万世ノ為ニ太平ヲ開カント欲ス―安岡正篤の国体護持思想を中心に―

Desiring to Inaugurate Great Peace: Yasuoka Masahiro, Kokutai Preservation, and Japan's Imperial Rescript of Surrender

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In perhaps the most memorable line from Japan's surrender radio broadcast of 15 August 1945 Hirohito 裕仁, the Shōwa Emperor (*Shōwa tennō* 昭和天皇), expressed a desire to "pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is insufferable."[1] At first glance, these words appear to constitute a straightforward statement of pacifist sentiment and an overriding determination on the part of the emperor to save his subjects from further suffering. Consequently, they have proven useful for casting the emperor's "sacred decision" (*seidan* 聖断) to surrender as a benevolent intervention rescuing the people and setting the nation on the path toward postwar peace and prosperity.[2] Alternatively, the expression has been seen as an effort to "seize the moral high ground from the Allies" and as exemplifying Hirohito's self-interested deployment of classical rhetoric and euphemism in order to avoid personal and institutional responsibility for the war.[3]

Examining the history behind this passage and its insertion into the rescript, however, reveals that rather than directly representing Hirohito's personal motivations the expressed desire to open the path to a grand or, more literally, "Great Peace" (*Taihei* 太平) reflected the governing elite's overriding concern for "preservation of the national polity" (*kokutai-goji* 国体護持) and the related belief that ending the war offered the best hope for accomplishing that goal. While historians disagree over the extent to which Hirohito recognized that accepting the

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*Prewar *kanji* have been changed to postwar orthography.

[1] This translation follows that found in *The Oriental Economist* XII (July-August, 1945), p. 254, and reproduced in Butow 1954, p. 248. A more literal translation will be introduced below.

[2] For instance, see Sakomizu 1964, pp. 295-296, Shimomura 1985, p. 107, and the recollections in Yomiuri shinbunsha 1976, pp. 329-406. Also, see Handō Kazutoshi's introduction in Terasaki 1991, pp. 2-3. On early postwar efforts to cast Hirohito as a man of peace, see Ruoff 2001, pp. 126-35.

[3] See Bix 2000, p. 526, Dower 1999, p. 36, and, considering the rescript more generally, Kōketsu 2006, pp. 155-63.

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Potsdam Declaration meant redefining and even casting aside key principles of the prewar polity, he clearly worried over the fate of the imperial institution at the center of the *kokutai* and agreed that surrender offered the only real prospect for its survival.[4] Hirohito may even have grasped the Confucian origins of the words and values he gave expression to through the Great Peace passage.[5] But these particular words were not his and thus have limited utility in divining the emperor's thinking. However, elucidating the history of the phrase, its inclusion in the rescript and the repeated use of this classical ideal during the nearly two decades leading up to the late summer of 1945 does illuminate the abiding anxiety of conservative elites alarmed by various forms of radical thought seeking *kakushin* (renovation 革新) of the Meiji state, worries that subsequently multiplied with the expansion of Japan's war in China into the Pacific and then carried over into the early days of the occupation following Japan's surrender.

The process of composing the rescript announcing Japan's decision to surrender remained relatively obscure until the discovery of the original drafts in the early 1980s.[6] The person of central importance to understanding the connection of the Great Peace passage to the objective of preserving the *kokutai*, Yasuoka Masahiro 安岡正篤 (1898-1983), likewise received little scholarly attention until the past decade. Regularly identified as one of the "professors" or "academic specialists" whose knowledge of Chinese classics helped produce language appropriate for an imperial rescript, Yasuoka was in fact a veteran of the interwar nationalist movement and a committed proponent of top-down moral guidance (*kyōka* 教化) by men of superior character who would restore governance in line with the national polity. Born in 1898 and graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1922, he drew on classical Chinese studies and European idealism to articulate a nationalist discourse on "personalism" (*jinkakushugi* 人格主義) that prioritized reconnecting with the "Japanese spirit" (*Nippon seishin* 日本精神) in order to repair the supposedly deleterious effects of modern materialism upon individual character. Emerging as a nationalist ideologue during the apex of party rule in the 1920s, Yasuoka relied on Confucian-influenced ideals of virtuous governance (*tokuchishugi* 徳治主義) by officials (*kan* 官) to criticize the divisiveness of party politics and insist that even in an age of parliamentary institutions the guidance of non-partisan officials remained essential and, moreover, accorded best with Japan's *kokutai*. Until the end of the war Yasuoka devoted

[4] For recent arguments that Hirohito and others redefined the *kokutai* to facilitate surrender and used the term to control hardliners in the military, see Hasegawa 2007, pp. 205-14, and Furukawa 2009, who further argues that Hirohito's "sacred decision" signified conscious abandonment of the premise of imperial rule and the first step toward a constitutional monarchy based on popular sovereignty.

[5] On the role of Confucian ideals of virtuous governance in Hirohito's political thought, see Furukawa 2011, pp. 70-73.

[6] The discovery was made by Chaen Yoshio and is detailed in Chaen 1989. For more recent textual analyses, see Ishiwatari 1996 and Yamada 2010. For the fullest effort to elucidate what was and was not actually said by Hirohito in the imperial conferences of 9-10 August and 14 August, see Furukawa 2009.

himself to educating a leadership class capable of integrating Japanese subjects safely into the emperor-centered polity while inoculating them against the lures of communism, liberalism, revolutionary violence and state socialism. An ardent supporter of Japanese leadership of Asia, he nevertheless counseled against allying with Germany and Italy and for neutrality in that alliance's war with Britain and the United States. Once the "Greater East Asia War" began, he supported Japan's effort to create the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" yet worried over its potential consequences for domestic political stability, anxieties that only heightened in the face of defeat and then carried over into the occupation.[7]

Although the past two decades have seen the events leading to Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration receive increasingly close attention from historians working in both Japanese and English, very few of the details regarding the drafting of the rescript and its significance have appeared in Anglophone scholarship. Consequently, scholars working in English on the end of the war and considering the impact of the atomic bomb and the Soviet Union's entry into the conflict on Japan's leaders often rely on mistaken presumptions regarding what the imperial rescript may or may not reveal on that count.[8] While joining in this debate is not the primary objective of this essay, examining the drafting of the rescript does shed light on this document's utility when discussing Japan's decision to surrender.

The essay that follows examines Yasuoka's role in revising the rescript announcing Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, clarifies the meaning and intent of the Great Peace line, and underscores the larger ideological significance this message held during the first two decades of the Shōwa period (1926-1946). The essay first demonstrates the convoluted nature of the rescript's drafting, further revising the oft-cited version of this process and considering the Neo-Confucian origins and meaning of the Great Peace passage. The second section further elucidates Yasuoka's ideological motivations by tracing his repeated reliance on the same classical passage during two decades of political activism prior to August 1945. The essay then closes with a brief examination of the manner in which Yasuoka adapted the ideal of Great Peace to the exigencies of unavoidable demilitarization and democratization. In sum, the

[7] Butow 1954, p. 208n44, Bix 2000, p. 525, and Dower 1999, p. 568n2, although Dower mentions no names. After the war, Yasuoka rebounded from political purge and enjoyed a long career as a behind-the-scenes spiritual advisor to many of the former bureaucrats who reinvented themselves as party politicians and played a dominate role in postwar Japanese politics. With the notable exceptions of Otabe (1980; 1983) and Matsuo (1982), sustained historical study of Yasuoka only began around the turn of the century; for instance, see Brown (2003; 2007; 2009; 2011; 2013), Dufourmont (2005; 2012), Kawai (2006), and Kojima (2008). For a fuller historiography, see Brown 2013.

[8] The most detailed recent examination of the Japanese decision-making process is Suzuki 2011, which integrates insights on the composition of the rescript. Butow's work is the seminal study of the Japanese decision-making process in English, but deals only briefly with the composition of the rescript. Butow 1954, p. 208n44. Scholars giving renewed attention to the Japanese government often debate the impact of the atomic bomb versus that of Soviet entry into the war on Japanese leaders, and particularly on Hirohito; prominent examples include Asada 2001, Frank 1999, Hasegawa 2005, Hasegawa 2007 and Maddox 2009.

essay illuminates the perpetual concern of conservatives for preservation of the *kokutai* not only in the moment of defeat in 1945, but also in the face of successive challenges derived from the spread of liberalism, radicalism from the Left and Right, intra-elite political struggles, intensifying anxiety over the progress of the Asia-Pacific War, and profound unease at the prospect of democratization and the transition to a "New Japan."

Inaugurating Great Peace

At approximately 0230 on the morning of 10 August 1945, in the midst of an Imperial Conference, Prime Minister Suzuki Kantarō 鈴木貫太郎 appealed directly to Emperor Hirohito to intervene and resolve the inability of the cabinet to reach a consensus on whether or not to accept the Potsdam Declaration. Hirohito responded by supporting the plan of Foreign Minister Tōgō Shigenori 東郷茂徳, which stipulated that Japan would accept the Allied ultimatum on the condition that this would not change the "legal standing of His Majesty under Japanese law." In response to the objection of President of the Privy Council Hiranuma Kiichirō 平沼騏一郎 that this wording suggested the emperor's standing depended upon state legal codes, rather than being inherent in his transcendent position as sovereign, the cabinet agreed to revise the line to seek assurance that accepting the declaration would not "alter the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler."[9] Although subsequent disagreement over whether Washington's ambiguous response—which stated that Hirohito would be subject to the occupation commander and the ultimate form of government left to the Japanese people to decide—constituted acceptance of that condition or not required a second *seidan* from Hirohito on the morning of 14 August, the surrender of Japan was finally at hand.

In the meantime, the process of drafting an imperial rescript announcing the emperor's decision began early on 10 August and continued until the afternoon of 14 August. The resulting "imperial rescript ending the war" (*shūsen no shōsho* 終戦の詔書) was a multi-authored, heavily revised document that did not necessarily reflect accurately either the statements of Hirohito or even the content of the two Imperial Conferences, but prioritized euphemistically explaining the government's rationale for accepting the Potsdam Declaration. After denying any aggressive intent behind Japan's war effort, the rescript presented the emperor's decision as an act of benevolent intervention to end the escalating death and destruction. The document closed by assuring Japanese subjects that the emperor's decision preserved the *kokutai* and reminded them to not forsake the moral principles of the polity in the difficult days ahead, but to draw on those values and faith in the "indestructibility of the Land

[9] Gaimushō 1978, Vol. 4, pp. 147-55.

of the Gods" (*shinshū no fumetsu* 神州の不滅) in mustering all their strength for the reconstruction of the nation.[10]

Nevertheless, the rescript continues to draw the attention of scholars interested in teasing out indications of what actually motivated Hirohito's decision.[11] While understandable given the dearth of surviving Japanese primary sources and not entirely without merit, use of the document in this manner is plagued with pitfalls, some long recognized and others only recently come to light. In the former category is the fact that no verbatim minutes were taken at the imperial conferences, thereby leaving any effort to reconstruct exactly what the emperor said dependent upon fragmentary contemporaneous notations and after-the-fact recollections by participants. Given the intense emotions of the moment, the frailty of human memory, and the interest of partisan officials in protecting the image of the imperial house, reliance on these documents to reconstruct the emperor's exact words is fraught with difficulty. On the basis of these materials, it would appear that the emperor declared his support for accepting the Potsdam Declaration with the one provision that the imperial institution be guaranteed, stated his lack of confidence in lagging preparations to defend the Kantō Plain (while ignoring more advanced preparations in southern Kyūshū), and rebuked the military for the glaring gap between promised performance and actual battlefield results. He then conveyed his distaste at the prospect of further destruction and suffering, and expressed his determination to "bear the unbearable" in order to end the war and preserve the state.[12]

Falling into the second category are less recognized textual difficulties concerning the writing and revision of the rescript. To the degree that scholars have referred to the actual drafting of the rescript, they have relied heavily on the recollections of Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu Hisatsune 迫水久常, a participant in the Imperial Conferences of 9-10 August and 14 August and the man charged with seeing the emperor's decision rendered in language appropriate for an imperial rescript.[13] A "renovationist bureaucrat" (*kakushin kanryō* 革新官僚) who joined the Finance Ministry in 1925, Sakomizu served as secretary to his father-in-law

[10] The original document can be viewed on the following National Diet Library website: http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/shiryo/01/017shoshi.html For an English translation, see Butow 1954, p. 248.

[11] For instance, two of the leading writers on the topic in English, Frank and Hasegawa, have debated the significance of the rescript mentioning the bomb but saying nothing of the Soviet Union's actions. Hasegawa displays a bit more sensitivity to the textual issues involved in its drafting, but directs little of this skepticism toward the 17 August rescript, which includes mention of the Soviet Union's entry into the war but says nothing about the atomic bomb. Frank 1999, p. 346, Hasegawa 2005, pp. 297-98, 346n90.

[12] For what are considered reliable records of the conference by participants, see "Hoshina Zenshirō shuki" in Gaimushō 1978, Vol. 4, pp. 147-55, and the account of Ikeda Sumihisa in Kurihara 1986, pp. 393-400. Also see the close examination of numerous sources in Furukawa 2009. In English, for a detailed reconstruction of the emperor's words on 10 and 14 August see Butow 1954, pp. 175-76, 207-08. The author is unaware of any explanation for Hirohito ignoring the defensive preparations in Kyūshū, but it may have been a conscious effort to avoid a factor that could complicate acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. Regarding intensive Japanese efforts to strengthen defenses in the south, see Drea 2007, pp. 59-75 and Giangreco 2009.

[13] For a recent example, see Hasegawa 2007b, p. 271n88.

Prime Minister Okada Keisuke 岡田啓介 from 1934 to 1936 and subsequently worked in the extra-ministerial Kikakuin 企画院 (Cabinet Planning Board) to implement the economic plans viewed as essential to national mobilization.[14] Partly because of his connections to Okada, a moderate admiral active in behind-the-scenes efforts to end the war, Sakomizu has been remembered as one of the key lower-ranking officials working to implement acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. Following the surrender, Sakomizu testified to Allied authorities and published his first description of "the truth of the time of surrender" in February 1946.[15]

In the years ahead, Sakomizu continued to publish accounts of his role in the final days of the war and integrated the tale of August 1945 into stump speeches as a member of first the Democratic and then Liberal Democratic Parties. Elected to the Lower House in 1952 and to the Upper House in 1956, he went on to serve as Director of the Economic Planning Agency (8 December 1960 to 18 July 1961) in the first cabinet of Ikeda Hayato 池田勇人 and as Minister of Posts and Telecommunications (18 July 1961 to 18 July 1962) in the second Ikeda cabinet. Meanwhile, in the spring of 1955, he gave what became his second published rendering of the events of August 1945 in a speech before members of the Moral Science Research Institute (*Dōtoku kagaku kenkyūjo* 道徳科学研究所). These early reminiscences culminated in 1964 with the publication of a memoir focused on his experiences during the failed coup attempt of 26 February 1936 and during the period of surrender. A second memoir focusing on the final months of the war appeared in 1973. Finally, in 1976 Sakomizu's accounts served as an important source for the chapter on the surrender in the Yomiuri Shinbun's 30-volume popular history of the early Shōwa years.[16]

Reliance on Sakomizu can be explained both by his talkativeness and by necessity born of the assumption that the actual drafts had been burned, along with so many other government documents, in the days prior to the arrival of occupation forces. However, in 1981 the original drafts of the rescript were located in Japan's national archives. Several years earlier, the widow of Kawada Mizuho 川田瑞穂, professor of classical Chinese studies at Waseda University and cabinet advisor on matters such as the drafting of rescripts, had come forward with a private copy of the first draft of the rescript located in her husband's papers. Matching that resting in government files (but identified as Sakomizu's work), this document, together with the newly discovered drafts, represents compelling evidence of Kawada's authorship. The uncovering of this documentary record ended any need to rely so heavily and uncritically on Sakomizu's

[14] Nakamura 1971.
[15] Sakomizu 1946.
[16] Sakomizu 1961, 1964, 1973, Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1976.

version of events. This would appear to be a positive development, for comparison of these documents with the former chief cabinet secretary's oft-repeated recollections reveals important discrepancies.[17] While Sakomizu clearly played an important role in outlining the content and overseeing the drafting of the surrender rescript, he appears to have exaggerated his contribution by claiming to have actually written the primary working draft of the document and to have embellished his tale with details that are not supported by the documentary record.[18]

Fully tracing either Sakomizu's role or the entire process of drafting the imperial rescript broadcast on 15 August is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a brief look at this convoluted process of composition and revision not only underscores some of the abovementioned discrepancies but also demonstrates the difficulties of using the rescript to illuminate the emperor's thinking or the content of the imperial conference of 9-10 August. First, in addition to the long-acknowledged roles of Sakomizu, Kawada, Yasuoka, Sakomizu associate Kihara Michio 木原道雄 and diplomat Tajiri Akiyoshi 田尻愛義, it is now clear that the document also incorporated the opinion of the Foreign Ministry before concluding with three hours of intense debate among cabinet members following the emperor's second "sacred decision" of 14 August. The result was a rescript that, far from being the product of one man's draft and "a few revisions" by cabinet members, underwent some 23 deletions, 18 revisions, and 4 new additions.[19]

Perhaps no issue serves so well to demonstrate these textual difficulties as the question of whether or not the rescript sheds decisive light on the historical debate over the impact of the atomic bomb and the Soviet declaration of war on the decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration. Reference to use of the atomic bomb in the rescript and the absence of any to the role of the Soviet Union has been pointed to as evidence of the monarch "speaking explicitly" as to why he decided to end the war.[20] However, while both the bomb and the Soviet declaration of war were indeed discussed during the imperial conference, none of the firsthand accounts by participants record any explicit mention of the bomb or Soviet entry into the war by Hirohito when announcing his initial decision to surrender in the early hours of 10 August.[21]

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[17] Chaen 1989, pp. 40-48. Also, regarding Sakomizu's accounts and motivations, see Furukawa 2009.

[18] Until the publication of his 1964 memoir, Sakomizu mistakenly rendered Kawada's name as Takeda.

[19] The mischaracterization is that of Hasegawa 2007b, p.140. This discussion relies largely on the efforts of Chaen 1989, who reconstructs the process in detail and provides a useful chart on pages 294-95, but also see Ishiwatari 1996. The exact roles of Sakomizu, Kawada and others remain in dispute; for a consideration of the documentary trail, see Yamada 2010.

[20] Frank 2007, p. 90; also, in the service of a different argument, Bix 2000, pp. 529.

[21] Gaimushō 1978, Vol. 4, pp. 147-55. Frank 1999, p. 296, amends Butow's summary so as to have Hirohito making "specific reference to the greatly increased destructiveness of the atomic bomb." However, as Hasegawa has pointed out (2005, p. 346n90), this amendment is based on one second-hand account from a contemporaneous source, the diary of Lieutenant Colonel Takeshita Masahiko, who did not attend the conference but reported the emperor emphasizing the need to surrender "especially [because of]

This is further supported by the earliest draft of the rescript, where one might logically expect find to mention of the atomic bomb had Hirohito specifically referred to the weapon. Instead, extant drafts reveal that the well-known reference to the enemy's "new use of a cruel bomb" (*arata ni zangyaku-naru bakudan o shiyō-shi* 新ニ残虐ナル爆弾ヲ使用シ) appears only in the final version completed on 14 August. What the initial draft does include is two relevant passages, one to continued warfare leading to "fierce destruction and barbarous slaughter" (*gekiretsu-naru hakai to zankoku-naru satsutaku* 激烈ナル破壊ト残酷ナル殺戮) and a second one to "the increasing severity of bombing by the enemy that ignores humanity" (*tekikoku no jindō o mushi-seru bakugeki no hi ni tsuki ni karetsu o kiwame* 敵国ノ人道ヲ無視セル爆撃ノ日ニ月ニ苛烈ヲ極メ). The first phrase is clearly a reference to the escalating destruction of which bombing in general was one important part, while the second is the first to specifically mention bombing, but makes no distinction between conventional and atomic bombing. The reference to increasing severity then disappeared and the word "bombing" was replaced with generic reference to "the enemy's assault" (*tekishū* 敵襲). On 12 August, portions of these two separate passages were combined to make the first mention of the atomic bomb in condemning the enemy for "ignoring humanity and using a cruel weapon" (*jindō o mushi-shite zangyaku-naru heiki o shiyō-shi* 人道ヲ無視シテ残虐ナル兵器ヲ使用シ). Finally, on the afternoon of 14 August, State Minister Yasui Eiji 安井英二 changed "weapon" to "bomb." Thus, while reference to the atomic bomb in the rescript may be read as reflecting

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the appearance of the atomic bomb" (*toku ni genshi bakudan no shutsugen* 特ニ原子爆弾ノ出現). Takeshita's statement records a summary of the conference provided by his brother-in-law Army Minister Anami Korechika, who was, of course, present. Bōeichō bōeikenshūjo senshi-shitsu 1975, p. 449. However, the fact that no other account by a direct participant explicitly mentions such a statement suggests that Anami, who was both loath to admit battlefield defeat and anxious to quell insubordination in the army, may have been providing a face-saving excuse for surrender (the same entry from Takeshita's diary in a separate source provides the equivalent of underlining for the reference to the atomic bomb, which would make the contrast with its absence in all other summaries of Hirohito's statement all the more startlingly. [Sanbō honbu shozō 2005, p. 362.] Whether the passage is emphasized in the original diary or not is unclear because that document's current whereabouts are unknown. Daihon'ei rikugunbu sensō shidō-han 1998, p. xiii). Indeed, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce Ishiguro Tadaatsu made the case for the bomb's utility as a face-saving pretext for surrender to Anami on 9 August (Suzuki 2006, p. 79). It is surely apropos to remember that Takeshita was one of those officers calling for Anami to either bring the cabinet down by resigning, thereby preventing surrender, or to cooperate in a coup d'état, and that Takeshita later participated in the insubordinate effort to prevent the radio broadcast of the rescript. Furukawa sees in the "nuance" of a post-conference statement by Army Chief of Staff Umezu Yoshijirō to Vice-Chief of Staff Kawabe Torashirō evidence to support Anami's assertion. Kawabe records Umezu reporting that "[His Majesty] cannot stand to expose the people to further horrific war damage, [nor] can [His Majesty] endure to watch the further destruction of Japanese culture" *kore ijō ni jinmin o santan-taru sensai ni sarasu ni shinobi-etamawazu, kore ijō ni Nihon bunka no hakai o miru ni shinobi-etamawazu* 之以上ニ人民ヲ惨憺タル戦災ニ曝スニ忍ビ得給ワズ、之以上ニ日本文化ノ破壊ヲ見ルニ忍ビ得給ワズ (Furukawa 2009, pp. 3-4, 18n27). However, such a statement can just as easily be read as encompassing all forms of wartime destruction—including the incineration of around half of Tokyo—rather than as singling out the atomic bomb. It is true that Hirohito uses a term similar to Anami's in his dictated statements from early 1946, but he also directs listeners to Sakomizu's just published account of the conferences (Terasaki 1991, pp. 121-22, 196), whereas in his immediate post-conference explanation of his decision to Lord Privy Seal Kido Kōichi, he mentions neither the bomb nor the Soviet entry into the war, but focuses on the dire military situation and, above all, the lagging preparations to defend the homeland—especially the Kantō region—against invasion (Furukawa 2009, pp. 3-4). This reasoning is consistent with the most reliable accounts of what the emperor said in the conference itself. In sum, the weight of the evidence seems to support Hasegawa's point regarding Anami's statement to Kawabe.

the broad impact of that weapon upon the political leadership, the convoluted and indirect manner in which this oft-cited phrase found its way into the rescript demonstrates the difficulties in using it as evidence of Hirohito's personal motivations.[22]

As noted above, discussion of the Soviet entry into the war was also taken up in the imperial conference of 9-10 August, but apparently was not part of Hirohito's explanation for why he agreed with Tōgō's position. However, here the tale of revision moves in the opposite direction from that of the bomb's inclusion in the rescript, for reference to the diplomatic effort to end the war through an intermediary (i.e., the Soviet Union) was included in the initial draft and remained with only minor change until being removed during the final cabinet-level revisions of 14 August.[23] The first draft of the rescript has Hirohito follow his reference to the atomic bomb and the need to stop the war in order to prevent the "total extinction of human civilization" with the following explanation: "Even though We earlier requested that the imperial government seek the mediation of a third country, this [initiative] was unfortunately not accepted, [and] We have in the end for that reason ordered [Our government] to respond to the joint declaration" (*chin ga saki ni teikoku seifu o shite dai-sankoku no assen o motomeshimetaru yu'en naru mo fukō sono ireruru tokoro to narazu tsui ni kakkoku kyōdō sengen ni ōseshimuru ni itareru riyū nari* 朕カ先ニ帝国政府ヲシテ第三国ノ斡旋ヲ求メシメタル所以ナルモ不幸其ノ容ルル所トナラス遂ニ各国共同宣言ニ応セシムルニ至レル理由ナリ). During the cabinet meeting of 14 August, however, this statement was revised to read simply that the emperor had ordered the government to accept "the provisions of the Joint Declaration of the Powers." Moreover, the earlier addition of another new line prior to this newly revised one meant that acceptance of the declaration was now attributed to the emperor's concern for his subjects and for how to apologize to his imperial ancestors: "Such being the case, how are We to save the millions of Our subjects; or to atone Ourselves before the hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors? This is the reason why We have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the Joint Declaration of the Powers" (*kaku no gotokunba chin nani o motte ka okuchō no sekishi o hozon-shi kōso-kōsō no shinrei ni shasemuya kore chin ga*

[22] The term "weapon" appears to have been contributed by Yasuoka, with Kawada then adding the modifier "new." The process of revision does not mean there is no compelling evidence from other sources for the importance of the atomic bomb in convincing the emperor to act. For an emphasis on the shock of bomb in the decision to surrender, see Asada 2001 (which includes a revised version of his 1998 essay with an appended riposte to Hasegawa), pp. 174-206). The most recent argument for Russian participation being decisive is provided by Hasegawa 2007. Suzuki 2011, while recognizing the bomb's significance in certain regards, tends to place greater overall weight on the Soviet factor in undermining the position of the hardliners in the army holding out for a final decisive battle. For a case that the bomb and Russian intervention were of equal importance in bringing about Japan's surrender, see Hatano 2007. It is interesting to note that Sakomizu, writing in early 1946, stressed the bomb's importance in bringing about the end of the war and in giving the army a pretext for acquiescing to the emperor's decision. Sakomizu 1946, pp. 61-62. Given this outlook, had Hirohito explicitly, indeed, "especially," referred to the bomb, it seems likely that Sakomizu would have made a point of having this included in the first draft or at least at an earlier stage of revision.

[23] The minor revision was Yasuoka's replacing of arbitration (*chōtei* 調停) with mediation (*assen* 斡旋).

teikoku seifu o shite to narazu tsui ni kakkoku kyōdō sengen ni ōseshimuru ni itareru yu'en nari 斯ノ如クムハ朕何ヲ以テカ億兆ノ赤子ヲ保存シ皇祖皇宗ノ神霊ニ謝セムヤ是レ朕カ帝国政府ヲシテトナラス遂ニ各国共同宣言ニ応セシムルニ至レル所以ナリ).[24] Thus, by the time Hirohito stood before a microphone to record the rescript, the straightforward linking of a failed diplomatic initiative to the decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration had disappeared in favor of a bland statement of that decision tied directly to the rescript's message of benevolent intervention and rescue of the nation by the emperor.

Further examples illustrating the rescript's inconsistent relationship to the content of the imperial conferences are visible in the manner in which institutional perspectives were injected into the drafting process. For instance, an official of the Foreign Ministry intervened to have criticism of the enemy for "ignoring humanity" and using "any means fair or foul to attain its objective" removed as undiplomatic and inopportune. The same official, citing the need to avoid the language of "Axis ideology," lobbied successfully to have mention of the wartime goal to realize "construction of a New Order for East Asia" (*Tōa shinchitsujo no kensetsu* 東亜新秩序ノ建設) replaced with a reference to efforts made for the "liberation of East Asia." (*Tōa no kaihō* 東亜ノ解放). While the first wording would have more accurately reflected Japan's war goals and the rewrite perhaps demonstrated sensitivity to future historical debate, neither issue came up in the imperial conferences. Perhaps the best-known incidence of such revision came when Army Minister Anami Korechika 阿南惟幾 insisted on inserting the euphemistic "war situation not necessarily developing favorably," (*senkyoku kanarazushimo kōten sezu* 戦局必シモ好転セス) in place of more straightforward acknowledgement of it growing worse by the day, thereby softening Hirohito's criticism of 14 August regarding the gap between promised and actual performance by the military.[25]

Anami was also involved in strengthening a statement that reflected the focal point of debate and concisely captured what members of the governing elite hoped they were

[24] Chaen, p. 294. At the moment, the author is not aware of any evidence regarding who made this last minute revision and for what reason. While one might read the revision of references to the atomic bomb and Soviet entry into the war as evidence of the cabinet emphasizing the former and downplaying the latter (e.g., Suzuki 2011, pp. 185, 188, 213), the official cabinet statement (*naikaku kokuyu* 内閣告諭) broadcast on NHK immediately after the surrender rescript straightforwardly links both events to the decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration, stating that "already the nature of warfare has been changed in an instant by use of a new bomb of destructive power unheard of in the history of science, [and this was] followed immediately by the Soviet Union's declaration of war against the Empire on 9 August, leaving the Empire faced with two truly unprecedented obstacles" *Tsui ni kagaku-shi jō mizō no hakai-ryoku o yūsuru shin-bakudan no mochiraruru ni itarite sensō no shihō o ippen seshime tsuide So-renpō wa saru kokonoka teikoku ni sensen o fukoku-shi teikoku wa masa ni mizō no nankan ni hōchaku-shitari* 遂ニ科学史上未曽有ノ破壊力ヲ有スル新爆弾ノ用ヒラルルニ至リテ戦争ノ仕法ヲ一変セシメ次イデソ連邦ハ去ル九日帝国ニ宣戦ヲ布告シ帝国ハ正ニ未曽有ノ難関ニ逢着シタリ. Likewise, the NHK commentary following the broadcast and the cabinet statement repeatedly emphasized both factors when explaining the government's decision. Takeyama, pp. 124-27, 131-32, 139.

[25] See Chaen 1989, p. 291; Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1976, pp. 375-99.

accomplishing through acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration: "We have herein been able to preserve the *kokutai*" (*chin wa koko ni kokutai o goji-shiete* 朕は茲ニ国体ヲ護持シ得テ). This particular line, which opens the final paragraph reminding Japanese not to let the difficult times ahead cause them to lose faith in the values of the emperor-centered national polity, follows directly the expressed desire to "inaugurate Great Peace." Sakomizu, in his memoirs from 1964 and 1973 memoir—but in neither his 1946 article nor 1955 speech—credited himself with providing the line that served as the basis for this classical expression and that conveyed a straightforward pacifist meaning: "[We] resolve to secure eternal peace" (*ei'en no heiwa o kakuho-sen koto kisu* 永遠ノ平和ヲ確保センコト期ス). These were the words, he wrote, that Yasuoka revised with the Great Peace line from the Chinese classics.[26] However, while a desire for peace is visible in Hirohito's statements and perhaps implicit in any decision to end a war, there is no record of such a categorically pacifist statement being made on 10 August.[27] Moreover, the extant drafts of the rescript reveal no such line appearing anywhere at any stage of the drafting.

Rather, what one does find is a quite different passage by Kawada expressing a sentiment very much in line with the goal of preserving the *kokutai*, an objective clearly shared by all participants in the imperial conference. Spared revision, Kawada's line would have had the emperor state the following words: "Enduring the unendurable and suffering the insufferable, We truly desire to devote every effort together with ye Our subjects to preserve and defend the state" (*chin wa jitsu ni taegataki o tae shinobigataki o shinobi nanji shinmin to tomo ni binben doryoku o motte shashoku o hoei-sen to hossu* 朕ハ実ニ堪ヘ難キヲ堪ヘ忍ビ難キヲ忍ビ爾臣民ト共ニ黽勉努力以テ社稷ヲ保衛セムト欲ス). However, this was then revised to read "Enduring the unendurable and suffering the insufferable, We truly resolve to persevere determinedly for a future day and desire the assistance of ye Our subjects to forever preserve and defend the state" (*chin wa jitsu ni taegataki o tae shinobigataki o shinobi gashin-shōtan nasu aru no hi o shōrai ni ki-shi nanji shinmin no kyōyoku o ete nagaku shashoku o hoei-sen to hossu* 朕ハ実ニ堪ヘ難キヲ堪ヘ忍ビ難キヲ忍ビ臥薪嘗胆為ス有ルノ日ヲ将来ニ期シ爾

[26] Sakomizu 1964, pp. 295-96, Sakomizu 1973, pp. 241-42, Yomiuri shinbunsha 1976, pp. 370-71.

[27] Writing after the war, Director of the Cabinet Information Bureau Shimomura Hiroshi (Kainan) paraphrases Hirohito as saying he wanted "to open the way to peace for the next ten-thousand generations" (*bansei no tame heiwa no michi o hirakitai*); however, Shimomura, while attending the imperial conference on 14 August, was absent from the meeting of 9-10 August, and, when considered with the other textual evidence, the coincidence between this line and what was later broadcast suggests he retrospectively added this phrasing in order to polish the emperor's image. Shimomura 1985, p. 107. Relatedly, recent research shows that Shimomura also concocted the story that Hirohito said the war must end "no matter what may happen to me" in order to "save the lives of all the people." Furukawa 2009; Suzuki 2011, pp. 185, 213. Shimomura's involvement in the radio broadcast of the rescript likely explains the inclusion of this anecdote of imperial self-sacrifice in the NHK commentary. Takeyama 1989, pp. 127-28.

臣民ノ協翼ヲ得テ永ク社稷ヲ保衛セムト欲ス).[28] Subsequent drafts reveal this to be the passage Yasuoka marked out and replaced with the line about inaugurating Great Peace, thereby making the same point, but with greater emphasis on the moral imperative of the sovereign's intervention and in a manner more oblique and more beneficial to Hirohito's postwar image.

Reviewing the draft on 12 and 14 August in his capacity as a consultant to the Greater East Asia Ministry (*Daitōashō* 大東亜省), Yasuoka added phrases he hoped would help the state and the imperial institution weather the crisis of defeat in the best light possible.[29] These included the passage introduced above linking acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration to Hirohito's wish to rescue his subjects and concern over how to atone before his imperial ancestors. Of his two alterations to Kawada's line about preserving the state, one survives in the final document and one does not; both sought to present the emperor as a benevolent monarch acting out of moral principle and with the selfless intent of ending the war for the sake of the national polity and the political values it embodied. Toward this end Yasuoka first coined and inserted the phrase "in moral principle and destiny" (*gimei ni sonsuru tokoro* 義命ニ存スル所), explaining later that "*gimei*," a neologism comprised of two characters found in a line from *Master Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋左氏伝, *Chunqiu Zuo Shi Zhuan*; Jp. *Shunjū sashiden*), was intended to signify a "categorical imperative," meaning that the emperor was ending the war in accordance with his mandate as sovereign.[30]

However, cabinet members reviewing the revised draft found the neologism too obscure and replaced it with "in compliance with the fortunes of the day" (*jiun no meizuru tokoro* 時運ノ命スル所), which was revised further to read "in accordance with the fortunes of the day" (*jiun no omomuku tokoro* 時運ノ趨ク所). Thus, the line went from being an obscure expression concerned with shoring up emperor-centered political morality to a bland reference to general conditions. For this reason, Yasuoka deplored the cabinet's "ignorant" rephrasing of his revision for making it sound as if the emperor was merely responding to the trends of the times, rather than acting in accord with his moral mandate to implement righteous governance.

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[28] Chaen 1989, p. 295. *Shashoku* 社稷 is an old Chinese term for the god of the five grains that also signifies the state. Yasuoka originally considered using *shashoku* as the name for his association of officials, before settling on Kokuikai (see the following section). See Kido 1966, p. 105.

[29] Yasuoka confirmed his revisions in an interview in 1981. Chaen 1989, pp. 70-81; "Daitōashō komon hi" 1944; Chaen 1989, p. 73.

[30] Chaen 1989, pp. 274-78. Translated into English, the original passage might read "With faith (*shin* 信) carry out moral principle (*gi* 義), with moral principle accomplish destiny (*mei* 命)."『春秋左氏伝』の巻 12　成公 8 年：信以行義，義以成命「信を以て義を行い、義を以て命を成す」.

The final wording, he complained, implied that the emperor was acting "as if lacking authority as the son of heaven, as the emperor (*tenshi to shite, tennō to shite no ken'i ga nai yō ni* 天子として、天皇としての権威がないように)."[31] Moreover, he recollected, "the loss of the war was the starting point of postwar Japan's peace. To convey the idea that this decision was made as if bending before a breeze, well, that's disturbing."[32]

Yasuoka's second revision to Kawada's line was the final clause in which Hirohito expresses the desire to realize Great Peace. Reading the original call to "preserve and defend the state" appears to have reminded Yasuoka of a favorite classical passage credited to the eleventh-century Chinese philosopher Zhang Zai 張載 and recorded in the twelfth-century Neo-Confucian text *Reflections on Things at Hand* (近思録, *Jinsilu*; Jp: *Kinshiroku*). Marking out the final portion of Kawada's line, he inserted "desire to inaugurate Great Peace for the sake of the next ten-thousand generations (*bansei no tame ni taihei o hirakan to hossu*) 万世ノ為二太平ヲ開カムト欲ス."[33] Combined with the aforementioned reference to the "fortunes of the day" and the memorable phrase "enduring the unendurable and suffering the insufferable," the final passage as it appears in the rescript reads as follows:

> In accordance with the fortunes of the day and while enduring the unendurable and suffering the insufferable, We desire to inaugurate Great Peace for the sake of the next ten-thousand generations (*chin wa jiun no omomuku tokoro taegataki o tae shinobigataki o shinobi motte bansei no tame ni taihei o hirakan to hossu* 朕ハ時運ノ趨ク所堪ヘ難キヲ堪ヘ忍ヒ難キヲ忍ヒ以テ万世ノ為ニ太平ヲ開カムト欲ス).[34]

Thus, despite the loss of moral imperative intended through use of the neologism "*gimei*," Yasuoka succeeded in presenting Hirohito as intervening benevolently to institute Great Peace.

In the context of military defeat, Great Peace certainly encompassed the intent of ending the war and thereby restoring peace. However, in the classical passage from which this line was taken Great Peace referred specifically to the pacific realm that would result from the restoration of proper learning and governance, and is thus not far removed in meaning from Kawada's more straightforward sentence about preserving *shashoku*, a term that, like *kokutai*,

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[31] Chaen 1989, p. 79.
[32] Chaen 1989, p. 277.
[33] The line appears as Line 95 in Section Two. This translation follows that found in Chan 1967, p. 83, and is adopted here to emphasize both the classical meaning, of which Yasuoka was clearly aware, and the contemporary concern with preserving the *kokutai*. Although not visible in the documentary record, Yasuoka recollected years later that this line, too, met opposition in the cabinet from those who felt it was baldy inopportune for Japan to now state that it sought to initiate peace; however, he saw this as a misunderstanding of Zhang Zai's words. Chaen, pp. 81, 277-78.
[34] Author's translation. There is general agreement that the well-known phrase "enduring the unendurable and suffering the insufferable," or some close approximation, was uttered by Hirohito; however, he was apparently responding to prompting by Lord Privy Seal Kido Kōichi, who earlier used the same phrasing in conversation with Hirohito prior to the conference. Butow 1954, p. 176n24.

combines political and ethical sentiments. The text in the *Jinsilu* reads as follows:

> Make up your mind for the sake of Heaven and Earth. Establish the Way for the sake of living men. Continue the learning that has been interrupted for the sake of past sages. And inaugurate great peace for the sake of the next ten-thousand generations (*Tenchi no tame ni kokoro o tate seimin no tame ni mei o tate ōsei no tame ni zetsugaku o tsugi bansei no tame ni taihei o hiraku* 天地ノタメニ心ヲ立テ生民ノタメニ命ヲ立テ往聖ノタメニ絶学ヲ継ギ万世ノタメニ太平ヲ開ク).[35]

The traditional annotation then explains:

> The mind of Heaven and Earth is to produce and reproduce. The sage participates and assists Heaven and Earth in this process of transformation and nourishment so that all things will fulfill their nature and destiny correctly. This is to make up one's mind for the sake of Heaven and Earth. To establish the Way for living men is to establish and make prominent moral principles and to support human relationships and cardinal virtues. To continue interrupted learning means to continue transmission of the Way. If great peace is inaugurated, whenever a true king arises, he will adopt the system as a model and benefit ten-thousand generations.[36]

It is this central concern with perpetuating correct political morality and political stability that motivated Yasuoka, an ardent student of classical Chinese learning and one for whom the moral principles and cardinal virtues associated with Japan's Imperial Way (*kōdō* 皇道)—and with the "true king" who manifested this path—constituted both the learning and the system to be safeguarded and transmitted to future generations through the inauguration of Great Peace. For this reason, he employed classical language to cast Hirohito as the benevolent ruler of Confucian lore intervening to restore a peaceful and harmonious realm in accord with the Kingly Way (王道 *ōdō*).[37]

Because such esoteric intent could hardly be expected to resonate easily and clearly with the average Japanese, radio and print media stepped in to propagate the tale of munificent imperial intervention and successful *kokutai-goji* to the war-weary populace. Immediately following Hirohito's "jeweled-voice broadcast" (*gyokuon hōsō* 玉音放送), the national broadcasting station NHK aired a rereading of the rescript by announcer Wada Nobukata 和田信賢, followed by an official cabinet statement (*naikaku kokuyu* 内閣告諭) explaining the

[35] Line 95 of "The Essentials of Learning," in Chan 1967, p. 83. The Japanese rendering comes from Shimada 1967, p. 1.
[36] Chan 1967 p. 83.
[37] Yasuoka's reliance on Confucian political ideals led him to define the Imperial Way as the penultimate expression of the Kingly Way, the realization of which was facilitated by Japan being blessed with a *kokutai* centered on a "sovereign line unbroken for ages eternal." See Brown 2007, pp. 133-50.

government's decision, and then further extended editorial commentary by Wada in everyday Japanese. Such programming was necessary because of the difficulty of the Sino-Japanese language in which the rescript was written, but was also desirable in that it provided an opportunity to underscore how the emperor had intervened to rescue the nation—indeed "world civilization"—from further destruction. In the course of this commentary, NHK paid prominent attention to the benevolent "inauguration of Great Peace" as representing the Imperial Will (*ō-mikokoro* 大御心) and the emperor's prime motivation for accepting the Potsdam Declaration.[38] The print media then reproduced the entire rescript and gave the Great Peace phrase prominent place in headlines reporting the radio broadcast. Together, NHK and the newspapers initiated the process whereby the broadcast came to symbolize a participatory ritual of war remembrance, serving as a cornerstone for constructing and disseminating the story of noon on 15 August 1945 as the moment when the emperor ended the war and paved the way for an enduring peace from above.[39]

In the decades since Japan's surrender the Great Peace line has become a central prop in this story of benevolent intervention, despite the fact that the passage articulated primarily an abiding concern for the fate of the emperor-centered polity and the political values it represented, the perpetuation of which necessitated the restoration of peace. Although Yasuoka on occasion associated the famous line with pacifist sentiment and was happy to see this reflect well upon the emperor and on Japan as a nation contributing to world peace, he explicitly rejected the idea that his revision meant that Japan should embrace permanent pacifism.[40] Desiring to inaugurate Great Peace did not mean, he wrote in 1957, creating a peace that would "extend for ten-thousand generations (*bansei ni watatte* 万世に亙たって)," but rather signified the immediate restoration of peace "for the sake of ten-thousand generations" (*bansei no tame* 万世の為).[41] Likewise, Yasuoka emphasized that *bansei no tame*, like the excised neologism *gimei* with which it was intended to be used, was more profound in meaning than *ei'en no heiwa* because of the imperial moral imperative involved.[42] In sum, accepting the unfortunate reality of defeat and ending the war in the late summer of 1945 was in the best interest of Japan and Japanese because this course of action held out the possibility of preserving the national polity and, hopefully, the political morality that went with it.

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[38] The content of the broadcast, which was repeated several times that day, is available in Takeyama 1989, pp. 117-46.
[39] See, for example, page one of the *Tokyo shinbun* 1945. For more on media portrayals of the radio broadcast as participatory ritual, as well as the larger—and ongoing—tale of constructing and disseminating the story of 15 August, see Satō 2005, p. 148, passim.
[40] Chaen, p. 278.
[41] Cited in Matsuo 1982, pp. 119-122.
[42] Yomiuri shinbunsha 1976, pp. 376-77.

Great Peace in the Age of *Kakushin* and War

Further substantiation that concern for preserving the political status quo lay behind the Great Peace line is visible through a quick retrospective of Yasuoka's repeated use of the same passage in the 1920s and 1930s. During these years he found Zhang Zai's injunction useful in promoting the ideal of stable governance of the emperor-centered state by wise statesmen who transcended petty partisanship and placed the interests of the state first. This perspective naturally appealed to non-party elites seeking to preserve their prerogatives in the years of "dangerous thoughts" and "Taishō democracy." Advocates of this approach to constitutional government located potential threats to political stability and their own authority in party-led cabinets and in radical renovation (*kakushin* 革新) inspired by ideologies of the Left and the Right, whether posed through terrorist violence or state planning at the hands of socialist-inspired military and civilian technocrats. Further anxiety was unleashed by first the prospect and then the reality of war against the Western powers.

As the power of the mainstream political parties peaked in the late 1920s, Yasuoka and patrons within the Home Ministry attacked liberalism and what they viewed as the corrupt and incompetent nature of party rule in an ultimately successful campaign to achieve greater bureaucratic autonomy from party oversight. Support from these and other non-party political and economic elites enabled Yasuoka to establish the Kinkei Gakuin 金雞学院 (Golden Pheasant Academy) as the headquarters for his moral education campaign. The academy, modeled on Yoshida Shōin's 吉田松陰 famous *Shōka Sonjuku* 松下村塾 and set-up on the grounds of Count Sakai Tadamasa's 酒井忠正 Tokyo residence, served as a forum for discussing political conditions with elite supporters and as the headquarters for Yasuoka's efforts to educate young leaders who would provide moral guidance that inculcated loyalty to the state. Governing this state in line with the *kokutai* meant, for these men, having the emperor's officials serve as the vital linchpin between the monarch and the people.

Such right-thinking "men of ability" (*jinzai* 人材) working quietly and determinedly constituted what Yasuoka in 1928 called the *kokui* 国維 (national mainstay) movement, relying on a neologism from the *Guanzi* (菅子, circa fourth to first centuries BCE; Jp. *Kanshi*) chapter on "shepherding the people (*bokumin* 牧民)." Nevertheless, he turned to Zhang Zai's passage for the main principles for this undertaking and therein provided the following definition for the Great Peace line: "A momentary peace often becomes a generation's source of evil. Thinking of the infinity of nature and the perpetuity of human life, one must not fall into superfluous, foolish undertakings" (*Ichiji no heiwa wa ōō ni shite ichidai no kakon to naru. Zōka no mugen, jinsei no eikyū o omotte, fuzei-ken'yū-teki gukyo ni ochiitte wa naranu* 一時

の平和は往々にして一代の禍根と為る。造化の無限、人生の永久を思って、附贅懸疣的愚挙に陥ってはならぬ).[43] In January 1932, Yasuoka's *kokui* movement and alliance with the so-called "new bureaucrats" (*shin-kanryō* 新官僚) culminated in the creation of the Kokuikai 国維会 (National Mainstay Society), several key members of which went on to staff the national unity cabinets that helped weaken the influence of the political parties over the civil bureaucracy and strengthen ties between bureaucrats and military staff officers.[44]

The alliance behind the Kokuikai also perceived danger to the *kokutai* in the terrorism of revolutionary nationalists intent on sweeping aside a corrupt political and economic status quo in favor of connecting, however vaguely, the emperor and his subjects. Ironically, as Yasuoka attained public prominence, his appearance was sometimes characterized as "the second coming" of Yui Shōsetsu 由井正雪, the early seventeenth-century warrior-scholar who plotted unsuccessfully to overthrow the newly established Tokugawa shogunate.[45] Such rumors were fueled by the fact that some future participants in plotting assassinations and coups d'état, such as naval officer Fujii Hitoshi 藤井斉, who was involved in plotting the murder of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi 犬養毅, spent time at the Kinkei Gakuin.[46]

Nevertheless, this characterization was not apt, for Yasuoka's discourse on *kakushin* and personal ties revealed him to be an apostle of gradual top-down reform by political elites, rather than an advocate of violent revolutionary change. Indeed, evidence for this was given at the time by disenchanted radical nationalists. Although Fujii, who died in the Shanghai Incident of 1932, appears to have left no evaluation of Yasuoka, other associates of Inoue Nisshō's 井上日召 Ketsumeidan 血盟団 (Blood Pledge Brotherhood) who spent time at the academy clearly recognized the difference between their agenda and that of Yasuoka.[47] For instance, Ikebukuro Seihachirō 池袋正釟郎, assigned to kill Lord Privy Seal Makino Nobuaki 牧野伸顕 as part of the group's tactic of "one man, one murder" (*ichinin-issatsu* 一人一殺), decided that Yasuoka was no ally because he "possessed no concrete plans, especially nothing directed toward destruction, and what's more his ties were all with the privileged class and bureaucratic class."[48] Likewise, Onuma Shō 小沼正, the assassin of former Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke 井上準之助, commented that while people "are calling him a contemporary Yui Shōsetsu," he felt that Yasuoka was "no good" and that, while he may be "a great scholar,"

[43] Yasuoka 1928, pp. 4-6.
[44] For details, see Brown 2009 and Brown 2012.
[45] Itō 1940, p. 18.
[46] *Kinkei kaihō* 1930b.
[47] *Kinkei kaihō* 1930a ; "Ikebukuro Seihachirō," 1964, p. 706.
[48] "Ikebukuro Sheihachirō," p. 706. Inoue believed that Yasuoka's actions included turning his group in to the police. Inoue 1954, p. 47.

he would not "participate in national reorganization."[49]

Yasuoka indeed valued the ties to which Ikebukuro referred. A year before members of the Ketsumeidan embarked on their assassination plots, Yasuoka had written to Makino warning that contemporary youth were "casting their lot with terrorists of the Left and Right."[50] Once the violence began, he visited political leaders to warn of the growing menace from revolutionary action that, whether originating on the Right or the Left, might endanger the imperial house. For example, on 19 February 1932, ten days after the assassination of Inoue, he provided such counsel at the residence of Makino's private secretary Kido Kōichi 木戸幸一 while in the company of senior statesman Prince Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺公望 and longtime associates Sakai, Home Ministry official Gotō Fumio 後藤文雄, and Prince Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文麿.[51] Two days prior to the 5 March murder of Mitsui director Dan Takuma 団琢磨, Yasuoka appealed to Makino for the creation of a "cabinet of talented men" (*jinzai naikaku* 人材内閣) selected from the bureaucracy, the House of Peers, and the two conservative parties. Such an approach, he argued, would bring politics in line with the principles of good governance and thereby "inaugurate Great Peace for the next ten-thousand generations."[52] Speaking before the Japan Industrial Club in December 1932, Yasuoka asserted that the right wing was beginning to resemble the left wing in their willingness to use terror to seize control and erect a dictatorship. By targeting such men as Makino and Saionji, he argued, these assassins threatened to deprive Japan of the very statesmen who could control the Diet and thereby prevent demagogues from using electoral politics to seize dictatorial power and possibly threaten the imperial institution.[53]

Meanwhile, Yasuoka utilized Zhang Zai's passage to warn his students of the threat posed by right-wing terrorism to the *kokutai* and expanded his pedagogic activities in the prefectures. Following the assassination of Inukai on 15 May 1932, he warned academy students against being seduced into such reckless acts, saying that Japan could not be saved overnight but only through the gradual moral cultivation of youth and the leadership of able men determined to "inaugurate Great Peace for the sake of the next ten-thousand generations."[54] In January 1933, Yasuoka and compatriots from the Kokuikai established the Tokunō Kyōkai 篤農協会 (Ardent Farmers' Society) with the goal of rescuing Japan's rural villages, with their supposed

[49] Mainichi shinbunsha 1968, pp. 217-52.
[50] Letter from Yasuoka Masahiro to Makino Nobuaki, 18 February 1931, Otabe 1980, pp. 68-69. In fact, this was not the first time Yasuoka had written to Makino about youth being seduced by radical ideas of the Left and Right; see Letter from Yasuoka Masahiro to Makino Nobuaki, 1927 (month and day unknown), Otabe 1980, p. 63.
[51] See Kido 1966, p. 140.
[52] Letter from Yasuoka Masahiro to Makino Nobuaki, 3 March 1932, Otabe 1980, pp. 70-71.
[53] Yasuoka 1932c, pp. 33-40, 56-71.
[54] Yasuoka 1932a; Yasuoka 1932b.

familial bonds and nationalist loyalty, from the destructive social morality unleashed by modern urbanization. Toward this end, they called on members to create superior households and harmonious villages to serve as a foundation for the "enduring pacification of the state" (*kokka-bandai no shizume* 国家万代の鎮め), a phrase essentially synonymous in meaning to the Great Peace line. Nevertheless, for good measure Yasuoka once again employed the entire *Jinsilu* passage as the society's founding principles.[55] In September 1935, former Kokuikai member Abe Tonizō 安部十二造 established the Sokōkai 素行会, named after the seventeenth-century Confucian scholar and military theorist Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行, in order to further extend their moral education movement to Abe's home province of Shimane.[56]

Yasuoka employed the same approach when confronted with the most serious prewar threat to the Meiji constitutional order in the attempted coup d'etat by young army officers on 26 February 1936. Conferring with *zaibatsu* supporters including Gō Seinosuke 郷誠之助, Ikeda Shigeaki 池田成彬, and Yūki Toyotarō 結城豊太郎, Yasuoka received financial backing to further expand his moral education activities and embarked on a national speaking tour calling for the avoidance of such disturbances.[57] He also reissued a plan for "renewal of governance" (*shosei-isshin* 庶政一新) that would strengthen the authority of non-party officialdom, weaken the power of the Diet, and enhance nationalist education directed toward inculcating loyalty to the state.[58] Lamenting the recent coup attempt as just the type of occurrence he had been trying to prevent since the influx of communist ideas after the First World War, Yasuoka explained that the Kinkei Gakuin, Nippon Nōshi Gakkō 日本農士学校 (Japan Agrarianist Academy), and Kokuikai had all been established in order to "eliminate [such] foolishness, prevent the country from falling into the current condition and, bringing forth righteous patriots and harmonious unity, pioneer the path toward progress in world culture and civilization."[59] The current state of affairs, he determined, demonstrated clearly the insufficiency of these activities and the need for stepping up efforts to foster national unity through the dissemination of a "grand ideal" emphasizing moral principle and proper governance.[60] In March 1936, Yasuoka reiterated the conservative principles behind this "grand ideal" in an address to the graduating class of the Kinkei Gakuin, admonishing them to avoid being caught up in the temporary vicissitudes of politics and calling them to selfless

[55] *Tokunō* 1938, p. 11; Yasuoka 1938, p. 1.
[56] Sokōkai 1988, pp. 172-91.
[57] Yasuoka Masahiro-sensei nenpu hensan iinkai 1997, p. 54. Otabe 1983, p. 30.
[58] Yasuoka 1936a. A slightly revised version appeared in the pro-reform magazine *Shakai Ōrai* in October. Yasuoka 1936d, pp. 1-15.
[59] Yasuoka 1936a, back page.
[60] Yasuoka 1936a, p. 1.

service based on the realization that "true sincerity always resides in the imperative to inaugurate Great Peace for the sake of the next ten-thousand generations."[61]

Space will not permit close examination of how Yasuoka and his conservative allies viewed and reacted to the threat posed to their prerogatives by advocates of state socialist-style renovation in the form of a new political structure (*shin-seiji taisei* 新政治体制). These men also looked askance at the insistence of these reformists that creating a New Order for East Asia (*Tōa shin-chitsujo* 東亜新秩序) necessitated a military alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Conservatives and other vested interests viewed the effort to create a one-party state and implement a "control economy" (*tōsei keizai* 統制経済) with great suspicion, and opposition from these quarters ultimately eviscerated the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA; Taisei Yokusankai 大政翼賛会), thereby preventing the restructuring sought by its supporters. A strident anti-communist, Yasuoka shared many of these doubts. In August 1940, for instance, as one of numerous right-wing and military figures queried by the Konoe government about the prospective IRAA, he responded that while the divisiveness of party politics might justify some reform of the political system, the necessity and effectiveness of proper individual "political self-awareness" trumped the need for such structural change. Domestic critics of the IRAA also tended to question the need for the Tripartite Pact, worrying that such a move would worsen relations with the United States and Great Britain. Yasuoka agreed, seeing "no need to follow Germany and Italy" and arguing instead the priority of focusing on East Asia and "the increasingly close ties between the United States and the Soviet Union."[62] Japan's interests in East Asia, he counseled, would be best secured through a policy of neutrality. For instance, before an audience of diplomats in 1939, he argued there was no need "to curry favor with Britain or to flatter Germany" when all Japan should do was turn a blind eye to both the Axis and Allied powers and "take charge of our own area."[63]

Such opinions help explain Yasuoka's association with members of the so-called "pro-Anglo-American faction" (*shin-EiBei-ha* 親英米派), which continued during the Pacific War. Reflecting these ties, when the skepticism of these men toward the course of the war drew the ire of Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki 東條英機, Yasuoka publicly, if obliquely, expressed criticism of the Premier's dictatorial methods and concern over the potential negative effects of prolonged warfare upon the health and stability of Japanese society. On page two of the 10 January 1943 edition of the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, for instance, Yasuoka used the words of Yamaga

[61] Yasuoka 1936b, pp. 2-3.
[62] Keishichō 1940, p. 17.
[63] Yasuoka 1939, pp. 57-58.

Sokō as cover for stressing the need for "those who stand above" to behave with dignity, focus on the welfare of the people, be above ethical reproach, be open in policy making and engage in moral guidance. Implying that the current cabinet lacked such traits, he chided that political leaders must recognize that "the true essence of politics resides in the moral cultivation of the statesman" and that "the apex of politics is to pacify the hearts and minds of the people, make clear one's place, and remove all suspicion." Statesmen, he continued, must not fall prey to feelings of superiority and ambition or mete out punishment for purposes of political expediency. The least "gentlemen of ambition" could do, he concluded, is study Yamaga's works.[64]

Speaking before diplomats the previous month, Yasuoka warned of the dangers that an expanded and extended war held for domestic tranquility, a factor that increasingly worried Japan's leaders in the final months of the war.[65] Even with a totally committed people under the leadership of able men, he argued, the larger the war became and the longer it continued, the more likely and more extreme would be the inevitable reaction of the people. To begin with, spiritual and economic exhaustion was inevitable. The brutality and destruction that accompanied war would impact the customs of daily life and potentially undermine the vitality of Japan's ethnic spirit, leading to the type of moral decadence witnessed in Europe after the Great War. Indeed, Yasuoka warned, one could already see it beginning among the commoner and laboring classes. These matters were complicated further, he continued, by the influx of the inferior lower classes of other ethnic groups that unavoidably accompanied the occupation of foreign lands and by increasing efforts to mobilize women to work outside the home.[66] By the end of 1943, Yasuoka's concerns for the state of proper political morality had only worsened, and he took the opportunity to share these with the general populace in a New Year's radio address on NHK in which he emphasized the need for all Japanese to maintain a composed spirit despite the strains of war and the efforts of the enemy to sow discontent.[67]

In addition to reflecting his longstanding ties to many of the so-called "pro-Anglo-American faction"—some of whom were active in maneuvering the Tōjō cabinet into resigning and in seeking a negotiated settlement of the war—Yasuoka's criticism of Tōjō's leadership and his deepening concern for the destabilizing effects of the war on the domestic

[64] Yasuoka 1943a. Yasuoka's article came nine days after the *Asahi Shinbun* printed Nakano Seigō's much better-known but less well-camouflaged attack on Tōjō's wartime leadership. Nakano's article, along with his other criticisms of Tōjō, resulted in his arrest, interrogation, and suicide. Shortly after the war, Yasuoka made more direct criticism of Tōjō's divisive leadership style in a secret document prepared at the request of the Foreign Ministry on "preservation of the emperor system." Yasuoka 1945c, p. 15.

[65] For a recent look at the fear of revolution and the decision to surrender, see Yellen 2013.

[66] Yasuoka 1943b, pp. 29-34.

[67] A transcript of the address appears in Yasuoka 1944.

front are suggestive of the ideological affinities and prewar activities of what became the postwar governing elite.[68] For instance, as noted earlier, Yasuoka received the support of Makino during the elder man's consecutive terms as Imperial Household Minster (1921-1925) and Lord Privy Seal (1925-1935). Makino was also the father-in-law of the diplomat and postwar premier Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂, an opponent of Tōjō and advocate of an early negotiated settlement of the war. This pedigree bolstered Yoshida's credentials as the kind of "moderate" who Japan hands in the U.S government believed could govern a friendly, democratized Japan. And, indeed, Yoshida played a central role in laying the foundation for the postwar US-Japan alliance and for domestic dominance by conservative politicians and bureaucrats.[69] Yoshida was also among the many postwar premiers with a strong affinity for the conservative nationalism articulated by Yasuoka.

Great Peace in the Age of Demilitarization and Democratization

Following broadcast of the surrender rescript, Yasuoka continued his efforts to elucidate, defend and extend the ethical and political values of the *kokutai* across the chasm of defeat and through the challenges posed by foreign occupation. In two pamphlets from August and October 1945, Yasuoka diagnosed the afflictions of wartime Japan through reference to the radical nationalism and intra-elite political struggles that had worried conservatives during the prewar and wartime years. Assigning war responsibility to these factors, he reaffirmed the political morality of the emperor-centered Meiji polity and sought to prepare these values to withstand the American reform agenda of demilitarization and democratization.

In "The Path Japan Must Travel," Yasuoka outlined briefly "the people's fundamental preparedness regarding defeat and surrender" (*haisen to kōfuku to ni kan-suru kokumin no konpon-teki kakugo* 敗戦と降伏とに関する国民の根本的覚悟) that should form the proper basis for national revival. "Japan the patient," he wrote, would soon undergo a "major operation" at the hands of the approaching enemy, but, rather than waiting passively, Japanese should engage in self-diagnosis and self-treatment. Following the Manchurian Incident, he argued, various forms of depravity had spread, contributing to the current "internal illness" that had afflicted the nation with "foolish struggles over military command and state administration," overweening civil and military bureaucrats (*bunbu kanryō* 文武官僚) deeply enmeshed in internecine battles, and deepening popular despair. Prefacing this pamphlet with reference to the 26 February Incident and the reformist political forces that grew in its wake,

[68] See Otabe 1980 and Otabe 1983.
[69] Dower 1979, pp. 227-72.

Yasuoka lamented that these forces had left his views out of line with the trends of the times.[70] He then reaffirmed the significance of his own perspective for confronting the newest challenge to the *kokutai* by simply reprinting the principles of good governance he had distributed following that failed coup attempt.[71]

Indeed, none of Yasuoka's general criticisms of prewar politics suggested that there was any need to question the fundamental moral principles upon which the prewar Meiji constitutional order was built. Rather, the emperor's decision to inaugurate Great Peace represented an opportunity to renew and shore up the values of Imperial Japan in order to weather the occupation's democratizing reforms. In much the same way as he had during the 1920s and 1930s, Yasuoka portrayed a country that, having gone astray, could be set back on the proper path through a restoration of personal and political morality that would enable Japanese to assume their place as one of the world's great peoples. Referring to the surrender rescript, he underscored the lesson therein about the importance of not allowing a one-time reversal to result in a forsaking of the "eternal Righteous Way" (*ei'en no daidō* 永遠の大道). Turning to the Great Peace line from the recently broadcast surrender rescript, he annotated "His Majesty's words" as follows:

> Peace and chaos, victory and defeat are unavoidable in this world; this is a constant and solemn truth, this is the Righteous Way. When we understand this through experience, we awaken clearly to the profound meaning of His Majesty's words.[72]

Yasuoka underscored that while the shame of defeat was great, it was also temporary. Rejecting "panicked talk" that accepting the Potsdam Declaration meant the end of Japan, he reminded readers of the emperor's statement that he was always with his subjects and enjoined them to act in a manner incorporating much of the classical meaning of the Great Peace passage:

> [A]ssist and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with Heaven and Earth, honor the moral customs of our ancestors, pass down the principled Way of the Sages (*shidō* 斯道) to our descendants, purify today's national shame, and atone for this great disloyal and unfilial sin.[73]

Purging the shame and expiating the sin, he cautioned, did not mean "short-sighted military retaliation," but rather "implementing true restoration and rising in the world as a sound

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[70] Yasuoka 1945a, pp. 1-3.
[71] Yasuoka 1945a, pp. 6-24.
[72] Yasuoka 1945a, pp. 3-5.
[73] Yasuoka 1945a, p. 4. The injunction regarding the prosperity of the throne comes directly from the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890).

cultural country." Avoiding the extremes of falling into national chauvinism, on the one hand, or an "inferiority complex," on the other, would allow for attaining "tranquil governance" (*chihei* 治平, a term synonymous with Great Peace). From such a stance, he concluded, if the American reform agenda was explored in the "true spirit of democracy" and in accord with the "Japanese Way," then the discovery of "Japanese democracy" could be realized.[74]

Two months later Yasuoka explored his prescription for melding democracy and the "Japanese Way" further in "Our Fundamental Principles and the New Japan," wherein he argued that Japan had failed to remain true to itself since the era of the Great War. Giving themselves over blindly first to Anglo-American customs and then to those of Germany and Italy, Japanese had gone astray and fallen into "chauvinism and egoism." Consequently, the recent effort to establish Japan's "global power" had relied solely on military force and thus failed. Yasuoka then devoted the bulk of the pamphlet to reaffirming the articles of faith that should inform elite efforts to reconstruct postwar society and shore up the *kokutai* to confront the ideological challenges ahead.[75] While space and the parameters of this essay preclude exploring his ideas in detail, he identified the primary task facing Japan's political leaders as perpetuating the national morality of the emperor-centered *kokutai* while somehow accommodating the coming wave of democratization. Japan's "best and wisest" would have to harmonize the extremes of individual liberty and state control in order to "rescue the people from obtuse and ugly ideological struggle." The path ahead was thus full of challenges. However, he promised, if this task was accomplished, Japanese could still look forward to achieving a special world destiny. He then for the first time presented the Great Peace line in explicitly pacifist terms:

> Japan has cast aside her weapons, but this is nothing to worry about. It will be a fine thing if, having discarded our weapons, we exert ourselves wholeheartedly until we convince the rest of the world to do the same. Therefore, we must devote ourselves earnestly to hitherto neglected moral principles and culture. It is commonly understood that the Chinese character for things martial (*bu* 武) is comprised of parts meaning to strike 戈 and to stop 止. Japan, which was mistakenly said to be a war-loving and aggressive country, is now at the forefront of the nations of the world in stopping the use of weapons. I believe that to henceforth inaugurate Great Peace for the sake of the next ten-thousand generations

[74] Yasuoka 1945a, pp. 4-7.
[75] Yasuoka 1945b. In addition to these pamphlets, Yasuoka made similar points in his December 1945 contribution to a series of secret government reports committed to providing a "proactive, rational basis for preservation of the emperor system." Yasuoka 1945c. For a different reading of Yasuoka 1945a and Yasuoka 1945b, see Dufourmont 2012, pp. 100-06.

is by no means empty talk.[76]

However, coming in the final paragraph of his catechism on preserving the values behind the *kokutai*, this seeming embrace of pacifism is best read as an expedient tactic necessitated by the extraordinary conditions of military defeat and foreign occupation. In fact, as with the Great Peace passage, Yasuoka's analysis of the character *bu* represents another recasting of a favorite term. For he employed the same character in prewar lectures on *bushidō* 武士道 ("way of the warrior") to naval officers as part of his discourse on their duties as loyal officials and superior fighting men prepared to instantly give their lives on the battlefield. Moreover, he propagated the warrior spirit and self-immolation in the manner of the medieval imperial loyalist Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 not simply as qualities required of professional soldiers, but as attributes emblematic of the Japanese ethnic spirit and thus the preferred foundation for personal cultivation as loyal subjects of the emperor.[77]

Indeed, the main point of Yasuoka's essay lay in the preceding paragraphs wherein he sought to shore up faith in the emperor-centered order established under the Meiji constitution. Forced by unprecedented circumstances to accommodate prewar political morality to the impending reforms of the occupation forces, he argued the need for men of character to govern for the emperor, guard against the excesses of mass politics, and transmit the moral principles of the Imperial Way to future generations. Put differently, for Yasuoka the task at hand remained the realization of Great Peace, but in a newly demilitarized and democratized Japan.

Conclusion

Regardless of the degree to which Hirohito and other political leaders expected the principles expressed in the rescript of 15 August to withstand surrender and postwar reform, it is certainly the case that subsequent decades witnessed a dramatic decline in the political ethics promoted under the prewar and wartime state. Indicative of this reality is the fact that even as conservatives—many with extensive prewar resumes—dominated the political scene, the word *kokutai* became largely unknown to postwar generations except as a homophonic abbreviation for the national athletic meet. Nevertheless, what one sees in Yasuoka's contribution to the rescript's focus on *kokutai-goji* is a straightforward repetition of his earlier efforts to preserve the emperor-centered national polity from a succession of threats, only now executed in the face of an unprecedentedly traumatic and dangerous peril. In the years that followed, he

[76] Yasuoka 1945b, pp. 15, 25-26.
[77] Yasuoka 1926, p. 1. Yasuoka likely learned this analogy from his study of Yamaga Sokō. On Sokō's use of this character, see Bitō 1971, p. 90. Yasuoka 1936c. For more on Yasuoka's *bushidō* discourse, see Brown 2013.

continued in his moral education endeavors and in his unofficial station as an ideologue to establishment conservatives until his death in 1983, supporting conservative political hegemony at home and cooperation with the United States in the Cold War abroad. This fact is suggestive of the manner in which, at least in the halls of elite governance, Yasuoka's articulations of the political morality informing the ideal of Great Peace continued to resonate.

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