

Mother of the Nation: Femininity, Modernity, and Class in the Image of Empress Teimei

By

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the political significance of the image of the Japanese Empress Teimei (1884-1951) with a focus on issues of gender and class. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Japanese society underwent significant changes in a short amount of time. After the intense modernizations of the late nineteenth century, the start of the twentieth century witnessed an increase in overseas militarism, turbulent domestic politics, an evolving middle class, and the expansion of roles for women to play outside the home. As such, the early decades of the twentieth century in Japan were a crucial period for the formation of modern ideas about femininity and womanhood. Before, during, and after the rule of her husband Emperor Taishō (1879-1926; r. 1912-1926), Empress Teimei held a highly public role, and was frequently seen in a variety of visual media. Through the investigation of various discursive forms of visual materials featuring Empress Teimei, this dissertation aims to reveal the political significance of Teimei as a role model of middle-class and aristocratic femininity. To this end, this dissertation examines Empress Teimei's appearance in formal portraiture, representations of Teimei in popular media, and emulations of the Empress by upper class women, as well as tracing changes in her image through time as related to political circumstances and her personal biography.

As a public figure, Empress Teimei held great sway over women's decorum in the first three decades of the twentieth century; she was the first Empress to establish monogamous modern family relations, and was the first modern Empress to mother the successive Emperor. Despite her relevance to the narrative of Japanese imperial history, very few publications, particularly in English, have fully discussed the historical importance of the Empress. Furthermore, the visual representation that was so crucial to the formation of her public persona and image has received scant scholarly consideration.

This dissertation will fill a void in art history, visual culture, and Japanese studies, opening up future avenues of research on how art and visual culture impacted the politics of gender and power in modern Japan. Specifically, this dissertation will pioneer the study of how the media presentation of the Imperial Family was intrinsically connected to the construction of feminine norms in the 1910s-30s. By bringing the image of Empress Teimei to the center of study, this dissertation contributes to the understanding of issues of gender and power as related to the Imperial Family in early twentieth-century Japan.

## Acknowledgements

Like any major project, this dissertation was written with the support of many people, both near and far. Over the course of four years of research, writing, and revising in Lawrence, Kansas City, and Tokyo, I was assisted by a variety of institutions, advisers, colleagues, friends, and family, without which I could have never completed this project. This partial list is a start at recognizing the amazing support network in which I have been fortunate enough to work.

My journey of studying the Imperial Family in modern Japan began at the University of Kansas in the stimulating courses of Dr. Maki Kaneko and Dr. Sherry Fowler. It was there that I began working through my interests and ideas in a variety of seminars on thought-provoking topics. The KU Art History Department, and my advisers and larger dissertation committee, including Dr. David Cateforis, Dr. John Pultz, and Dr. Akiko Takeyama from Anthropology, have provided unwavering support throughout my tenure. Maki's constant editing advice and steadfast commitment to sharpening my arguments was always delivered with encouragement. It is to her that I owe so much of my scholarly development. David and Sherry both have an amazing eye for grammar, editing, and the Chicago Manual of Style. I aspire to write to their level of meticulous detail in my future career. In Kansas I was also fortunate to work at the Spencer Museum of Art where I was able to experiment and delve into the world of Meiji and Taishō prints, and to organize exhibitions on the topic. This experience was invaluable to me in developing my eye, and in seeing these objects in a larger context.

In Tokyo I was generously supported by a year-long Fulbright Fellowship, which I spent in residence at the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo (Tobunken) under the tutelage of Yamanashi Emiko. Yamanashi-sensei provided wonderful conversation and fruitful research suggestions, and assisted with access at a variety of institutions. Presenting at the Tobunken Research Forum was a great experience and opportunity to gain feedback on my

research, as was the Waseda Modern History Group. The Fulbright Office was a source of continuing assistance and support while in Tokyo. Professor Sato Doshin was kind enough to allow me to sit in on his courses at Tokyo Fine Arts University, where I learned a great deal about modern Japanese art. I conducted research at many archives and libraries while in Tokyo including Waseda University, the National Diet Library, the Tokyo University Multi-media and Socio-information Studies Archive, and the archives of the Imperial Household Agency. The staff at each of these institutions was a great assistance to me and my research. In Tokyo, Ti Ngo was a great friend with whom I could talk about modern Japanese history, visit museums, or seek out good food and drink. The network of friends and researchers that I built during my year in Tokyo will hopefully remain with me for many decades into the future.

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My friends and family also provided intellectual and emotional support through these long and often solitary years. My gratitude for each of you is overwhelming. And of course, my amazing family, Barb and Tom Miller, Joe and Dylan Bruscato, without your encouragement, love, and support none of this would have happened. Thanks for always being there.

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## Introduction

In an interview with the press in 2007, Empress Michiko (b.1934, r. 1989-), the first commoner to marry into the Japanese Imperial Family, stated that she wished for an invisibility cloak so she could, “walk through the railway station, then go to Kanda-Jinbocho [an area of Tokyo famous for bookstores], and browse as I did when I was a student.”<sup>1</sup> Michiko, like her predecessors and successors, lives a life prescribed by ritual and regimen, mostly sequestered at the Imperial Palace. With relative frequency, she appears with her husband at public events, but always according to the protocol of the Imperial Household Agency, the bureaucratic organization that manages all Imperial affairs. Michiko’s desires to escape the rigidity of palace life are likely echoed by her successor, Crown Princess Masako (b. 1963), whose difficulties adjusting to her monarchical status are frequently covered in the press. Masako, who was a successful, Harvard-educated diplomat prior to her 1993 marriage into the Imperial Household, has largely been absent from public view in the past decade. She is rumored to have emotional troubles, which stem from adjusting to the immense pressures of palace life, the strong presence of the Imperial Household Agency, and her inability to produce a male heir.

In the past, as now, the pressure placed on members of the Imperial Family was immense.<sup>2</sup> Today the Japanese royals are covered in the press with a far greater reverence than

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<sup>1</sup> William Langley, “Japanese Empress who Dreams of Being Invisible,” *Telegraph*, May 20, 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3639999/Japanese-Empress-who-dreams-of-being-invisible.html>. Accessed December 2, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Media coverage of the Imperial Family is still not completely open. One Imperial correspondent stated of his reporting, “If you want to argue that we protect the mystery (*shimpiteki na bubun*) of the Imperial Family, I think we do. But no matter what we do the family will have to reform. And the more they reform the more the mystery will decline. That’s their dilemma.” David McNeill and Herbert P. Bix, “Trouble at the Top: Japan’s Imperial Family in Crisis,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 2 (2004), n.p. For a full analysis of the post-war Imperial Family see: Ken Ruoff, *The People’s Emperor: Democracy and the Japanese Monarchy, 1945-1995* (Cambridge: Harvard East Asia Monographs, 2001).

their European counterparts; there are no gossip magazines or paparazzi devoted to cataloging their personal slip-ups. While rumors swirl around them from time to time, they are generally far less vitriolic than those that are attached to the British monarchs. In short, it can be said that the Japanese Imperial Family is still treated with a level of public respect not found in many other nations.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this, we do know that the pressures of palace life weighed heavily on the monarchs of the past, as they do on those on the throne today. Records speak of Emperor Taishō (1879-1926, r. 1912-1926) taking joy in his children and family life in the first decade of the twentieth century, specifically with the change in court regulations that allowed the imperial children to remain in the custody of their parents.<sup>4</sup> Yet, as his son Hirohito (1901-1989, r. 1926-1989) stated after his father's passing, when Taishō was Crown Prince, "he was very cheerful and lively... after he ascended the throne everything became rigid and restricted."<sup>5</sup> The weight of monarchical responsibility was, and is, a heavy burden to bear, and maintaining and presenting a flawless image, in line with the protocol of the Imperial Household Agency can be overwhelming.

This dissertation examines the political significance of the image of the Japanese Empress Teimei (1884-1951, r. 1912-1926), wife of Emperor Taishō, with a focus on issues of gender and class. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Japanese society underwent significant changes in a short amount of time.<sup>6</sup> After the intense modernizations of the

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<sup>3</sup> The monarchs of Thailand or the Middle East are treated with a similar level of respect, however, they are still part of their respective national power structures, whereas the Japanese Imperial Family is a constitutional monarchy, and is forbidden from influencing politics, or expressing political opinions.

<sup>4</sup> Sterling Seagrave, *The Yamato Dynasty: The Secret History of Japan's Imperial Family* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 77. See Chapter One for further exploration of their family life.

<sup>5</sup> Honjō Shigeru, *Emperor Hirohito and His Chief Aide-de-Camp: The Honjō Diary, 1933-1936*, Trans. Mikiso Hane (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1967), 185.

<sup>6</sup> All images are redacted to comply with copyright. When an image is referenced, the place of publication is included in a footnote.

late nineteenth century, the start of the twentieth century witnessed an increase in overseas militarism, turbulent domestic politics, an evolving middle class, and the expansion of roles for women to play outside the home. As such, the early decades of the twentieth century in Japan were a crucial period for the formation of modern ideas about femininity and womanhood. Before, during, and after the rule of her husband Emperor Taishō, Empress Teimei held a highly public role, and was frequently seen in a variety of visual media. She held great sway over women's decorum in the first three decades of the twentieth century, was the first Empress to establish monogamous modern family relations, and was the first modern Empress to mother the successive Emperor.<sup>7</sup> She held an influential and powerful role in the Imperial Family, both in her maternal and spousal authority, and in her sway over internal palace politics, as will be further elaborated upon throughout the this dissertation. Despite her relevance to the narrative of Japanese Imperial history, very few publications, particularly in English, have fully discussed the historical importance of Empress Teimei. Furthermore, the visual representation that was so crucial to the formation of her public persona has received scant scholarly consideration. Through the investigation of various forms of visual materials featuring Empress Teimei, this dissertation aims to reveal her political significance as a role model of upper-class and middle-class and aristocratic femininity. To this end, this dissertation examines two-dimensional media and artworks representing Empress Teimei, primarily between 1899 and 1926, tracing changes in her image through time as related to political circumstances and her personal biography, in order to discern her impact as a feminine role model in the early twentieth century.

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I am using the period of 1899-1926 as the height of Teimei's visibility. This period is marked by her entrance into public life in 1899 with the announcement of her engagement to then Crown Prince Yoshihito, and her transition to Empress Dowager in 1926 with the death of her husband.

The modern concept of the Japanese Imperial Family was codified during the Taishō years (1912-1926).<sup>8</sup> As will be shown in Chapter One, the laws and norms which define the Imperial Family were set up during the Meiji period (1868-1912), and became fully accepted and practiced during the Taishō period. As such, the Taishō monarchy had a great impact on the public understanding of the Imperial Family and their position in society. It was during this time that Empress Teimei was acting monarch, but more importantly, as will be seen in Chapter Three, due to the illness of her husband in the years after 1920, her reign was one wherein she was a prominent public face for the Imperial Family. Scholar Carol Gluck states that *tennōsei* (天皇制) ideology, or the ideology of the Emperor (in the context of the modern Japanese state) was a product of the years between 1890 and 1945.<sup>9</sup> This ideology used nationalist rhetoric to promote the Japanese state as a large family under the Emperor, positioning Japan as uniquely superior, and justifying their colonial control over neighboring states. *Tennōsei* came to define much of Japanese history in the modern era, and was intertwined with daily life and visual culture of the time. Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei were in the public eye for a significant portion of these defining decades; Taishō from 1890-1920, and Teimei from 1899-1945.

As my interests lie with the public perception and interpretation of imperial imagery, the scope of this dissertation will focus on images that were in the public eye. Within print media, this ranges from woodblock prints and lithographs in the early years, to photography in the later years, particularly as published in newspapers and magazines. Postcards were another popular

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<sup>8</sup> In Japan, eras are marked by the *gengō* (元号) system. In the modern era this means the era name coincides with the period spanning the emperor's ascension to the throne and his death. The four modern periods—Meiji (1868-1912), Taishō (1912-1926), Shōwa (1926-1989), and Heisei (1989-present) have each adhered to this system since the institution of the *issei ichigen* (one reign, one name, 一世一元) policy in the early Meiji period. In Japan dates are typically written in both the *gengō* system and the Gregorian calendar, with no year zero and an overlap for each era in the *gengō* system. For example, 1912 C.E. is also written as Meiji 45 or Taishō 1, as Emperor Meiji passed away on July 30. In the premodern era the *gengō* system (also termed *nengō* 年号) was used, but with many irregularities, as eras changed according not only to reign, but also cosmology and auspicious or inauspicious events.

<sup>9</sup> Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 5.

source of imperial imagery, and although less accessible to the public, some paintings will be covered as well. By examining each of these types of images, this dissertation will reveal the larger impact of visual representations of Empress Teimei, including how she acted as a role model for middle and upper class women in the early twentieth century.

### Previous Scholarship on the Imperial Family

The Imperial Family has long held somewhat contradictory positions in society, positions which in the modern era are inherent in their public visual representations. As Erwin Baelz, the German physician who cared for the Imperial Family's medical needs in the early twentieth century famously stated, to the Japanese people, the emperor is, "not so much an individual as the incarnation of an idea."<sup>10</sup> Yet, from an examination of print and photographic imagery in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and even through to the present day, it is apparent that the modern emperors of Japan were very much represented as individuals—from Emperor Meiji through to Emperor Akihito, the distinctive interests and activities, as well as distinct dispositions of the four modern emperors were and are an important component of their public personas. When Baelz was working for the Imperial Family, Emperor Meiji's strong, stoic personality was central to his reputation as a leader and to the justification of him as the leader of the nation. This contradictory notion—of the emperor as an individual and as a representative of a timeless ideal—has long been of interest to scholars of the Imperial Household.

Historically, a number of specialists across disciplines have investigated how the emperor and the imperial institution acted as a timeless symbolic representation of the nation-state of

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<sup>10</sup> Toku Baelz, ed., *Awakening Japan: The Diary of a German Doctor, Erwin Baelz* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1974), 395.

Japan, rather than as an individual in the narrative of nation or history.<sup>11</sup> More contemporary scholars such as Stephen S. Large, Donald Keene, Hara Takeshi, and Herbert P. Bix have detailed the individual characteristics and biographical and personal elements of the modern emperors. These biographical studies mark the emperors as matchless personages, shaped by their historical moment and unique place in Japanese society.<sup>12</sup> In considering the position and role of the empress, particularly in the context of the Imperial Family, it is crucial to understand the seemingly contradictory positions of the emperor in society. Emperors were constrained by their role as what Stephen S. Large termed, “manifest destinies,” or sacred authorities in the lineage of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, yet in the era after 1868, the Imperial Family was also promoted as a role model of modernity and the nuclear family, their images shown in prints, newspapers, and pictorial magazines.<sup>13</sup> The scholarship of Stephen Large thus brings a contradiction in the interpretation of the emperor to the fore: the emperor was a representative of a timeless, sacred institution, yet simultaneously he was an individual human acting as a role model for the citizenry.

Scholarship on Empress Teimei has predominantly focused on her biography and her role within the Imperial Family and the imperial institution, but her impact on broader society has not received significant attention. For example, Empress Teimei’s role in promoting the Shinto religion within the Imperial Family and palace life is documented in historian Hara Takeshi’s

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<sup>11</sup> For example, see William Elliot Griffis, *The Mikado: Institution and Person* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915).

<sup>12</sup> For further detail on the writings of these scholars, please refer to Chapter One. See: Stephen S. Large, *Emperors of the Rising Sun: Three Biographies* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1997), Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), Hara Takeshi, *Taishō Tennō* [Emperor Taishō] (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 2000), and Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of the emperors as “manifest destinies,” see Large, *Emperors of the Rising Sun*, 10. For additional information on pictorial magazines such as *Kōzoku gahō* (皇族画報, *Royal Pictorial*), see Junko Aoki, “Zasshi ‘Kōzoku gahō’ ni miru kindai kōzoku fuasshon no imeji,” [The Image of Royal Family Fashion as Shown in Kozoku Gaho: The Military Uniform and the Dress] *Contentsu Bunkashi Kenkyū* [Journal of Contents History Studies] 8 (2013): 69-87.

work, wherein he argues for the Empress as having a strong influence on the nationalist ideas of her son, Emperor Hirohito, during World War II. Historian Jordan Sand argues for the significance of national and imperial institutions in defining the modern family and women's roles within the structure of the home and the nation-state, yet he does not discuss Teimei specifically. While previous historical studies establish Teimei's role within the Imperial Family and on a national level, none of the aforementioned scholars address how visual media represented Teimei, nor how her image was consumed by the general public, both of which are core topics of this dissertation. Furthermore, despite a recent increase in scholarship addressing Emperor Meiji, Empress Teimei and her husband Emperor Taishō are nearly absent from art historical studies, particularly in English.<sup>14</sup> At this point, I will turn to a more detailed review of relevant scholarship which focuses on the Imperial Family, including that by Takashi Fujitani, Hara Takeshi, Kawamura Kunimitsu, Wakakuwa Midori, and Hayakawa Noriyo.

In the modern period, and with the Restoration of Imperial Rule in 1868, the roles and responsibilities of the Imperial Family changed dramatically. These changes, particularly in regard to how the Meiji Emperor was viewed in the public sphere, are detailed by Takashi Fujitani in his groundbreaking and oft-cited work, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*.<sup>15</sup> Fujitani examines the invention of the modern monarchy in the course of the late nineteenth century, arguing that 1889, the year of the Promulgation of the Constitution, was a turning point for the public pageantry of the Japanese Imperial Household. While the twenty years prior to 1889 were marked by what he terms "archaic models" of imperial progresses, such

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<sup>14</sup> For examples of English language studies on the image of Emperor Meiji see: Mikiko Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes: Japanese Visuality and Imperial Portrait Photography," *History of Photography* 33:2 (2009), and Yuki Morishima, "Political and Ritual Usages of Portraits of Japanese Emperors in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2014). In an additional example of previous scholarship, Morris Low writes on the Shōwa Emperor, with reference to the Meiji Emperor, yet only mentions Taishō a few times. Morris Low, *Japan on Display: Photography and the Emperor* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

as the Emperor visiting towns throughout the archipelago with a modest entourage, little pomp, and staying in modest, makeshift accommodations, the decades which followed the shift were characterized by new public celebrations and rituals, including weddings, funerals, anniversaries, and state ceremonials.<sup>16</sup> Building on the work of the Japanese historian Taki Kōji, Fujitani further argues for the development of the ritualized male gaze of the Emperor in the Meiji period, proposing that the Emperor was at the center of a “panoptic regime,” overseeing his people, their possessions, and their labor.<sup>17</sup> Fujitani’s book not only pioneered the study of the modern Imperial Family in the English language, but it also had a profound impact on the study of Meiji period art and history, expanding the field in new, cross-disciplinary directions, particularly in regard to the role of pageantry and visual culture in establishing the monarchy as a central institution of the modern state.

Hara Takeshi is the foremost scholar working on the Taishō Imperial Family today. He has written a variety of books and articles addressing Taishō and Teimei, with a focus on biography.<sup>18</sup> Hara writes of the Taishō Emperor as a man who was very open, and who spoke freely and casually with his citizens while he was Crown Prince. He traveled to all corners of Japan, as well as Korea, and was talented at composing classical Chinese poetry, a longer form which differed greatly from the short *waka* poems that his father used to express himself. Hara also writes of a man who struggled with the transition to becoming emperor, and had difficulties with the responsibilities placed on him after ascending the throne, troubles which contributed further to his already deteriorating health. Hara characterizes Taishō as a man who thoroughly

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., x-xi.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 52-55.

<sup>18</sup> See: Hara Takeshi, *Taishō Tennō*, and Hara Takeshi, *Kōgōkō* [Thoughts on the Empress] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2015).

enjoyed his time at the imperial retreats, and took great pleasure in outdoor excursions, something he did at the expense of his responsibilities to palace rites.

Concerning Teimei, in his article, “Taishō: An Enigmatic Emperor and his Influential Wife,” Hara argues for Teimei as a strong and impactful figure in the Imperial Household, who was a devout religious believer, first in Nichiren Buddhism and later in Shinto, with some interest in Christianity throughout her life.<sup>19</sup> In the article, he states that Teimei believed that Taishō’s illness was retribution on behalf of the Shinto deities for his flippancy towards palace rites. He further argues that Teimei clashed with her son Hirohito during his youth and into the war years for the same reason; she was deeply concerned about her son exhibiting a great devotion to the rites and to the deities, so much so, Hara argues, that she was influential in extending the Pacific War.<sup>20</sup> Another key study by Hara, “‘Kokutai’ no shikakuka—Taishō·Shōwa shoki ni okeru tennōsei no saihei” [「国体」の視覚化—大正・昭和初期における天皇制の再編, The Visualization of the ‘Kokutai’—Reorganizing the Emperor System from Taishō to Shōwa], is important for his argument that the modern imperial system was not monolithic or static, but rather, the etiquette and terminology surrounding the emperors changed throughout the modern era.<sup>21</sup> Hara cites examples from the reigns of Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa that show how each emperor was treated in differing fashions depending on the social, cultural, and political context which surrounded them. By exploring the biography and inner workings of the Imperial Household, Hara Takeshi’s scholarship is crucial for understanding the Taishō era, and for the historical study of Teimei and Taishō as public figures.

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<sup>19</sup> Hara Takeshi, “Taishō: An Enigmatic Emperor and his Influential Wife,” in *The Emperors of Modern Japan*, ed. Be-Ami Shillony (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 227-240.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 238-239.

<sup>21</sup> Hara Takeshi, “‘Kokutai’ no shikakuka—Taishō·Shōwa shoki ni okeru tennōsei no saihei,” [The Visualization of the ‘kokutai’—Reorganizing the Emperor System from Taishō to Shōwa] in *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru* [Thoughts on the Emperor and Royalty] v. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 135-159.

Kawamura Kunimitsu's work, "Tennōke no konin to shussan" [天皇家婚姻と出産, Marriage and Birth in the Imperial Family], examines gender roles in the modern Japanese Imperial Family.<sup>22</sup> Although the essay does not touch on the visual representation of the Imperial Family, it presents critical information and concepts as related to the Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa empresses. Specifically, Kawamura ties the monogamous relationship of the Taishō imperial couple to the "one man, one woman" campaign, in which the government promoted monogamous marital relationships in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the article, Kawamura points out the use of the Shinto deities Izanami and Izanagi, as models for the system.<sup>23</sup> Izanami and Izanagi were legendary Shinto deities whose procreation led to the islands and natural features of Japan, as recorded in the mythical histories the *Kojiki* (古事記, Record of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀, Chronicles of Japan), both from the eighth century C.E. The story emphasizes the love shared by the two deities, as well as their equal importance in creating Japan, however, there are subtexts of male dominance and female impurities within the narrative.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Kawamura delineates the clearly divided gender roles of the emperor and empress, with the men of the Imperial Household having a military-oriented role, and the women tending to domestic and family affairs. He also discusses the public activities of the Imperial Household as performances conducted in front of an audience (who were the *kokumin*—国民, citizenry), who observed vis-à-vis media communication, such as *nishiki-e* (錦絵, multicolor woodblock prints), photographs, newspapers, and magazines.<sup>25</sup> Finally, he addresses the transition from the Taishō monarchy to the Shōwa, who he refers to as a

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<sup>22</sup> Kawamura Kunimitsu, "Tennōke no konin to shussan" [Marriage and Birth in the Imperial Family, in *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru*, v. 10 [Thoughts on the Emperor and Royalty] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 161-182.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>24</sup> For example, their first child is born deformed, which was blamed upon Izanami, as she spoke in front of her husband during their first marriage ceremony. See: *Kōjiki* [Records of Ancient Matters] trans. Donald L. Phillips (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

<sup>25</sup> Kawamura, 167.

more “open Imperial Family,” as they allowed for more of their life to be on display from the 1930s on.<sup>26</sup> Kawamura Kunimitsu’s study connects Shinto myth, modern imperial gender roles, and government policy, providing a critical examination of the Imperial Family and their impact on Japanese society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Wakakuwa Midori’s book, *Kōgō no shōzō* [皇后の肖像, Portraits of the Empress], is groundbreaking for the field of Japanese feminist art history as well as studies of the Imperial Family. It is the first full-length study to concentrate on the modern empresses and the visual culture surrounding them.<sup>27</sup> In the book, Wakakuwa, a feminist scholar whose primary area of research was European painting, focuses on images of Empress Shōken (1849-1914), wife of Emperor Meiji (1852-1912), and analyzes them through the lens of social and political context. *Kōgō no shōzō* provides a detailed examination of the *goshinei* (御真影, sacred Imperial images), *nishiki-e* (multi-colored woodblock prints), and portraiture, all of which will be covered in Chapter Two, as well as morality manuals, European dress, and the mythology of the empress. Wakakuwa traces Shōken’s portrait to Italian models, and asserts that the empress image was used to promote a new model of the nuclear family in the nineteenth century. In the introduction of the book she examines the impact of the visual components of the empress image produced in the Meiji period, arguing that with the image of Shōken the Meiji government attempted to project power over women’s lives. Wakakuwa uses the creation of the *koseki* (戸籍, family registration system), wherein all Japanese citizens are listed by their ancestry in government-held records in their hometown, as an example of population management. She links the *koseki* to the image of Shōken by stating that women were kept in the private domain, both visually and through public policy, and that the family unit as the foundation of government control was a

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>27</sup> Wakakuwa Midori, *Kōgō no shōzō: Shōken kōtaigō no kyōshō to josei no kokuminka* [Portrait of the Empress: The Representation of Empress Shōken and the Nationalization of Women] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2001).

means to regulate reproduction and thus population. Wakakuwa points out that even into the twentieth century Japanese law and culture worked to protect the male-dominated system.<sup>28</sup> All of these feminist arguments are tied to the image of Shōken as a component in supporting the establishment of women's roles in the home. Throughout the book, Wakakuwa's varied arguments and analyses of Shōken's image all support her larger point: that the empress image in the Meiji period was one component in the state's strategy to keep women out of positions of power. For the purposes of this dissertation, Wakakuwa's argument sets the historical stage for empress images in the Taishō period.

Finally, in the article, "The Formation of Modern Imperial Japan from the Perspective of Gender," historian Noriyo Hayakawa ventures into a discussion of the sexual politics of the imperial couple. In discussing this topic amidst a larger argument regarding Imperial Household Law and the gender of imperial succession, Hayakawa questions the implications of the codified use of concubines for the emperor and how this "sexual liberation" of the husband affected, "the wife's contained sexuality."<sup>29</sup> Her conclusion on the matter is that the occasional slips into the world of politics by the Meiji Empress were transgressions that "constituted an unconscious rebellion" against the abuses of the institution of monogamy, in this case relations with courtesans constituting said abuse.<sup>30</sup> Although Hayakawa's argument presumes much about the inner emotional concerns of the Empress, the larger point remains: in the context of the Meiji period the empresses' political activities, however minor they were, were not sanctioned by law or court etiquette, and as such were subversive in nature. Whether these political activities were a

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> Hayakawa Noriyo, "The Formation of Modern Imperial Japan from the Perspective of Gender," in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie, and Ulrike Wöhr (London: Routledge, 2014), 27-33..

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 32.

form of rebellion, or an active personal insurrection against her sexual position vis-à-vis imperial courtesans is impossible to discern through the historical record.

While each of these studies provides important background information for this dissertation, none of them address Empress Teimei as their primary subject, and none examine the visual culture which surrounded her, both of which are the focus of this study. The feminist scholarship of Wakakuwa and Hayakawa, combined with the gender studies of Kawamura, impacted my analysis by providing theoretical frameworks of feminist scholarship addressing the Imperial Family and their impact on larger social systems of gender, as well as the potential for subversive actions within the conventional gender structure of the Imperial Family. Fujitani's study opened the field to interdisciplinary inquiry on the Imperial Family and established the male gaze of Emperor Meiji, while Hara provided necessary background information. Previous art historical studies on the modern Japanese monarchs have focused on Emperor Meiji, and to a lesser extent Emperor Shōwa and Empress Shōken. This dissertation fills a gap in the field, being the first full-length examination of the image of Empress Teimei, and the first in-depth examination of the visual culture of the Taishō monarchy in English. Furthermore, this study bridges the study of prints, photography, and painting, in order to fully grasp the visual milieu of imperial femininity in the early twentieth century.

### Defining Relevant Terms

In discussing the Japanese Imperial Family, there are a few concepts and terms which take on distinct definitions, and which are crucial to understanding the Imperial Household as a modern institution. Before proceeding with my argument, the following key terms are necessary to define here: modern, emperor and empress, and *kokutai* (national polity). Presently, these terms will be

described with a focus on their specific relevance to the Imperial Family and Imperial Household.

In this dissertation, I use the term “modern” in reference to the period between 1868 and 1945. The year 1868 marks the Meiji Restoration, wherein the emperor was returned to a central political and religious role and the Meiji period (1868-1912) began. In the preceding centuries, Japan was governed by a feudal system led by the shoguns, or military rulers. With the change in leadership, the nation went from a secluded, agrarian state to an industrialized global power, in only a matter of decades. In addition to large-scale, society-wide changes, the Restoration was the start of the modern imperial institution; as will be discussed in Chapters One and Two, the first thirty years of Emperor Meiji’s rule was the time when most of the standards of imperial behavior, ritual, and public interaction were established.

During the Meiji, Taishō, and the first half of the Shōwa period, which constitute the decades from 1868 to 1945, the Imperial Family was used for nation-building purposes. Throughout this time the emperors were believed to be descendants from Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess.<sup>31</sup> In the preceding era, the emperors were largely invisible to the public eye, and in the years post-1945, the emperors rescinded their political status, acting as figureheads and cultural icons, rather than in positions of power. Furthermore, many of the performed rituals of the

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<sup>31</sup> In English, the modern emperors are often referred to as deities, however there is some cultural translation which requires clarification in this regard. The divinity of the emperors was promoted in the modern period, building throughout the Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa periods, and eventually included in morality texts in the 1930s and 1940s. This divinity arose from the ancestry of the emperors, and from their connections to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. The emperors were not regarded in the Euro-American sense of a god; they were not omnipotent and did not possess supernatural powers. When Emperor Shōwa announced the end of the war with his August 15 radio broadcast, the *Gyokuon-hōsō* (玉音放送, Jewel-voice broadcast), he said nothing of his personal divinity. With his January 1, 1946 broadcast, he touched upon the subject, but did not specifically renounce his divinity. Ben Ami Shillony recounts that he stated, “The ties between him and the people did not ‘depend upon mere legends and myths’ and were not ‘predicated on the false conception that the Emperor is divine.’ He confirmed the fact that his sacred position did not derive from the belief that he was god, but from the belief that he was a descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami.” In short, Hirohito did not renounce his divine descent, as it provided the legitimacy for the Imperial Family, but did step back from the wartime escalation of his status. See: Ben-Ami Shillony, “‘Restoration,’ ‘Emperor,’ ‘Diet,’ ‘Prefecture,’ or: How Japanese Concepts were Mistranslated into Western Languages,” *Ben-Ami Shillony- Collected Writings* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), n.p.

Imperial Family, activities which are now incorporated into a basic understanding of their role in society, were constructed during the modern era. As was described in the literature review above, Takashi Fujitani's scholarship addresses this notion in the Meiji period. The concept of the "construction of tradition," as will be used throughout this dissertation, refers to Fujitani's idea that during the late nineteenth century the bureaucracy surrounding the emperor, specifically the Imperial Household Ministry (now Agency), created public rituals, processions, and rites which were loosely based on tradition, and which worked to legitimize and validate the position of the emperor at the head of society. As the period between 1868 and 1945 was defined by the construction and usage of the Imperial Family as heads of state, and as there were dramatic differences in social, religious, and political organization in Japan both before and after this time period, the term modern is a logical descriptor for this era.

The English usage of the terms emperor and empress also needs delineation in the context of modern Imperial Japan. Today, the continued usage of emperor and empress in English to refer to the contemporary Japanese sovereigns is problematic, as Japan does not have an empire. Historically, however, the term emperor was appropriate, as Japan did possess imperial territories in the Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa periods.<sup>32</sup> It was during this period that the English term emperor began to replace the transliterated *mikado*. The term *mikado* (帝, emperor) was used in English in the nineteenth century to refer to the Japanese monarchs, but has since gone out of favor, replaced with the term emperor.<sup>33</sup> Developed to contrast the Japanese emperor with that of other nations (specifically, China), the Japanese word *tennō* (天皇, emperor) refers only to the Japanese emperor, rather than the term *kōtei* (皇帝, emperor), which refers to any emperor.

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<sup>32</sup> When Korea became a part of the Japanese empire in 1911, the Korean nobility was brought into the larger community of the Japanese nobility.

<sup>33</sup> Ben-Ami Shillony calls for the transliterated use of *tennō*, as *mikado* was not commonly used by the Japanese themselves, and emperor is not an accurate translation. See: Ben-Ami Shillony, "Restoration,' 'Emperor,' 'Diet,' 'Prefecture,'" *Ben-Ami Shillony-Collected Writings*, n.p.

The Japanese imperial system was initially developed between the mid-sixth and early eighth centuries, during a period when the influence of Chinese culture, and specifically Confucianism, was particularly strong.<sup>34</sup> Under Confucian philosophy, merit is a core value, and the overthrow of unjust rulers who lack merit is warranted. Because the Japanese monarchy draws their legitimacy and power from their deified lineage, it was necessary to create a distinction between the Japanese system and those of other nations. While the political and power structure of Japan changed a great deal throughout the centuries, the emperors retained their unbroken lineage, regardless of governmental control. Throughout their differing political fortunes, the Japanese emperors were continually associated with the Shinto religion, and with the Great Shrine at Ise, home of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, and the most important shrine in the Shinto structure. Their importance to rituals at the shrine provided them with a crucial and unique role, and one which could not be usurped by political leaders. More detail on the political position of the emperors will be provided in Chapter One, but for now it will suffice to say that as the emperors of the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa periods were reliant upon their advisers, ministers, and the *genrō* (元老, an extraconstitutional palace oligarchy), true political power and authority in the Taishō period rested with the bureaucracy, the military, and the heads of the House of Peers, the Privy Council, and the House of Representatives.<sup>35</sup> While the emperors of the modern era were presented with the aura of political and military authority, their primary importance remained in their symbolic and religious roles.

*Kokutai* (国体), or national polity, is yet another key concept that was distinct in meaning during Japan's modern era. Generally translated as national polity or national essence, the term

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<sup>34</sup> For a full account of early Imperial history see: Imatani Akira, "The Strange Survival and its Modern Significance," n.p., in *The Emperors of Modern Japan*, ed. Ben-Ami Shillony (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Bernard S. Silberman, "Conclusion: Taishō Japan and the Crisis of Secularism," in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, ed. Bernard S. Silberman and H. D. Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 244.

literally means national body. Defining *kokutai* is notoriously difficult; the term has its roots in the pre-modern period, and the nuance in the meaning of the term quickly evolved in the modern era. In essence, *kokutai* refers to the “unique” Japanese system of governance, social structure, and rule. Closely linked with the emperor, who was envisioned as the father figure of the nation, *kokutai* was, in the nineteenth century, a means for justifying the continuation of the monarchy, the expansion of State Shinto, and the promotion of the legendary origins of Japan and the Imperial Family, while simultaneously maintaining a constitutional democracy in the style of the European powers. As time progressed, the use of *kokutai* to keep these two systems blended into an overarching philosophy of single governance with the emperor at the head of state.

In 1925, at the end of the Taishō era, the Peace Preservation Law was passed, criminalizing the critique of the *kokutai* and the property system, and making criticism of the emperor a capital offense.<sup>36</sup> By 1937, with the publication of *Kokutai no hongī* (国体の本義, Cardinal Principles of the National Polity), the system reached its zenith; the manifesto promoted the emperor as central to Japanese life, stating:

Our country is established with the emperor, who is a descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami, as its center, as our ancestors as well as we ourselves constantly have beheld in the emperor the fountainhead of her life and activities. For this reason, to serve the emperor and to receive the emperor’s great august will as our own is the rationale of making our historical ‘life’ live in the present; and on this is based the morality of the people.<sup>37</sup>

Communal interest, military values, and serving the nation above all else were promoted as part of the text, which was distributed to school children throughout the nation. Throughout the

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<sup>36</sup> See Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 41, Richard H. Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 56-68, and Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 170.

<sup>37</sup> Selections from *Kokutai no hongī* [Fundamentals of our National Polity], 1937, from *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur L. Tiedemann, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 968-969, 975.

period covered in this dissertation, the concept of *kokutai* was steadily developing, its influence growing greater with time. Regarding the study of empress images, the promotion of *kokutai* in the modern period means that there is no critique of the Imperial Family to be found in the historical record. The images under examination in this dissertation were created and disseminated under state control, and any questioning of the Imperial Family or the system that surrounded them was swiftly suppressed.

### Chapter Outline

This dissertation is composed of four chapters, covering the image of Empress Teimei from the announcement of her marriage in 1899 to the end of the Taishō monarchy in 1926. Her years as Empress Dowager, as well as her funeral in 1951 will be briefly discussed in the conclusion.

Chapter One, “Empress Teimei: Biography and Background,” delineates the biographies of Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō, and situates them in the context of the imperial system and State Shinto in the early twentieth century. This chapter explains the role of the Imperial Household Agency in the modern monarchy, and reviews the Japanese Imperial Family system in the modern period with the goal of providing the necessary background information for the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter Two, “Toward the Sacred and the Standard: Formality, Lineage, and Decorum in the Modern Japanese Imperial Portrait,” discusses official studio portraiture of the Japanese monarchs in the modern era with the aim of explaining how Imperial portraiture evolved in the decades between the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the end of the Taishō period (1926). Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, images of the emperors became increasingly standardized and sacred in nature, and the laws and norms which dictated the distribution and exhibition of imperial portraiture were codified. Simultaneously, images of the

empresses became increasingly visible, and took on an aura of “modernity.” Chapter Two provides an overview of the history of imperial portraiture in the pre-modern eras, investigates the initial construct of the modern imperial portrait in the Meiji period, and examines the fully articulated modern imperial portrait in the Taishō period. This chapter also looks at the *Meiji kaigakan*, a painting gallery representing Emperor Meiji, which was conceptualized during the Taishō period and realized in the early Shōwa period.

Chapter Three, “In/visibility: The Absence and Presence of Gendered Imperial Images in the Taishō Period,” traces the shift in Teimei’s public image between 1899 and 1926, with a focus on photographic images published in *Asahi Shinbun* (朝日新聞, Asahi Newspaper). This chapter argues that as Emperor Taishō disappeared from public view in the late 1910s due to illness, Empress Teimei took on a more active public role, appearing in situations formerly uncommon for the women of the Imperial Household, and thus contributing to changing norms in acceptable roles for women. I argue that in the context of the Regency period, starting in 1920 Empress Teimei acted as an Imperial Proxy, as her husband remained sequestered at the Imperial Palace. Prior to 1924, Crown Prince Hirohito was unmarried, and visibly youthful, which meant he was not prepared to fully act in his father’s place, thus leaving Teimei to be the foremost representative of the Imperial Family.

Chapter Four, “The Maternal Monarch: Gender Politics, Women’s Magazines, and the Empress Image in the Taishō Period,” examines Teimei’s image as published in the magazine *Fujin gahō* (婦人画報, Ladies Pictorial), a publication that was marketed to ladies of the upper and upper-middle classes. In the context of this women’s magazine, Teimei’s image fit the role of the military mother, a Taishō period version of the *ryōsai kenbo* (良妻賢母), or “good wife, wise mother.” This ideology, which was popular between the 1890s and the Pacific War (1941-1945) reflected social expectations of women’s roles, with specific nuance for each era. Chapter

Four also looks at the impact of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake on the Imperial Family in the public sphere, and discusses the conservative turn that Teimei's image took in the years after the earthquake and before her husband's death in 1926, a time when she faded to the background amidst the wedding of her son, and the transition to the subsequent generation of monarchs.

Each of these chapters examines different media, audiences, and distribution channels for constructing the narrative of imperial power in Japan, yet their ultimate purpose was to elevate the empress, and to promote her image as a role model for the activities of modern women. Throughout this dissertation, the image of Empress Teimei, as produced by the Imperial Household Agency, strikes a balance between propaganda and popular media, noble philanthropy and upper-middle class role model, celebrity and mother of the nation. By examining how Teimei's image was exalted and approachable at the same time, this dissertation illuminates a dynamic and powerful female figure who impacted not only women in her own time, but whose influence extended to later generations of the Imperial Household, creating a greater role for imperial women, and elevating the status of women's roles at a crucial juncture in Japanese history.

## Chapter One: The Imperial Family in the Modern Era: Biography and Background

On November 3, 1899, the *Asahi Shinbun* (朝日新聞, Asahi Newspaper) ran an illustrated portrait of Sadako Kujō, a daughter of the noble Fujiwara house, and the future Empress of Japan.<sup>38</sup>

Modest in size, the image shows Kujō in the year before her marriage into the Imperial Household in a half-length portrait, the details of her physical form vague, owing to the nature of the medium. It was with this early image, and a handful of other, similar pictures from the same time, that the Japanese citizenry was introduced to their future empress. From late 1899 forward, the narrative biography of Empress Teimei and her place within the Japanese Imperial Family began to be written in the public forum. This biography was calculated in nature, and always in service of the mission of the Imperial Household Agency (formerly Ministry), and their goals of maintaining respect for the emperor, empress, and larger Imperial Family.

Empress Teimei, like the other members of the modern Japanese Imperial Household, is not a figure who we can truly know. Throughout the course of written history, the imperial lineage of Japan experienced no interregnum, with mythical roots extending over 2,500 years into the past. Throughout this lengthy history the treatment of the Imperial Family by the ruling classes and the public was varied. The emperors of Japan were, until 1945, considered to be deities, and in the modern period, defined as 1868 to 1945 for the purposes of this dissertation, the emperors and their families were treated with reverence and respect afforded to a sacred presence.<sup>39</sup> Their true personalities and opinions were not known to the public, and although

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<sup>38</sup> For an image see: *Asahi shinbun*, November 3, 1899, page 2, Osaka Supplement. Illustration for Article, “九条節子姫御方 (皇太子妃内定)” (Kujō Sadako hime okata (kōtaishihi naitei), Honorable Lady Kujō Sadako (An unofficial decision on the [appointment of the] Crown Princess).

<sup>39</sup> 1868 marks the start of the restoration of Imperial rule in Japan, and the opening of the nation to international trade. This is widely considered the start of the modern era in the field of Japanese studies. I am using the end of the Pacific War, 1945, to mark the transition from the modern era into the postwar, as discussed in the Introduction. The post war period in Japan is defined by the US occupation (1945-1952), and the US occupation of Okinawa (1945-1972), and was a vastly different political landscape than that under consideration here. For the full lineage of

there was, and still is, some element of celebrity gossip that surrounds their media presence, negative comments were strictly suppressed by the state censorship machine.<sup>40</sup> The Imperial Family did not make statements during their public appearances, and their personal thoughts, if recorded, were not and are not available to the public today. Therefore, Empress Teimei as examined in this dissertation is the Empress who was known to the public. Teimei's life and role as seen in the forums of newspapers, print culture, and magazines will be put under the lens, as that is the only aspect of her persona which is, and was, accessible and available.

This chapter will begin with background information on the Japanese imperial system, including the modern conceptions of the Imperial Family and the role of the Imperial Household Agency. The second part will discuss the State Shinto system, and how the Imperial Family was connected to the Shinto religion in the modern era. The final section will cover biographical information on Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō. By introducing the Emperor and Empress, the role of the Imperial Family in larger society, as well as the imperial system in Japan, this chapter aims to provide the necessary biographical and contextual information on the Imperial Family and the structures that surrounded them in the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa eras.

### The Japanese Imperial System

Since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese Imperial Family was, and continues to be, a central institution in Japanese society. Active in philanthropic, scholarly, and cultural pursuits, and for the men of the house in the period prior to 1945, active in the Shinto religion, the

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emperors see: "Genealogy of the Emperors of Japan," *Imperial Household Agency*, <http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-about/genealogy/img/keizu-e.pdf>. Accessed October 2015.

<sup>40</sup> While conducting research at *Kunaichō*, the Imperial Household Agency, in 2014, a variety of sources I requested to see were restricted. Some, which contained detailed records on the household expenses and activities of Empress Teimei, were partially censored for viewing in the research room. Others that were labeled in the database with relatively vague records, were not available for public viewing until the following year.

military, and politics, the Imperial Family had a great impact on Japanese society and culture throughout the past 150 years. This social and political influence and presence, however, was not always a central part of Japanese civilization. This section will introduce the Japanese Imperial System and provide a brief overview of the Imperial Household in the modern period, including relevant biographical details of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, the Imperial couple of the modern era.

The modern Japanese imperial system had its start in the years after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. When the Tokugawa shogunate, which ruled Japan for over 250 years, was overthrown in a coup, the leaders of the rebellion decided to restore the imperial institution to a central role in the Japanese society and state. Prior to 1868, the emperor lived in seclusion in the old capital of Kyoto. During the period of military rule, which began with the transition to the shoguns in 1185, the emperor and the court were held as near captives of the ruling powers. The Japanese Imperial Family traces its roots back over 2,500 years, to the first emperor, Emperor Jimmu (c. 660 B.C.E.-585 B.C.E), however the lineage is likely to extend legitimately 1,500 years into the past.<sup>41</sup> Throughout this history, the imperial line was claimed to be unbroken, and in Shinto and palace mythology, the lineage is traced to the Shinto sun goddess, Amaterasu.<sup>42</sup> During the course of the thousands of years of imperial history, the Emperor of Japan took on different roles at different times; at points he was a powerful figure, and at other moments he was held near captive in the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, subject to the whims of the military rulers who held power. This lengthy history is far too complex to detail here, but it is crucial to note that

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<sup>41</sup> For the full lineage see “Genealogy of the Emperors of Japan,” *Imperial Household Agency*. Emperor Keitai (507-531) is generally thought to be the first emperor with established historical evidence. Most historians dispute the unbroken lineage mythology. See: Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire’s 2,600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 185-187.

<sup>42</sup> The lineage from Jimmu to Amaterasu can be found in *Kojiki*. As *Kojiki* was a pseudo-historical narrative, written in the eighth century at the request of an empress, it is not considered an accurate historical source. See *Kōjiki* [Records of Ancient Matters], trans. Donald L. Phillipi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

throughout this history, the emperor was never a public figure. He did not take tours of the nation, and did not appear before the masses. It is questionable how much the general populace was even aware of the imperial presence, as he was not seen in distributed visual culture until the modern period.

The empresses of the premodern Imperial Household played even less of a role in both palace and public life. Emperors generally had many concubines to serve them at the Imperial Palace, and the idea of a single empress who acted as part of a couple with the emperor was not part of the structure of the Imperial Household prior to 1868. Women could take the throne prior to the modern period, and did so on eight occasions, mostly standing in for a crown prince too young to become emperor himself. Of these eight, six female *tennō* (天皇, emperor) acted in the Nara period (710-794) or earlier.<sup>43</sup> Those who did serve during the early modern Edo period (1600-1868) were not perceived as strong leaders.<sup>44</sup> The term *kōgō* (皇后, empress or empress consort) was not commonly and widely used for the spouse of the emperor until the modern period, a point to which I will return later. As a result, the women who served as companions for the emperor and mothers of the crown princes were not well known among commoners. They were cloistered from public view, organized according to a strict system of ranking, and subject to the many rites and rituals of the palace, particularly if they were to bear a son for the

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<sup>43</sup> Ernst Lokowandt, "The Imperial House Law and its Meaning for the Position of the Tennō in the Meiji State," in *Leaders and Leadership in Japan*, Ian Nery, ed. (Surrey: Japan Library, 1996), 128-146, 132.

<sup>44</sup> One instance of a woman ruler during the Edo period was Okiko (posthumously Meishō), who began rule in 1629. She was the daughter of Kotohito (posthumously Go-Mizunoo), who tried to seize power from the new shogun, failed, and then resigned, allowing his last-but-one daughter Okiko to become *shujō* (emperor). Another instance was Toshiko (posthumously Go-Sakuramachi), *shujō* from 1762-1771, during the first half of Ieharu's reign. Timon Screech states of these women, "Something of the depleted sense of a woman *shujō* can be surmised from the fact that she [Toshiko] and Okiko were omitted from the official dynastic portraits." Timon Screech, *The Shogun's Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States, 1760-1829* (London: Reaktion, 2000), 149. See also Kuroda Hideo, "Kinsei no tennō to shōgun no shōzōga" [Early Modern Emperors and the Portraits of the Shoguns] in *Ō noshintai ō no shōzō* [Body of the Sovereign, Portrait of the Sovereign] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993), 286-287.

emperor.<sup>45</sup> The present-day laws which regulate the Imperial Family were only enacted starting in the late nineteenth century, and in fact the term Imperial Family (天皇家, *tennōke*) was not widely used until the Shōwa period (1926-1989), as the emperor was not affiliated with a family in the premodern period.<sup>46</sup> Within the system of modern imperial law, the first draft as written in 1882 allowed for women to take the throne, however, as women did not have suffrage, the concept of a female leader was viewed as contradictory, and thus the law was changed in subsequent drafts. By 1889 when imperial law was made official, women were excluded from taking the throne, a provision that continues to this day.<sup>47</sup>

It was in the first decade of the Meiji period (1868-1912), that the emperor and the Imperial Family became a central part of Japanese society. Emperor Meiji became a central military, religious, and political figure in the late nineteenth century, with his primary wife, Empress Shōken, and his son, Crown Prince Haru (later Emperor Taishō), taking on the public role of the model nuclear family, which will be detailed in the following pages. The roles and responsibilities that Emperor Meiji adopted were completely new in the course of Japanese history; with the reinstatement of the emperor at the head of society, entirely new rituals, ceremonies, institutions, and societal norms had to be created in order to cement the emperor's position as the head of the new, modern Japanese nation. In addition to the dramatic changes that took place in the 1870s, the position of the Imperial Family in public life transformed at least two

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<sup>45</sup> These women usually came from the Fujiwara noble family, and one was ranked as head consort. Her rank was not necessarily about her role in birthing an eldest son, as there were many cases of illegitimate successors to the throne. In the record of 120 emperors, only 60 were a son succeeding his father, and many of those were not the eldest, or legitimate sons. It should be remembered, however, that in the Japanese tradition monogamy and a sacrament of marriage did not exist, thus leaving the legitimate/illegitimate line to be quite unclear. In short, the story of Japanese succession was not as tidy as the modern narrative might lead one to think. See: Lokowandt, 132-133.

<sup>46</sup> The concepts surrounding the Imperial Family as a unit were, however, initiated in the late nineteenth century. As such, I will use the term *tennōke* throughout this dissertation. See: Yokoo Yutaka, *Rekidai Tennō to Kōgōtachi* [Generations of Emperors and Empresses] (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1987), 53.

<sup>47</sup> Toyama Shigeki, *Tennō to kazoku, nihon kindai-shisō taikai* [Emperor and Family, Modern Japanese Ideology and Systems] Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1989), 132.

additional times between 1889 and the post-war period. Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei cemented the imperial roles which were invented in the Meiji period, but these roles would change with the regency period (1921-1926), as will be the topic of Chapter Three of this dissertation.<sup>48</sup> The public personas of the Imperial Family changed yet again with their successors, Emperor Shōwa and Empress Kōjun, as the nation marched towards imperialism and greater nationalism in the late 1920s and into the 1930s. The Shōwa Emperor's image was marked in the age of empire by his role as the head of the military in the pre-war years, and changed yet again in the post-war era, when his societal status adjusted to fit the needs of the post-war political state.

In the years since 1945, the emperor and empress have functioned as figureheads with no political power. One of the conditions of Japanese surrender at the end of World War II was that the emperor renounce his status as a deity (as will be discussed in detail later in this chapter), which, much to the shock of many Japanese citizens, he did with a radio broadcast on August 15, 1945, declaring the surrender of the Japanese Empire. Since then, the monarchy have acted as cultural ambassadors for Japan, and taken on a distinctly intellectual reputation. The current Emperor, Akihito (b. 1933), has a strong interest in ichthyology, and has published research papers on the topic. Empress Kōjun (1903-2000), wife of Hirohito (1901-1989), was an accomplished artist, with her works being exhibited and included in exhibition catalogues devoted to her creative pursuit. Princess Akiko of Mikasa (b. 1981) holds a doctorate in art history from Merton College (Oxford), and regularly conducts research and presents on her scholarship.

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<sup>48</sup> The regency was a time when Emperor Taishō fell ill, and his son Crown Prince Hirohito was named as regent in his place.

The creation of the majority of modern imperial systems was undertaken over the course of more than two decades, with some systems not being codified into law until almost forty years after Emperor Meiji came to the throne. Every aspect of imperial life needed to be documented and put into the legal code, including the way imperial events such as weddings, enthronements, and funerals were commemorated, the message depicted in imperial portraiture, national holidays in honor of the emperor, and private religious rites, all of which had to be defined and presented to the public in an authoritative fashion. Most of these imperial activities were portrayed and promoted to the public with an air of historicity, yet were only loosely based on ancient precedent; the rites, rituals, and public performances of the emperor and the Imperial Family were primarily creations of the modern age. The construction of the Imperial Family as undertaken in the Meiji period was intertwined with the lives of the founding family of Japan's modern imperial lineage, Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, whose biographies I will turn to thusly.

Every activity of Emperor Meiji (明治天皇), born in Kyoto in 1852, is detailed in the lengthy, multivolume official chronicle, *Meiji tennō ki* (明治天皇記, Record of the Emperor Meiji).<sup>49</sup> While the full details of his public life were documented with extreme attention to minute detail, the story of his personal life and personal thoughts are relatively unknown. As the first modern, and first public emperor, he undertook a variety of actions which were new to the Imperial Household: he was the first emperor to meet a European, tour the nation, live in the new capital of Tokyo, and have his image widely displayed in public. For one who grew up in the cloistered and unusual world of the Kyoto Imperial Palace, these encounters and experiences must have come with an enormous amount of fascination and confusion, and decidedly took a

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<sup>49</sup> Kunaichō, *Meiji tennō ki* [Record of Emperor Meiji] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1968-1977).

great deal of personal strength and resolve. Each of these activities, and the numerous other firsts that he participated in led to a standardization and ritualization of the emperor's behaviors as performed for the public, foreign and domestic dignitaries, and palace visitors. The Imperial Household Agency (Ministry) would oversee this new management of imperial propriety.

Meiji was born as Sachinomiya (祐宮) to Emperor Kōmei (孝明天皇, 1831-1867) and Nakayama Yoshiko (中山慶子, 1836-1907), a *gon no tenji* (典侍), or imperial concubine.<sup>50</sup> His birth came at a time of difficult political change for the Japanese rulers, as within a year Commodore Matthew Perry would enter the harbor at Uraga (1853), near present-day Tokyo, bringing a forceful request for a trade treaty from the president of the United States. Meiji's youth was spent in Kyoto against the backdrop of intense political drama; the reign of the shoguns, which had lasted for two-hundred years prior, was coming to a close. In the midst of the signing of new international treaties and the occurrence of extraordinary economic hardship upon entering the global economy, the shogunate was in a weakened position, and faced challenges to their rule from young samurai, particularly those of the Satsuma and Chōshū regions. These samurai led a revolt in 1867, allied with the imperial court. In 1868 the young Emperor Meiji, who took the throne only one year earlier, declared an Imperial Restoration, abolishing the shogunal system with the support of a coalition of Japanese leaders who desired political revolution. The regime change that resulted from this coup came with domestic battles and much political maneuvering and marked the start of the modern imperial system.

Emperor Meiji spent his childhood cloistered in the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, surrounded by the traditional world of palace and court life. In 1860, at age eight, he was given the name

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<sup>50</sup> English publications use *gon no tenji* when referring to the court ladies who served at the pleasure of the emperor. Japanese publications use 典侍 (*tenji*), or 宮人 (*miyabito*, courtier) to refer to the women of the court. This footnote does not represent a comprehensive examination of the use of the term in publication, but a preliminary or general observation.

Mutsuhito (睦仁) upon being titled Crown Prince. Throughout this his youth, he continued his education in the classical tradition at the palace, learning poetry and Confucian classics among other topics, but without exposure to contemporary politics or statesmanship. Accounts of his childhood are rife with contradictions, and most were written at a later date, leaving many questions unanswered or unanswerable. We do know, however, that he would be the last emperor to receive his education in this manner.

Emperor Kōmei suddenly passed away in his mid-thirties in 1867, leaving the teenaged Mutsuhito to take the throne as the 122<sup>nd</sup> emperor of Japan under the rule of the last shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (徳川慶喜, 1837-1913). On September 12, 1868, Emperor Meiji was crowned in an elaborate ceremony based on Shinto rites. Previous coronations were believed to be modeled on Chinese ceremonials, and the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Shinto worked to revise the ceremonies in what they felt was an authentically Japanese fashion, and which would serve as the model for future coronation ceremonies.<sup>51</sup> The ascension ceremonies were not public, and were not held with fanfare that could be observed outside of the palace confines, although officials and laborers were given a holiday to mark the occasion. This was to be the last time that this event would happen in such a secluded fashion; beginning with Emperor Taishō the ascension ceremonies were large publicized events on a national scale, with a visual record. Within a year Emperor Meiji declared Imperial Rule, and one year later he was married to Ichijō Masako, posthumously Empress Shōken (一条勝子, 昭建皇后, 1849-1914). This was also to be the last time that an Imperial wedding occurred in isolation.

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<sup>51</sup> Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 157-159. Keene states that Iwakura Tomomi requested an officer of the Ministry of Shinto to, “examine old records to determine authentically Japanese rituals,” as he was, “sure that most of what was considered to be traditional was in fact copied from Chinese models, and he believed that in a time of great changes, it was appropriate that the ceremony be revised so as to constitute a model for future coronations.”

With the new regime, came a change in the geographic center of power. On November 26, 1868, Emperor Meiji arrived in Tokyo on his first trip to the city, becoming the first emperor to travel this distance, and to see the sights along the way, including the Pacific Ocean and Mount Fuji.<sup>52</sup> The city, while established as Edo for more than 250 years as the center of power for the shoguns, would be renamed, and remade as a modern imperial capital. The former Edo Castle, which was the central symbol of shogunal rule, had sustained great damage in the previous century. Over the course of the first decades of the Meiji period, the site became the grounds of the Imperial Palace, and remains as such to this day. This process was not completed quickly, however. Takashi Fujitani details the transfer of power from Kyoto to Tokyo over the course of eight months stretching from the September 3, 1868 edict proclaiming Edo henceforth be called Tokyo (東京, Eastern Capital) to Meiji's residence in Edo Castle, then renamed *kōkyō* (皇居, Imperial Palace) on May 9, 1869. He presents the argument that many in the elite classes viewed the new capital as a temporary site for up to twenty years after the Emperor's arrival in Tokyo.<sup>53</sup> Although the physical transformation from the low, wooden city of Edo to the modern brick metropolis of Tokyo, crisscrossed by trains and dotted with imperial monuments, would take decades, by the time of the Taishō ascendancy to the throne, the restyling of urban life would be remarkable, and the city unrecognizable from its form only forty years prior.

Unlike his predecessors, Emperor Meiji was relatively visible to his people, setting a precedent for the modern emperors to model their public personas in the style of European monarchs. He conducted imperial tours throughout the nation, and made frequent appearances on the streets of Tokyo in the imperial carriage, a vehicle which would become a symbol of the modern monarchy. As will be addressed in Chapter Two, he was the first member of the Imperial

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 162-163.

<sup>53</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 36-37.

Household to be photographed, and his visage appeared with regularity in popular woodblock and lithograph prints, all under the watchful censorship of the Imperial Household Agency.

Emperor Meiji fathered fifteen children during the course of his reign, but tragically only five of them would live to adulthood, and the only male child to survive was the future Emperor Taishō. Meiji sired children with five different concubines of the Imperial House, but never produced an heir with Empress Shōken, who was childless. This would also be a historic last, for beginning with Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei, monogamy was the preferred family structure for the Imperial Household, and maintaining concubines ceased to be an imperial practice.

Emperor Meiji's reign produced many historic changes, far too many to list here. But in addition to the plethora of firsts, as the preceding paragraphs state, Emperor Meiji was also the last in the imperial lineage to participate a variety of imperial traditions. Due to the revolutionary nature of Meiji's early years, combined with dramatic changes in technology, by the time Emperor Taishō came to the throne, many of the imperial rites and rituals which today seem to be cemented in hundreds of years of tradition were codified in the legal system. Within a few years of the restoration of imperial rule, Japanese bureaucrats recognized the importance of ceremony and ritual in the art of statecraft, and as a result they were quick and careful to establish seemingly long held traditions, and to publicize and normalize such traditions into the daily life of the citizenry. As will be covered in the next section, Emperor Meiji was not just the head of the state, but of the Shinto religion, and as such his ceremonial function, at least as perceived by the common people, was outsized, as was to be expected for a monarch with divine status.

Empress Shōken, who took the name Haruko (春子) upon her marriage to Emperor Meiji, was born to the Fujiwara clan on April 17, 1849 as Ichijō Masako.<sup>54</sup> As she was three years older than her husband, an inauspicious difference in age, her official birth year was changed to 1850 upon her marriage into the Imperial Household.<sup>55</sup> She was the first to take the title *kōgō* (皇后) in the modern era. The term *kōgō*, translated as empress consort, or empress, was given to non-ruling women who acted as the primary wife of the emperor. While employed with frequency in the tenth through fourteenth centuries, the title had decreased significantly in use, with only a few women holding the position in the centuries prior to the Meiji period.<sup>56</sup> With Shōken began the contemporary use of the term *kōgō* to refer to the wife of the emperor, as conceived in the model of the Euro-American nuclear family. Although Emperor Meiji had access to concubines or other women of his choice in the privacy of the palace, he appeared in public with Empress Shōken, and it was she who acted as the representative female face of the monarchy. The way in which Shōken modeled the new, modern sensibility of how a *kōgō* should act was recorded in a variety of woodblock and lithograph prints.<sup>57</sup> As the concept of an empress who made public appearances was a relatively new one in Japan, the Imperial Household Agency was looking to models from European monarchs and politicians' wives from the United States to base the role upon, both visually and in practice.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Her name at birth was Tōka (桃花), but her name was changed six days later. See: Otabe Yūji, *Shōken kōtaigō Teimei kōgō: hitosuji ni makoto o mochite tsukaenaba* [Empress Shōken Empress Teimei: Working Towards Maintaining Sincere Devotion] (Kyoto: Mineruva Nihon hyōdensen, 2010), 347.

<sup>55</sup> Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 105.

<sup>56</sup> For a complete history of the lineage of Japanese empresses see: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, *Rekidai kōgō jinbustsu keifu sōran* [Guide to the Lineage of Successive Japanese Empresses] (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 2002).

<sup>57</sup> For images see: 皇后宮御製唱歌, *Kōgōgū gosei shōka*, Song Composed by the Empress, September 8, 1887, Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900), Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; 参謀本部行啓之図, *Sanbō honbu gyōkei no zu*, Visit by the Empress to the General Staff Headquarters [to present a tray of bandages], 1895, Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847-1915), Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; 凱旋新橋ステーション御着之図, *Gaisen Shinbashi sutēshon gochaku no zu*, Illustration of the Arrival of the Emperor at Shinbashi Station Following a Victory, 1895, Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847-1915), Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<sup>58</sup> Wakakuwa Midori covers the modeling of the empress image in the 1880s, and specifically argues for a large influence from Italian royal portraiture, owing to the presence of foreign artists working and teaching in Japan. See:

As part of the new, modern model of proper feminine comportment, Empress Shōken took on a variety of charity and philanthropic activities. She was frequently at her husband's side during state functions, and hosted official diplomatic visits of women dignitaries throughout her reign. Among her primary philanthropic interests were hospitals for the poor and for the military, women's education, and the Red Cross. Shōken was instrumental in supporting the Red Cross Organization in Japan. The charity still receives the support of the Japanese Empress today, and empresses act as the symbolic leader of the organization.<sup>59</sup> As part of her work with the Red Cross, she donated 100,000 yen to establish the Empress Shōken Fund in 1912.<sup>60</sup> The fund was the first in the world to be dedicated to the peacetime activities of the Red Cross. Enhanced by monetary gifts from successive Japanese empresses and the Imperial Family, the fund is still active today, supporting a diverse array of global humanitarian aid projects.

Empress Shōken was also a well-respected writer of *waka* poetry. It was estimated that she composed over 30,000 *waka* poems in her lifetime. *Waka* are composed in five lines, with syllables of 5/7/5/7/7, respectively, and written to express one's emotions. It is through these poems that we can gain some understanding of the daily life and concerns of Empress Shōken.<sup>61</sup> Topics range from observations of nature on her official travels, to concern over her husband's alcohol consumption.<sup>62</sup> Although the vague nature of the poetry does not provide as much detail

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Wakakuwa Midori, *Kōgō no shōzō: Shōken kōtaigō no kyōshō to josei no kokuminka* [Portrait of the Empress: The Representation of Empress Shōken and the Nationalization of Women] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2001), 40-42.

<sup>59</sup> The Japanese Red Cross (日本赤十字社, *Nihon sekijūjisha*) was founded in 1877 as the Philanthropic Society (博愛社, *Hakuaisha*), and in 1887 changed its name and was recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross. For a brief history of the Japanese Red Cross, see, *Japanese Red Cross Society*, "History," <http://www.jrc.or.jp/english/about/history/>, accessed December 27, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> *Empress Shōken Fund*, "Empress Shōken Fund," <http://shokenfund.org/>, and *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, "Empress Shoken Fund: Supporting Red Cross Red Crescent Work for 100 Years," <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/asia-pacific/japan/empress-shoken-fund-supporting-red-cross-red-crescent-work-for-100-years/>, accessed October 21, 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Her poetry is translated into English in the book: Shōken, Empress Consort of the Meiji Emperor of Japan, *Kenshō kōtaigō gyōka* [Waka poetry of the Empress Shōken] (Tokyo: Meiji Jingū Shamusho, 1980).

<sup>62</sup> "I hope you will observe/ Moderation when drinking/ From your sake cup/ Amidst the springtime flowers/ Or the crimson autumn leaves." As cited in Keene, 174.

as an autobiography or detailed diary account, the expanse of available poetry does offer a glimpse into her personality. Furthermore, her involvement and interest in poetry was represented in visual art, with paintings of poetry gatherings at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery (聖徳記念絵画館, *Seitokukinen kaigakan*), a painting program which will be covered in Chapter Four. This artistic pursuit was the start of creative and intellectual activity as a core endeavor of the empresses.

Late in the evening on July 30, 1912, Emperor Meiji died of heart failure. Immediately, the sacred objects—mirror, sword, and jewel—were passed to his son, Emperor Taishō, in the confines of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. There was to be no gap in leadership, and no interregnum. The large-scale public funeral of Emperor Meiji was already in the planning stages, as his health had been waning for many months. His was to be the first ceremonial event commemorating the death of the monarch in the modern period, and many of the details of the rites were written into the law only a few years earlier, with the Edict on Imperial Household Mourning (皇室服喪令, *kōshitsu fukumo no rei*) in 1909. The funeral of Meiji's father, Emperor Kōmei, was held in 1867, and was a Buddhist affair, and the last of its kind for an emperor. Empress Dowager Eishō's funeral in 1897 gave some precedent for Meiji's memorial, but it was a much more private, small-scale affair than the funeral of the first modern Japanese emperor.<sup>63</sup> Empress Shōken's funeral would follow only a few short years later. She passed away on April 9, 1914, and the preparations for her funeral delayed the Taishō enthronement ceremonies, as the state bureaucracies put off the coronation in order to allow for a period of mourning, and for a proper state funeral. Both Meiji and Shōken were buried at the Fushimi Momoyama Imperial Mausoleum (伏見桃山陵, *fushimi no momoyama no misasagi*) near Kyoto.<sup>64</sup> Their graves are

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<sup>63</sup> Edmund T. Gilday, "Bodies of Evidence: Imperial Funeral Rites and the Meiji Restoration," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27:3-4(2000): 273-296, 291-293.

<sup>64</sup> Otabe, 165-169.

based upon the simple Buddhist designs which were standard for the Emperors of Japan since the twelfth century; a small square base structure beneath a low, round mound. The burial sites are encircled by a low fence with a Shinto *tori* (鳥居, gate) at the front, and surrounded by forest. Meiji and Shōken were the last emperor and empress to be buried near Kyoto.

As Emperor Meiji had reigned over Japan during a long period of intense changes, and as he was promoted as a father figure, political leader, and head of the Shintō system, many citizens developed a personal connection with him, and felt an emotional bond to him as the leader of their nation. Meiji was intrinsically linked with modernity itself, and with his death, there were concerns over the future direction of the Japanese state. It should be recalled that the strong, successful Japanese state was only thirty years old in 1912. The Promulgation of the Constitution, a turning point in national image, was only twenty-three years past, and the military victories of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) and Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), which truly catapulted Japan to its status as a global power were seventeen and seven years past, respectively. The global political situation in the early 1910s was growing increasingly unstable, and the change in the monarchy represented a potential moment of weakness for the state. The Taishō emperor was unproven as a leader, and the state-constructed narrative of national modernity which revolved around Emperor Meiji as a cult of personality had to be repositioned to center around Emperor Taishō.

Throughout the modern era, the system and organizational structure which surrounded, and surrounds, the Imperial Family, and which is crucial to the understanding of the public image of the emperor and empress was controlled by the government agency charged with state matters as related to the Imperial Family, the Imperial Household Agency (宮内庁, *kunaichō*).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Prior to the late 1940s, the agency was termed the Ministry of the Imperial Household (宮内省, *kunaishō*).

The agency, which acts as an Independent Administrative Institution, is not regulated by legislation, as is standard for other institutions of the same governmental position. In addition to maintaining the customs of the Imperial Family and managing their affairs, the Agency is charged with the care of the Privy Seal, the official seal of the emperor, and the State Seal of Japan. The Agency was established between the seventh and eighth centuries, growing to a massive bureaucracy through the centuries. Between 1947 and 1949, the Agency was reformed, and the staff was cut by over eighty percent, down to 1,000 workers and officers. Throughout the Meiji period, from the establishment of the modern Ministry of the Imperial Household in 1869 to the reorganization in 1908, the departments, functions, and power structures of the Ministry changed frequently. As part of the State Shinto system, Shinto religious affairs fell under the structure of the Ministry during the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa periods, but upon the imperial proclamation in 1945 renouncing the Emperor's status as a deity, Shinto was separated from the Ministry and from state governance. The Imperial Household Agency still exists today.

The Agency website states:

The Imperial Household Agency, as a government organization placed under the Prime Minister, takes charge of the state matters concerning the Imperial House. In addition, among the Emperor's acts in matters of state stipulated in Article 7 of the Constitution of Japan, the Agency assists His Majesty in receiving foreign ambassadors and ministers and performing ceremonial functions. It also keeps the Privy Seal and State Seal.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to overseeing the activities and affairs of the emperor, empress, and their extended family, the Agency also oversees the Archives and Mausolea of the Imperial Family, the properties and gardens of the Family, and two museums: the Sannomaru Shōzōkan (三の丸尚蔵館,

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<sup>66</sup> Kunaicho, "Organizations and Functions of the Imperial Household Agency," <http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-kunaicho/soshiki.html>. Accessed November 2015.

Museum of the Imperial Collections) in Tokyo, and the Shōsōin Treasure House (正倉院) in Nara.

A final note on the system and social network which surrounded the Imperial Family in the early twentieth century is necessary at this point. The nobility (華族, *kazoku*), which formed the social group that surrounded the Imperial Family, included between 400 and 1,000 families, and reached its height in the years of the Pacific War. This group, which was created at the time of the Imperial Restoration, were well-known as public figures and celebrities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>67</sup> They frequently surrounded the Imperial Family in photographs, at public appearances, in their education, and at social events. This group was disbanded in 1947, at the end of the Pacific War.

This section provided an overview of the imperial system as it evolved in the late nineteenth century under Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken. The position of the Imperial Family in modern Japanese society, with particular regard to the systems, rituals, and representations that communicate their roles to the public, was formulated during this time. In the pre-war years, the Imperial Family was closely tied to the biography of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken. This would change in 1945, but during the years of the Taishō monarchy, Meiji's shadow was a constant presence.

### Shinto, the State, and the Imperial Family in the Modern Era

The Imperial Household, as it was conceptualized between 1868 and 1945, was tightly interwoven with the ideology of the Shinto religion. During this time, the emperor was viewed as a deity and descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu, and was envisioned as a political,

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<sup>67</sup> The nobility was a hereditary peerage, and was a merging of the *kuge*, the court nobility, and the *daimyo*, or feudal lords. For a full history see: Takie Sugiyama Lebra, *Above the Clouds: Status Culture of the Modern Japanese Nobility* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 28-61.

religious, and national leader; a father figure of the Japanese state. To clarify this system, in this section I will first introduce Shinto in the modern period, move on to examine how Shinto and the Japanese state blended together in the years just after the Imperial Restoration, and finally, detail how the Imperial Family, and the emperor specifically, functioned as the head of the Shinto system in the pre-1945 era.

Shinto as a belief system can be characterized as a relatively decentralized religion. The faith is organized around *kami* (神), or deities, who are often associated with nature or natural phenomena. The *kami* inhabit specific places of the Japanese archipelago, and while some are of universal importance, such as the sea *kami* Susanoo or the sun *kami* Amaterasu, others are highly local in their focus and reach. Shinto religious practice is based upon rites, completed either by individuals or by priests acting on behalf of a community. These rites are conducted individually or in small groups; Shinto does not have a communal worship focus wherein practitioners attend services at a designated time in a group setting, but rather, rites are conducted individually when circumstance necessitates. Groups are gathered for certain observances such as New Year's day prayers, or harvest *matsuri* (祭り, festivals) in the fall season, but even within these contexts, the individual worships in a singular fashion. There are no sermons or calls to prayer as are seen in other religions.

The origins of Shinto are vague and difficult to discern, and many questions remain regarding the initial developments of Shinto belief and practice. What scholars generally do agree on is that Shinto is distinctive to the Japanese archipelago, was an established practice by the fifth to seventh centuries, and in the very early stages acted as a negotiation between organized settlements and the natural world beyond. When the Japanese court organized in the decades around the seventh century, it incorporated local *kami* into a new court narrative, which scholars John Breen and Mark Teeuwen term a “mytho-history” that established the origins of

the Japanese state.”<sup>68</sup> This legendary origin of the nation included the emperor as a living fixture who represented the “mytho-history,” and whose ancestral ties to Amaterasu were recorded in *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, *The Chronicles of Japan*), and *Kojiki* (古事記, *The Record of Ancient Matters*), eighth-century texts that document the history and mythological origins of the Japanese state.<sup>69</sup>

The history of Shinto in Japan cannot be examined in isolation, but rather, must be studied in tandem with the history of Buddhism. Since the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the mid-sixth century the two religions have had ties both physically, with the close proximity of shrines and temples, as well as conceptually. Even in the earliest stages of Japanese Buddhism, Buddhist deities were worshipped as *adashikuni no kami* (あだしくにの神), or foreign *kami*, functioning as a variant of the native divinities.<sup>70</sup> It is important to distinguish two ways in which the two religions were conceptually linked throughout the centuries of Japanese history: *honji-suijaku* (本地垂迹) is the system which links divinities, while *shinbutsu shūgō* (神仏習合), is the general syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism.

The combinatory system of *honji-suijaku* existed in various forms through the centuries until just after the Meiji Restoration, when in 1868 the new government instituted the policy of *shinbutsu bunri* (神仏分離), or separation edicts, which attempted to distinguish the two religions, and to favor Shinto practice. The various nineteenth-century attempts to define and codify Shinto resulted in three major variations of the practice—state/emperor, local/ritual, religious/sectarian—all of which shared the conception of Shinto as Japan’s “pure” indigenous

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<sup>68</sup> John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto* (West Sussex, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 27.

<sup>69</sup> Inoue, *Kojiki*. Taro Sakamoto, *Nihon shoki* [The Chronicles of Ancient Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967).

<sup>70</sup> Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, “Introduction: Combinatory Religion and the *honji-suijaku* Paradigm in Pre-Modern Japan,” 1-53, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, eds. (London: Routledge, 2003), 7.

belief system.<sup>71</sup> Because the two religions have a long shared history, the possibility of the separation of Shinto and Buddhism is established in the literature as a falsehood; everyday practice blended the two in ways that were inseparable, and it is unknown the extent to which average practitioners divided the two beliefs in their minds. With the separation edicts, Buddhist temples did suffer a loss of power, which led to widespread persecution and abuse in the late nineteenth century. It is not my intention to lessen this suffering or to ignore this history, however, for the purposes of examining the emperor system and the modern Shinto paradigm, this section will focus on Shinto, with the recognition that Shinto was impacted by and intertwined with Buddhism throughout history.<sup>72</sup>

In the modern era, bureaucrats thought that they could combine the power of the Shinto system with that of the patriarchal state to create an infallible and highly powerful government. The principle on which this was based was *saisei itchi* (祭政一致), or “rites and government are one.” Reflected in the initial Imperial Rescript from 1867, which abolished the shogunate and called for imperial rule in the style of the mythological first emperor Jinmu, *saisei itchi* associated Buddhism with the failed Tokugawa shogunate. It also acted as a hedge against the spread of Christianity in Japan, which was a perceived threat in light of Euro-American expansion into East Asia in the late nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, it cemented the centrality of the emperor, and worked to create additional national unity. As Breen and Teeuwen state, the radical reforms, “drew on a wave of nostalgic nativism that idealized Japan’s age of antiquity as a divine era of natural harmony and innocence.”<sup>74</sup> Neo-Confucianism was the preferred

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<sup>71</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 18-19.

<sup>72</sup> As early as 1975, Carmen Blacker calls the separate study of Shinto and Buddhism “nonsense,” arguing that, “the large area of religious practice common to the two, in which the worshiper is scarcely aware whether the deity he is addressing is a Shinto kami or a bodhisattva, has been either ignored or relegated to various snail patches with pejorative labels such as superstition, syncretism, or magic.” Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975), 33.

<sup>73</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 7-9.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

intellectual paradigm in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japan, but with a layer of Japanese symbolism. Within Confucian philosophy, leadership is selected through merit and revolution, yet as Hara Takeshi notes, the selection of rulers in Japan was precluded by the importance of the imperial blood line and the connection of the emperor to the sun goddess Amaterasu.<sup>75</sup> The system which resulted from these hybrid religious and philosophical beliefs was, in essence, Confucian ancestor worship with the Imperial Family at the national center, as per Shinto mythology, and can be termed State Shinto.<sup>76</sup>

At the core of Shinto practice and ritual in the modern period was the Grand Shrine of Ise. Located in a remote, rural area of Mie prefecture, the shrine houses the sacred mirror, one of the three sacred objects of Shinto mythology: the sword, the jewel, and the mirror. Ise is also the shrine inhabited by Amaterasu. On April 8, 1869 Emperor Meiji departed from Kyoto for his second journey to the newly established capital at Tokyo. En route, on April 23, 1869, he stopped at Ise Jingū (伊勢神宮, the Grand Shrine of Ise), paying visit to the place of worship where the founders of the Imperial House are enshrined.<sup>77</sup> Emperor Meiji was the first emperor to visit Ise in over one thousand years, and as seen against the backdrop of Meiji period religious policy, this pilgrimage was an important part of developing and promoting State Shinto to the general populace.<sup>78</sup> As the government attempted to intertwine nationalist sentiment, religious

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<sup>75</sup> Hara Takeshi, *Kōgōkō* [Thoughts on the Empress] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2015), 363.

<sup>76</sup> Breen and Teeuwen state that, “In effect, the new Meiji cult of shrines functioned as a form of Confucian-inspired ancestor worship. By honoring the ancestors of the nation, a community was created that celebrated a shared past. To this end, shrines were redefined as places that commemorated heroes of the state. The centerpiece of the new shrine system was Ise, the shrine of the imperial ancestor and sun-goddess Amaterasu.” Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 8-9. Helen Hardacre argues for the term State Shinto to be used to define the invented tradition of Shinto in the years from 1868-1945. See: Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 4-7.

<sup>77</sup> Meiji Jingū Gaien, *Seitokukinen kaigakan hekiga, Meiji Jingū* [Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery Murals, Meiji Shrine] (Tokyo: Meiji Jingū Gaien, 2009), 49.

<sup>78</sup> Meiji may have been the first emperor to ever visit Ise Jingū. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen inform us that there was a possibility that Empress Jitō visited the Ise Shrines in 692 when she visited Ise Province. See: John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 229 n.6.

belief, and the figure of the emperor, one might expect that images of the Grand Shrine of Ise took on new meanings and greater prominence throughout the Meiji period. However, images of the emperor in an explicitly Shinto context are relatively rare in the body of Meiji period woodblock prints, which would seemingly be a central medium for disseminating images of the Emperor to the general public.

Helen Hardacre's seminal work *Shinto and the State: 1868-1988* illustrates how State Shinto was not only imposed onto the population by the government, but was also a concept embraced by the people, who saw Shinto as a way to gain power and influence in a society dominated by the government.<sup>79</sup> The Meiji period saw a steady increase in the connections between Shinto and the state, beginning with the various edicts of early Meiji, and extending to the creation of the Meiji Shrine in 1915. The reorganization of all shrines around Ise Jingū was part of the formative period of State Shinto in the first twenty years of the Meiji period, along with the advent of shrines being treated as national institutions outside of religion, and the consolidation of palace rituals.<sup>80</sup> As part of these palace rituals and the increasing importance of the emperor in ritual, three halls modeled after Ise Jingū were built within the Imperial Palace before 1880, allowing for the ritual aspect of Court Shinto to increase without the emperor having to travel to Ise.<sup>81</sup> The building of these shrines at the palace compound in Tokyo may have been one reason that there are few images of the emperors visiting Ise; if they were able to conduct rituals within the palace confines there was little need for travel. Ise did, however,

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<sup>79</sup> Hardacre, *Shinto and the State*.

<sup>80</sup> Shimazono Susumu, "State Shinto in the Lives of the People: The Establishment of Emperor Worship, Modern Nationalism, and Shrine Shinto in Late Meiji," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36:1 (2009): 95.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 112. I could not find any images of these halls, or any imagery depicting the Emperor's use of the halls, however the following quotation, attributed to Emperor Meiji, seems to indicate the Emperor's use of them on a daily basis, "From far away I have never spent a day without offering prayers to the Grand Shrine of Ise, which stands as the Guardian Deity of our country." Svend M. Hvass, *Ise: Japan's Ise Shrines, Ancient Yet New* (Holte, Denmark: Aristo, 1999), 142.

become a central site for the nation. As religious studies scholars John Breen and Mark Teeuwen state:

The emperor's visit transformed Ise from a popular pilgrimage site into the modern nation-state's most sacred center, and it was critical too in animating the imperial myth. It was dramatic proof, after all, of the most intimate relationship between emperor and sun goddess.<sup>82</sup>

The site continues to be important to this day; it is ritually rebuilt every twenty years, and the Imperial Family maintains close ties to the Shinto establishment at the shrine.

As the Meiji period went on, State Shinto developed as an ideology, and strengthened ties to the symbol of the emperor. The second phase of State Shinto, which Shimazono Susumu defines as the "period of completion of the doctrine," lasted from the Promulgation of the Imperial Constitution in 1889 through the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.<sup>83</sup> It was during this period that State Shinto "became a supra-religious national ritual system under the Imperial Constitution."<sup>84</sup> It was also during this second phase that the *goshinei* (御真影, imperial portrait), a sacred image which will be discussed in Chapter Two, were distributed and enshrined within schools and government offices. Just after the Promulgation of the Constitution, the edict *For the Storage of Copies of the Imperial Image and the Rescript on Education* was released, detailing the display and handling of the emperor's image.<sup>85</sup> With the combined actions of the new Constitution, the promotion of State Shinto, and the distribution of imperial portraits, the emperor as the direct descendant of Amaterasu and as the father figure of the nation was

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<sup>82</sup> John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 110.

<sup>83</sup> Shimazono, "State Shinto in the Lives of the People," 95.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

visualized and established across the political and personal realms, and the power of Ise as a symbol of national cohesion increased.<sup>86</sup>

All of the organizations and structures discussed in this section were presented to the public through woodblock prints, photography, and lithography under the watchful eyes of the Imperial Household Agency. Chapter Two will address imperial portraiture in detail, but it is important to note the variety of images outside of official portraiture which were the main conveyers of imperial relationships, image, and propriety throughout the establishment of the modern Imperial system. All of these were regulated under the Imperial Household Ministry, as well as their affiliated government censors. As such, the Ministry, and later the Agency, controlled the public understanding of the Imperial Family. They were not to be held as individual personalities, or individuals with agency over their actions, but rather they were to be seen as esteemed holders of tradition and lineage. This control continues today.

### Biography of Teimei and Taishō

The life stories of Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō are well documented in the Japanese literature, but difficult to access in English publications. Many of the biographical publications on Empress Teimei were written by court ladies in the years after her death, and as with so much

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<sup>86</sup> Although explicit images of the emperor in a Shinto setting are unusual, the subtle cue in all images of the emperor was that he was the father figure of the Japanese nation-state and the direct descendent of Amaterasu. It must be remembered that prior to 1868 the Japanese people were completely unfamiliar with the image of the emperor, who was cloistered at his residence in Kyoto. With the Meiji Restoration, the government embarked on a campaign to make the image of the Imperial Family familiar to the Japanese people. At the same time, *nishiki-e* (錦絵 multicolor woodblock prints) depicting Meiji in a variety of undertakings such as military exercises, cultural activities, and government ceremonies were published and widely distributed. These images were collected out of sentiments of pride, and as symbols of the new, modern Japanese state. As Julia Meech-Pekarik states, the images were intended to promote the imperial myth. “The prints were not perceived as in any way irreverent; they were a means of popularizing the goals of a new regime anxious to solidify its power and to inhibit dissent and opposition.” Prints such as “Gaisen Shinbashi sutēshon gochaku no zu,” were affordable for the general public, and were reminders of the progress of the Japanese nation. See: Sensu Tadashi, *Nishikie ga kataru tenno no sugata* [The Figure of the Emperor as Seen in Nishikie] (Tokyo: Yushikan, 2009), and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986), 11.

of the literature on the Imperial Family in Japan, there is a reverent tone to the majority of books devoted to telling the story of Teimei's life. While it must be remembered that the Imperial Household Agency holds great sway, even today, on the information available on the Japanese Imperial Family, there are some basic facts and dates which can be agreed upon by scholars of imperial history. In this section I will provide a basic biography of Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō, with the aim of providing necessary background information for the remaining chapters of this dissertation. This biographical sketch is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather meant to address necessary points and highlights in the lives of the Taishō imperial couple.

Born on June 27, 1884, Kujō Sadako (九条節子) was the fourth daughter of Duke Kujō Michitaka of the Northern Fujiwara lineage. She spent her infancy and early childhood away from her parents, living with a Quaker family near Tokyo. Teimei was removed from her foster family at age six and brought back to Tokyo, where she attended the Peeresses School. At age thirteen she was selected to be Yoshihito's bride, after which she spent two years being instructed in court etiquette.

Yoshihito (嘉仁), or Crown Prince Haru, was born on August 31, 1879. He was the only surviving son of Emperor Meiji; ten of his fourteen siblings died during infancy or early childhood.<sup>87</sup> Taishō was born to an imperial concubine, Yanagihara Naruko (柳原愛子). Taishō was the third child Yanagihara and Meiji bore together, but as the birth of the young prince was so fraught with pain and difficulty, she was never again to share a bed with Emperor Meiji.<sup>88</sup> At age eight, the young prince was named heir apparent, and was centrally featured in the woodblock print *Fūsō kōki kagami* (扶桑高貴鑑, *Mirror of Japanese Nobility*), by Yōshū

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<sup>87</sup> Ben-Ami Shillony, *The Emperors of Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 317.

<sup>88</sup> Keene, 251. The footnote cites a recounting of the birth by an attendant, who stated that Yanagihara was so distressed that the women of the court and the nurses ran from her bedside, unsure of what to do.

Chikanobu (楊洲周延, 1838-1912).<sup>89</sup> At age ten, Yoshihito was officially named Crown Prince.<sup>90</sup>

The occasion was marked by a photograph, which will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter. From 1887 to 1895, he attended the Peers' School, for children of the aristocracy.<sup>91</sup>

Teimei and Taishō were married on May 10, 1900 in a Shinto ceremony, the first of its kind. The wife of the Belgian ambassador was in attendance when the diplomatic corps visited the newlyweds in the afternoon of their wedding day and described the ceremony by stating:

Their marriage took place in the Imperial shrine in the palace grounds at eight in the morning. Both bride and bridegroom were dressed in ancient court dress, but only Japanese were present and only two people outside the family witnessed the actual ceremony behind the curtain of the holy of holies...[Then] they changed into Western-style court dress and decorations and presented themselves to the emperor and empress.<sup>92</sup>

The wedding was depicted in lithograph prints, and was an event which was watched with fascination by many in the general citizenry.<sup>93</sup> Wedding ceremonies were different by province in the pre-Meiji era, but generally consisted of a gradual transition of the bride to the groom's home, and a ceremony at the home with a celebration either at the home or at a nearby restaurant.<sup>94</sup> In the wake of the imperial wedding in 1900 weddings held at Shinto shrines became popular with the general public—a practice which remains fashionable to this day.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> For an image see: 扶桑高貴鑑, *Fūsō kōki kagami*, Mirror of Japanese Nobility, 1887, Yōshū Chikanobu (1838-1912), Collection of the Spencer Museum of Art.

<sup>90</sup> See Meech-Pekarik, 126-127 for a full description of the Crown Prince's official reception.

<sup>91</sup> For an image see: Crown Prince Yoshihito, hand colored silver gelatin print, 1892, Suzuki Shinichi II (1855-1912), published in: The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, *Treasures of the Imperial Collections—The Quintessence of Modern Japanese Art* (Kyoto: The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, 2013).

<sup>92</sup> As cited in Leonard Mosley, *Hirohito: Emperor of Japan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> For images see: *Wedding of Crown Prince Yoshihito and Crown Princess Kujo Sadako*, May 1900, Kasai Torajirō, Collection of the U.S. Library of Congress; *Wedding Reception of Crown Prince Yoshihito and Princess Sadako Kujo*, 1900, Kasai Torajirō, lithograph print, Collection of the U.S. Library of Congress.

<sup>94</sup> Walter Edwards, *Modern Japan Through Its Weddings: Gender, Person, and Society in Ritual Portrayal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 36-41.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

Following the ceremony, in late May and early June the newlyweds took a tour of the Kansai region, visiting the Grand Shrine at Ise and the mausoleum of Emperor Jinmu, the legendary founding emperor of Japan, as well as observing students in Kyoto, and touring temples and shrines in Nara.<sup>96</sup>

During her years as Crown Princess, Teimei participated in a variety of state ceremonies and functions. One such example was her attendance at the dinner hosting the American delegation to Tokyo on July 26, 1905. As Empress Shōken was not in Tokyo during the visit, Teimei stood in, dining with Emperor Meiji, then-Secretary of War William Howard Taft, and Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>97</sup>

Empress Teimei was influential in establishing a new court order and a new system for court ladies; specifically, her monogamous relations with the Emperor were crucial in the general societal acceptance of marital monogamy. From the later Meiji period, policies surrounding *ippuissaisei* (一夫一婦制, monogamy system) were encouraged and promoted by the government. With Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō, a model of monogamy was created, and the government policy strengthened with the imperial couple as an example of marital policy.

Among Empress Teimei's feats was the birthing of four male heirs. The empress of Japan had not produced a male heir in nearly 150 years, with the bloodline of court succession passing instead through the union of court consorts with the emperor.<sup>98</sup> Teimei gave birth to Michi on April 29, 1901 (Emperor Shōwa, or Hirohito, 昭和天皇, 裕仁), Atsu on June 25, 1902 (Prince Chichibu, or Yasuhito, 秩父宮, 雍仁), Teru on January 3, 1905 (Prince Takamatsu, or Nobuhito, 高松宮, 宣仁), and Sumi on December 2, 1915 (Prince Mikasa, or Takahito, 三笠宮, 崇仁). There

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<sup>96</sup> Katano Masako, *Kōgō no kindai* [Modern Empress] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003), 83-84.

<sup>97</sup> David Hogge, "Alice in Asia: The 1905 Taft Mission to Asia," *Freer Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution*, <http://www.asia.si.edu/research/archives/alice/>. Accessed September 2015.

<sup>98</sup> The last emperor to have a child with the empress was Go-Momozono (r. 1770-1779). See Peter Martin, *The Chrysanthemum Throne: A History of the Emperors of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 133.

is some rumor of a fifth child which cannot be verified. In 1984, journalist Kawahara Toshiaki published the book, *Higeki no kōjo: Mikasanomiya futagosetsu no shinsō* (悲劇の皇女 : 三笠宮双子説の真相, The Tragic Imperial Princess), which investigated a possible hidden twin for Takahito, a girl that was kept in a Kyoto nunnery due to the inauspicious nature of twins in Shintō belief.<sup>99</sup> Although this child is undocumented outside of Kawahara's investigations, there is some evidence of a miscarriage in 1903-4 from the papers of Baelz.<sup>100</sup>

As was court custom in the past, the children of the Imperial Household were taken from the emperor and empress at birth, likely a custom of the Edo period that would keep the Imperial Family from banding together to overthrow the shogun.<sup>101</sup> This practice and the accompanying court regulation was changed in the early twentieth century, with Teimei and Taishō taking custody of their children in March 1905, likely under pressure of Empress Teimei, who desired to be near her children.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, the practice was no longer necessary, as a familial bond among the Imperial Household no longer presented a threat to Japanese rule.

From 1909, Teimei and Taishō lived at the Ōmiya Palace (大宮御所, Ōmiya gosho) at Akasaka, Tokyo, also called the Tōgū Palace (東宮御所, Tōgū gosho, Crown Prince's Palace). Today the building is referred to as the Akasaka Detached Palace (赤坂離宮, Akasaka rikyū), and is used as a state guest house. Designed by the architect Katayama Tōkuma (片山東熊, 1854-1917), and constructed between 1899 and 1909, the building functioned as an Imperial Palace until the late 1920s, housing both Teimei and Taishō, and later Hirohito and Kōjun. The building was constructed in an opulent neo-Baroque style, and made Taishō and Teimei the first Japanese

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<sup>99</sup> Kawahara Toshiaki, *Higeki no kōjo: Mikasanomiya futagosetsu no shinsō* [Tragedy of the Imperial Princess: The Truth About the Mikasa Family Twin Theory] (Tokyo: Dainamiku-sarazu, 1984), 1-4.

<sup>100</sup> Toku Baelz, ed. *Awakening Japan: The Diary of a German Doctor* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 329.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>102</sup> Sterling Seagrave and Peggy Seagrave, *The Yamato Dynasty: The Secret History of Japan's Imperial Family* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 77.

imperial couple to reside in European-style accommodations at such an early stage in their reign. During their reign as Emperor and Empress, Teimei and Taishō lived at the Imperial Palace in the center of Tokyo (皇居, *kōkyō*). The Imperial Palace was built on the site of the former Edo Castle, and as it existed during the Taishō period was constructed primarily during the late nineteenth century.<sup>103</sup> The Imperial Palace is primarily concealed from public view. The most recognizable symbol of the expansive compound is Nijūbashi (二重橋), a double bridge made of stone, and the primary visual representation of the Palace since the Meiji period. The ritual sites, official rooms, and living quarters were, and are, off limits to the public.<sup>104</sup>

As was, and continues to be, the standard for Japanese empresses, Teimei took on philanthropic activities during her time as monarch. In addition to her participation as the symbolic leader of the Red Cross, Teimei was drawn to helping those with Hansen's Disease (leprosy). She donated money to various charities focused on eradicating the disease and helping suffering patients, supporting the efforts of English missionary Hannah Riddell in caring for the sick, and establishing the Tōfū Kyōkai (藤楓協会, Wisteria Maple Association), a organization dedicated to the prevention of leprosy. The organization was first established in 1931 as the Rai yobō kyōkai (癩予防協会, Leprosy Prevention Foundation), with the name change and a second large gift upon her death in 1951.<sup>105</sup> Teimei's other primary charity activity was to assist the keepers of lighthouses by providing radios to the lighthouses to allow them to have increased

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<sup>103</sup> Takashi Fujitani details the construction of the palace in *Splendid Monarchy*, 66-82.

<sup>104</sup> The majority of structures at the compound were destroyed in the firebombing of Tokyo in 1945. Today, visitors can take a guided tour of the palace, which requires an application a few weeks in advance. The tour takes participants through a very limited area of the grounds, and does not include entry to the buildings. Some of the gardens, the Sannomaru shōzōkan (a museum), and the Imperial Household Agency archives are open to the public on a limited basis. Photographs of the Imperial Palace interiors as they were in the Meiji and Taishō periods are held at the Imperial Household Agency archives, but they show empty interiors in a documentary fashion, not as they were used, and not with the Imperial Family using them.

<sup>105</sup> Ichiro Kikuchi, "Hansen's Disease in Japan: A Brief History," *International Journal of Dermatology* 36 (1997), 629-633, 630, and Toyoda Maho, "State, Sterilization, and Reproductive Rights: Japan as Occupier and Occupied," in *Japan as the Occupier and Occupied*, ed. Christine de Matos and Mark E. Caprio, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015): 45-64, 48.

communication with the outside world.<sup>106</sup> Finally, Teimei undertook ritual sericulture activity at the Imperial Palace, a tradition for empresses that can be traced to the Nara period (710-796), and which was revitalized by Empress Shōken in 1871.<sup>107</sup> This ritual activity was a counterpart for the emperor's ceremonial rice cultivation.

During her reign, Empress Teimei was a popular figure who was frequently in the public eye. Although the strict censorship on information regarding the Imperial Family makes it difficult to determine exactly how she was received by her public, the sheer number of publications on her, both during her reign and at the time of her death, prove that she was a popular celebrity. She is not, however, well remembered by historians. Empress Teimei's role in the Imperial House may have been dismissed through the course of history for a variety of reasons, and her personal narrative also has potential issues that the Imperial Household Agency may prefer to keep quiet.<sup>108</sup> Foremost among these were her possible religious beliefs; although some biographers argue for her strong Shinto beliefs, others argue that she may have been a Christian.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, the cultural memory of her husband is not one of strength for the Imperial Household, and the complex political circumstances of the 1910s and 1920s project a

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<sup>106</sup> Kudō Miyoko, *Hahamiya Teimei kōgō to sono jidai: Mikasa nomiya ryōdenka ga kataru omoide* [Imperial Mother Empress Teimei and Her Era: Recollections on both Mikasa Families] (Tokyo: Chuokoron shinsha, 2010), 114-122.

<sup>107</sup> Sannomaru Shōzōkan, *Kōgō heika no goyōsan to Shōsōin-gire no fukugen: Kōgō heika koki kinen tokubetsuten* [Sericulture of Her Majesty and Restoration of Shoso-in Textiles: Special Exhibition in Commemoration of the 70th birthday of Her Majesty the Empress] (Tokyo: Kunaichō, 2005).

<sup>108</sup> As stated earlier, female empresses were outlawed under the 1889 constitution. Today, there is no direct male heir to the throne, but there is a female heir. A nephew of the current Crown Prince is the most likely eventual successor.

<sup>109</sup> Raised by Japanese Quakers in the countryside until age six, she surrounded herself with Quakers and other Christians in the palace, and was said to have read the Bible daily. Christians were, and are, a small percentage of the Japanese population, and there is a long history of hidden Christianity and blended religious beliefs in Japan, however, the strong ties of the Imperial Family to the Shinto hierarchy and narrative precludes them from participating in religious practices other than Shinto. See Seagrave, 12, 83. Empress Teimei was said to have read the New Testament with frequency. Furthermore Prince Mikasa taught at a Christian university and Teimei selected a Quaker for her second son's wife. While none of these facts necessitate a label of "Christian," it must be remembered that she was operating in a time and place where the label could have worked to damage her reputation and position, and therefore any possible Christian religious activity had to be discreet and well-managed.

less than desirable image for the Imperial Family. Despite this historical oversight, she was a well-known and beloved figure in the first half of the twentieth century, even after the death of Emperor Taishō.

That Teimei was able to rise to a position of power in the palace was not particularly remarkable. She was the mother of Hirohito, the successive emperor, and the role and influence of the mother figure in Japanese culture is a powerful one, which should not be underestimated. It was the potential power and influence of the mother and the mother's family which led to many precautions with imperial children in the past. Practices such as raising children outside of the palace compound, or using imperial concubines diluted the power of the empress and imperial mother. Additionally, Teimei's strong personality and female status meant that she could not be influenced by the gift of concubines, as many male palace counterparts were.<sup>110</sup> Finally, her Christian circle also gave her additional influence at court—the members of the Imperial Household Agency and other palace bureaucracies that were selected by her from the Japanese Quaker community came from outside of the traditional Shinto and Buddhist groups. These Christians were influential not for their religious beliefs, but because they were outsiders, and because they were loyal to Teimei for their placement, thus giving her additional power and an “expanded circle of influence.”<sup>111</sup>

Teimei's role remained constant throughout the first eight years of the Taishō reign, but in the late 1910s, her husband began to succumb to illness. His childhood bout with cerebral meningitis left him with compromised health, and complications from the disease grew increasingly worse until he had to turn over rule to his son, Crown Prince Hirohito, on November 25, 1921. The regency period began when Hirohito was unmarried, and quite young. He was

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

twenty years old, and had just had his Coming of Age ceremony two years prior.<sup>112</sup> As he was yet to take the throne, he traveled throughout this period, visiting Europe in 1921. This episode in Taishō imperial history will be further addressed in Chapter Three, but here it suffices to say that Empress Teimei gained a great deal of power and visibility in the early Regency years. Upon Hirohito's marriage to Princess Nagako (Empress Kōjun) on January 26, 1924, the younger Imperial couple began to appear in the media and at public functions with greater regularity.

Emperor Taishō passed away on December 25, 1926, and Emperor Shōwa immediately took the throne, his coronation coming two years later. During Teimei's time as Empress Dowager, she took on a more private persona, appearing only occasionally with her grandsons or the larger Imperial Family. She was reticent during the height of the Pacific War. Emperor Taishō was the first member of the Imperial Family to be buried at the Musashino Imperial Mausoleum in Hachiōji, a city in the far western suburbs of Tokyo. The Edict on Imperial Household Mourning as passed in 1909 dictated the form of Emperor Meiji's funeral, but in 1911 a new imperial funerary edict was drafted (喪儀令草案, *sōgi no rei no sōan*); this new edict was enacted into law as the Imperial Mortuary Rites Law (皇室喪儀令, *kōshitsu sōgi rei*) in 1926, immediately before Taishō's funeral.<sup>113</sup>

Empress Teimei passed away on May 17, 1951. Hers was a State Funeral, and various Imperial Funeral Ceremonies were performed, including the *Rensō-no-gi* (斂葬の儀, Ceremony of the Funeral and Entombment), which took place on June 22.<sup>114</sup> Teimei was buried at the Musashino Imperial Mausoleum next to her husband. Teimei and Taishō were the first to be

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<sup>112</sup> *The Imperial Household Agency*, "Emperor Shōwa and Empress Kōjun," <http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-about/history/history11.html>. The ceremony takes place at age eighteen.

<sup>113</sup> Gilday, F29, 293. See also: Robert J. Smith, "Wedding and Funeral Ritual: Analyzing a Moving Target," in *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan: Religious Practices in an Industrialized Society*, ed. Jan van Bremen and D.P. Martinez (New York: Routledge, 2005), n.p. (digital edition).

<sup>114</sup> Kunaicho, "Imperial Funerals, Accession to the Throne, Weddings, and other events," <http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-about/seido/seido10.html>

buried in this imperial cemetery. Like those of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, the Taishō graves are in a style that is reminiscent of a Buddhist stupa, the same form that imperial graves took since the twelfth century. Their successors Emperor Shōwa and Empress Kōjun are also interred at Musashino in similar, slightly larger monuments. The present Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko will be cremated and their ashes interred in significantly smaller mausoleums at the site, as per their personal wishes.<sup>115</sup>

### Conclusions

The Imperial Family was a central component of the modern Japanese state throughout the modern period. In the Meiji and Taishō periods, the biographies and lives of the emperor, empress, and their immediate family members were promoted through mass media sources, and their public image, as constructed by government agencies, had a major impact on conceptions of family and gender relations in the modern era. Many of the behaviors, rituals, and functions performed by the contemporary Imperial Family in Japan were established during the Meiji period, and codified during the Taishō reign. While there was historical precedent, and a basis in tradition for many of these activities, it was during the Taishō period that most were performed in public for the first time.

Empress Teimei, though knowable only vis-à-vis her public persona, was decidedly an anomaly in the lineage of modern Japanese imperial women. Her role as Imperial Proxy during the Regency period, which will be further covered in Chapter Three, and her position as the mother of four boys, as well as her status as the first empress in over 150 years to birth the successive emperor, meant that she was in a position of power within the palace. The remaining

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<sup>115</sup> *The Asahi Shinbun*, “Mausoleum, Cremation Plans Revealed for Emperor, Empress,” November 15, 2013, [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/social\\_affairs/AJ201311150060](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201311150060). Accessed October, ? 2015.

chapters of this dissertation will expand upon this biography, examining her place within greater society.

This chapter has explained the modern imperial system, particularly as it relates to the Shinto religion, and the position of the emperor and empress in the years between 1868 and the Pacific War. Due to the many restrictions on information surrounding the Japanese Imperial Family, Empress Teimei is not a figure who we can truly know, however, her public personality and constructed persona were central to ideas of femininity and women's comportment in the 1910s and 20s. The following chapters will examine her image in portraiture, photography, prints, and mass media representations. With her basic biography and a general understanding of the role of the Imperial Family in Japanese society, it is to these visual concerns this dissertation will turn to.

Chapter Two: Toward the Sacred and the Standard: Formality, Lineage, and Decorum in the Modern Japanese Imperial Portrait

In the spring of 1900, at the time of their marriage, Crown Prince Yoshihito and Crown Princess Sadako, the future Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei, posed for two commemorative photographic studio portraits. Dressed in layers of robes reminiscent of the fashions of the Heian period (794-1185), the imperial couple was represented in a way that imagined how their distant ancestors appeared. Crown Princess Sadako stands dressed in layers of dark colored robes, a small fan folded and held in her hand, disguised beneath the many layers of dress.<sup>116</sup> Attached to her hair is the same style of crown that her predecessor, Empress Shōken, wore the first time she was photographed, a circular metal coronet with five adornments on the front and three metal plumes at the top.<sup>117</sup> The Crown Princess gazes off into the distance, with her facial expression appearing neutral. The Crown Prince's companion portrait has a similar feeling; one of constructed timelessness and one in which the individual personalities of the monarchs recede to an eternal aura of the imperial lineage. The backgrounds of both photographs are minimally arranged—aside from the central figures, the viewer only sees a floral patterned rug and a small hint of drapery at the side.

These photographs represent a rare example of Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō in traditional costume. Just as with all imagery of the Japanese Imperial Family, studio portrait photography of the Emperor and Empress was, and remains to this day, highly controlled and staged. Studio portraits of the Emperor and Empress in the Taishō period were few in number,

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<sup>116</sup> For an illustration see: *Tennō yondai no shōzō: Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa, Heisei* [Portraits of Four Generations of Emperors: Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa, Heisei] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1999), 40.

<sup>117</sup> For an illustration of the photograph see Wakakuwa Midori, *Kōgō no shōzō: Shōken kōtaigō no hyōshō to josei no kokuminka* [Portrait of the Empress: The representation of Empress Shōken and the nationalization of women] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2001), plate three.

and were generally in Western dress. Although photographs in traditional court costume were published in magazines and newspapers, the portraits which received the widest reproduction and distribution were of the monarchs in European-style costume.<sup>118</sup> Thus, the wedding images in historically inspired dress, a custom that has been undertaken with all four of the modern Japanese monarchs, were only occasionally seen—published upon the change of imperial era, the photographs subsequently faded to the background. This ubiquitous use of contemporary European fashion harkens back to the concern from the late nineteenth century that the emperor in traditional Japanese costume would present a problematic, exotic impression to other nations; it was crucial for Japanese royalty to be presented as a modernized, cosmopolitan monarchy, not a relic of the past.

By the time Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei came to the throne, the practices of production, distribution, and display of imperial portraits were well established, and were codified in the Japanese legal code. This was not so for the earliest modern imperial portraits. When Emperor Meiji was first photographed in 1872, it was in an unsanctioned image captured by a foreigner.<sup>119</sup> By the early 1940s, photographic imperial portraits were developed in water which was purified by means of Shinto rites, and drawn from a well which was adorned with *shimenawa* (しめ縄), ropes and papers which are usually seen at Shinto shrine altars.<sup>120</sup> This systemization of invented ritual occurred within a time span of less than seventy-five years, the majority of which transpired in the late Meiji to early Taishō periods. While the emperors of

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<sup>118</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, I am using the term studio portrait as defined in the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus, “portraits taken in a professional photographer’s studio, often making use of backdrops of props.” See: Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus, “Portraits,” accessed March, 2014, [http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=portrait&logic=AND&note=&english=N&prev\\_page=1&subjectid=300223022](http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=portrait&logic=AND&note=&english=N&prev_page=1&subjectid=300223022).

<sup>119</sup> Luke Gartlan, “A Chronology of Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz,” in *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s-1930s*, ed. John Clark (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001), 131.

<sup>120</sup> Sebastian Dobson, “Frederick William Sutton, 1832-1883: Photographer of the Last Shogun,” in *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, v. 4, ed. Hugh Cortazzi (London: Japan Society, 1994), 297.

Japan were treated with an increasing attentiveness to their sacred qualities, the empresses of Japan shifted from being auxiliary members of the Imperial Household to central figures of compassion and charity.

This chapter will examine Japanese imperial portraiture in the modern era with the aim of explaining how imperial portraiture evolved in the modern era prior to the Pacific War. As the laws and norms surrounding the distribution and exhibition of imperial portraiture were schematized throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, images of the emperor grew increasingly standardized and carried an augmented aura of sacredness. Images of the empress became increasingly visible and “modern” throughout this same era. To complete this analysis of portraiture, this chapter will first provide a brief overview of the history of imperial portraiture in the pre-modern eras. Secondly, the initial construct of the modern imperial portrait in the Meiji period (1868-1912) will be discussed. The third section examines the fully articulated modern imperial portrait in the Taishō period (1912-1926), and finally looks to Seitoku kinen kaigakan, a painting gallery representing Emperor Meiji, which was conceptualized during the Taishō period and realized in the early Shōwa period (1926-1989). Throughout each stage of modern Japanese history, imperial portraiture grew to be more regulated and regimented, with increasingly complex messages imbedded in images from paintings to prints to photographs.

### History of Imperial Portraiture

Portraiture has a long and rich history in Japan. The earliest portraits, dating from the eighth century, presented the likenesses of Buddhist monks.<sup>121</sup> In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,

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<sup>121</sup> Yukiya Kawaguchi traces early Japanese portraiture to the eighth century realistic wood sculpture of Ganjin. See: Yukiya Kawaguchi, “Portraits of the Self: Characteristics and Development of Asian Portraits” in *Self and Other: Portraits from Asia and Europe*, ed. Kenji Yoshida and Brian Durrans (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun, 2008), 264-266.

after contact with Song dynasty China, representations of Buddhist monks began to appear in painting and sculpture.<sup>122</sup> Although these images were predominantly of religious men, they do establish a historical precedent of naturalistic portrait imagery, one which had an impact on and legacy in imperial portraiture.<sup>123</sup> These idealized portraits were not, however, comparable to modern secular portraits in their use or patronage. They were not intended for everyday viewing, and were not displayed for personal use in the home, or for public consumption. Rather, they were usually created by devout followers upon the death of the monk, and were displayed during memorial ceremonies, and later upon the anniversary of the death of the sitter.

The earliest portraits of living emperors in Japan did not appear until the twelfth century. It was with the development of the *nise-e* (似絵, copy picture) in the mid-twelfth century, and the portrait of the retired Emperor Toba (鳥羽天皇, 1103-1156) at the same historical moment that imperial Japanese portraits came into existence.<sup>124</sup> The *nise-e* generally depicted secular figures with individualized faces, but similar bodies.<sup>125</sup> It is accepted among scholars that prior to the twelfth century, there was a belief that realistic or naturalistic imagery could result in a supernatural curse.<sup>126</sup> The potential for the growth of portraiture was unleashed once these beliefs changed. *Nise-e* of the emperors, while not common, did exist, with the earliest being that of Emperor Hanazono (花園天皇, 1297-1348), created in 1338.<sup>127</sup> Yet, even after the development

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<sup>122</sup> For a complete discussion of the history of Japanese portraiture see: Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Nihon no shōzōga* [Japanese Portraiture] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun, 1991), and Yamato Bunkakan, *Nihon no shōzōga* [Japanese Portraiture] (Nara: Yamato Bunkakan, 1991).

<sup>123</sup> Portraits of women did exist, but were less common than those of men. For more information on pre-modern portraiture of nuns and nobility see: Miyajima Shinichi, *Shōzōga no shisen* [A Look at Portraiture] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1996), 170-183, and Naruse Fujio, *Nihon shōzōgashi* [History of Japanese Portraiture] (Tokyo: Chūōkōron bijutsu shuppan, 2005), 132-136.

<sup>124</sup> Miyajima, *Shōzōga no shisen*, 37.

<sup>125</sup> For a complete definition of the *nise-e*, see Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System, “nise-e.” <http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/n/nisee.htm>. Accessed June 15, 2015.

<sup>126</sup> Yamamoto Yōko, “Tennō o egaku koto o habakaru hyōgen no shūen” [The Demise of Hesitant Expression in Representing the Emperor] *Myōjyō daigaku kenkyū kiyō* [Bulletin of Myōjyō University Research] 9(2001): 21.

<sup>127</sup> Mikiko Hirayama, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: Japanese Visuality and Imperial Portrait Photography” *History of Photography* 33:2 (2009): 168.

of *nise-e*, portraits of the emperors were rare and not publically displayed until well into the nineteenth century.<sup>128</sup>

The role of the female members of the Imperial Household in the premodern period was even further hidden. While women could ascend to the role of ruling monarch in the pre-modern period, throughout Japanese history, there are only eight women who did so, six of whom ruled in the years prior to the eighth century, and therefore did not have their likenesses recorded in portrait form.<sup>129</sup> Empresses as non-ruling consorts were also generally not represented in portraits. As most emperors kept a multitude of courtesans, and there was not the concept of the nuclear family as there was in the European royal tradition, the empress as a publically exhibited persona who accompanied the emperor did not develop until the modern period.

The shoguns, military leaders who ruled from 1185-1868, were represented in portraiture with similar conventions to Buddhist monks.<sup>130</sup> In a dramatic turn of representation, the first Japanese ruler to be photographed was Tokugawa Yoshinobu (徳川慶喜, 1837-1913), the last shogun to rule the nation. The earliest photographs of him dated to the mid-1860s, with a woodcut reproduction of one of the images published in the *Illustrated London News* on August 10, 1867.<sup>131</sup> Although photographs of the Shogun from the year prior are extant, the 1867 image was the first to be widely viewed by the public, but notably this public was outside of Japan; the image received virtually no domestic distribution.<sup>132</sup> The *Illustrated London News* portrait was

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<sup>128</sup> For more on the early modern use (and disuse) of images see: Timon Screech, "Image Management for Royal Power," *The Shogun's Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States, 1760-1829*, 111-166 (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

<sup>129</sup> The Empress Jingū, who ruled in the third century, is considered legendary due to insufficient historical records on her reign. She is not one of the eight ruling empresses.

<sup>130</sup> For a full discussion of shogunal portraits see, Miyajima Shinichi, *Shōzōga* [Portraiture] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994), 232-248.

<sup>131</sup> Masato Miyachi, *Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Akitake, Yoshikatsu shashinshū: Shogun tonosama ga totta Bakumatsu Meiji* [Photo Albums of Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Akitake, Yoshikatsu: Feudal Lord Shoguns in Bakumatsu and Meiji] (Tokyo: Shin Jinbustū Ōraisha, 1996), 98. For an image see: *Illustrated London News*, August 10, 1867.

<sup>132</sup> The earlier images, including those of Tokugawa Yoshinobu in Napoleonic-style military dress, Japanese dress of two differing styles, and a European-style suit, as well as later images of the Shogun can be found in: Masato

taken by amateur British photographer Frederick William Sutton, in Japan with the Royal Navy, to document the meeting of the Shogun and the visiting British Minister Extraordinary and captains of the Royal Navy vessels docked in Osaka in April of 1867.<sup>133</sup> An additional image of Yoshinobu from the 1860s depicts him in a military uniform that was a gift from Napoleon III. Although these images were not widespread in their reproduction or distribution, as Mikiko Hirayama states, they “clearly indicate a conscious attempt to present a positive image of the then-shaky shogunal authority overseas.”<sup>134</sup> It is also important to note that the single published image was taken by a foreign photographer. Although in these early days of public portraiture of Japanese rulers the concept of authority was decidedly important, Japanese government officials had yet to codify and standardize a visual strategy for representing leadership.

This lack of a visual strategy continued into the very early days of the Meiji period. With the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the government quickly moved to place the emperor at the head of society, and to give the emperor an aura of authority. After hundreds of years of shogunal rule, it was critical to the Restoration project to situate Emperor Meiji as an unquestioned leader of the nation. Yet, coinciding with the ascent of Emperor Meiji to the throne the distribution of news was in the midst of great change due to technological advancements in communications, printing, and transportation. Simultaneously, the developing field of photography was impacting the way portraits were conceived and created.<sup>135</sup> These developments would prove to have a great impact on the way in which the early imperial portraits were created and distributed.

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Miyachi, *Shogun tonosama ga totta Bakumatsu Meiji*, 96-106. This publication also includes photographs of Tokugawa Akitake, the younger half-brother of Yoshinobu, whose image was recorded around the same time, 1867, which coincided with Akitake’s visit to France. A woodcut copy of Akitake’s portrait was also published in the *Illustrated London News*, in December of 1867.

<sup>133</sup> For a full biography of Frederick William Sutton and his work in Japan see: Sebastian Dobson, “Frederick William Sutton,” 289-302.

<sup>134</sup> Hirayama, “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” 166.

<sup>135</sup> One early Meiji example of the changing presentation of news was the *nishiki-e shinbun*, or brocade print newspaper. These single-sheet multi-color woodblock prints, which began publication in the mid-1870s, featured a graphic illustration of a news story, often violent in nature. See: Chiba-shi Bijutsukan, *Bunmei kaika no nishikie*

The first photograph of Emperor Meiji was captured by the Czech photographer Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz in January of 1872. Upon the occasion of Emperor Meiji visiting the city of Yokosuka to tour industrial facilities, Stillfried surreptitiously placed his camera behind a canvas sail with a small hole in it, so as to capture the Emperor and his entourage while they took a break from their tour.<sup>136</sup> In the image Emperor Meiji wears formal Japanese-style robes, as do only three of the twenty men who accompany him. Immediately, the illicit photograph caused a stir. The *Japan Weekly Mail* reported the incident,

On the occasion of the recent visit of the Mikado to Yokoska, an enterprising photographer managed to secure a view of the scene, including a portrait of His Majesty. The Japanese, fearful of the universal diffusion of the portrait, sent down to Yokohama to buy up the copies which had been struck off and the negative itself. This they have done at a large price, the photographer clinging, not unnaturally, to his rights.<sup>137</sup>

Stillfried attempted to market the image, but was quickly embroiled in an international controversy, complete with the involvement of Japanese diplomats, the British Consul, and the Austrian Minister Resident, the result of which was the confiscation of the negatives and the censorship of the photograph.<sup>138</sup> The commotion surrounding the photograph was widely reported in the press, and promptly led to discussions on the need for a visible, visual monarchy in Japan, something which was not a priority throughout the previous millennia of imperial history.

Among government bureaucrats, there were many concerns about the weak appearance of Emperor Meiji in the early days of the Restoration. As Meiji's youth was spent in isolation he

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*shinbun: Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun, yūbin hōchi shinbun zen sakuhin* [Newspaper Prints of Civilization and Enlightenment] (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 2008). Japanese newspapers had their roots in single sheet woodblock prints of the seventeenth century, with modern newspapers developing in the 1860s and early 1870s.

<sup>136</sup> For an image see: Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz, January 1872, *His Imperial Majesty the Tenno of Japan and Suite*, published in *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s-1930s*, ed. John Clark, np.

<sup>137</sup> *Japan Weekly Mail* January 13, 1872, published in Gartlan, "A Chronology of Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz," 131.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

had little experience or training in how to act as a public figure; in early visits with European dignitaries many commented on his odd way of walking, his hushed voice, his highly made-up face, and his sartorial antiquity.<sup>139</sup> At the encouragement of his advisers and diplomats, though, Emperor Meiji quickly transformed his public persona. In fact, it was less than six months after Stillfried's image was created that the Japanese government responded with an image of their own; with interest in the emperor gaining traction with the common people and with the emperor making appearances in popular *nishikie*, or multi-color woodblock prints, the government sensed the need to distribute an official image, thus providing a modicum of control over the likenesses in circulation. It is this first official photograph, and the other official studio portraits of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, that will be the focus of the following section.

### Portraits in the Meiji Period

The official reaction to the illicit 1872 image of Emperor Meiji was swift, and evolved quickly.<sup>140</sup> The response included the first official portrait photographs of the sovereign, which were in historic Heian-style clothing and were followed soon thereafter with a photograph in European-style military garb. These three official studio photographs of the Emperor, produced by artist Uchida Kūichi (内田九一, 1844-1875) in 1872 and 1873, were to form the basis for the public representation of Emperor Meiji for the remainder of his lifetime.<sup>141</sup> Although the earliest

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<sup>139</sup> Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 211.

<sup>140</sup> For a further account of how the unsanctioned photograph impacted later Meiji Imperial portraiture see: Kuramochi Motoi, "Meiji tennō shashin hiroku," [Confidential Papers on Photographs of Emperor Meiji] *Rekishiyomihon* [History Reader] 54:3 (2009).

<sup>141</sup> There are a variety of portraits of Emperor Meiji outside of the realm of photography, many of which were based upon the official photographs. Some of these additional portraits are official commissions, such as the Takashi Yuichi oil painting of 1879. The image can be found in: Kyoto kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, *Kōshitsu no meihin: kindai Nihon bijutsu no iki* [Treasures of the Imperial Collections—The Quintessence of Modern Japanese Art] (Kyoto: Kyoto kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, 2013), 252. For images see: *Emperor Meiji, 1872*, silver albumen prints, Uchida Kūichi, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 10 and 14.

images of the Emperor were not controlled, post-1875 photographs, and subsequent images in lithograph, oil, and woodblock formats, would receive the attention of censorship authorities. In 1874 Uchida Kūichi was denied access to the negatives of the imperial photographs he took, and the commercial sale of imperial photographs was banned from the start.<sup>142</sup> In addition to the carefully distributed image of the emperor, the empress also began to be represented in the visual realm. This section will detail the official photographs of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, with a specific focus on the increase in standardization which occurred throughout their reign.

The first publically distributed images of Emperor Meiji, those created in the late 1870s, were generally woodblock prints and did not feature realistic portraiture. These prints did not resemble Meiji's physical characteristics, and imperial symbols, such as palanquins, were a common substitute to represent the imperial presence, therefore censorship of these images was not a priority for the government.<sup>143</sup> Formal censorship of the imperial image did not commence until 1875, with a move to standardize images in order to promote the emperor as a strong national icon.<sup>144</sup> Concurrently, in the 1870s, officials and bureaucrats were developing a visual strategy that envisioned Emperor Meiji as exhibiting the mature qualities of a world leader.<sup>145</sup> Tied up with this strategy, which was partially based on the observation of European monarchs, were the first government-sanctioned photographs of the Imperial Family.

The first two official photographs of Emperor Meiji were captured by Uchida Kūichi in 1872. In each image, the monarch wears different attire; in one he wears the *sokutai* (束帯), a layered, formal court costume, complete with a tall crown and platform shoes; in the other he

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<sup>142</sup> Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes," 173.

<sup>143</sup> See: Kanagawa kenritsu hakubutsukan, *Oke no shōzō: Meiji kōshitsu arubamu no hajimari* [Royal Family Portraits: The Origin of the Royal Family Album] (Yokohama: Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, 2001), and Taki Kōji, *Tennō no shōzō* [Emperor Portraits] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2002) for samples of these early images of Emperor Meiji.

<sup>144</sup> Taki, *Tennō no shōzō*, 11.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-7.

wears the less formal *nōshi* (直衣), a style of robe worn by the nobility and court, hands hidden beneath the many layers of clothing, and with a much shorter crown. In both, the young sovereign appears uncomfortable and unsure of how to present himself. In the *sokutai* image, he gazes at the camera, but has an uncertainty to his expression, in the *nōshi* image he peers off to the viewer's right, again with an appearance which does not exude confidence or self-assurance; his timid posture and pouty expression reveal his inexperience with the camera, and possibly with his exalted position.<sup>146</sup> It should be recalled that Emperor Meiji was only nineteen years old when these images were captured, and was in the midst of transitioning his position from that of a secluded leader to a public figure. In the *sokutai* photograph, the body of the Emperor is reminiscent of that of his imperial predecessors, the robes show a hint of his physical presence, and his hands cradling the cedar fan that completes the costume. The *nōshi* image, however, gives very little indication of the body beneath the many layered robes—the Emperor's hands are only visible as the tips of two fingers on his proper left hand, and the way which the robes fall to his sides makes him appear small, and do not give an aura of a strong global ruler. In painted form, as they were depicted for the millennia prior to these photographs, the imperial costumes appeared luxurious, and gave off an aura of authority. Later emperors, including Emperor Taishō and Emperor Shōwa, would have their photographs taken in similar traditional costumes, yet in these subsequent images there was a greater understanding of how to use photography to

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<sup>146</sup> This inexperience would quickly change; only six years later, in 1878, a government sponsored photography bureau was established under the Ministry of the Treasury, marking the advent of a public sponsored institution undertaking photographic activities. The following year an order was issued by the Emperor to create portrait albums of his subjects. This initial government project included the portraits of 4,531 people, including members of the Imperial Family, senior officials, and others involved in the modernization efforts, organized into thirty-nine albums. These portraits are all men; only in the category of nobility and the Imperial Family are women's portraits included. See: Kunaicho sannomaru shōzōkan, *Meiji jūninen Meiji Tennō gokamei "jinbutsu shashinchō": 4500-yomei no shōzō* [The Honorable Order of Emperor Meiji in Meiji Twelve "A Portrait Album": Over 4500 Portraits] (Tokyo: Kunaichō, 2013).

advance the imperial visual strategy. This awareness was yet to be developed in the first emperor photographs.

The two images described above were quickly followed by a third Uchida Kūichi photograph of Emperor Meiji in European-style military costume, taken on October 8, 1873.<sup>147</sup> This later photograph, taken less than one year after the first two, provided a drastically different image of the Emperor as an authority figure. In the image, the Emperor is seated in a European-style chair, his body turned in a three-quarter profile. His posture is slightly maladroit, as he is somewhat slouched in the chair, his waist and legs at an awkward angle, and his proper right foot bent behind his left. He wears a European-style military uniform consisting of a black jacket with elaborate gold embroidery, white pants, and a two-cornered hat with white feathers, which sits beside him on a small table. He also holds a sword, resting on his leg, and in his clasped hands, which sit upon his lap. The sovereign's hair is cut short, and he has some facial hair, a new style in the 1870s. The room which surrounds him is relatively unadorned; the carpet and tablecloth are decorative, but the background is plain.

Whether or not the Emperor appeared as a strong leader in this image is a matter of interpretation. While the image can be read as a more masculinized image of a global leader than the 1872 images of the monarch in Heian-style costume, he still appears rather young, and somewhat uncomfortable in his posture. Photography was still new in the early 1870s, and thus Uchida, the Emperor, or the many bureaucrats involved with the creation of the image might not have yet fully understood the power of visual messaging in photographic form. Despite Emperor Meiji's slight appearance, the image was deemed as appropriate for distribution, and in

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<sup>147</sup> For more detail on the differing categories of Emperor Meiji, as a sovereign and patriarch, or as a political leader, see: Mashino Keiko, "Meiji tennō imeji no henshen nitsuite: sekihanga ni miidaseru tennōzō," [On the Transition of Emperor Meiji's Image: Discovering the Emperor's Image in Lithographs] *Bijutsushi kenkyū* [Art History Research] 38 (2000): 52. For more on the third photograph, see, Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes," 172. For an image see: *Emperor Meiji*, October 8, 1873, Uchida Kūichi, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 16.

November of 1873 the government began to issue the photograph to the prefectures for public display on special occasions.<sup>148</sup> As Emperor Meiji had a strong distaste for being photographed, this image, at age twenty and only five years after the Meiji Restoration, is the last official photograph of him.<sup>149</sup>

Amid the many political debates and innovations of the early 1870s was the start of military conscription, and the establishment of modern gender roles in society. In Japan, as both private, domestic relationships and everyday public roles changed to fit nineteenth-century expectations of Europe and the United States, men were brought into the political realm and women were excluded, with not just women's public behaviors, but even their appearance being legislated in the early Meiji period.<sup>150</sup> As part of this process, the Imperial Family were envisioned as role models at the head of society, and there was concern amongst the bureaucracy that the emperor convey a "masculine" appearance, one which was in line with the global standards of the era, and which would serve as a model for the Japanese men of the newly conscripted military forces.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, there was, as is argued by Wakakuwa Midori, a widespread anxiety about the exposure of traditional Japanese gender roles and sexuality to the

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>149</sup> Donald Keene, "Portraits of Emperor Meiji," *Impressions* 21 (1999): 21. A few photographs of Emperor Meiji undertaking military exercises between 1907 and 1910 exist, but they were not widely published or viewed. See: *Tennō yondai no shōzō: Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa, Heisei* [Four Generations of Emperor Portraits: Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa, Heisei] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1999), 28-29.

<sup>150</sup> These changes were undertaken as part of a larger national strategy to gain cultural respect and political equality with Europe and the U.S. with the larger aim of reversing unequal treaties and taking on a role of greater global power. Women were legally not allowed to cut their hair short, and if a medical condition necessitated shorter locks, a permit was required. Sharon Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 14-15.

<sup>151</sup> Takashi Fujitani discusses this transition stating, "the invention of the imperial family—where women represented what men were not, and vice versa—provided the context for the masculinization of the emperor in his "body natural," a man in both senses of the term, who could be imagined as directly and actively involved in society and politics." Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 191. Wakakuwa Midori states, "The establishment of conscription as in Imperial tradition and the establishment of the system of Western dress are close and inseparable." Wakakuwa, *Kōgō no shōzō*, 29.

Western world.<sup>152</sup> Aside from worries over cultural judgement, there was a broader concern about how domestic social practices which were different than those of Europe or the U.S. could negatively impact the respect that the Japanese nation gained on the global stage.<sup>153</sup> All of these factors came together to motivate the third official photograph of Emperor Meiji, as discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

Throughout the 1870s and into the 1880s, while the negatives for the Uchida photographs were kept under state control and the sale of prints of the images was maintained as illegal, woodblock prints and lithographs of the emperor were sold on the commercial market. Around the turn of the decade in 1880, realistic imperial portraiture grew to increasing popularity, leading to a ban on sales of the imperial image in 1881, although many publishers evaded the law by not using the official title of the emperor, empress, and empress dowager.<sup>154</sup> In creating prints which envisioned the imperial heads of state, but which did not label them as such in the titles, printmakers and sellers could capitalize on the growing popularity of the monarchy, while still staying within legal boundaries. During this time, a plethora of lithograph and woodblock prints were published and sold, with many including increasingly realistic portraits.<sup>155</sup> Lithographs had cornered the market on Imperial portraiture through the 1880s, and were the dominant media for

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<sup>152</sup> Wakakuwa discusses these gender roles as potentially viewed as weak by Europe and the U.S. Although women had little power in Edo period Japan, accepted practices of prostitution, and more fluid gender identities when compared to Europe and the U.S. at the time (as seen in the *onnagata*, men who performed as women on the kabuki stage) were seen by the imperialist powers of the West as suspect, and as evidence of moral inferiority. The Japanese government was aware of these critical views, and cautious to present their society as in line with European and U.S. expectations. Wakakuwa, *Kōgō no shōzō*, 20-30.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 22-30.

<sup>154</sup> These bans included images of the emperor and empress if they were defined with their official titles. By not labeling the images with text, printmakers and sellers were able to evade the laws. See: Hirayama, 174-175, and Tōyama Shigeki, ed. *Nihon kindai shisōshi taikei: Tennō to kazoku* [History of Modern Japanese Thought (Series): Emperor and Family] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988).

<sup>155</sup> Migita Hiroki, “‘Kōshitsu gurabia’ to ‘goshinei’: senzenki shinbun zasshi ni okeru kōshitsu shashin no tsūjiteki bunseki” [“Photogravure” and “goshinei” of the Imperial Family: A Diachronic Analysis of Photographs of the Imperial Family in Prewar Newspapers and Magazines] *Kyōtō shakaigaku nenpō* [Kyoto Journal of Sociology] (2001): 94-96.

imperial images by 1890.<sup>156</sup> The technological development and spread of lithography, with its photograph-like aesthetic, led to changes in how prints, both woodblock and lithograph, were conceived and produced, pushing the genre towards a higher degree of naturalism in terms of line, color, and composition.<sup>157</sup> By 1887, the rules would once again change with increased censorship standards being issued as part of the Press Ordinance and Publication Ordinance, both of which dictated the treatment of the imperial image, and which would remain in place for the following fifty years.<sup>158</sup>

Beginning in the late 1880s, a variety of imperial officials were concerned about the propriety of presenting a nearly twenty-year old photograph of the Emperor to dignitaries, officials, and foreign royals. The nation was on the cusp of codifying many of political modernization projects, such as the Promulgation of the Constitution (1889), the first general election (1890), and the release of the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890), the last of which cemented the emperor's role as the patriarchal head of the Japanese nation. With the Rescript came the need for a new image of the emperor. The resulting image, a composite photograph of a conte crayon drawing by European artist Edoardo Chiossone, and termed the *goshinei* (御真影, imperial portrait), was a specific category of Japanese Imperial portraiture which originated with Emperor Meiji and was actively used through the end of the Second World War. The *goshinei* was treated as a sacred object, the ritual creation, handling, and display of which was standardized in imperial law.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Mashino, "Meiji Tennō imeji no hensen ni tsuite."

<sup>157</sup> For further discussion of the impact of lithography on woodblock print production as related to Imperial imagery in Japan see: Sasaki Suguru, "Kindai tennō no imeji to zuzō," [The Icon and Image of the Modern Emperor] in *Hyōchō to geinō* [Symbols and Performing Arts] ed. Ōtsuka Shinichi, vol. 6 of *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru* [Thoughts on Royal Power and the Emperor] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 139-163, 145-146. For an image see: *Kiken gosonei*, 1900, lithograph, published in *Oke no shōzō*, 115.

<sup>158</sup> Richard Mitchell, *Censorship in Imperial Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>159</sup> The term *goshinei*, or honorable true shadow, was first used in 1888, sixteen years after the first formal portrait of Emperor Meiji was created. See: Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes," 166.

By the late 1880s, Emperor Meiji was not interested in sitting for a photographic portrait, but the government officials involved in the project of procuring an image of the monarch were concerned with having a realistic photograph-like representation. It was with these dual concerns that Edoardo Chiossone, an Italian artist in the employ of the Japanese Printing Bureau was commissioned to create a likeness of the Emperor by the Minister of Imperial Affairs, Hijikata Hisamoto.<sup>160</sup> As Emperor Meiji refused to participate in a sitting, Hijikata and Chiossone conspired to create the image stealthily; in January of 1888, the painter was provided with a space next to the Emperor's dining room, from where he sketched the visage of the monarch. Chiossone proceeded to costume himself in a military uniform and have his appearance photographed. From these two images, the sketch of the Emperor and the photograph of himself, Chiossone created a composite portrait; the resulting image was the model for the Emperor's figure in the *goshinei*.<sup>161</sup> The completed portrait was a drawing produced in conte crayon. Upon being shown the portrait of himself by Hijikata, Emperor Meiji neither approved nor disapproved of the image, but soon thereafter signed over permission for copies of the image to be presented to foreign dignitaries.<sup>162</sup>

Chiossone's drawing was reproduced in photograph form in 1889 by Maruki Toshihiro.<sup>163</sup> Although the original distribution records of the *goshinei* are not open to the public, it is estimated that over twenty thousand copies of the image were distributed to schools throughout the country in 1889.<sup>164</sup> The image, although a compilation of two different bodies and two different mediums, was treated as the most authentic image of the Emperor. The art historian

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<sup>160</sup> Kunaichō, *Meiji tennō ki 7* [Record of Emperor Meiji] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1972), 7-8.

<sup>161</sup> Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes," 167. For an image see: *goshinei Emperor Meiji*, Edoardo Chiossone, 1888, conte crayon, reproduced by Maruki Toshihiro, 1889, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 19.

<sup>162</sup> Keene, "Portraits of the Emperor Meiji," 21-22.

<sup>163</sup> Kunaichō, *Meiji tennō ki 7*, 336-337. Interestingly, Hirayama cites this incident, as stating in a footnote that Maruki later wrote that he worked on the *goshinei*, "after bathing and a period of abstinence, just like Shinto priests." Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes," 180.

<sup>164</sup> Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, *Oke no shōzō*, 21-22.

Mikiko Hirayama argues that the *goshinei*, “successfully perpetuated an eternally youthful, masculine emperor... The state needed the illusion of authentic reality that photography created. Thus, it was always treated as a photographic image even though it was actually a drawing.”<sup>165</sup> Emperor Meiji’s *goshinei* is highly idealized. In the portrait, the Emperor was age thirty-six, and he is envisioned as a mature, confident leader. Although there are few appropriate contemporaneous photographic images to compare Chiossone’s drawing to, in contrasting the *goshinei* with the 1872 photographs by Uchida Kūichi, the idealized nature of the later drawing is apparent. In the *goshinei*, Emperor Meiji’s jaw is softened, and his head shape perfected. The piercing, serious eyes and distinctive upturned eyebrows that distinguish the Emperor’s face remain the same as in photographs, but the drawing allowed Chiossone to polish and enhance the countenance of Emperor Meiji. The physique of the Emperor, which was actually modeled on Chiossone’s own body, closely resembles the photograph that the artist took of himself; the frame is expanded in the chest, and the torso bulges beneath the highly adorned military uniform. The Emperor’s posture is stiff and upright, with his right arm resting on the table beside him, and his left holding a sword.<sup>166</sup> From the neck down, the portrait is based on the artist’s appearance and not the Emperor’s, leading us to understand that the attributes and gestures of the *goshinei* provide few cues to the actual appearance of Emperor Meiji in the period when he was at the height of his power, in the years immediately before the Promulgation of the Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education. Rather, the image provides more information on the politics of the imperial image in the late 1880s and early 1890s than the genuine look of the monarch. The circumstances of its creation and later distribution are a window into the control and construction of the modern imperial symbol in its early days. Examining images of Emperor Meiji also

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<sup>165</sup> Hirayama, “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” 181.

<sup>166</sup> For further analysis of the visual characteristics and iconography of the Emperor’s portrait, see: Wakakuwa, *Kōgō no shōzō*, 38-48.

provides a basis of understanding regarding gender constructions in imperial imagery, which will be of importance in contrasting Teimei and Taishō with their predecessors.

On the same occasion as Emperor Meiji's 1872 photographs in traditional costume, Empress Shōken's portrait was captured by Uchida Kūichi. Like the Emperor, the Empress was depicted in Heian-style court clothing, but unlike her husband, the image of her in these costumes was not updated with a photograph in European-style costume the following year. In fact, it was not until 1890 that Shōken was photographed in European dress. While the political circumstances of the 1870s led to the reimagining of Emperor Meiji in the masculine ideal of European monarchs, the Empress was to act as an exemplar of femininity, and in this instance, part of the ideal of femininity was to be the keeper of tradition. While the new modern men were to be active in industry, politics, and military concerns, women were to act as the *ryōsai kenbo* (良妻賢母), or "good wife, wise mother," an ideal of domesticity that I will return to in Chapter Four of this dissertation.<sup>167</sup> In the immediate instance of the 1872 photograph, Empress Shōken was exemplifying the standard for women's appearance in the aftermath of the ban on short hair for women which was instituted in the same year: her hair was long, her eyebrows natural, and her teeth white.<sup>168</sup>

The 1872 Uchida Kūichi photograph portrait of Empress Shōken, is similar to the accompanying photographs of her husband, in that it is an image of the monarch in traditional,

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<sup>167</sup> The term *ryōsai kenbo* was first coined in November of 1875 by Nakamura Masano, writing in the *Meiji Six Journal*. The nationalist ideal of women as patriotic caretakers and educators of the next generation however, began to develop a few years prior. See: Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 22. As will be examined in Chapter Four, *ryōsai kenbo* ideology evolved throughout the over seventy year period during which it was promoted as an ideal. At this early stage, the ideology encouraged women to bear many children, and to be educated so as to take an active role in the education of their children, who as the next generation were crucial to the success of the Empire. Women were also to maintain Japanese traditions in the home, all in patriotic, nationalist service.

<sup>168</sup> In addition to the law banning short hair, there were informal proclamations against blackened teeth and shaved eyebrows for married women. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 14-15. Prior to the Meiji period, the custom of traditional appearance included the latter two, shaved eyebrows and blackened teeth, as common beauty standards.

Heian-style clothing, termed *kōchiki* (小桂) in this instance.<sup>169</sup> Like with Emperor Meiji, she stands upon a decorative carpet, in an otherwise unidentifiable studio space. With the Empress, however, she stands upon an additional rug, one which is square in shape with a circular pattern at the center. It is upon this circle which she stands, dressed in many layers of traditional robes, and holding an open fan which is tucked among her layers of robes, her hands unseen. One small sprig of flowers is also placed in the folds of her robes, and another posy is attached to the fan at her proper left, cascading down her robes with a collection of ribbons. Her hair is gathered at her neck and highly styled, and she has a small crown atop her forehead. In a similar style to the Emperor's *nōshi* photograph, her physical form is completely hidden beneath the large conical shape of her luxurious robes. Her facial expression is blank; she gazes off to the side of the camera. She appears confident in her position, and her expression does not expose any discomfort or uncertainty that she may have had in being photographed.

Based upon this photograph, Italian artist Giuseppe Ugolini completed an oil painting of Empress Shōken in 1875, commissioned by the Japanese authorities and undertaken in Milan.<sup>170</sup> This portrait was again copied by Goseda Yoshimatsu (五姓田義松, 1855-1915) in 1879 on a commission from the *genrō* (元老, imperial advisers) to create three portraits for the legislative building depicting Emperor Meiji, Empress Shōken, and Empress Dowager Eishō.<sup>171</sup> That there were such close connections in the representation of the Imperial Family in photographs and oil paintings is unsurprising; during the early Meiji period the two genres were closely linked for their ability to represent reality. Photographers and oil painters in mid-nineteenth century Japan

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<sup>169</sup> For an image see: *Empress Shōken*, 1872, Uchida Kūichi, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 12.

<sup>170</sup> The Ugolini portrait, and a catalogue entry on the painting, can be found in: Meiji Jingū, *Meiji no kōgō: Meiji tennō to ayumareta Shōken kōtaigō* [The Meiji Empress: Emperor Meiji and the History of Empress Shōken] (Tokyo: Meiji Jingū, 2014), 11.

<sup>171</sup> Kyoto kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, *Kōshitsu no meihin*, 329. For an image see: *Empress Dowager Shōken*, oil on canvas, 1879, Goseda Yoshimatsu, *gyobutsu* [Imperial Properties], published in National Museum of Modern Art Kyoto, *Treasures of the Imperial Collections*, 252.

were part of a continuum of interest in mimesis, which was considered desirable for the sacred representations of the heads of both religion and state.<sup>172</sup> Much as with the developing field of photography, the oil paintings of the Imperial Family led to the furthering of the nascent field of *yōga* (洋画, Western-style painting) in Japan.<sup>173</sup>

Aside from official portraiture, a variety of popular portraits of other female members of the Imperial Household were produced throughout the Meiji period, some of which proved to be controversial. In the midst of the 1870s, and alongside the publication of the many woodblock prints of the empress, which gained a great deal of public popularity, were prints of the *gon no tenji* (権の典侍). The *gon no tenji* were the concubines of the emperor, officially sanctioned through the Meiji period. The women were depicted in an 1878 woodblock print series by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年, 1839-1892). Depicted in two series of seven, the *gon no tenji* were the mothers of Emperor Meiji's children (Empress Shōken never bore children), and while their role was accepted, there was a certain furtive manner required of their position. Donald Keene states of the *gon no tenji* and the Yoshitoshi series featuring the women:

Although it was not a disgrace to be a *gon no tenji*, these women were shadowy presences, and there was something clandestine about them. They so seldom left the palace or were exposed to sunlight that their faces were said to have a ghastly pallor. It is astonishing that Yoshitoshi should have known the names of these women, who were hardly visible even inside the palace, but he boldly labeled each portrait with the woman's name and rank.<sup>174</sup>

The mother of Emperor Taishō, Yanagihara Naruko, was one of the represented *gon no tenji*. In the image of her, *Tōdai no hi: Gon no tenji shō-goi Yanagihara Naruko* (灯台の日 : 権の典侍正五

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<sup>172</sup> The links between photography and oil painting in their pursuit of realism are detailed by Doris Croissant, "In Quest of the Real: Portrayal and Photography in Japanese Painting Theory," in *Challenging Past and Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*, ed. Ellen P. Conant (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 153-176. The concepts are also discussed at length in: Maki Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012). Hirayama also connects the interest in "accuracy of vision" to Imperial portraits in her article. Hirayama, "The Emperor's New Clothes."

<sup>173</sup> Kyoto kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, *Kōshitsu no meihin*, 329-330.

<sup>174</sup> Donald Keene, "Portraits of the Emperor Meiji," 23.

柳原愛子, Light of the Lantern: Yanagihara Naruko, Gon no Tenji of the Fifth Rank) from the series “Mitate Shichiyōsei” (見立絵七曜星, A *Mitate* of the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper), Yanagihara Naruko is envisioned in a suggestive position, preparing to extinguish a candle-lit lantern and holding a packet of tissues in her mouth.<sup>175</sup> The image was so controversial that it was banned by the authorities, and the shock surrounding the image may have contributed to the development of imperial censorship laws. Although the *gon no tenji* and Yanagihara Naruko were later seen in newspaper photographs, their presence in the media was minor. Certainly these prints affirmed the need for the distribution of approved images of the empress and other female members of the Imperial Household. That Yoshitoshi published two series of images of the *gon no tenji* indicates that there was a market demand for these pictures, a demand that, in the eyes of the authorities at least, was better fulfilled with images of the empress and other, more respectable, female members of the Imperial Household.

Although she appeared in myriad woodblock and lithograph images throughout the 1870s and 1880s, it was not until 1889 that Empress Shōken was photographed again.<sup>176</sup> In this later image, captured by Suzuki Shinichi (鈴木真一, 1835-1918) and Maruki Riyō (丸木利陽, 1850-1923), the Empress is in a dramatically different studio setting, and wears a costume similar to the elaborate court costumes worn by European monarchs. She stands clad in a red velvet dress with a silk embroidered frontispiece, a sash across her torso, and imperial medallion on her chest.<sup>177</sup> Wearing a three-strand jeweled necklace, and a European-style crown, her hair is pulled up, and she holds a folded fan and handkerchief in her gloved hands. Behind her is a painted

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<sup>175</sup> Due to the censorship of the image, even today it is not widely distributed, but can be found reproduced in: Segi Shinichi, ed. *Tsukioka Yoshitoshi gashū* [A Book of Paintings of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978).

<sup>176</sup> For an image see: *Empress Shōken*, Suzuki Shinichi and Maruki Riyō, 1889, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 18.

<sup>177</sup> A detailed history of this dress, along with the imperial medallions and costume of Emperor Meiji can be found in: Bunka Gakuen Fukushoku hakubutsukan, *Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa senzenki no kyūteifuku—yōsō to shōzoku* [Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa Court Clothing of the Prewar Era—Costume and Western Clothing] (Tokyo: Bunka Gakuen Fukushoku hakubutsukan, 2013).

backdrop, intended to look like a posh European-style interior, and next to her is a table covered in opulent fabric and topped with a rose-filled vase and a large book bound in the Japanese style.

The 1889 photograph of Empress Shōken was, like the *goshinei* of Emperor Meiji, taken in response to the Promulgation of the Constitution and the subsequent desire to distribute imperial portraits to schools and government buildings. Art historian Wakakuwa Midori addresses the creation of this image in her book *Kōgō no shōzō*, citing the Italian royal portraits that influenced the style of the Shōken image, including that of Queen Margarita of 1878.<sup>178</sup> Italian artists were working in the Japanese capital in the early Meiji years as part of the *oyatoi gaikokujin* (御雇い外国人, hired foreigners) system, wherein foreign experts were brought to Japan to assist with instruction in a variety of fields, from art to education, military to manufacturing. Wakakuwa traces the visual inspiration for the early Meiji Japanese imperial images to the Italian artists working in the Japanese capital, including Edoardo Chiossone, the creator of Emperor Meiji's *goshinei*. Wakakuwa also attributes the creation of what she refers to as the *kōgō goshinei* (皇后御真影, Empress *goshinei*) to developments in gender politics in the mid-Meiji period. She cites the continuing need for Japan to be viewed as a peer to the European and American powers, and the necessity of altered, Westernized roles for women in the pursuit of a position in international society. From this change in women's roles, out of the historic Confucian system and into the Westernized system, arose the Meiji ideology of *ippuissaisei* (一夫一婦制, one man, one woman policy), and with it came the need for the Empress to be envisioned in Western clothes, in the same fashion as her husband.<sup>179</sup> The 1889 portrait photograph was taken only two years after Empress Shōken appeared in public in European-style dress for the

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<sup>178</sup> Wakakuwa, *Kōgō no shōzō*, 50-52.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113.

first time, and three years after she issued her edict on Western-dress, in which she encouraged Japanese women to don European-style garments made with Japanese textiles.<sup>180</sup>

The varied images of Empress Shōken, including those in photograph, print, and oil form, had an outsized impact on the public acceptance and understanding of portraiture as a concept in the modern era, particularly in reference to women's portraiture. Because of the legacy of the *bijin* (美人, beautiful people) as a category of *ukiyo-e* (浮世絵, pictures of the floating world, or Edo period woodblock prints), it was controversial to represent middle and upper-class women who worked outside of the realm of entertainment in portrait form in the late nineteenth century. The *bijin* were generally of a low social status, and worked as courtesans, shop girls, or other famous entertainers of the pleasure quarters of Edo. The idea of women's portraiture, particularly in the public realm, as a marketing tool for brothels or shops of the red-light districts was not overcome until the mid to late-Meiji period. The public images of the empress and other women of the Imperial Family were a catalyst in this change; with the female leadership of the nation appearing frequently in visual form, the public grew accustomed to seeing respectable women in public images.<sup>181</sup> This would eventually impact the way that middle- and upper-class women in the late Meiji and later eras allowed themselves to be represented.

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<sup>180</sup> Wakakuwa cites this first appearance in European costume as July 30, 1887, *ibid.*, 56. The Empress' proclamation was published in the *Chōya shinbun* on January 17, 1887. For an English translation see: Julia Meech Pakarik, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986), 129-130.

<sup>181</sup> Karen Fraser details this change, along with the increasing visual use of *bijin* for nationalist and political purposes on the international stage in the early twentieth century. See: Karen Fraser, "Beauty Battle: Politics and Portraiture in Late Meiji Japan," in *Visualizing Beauty: Gender and Ideology in Modern East Asia* ed. Aida Yuen Wong (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012). The resulting change in public portraiture of women, particularly in the context of newspapers is discussed in: Yoshimoto Hiroko, "Taishō shoki no shinbun ni miru kazoku shashin: Yomiuri shinbun, Tokyo Asahi shinbun o jirei toshite," [Viewing Family Photographs in Early Taishō Newspapers: Yomiuri Newspaper, Tokyo Asahi Newspaper as Case Studies] *Matsuyama shinonome jyoshi daigaku jinbunkagaku bukiyou* 10 [Matsuyama Shinonome Women's College Humanities Bulletin] (2002-2003): 91-101. Yoshimoto discusses the difference in photographic treatment by gender in different Japanese newspapers of the Taishō period.

In the aftermath of the 1889 photograph of Empress Shōken, the ban on the commercial sale of imperial imagery was lifted in 1891, allowing for a wider distribution of imperial portraiture in more established sources, such as magazines and newspapers.<sup>182</sup> Further permissions to reproduce and distribute the imperial likeness were given to the media in 1898 and 1900, immediately prior to the Taishō wedding.<sup>183</sup> This relaxing of the censorship laws was a response to the heightened public interest in the upcoming nuptials, and to the widespread desire for more imperial imagery in an age when there was a heightened interest in national culture, and an excitement surrounding the expansion of printed visual materials created with new technologies. It is this expansion and proliferation of imperial imagery in the Taishō period which will be examined presently.

### Portraits in the Taishō Period

As the previous section shows, throughout the Meiji period the numerous government institutions with a vested interest in the imperial portrait worked to construct a standardized image of the modern Imperial Family. Yet, the rites and rituals that surrounded the imperial images were not fully established as universal activities for the citizenry until the early twentieth century—in the Taishō period. Erwin von Bälz, a doctor serving in Meiji Japan recorded the progression of imperial activities in his diary noting that, “in 1880 police coercion had to be used to persuade people to fly the national flag on the new holidays. Diaries of Meiji Japanese showed no awareness of the new rites until 1900. It was not, in fact, until 1910 that the new holidays came to be generally observed.”<sup>184</sup> In the last two decades of Meiji rule, between the Imperial

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<sup>182</sup> Migita Hiroki, “Kōshitsu gurabia” 93-114, 98.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>184</sup> As quoted in Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 33. Hardacre also states of the period between 1905 and 1930 that Shinto “priests were a great asset in universalizing such practices as formal veneration of the imperial portrait and the Imperial Rescript on Education,” 23.

Rescript on Education and Promulgation of the Constitution and the switch to the Taishō monarchy, the systems put in place by the Rescript and Promulgation were absorbed and normalized in the daily practices of the common people. Thus, with the change to Taishō rule in 1912, these norms and guidelines were in place for the first monarchical shift in modern Japanese history. In relation to the visual strategy of the modern Japanese Imperial Family, the Meiji period was about the establishment of imperial visual culture, while the Taishō period was about the application of said culture. Furthermore, wide cultural shifts between the Meiji and Taishō periods led to a differing focus for the imperial icon, moving from the Meiji emphasis on establishing a global reputation to the Taishō focus on building the metropole as the power center of the budding Japanese Empire.<sup>185</sup> As one scholarly article phrased it, Taishō emperor was a domestic figure, as contrasted with the international character of Meiji emperor.<sup>186</sup> This difference in the perceived and intended audience for the imperial image had a great impact on the visual strategy in the 1910s and 1920s. It is this Taishō implementation of imperial visual strategy that this section will examine.

While there were a handful of images of Emperor Taishō as a young boy, the majority of the early images of the Taishō imperial couple came in the year immediately before the imperial wedding in 1900. These early images were created in both woodblock and lithograph form, and with the newly relaxed laws surrounding censorship of the imperial image, as discussed in the previous section, they were widely distributed. In addition to lithographs and woodblock prints depicting the multitude of wedding ceremonies which occurred leading up to the official nuptials

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<sup>185</sup>Regarding this change, philosopher and literary critic Kōjin Karatani states that the Meiji philosophers Uchimura and Okakura, “were not unpatriotic, but their patriotism was revealed only to Westerners and was not directed internally...The Taisho discursive space came into being with the eradication of the transcendent otherness and exteriority maintained by Uchimura Kanzo and Okakura Tenshin...The Taisho discursive space emerged as an affirmation of ‘Japanese nature,’ and the eradication of the West and Asia as Other.” Kojin Karatani and Seiji M. Lippit, “The Discursive Space of Modern Japan,” *boundary 2* 18 (1991): 203-204.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

as discussed in Chapter One, some of the earliest popularly distributed images of Empress Teimei came in the form of formal, posed group images of the Imperial Family. Images such as the lithograph *Kiken gosonei* of 1900 show bust portraits of the Crown Princess Sadako and Crown Prince Yoshihito in small roundels, together with portraits of Empress Shōken and Emperor Meiji.<sup>187</sup> Printed and sold around the time of the imperial wedding, by depicting the well-established and respected Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken together with their future successors Crown Prince Yoshihito (Taishō) and Crown Princess Sadako (Teimei), these portrayals allowed the citizenry to become accustomed to the Crown Prince and Princess as upcoming rulers, and cemented the image of the unbroken lineage of the Japanese Imperial Family in the public eye. As the late nineteenth-century Japanese public was quite familiar with the visage of the Emperor Meiji, images such as *Kiken gosonei*, and many other lithographs from the last decade of Meiji, were key in aiding the transition between Meiji and Taishō; this is particularly true as Emperor Meiji began to limit public appearances in the years after 1900 due to declining health.

It should be noted that much of what was popularly understood to be the modern imperial institution and modern Imperial state was intertwined with Emperor Meiji personally. In his years as Crown Prince, Taishō was known to be more independent, direct, and casual than his father. For the public to accept readily the transition from the charismatic and regal Emperor Meiji to his more casual and free-spirited son, some effort on behalf of the Imperial Household Agency and by extension, the media, was necessary.<sup>188</sup> As Natsume Soseki famously stated on the passing of Meiji in his novel *Kokoro*, “And then, at the height of the summer, Emperor Meiji

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<sup>187</sup> For further examples of these types of lithographs of the Imperial Family from the years surrounding 1900 see: Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, *Oke no shōzō*.

<sup>188</sup> For further discussion of the personality and antics of Emperor Taishō see: Hara Takeshi, “Emperor Taishō—Image vs. Reality,” *Japan Quarterly* 48 (2001): 56-63.

passed away. I felt that as the spirit of the Meiji era had begun with him, so it had ended with his death.”<sup>189</sup> If the “spirit of the Meiji era” is equated with the public notion of modernity, this quotation exemplifies the crisis in national confidence that occurred at the end of the Meiji period, and may help explain why the proliferation of images showing the Imperial Family as a unit and as part of a lineage was so important in the years between 1900 and 1915.<sup>190</sup> Formal portraiture was the genre best suited to promote the unity and lineage of the Imperial Family—it imparted a quality of respect, worldliness, and aristocratic class, and removed traces of individual personalities or expressions. Lithographs such as *Kiken gosonei* exemplify just these characteristics; the image, in which the roundels surrounding the Crown Prince and Princess are bound together, the unity of which produces a sprig of floral blooms, provides a literal illustration of the fecundity and future of the imperial lineage. Dressed in military costume for the men and European-style monarchical dress for the women, the four royals exemplify stability, regality, and strength.<sup>191</sup>

The lithograph scroll *The Coronation of the Emperor Taishō*, is another example in which we see the portrait of Empress Teimei in print media and as part of the promotion of the lineage and tradition of imperial history.<sup>192</sup> This scroll was produced upon the occasion of the Emperor’s ascension and coronation ceremonies, the *sokuirei* (即位礼) and *daijōsai* (大嘗祭), likely as a

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<sup>189</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Kokoro* (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1952), 231.

<sup>190</sup> Large printed hanging scrolls showing portraits of the entirety of the imperial lineage also became popular at this time. For examples see Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, *Oke no shōzō*, Illustration 114, p. 73. This scroll shows portrait rounds of every emperor with Emperor Taishō at the bottom center as the rightful inheritor of 2,000 years of imperial history.

<sup>191</sup> Taishō, who was physically not as imposing of a presence as his father, was coming into the crown during the early days of photographic reproduction and mass distribution. While Emperor Meiji had the benefit of testing his leadership without the watchful eye of the camera and the international media, Taishō was thrust into the media immediately, with no opportunity to rehearse his public persona in an undocumented fashion. Even though the censorship of the Imperial Household Agency assisted in controlling the Emperor’s public image, the margin for error was slim, and threats to rule, both from within and without the Imperial Palace were a constant concern.

<sup>192</sup> For an image see: *Coronation of Emperor Taishō*, artist unknown, 1915, collection of the Spencer Museum of Art, 1991.0051.

commemorative memento.<sup>193</sup> Although most of the narrative of the scroll relates to the ceremonies themselves, and is therefore populated with a majority of male participants, Teimei appears in a full-length portrait in a small roundel at the start of the scroll, which unfolds right to left at the leisure of the viewer. She is opposite Emperor Taishō, dressed in traditional Heian-style costume. Her image and his frame the temporary structure, the *takamikura* (高御座), wherein the *sokuirei* was performed.

The *sokuirei* was detailed in the 1909 Edict of Imperial Accession; in the instance of Emperor Taishō, the ceremony took place in early November 1915, and was the official public announcement of the Emperor's ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne.<sup>194</sup> It is inside the *takamikura* where the emperor sits when the ascension ceremonies occur. Following the historic ceremonial precedent for the *sokuirei*, which was loosely based on Chinese rituals, the *takamikura* exhibits Chinese and Korean style painting and metalwork. Within twenty minutes of Emperor Meiji's death in 1912, Emperor Taishō inherited the three imperial regalia—the sword, the jewel, and the mirror—in a ceremony termed the *senso* (踐祚), or inheritance of the divine objects, officially giving him rule of the nation. Yet, the *sokuirei* and *daijōsai* were to take place two years later, to allow time for Emperor Meiji's funerary rites, and for the extensive planning that the two later ceremonies required. Due to the death of the Empress Dowager (the former Empress Shōken), the ceremonies were delayed for an additional year to allow for an appropriate period of mourning. The *Coronation of the Emperor Taishō* scroll uses a variety of imagery and symbols, both historic and modern, to represent the sacred events of imperial ascension. The

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<sup>193</sup> A similar scroll is published in: Mainichi Shinbunsha, *Tennō yondai no shōzō: Meiji Taishō Shōwa Heisei* [Portraits of Four Generations of Emperors: Meiji Taishō Shōwa Heisei] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1999), 41-43. For further information on the Emperor's image in this print see: Alison Miller, "Coronation of Emperor Taishō" in *Divine Inspiration in Japanese Prints*, Spencer Museum of Art, 2012, <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/divine-inspiration/miller-taisho.shtml>

<sup>194</sup> Adrian C. Mayer, "Recent Succession Ceremonies of the Emperor of Japan" *Japan Review* 2 (1991): 35-61.

angular style of perspective and the use of flat areas of color were indicative of artistic tradition, and acted as pictorial reminders of both pre-modern times and the revival of traditional visual forms.<sup>195</sup> The architecture and ritual structures shown in the scroll were also reminders of the ceremony's location in the ancient capital city of Kyoto, where the Imperial Family resided from the ninth through the nineteenth century. Additionally, the use of the handscroll format itself emphasized Japanese tradition. By the early twentieth century most urban Japanese were accustomed to modern visual culture such as newspapers, magazines, and cinemas. The handscroll, a format used for calligraphy and painting in the pre-modern period, and which hinted at the elite status of those who accessed these objects, was reminiscent of historic painting practices. Furthermore, the large, angular robes and multiple layers of colorful clothing that the Emperor, Empress, and their attendants wear in the scroll is in the style of the Heian period (794-1185). The use of historic costume gives an air of authenticity to the ceremony, performed publically for the first time, and works to establish the validity of the monarchy as the modern incarnation of a lengthy and distinguished lineage. The lithographic reproductions of photographs of the sovereigns that grace the scroll provide a counterpoint to the traditional format, style, and costuming, and provide a reminder that this is a modern object. The small roundels also create a hybrid of tradition and modernity, presenting the viewer with a monarchy rooted in historic legitimacy, but contemporary in technological savvy. This scroll, as with the lithograph portraits of the Imperial Family in the last decade of the Meiji period, acted to establish the Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei as the inheritors of imperial lineage. The

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<sup>195</sup> The angular, top-down perspective used in the scroll was a common pictorial convention of the Heian period (794-1185), as was the use of flat areas of color without three-dimensional contouring and shadows. These techniques were popular in the nineteenth century among artists practicing *nihonga*, or neo-traditional Japanese painting. Traditional perspective and modeling was also present in the early twentieth-century revival of printmaking, known as *shinhang*.

invented ceremonies of imperial ascension and rule were to link Emperor Taishō to the past, even if that past was partially imagined, and this scroll works to cement that link visually.<sup>196</sup>

A similar image, but with more of a modern and European flavor, can be seen in the hanging scroll *Sesshōgū gokeiji kinen* (摂政宮御慶事記念, Commemoration of the Auspicious Occasion of the Imperial Regent), a lithograph from 1912.<sup>197</sup> The composition, filled with symbols of the imperial family such as the golden phoenix, chrysanthemum seal, Nijūbashi (double bridge), and the royal carriage, provides the viewer with an impression of the modern monarchy—one which retains the cultural memory of the recent past, and which presents tradition as a grounding for the contemporary imperial couple by literally surrounding them with images which evoke the past.<sup>198</sup> At the top, Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken are represented in small portrait roundels and in Heian-style robes. Their portraits are couched between the golden phoenixes and a view of Ise Jingū—signifiers of Shinto belief and the Imperial Family.<sup>199</sup> Immediately below them is the royal carriage emerging from Nijūbashi, a symbol of the modern Imperial Family and their place in the modern capital of Tokyo, flanked by portrait rounds of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei. In this top third of the scroll the viewer is given an image of tradition and modernity; the contemporary inheritors of the throne are placed in a European-style carriage, signifying their cosmopolitan modernity, and riding in front of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, a geographically central site of multi-layered meaning.<sup>200</sup> Just below these two scenes in the central section of the

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<sup>196</sup> For a complete analysis of the invention of tradition surrounding imperial rituals and rites in the late Meiji period see: Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*.

<sup>197</sup> For an image see: *Sesshōgū gokeiji kinen*, artist unknown, 1912, published in *Oke no shōzō*, 75.

<sup>198</sup> Nijūbashi is the double arched bridge used by the Imperial Family and high-ranking dignitaries when entering the Imperial Palace grounds. Since the Meiji period it has been used as a symbol of the Imperial Palace.

<sup>199</sup> Ise Jingū, or Ise Shrine, is the most important Shinto shrine in Japan, housing the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, who is the legendary ancestor of the Imperial Family. The Imperial Family has long held close ties with the shrine.

<sup>200</sup> The Imperial Palace was built during the Meiji Period upon the remnants of Edo Castle, the central defensive site of the shogunate. In this way, it exemplifies the triumph of the monarchy over the military rulers that controlled the nation before the Meiji Restoration. The Palace lies in the geographic center of Tokyo, and while there is not a central monument to be seen, the large defensive moats and stone walls convey a message of strength and power.

scroll are images of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei at their coronation in both European and Japanese styles, and at the Imperial Palace standing before Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken. All three of these images work to reinforce the larger message of the scroll: that the contemporary monarchs were the rightful inheritors of tradition, they were not vestiges of the past, but rather were grounded and legitimized by their predecessors. The bottom third of the scroll shows Taishō and Teimei in Heian-style robes, once again juxtaposing the modern throne with its historical roots, and giving a visual foundation to the scroll with a large image of the two central figures.

In regard to the many images which secured the concept of the imperial lineage in the mind of the public, it must be recalled that all of the ceremonies and events surrounding the Taishō wedding and ascension were performed in the public arena for the first time with Taishō and Teimei. These images, therefore, worked not just to delineate the lineage, but also to introduce the citizenry to imperial rites and ceremonies. When Emperor Meiji came to the throne in the 1860s, it was prior to the advent and spread of mass media outlets. As such, the early days of his reign were not a part of public awareness. Additionally, the laws that detailed the imperial wedding customs were adopted in the 1890s, and those for the ascension ceremonies were put in place in the early 1900s, both in anticipation of the Taishō transition. This multiplicity of new ceremonial observances, combined with the fact that the move from Meiji to Taishō was the first modern changeover in imperial power, created a fertile environment for picturing the imperial subjects. The representations of the monarchs and the newly constructed ceremonials was a learning process for all involved.

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Further, the grounds are expansive and wooded, a stark contrast in the middle of densely populated and urban Tokyo.

Once the Taishō imperial couple took the throne, more conventional portraiture was necessary for exhibiting their authority. The death of Emperor Meiji in 1912, and Empress Dowager Shōken in 1914, necessitated a more mature image of Taishō and Teimei as global heads of state and as the pinnacle of the Imperial Household and the nation. This development of the imperial couple as subject occurred simultaneously with the advent of new technologies in photography and its reproduction, which would provide innovative possibilities for imperial imagery in the early twentieth century.

Photography grew to be an increasingly important component of portraiture in general, and the imperial image in specific, in the years immediately after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Formal studio portrait photography of the emperor and empress—that in which they are seen in a staged full or half-length portrait and in a formal, composed studio context, was readily viewed by the masses in the pages of popular magazines or newspapers. Over the course of the Taishō period, formal, photographic studio portraits were the most commonly viewed images of Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō. Distributed to schools and government buildings throughout the nation, as well as reproduced on postcards and in newspapers and mass-market magazines, these photographs, limited in number yet expansive in reproduction, distribution, and use, formed the core of the public image of Empress Teimei during the Taishō period, and beyond. The following paragraphs will first examine the formal, studio portraits of Emperor Taishō, and then Empress Teimei.

Five formal studio portraits of Emperor Taishō mark the major events and phases of the life of the sovereign.<sup>201</sup> The first of these is a hand-colored silver gelatin print from 1892 by the

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<sup>201</sup> These five images are the studio portraits which were featured in mass media publications such as newspapers, magazines, and postcards. That from 1915 was the most widely distributed. That from 1892 and the military costume portrait of 1900 were broadly published at or just after the time of their release. That in Japanese costume from 1900 was used on special occasions, such as the ascension to the throne and the death of the Emperor. That in the costume of the Order of the Garter, although relatively limited in distribution by comparison, was the remaining

photographer Suzuki Shinichi II (二代鈴木真一, 1855-1913).<sup>202</sup> Immediately after the Crown Prince's thirteenth birthday he was promoted to the military rank of First Lieutenant; it was at this time that this photograph was taken.<sup>203</sup> During the Taishō reign, the image was published in the mass media on a few occasions, and together with a portrait of Empress Teimei at a similar age, however, the version shown in newspapers and magazines was the original black and white, not the hand-colored image. In the photograph, the young Crown Prince stands in his military uniform, feather-topped hat on his head, and hands at his sides. This is the same style of military uniform that he would wear in later photographs, but with fewer medals and adornments. The youthful future prince gazes with uncertainty at the camera, his full cheeks revealing his young age. His lips are slightly pursed, and the high collar of the slightly oversized military uniform, combined with his adolescent stance, make him appear younger than his thirteen years. A few other photographs of Taishō during his years as Crown Prince were taken and published on rare occasions. In each of these the youthful sovereign appears in a formulaic stance and costume, reminiscent of his later portraits in military garb.<sup>204</sup>

Upon the occasion of Taishō and Teimei's wedding in 1900, the imperial couple was photographed in costumes reminiscent of traditional Heian-period clothing. Emperor Taishō, like his father Emperor Meiji before him, was featured in the *sokutai*, an imperial court dress that consists of multiple layers of robes, the *kanmuri*, a black lacquered silk hat, and the *shaku*, a long, thin ivory tablet that the Emperor holds upright in his proper right hand.<sup>205</sup> This image,

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studio portrait which the Taishō public would have viewed, it was published at the time of release, but received minimal re-publication. These five photographs were selected as they were the primary studio portraits which the Taishō public would have had familiarity with.

<sup>202</sup> For an image see: *Crown Prince Yoshihito*, hand colored silver gelatin print, Suzuki Shinichi II, 1892, published in National Museum of Modern Art Kyoto, *Treasures of the Imperial Collections*, 263.

<sup>203</sup> Crown Prince Yoshihito was promoted on the third of November, 1892. The photograph was taken around 1892-1893 by Suzuki Shinichi II. See: Kyoto kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, *Kōshitsu no meihin*, 331.

<sup>204</sup> The reproductions of these are published in Hara Takeshi, *Taishō Tennō* [Emperor Taishō] (Tokyo: Asahi shinbun shuppan, 2000), 34-35.

<sup>205</sup> For an image see: *Emperor Taishō*, 1900, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 40.

although important for grounding the Taishō Emperor in tradition, was not widely published. Much like with Emperor Meiji's image, there was a concern among bureaucrats of the early twentieth century that the emperor be viewed as a modern, cosmopolitan leader, one who would be respected on the global stage, and viewed as a peer of the European monarchs. The accompanying image of Empress Teimei in Heian-style clothing, which will be examined later in this chapter, was published more frequently than that of Emperor Taishō in historic costume, and both photographs, that of the Emperor and the Empress in historic costume, were published with greater frequency in women's magazines than in other publications. It is also of note that for the Taishō imperial couple, the Heian-style image set was generally published as a pair, in contrast to image sets of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, which were often depicted with the Emperor in European-style military dress and the Empress in historically inspired costume. That Empress Teimei's image matched that of Emperor Taishō in European-style costume was significant; by the time of the Taishō monarchy the Empress was seen as an individual, and the imperial couple was presented to their public as a pair, rather than a Europeanized emperor and traditional empress.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, as Empress Shōken passed away less than two years after her husband, the commonly published Meiji period images which depicted Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken together with Empress Dowager Eishō were not replicated in the context of the Taishō monarchy.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> This discrepancy in imperial costume during the Meiji period, and the political reasons for adjusting to the monarchs wearing matched dress was discussed by Wakakuwa and footnoted in the previous section. See: Wakakuwa, *Kōgō no shōzō*, 57-58.

<sup>207</sup> Empress Dowager Eishō was the spouse of Emperor Kōmei, Meiji's father, yet Eishō was not Meiji's birth mother. Eishō (1835-1897) lived for three decades of the Meiji reign, whereas Shōken survived her husband for twenty-one months. A postcard image of the Taishō imperial couple together with Empress Dowager Shōken, Meiji's spouse but not Taishō's birth mother, was published to commemorate Emperor Meiji's funeral. This postcard is held in the collection of the Boston MFA, accession number 2002.7893. The image of the Emperor, Empress, and Empress Dowager grew to be less common in the twentieth century as the focus turned to the nuclear family and the younger members of the Imperial Family.

Two photographs of Emperor Taishō in military-style dress were commonly published, distributed, and exhibited in the 1910s. These two images, one from 1900, and the other from 1915, taken by Imperial Household Artist Maruki Riyō which was used as Taishō's *goshinei*, are very similar in pose, costume, and composition.<sup>208</sup> Only a few details mark the difference between the two images and between other, similar photographs of Emperor Taishō which received less distribution.<sup>209</sup> In both images the Emperor stands in a mostly unidentifiable studio setting with a small table at his proper right side. Atop the table rests his plumed military hat, his right hand at his side, and left hand atop the handle of his sword, which is attached to his uniform. Emperor Taishō is adorned with a variety of medals, ribbons, and other military regalia, a large sash stretching across his torso. In both images he sports a short hairstyle and a small mustache, and gazes off to the right hand side of the camera, a neutral expression on his face. In the *goshinei*, the Emperor sports more medals than in the earlier image, and his facial features exhibit slightly more wariness—his forehead has additional lines, and his eyes are a bit heavier than in the earlier image. Additionally, the table in the *goshinei* is covered with a Japanese-style textile that includes the Imperial chrysanthemum seal, while in the earlier photograph the table is covered in a European-style brocade textile. Just over a decade later, Emperor Shōwa was photographed in a nearly identical military uniform and in an indiscernibly different studio setting upon his rise to the throne in the mid-1920s.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> For images see: *Emperor Taishō*, 1900, and *goshinei Emperor Taishō*, Maruki Riyo, 1915, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 35 and 37.

<sup>209</sup> The *goshinei* of Emperor Taishō was not only distributed to government buildings and schools, but was also published in newspapers and magazines. The *goshinei* was distributed upon the occasion of the ascension to the throne in 1915. For an example of the distribution of the *goshinei* of Meiji and Taishō as compared within a single prefecture see: Aoki Shōji, “Goshinei chokugo tōhon “hōan”no jissō: Yamagataken no jirei,” [The Realities of “Enshrining” in the Transcript of the Imperial Rescript on Goshinei: A Case Study in Yamagata Prefecture] in *Yamagataken hakubutsukan kenkyū hōkoku* [Research Report of the Yamagata Prefecture Museum] 26 (2006): 13-38. Maruki Riyō served as an Imperial Household Artist, or Teishitsu gigei-in (帝室技芸員); a brief biography of the artist can be found in: Terry Bennett, *Photography in Japan, 1853-1912* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2006), 317.

<sup>210</sup> For an image see: *goshinei Emperor Shōwa*, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 64.

These photographs, beginning with the *goshinei* of Emperor Meiji, and continuing through to that of Emperor Shōwa, represent the increasingly removed and sacred emperor; imaged in nearly identical poses, dress, and comportment, the *goshinei* of Emperor Taishō, as well as the similar photographs in military dress, show an emperor that was progressively being revered for both military leadership and his sacred role within the Shinto structure, roles which were slowly conflating in the midst of imperial expansion. A development which created a more sacred aura for the Emperor were the *hōanden* (奉安殿) and *hōankura* (奉安庫). These structures were small safe enclosures that were part of schools or government buildings, either built as a room within extant architecture or in a small, shrine-like independent building, with the intended purpose of housing of the *goshinei*. Developed in the 1910s and 1920s and lasting until the end of the Second World War, the style of the structures had religious overtones, either in the form of neo-classical European style or Shinto style architecture, lending to a message of the holy inviolability of the emperor and empress, whose sacred images were housed within.<sup>211</sup>

A final image of note in this section, and one of international significance, is the formal studio photograph of Emperor Taishō in 1912 in the costume of the Order of the Garter, an

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<sup>211</sup> See the Conclusion of this dissertation for an image of a *hōanden* in the Shōwa era. Most of the structures were purposefully destroyed in the weeks and months immediately following the Second World War, and amongst the scant information published on them, there is no information on the visual characteristics of the architecture. The treatment of the *goshinei*, and the use of the *hōanden* and *hōankura* differed by prefecture, which is reflected in the literature on these objects and structures. As such, it is impossible to discern broad, national trends in the reception or veneration of these images in the Taishō period—the practices of display, viewing, and worship were simply too diverse, and the records are too dispersed, concealed, and vast to provide a complete picture. For more information on the *goshinei* of Emperor Taishō in the context of three specific prefectures see: Ono Masaaki, “Taishō tennō no goshinei kafu to sono ‘bōgo’ keitai no mosaku: Miyazakiken ni yoru Kyūshū, Okinawa chihō kakuen no goshinei ‘bōgo’ jittaichōsa no imi” [“Protecting” Family Tradition and Imitating Form in the Goshinei of the Taishō Emperor: A Factual Investigation into the Meaning of “Protecting” in Every Prefecture by Means of Miyazaki Prefecture, Kyushu, and Okinawa Regions] *Kyōiku shigakkai kiyō* [Bulletin of the Society for the History of Education] 48 (2005): 28-38. See also, Ono Masaaki, “Tennō no shōzō shashin (goshinei) to gakkō to no kankeishi kenkyū” [Photographic Portraits of the Emperor (Goshinei) and Research on the Related History of Schools] (PhD diss., Nihon Daigaku, 2011).

honorary British Order of Chivalry.<sup>212</sup> The photograph was rarely published, and depicts a monarch who appears unsure of his authority and ineffectual in stature. Like the other photographs of Emperor Taishō in military attire, he stands in an unidentifiable studio setting with a small textile-covered table at his proper right side. In the image he appears to wear his standard military jacket, which peeks out from an oversized black velvet robe. The large British garment dwarfs the Emperor, and makes his posture appear hunched, giving the impression of uncertainty and insecurity. The large ribbons that adorn the shoulders of the garment, as well as his unseen hands, and slight contrapposto stance, combined with baggy white trousers and a saddened, slightly pouty facial expression make Emperor Taishō appear as apprehensive and uneasy. Furthermore, the Emperor's hair is cut close to his head, and the angle of the image makes his ears appear large, adding to the timid representation of the sovereign. On the table beside the Emperor sits an extravagant, outsized, multi-feathered hat which is similar in size to the Emperor's torso. This ostentatious hat furthers the awkward disquiet of the photograph. All of these inelegant features, when read together, present a foreboding photograph, one which due to its lack of grace, was logically not published with any frequency. Finally, it is important to recall that this image shows the Japanese Emperor in the costume of the British monarchs. The Imperial Household Agency may not have desired to publicize the image of the Emperor in the costume of a foreign monarchy, as the image could be read as global weakness on the part of the Japanese Imperial Family.

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<sup>212</sup> For more information on the Order of the Garter see: "Order of the Garter," *The Official Website of the British Monarchy*, <http://www.royal.gov.uk/monarchUK/honours/Orderofthegarter/orderofthegarter.aspx>. Accessed June 18, 2015. For an image see: *Emperor Taishō*, 1912, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 39.

Turning to the Empress, there are four frequently published studio portraits of Teimei.<sup>213</sup> The earliest of these images was that of her in childhood, although it was not published until the 1910s.<sup>214</sup> The image appeared in the women's magazines *Fujin gahō* in the first and fourteenth years of the Taishō period (1912 and 1926, respectively), and *Fujyosei* in Taishō 13 (1925). The portrait shows Sadako as a child, before she was selected to be Crown Princess, standing in a *hakama* (袴), and wearing heavy makeup, making her appear older than her age. She holds a small fan in her hands and her expression is serious, with her lips pursed as she gazes off into the distance. The background is a studio backdrop of a painted European-style interior. In publications from the Taishō era, the photograph is often paired with the childhood studio portrait of Yoshihito in military-style dress. Through her confident, straight posture, with shoulders back and head held high in a regal position, and her strong gaze, combined with makeup that makes her appear more mature than her years, the photograph seemingly attempts to show that Sadako had the comportment of an empress long before her selection and rise to the role. It also shows evidence of her preparations for a position within the nobility, thus legitimizing her place within the Imperial Family. Furthermore, by pairing her childhood portrait with that of the young Crown Prince Yoshihito, it links the two monarchs as having a common upbringing, giving their union a sense of destiny.

Among the most widely viewed portraits of Empress Teimei was the studio photograph in European-style dress taken upon her wedding in 1900.<sup>215</sup> This image was published in a variety of magazines at the start of the Taishō period in September of 1912. In addition to gracing the

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<sup>213</sup> My goal here is to present basic information and a brief visual analysis of these images. In Chapters Three and Four I will return to the photographs and the context of their publication and consumption in magazines and newspapers.

<sup>214</sup> The image is not published with a date, rather it states “in adolescence” or “in childhood.” We can estimate her age to be approximately ten to twelve years old.

<sup>215</sup> For an image see: *Empress Teimei*, 1900, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 34.

pages of women's magazines such as *Fujin gahō* (1912, September 1, and 1914, January 15), *Shōjo gaho* (1912, September), and *Fujin no tomo* (1912, September), the portrait appeared in the nationalist publication *Daikokumin* (1912 September), and in specialist business, industrial, and agricultural publications such as *Nōji shinhō* (1912, September), *Kōgyō no Nihon* (1912, August), and *Nihon jutsugyō shinhō* (1912, August).<sup>216</sup> It was also published in the newspapers in the same year. In this photograph, Empress Teimei appears as a European-style monarch with the outward signs of nobility. Her clothing, luxurious fabrics with a train, and plentiful jewelry in the latest Parisian style, indicate her high status, and the sash, crown, and medal she wears remind the viewer of her position as the future Empress. Although the public was by this time familiar with her image from the various lithographs and other images that were disseminated around the time of the Taishō wedding, this photograph marks her rise to the role of Empress. In the photograph, Teimei appears very young, and does not exhibit the deportment of royalty or regality. Her shoulders are slumped, and at this point she seems somewhat unaware of the power of the camera in conveying an image of imperial deportment. When the photograph was taken, Teimei was only sixteen years old, and the distribution of imperial images was not as widespread as it would be a mere twelve years later, when this photograph was widely published upon her taking the role of Empress. Her facial expression is neutral, yet also slightly pouty; in this image she has yet to become comfortable with her position of power, Teimei still appears as a princess, not yet an empress. This lack of regal comportment is likely why this image was distributed mostly in the year that Teimei and Taishō ascended the throne, and not much in the years thereafter.

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<sup>216</sup> For more information on *Daikokumin*, and its stance as an anti-Christian nationalist publication see, Gregory Adam Scott, "Finding Aid for Daikokumin Records," The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 2009, updated 2014: [http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/burke/fa/mr/ldpd\\_4492622.pdf](http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/burke/fa/mr/ldpd_4492622.pdf)

Although less popular, an additional early photograph which is noteworthy as a step in the development of imperial imagery is that of Empress Teimei in Heian period robes at the time of her marriage. This image, as described at the beginning of this chapter, was published predominantly in women's magazines, and shows Teimei in a studio portrait setting with very minimal markers surrounding her—only a small drapery at the right and the carpet on which she stands. Her robes indicate the lengthy imperial tradition which she is inheriting with her rise to the throne. This image was published in *Fujin gahō* in 1912 together with a similarly styled photograph of Emperor Taishō and a small inset photograph from her childhood. It was also published in 1912 the women's magazine *Shōjo sekai* with Taishō's companion portrait, and the *Asahi Shinbun* in 1915, upon the occasion of the formal imperial ascension rituals, and reproduced on the *Coronation of the Emperor Taishō* scroll. Later, the photograph was published in the women's magazine *Fujyosei* in 1925, together with a small grouping of photographs including Teimei's childhood portrait and her later imperial studio photograph, a matching montage of Emperor Taishō's photographs on the opposite page. Commemorating major milestones with this style of portrait, in which the emperor and empress are portrayed in Heian-style robes, was innovated in the Meiji period, and is still practiced today. That the images of Taishō and Teimei in the traditional costumes were published in greater numbers in women's magazines is important to note, as it informs us about one of the key factors of Japanese gender politics throughout the modern era: women were viewed as the keepers of tradition, while men were the driving force of modernity. Images of the Imperial Family reflected these widespread societal beliefs, and how they evolved between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. While Empress Shōken was frequently represented in traditional clothing alongside her husband in European-style garb, Empress Teimei's sartorial selections generally matched those of her spouse. This is to say that during the Taishō period, although women as an audience still

received a greater amount of traditional-style imagery, the Imperial Family as a unit was promoted on a more equitable level than they were in the preceding era.<sup>217</sup>

The final studio portrait that received wide distribution in Taishō period media is that of 1915, her *goshinei*.<sup>218</sup> This portrait is the most recognizable, and widely distributed image of Empress Teimei. The photograph first appeared in the *Asahi Shinbun* in 1916 (October 30, Tokyo morning edition, page 3), and was subsequently published in the *Asahi* in 1917 (June 25, Tokyo morning edition, page 3), and 1925 (May 10, Tokyo morning edition, first page, together with a companion portrait of Emperor Taishō). It was also published in a variety of women's magazines such as *Fujin gahō* (1917, December 1), *Fujin shūhō* (1917, April 13), *Fujyo kurabu* (1925, May), and *Fujyosei* (1925, July), as well as on postcards, including one example commemorating the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of the imperial couple. The portrait was cropped in some of these publications, or published in small portrait rounds.<sup>219</sup> Like the *goshinei* of Emperor Taishō, and of the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken before them, this photograph received widespread distribution to schools and government buildings, as well as to individuals as an Imperial gift on select occasions. This portrait shows Empress Teimei as having risen to the

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<sup>217</sup> For further analysis of the concept of women as the “receptacles of tradition” and the contrasting “symbol of mass culture” within the modern discourse see: Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). Also, Sarah Frederick discusses a variety of gender issues surrounding women's magazines in the early twentieth century, including the mostly male editorial staffs, and that many men read women's magazines—perhaps up to one-third of the readership of women's magazines in the Taishō period were male. Sarah Frederick, *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006): 31-33.

<sup>218</sup> For an image see: *goshinei Empress Teimei*, 1915, published in *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 36.

<sup>219</sup> A similar image can be found in oil painting as well. Oil paintings were not widely viewed by the Japanese public, as there was not a tradition of the public portrait gallery or other permanent established forum for the social viewing of these works, as existed in European monarchies. The European tradition of public statuary was also non-existent in pre-modern Japan, thus the two-dimensional media covered in this dissertation had a larger reach and significance in Japan than similar media in Europe. One example of an oil painting of Empress Teimei is from 1920, painted by John Wycliffe Lowes Forster (1850-1938), a Canadian artist who specialized in portraits. The image has rarely been seen by the public, but is very similar in style and pose to the *goshinei* of Empress Teimei. As such, the viewer sees the same confident, regal Empress as in the photograph, but with the addition of color. The artist added further expression to Teimei's face as well, giving her a slight upturn of the lips that reads as a small smile, and makes her appear more approachable to the viewer. He additionally rendered her clothing in a flattering fashion, using the oils to create more nuance of light than in the contrast of the black and white photograph. See: Kyoto kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, *Kōshitsu no meihin* 233. A companion image of Emperor Taishō was also created in oil.

role of monarch. Unlike the earlier studio photograph wherein she appeared young and unsure of her position, in this image she is the model of royal comportment. Her shoulders are positioned back, giving her an aura of regal authority, and her crown, sash, robes, and medal are clearly visible signs of her status. Her facial expression is still neutral, but projects an element of confidence not seen in the earlier portrait. She is mature and beautiful, a regal symbol of the nation over which she presides.<sup>220</sup>

When the Taishō Imperial couple came into public prominence in 1900, they began the process of succession. By the time they ascended the throne as established monarchs in 1915 they had reinterpreted the visual legacy of their predecessors, transforming the Imperial image into one which was more savvy and nuanced than in the past. During the Taishō period, images of the emperor and empress were standardized in form, distribution, and display. Laws and

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<sup>220</sup> An additional critical comparison for understanding the climate in which Japanese imperial portraits arose and developed is that of the photographic portraits of the British monarchs. The British monarchy's global reach and influence, as well as high level of visibility in the international media meant that they were inescapable as standard-bearers for royal deportment. Also, that Emperor Taishō was part of the Order of the Garter leads us to understand the influence that the British royals had on the construction and meaning of crowned heads in the early twentieth century, and informs us that the Imperial Household Agency was keenly aware of British royal practices. Queen Alexandra and Mary of Teck were the British contemporaries of Empress Teimei. Alexandra of Denmark (1844-1925) ruled as Queen consort of the United Kingdom and Empress of India from 1901-1910 as the wife of King-Emperor Edward VII. Mary of Teck (1867-1953) ruled as Queen of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions and Empress of India from 1910-1936 as the wife of King-Emperor George V. Queen Victoria (1819-1901), Alexandra's predecessor, ruled as Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India from 1837-1876. Victoria, as the most visible female monarch of the nineteenth century, inaugurated many of the models of royal photography that were later considered by rulers in many nations, including Japan. However, as Victoria famously lived much of her life in mourning (her husband Prince Albert died in 1861), and played the role of matriarchal Queen, comparisons between Victoria and Teimei are not the most fruitful. Victoria came to the throne only two years before the invention of photography, and throughout her lengthy reign she used the medium to manipulate and control her image, going so far as to use it as a stand-in during her later years when her public appearances were few. The influential concept of the monarchical image and use of media for royal self-promotion thus can be largely attributed to Queen Victoria. Yet it was with the feminine, demure, and beautiful Alexandra that we see distinct comparisons for Teimei's image. Both monarchs were on the throne during the early twentieth century, at a time when femininity and feminism as concepts were coming to the societal fore, and when the two ideas were being formed, often times in contrast with one another. Although this chapter does not allow for a full comparison of the royal portraiture of the two empires, this is certainly a topic for further future research. For a full examination of Queen Victoria's use of photography in creating a public image see: Anne M. Lyden, ed. *A Royal Passion: Queen Victoria and Photography* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2014). For additional information on the concepts of royal imagery, feminism, femininity, the princess image in society, and how these concepts which developed with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century British monarchy are still relevant today, see: Colleen Denney, *Representing Diana, Princess of Wales: Cultural Memory and Fairy Tales Revisited* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005).

guidelines that were invented and established during the late Meiji period were put into practice with Teimei and Taishō. A fully articulated visual strategy of the Imperial Family, something which the bureaucrats and officials surrounding the monarchs desired since the first days of the Imperial Restoration, came to fruition with Teimei and Taishō. As the visual analysis of this section has shown, from the early marriage lithographs to the *goshinei*, which was published alongside announcements of Emperor Taishō's death in 1926, the public image of the Taishō monarchy was calculated and controlled, and set the precedent for the twentieth-century representations of those seated on the Chrysanthemum Throne.

### Constructing the Imperial Past: The Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery

A final development in the trajectory of pre-war imperial portraiture is that of the Seitoku kinen kaigakan, or Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery. Located in Tokyo near the Akasaka Palace, the 1926 granite and concrete structure of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery (聖徳記念絵画館, Seitoku kinen kaigakan) houses eighty large-scale murals devoted to telling the story of Emperor Meiji's life and accomplishments.<sup>221</sup> Displayed chronologically, the first forty images are *nihonga* (日本画, neo-traditional Japanese painting), and generally represent domestic events. The later forty paintings are *yōga* (洋画, European-style oil painting), and tend to address political and military themes.<sup>222</sup> The Empress Shōken is included in fifteen of the eighty images, six in *nihonga*, nine in *yōga*. Planning documents for the gallery indicate that the themes of the paintings were to represent the triumphs and achievements of Emperor Meiji, and as the

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<sup>221</sup> The Japanese name for the gallery literally translates as Imperial Virtue Memorial Picture Gallery, but the standard English translation is published as the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery. Meiji Jingū Gaien, *Seitokukinen kaigakan hekiga, Meiji Jingū* [Murals of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, Meiji Shrine] (Tokyo: Meiji Jingū Gaien, 2009).

<sup>222</sup> All of the paintings are a standard size 9'10" by 8'10". The use of materials is the main difference between the *nihonga* as contrasted with *yōga* in the paintings exhibited at the gallery. Although many of the images in either category exhibit a style consistent with their genre, many others provide an example of overlapping styles between the two categories.

selection of subjects held a high level of political importance, the individual topics of the paintings were determined over a period of six and a half years of study by the Gallery Committee (絵画館委員会, Kaigakan inkai) affiliated with the Meiji Shrine Support Committee.<sup>223</sup> This period of study took place under the Taishō monarchy, and provides insights into the politics of imperial representation in the time of Taishō and Teimei.

The process of developing the ideas and images of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, and the historiographic implications surrounding the construction of the recent past in the Taishō period, are addressed by Yoshiko Imaizumi in her article on the Gallery. She establishes the educational nature of the site, stating that the Gallery was the first national project to construct the recent past, and that, “The particular virtues of Emperor Meiji deserving of remembrance were not self-evident. Rather, the practice of recording and representing history, in creating the gallery itself, determined what and how to remember.”<sup>224</sup> This conceptual framing of history was particularly poignant and important in the 1910s and 1920s, as the Japanese monarchy struggled to remain relevant in the face of changing domestic politics, and as the expanding empire sought to use historical narratives to justify the present military goals.

Just as the need to reaffirm the national narrative of the unbroken imperial line was an important component of the imperial lineage lithographs discussed earlier in this chapter, a large public works project which would affirm the positive features and traits of the Imperial Family in visual form was an important development in the promotional strategies of the Imperial Household Agency, providing a permanent physical presence of imperial memory in the capital.<sup>225</sup> During his reign, Emperor Meiji’s frequent tours of the nation and processions through

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<sup>223</sup> Yoshiko Imaizumi, “The Making of a Mnemonic Space: Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery 1912-1936,” *Japan Review* 23 (2011): 144-145.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-151.

<sup>225</sup> The Meiji Shrine is also an important site for imperial memory within the city of Tokyo, however, the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery provides an explicit narrative by means of the subjects of the paintings. For more on Meiji

the capital, as well as the woodblock prints which documented these activities kept him in public view, but in the years after his death, the necessity of a positive public memorial site was crucial in establishing Meiji as the prominent epoch-making modern Japanese monarch. As a result of these concerns, the politics of imperial representation and imagery as seen in the painting program at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery are less a reflection of the realities of the Meiji Imperial Family, and more an impression of the Taishō concepts for what the imperial memory and history should be, and how this memory could benefit the dominant power structures of the day. The constructed version of imperial history that is carefully crafted and presented at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery provides an image of an Imperial Family that is noble and esteemed in their lifetime of national service.<sup>226</sup> These positive images of a beloved emperor and empress of the recent past helped to promote the imperial institution to a Taishō public which was exposed to radical political movements, and much social instability, and aimed to secure the Imperial Family as a core institution of the modern Japanese state.

After the death of Emperor Meiji in 1912 and Empress Shōken in 1914, discussion of how to memorialize the monarchs quickly ensued and a two-part plan—creating a sacred shrine and a secular museum—was decided upon. By early 1916 the Gallery Committee was formed, and on November 1, 1920, in time for the November 3 holiday celebrating the Emperor's birth, Meiji Jingu (明治神宮, Meiji Shrine) was consecrated.<sup>227</sup> Although today it is not part of the standard Tokyo travel plan, the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery was a popular sight on the Tokyo

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Shrine see: Yoshiko Imaizumi, *Sacred Space in the Modern City: The Fractured Pasts of Meiji Shrine, 1912-1958* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>226</sup> In analyzing the painting program at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, it should be remembered that the events represented in the gallery were selected posthumously, with the benefit of hindsight. In this sense, the narrative of the Gallery is much different in scope and strategy than other imagery examined in this dissertation, which was generally created during the life of the sovereigns.

<sup>227</sup> Meiji Shrine, "Facts About Meiji Jingu," <http://www.meijijingu.or.jp/english/about/1.html>, accessed June 2015. November 3 is now commemorated as *bunka no hi*, or Culture Day. The date commemorates Emperor Meiji's birthday as well as the 1946 announcement of the post-World War II Constitution. The holiday is intended as a celebration of traditional culture.

domestic tourist circuit in the early Shōwa period. Promoted in guidebooks, it was open to the public on weekends and select holidays from 1927 until its official opening in 1937.<sup>228</sup> During this interim period, the building was complete, but the painting program was not—less than forty paintings were finished and hung by 1930, and the complete program was not viewed in its entirety until 1936.<sup>229</sup> As such, the unified narrative of the Meiji period that was planned by the Gallery Committee in the late 1910s and early 1920s was at first presented only in fragmented form. In other words, the image of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken as envisioned by the Gallery Committee was already a vestige of the Taishō past by the time the gallery was fully realized in the early Shōwa period.

Of the eighty paintings commissioned for the Gallery, only fifteen highlight Empress Shōken, and only nine beyond those represent women.<sup>230</sup> In examining these paintings, the subject matter can be classified as performing official state ceremonies and visits, such as Number 51, *Promulgation of the Constitution* or Number 34 *The Empress at a School for Girls*; caretaking, such as Number 61, *The Empress Visiting Wounded Soldiers*; and observing or participating in traditional cultural activities, such as Number 53, *Poetry Party at the Imperial Palace* or Number 40 *Empress Composing a Poem*. Even while depicted performing official state functions, Empress Shōken is frequently seen wearing traditional clothing and at events

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<sup>228</sup> Imaizumi, “The Making of Mnemonic Space,” 165-166.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>230</sup> The fifteen Empress paintings are as follows: #18 *Installation of the Empress*, Tatehiko Suga, #28 *The Empress at a Silk Factory*, Kanpō Arai, #32 *The Empress Viewing Rice Planting*, Shōsen Kondo, #34 *The Empress at a School for Girls*, Gengetsu Yazawa, #38 *Attending the National Industrial Exhibition*, Somei Yūki, #40 *The Empress Composing a Poem*, Kiyokata Kaburaki, #48 *The Empress Visiting the Peeress’s School*, Yutaka Atomi, #49 *Patroness of the Tokyo Charity Hospital*, Kunishirō Mitsutani, #51 *Promulgation of the Constitution*, Eisaku Wada, #52 *Grand Parade to Celebrate the Constitution*, Tokurō Katata, #53 *Poetry Party at the Imperial Palace*, Shintarō Yamashita, #57 *Silver Wedding Anniversary of the Emperor*, Noboru Hasegawa, #61 *The Empress Visiting Wounded Soldiers*, Hakutei Ishii, #67 *The Empress Attending the General Meeting of the Japan Red Cross*, Ichirō Yuasa, #76 *The Chrysanthemum Garden Party*, Hiromitsu Nakazawa. The English titles used here are those published by the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery in both their catalog of paintings and on their exhibition labels. In a few instances the Japanese titles are slightly different, generally more specific in nature.

which are conventionally feminine, as in Number 28 *The Empress at a Silk Factory*, wherein she visits the Tomioka Silk Mill, a site of national importance for the developing manufacturing economy, but one which was predominantly staffed by young girls, and which was part of an industry with historic ties to women's labor. The other women appearing in the narrative of the Emperor are often of nobility, including Number 2 *The Rites of Growth*, wherein two women attend the coming of age ceremony of the nine-year-old Emperor Meiji, Number 21 *The Iwakura Mission to America and Europe*, where foreign women accompany their husbands and are entertained by Japanese noblewomen, and Number 26 *The Establishment of the Ryūkyū Clan*, where we see women of the Ryūkyū nobility greeting the Emperor. Women also appear in the peasantry, including in Number 16 *The Emperor Viewing the Rice Harvest*, Number 24 *The Emperor in Kagoshima*, Number 79 *The Emperor's Final Illness*, and in two colonial images, Number 63 *The Restoration of Peace in Taiwan*, and Number 77 *The Union of Korea and Japan*. One *nihonga* painting, Number 39 *Watching a Nō Play*, pictures the Emperor and Empress Dowager Eishō (his mother) in a setting dominated by traditional architecture and accompanied by a single masked actor. All of these women appear in either service or ceremonial roles, and are either of the peasantry or the nobility, eliminating the newly developing middle-classes, who would have comprised a large portion of visitors to the site. Additionally, with a female presence in only twenty-four of the eighty paintings exhibited at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, it would appear that the vision of the Emperor's life as constructed by the Gallery Committee was a highly masculine one.

Within the representations of Empress Shōken at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, the monarch appears stoic and removed. While this is also true of the facial expressions and postures of Emperor Meiji within the painting program—it would have been considered disrespectful to paint the sovereigns smiling or in intimate situations—the Empress portraits as envisioned within

the Gallery are particularly emotionless and generic. It is possible that the relatively gregarious and liberal Teimei may have been a reason for the Gallery Committee to envision the female sovereign of the recent past as a conservative, docile, and subservient figure. While Teimei was frequently seen in the early 1920s in her role as imperial proxy, which is the subject of the following chapter, the Gallery Committee and other connected bureaucrats likely desired to model a far more unassuming version of the female members of the Imperial Household, which is precisely what is envisioned in Empress Shōken's role at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery.

In the course of the eighty paintings of the Picture Gallery, the imagery of the Empress, as with that of the Emperor, gradually changes from the traditional to the more modern, exhibiting an evolution in costume, ritual, and imperial function and service that mirrors the drastic changes that occurred within the Meiji period. In reality, however, this change was not as clear and simple as the pictorial program at the gallery indicates. This simplification of message and appearance was part of the historiographic function of the Picture Gallery, leading early Shōwa viewers to believe that the modern era of the Meiji emperor was one of steady progression, leading to Japan's "unique" position as an Asian empire in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>231</sup> With the painting program documenting the societal evolution of the Meiji period from tradition to a modern state backed by the institution of the Imperial Family, viewers were provided with a message that reflected and reinforced that of the dominant political forces at work in a time of increasing militarism and imperialism. The role of Empress Shōken in the painting program added to this political message, and reinforced the Meiji concept of women as the "good wife, wise mother," a feminine figure in a nurturing role, maintaining tradition, and educating the next generation of male leaders and female caretakers. With images that span subjects from religious

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<sup>231</sup> Government propaganda in the first half of the twentieth century frequently identified Japan as a "unique" state, whose position as both a global power and an Asian nation made it distinctly suited to having an Asian empire. This was used to justify the expansion of the Japanese empire from the 1910s through the end of the Pacific War.

ritual to military leadership for the Emperor, and poetry creation to silk production for the Empress, the gender roles exhibited in the eighty paintings of the institution are an important component of normative imperial gender expectations in the 1920s. In the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery program, men are shown as associated with military and religious concerns, and women associated with caretaking and the maintenance of traditional culture. In reading the Picture Gallery from this stance of (re)constructed femininity, we see the female imperial image on the verge of expansionism and war, prepared to serve the next generation of subjects.

### Conclusions

Throughout the Meiji and Taishō eras, the imperial image held a connotation of modernity, and embedded within that modernity were allusions to the visual milieu of European monarchies. Beginning with the earliest official studio portraits of Emperor Meiji, continuing through the incorporation of the empresses being photographed in European-style costume, and finishing with the grand landmark of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, the Japanese imperial image grew increasingly sacred, removed, modern, and Western in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Foreign artists had a distinct impact on the evolution of the official imperial portraits, as did the models of the European monarchs. These undoubtedly shaped the trend towards an increasingly visible empress who appeared in the latest European fashions. Government policies were also greatly influenced by models from abroad; the aim of the visual monarchy was not just to increase domestic reverence for the Imperial Family, but also to increase respect for Japanese culture and traditions abroad. By emulating the European crowned heads, and by creating a visible Imperial Family, something that was unprecedented in Japanese history, the bureaucrats of the Meiji and Taishō eras achieved their ambitions to see the Japanese sovereigns included in the ranks of the global monarchs. Emperor Taishō's inclusion in the

British Order of the Garter, as well as coverage in the international press is evidence to their success.

This chapter examined the imperial portraiture of the modern era with the aim of explaining how imperial portraiture evolved between the Meiji and Taishō periods. By reviewing the norms of distribution and exhibition, as well as changes in censorship laws surrounding the imperial image, this chapter showed how the image of the Emperor grew to be regarded as increasingly sacred and standardized. Simultaneously, the female members of the Imperial Household evolved from concubines and accessories to active role models of benevolence and philanthropy. The imperial visual strategy, which began its development in the first years after the Restoration of Emperor Meiji grew to full fruition in the Taishō period, as the visual monarchy became a tool of imperial expansion, encouraging the unity of the citizens of the metropole under their political and religious leader, the Emperor.

Chapter Three: In/visibility: The Absence and Presence of Gendered Imperial Images in the Taishō Period

“Recently it has reached the point where one must do everything through the empress.”  
Prime Minister Hara, 1920<sup>232</sup>

On the morning of May 11, 1900 the *Asahi Shinbun* (朝日新聞, Asahi Newspaper) published a drawing of the imperial couple, Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, together with their newly married successors, Crown Prince Yoshihito and Crown Princess Sadako.<sup>233</sup> The image, in which the two couples are not distinguishable from each other, was published on the day following the much-anticipated wedding of Yoshihito and Sadako. In the illustration, the four figures, drawn without facial features, stand atop a European-style dais with a large canopy framing the space above. They directly face two officials, depicted in a low bow, as crowds of other officials stand on either side. As a simple drawing, the image does not provide the viewer much information; while the luxurious fabrics and opulent interior present a vision of royalty, the four crowned sovereigns are only identifiable by context and the accompanying text.<sup>234</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sketchy, abbreviated images such as these were commonly seen in mass media. Photographs, although readily available, were not easily reproduced by Japanese mass media outlets prior to 1906. For more detailed information about the Imperial Family, one had to look to woodblock or lithograph prints, and yet, even there, the look of the monarchs was idealized. However, with the advent of new technologies and changes in societal norms, the media presentation of the imperial couple would change quickly

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<sup>232</sup> As cited in: Kawahara Toshiaki, *Hirohito and His Times* (Tokyo: Kōdansha International, 1990), 35-36.

<sup>233</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, May 11, 1900, page 2, Tokyo morning edition, Illustration for Article, “御製” (Gosei, Songs and Poems Written by the Imperial Family).

<sup>234</sup> The image includes a caption “In a deep bow” and the accompanying text provides the lyrics of songs and poems written by the imperial family. “Gosei” 御製, *Asahi Shinbun*, May 11, 1900, 2, morning edition.

and dramatically within the decades marked by the start of the preparation for the imperial wedding in 1899 and the death of the Taishō Emperor in 1926. The presentation of the May 11, 1900 drawing at the start of this chapter sets a point of departure for examining the imperial image in mass media, and creates a point of contrast for what the imperial image would become in the Taishō period.

This chapter will examine images of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei published in the *Asahi Shinbun* between 1899 and 1926.<sup>235</sup> By detailing how the images changed between these years, and examining how newspaper images reflected the shift in gender roles of the Imperial Family from the early to late Taishō period, this chapter will explore how the Emperor's decline in visibility around 1920 led to an increase in the public presence and visibility of the Empress. This chapter also reveals how this resulting high profile, together with political and social changes in both the role of the Imperial Household, as well as women in society, allowed Teimei to take on new public roles as an imperial proxy. Furthermore, this chapter will investigate what I term as “the politics of imperial concealment” by examining issues of power, in/visibility, and the gendered gaze, and will consider gender and the imperial body in the context of imperial theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As discussed in the Introduction and Chapter Two, visual representations of the preceding Meiji Emperor and Empress and the succeeding Shōwa Emperor and Empress conveyed relatively conventional gender roles: the images of the emperors were constructed as masculine, and associated with military costuming, and the empresses as feminine, and were associated with domestic and family concerns.<sup>236</sup> In contrast, the relationship between the

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<sup>235</sup> The majority of images examined in this chapter are from the *Asahi*, however, a few images from other Japanese daily newspapers within the same time parameters will also be mentioned.

<sup>236</sup> Further details regarding the construction of gender roles in the Imperial Family from Meiji through Shōwa are discussed by Kawamura Kunimitsu. Kawamura focuses on the Imperial Family's relationship with and impact on the public vis-à-vis mass media representations. See: Kawamura Kunimitsu, “Tennōke no konin to shussan,”

Emperor and Empress was particularly complex during the Taishō period. Emperor Taishō was afflicted with illness, and mid-way through his reign passed along imperial power to his son Hirohito, who was appointed regent in 1921. As a result of this change Empress Teimei took on roles otherwise reserved for the male members of the Imperial Household. This complexity was evident in visual presentations of the couple. In surveying the image of Emperor Taishō, it was often his absence, rather than his presence, that defined him in the media. This absence resulted in the need for alternative imperial symbols, including that of Empress Teimei. To this end, this chapter will begin with a brief overview of the production and consumption of mass media in Taishō-period Japan. Next, it provides a comprehensive examination of imperial imagery in the *Asahi Shinbun*. The following section details the politics and historical context for the changes in imperial imagery that were investigated in section two with a specific focus on the “politics of concealment” surrounding Emperor Taishō’s illness. Finally, the changing gender roles of the Imperial Family as seen in photographs in the years surrounding 1920 will be discussed.

### The *Asahi Shinbun* and the Media-Oriented Society of Taishō Japan

In the Taishō period, pictures of the royal couple often appeared in newspapers and magazines, generally as an accompaniment to a narrative article documenting the imperial couple’s activities, or in the case of popular illustrated magazines, as a photographic feature. In the years after 1906-7, with the technological innovations of the rotary press and offset printing, image-heavy magazine publications became commonplace. Commemorative pictorial spreads of the Imperial Family were issued by the newspapers, generally in dual or quadrafold inserts.

Postcards were another media where the public could view the visage of the Imperial Family.

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[Marriage and Birth in the Emperor’s Family] in *Ō o meguru shisen* [The Gaze of the Ruler] ed. Yoshihiko Amino, vol. 10 of *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru* [Thoughts on the Emperor and Royal Power] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 161-182.

Picture postcards were first officially acknowledged in Japan in 1900, and gained instant popularity.<sup>237</sup> Among these varied visual representations, the most accessible and commonly viewed images for the general public were newspaper photographs. These photographs served to link the Imperial Family to their subjects, providing the commoner with a sense of intimacy and familiarity with their rulers.

The majority of images examined in this chapter were published in the *Asahi Shinbun* between 1899 and 1926. As previously mentioned, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the invention of the rotary press and the expansion of offset printing technologies allowed for the inexpensive reproduction of photographic images in the newspaper. Prior to 1906-7, newspaper images were primarily reproductions of sketches, and prior to 1899, no images of the Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei were printed in the *Asahi Shinbun*. In fact, the first Taishō-related imperial image to appear in the *Asahi* in 1899 is a sketch reproduction of Empress Teimei.<sup>238</sup> Emperor Taishō appears in reproduced monochrome drawings two times in 1900, and once in 1905, yet in both images the detail of his individual appearance is difficult to discern. Taishō's recognizable visage does not appear until 1907, and when first published, his image is in photographic form.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Sepp Linhart, "The Japanese Emperors as Seen on Japanese and Western Postcards, 1900-1945," in *Nihon bunka no chū no tennō—tennō to wa?* [The Emperor Within Japanese Culture—How to Define the Emperor?] (Tokyo: Kokusai nihongaku kenkyū sōsho, 2008), 132. Sepp Linhart traces the image of the modern emperors on the postcard, and determined that within his sample of domestic cards, all of the picture postcards of Taishō were based on two official photographs, one as a young Crown Prince, and the other after his ascension to the throne (138). This is disputable, as the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston includes more than two varieties of Emperor Taishō's portrait in the museum's postcard collection.

<sup>238</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, November 3, 1899, page 2, Osaka Supplement Illustration for article, "九条節子姫御方 (皇太子妃内定)" (Kujō Sadako hime okata (kōtaishihi naitei), Honorable Lady Kujō Sadako (An unofficial decision on the [appointment of the] Crown Princess))

<sup>239</sup> Empress Teimei's image appears in the *Asahi Shinbun* for the first time on November 3, 1899. Emperor Taishō's recognizable image first appears on May 10, 1907. I will return to a visual analysis of these images later in this chapter. The images from 1900 are a sketch from May 10 of the imperial couple in Heian-style court robes wherein neither the emperor or empress is easily visible, and another sketch from May 11 of the imperial couples (Meiji and Taishō), participating in a European-style court ceremony. In 1905 an image of Taishō in sketch form in a carriage appeared on November 15, he is a distinguishable figure, but his appearance is not distinctive.

As a major daily publication, the *Asahi* functions as a sample media outlet of the late Meiji and Taishō periods, particularly when considering that the newspaper had the largest circulation of Japanese daily newspapers at the time. By the end of the Taishō period the *Osaka Asahi* had a circulation of over 800,000; the average circulation of the eight major Tokyo newspapers in the same year averaged over 300,000 each, and, being one of the largest amongst the major dailies, the circulation of the *Tokyo Asahi* was likely much larger than the average.<sup>240</sup> In 1895, long before newspaper circulation surged, the *Tokyo Asahi* was the most popular of the eight Tokyo daily newspapers.<sup>241</sup> Between 1897 and 1911 the number of newspapers tripled; by 1911 there were 236 newspapers being published throughout Japan, and the circulation of the seven largest newspapers surpassed 100,000.<sup>242</sup> Furthermore, these newspapers were often passed around families, co-workers, and in public spaces, meaning that any given newspaper reached many more readers than subscribers.<sup>243</sup>

Newspapers were part of the system of social control since the early Meiji period; for example, in the 1870s, newspapers played an integral role in educating the public about the role of the emperor in society and included didactic articles on proper behavior when viewing an imperial procession.<sup>244</sup> Newspaper, magazine, and book publishers were held to strict censorship laws, and most newspapers promoted imperial and state myths. As Richard H. Mitchell stated of

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<sup>240</sup> The content of the *Tokyo Asahi* and the *Osaka Asahi* are relatively similar on any given day of publication, but occasionally one would include additional content of local interest, such as the *Osaka Asahi* including additional photographs and reportage on an imperial tour to the Kansai region, where Osaka is located.

<sup>241</sup> Exacting statistics for the circulation of each newspaper in any given year are difficult to come by. For full statistics used here, and an analysis of news media circulation in the Meiji and Taishō periods see: James L. Huffman, *Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 362-363, 386.

<sup>242</sup> Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 171.

<sup>243</sup> Although using only the *Asahi Shinbun* imagery limits the media that I will address in this chapter, it is important to remember that the majority of imperial images every newspaper carried were nearly identical—the Imperial Household Agency held, and continues to hold, tight censorship controls on the imperial image.

<sup>244</sup> Richard H. Mitchell, *Censorship in Imperial Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 40-52.

Meiji publications, “Journalists, then, were foot soldiers in the state’s battle to manipulate traditional values about authority and to expand the cult of the emperor.”<sup>245</sup> These laws evolved during the early twentieth century, to the point of the Press Law of 1908, wherein anyone responsible for periodical publications which were interpreted to have defamed the Imperial Household could be punished with up to two years in prison and levied with steep fines.<sup>246</sup> It is difficult to exaggerate the severity of state media control in early twentieth century Japan, as evidenced by these multifarious laws and publication standards. The use of various mass-media publications, including the *Asahi*, was crucial in crafting a positive public opinion of the Imperial Family. Furthermore, the media-oriented society of Taishō Japan, wherein postcards, newspapers, and magazines surged in popularity, was an important component in the cultivation of the Taishō imperial image.

#### Categories of Imperial Imagery in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Newspapers

An investigation of articles and photographs of the Emperor and Empress as published in the *Asahi Shinbun* between 1899 and 1926 verifies that Teimei was an important component of the visual culture of the Imperial Family during the early decades of the twentieth century. Exacting statistics on the frequency of visual representations of the Empress will be addressed in the subsequent section, however with the knowledge that her appearances were frequent, this section will provide an analysis of the various subject matter found within the forty-one photographs of Teimei published in the *Asahi Shinbun* between 1899 and 1926. The iconography of Teimei as presented in the *Asahi Shinbun* exhibits a dramatic shift in how the Empress was represented; in

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 143. Additionally, after the High Treason Incident of 1910-11, wherein twelve people were hanged for a failed plot to assassinate the emperor, public debate and critique of the emperor system completely cooled. See: Ibid., 145-146.

the years after 1920, when the Emperor grew reclusive due to illness, Empress Teimei's individuality and individual presence came to greater prominence, and was emphasized within the photographs published in the newspaper. In the following paragraphs this change in iconography will be examined in detail, with particular attention to the recurring visual themes of Empress Teimei in transit and in her role as symbolic leader of the Red Cross, as well as her shift into a surrogate visual marker for the Imperial Family in the years after 1920.

Noticeably, the *Asahi* most frequently featured the Empress in a carriage or car.<sup>247</sup> On eleven occasions her presence was indicated through the image of the carriage exterior, or her seated in an open-topped vehicle. This imperial iconography had roots in the Meiji period, when imperial processions and tours became commonplace.<sup>248</sup> Takashi Fujitani argues for the importance of the visual role of the empress by stating, “The innovation of the imperial couple riding together, widely publicized as never having been seen in all of Japanese history, signaled the empress’ new prominence in the process of manufacturing a public image for the imperial family.”<sup>249</sup> Although in the Taishō period Empress Teimei generally appears alone or masked behind the façade of the vehicle, the recurring visual theme of members of the Imperial Family pictured in transit, as established only a few decades earlier, remained a popular one. An example of one such image of Teimei dates from May 10, 1919, wherein the Empress rides in an open carriage on a visit to Ueno.<sup>250</sup> In sharp contrast to the photograph of a large crowd gathered

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<sup>247</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, July 14, 1911, Page 5, Tokyo morning edition, “妃殿下還啓” (Hidenka kankei, Her Royal Highness Returns to the Palace)

<sup>248</sup> For further information about these processions, and the imperial style that accompanied them, see: Ozawa Asae, *Meiji no kōshitsu kenchiku: kokka ga motometa “wafū” zō* [Architecture of the Meiji Imperial Household: A Nation Searching for the Image of “Japanese style”] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2008) and Gyewon Kim, “Tracing the Emperor: Photography, Famous Places, and the Imperial Progresses in Prewar Japan,” *Representations*, 120 (2012): 115-150.

<sup>249</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 110.

<sup>250</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, May 10, 1919, Page 5, Tokyo morning edition, “上野行啓の皇后宮” (Ueno gyōkei no kōgōgū, The Empress’ Royal Visit to Ueno).

at the park which fills the other side of the page, Teimei appears calm and demure in this photograph. Her gaze is directed downward, and is removed from the crowd that according to the headline is, “looking up at the imperial visit,” (行幸啓を仰ぎて, *gyōkōkei o aogite*).<sup>251</sup> Her expressionless face is partially obscured by the handle of the parasol which she stiffly holds, and the top of which pierces the circular cut-out of the image as reproduced. The repetitious quality of her round parasol and the circular format, as well as the multiple horizontal lines from her hat, the carriage doors, and a graphic line inserted at the base of the image, all work to create a dominating frame within which the Empress’s relatively small and partially hidden face is lost. In this carriage image Teimei’s face is fully seen, yet the visual qualities of the image, such as the cropping of the photograph and the framing of her personage with various objects, as discussed above, distract the viewer from her personal, individual facial features. This is particularly noticeable when examining the layout of the entire newspaper page, wherein Empress Teimei may be the central figure in the roundel photograph, and featured as larger than the citizens in the accompanying image, yet the overall effect results in her being unindividuated and not fully visible. This type of representation was to change in the years after 1920.

Other photographic genres that will be examined later in this section, such as Empress Teimei appearing in front of the Red Cross, or on domestic tours of the nation, include comparable photographs in which the Empress is also seen in a visually diminished role within the larger composition. However, transit photographs in particular show Teimei in a position wherein she is not easily recognizable or clearly visible, but rather, the surrounding text and signifiers alert the viewer to the concealed presence of the Empress within the vehicle. Another example of an early image of Teimei in transit is seen on the fifth page of the morning edition of

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<sup>251</sup> “Gyōkōkei o agite Tokyoshi tentosai,” [Looking up at the Imperial Visit, Tokyo City Metropolitan Enshrinement Festival] *Asahi Shinbun*, May 10, 1919, 5, morning edition.

the July 14, 1911 *Asahi Shinbun*.<sup>252</sup> In this photograph, taken as she returned to the palace from the Imperial Villa at Hayama, a full side view of the Crown Princess' horse-drawn carriage is shown, yet the viewer cannot see her figure, only a white parasol and a tiny hint of her body. Throughout the Taishō period, transit images did not clearly show the Empress' personage, rather, she is either fully hidden from view or partially obscured. A photograph from the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* from November 29, 1925, although poor in quality, is illustrative of the obscured image of Teimei that is so common in transit images.<sup>253</sup> The Empress is surrounded by her attendants, her full figure is shown, as she is pictured in an active role as she moves through Tokyo Station, preparing to board a train. In this image, as with most of the transit images picturing her, Teimei is illustrated independent of her husband, in contrast to the transit images of the Meiji period, wherein Empress Shōken was pictured in transit together with her spouse. As time passed, Empress Teimei would be represented as an individual, in photographic genres other than that of transit. This style of independent imagery will be further examined later in this section.

An additional visual theme which recurs in the *Asahi Shinbun* with frequency is that of the Empress' leadership role with the Red Cross. As stated in Chapter One, following the lead of Empress Shōken, Empress Teimei was a strong supporter of the Red Cross organization in Japan, and took a position as symbolic leader. As such, photographs of Teimei appearing before Red Cross meetings were published in the *Asahi Shinbun* six times between the years 1914 and 1925.

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<sup>252</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, July 14, 1911, Page 5, Tokyo morning edition, “妃殿下還啓” (Hidenka kankei, Her Royal Highness Returns to the Palace).

<sup>253</sup> A note on the quality of these images—although the photographs are low quality, the Taishō public saw them as they are reproduced in this dissertation, therefore in examining them in their imperfect state, this study attempts to understand the visual culture of the Taishō imperial family as they were presented during their era. Additionally, the date and publication information of this photograph is uncertain. It was listed as *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, November 29, 1925 in the archives of the Imperial Household Agency, but cannot be found on the digitized archives of the *Asahi Shinbun* under that publication date. For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun* (?), November 29, 1925, Osaka edition, “皇后陛下東京驛御出發” (Kōgōheika Tokyo eki goshuppatsu, Her Royal Highness Departs Tokyo Station).

One such example is found in the *Asahi* of May 5, 1919.<sup>254</sup> In this two-photograph layout, as with other examples, the Empress appears as a small figure on a stage, without many identifiable characteristics. The photograph of her on the stripe-covered stage is contrasted with a photograph printed immediately below of a large crowd, who demonstrated their respect by removing their hats in her presence. The Empress looks out at the crowd, and although her presence in front of the masses is implied through the two juxtaposed photographs, she herself is removed from the throng of commoners, both in the historic moment through her position on the stage, and in the media coverage through her portrayal in a separate image. The publication of the two photographs next to each other provides the viewer with both the vision of the stage that was seen by the crowd, and the vantage point of the Empress. The crowd is depicted as looking up at the sovereign on her platform, seeing the back of the official reading the proclamation of the meeting directly to the monarch herself, while Empress Teimei looks out over the heads of her people from a slightly elevated viewpoint. A similarity between the 1919 Red Cross photograph and the 1919 carriage image in terms of the treatment of the Empress is evident: she is depicted as impersonal, removed, and contrasted with the crowds of subjects that gather to celebrate and view her. In both instances Empress Teimei was physically separated from the citizenry, as was to be expected of a monarch of her stature, yet these examples of media representation provided an additional layer of spatial difference in the photographic layouts: both represent the Empress in a separate photograph on the newspaper page.

In the years after the Crown Prince's appointment as regent in 1920, however, a dramatic shift occurred in the visual representation of Empress Teimei in mass media. Her individual presence became more emphasized, and she took on roles not previously performed by female

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<sup>254</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, May 5, 1919, Page 5, Tokyo morning edition, “昨日の赤十字社総会” (Kinou sekijūjisha sōkai, Yesterday's General Assembly of the Red Cross Society).

members of the Imperial Family. For example, in a 1925 photograph of her at a Red Cross meeting, she is represented in close-up images without the crowds of followers to meet her gaze.<sup>255</sup> She wears a similar white dress and hat as in the earlier images, and stands behind the same striped railing, but this time she is accompanied by a male member of the Imperial Household, and her face and expression are clearly visible; she no longer has a passive downward gaze, but rather makes eye contact with the camera, gazing at the viewer. Rather than being the removed and distant sovereign, she is now active and engaged with the camera, and by extension engaged with her subjects, shown in motion as she walks across the stage, a change from earlier imagery wherein she stood still or sat in a carriage.

The title of the article which accompanies the photograph reflects this active gaze as well. “On hareyakana kōgō heika,” (御晴やかな皇后陛下, Her Honorable Majesty the Empress, Beaming) gives a subtle hint at her cheerful disposition, and contrasts with the passive, factual title of the article accompanying the earlier photograph, “Kinō no sekijūjisha sōkai” (昨日の赤十字社総会, Yesterday’s General Assembly of the Red Cross Society).<sup>256</sup> This change from passive to engaged monarch became even more pronounced as time progressed. In addition to the change seen in the image of Empress Teimei as the leader of the Red Cross, she also took on overtly active roles that were formerly reserved for the emperor or other male leaders, as will be examined presently.

Other photographs from the early 1920s serve to exhibit how Teimei’s representation was transformed in the years after her husband fell ill, and exemplify her visual role as a surrogate

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<sup>255</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, May 7, 1925, Page 1, Tokyo evening edition, “御晴やかな皇后陛下” (Gosei yakana kōgō heika, Under the Eye of her Majesty the Empress).

<sup>256</sup> The articles, captions, and titles which accompany the newspaper images of the Empress were generally formulaic and straightforward in their reporting. Most address her endeavors with a neutral approach, detailing her clothing and activities without additional editorial commentary. The title “On hareyakana kōgō heika,” however, provides a more descriptive flavor—hareyaka can be translated as beaming, bright, or sunny.

monarch in the regency years. In an *Asahi Shinbun* photograph from March of 1922 Teimei appeared on the deck of the ship Tenryū, a light cruiser of the Imperial Navy.<sup>257</sup> In the image she is shown investigating military equipment and presumably listening to an explanation from a military official. This shows her in an active political role, something that was extremely unconventional for the female members of the Imperial Household, and which was unprecedented in representations of the modern empresses.<sup>258</sup> Coinciding with the publication of this photograph, the Imperial Army was involved in the Siberian Intervention, a military maneuver which was highly unpopular with the Japanese public. Undertaken by the Allied Powers in an effort to support White Russian forces in their conflict with the Bolshevik Red Army in the Russian Civil War, the Siberian Intervention lasted from 1918 to 1920, with the Japanese maintaining military outposts in Siberia through 1922. This photograph also corresponds directly with the return of Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō from meetings in the United States with military officials at the Washington Naval Conference, an event which was covered in the mass media.<sup>259</sup> Upon returning to Japan in March of 1922, the Minister was involved in public lobbying for the adoption of negotiated treaties and the reduction of the military budget.<sup>260</sup> This reduction in spending was part of a larger international agreement to limit arms; Katō believed that by curtailing the size of the Imperial Navy, and thus creating an accord with the United States that included proscriptions on U.S. forces in the Pacific, that the

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<sup>257</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, March 28, 1922, Page 7, Tokyo morning edition, “「天龍」甲板上の皇后陛下” (“Tenryū” kanpan ue no kōgōheika, Her Majesty the Empress on the Deck of the “Tenryū”).

<sup>258</sup> In 1888, Teimei’s predecessor Empress Shōken appeared at the ceremonial launching of an imperial ship in Yokosuka when Emperor Meiji fell unexpectedly and suddenly ill. This incident, however, was not visually reproduced in the media, and was not a major event. The visit is mentioned in: Julia Meech Pakarik, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986), 129.

<sup>259</sup> Paul E. Dunscomb, *Japan’s Siberian Intervention, 1918-1922* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 181. Dunscomb provides a highly detailed study of the Intervention, the policies that led to the historical moment of the Intervention, and the aftermath of the conflict.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

overall Japanese naval position would be strengthened.<sup>261</sup> Both of these news events were widely reported on, and would have been topics of public discussion, debate, and concern at the time.

Although since the Meiji period the women of the Imperial Family had a public role, this is a rare image of a female member of the Imperial Household directly engaging in military affairs, which were typically male-dominated pursuits. Moreover, in addition to military concerns, in early 1922 the government was dispelling civil unrest over the defeat of the Adult Suffrage Bill in February. On the day after the Tenryū photograph appeared in the *Asahi*, the newspaper ran a photograph of Empress Teimei leaving the Rokumeikan, a space for diplomatic and social events, after a social occasion; the article immediately above the Rokumeikan image was titled “Gunjijō yori mita fusen” (軍事上より見た普選, The view of Universal Suffrage from the Military), written by a member of the Rikugunshō (陸軍省, Army Ministry).<sup>262</sup> The contrast of the article and the photograph, combined with the Tenryū image being published only one day earlier, suggests the importance of the Teimei’s image in a time of political tumult. Coinciding with 1922 being the year wherein Empress Teimei’s image received the most media visibility (see Chart One and Two) was the revision of Article Five in the Diet, allowing for women to participate in and sponsor political activities.<sup>263</sup> In light of these various political happenings, the Tenryū photograph represents not only an attempt on behalf of the Imperial Household Agency to counter the unpopularity of military affairs, but also shows the Empress as an active stand-in for her husband at a time when women were slowly gaining political rights. In both of these ways, through the association of a female member of the Imperial Household with the military,

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<sup>261</sup> J. Charles Schencking, *Making Waves: Politics, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1868-1912* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 217-221.

<sup>262</sup> “Gunjijō yori mita fusen,” [The View of Universal Suffrage from the Military] *Asahi Shinbun*, March 29, 1922, 3, Tokyo morning edition. Japanese men over the age of 25 were afforded universal suffrage in 1925.

<sup>263</sup> Women were not afforded suffrage in Japan until 1945. For a more in-depth discussion of the debates surrounding Article Five in the late teens and early twenties, as well as a description of the original Article from 1900, see: Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 123-126.

and through the use of the Empress as a surrogate imperial figure in a situation of national political importance, this photograph exemplifies the blurring of imperial gender roles which were established with the Meiji Emperor and Empress in the recent past.<sup>264</sup>

It is important to note that in the *Asahi*, as well as in other mass media publications, the Empress was frequently presented without her husband. Unlike the other imperial couples of the modern era, Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei were rarely seen together in the years after he took the throne. Most of the images of Teimei and Taishō as an imperial couple are from the time surrounding their marriage in 1900. Even when they appear together, they are often in separate portraits, placed next to each other in the context of postcards or other commemorative mixed media, as in the examples of studio portraiture discussed in Chapter Two. The *Asahi Shinbun* images of the imperial couple are nearly all separate portraits, and appear only on formal occasions such as the ascension to the throne in 1912, commemorative New Year's editions, and on the wedding anniversary of the imperial couple.<sup>265</sup> This observation further supports the idea that Teimei played an active role as an imperial surrogate. She was not portrayed in a supporting role to her husband, but rather was pictured as a distinct and independent figure, undertaking an active societal role as a member of the Imperial Household.

In contrast to Empress Teimei's independence, her predecessor Empress Shōken frequently appeared in public with her husband Emperor Meiji, seated by his side, or walking just behind him in a reverent position. A few points of comparison between the two empresses will serve to exemplify the differences in their public personas as seen in visual culture, to

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<sup>264</sup> It is of interest to note that Empress Teimei later spoke out against Japan's role in the Pacific War. In her position as the Empress Dowager she controversially expressed her distaste for military activities in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>265</sup> Examples from the *Asahi Shinbun* include July 31, 1912, wherein formal portraits of Teimei and Taishō appear published next to each other, and May 10, 1925, on the occasion of their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary when formal portraits of the imperial couple were published next to each other. An exception is January 1, 1918, wherein a reproduced painting of the imperial couple appeared on the front page; in this image the imperial couple do appear together, but it is in painted form, not photographic.

illustrate the persistence of conservative roles given to the female members of the Imperial Household, and to exhibit how Teimei's image departed from earlier empress models. The image of Empress Shōken as it relates to the establishment of constructed modern femininity was detailed in Chapter Two, therefore, the discussion here will be relatively brief, but crucial to understanding what was groundbreaking about Teimei's image. In the example *Daisankai Naikoku kangyō hakurankai* (第三回内国勸業博覧会, The Third National Industrial Exhibition) by Watanabe Nobukazu (渡辺延一, 1874-1944) from 1890, the Meiji Imperial Family and their attendants are shown entering the exhibition hall.<sup>266</sup> In this print Empress Shōken stands near the center of the composition, yet her body is oriented towards the young Crown Prince Yoshihito, her wrist is bent and her elbow withdrawn, indicating hesitation, and her gaze is directed towards Emperor Meiji, who stands with a strong, wide stance, shoulders broad and set back, hand on his sword, the attention of his three male attendants set on him. Although the opulent sartorial style and central placement of Empress Shōken indicates her importance, the principal actor in this image is Emperor Meiji.

Many of Shōken's studio portraits were based on those of European royalty, in particular the 1872 photograph in Heian costume as captured by Uchida Kuichi (内田九一, 1844-1875), which attempted to link the monarch to tradition, and therefore authority, and the 1889 photograph of the standing Empress in European costume, directly modeled on European royal photographs.<sup>267</sup> Both of these photographs were used extensively as a model for Shōken's

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<sup>266</sup> For an image see: *Daisankai Naikoku kangyō hakurankai* (第三回内国勸業博覧会, The Third National Industrial Exposition), Watanabe Nobukazu, March, 1890, [2000.396a-c] Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Other examples can be seen in "Ueno koen hakurankai gyoko no zu" [Picture of a Visit to the Exhibition at Ueno Park] by Kobayashi Ikuhide, 1890, collection of Waseda University Library, or "Ueno kōenchi dai sankai naikoku kangyō hakurankai no zu" [The Third National Industrial Exhibition at Ueno Park] by Toyohara Kuniteru III from March of 1890, Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

<sup>267</sup> For images see: *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 12 and 18.

appearance in later media such as lithography and woodblock prints. In other media depictions, Shōken appears demure, often with a dainty upturned and bent wrist or an angled turn of the head, averting her eyes downward, and clothed in the latest elaborate Parisian fashions, as in the 1887 *nishiki-e* woodblock print *Baien shōkazu*, (梅園唱歌図, Picture of Singing Songs in the Plum Garden) by Yōshū Chikanobu (楊洲周延, 1838-1912).<sup>268</sup> Shōken appears at the center of the triptych print, leaning on a bright red chair with Crown Prince Yoshihito to her side. Her tight corset and large bustle force her figure into a posture which compromises any assertiveness, and which emphasizes the female anatomy while obscuring any individual physical bodily features. Her face is reminiscent of Edo-period *bijin* from woodblock prints—unindividuated, idealized, sparse on details, and completely lacking the contours and shading of three-dimensional visual representation. Empress Shōken is surrounded by palace ladies, the Crown Prince, a luxurious imperial interior in European style, and an expansive garden in the background. All of these visual cues worked together to form a demure, passive, and conservative semblance of imperial femininity in the Meiji period.

The conventional image of Empress Shōken can be contrasted with the changing image of Empress Teimei in the Taishō period generally, and specifically with mass media photography after 1920, when Teimei's image underwent more dramatic changes. Throughout the Taishō period, Teimei's image retained the propriety required of the members of the Imperial Household, and exhibited an air of elegant femininity which was expected of the imperial women; yet changes in body language, setting, and entourage demonstrate the shift in acceptable decorum which occurred around 1920. Only thirty-two years after Shōken visited The Third National Industrial Exhibition, Empress Teimei conducted similar public affairs independent of

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<sup>268</sup> For an image see: *Baien shokazu* (梅園唱歌図, Picture of Singing Songs in the Plum Garden) Chikanobu Yōshū, Meiji 20, 1887, Waseda University Library.

her husband.<sup>269</sup> In 1922 Teimei visited the Imperial Art Exhibition without the accompaniment of Emperor Taishō. In the newspaper image, readers were given the opportunity to view Teimei as she walked independently into the exhibition, onlookers bowing deeply and averting their eyes from her majesty. Her posture is upright, and despite the low image quality impeding an examination of her facial expression, there are no male figures in the image, making the Empress the principal subject: Teimei stands alone, at center right, with a female attendant following. The independence of Empress Teimei in this exhibition image as contrasted with the supporting role of Empress Shōken in a similar setting, shows the dramatic shift in empress imagery in the years after 1920. As with the other images examined in this section, Teimei's representation in the regency years was a crucial component in maintaining the visibility of the Imperial Family during an uncertain time.

### Emperor Taishō and the Politics of Concealment

Thus far, this chapter has traced how images of Empress Teimei, as published in the *Asahi Shinbun* between 1899 and 1926, changed through time, and has shown how depictions of the Empress in photographic form evolved from a demure and passive image to that of an active imperial surrogate, undertaking roles previously performed by the male members of the Imperial Household. To explore the motives for this transition, this section turns to an investigation of the historical circumstances surrounding Emperor Taishō's disappearance from public view. To do so, this section will detail the reasons for the Emperor's withdrawal in the regency years, as well as examine the imperial public image as crafted by the Imperial Household Agency in the 1910s and 1920s in response to the Emperor's retreat. To supplement the visual analysis provided in the

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<sup>269</sup> For an image see: *Asahi Shinbun*, October 28, 1922, Page 2, Tokyo evening edition, “帝展へ行啓の皇后宮” (Teiten he gyōkei no kōgōgū, The Empress visiting the Imperial Exhibition).

previous section, this section will examine the varied photographs and articles from the *Asahi Shinbun*, and will survey the mass media presence of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei within written and visual material published in the *Asahi Shinbun* to provide a comprehensive study of the representation of the imperial couple as seen in the newspaper. To accomplish this investigation, this section will present statistics and details on the frequency of imperial coverage in the mass media. The varied tactics of visual concealment and promotion used in the Taishō period provided for bureaucratic hegemony over the imperial image in an age of uncertainty, thus allowing for the maintenance of *kokutai*, a concept detailed in the Introduction of this dissertation. For the purposes of explicating the politics of vision during the regency period, as argued in this section, I address a new term for Taishō visual culture, the “politics of concealment.”<sup>270</sup> This term will refer to the strategic promotion or restraint in the use of the image of various members of the Imperial Household for political purposes, specifically the use of various images for the express aim of sustaining centralized imperial power in the 1910s and 1920s.

As discussed in Chapter One, after 1916, Taishō’s fading health became evident. Rumors of erratic behavior were commonly reported in the media in the late 1910s, leading up to the regency in November of 1921, yet it is difficult to know which of these reports were based on reliable sources. The most famous of these was the unverifiable Spyglass Incident of 1913. In this episode, Emperor Taishō was said to have appeared before a meeting of the Diet, at which time he rolled up the text he was holding, and peered through it like a telescope. Yet, it is

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<sup>270</sup> In relation to Japanese studies scholarship, the phrase “politics of concealment” can be found in the work of Anne Walthall and Atsuko Ueda, yet neither of these authors uses the phrase as a key concept or central aspect of their argument. Furthermore, the two authors use the phrase in vastly different contexts than are used here; Walthall employs the phrase to discuss shogunal culture (which will be mentioned below), and Ueda examines the development of Meiji literature in her study. See: Anne Walthall, “Hiding the Shoguns,” in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion* ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 331-356, and Atsuko Ueda, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: The Production of “Literature” in Meiji Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

difficult to determine if this incident actually occurred, if it was rumormongering by politicians who opposed the Emperor, or if it was the product of public gossip. In his seminal biography of the Emperor Taishō, Hara Takeshi attempted to determine the truth behind the Spyglass Incident (遠眼鏡事件, *tōmeganejiken*), but struggled to come to a verifiable conclusion.<sup>271</sup> Furukawa Takahisa, also a prominent Taishō biographer, likewise questions the accuracy of the story, and although Furukawa's conclusions may overreach the available evidence, his article on the incident confirms Hara's uncertainty.<sup>272</sup> Even though the historical details may be suspect, it is telling that this notorious incident is one of the most oft-repeated narratives from Emperor Taishō's biography, and conspiracy theories notwithstanding, it is known that Emperor Taishō's health was deteriorating in the late 1910s.

Regardless of the veracity of the Spyglass Incident, the change in Emperor Taishō's health and behavior and the resultant regency of Crown Prince Hirohito beginning in 1921 is well documented in the literature. A greater understanding of the politics of concealment in the regency era can be gained through an examination of the invisibility of Emperor Taishō between 1920 and 1926. In his 2002 article, “‘Kokutai’ no shikakuka—Taishō • Shōwa shoki ni okeru tennōsei no saihen,” (「国体」の視覚化—大正・昭和初期における天皇制の再編, The Visualization of the “Kokutai”—Reorganizing the Emperor System from Taishō to early Shōwa), Hara Takeshi examines the evolution of Taishō imperial norms, and identifies the subsequent adjustments in public appearances and messages communicated to the citizenry. In the article,

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<sup>271</sup> Hara Takeshi, *Taishō Tennō* [Emperor Taishō] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun shuppan, 2000), 4-11. Hara traces the various reminiscences of the incident, as well as contemporary media to attempt to find a reliable source to prove the incident, but struggles to find a conclusion.

<sup>272</sup> Furukawa Takahisa, “Taishō tennō tōmeganejiken: naze fūsetsu ga umaretanoka,” [The Taishō Emperor Spyglass Incident: Why Were the Rumors Created?] *Rekishi tokuhon* [History Reader] 55:8 (2010): 132-137. Furukawa comes to the conclusion that the incident was a rumor which the Imperial Household Agency allowed to spread in the late 1910s because they were interested in the public believing that Emperor Taishō was weak, thus allowing them to replace him peacefully with Crown Prince Hirohito as regent. His conspiracy theory is not supported by strong evidence, and he denies the various health issues of Emperor Taishō, choosing to valorize and glorify Taishō rather than present the nuanced and complex narrative that Hara weaves.

Hara argues that the reorganization of the emperor system under the regency of Hirohito required a shift in etiquette, the creation of new terminology, and the formulation of a new public image of the Imperial Family.<sup>273</sup> Hara's assertion that the Imperial Household was in need of a restructuring of image and etiquette in the public sphere is relevant in understanding the imperial image in the visual realm. Hara argues that the commonly held idea of the modern Imperial Family as organized in a fixed and static fashion is disproved by the regency period, wherein flexibility in the system was necessary. According to Hara, the regency period, wherein new norms in the public image of the Imperial Family were invented and institutionalized and Crown Prince Hirohito was put forth as a major symbol of the nation, is evidence that there was not just one modern imperial system in the modern era, but rather the system adjusted to the needs of the day.<sup>274</sup>

In this article, Hara focuses on the use of Hirohito as a symbol of continuity, and how Hirohito twice overcame political and imperial crises to assist in unifying the nation, yet Empress Teimei also merits mention in the article.<sup>275</sup> Hara states that in the regency era, it was not just Crown Prince Hirohito who acted to “compensate for the absence of the Emperor,” but that Prince Chichibunomiya, the Empress, and other members of the Imperial Family were also active in regional imperial inspections.<sup>276</sup> Furthermore, Hara suggests that this increase in the public activities of members of the Imperial Family other than the Emperor led to the

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<sup>273</sup> As Hara approaches the Imperial Family from the perspective of a historian, he uses the term image (像, *zō*) in the broad sense, encompassing the entirety of the impression conveyed to the public, not just the visual vestige. Hara Takeshi, “‘Kokutai’ no shikakuka—Taishō • Shōwa shoki ni okeru tennōsei no saihen,” [The Visualization of the “Kokutai”—Reorganizing the Emperor System from Taishō to early Shōwa] in *Ō o meguru shisen* [The Gaze of the Ruler] ed. Yoshihiko Amino, vol. 10 of *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru* [Thoughts on the Emperor and Royal Power] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 135-159.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>275</sup> Hara cites Junnosuke Masami's 1998 book *Shōwa tennō to sono jidai*, [The Shōwa Emperor and His Era] which argues for the Emperor as a symbol of the maintenance of *kokutai*, a concept discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation. Ibid., 156. Hara further draws parallels between Hirohito's appearances during the regency period and Hirohito's appearances in the years after 1945 as a means to maintain *kokutai* during times of crisis. Ibid., 156.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 147.

mobilization of domestic suffrage movements in Japan: the increased visibility of the women of the Imperial Family, combined with ideas of social equality, strengthened the movement for expanded rights of citizenship.<sup>277</sup> In making this argument, Hara's article supports my contention that the Empress was a figure of central importance in Japanese politics of the 1920s.

In reference to the Empress Teimei, Hara details her visit to Kyoto in 1922, wherein she appeared at various religious sites and visited university and elementary school students, performing imperial functions previously relegated to the emperor. Hara presents this tour as evidence of the difference in etiquette and the performed tasks of the Imperial Family during the regency period.<sup>278</sup> Empress Teimei also visited Kansai on an official tour during 1925, with documentary images published in the *Mainichi Shinbun* (毎日新聞, Mainichi Newspaper). The images from this tour, much like Hara's explanation of her 1922 Kyoto visit, show an Empress who was independent and confident in appearance.<sup>279</sup> Much like the photograph from her 1922 visit to the Imperial Exhibition, in the 1925 tour photographs Teimei is not secondary to a male figure, but acts autonomously. This adjustment in etiquette is particularly relevant for my argument here—as the changes in the *Asahi* photographs show, the visual norms of the Imperial Family as represented in mass media transformed through time, and Empress Teimei was at the forefront of this evolving system. The publicly documented activities of the Empress, as detailed above, combined with Hara's argument that the imperial system was in flux during the Taishō period, provides support for my contention that the *Asahi* photographs represent a change in

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<sup>277</sup> Hara argues that the theory of constitutional authority, or one ruler with no discrimination or distinction amongst social classes, led to the generation of the theory of universal suffrage, and that the expanded and newly visible roles of the Imperial Family led to the strength of suffrage movements in popular society. *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>279</sup> For images see: *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*, December 2, 1925, Visiting Daitokuji on Official Tour, and *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*, December 4, 1925, Official Tour.

visual media in the regency period. With the concealment of the Emperor's image came the increased profile of the Empress.

At this point, an analysis of statistics concerning the publication of imperial imagery in the *Asahi Shinbun* will be of use in further understanding the in/visibility of the Taishō Emperor and Empress. In the years between 1899 and 1926, Emperor Taishō was mentioned in 14,931 *Asahi Shinbun* articles, and his likeness appeared 42 times. Empress Teimei, on the other hand, was mentioned in 4,641 articles, and her image appeared 32 times. These numbers provide a striking contrast in how the two foremost imperial figures were represented in mass media. In examining textual descriptions alone, Teimei accounted for only 31 percent as many mentions as her husband; yet, concerning images, Teimei appeared in 76 percent as many photographs as the Emperor. In other words, while Taishō was featured in nearly three times as many text-based newspaper articles as his wife, Teimei's visual presence in the *Asahi Shinbun* was nearly as frequent as that of her husband. The published appearances discussed to this point are those where the Emperor or Empress is clearly visible and their visage recognizable.

However, a different picture is created when considering images where the imperial presence is not completely clear, but rather is merely indicated: images such as photographs of the imperial carriage, or imperial processions, wherein the Emperor or Empress is not clearly seen, but rather their presence is implied through visual markers of royalty, and the accompanying text.<sup>280</sup> These images, wherein the imperial presence is indicated, implied, or inferred, required viewers to possess knowledge of the imperial institution and imperial visual makers, knowledge which most citizens gained from repeated exposure to the visual culture of the imperial family in mass media, public education, and in the preceding Meiji period through

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<sup>280</sup> In the case of the Japanese sovereigns, visual markers of royalty include, but are not limited to, luxurious horse-drawn carriages, officials standing or on horseback holding flags at attention, temporary arches or celebratory structures, and groups of citizens, often with flags, lining the route of an imperial procession.

the many domestic imperial tours. In surveying the inferred presence in *Asahi Shinbun* photographs, Taishō's concealed presence, wherein the Emperor is presumably present in the photograph yet the viewer sees only an object as a marker of the imperial, is visually indicated twenty-five times during the period from 1899-1926, and Teimei's veiled presence is found only nine times. These hidden images account for thirty-seven percent of the Emperor's total image count, but only twenty-two percent of the Empress', showing that even in photographic accounts, Emperor Taishō was not as visible as Empress Teimei, and that his physical concealment, or invisibility, was a feature of his media representation.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, in examining the dates of publication for images of the Emperor and Empress, both visible and hidden, it is clear that Taishō's likeness peaked in the mid-1910s, whereas Teimei's reached its zenith in the early 1920s (see Chart 1 and Chart 2). This data verifies that as Taishō withdrew from public view in the years just prior to 1920, Teimei's appearances in public increased. I will return to this point later in this chapter.

The aforementioned data from the *Asahi Shinbun* photographs indicates Emperor Taishō's low level of media visibility in the years between 1899 and 1926. The absence of the imperial visage from public view is found in other media as well. For example, in searching the digitized periodical collections at the National Diet Library with the parameters of the Taishō period (1912-1926), the term *tennō* (天皇, emperor) came up with 428 items. Of those, 192 were related to Emperor Meiji, Taishō's father and predecessor, and a variety of the other 236 were historic emperors or emperors of other nations. Within the search, only 11 items of the 428 found included photographs or illustrations of Emperor Taishō. This is contrasted with a search for *kōgō* (皇后, empress) within the same time parameter of 1912 to 1926, which came up with 121

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<sup>281</sup> The total image count for Taishō is 67 images between 1899-1926, and for Teimei the total is 41 for the same period.

periodicals, 17 of which included photographs or illustrations of Empress Teimei. These figures indicate that Empress Teimei was seen in photographic magazine representations nearly one and a half times as frequently as her husband.<sup>282</sup> Comparable to the photographs from the *Asahi Shinbun*, this data shows that the Emperor had a greater amount of textual media attention bestowed on him than was devoted to his wife. Although he was frequently mentioned in text, as with the *Asahi Shinbun*, the image of his physical body was concealed; Emperor Taishō was once again hidden from public view.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, immediately preceding the regency period, the Imperial Household Agency published proclamations in major newspapers detailing Emperor Taishō's health. Between 1920 and 1921 alone, they made five announcements concerning the illness of the Emperor.<sup>283</sup> The intention of these proclamations was to put rumors to rest; as the Emperor was not making public or photographic appearances, the Agency was concerned with maintaining the holy inviolability and elevated status of the Imperial Household during a time of uncertainty. Yet, as Emperor Taishō retreated further from public view, these textual proclamations slowed in frequency, while images of Empress Teimei became ever more common in the various daily newspapers. Teimei's photographic appearances in the *Asahi Shinbun* peaked in 1922, immediately after the start of the regency, and in the time when the Imperial Household Agency slowed the reports of the Emperor's health issues (Charts One and Two). This spike in published photographs, double in 1922 over any other year, is likely a direct result of the need for imperial stability in light of the Emperor's retreat from public view.

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<sup>282</sup> Two of these illustrated examples overlapped, showing both the Emperor and the Empress together. These searches were conducted on October 10, 2013 at the National Diet Library using their on-site digital collections. While undoubtedly the findings are not completely exhaustive, they do form a representative sample of widely distributed media; the search results included women's magazines such as *Fujyokai* and *Fujyo no tomo*, children's media such as *Shonen Sekai* and *Nihon no kodomo*, trade publications such as *Kōgyō no dainippon*, and academic publications such as the *Journal of Kokugakuin*.

<sup>283</sup> For a detailed account of the health conditions of the emperor and the subsequent rumors and newspaper proclamations see Hara Takeshi, *Taishō Tennō*, 16-21.

In order to fully understand the politics of concealment, it is necessary to recall that “practices of secrecy” have a long history in Japanese culture. In the pre-modern period, rulers were not widely seen by their subjects, and the Imperial Family was traditionally cloistered away in Kyoto, out of the public eye. In both Shinto and Buddhism, as well as in use by the shoguns, secrecy and practices of concealment and discretion were used to enhance authority. Many scholars, foremost being Takashi Fujitani, have studied how the Meiji rulers and bureaucrats changed the public’s expectations of the visibility of rulers, and used visual culture as a means of exerting and exhibiting power. Yet, it is important to recall that the shoguns surrendered their system of rule only forty-four years before the Taishō period, and therefore only fifty-two years before Crown Prince Hirohito took over as regent. Furthermore, the systematic use of pageantry and visual culture to promote the Meiji imperial agenda was not established until the 1880s, and did not fully take root until the time of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5, merely five years before the start of the Taishō period.

The concept of the “iconography of absence,” as conceived by Timon Screech, is one in which secrecy leads to mystery and a sense of awe and respect.<sup>284</sup> In his study of the visual culture of the Japanese ruling classes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Screech details the way in which the shoguns were hidden from the view of their subjects and states:

This could seem an extraordinary abdication of the power of visual display. The pomp on which Western or Islamic kings relied to curry loyalty was simply not attempted. Yet shogun, daimyo, and shujo all deployed images of rule that were unshakable, only they were not predicated on *revelation*. They were the opposite: elites occluded themselves with an iconography of *absence*.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Timon Screech, *Shogun’s Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States, 1760-1829* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 112-118.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 112. Screech also discusses these ideas in: Timon Screech, “Shōgun no zuzō o utsusu,” [Reproducing the Icon of the Shōgun] trans. Takayama Hiroshi, in *Edo no kirikuchi* [Perspectives on Edo], ed. Takayama Hiroshi (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1994), 259-273.

The “iconography of absence” is useful for understanding the politics of concealment in the Taishō period as it provides historic precedent for the use of symbols other than the personage of the ruler to express power and leadership to the masses. In addition to Screech’s argument that the veiling of shogunal grandeur led to an aesthetic culture that valued the restraint of luxury, historian Anne Walthall argues that it was through strategies of obscurement paired with calculated use of palace ritual and ceremony, visible by only select groups, that the shoguns created an aura of control and power.<sup>286</sup>

Although pairing the contradictory terms iconography, defined by visible characteristics, and absence, defined by a lack of visibility, may seem like an oxymoron, in the context of the reticent Emperor Taishō and the maintenance of imperial power vis-à-vis mass media imagery in the regency period, the concept of the iconography of absence is a useful one. While Japan experienced vast cultural, technological, and political changes in the course of over a half-century of Meiji rule, the cultural memory of the Edo period and the shogunal system was still present, if not powerful, in the Taishō period.<sup>287</sup> The idea of Edo as the source of Japanese tradition was popular and widespread in the early twentieth century, both in popular culture, as argued by Carol Gluck, and with the conceptualization of the role of the Imperial Family, as argued by Itō Kimio.<sup>288</sup> Although the practice of imperial concealment in the Edo and Taishō periods was undertaken for differing reasons, and was different in practice, both Gluck and Itō provide evidence that with the invention of Japanese tradition in the 1910s and 1920s, ideas of

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<sup>286</sup> Anne Walthall, “Hiding the Shoguns,” in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion* ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 331-356.

<sup>287</sup> In fact, the idea of Edo as a space of cultural tradition was widely promoted in the mass media of the 1920s, creating dichotomies of Western/modern and Japanese/traditional. For further discussion see: Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 262-284.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 272. Itō Kimio, “The Invention of Wa and the Transformation of the Image of Prince Shōtoku in Modern Japan,” in *Mirror of Modernity*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 45.

Edo, be they historically accurate or creations of the contemporary age, were decidedly part of Taishō philosophies. Surely the “iconography of absence” that was formulated by the shoguns over hundreds of years of rule was still resonant in the early twentieth century—the Imperial Palace was in the Taishō period, and remains to this day, cloaked in secrecy, and the rituals and daily lives of the Imperial Family were, and still are, hidden from public view.<sup>289</sup>

Despite this invisibility, the public in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was somewhat cognizant of palace ritual through brief textual reports in the newspapers. This is not to mention the continuing culture of concealment that exists in the Japanese religious traditions of Shinto and Buddhism, wherein there is also an awareness, but not a knowledge, of ritual. In this light, Taishō’s reticence was a return to previous methods of rule—concealed, hidden, and absent. By conducting rituals and ceremonies in private, or in the company of small, select groups of people behind the palace walls, the Emperor, and by extension the Imperial Household Agency, was asserting his position at the pinnacle of the Shinto system, a system in which secrecy is used to demonstrate power.<sup>290</sup> Thus, by means of strategies of concealment, combined with the public appearances of other members of the Imperial Family, Emperor Taishō maintained elements of imperial legitimacy, power, and control.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> For further detail on the various ceremonies and rituals used by the shoguns to consolidate and maintain political power see: Anne Walthall, “Hiding the Shoguns,” 331-356.

<sup>290</sup> Kadoya Asushi discusses the Three Sacred Regalia of Shinto (三種神器, *sanshu no jingi*, or the sword, mirror, and jewel), never seen by the public, as a means of legitimizing the emperor’s sovereign power. See: Kadoya Atsushi, “Myths, Rites, and Icons: Three Views of a Secret,” in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*, ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 269-283.

<sup>291</sup> There are some contemporary scholars who argue for secrecy as a method of suppression in the study of the female members of the Imperial Household. Yet I believe that a long-view historic perspective contradicts that argument. It must be remembered that the public personas performed by Emperor Meiji and Emperor Hirohito were exceptions to the rule—the Imperial Family has never had an uncensored public stage, and was cloistered more often than not throughout the course of their existence. For the argument of secrecy as suppression see: *Elisheva A. Perelman*, “The Japanese Way of Silence and Seclusion: Memes of Imperial Women,” *Asia-Pacific Journal*, 12:41 (2014), n.p.

However, this historical use of the iconography of absence to establish power does not alone explain the increased visual presence of Empress Teimei in the 1920s. To better understand the use of the Empress' image as proxy during the period of the Emperor's concealment, it is necessary to reiterate the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the modern imperial image in the Meiji period, as was discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation. The creation of the imperial image in the modern era is well documented by a variety of scholars, including Takashi Fujitani and Kawamura Kunimitsu, who detail and analyze the various methods and means by which the modern imperial institution was formed. In his book *Tennō no shōzō* (天皇の肖像, The Portrait of the Emperor), Taki Kōji traces the evolution of the imperial image from the years immediately following the Meiji Restoration, arguing that the consciousness of the emperor and his role in mid-nineteenth century society varied greatly by gender and class.<sup>292</sup> He continues by detailing the importance of the public image of the emperor in the nineteenth century—an image which formed the basis of the visual culture of the modern Imperial Family, the customs of which continued into the twentieth century.<sup>293</sup> The arguments of Fujitani and Kawamura, as well as that of Hara Takeshi, establish the visual prominence of the modern Imperial Family, and the role of imperial visual culture as a crucial component in the maintenance of *kokutai* as a concept that was formed and realized in the late nineteenth century.

As seen in the previous paragraphs, the reticence of Emperor Taishō was a return to the older iconography of absence. The visual culture of the modern Imperial Family, as established during the Meiji period, was an integral component of the imperial presence as rulers of the nation; yet, in the regency period the newly absent Emperor necessitated the use of alternative imperial symbols. In other words, an invisible emperor without supporting figures from the

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<sup>292</sup> Taki Kōji, *Tennō no shōzō* [Portraits of the Emperor] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 5.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-8.

Imperial Family was simply too great of a risk; by 1920 the citizenry was accustomed to imperial imagery, and imagery was crucial in justifying and maintaining imperial rule. This use of alternative imperial symbols led to flexibility in the public image of the Imperial Family, which was justified by both the iconography of absence, and by theories of imperial rule, which will be examined in the next section of this chapter.

The work of Fujitani, Kawamura, Taki, and Hara provides a fundamental understanding of the imperial institution in the late Meiji and early Taishō periods, yet as indicated earlier in this chapter with analysis of images of Empress Teimei which appeared in the *Asahi Shinbun*, this strong national institution underwent dramatic changes in the Taishō period. The politics of concealment that surrounded Emperor Taishō in the 1920s are important for analyzing the visual representations of the Imperial Family, yet this was not the only component of Taishō politics that impacted the construction and use of the imperial image in the regency era. The philosophical and theoretical concepts surrounding the role and position of Imperial Family in society, as conjectured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are an additional element that requires examination for reading the visual representations of Empress Teimei and Emperor Taishō in the early twentieth century.

#### Dualities of Gender and Rule: The Female Imperial Symbol in the 1920s

Throughout the course of history, the Imperial Family took on a wide variety of meanings in Japanese culture. At times the symbolism associated with the Family worked in the service of the shogunate or the state, wherein the support of Imperial Family for larger systems of governance was used as a justification for power; at other times imperial symbolism worked to provide the Imperial Family with a rationale for direct rule. By investigating the political and philosophical milieu surrounding the Imperial Family in the Taishō period, this section will examine how the

use of the image of Empress Teimei as an imperial proxy in the 1920s was possible, and how the publically expressed gender roles of the imperial family changed as a result.

During most of the Meiji period, particularly in the years after 1885, the Imperial Family and the imperial institution were stable figures in Japanese society.<sup>294</sup> Yet, during the final three years of the Meiji period and into the Taishō period, the court struggled to evolve with the times and to maintain holy inviolability in the face of revolution in Europe and domestic political unrest. To this end, in the face of instability, the surrogate role of Empress Teimei and the flexibility of the Imperial Family as national symbols in the 1910s and 1920s is logical. By modifying the image of the Imperial Family, the Imperial Household Agency, together with their allies in the press, attempted to respond to political instabilities both internationally and domestically, as well as to counter any anxieties regarding Emperor Taishō's health issues. In doing so, these institutions used the image of Empress Teimei as a representative for the Imperial Household. In the absence of Emperor Taishō from public view, and in the days when Crown Prince Hirohito was still viewed as young and inexperienced, Empress Teimei proved to be a commonsense choice as a representative of the Imperial Family.

However, just as the emperors held contradictory positions, Teimei can also be considered as a paradoxical symbol. She was an individual and a woman holding a prominent and unprecedented position in the predominantly masculine modern imperial institution, but she was also a representative of the timeless imperial idea, and a public face for the lengthy, unbroken lineage of the Imperial Family. The *Asahi Shinbun* image set reviewed in the first section of this chapter provides visual evidence for Empress Teimei's role as an imperial proxy, particularly in the photograph of her on the deck of the Navy cruiser Tenryū. In the Tenryū photograph, and the

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<sup>294</sup> David Ansun Titus, *Palace and Politics in Prewar Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 111-129.

1922 Kansai tour images, as well as the Imperial Exhibition photograph, Empress Teimei performed roles with masculine connotations: these were actions previously performed by either the male members of the Imperial Household alone, or with the empress as accompaniment. In the case of the Tenryū, she was closely associated with the military. In contrast, the modern empress in the recent past was only visually linked with the military in the context of visiting wounded soldiers, pictured as a caretaker in a maternal and feminine role similar to that of a bedside nurse.<sup>295</sup> In the Kansai tour images, Teimei was seen as independently undertaking tasks that the emperors previously executed, thus connecting her with the traditions of the male members of the Imperial Household. Finally, in the Imperial Exhibition photograph, her solo appearance, combined with her assertive stance and the deep, respectful bow of the citizen onlookers lend an air of authority to the Empress, and also provides a masculine connotation.

Yet, while the above examples show how the imperial symbol had the potential for flexibility in gender roles, this is not to say that Empress Teimei, or any of the members of the Imperial Family had completely protean identities. Throughout the course of her life, Empress Teimei may have performed roles with masculine connotations, yet she maintained a conventionally feminine look, appearing before the public in the latest European fashions, which were often described in the textual articles that accompanied the newspaper photographs of her, and generally positioned with demure hand gestures. This femininity will be covered further in Chapter Four of this dissertation. While Teimei's particular circumstances, personality, and historical position gave her some flexibility, her gendered appearance never courted controversy or pushed the boundaries of acceptability too far.

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<sup>295</sup> For example in the painting, *Patroness of the Tokyo Charity Hospital* (東京慈恵医院行啓, *Tokyo jikei iin gyōkei*), 1928, Mitsutani Kunishirō (満谷国四郎, 1874-1936), housed at the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery.

At this point, in order to further understand how Empress Teimei was able to act as an imperial proxy within the constraints of imperial propriety, it is useful to examine the various religious and state philosophies which required, and continue to require, that the Imperial Family maintain relatively orthodox gender roles. The contradictory nature of the imperial image had its roots in the philosophies of the Meiji period, yet grew ever more incongruous in the atmosphere of political disarray that characterized the Taishō period. As addressed in the Introduction, Takashi Fujitani's seminal book, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, establishes the concepts of the masculine imperial gaze, as well as arguing for a nuanced understanding of the work of philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu in the context of the late nineteenth-century Japanese monarchy.<sup>296</sup> Fujitani's application of Foucault's theories of the panopticon, the disciplinary regime of power, and the culture of surveillance are comprehensible in the context of the gaze of the Meiji Emperor, who was a strong, military-oriented, charismatic, and highly masculine figure. Emperor Meiji's public image was one of staunch discipline met with a piercing gaze. He always appeared in public in military costume, and his paternalistic gaze was one of strength and authority.<sup>297</sup> Yet, as previously stated, imperial politics underwent dramatic changes amidst the circumstances of instability in the Taishō period, leaving a power void at the top when Emperor Taishō left public view after 1920.<sup>298</sup> How can late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories of imperial structure and rule be applied to

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<sup>296</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For a discussion of Foucault and Bourdieu see pages 102-103, and 138-143.

<sup>297</sup> Emperor Taishō also appeared in military costume in public appearances, but to different effect. Also, Emperor Meiji's gaze was not only seen in portraiture, but also in landscape photographs taken from his viewpoint, literally recreating the scene before his eyes. See: Ozawa Asae, *Meiji no kōshitsu kenchiku: kokka ga motometa "wafū" zō* and Gyewon Kim, "Tracing the Emperor: Photography, Famous Places, and the Imperial Progresses in Prewar Japan."

<sup>298</sup> Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 141-143. For further discussion of the disciplinary regime of power see: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans., Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977), 193.

the use of Empress Teimei as an Imperial proxy? And, what understanding can be reached regarding the imperial gaze in the context of photographs of a female imperial symbol?

Inquiring into the fluctuating status of the Imperial Family illuminates how the adjustments of the regency period allowed for Empress Teimei to act as an imperial proxy. David Titus describes the court structure in the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa periods by stating that “the palace bureaucracy, both its outer and inner sides, was to see that the emperor as a person was made invisible. Only the emperor as a social paragon, as an ideal, was to be visible.”<sup>299</sup>

However, in the regency years, the bureaucratic objective of establishing the monarch as a social ideal and not an individual was faced with a serious quandary. In the midst of public updates on his health status the Emperor could not be invisible to the populace as a personage; on the contrary his illness highlighted the frail nature of his humanity. Thus, Emperor Taishō’s illness and the subsequent flow of information to the people regarding the details of his health meant that the citizenry could not ignore that there was a human being at the apex of the Imperial Household, one who was facing illness in the same mundane and mortal fashion as his subjects. It was in the midst of this predicament that Empress Teimei came to the fore as a stand-in for the Emperor during public appearances.

Although it was unusual for a female member of the Imperial Household to take on an independent, somewhat masculine public role, the potential for an empress to act as an imperial proxy was made possible by various imperial philosophies and theories of the late Meiji and early Taishō period. Scholar, journalist, and politician Suematsu Kenchō (末松 謙澄, 1855-1920) and ethnologist and literary theorist Origuchi Shinobu (折口 信夫, 1872-1953) provided two important voices among many whose writings on Japanese society and culture included notions

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<sup>299</sup> Titus, *Palace and Politics in Prewar Japan*, 54.

of duality in imperial rule.<sup>300</sup> Suematsu, who spent three years studying law at Cambridge University, wrote about the English theory of the king's two bodies as a means to conceptualize the Japanese monarchy in the late nineteenth century.<sup>301</sup> He states:

The king is said to be one who never dies.... This does not mean that the life of the king is in reality undying but that when the sovereign dies his power and majesty as king are immediately conveyed to the royal heir. Because it is deemed that not a moment intervenes, it is said that while there is a replacement of the old king's physical body (*shintai*) by the new, it is as if there has never been a change in the king's spirit (*seishin*).<sup>302</sup>

As this was part of a report to the Imperial Household Agency which Suematsu completed while posted in London as part of the official Japanese diplomatic mission, one can be sure that those who were formulating and constructing the concepts of the modern Imperial structure were aware of the theory of the king's two bodies as interpreted by Suematsu.<sup>303</sup> In the context of the regency, this would allow for the *seishin* (精神), or the king's spirit, to continue on, unbroken in lineage and unaffected by the illness that Emperor Taishō was experiencing in his physical body, or *shintai* (身体). In practical terms, the concept of the king's two bodies allowed for the invisibility of Emperor Taishō—his power lay in the unseen *seishin*, or spirit, rather than in the

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<sup>300</sup> For additional biographical information on Suematsu Kenchō in English see: Ian Ruckston, "Suematsu Kenchō, 1855-1920: Statesman, Bureaucrat, Diplomat, Journalist, Poet and Scholar" Ch. 6 in Hugh Cortazzi, *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits V.5* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2005), e-book, n.p. For a biography of Origuchi Shinobu see: Nakazawa Shin'ichi 2008 *Kodai kara kuta miraijin: Origuchi Shinobu* [From Ancient Times came a Man of the Future: Origuchi Shinobu] (Tokyo: Chikuma Primer Shinsho, 2008). Although no biography of Origuchi Shinobu exists in English, the following article introduces his philosophies and background: Alfonso Falero, "Origuchi Shinobu's *Marebitoron* in Global Perspective: A Preliminary Study" in *Classical Japanese Philosophy*, eds. J.W. Heisig and R. Raud, *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy 7* (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2010), 274-304.

<sup>301</sup> For further information on Suematsu's formative years studying in Britain, see: Noboru Koyama, *Japanese Students at Cambridge University in the Meiji Era, 1868-1912: Pioneers for the Modernization of Japan*, trans. Ian Ruxton (Raleigh, North Carolina: Lulu, 2004). Suematsu's writings while he was studying at Cambridge were created as reports to the Imperial Household Minister. See: Suematsu Kenchō, "Eikoku teishitsu shorei kansatsu hōkoku," [Report on observations of the British Royal Family] no. 1, 1881, Shoryōbu, Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo.

<sup>302</sup> Suematsu, "Eikoku teishitsu shorei kansatsu hōkoku" as translated and published in Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 155-156.

<sup>303</sup> For more on the European conceptualization of the duality of the monarchs, see: Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

mortal *shintai* form. Decades later, a similar argument was put forth by Origuchi Shinobu, who postulated that the imperial body was merely a receptacle, or *iremono* (入れ物), which housed the *tennōrei* (天皇靈), or Imperial spirit.<sup>304</sup> Within this theoretical context, because the corporeal body was merely a physical placeholder, or signifier of the more vital, timeless spirit, the visibility of the Emperor's body in front of the citizenry was not necessary for maintaining the imperial narrative. As such, these theories of the dual imperial body were crucial for positioning Empress Teimei as an imperial proxy, for without them the imperial institution would have faced a grave crisis in the regency era.

The concept of the king's two bodies and its application for the Japanese imperial institution is further discussed by Takashi Fujitani, who argues against using the concept of the king's two bodies to support a universal theory of kingship by presenting evidence that there are significant differences between European monarchical systems and the Japanese Imperial Family. Despite this, he acknowledges the importance of the various Japanese imperial philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Suematsu and Origuchi, for their contribution to the conception of the modern Japanese monarchy stating that they were writing, "as if European and Japanese ideas about kingship were similar, and in so doing participated in the construction of the modern emperor's dualism."<sup>305</sup> Fujitani also goes on to detail the specific way in which the concept of imperial dualism was used in the late Meiji period; on the one hand the Emperor's sacred qualities allowed him to act as an important, unifying, and divine symbol, yet his humanity kept him as a figure central to the citizenry and the lives of his subjects. A delicate balance was required, the emperor had to maintain an element of being "above the clouds," mysterious and mystical, yet he could not be so far removed from

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<sup>304</sup> Origuchi Shinobu, "Daijōsai no hongī" (1928), collected in *Origuchi Shinobu zenshū* [The Complete Works of Origuchi Shinobu] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1966) 3:174-240.

<sup>305</sup> Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 158.

the people so as to lose relevance.<sup>306</sup> Although a duality might be a tidy way of fashioning the theories of imperial power, it is an overly simplistic one, and does not tell the full story. It was the role of Empress Teimei that complicated this narrative—Taishō as Emperor may have been seen in the context of the king’s two bodies, allowing his ill physical body to be irrelevant in light of his immortal spiritual body, but Teimei provides a third, complicating presence. It is her public role, as a strong female leader, as a placeholder for the Emperor, as the public face of the Imperial Family, which worked to maintain imperial power and legitimacy in the regency period.

Near the end of his reign, Emperor Meiji retreated from constant public view, and in the years after the Promulgation of the Constitution in 1889, his outings from the Palace decreased dramatically.<sup>307</sup> Yet, his public presence was maintained through images, news stories, and by participating in major public ceremonial events such as the imperial wedding of 1900, as well as processions marking major civic anniversaries, holidays, and military and cultural events.<sup>308</sup> This retreat from public view by Emperor Meiji provided a precedent for Emperor Taishō’s seclusion in the years after 1920. Furthermore, Empress Teimei and the other members of the Imperial Household provided an important human element to the Emperor. The empress and the children of the emperor were a sign of the conjugal relations of the emperor, and thus a reminder of his humanity. The Empress and imperial children therefore assisted in connecting the Emperor to his people; in the regency years, then, we can understand the imperial institution as one wherein Emperor Taishō was acting as the timeless imperial ideal inside the Palace walls, while Teimei appeared in public and provided the citizenry with a connection to the monarchy. Her gaze

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 160-161. See also, Marius Jansen, “Monarchy and Modernization in Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36 (August 1977): 611-622.

<sup>307</sup> David Titus details the Imperial excursions from 1868 to 1910, both within and outside of Tokyo, dividing them by purpose. The height of Imperial excursions was in 1880, with 163, most of which were in Tokyo. After 1890, which saw forty-seven excursions, Emperor Meiji averaged sixteen excursions per year from 1891-1910, with as low as four tours in the year 1897. Titus, *Palace and Politics in Prewar Japan*, 48.

<sup>308</sup> See Ibid., 48-49 for a more detailed list of the purposes of Imperial excursions.

channeled the masculine imperial ideal, as seen in the Tenryū, Kansai tour, and Imperial Exhibition images, but her body remained feminine, thus adding another layer of duality to the Taishō imperial narrative.

One final point here: as Crown Prince Hirohito was the most visible male imperial figure in the regency era, it is important to mention his role in visual culture after 1920. Hirohito did make many media appearances, and was very popular with the citizens, yet he was quite young when he took over as regent, being only twenty years old. Hirohito was unmarried, and did not possess the traits of a mature leader in 1920. He spent much of the regency period traveling, both domestically and internationally, and was wed in 1924. Thus, while Hirohito was an important component of the visual representation of the Imperial Family between 1920 and 1926, he had not yet received the *daijosai*, or rites which would eventually make him Emperor, and did not yet have the deportment and presence required of the central imperial figure. In the case of unforeseen events, the succession of the imperial line could have gone to another of Emperor Taishō's sons, making an investment in Hirohito as an imperial proxy an imprudent choice during the regency period.

It is equally important to note that the use of a woman as an imperial representative was not limited to Empress Teimei in the 1920s. As will be addressed in the next chapter, the rise of Teimei as an imperial figure coincided with dramatic changes in women's status in society. These transformations in the image of women were not limited to contemporary women or the secular sphere, but were also projected back into an imagined Japanese history. In the imperial milieu, the semi-legendary Empress Jingū, who ruled in the third century, enjoyed a renaissance in popularity in the late Meiji and Taishō periods. She was added to banknotes in the early twentieth century, and was an important figure in newly created narrative histories of Japan, and

as such, her image was well known amongst the populace.<sup>309</sup> Jingū ruled Japan for nearly seventy years, and may be the same figure as Queen Himiko, a strong shaman queen who is documented in Chinese records of Japan in the second century.<sup>310</sup> Jingū was an imperial consort and shaman, who conveyed the desires of the gods to the emperor; his subsequent dismissal of the gods' desires led to his untimely death.<sup>311</sup> After the death of the emperor, Jingū ruled Japan in her own right—her exploits are documented in the legendary text of the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, The Chronicles of Japan), wherein she conquered the three kingdoms of Korea, delayed the birth of her baby by placing a stone in her groin, quelled domestic rebellions, and wore masculine attire.<sup>312</sup> Jingū's narrative provides a model of a strong female leader; the rise of her popularity in the Taishō period, as coinciding with the rise in Empress Teimei's political and visual power should not be overlooked.<sup>313</sup> In the late Taishō period, there was even a popular movement to include Empress Jingū in the official lineage of emperors, proving that there was a certain openness towards women being included in the imperial line, one which paralleled Teimei's increased visibility in the years after the regency of Crown Prince Hirohito.<sup>314</sup>

Although in the Meiji period the establishment of the imperial presence as a highly visible, ritualized male gaze was strong, in the Taishō period, the flexibility of the imperial

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<sup>309</sup> Melanie Trede, "Banknote Design as a Battlefield of Gender Politics and National Representation in Meiji Japan," in *Performing "Nation": Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880–1940*, ed. Doris Croissant, Catherine Vance Yeh, and Joshua Mostow (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 55-104.

<sup>310</sup> The full text of the *Wei zhi*, or history of the Wei Dynasty, attributes societal order to the female ruler Himiko, who "occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people." See: Ryusaku Tsunoda and L.C. Goodrich, eds., *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (Pasadena: P.D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), 13-16.

<sup>311</sup> Ben-Ami Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors: Sacred Subservience in Japanese History* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2005), 36.

<sup>312</sup> *Nihon shoki* [Chronicles of Japan] trans. Hideo Yamada (Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1979).

<sup>313</sup> The increased interest in popular female figures was part of a larger trend of nostalgia. This trend was discussed earlier in reference to the use of the Edo period as a source of traditional Japanese culture, and can also be seen in the rise of the *shin-hanga* (新版画, new prints) movement. *Shin-hanga* were a revival of earlier models of *ukiyo-e* print traditions, and often featured nostalgic landscapes or images of beautiful women. For more on nostalgia and Edo in the 1920s see Gluck, "The Invention of Edo," and Itō, "The Invention of Wa."

<sup>314</sup> "Jingū kōgō o dai 15dai on-rekidai ni kuwae" [Summing up Fifteen Generations of Historical Empresses], *Yomiuri Shinbun*, May 30, 1924.

symbol was necessitated by the regency era. The various theories of the king's two bodies, as arising from philosophical writings of the day, allowed for Empress Teimei to act in a surrogate imperial role. Taishō, and the emperor as institution, maintained power vis-à-vis his concealed status, while Teimei acted as a visual place holder, or an imperial vessel, channeling the imperial gaze and acting as a visual reminder of the Imperial Household in the mass media, but without threatening the traditional gendered imperial order. This role as imperial proxy allowed her to maintain her status as an elevated cultural symbol, as a paragon of femininity and female decorum, yet did not diminish her husband's role as the absolute center of imperial power.

Simultaneous with concerns of maintaining the male axis of imperial authority, those at the Imperial Household Agency who were in control of the imperial image and structure would have been apprehensive about the stability of the monarchy in light of global events. Concurrent with the Taishō period was the fall of the Russian Tsar in 1917, the abdication of Prussian King Wilhelm II in 1918 and the deposition of Austrian Hapsburg ruler Charles I in the same year, and the complex loss of power and agency that Puyi, the last Emperor of China, underwent in the years after 1912.<sup>315</sup> These lessons from abroad, combined with the tumultuous domestic political landscape discussed in Chapter One, and concerns over changes in women's societal roles as will be discussed in Chapter Four, furthered the need for a strong imperial presence, so as to maintain imperial stability in the face of various external pressures.

All of these facets came together in the image of Empress Teimei during the Regency period. As shown by the visual evidence presented in the beginning of this chapter, Empress Teimei fulfilled a new role in the years after 1920. She was a visible and well-known imperial symbol; in the years between the imperial wedding of 1900 and the end of the Meiji period in

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<sup>315</sup> Puyi's case is particularly interesting, as he ruled from 1908 to 1912, was restored as a figurehead by a warlord briefly in 1917, and was placed back on the throne by the Japanese as the Emperor of Manchuria during the 1930s and 1940s.

1912, the familiar faces of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken were used together with Crown Prince Taishō and Crown Princess Teimei to allow the public to grow accustomed to the new monarchs. The use of Empress Teimei's image as an imperial proxy during the regency years can be understood as the application of a similar tactic in maintaining imperial stability; Teimei was familiar and established, and by placing her image at the fore, the public had time to grow accustomed to Crown Prince Hirohito after 1920, and to Crown Princess Nagako after the imperial wedding of 1924. By balancing her role as imperial proxy, as investigated in this chapter, and her role as Empress, as investigated in Chapter Two, Empress Teimei was able to break into the masculine field, yet still be conventionally feminine. She was represented as a political symbol in her appearances on imperial tours and in the context of the military photograph on the deck of the Tenryū, yet she maintained her motherly and nurturing role when visiting victims of the 1923 earthquake, as will be discussed in the following chapter. As a female figure, she could not be purely masculine, yet the politics of the regency necessitated her moving beyond the confines of a female role as was established in the late nineteenth century. Global and domestic concerns over maintaining monarchical power, combined with the theory of the king's two bodies and the conditions of the regency period, as well as Teimei's distinct public personality provided a situation in which Empress Teimei could act in a role outside of the strict masculinity and femininity established by her predecessors in imperial rule. It was this new space in which the Empress' role as the imperial proxy was formed.

### Conclusions

This chapter investigated the strategies of concealment surrounding Emperor Taishō, and the subsequent rise in the use of the image of Empress Teimei as an alternate imperial symbol. Photographs of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei from the *Asahi Shinbun* indicate that as

Taishō's image faded in the regency period after 1920, Teimei's image came to the fore, and was used as an imperial proxy. Duality of the imperial body, as well as the practices of the past, formed the philosophical and theoretical milieu in which Teimei's image as an alternative imperial symbol was produced.

Thus, while Taishō's concealed image had precedent in history, and was justified by imperial rescripts and ties to religious beliefs, it was Teimei's appearance and image that was truly something new. While female rulers were not unheard of throughout Japanese history, and Empress Shōken took a public role in the Meiji period, Teimei's strong and independent visual presence was markedly different than that of her predecessor. Her appearance acted as a surrogate for her husband's in his absence, something that can be attributed to not just ideas of the dualistic imperial body, but also to her personal character and the changing cultural norms regarding women and appropriate feminine behaviors, which is the topic of the following chapter.

Although the axis of imperial power remained in the hands of the male members of the Imperial Household, this chapter has traced in Teimei's image a change, and one with possible implications for the future lineage of the Imperial Household. As debates swirl around the succession of the Chrysanthemum Throne in the twenty-first century, Teimei stands historically as an example of a strong female imperial presence in an age of regency, one wherein she pushed the acceptable limits for what was appropriate and acceptable for an empress, and one where she reflected the changing culture that surrounded her and her family.

## Chapter Four: The Maternal Monarch: Gender Politics, Women's Magazines, and the Empress

### Image in the Taishō Period

“This [the woman problem] is an issue that was bound to come up sooner or later, and since the trend for such a movement is already under way, it is impossible to continue to use the old-fashioned policies of suppression and restraint.”  
- Yuhara Motoichi, 1913<sup>316</sup>

When these words were written by prominent Japanese educator Yuhara Motoichi (湯原元一, 1863-1931), the Taishō monarchy had only been in place for two years. In his statement, Yuhara, who was a leader in the field of women's higher education, predicted the political trend towards greater freedoms and visibilities for women. Yet, the tumult that he observes—specifically that the transition towards women's expanded societal roles would not be an easy one—was to be a significant issue during the reign of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei, and by extension a major topic of Japanese political and social thought in the 1910s and 1920s. The woman problem that Yuhara concerns himself with, which encompassed the concerns held by the patriarchal establishment that women were gaining too much power, was not the only facet of gender relations that was fluctuating in the Taishō period. Homemakers and mothers also saw shifting expectations in their roles and responsibilities. These varied issues surrounding women were reflected in the roles Empress Teimei played in the first decades of the twentieth century.

This chapter will use a set of images as published in the women's magazine *Fujin Gahō* (婦人画報) between 1905 and 1926 to investigate how Empress Teimei was represented in Taishō

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<sup>316</sup> This statement from Yuhara Mtoichi (1863-1931) on the “woman problem” (婦人問題, *fujin mondai*) was published in “Kaiseika no kōkyū o yōsuru dai-mondai” [Great Problems Requiring Study by Statesmen], *Taiyō* [The Sun], 1913. Yuhara later went on to become the head of the Tokyo Women's Higher Normal School, the precursor to Ochanomizu University. Cited in: Koyama Shizuko, “Domestic Roles and the Incorporation of Women into the Nation-State: The Emergence and Development of the ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ Ideology,” trans. Vera Mackie, in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr (London: Routledge, 2014), 85-100, 92.

period women's magazines. The years after the First World War were ones of great societal change, and variations in acceptable gender roles were simultaneously undergoing modification. Government officials were concerned about contradictory notions of women: on the one hand there was worry over the "woman problem" and women growing too liberal and free-thinking in their mores, yet on the other hand military officials fretted about housewives being too insular, and not having the skills and preparedness as individuals and family leaders to ready their sons and the home front for military activity. These contradictory impulses resulted in the promotion of a specific version of the *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother) ideology in the early 1920s, which was reflected in the image of Empress Teimei as published in *Fujin Gahō*.<sup>317</sup>

The *ryōsai kenbo*, or "good wife, wise mother" (良妻賢母), was a theory of womanhood which had its roots in the late nineteenth century, and as a state ideology it continued through the mid-twentieth century. The concept was made manifest in school textbooks and government policies, and trickled down to influence everyday familial gender dynamics. The principles of *ryōsai kenbo* promoted the idea that women should be broadly educated so as to be supporters to their children and husbands, and to provide a strong societal foundation vis-à-vis their role as homemakers and home economists, thus positioning women as supporters of national aims within the framework of the home and community.<sup>318</sup> This chapter explores how the image of Empress Teimei in women's magazines represented nuanced changes in 1920s gender politics, and how the Taishō version of the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology was reflected in photographs of the Empress. For example, the *Fujin Gahō* photographs featuring Empress Teimei focused on

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<sup>317</sup> The phrase *ryōsai kenbo* was first coined in 1875 by the educator Nakamura Masano in the *Meiji Six Journal*. Sharon Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 22.

<sup>318</sup> The concept of *ryōsai kenbo* was created in opposition to earlier Tokugawa models of women in society, wherein they were to be subservient to their husbands, and wherein education for women was not considered necessary. See Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow, "The Japanese Ideology of 'Good Wives and Wise Mothers': Trends in Contemporary Research," *Gender and History* 3 (1991): 345-349.

feminine concerns—images such as *Kōgō heika shōhi tenrankai e gyōkei* (皇后陛下商品展覧会へ行啓, Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Household Economy Exhibition at Ochanomizu) of January 1, 1923, wherein the Empress visits an exhibition relevant to homemakers; *Kōgōheika shikangakkō e gyōkei* (皇后陛下士官学校へ行啓, Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Military Academy) of July 1, 1922, where readers observed the Empress as she visited her son’s military training academy; or *Kōgōheika risai byōji ni okotoba o tamafu* of November 1, 1923 (皇后陛下罹災病児にお言葉を賜ふ, Her Majesty the Empress Expresses her Condolences to the Suffering Children), which shows Teimei visiting with young victims of the horrific Great Kantō Earthquake, all show a motherly version of the Empress.<sup>319</sup> This rendering of Teimei differed from the images commonly published in other media such as newspapers or commemorative prints in that it focused on distinctly feminine tasks, and exhibited the Empress as a role model for the upper and upper-middle class woman to a greater extent than other media.

To accomplish an analysis of Empress Teimei and *ryōsai kenbo* values in the pages of *Fujin Gahō*, this chapter will first delve into a brief examination of gender politics in the Taishō period, with a specific focus on the “woman problem,” the roles of women in the expanding Japanese Empire, and the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology as it was used in the Taishō period. The chapter will then turn to a background history of women’s magazines in the Taishō period, followed by a survey of images of Empress Teimei as found in the pages of *Fujin Gahō*. This survey was conducted with a search through the digitized images as published in *Fujin Gahō* between 1905 and 1926, providing eighty-three pages of material, seventy-five pages of which contained visual

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<sup>319</sup> For images see: *Kōgō heika shōhi tenrankai e gyōkei* (Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Household Economy Exhibition at Ochanomizu), *Fujin Gahō*, January 1, 1923, page 13; *Kōgōheika shikangakkō e gyōkei* (Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Military Academy), *Fujin Gahō*, July 1, 1922, page 10; *Kōgōheika risai byōji ni okotoba o tamafu* (Her Majesty the Empress Expresses her Condolences to the Suffering Children), *Fujin Gahō*, November 1, 1923, page 6.

material, either photographs or drawings.<sup>320</sup> Among these seventy-five pages, forty pages of visual material relate to Empress Teimei, with twenty-seven photographs in which her visage is fully recognizable. Only five of these twenty-seven images are formal studio portraits, such as those examined in Chapter Two. The body of photographs shows the change in the visibility and nature of Teimei's activities throughout her reign, mirroring the growth in her public profile which was seen in newspaper images, as detailed in Chapter Three of this dissertation. Furthermore, a visual comparison and analysis of the image set as a whole shows how the expression of gender roles in visual culture changed in a period of less than twenty years. Finally, the conservative turn in Teimei's published appearance will be investigated, particularly as a maternal figure in the post-1923 earthquake context, and as a keeper of tradition in the final days of the Taishō period.

Gender Politics in the Taishō Period: The “Woman Problem,” the Role of Women in the Empire, and *ryōsai kenbo* Ideology

The start of the Taishō period was marked by the development of an advanced consumer culture in Japan, the expansion of which was linked to an increase in service sector jobs available to women in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>321</sup> New positions such as bus girls, train girls, department store girls, and elevator girls provided women with visible jobs that were linked to the modern, urban experience.<sup>322</sup> In addition to a visible role in the landscape of the city, these jobs also provided young women with an expendable income which they used at movie theatres, cafes, and on

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<sup>320</sup> The search term used was 皇后 (*kōgō*, empress). The remaining eight pages contained textual material on subjects such as the era of the Empress' upbringing, or poems written by the Empress.

<sup>321</sup> Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, “Introduction: Hiding in the light: from Oshin to Yoshimoto Banana,” in *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, eds. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 16.

<sup>322</sup> The English word “girl” was assigned to each of these jobs, most of which were filled by unmarried young women. Shimamori Michiko, *Kōkoku no naka no onnatachi* [Women in Advertising] (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1984), 54.

products specifically marketed to them via magazines, such as cosmetics, housewares, and clothing. This new culture is characterized by Barbara Sato as “a culture of the everyday, and it was labeled a women’s culture.”<sup>323</sup> The rise of women’s consumer culture, as well as the plurality of experiences that young women of the Taishō period had with this culture, is well documented in the historical literature, but bears repeating here.<sup>324</sup>

Much of the scholarship on 1910s and 1920s Japan focuses on Taishō Democracy, a phrase which sums up the liberal trends in politics, government, and social movements which characterized the years immediately after the First World War. Sleek graphic design, images of modern girls in knee-length European-style dresses, photographs of the bustle of urban life, and pictures of the new middleclass partaking in leisure activities are frequently used to illustrate the liberal societal mores of the late 1910s and early 1920s.<sup>325</sup> I argue that this portrays an oversimplified version of the complex historical era of Taishō. While some women were able to pursue new careers as bus girls and café waitresses, they lacked voting rights and other legal protections, such as the ability to file for divorce, afforded to the male citizenry. Their careers were limited, and the available positions were generally marked as jobs for young, unmarried women, with the expectation that marriage would bring their retreat from the working world. Furthermore, the latter half of the 1920s and into the 1930s was marked in Japan by the march towards war. The increase in conservatism which began in the late Taishō years and saw full fruition in the first two decades of the Shōwa period (1926-1989) was not precipitated by a major

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<sup>323</sup> Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 80.

<sup>324</sup> For a full picture of the mass urban culture of Taishō, specifically the development of consumer culture in Taishō, see: Takemura Tamio, *Taishō bunka teikoku no yūtopia: sekaishi no tenkanki to taishū shōshakai no keisei* [Taishō Culture, an Imperial Utopia: A Turn in World History and the Formation of Mass Consumer Society] (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2010). For more in English on mass culture in Taishō see: Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic, Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>325</sup> For visual examples see: Ajioka Chiaki, *Modern Boy, Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art, 1910-35* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1998).

change in the structure of government, but rather was part of a continuity, a slow slide, sometimes characterized as an inevitable reaction, from liberalism into conservatism.<sup>326</sup> The seeds for this conservative turn, which I will discuss further at the end of this chapter, were planted during the early 1920s.

Although women in Japan did not gain full suffrage until 1945, feminist movements which were politically active in lobbying for women's rights were established during the late nineteenth century, and were active in the early 1920s. Much of the activity of these groups was in response to the redefining of acceptable gender roles for women in the early twentieth century. Termed the "woman problem," the debate over women's position in society and family extended to government, schools, and the media.<sup>327</sup> While the debate was at first dominated and directed by male voices, beginning in the 1910s the group Seitōsha (青鞮社, Bluestocking Society), an organization of educated, upper-middle-class women came together in Tokyo, creating the journal *Seitō* as their platform, and impacting the debate over the woman problem and the resulting "new woman" figure which emerged from the discourse.<sup>328</sup> The women of Seitōsha presented a challenge to the existing patriarchal ideal of women. Despite still being legally barred from attending political meetings, and lacking individual rights to hold property or file for divorce within the codified legal system, conditions for women slowly began to transform throughout the Taishō era. While the Meiji systems of limited rights for women remained, as Dina Lowy states, some male writers "gradually transformed the intellectual discourse from an emphasis on self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation to the recognition of self and concern with

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<sup>326</sup> For a full discussion see: Kato Shūichi, "Taishō Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism," in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, ed. Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 217-236.

<sup>327</sup> Dina Lowy, *The Japanese "New Woman" Images of Gender and Modernity* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 1-2.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

private interest.”<sup>329</sup> This changed intellectual environment allowed for a discussion of the issues promoted by the women of Seitōsha, even if this discussion was necessarily conservative due to the disapproval it aroused in many in bureaucratic circles. As a result of the relatively liberal environment in the early 1920s, the conception of the *ryōsai kenbo* was influenced by the new woman, and by the desires for a more politically active voice, suffrage, and expanded rights for women which accompanied her presence.

Another figure which impacted the evolution of the *ryōsai kenbo* in the Taishō era was the *moga*. In April 1923, the term *modan gāru*, (モダンガール, modern girl, *moga*) was first coined in the press, by journalist Nii Itaru, writing on the “Contours of the Modern Girl.”<sup>330</sup> The use of the term was to grow dramatically in the mid- to late-1920s, becoming common parlance. Although the *moga* experience was diverse, a few key traits can be used to loosely define her here. The *moga* was a youthful, independent woman who dressed in trendy European fashions. Her hair was often cut short, and she moved freely throughout the city. *Moga* worked in jobs that were part of the new economy, and were financially independent. They selected their own suitors, and were liberal in their sexual mores. Much is written in contemporary scholarship on the modern girl and her conspicuous role in Taishō and early Shōwa media. As with broader conceptions of women in the early twentieth century, the idea of the modern girl held many contradictions; modern girls were, as discussed by Freedman, Miller, and Yano, “simultaneously attractive and dangerous because they flaunted a new agency premised on consumer culture.”<sup>331</sup> The woman problem was concentrated in these visible members of society; modern girls

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>330</sup> Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 239-266, 241.

<sup>331</sup> Alisa Freedman, Laura Miller, and Christine R. Yano, “You go, girl! Cultural Meanings of Gender, Mobility, and Labor,” in *Modern Girls on the Go: Gender, Mobility, and Labor in Japan*, ed. Alisa Freedman, Laura Miller, and Christine R. Yano, 1-20 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 6.

frequently worked in new public spaces, such as department stores, trains, or cafes, thus they were easily seen, and as they held little social or political agency, they were easily vilified. Both the *moga* and the new woman, as well as the larger global feminist movement that they were a part of, were of concern to the patriarchal establishment. Many figures in the established patriarchy believed that if women gained too much power, they would not marry or have children. Correctly or incorrectly, there was an assumption that the expansion of women's rights would lead to a decrease in the birthrate, something which would have negative consequences for the growing empire. Bureaucratic agencies, some of which were in control of Empress Teimei's image, were also concerned with maintaining the respect and value of the Imperial Family in the midst of these movements. For the imperial institution to become irrelevant was a threat to the continuation of the monarchy, and change was a requirement to maintain the status of the Imperial Household.

By the 1920s, Japan held a secure position in international political spheres, and had thoroughly modernized, yet there were still domestic concerns regarding, in Stefan Tanaka's words, "how to become modern... and yet not lose an identity."<sup>332</sup> As women were seen as symbols of the new commercial culture, and as their roles had changed in a far more drastic way than their male counterparts, much of the anxiety regarding the loss of identity and traditions was directed toward the female half of society; women's roles and choices were scrutinized and judged to a higher degree than those of their male counterparts. This social disquiet, combined with a general apprehension over women gaining too many freedoms, meant that women continued to be associated with tradition and men with modernity. These gender roles, as they stood in the Taishō period, were constructed during the reign of Emperor Meiji. With the

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<sup>332</sup> Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; rpt., 1995), 3.

codification of the Civil Code (民法, *minpō*) of 1898, patriarchy, patriliney, primogeniture, and the monogamous family became legal standards. The *ryōsai kenbo* ideology reinforced these bureaucratic principles with cultural norms, making the government construction of the feminine ideal a comprehensive model wherein women were to maintain tradition and care for the family and home, and men were to undertake wage labor outside the home, tending to government, business, and industry.<sup>333</sup>

In the months and years following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) and World War I, the role of women within Japanese society was reevaluated out of necessity. In the instance of the post-Russo-Japanese War, the position of war widows and their children in society required an assessment of the purely domestic position of women under the previous *ryōsai kenbo* ideology, leading to discussions regarding wage-based employment for women outside of the home and vocational courses for girls, among other issues.<sup>334</sup> Women who had no skills beyond those of a housewife had no means to support themselves or their orphaned children if their husbands died while in military service. In the first decade of the twentieth century stories of war widows and orphans with no means of long-term financial support led to public anxieties over a purely domestic model of femininity. In the context of World War I, officials held greater concern for strategic military issues. Specifically there was a worry that “a purely domestic role for women would impede future military success. With defense of nation and empire at stake, even conservatives who were loath to endorse a public role for women had to grapple with the relationship between women’s work and their social participation and national progress.”<sup>335</sup> This

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<sup>333</sup> In practice this was not entirely a dual system. Women were the predominant workforce in Meiji period factories, and formed a large segment of wage laborers.

<sup>334</sup> Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ before 1931,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 492-519, 504.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 506.

apprehension over the expanding empire led to the promotion of what I term the “military mother,” a role within the *ryōsai kenbo* framework which Empress Teimei played in the pages of *Fujin Gahō*.

During the course of these early twentieth-century conflicts, the metropole was unscathed by direct military battles, and as a result, the inclusion of women in the expanding Japanese Empire did not go as far in changing gender roles as the same conflict (WWI) did in Europe.<sup>336</sup> Women’s roles in Japan did, however, change, and, as discussed below, Empress Teimei’s image was part of that shift. In the context of women’s magazines such as *Fujin Gahō*, Teimei’s image was used to involve women with the training of their sons as imperial soldiers. The support of women was crucial to maintaining a conscripted military; as mothers they needed to encourage their sons to respond to calls for patriotic duty, and as wives they needed to maintain the home front without protesting their husbands being sent into battle. Enacting the role of military mother allowed women to maintain their feminine roles within the home, and provided an active outlet for patriotic activity, without conceding to them too much social influence and clout. Government officials also fretted about the involvement of women in the rice riots of the late 1910s, and over backlash against unpopular military campaigns in the early 1920s. By the mid-Taishō period it was understood that women, as wives and mothers as well as citizens, needed to be included in the greater national project of imperial expansion in order to achieve the aims of the government.<sup>337</sup> In photographs such as “Her Majesty the Empress on the Deck of the ‘Tenryū’” from Chapter Three, Teimei showed her support for the military. Similar subjects were given a particularly feminine spin in *Fujin Gahō*, as in “Her Majesty the Empress Visiting

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<sup>336</sup> For more information on gender in Europe during this time see: Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger, and Birgitta Bader Zaar, *Gender and the First World War* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>337</sup> During the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Japanese leaders grew to understand that women needed to be mobilized for success in modern warfare. See Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire,” 500-501.

the Military Academy,” where the Empress observes her son’s military training. This image will be further discussed later in this chapter, but for now it is sufficient to say that the incorporation of women in the expanding Japanese Empire was seen as crucial to national success.

With the competing needs for an appropriate role for women to play in the development of the Japanese Empire, and the desire to steer women away from morals which were deemed inappropriate or unacceptable in Taishō Japan, came the development of a Taishō-specific *ryōsai kenbo* ideology. With its roots in Meiji Japan, *ryōsai kenbo* was a well-known concept, and one which was widely accepted in the early twentieth century, if needing an update. The ideology was expressed to the general citizenry in a variety of modes, most conspicuously via state-issued textbooks. In the 1930 version of the upper-level ethics reader, *The Revised Morals Teachings for Young Girls*, young women were instructed on the role of the married couple within the family unit, and that in Japan the family was to model itself after that of the Imperial Household, ensuring the continuity of the nation into the future.<sup>338</sup> This basic concept of the ideology was the same as in the Meiji period, yet there were differences in the ideology that were visible in the varying *ryōsai kenbo* incarnations and expressions as found in sources approved by, but not issued by, the government.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 148.

<sup>339</sup> In much of the long line of scholarship on *ryōsai kenbo*, the concept was treated as an unchanging government doctrine, something which lacked subtlety and had the same aims throughout its nearly eighty years of usage. This perspective fails to account for the dynamic changes in women’s roles within society between the late Meiji period, through the Taishō years, and into the war era. Kathleen Uno attempts to recover the changing meaning of *ryōsai kenbo*, and in her scholarship on familial relations, she addresses the specifics of the ideology and how it was used within differing contexts at different points in history. Uno traces the ideology from the Meiji period through the early Shōwa era, arguing for complex reasons for the shifts in *ryōsai kenbo* thought, such as nationalism, war, and overseas expansion. She also expands the reasoning for these shifts to examine social forces beyond mere increases in education and industrialization. Uno also notes the many aspects of *ryōsai kenbo* that have yet to be explored, and while detailing the government positions in the pre-war years, does not address the Imperial Family or the representations in media. See: Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire,” 512. The evolution and adaptation of *ryōsai kenbo* ideology is also discussed by Jason Karlin, who comments on the early twentieth century by stating that “the dislocations, anxiety, and uncertainty of the modern world that have destabilized notions of identity and gender give rise to the desire for a return to the redemptive realm of the mother and the nation.” See: Jason G. Karlin, *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan: Modernity, Loss, and the Doing of History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014), 5. This reading of *ryōsai kenbo* is fully applicable to the *Fujin Gahō* photographs of Teimei in the aftermath

The “good wife, wise mother” of the Taishō era was decidedly different from her Meiji predecessor in a few key ways, and, as detailed by Koyama Shizuko, in response to three key social changes: the rise of so-called “woman problem” (婦人問題, *fujin mondai*), the participation of European and American women in home front activities during the First World War, and a concern over deteriorating living conditions in the post-World War I era.<sup>340</sup> In response to these changes, the “good wife, wise mother” was expected to contribute to society not just through childrearing and domestic work, but also through part time or occasional work outside the home. As Koyama states, “again, there came to be an expectation that women, rather than pursuing a masculine role by seeking employment, should display suitably feminine moral characteristics, such as kindness, in their engagement in social work for the betterment of society.”<sup>341</sup> The concept that women should contribute to the larger national project of imperial expansion and the development of the metropole was new in the Taishō era; Koyama’s argument shows that women were not expected to mimic the roles of men, nor were they confined to family life as in the Meiji period, but rather they were to take on a distinctly feminine role in supporting the nation and Empire. The expanded concept of the *ryōsai kenbo* is furthered by Sato, stating, “For a woman, it was no longer enough to simply look after her husband in order to be considered a good wife. Rather, the understanding of a ‘good wife’ had altered to include the management of family consumption and an awareness of her contribution to the national economy.”<sup>342</sup> In all of the conceptions of the good wife, wise mother mentioned in this paragraph, the nuance and constant reevaluation of the role of women and their relationship to the ideology of *ryōsai kenbo*

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of the 1923 Kanto Earthquake: as Japanese society experienced a complete destabilization, both literally and figuratively, Teimei’s appearances as a maternal figure helped to ease the fear and panic that many felt as the rebuilding process began.

<sup>340</sup> Koyama, “Domestic Roles and the Incorporation of Women into the Nation State,” 92-93.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>342</sup> Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, 96.

is apparent. As the roles of women were changing in response to consumer culture, military concerns, and fretting over morality, it follows that the visual roles of Empress Teimei were also to undergo changes throughout the Taishō period.

While the women of Seitōsha and other feminist movements may have attempted to counter the limitations of the *ryōsai kenbo*, and to campaign for expanded roles and rights for women outside of the ideological constraints of the doctrine, the changes in the official ideology in the 1920s may have made *ryōsai kenbo* ideas more palatable to average citizens.<sup>343</sup> There was an understanding among government officials that the doctrine was seen as old-fashioned, and as these officials worked to continually promote it, they also saw the necessity of keeping it relevant to women.<sup>344</sup> As women, and men, became accustomed to and accepting of consuming images of women in the media, it became increasingly important to provide acceptable female images which supported government ideologies. Simultaneously, as women gained greater voices in society, it became necessary for *ryōsai kenbo* ideologies to appear adaptable to women's concerns, and to seem as if the ideology were produced for consumption by women.

Creating the illusion that *ryōsai kenbo* values were innate, internalized, and instinctual to women was important to promoting the concept to the public. If the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology was seen as something which appeared to be a natural, self-motivating impulse, rather than a state-

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<sup>343</sup> In writing on the transformation of the artistic genre of *bijinga* (images of beautiful women) in the Taishō period, Doris Croissant argues for the greater acceptance of *bijinga* by women, and draws parallels between the change in standards of artistic beauty and how *nihonga bijinga* (images of beautiful women in neo-classical Japanese painting) had moved from being interpreted as erotic to being interpreted as edifying, “echoing the new ‘civilizing’ ideal of ‘good wives, wise mothers,’ as proclaimed in women’s magazines... *bijinga* had been transmuted into a genre for female consumption. Doris Croissant, “Icons of Femininity: Japanese National Painting and the Paradox of Modernity,” in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua S. Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill, 119-140 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 137-138. A similar transition occurred with *ryōsai kenbo* ideology—it evolved from being a top-down doctrine promoted by the government to a doctrine that took ideas and meaning from the women who were emulating it.

<sup>344</sup> See Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire,” 510. She quotes from a 1929 publication which attempted to argue that the ideology was unfairly labeled as old-fashioned, and moved to once again make it popular among young women by emphasizing its necessity for success in the imperial project.

constructed ideology, it would be much more successful. To achieve this normalization of the value system was to make women feel as if it were an internal instinct, and one with great importance. Promoting the ideal of good wife, wise mother as an internally driven impulse was accomplished by appealing to the motherly role of *ryōsai kenbo*. In what cultural historian Michiko Mae claims was an “example of a modern doctrine concealed as a Japanese cultural tradition,” women had three main roles in the *ryōsai kenbo* system: as birth mothers to citizens and soldiers, as the transmitters of national culture and identity, and as a symbol of what men needed to protect.<sup>345</sup> For the most part, these core concepts remained the same even as the nuance of the ideology evolved with society. Constructing the good wife, wise mother as an important figure who was central to the success of Japanese society was in part accomplished by using the empress as a role model; if *ryōsai kenbo* was important enough for the Imperial Household to perform, surely it should be emulated by the masses.

In addition to *ryōsai kenbo*, other government policies and ideologies were also integral to the way that Taishō citizens understood gender within the context of society. Itō Hirobumi, who served as Imperial Household Minister in the mid-1880s, wrote in his explanation of the draft of the Imperial Constitution in 1895 that “males have the virtues of bravery (豪勇, *gōyū*) and refinement (高尚, *kōshō*), while females have the quality of gentleness (穩和, *onwa*), and that these traits shape their gender roles.”<sup>346</sup> This quotation, from Japan’s first Prime Minister, and a prominent member of the *genrō* (元老, an unofficial cabinet of imperial advisers), provides evidence of the conservative gender roles of the late Meiji period, the same gender roles which

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<sup>345</sup> Michiko Mae, “The Nexus of Nation, Culture and Gender in Modern Japan: the Resistance of Kanno Sugako and Kaneko Fumiko,” trans. Leonie Stickland in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr (London: Routledge, 2014), 68-84, 74-75.

<sup>346</sup> As paraphrased in Hayakawa Noriyo, “The Formation of Modern Imperial Japan from the Perspective of Gender,” trans. Stickland and Wöhr, in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. Germer, Mackie and Wöhr (London: Routledge, 2014), 25-47, 31.

were accepted by society as Teimei and Taishō came into the public eye, and the same gender roles which set the stage for the ascension of Teimei and Taishō to the throne.<sup>347</sup>

### Women's Magazines in the Taishō Period

In the Taishō period, the expanded urban middle classes at which the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology was aimed were also the target audience of the newly burgeoning press industry. In addition to newspapers, as discussed in Chapter Three, the media mix of the Taishō period saw the great expansion of magazines, and the new genre of women's magazines. While diverse publications were marketed to differing groups, women's magazines for the upper and upper-middle classes frequently included representations of the empress and the Imperial Family. The concept of Empress Teimei as *ryōsai kenbo* was visualized in the pages of these magazines for the consumption and admiration of the new middle class.

Women's magazines generally had an educated readership in the Taishō period. Sarah Frederick documents the circulation of women's magazines in the period between 1920 and 1934 by citing surveys and scholarship indicating an approximate audience of over one million readers for women's magazines in the mid-1920s.<sup>348</sup> These readers tended to be urban, educated women: among women students readership rates were above ninety percent for both magazines and

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<sup>347</sup> As Emperor Meiji faded from public view in the years after 1900, and Teimei and Taishō regularly appeared in the media after their wedding in 1900, it is important to understand the range of standard and accepted roles as they existed throughout the Taishō monarchy. This chapter will later examine early, non-photographic representations of Empress Shōken as a visual example of "gentleness" in the demure and modest pose, soft and warm facial expression, and the elegant and dainty physical features of the monarch, further amplified by the misty and bright nature of the overall image. This feminine conception of Shōken was the standard when Teimei came to the throne as Crown Princess, and sets a baseline for change in the Taishō years.

<sup>348</sup> Sarah Frederick, *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 6.

newspapers, for white-collar working women 75 percent read magazines and 85 percent newspapers, and for factory girls 20 percent read magazines and 7 percent newspapers.<sup>349</sup>

Many popular women's magazines of the Taishō era such as *Shufu no Tomo* (Housewife's Friend, 1917-2008), *Fujin Kurabu* (Ladies Club, 1920-1945, 1946-1988), or *Fujin no Tomo* (Ladies Friend, 1906-), were marketed directly to a younger middle-class audience, and emphasized the experience of the homemaker. In addition to magazines marketed towards middle class women, other publications of the Taishō period, such as *Nyonin Geijutsu* (Women's Arts, 1928-1932), had a literary or arts focus, and a select few, such as *Seitō* (Bluestocking, 1911-1916) and *Shin Shin Fujin* (The New True Woman, 1913-1923) centered on feminist or socialist issues. As Sarah Frederick states of *Shufu no Tomo*, the magazine in the interwar period focused on the middle-class housewife, featuring women who appeared to be among the magazine's readership, with a cover which "depicted an imagined feminine and beautiful product of that daily lifestyle at its most successful."<sup>350</sup> Although an idealized version of the average Japanese home, the lifestyle addressed by *Shufu no Tomo*, which ran from 1917 to 2008, appeared to be achievable. The magazine included profiles of readers, and featured practical tips on childcare and home economics.

A predominant value which was eagerly promoted across all of these publications was that of self-improvement and self-cultivation. In the course of documenting the construction of the "ideal woman" in 1920s Japan, Barbara Sato examines the discourse concerning appropriate roles for women as expressed in early twentieth-century magazines, and specifically the notion of self-cultivation included in their pages. She states, "self-cultivation, achieved in part through

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 6-7. The terms used by Frederick for each of these groups are as follows: *jogakusei*, women students, *shokugyō fujin*, working women, primarily white-collar, and *jokō*, factory girls. Frederick further notes that men's magazines also grew during the interwar era, but it was women's magazines that saw truly remarkable increases in circulation, as much as ten-fold in the years between the late 1910s and the mid-1920s.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 110.

reading, represented the ideal for a middle-class persona.”<sup>351</sup> Many women readers, as well as their male counterparts, desired upward social mobility, and as such were interested in the content of popular magazines in an aspirational sense. Placing Empress Teimei, an exemplar of Taishō values, in the pages of these magazines provided a model of decorum, behavior, and morality that the readership could desire to emulate.

*Fujin Gahō*, or Ladies Pictorial, began publication in 1905 and continues to be published by Hearst Fujingahō today. The magazine emphasizes visual feature content, and as such is mainly comprised of photographs. In the early days of the magazine, as well as today, the primary market of *Fujin Gahō* consisted of upper-middle-class women of middle age, with an emphasis on the lifestyles of elite women.<sup>352</sup> The driving concept of the magazine is “*hito, mono, koto*,” (ヒト、モノ、コト; people, things, happenings), with an emphasis on Japanese traditions and culture, health and beauty, and fashion and jewelry.<sup>353</sup> Historically, as well as today, the majority of readers of the magazine, although financially well off, would have viewed the goods, fashions, and lifestyles featured in the magazine’s images as aspirational.<sup>354</sup>

The *Fujin Gahō* lifestyle was, and continues to be, one of luxury and quality expressed in an opulent visual format. While many of the women’s magazines of the Taishō era included images of the Imperial Household, amid the diverse field of Taishō period women’s magazines *Fujin Gahō* was among the most suited to feature images of the Empress and Imperial Family,

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<sup>351</sup> Barbara Sato, “Commodifying and Engendering Morality: Self-Cultivation and the Construction of the ‘Ideal Woman’ in 1920s Mass Women’s Magazines,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 99-132, 101.

<sup>352</sup> Frederick, *Turning Pages*, 9.

<sup>353</sup> *Fujin Gahō Media Kit*, [http://www.hearst.co.jp/brands/fujingaho/media\\_kit\\_print](http://www.hearst.co.jp/brands/fujingaho/media_kit_print). Accessed March 23, 2015. The Media Kit includes statistics on the contemporary readership from a survey conducted in 2011. The data provided indicate that readers have an average annual household income of 14,000,000-30,000,000 Yen (approximately \$140,000-300,000), and an average age of 40-60 years. Among readers, 10% have a wine cellar in their home, and nearly 8% have a tea ceremony room in their home.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid. Today the corporate language specifically states that the magazine aims to focus on, “food, travel, items, and culture with a focus on all that is good about Japan,” as well as, “fashion, jewelry, and beauty to ‘enrich the lives of women.’”

due to its elevated readership. As the magazine's targeted audience was upper- and upper-middle-class women interested in affluent lifestyles, the activities and fashions of the women of the Imperial Household easily fit the aim of the publication and the interests of its regular readers. In keeping with the value of self-cultivation which was so important across publications, the readers of *Fujin Gahō* could have looked to the women of the Imperial Household as role models and as having lifestyles to which they as readers could aspire.

The images of Empress Teimei as they appeared in the pages of *Fujin Gahō* were, as all imperial images were, subject to the varied censorship systems of the state. As stated throughout this dissertation, the publicized image of the Imperial Family was directly disseminated and controlled by the Imperial Household Agency, yet examining the images and representations of the Imperial Family provides more than a take on the image that the government desired to promote. The images under consideration in this chapter were distributed in publications that were available for commercial sale; many of these publications did not have a fixed subscription system, and were thus dependent upon popular features to maintain sales. As such, the photographs inform us about the self-perpetuating concept of the Imperial Family in the larger milieu of Japanese society—these photographs as they appeared in magazines were purchased out of the people's personal interest in the Imperial Family as celebrity figures, distinct from the propagandistic *goshinei* portraits which were distributed by the government and exhibited in public spaces (see Chapter Two). As stated in the previous section, the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology changed in the Taishō period to be less of a state-imposed ideology, and more of one which was subtly constructed for the internalization of women, and for women to consume as their own. That the image of Empress Teimei was commercially viable reinforces this new ideology of the *ryōsai kenbo*.

The images also inform us as to how the Imperial Family not only reacted to the broader social changes that accompanied modernization in the Taishō period, but also how Imperial images drove social change in the 1910s and 1920s. Simply put, the changed image of the empress, as seen with Teimei, and her popular position in magazines, reveals a particular means of constructing modern femininity in Taishō Japan. The savvy, upper-middle class readership of *Fujin Gahō* was interested in the women of the Imperial Family as aspirational role models, and contemporary celebrities. It is these representations that are the topic of the next section.

### The Imperial Mother: Empress Images in the Pages of *Fujin Gahō*

The photographic representations of Empress Teimei as featured in women's magazines held subtle differences when compared to her appearances in other forms of media. Despite these nuances, there were important messages for the target readership of a publication such as *Fujin Gahō*. This section will discuss some of the distinctive features of empress images published in women's magazines by exploring the notion of Teimei as a supporter of military activities vis-à-vis her maternal role.<sup>355</sup> It will also show the visual differences between Teimei and her predecessor Empress Shōken by contrasting how their images were used to construct ideals of feminine propriety in their respective eras of rule.

As was the common style in the 1920s as well as previous decades, Empress Teimei's clothing in the *Fujin Gahō* image set exhibits a straight silhouette with little emphasis on the curved and constricted form of the female anatomy. Her clothing mirrored the international trends for women to wear smaller hats and tailored suits which drew their inspiration from menswear. Although exacting statistics for what types of clothing were regularly worn by the

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<sup>355</sup> Empress Teimei's image began being widely published upon the announcement of the imperial wedding in 1899. Her image was even further distributed after the wedding in 1900.

general public are difficult to come by, most indicate that in the Taishō period, the majority of women wore Japanese-style clothing, and the majority of men Western-style.<sup>356</sup>

Even within the realm of Japanese-style clothing, the kimono styles that were worn by Japanese women in the 1920s had changed dramatically from those of their grandmothers.<sup>357</sup> Elements of Western fashion, such as hats, leather shoes, and overcoats were mixed in, creating a hybrid of styles. The construction of the kimono itself had also changed, with the *obi* (帯, kimono belt), being worn higher on the waist, mimicking the straight-silhouetted menswear-inspired fashions that were so popular in Europe and the United States. Furthermore, the fabrics of early twentieth-century kimono incorporated modern patterns, weaves, and materials.<sup>358</sup> Thus, by the Taishō period, the categories of Japanese-style and European-style clothing were not as clear cut as they once were.

By the late Meiji period, most urban men had adopted suits as their common dress.<sup>359</sup> Although women had fully adopted Western hairstyles by the 1890s, and had incorporated other accessories such as handbags and umbrellas, it was not until the 1930s that women fully adopted

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<sup>356</sup> A few sources provide general information on the trends of Taishō dress. A hand-drawn infographic published in *Fujin Kōron* (Women's Opinion) in 1925 shows the results of a survey of 1,180 people in the famed Tokyo shopping area Ginza. The drawing indicates that 99% of women wore Japanese dress, as opposed to Western clothing. The drawing was republished in the anthology *Moderunologio* in 1930. Kon Wajirō and Yoshida Kenkichi undertook the research for their first modernology survey in July 1925. The drawing can also be found in: Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, plate 5. These statistics are not necessarily representative of all areas and fashions; Ginza was, and continues to be, a high-end shopping area in the center of Japan's capital city, and as such, the observational survey may have biased results, as the sample of women likely skewed towards wealthy ladies on shopping excursions. For the observed men of the survey, only 33% wore Japanese-style clothing.

<sup>357</sup> For a full history of Japanese fashion see: Tanida Etsuji, *Nihon fukushokushi* [A History of Japanese Attire] (Tokyo: Koseikan, 1989).

<sup>358</sup> For further information see: Annie Van Asche, "Japanese Kimono Fashion of the Early Twentieth Century," *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, Paper 799 (2000), <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1800&context=tsaconf>

<sup>359</sup> Throughout the early twentieth century, close to half of the Japanese population remained in rural, agricultural areas. These citizens kept Japanese dress as their standard clothing style. The change from Japanese to Western style suits for men is sometimes attributed to the change in the Japanese political world from colonized to colonizer. See: Mina Roces and Louise Edwards, "Transnational Flows and the Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas," in *The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas*, ed. Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), 1-18, 10.

Western-style dress, and even then it was not as common as Japanese styles.<sup>360</sup> Among many potential causes for the change in everyday costume was the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. Many were haunted by the exposed bodies which remained in the aftermath of the disaster, and some felt that the more practical aspects of European-style dress may have allowed for easier escape from the fires and fallen structures.<sup>361</sup> While clothing choice would likely not have made a difference in the number of earthquake victims, concepts of thrift, ease of wear, and freedom of movement all contributed to the move from Japanese clothing to European styles. That the silhouette of Japanese and European dress styles was similar in the 1920s also was a likely contributor towards the shift in fashion; the slim, straight look of European-style dresses was markedly similar to kimono lines, making the transition easier.<sup>362</sup>

Although Teimei's societal stature meant that her hemlines did not rise and fall in accordance with popular fashion, she remained an example of appropriate dress for fashionable women of a certain age and standing, the same demographic which made up the majority of *Fujin Gahō* readers. In an example from January of 1923, Teimei visited the Household Economy Exhibition at Ochanomizu.<sup>363</sup> In the photograph, a centrally placed Teimei walks with male accompaniers and a court lady in the background. Her fashion is practical for the winter climate, but also exhibits a suit-like form, and a small, simple hat in keeping with trends of the time. The lines of her clothing are straight and minimal, with slight elaboration at the collar and with the ribbon that adorns her hat. The curves of her figure are indistinguishable, and her long, nearly knee-length overcoat is similar to those of the men who join her. Many Japanese women

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<sup>360</sup> Historian Toby Slade attributes this shift to increasing numbers of Japanese citizens growing comfortable with European dress after wearing Western-style school and military uniforms, and to the change in popular styles towards those which would accommodate active lifestyles. Toby Slade, *Japanese Fashion: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Berg Publishing, 2009), 58.

<sup>361</sup> Liza Dalby, *Kimono: Fashioning Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 126.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-128.

<sup>363</sup> For an image see: *Kōgō heika shōhi tenrankai e gyōkei* (Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Household Economy Exhibition at Ochanomizu), *Fujin Gahō*, January 1, 1923, page 13.

mixed fashion styles from Asia and Europe, with both hybrid and Western-style overcoats being popular in the colder months.<sup>364</sup> This image, therefore, functioned in a dual-fold manner: Teimei was both exhibiting the *ryōsai kenbo* values of household thrift by visiting the Household Economy Exhibition, and was also showing how women could be acceptably fashionable.<sup>365</sup>

In addition to the sartorial style of Empress Teimei, the gaze of the female monarch was a feature that distinguished her from her predecessor, and marked the newness of her comportment. In the example of Teimei visiting the Peace Exhibition in Ueno Park from 1922, she looks directly at the camera as she walks away from the exhibition building, with the light color of her parasol and dress framing her face.<sup>366</sup> Her expression is serious and flat; this is not the soft, gentle face which was common with her predecessor Empress Shōken, but rather Teimei bears the visage of a monarch with additional power, and a more prominent role in the court structure and larger society. Furthermore, the caption of the image states that Teimei stayed at the park until evening to enjoy the night scenery. This phrasing contributes to a reading of her image as independent and modern; like so many women interested in exploring their city, she was out in the evening hours, and while accompanied by her court handlers, she was without her husband.

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<sup>364</sup> Chinese dress was also fashionable in the 1910s and 1920s, and oftentimes hybrid styles of clothing were featured in paintings, as well as magazines. See: Kaizuka Tsuyoshi, ed. *Egakareta Chaina doresu: Fujishima Takeji kara Umehara Ryūzaburō made: tēma tenji* [Chinese-Style Dresses, from Fujishima Takeji to Umehara Ryuzaburo] (Tokyo: Bridgestone Museum of Art, 2014). This type of dress was wrapped up in colonial issues of femininity and power, for further discussion of these complexities see: Ikeda Shinobu, “The Allure of a ‘Woman in Chinese Dress’: Representation of the Other in Imperial Japan,” in *Performing "Nation": Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940*, ed. Doris Croissant, Catherine Vance Yeh, Joshua S. Mostow (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 347-382.

<sup>365</sup> Chapter Two of this dissertation addresses the common use of Western dress for the modern Japanese monarchs. As it was important for the Imperial Family to appear as cosmopolitan global leaders, they rarely appeared in Japanese dress.

<sup>366</sup> For an image see: *Kōgōheika hakurankai e gyōkei* (Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Peace Exhibition), *Fujin Gahō*, July 1, 1922, page 9.

Empress Teimei's clout was manifested not only in her physical appearance, but also in the contexts in which she appeared. Among the pages of *Fujin Gahō* Empress Teimei took on the role of a "military mother," appearing with young cadets in a military context with subtle differences from that which was seen in the newspapers. One such example of this appeared in the publication on July 1, 1923.<sup>367</sup> As part of a two-page, three-photograph layout titled "*Kōgō heika gyōkei*" (皇后陛下行啓, Attendances of Her Royal Highness the Empress), Empress Teimei appears with four male officials and four ladies-in-waiting at the Naval Institute at Tsukiji. In the image she is looking at a large framed picture, unseen to the viewer of the photograph.

The naval training facility was part of a well-known officers training program popular with educated cadets.<sup>368</sup> Depicted in Meiji-era woodblock prints as well as early twentieth-century photograph postcards, the Naval Institute was familiar to the Japanese public of the early twentieth century.<sup>369</sup> This image depicts the sovereign in her capacity as a ruler, and as she related with the military, but with a softening element.<sup>370</sup> While these images of her as interacting with the naval forces on what may be read as a political level were rare, that they were widely published in the early 1920s is of importance in understanding Teimei as an imperial proxy. Teimei's interactions with the military went further than those of her predecessor. While Empress Shōken was envisioned as a caretaker (images of Shōken and the military were limited to field hospitals), Teimei is involved in training and more active military maneuvers. The images also suggest the complexity and flexibility of gender roles in the Taishō

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<sup>367</sup> For an image see: *Kōgō heika gyōkei* (Attendances of Her Royal Highness the Empress), *Fujin Gahō*, July 1, 1923, page 8.

<sup>368</sup> For more on the early days of the institution see, J. Charles Schencking, *Making Waves: Politics, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1868-1922* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 23.

<sup>369</sup> For an example of these images see: *The Naval Institute at Tsukiji* (Tsukiji kaigunshō), from the series "Famous Places in Tokyo" (Tōkyō meisho zue), Utagawa Hiroshige III, published by Maruya Tetsujirō, February 1873, collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2000.272.

<sup>370</sup> A similar image was discussed in Chapter Three, wherein Empress Teimei visited military officials aboard the ship *Tenryū*.

period. Here, as with the *Asahi Shinbun* images of Chapter Three, we see an Empress who is involved with state affairs, yet who in other photographs, and with her progressive fashions, maintains an element of feminine style and comportment.

Additionally, this photograph shows Teimei at an educational training facility, thus tempering her involvement with the military by affiliating her with the feminine, motherly concern over education. This was a particularly poignant detail when considering that the photograph was published in the context of a women's magazine, a venue wherein exhibiting the *ryōsai kenbo* value of women's support for their military-involved sons was of critical importance. This point will be returned to later in this section. Furthermore, while the Naval Institute was decidedly a masculine military institution, placing Empress Teimei at a location associated with young cadets and their instructors, rather than established active military men, softens her activity, as do the other two images appearing on the two-page spread: that of her at a Red Cross meeting, and that of a crowd of Red Cross volunteer women awaiting her arrival. As will be discussed in the following paragraph, Teimei was also imaged in an active motherly role, yet this mothering role was never to be as one-dimensional as that of her successor, or that which was later promoted in the name of national service in wartime Japan.

A similar image of Empress Teimei is seen in the photograph series captioned “*Kōgōheika shikangakkō e gyōkei* (皇后陛下士官学校へ行啓, Her Majesty the Empress Visiting the Military Academy). Dating from July 1, 1922, in these images Empress Teimei is shown standing in front of a folding chair in the midst of a dirt yard, stately European-style buildings in the background, and a small crowd of officials gathered at the right. The photograph of Teimei fills the top half of the page, with a separate photograph of military cadets observing tactical lessons comprising the bottom half of the layout. The lower image depicts the scene which Empress Teimei was gazing upon; the buildings in the background of the two images show a

continuation of architectural features, and in the layout the figures in each photograph turn to face each other, thus providing visual cues for the viewer to understand the unbroken nature of the scene. Among the military cadets pictured is Prince Chichibu, Empress Teimei's second son, as viewers are informed by the caption at the right of the page. The Military Academy students stand in straight tidy formation while they observe two superiors instructing them with mounted weaponry and other tactical paraphernalia.

Two points about this image reinforce the message of the Naval Academy photograph, and are worthy of note here: first, that Teimei as an empress was associated with military training activities, and second that she is pictured as a mother. The first point, that a Japanese empress associated with the military was unusual, was addressed in the analysis of the photograph from the Naval Institute at Tsukiji, and in the previous chapter. Empress Shōken appeared in paintings and prints as she visited military hospitals, but never directly communicating with military leaders or soldiers. In the context of Chapter Three, I connected Empress Teimei's appearance on the ship *Tenryū* as published in the *Asahi Shinbun* to a larger government interest in popularizing an unpopular military campaign and to Teimei's role as an imperial proxy. In the military images published in *Fujin Gahō*, there is a subtext of military mother at work which differentiates these photographs from that seen in the *Asahi*. It is this role as mother, and the latter point from above, regarding Teimei and her imaged relationship with Prince Chichibu, which will be addressed thusly.<sup>371</sup>

Throughout the course of the Taishō period, and in investigating the body of images of Empress Teimei which were distributed prior to 1926, there is an absence of photographic evidence of the Imperial Household as a domestic, familial unit. Pictures of the Imperial Family

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<sup>371</sup> The first point, on Teimei's visualized and publicized interactions with the military was addressed in Chapter Three, and will be further discussed later in this chapter.

envisioned in the context of a family tree, or in lithographs as a nuclear family were popular in the years just after 1900 (as discussed in Chapter Two), but photographs of the monarchs in a state of domesticity were not available to the public until the Shōwa period.<sup>372</sup> This notable absence of imagery depicting Empress Teimei as a mother to her own four sons is particularly significant in light of Teimei's status as the first empress to birth the successive emperor in the modern period. Additionally, as issues of imperial primogeniture were, and are, a recurring issue with the modern Japanese monarchy, that Teimei biologically mothered four healthy boys is of relevance to her biography and her status in the twentieth-century imperial lineage. Despite these key historical facts, Teimei is rarely seen as a maternal figure to her own children. The Military Academy photograph, of her observing the military training of her second son, is an exception to that. In the photograph, Teimei and Prince Chichibu, who was the second-in-line to the Japanese throne, are seen together, and the Empress performs the role of *ryōsai kenbo*, astutely observing her son and acting as a military mother, but with a few key points which remind the viewer of her exalted status.

In the image, her familial connection to Prince Chichibu is not immediately apparent; in fact it is difficult to discern from the photograph of the young cadets which figure is the young monarch. Furthermore, her isolated position as an overseer of the training process is visually similar to other images, such as her appearances before the Red Cross, where she views a crowd or group from a distant space. From analyzing this photograph, we see a monarch who is involved with the lives of her children, but in an indirect, distant fashion. Indeed, rather than envisioned as a nurturing birthmother to Crown Prince Chichibu, Teimei is constructed as a

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<sup>372</sup> A few photographs of Emperor Taishō together with his sons were published in the media, and photographs of the Shōwa monarchy as a family unit were widespread in popular media sources, starting with the Shōwa Emperor and Empress as Crown Prince and Princess in the late Taishō period. The lithographs of the Imperial Family from the time around the 1900 wedding of Taishō and Teimei were fictional. The statement above, that domestic photographs were not widely available until the Shōwa period, is true across publication types.

removed maternal presence; she watches over her son with interest, but also pays attention to the other cadets. The mother-son relationship is not singled out, but Teimei is rather pictured as a guiding figure for all of the military youths. She is not, as her successor Empress Kōjun would later be, imaged with a baby carriage, or in physical contact with her offspring, nor is she engaged with her son on a personal level. In fact, if the caption did not inform the viewer that she was observing her child, the image could be easily read as a ruler observing the general activity of her subjects. This image was published in the years just after the conclusion of World War I, when imperial expansion and military concerns were at the forefront of national discussions.

The *ryōsai kenbo* that Teimei exemplifies here is one which was produced for the upper-classes to emulate. The institutions which Teimei visited were not for the enlisted men of the lower classes or rural areas, but for officers-in-training, young men who mostly came from well-off, urban family backgrounds. While the specifics of the photographs were for the upper-classes, the lessons of these images were universal; Teimei was promoting the *ryōsai kenbo* core values of education and military readiness in these photographs, concepts which could be implemented in differing ways at many levels of society. By promoting Empress Teimei as a military mother, common women would likely have had an easier time accepting the conscription of their sons into the military. In showing the Imperial Family as making the same sacrifices for the national good as was being asked of the citizenry, Teimei was modeling *ryōsai kenbo* and the role of the military mother for her subjects.

Images of Empress Teimei as an exemplar of the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology and as an active military mother were a distinct departure from the feminine and maternal images of her predecessor. The femininity and motherly qualities of Empress Shōken were envisioned in a more conservative fashion; Shōken was rarely seen with Taishō (who it should be remembered was not her birth son), and maternal images of her show her as an imperial mother (国母, *kokubo*,

an older term for empress), providing care and compassion to ill soldiers or nobility, or to young citizens. The composition and subject of images featuring Empress Shōken in the pages of *Fujin Gahō* exhibit the differences in monarchical representation, ideal femininity, and the evolving concept of what “mother of the nation” meant in differing eras.

In August of 1906, a drawing of Empress Shōken was published on the sixth page of *Fujin Gahō*.<sup>373</sup> The image, *Kōgō heika to Kaneko danshaku bessō* (皇后陛下と金子男爵別荘, Her Majesty the Empress Visiting Baron Kaneko’s Villa), in which the Empress exhibits a highly conventional feminine appearance, shows Shōken in a matronly role, and as such, serves as a good base line for both concepts of the imperial mother in the years just before the Taishō monarchy, as well as standards of imperial feminine beauty in the late Meiji period. In the drawing, Empress Shōken is depicted at the center of the frame; she is taller than the other people in the composition, and the placement of her in the foreground, combined with her central location provide her with a more striking presence than the attendants that stand off to the right of the picture plane, as she rests her hand atop the head of the young Kaneko boy.<sup>374</sup> Her posture is regal and confident, and her facial expression is calm as well as neutral. The way in which she gently pats the young child’s head, as well as her soft expression and carriage provide a maternal feel to the piece. In regards to her fashions, the lines comprising the drapery folds of her skirt, combined with the large adornment on her bodice give an element of stability and strength to her form. Although in life Empress Shōken was petite in stature, in this image, partially through the use of perspective, and also through artistic liberties, she possesses a grace and elegance in her

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<sup>373</sup> For an image see: *Kōgō heika to Kaneko danshaku bessō* (Her Majesty the Empress Visiting Baron Kaneko’s Villa), *Fujin Gahō*, August 1906, page 6.

<sup>374</sup> This is the only image in which an artist is attributed in the caption. 『内田千秋君筆』 *Uchida Chiaki kun fude*, or the brush of Uchida Chiaki, is included parenthetically at the end of the image caption. *Fujin Gahō*, August 1, 1906, page 6. The elder Kaneko was a well-known diplomat who was influential in Japanese international diplomacy.

exaggerated figure, dominating the picture plane. The dress that she wears is significantly corseted, with a fabric belt emphasizing the small size of her waist. Additionally, the light color of her garb stands out against the dark hues of the surrounding figures and the tree in the background; this brightness emphasizes her monarchical stature, and combined with the sweeping lines of her skirt and bodice, leads the eye to the outline of her facial profile.

The other four images of Empress Shōken featured in *Fujin Gahō* are also reproductions of drawings or paintings, and show the Empress sporting a similar sartorial style.<sup>375</sup> The fashion serves two purposes: first off, through composition choices and painterly detail, Empress Shōken's clothing works to distinguish her figure from the others in the image; second, the styles are an example of vogue trends that were acceptable for women of upper and upper-middle class to wear.<sup>376</sup> Each of these images also presents Empress Shōken with an averted gaze. In every instance, the monarch is either looking down at an object or upon her subjects, or in the case of a carriage image, off into the distance. This stands in sharp contrast to Empress Teimei, who on multiple occasions gazed directly into the camera. Her attendants and subjects also avert their gaze, thus lending a passive, and slightly tense feeling to the scene. The downcast eyes of those

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<sup>375</sup> In each image, Shōken wears a floor length, corseted, S-shaped dress and a large wide-brimmed hat, as was the fashion of the decade. For further detail on the fashion trends of the 1900s and 1910s, see: Elizabeth Ewing and Alice Mackrell, *History of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fashion* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1997). Her dress includes the slight flare at the ankles, and the snug hips that were popular in the years leading up to 1909, as well as the flounced blouse with buoyant fabric comprising the shoulders and upper arms that was so common in the silhouettes of the day.

Furthermore, in all of the reproduced images, Empress Shōken wears the lavish, opulent millinery style that marked fashion in the 1900s; her hats, topped with large floral décor and full ribbons, include a slight veil, which was often used when in transit, as it would assist in keeping the hat balanced upon the head.

<sup>376</sup> Such trends included tight, corseted bodices, layers of gathered fabric on the front of the torso, a wide-shouldered silhouette with fitted sleeves in the forearm, and a flowing, long skirt with a slight bustle. Junko Aoki argues for Shōken's clothing, as well as that of other noblewomen, as an example of the Imperial Family promoting acceptable fashion. See: Junko Aoki, "Zasshi 'Kōzoku gahō' ni miru kindai kōzoku fuasshon no imeji" [The Image of Royal Family Fashion as Shown in Kozoku Gaho: the Military Uniform and the Dress], *Contentsu Bunkashi Kenkyū* [Journal of Contents History Studies] 8 (2013): 69-87.

represented in the compositions work to lead the viewer to the central Empress figure, who is located at either the top of or the center of the image.<sup>377</sup>

Furthermore, in two of these images, Empress Shōken shows a matronly, maternal side in a one-on-one situation. She is paired with a small child in “Her Majesty the Empress Visiting Baron Kaneko’s Villa,” and in a caretaking role in “The Empress’ Visit to Lady Nakayama.” This second image, *Kōgōheika no gomimai* (皇后陛下の御見舞い, The Empress’ Visit to Lady Nakayama) from November 1, 1907, shows Shōken visiting the ill Nakayama Yoshiko, an imperial concubine who was the birth mother of Emperor Meiji.<sup>378</sup> In the Meiji period, the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology was far more conservative than during the Taishō period. The conception of “good wife, wise mother” was still emerging from earlier philosophies of women’s positions, which included Confucian-influenced ideas of women as belonging strictly within the domestic realm. The images of Empress Shōken as featured in the early days of *Fujin Gahō* were created prior to the development of upper-class women holding jobs in the public sphere, and at a time when feminist movements were harshly controlled. These various factors led to the public image of Shōken having less variety than that of Teimei, and exhibiting a version of mother of the nation which was limited to her interactions with the young and the ill, providing a conservative account of maternal and feminine roles.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> In the carriage image from May 15, 1908, she is centered on the top to bottom axis, but not the right-left axis, however she is framed by the large, dark carriage in which she rides.

<sup>378</sup> Nakayama Yoshiko passed away on October 5, 1907, and this image shows how the filial Shōken paid her respects to the imperial mother, exhibiting both the good wife role of *ryōsai kenbo*, as she cares for her husband’s ill mother, and the mother of the nation role, as she demurely visits the birth mother of the beloved Emperor Meiji. For an image see: *Kōgōheika no gomimai* (The Empress’ Visit to Lady Nakayama), *Fujin Gahō*, November 1, 1907, page 6.

<sup>379</sup> In addition to these concerns, Empress Shōken was seen visiting the Tokyo Industrial Exhibition in the August 1, 1907 edition of *Fujin Gahō* on page 7, *Kōgō heika no gyōkei* (Visit of Her Majesty the Empress to the Tokyo Industrial Exhibition). The Meiji government understood women to be an integral part of the modern Japanese nation, not just for their contributions to homemaking, child rearing, and caretaking, but also for their heavy involvement in factory work. The majority of textile factory workers in the late nineteenth century were women, and as such they were responsible for one of the largest sources of economic power and foreign income in mid-Meiji Japan. Maintaining the productivity of the female workforce was of the utmost importance to the national project;

Through this comparison of Teimei's role as military mother to Shōken's imperial mother, the distinctions between the two are clear. Shōken's development as a public figure occurred alongside the emergence of the mother of the nation role; her maternal presence was expressed through one-on-one caring roles such as those seen in "Her Majesty the Empress Visiting Baron Kaneko's Villa" and "The Empress' Visit to Lady Nakayama."<sup>380</sup> As she never had children of her own, picturing her as a caretaker was a way to link her to maternal roles. Furthermore, the formal elements of the images also show a soft, caring femininity that connected Shōken to sentiments of family and motherly qualities. This is contrasted with Teimei's military mother role, in which she promoted lofty imperial goals of military participation and national service through motherhood. The vision of Teimei as *ryōsai kenbo* in the late 1910s and early 1920s was less about a conventionally feminine, caring maternal model, and more about the conflation of the nuclear and imperial family. By exemplifying the distant motherly figure who willingly sacrifices her sons for the greater national cause, Teimei models a new Taishō gender politics, that of strong women who maintain their femininity while serving the nation with their domestic skills. Teimei's representation in photographs published in women's magazines showed a savvy, independent, and cosmopolitan empress and one who was also involved with issues of concern to Taishō women, such as household economy and national service. This military mother role was

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one way to encourage morale among the youthful workforce was for the empress to acknowledge their contributions. The realities of women's participation in industrial production were generally hidden from public view and when they were widely visible (in woodblock prints or imperial visits), the conditions were presented as far more safe and sanitary than they were in reality. Through her visits to factories, and the Industrial Exhibitions which featured manufactured textiles, Shōken showed women of the working classes how important their work was to the nation. This also fulfilled her role as mother of the nation.

<sup>380</sup> Kitano Masao argues that the act of creating a permanent, compulsory Imperial Household was a modern court revolution. Key to the success of this revolution was a shift in the activities that the imperial women undertook within the system. She identifies the *kokubo* as a crucial component of this system, and details Shōken's development as a public figure, and how her role as the feminine *kokubo* emerged over the late nineteenth century. Kitano Masako, "Kindai kōgōron" [A Theory of the Modern Empress], in *Jendā to sabetsu* [Gender and Discrimination], ed. Amino Yoshihiko, vol. 7 of *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru* [Thoughts on the Emperor and Royal Power] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 79-103, 81.

not to last, however, as great changes occurred at the end of 1923 which would alter the course of imperial responsibilities.

### Teimei as “Imperial Mother” in the Aftermath of Disaster

On September 1, 1923, the 7.9 magnitude Great Kantō Earthquake hit Tokyo and the surrounding metropolitan areas with a calamity unprecedented in modern Japanese history. The aftermath of the earthquake brought the mass destruction of homes, businesses, and infrastructure; as a result of the forces of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami and mass fires, an estimated 140,000 people died, and countless more were injured or left homeless.<sup>381</sup> In the months following the disaster, Empress Teimei made public appearances to console those who were impacted by the catastrophe, as documented in three *Fujin Gahō* photographs.<sup>382</sup> These images show how Teimei’s public persona was malleable, adjusting to circumstances as needed, and exemplifying her in a nurturing role.<sup>383</sup> Furthermore, in the context of the greater milieu of empress images as examined in this dissertation, these three photographs exhibit the nuanced ways in which Empress Teimei acted as mother of the nation.<sup>384</sup> The photographs of the Empress

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<sup>381</sup> For further discussion on the society-wide ramifications of the 1923 earthquake as well as Imperial reactions to the 1891 Nōbi Earthquake see: Gregory Clancey, *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity, 1868-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>382</sup> For images see: *Kōgōheika risai byōji ni okotoba o tamafu* (Her Majesty the Empress Expresses her Condolences to the Suffering Children), *Fujin Gahō*, November 1, 1923, page 6; *Kōgōheika Teidai byōin goimon* (Her Majesty the Empress Visits the Imperial hospital), *Fujin Gahō*, November 1, 1923, page 8; *Kōgōheika heitan byōin e gyōkei* (Her Majesty the Empress Visiting a Military Hospital), *Fujin Gahō*, January 1, 1924, page 11.

<sup>383</sup> Kitano Masako also argues for Teimei as exemplifying the *ryōsai kenbo* values of motherhood in the aftermath of the 1923 earthquake. Her larger argument is that Teimei’s public persona was defined by her reputation as a stable homemaker, and that she exemplified motherhood after the earthquake and also at her husband’s side on his deathbed. Kitano Masako, “Kindai kōgōron,” 88-97.

<sup>384</sup> This point was addressed in Chapter One, however, in this instance I am arguing against the conceptualization of the Emperor as the mother and father of the nation combined into a single body. While many scholars have argued for the Emperor as maternal and paternal in the context of the nation, and while this may be true in the Shōwa period, I believe that the presence of Empress Teimei in the visual culture of the Taishō monarchy shows that Emperor Taishō did not act as mother of the nation.

in the months immediately following the earthquake took a conservative turn, one which reflected larger societal values.

Chapter Three established the importance of Teimei as an imperial proxy in the post-1920 years, but her public role was of even greater significance in the months after the earthquake. In the aftermath of the disaster Teimei actively took on the role of imperial mother, publically performing nurturing roles and showing her concern for the victims of the disaster. In this role she was represented as a caretaker, actively visiting wounded subjects, and seen in direct contact with those who were in need of her benevolence. This is distinctly different from her earlier philanthropy; Teimei was known for her charity work with lepers and lighthouse keepers, as well as for her position as the head of the Japanese Red Cross organization. Yet, in these first two capacities, Teimei is never visually represented, and in the third, she is depicted in a removed fashion, never actively involved with the citizen recipients of Red Cross charity. Although coverage of the Imperial Family was always subject to censorship laws, in the two months immediately following the disaster the state directly controlled and heavily censored the press, through the end of November of 1923, just prior to the publication of the images analyzed here. Thus the representation of Empress Teimei as imperial mother was a state-constructed phenomenon. The images which will be examined presently show an alternate role for Teimei; rather than the distant monarch who gazes over the people, or the role-model military mother, in the weeks following the disaster she was directly involved with caring for her subjects.

In *Fujin Gahō* on November 1, 1923 Empress Teimei was shown visiting orphaned children at the Red Cross Society Hospital at Shibuya. Titled *Kōgōheika risai byōji ni okotoba o tamafu* (皇后陛下罹災病児にお言葉を賜ふ, Her Majesty the Empress Expresses her Condolences to the Suffering Children), this photograph provides a distinctive example of Empress Teimei and her maternal role in society, as the Empress visits child victims of the Great Kantō Earthquake of

the same year. As with many of the photographs of the Imperial Family, the image was widely distributed across a variety of news and general interest publications. In the image the Empress, dressed in modest but fashionable attire, meets with three small children who sit in the portico of a wooden building, two of their attendants bowing deeply in the background. The three children make eye contact with the Empress, whose back is turned to the camera. With her two suited attendants to her left side, and another male attendant at the right border of the photograph, Teimei is leaning slightly towards the three victims, and it appears that she is stepping towards them as she provides solace for the distressed youths. In the photograph, Teimei is directly looking at three small citizens of Japan, each of whom look back at her. In using children in these images, eye contact with the monarch was acceptable; the children were young enough to not be expected to conform to the strict conventions of behavior for an imperial visit. This is contrasted with the adult subjects in the Shibuya image who avert their gaze and either bow deeply at the waist, or from a kneeling position, exhibiting their deep respect for her exalted status. By using both adults and children in the image, the Empress was shown both as a respected leader, and also a direct, personable caretaker, embodying the concept of imperial mother.<sup>385</sup>

A second photograph layout, *Kōgōheika Teidai byōin goimon* (皇后陛下帝大病院御慰問, Her Majesty the Empress Visits the Imperial Hospital), also published on November 1, 1923 shows Empress Teimei as she exits the Imperial University Hospital after visiting some of the young victims of the earthquake. In this layout, the upper photograph, which shows the visage of

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<sup>385</sup> Teimei's devotion to her subjects also worked to prove her relevance, something which was crucial in the post-earthquake environment. The Emperor and Empress were on holiday in the mountains of Nikkō, nearly one hundred miles from Tokyo, when the earthquake struck, and may not have immediately understood the magnitude of the calamity. Furthermore, there was a slight crisis of confidence in the imperial lineage in the chaotic months surrounding the disaster; questions over succession, the nuptials of the Crown Prince, Confucian beliefs in the shift of the ruling line in the aftermath of a revolution or disaster, and the blood lineage of the Emperor to Amaterasu (but not the Empress) were all circulating in light of Emperor Taishō's absence and Crown Prince Hirohito's regency. See Hara Takeshi, *Kōgōkō* [Thoughts on the Empress] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2015), 363-364.

the monarch, is contrasted with a photograph of the hospitalized children, with one specific child, Ichiro, as being singled out as the recipient of her compassion, and visually featured in a small oval-shaped photograph. The photograph of Teimei as she strides through the hospital complex is not particularly remarkable, as she is represented in a similar fashion to her standard pre-earthquake appearance; she is accompanied by three men, and attired in the same reserved, yet vogue, garb as in the photograph where she visited the child victims in Shibuya. That she is contrasted with her subjects in a separate image is also standard for representations of the Empress in the Taishō period. What is of note about the image is the singling out of one young victim, Ichirō, who received Teimei's attention. In most Empress imagery from the early twentieth century, the Empress is shown with anonymous crowds of commoners to greet her in her public appearances—lines of students, masses of Red Cross members, or throngs of citizens on the streets are all envisioned as the onlookers of imperial activity. In this image, although Ichirō is not placed within the same photograph as Empress Teimei, he was clearly identified as the recipient of Imperial compassion. Using an individual, and particularly a child, allowed for a fully articulated vision of Teimei's kindness and empathy—citizens in Tokyo viewing this image could imagine their own children, or the children of their family or neighborhood, all of whom experienced some form of suffering and hardship in the days after the disaster. Subjects in other parts of the nation could also personally relate to this photograph; there is no part of the Japanese archipelago which does not experience earthquakes, and the nurturing aspect of the human relationship exhibited in this image reinforced the *ryōsai kenbo* ideal of mothering.<sup>386</sup> This photograph also represents a return to the caring, conventionally feminine, one-on-one image that Empress Shōken exhibited on the pages of *Fujin Gahō*.

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<sup>386</sup> It also would have reinforced the charitable and philanthropic activities of upper-middle class women who raised funds in times of disaster and war.

By showing the Empress, a sovereign whose husband was believed to be divine and who held an exalted position in society herself, together with the smallest victims of natural disaster, whose families were of the common classes, these two images aptly illustrate the compassion of Empress Teimei in a time of disaster. In leaving the enclave of the Imperial Palace and visiting with those who had experienced direct hardship, she personified the role of the kindhearted ruler. Although through the course of her reign she used her monarchical status to support charity work, these activities are rarely documented in photographs. The chaotic weeks in the wake of the 1923 disaster were therefore an anomaly in the normally highly standardized imagery of the Imperial Family, one which allowed for a more motherly, directly involved Empress to appear.

In his book on Empress Teimei, *Kōgōkō* (皇后考, Thoughts on the Empress), Hara Takeshi discusses her appearances in the post-earthquake media, arguing that the Imperial Family used the newspapers and magazines to convey their messages to citizen-victims in the weeks after the disaster. Hara draws comparisons to the video messages created by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko in the days after the 3/11 earthquake in 2011, when the contemporary monarchs used the same media-based strategy to express their condolences and concerns for the public. Hara also points out the absence of Emperor Taishō in the 1923 messages, and that Empress Teimei took her husband's place as a political actor.<sup>387</sup> Hara's argument reinforces the point that Empress Teimei was an active agent in creating messages of compassion and charity in the post-earthquake months.

The November 1, 1923 Shibuya photograph is addressed by Jennifer Weisenfeld in her book, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923*.

Weisenfeld states of the image that:

This scene symbolically suggested that the state was serving as surrogate

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<sup>387</sup> Hara Takeshi, *Kōgōkō*, 368.

parents for the orphans and that the nation was one large compassionate family. Images of the empress visiting her injured subjects in makeshift shelters harkened back to previous imperial acts of consolation... engendering widespread appreciation for benevolent imperial rule. Together with the innumerable images of the prince regent surveying the damaged cityscape and consulting with government officials... the empress's presence among refugees reinforced the image of state compassion.<sup>388</sup>

In *Imaging Disaster*, Weisenfeld discusses the visual culture that surrounded the 1923 earthquake. In her analysis of mass media, photography, postcards, prints, and paintings, she includes a discussion of the Imperial Family and their role in keeping the peace in the wake of the disaster. Weisenfeld comments on the importance of the imperial family by stating, “Under the auspices of the government, the mass media immediately began a moral campaign to create social solidarity under the purportedly august and enlightened rulership of the imperial family, with the emperor as the pater familias of the national family-state.”<sup>389</sup> She continues by supporting this statement with photographic examples of Hirohito in military uniform, examining the damage to the capital on horseback.<sup>390</sup> In the two months immediately following the disaster the state controlled and heavily censored the press, through the end of November 1923, making the media an arm of the government.<sup>391</sup>

While Weisenfeld argues for the Imperial Family as a crucial tool for maintaining state control in the weeks after the disaster, she does not address the absence of Emperor Taishō himself in the visual landscape of 1923. The visible imperial figures in the aftermath of the disaster were Crown Prince Hirohito, Empress Teimei, and some other, less prominent members of the Imperial Household. Among these publically viewed figures, Empress Teimei was the

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<sup>388</sup> Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 166.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55. Weisenfeld writes of the “Notification of Request for Cooperation” which she argues, “effectively turned all public media into quasi-official organs of the state.”

monarch with the highest status in 1923. As a result, while the promotion and role of the Emperor as father of the nation was certainly important for maintaining national unity, it was the role of the empress as mother of the nation which was visible to the public. The feminized, maternal role for Empress Teimei which was seen in the two aforementioned photographs was a departure from her compassionate, yet distant role as leader of the Red Cross (see Chapter Three), and was a very different form of messaging than was seen in the images of her in front of military affairs. This version of the Empress, as a compassionate, actively involved maternal figure for the Empire, which reflected the persona of her conventionally feminine predecessor, was to be short lived. Once life returned to normal in the months after the earthquake, the wedding of the Crown Prince and Princess, and the transition to the Shōwa monarchy would dominate the headlines on the Imperial Family.

A third disaster photograph was published in *Fujin Gahō* on January 1, 1924. This image, titled *Kōgōheika heitan byōin e gyōkei* (皇后陛下兵站病院へ行啓, Her Majesty the Empress Visiting a Military Hospital), is earthquake related, but shows the Empress in less of a maternal role, and more of a diplomatic one as she transitioned back to her role as imperial proxy. She is pictured leaving the field hospital which was sent from the United States, and is accompanied by two male figures. The Empress walks out from a large tent, and has a serious, downward gaze. On the facing page of the magazine are two additional photographs, one of Crown Princess Nagako visiting the Meiji Shrine and one of Crown Princess Nagako and her family visiting a field hospital, with the title, *Kuninomiya goikka tairin* (久邇宮御一家台臨, Visitations of the Honorable Kuninomiya House). Both of the images were taken in the preceding months. Interestingly, the Azabu field hospital photograph depicts the Princess in traditional clothing, perhaps a reminder of comforting traditions in the post-earthquake days when it felt as if modernity and modern life betrayed so many. Further, there are three small graphic images of

chrysanthemum flowers that complete the two-page layout, providing a stable, peaceful symbol of the Imperial Household. Although the horror of the disaster was still fresh in the minds of the Japanese people, and the rebuilding efforts were still underway, this photograph and the accompanying images on the page can be read as an effort to move on from the immediacy of the calamity, and to imagine the rebuilding process. The image of the Empress, together with male associates, is a change from the two feminine, caring images discussed in previous paragraphs. In this photograph we see Teimei returning to her previous position as an imperial proxy, and away from the more motherly post-earthquake empress persona.<sup>392</sup>

The image of Empress Teimei as an orthodox imperial mother was short-lived in the aftermath of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake. Her compassionate and conventionally feminine deportment and activities, such as visiting child victims in hospital settings, reflected the public image of her predecessor Empress Shōken, whose compassion was envisioned with visits to the ill and infirm.<sup>393</sup> In this sense, Empress Teimei's role as an exemplar of Taishō *ryōsai kenbo* values shifted to reflect the importance of feminine caretaking in the post-earthquake weeks. These distinctive photographs, while representing a brief turn in her image, are an important nuance in the larger discourse of Empress Teimei and her relationship to Taishō period gender politics. The three photographs discussed here show how her image was malleable when necessary, and how a crisis of national consequence could quickly bring a conservative turn in

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<sup>392</sup> This concept of the empress as a substitute for the emperor in the post-earthquake days is, as discussed above, argued by Hara, *Kōgōkō*, 364. Hara uses the phrase, “天皇に代わる政治的主体として” to describe her activities. I have translated this as “taking the place of the emperor as a political actor.”

<sup>393</sup> Empress Shōken's efforts in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 were publicized in the press with her activities later recorded in painted format for inclusion in the *Meiji kaiga-kan* (see Chapter Two). Shōken's activities are addressed by Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, who argue that the mobilization efforts of women of the nobility and Imperial Family on the home front were used to deemphasize class differences, showing that Japanese of all social classes were involved in the war effort. This was an attempt to placate the conscripted masses, and also to show that the upper classes were involved with hard work. See: Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, “The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 151-174, 158-159.

values. In the remaining three years of the Taishō period Empress Teimei's image never returned to the level of visibility and centrality that she had in the pre-earthquake years. Crown Prince Hirohito was married on January 26, 1924, after the ceremony was delayed due to the 1923 calamity. As such, the post-recovery era was that of Hirohito and Nagako, the newlywed couple who would ascend to the throne in only two years' time.

There were many harsh public voices of the early 1920s which stated that the new woman was an unacceptable public figure, and many who voiced negative critical opinions on the increasingly progressive activities of women, all while Teimei was appearing in public as an imperial proxy.<sup>394</sup> While Teimei's public image in the pre-earthquake regency years was relatively unorthodox, it was not outside of the realm of imperial propriety. However, the earthquake's aftermath left an opening for a variety of conservative turns, in the months after the calamity, and the empress' image as published in mass media outlets required a change.<sup>395</sup> This conventional imperial mother version of the Empress was to be brief, and as society regained its footing, so did the imperial image return to conventions established in the pre-earthquake 1920s media. Teimei once again appeared before large meetings of the Red Cross, and upon the occasion of the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of Taishō and Teimei many commemorative images of the 1915 imperial studio portraits were published as postcards and in print media outlets. Teimei, however, never returned to the levels of visibility or importance that she had between 1919 and 1923.

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<sup>394</sup> See Lowy, *The Japanese "New Woman."*

<sup>395</sup> Some went so far as to blame women for the event, believing that the calamity was a divine punishment for the new, modern liberal social mores. For illustrations and further explanation of the vigilantes and the moralizing impulses which followed the earthquake see: Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster*, 167-187. Koreans in particular were persecuted in the weeks after the earthquake, as some blamed them for the fires and other secondary disasters that occurred after the initial earthquake event. Rumors swirled that Koreans were detonating bombs throughout Tokyo, and both police and vigilante groups sought out and killed those who were known or believed to be Korean.

Teimei's public appearances in the aftermath of a calamity of immense proportions worked to keep the Imperial Household relevant in a time of crisis. Teimei was a maternal presence, harkening back to Shōken's imperial mother ideology, but was also exemplifying the good imperial wife tending to her duties. In the months after the disaster, a moralizing impulse arose across Japanese society. The Ministry of Education published a series for use in the national school curriculum titled *Shinsai ni kansuru kyōiku shiryō* (震災に関する教育資料, Education Materials Related to the Earthquake), which emphasized loyalty to the emperor, sacrifice, and bravery as critical social values.<sup>396</sup> As Emperor Taishō was ill, Teimei's public appearances as a devoted imperial mother were crucial in promoting these morals, particularly in the context of women's magazines, as this section has shown. This conservative turn was reflected in many of the photographs of Empress Teimei which appeared in the final years of the Taishō period, particularly as published in *Fujin Gahō*. In the three years after the earthquake and prior to the start of the Shōwa period, the use of Empress Teimei's image in the press decreased (see Chapter Three), and those that were published frequently featured activities closer to the *kokubo* model of Empress Shōken than the more progressive model that Empress Teimei commonly exhibited during the regency period. It is these late conservative images to which I will now turn.

#### Turning to Tradition in the Final Taishō Years

Much of the Imperial Family press coverage in early 1924 addressed the wedding of Crown Prince Hirohito (Shōwa) and Crown Princess Nagako (Kōjun). The following year, on December 6, 1925, the young couple bore their first of seven children, Princess Shigeko. Thus, the Crown

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 187.

Prince and Princess dominated news of the Imperial Family until the passing of Emperor Taishō on December 25, 1926. In these waning years of Taishō reign, Empress Teimei's image grew to be conservative in nature; she was imaged as frequenting religious institutions and praying for the health of her husband, or in photographs that worked to transition the monarchy to the Crown Prince and Princess. In the years after the earthquake, Teimei's image never returned to the active imperial proxy of the regency period. An examination of these images will conclude the analysis of Empress Teimei in the Taishō period, and display how this return to convention and tradition in the late Taishō years continued into Teimei's days as Empress Dowager in the Shōwa period, which will be covered in the Conclusion.

Late in the Taishō period, a full-page single image of Empress Teimei at Datokuji appeared on page six of the February 1, 1925 edition of *Fujin Gahō*.<sup>397</sup> In this image Empress Teimei is smiling, and appears engaged in conversation with a gentleman who is turned away from the camera, while a monk leads the Empress and two accompanying men through the forested grounds of the temple. The large trees in the background and the low horizon ground the photograph, and emphasize the natural beauty of the temple site. These visual elements also serve to express how expansive the grounds of the temple are, and combined with the monk's traditional clothing, to place the Empress' Kansai visit in history and tradition. In the photographs of her visit to the ancient capital region, Empress Teimei maintained her confident demeanor, but turned away from events where she intermingled with military officials or acted as an imperial proxy. In the context of photographs published in *Fujin Gahō*, Teimei visited predominantly religious institutions in these final Taishō years, praying and emphasizing traditional Japanese religious practices. This return to conservative *ryōsai kenbo* values was

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<sup>397</sup> For an image see: *Kōgōheika* (Her Majesty the Empress at the Daitokuji Temple, Kyoto), *Fujin Gahō*, February 1, 1925, page 6.

indicative of the cultural climate in the mid-1920s. In the latter half of 1920s, Taiwan and Korea were already annexed as colonies (in 1895 and 1911, respectively), and in 1924 the United States banned Japanese immigration, adding insult to what Japan viewed as poor outcomes of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.<sup>398</sup> Furthermore, the Japanese economy in the 1920s was in a period of deflation, which generally leads to political conservatism.<sup>399</sup> Each of these events, combined with many others, pushed Japan further down the road to imperialism, and led to a dismantling of the open, liberal mores of the late 1910s and early 1920s. In the context of photographs published in women's magazines, this conservative turn in imagery reflects political changes which occurred between the early 1920s and the early 1930s. Between these years images of women, and those of Empress Teimei, evolved from the soft promotion of the military mother as a social role which women desired to emulate, to the mandated service and nationalism featured in the imperial propaganda of the age of empire.

The imperial excursions (行幸, *gyōkō*) were an important visual component of the imperial institution throughout the modern era.<sup>400</sup> Emperor Meiji took 102 tours of the nation during the 45 years of his reign, compared to his predecessors who only took three in the entire 260 years of Tokugawa power.<sup>401</sup> On the issue of the imperial excursions, Carol Gluck cites the prominent Meiji period statesman Inoue Kaoru, who stated in 1878 that “the emperor’s visiting

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<sup>398</sup> Japan did not receive territory at Versailles, as was expected, and there was no clause on racial equality at the League of Nations, also an insult to Japan.

<sup>399</sup> For an analysis of the inter-war economy see: Masato Shizume, “The Japanese Economy during the Interwar Period: Instability in the Financial System and the Impact of the World Depression,” *Institute for Monetary and Economic Studies*, May 2009, [https://www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps\\_rev/rev\\_2009/data/rev09e02.pdf](https://www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps_rev/rev_2009/data/rev09e02.pdf). The period under consideration here, the mid-1920s was the start of a slide toward conservatism, which would reach full fruition in the 1930s and 40s. The poor economy would reach crisis points in 1927 and 1931, immediately before the invasion of Manchuria. This move from economic crisis to right-leaning politics is part of a larger modern, global pattern. See: Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch, “Going to Extremes: Politics after Financial Crises, 1870-2014” (October 2015). CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP10884.

<sup>400</sup> For a complete discussion of these tours, see: Ozawa Asae, *Meiji no kōshitsu kenchiku: kokka ga motometa 'wafū' zō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2008).

<sup>401</sup> Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 74.

all parts of Japan not only informs the people of the emperor's great virtue but also offers the opportunity of displaying direct imperial rule in the flesh, thus dispelling misgivings about monarchical government."<sup>402</sup> As argued in Chapter Three, during the period of Emperor Taishō's invisibility between 1920 and 1926, Empress Teimei conducted these tours as an imperial proxy; in a time of global uncertainty for monarchical rule, it was crucial for the Imperial Family to maintain their visibility, and to uphold their validity and importance as the heads of Japanese society. While during the regency period it was not uncommon for Empress Teimei to visit shrines and temples, particularly on her tours of the Kansai region, seeing her in the same space as a Buddhist monk, or any religious practitioner, was relatively rare. The presence of these practitioners in the late Taishō *Fujin Gahō* images leads the viewer to believe that Teimei was visiting these temples and shrines for religious purposes, not just to view historic cultural sites.<sup>403</sup> Additionally, the Daitokuji image exhibits a great deal about gender politics, and Teimei personally, in the final Taishō years. The Empress walks confidently, with her head tilted in a coy fashion, revealing confidence and a casual feeling. Two of the three men in the image are turned towards Teimei, with the third gazing downward. Teimei is the figure in this image with the greatest agency—she is the central character—and seemingly the person driving the activity, yet unlike the military mother imagery of the pre-earthquake years, here her outgoing personality is tempered by the traditional setting. This photograph exhibits the turn towards conservatism and away from a visible, active empress in the mid-1920s, a trend which would continue into the militaristic 1930s.

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>403</sup> Her intention to pray or conduct rites is assumed in these photographs; she is not shown as directly participating in religious activity, however, the presence of religious figures likely led viewers to believe that there was a religious connotation to her visit, rather than a purely secular purpose.

Concerning the Empress' imperial tours, historian Hara Takeshi points out that, for the most part, after Taishō fell ill in 1920, the Empress alone prayed for the Emperor's recovery at shrines and temples, and that the imperial inspection tours were frequently repeated during the regency, with the Empress in a prominent role.<sup>404</sup> As published in a women's magazine, by displaying Teimei tending to her husband's physical illness in a religious way, this photograph serves to place her as a role model for women's duties in the sacred realm, part of her tempered, more conservative post-earthquake image. Through most of modern imperial history, with a few exceptions, empresses did not attend to the personal religious life of the Imperial Family in public spaces, but rather, as the photographs and prints examined in this dissertation have shown, empresses tended to larger, national and diplomatic concerns such as visiting Industrial Exhibitions, or leading charity groups. In the Daitokuji photograph, we see the Empress tending to the spiritual care of her ailing spouse, and concurrently tending to her obligations as an imperial proxy. She is exhibiting her activities as a dutiful wife and a responsible monarch, modeling both *kokubo* and *ryōsai kenbo* values, as she appeared at historic religious institutions. In many ways this mirrors the activity of Empress Shōken, thus showing how Teimei in the post-1923 years exhibited more conservative values.

In a later example of Teimei's position as keeper of tradition, on May 1, 1925 the Empress' photograph was contrasted with that of Crown Prince Hirohito and Crown Princess Nagako.<sup>405</sup> Published just sixteen months after the wedding of Hirohito and Nagako, the three-photograph arrangement visualizes the lineage of the monarchy in a fashion that prepares the

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<sup>404</sup> Hara, "Kokutai' no shikakuka" [The Visualization of the 'kokutai'] in Ō o meguru shisen [The Gaze of the Ruler] ed. Amino Yoshihiko, vol. 10 of Tennō to ōken o kangaeru [Thoughts on the Emperor and Royal Power], 135-159, 146.

<sup>405</sup> For an image see: Two-page layout, *Kōgōheika shimokamo e* (Her Majesty the Empress at Shimokamo) and *Kōtaishidenka hidenka to godōjō* (The Crown Prince and Crown Princess Ride Together), *Fujin Gahō*, May 1, 1925, page 47.

citizenry for the transition of rule. The right half of the two-page layout consists of a full-page photograph of Crown Prince Hirohito in a frock coat and silk top hat. The caption above the oval-framed photograph states, *Kōtaishidenka hidenka to godōjō* (皇太子殿下妃殿下と御同乗, The Crown Prince and Crown Princess Ride Together). In the full-page image, Hirohito is shown walking alone in an unidentifiable location, tipping his hat, and gazing away from the camera as he progresses. It is noteworthy that Hirohito is dressed in civilian clothing, and is pictured solo—there are two visible figures in the distant background, but their identity is indiscernible. The young prince is imaged as facing the center of the page layout, and his forward posture leads the eye towards the opposing page. On the facing page are two photographs: Empress Teimei visiting Shimogamo Shrine in Kyoto on the top, and Crown Prince Hirohito and Crown Princess Nagako riding in a horse-drawn carriage on the bottom with the title *Kōgōheika shimokamo e* (皇后陛下下賀茂へ, Her Majesty the Empress at Shimogamo) at the top of the page. The image of Teimei as she walks across the shrine grounds with her entourage provides grounding in tradition, while the Crown Prince and Princess provide a visual representation of the preparedness of the Empire for transition to the new imperial era upon which Japan would shift after the death of Emperor Taishō. In the context of the overall layout, Teimei is small—her face is hardly visible beneath a large hat and billowing dress, and her form is dwarfed by the large temple buildings which surround her. In this context, she is not accompanied by a religious figure, but walks alone, her ladies-in-waiting and other handlers surrounding her at a distance, all following a single priest who is, at the far right of the photograph, partially obscured by the page break. In examining the layout in its entirety, Teimei is a supporting figure; with the rise of the next generation of the Imperial Family, her position gradually faded to the background. While the Crown Prince and Princess exhibit youth, and the potential for fecundity, and the Crown

Prince alone represents the power of rule, Teimei's role is to remind the viewer that Taishō was still the Emperor, and that tradition substantiated the Imperial Household.

As the health troubles of the Emperor were reported in the newspapers with an increasing frequency in 1925 and 1926, images showing the current Empress together with the Crown Prince, and images of the heir apparent himself grew increasingly important for a smooth transition of rule, just as they were with the succession from Meiji to Taishō (see Chapter Two). By placing the future sovereigns within the familiar context of the Imperial Family in an open carriage, a subject which was popularly used to represent the Emperor and Empress since the Meiji period, the May 1, 1925 photographs would have helped the Japanese public to become accustomed to the successive heads of state. This photograph, as placed within the context of the overall layout, also serves to reinforce the strength and vitality of the Imperial Family during the regency period; as discussed in Chapter Three, despite the ill health and invisibility of Emperor Taishō, these images exhibit the Empress and the Crown Prince and Princess engaging in everyday activities which proved the health and continuity of the Imperial Household.<sup>406</sup> Furthermore, much like the multitude of lithographs which were published and distributed in the years immediately after the wedding of Teimei and Taishō in 1900, images of Crown Prince Hirohito and Crown Princess Nagako, particularly when displayed together with images of Empress Teimei, served to solidify the imperial lineage within the minds of the Japanese citizenry. Like Shōken before her, Teimei acts as the figure of continuity in transitioning to the new monarchs.

The photographs from *Fujin Gahō* as published in the final two years of the Taishō period show the transition of the monarchy to the successive Shōwa period. The images also

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<sup>406</sup> In this context, I am contrasting “everyday activities” such as tending to diplomatic and family affairs, or appearing at events of national importance to the frequent reports of Taishō's failing physical health which peppered newspapers throughout late 1925 and into 1926.

show a conservative turn in gender politics, imaging women in supportive roles, and as the keepers of tradition. This will be further seen in the Conclusion with the image of Empress Kōjun in the early Shōwa period. Empress Teimei grew to act as a more conventional empress in the final days of Taishō, appearing as a carrier of tradition and working to ease the transition to her son's rule. In the Shōwa period, Teimei faded to the background of imperial imagery, making infrequent public appearances throughout her reign as Empress Dowager. The photographs from *Fujin Gahō* in 1924-1926 show how she reflected a conservative turn in society in the post-earthquake years, appearing less as an assertive imperial proxy and tending to more conventionally feminine imperial positions.

### Conclusions

This chapter examined the ways in which Empress Teimei's photographic representations in the pages of *Fujin Gahō* responded to current events in Taishō Japan, from promoting the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology to caring for earthquake victims, and eventually taking a conservative turn. Teimei's image was at times that of a military mother, a national mother, and a wife. In many ways she mirrored the broader trends for women to play increasingly important roles outside the home, yet these roles, as seen in the pages of *Fujin Gahō*, were always kept within the confines of appropriate deportment. Women's roles may have been expanding, but they continued to be kept in check. By investigating contradictory concerns over women's roles in society and the home, as well as reactions to events such as military expansion and the Great Kantō Earthquake, this chapter revealed the nuances of Taishō gender politics as seen in the image of Empress Teimei as *kokubo*, or mother of the nation.

This chapter used a set of images as published in *Fujin Gahō* between 1905 and 1926 to investigate how Empress Teimei was represented in Taishō period women's magazines. In doing

so, the focus was turned to gender politics and how reading imperial imagery as published in a women's magazine can inform our understanding of gender in early twentieth-century Japan. As the years just after the First World War were ones of great societal change, variations in acceptable gender roles were also occurring. On the one hand, many officials were apprehensive about the woman problem, and had concerns about young working women becoming too liberal and free-thinking. On the other hand, military officials fretted about housewives being too insular, and not having the skills and preparedness as both individuals and family leaders to prepare their sons and the home front for military activity. These contradictory impulses resulted in the promotion of a specific version of the *ryōsai kenbo* in the early 1920s. Change in the way women were perceived, and modifications in accepted modes of femininity were inevitable in light of the woman problem. Yet, these adjustments were never drastic, and generally maintained an element of political conservatism.

A magazine such as *Fujin Gahō*, with a reserved, established, and relatively older readership was a prime location to publish images of Empress Teimei exemplifying the new characteristics of *ryōsai kenbo* in the 1920s. In images where she is involved with her son's military training, and in post-1923 earthquake images where she provides a nurturing presence for her subjects, this chapter has argued for her strong, feminine aura as a complex picture of Imperial gender in the 1920s. In experimenting with how the various new roles for women could fit Japanese society, and what types of roles were appropriate for women to play, the concept of serving the nation was never distant, for either the average woman or for the empress. In the early Shōwa years of expanding empire and in the lead-up to the Pacific War, these images and roles would change yet again.

## Conclusion

On December 25, 1926, after a long bout of illness, Emperor Taishō passed away from a heart attack at the Hayama Imperial Villa in Kanagawa Prefecture. Immediately, together with the Imperial Regalia, the role of the head monarch of Japan was passed on to his son Hirohito, or Emperor Shōwa. This change was not a surprise; Taishō's illnesses were reported in the media with regularity for most of 1926, including the onset of his pneumonia in early December. Empress Teimei's devoted visitations to her husband's sick bed throughout his decline were a primary part of the media narrative surrounding the sovereign's illness; as the Emperor himself was not making public appearances, the story of his caring wife maintaining a bedside vigil accompanied the majority of news stories reporting the physical condition of the monarch. Although Crown Prince Hirohito played a large public role since the start of the regency in 1920, and would not formally ascend the throne until 1928, with the death of Taishō, a new era had begun.<sup>407</sup>

The official change in reign accompanied broad changes in Japanese society which had their roots in the preceding decade, and which would continue through the end of the Pacific War. The Japanese military and political establishment was in the midst of imperial expansion; in 1911 Korea was annexed as part of the Japanese empire, and in 1931, Japanese armed forces occupied Manchuria. Alongside the expansion of empire came an increase in conservatism. The late 1920s witnessed economic depression, political assassination attempts, an escalation in the military presence in both the empire and the metropole, and social unrest. All of these factors led

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<sup>407</sup> The majority of the ascension ceremonies took place in late 1928, as time was needed for the extensive preparations.

Japan to move from a relatively open democratic society to one tightly controlled by the state.<sup>408</sup> Propaganda was used more frequently than ever before for shaping public opinion and maintaining support for the state during the late 1920s and 1930s, and the image of the Imperial Family played a significant role in state propaganda efforts.<sup>409</sup> By way of concluding, I will briefly outline Teimei's life and images after the death of her husband in 1926 to confirm the significant role she played not only during her rule, but also throughout her life.

The visual representation of the Imperial Family in the early Shōwa era was different than that of their predecessors in a few significant ways. As discussed in Chapter Four, Emperor Shōwa and Empress Kōjun were frequently depicted with their children as a nuclear family in photographs.<sup>410</sup> This was a distinct departure from images of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei, who were never placed within the same frame, and not shown together as a family unit with their children. As the Japanese public generally grew more comfortable with private, domestic life being exhibited in public, and as the empire expanded, leading to the promotion of the concept of Japanese nationals as a family beneath the emperor, the nuclear Imperial Family became a suitable role model image. In the October 1939 image (footnote 409), we see Emperor Shōwa seated at the center of his young, growing family. His facial expression and body position are neutral, as he is posed wearing a trim suit in a cushioned rattan chair. To the right are four of his children, including Crown Prince Tsugu, the future Emperor Akihito, who stands in a sailor's costume immediately at his father's side, holding a large feather. Empress Kōjun stands to the left of the photograph holding Princess Takako, then an infant, and just behind Princess

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<sup>408</sup> Andrew Gordon characterizes this time by stating, "A new political order that bore great similarity to the fascist systems of Germany and Italy had become ascendant and would plunge Japan and Asia into a disastrous war." Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 181.

<sup>409</sup> For a full examination of Imperial propaganda see: Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

<sup>410</sup> For an image see: *Emperor Shōwa and his family in the inner precinct of the Meiji Palace, October 1939*, published in: *Tennō yondai no shōzō*, 78.

Takatsukasa. Empress Kōjun is the only member of the family to smile at the camera, her expression warm and gentle beneath a fashionable hat. The portrait is set in the inner precinct of the Meiji Palace, and while mostly out of focus, the indication of traditional architecture and tidy, well-maintained trees and shrubbery in the background of the photograph provide an aura of calm.<sup>411</sup> The Emperor is visually set apart in the photograph by the large chair in which he sits, and the open space above his head. In addition to his central position, that he alone has no other family member in front of or behind him, and that he is the only person seated, adds to his distinction within the photograph. This type of image was innovated with the Shōwa Imperial Family, and posed family photographs of the Imperial Family are a practice that continues to this day. Empress Teimei appeared with three of her sons on one occasion at the end of her reign, and Emperor Taishō with his children on one occasion when they were small. Never did Emperor Meiji or Emperor Taishō pose together with their entire family for a photographic portrait.

An additional change which occurred with the switch to the Shōwa Imperial Family was a return to the conventional imperial gender roles which were established under Emperor Meiji. Three days after succeeding to the throne, on December 28, 1926, Hirohito issued a series of imperial edicts, mainly to establish the primacy of the military in the social order, and also to inform the public of political continuity. Within his message, Hirohito promised to, “abide by the constitution, ‘cultivate inherited virtue and...maintain intact the glorious tradition set by our ancestors,’ starting with ‘Our imperial grandfather,’ whose ‘educational developments’ and ‘military achievements’ had ‘enhanced the grandeur of the empire.’”<sup>412</sup> With this address, he immediately connected himself to the strong historic figure of Emperor Meiji, rather than his

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<sup>411</sup> The Meiji Palace (明治宮殿, Meiji kyūden) was the term for the Imperial Palace between the Meiji period and the end of World War II. It is currently termed *kōkyō* (皇居), or Imperial Palace. The former structure was destroyed in May of 1945 during the firebombing of Tokyo. The current structure of the Imperial Palace was built in 1968.

<sup>412</sup> Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 182.

own father, who was plagued by illness for the last six years of his life, and who, while popular, never took on the strong masculine presence that Meiji and Hirohito did. In these edicts, and in the successive imagery of the Shōwa Imperial Family, we see an emperor who is affiliated with military affairs and an empress who is associated with domestic concerns, particularly childrearing.<sup>413</sup> Together Emperor Shōwa and Empress Kōjun had seven children, two sons and five daughters.<sup>414</sup> This return to conventional gender roles in the late 1920s and early 1930s was related to the upturn in conservatism, and the expansion of Empire and the military, both of which advocated for more traditional gender norms.

A final change in the imperial image was the large-scale expansion of the *hōanden* (奉安殿) and *hōankura* (奉安庫), small safes or structures used to store the *goshinei* (御真影, sacred imperial images), which began to be used in the Taishō era, but grew in popularity during the Shōwa period. The *hōanden* and *hōankura* were mentioned briefly in Chapter Two, but as the numbers and visibility of these structures increased dramatically during the Shōwa years, they necessitate mention here as one of the significant differences in the imperial visual representation between Taishō and Shōwa. In particular, the *hōanden*, which were generally built on the grounds of schools, were used regularly in military simulation exercises in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>415</sup> The Shinto style of architecture, combined with the rhetoric of *tennōsei* (天皇制, the ideology of the Emperor, as discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation), and the military exercises, were fully in support of the nationalist propaganda which saturated all aspects of Japanese life in the imperial age. Although the doors to the *hōanden* were often closed, the

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<sup>413</sup> For an image see: *Empress Kōjun and Crown Prince Akihito*, 1934, published in *Shōwa no omokōtaigōsama* (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2000).

<sup>414</sup> Six of the children lived to adulthood. Princess Sachiko passed away in 1928 at six months of age.

<sup>415</sup> This is in contrast with the Taishō era, wherein the structures were used primarily for the security of the images. For an image see: *Hōanden*, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, 1943. Photo from: *University of Vienna* “Religion in Japan” [https://www.univie.ac.at/rel\\_jap/an/Geschichte/Staatsshinto/Kyoiku\\_chokugo](https://www.univie.ac.at/rel_jap/an/Geschichte/Staatsshinto/Kyoiku_chokugo).

students who gathered before the structures were familiar with the *goshinei* images housed inside, and were highly aware of the symbolism of the structure, which embodied the sacred presence of the emperor as the head of the religious and political establishments.

While the Shōwa Emperor and Empress were frequently viewed in public in the 1930s with their young family, Empress Teimei, in her role as Empress Dowager, appeared in the media with less frequency after the death of her husband. Naturally, the Imperial Household Agency was more interested in promoting the current and future monarchs, and the vitality of the imperial institution, and as a result, Teimei predominantly lived a private life between 1926 and her death in 1951. Teimei did make a few media appearances in her twenty-five years as Empress Dowager, but her public image in the years after her husband's passing changed to be that of a doting grandmother.

In one such instance in 1949, she appeared with her grandson, Akihito, as the two read a book together.<sup>416</sup> Teimei appears in a conservative black dress, which was her standard attire after the death of Emperor Taishō. The two are situated in a nondescript room, Teimei seated in a plush upholstered chair with her grandson leaning over her shoulder. They are gazing at a book of photographs, and the young Akihito's expression seems to convey genuine interest in what his grandmother is showing him. The moment is intimate, and exhibits both filial piety and the continuation of the imperial lineage, something which was important in the years just after Japan's surrender to the U.S., particularly for the Imperial Family (I will return to this point later).

On May 17, 1951, at age 66, Empress Teimei died of a heart attack at her residence, Omiya Palace in Tokyo. Japan was on the verge of immense changes, as only one year after her

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<sup>416</sup> For an image see: *Empress Dowager Teimei and her grandson Akihito*, 1949, published in "Asahi Historical Photographs Library: War and People, 1940-1949," V. 5 *Asahi Shinbun Company*.

death the United States forces, which had occupied the nation since the end of the war in 1945, would leave, returning control back to the Japanese government (with the exception of Okinawa, which was occupied until 1972). In the early 1950s, the national economy was starting to recover from the devastating effects of the war, and Teimei's passing, the first major imperial event in the post-war period, was an important marker of the change in the family's status from political and military figures to cultural figures. Imperial funerals in the early twentieth century were commemorated as national holidays, and marked with grand processions, all of which were dictated by a series of imperial edicts and Imperial Household Law. In the years just after Japan conceded defeat in 1945, however, much of the Imperial Household Agency bureaucracy was dismantled or downsized, and the role of the Imperial Family in Japanese public life was significantly diminished as compared to the decades between the 1870s and 1940s. As a result, there was some uncertainty around what form Teimei's funeral should take, yet in the end a large state funeral was held.<sup>417</sup>

Teimei's passing was marked in Japanese newspapers with textual proclamations on May 17, followed by more in-depth coverage on the front pages of daily periodicals on the following day.<sup>418</sup> The photograph published in the *Asahi Shinbun* on May 18, 1951 shows Teimei in her years as the Empress Dowager, in a closely cropped image. The accompanying articles recount her life and the era of her rule. The image shows her not as a youthful empress, but rather as a grandmotherly dowager. A possible reason for this photographic selection was the new role that the Imperial Household took on in the postwar years. While Teimei's death sparked memories of the 1910s and 1920s, a time when the Imperial Family was at its height of power, to reminisce

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<sup>417</sup> The cost of the procession was estimated at \$222,000, which was paid for by the government. "Japanese Bury Dowager in Pomp," *New York Times*, June 23, 1951, 18. Another estimate put the cost at \$138,889. "Japanese Bury their Dowager Empress," *Life Magazine*, July 9, 1951, 33.

<sup>418</sup> For an image see: *Kōtaigōheika goseihō* (皇太后陛下御逝去, The Passing of her Majesty the Empress Dowager), *Asahi Shinbun*, May 18, 1951, page 1, Tokyo morning edition.

about the era of her rule was also to recall Japan at a time when it was on the road to empire, and in the build-up to the war years. With the painful memories of wartime destruction, the fire bombings and atomic bombings, and mass shortages of food and housing in the aftermath of the surrender all too clear in the minds of most Japanese citizens in the early 1950s, remembering Teimei at the height of her reign was fraught with challenging historical memories. The choice of a photograph of the Empress in her elder years carried many fewer recollections, and certainly less taxing ones at that.

In the book *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*, Yoshikuni Igarashi argues that, “Many Japanese emphasized culture but not politics in their attempt to construct new images of a nation against the political reality of the postwar period.”<sup>419</sup> With the funeral of Empress Teimei, there was a great opportunity to celebrate and reframe the culture of the Imperial Family, rather than their contested political role in the conflicts of the first half of the twentieth century. As a female leader, Teimei did not have the military image that her husband and son presented to the public. Upon her death, this positioned her memory to be reinterpreted in the milieu of the postwar, and for the memorialization of her life to support the then new image of the Imperial Family as cultural icons rather than political or military leaders.

In the postwar period, the Imperial Family took on an intellectual and cultural image. The emperors of Japan in the postwar period continued to be associated with Shinto ceremonies and rites, however, these were separated from government functions. The Imperial Family pursued intellectual activities, as they do today, including the academic study of biology, painting, and art history. In this way, their image shifted dramatically, as the post-war Constitution stipulated that

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<sup>419</sup> Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 73.

the emperor have no association with government affairs. This transition in the Imperial Family occurred immediately after the end of the war, and was part of the occupation effort to protect Emperor Shōwa from prosecution as a war criminal. Scholar Herbert Bix refers to this as the creation of the “symbol” monarchy, a term he uses to refer to the humanization of the emperor and the reform of the Imperial House in order to conserve the imperial institution.<sup>420</sup>

The reframing of Emperor Hirohito began with a photograph of the Emperor visiting General Douglas MacArthur at the United States Embassy on September 27, 1945, only weeks after Japan’s surrender. The image shows the two men standing next to each other in a large room at the embassy with curtained windows, Buddhist sculpture, ceramic wares, assorted furniture, and a potted bamboo plant in the background.<sup>421</sup> MacArthur, dressed in his military khaki uniform, stands with his hands on his waist, elbows projected behind him and hips slightly forward, gazing disinterestedly off into the distance. Hirohito, wearing a formal tuxedo, stands with his hands at his sides, head held high. Neither man appears particularly distinguished or comfortable in the photograph, nor does the informality of their positions vis-à-vis each other indicate the historic importance of their meeting. Historian Yoshikuni Igarashi has written extensively on the Hirohito-MacArthur image, reading it as a wedding photo representing the unity of the strong and masculine MacArthur with the feminine and helpless Hirohito, a dramatic departure from his militaristic prewar image.<sup>422</sup> While Igarashi’s interpretation is highly subjective, the point remains that the imperial image was to undergo a complete turn-around during the occupation years.<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Herbert P. Bix, “Inventing the ‘Symbol Monarchy’ in Japan, 1945-1952,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 21 (Summer 1995): 319-363.

<sup>421</sup> For an image see: *General Douglas MacArthur and Emperor Shōwa*, September 27, 1945, published in *Tennō no shōzō*, 86.

<sup>422</sup> Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory*.

<sup>423</sup> In November of the same year a more purposeful attempt to change the image of the Emperor came with his tours of the Kansai region, the removal of the *goshinei* from public schools and offices, and in January a speech on New

Occurring at the end of the occupation, and at a time when both the symbol monarchy and the US-Japan narrative was established, Empress Teimei's funeral was an event which cemented the postwar position of the Imperial Family as cultural symbols. Stephen Large argues that the funeral of Empress Teimei, as well as the investiture and wedding of the Crown Prince in the 1950s were "ceremonial occasions catered to a sense of popular nostalgia for the idealized cultural traditions of the court."<sup>424</sup> The domestic press coverage of her funeral included images of horse-drawn carriages, a symbol of the monarchy since the days of Emperor Meiji's processions, and was relatively brief; she was eulogized immediately after her death, and her funeral made the front pages of the daily newspapers when it occurred the following month.<sup>425</sup>

Teimei's death was marked with an imperial funeral procession in the style established by Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken only forty years earlier. Her State Funeral, which included the *rensō no gi* (歿葬の儀, Ceremony of the Funeral and Entombment), took place on June 22, 1951, after which she was buried at the Musashi Imperial Mausoleum (武蔵陵墓地, Musashi ryōbochi) in Hachiōji, just to the west of Tokyo. As mentioned in Chapter One, the funeral was conducted in accordance with various imperial edicts and imperial mortuary laws, which were put into place between 1909, just before the passing of Emperor Meiji, and 1926, immediately before the funeral of Emperor Taishō.

In addition to domestic press coverage, Teimei's funeral received attention in the international media. The global political climate had changed dramatically by 1951, and interest in Japan and Japanese culture was once again heightened in Europe and the United States in the

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Year's Day linking the modern monarchies of Japan. This was all part of what Bix discusses as the rebranding of the Imperial Family as a symbol monarchy. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy,'" 328-331.

<sup>424</sup> Stephen Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Shōwa Japan: A Political Biography* (London: Routledge Japanese Studies, 1996), n.p. (digital).

<sup>425</sup> For an image see: "The Honorific Remains Arriving at the Toshimagaoka Funeral Site" (豊島岡葬場に御着の御遺体 *Toshimagaoka sōjyō ni gochaku no goitai*), *Asahi Shinbun*, June 23, 1951, Tokyo evening edition, page 1.

post-war years. Magazines such as *Life* carried features which mentioned the funeral and briefly discussed the life of Empress Teimei.<sup>426</sup> This two-page photograph spread emphasizes Japanese traditional culture in the images, and reinforces that the citizens of Japan were ruled by democracy in 1951, and that they were the former subjects of Teimei. In doing so, this spread reminds readers of the grandeur of Japanese culture, but also that Japan's empire was a vestige of the past. The brief article states that after Taishō's death, Teimei, "silently watched the rise and fall of his Empire from the seclusion of the Omiya Palace."<sup>427</sup> In the images, it removes her power when referring to her as a "frail little Dowager Empress," and reinforces a vision of Japan as a culture stuck in the past. With photographs including peasant farming without machine labor, a steam engine, former subjects seated on straw mats in front of low, wooden structures, and Shinto priests in traditional costumes, the images of these pages do not exhibit Japan a world power which presented an economic or military threat.

Empress Teimei's monument at the Musashi Imperial Graveyard is a large earthen structure, similar to the style of a Buddhist stupa. The style of her grave, like that of her husband's, is in the same form that imperial monuments took since the twelfth century. Taishō and Teimei were the first to be buried near Tokyo; Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken are interred just outside of Kyoto, however, the Musashi Imperial Graveyard is now the designated location for future imperial funerary monuments. Teimei was the first empress to receive a large funeral monument equal in size to that of her husband. The concept of a substantial monument was also used in the burials of their successors, Emperor Shōwa and Empress Kōjun, however, the current Emperor and Empress have elected to be cremated and interred in a significantly smaller memorial. The site is relatively secluded, and is surrounded by a hilly, verdant landscape.

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<sup>426</sup> For an image see: "Japanese Bury Their Dowager Empress," *Life Magazine*, July 9, 1951, page 33-34.

<sup>427</sup> "Japanese Bury their Dowager Empress," *Life Magazine*, July 9, 1951,33.

It is not a popular spot for tourists, and visitation of the site is quite low, especially when contrasted with the very popular Imperial Palace and gardens at the center of Tokyo.

Starting with her introduction to her subjects in 1899, and leading up to her death in 1951, this dissertation investigated images of Empress Teimei in a variety of media. It examined the larger concept of imperial portraiture in Japan, and brought images of modern female rulers to the fore. Through an investigation of photography, prints, paintings, and postcards, this dissertation showed how Teimei's public image changed as a reaction to military concerns over motherhood, and how she took on an active role as an imperial proxy at a time when her husband was ill.

Although Empress Teimei was monarch at a time when the modern concept of the Japanese Imperial Family was codified, she has received very little scholarly attention. Her public image was significantly different than that of her conventionally feminine predecessor and successor, and despite the considerable censorship of the Imperial Household Agency, photographs of Teimei show her distinctive personality at a time when feminine comportment and gender roles were quickly fluctuating. As shown in Chapter Two, modern Japanese imperial portraiture grew increasingly standardized and sacred in the early twentieth century, and empress imagery in particular grew to be "modern" in appearance. Empress Teimei initiated and exemplified this new image for the female members of the Imperial Family in the midst of the Japanese imperial portrait becoming fully articulated in the Taishō period.

Chapters Three and Four provided case studies in how the image of Empress Teimei functioned in this new era of imperial visual culture. As photography grew to be the preferred media for representing the imperial visage, and mass media publications such as newspapers and magazines grew in popularity alongside the ability to reproduce photographs, the image of Empress Teimei changed to fit modern expectations of a visible monarchy. In the regency

period, with the absence of Emperor Taishō from the public forum, Empress Teimei took on a role as imperial proxy, with a dramatic increase in the number of her media appearances in the wake of her husband's illness. Furthermore, in the context of the *Asahi Shinbun* images considered in Chapter Three, she appeared in situations previously reserved for the male members of the Imperial Family, such as visiting military installations. In Chapter Four, the specifics of Teimei's image in the growing genre of women's magazines was considered, and her role as a Taishō version of the *ryōsai kenbo* was revealed. In response to the need to involve women in the imperial project in the late 1910s and early 1920s, Teimei exemplified the military mother, modeling a feminine and maternal role that was crucial to growing the Japanese empire. This role was to be short lived, however, as Teimei once again changed to act as an imperial mother, or *kokubo*, in the months after the devastating 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake. All of these maternal and feminine images were specific to women's magazines, and distinctive from Teimei's media representations in other styles of publication. Her public image would change yet again with the marriage of her son in 1924, and the death of her husband in 1926. Teimei led a largely private life in her years as Empress Dowager, until her large state funeral in the early 1950s. It is with this funeral that once again her public persona was used to construct ideas of the monarchy. Through each of these stages, Teimei's personal thoughts and emotions are unknown, but her public image was beloved and embraced by her people.

In the course of this study, a dynamic and distinctive imperial figure was uncovered. Teimei's reign as empress was at a time of great social change, especially for women. Her image provided a role model for many middle and upper class Japanese women, as she exhibited proper feminine comportment and activities at a time when women's propriety was under intense scrutiny and great debate. Although much of her impact has been downplayed due to her husband's contested status, and by reinterpretations of the Taishō era by the forces of history,

this dissertation has shown Teimei's contributions to the social milieu of 1910s and 1920s Japan. At a time when the Imperial Family reigned as a strong political, social, and religious force in Japanese society, Teimei was a true mother of the nation.

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## Appendix One

### Periods of Early Modern and Modern Japan

Edo	江戸	1600-1868
Meiji	明治	1868-1912
Taishō	大正	1912-1926
Shōwa	昭和	1926-1989
Heisei	平成	1989-present

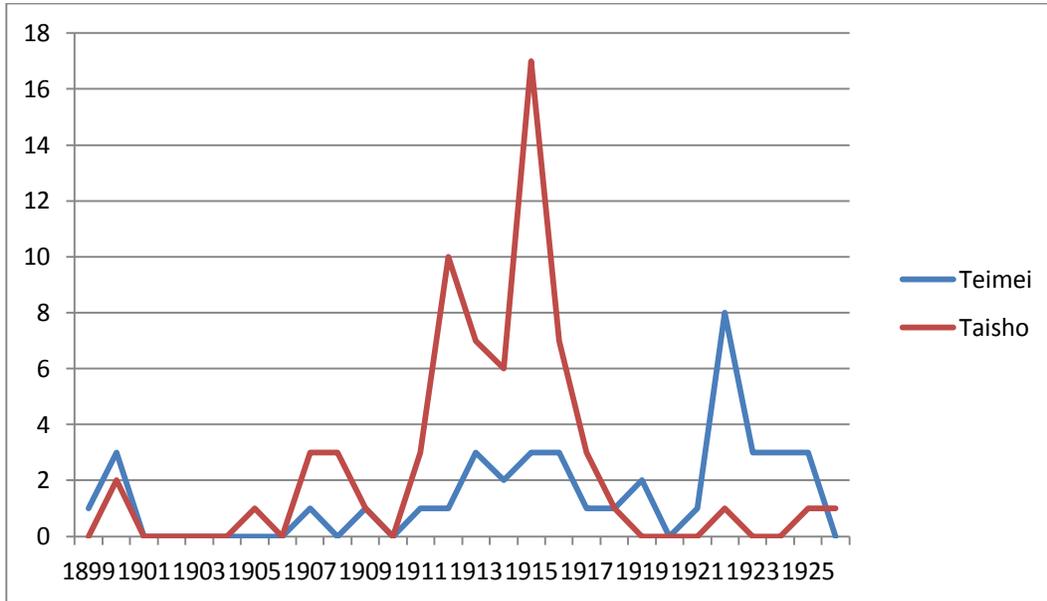
### Emperors and Empresses of Modern Japan

Posthumous Name	Given name(s)	Life dates
<b>Meiji Period</b>		
Emperor Meiji 明治天皇	Musuhito 睦仁	1852-1912
Empress Shōken 昭建皇后	Masako Ichijo 勝子一条, Haruko 春子	1849-1914
<b>Taishō Period</b>		
Emperor Taishō 大正天皇	Yoshihito 嘉仁	1879-1926
Empress Teimei 貞明皇后	Sadako Kujō 九条節子	1884-1951
<b>Shōwa Period</b>		
Emperor Shōwa 昭和天皇	Hirohito 裕仁	1901-1989
Empress Kōjun 香淳皇后	Nagako Kuninomiya 久邇宮良子	1903-2000
<b>Heisei Period</b>		
Emperor Akihito 明仁	Akihito 明仁	1933-present
Empress Michiko 美智子	Michiko Shōda 正田美智子	1934-present

## Appendix Two

### Chart 1

Images published in the *Asahi Shinbun*, 1899-1926, wherein the imperial presence was visible. This chart includes portrait images, photojournalistic images, and images of vehicles wherein the emperor or empress was noted to be present. Total images of Teimei, 41, Taishō, 67.



### Chart 2

Images published in the *Asahi Shinbun*, 1899-1926, wherein the body of the emperor or empress was fully visible. Total images of Teimei, 32, Taishō, 42.

