own identity, differentiating "us" from "them".[147]

In a similar vein the *Eitai Setsuyō* also refers to Japan as something different from other countries. On the page following the map of Japan in the *Eitai Setsuyō* there is a text discussing the origin of some of the various names for Japan, as well as facts on how the country is divided into different provinces. Following is the translation of the first lines of the text:

> Looking through the history of the country, Great Japan[148] has been referred to as for instance Toyoashi no Nakatsu Kuni, Mizuho no Kuni, Tamagaki no Uchitsu Kuni, Urayasu no Kuni, Kuwashihokotaru no Kuni, and Hotsuma Kuni. Because this Empire is ruled by the son (*miko no mikoto* 御子尊) of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami, it is said that the sacredness of this country exceeds that of all other countries.

As we can see from the text, the *Eitai Setsuyō* differentiates Japan from other nationalities, although it does not do so with illustrations similar to that above. We also see the notion of Japan as a divine country and that because of this divinity Japan is actually *superior* to other countries. Japan is referred to as a divine country in several instances in the book, and is mentioned as early as the introduction. Here is a translation of the first couple of sentences:

> This Great Japan[149] is The Land of the Gods, and is therefore a land based on sincerity. To supplement this, we also follow the two ways of Buddhism and Confucianism. Here [in Japan] the four social orders is stable, and they use the many hundreds of thousands letters in their functions through day and night.

---

[147] Jenkins, *Social Identity.*, p. 21
[148] The text uses the name *Ōhi no Moto* 大日本, Japanese reading of the characters. I have nevertheless chosen to use the denomination Japan in the translation, as it is the most familiar. For the rest of the different names referring to Japan, I have chosen to just use the romanized versions of the names as they appear in the text.
[149] Same as in the translated text above, this also uses the name *Ōhi no Moto*.

Here we also see the four social orders referred to, and this will be addressed in more detail later. The reason why the author mentions the "many hundreds of thousands letters" is to give a basis for why this book is useful and necessary. Both the texts that are translated above have a certain *kokugaku* feel to it, and it is not unlikely that the texts are influenced by that tradition.

Another interesting detail from the pages presenting the map over Japan is a small "compass" in the lower left corner of the last page. This circular diagram shows the distance to the various provinces measured from Kyoto. This is interesting because at the time the place that was used to measure distance from was usually Nihonbashi in Edo, the capital of the Shogun. In contrast, Kyoto was the capital of the Emperor. Most postwar scholars agrees that the emperors in early modern Japan were only impotent symbols of power, while the shogunate were the de facto rulers.[150] This, although true, tends to overshadow the influential power such a symbol must have had on the Japanese people. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi has demonstrated the prestige and significance that imperially bestowed names have had for Japanese people—commoners as well as warriors—and argues that this is one of the reasons for the fact that the imperial line did not merely disappear despite their lack of actual power.[151] He also observes that it was common for many intellectuals—and surely for commoners as well—to believe in the powerful spiritual and godly powers of the Emperor.[152] Reverence for the Emperor can be seen in many parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō*, such as in the chronological history of Japan discussed later. We also saw it in the translation in the previous subchapter where reverence for the Emperor was given cosmological legitimacy. The importance of the imperial court is also evident in one of the many names for Japan used throughout the book, namely *Honchō* 本朝 which literally means "the imperial court". All of these factors, including putting Kyoto as the center from where all other places in Japan are measured from, undoubtedly contributed to imagining a community where the Emperor was at the top ruling the divine country.

When moving on to the world map within the *Eitai Setsuyō*, it is interesting to see that Japan (and China) is positioned in the center of the map, illustrating the world view of Japan as the center of the world. This seems to have been common for most maps before the Meiji

---

[150] Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "In Name Only: Imperial Sovereignty in Early Modern Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991)., p. 27
[151] Ibid., p. 30
[152] Ibid., p. 29

restoration,[153] and represents the Confucian idea of the Middle Kingdom (*Chūgoku* 中国). In the early modern period the words *Chūgoku* or *Chūka* 中華 did not necessarily mean China as they do today, but were rather honorific expressions aimed at the world center which was inherently more civilized than other parts of the world.[154] The further removed from this center you were, the more barbarian. Early in the early modern period Ming dynasty China was revered by the Japanese as this civilized Middle Kingdom, but later in the period Japanese thinkers began to believe that Japan had surpassed China as a civilization and thus had become the new Middle Kingdom.[155] To be fair though, China is placed more in the center than Japan in this particular map. However, the name used for China is *Shina* 支那; not *Chūgoku*. This might be a reflection of the fact that many Japanese thinkers in the early modern period felt that by referring to China as *Chūgoku* would demean their own nation.[156]

Many of the different names used in referring to Japan were of course nothing new, as was the idea of some kind of entity called "Japan". The imperial family had since the mid-seventh century or earlier claimed authority over all of Japan. However, at this time there was no clear definition of what "Japan" was.[157] Moreover, the idea of "Japan" was something that was restricted both geographically and socially and was more or less limited to the imperial elite in Kyoto and to the shogunate. This becomes significantly different in the age of the *Eitai Setsuyō*, however, when it and other books like it spread to a much larger audience in both social and geographical terms. In other words, the idea of Japan as one big (imagined) community shared by everyone living there, as well as the idea of Japan as a divine country, becomes an idea of the public first in the early modern period, with good help from books like the *Eitai Setsuyō* and the effectiveness of the information networks that made information spread to the far reaches of the country.

In addition to maps of the world and Japan, maps of the three metropolises Edo, Kyoto and Osaka are also included. The first map we encounter is of Edo, which is a fairly rough map compared to the other city maps and to other maps of Edo which circulated in the early modern period. Next up is Kyoto (*Heianjō* 平安城), first with a detailed map of the city then

---

[153] The University of California, Berkley has a nice collection of Japanese historical maps stored online, with many different types of maps: http://luna.davidrumsey.com:8380/luna/servlet

[154] Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-foreignism and western learning in early modern Japan: the new theses of 1825*, vol. 126, Harvard East Asian monographs (Cambridge, Mass.: The University, 1986)., p. 17

[155] Ibid., p. 51

[156] Ibid., p. 17

[157] Howell, "Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan.", p.112

another rougher map of the city's outskirts. And last, a fairly detailed map of Osaka is presented.

When looking at the order in which these cities are presented in the book might tempt us to view this as some kind of hierarchy representing Edo as the most important of the three cities because it appears first. As we of course know, Edo did indeed become more and more important throughout the early modern period. On the other hand, it might also be tempting to jump to the conclusion that Kyoto is represented as the most important because of the higher degree of attention it gets in the maps, with two maps contrasting the one of Edo. I would, however, propose another reason for this particular order. In between the pages that show the maps of Edo and Kyoto there are six pages mapping out the entire Tōkaidō road while giving some, although severely condensed, information on some of the stations and famous places one would encounter on the road. Between the names of each station, information is written on how far it is from it to the next one. Between Kyoto and Osaka there is no such roadmap, but a panoramic view over the Yodogawa River with the names of some places of interest plotted out throughout the illustration. The presentation of the material in this manner suggests that it is intentionally structured as a journey, where you would travel from Edo to Kyoto along the Tōkaidō road, and enjoy the view of Yodogawa River when approaching Osaka. This makes it possible for the reader to take a virtual travel from Edo to Osaka via Kyoto without ever leaving one's village or home. This is significant because it made it possible for people at the time that could not afford to travel or for some other reason did not have the opportunity to leave their homes to take part in the growing trend of traveling. The experience would of course not be as powerful as if they actually went out to travel; they would not smell the different smells of other places, taste the various foods, or talk to people from other parts of the country. However, their "virtual travel" experience should not be underestimated either. There can be no doubt that representations such as these gave the readers a sense of place and geographical identity, and that the "national" framework in which they were presented contributed to the imagining of community. This also applies for the various famous places that are presented in the *Eitai Setsuyō*, the topic of the next segment.
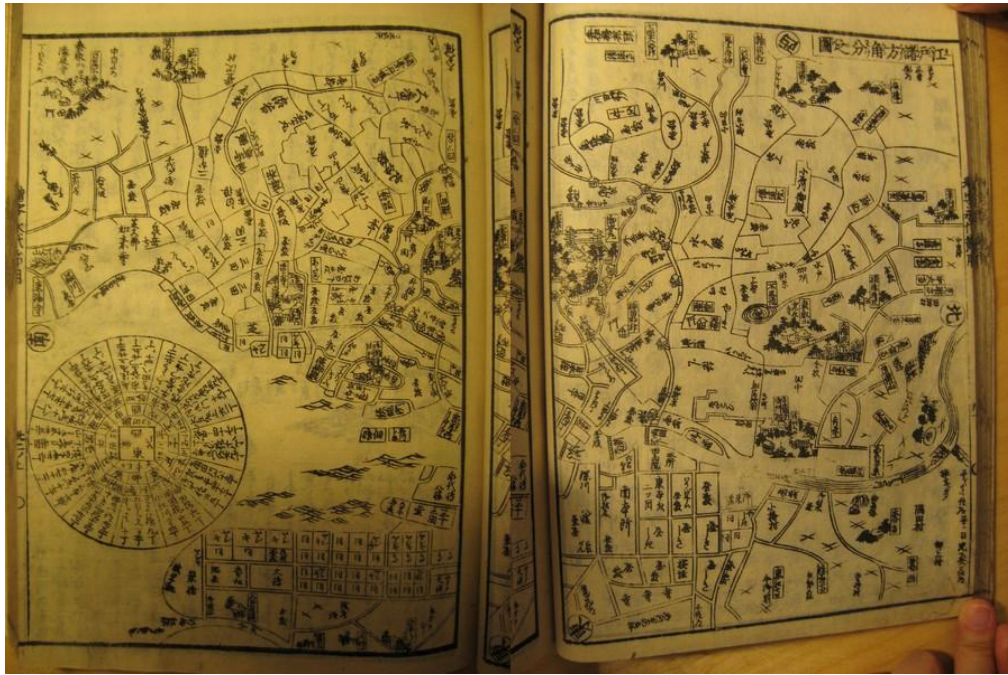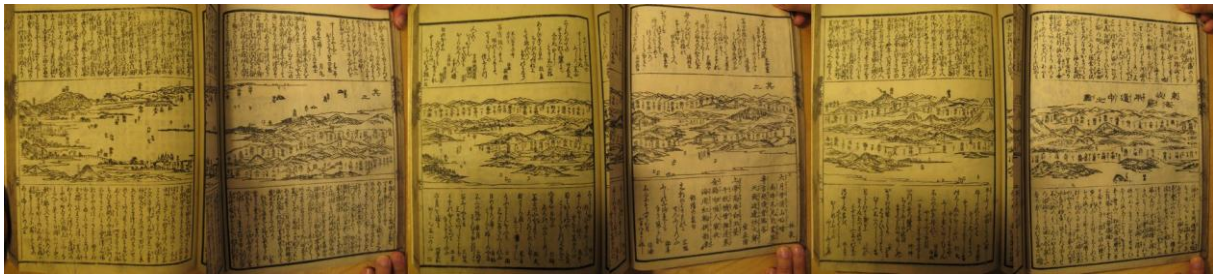
Fig. 8 Map of Edo

Fig. 9 Map of the Tōkaidō road. Read from right to left.
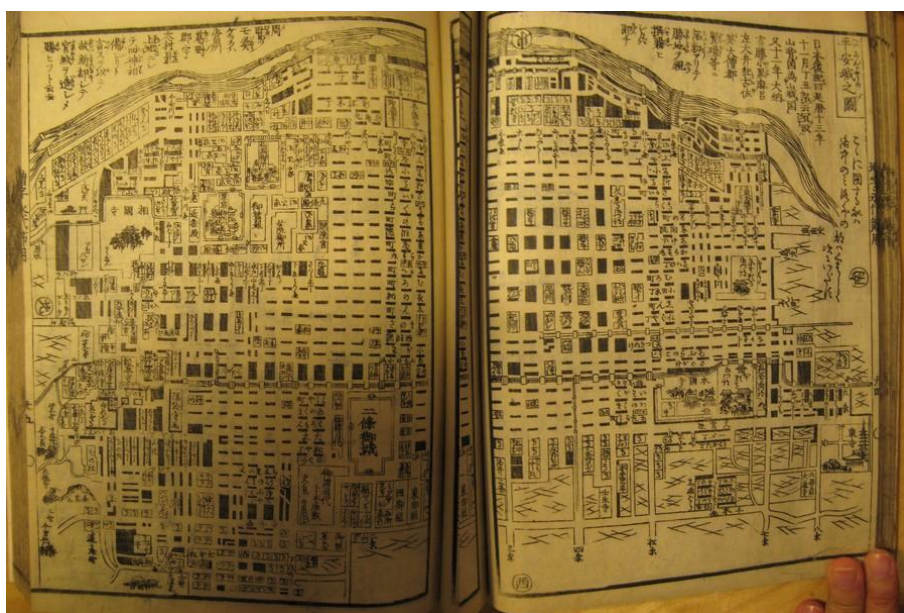
Fig. 10 Map of Osaka

4.6 Famous places as space

Along with maps, parts with illustrations and information on famous places were also prominent in most, if not all, *setsuyōshū*. For simplicity, famous places can be divided into two categories: scenic nature sites such as for instance mountains, rivers and seascapes; and religious sites such as temples and shrines. These two categories are often presented within a larger category of famous pilgrimage routes or roads such as for instance the Tōkaidō road. The two categories are not mutually exclusive, however, as religious sites are often located at scenic nature sites.

The first famous place we encounter is (I would like to say "of course") Mount Fuji. Title says *Fuji-san fumoto meisho no zu* 不盡山名所の圖, which translates into:"Illustration of the famous foot of the everlasting Mount Fuji". The name of the mountain is written here with different characters than the ones we are familiar with today. The characters 不盡 (*fujin*) means "everlasting" or "inexhaustible". Moreover, 盡 is a more complicated way for writing 尽, which interestingly is also a part of the title of the book (*Eitai setsuyō mujinzō* 永代節用 無尽蔵). Information and illustrations of Mt. Fuji spans over three page-spreads. The first double page shows a scenic view of the mountain with labels denoting various places of interest in its surroundings.

Fig. 11 Scenic view of Mount Fuji

The next page-spread show a more detailed map of the mountain itself and the various roads, shrines, streams and so forth. The third and last double page shows smaller illustrations of different views of the mountain from various famous places such as for instance Hakone and Numazu. The majority of the text accompanying the illustrations gives information on the many different names and characters for the mountain and speculates on their etymological origin. It also gives geographical information about various other mountain tops surrounding Fuji, how far is it to the summit, and so forth.

There are particularly two passages that I find quite interesting within the text. The first one states that the summit of Mt. Fuji can be seen from 15 provinces (*shū* 州) within "our country". (*waga kuni* 吾国) First of all, this way of denominating the country illustrates some degree of national consciousness, or at least of a sense of community spanning over a large geographical area. More importantly, it shows explicitly how smaller things are "parsed within [the] unifying frame" of Japan as a "singular national space"[158] as discussed in chapter 3.4. Moreover, this notion of Fuji being visible from so many parts of the country gives off the impression that the mountain is positioned in the center of the country.
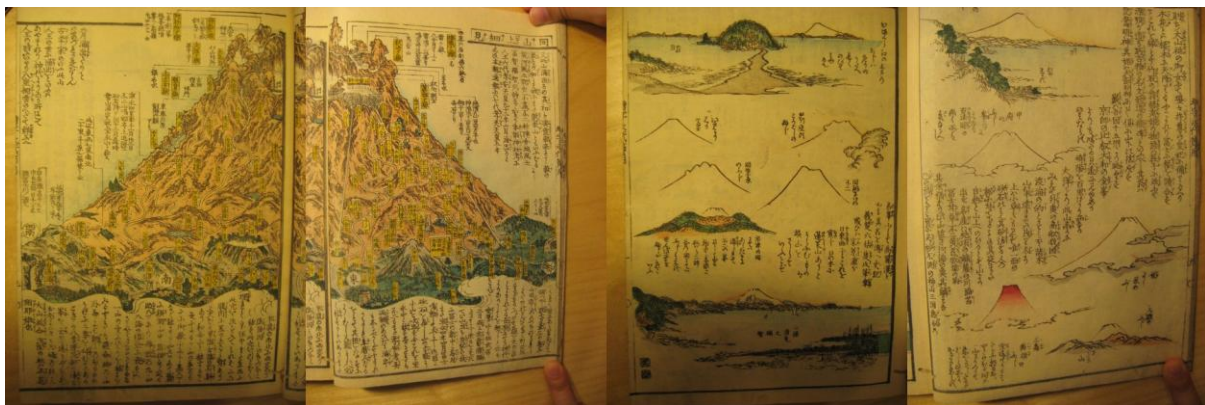
Fig. 12 Left: Detailed map of Mt. Fuji. Right: Different views of Mt. Fuji

This idea of centrality becomes even more evident in another interesting passage from the text, where Mt. Fuji is compared to Mt. Sumeru. This comparison is made possible because, according to the text, there are nine smaller mountains and eight lakes surrounding Mount Fuji. This is paralleled with the nine mountains and eight oceans of Mount Sumeru. We are further reminded that Mt. Sumeru is the mountain that the sun and the moon circle around, and that the mountain regulates night and day. Thus, the text is indirectly, but also

---

[158] Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period.*, pp. 22-23

rather obviously, making the suggestion that Mt. Fuji as well can be seen as the mountain that the sun and the moon revolve around. In other words it can be seen as the *axis mundi.*

Other mountains are presented in the *Eitai Setsuyō* as well, most notably Mount Yoshino. Text and color illustrations are spread over two double-page spreads under the title "Illustration of a view of the 10.000 cherry blossoms at Mount Yoshino." The text starts with the typical listing of various other names for the mountain, such as for instance Kimpusen 金峰山, but also includes an interesting part about the mountain flying in from India. Grapard notes that according to legend this is something that allegedly happened at the same time as the introduction of Buddhism to Japan and thus serves for a metaphor for this introduction. He also observes that it not only Kimpusen (or Yoshino) that came flying from India to Japan, but Kumano as well.[159] The text also makes Mount Yoshino, together with Mount Fuji, into a sacred "national" symbol:

> Japan has many famous places, but as the Chinese *Gitsurokujū*[160] 義楚六帖 says, the sacred mountains of Fuji and Yoshino is something to be particularly envious of. This is because other countries do not have cherry blossoms; while in our Empire (*mikuni* 皇国) the cherry blossoms are growing.

It is interesting to see that the word *mikuni* is chosen here as well, emphasizing that Japan is the country of the Emperor.

Another sacred mountain that is given attention in the *Eitai Setsuyō* is Mount Hie 比叡山. In the section dealing with this mountain, a double page with an illustration of the temple complex on the mountain, there is especially one passage that is of particular interest. The passage can be translated as follows:

> This mountain is towering high above the Imperial Palace in the *ushitora* 艮 direction (north-east), blocking the Demon Gate (*kimon* 鬼門) and therefore protecting the country (*kokka* 国家).

---

[159] Grapard, "Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions.", p. 218
[160] Text about the Chinese daoist Xu Fu who supposedly travelled to Japan in search for the elixir of life.

The *kimon* and *ushitora* mentioned here are both from *onmyōdō* thought and it was believed that the north-east direction was especially dangerous and that demons entered and left this world in that direction. Therefore, the Hie temple complex was constructed here to ward off evil spirits. This was done late in the eighth century when the capital was moved to ancient Kyoto in 794 to ward off evil spirits coming from the north-east. This is of course far removed from the early modern period, but it is clear that the Tokugawa rulers were also worried about the *kimon* problem, because they built the Kanei temple 寛永時 in Ueno to protect Edo from evil spirits.[161] Text dealing with *kimon* appear later in the *Eitai Setsuyō* as well, together with the list of directional gods discussed later.

The most interesting part of the passage is not the information on *kimon* itself, but that by protecting the Imperial Palace the entire "nation" is protected. The word used for "country" or "nation" here is *kokka*, which could take on different meanings in different contexts in early modern Japan. It could refer to a specific domain, or it could refer to the entire Japan or jurisdiction of the shogunate.[162] In this particular case it does not seem to refer to any specific domain so it must therefore be a reference to the entire country. This means that by protecting the Emperor the country is protected as well, effectively elevating the Emperor to a "national" symbol. Hie, then, also becomes a "national" symbol because it actually protects the entire country.

Although it is quite clear that mountains receive the highest reverence, there are also many other famous places presented in the *Eitai Setsuyō*. Most of these places do not get much attention in terms of text apart from having a poem or two attached to the illustrations. These representations of famous places are too numerous to mention all of them, but among them are such sites as for instance the Three Shrines of Japan (*mikuni sansha no uchi* 皇国三社之内), Nikkō, Ōyama, Takano, and Japan's Three Famous Sights (*nihon sankei* 日本三景). Because of the indications of reverence for the Emperor seen many other places in the book, I was curious to see if such an ideology could be discerned in these sections, more specifically in the usage of Ise as a symbol for the Emperor and Nikkō as a symbol for the Shogun. As noted by Herman Ooms, the Tokugawa shogunate tried to rearrange ideological space in the early modern period:

---

[161] Mitsuo Ōtani, *Kyūreki de yomitoku nihon no narawashi* (Tokyo: Seishun Shuppan-sha, 2003)., pp. 38-39
[162] Ronald P. Toby, "Review: Rescuing the Nation from History: The State of the State in Early Modern Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 2 (2001)., p. 221

> By 1600, the emperor had been the pinnacle of the Japanese polity since time immemorial; Kyoto had been the capital of the realm for eight hundred years; Ise its ritual point of gravity for about a millennium. The emperor, Kyoto, and Ise formed the center of Japan's ideological space.
>
> The early Tokugawa shoguns tried nothing less than to rearrange this space around the shogun, Edo, and Nikkō—and to a large extent they succeeded.[163]

Therefore, it would not be surprising if this ideology could be seen through the symbols of Ise or Nikkō in the book, demonstrating a favoritism of one over the other. This is not the case, even though both of the symbols are readily available. Ise is presented as one of the Three Shrines of Japan and some textual description of the enshrined god Amaterasu accompanies the illustration, while Nikkō only has some short poems attached to the illustration, but the difference in attention is insignificant. The same thing holds true for the symbols of Kyoto and Edo discussed in the section about maps above as well, there was no clear favoritism. At the same time, however, we saw that in the discussion of Mount Hie, Kyoto was indeed used as a symbol for being the center of Japan, because by protecting it the entire country was protected. That an ideology so clearly presents itself in one instance, but is absent in another where it could be expected is quite interesting, and highlights an important aspect of the *Eitai Setsuyō* and *setsuyōshū* genre. Because of the highly intertextual nature and "cut and paste" character of the *setsuyōshū*, the books speak to the reader with many different voices.

4.7 Mapping social space

In the translation from the introduction to the *Eitai Setsuyō* above we saw that the author referred to the four social orders. As already stated in chapter 3.1, the four social orders were a part of Confucian ideology imported from China that were often discussed in the early modern period, but that did not correspond accurately to actual social reality. The author, however, does not seem to mind this and casually uses the word for "the four social orders" (*shimin* 四民) in a way that seems to be referring to "everybody". Such usage of the word seems to have been common in other writings as well:

---

[163] Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa ideology: early constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985)., p. 162

Watanabe Hiroshi has recently remarked that references one finds in the early Tokugawa writings to the "four classes" were stylistic conventions used to speak of "the people."[164]

Nevertheless, whatever the intended meaning of the word in this context, the four social orders are referred to, and can only be taken as an indication for the concept to be an integral part of the author's inherent worldview. Moreover, we find more concrete referral to the four social orders towards the end of the book where there are illustrations of the different orders under the headline "Illustrations of the four orders and their stable occupations" (*shinōkōshō angyō no zu* 士農工商安業の図). The illustrations show the different orders doing different activities that should be exclusive to their order. The idea seems to be that these are the activities that are stable or safe for the respective orders to engage in, with the implicit meaning that if they do otherwise the society would delve into chaos.

Fig. 13 First page of the illustrations showing stable activities of the four orders, here with samurai and farmers.

---

[164] Ibid., p. 293

What is rather peculiar about this is that the *shinōkōshō* ideology is a social system that is made to create and maintain differences in society, and the way the *Eitai Setsuyō* treats *shinōkōshō* here encourages the continuation of these differences. On the other hand, however, the *Eitai Setsuyō*, other *setsuyōshū*, and many other books in the "public information library" in fact contributes to eradicating much of social differences by making information that traditionally belonged to the samurai and *kuge* (court nobles) available to everybody.

This is a good representation of a phenomenon similar to that which Yokoyama calls "kuge-fication". In his studies of *setsuyōshū* usage, he found that one of the usage-trends showed keen interest in matters that previously had belonged to court culture:

> The 'diffuse type' [of usage] was characterized by the interest it evinced in literary elegance as well as in observing the taboos prescribed by the Yin-yang thought. This particular combination of concerns is reminiscent of the mores of medieval Kyōto court nobles (*kuge* 公家), inviting speculations as to whether this might not be part of a still-living tradition that was in the course of dissemination among the wider populace during the 19th century. This initial speculation, based on limited data, was later substantiated by further data, eventually providing evidence for an important, but hitherto ignored social phenomenon of pre-industrial Japanese trend to emulate various aspects of *kuge* culture. For this phenomenon, I provisionally coined the term 'kuge-fication'.[165]

It is possible, however, to take this approach one step further. It was not only *kuge* culture that spread to a popular audience, but samurai culture as well. It can rather be seen as a general trend that cultural capital spread "downwards" in society.

One example of such samurai culture in the *Eitai Setsuyō*—which is also a constituent of the social map that the book maps out—is a six-page illustrated guide to the courtesies of the Ogasawara school of etiquette (*Ogasawara-ryū shorei no shiki* 小笠原流諸禮の式). The Ogasawara clan was a samurai clan that was quite influential in the martial arts world and their school of etiquette became dominant in the early modern period because of their close ties with the Tokugawa shogunate.

We have already encountered a translation of one of the parts by Yokoyama, where we saw rather entertaining instructions on how to blow one's nose in proper manner. This is but

---

[165] Yokoyama, "The Illustrated Household Encyclopedias that Once Civilized Japan.", p. 56

one of several instructions that are presented within the pages of the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other *setsuyōshū* as well. The guides have found their way into nearly all the different *setsuyōshū* I have had the chance to browse, with the only differences being the use of different illustrations and some minor differences in the text. Although not all of them use the name Ogasawara in the headline for their illustrations, it is beyond any doubt that they have all derived from the same source.

Fig. 14 Text and illustration from the first page of the Ogasawara school's guide to proper behavior in the *Eitai Setsuyō*

4.8 Representations of linear time: The Chronology of Japan

In a previous chapter we discussed the mythical nature of historical representations. Apart from having a mythical nature, history often also includes what we more commonly associate with myth. This is something we find in the representation of history in the *Eitai Setsuyō*, where the history of Japan starts with the separation of Heaven and Earth by the god *Kuninotokotachi*, before we are told about the other various earliest gods and their activities, and then the first human Emperor, Jimmu. Not surprisingly, this kind of historical

representations was published as an individual genre as well. Below is an illustration showing an example of such a book compared with a page from the *Eitai Setsuyō*.

Fig. 15 Left: First page from *Shinpo Yamato Nendai Koki Esho* (1692)[166]
Right: From *Eitai Setsuyō*. Both books show an illustration of *Kuninotokotachi no Mikoto*, the god who separated Heaven and Earth.

According to Yagi Keiichi in a short article on such chronologies of Japan, most of the *setsuyōshū* late in the early modern period included a section like this, and they were all based on the *Shinpo Yamato Nendai Koki Esho* (also called just *Nendaiki Esho*) shown in the illustration above. He also states that it is likely that most common people got their information about *Kuninotokotachi* and other gods not through the *Nihon Shoki* or the *Kojiki,* but rather through the *Nendaiki* genre and through *setsuyōshū*.[167]

As stated above, the text starts with the separation of Heaven and Earth. It continues with presenting six more generations of gods in addition to *Kuninotokotachi*, adding up to the seven generations of celestial deities (*tenjin shichidai* 天神七代). The names of these gods

---

[166] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ri04/ri04_00923/index.html
[167] Kei-ichi Yagi, "Nendaiki Esho," in *Edo no shuppan*, ed. Mitsutoshi Nakano (Tokyo: Perikan, 2005)., pp. 336-367

and the order in which they are presented tell us that the information comes from the *Nihon shoki*, which differs from the *Kojiki*. Next, the text presents the five generations of earthly deities (*chijin godai* 地神五代), with the most important one among the five being Amaterasu Ōmikami. In this chronology of the divine age, three events are supplied with illustrations. The first one is the separation of Heaven and Earth by the god *Kuninotokotachi* as seen in the illustration above. The second illustration depicts the gods Izanami and Izanagi standing on land below a bridge, likely referring to the moment after creating the first land. The text on the illustration refers to the successful marriage and mating of the two. The third and last illustration pictures the myth of the sun-goddess Amaterasu and the rock-cave. As John Breen and Mark Teeuwen notes in their book *A New History of Shinto*, it is possible to interpret this myth straightforward as a "nature myth" explaining "sun eclipses, or […] the sun's decline in autumn and 'rebirth' after the winter solstice."[168] This simple view, however, ignores the political and ideological aspects of the myth. Breen and Teeuwen states that:

> Amaterasu is not only the sun-goddess but also the imperial ancestor, and the plot of this story sends the message that, without her, the world will simply stop functioning.[169]

Such an interpretation becomes valuable for this thesis as well. The mythical pre-history is here told *as* history, and therefore contributing to the collective memory of the community, confirming the divinity of the Emperor and by extension also the divinity of the country itself.

This divine heritage of the Emperor becomes even more apparent when moving into the next section: the beginning of human rule which starts around 660 BC with the first human Emperor, Emperor Jimmu. The text states that his given name was Kamuyamato Iwarebiko and that he was the fourth son of the god Fukiaezu (short for Ugayafukigaezu 鵜葺 草葺不合), who in turn was a direct descendant of Amaterasu. The text then lists subsequent emperors in chronological order, ending with Emperor Ninkō who was Emperor at the time when this edition of the *Eitai Setsuyō* was published.

The historical narrative in the book moves smoothly from a mythical age of the gods into "real" history. Indeed, the first generations of emperors are considered by serious historians as mythical. In the words of Joseph M. Kitagawa:

---

[168] John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A new history of Shinto* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)., p. 132
[169] Ibid.

At any rate, the accounts of the first ten legendary emperors are clearly not reliable historical records. Probably the accounts of the emperors beginning with Ōjin, the fifteenth emperor according to the legendary genealogy, may be trusted as historical records.[170]

Nevertheless, both the reign of the first emperors and the mythical beginnings of gods and the earth are presented as "real" history both within the *Eitai Setsuyō* and the *Shinpo Yamato Nendai Koki Esho*. One might think that this way of looking at history would have disappeared when Japan started modernizing after the Meiji restoration, but rather the opposite was the case. In order to maintain the image of the Emperor as a divine being the state relied heavily on the ancient myths, and up until 1945 it was an important part of the curriculum in Japanese schools.[171] The same historical narrative still exists in some extreme cases to this day. One need only to take a trip to the ever controversial Yūshūkan museum located in the infamous Yasukuni shrine to see this history presented as indisputable truth.

When browsing through the more than 250 pages of historical narrative, it is rather interesting to see *which* parts of history, or indeed myth, is highlighted and given importance. One way to get an indication of which parts are regarded as important or interesting is to see which events are bestowed with illustrations and which events are explained in more detail than others in the form of text. Many of the events that receive such attention are for instance tales of legendary heroes, such as the hero Yamato Takeru who used the legendary sword Kusanagi to battle and defeat a group of barbarians; the hero Kashiwade no Hasubi who killed a fierce tiger on his way to the land of Kudara (Korea); the great warrior Yorimitsu who killed barbarians by Mount Ōe. All of these are awarded with illustrations, but the amount of text varies. Yamato Takeru and the story of Kusanagi occupies more than a whole top row, which is a lot in comparison to most entries in the book; Kashiwade no Hasubi gets three lines of text, slightly above average; and Yorimitsu gets only a little more than a line which is the standard for most entries. Other entries with illustration that can be mentioned are for instance the horseback duel in the river between Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin; the divine winds (*shinpū* 神風) that hindered Mongolian fleets from invading Japan; the last volcanic

---

[170] Joseph M. Kitagawa, *On understanding Japanese religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987)., p. 145
[171] John S. Brownlee, *Japanese historians and the national myths, 1600-1945: the age of the gods and Emperor Jinmu* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997)., pp. 5-7

eruption of Mount Fuji; and camels brought to Japan by the Dutch. Throughout the illustrations there is much focus on the bravery and military skill of warriors, but there is not really any focus on the warriors as rulers. This absence of matters concerning the shogun contributes to the overall impression of an emperor-centric perspective in the *Eitai Setsuyō*.
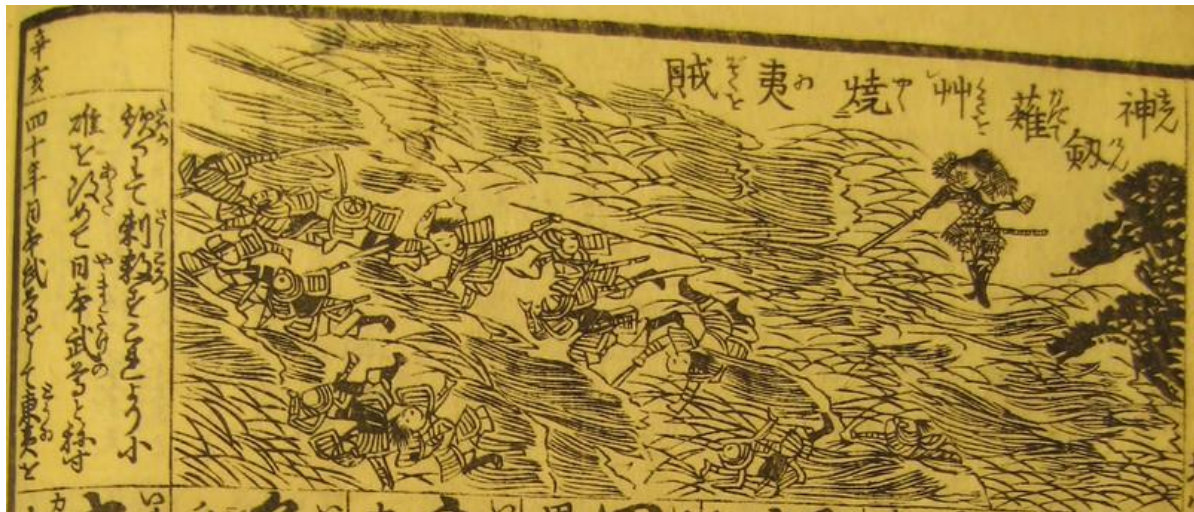

Fig. 16 Yamato Takeru using the Kusanagi sword to fight barbarians.

In contrast to these events that are given attention through text and illustration, it is maybe even more interesting to see what kind of events that do *not* get much attention. For instance when looking up the siege of Osaka—which most modern historians would agree was an important historical event—we see that the event is not illustrated and is only awarded very little text. The text merely says "The winter campaign of Osaka" under the nineteenth year of Keichō 慶長 (1615), before it says "In the fifth month, Osaka falls and Hideyori takes his own life." The brutal way in which Tokugawa forces overtook the castle and the fact that Hideyori's suicide most likely was a forced one is carefully omitted. The absence of more thorough information on this event is likely to be a result of a degree of censorship. As mentioned by Kornicki, there were no explicit laws banning books on this subject in general, but many publishers got in trouble for publishing books dealing with Hideyoshi and Hideyori and the subject became taboo and was to a great extent avoided by publishers.[172] Hideyoshi is, however, listed as one of the 36 immortal warriors of Japan which also appear in the *Eitai Setsuyō*.

---

[172] Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*. p. 332

Kornicki mentions another topic that was taboo as well, namely any mention of the Christians.[173] The Christians are, however, referred to in the *Eitai Setsuyō*, albeit in rather grim circumstances. Seeing how the siege of Osaka was portrayed, it made me curious to see what the text said about the Shimbara rebellion. In rough translation it says under the 15th year of Kan'ei: "About 37.000 Christian conspirators from Shimbara in Hizen were executed." It labels all the rebels as Christians, and fails to mention the reasons for the rebellion to arise in the first place, such as scarce availability of food and increased taxes.[174]

As discussed in chapter 2.6, historical representations have an important impact on collective memory, and thus also on the way in which community is imagined. There is no reason why the historical representations in the *Eitai Setsuyō* should be any different. The amount of text and pictures that are dealing with legendary heroes and of mythological events indicate a keen interest in the past over the present.

4.9 Representations of cyclical time: The calendar and annual events

In addition to the linear representation of history discussed above, the *setsuyōshū* also contain representations of a cyclical perspective on time. In the *Eitai Setsuyō* there are two major categories of such representation: a list of Buddhist and Shinto festivals (*saiki hōe nenjū gyōji* 祭祀法會年中行事); and the calendar, based on Daoism or *onmyōdō* thought. This does not mean, however, that the linear and cyclical perspectives are independent of each other and mutually exclusive. The years in the historical chronology as well—in addition to names of empirical reigns and era names—are separated according to the sexegenary cycle.

The list of various festivals is divided according to month and lists many of the major events throughout the year across the country. The events listed here are for the most part local events, but the way in which they are presented here gives them a "national" character. Scholars have often pointed out the relationship between Japanese religious festivals and collective identity of community.[175] Their main perspective has chiefly been focused on how the festivals contribute to the identity of smaller village communities, but should be applicable on a wider level as well. The presentation of the festival in the *Eitai Setsuyō* gives the reader the feeling that these events are shared by everybody, not just smaller village

---

[173] Ibid.
[174] Totman, *Early modern Japan.*, p. 111
[175] E.g. Michael Ashkenazi, *Matsuri: festivals of a Japanese town* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993)., p. 145 and Scott Schnell, *The rousing drum: ritual practice in a Japanese community* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999)., p. 142

communities, and transforms them into "national" events. And maybe more importantly, it gives the reader a perception of *shared time* which we have already discussed as an important part of collective identity. The year is also made sacred because of the religious nature of these yearly events.

Fig. 17 Major events of the two first months of the
year with illustrations.

Another way the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other *setsuyōshū* contributes to the construction an maintenance of shared time is through information on the type of calendar used at the time. The *setsuyōshū* does not contain a calendar per se, but gives information on the various supernatural devices that was commonly used in the calendars. The calendar used in Japan before the Meiji period was the so called old calendar (*kyūreki* 旧暦) or lunar-solar calendar (*tai'intaiyōreki* 太陰太陽暦). As mentioned above this calendar was based on *onmyōdō* thought, and it was used to select auspicious days and avoiding inauspicious ones for various tasks of daily life. The calendar itself did not necessarily give information on what the different terminology inside it meant, so the users of the calendar often had to find this

information elsewhere. Users could go to the *ōzassho* to find such information, or they could get somewhat more condensed information from the *setsuyōshū*. This is also one of the parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō* that showed signs of heavy wear and tear according to Yokoyama's studies.

The main principles that the calendar is based on is a combination of relatively complex systems. First you have yin and yang. These two principles are coupled with each of the five elements (*gogyō* 五行) to create the "ten stems" (*jikkan* 十干), i.e. creating one yin and one yang version of each element. These ten stems are in turn combined with the "twelve branches" (*jūnishi* 十二支)—known by many as the twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac—to create a cycle of 60; the "sexegenary cycle" (*kanshi* 干支). This cycle was used to, among other things, denoting days and years[176], as seen for instance in the Chronology of Japan discussed above. This is why a persons 60th birthday called *kanreki* 還暦 is seen as special in Japanese culture, because the person has lived through one entire cycle. One of the most important reasons people consulted the calendar for was to check which directions were lucky or unlucky for various actions at any given moment in time. Whether a specific direction was lucky or unlucky was decided by where the so called Gods of directions (*hōijin* 方位神) were residing at that particular time, and where these various gods were residing was in turn decided by which year of the sexengenary cycle it was. There are several of these directional gods and the *Eitai Setsuyō* lists eleven of them. Eight of these are from a group that is collectively referred to as *Hasshōjin* 八将神. To illustrate how the system works, let us look at one of these gods and what the text says about him:

> *Hyōbi* 豹尾: Also called *Shudoku kijin*. Do not urinate or defecate towards this direction. Neither should one take any kind of pet from this direction. In the years of the Rat, Dragon and Monkey he resides in the direction of the Dog (west-northwest). In the years of the Ox, Serpent and Bird he resides in the direction of the Ram (south-southwest). In the years of the Tiger, Horse and Dog he resides in the direction of the Dragon (east-southeast). In the years of the Hare, Ram and Boar he resides in the direction of the Ox (north-northeast).

---

[176] Kōji Satō, *Bunka toshite no koyomi* (Fukuoka: Sōgensha, 1998)., pp. 96-110

The reason why this particular god was chosen was to emphasize just how far into the daily lives of people this system reached; you even had to make sure you went to the toilet in the right direction. Other taboos that are connected with other gods are for instance not to give birth in a specific direction, taking a wife from a specific direction or sowing seeds towards a specific direction. Not only negative things are associated with the gods, however, as for instance the direction where *Daisai* 大歳 resides brings fortune to all activities towards that direction. One should not, however, cut trees in that direction.

Another example that is not one of the *Hasshōjin* is *Konjin* 金神. The text in the *Eitai Setsuyō* points out that there are several taboos connected with the direction in which *Konjin* resides, such as for instance taking a wife from that direction or even opening a window or a gate facing that direction. If one should be so unlucky to violate any of these taboos, *Konjin* would take the life of seven people in your household. If there were less than seven in your own household, he would continue to your neighboring household until he had seven in total. Luckily for the people who had important business to attend to in dangerous directions there were days when the gods were on "holiday" (*yūgyōbi* 遊行日). In the *Eitai Setsuyō* there is a table where it lists six consecutive days during each of the fours seasons when *Konjin* travels to another cardinal point. The original *Konjin* direction was then safe for a while, but people of course needed to make sure not to violate any taboos in the direction where he went on vacation.
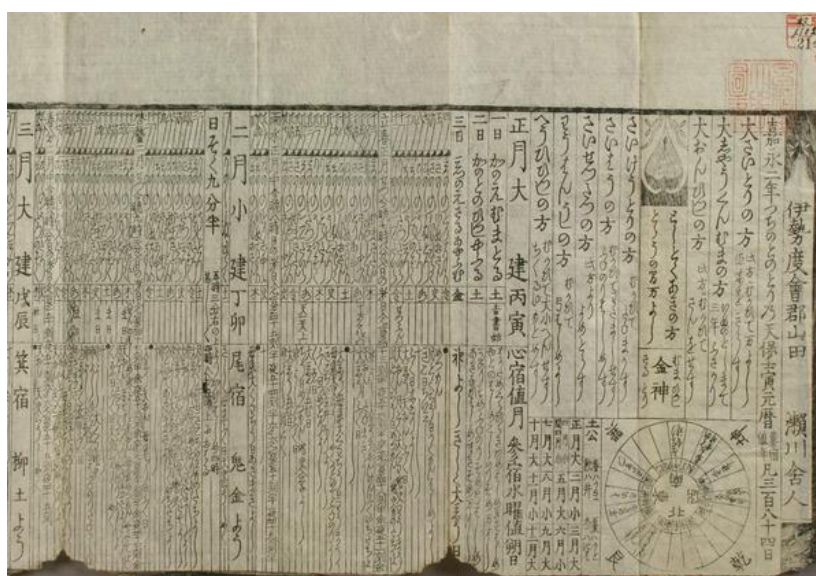

Fig. 18 The *Tenpo jin'in genreki* from the same year as the *Eitai Setsuyō* (*Kaei* 2)[177]

---

[177] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ni05/ni05_01102_0021/index.html

This system of directional gods shows the close relationship between space and time in *onmyōdō* thought. The calendar consisted of many other systems too, many of them which were more strictly temporal in nature. We will not go through it all in great detail here, but give a couple of examples to illustrate. Information about the directional gods was placed at the beginning of the calendar. The following information was divided into three columns: *jōdan* 上段, *chūdan* 中段, and *kadan* 下段. The top column contains "scientific" data such as date, name of days and so forth. The middle column contains information on *jūnichoku* 十二直, a series of twelve words assigned to days giving information on the good or bad fortune for certain activities. This included for instance *tatsu* 建 days, which are lucky for most activities but unlucky for opening a warehouse or moving soil; and *ayabu* 危 days when all actions should be conducted with great precaution. The bottom column could contain information from many different systems, and the *Eitai Setsuyō* does not seem to give an exhaustive list. The list includes among others *tensha* 天しや, a day which brings luck to all endeavors; and *kiko* days when taking a wife or traveling far should be refrained from.

The calendar and the *Eitai Setsuyō* include more information than discussed here, but this should be more than sufficient to make the point. If people at the time observed all of these taboos with care, it would greatly affect almost any aspect of daily life and put severe restrictions to it. It is of course difficult to say anything for certain about exactly *how* these beliefs were actually observed by people in the early modern period. Did they follow all the instructions with utmost care or did they merely find reading these as an amusing pastime much like people enjoy horoscopes today? It is hard to say, and it would require extensive research on the matter in order to reach any satisfying conclusion. But as Yokoyama's studies have shown, because of the wear and tear on the pages containing this kind of information, we know that people did show keen interest in this information. Thus, we must also assume that these beliefs were important to the shared ideas of time by the community.

Chapter 5: Summary and concluding remarks

This thesis started out by asking how early modern Japanese community was imagined in the *Eitai Setsuyō* and if the book could be seen as a representation some kind of collective identity. In order to find an answer to these questions we looked more specifically at how the concepts of space and time are represented within the book, because both space and time is seen as important constituents of collective identity and of any imagined community. When exploring these two concepts a wide definition of "map" and "mapping" was utilized, and we saw that the *Eitai Setsuyō* is "mapping out" several different types of space and time. Two different types of representations of time—linear and cyclical—were explored, and several types of space. We looked at the more typical concrete space in geographical representations of maps and famous places, but also explored more abstract space like language, cosmic and social space. Above I have presented individual parts from the *Eitai Setsuyō*, but will now try to tie it together in a more overall picture. What, then, did the various representations that were explored tell us about community and collective identity?

5.1 The Imagined Community

First of all, one very important point needs to be made. The various parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō* do not tell one uniform story. The different parts within the book are like a choir of many voices, voices that sometimes sing separate songs. This is a result of the nature of *setsuyōshū*, with bits and peaces from all over the "public information library" being pasted into a somewhat inconsistent information-collage. We saw that this was especially evident in the usage of the ideological symbols of the emperor and the shogun. In many places in the book there was a clear and explicit use of symbols representing the emperor, but at the same time other parts of the book did not make any ideological use of similar symbols even though they were readily available, while symbols representing the shogun were not used at all. It might be reasonable to assume that the compilers of *setsuyōshū* selected material in accordance with their own beliefs and ideologies, but it is also reasonable to assume, and also more likely, that their desire to cram as much information into the *setsuyōshū* as possible in order to be the best edition on the market trumped their own beliefs. How does this affect the main question asked? If the content of the *Eitai Setsuyō* tells several contradicting stories, is it still possible to consider it as a representation of the community or the collective identity? The

answer to this is yes, because first of all, any community consists of several voices and opinions, many of these which are in conflict with one another. Moreover, although not all the voices tell the same story or sing the same song, some of the voices can be distinguished as dominant. We will now turn to the story which these dominant voices tell us and what kind of community they imagine.

One thing that becomes quite clear early in the book and is seen throughout the entire book is that the *Eitai Setsuyō* portrays the world as a sacred place, and it does it in several ways. We saw that the book referred to what is usually considered to be the three major religious traditions in Japan—Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism—already in the introduction, and also in other places in the book. Although these religious traditions are important, and the point here is not to downplay their role, but throughout the sections discussed in this thesis it became clear that it was another religious tradition that was the most prominent in many of the parts, namely *onmyōdō*. Beliefs from this somewhat complicated thought system constitute a framework for the world and seem to run through many aspects of the community and daily lives of the people at the time. We saw that the beliefs are visible in the language, with characters having magical and sacred meaning with the power to affect human relationships; we saw that it was closely connected with space, in that it was important to safeguard important places such as the Imperial Palace from unpropitious directions; and we also saw how time and space were affected by the movement of various *onmyōdō* gods and how that might effect daily life in the community. As was also reflected upon earlier, this interest in *onmyōdō* thought, which traditionally was associated with court culture, represents the growing trend of what Yokoyama has called "*kuge*-fication".

It was not only in the calendar and the beliefs surrounding it that time was rendered as sacred, but in the *Eitai Setsuyō's* presentation of history as well. The history of Japan, we saw, started with the mythical creation of the first generations of gods and the world, before introducing the mythical first human emperors, and then the representation of history moved seamlessly into "real" history. Representing history in this fashion gave history a definite sacred beginning and helped imagine Japan as a community that had descended from the gods themselves. The entire history throughout is scattered with minor and major magical or supernatural events, such as for instance the sacred winds that repressed the Mongol invasions.

In addition to *onmyōdō* beliefs such as directional gods and unlucky directions such as *kimon*, ideas of sacred space are visible in other parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō* as well. This is

clearly visible particularly in the representations of various mountains. In the discussion above we looked at three such sacred mountains, Mount Fuji, Mount Yoshino and Mount Hie. Mount Fuji was equated with Mount Sumeru, the mountain positioned in the center of the universe in Buddhist cosmology and that the sun and the moon revolve around. Mount Fuji thus becomes a symbol that is as sacred as it can get, namely the center of the universe. Mount Yoshino is also portrayed as a sacred place; it came flying from India and thus works as a symbol for the introduction of Buddhism. Moreover, because of its many beautiful cherry blossoms, it is described as a place that should be envied by all other countries. Thus, Mount Yoshino is elevated to a "national" symbol as well. And last, Mount Hie must be given the status as both sacred and as a "national" symbol also, because it actually protects the entire country from evil supernatural forces.

It is not only individual places such as the three mountains discussed above that are portrayed as sacred, but entire Japan is given sacred meaning as well. In addition to what is discussed above—a sacred history along with sacred national symbols such as the mountains—there can also be distinguished a clear rhetoric that distinguishes Japan as a sacred space. Throughout the book Japan is referred to by various names, but some of the ones we have discussed are more interesting for the purpose of highlighting Japan as a sacred country. We saw that Japan was referred to as the Land of the Gods (*Kami no Mikuni* 神乃御国), and as the Land of the Emperor (*Mikuni* 皇国 and *Honchō* 本朝). Referring to the country as the Land of the Gods of course explicitly reveals the sacred nature of the country, but referring to it as the Land of the Emperor is vested with sacred meaning as well. The emperor is presented in the book as the direct descendant of the gods, and by extension the kingdom which he rules over thus also becomes sacred.

Through the usage of words referring to Japan as the country of the emperor reveals ideas about the emperor as the supreme ruler. This can also be seen through the usage of Kyoto as a symbolic device. We saw that in the map of Japan distance was measured from Kyoto, and not Nihonbashi. This might seem trivial, but in a time where Edo had been de facto capital for almost 250 years, it is quite interesting to see that the city of the emperor's seat was emphasized as the center of the country. A similar idea was seen in the text about Mount Hie, where by protecting Kyoto and the Imperial Palace, the entire nation was kept safe. Although samurai culture is clearly revered throughout the *Eitai Setsuyō*, this reverence is almost exclusively focused on military prowess and courage, not on shogunate leadership.

One of the reasons for this one sided focus on the emperor as ruler might be a result of the shougnate's failure to take up print as a tool to promote their own agenda.[178]

Apart from names for Japan that clearly indicates emperor worship, more neutral words for Japan are used throughout the *Eitai Setsuyō* as well. The very title of the book, *Dai Nippon Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō*, already tells us that Japanese information is contained within it. In addition to *Nippon* and the emperor-biased names discussed above, we also encountered *Ōhi no moto* (also written 大日本), *Waga Kuni* 吾国 (Our Country), and several historical names for Japan. So many of the individual parts of the book either has one of the names for Japan in its title or is mentioned somewhere within the text that it is hard to find information which is not imagined within this unifying framework of Japan one way or another.

In addition to this "national" framework brought to the light by the wording used, the *Eitai Setsuyō* also contributes to the imagining of community through heightening geographical awareness. This is achieved through the representation of space through maps, and through depiction of famous places such as for instance the mountains discussed above. Readers were also able to go on a "virtual travel" along the Tōkaidō road, thus getting to experience other parts of the country. These representations—Japan as a unifying framework and geographical information—must certainly have contributed to the awareness of the people of a "national" community, and if this awareness was already in place, the information in the book must have strengthened it.

One last thing that was explored in this thesis was the imagining of social space. We saw that the *Eitai Setsuyō* insists on the division of social space into the four social orders of warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants. It was also argued that this division of social space did not correspond to actual social reality. Moreover, despite the fact that the book tries to maintain these social boundaries, the *Eitai Setsuyō* contributes—although most likely unconsciously—to the diminishing of said boundaries. This weakening of social borders was achieved through the popular trend of "*kuge*-fication", the growing commoner interest in culture traditionally belonging to court culture such as for instance *onmyōdō* beliefs; and also the increased interest of commoners in samurai culture such as for instance the etiquette of the Ogasawara School. The very idea that such information should be available to commoners represents a change, because such information was traditionally considered to be esoteric knowledge. Such a change in possession of cultural capital would not have been possible had it not been for the popularization of print and books such as the *Eitai Setsuyō*. Despite the

---

[178] Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century*., p. 143

discrepancies with social reality, and the fact that the book contributes to the fading of social borders, the idea of the four social orders is indeed an important part of the imagined community in the *Eitai Setsuyō*.

To summarize in short what the early modern Japanese community and collective identity looks like *imagined through the* Eitai Setsuyō, with all the generalization it necessarily involves, it would be something in this vein:

> *Japan is a country ruled by the divine emperor, connected through sacred language, time and history. The country is in itself sacred, and is scattered with holy places. It has a clear geographical identity and knows its place in the world. It has a stable and structured society thanks to the ordering of the people in four social orders.*

It goes without saying that such a way of perceiving the world does not necessarily represent any kind of consensus of popular thought at the time. However, because of the nature of the *Eitai Setsuyō* and the *setsuyōshū* genre—being a sample from a wide range of the "public information library"—it is not far fetched to assume that the *Eitai Setsuyō* also represents common and dominant beliefs or trends from this information library. Therefore it can be assumed that it represents how many authors and writers perceived the world, but also that the *Eitai Setsuyō* represents a batch of the most typical information that was spread to the masses. Whether or not the masses took this information to heart remains to be seen, but considering the popularity of the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other *setsuyōshū* it is quite likely that they did. Thus, I can say with some degree of confidence that the world as it is represented within the *Eitai Setsuyō* illustrates a collective identity of community shared by at least a relatively large part of the population.

5.2 Towards modernity

There are at least three important points that emerge from the discussion in this thesis that had implications for the future of Japan. The particular edition of the *Eitai Setsuyō* discussed here was published only four years before the arrival of Matthew Perry and his black ships, and therefore is a representation of the community in a time very close to a major turning point in Japanese history. Scholars of Japanese history have emphasized this external threat together with internal problems as the main reasons for the fall of the Tokugawa regime

and Japan's step into modernity.[179] Although these are definitely major factors that made the change take place, there were also more "positive" internal factors that made this change possible without causing any more trouble than it actually did. The transition from early modern to modern times was of course not exclusively a smooth one, as there were samurai rebellions such as for instance the Satsuma rebellion, but the transition could have been a much more violent one. The factors discussed below contributed to this "ease of transition".

First of all, as seen through the discussion on the *Eitai Setsuyō*, the emperor had already been given the status as the true ruler of Japan in the popular mind of people in the early modern period, and this made the restoration of power to the emperor seem only natural to the general populace. Although the shogunate most likely would have fallen regardless, their failure to make use of print as a tool to push their own agenda most certainly did not work in their favor in maintaining the image of the shogun as ruler in people's minds.

Second of all, the dissemination of what was previously conceived of as elite culture to the general populace contributed to a weakening of social borders. Although the *Eitai Setsuyō* imagines a community divided by social border, its unconscious power to tear down the same borders should not be underestimated. The fluctuation in economic capital brought about changes in the society and made them possible, but movement of cultural capital must have helped the commoners in re-imagining themselves as no longer inferior to the samurai class. This must have made the transition to a society free of the previous social borders go more smoothly than it could have.

And last, the heightened geographical awareness brought on by the *Eitai Setsuyō,* other books and increased traveling, together with the fact that the information contained within the *Eitai Setsuyō* and other books in the "public information library" were "parsed within the unifying frame of Japan" as Berry would call it, laid the foundation for the construction of a national identity in the Meiji period. As we recall from one of the quotes from Benedict Anderson towards the beginning of this thesis, in order to become a nation, one must first be able to *think* the nation. And as we have seen, the *Eitai Setsuyō* is filled with devices encouraging this process of imagining, so the majority of the population—not just the political and cultural elite—must have been ready to embrace the idea of Japan as a nation.

In other words, the spreading of the *Eitai Setsuyō* and information from the "public library" brought about a silent revolution of knowledge that offered a gateway into modernity,

---

[179] See for instance Marius B. Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Vol. 5 The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)., pp. 308-313

possibly making the modernizing process a much smoother affair than it would have been without this popularization of knowledge.

5.3 Openings for further research

Although I looked at many different parts of the *Eitai Setsuyō* in this thesis, I have barely scratched the surface. The *Eitai Setsuyō* and other *setsuyōshū* deserve more attention than they have gotten so far, and more comprehensive studies should be conducted. The wealth of material in *setsuyōshū* creates a near infinite amount of possibilities on how to approach the subject, but I will try to mention only a few ideas I thought would be interesting to pursue during the work on this thesis, but did not fit into the thesis on thematic grounds or because of time constraints.

I mentioned earlier that the compilers of *setsuyōshū* probably mostly followed their desire to put as much information into the book as possible without it being affected much by their own views on ideology, etc. This I believe to be only partly true, because there must necessarily have been a selection process where the compiler chose some data over other. It would be interesting to see which sources the compilers went to when there were several different books on the same subject. Moreover, because the parts in the *setsuyōshū* mostly are boiled down versions of other sources, it would also be interesting to see which parts they decided to include and which ones they opted to discard and why. There might also be differences in the presentation of material and there is a possibility that the compilers changed material that they did not agree with. If so, this should be discovered.

Another thing that should be addressed is similarities and differences of individual editions of *setsuyōshū*, and also how the content varies over time. I believe such an investigation could function as a shortcut to getting an understanding of how the "public library of information" changes over time, and also by extension how the community is imagined over time.

One last suggestion I will bring up is concerned with *onmyōdō* thought. We have seen that throughout the *Eitai Setsuyō* there is quite a lot of information that is based in the intricate thought system, and Yokoyama Toshio has shown that many people indeed had great interest in most of these parts. Exactly *how* people used this information cannot be deduced from the patterns of usage, and can only be investigated through a comprehensive study of a wide selection of sources, such as for instance diaries and almanacs.

Bibliography

Primary Resources

Bunkan setsuyō tsūhōzō. Osaka, 1770.

Eitai Setsuyō Mujinzō. Kyoto: Katsumura Jiuemon [et al.], 1849.

Kannon Kyō Hayayomi Eshō: Rakuyō Ōsaka Sanjūsanjo Junrei Engi. Kyoto: Suharaya
      Heizaemon, 1739.

Ōzassho. Edo: Eijudō, 1780.

Shinpo Yamato Nendai Koki Esho. Kyoto: Yoshinoya, 1692

Taisei Musō Setsuyōshū. Kyoto: Keimeisha, 1821

Tenpo jin'in genreki. Ise, 1848

Tokai Setsuyō Hyakka Tsū. Osaka: Naniwa, 1801

Reference Material

Kokusho sō mokuroku, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1967

Internet Resources

University, Waseda. "Kotenseki Sogo Database: Japanese & Chinese Classics."
      http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/.

Secondary Resources

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of
      Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.

Ashkenazi, Michael. *Matsuri: Festivals of a Japanese Town*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii
      Press, 1993.

Aveni, Anthony F. "Time." In *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor,
      314-33. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in
      the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin, 1967.

Berry, Mary Elizabeth. *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson, 241-58. New York: Greenwood, 1986.

———. "Social Space and Symbolic Space." In *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff and Indermohan Virk, 267-75. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

Breen, John, and Mark Teeuwen. *A New History of Shinto*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Brownlee, John S. *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997.

Burns, Susan L. *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2003.

Castoriadis, Cornelius. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.

Cohen, Anthony P. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Dore, Ronald P. *Education in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1965.

Eley, Geoff, and Ronald G. Suny. "Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation." In *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. *Kampen Om Fortiden: Et Essay Om Myter, Identitet Og Politikk*. Oslo: Aschehoug, 1996.

Frellesvig, Bjarke. *A History of the Japanese Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Grapard, Allan G. "Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions." *History of Religions* 21, no. 3 (1982): 195-221.

Hanley, Susan B. *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan: The Hidden Legacy of Material Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Hooson, David. "Introduction." In *Geography and National Identity*, edited by David Hooson. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.

Howell, David L. "Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan." *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 105-32.

Jansen, Marius B. *The Making of Modern Japan*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000.

———. "The Meiji Restoration." In *The Cambridge History of Japan: Vol. 5 the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marius B. Jansen, 308-66. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. Edited by Peter Hamilton. 3rd ed, Key Ideas. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

Kalland, Arne. *Japans Historie: Fra Jegersamfunn Til Økonomisk Supermakt*. Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forl., 2005.

Katsuhisa, Moriya. "Urban Networks and Information Networks." In *Tokugawa Japan: The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan*, edited by Chie Nakane, Conrad Totman and Shinzaburô Oishi, 97-123. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1991.

Kinski, Michael. "Admonitions Regarding Food Consumption: Takai Ranzan's Shokuji Kai – Introduction, Transcription and Translation. Part One." *Japonica Humboldtiana* 7 (2003): 123-78.

Kitagawa, Joseph M. *On Understanding Japanese Religion*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Kornicki, Peter F. *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*, Handbuch Der Orientalistik, 5. Abteilung, Japan. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

McOmie, William, ed. *Foreign Images and Experiences of Japan: Vol. 1 First Century Ad to 1841*. Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2005.

Miyake, Hitoshi. *Nihon No Minzoku Shûkyô*. Tôkyô: Kôdansha, 1994.

Nenzi, Laura. "Cultured Travelers and Consumer Tourists in Edo-Period Sagami." *Monumenta Nipponica* 59, no. 3 (2004): 285-319.

———. *Excursions in Identity: Travel and the Intersection of Place, Gender, and Status in Edo Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Ng, Wai-ming. *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*. Honolulu, HI: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.

Nobuhiko, Nakai. "Commercial Change and Urban Growth in Early Modern Japan." In *The Cambridge History of Japan: Vol.4 Early Modern Japan*, edited by John W. Hall, 519-95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Olick, Jeffrey K., and Joyce Robbins. "Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-40.

Ooms, Herman. *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Ōtani, Mitsuo. *Kyūreki De Yomitoku Nihon No Narawashi*. Tokyo: Seishun Shuppan-sha, 2003.

Rubinger, Richard. *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

———. *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Sandvoss, Cornell. "Social Constructionism." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, edited by Bryan S. Turner, 569-71. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Satō, Kōji. *Bunka Toshite No Koyomi*. Fukuoka: Sōgensha, 1998.

Sawada, Janine Anderson. *Confucian Values and Popular Zen: Sekimon Shingaku in Eighteenth-Century Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993.

Schnell, Scott. *The Rousing Drum: Ritual Practice in a Japanese Community*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

Scott, John. "Collective Representations." In *Sociology: The Key Concepts*, edited by John Scott, 33-35. London: Routledge, 2006.

Seeley, Christopher. *A History of Writing in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2000.

Sheldon, Charles D. "Merchants and Society in Tokugawa Japan." *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983): 477-88.

Shores, Matthew W. "Travel and "Tabibanashi" in the Early Modern Period: Forming Japanese Geographic Identity." *Asian Theatre Journal* 25, no. 1 (2008): 101-21.

Smith, Henry D. "The History of the Book in Edo and Paris." In *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, edited by James L. McClain, John M. Merriman and Kaoru Ugawa, 332-52. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Snow, David A., Sharon S. Oselin, and Catherine Corrigal-Brown. "Identity." In *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, edited by George Ritzer, 390-93. Thousand Oaks, London and New Dehli: Sage Publications, 2005.

Stewart, Pamela J., and Andrew Strathern. "Introduction." In *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, 1-15. London: Pluto Press, 2003.

Toby, Ronald P. "Review: Rescuing the Nation from History: The State of the State in Early Modern Japan." *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 2 (2001): 197-237.

Totman, Conrad. *Early Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Traganou, Jilly. *The Tōkaidō Road: Traveling and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan*. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

Tsuda, Tetsuei. "Tenbu to Wa Nani Ka." In *Butsuson No Jiten: Sōdai Naru Bukkyō Uchū No Hotoke Tachi*, edited by Shunichi Sekine. Tokyo: Gakken, 1997.

University, Waseda. "Kotenseki Sogo Database: Japanese & Chinese Classics." http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/.

Unno, Kazutaka. "Maps of Japan Used in Prayer Rites or as Charms." *Imago Mundi* 46 (1994): 65-83.

Vaporis, Constantine N. "Caveat Viator. Advice to Travelers in the Edo Period." *Monumenta Nipponica* 44, no. 4 (1989): 461-83.

Vaporis, Constantine Nomikos. *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan*, Harvard East Asian Monographs. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Wakabayashi, Bob Tadashi. *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan: The New Theses of 1825*. Vol. 126, Harvard East Asian Monographs. Cambridge, Mass.: The University, 1986.

———. "In Name Only: Imperial Sovereignty in Early Modern Japan." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991): 25-57.

Yagi, Kei-ichi. "Nendaiki Esho." In *Edo No Shuppan*, edited by Mitsutoshi Nakano, 366-67. Tokyo: Perikan, 2005.

Yokoyama, Toshio. "Even a Sardine's Head Becomes Holy: The Role of Household Encyclopedias in Sustaining Civilisation in Pre-Industrial Japan." In *SANSAI: An Environmental Journal for the Global Community*, 41-57, 2006.

———. "The Illustrated Household Encyclopedias That Once Civilized Japan." In *Written Texts - Visual Texts: Woodblock-Printed Media in Early Modern Japan*, edited by Susanne and Sepp Linhart Formanek, 47-72. Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005.

———. "In Quest of Civility: Conspicuous Uses of Household Encyclopedias in Nineteenth-Century Japan." *Zinbun* 34, no. 1 (1999): 197-222.

———. "On the Civilising Role of Ozassho, the Household Encyclopedia for Divining in Premodern Japan." *Zinbun* 37 (2005): 129-49.

———. "Setsuyōshū and Japanese Civilization." In *Themes and Theories in Modern Japanese History: Essays in Memory of Richard Storry*, edited by Sue Henny and Jean-Pierre Lehmann, 78-98. London and New Jersey: The Athlone Press, 1988.

———. "Some Notes on the History of Japanese Traditional Household Encyclopedias." *Japan Forum* 1, no. 2 (1989): 243-55.

Yonemoto, Marcia. *Mapping Early Modern Japan: Space, Place, and Culture in the Tokugawa Period, 1603-1868*. Berkeley ; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Yoshino, Yuko. *Inyō Gogyō to Nihon No Bunka: Uchū No Hōsoku De Himerareta Nazo Wo Toku*. Tokyo: Daiwa shobō, 2003.