

# Symbolic Transformation of the Yasukuni Shrine: From an Entertainment Site to a Commemorative Space

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**Abstract** | The Yasukuni Shrine is a “commemorative” space for those who died in service of the Japanese Empire. However, the enshrinement of class-A war criminals from the Asia-Pacific War has made critics at home and abroad reevaluate the shrine as a symbolic space for Japanese right wing. Unlike the contemporary conception of the shrine as a “commemorative” space for Japan’s past wars, however, this article reveals that the Yasukuni Shrine in the early Meiji era also functioned as a site for “entertainment” (*yokyō*), which held horse racing and other various events. When did the entertaining function disappear from the conception of the Yasukuni Shrine, leaving it as a site for “commemoration” and “glorification” (*kenshō*) of the past? My research will show the following: The Yasukuni Shrine in the early Meiji era served primarily as a space for horse racing and other major events, which represented and publicized the new government’s “civilization and enlightenment” policy. However, going through the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the construction of the main hall (*haiden*) in 1899, the Yasukuni Shrine gradually emerged as a site for “glorification” of the past rather than “entertainment.” The Russo-Japanese War in 1904 consolidated Yasukuni’s transformation towards becoming the space for “glorification.”

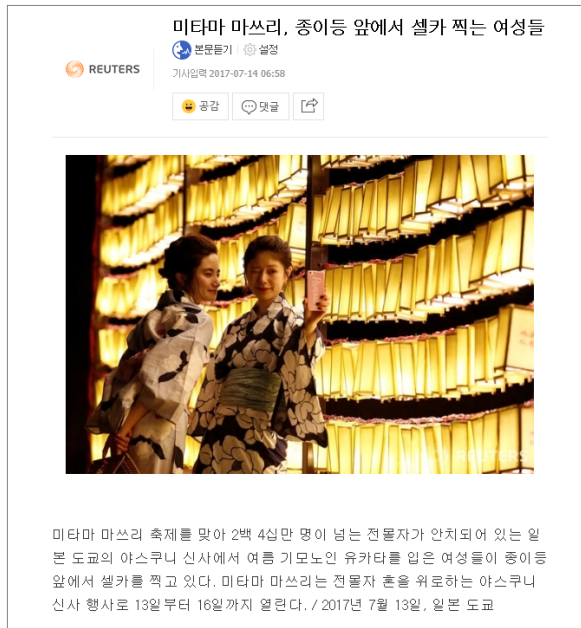
**Keywords** | Yasukuni Shrine, publicness, commemoration of the war dead, entertainment (*yokyō*), glorification (*kenshō*)

## Introduction: Yasukuni Shrine as a Public Space for Summer Festivals

On April 21, 2017, the Korean media again condemned the Japanese politicians’ visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. Although Prime Minister Abe Shinzō was absent, about ninety politicians visited the shrine during the controversial annual spring festival (*shunki reitaisai*). Unless radical changes occur in Japanese politics,

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Source: Reuters (July 13, 2017).

**Figure 1.** *Mitama Matsuri*, Women Taking Selfies in front of Paper Lanterns

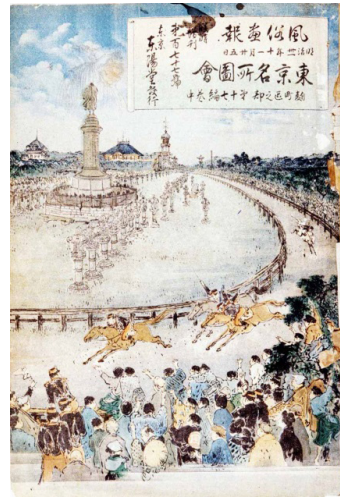
similar criticism in both Korean and Chinese media is likely to recur on the anniversary of the war's end on August 15, and the annual fall festival (*shūki reitaisai*) on October 17.

The foundation of South Korean and Chinese criticism of Japanese politicians' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine lies in the enshrinement of the convicted class-A war criminals of the Asia-Pacific War. In October 1978, the fourteen class-A war criminals, including Tōjō Hideki, became covertly enshrined at Yasukuni. The fact was first revealed by the media in 1979 and Japanese prime ministers continued to visit Yasukuni afterwards. The emerging series of controversies surrounding Japanese history textbooks in 1982 and Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro's official visit to Yasukuni on August 15, 1985, which allegedly signaled the revival of Japanese militarism in Chinese and Japanese media, however, soon turned the issue into a contentious debate on the international stage. The Yasukuni Shrine, henceforth, emerged as a symbolic space for the right wing who desired to commemorate the war as a "holy war" by honoring the convicted class-A war criminals at the shrine. The shrine also became "a sanctuary" for the



Source: *Fūzoku gahō* 175 (October 25, 1898, cover page).

Figure 2. The Kōjimachi District 1



Source: *Fūzoku gahō* 177 (November 25, 1898, cover page).

Figure 3. The Kōjimachi District 2

elderly to dress in old army uniforms and perform with the Japanese Rising Sun flag.

Meanwhile, on July 14, 2017 a few media outlets reported on the Yasukuni-sponsored festival, *Mitama Matsuri* (Spirit Festival) (figure 1). One of the articles, entitled “*Mitama Matsuri*, Women Taking Selfies in Front of Paper Lanterns,” intrigued peoples’ interest in Yasukuni, as the feminine aspect embedded in the title set against peoples’ ordinary preconception of Yasukuni as a symbolic space for the right wing.

The *Mitama Matsuri* is a summer festival hosted by the Yasukuni Shrine, renowned for the splendor of its 30,000 paper lantern installations commemorating the war dead (figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Other than the paper lanterns, however, the festival does not differ from other ordinary summer festivals as arranged with shrine shaking (*mikoshiburi*)<sup>2</sup> and *bon* festival dance (*bon odori*) processions. Since 2015 the Yasukuni Shrine banned food carts (*yatai*) and

1. *Mitama Matsuri* has been officially held since July 1947, the year following the Yasukuni Shrine’s commissioning of the *bon* festival dance of *Obon* Festival to the Bereaved Family Association of the Nagano Prefecture, upon folklorist Yanagita Kunio’s proposal in July 1946 (Tokoro 2007, 70). The paper lanterns of *Mitama Matsuri* are modelled on the pole lanterns (*kantō*) of *Tanabata Matsuri* (Festival of the Weaver) hosted by Akita City.

2. It refers to a procession in the ceremony where men shake the *mikoshi* (portable shrine).

drinking on the premises in order to maintain the distinctive commemorative function of the Yasukuni. Nevertheless, the intended purpose of the shrine could not but be muddled by those who try to escape the midsummer heat at the shrine, taking photographs in front of the paper lanterns. Unlike Yasukuni's original intention for the festival, visitors appear no different from people enjoying ordinary summer festivals in Japan.

We will now turn to an observation of Japan's first popular illustrated magazine, *Fūzoku gahō* (Customs Illustrated). The magazine gained popularity with the public for their original themes. New publications, which included illustrations of new tourist attractions in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kyoto, comprised the magazine's essential sales strategy in the Meiji era. The illustrations aroused new desires and interests for the people, who had increasing freedom of movement at the time.

The Kōjimachi district,<sup>3</sup> where the Yasukuni Shrine is located, is introduced in the issues of 175 and 177 of *Fūzoku gahō* (figures 2 and 3). It is highly likely that the Kōjimachi district on the cover pages was chosen for its widespread popularity at the time or as a recommendation for the public. In this regard, it can be implied that the Imperial Palace and the Yasukuni Shrine were the major attractions of the Kōjimachi district. The cover pages of the issues of 175 and 177, respectively, include the illustration of the *Nijūbashi*<sup>4</sup> in front of the Imperial Palace and the statue of Ōmura Masujirō,<sup>5</sup> which continues to be the representative installation of the Yasukuni Shrine to this date. Indeed, these two locations are contemporary landmarks of Tokyo as well. However, these cover illustrations are very different from the present. The Mt. Fuji depicted in the backdrop of the *Nijūbashi* before the Imperial Palace, in the issue of 175, for instance, should not be visible from the angle of the illustration. Combined with the complete exclusion of people in the illustration, the cover page visualizes the absolute authority of the Emperor at the time.

Comparably, the cover page of the issue of 177 portrays horse racing and a cheerful crowd around the Ōmura statue. This implies that the people of the

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3. The Kōjimachi district includes the Imperial Palace and other surrounding areas. In 1947, the district merged with Kanda and Chiyoda districts.

4. *Nijūbashi* refers to the iron bridge at the front gate, not the stone bridge. But since the iron bridge was not open for the public, people used the name *Nijūbashi*, referring to the two bridges together. The iron bridge was first built during the construction of the square in front of the Imperial Palace in 1888.

5. Japan's first installation of Western-style sculpture in 1893. Twelve meters high. Ōmura is dressed as he fought against Japan's shogunate army, gazing into Ueno or northeast (against the adversaries), where the battle was held.

time perceived the Yasukuni Shrine as a site of entertainment, which is quite different from its contemporary commemorative perception. Certainly, Yasukuni was formerly Tokyo Shōkonsha,<sup>6</sup> which was established for “honoring and commemorating the achievements of the war dead.” Also, as stated in the lyrics of the military anthem released in 1939, *Dōki no sakura* (My Comrade Cherry Blossom), “Yasukuni Shrine, home of flowers, let’s meet as blooms in Spring,” the Yasukuni Shrine was a site of more than mere commemoration, but also of honoring the people who dedicated their lives for their country. Nevertheless, at least until 1898, the Yasukuni Shrine remained a site of entertainment during the annual spring and fall festivals. It was embodied by the horse racing around the Ōmura statue and not by its contemporary association with the main shrine (*honden*), large bronze gate (*torii*), or *Yūshūkan* War Memorial Museum, the symbolic sites for commemoration. In other words, the Yasukuni Shrine in 1898 existed as a complex site of glorification and commemoration of the war dead, as well as entertainment.

Then when did the entertaining function disappear from the concept of the Yasukuni Shrine, leaving it as a site for commemoration and glorification of the past? This question asks not only how the state constructed and maintained the Yasukuni Shrine, but also how people’s perception of Yasukuni became socially constructed.

Recent works by Japanese scholars have posed similar question about the Yasukuni Shrine. Fujita Hiromasa’s studies (2011, 2013a, 2013b) are exemplary.<sup>7</sup> To elaborate, Fujita criticized the work of Murakami Shigeyoshi, who defined Yasukuni as “a shrine representative of the militarist nature of State Shinto,” as well as “an important pillar of Japan’s national doctrine” at the time (Murakami 1970, 144). According to Fujita (2013b, 117), we need to first scrutinize to what extent the State Shinto ideal has been actually realized in Japan before presupposing that “a substantive and large system of ‘State Shinto’” existed in modern Japan.

In specific, Fujita reconstructed the Yasukuni Shrine as a public space that emerged in the modern “Imperial City of Tokyo,” rather than associating it with State Shinto. The precinct of the Yasukuni Shrine became widely recognized as both a new attraction of the Imperial City of Tokyo and a public space. According to Fujita (2013b, 125), the “publicness” of the site was later consolidated into the state’s conception of a public space for national-civic commemoration of the war dead. Fujita (2013b, 154-56) further concludes that the 1939 proposal

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6. *Shōkonsha* is a shrine dedicated to those who died for the country.

7. See also, Tsubouchi (1999); Satō (2006).

to expand the spiritual area in the Yasukuni Shrine was not put into practice as part of the 2,600th anniversary celebration of Imperial Japan in 1940, which marked the peak of State Shinto. It was because the Yasukuni Shrine *later* emerged as public space for commemoration in the modern “Imperial Capital of Tokyo.”

In this light, my study largely concurs with Fujita’s approach to the Yasukuni Shrine, which aimed to critically review the assumption that Yasukuni existed as a commemorative space for those who dedicated their lives for the country since its inception.<sup>8</sup> Yet this article differs from Fujita’s interpretation of the shrine as a public space for commemoration.

Fujita (2011, 57) first divided the meaning of “publicness” into three categories: (1) “official” in relation to the state; (2) “common” to everyone and not to any particular person; and (3) “open” to all. Then, distinguishing the premises of the shrine from spaces that are private, personal, or secret, Fujita defined the shrine as a public space. Here, the concept of “public” is used as an antonym to (2) and (3), and a synonym to (1). As result, “public” becomes substitutable with “official,” as exemplary in spaces like public parks. For evidence, Fujita illustrates how the Yasukuni Shrine in the 1880s became defined as one of the public parks of the Imperial Capital of Tokyo, along with Ueno, Shiba, Asakusa, Fukagawa, Asukayama, Hie Shrine, and Kanda Shrine.<sup>9</sup>

However, “public” and “official” should not be treated as equivalent nor substitutable in the “Great Japanese Empire,” where anything official about the state was concentrated in the emperor and the emperor was supposed to be the origin of public values. Also, amongst the parks of the Imperial Capital of Japan Fujita listed, the Yasukuni Shrine was the only place in which the “publicness” and official function of commemoration coexisted since its founding.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the more the Yasukuni Shrine served as a public space for the state, and the Emperor officially represented the state, the Yasukuni Shrine could not

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8. Previous studies sharing similar approaches to the Yasukuni Shrine tend to only focus on the problems of enshrining class-A war criminals, Japanese responsibility in the war, and colonial rule. Representative works are Koyasu (2005); Takahashi (2005); *Nihon no Sensō Sekinin Shiryō Sentā* (2011).

9. Refer to August 16, 1888, Tokyo Urban Renewal Ordinance, etc. (Fujita 2011, 60).

10. In reference to state-level ceremonies held at the Ueno Park, including commemorations, expositions, and triumphal celebrations, Ono Ryōhei (2003, 105-34) also evaluated the Ueno Park as a place in which both public and official function of the site coexisted, therefore defining it as one of the mechanisms in building the nation-state. I agree with Ono’s evaluation. Yet, considering the recurrence of commemoration at the Yasukuni Shrine, I find the “publicness” of Ueno Park, in which such national ceremonies were held intermittently, relatively stronger than places like Yasukuni.

but deviate from being a public space like other parks to an official space for state-level occasions.

For instance, Yasukuni Shrine appeared in the national textbook for the first time in the 1911 publication of *Ordinary Elementary School Textbook of Moral Training* (fourth grade), second edition. The textbook depicted Yasukuni as “a place for enshrining those who dedicated their lives *for the country*,” and called for people to “emulate the people enshrined in Yasukuni in order to work *for the country and for the emperor*” (Monbushō 1911, 356, emphasis added). However, in the third edition of *Ordinary Elementary School Textbook of Moral Training* (fourth grade) published in 1920, the portrayal of Yasukuni was revised as “a place for enshrining those who dedicated their lives *for the emperor and for the country*,” and that people have to “work *for the emperor and for the country*.” The 1937 publication of *Sim-Sang Elementary School Supplementary Textbook* (Fourth Grade), fourth edition, remained identical (Monbushō 1920, 529, emphasis added).

The emergence of the Yasukuni Shrine in the second edition in 1911 illustrates that a transformation occurred after the publication of the first edition in 1903. The Yasukuni Shrine, which was included with other public spaces in the Imperial Capital of Tokyo in 1903, had become an official space by 1911 and a site for commemorating those who dedicated their lives for the country. Yet, as the phrase “for the country and for the emperor” illustrates, the emperor had yet to emerge as a representative of the country.<sup>11</sup> However, the change of order in the 1920 description, from “for the country and for the emperor” to “for the emperor and for the country,” suggests that the Yasukuni Shrine became nationally defined as an official space of the state, represented by the emperor. As the following sections will illustrate, the “publicness” of the Yasukuni Shrine, which first emerged in modern Japan, gradually evolved into an official space of the state and ultimately a public space represented by the emperor.

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11. The emergence of the debate on the “Emperor as an Organ of Government Theory” in 1912 comes with many implications. On Japanese nationalism (kokutairon) in early Taishō and Shōwa, refer to Park Sam-hun (2012, 264-76; 2016, 126-31).



## The Yasukuni Shrine as a Site for Entertainment

### 1. Entertainment of Regular Festivals (*Reitaisai*) and Civilization and Enlightenment

Since the establishment of Tokyo Shōkonsha in 1869, the Yasukuni Shrine has continued to hold collective enshrinement ceremonies of the war dead, and regular and extraordinary festivals, commemorating them. Shrines are commonly monotheistic, and therefore the commemorative rites are set on specific dates relevant to the worshipped god. However, because the Yasukuni Shrine honors multiple imperial people who lost their lives in conflicts, including the Boshin War, it holds collective ceremonies whenever the war dead are enshrined. Also, given the multiplicity of those worshipped, a specific date cannot be set for the rites. Then on what criteria were the regular festivals held in the Yasukuni?

Table 1 lists all the dates of regular festivals held at the Yasukuni Shrine since the founding of Tokyo Shōkonsha. The regular festivals were held four times in 1869, the founding year of the shrine, on days relevant to the Boshin War, which was fought against the shogunate military. With the introduction of the solar calendar, the days were adjusted to two times a year in 1879 and held on May 6 and November 6. While November 6 is the day Aizu surrendered, leading to the final victory of Imperial Japan in the Boshin War, May 6 is a calculated date to “hold the ceremony twice, at the midpoint of the twelve months” (Yasukuni Jinja 1983, 395). To note, the 1879 change of the regular festival dates occurred within ten days of the renaming of Tokyo Shōkonsha to Yasukuni (Yasukuni Jinja 1983, 79-86). This was done in order to “always commemorate and immortalize the souls of the loyal subjects who dedicated their lives in wars since the Boshin War” (Yasukuni Jinja 1983, 81). In other words, the 1879 change of dates illustrates how both Tokyo Shōkonsha and the Yasukuni Shrine only commemorated the Imperial Army and excluded the shogunate military. As a result, while the commemoration of the war dead at the Yasukuni Shrine may have been official deeds of the imperial government at the time, the commemoration had not yet become public for “Japan as a nation-state” or incorporated the adversaries who resisted against the emperor. This is the basis of why the issue of collective enshrinement of the shogunate military and Saigō Takamori is again emerging as a contentious issue ahead of the upcoming 150th anniversary ceremony of the Yasukuni Shrine in 2019 (“Yasukuni Jinja 150-shūnen,” 2016).

Since its founding, Tokyo Shōkonsha hosted offering ceremonies as



**Table 1.** Regular Festival Dates of Tokyo Shōkonsha and Yasukuni Shrine

Period	Enacted	Memorial Day				Grounds for Enactment
1869 - 1911	Jul 17, 1869	*Jan 3	May 15	May 18	Sep 22	Battle of Fushimi began (Jan 3) Battle of Ueno began (May 15) Surrender by Hakodate (May 18) Surrender by Aizu (Sep 22)
	Sep 23, 1869	*Jan 3	May 15-18		Sep 23	Date changed due to the Emperor's birthday (Sep 22)
	May 12, 1872	*Jan 3	May 15		Sep 23	May 18 merged with May 15
	Mar 18, 1873	Jan 31	Jun 9		*Nov 12	Date changed according to the solar calendar
	Sep 5, 1873	Jan 27	Jul 4		*Nov 6	Date changed according to the solar calendar
	Nov 5, 1877	Jan 27	Jul 4	Sep 24	*Nov 6	Victory of Seinan War (Sep 24)
	Jun 14, 1879		May 6		*Nov 6	Reset in accordance to the Autumn Festival (May 6) Autumn Festival, Surrender by Aizu (Nov 6)
1912 - 45	Dec 3, 1912		*Apr 30		*Oct 23	Japanese Army Parade during the Russo-Japanese War (Apr 30) Japanese Navy Parade during the Russo-Japanese War (Oct 23)
1946 - Present	Oct 11, 1946		*Apr 22		*Oct 18	Spring Equinox Day calculated in solar calendar (Apr 22) Fall Equinox Day calculated in solar calendar (Oct 18)

\*Emperor sends imperial envoy

Source: Yasukuni Jinja (1983, 417-18).

entertainment during the regular festivals. According to table 2, entertainment lasted for two to three days until Tokyo Shōkonsha was renamed the Yasukuni Shrine in 1879. Here, we can observe that the entertainment components of regular festivals were as important as the commemoration—the main purpose of regular festivals—at least until 1879. The main events were horse racing<sup>12</sup> and

12. Yasukuni Jinja (1987, 47) states that horse racing began from the regular festival of May 15, 1871. According to the diaries of Kido Takayoshi and Hirosawa Saneomi, however, horse racing was already held during the regular festival at Tokyo Shōkonsha on September 23, 1870 (Nihon

**Table 2.** Entertainment in Regular Festivals until the December 3, 1912 Date Change

Year	Date	Horse Racing	Sumo	Fireworks	<i>Nōgaku</i>	Military Music
1869	Jun 29 (founding ceremony)		0	0		
	Sep 21					
1870	Jan 3					
	May 15-18		0	0	0	
	Sep 23-25	0				
1871	Jan 3					
	May 15-20	0	0	0		
	Sep 23-25	0	0 (2 days)			
1872	Jan 3		0			
	May 15	0	0	0		
	Sep 23	0				
1873	Jan 31-Feb 2	0	0 (2 days)			
	Jun 9-11	0	0 (2 days)	0		
	Nov 6-8	0	0 (2 days)			
1874	Jan 27-29		0 (2 days)			
	Jul 4-6	0	0 (2 days)			
	Aug 28 (Temporary)	0		0		
	Nov 6-7	0 (2 days)				
1875	Jan 27-28	0	0			
	Feb 22 (Temporary)	0	0 (2 days)			
	Jul 4-7	0 (2 days)		0		
	Nov 6-7	0 (2 days)				0*
1876	Jan 27-Feb 3		0 (2 days)			
	Jul 4-8	0 (2 days)	0 (2 days)			
	Nov 6-7	0 (2 days)				
1877	Jan 27-31	0 (3 days)	0 (3 days)			
	Jul 4-8	0 (2 days)	0 (2 days)			
	Nov 6-8	0 (2 days)				
	Nov 13-15 (Temporary)	0	0	0	0	

Table 2. (continued)

Year	Date	Horse Racing	Sumo	Fireworks	Nōgaku	Military Music
1878	Jan 27-29	0	0 (2 days)			
	Sep 24-26	0 (3 days)	0 (2 days)		0 (3 days)	
	Nov 6-11	0 (2 days)			0 (3 days)	
1879	Jan 27-Feb 1	0 (2 days)	0			
	Jun 25-27 (Temporary)	0 (2 days)	0 (2 days)		0 (2 days)	
	Nov 6					
1880	May 6-9	0	0 (2 days)	0		
	May 14 (Temporary)	0	0	0		
	May 17-19 (Temporary)		0		0	
	Nov 6	0	0**		0	
1881	May 6-8	0	0	0		
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1882	May 6		0			
	Nov 6-7				0	
1883	May 6-8	0	0 (2 days)			
	Nov 6-7	0	0			
1884	May 6-7	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0	0			
1885	May 6-7	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1886	May 6-8	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1887	May 6-8	0	0			
	Nov 6-8	0			0 (2 days)	
1888	May 6-9	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1889	May 6-7	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1890	May 6-8	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1891	May 6-7	0	0		0	
	Nov 6-7	0			0	

Table 2. (continued)

Year	Date	Horse Racing	Sumo	Fireworks	<i>Nōgaku</i>	Military Music
1892	May 6-7	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	0
1893	May 6-7	0	0			0
	Nov 6-7	0			0	0
1894	May 6-7	0	0			0
	Nov 6	Suspension due to Sino-Japanese War				
1895	May 6					
	Nov 6					
	Dec 16-18 (Temporary)	0 (2 days)	0	0	0	0
1896	May 6-8	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0			0	
1897	May 6	Suspension for mourning for the death of Empress Dowager Eishō				
	Nov 6					
1898	May 6-7	0	0			
	Nov 6-7	0	0		0	
1899	May 6-8		0		0	
	Nov 6-7***				0	
1900	May 6-7		0			
	Nov 6-7				0 (2 days)	
1901	May 6-8		0			
	Nov 4 (Temporary)		0		0	
	Nov 6					
1902	May 6-7		0			
	Nov 6-7				0	
1903	May 6-7		0			
	Nov 6-7****				0	
1904	May 6-7		0			
	Nov 6-7		0		0	
1905	May 3-5 (Temporary)		0		0	
	Nov 6-7				0	
1906	May 3-5 (Temporary)		0 (3 days)			
	May 6					
	Nov 6		0			

Table 2. (continued)

Year	Date	Horse Racing	Sumo	Fireworks	Nōgaku	Military Music
1907	May 6					
	Nov 6-7		0		0	
1908	May 6-8		0 (2 days)		0 (2 days)	
	Nov 6-7				0	
1909	May 6-8		0 (2 days)		0 (2 days)	
	Nov 6		0			
1910	May 6-7		0		0	
	Nov 6		0			
1911	May 5-6		0 (2 days)		0 (2 days)	
	Nov 6		0		0	
1912	May 5-7		0		0	
	Nov 6	Suspension for mourning the death of Meiji Emperor				
1913	Apr 30					
	Oct 23-24		0		0	

\*The first time an army officer played the military music. After designation as special-class state shrine (*bekkaku kanpeisha*)<sup>13</sup> in 1879, the army and navy played alternately.

\*\*Sumo for public.

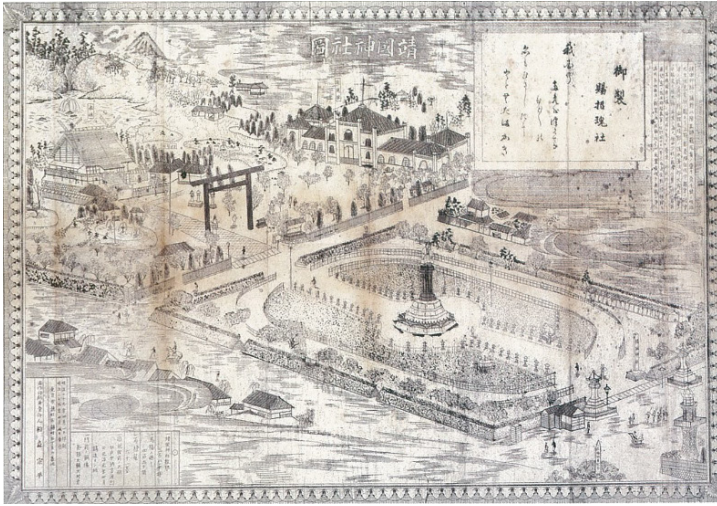
\*\*\*Listed in “Yasukuni Jinja taisai” (1895); Nihon Shiseki Kyōkai (1985, 2001); Yasukuni Jinja (1987); Saitō (2004).

\*\*\*\*Since this date, street stalls and public performances became customary at the old racetracks.

Note: The list excludes the dates that the author could not precisely confirm and *dōge odor*i festivals that were intermittently held.

sumo, which were part of the traditional offering ceremonies held at the shrine. However, the horse racing held at Tokyo Shōkonsha, and later at the Yasukuni Shrine, were not the traditional martial kind of *yabusame* where archers on running horses shot at wooden targets. Instead, it was horse racing “using the warhorses kept under the jurisdiction of Imperial Japanese Army, inviting those interested in the race, and awarding the fastest rider for entertainment, and at the same time improving techniques for horse breeding” (Kamo 1911, 116). As British official Ernest Satow (2008, 42) described, it was “European-style horse

13. *Bekkaku kanpeisha* were shrines for those with distinguished services to the state, which were designated by the Meiji government.



Source: Yasukuni Jinja Yūshūkan (1986, List 44).

Figure 4. Copperplate Print of the Yasukuni Shrine on April 4, 1896

racing.”

Observing the circular horse racing track, which previously existed around the Ōmura statue, Fujita (2015, 122) argued that it demonstrated how the Yasukuni Shrine was “widely recognized as a new ‘attraction’ constructed in the modern ‘Imperial Capital of Japan,’ as well as a ‘public space’” among the people (figure 4). The presence of the horse racing track itself manifested that the “public” and “official” converged at the Yasukuni Shrine.

To substantiate Fujita’s argument, however, the following two questions have to be answered. First, why did the horse racing not resume once the racing track became the workspace for the construction of the main hall (*haiden*) in 1898? Second, what happened to the tracks after the construction?

In response to the second question, Fujita explained that the “memories of the Yasukuni Shrine precinct (especially the horse racing track) became the ‘intermediary’ for the construction of the Meiji Shrine (especially the outer garden) during the Taisho era” (2013b, 154; 2015, 122-26). But regarding the first question, he only states that the “horse racing and the racing track were ludicrously closed down in 1901” (2015, 129) without further explaining why horse racing was suspended since 1898. Unlike sumo and *noh* (*nōgaku*), which were held only once a year, horse races were semi-annual, despite their abbreviated duration. However, if the old horse racing track was what shaped



Source: Yasukuni Jinja Yūshūkan (1986, List 6).

**Figure 5.** French Circus Performance at the Precinct of Tokyo Shōkonsha

the Yasukuni Shrine as a public space, where public and official values converged, why the tracks were closed must be explained.

Why did horse racing stop at the Yasukuni Shrine, and why were the racing tracks closed down? To address these questions, we must first understand why “European style horse racing” took place at the Tokyo Shōkonsha and Yasukuni Shrine and what such events meant.

The “European horse racing” began in Japan when the British living in Yokohama first introduced it during the Keiō era (1865-68) (Ishii 1908, 482).<sup>14</sup> However, the first introduction by the Japanese was during the regular festival of Tokyo Shōkonsha held on September 23, 1870 by the Military Ministry, as a form of entertainment.<sup>15</sup> During the regular festival held on May 15, 1871, not only Japanese, but also foreigners participated in the races (Ishii 1908, 482-83). Irrelevant to the regular festival, however, the horse races were held on October 20, 1872 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to entertain the Prince of Russia. On October 26, 1871, a Western-style circus was also shown at the shrine, as illustrated in figure 5 (Ishii 1908, 483).

As mentioned above, the Military Ministry (*Heibushō*) hosted horse races at

14. The British living in Yokohama rented from Tokugawa Shogunate the space near Negishi for horse racing, which is the origin of the Negishi Racetrack.

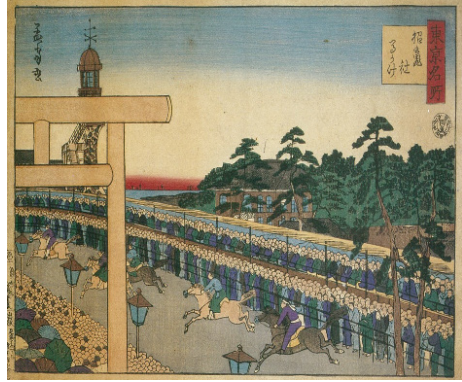
15. Ishii Kendō (1908, 482) states that horse racing was held for the first time by the Japanese during the Tokyo Shōkonsha ceremony in 1869. However, given the absence of any primary materials to confirm the date, I assume the date to be around September 1870 in reference to Kido and Hirotsawa's diaries (see footnote 12).





Source: Yasukuni Jinja Yūshūkan (1986, List 12).

**Figure 6.** Kudan Horse Racing 1877, Kobayashi Kiyochika



Source: Yasukuni Jinja Yūshūkan (1986, List 14).

**Figure 7.** Tokyo Shōkonsha Horse Racing, September 1878

the Tokyo Shōkonsha in order to entertain the people during the regular festivals and improve horse breeding techniques. However, it is important that the ministry opted for the Western-style horse racing rather than Japan's traditional archery-based horse racing for the regular festivals. The race participants at Tokyo Shōkonsha dressed in Western clothes and equipment (figures 6 and 7). Even though irrelevant to the regular festivals, the Western-style circus was also permitted at Tokyo Shōkonsha. Considering the fact that a circus was ever shown to the Japanese public for the first time in August 1871, it took only two months to permit a circus to be shown at Tokyo Shōkonsha too (Akune 1977, 41). A bicycle race, the representative Western vehicle of the time, was hosted at the shrine as well (Ōtsuki 2003, 783).

The regular festivals at Tokyo Shōkonsha were sites of embracing and introducing “Western culture” by the state. The new government utilized them to publicize their civilization and enlightenment policy under the slogans of rich country, strong army and promotion of industry, which, in essence, aimed to legitimize their rule after the Meiji Restoration.

Negishi of Yokohama and the Sinobazu Pond of the Ueno Park also held the Western-style horse races (Harada 1888, 13-14).<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the Western-style circus was hosted in many places across the country, including the Asakusa Park of the Imperial Capital of Tokyo, the Shijō of Kyoto, and Minatomachi of

16. The surroundings of Sinobazunoike were used for horse racing since 1884, including the construction of a building for the audience to watch the race.

Niigata (Akune 1977, 41-45). In other words, the new government utilized the newly constructed public spaces, including the Tokyo Shōkonsha, as a site to propagandize their civilization and enlightenment policy. The regular festivals of Tokyo Shōkonsha were, therefore, primarily an “official space of the state” for commemorating the Imperial Army soldiers who died during the Boshin War. They simultaneously served as a public space for promulgating the new government’s civilization and enlightenment policy through the hosting of Western-style horse racing for entertainment.

The horse racing, which was the only entertainment to be suspended in 1899, was held regularly twice a year (refer to table 2), and the number of horses for racing gradually increased from 150 in 1891 to 268 horses by 1896 (Kamo 1911, 116). The horse racing at the regular festivals became the major event for the new government to disseminate their civilization and enlightenment policy, as well as a site for “the citizens of Tokyo to physically experience this modern world view” (Ōtsuki 2003, 784). As result, the central function of the regular festivals was not only to commemorate those lost during the Boshin War, but more to entertain the people. This fact may explain the reason the old horse tracks were chosen to be used for the construction of a new main hall, which aimed to enhance the commemorative function of the shrine. While I shall discuss this in greater detail below, first we must look into how the horse races and Tokyo Shōkonsha were viewed by citizens outside Tokyo.

## 2. Tokyo Guidebooks and Yasukuni Shrine

Tokyo Shōkonsha appeared for the first time in Tokyo guidebooks with the first edition of *Tōkyō shin hanjōki* [Tokyo’s New Era of Flourishing], published in 1874 by Hattori Seiichi. Selling more than 10,000 copies, this guidebook has been labeled one of the three bestsellers of the early Meiji era, along with Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Seiyō jijō* [Western Matters] and *Sekai kunizukushi* [Compendium of All Countries of the World] (Miki 1925, 1-4).<sup>17</sup> While the two books by Fukuzawa delved into the origins of the West, Hattori’s *Tōkyō shin hanjōki* focused on introducing Tokyo with a modern world view.

In the guidebook, Tokyo Shōkonsha is introduced among descriptions and pictures of Tokyo’s schools, rickshaws, newspapers, and beef. In the list of entertainment during the regular festival, the book introduces the fireworks, horse racing, and sumo, which were held on the first, second, and third day of the festival, respectively. The horse racing, in particular, is described as a “race

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17. Popular among the readers, the first edition was followed by a second to sixth editions in 1876.

Source: Fukuda (1877, 25).

**Figure 8.** The Wooden Fences Set for the Regular Festival Races, Tokyo Shōkonsha



between two horses, within a place surrounded by wooden fences,” which “resembles watching Sasaki and Kajiware’s cavalcade (people leading the cavalcade charge on horseback)” (Miki 1925, 102).<sup>18</sup> While it is not directly described as “Western style,” the detailed portrayal of the race emphasizes how the horse racing differed from the traditional *yabusame* of offering ceremonies. In introducing Tokyo Shōkonsha, horse racing is always included in the description, although sumo and fireworks are excluded at times. Some of the guidebooks even use an illustration of the wooden fences set for the regular festival races as the main image of Tokyo Shōkonsha (figure 8).<sup>19</sup> While it is probable that the influence of *Tōkyō shin hanjōki* led to these illustrations, it is important that horse racing was at the center of Tokyo Shōkonsha’s introduction in the guidebook.

Even after renaming Tokyo Shōkonsha to Yasukuni Shrine in 1879, the descriptions generally included the phrase that “the rites [were] always followed by horse racing” (Kubota 1880, 2).

Turning to Kodama Eisei’s *Tokyo annai* [Guide to Tokyo], which were sold widely from the first edition in March 1881 to a revised edition in October 1881 and an expanded edition in 1884, Tokyo Shōkonsha and the Yasukuni Shrine appear together. While the name change had already taken place by the time of the publication, the guide introduced Tokyo Shōkonsha as one of Tokyo’s “amusement places” and Yasukuni as one of the shrines located in the Kōjimachi

18. “Sasaki and Kashiwara cavalcade” refers to Sasaki Takatsuna and Kajiware Kagetsue’s Battle of Uji during the Genpei War.

19. Refer to Okabe (1877, 1-2).

district. With descriptions of the “wide variety of flowers, including cherry blossoms” which “bring many visitors during the blooming season, and also great scenery at the fountain,” the book does not mention horse racing when introducing Tokyo Shōkonsha (Kodama 1881, 20). Excluding the specific dates of regular festivals, Tokyo Shōkonsha is portrayed as an amusement place rather than a site for commemoration.

By contrast, the book did not offer descriptions of the Yasukuni Shrine, except for its address (Kodama 1881, 30). This portrayal contrasts with the book’s descriptions of other places located in the same Kōjimachi district, including the *Hirakawa Tenmangū*. Moreover, in terms of organization, the book only briefly mentioned the Yasukuni Shrine among the descriptions of other shrines located in each districts of Tokyo. It instead described the main attractions of the Edo period, including the Hie Shrine and Kanda Shrine with minute details on the worshipped god and origin of these shrines.<sup>20</sup>

The above observation implies that the Yasukuni Shrine was only one of many shrines located in the Imperial Capital of Tokyo at the time of the publication in 1881. There was a less need to visit the shrine than other major attractions of the Edo period. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the *Tokyo annai* only introduced Tokyo as an extension of the Edo period. “Brief Overview of Tokyo” on the first page of the book, described Tokyo as the “heart of the Empire,” followed by an introduction of the Imperial Palace. In other words, Tokyo is depicted primarily as a city of the emperor. However, the overview only briefly mentioned Yasukuni, a commemorative space related to the emperor while describing in detail the Hie Shrine and Kanda Shrine, relatively traditional commemorative places of the Edo period. It was because the people did not recognize Yasukuni as a preferred or must-visit attraction of the Imperial Capital of Tokyo. Additionally, the information guide for the third National Industry Exhibition held in 1890, which for the first time exceeded one million visitors, also introduced the Imperial Palace first, then venues in Ueno Park, Asakusa Park, Shiba Park, Mukōjima, Shin’yoshiwara, and the Suzaki red-light district, in that order. The Yasukuni Shrine is only mentioned after these places as part of the Kōjimachi district. The description remains very brief: “It is located in Kudanzaka. Dedicated to the ancient and modern loyal countrymen, the shrine was established in June 1869. The park within the precinct of the shrine is filled with apricot and cherry blossoms. With fireworks, horse racing, and sumo, the shrine especially flourishes during the annual fall festivals”

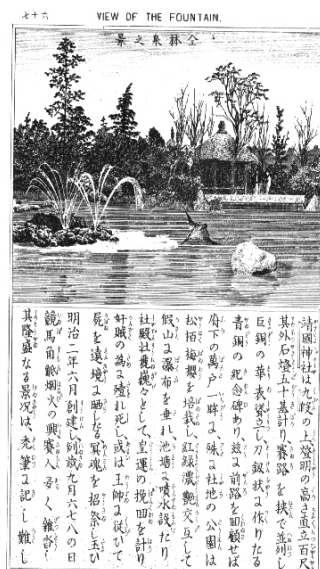
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20. The Hie Shrine’s *Sannō Matsuri* and *Kanda Matsuri* of Kanda Shrine were the two major *matsuri* of Edo period.



Source: Ueda (1889, 66).

Figure 9. View of Yasukuni Shrine



Source: Ueda (1889, 67).

Figure 10. View of the Fountain

(Nakajima 1890, 27-28).

In a guidebook for foreigners traveling Japan (Ueda 1889, 66-67), the Yasukuni Shrine is described with two pages of illustrations and explanations. One of the illustrations is the “View of Yasukuni Shrine” portraying the largest bronze gate in Japan and the main shrine (figure 9) while the other is the “View of the Fountain.” (figure 10). The explanation underneath the illustrations provides the location of the Yasukuni Shrine and the following description: “The park on the premises of the Yasukuni Shrine is filled with reds and blues with the pines, hibiscus, apricot, and cherry blossoms planted, the waterfall on the artificial hill, and the fountain installed in the pond. ... Established in June 1869, the hustle and bustle of the place with horse racing, sumo, fireworks, and others during the regular festival, September 6-9, cannot be fully described in words.” The description introduces the Yasukuni Shrine as an amusement park or public space, rather than an ordinary site for commemoration or official space of the state. It introduces the subsidiary entertainment components of the regular festivals rather than focus on describing the commemoration.<sup>21</sup> In

21. *Yūshūkan* War Memorial Museum is also mentioned here, although nothing other than the

addition, a Tokyo *Asahi* Newspaper article introduced the Yasukuni Shrine as one of the cherry blossom attractions in 1891, along with the Akasakamitsuke, Shiba Park, Tsukichi Honganji, Hibiya Daijingū, and Asakusa Park (Tokyo *Asahi shinbun*, April 3, 1891).<sup>22</sup>

Then when did the Yasukuni Shrine, originally portrayed as a place of entertainment and a park, at least by 1891, emerge as an official space of the emperor and state, a site for “glorification”?

### Yasukuni as Site for “Glorification”

After the promulgation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (Meiji Constitution) and the Imperial House Law on February 11, 1889, Emperor Meiji came out of the Imperial Palace to *Nijūbashi*, crossed the square in his carriage, and headed to the Aoyama military training ground. The 5,000 students waiting for the emperor’s parade along the road from *Nijūbashi* to the Aoyama training ground shouted “Long live the Emperor and Empress! (*banzai*)”<sup>23</sup> and sang the Song of National Foundation Day and the national anthem of Japan (*Kimigayo*). The significance of the Meiji Constitution’s promulgation lies both in the declaration of imperial sovereignty; Article 1 of the Meiji Constitution reads, “The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal” and that the event was “Japan’s first modern national ceremony” (Fujitani 2003, 147-52).

Another large-scale national ritual held after the proclamation ceremony was related to the Sino-Japanese War. This event also marked the beginning of a Japanese military parade celebrating Japan’s victories against foreign powers. This welcoming ceremony for Emperor Meiji on May 30, 1894 celebrated the Emperor’s return from the Imperial General Headquarters of Hiroshima after “blessing” and “presiding over the foundation of the militant nation” (*Fūzoku gahō* 96, July 25, 1895, 21-23).<sup>24</sup>

Other than the state-led “national rituals,” there were also diverse welcoming

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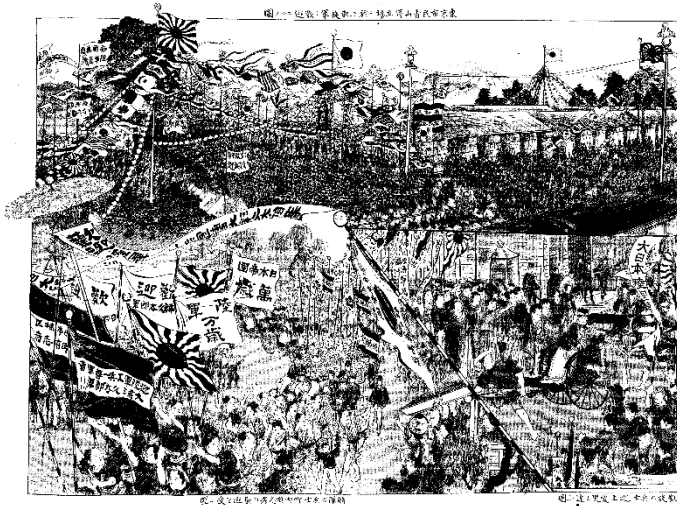
visiting hours and displays of Japan’s ancient weapons is described here (Ueda 1889, 68).

22. See the first page on Tokyo *Asahi* Newspaper on April, 3, 1891. Other Tokyo *Asahi* Newspaper article also mentioned Yasukuni as major attraction for apricot flowers in March and cherry blossoms in April (April 15, 1892, April 19, 1892, March 7, 1898).

23. The “three banzai” first began in front of *Nijūbashi* during the celebration for the proclamation of the Meiji Constitution.

24. The ceremonies were also held in Kyoto, Osaka, and Hiroshima, other than the “Imperial Capital of Tokyo.”





Source: *Fūzoku gahō* 96 (July 25, 1895, 16-17).

**Figure 11.** Civilians of Tokyo Welcoming the Returning Victorious Troops at the Aoyama Station

ceremonies led by civilians for victorious troops returning home from the Sino-Japanese War, including the Tokyo Mass Celebration of Victory (*Tokyo-shi Shukushō Taikai*).<sup>25</sup> Figure 11 lively portrays the civilians of Tokyo welcoming the returning victorious troops at the Aoyama station, the reunion of the returning soldiers with their children, and volunteers from neighbors welcoming the returning military men. It is a depiction of the citizens of Tokyo and the larger Japanese citizenry of the era taking the victories of the Sino-Japanese War as their own achievements and celebrating with the Japanese national flag and the Rising Sun flag waiving in the air during the state-level occasion for celebration. Put differently, it is a clear depiction of Japanese nationalism, wherein the people recognized the Chinese and Koreans as inferior to the Japanese themselves—nationalism premised on the uniformity of the Japanese state.

However, for the Yasukuni Shrine, the Sino-Japanese War was the true beginning of the collective enshrinements, as the Sino-Japanese War honored

25. On December 9, 1894, the influential businessmen of Tokyo hosted the ceremony to celebrate Japan's victory in Lushun (November 21, 1894). The participants gathered for celebration at the Hibiya Park, reconvened in front of *Nijūbashi* and marched together to the Ueno Park. For details, refer to Kinoshita (2013).



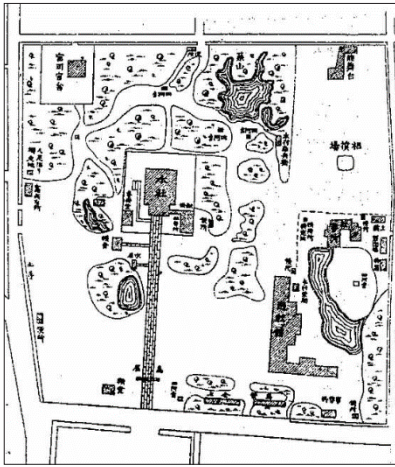
every war dead as the Emperor's military, unlike the Boshin War, which excluded the shogunate military from commemoration. Moreover, the Sino-Japanese War was the first large-scale war after Japan launched the conscription system, and therefore, unlike the Boshin or Seinan War, most of the people died in the war were commoners, rather than samurais. The number of war dead also rose to 13,619, which was almost equivalent to the combined death tolls of the Boshin and Seinan Wars (table 3). Participation by bereaved families and the general public increased so rapidly that the railways offered a twenty-percent discount during the two-day collective enshrinement ceremony, beginning on December 17, 1895 (*Tokyo Asahi shinbun*, December 15, 1895, 6). Thus, the Sino-Japanese War was the turning point in which the Yasukuni Shrine was consolidated as a site for not only commemorating the Imperial Army, but also constructing the "national norm" of honoring the war dead in the hearts and minds of visitors to the shrine, including the bereaved families ("Yasukuni Jinja no rinji taisai," 1895, 2).

With the Sino-Japanese War, the Yasukuni Shrine also began its spatial renovation in order to befit the shrine's elevated status in Japanese society. This is exemplified by the main hall, as it was constructed after suspending horse racing in 1899 and using the race tracks as a workspace for the construction

**Table 3.** Number of People Enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine by War

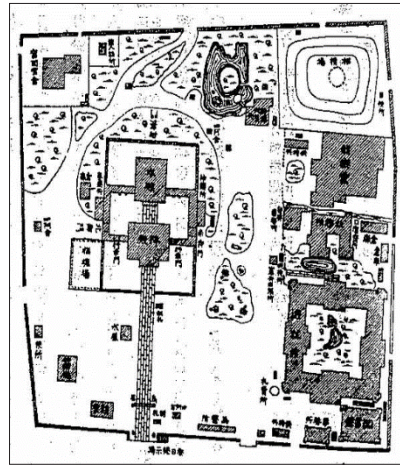
Name of War	Number Enshrined (Oct. 2004)	Percentage
Meiji Restoration	7,751	0.31
Seinan War	6,971	0.28
First Sino-Japanese War	13,619	0.55
Taiwan and Korea Invasion	1,130	0.05
Boxer Rebellion	1,256	0.05
Russo-Japanese War	88,429	3.59
World War I	4,850	0.20
Jinan Incident	185	0.01
Manchurian Incident	17,176	0.70
Second Sino-Japanese War	191,250	7.75
Asia Pacific War	2,133,915	86.52
Total	2,466,532	100.00

Source: Nihon no Sensō Sekinin Shiryō Sentā (2011, 7).



Source: Kamo (1911, 71-72).

Figure 12. 1895 Map of the Shrine



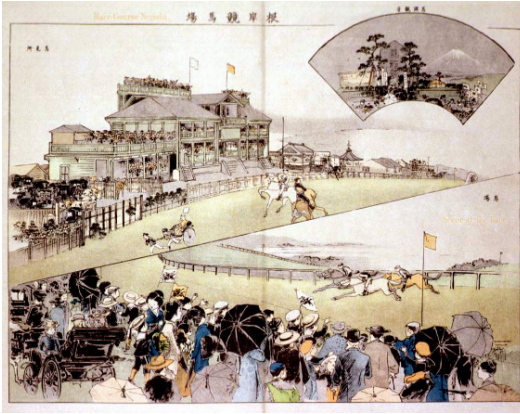
Source: Kamo (1911, 71-72)

Figure 13. 1910 Map of the Shrine

instead.

On March 21, 1898, Kamo Mizuho, the second head priest of the Yasukuni Shrine, proposed the construction of the main hall to “make the shrine grand and divine.” He justified this on the grounds that the existing spaces at the shrine (1) were too small to hold regular festivals and religious ceremonies twice a year; (2) were inconvenient when it rained; (3) were frequently visited by the Emperor and Empress; (4) were receiving increasing numbers of visitors from other regions after the enshrinement of the Sino-Japanese War dead (Yasukuni Jinja 1983). In short, the proposal for the construction of the main hall sought to make the shrine more “grand and divine” and address the rapidly increasing number of visitors from distant regions in Japan after the Sino-Japanese War.

The construction of the main hall was completed on August 20, 1901 (“Yasukuni Jinja Haiden,” 1901, 458). Comparing the spaces before and after the construction, the newly built main hall hid the main shrine from ordinary visitors (figures 12 and 13). The bereaved families of the war dead are, of course, allowed to visit the main shrine. However, other visitors must pay their respects in front of the main hall, while imagining the main shrine hidden from sight. This architecture offered special treatment to the bereaved families. Also, the pond located between the bronze gate and main shrine also disappeared with the construction of the main hall. It amplified the significance of the main shrine as the visitors were made to walk in a straight line from the bronze gate through the main hall to the main shrine without any distractions in between.



Source: *Fūzoku gahō*, 257 (1902, 24-25).

Figure 14. The Negishi Racetrack

As illustrated above, the construction of the main hall transformed the Yasukuni Shrine to connote the national hierarchy of (1) the emperor (2) military dedicated their lives for emperor (3) bereaved families (4) ordinary visitors, which provided important momentum for the symbolic transformation of the Yasukuni Shrine towards glorification. This transformation probably explains the reason the racetracks were not restored, and horse racing was no longer held on September 18, which was shortly after the completion of main hall.

However, this does not mean that the popular horse races, representing the new government's civilization and enlightenment policy, were not held elsewhere in Japan. As a 1902 issue of *Fūzoku gahō* mentioned the Negishi Racetrack as one of the major attractions of Yokoyama (figure 14), horse racing had become popular entertainment for the people, unlike the previous state-led races held as part of their civilization and enlightenment policy (Sugimoto 2004).<sup>26</sup> As the nature of horse racing transformed, the Yasukuni Shrine could no longer host such entertainment, for the shrine itself had also spatially transformed after the Sino-Japanese War to glorify the souls of the people who died in service of the emperor.

The function of glorification at the Yasukuni Shrine intensified further after the Russo-Japanese War. Street stalls were banned to "maintain the sacred scenery" of the shrine ("Yasukuni Jinja keidai," 1906, 7); a military police station and guards were set at the precinct (Yasukuni Jinja 1983, 172)<sup>27</sup>; and night access to the shrine was prohibited ("Yasukuni Jinja no yakan," 1908, 6). The newspaper

26. Betting on horses was first permitted in 1905.

27. June 20, 1907.

article on the banning of night entry to the shrine stated that “[Tokyo] citizens lost one of their amusement attractions.” This was an exemplary depiction of the shrine’s transformation. Such reinforcement of the glorification function of the shrine came with changes in the regular festival dates.

The existing regular festivals for commemoration at the Yasukuni Shrine was changed to December 3, 1912, the day when the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy returned victoriously from the Russo-Japanese War. Unlike the times of the Boshin War, the emperor was the sovereign power of Imperial Japan as defined under the Meiji Constitution. Therefore, while the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War was primarily the victory of the emperor, it was also the victory of all subjects of the emperor at large. The changing of the regular festivals to dates associated with the Russo-Japanese War should thus be understood as the transformation of the Yasukuni Shrine, which not only commemorated the official achievements of the emperor but also the public of Imperial Japan. The “publicness” of modern Japan emerged upon the Emperor’s monopolization of achievements in the wars, and the Yasukuni Shrine’s commemoration of glorification.<sup>28</sup> In this regard, setting the dates of annual spring and fall festivals according to the solar calendar after the defeat, regardless of recent wars, can be seen as an effort to separate commemoration of the Yasukuni Shrine from the emperor and instead construct Japan as a nation-state upon the tradition of worshipping their ancestry.

## Conclusion: 150 Year Anniversary Project of Yasukuni Shrine

Since June 2016, the official webpage of Yasukuni Shrine has been introducing the 150 Year Anniversary Project of the Yasukuni Shrine in 2019 (Yasukuni shrine website). According to the site, the ceremonial project for the anniversary includes: (1) constructions related to the main shrine, main hall, and sanctuary of enshrined spirits (*reijibo hōanden*); (2) Yasukuni Hall interior renovation and rest area installation; and (3) outer garden reorganization. While the first two focus on renovating the existing buildings of the shrine, the third extensively reorganizes the space of the Yasukuni Shrine. Called the “Invitation Project,” the main purpose of the construction is to make the outer garden of the shrine “invite visitors to the main shrine, and experience the heart of commemoration conveyed in the space.” The shrine is planning to reorganize and realign the

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28. Therefore, the construction plans for an outside garden during the Taishō era was an effort to convey the state’s glorification in Yasukuni Shrine’s space, in contrast to Fujita’s explanation.



Source: The official website of Yasukuni Shrine (<http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/150th/project03.html>. Accessed August 10, 2017).

**Figure 15.** Artist's Impression the Outer Garden of the Yasukuni Shrine of the Invitation Project

trees and install a walking trail for visitors in order to transform the space for both commemoration and rest. This description is shown in the artist's impression of the outer garden (figure 15) which depicts the trail as an urban park from the first bronze gate—observable from the exit of Kudanshita subway station—passing by the Ōmura statue, then to the second bronze gate leading to the inner garden of the shrine.

Many may be unfamiliar with above explanation and artist's impression of the Yasukuni Shrine, which is often symbolized as a space for Japan's right wing. However, does it not rather mean that the present state of the shrine's outer garden neither encourages visitors nor conveys the atmosphere of commemoration in Japan? Would not this be the reason that the Yasukuni Shrine is focusing on the spatial transformation of the outer garden to "encourage people to the main shrine and make the visitors experience the atmosphere of commemoration" for the 150th anniversary project? In other words, is this not the efforts of the Yasukuni Shrine, denied as an official site for commemoration after the defeat in the Asia-Pacific War, to renovate the outer garden as a public rest area of the city? Is it an effort to spatially transform the outer garden into a public space that existed before the emperor's official representation of the site in the past? Does it thereby invite Japanese visitors (including citizens of Tokyo) and lead them to pay respect and commemorate at the main shrine? Would this

not be the reason behind the naming of the effort the Invitation Project?

As aforementioned, like other shrines in Japan, the Yasukuni Shrine is currently banning the installation of food carts and drinking on the premises in an effort to restore the distinctive commemorative function of the Yasukuni Shrine. For the Invitation Project to succeed under the circumstances, an “external war” may be a precondition, as the modern history of Japan suggests. Prime Minister Abe announced his intention to “revise the constitution and constitutionalize the SDFs by 2020” (Kim Chin-u 2017). In this regard, we could say that the success of Yasukuni’s upcoming 150-year anniversary Invitation Project depends on Prime Minister Abe’s successful revision of the constitution.

• Translated by JO Bee Yun

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