

Feature Article 【專題論文】

National Consciousness and the Evolution of the
Civil/Martial Binary in East Asia
東亞的國家意識與文武分途的演進

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關鍵詞：文武、武士道、日本、中國、朝鮮、民族主義、梁啟超、朴殷植

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Abstract

The binary of martial and civil virtues (*wen-wu*) is one of the oldest and most pervasive concepts in East Asian thought. This paper examines the transmission of Chinese *wen-wu* thought to Japan, and its subsequent independent development in that country. Whereas in China and Korea, primacy has traditionally been given to civil virtues over martial ones, the unique warrior-centered social and governmental structure that developed in Japan led its thinkers to more strongly emphasize the martial. As a result, at least in the context of *wen-wu*, many Japanese were willing to accept, rather than invert, the China/barbarian binary that marked continental interpretations. In comparison, many Japanese Confucians and related schools of thought had otherwise tended to revise ideas imported from China in ways that removed them from their source and relocated the moral center to Japan. The identification of Japan as the "martial country" and China/Korea as the "civil countries" came to be broadly accepted by intellectuals in all three societies. At the same time, the exact nature of Japanese "martiality" varied greatly among different thinkers, often to the extent that definitions of the concept could be polar opposites. This paper argues that it was this vagueness and flexibility of the *wen-wu* binary that ensured its continued prominence as the concepts were adapted to new situations, and further led to movements by Chinese and Korean thinkers to introduce Japanese martiality into their own nations around the turn of the twentieth century. In this process, Japanese *bun-bu* (*wen-wu*) theories were variously packaged with the teachings of Wang Yangming and the modern martial ethic of *bushido* (the way of the warrior), and this paper considers the roles of the reformers Liang Qichao and Pak Un-sik in the dissemination of *bun-bu* thought in China and Korea, respectively.

摘要

文、武二分法是東亞思想中最古老且最為普遍的概念之一。本文檢視中國文武思想傳至日本，及其在該國的後續獨立發展。「文」在中國和韓國傳統上位於「武」之上，居首位，而日本因發展出以武士為中心的獨特社會與政治結構，使其思想家特別強調「武」。因此，至少在文、武的脈絡下，許多日本人願意接受，而非轉化，標誌著大陸解釋的華夷之辨。相較而言，許多日本儒家及相關學派的思想卻傾向於將自中國傳入的思想以將其與源頭分離，並將道德中心重置於日本的方式，加以修訂。日本等同「武國」，中國和韓國等同「文國」為三個社會的知識分子廣泛接受。與此同時，各思想家對於日本「武」的真正內涵卻有極為不同的見解，其間的歧異往往到對該概念的定義可以完全相反的程度。本文主張，便是這種對文武二分法的含糊不清與彈性，確保其在適應新形勢時能持續突顯，並進而導致中國和韓國思想家於二十世紀初將日本的「武」介紹給其祖國的運動。在此過程中，日本的文武理論與王陽明的學說、武士道的現代武術倫理有各種不同程度的結合。本文分別討論改革家梁啟超和朴殷植於文武思想在中國與韓國傳布上的角色。

One of the oldest and most pervasive concepts in East Asian thought is the binary of *wen* and *wu*.¹ It has been used as a basis for political and natural philosophy, prescriptive ethics, racial theories, and even modern gender studies. It has also been related and applied to many other binary systems in East Asian traditions, such as *yin-yang* theories, male-female dichotomies, and inner-outer relationships. While the *wen-wu* binary evolved and was understood in a large variety of ways in different times and regions, it has remained prominent in China, Korea, and Japan into the modern age. Japanese and continental thought on *wen-wu* began to influence one another again directly at the end of the nineteenth century after several hundred years of relatively independent development. The relative success of Japan in its dealings with the Western powers inspired intellectuals in both Choson Korea and Qing China to look to Japanese *bun-bu* thought for solutions to their own difficulties in reforming their countries. By this time, the binary concepts of letteredness and martiality had become closely identified with perceived national characteristics in East Asia, complicating the transmission of ideas between cultures.

This paper examines different historical trajectories of *wen-wu* thought that led to the development of nationalistic interpretations of these concepts, and how these related to Chinese and Korean interest in the *bun-bu* theories of nineteenth-century Japan. The various developmental patterns of *wen-wu* thought in Japan, Korea, and China reveal reasons why Meiji Japanese interpretations found favor on the continent in spite of frequent hostility between these nations at the time. This paper provides an overview of the development of *bun-bu* thought in Japan

1 These concepts are pronounced *bun* (文) and *bu* (武) in Japanese, and *mun* and *mu* in Korean. This study generally uses the Romanized spellings of either term, depending on the context. Much like the concept of a/the "way" (道, C: *dao*; K: *do*; J: *dō*), *wen* and *wu* defy easy translation into Western languages. *Wen* is frequently translated as "letters," "civil," or "culture," while *bu* is often rendered "martial," "military," or "war-." However, none of these terms can claim to cover even most of the applications of either *wen* or *wu*, as their meanings vary greatly depending on the time period and context. If English terminology is deemed necessary, this author prefers to use the words "letteredness" and "martiality," as these convey some of the general meaning but do not imply a specificity that may not be applicable to certain situations.

after its introduction from the continent over a millennium ago, then it examines more closely the ways in which *bun-bu* was influenced by the sudden end to the *sakoku* ("closed country") period in the face of overwhelming foreign threats in the middle of the nineteenth century. Japanese interpretations of the roles of martiality and letteredness were varied, and distinct from those on the continent, but there were aspects of Japanese *bun-bu* thought that made it attractive for certain continental reformers. One of these characteristics was that, in the context of *wen-wu*, many Japanese thinkers were willing to accept, rather than invert, the China/barbarian binary that marked continental interpretations of the concept. In addition, the association of Japanese *bun-bu* thought with the philosophy of Wang Yangming and the concept of *bushidō* ("the way of the warrior", 武士道) made it easier for continental thinkers with strong Confucian roots to integrate Japanese thought. In this context, this paper considers the works of the reformers Pak Un-sik (朴殷植, 1859-1925) and Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873-1929) as examples of the dissemination and adoption of Japanese *bun-bu* thought in Korea and China, respectively.

I. *Wen* and *Wu* in Chinese Thought

The origins of *wen* and *wu* are often sought in the evolution of the respective Chinese characters.² As Shiroki Yutaka has argued, since the most important functions of government in ancient China related to administrative rites and military matters, it was natural that terms would appear that signified each of these concepts, and *wen* and *wu* are scattered throughout Chinese classical texts. Initially, as the two referred to separate responsibilities of government, they seem to have been understood as distinct concepts, although knowledge of both was

² See, for example, Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," *Jissen joshi daigaku kiyō*, vol. 7 (March, 1962), pp. 56-68, or Tōdō Akiyasu, "*Bu*" no kanji "*bun*" no kanji: sono kigen kara shisō he (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1977).

considered desirable in government officials.³ *Wen* and *wu* are frequently mentioned in connection with the Zhou dynasty kings of the same names, but the concepts appear to be even older and their origins are not clear. Even in later texts, the intended meaning of the compound *wen-wu* is not always certain, as writers used it to signify "King Wen and King Wu," "the virtues *wen* and *wu*," or "a person exemplifying both *wen* and *wu*," among other ideas. *Wen* and *wu* have also frequently been used in the posthumous names of emperors in China, Korea, and Japan, often without regard for the martial or cultural accomplishments of the sovereign in question.⁴ These difficulties in interpretation are worth noting when examining more recent discussions of *wen-wu* in all three of these countries, for writers using the same terminology and putting forward superficially similar arguments were often advocating completely divergent positions.

In the framework of this study, there are three aspects of early *wen-wu* thought that are most significant to later developments. The first is the idea of the necessity of both *wen* and *wu* in order to rule successfully. The second aspect is the identification of *wen* with China and related prioritization of *wen* over *wu* in that country. The third aspect is the association of *wen-wu* with the internal/external binary. The first of these aspects can be found in many famous texts, including the Analects, which contain the phrase "the way of *wen-wu*."⁵ A close relationship between the two concepts was generally accepted, although specific interpretations varied considerably. Depending on the time and the individual thinker, the nature of *wen* and *wu* could be defined in terms that posited the two as aspects of a uniform and indivisible whole, as separate concepts that complemented one another, or even as subordinate to one another. The prevalence of this issue, as well as its sometimes rapid evolution, can be seen in the essay themes for palace examinations in 980 and 983. As Peter Bol has explained, the theme of the earlier

3 Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," pp. 68-69.

4 Ibid., pp. 73, 75.

5 G. Cameron Hurst III, "The Warrior as Ideal for a New Age," in Jeffrey P. Mass (ed.), *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 223.

examination asked "Wen or wu, which is primary?" while the latter examination focused on the notion that "Wen and wu flourish together," also reflecting changes in the state's military ambitions in those three years.⁶ The notion that *wen* and *wu* are both essential to government was further abstracted to argue that letteredness and martiality were equally important on the level of individual persons. This argument was common in texts regarding the roles of government officials, exhorting members of the military branches to study *wen* and civil administrators to attune their minds to *wu*.⁷

The second aspect of *wen-wu* thought that is important to this study, i.e. the identification of Chinese culture with *wen*, is related to the elevation of *wen* over *wu*. While the two concepts were closely linked, Chinese thinkers have not traditionally given them both equal weight. In general, the dominant political and philosophical theories held that letteredness was a superior virtue to martiality, for it was more fundamental to peacefully ruling the country. Furthermore, partially due to the symbolism of King Wen being the father of King Wu, it was written that even the "people of Zhou revered the letteredness of King Wen more than the martiality of King Wu, and King Wu himself revered the civil virtues of his father."⁸ There were periods of history in which martiality dominated letteredness, but the ultimate goal was to restore the order of *wen*. This can be seen, for example, at the beginning of the Song dynasty, which hoped to create an era of *wen* after the previous *wu*-dominated century.⁹

Positing *wen* as primary and identifying it with (Chinese) culture and civilization could also cause difficulties. In addition to the loftier meaning of culture, *wen* could be interpreted as referring to mere "literary artifice," resulting in considerable debates over the meaning of texts and whether newer types of

6 Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 151.

7 Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," p. 77.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

9 Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, p. 148.

literature should be allowed to exist together with ancient classics and histories.¹⁰ The notion of *wen* as a type of national essence or core gave writing a much greater significance than it might otherwise have had, especially when this interpretation of the concept clashed with narrower definitions that were limited to the production of literature.¹¹ Although there were comparable differences in the understanding of the concept of *wu*—for example, as mere martial arts or as a more abstract virtue—this issue did not excite similar levels of debate in China as it did in Japan, where *wu* was considered to be the representative core cultural value. The importance of *wen* in Chinese culture also meant that the concept was used in other binaries in addition to *wen-wu*, such as the relationship between *wen* and *dao* (the Way), considered an important philosophical issue in some periods.¹²

The identification of China with *wen* is closely related to the third significant aspect of *wen-wu* theory discussed here, which is the combination of these concepts with the internal/external binary that is an important theme in Chinese thought. In this sense, *wen* was seen as necessary for ruling within, while *wu* was essential for pacifying the external. External enemies were to be fended off by military force, whereas internal stability was to be ensured through civil rule. This association of *wen-wu* has a long history, and references can be found in the *Yi Zhou shu* (*Remainder of Zhou Documents*), among other texts.¹³ As well as a prescription for ruling a state, the idea that *wen*=internal and *wu*=external was also interpreted as defining qualities of China and other nations. After positing China as *wen* (culture, civilization, internal), the subsequent connection between *wu* (martial, external) and foreign lands was a natural step. This argument was

10 Peter K. Bol, "Examinations and Orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 Compared," in R. Bin Wong et al. (eds.), *Culture & State in Chinese History: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critiques* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 33-34.

11 This situation illustrates some of the difficulty of translating the term into other languages, as even in the original the same term could be interpreted in vastly different ways, which was a frequent source of debate.

12 For an examination of this issue in the Tang and Song dynasties, see Peter K. Bol, "Examinations and Orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 Compared," pp. 35-57.

13 Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," p. 78.

reinforced by invasions of China by foreign peoples with superior military capabilities. This dichotomy was further applied to dynasties of foreign origin, which, with the notable exception of Choson Korea, tended to agree with this assessment. In the case of the Qing, for example, the notion that China was *wen* and the Manchu were *wu* was not only widely accepted, but formed the basis of government policy. In the 1640s, the Qing attempted to create a new layer of imperial administration that would be able to cover the entire empire and its different groups, and hopefully bridge the gaps between Chinese and other peoples. Although the project ultimately failed, the bannermen were required to "become accomplished in both military ('Manchu') and civil ('Chinese') skills" by learning military arts and science, as well as studying Chinese classics and literature.¹⁴ The acceptance by the Manchu of the view of foreign peoples as *wu* reflected their view of themselves as martially inclined, and was similar to developments in *wen-wu* thought in Japan, where the prioritization of *wu* became linked with national identity.

II. From *Wen-Wu* to *Bun-Bu*

The concept of *wen-wu* entered Japan at a very early stage, and references to *bun* and *bu* appear in the very earliest Japanese histories, such as the *Nihon Shoki* (*Records of Japan*) of 720.¹⁵ At this early stage, the concept was understood in much the same manner as in contemporary Tang China, and several court posts made use of the term. *Bun* and *bu* were considered to be the two pillars of successful government, with letteredness given distinct priority over martiality as in China. The terms were used in the reign names of many emperors, much as they were on the continent. This pattern continued into the Heian Period (平安時

14 Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 286-288.

15 Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," pp. 89-91.

代, 794-1185), reflecting the centrality of courtly administrators and the importance of high culture. With the gradual rise of provincial warrior power, and the formation of the first shogunate after 1185, the importance of military competence naturally increased. At this point, *bun* and *bu* were generally understood to be the domains of courtiers and warriors, respectively, and with a handful of notable exceptions there were few individuals who fulfilled both roles. The two groups were also separated geographically, with the court continuing to reside in Kyoto while the warrior administration was located in Kamakura, near present-day Yokohama. As the Kamakura period (鎌倉時代, 1185-1333) progressed, especially following the Jōkyū disturbance of 1221, the balance of power shifted towards the warrior government. In spite of their increasing political power, however, it was not until the fourteenth century that the notion of warrior rule became widely accepted and acknowledged.¹⁶

The two-year restoration of court rule by the emperor Go-Daigo in 1334 marked the last significant attempt to challenge warrior supremacy until the modern period, and documents from this time reveal the shifts that had taken place in *bun-bu* thought over the past century. The reality of warrior rule meant that the previous dichotomy of civil and military administration broke down as these tasks became the responsibility of a single group. Cameron Hurst has analyzed fourteenth-century texts, especially warrior house codes (*kakun*), and identified a pattern with relation to their usage of *bun* and *bu*. Most warrior leaders at this time understood the demands placed upon them and their vassals by the new order. For example, the *Tōjin goisho* attributed to Ashikaga Takauji (足利尊氏, 1305-1358) stated that matters of government were now the responsibility of the military houses, and that the fate of the country was entirely dependent on keeping martiality (*bu*) firmly in mind. Once the country was pacified, however, letteredness (*bun*) was essential for governing the nation, making "both ways" (*bunbu ryōdō*, 文武兩道) indispensable for rulers.¹⁷ The

16 G. Cameron Hurst III, "The Warrior as Ideal for a New Age," p. 226.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

Gusoku Nakaki seishi of Imagawa Ryōshun (今川了俊, 1326-1414) and Shiba Yoshimasa's (斯波義將, 1350-1410) *Chikubashō* took a similar approach to the balance between letteredness and martiality, although their texts focused on the former virtue. As warriors by trade, these writers regarded *bu* as self-evident and thereby focused their attentions on *bun* in order to provide warriors with the civil skills and cultural knowledge required to run a government.¹⁸

Hurst's statement regarding the *Kenmu shikimoku* (*Kenmu Code*, 建武式目) could be applied to most other documents from this time: "Written for a man of war, it proposes the arts of peace."¹⁹ One exception to this is the case of Nitta Yoshisada (新田義貞, 1301-1338), who submitted to Go-Daigo's authority and was later held up as a paragon of loyalty to the imperial house, especially in modern Japan. Nitta had not adapted his views to the new order, and his *Yoshisadaki* treated *bun* and *bu* as necessary but separate, with *bun* primary as it was the way of ruling the country.²⁰ Although he considered *bun* to be more important, Nitta's discussions focused on *bu*, for this was his area of expertise and, according to his somewhat antiquated interpretation, his role in the political structure. As an exception proving the rule, Nitta's text shows the changes that were taking place in Japanese *bun-bu* thought in the turmoil of the early fourteenth century.

The two concepts became increasingly interlinked, and the relocation of the base of warrior power to Kyoto in the 1330s, combined with increased importation of high culture from China, including forms of tea ceremony, painting, and flower arrangement, led warriors to adopt many "civilian" activities.²¹ On the other hand, the turmoil and frequent warfare that marked the late fifteenth and

18 Ibid., pp. 218-220.

19 Ibid., p. 213.

20 Ibid., p. 222.

21 For a discussion of the growth of high culture in fifteenth-century Japan, see Donald Keene, *Yoshimasa and the Silver Pavillion: The Creation of the Soul of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Cameron Hurst has argued that the prescriptions for warriors to practice both *bun* and *bu* were directed toward a small literate elite, and were not intended for all warriors (G. Cameron Hurst III, "The Warrior as Ideal for a New Age," p. 222).

sixteenth centuries made it necessary for warriors to not only rule their domains, but to defend them against constant outside threats, making a practical application of both *bun* and *bu* indispensable. As a result, the indivisibility of *bun* and *bu*, often compared to the "two wings of a bird" or "two wheels of a cart" in contemporary documents, was one of the most widely accepted and repeated themes in the warrior house codes of the late sixteenth century, and many of these were widely read and cited well into the modern period.

III. *Bun-Bu* Thought in the Transition from War to Peace

Given the pervasiveness of *bun-bu* thought around 1600, it is not surprising that the necessity of a balance between letteredness and martiality was stressed in the first article in the defining document of Tokugawa rule, the *Buke shohatto* (*Laws for the Martial Houses*, 武家諸法度) of 1615. Sporadic conflicts and rebellions continued to occur throughout much of the seventeenth century, but the samurai were experiencing an ultimately irreversible shift away from the battlefield towards a more administrative and bureaucratic existence, a process which had a strong impact on their understanding of *bun* and *bu*. *Bushi* first began to earnestly contemplate warrior ethics during the Edo period (江戸時代, 1600-1868), usually relying heavily on Confucian ideas in their theories. When the nationalistic *bushidō* ("way of the warrior", 武士道) ethic was formulated in modern Japan, the source documents upon which *bushidō* theorists relied were almost all products of the Tokugawa age.²²

Two general themes were discussed by most commentators on the subject of *bushi* thought during the Edo period, and most interpretations were at least

22 According to *bushidō* theorists Inoue Tetsujirō (井上哲次郎, 1855-1944) and, more recently, Kannō Kakumyō, before this time *bushi* had been too busy fighting to put their thoughts to paper (Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō* [Tokyo: Heiji zasshi sha, 1901], p. 41; Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū* [Tokyo: Kōdansha Gendai Shinsho, 2004], pp. 20-21)

superficially in agreement. The first of these themes was a political philosophy relating to the nature of the warrior class. The Tokugawa social structure made it natural for *bushi* thinkers to debate the rights and responsibilities of the warrior class, with theoretical arguments intended to bolster claims of warrior superiority not uncommon. The Kogaku (Ancient Learning, 古學) scholar Yamaga Sokō's (山鹿素行, 1622-1685) commentaries on this subject are among the earliest and best-known.²³ The second issue that runs through almost all *bushi* writings from the period relates to the nature of *bun* and *bu*, specifically the importance of keeping a balance between the two. On a basic level, the approach to these concepts was in line with interpretations common before 1600, with *bun* and *bu* viewed as inseparable parts of a whole, but with primacy clearly given to martiality over letteredness. However, great increases in the importation of Confucian ideas and the sophistication of Japanese philosophers, combined with the establishment of native schools of thought, meant that the development of *bun-bu* philosophy also took new directions.

Two characteristics set *bun-bu* thought in mid-Edo apart from earlier discourse on the subject—the development of a proto-nationalism, and a shift away from the practical to the metaphysical. The continuance of warrior rule in Japan, combined with the greater spread of nativistic ideas, led many Japanese thinkers to identify *bun* and *bu* with China and Japan, respectively. A balance between the two was still deemed essential, but the greater weight Japan placed on martiality was explained by appeals to the unique nature of the country. As Daidōji Yūzan (大道寺有山, 1639-1730) wrote in the early eighteenth century,

Those who are warriors, whether they are at home or away, must not forget the spirit of combat, must ready their minds, and need to be full of courage throughout the 26 hours of every day. The virtues of this land are

23 Yamaga Sokō, *Yamaga Sokō*, in *Nihon shisō taikēi*, vol. 32 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), pp. 32-33.

different from others, and even the lowest farmers, townsmen, and craftsmen will be prepared and carry a rusty short sword (*wakizashi*). This is the custom of the martial land of Japan (*nihon bukoku no fūzoku*).²⁴

This view of China as *wen/bun/mun* and Japan as *wu/bu/mu* was in agreement with traditional Chinese and Korean views, which posited China as *wen* and the "barbarian" foreign peoples as *wu*. Korean Confucians traditionally interpreted this binary in the context of their own nation as "little China," especially in periods when they felt that China strayed from Zhu Xi's orthodoxy.²⁵ This caused considerable difficulties at the end of the Ming dynasty, when many Korean Confucians rejected the new Qing rulers as heterodox and barbarian, and were willing to die for their beliefs. Similar arguments were used with regard to Japan during Hideyoshi's invasions, as well as in response to Japanese interference in Korean affairs beginning in the late nineteenth century.²⁶ The continued appeal of this view can be seen in popular works such as Han Chun-sök's 1989 comparison of Japan and Korea as the "culture of *bun*" and "culture of *bu*," respectively.²⁷

The Japanese approach in the case of *bun* and *bu* was unusual, for Japanese thinkers in recent centuries tended to reverse the dichotomous inside/outside (culture/barbarian) views that arrived from the continent, instead relocating the moral center to Japan. A well-known example is the Ancient Learning scholar Itō Jinsai's (伊藤仁齋, 1627-1705) claim that Confucius would have desired to move to Japan due to that nation's greater virtue and "unbroken" imperial line, and a

24 Daidōji Yūzan, *Budō shoshinshū (A Primer on the Martial Way)*, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), p. 306.

25 Yang Hyunhea, *Yun Chiho to Kimu Kyoshin sono shinnichi to kōnichi no ronri* (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppan, 1996), pp. 16-18.

26 Keum Jang-tae, *Confucianism and Korean Thoughts*, in *Korean Studies Series*, no. 10 (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing, 2000), pp. 60-62.

27 Han Chun-sök, *Bun no bunka to bu no bunka: tonari no kuni no dō to i* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1989).

fundamental premise of the Japanese Ancient Learning school was that the thought of the ancient sages could be removed to Japan.²⁸ Due to Japan's exaltation of martiality over letteredness, however, thinkers in the Edo period and beyond tended to agree with Sino-centric Chinese and Korean assessments of *bun-bu* and national characters. Many Japanese thinkers sought religious support for their views, and traced Japan's alleged martial nature back to the national founding myths. An oft-repeated explanation was that the very process of creation of the Japanese archipelago—from drops falling from the tip of a heavenly jeweled spear thrust into the primordial sea by the deities Izanagi and Izanami—divinely endowed the inhabitants of the islands with a unique martial spirit.²⁹

The second characteristic of Edo *bun-bu* thought that set it apart from pre-1600 Japanese interpretations was that the concepts often came to be understood more in a political or philosophical sense than as practical martial and civil virtues. Nakae Tōju (中江藤樹, 1608-1648) criticized contemporary thought as follows:

The common explanations of *bun* and *bu* show a great lack of knowledge. To common people, writing songs, composing poetry, mastering literature, having a gentle disposition, and becoming refined are considered to be *bun*. It is said that learning and knowing mounted archery, military drill, and strategy, and having a stern and fierce disposition are *bu*. [...] Originally, *bun* and *bu* were a single virtue, and not a thing that could be separated. Just as all of creation is one force yet there is a distinction between *yin* and *yang*, if the intuition of human nature is a single virtue that can be distinguished into *bun* and *bu*, then *bun* without *bu* is not true *bun*, and *bu* without *bun* is not true *bu*. Just as *yin* is the root of *yang*, and

28 Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan: The New Theses of 1825* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 24-27.

29 Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," p.98.

yang is the root of yin, *bun* is the root of *bu*, and *bu* is the root of *bun*.
 [...] *Bun* is correctly practicing the way of filial piety, brotherliness, loyalty, and trustworthiness. *Bu* is striving to eliminate things that obstruct filial piety, brotherliness, loyalty and trustworthiness.³⁰

Even as philosophers accepted and reinforced the notion of Japan as the divine martial country, these same thinkers warned against the excessive practice of martial arts, which were rapidly growing in popularity. As Nakae's student Kumazawa Banzan (熊澤蕃山, 1619-1691) wrote during the peaceful late seventeenth century,

Warriors who are blind to *bun* and without the reason of the teaching of the Way (Confucianism) will have minds that merely lean towards martiality and consider it to be most important. Even now if something occurred they would not hesitate to try to make a great name for themselves, and consider dying in your bed of old age to be shameful. [...] if one greatly values bows, arrows, and guns, it is like making death ten times as important as life. [...] In the world, calling a person who knows civil arts and military arts a master of "the two ways of *bun* and *bu*" is not unusual. However, this should be called "knowing the two arts of *bun* and *bu*." If one only studies arts without wisdom, benevolence, and courage, it can scarcely be called knowing the "two ways."³¹

Kumazawa, who also defined Japan as the "country of *bu*," clearly distinguished between *bun* and *bu* as "ways" rather than as mere "arts." Kumazawa reasoned that, if a person served his lord with great devotion, and did great work while forgetting himself and his home, he could be an example of both *bun* and *bu* even if he were illiterate and unlearned.³² The lack of applications for practical

30 Nakae Tōju, *Bunbu mondō (Dialogues on Bunbu)*, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), pp. 246-247.

31 Kumazawa Banzan, *Shūgi washo (shōroku) (Japanese Writings on Gathered Virtues [Abridged])*, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), pp. 121-122.

32 Ibid., pp. 121-122.

military techniques in the Edo period, combined with the continued awareness among *bushi* that they were fundamentally a warrior class, contributed to increased philosophical abstraction of the *bun-bu* binary.³³

At the same time, those samurai who were directly involved in the practice of martial arts such as swordsmanship or archery continued to emphasize the importance of both *bun* and *bu*, although their understanding of the concepts was more practical than philosophical. The swordsman and Shinto scholar Izawa Nagahide (井澤長秀, 1668-1730) adopted the former approach. In addition to exhorting *bushi* to train in various martial arts, Izawa argued that

It is generally thought that we are military men and should therefore only study *bu*, but without learning *bun* it is impossible to know the true meaning of *bu*. [...] [The Song scholars] also said of *bun-bu* that one should 'first master letteredness, then acquire martiality, and all affairs will be settled through the way of *bun* and *bu*.' In order to learn *bun-bu* one must first study literature and realize the way of loyalty and filial piety, and only afterwards study military techniques.³⁴

Studying *bun* makes one lose oneself. Without losing oneself, it is impossible to obtain the Way. Learning martial techniques should be

33 One philosophical interpretation of *wu* that first appeared in China and became popular in Tokugawa Japan was the theory that the character *wu* 武 was originally created by combining the characters for "stop" 止 and "pike (weapon)" 戈, inferring that the meaning of *wu* was closer to "pacify" than "martial." An example of this theory from the Edo period is the *Shika benron*, 止戈辨論, which is dated 1743 (Ariyoshi Saeki et al. [eds.], *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 4 [Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942], p. 238). Shiraki Yutaka provides an overview of the history of this theory in his examination of *bun-bu* (Shiraki Yutaka, "Bunbu kakusho," p. 65).

34 Izawa Nagahide, *Bushi kun (A Guide for Warriors)*, Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), pp. 255-256.

done for it is like having a self. If one is without self from his earlier studies, he will not be able to foster bravery.³⁵

Regardless of whether thinkers were more inclined towards the practical level of literature and martial arts, or the level of philosophical abstractions, all agreed on the importance of both *bun* and *bu*. The gap between the practical and philosophical levels of discourse continued to widen throughout the Edo period, however, and became the subject of considerable debate. Almost all thinkers ostensibly called for a balance between martiality and letteredness, but differences in interpretation led to accusations that one aspect or the other was being neglected or excessively favored, a situation that could already be seen in the above excerpt from Nakae Tōju.

IV. *Bun-Bu* in Bakumatsu Japan

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the official policies of the Tokugawa shogunate, which severely limited Japan's contact with other nations, were showing signs of weakness as unauthorized landings by foreign ships increased. Japan was never entirely closed off to information from abroad, however, and news of China's defeat in the Opium War of 1840-1842 sent further shockwaves throughout Japan. If China was unable to resist the military strength of the Europeans, it seemed only a matter of time before Japan would be under threat. Chinese accounts of Western countries became important sources of information, although the factual accuracy of these was often questionable. In this situation, the importance of martial virtues once again came to the fore. Writers had insisted on the importance of a balance between *bun* and *bu* throughout the Edo period, but in the middle of the nineteenth century their writings took on a new sense of urgency. There was widespread concern that the warrior class had

35 Izawa Nagahide, *Bushi kun*, p. 288.

become overly pacified and would be helpless to resist foreign threats, and the reformer Yokoi Shōnan (横井小楠, 1809-1869) went so far as to state that if the peasants were given arms and a bit of training, their greater physical strength and tolerance for hardship would allow them to defeat the *bushi* quite handily.³⁶ Such a view was markedly different from the affirmations of samurai superiority that had dominated discourse over the previous two centuries.

Throughout the Edo period Neo-Confucianism, especially the Zhu Xi school (Jpn. Shushigaku, 朱子學) was the official orthodoxy, but native schools of thought such as Ancient Learning and National Learning (Kokugaku, 國學) also arose and developed to a high degree, especially in the eighteenth century. Although many of these native movements were dependent on Confucian thought, they were generally nationalistic and some aspired to distill a "pure" Japanese spirit without foreign influences. In the mid-nineteenth century, prescriptions relating to the concept of *bun-bu* could be found in the writings of thinkers from every school, reflecting the wide dissemination of the belief that the *bushi* would be unable to meet foreign threats in their current state. Orthodox Zhu Xi Confucian scholars, such as Saitō Setsudō (齋藤拙堂, 1797-1865), who studied at the shogunal Shōhei school, often referred to the *Buke shohatto* and repeated earlier arguments regarding the unity of *bun* and *bu*, at the same time pointing out the large gap between the philosophical and practical approaches to the binary:

One must study the way of *bun-bu*. The way of *bun-bu* is two things that become one. It is one thing that becomes two. With *bu* one should administer the virtue of *bun*, while with *bun* one should also perform valorous martial acts. To be swept up by the *bun* of the men of letters means not knowing the *bun* of the warp and woof of heaven. To lean towards the *bu* of the men of martiality means not knowing the divine *bu*

36 Yokoi Shōnan, "Kokuze sanron," *Watanabe Kazan, Takano Chōei, Sakuma Shōzan, Yokoi Shōnan, Hashimoto Sanai*, in *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 55 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), p. 463.

that does not kill. These cannot be said to be the true way of *bun-bu*. The true way of *bun-bu* is like the proverbial two wheels of a cart or two wings of a bird, and to discard one means that one cannot move.³⁷

Other, more nationalistic Confucian and nativist groups were also becoming increasingly vocal and had a strong impact on the younger activists who led the movement towards the Meiji Restoration of 1868. These nationalistic Confucians, such as Nakamura Mototsune (中邨元恒, 1778-1851), also recognized the importance of both *bun* and *bu*, but more closely identified the two concepts with China and Japan, respectively. According to Nakamura's 1848 *Shōbu ron*,

Our country is the land of martiality. The Western lands (China) are the land of letteredness. For the land of letteredness to value *bun* and the land of martiality to value *bu* is an ancient pattern. This means that in ancient times for many hundreds of years, rebellions did not occur and external enemies did not enter. The higher were safe and the lower were at peace, and the four directions were without incident and ruling them was like the age of Yao and Shun. At the time, the Confucian way had not yet entered, nor had Buddhist law been adopted, so with what was this accomplished? Rule was purely with *bu*. The *bu* of our country is the natural way of our country.³⁸

Nakamura went on to criticize earlier Tokugawa scholars whom he considered to have been overly critical of martiality and the militarism of the age before 1600:

37 Saitō Setsudō, *Shidō yōron (Essential Theories of the Way of the Samurai)*, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), p. 316.

38 Nakamura Mototsune, *Shōbu ron (Theories of Valuing Martiality)*, 尚武論, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), p. 320.

Ours is the martial country. We have *bushidō*. Not relying on Confucianism or using Buddhism is the natural way of our country. The land of *bun* values filial piety, while the land of *bu* values loyalty. [...] [Ogyū] Sorai said that *bushidō* was a bad learning created in the Warring States period. [Yamazaki] Ansai said that our country is heretical. These are the words of jaundiced Confucians who do not know *bushidō*.³⁹

Thinkers of the Mito School (Mitogaku, 水戸學), which advocated reverence for the emperor and resistance to foreign "barbarians" (*sonnō jōi*, 尊皇攘夷) took a similar approach. In 1833 Tokugawa Nariaki (徳川齊昭, 1800-1860), the head of Mito domain, argued that *bun* and *bu* were both essential, and only studying the (Chinese) way of letteredness would "lead to the greatest possible confusion." Believing that the samurai class had become overly pacified, he exhorted them to practice martial arts in line with the "great way of the country of the gods."⁴⁰ According to Nariaki,

Even a single samurai on his own must be prepared like a samurai. However, in the Great Peace (of the Tokugawa period), samurai no longer practice the martial way, they eat as much as they can, wear warm clothes, and until today live comfortable and peaceful lives, forgetting what they have received from their superiors.⁴¹

The pervasiveness of *bun-bu* thought could also be seen in the writings of some members of the National Learning movement, which generally sought to free itself from foreign influences. The writings of Tomobayashi Mitsuhiro (伴林光平, 1813-1864), for example, contained frequent references to *bun* and *bu*:

39 Ibid., pp. 329-330.

40 Tokugawa Nariaki, *Kokushi hen (Pronouncement of Ambition, 告志篇)*, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), pp. 23-24.

41 Ibid., p. 39.

In the Western lands (China) letteredness is primary and martiality subordinate. In the imperial country (Japan) martiality is primary to letteredness. This is because the national polity (*kokutai*, 國體) of the imperial country is not the same as foreign countries [...] Disparaging the martial way and placing it below civil matters is meaningless words that display a lack of knowledge about the ancient ways of the imperial country. [...] In the Western lands *bun* and *bu* are different. Their civil officials do not deal with military affairs, and their military officials do not deal with civil matters. In ancient times in our imperial country, *bun* and *bu* were one, and civil officials dealt with military matters while military men learned letters.⁴²

In addition to agreeing on the importance of both *bun* and *bu*, the above writers were united in their belief that the current state of *bun-bu* was heavily flawed. Their proposed solutions for the problems of the time were superficially similar, calling for a reintroduction of "true" martiality and letteredness, with special emphasis on the former, "native," virtue. Their individual understandings of the concepts were quite different, however, and it was unlikely that they would concur with regard to specific policies formulated on the basis of *bun* and *bu*. In fact, many of their differences of interpretation resulted from the degree of practicality or abstraction of their approaches, making the spectrum of *bun* and *bu* thought within Japan as varied as between Japan, China, and Korea. At this time, the reality of foreign encroachment into Japan resulted in a much greater emphasis on practical interpretations of *bun* and *bu*, which tended to be viewed as the Japanese, or *bu*-like, approach. The abstract philosophical views of *bun-bu* put forth by some scholars were in turn derided as a Chinese, or *bun*-like, approach that was not suited to the current crisis. The interrelated binaries of "*bun/bu*," "China/Japan," and "abstract/practical" were dealt with in different ways by

42 Tomobayashi Mitsuhiro, *Omoide gusa (Reminiscences, おもひ出草)*, in Ariyoshi Saeki et al. (eds.), *Bushidō zensho*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1942), pp. 209-210.

different thinkers, often unconsciously, but thought as a whole tended to move to the latter aspect of each of these binary sets in the mid-nineteenth century.

The theories put forth by Yokoi Shōnan at the very end of the Edo period incorporated many diverse elements, and are an important source for understanding the state of *bun-bu* thought in Japan at the time. Yokoi was influenced by thinkers of the Mito School and other nationalist movements in his earlier years, and was highly respected among younger activists, including Yoshida Shōin (吉田松陰, 1830-1859). In the 1850s, however, Yokoi's thought changed from the *sonnō jōi* ("revere the emperor, expel the barbarians") position he had advocated earlier, and he realized that pure military resistance to the Western powers was futile. The show of force put on by the American fleet under Commodore Perry was one factor in Yokoi's reconsideration of his position, but a more important event may have been his discovery of the *Kaikoku zushi* (*Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Countries*, 海國圖志; Chin. *Haiguo tuzhi*). This 1844 Chinese text was an overview of the nations of Europe and America written by Wei Yuan (魏源, 1794-1857) in the aftermath of the Opium War, and has been credited with convincing Yokoi that Japan would not be able to compete with the advanced weaponry of the European powers.⁴³ In the late 1850s Yokoi shifted from advocating armed rebellion to promoting reform, even holding high government offices in the 1860s, but this moderate approach cost him his life when he was assassinated by radicals in 1869.

His suggestions for reform as outlined in his most important text, the *Kokuze sanron* (*Three Treatises on Government*, 國是三論), are a good representation of widely-held beliefs regarding the state of the warrior class and the importance of *bun-bu* in Japan at the time. In this text, Yokoi addressed the problem of the

43 Minamoto Ryōen, "Yokoi Shōnan ni okeru jōi ron kara kaikoku ron he no tenkai," in *Ajia bunka kenkyū*, vol. 26 (Kokusai Kirisutokyo Daigaku/International Christian University, March, 2000), pp. 208-209.

separation of practical and philosophical approaches to *bun-bu* that had become even more pronounced by his time:

Everyone professes that *bun* and *bu* are the key to the way of ruling the country, which is the profession of the samurai. However, those who point to *bun* today refer to arts that have been transmitted from ancient times through the Chinese classics and histories. Mostly they enter into a flow of empty reasoning about broad subjects, and in extreme cases they merely memorize texts. Those who speak of *bu*, ride horses and practice the arts of swordsmanship, discuss meanings and say clever things without seriousness, or are impressed by the most violent blows. [...] As a result, scholars look at fighters' carelessness and roughness, and despise their lack of usefulness, while fighters mock the scholars' haughtiness and effeminate manner, as well as their inability to endure anything. The two groups cannot be reconciled.⁴⁴

According to Yokoi, these difficulties arose from a failure to understand the origins of *bun* and *bu*. When the concepts originated in China in the age of Emperor Shun, there was no literature, nor were there military techniques. Instead, *bun-bu* referred to virtues of the emperor. The association with military techniques was a result of the Japanese medieval period, when warlords such as Katō Kiyomasa (加藤清正, 1562-1611) and Honda Tadakatsu (本多忠勝, 1548-1610) introduced and taught martial skills, which were then passed down. However, continued Yokoi, their military skills originated in training the mind, a characteristic that also applied to Japan's most famous swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi (宮本武藏, 1584?-1645), who focused on reflection and study of the mind and limited physical training with a sword to six times per month.⁴⁵ In these passages, Yokoi's discussion focused on military matters, and specifically

44 Yokoi Shōnan, "Kokuze sanron," p. 458.

45 Ibid., pp. 458-459.

the nature of *bu*. Yokoi used examples of famous warriors from Japanese history to show that the balance of the philosophical and practical within *bu* was important, although the former element was primary.

After the end of the Sengoku period, argued Yokoi, the cultural aspects that had been neglected during the centuries of turmoil were revived, and many people studied literature. At the same time, other people calling themselves "men of *bu*" taught military techniques without any knowledge of *bun*.⁴⁶ Yokoi's criticism of these martial artists was harsh, yet understandable in the context of his view of *bun-bu*. By ignoring *bun* completely, these fighters were missing an essential half of the equation, and by focusing purely on techniques and failing to understand the true origins of *bu* in mental training, they also lacked the most important elements of *bu*. Yokoi did not make the calculation himself, but his writings indicate that he considered the teachers of martial arts to have grasped at most a quarter of the *bun-bu* whole, and the most superficial quarter at that.

Rather than the teaching of literature and martial arts, Yokoi focused on mental training in order to understand true *bu*. This entailed knowing *bushidō* and learning through serving one's lord and father and interacting with one's friends. For Yokoi, *bushidō* was less the "way of the warrior" than it was a "re-martialized way of the pacified samurai bureaucrat." In his *Kokuze Sanron*, Yokoi called for the reintroduction of *bu* to the *shidō* that had come to define the more Confucian role of samurai in the age of peace.⁴⁷ When questioned where *bun* entered into his *bu*-centered discussion, Yokoi answered that both were contained within *bun-bu*, and there were virtues of *bun* within *bu*.⁴⁸ With regard to the study of *bun* and *bu*,

46 Ibid., p. 460.

47 Ibid., pp. 456, 461.

48 Ibid., pp. 461-462.

In order to realize the way of loyalty and filial piety and seek the order of things on the basis of moral principles, that which shows one the correct way is *bun*. Calming the mind and steeling courage through attempting techniques and trying ventures is *bu*. Although the nature of the attempted ventures is no different today, there is a great difference between the extremes of throwing oneself into techniques to calm the mind and trying techniques after cultivating the mind. To make a comparison, the *bun* and *bu* of today are like trying to make the water at the mouth of a river clear while ignoring its muddy source. Without understanding the true source, it is natural that one will not benefit in either order or chaos.⁴⁹

According to Yokoi, if the government was built on schools and the teachings of *bun-bu*, officials would of their own volition turn towards the Way and naturally do their utmost to realize the way of the samurai. If people did their best to unify their minds with the minds of their lords, they would know the foundations of the classics and histories and grasp the use of swords and lances when they tried them, and would not be carried away by empty *bun* or unbalanced *bu*. Yokoi saw these as the "ruling teachings of true *bun* and true *bu*," and stated that they would revive warm and kind customs among the people, and generate men of talent.⁵⁰

V. The Resurgence of *Bun-Bu* in Meiji and Its Influence on Continental Reformers

In spite of the prominence of *bun-bu* discourse in Japan in the years leading up to 1868, after the collapse of the Tokugawa order the concept largely disappeared from the popular consciousness as attempts were made to replace native values

49 Ibid., p. 463.

50 Ibid., p. 465.

with Western ideals in the name of "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*, 文明開化). Over a decade of large-scale movements towards Westernization were then followed by a gradual but inevitable backlash against what was regarded as excessive foreign influence. This movement back towards "traditional" values, which reached critical mass in the late 1880s, incorporated the concept of *bun-bu* from an early stage. The reluctance of the Western powers to revise the unequal treaties that had been signed decades earlier provoked strong anti-foreign sentiment and a corresponding rise in nationalistic and militaristic thought. This renewed interest in martiality was a significant factor in drawing Japanese thinkers towards the ethic of *bushidō*, which was increasingly brought into discussion as the 1890s progressed. An early example of *bun-bu* theory in this discourse was an 1891 essay by Matsumoto Aijū (松本愛重), lamenting the imbalance of *bun-bu* in the Edo period, when samurai allegedly became weak and neglected to uphold martial virtues. With the restoration of imperial rule, Matsumoto argued, "*bushidō*, the unique character of the Yamato race," once again came to the fore.⁵¹ This article was simultaneously one of the earliest texts in the Meiji development of the *bushidō* ethic, which was closely related to the modern resurrection of the *bun-bu* binary. Meiji thinkers took up the earlier notion of Japan as the land of *bu*, using it as a basis for contending that the Japanese had a unique *bushidō* spirit.

Militaristic thought accelerated before, and especially after, the Sino-Japanese (Jiawu) War of 1894-1895, which marked Japan's arrival on the world stage as a modern military power. As well as convincing many Japanese that their belief in the nation's unique martial qualities was correct, this conflict had similar effects on many continental thinkers, who were as impressed with Japanese development since 1868 as they were disappointed with the state of their own militaries. The notion that the Japanese were martially inclined, i.e. more *wu* than *wen*, had a long history in China and Korea, dating back at least to Toyotomi

51 Matsumoto Aijū, "Bushidō," in *Bushidō sōron* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1905), p. 18.

Hideyoshi's (豊臣秀吉, 1536-1598) invasions of the late sixteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, this view was tempered by rationalist arguments that sought the roots of Japan's martiality not in innate racial traits, but in training and ideological education. If *bu* was an evolved cultural characteristic, it could theoretically be transferred to other countries. This interpretive shift was encouraged by social Darwinist ideas that became highly popular throughout East Asia after their introduction from the West.

Another approach taken by Confucians that allowed progressive change while remaining within the broader tradition was a change of emphasis from Zhu Xi's orthodoxy to the teachings of Wang Yangming. This movement could be observed in Japan, Korea, and China from the end of the nineteenth century. The rejection of Zhu Xi's teachings as representative of the old order was a development that occurred in both Japan and Korea, although in the former it was essentially a retrospective process of rationalization after the *ancien régime* had already been deposed. In Korea, the Tonghak movement was adamantly opposed to Zhu Xi orthodoxy largely due to its symbolic importance as the ideological structure of the court.⁵² As shown in the case of Japan, *bun-bu* was a popular rallying cry for reform to a society deemed to be under threat. The specific content of *bun-bu* varied from thinker to thinker, making the concept easily adaptable for different causes. In the same way, much of popular Wang Yangming thought in Japan, Korea, and China around the turn of the twentieth century focused on Wang's teachings of the innate knowledge of the good (致良知) and the unity of thought and action (知行合一), which provided a broad basis for "righteous" action by reformers and activists throughout East Asia. Given that many of the "righteous" actions proposed or carried out by modern Chinese and Korean activists had a martial element, the combination of Wang Yangming's ideas with the resurgence of *bu* as action was a natural development. In Japan, many activists were

52 Watanabe Manabu, *Chōsen kindai shi* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1968), p. 53 and Yang Hyunhea, *Yun Chiho to Kimu Kyoshin sono shinnichi to kōnichi no ronri*, pp. 17-18.

retrospectively classified as followers of Wang Yangming, whether or not their own writings supported this claim.⁵³

After several centuries of geopolitical isolation from the world, aside from tributary contacts with China, Korea was opened by Japan at a time when the latter was in the midst of an ambitious Westernization program, and the same was recommended for Korea by Japanese advisors. An official Korean mission to Japan in the summer of 1876 was impressed by the progress Japan had made, but misgivings regarding the possibilities of financing similar projects in Korea prevented the immediate adoption of similar policies.⁵⁴ Some of the younger Korean students who subsequently traveled to Japan to study were more open to ideas of modernization, and the famed publicist and promoter of Western ideas Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉, 1834-1901) was instrumental in supporting would-be reformers. However, intellectual currents in Japan were also undergoing considerable changes during this period, and a brief but influential Confucian revival led by men such as Nishi Amane (西周, 1829-1897) in the early 1880s demonstrated the discomfort many Japanese intellectuals felt with regard to "excessive" Westernization. Even Fukuzawa, who was no reactionary Confucian, began to show an increasing interest in traditional thought around this time. In 1881, Fukuzawa wrote that martiality was being neglected in favor of letteredness, and that Japan would only be able to compete on the global stage through a return to *bu*.⁵⁵ Fukuzawa's thought continued to move in this direction over the next decade, culminating in his 1891 *Yasegaman no setsu*, which argued that foreign powers would take advantage of Japan due to the lack of martial spirit shown by several prominent supporters of the collapsed Tokugawa regime.

53 Examples of this include the social revolutionary Ōshio Heihachirō (大鹽平八郎, 1793-1837), bakumatsu activist Yoshida Shōin, and restoration hero Saigō Takamori. Also see: Oleg Benesch, "Wang Yangming and Bushidō: Japanese Nativization and its Influences in Modern China," in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 36, no. 3 (Fall, 2009), pp. 439-454.

54 Vipin Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1988), pp. 30-31.

55 Hwang In K, *The Korean Reform Movement of the 1880s: A Study of Transition in Intra-Asian Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Shenkman, 1978), p. 99.

A desire for radical change led many Korean reformers who traveled to Japan further toward Western thought, but the idea of *bu* as a rationale for action was another strong influence. Encouraged by Fukuzawa and believing in sufficient Japanese military support, a large group of activists returned to Korea to stage a coup in 1884. The coup leaders held power for less than two days before being ousted by Chinese troops, in the process increasing anti-Japanese sentiment among the populace.⁵⁶ The coup generated considerable unease among many more traditional Koreans, not only for its violence. The goal of the coup leaders was a complete severing of the traditional relationship with China, which they felt was excessively subservient and doomed the nation due to China's own difficulties vis-à-vis the Western powers. Other aims were total reform of the governmental and military systems, as well as the elimination of class privileges and the introduction of vernacular language in schools in place of classical Chinese.⁵⁷ For most Korean thinkers in the late nineteenth century, however, even if they recognized the need for reform, the complete elimination of the Confucian system was too radical a program. It became obvious that reform would have to accommodate the traditional social structure to a certain extent, and even the most ardent Westernizers at times conceded the importance of the Confucian order to the state.⁵⁸ The *Hwangsong sinmun* newspaper, which began publication in 1898, can be seen as representative of reform movements that considered Confucian sensibilities. After the Sino-Japanese War ended in 1895, contemporary China ceased to serve as a valid model to even the most diehard loyalists to the old order, and many felt that Korea had become the center of Confucian virtue in the world. Instead, the Confucian reformers who contributed

56 Ibid., pp. 115-130.

57 Vipin Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club*, pp. 44-45.

58 For example, Yun Chi-ho was one of the most vocal critics of Confucianism, publishing several high-profile attacks on the traditional system (see Chandra, pp. 94-95). At the same time, however, the idea of "ethical rule" that Yun promoted as a solution to Korea's problems used much of the Confucian framework, and it has been argued that behind his calls for using foreign models was a firm reliance on the stability of a Confucian social order (see Yang, pp. 23-24).

to the *Hwangsong sinmun* looked to Japan for inspiration. The adoption of Japan as a prototype was intended to reconcile the need for technological and systematic reform with traditional East Asian (Confucian) ethics and worldviews.⁵⁹

Pak Unsik, one of the founders of the *Hwangsong sinmun*, combined *bun-bu* thought and Wang Yangming's teachings in his response to new challenges in Korea. Pak was a Confucian scholar and historian who also briefly served as president of the Korean Provisional Government before his death in 1925. Although many of Pak's writings after the annexation of Korea in 1910 were anti-Japanese polemics, his earlier work was strongly influenced by Japan, and there was much in that country's recent history that Pak sought to emulate in Korea. Like many Korean independence activists, Pak sought solutions to the threat of a Japanese takeover in the recent history of Japan itself. Echoing sentiments voiced by Liang Qichao with regard to China, Pak and other reformers agreed that maintaining independence would require the development of a strong nationalistic spirit.⁶⁰ Similar to Liang and many Japanese thinkers in the late Meiji period, Pak attributed Japan's success in modernization to a reliance on Wang Yangming's philosophy, and sought to implement Wang's teachings in Korea in order to strengthen and change the country.⁶¹ By rejecting Zhu Xi orthodoxy and instead focusing on Wang's theories of the unity of thought and action and the innate knowledge of the good, Pak sought to reform Korean Confucianism from within.⁶²

The Japanese influence on Pak's interest in the teachings of Wang Yangming can be seen in his correspondence on the subject with Azuma Keiji (東敬治,

59 Kim Dong-no, "Views of Modern Reforms as Depicted in the *Hwangsong sinmun* during the Taehan Empire," in Kim Dong-no et al. (eds.), *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006), pp. 44-45.

60 Chizuko Allen, "Northeast Asia Centered Around Korea: Ch'oe Namson's View of History," in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 49, no. 4 (Nov., 1990), p. 789.

61 Chung Chai-sik, "The Case of Neo-Confucian Yangban Intellectuals," in Helen Hardacre (ed.), *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 353-354.

62 John B. Duncan, "The Confucian Context of Reform," in Kim Dong-no et al. (eds.), *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006), pp. 119-120.

1860-1935), an influential member of the Japanese Wang Yangming Society.⁶³ Even as the threat of Japanese annexation of Korea increased in 1909-10, Pak continued to expound upon the positive influence Wang's teachings had on Japan, especially during the restoration struggles. In 1910, the year that Pak was forced to flee into exile, he published the *True Record of Wang Yangming (Wang Yangmyeong silgi)*, his largest work on the subject.⁶⁴ In addition to his admiration for Japanese use of Wang Yangming's theories to realize action, Pak was able to transcend his antipathy towards Japanese designs in Korea and suggest that Koreans should adopt a military spirit similar to *bushidō*, hoping that the ideology would have a similar effect on his countrymen as it did on the Japanese, strengthening their national consciousness and courage in their struggle against colonial control.⁶⁵ Pak's breaking with the Korean Confucian tradition and adopting Wang Yangming's philosophy was a major step for a nationalist activist such as himself, but his promotion of *bushidō* appears even more surprising in the context of the imminent annexation of Korea by Japan. Pak felt that a similar martial spirit to that of Japan would benefit Koreans in their struggle for independence, for the country had been largely "weakened by letteredness" during the earlier period of peace.⁶⁶ Throughout most of the Choson dynasty, Korea had been under the protection of the Chinese military and, with a brief exception during the transition from Ming to Qing in the seventeenth century, was never pressed to maintain an independent force with meaningful capabilities.⁶⁷

Nearer the end of his life, after more than a decade in Chinese exile, Pak's writings took on an extremely critical tone towards Japan, which he felt had gone

63 Pak Ũn-sik, *Pak Ũn-sik chōnsō*, vol. 3 (Seoul: Tan'guk Taehakkyo pusōl Tongyanghak Yōn'guso, 1975), pp. 235-238.

64 Pak Ũn-sik, *Pak Ũn-sik chōnsō*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Tan'guk Taehakkyo pusōl Tongyanghak Yōn'guso, 1975), pp. 39-174.

65 Chung Chai-sik, "The Case of Neo-Confucian Yangban Intellectuals," pp. 354-355.

66 Pak Ũn-sik, *Pak Ũn-sik chōnsō*, vol. 1 (Seoul: Tan'guk Taehakkyo pusōl Tongyanghak Yōn'guso, 1975), pp. 465-466.

67 James B. Palais, "Confucianism and The Aristocratic/Bureaucratic Balance in Korea," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 44, no. 2 (Dec., 1984), p. 431.

too far in the direction of martiality, especially in its relations with Korea. In his 1920 *The Bloody History of the Korean Independence Movement* (*Hanguo duli yundong zhi xueshi*), written in Chinese, Pak cites the American missionary Underwood's classification of Japan as a country of *wu* and Korea as a country of *wen*. According to Pak's translation of Underwood, "Japan refers to warriors (*wuren*) as gentlemen, whereas Korea conversely calls learned men (*wenren*) gentlemen. [...] Even in the current independence movement, Koreans seek to solve issues by appealing to letters, discussion, and justice, while Japan only relies on military force." Pak agreed with this sentiment, stating that the Korean people did not feel inferior to Japan, but rather strongly believed in their own historical superiority, demonstrated by the great amount of knowledge that Korea had transferred to Japan over the centuries. The only thing that gave Korea cause for concern in the present day was Japanese weaponry.⁶⁸ For Pak, defeat by Japan was not humiliating on account of the difference in wealth and military technology between the two countries. The only thing that would be humiliating would be a failure to resist.⁶⁹ To the Confucian reformers, an excessive focus on letteredness over martiality had exposed Korea to modern imperialism, and a balance between the two had to be restored if the nation was to emulate Japan's progress. Conversely, especially after 1910, many felt that Japan had swung too far towards martiality, and was missing the civilizing influence of letteredness in its dealings with its neighbors.

In China, following the Opium War, thinkers increased efforts to promote *wu* and restore the balance of martiality and letteredness, which many felt had become skewed in favor of the latter. This was a common response to military threats throughout Chinese history, along with tactics such as "using barbarians to control barbarians." While these policies had often been effective in previous centuries, they were found to be woefully lacking in the face of the new threats

68 Pak Ũn-sik, *Pak Ũn-sik chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, pp. 508-511.

69 Kang Duksang, "Kaisetsu," in Pak Unsik, *Chŏsen dokuritsu undŏ no kesshi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972), p. 317.

from the Western powers. The shock defeat in the Sino-Japanese (Jiawu) War made the necessity of radical reform inescapable for the future of the country, and simultaneously established Japan as a possible model for Chinese reformers. Japan's proximity, linguistic commonalities, and recent success with modernization made it an ideal source for innovation. As a newly emerging colonial power, Japan was regarded as a hostile nation by both China and Korea, but interest in acquiring knowledge of Japan's development was a greater driving force. In the decade following the war, many Chinese students spent time at Japanese universities and military institutions, a movement that has been covered by Douglas Reynolds, Paula Harrell and others.⁷⁰ The majority of Chinese students abroad were interested primarily in acquiring technological, military, and medical knowledge, but there was also a considerable curiosity regarding the cultural and historical contexts that appeared to be responsible for Japan's progress. Japan acted as a safe haven for young activists and reformers from Korea and, later, China, which has led scholars to describe Tokyo as the "nerve-center" of Chinese anti-government exiles.⁷¹

Chinese attempts to restore *wu* with the aid of Japanese models took both practical and ideological forms after 1895. Modern schools were established, incorporating martial elements such as physical training and military drill, and Japanese advisors and returnee Chinese helped set up a great number of military academies between 1898 and 1900.⁷² The ideological counterpart to these practical changes was also significant, and was directly influenced by major changes taking place in the Japanese national consciousness during the tenure of many Chinese students and activists in the country after 1895. Influential early

70 Douglas R. Reynolds, *China 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Paula Harrell, *Sowing the Seeds of Change: Chinese Students, Japanese Teachers 1895-1905* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

71 Robert A. Scalapino and Harold Shiffrin, "Early Socialist Currents in the Chinese Revolutionary Movement: Sun Yat-sen versus Liang Ch'i-ch'ao," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3 (May, 1959), p. 322.

72 Wang Wan, "Jindai Zhongguoren dui 'wen-wu heyi' jiaoyu de renshi guocheng," *Kyōritsu joshi daigaku sōgō gunka kenkyūjo kiyō*, no. 10 (Tokyo: Kyoritsu Women's University, 2004), pp. 124-125.

works on Japanese development included studies of the Meiji Restoration by the prominent thinker Kang Youwei (康有為, 1858-1927).⁷³ Kang's writings were an important source of inspiration for many Confucian reformers, including Pak Unsik and Kang's best-known student, Liang Qichao. Along with Sun Zhongshan (Yat-sen), Liang spent several years in Japan during the period between the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, and was influenced by intellectual movements prominent in Japan at the time. The great popularity of Wang Yang-ming's teachings in Japan inspired both men to integrate these into their thought as justifications for action. For nationalists such as Liang and Sun, it was important to maintain their links with Confucian heritage while calling for reform.⁷⁴ In late Meiji Japan, it was widely felt that Wang's teachings presented a possibility of reconciling tradition with progressive activism, and Liang and Sun appear to have adopted this view during their stay in Tokyo. Sun felt that Japan's rapid development was due to the effective realization of Wang's philosophy, and he discussed Wang's thought in his inaugural talk to the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (Zhongguo tongmenghui) in Tokyo in 1905.⁷⁵ Liang went further than Sun in his integration of Wang's thought, writing a book specifically on *Wang Yang-ming's Teachings of the Unity of Thought and Action* (*Wang Yang-ming zhixing heyi zhi jiao*).⁷⁶

In the context of *wen-wu* thought, the rapid development and popularization of the *bushidō* ethic in Japan during the decade after 1895 is significant. In many ways, *bushidō* can be seen as a product of attempts to nativize Wang's teachings in Japan, and some of the most prominent figures in modern *bushidō* discourse

73 For an overview of Kang's views of Japan, see Shibata Mikio, "Kō Yūi no Nihon ninshiki: *Nihon hen sei kō wo chūshin ni shite*," *Ryūokoku shitan*, 108 (March, 1997), pp. 44-62.

74 James Gregor, "Confucianism and the Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen," in *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 31, no. 1 (January, 1981), pp. 55, 67.

75 "Early Socialist Currents in the Chinese Revolutionary Movement," p. 323. James Gregor and Maria Hsia Chang, "Wang Yang-ming and the Ideology of Sun Yat-sen," in *The Review of Politics*, vol. 42, no. 3 (Jul., 1980), p. 401.

76 Peng Guoxiang, "Contemporary Chinese Studies of Wang Yangming 王陽明 and His Followers in Mainland China," in *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June, 2003), p. 321.

were also active in diverse Wang Yangming research groups.⁷⁷ Foreigners in Japan during this time tended to agree with Japanese theorists' assertions that *bushidō* was a major factor in Japan's military and modernizing success, and the concept became popular abroad, as well. Unsurprisingly, much of *bushidō* discourse in the late Meiji period was defined by ethnocentrism, posing a problem for those who desired to transplant aspects of the ethic to other societies. Liang, who desired to strengthen martiality in China through the introduction of a *bushidō*-like ethic, overcame this theoretical difficulty with the aid of social Darwinist concepts that were popular in East Asia at the time. For many observers, Japan's development was a prime example of social Darwinism at work, and Liang was a firm believer in the application of evolutionary theory to the competition between nations.⁷⁸ By adopting this view, it was possible to define *bushidō* as a nationalistic tool used effectively by the Japanese state, and not an innate trait of the Japanese people. The connections drawn between *bushidō* and Wang Yangming's teachings strengthened this argument, and made the importation of *bushidō* into China seem plausible.

In 1904, Liang attempted to introduce a similar martial spirit to China in the form of a book titled *China's Bushidō (Zhongguo zhi wushi dao)*.⁷⁹ Liang consciously used the Japanese term *bushidō*, which had a more positive connotation than similar Chinese terms, given the traditional subjugation of letteredness to martiality in Chinese culture.⁸⁰ In this book, Liang countered the widespread belief that Japan was a more innately martialistic nation than China, using examples from Chinese history to determine the nature of a Chinese martial spirit. Liang's work was of lasting significance, and Chinese studies of *bushidō* were popular in the 1920s and 30s even as hostilities with Japan expanded.⁸¹ For

77 See Benesch, "Wang Yang-ming and *bushidō*."

78 Christine Reinhold, *Studying the Enemy: Japan Hands in Republican China and Their Quest for National Identity, 1925-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

79 Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo zhi wushi dao* (Shanghai: 1904).

80 Tsu Jing, "Extinction and Adventures on the Chinese Diasporic Frontier," *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 2, 2 (Nov., 2006). p. 256.

81 Wu Anlong and Xiaong Dayun, *Chūgokujin no nihon kenkyū shi (A History of Chinese Japan*

example, Yan Xishan (閻錫山, 1883-1960), who had received military training in Japan, argued in a pamphlet that China required *bushidō* if it hoped to resist Japan, with the military most in need of the martial ethic.⁸² Chen Cheng (陳誠, 1897?-1965), another follower of Liang's theories, stipulated that cadets at the Baoding Military Academy memorize sections of *China's Bushidō*.⁸³

VI. Conclusions

The concept of *wen-wu* has passed through many interpretations in Japan, China, and Korea, with different levels of importance attached to martiality and letteredness in various times and places. As the variety of interpretations indicates, one of the great strengths of the *wen-wu* binary has been its flexibility and the lack of a single "orthodox" view of the subject that could dominate discourse in all areas. In China, Korea, and Japan, a certain balance between *wen* and *wu* was almost always deemed desirable, even if one of the two concepts received greater emphasis. The specific meanings of *wen* and *wu*, however, were constantly open to interpretation, allowing them to be adapted to any circumstances rather than being discarded. The common identification of *wen-wu* with other binaries such as internal/external, China/Japan, Korea/Japan, or theory/practice further broadened the range of interpretation, and resulted in the use of the concept in nationalistic arguments.

The primacy of *wen/mun* on the continent and *bu* in Japan fluctuated as political and ideological situations changed in each country, but these movements were largely independent of one another until the nineteenth century. Japanese

Studies (Tokyo: Rakkō Shuppan, 1989). p. 224.

82 Donald G. Gillin, "Portrait of a Warlord: Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi Province, 1911-1930," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3 (May, 1960). p. 291.

83 Donald G. Gillin, "Problems of Centralization in Republican China: The Case of Ch'en Ch'eng and the Kuomintang," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Aug., 1970). p. 839.

thinkers came to identify their country with martiality as a result of the unique warrior-dominated political and social structure of the Edo period. After 1868, geopolitical developments, especially the sudden reversal of previous power relationships with the Japanese victory over China in 1895, led to increased intercivilizational discussion of Japanese martiality in relation to Chinese/Korean letteredness. Continental reformers sought to restore the balance of *wen* and *wu* by adopting Japanese concepts of martiality in order to compensate for what was perceived as an overemphasis on letteredness in their own countries. The process of importing Japanese thought was complicated by the tense and occasionally bellicose relationship between Japan and the continent, as well as by entrenched views of China as the cultural center of East Asia. The transmission of Japanese martial ideals to China and Korea took many different forms, including the modern *bushidō* ethic, while the identification of the Wang Yangming school with Japan's modern success aided the spread of ideas to China and Korea by placing concepts of reform in a Confucian framework that appeared to involve a less drastic break with tradition. ♦

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