

## Moral Education in Early-Modern Japan The Kangien Confucian Academy of Hirose Tansō

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FOR THE GREATER PART of the nineteenth century, Kangien 咸宜園, a private academy nestled in the serene Kyūshū countryside,<sup>1</sup> offered students from all social classes an education in the Confucian *shu-yuan* 書院 tradition.<sup>2</sup> During its years of operation from 1817 until 1893, it attracted over 4,800 students from sixty-six of the then sixty-eight provinces of Japan. Three thousand of those students studied under Hirose Tansō 広瀬淡窓 (1782–1856), the renowned poet, scholar, and educator who founded the academy.<sup>3</sup> Tansō's mission was to address the problems of contemporary society through the setting in order of moral priorities, and it was with this in mind that he developed Kangien's twin pillars of rules and curriculum.

Reverence or awe for Heaven was the philosophical construct that supported Tansō's educational program. His aim, rooted in the belief that the fundamental goodness of man is an extension of the basic order of the universe, was to cultivate character by imparting to his students an attitude of reverence for Heaven in all that they said and did. Practically speaking, this meant two things. Each student was

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<sup>1</sup> Kangien was located in present-day Hita 日田 City of Ōita 大分 Prefecture. Part of the school compound stands today as a museum. The Kangien library is housed in its original boxes in the Hita public library. Tansō's original school records and manuscripts are stored on the family property near the Kangien museum.

<sup>2</sup> The tradition of Confucian academies (*shu-yuan*) dates back to the White Deer Grotto Academy of the Song Dynasty (960–1271) scholar Chu Hsi (1130–1200). On the Confucian *shu-yuan* tradition, see DE BARY and HABOUSH 1985, pp. 32–34.

<sup>3</sup> Tansō's brother, Hirose Seison 広瀬青邨, succeeded Tansō as head of Kangien from 1856–1861, and Hirose Ringai 林外 succeeded Seison from 1861–1871.

required, first, to adhere strictly to school rules and regulations (revised over the years to manage the ever-larger numbers of students), and, second, to fulfill daily work responsibilities at the school.

Tansō's mission as an educator was to nurture men of talent, molding them into true statesmen whose services would ultimately be of benefit to the nation. For this purpose he established a systematic Confucian educational curriculum and a series of rigorous testing exercises through which he taught his students the Chinese and Japanese texts that he considered essential to moral self-cultivation. Kangien's curriculum and structure are noteworthy, and will be described later in this article (although it should be kept in mind that what Tansō found practicable on a day-to-day basis at the academy differed somewhat from the ideals he espoused in *Ugen* 迂言 [Round-about words], his 1840 essay on statecraft and education).

By some measures Tansō's mission at Kangien was extremely successful. If students are an educator's legacy, the sheer number of them that attended Kangien distinguish it from the other Confucian academies of its day. However, closer examination reveals that those students counted most successful by Kangien standards were mere shadows compared with other students who passed through the academy en route to the next private school and ultimately to positions of national prominence. In the final analysis, the very approach that made Kangien such an educational success was an expression of the outlook that ultimately led to the downfall of the Bakufu 幕府 in the Bakumatsu 幕末 (1854–1868) period. This article describes Tansō's educational mission at Kangien, highlighting selected Kangien students. Of these, three won Tansō's particular acclaim, while three others win the praise of contemporary historians.

### *The Background of the Times*

As a social critic Tansō addressed issues being confronted nationwide in the Tempō period (1830–1844). He joined other Confucian scholars in stressing economy, frugality, and education, the three traditional supports invoked in Confucian discourse during all times of crisis. These ultimately fell far short of solving the underlying problem of the late Tokugawa: the fundamental inability of seventeenth-century institutions to accommodate nineteenth-century needs (although, indeed, they did indeed contribute greatly to Japan's rapid recovery during the Meiji period [1868–1912]). Nonetheless, the fact that serious domestic problems permeated society did not escape the statesmen of this period. These problems began at the top, with the financial drain

on domainal resources caused by the system of alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*) 参勤交代, the system that required all daimyo to leave their wives, children, and highest-ranking retainers in Edo, and to themselves live alternately in Edo and in their home domains, generally for one-year or half-year periods.

Participation in the system of alternate attendance, made mandatory by Tokugawa Iemitsu in 1642, had by the nineteenth century become for all intents and purposes the main obligation of the daimyo toward the shogun. The system shaped later Tokugawa society in three significant respects. First, the financial expenditure required in maintaining two residences and in traveling between them in appropriate style seriously strained the budget of the daimyo. By the end of the eighteenth century, alternate attendance cost some daimyo as much as a third of their annual income, and caused others to fall into serious debt to merchant money-lenders (HALL 1991, p. 158). Second, after the implementation of the alternate attendance, daimyo and samurai became, in effect, urban administrators, living in Edo away from their home domainal land. The samurai, not having engaged in serious warfare since the 1637 Shimabara Rebellion, turned more and more from the military arts to the literary arts, which they needed to carry out their administrative responsibilities. Third, because the daimyos' families lived in Edo, new daimyos first came to know the people and problems of their home domains only upon actually acceding to rule as adults.

As time went by, the four separate and distinct social classes established early in the Tokugawa period gradually lost their original character. Merchants, originally the lowest of the four classes, started living well with promises of better to come as the regional centers of trade and industry, far from the traditional urban centers of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka, increased in number and influence. The once-dominant samurai, on the other hand, whose stipends had been fixed early in the Tokugawa period, became more and more financially crippled. More significant than their financial plight, however, was the alienation they felt from their established role in society as a privileged military class.<sup>4</sup> After two centuries of peace the daimyo found themselves ill prepared for leadership, and the half-million samurai, though well-educated, formed an underemployed, underproductive, and, for the

<sup>4</sup> The Laws for the Military Houses (*Buke shohatto* 武家諸法度), issued by Tokugawa Ieyasu first in 1615, directed samurai to be equally prepared in the military arts of war (*bu* 武) and literary arts of peace (*bun* 文). The arts of peace included reading and writing as well as moral instruction contained in the classical Chinese and Japanese texts. A section of the *Buke shohatto* is found in translation in TSUNODA et al, 1958, pp. 326–29.

most part, impoverished elite (YAMAMURA 1974, pp. 26–69).

The precarious balance of late Tokugawa society was shaken by severe weather between 1833–1837 which caused successive years of dismal harvests and unprecedented famine. It is estimated that over 100,000 people starved to death in 1836, and that in 1837 the death rate was three times higher than normal (HANLEY and YAMAMURA 1977, p. 147). Famine triggered increasingly frequent and intense rebellions among the starving peasant masses. Widespread uprisings gave way at times to mass hysteria and peasant action against the government officials, who, unable to cope with such social dislocation, were perceived as corrupt and ineffective.

### *The Founding of Kangien*

People from all sectors of society proposed solutions to these problems, ranging from Ninomiya Sontoku's 二宮尊徳 (1787–1856) “return of virtue” (*hōtoku* 報德) community-based self-help agricultural cooperatives to Ōshio Heihachirō's 大塩平八郎 1837 “call to arms” (*gekibun*) and subsequent rebellion, in which three hundred peasants burned large sections of Osaka. Tansō's solution was to delve back into the rich, variegated Confucian tradition to which he was heir, and reify the twin pillars of education and statecraft. He writes,

Without governance, the lives of the people cannot be regulated; without the teachings [of the ancient Confucian sages] the minds of the people will not serve. Those who govern are the tools for the teachings; those who teach are the root of governance. Combined, they comprise the Way. (HIROSE 1927, 2, *Yakugen* 約言, pp. 14–15)

Tansō, the eldest son of a well-established merchant family (*goyō-shōnin* 御用商人), turned to books as a child when it became apparent that chronic illness would prevent him from assuming responsibility for the family's lumber, housing, and moneylending business ventures. His teaching career began at age twelve, when he was summoned by the Hita feudal intendant, Hakura Hikyū 羽倉秘救, to lecture for small groups on the Chinese *Classic of Filial Piety*. At that time his experience with institutionalized education consisted of only two years, entirely at the Fukuoka Kamei academy (*Kamei juku* 亀井塾) run by Kamei Nanmei 亀井南冥 (1743–1814) and his son, Shōyō 昭陽 (1773–1836). There Tansō was introduced both to the Confucian formulation of the Chinese Song scholar Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130–1200), and to Ogyū Sorai's 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) Ancient Studies (*kogaku* 古学).

In 1805, at age twenty-three, Tansō decided to make teaching his profession. He began tutoring students individually and in groups in various rented rooms in his home town. Demand for his services grew immediately, and in 1807 he constructed his first school, Keirin'en 桂林園 (Cinnamon Grove), where he lived and taught up to thirty-five students at a time. In 1817 he built and opened a school compound, to which, in 1820, he gave the name Kangien. At Kangien his students numbered up to two hundred at any given time and ranged in age from twelve to thirty-nine, a student body far larger and far younger than those at most other private academies.<sup>5</sup>

The name "Kangien" expressed the educational spirit of the school. Taken from the *Book of Odes*, the characters for Kangien can mean either "all are welcome" or "all are good." While Tansō was not egalitarian by any absolute standard, his student body illustrated his open-admissions policy: Of the 2,915 students who studied under Tansō's administration, samurai comprised 5.5% and Buddhist priests 33.7%. Of the remaining 60.8%, doctors were the most numerous, sons of wealthy urban merchants next, sons of village headmen and wealthy farmers next, and finally, Shinto priests (who were relatively few in number; see INOUE 1975 and 1987).

Tansō's egalitarian attitude was expressed in his admission requirement, known as the rule of the three renunciations (*sandatsu-hō* 三奪法). Finding validation in the *Book of Rites*<sup>6</sup> (in which the crown prince, prior to acceding to rule, attended school with other children and was assigned seating based on his age rather than his status), Tansō asserted, in theory, that the sons of all families, whether high or low in status, should attend school together and be seated according to age rather than to social rank (HIROSE 1927, 2, *Ugen*, p. 38). In practice, however, Kangien required each entering student to renounce *all* status relating to age, family position, and prior educational training, criteria widely used at other Tokugawa-period private academies to determine student ranking. At Kangien, all students began at a level designated as zero, and progressed upward through a total of nineteen ranks primarily on the basis of their academic performance on examinations held on regular occasions throughout the month. Students were accorded points, which were tabulated and posted at the end of each month on the *gettanhō* 月旦評, the roster of student rank.

Grouping students on the basis of academic performance rather than family pedigree served two purposes. First, social constraints

<sup>5</sup> Umihara Tōru provides charts of the age, stay, and demographics of Tansō's students in UMIHARA 1988, pp. 82–85.

<sup>6</sup> *Wen-Wang Shih-tzu* 文王世子: A, in LEGGE 1967, p. 352, no. 22.

slackened, allowing people from all social levels to become acquainted with one another. Tansō felt that, in later years, this would give those in authority the knowledge of the entire talent pool necessary for making proper, informed appointments. Second, social harmony was facilitated by the mutual understanding and empathy that develops when students from all social strata intermingle. Tansō cited the *Book of Rites* in asserting that a ruler knows how to rule only after he understands what it is to be a minister who must carry out orders himself.<sup>7</sup>

Students progressed upward through the Kangien curriculum step by step, earning promotion through the accumulation of points on the regularly scheduled examinations known as *dasseki-kai* 奪席会, which will be discussed in more detail below. The examinations were graded in difficulty and complexity to correspond to the academic levels of the respective student ranks, and competition was set up in such a way that students only competed against students whose academic ability approximated their own. Each student was left to progress through the complex Kangien curriculum at his own pace, but it was the unusual student who was able to master beyond the seventh rank.

In theory Tansō suggested a wide range of curricular topics: calligraphy; Confucian studies; philosophers of the Hundred Schools (ancient Chinese philosophers such as Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Mo Tzu, etc.); Chinese and Japanese history; composition; astronomy; Chinese and Japanese literature; study of office, rank, and government service; Dutch studies; medicine; mathematics; rites and rituals; and military science (HIROSE 1927, 2, *Ugen*, p. 39). However, many of these topics were never actually taught at Kangien, where the curriculum focused on the Confucian teaching as established by Chu Hsi at the lower levels, supplemented by Japanese histories and Tansō's own poetry at the higher levels.<sup>8</sup>

Tansō made use of teaching methods he had learned at the Kamei academy. Widely used at private academies in the period, these tech-

<sup>7</sup> Wen-Wang Shih-tzu: A, in LEGGE 1967, p. 351, no. 20.

<sup>8</sup> The following schedule, dating from Hirose Seison's administration of Kangien (1856–1861) is representative of Tansō's curriculum:

Level 1: *Analects, Classic of Filial Piety, Doctrine of the Mean, Great Learning*; Level 2: *Book of Rites, Spring and Autumn Annals, Elementary Learning, Mencius*; Level 3: *Abridged History of Japan, Classic of Filial Piety, Book of Changes, Book of History*; Level 4: *Famous Episodes from Chinese History, Eighteen Dynastic Histories (abridged), Doctrine of the Mean, Great Learning*; Level 5: *Confucius House Dialogues (Kung Tzu chia-yu), Mencius, Analects, Nihon gaishū*; Level 6: *Tso-chuan*; Level 7: *Enshirō shishō* (Tansō's poetry), *Records of the Historian, History of the Han, Book of Odes*; Level 8: *Ming-ch'en yen-hsing lu, Comprehensive Aid to the Study of Government, Shih-shuo hsin-yu, Hsun Tzu, Wen chuang-tzu, Chuang Tzu, Pa-ta chin-kang t'ung-tzu*; Level 9: Tansō's selected works, *Mo Tzu, Kuang Tzu, Reflections on Things at Hand, and Instructions in Practical Learning*.

niques were distinguished at Kangien by the added element of rigorous competition for academic promotion. Elementary students at zero rank began with the repetitive reading of short lines of basic Confucian texts (*sodoku* 素読). Through this exercise students learned to read texts using a complex marking system by which the Chinese text was inverted in such a way that it conformed to the rules of Japanese grammar (*kutō* 句読). Intermediate students in ranks one through four began to study the content of the texts by explaining the meaning of passages (*kōdoku* 講読) and answering questions on substance. Advanced students in ranks five through nine read and discussed (*rindoku* 輪読) passages of more difficult classical texts and anthologies of poetry Tansō himself had written, or lectured (*rinkō* 輪講) to students in the lower ranks.

The carefully structured exercise of the *dasseki-kai* was the final determinant of rank and promotion at each level, and was held nine times monthly in each academic subject. The number of points accumulated in this oral exercise determined each student's ranking vis-à-vis the group, and the total number of points accumulated during the month determined each student's rank on the student roster. This convoluted exercise required students to assemble in groups of ten or twelve based on rank. Students took turns asking, answering, and interpreting material from the previous three days of lectures. Answers were judged either by Tansō himself or by the head student, and points were awarded on the basis of the depth and breadth of the answers. Students physically changed seats during the course of the exercise to correspond with their changing academic rank within the group.

In 1840 an individual oral interview between the student and Tansō was instituted. The culminating exercise in determining promotion, this daunting exercise required the student to master all the texts of his rank, and to be prepared to recite selected memorized passages from these texts and discuss the salient points. In addition, the interview served as a sort of placement test for new entrants with prior educational training in that it enabled well-prepared newly enrolled students to move from zero rank to an intermediate level in one leap.

In order to shape moral character, Tansō required each student who lived at Kangien longer than twenty days to take responsibility for some aspect of school maintenance, something he called work duty. The four most important jobs—head student, assistant administrator, registrar, and director of dormitories—were filled by the top-ranking four students on the student roster. Other jobs, such as the directors of management, cleaning, library service, ceremonies, food service,

and clogs, plus night sentries, Tansō's private secretaries, and the physician, were assigned on the basis of individual talent. The most menial tasks, such as sweeping, cleaning, and kitchen duty, were filled by the lowest-ranking students. Performance was evaluated, and students who neglected work duties were given demerit points, affecting their overall status and promotion. In theory Tansō proposed that each student's moral self-cultivation be formally supervised and closely evaluated on a regular basis, just as was done for academic progress. He also proposed that these evaluations be stored and used later in life when determining the government post to which the grown student be appointed (HIROSE 1927, 2, *Ugen*, pp. 43–44). Such formal evaluations were never actually carried out at Kangien.

In practice, the strict code of rules Tansō enacted at Kangien played a greater role than work responsibility in cultivating moral character. Divided into the five categories of work, food and drink, entering and leaving, using resources, and miscellaneous, this detailed code governed all aspects of the students' lives. Students were expected to adhere to the established hourly schedule at Kangien. During their spare time they were to be involved in self-study, either at the extensive Kangien library, where they were allowed to check out two books at a time for one month, or in their rooms, where they were not to laze about, nap, or play games such as *go* or *shōgi*. Unless granted special exemption, students were expected to eat all meals at Kangien communally. They were allowed to supplement these meals with food sent from home, but could drink *saké* only on vacation days.

Tansō was especially concerned that his students not disturb the local community. He prohibited his students from roaming about in large, noisy groups, and encouraged them to be deferential whenever meeting townspeople in the streets. Tabs of students' financial affairs both on the school compound and in town were carefully kept, and all students were required to pay their debts or face dismissal.

Tansō's school motto stated, "In this world both sharp and dull are necessary. It is up to us to use the hammer and chisel each to its best advantage." He asserted that all students be exposed to the process of learning so that they might absorb what they could. However, he also stated that the rigorous program at Kangien was not for everybody. For those who did not show an inclination towards scholarship, Tansō's expectation was five years of study, including simple reading and composition. Those with a penchant towards learning, however, were encouraged to study one or two topics diligently and establish themselves as teachers of others. This, to Tansō, was the highest calling, and those who fulfilled this calling were judged by him as the

most successful.

The person holding the position of head student (*tokō* 都講) was the top student on the roster of student rank, the student who demonstrated the greatest talent for learning. While the position of head student existed at other schools as well, attaining it was particularly difficult at Kangien, and students who did so generally held it for some years. During their tenure they worked as second in administrative and educational command to Tansō himself.

Tansō was firm in the requirement that the position of head student be earned on the basis of academic achievement at Kangien itself. In 1830, Feudal Intendant Shionoya Daishirō Masayoshi 塩谷大四郎正義,<sup>9</sup> whose apparent agenda was to incorporate Kangien as an official domain school, compelled Tansō to accept as head student someone from outside the Kangien community. Tansō was so offended that he passed his administrative duties to his brother, Kyokusō 旭莊, only to resume them again in 1833 under pressure from his father and uncle as Shionoya grew more and more displeased with Kangien's falling student enrollment.<sup>10</sup>

### *Kangien Graduates*

To describe the career of the various students who held the position of head student is not useful to this study. Many, such as Karakawa Sokutei 唐川即定 (1834–1918), Munashi Shukei 孔珠溪 (1824–1889), Shigetomi Kensuke 重富健助 (1800–1880), Murakami Konan 村上姑南 (1818–1890), Yokoi Kojō 横井古成 (1844–1921), and Hirose Ringai 広瀬林外 (1836–1874) went on to found or administer schools of their own. Others, such as Karashima Shunpan 辛島春帆 (1817–1859) and Tamai Chūden 玉井忠田 (1808–1878), who became physicians, followed along in their fathers' occupation. However, among the thousands of students who studied at Kangien and the scores who became

<sup>9</sup> Shionoya served in Hita from 1817 to 1835. Between 1830 and 1835 he meddled with the administration of Kangien in such ways as insisting several times that the rank of selected students on the roster of student rank be upwardly modified and by personally revising the Kangien school rules. All of this was objectionable to Tansō.

<sup>10</sup> It seems that Tansō enjoyed autonomy in running Kangien only so long as he did not jeopardize the greater family's economic interest. Designated one of the eight Hita merchant family houses (*hakeya* 掛屋), the Hirose family served as a high-interest money fund for the government in two ways; it earned a commission from the government *via* the feudal intendant for exchanging rice for money, and it earned interest payments for lending money outright. The government funds to which the Hirose family had access through this business relationship served to underpin the family store, the *Hakataya* 博多屋, and brought substantial wealth and influence to the family. Consequently the greater family interest necessitated maintaining a harmonious relationship with the government, specifically the feudal intendant located in Hita (HIROSE 1927, 1, *Kaikyūō hikki* 懐舊樓筆記, pp. 3–35).

head student, Tansō singled out in his essays three students by name as among his best (HIROSE 1927, 2, *Tansō shohin* 淡窓小品, pp. 4–6).

Interestingly for the historian, the three students of whom Tansō made special note were local figures on whom there is little available information other than that which Tansō himself has provided. The first, Nakajima Shigyoku 中島子玉 (1801–1835), was described as an eccentric but talented man, whose interests and strengths lay in Chinese studies, especially poetry and composition. Nakajima was commissioned by his domain, Saiki 佐伯, to attend Kangien. After studying there for some time, he was sent by Tansō to study with Kamei Shōyō. From there he attended the Shōheikō 昌平黌, the official Bakufu school in Edo, and finally returned to Kangien as Tansō's assistant. The second student, Sō Ikkei 僧一圭 (n.d.), was described by Tansō as a congenial man who was versed in Zen Buddhism. Other than the fact that he was a monk, Tansō tells us little about him. Third, Tansō noted Oka Kenkai 岡研介 (1799–1839), a sincere and forthright man who was interested in the practical and technical learning offered by Western studies, which were not available at Kangien.

What is striking about these three students is their dissimilarity. One excelled in Chinese studies, the second was a Buddhist clergyman, and the third was interested in Western studies. What they all had in common, however, was their penchant for learning. In his essay on education, Tansō stated,

It is impossible for a person to be well-versed in all topics.... The evils of present-day learning stem from the fact that the curriculum is not divided.... As a result, what one knows, everyone else knows, and what one does not know, no one else knows. There may be one hundred Confucians but they all know no more than one person (HIROSE 1927, 2, *Ugen*, p. 41).

Tansō's learning was wide in scope: he did not quibble philosophically, nor was he overly inclined towards Buddhism or Taoism. He wanted to be known to the world as a Confucian of broad learning, and broad learning—broad by the Confucian standard but not by any absolute standard—was what he prized in his students.

Three other students, Takano Chōei 高野長英 (1804–1850), Ōmura Masujirō 大村益次郎 (1824–1869), and Chō Sanshū 長三洲 (1833–1895), won no particular praise from Tansō, but ultimately went on to occupy positions of relative national prominence.

The son of a rural doctor, Takano Chōei became a noted physician of Dutch medicine and set up private medical practice in Edo. He began his educational career studying the Dutch language and

Western medicine, and went on to study at Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold's (1796–1866) Narutaki Juku 鳴滝塾 on Deshima from 1825–1828, almost the entire tenure of the school. There he proved to be one of Siebold's best students.

Siebold's Narutaki Juku was unique among private academies in Tokugawa Japan. Its main instructor, Siebold, was a German physician who taught the most recent advances in European medicine and science to a small group of Japanese scholars. A representative of the Dutch East India Company, Siebold was charged both with teaching the Japanese about European medicine and with gathering information about Japan for the Dutch. In 1828 Siebold was arrested for carrying out of Japan secret materials, among them important Japanese maps and a formal half-coat (*haori* 羽織) with the shōgun's crest (RUBINGER 1982, p. 117 n. 34). Some of Siebold's students were arrested with him, but not Chōei, who quickly escaped to Kangien for a brief stay. There is no evidence that his tenure at Kangien had any particular long-term influence on him.

Throughout his life Chōei was an ardent proponent of Dutch and Western learning. In his essay, "Tales of a Dream" (*Yume monogatari* 夢物語), he protested the Bakufu's treatment of the Morrison incident, asserting that instead of abruptly sending the ship off, the Japanese castaways should have been allowed to return and that Japan's policy of national seclusion should have been explained to the foreigners. For this he was sentenced to life imprisonment. He escaped in 1844, and made his living by translating materials on Western learning from his hiding place in Uwajima for the next six years before committing ritual suicide (HALL et al. 1989, pp. 107–108, 129–31, 146–47, 166, 235, 238–42).

Like Takano Chōei, Ōmura Masujirō's career shows no lasting Kangien influence. Also the son of a rural doctor who began studying Dutch studies at a local school, Ōmura studied at Kangien for two years from 1843, reaching the fourth rank on the student roster. In 1846 he entered Ogata Kōan's 緒方洪庵 prominent Dutch Studies Academy, Tekijuku 適塾, where he became head student. In 1856 he went to Edo and taught at the military studies academy. He also served as an instructor at the Bakufu center for teaching Western studies and translating Western texts (Bansho Shirabe-sho 蕃書調所), and for a period of time he studied English at James C. Hepburn's English language school near Edo.

Perhaps the most nationally well-known of these three men, Ōmura is best remembered for his work in military affairs. As military advisor for the Chōshū domain, he organized military units of both commoners and samurai for the Chōshū militia that eventually defeated

the Bakufu forces. In 1869, as vice minister of military affairs for the new Meiji government, he began recruiting people dissociated from their own domains to man a modern conscript army along Western lines. His career was cut short when he was assassinated by loyalists of the “revere the emperor and expel the barbarians” (*sonnō jōi* 尊皇攘夷) movement, but his military vision was brought to fruition by the prominent official Yamagata Aritomo 山県有朋 (1838–1922; HALL et al. 1989, pp. 635, 647).

Unlike Takano Chōei and Ōmura Masujirō, Chō Sanshū’s career shows lasting Kangien influence. Chō Sanshū began his studies at Kangien in 1845, and completed the entire curriculum within four years, something very few other students ever accomplished. After serving as head student at Hirose Kyokusō’s academy in Osaka, he spent some time working on educational reform for the Hagi domain school. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, he wrote drafts for four of five sections of what would become the Fundamental Code of Education of 1872 (*Gakusei*). In addition he served as head of educational affairs in the Ministry of Education, and in the Imperial Household as tutor to the Taishō emperor (RUBINGER 1982, p. 235).

It is in the draft of the Fundamental Code of Education of 1872 that Chō Sanshū’s Kangien experience is most evident. Under provisions established by the code, students progressed through divisions in curriculum similar to those established at Kangien on the roster of student rank. Although Kangien’s initial zero rank was eliminated from the code, students progressed through the curriculum on the basis of age, as Tansō had proposed in theory. After successfully establishing modern Japanese education as a centralized, standardized, and integrated endeavor under the purview of the government rather than individual academicians, the Fundamental Code was replaced by the Education Law of 1879 (*Kyōikurei* 教育令).

### Conclusion

Tansō’s students as a whole defy any set pattern. They became everything: Buddhist priests, Shinto priests, Confucian scholars, doctors of Chinese and Dutch Medicine, officials in national, regional, and local government, military men, businessmen, scientists, artists, and educators. It is through them that Tansō’s principles lived on to influence modern Japan. From one point of view, Tansō was a noble failure, representative of the conservative group of early-modern scholars who, railing out against the unprecedented social hardships of the Tempō period, focused on fine-tuning institutions already in place rather than instituting innovative or radical changes. The microcosmic society

Tansō established at Kangien, in which he reified Confucian elements from an idealized past, offered few practical solutions for the problems of his time, and failed to instill the flexibility for innovation required to meet the crisis brought about by antiquated institutions, a faltering economy, and the threats from overseas. Indeed, those academies busily integrating into their curricula the Western science and mathematics not offered at Kangien were the places where the nineteenth century leaders were trained. Because of this, success at Kangien opened fewer doors to the future than success at other private academies of its time.

For these reasons men such as Tansō are too easily shunted aside by historians who are more interested in focusing on Japan's burst into modernity. Yet it is the Confucian values they stressed—study, hard work, frugality, promotion based on merit—that were in many ways responsible for the relative ease with which Japan emerged from hundreds of years of self-imposed isolation and became a powerful modern nation. Tansō's stress on egalitarian education helped lay the groundwork for the leveling brought about by Meiji land, conscription, and educational reforms, and through Chō Sansū his system of educational advancement influenced the development of school policy in modern Japan.<sup>11</sup> Subsumed in the late Tokugawa by the allure of the West but destined to reemerge as early as 1890 with the Imperial Rescript on Education, Confucian values such as loyalty to the ruler and allegiance to superiors were the props upholding the newly created national unity.<sup>12</sup> The Confucian thread in the intricate web of Japanese history must not be lost if an accurate overall evaluation is to be made.

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<sup>11</sup> Between 1885–1887 government ordinances stipulated that Japanese civil servants be classified into three ranks, the top rank of *chokunin* 勅任, appointed by the emperor, middle rank of *sonin* 奏任, appointed by recommendation, and bottom rank of *hannin* 判任, appointed by delegated ministers. In 1886, government official Kaneko Kentarō, developed a plan under which both passing examinations and attendance in the state educational system became the main means of recruitment to *sonin* and *hannin* ranks, and this was put into effect in 1887. HALL et al. 1989, pp. 648–50.

<sup>12</sup> Much has been written on the Imperial Rescript on Education, but Carol GLUCK provides an especially interesting analysis of its role in shaping Meiji ideology in her seminal work (1985).

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