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Introduction: *shigaku* as discipline

Histories of the historical discipline in Japan regularly refer back to a pair of inaugural moments. One is the imperial edict of 1869 that named history a national priority and established an office for the compilation of national history.¹ The other is the arrival in 1887 of one Ludwig Riess to take up a position in the department of history at the newly established Tokyo Imperial University. The first moment, throwing the state behind the production of history, seemed to fulfill Hegel's dictum that the state was the proper subject and object of history, while the second is seen as marking the beginning of the fully academic study of history (*shigaku*) in Japan. The embarrassing denouement of the first opening—the project was aborted when instead of producing a modern history of the nation, the compilers opted for a national history in Chinese on the archaic model of the Six National Histories (*Rikkokushi*)—sets the stage for the second, successful instantiation of *shigaku*. Though a remarkably undistinguished historian, Riess brought with him a connection to the godfather of modern academic history, Leopold von Ranke. Various described as secretary, acolyte, or member of Ranke's seminar (in fact, Riess was too young to have been any of these things in any serious way; he could only have encountered a very elderly and long-retired Ranke), he provides a link in a genealogy

1. Edict quoted in Ōkubo Toshiaki, *Nihon kindai shigaku no seiritsu*, in *Ōkubo Toshiaki Rekishi Chosakushū*, vol. 7, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988, 42.

tying the modern study of history in Japan to its fabled foundations in Ranke's seminar.² In this way, Ranke's determinedly objective, archival, document-and-seminar-based practice of history became enshrined at the Imperial University (as at much the same time it was being established in the United States and elsewhere). This framework for the study of history was completed in 1889, two years after Reiss's arrival, with the formation of a Historical Association, the Shigakkai, and the founding of its journal, *Shigakkai zasshi*, later *Shigaku zasshi*, still a leading historical journal in Japan.

This is, of course, the story of one particular version of *shigaku*, a story that identifies history with its modern disciplinary infrastructure and methods and that slights other configurations of history or possible meanings of the term. In this telling, *shigaku* means historical science in the German sense; indeed, *rekishigaku* entered Japanese as a translation of the German *Geschichtswissenschaft*.³ But this account excludes from its purview earlier, broader understandings of the term such as, for example, the sense that crops up in dictionaries in which *shigaku* connotes simply knowledge/study of history without any suggestion as to how that study should proceed or where the study properly takes place.⁴ This account obscures as well the fluidity of boundaries in a pre-disciplinary age, the ways in which what we've come to identify as history and literature mingled, for instance, in the historical fiction of Takizawa Bakin or Santō Kyōden. And what are we to make, on this account, of the following curious history? In 1879 (Meiji 12), history, *shigaku*, was dropped as a course of instruction at Tokyo University. For the next eight years—until September, 1887, when Tokyo University was reorganized into the Imperial University—Japan's premier university had no history department and no

2 For details about Reiss's life and his position at the Imperial University, see Margaret Mehl, *History and the State in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, 92-102.

3. See, for example, Sebastian Conrad, "What Time is Japan? Problems of Comparative (Intercultural) Historiography," *History and Theory* 38 (1999), 68.

4. E.g. in *Kokugo daijiten* entry for *shigaku*, the citations from 1783 and 1826.

course in *shigaku*. As Katō Hiroyuki, president of the university, explained it, this was because in Japan, “history requires something different from the history taught in the schools of Europe and the United States. It cannot consider only the history of the West, but must treat the histories of Japan, China, India and the several countries of the Orient.”⁵ The daunting range of expertise required to teach such a course meant that no qualified instructors could be found, while the equally intimidating range of competencies required to pass the course meant that students were hard to come by. During this period, history was taught, not in a department of history, but in the faculties of Chinese and Japanese literature, where it was a fixture of the curriculum. Even after the reconstitution of the University’s history department, Chinese and Japanese history remained the property of the literature faculties. Only in 1890, in fact, did the Imperial University offer Japanese history within a department of history. These developments suggest that the disciplinary lines separating history from other pursuits that engaged the past formed only belatedly, and they hint at ongoing indecision about how exactly to accommodate Asian histories within the new disciplinary framework.

The on-again, off-again history of *shigaku* thus serves as a reminder that the formation of the discipline of history in Japan was not a straightforward march of progress. The historical science practiced by academic historians struggled to establish itself within a crowded discursive field. The late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji world was awash with representations of history: not only European histories (and Japanese works cribbed from or patterned after them), but also state-sanctioned “official” histories written according to Chinese models, and a variety of “unofficial” histories (unofficial because they were produced outside the auspices of the state). Historical fiction, in a remarkable variety of styles, from the wholly fabulous to skillful combinations of fact and fancy, also

5. *Tokyo daigaku hyakunenshi*, tsūshi:1, 451, 456.

abounded. The success of the historical discipline should not lead us to suppose that its practices were accepted without contest. Nor should it blind us to the fact that other ways of relating to the past continued to exist.

Ōgai's *shigaku*

I'd like to pursue some of these issues regarding the practice of *shigaku* by considering one author's engagement with the limits of historical practice as defined by the new *shigaku*. In a curious essay, "Rekishi sono mama to rekishi banare" (History as It Is and History Abandoned), published in January 1915, one month after his short story "Sanshō Dayū," Mori Ōgai muses about the status of his historical fiction.

There has been considerable discussion as to whether or not my recent works, which deal with actual historical figures, are really fiction. ... Certainly, the kind of work I'm now writing doesn't resemble any one else's fiction. As a rule, fiction involves freely picking and choosing among facts and pulling everything together into a coherent whole. My recent works have none of these features. ... [Although I used to write in this way] I completely reject such methods nowadays.

"Why? My motives are simple," he goes on to declare. To write in a "fictional" manner would violate the integrity of historical sources. As he composed his historical tales, he came increasingly to value the "reality" (*shizen*) he discovered in old records and "wantonly changing that reality seemed distasteful."⁶

The bulk of Ōgai's essay is therefore taken up with the question of how much fictional distortion is permissible in dealing with history. Ōgai offers what he terms a "frank, behind-the-scenes look" at how he rendered history into fiction in "Sanshō Dayū." As one might expect, given Ōgai's professed aversion to "fiction" (at least as practiced by others), his concerns focus on the liberties he felt compelled to take with the

⁶ *Ōgai zenshū*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1951-56, 23:505-506.

original tale. He notes how he changed the ages of the main characters, dropped a couple of minor characters, and fiddled with dates—all in order to make the story cohere. He also admits to “antiquing” the language of the story so as to achieve a period effect. He used archaic terms for clothing and furnishings and introduced old-fashioned phrasings into the speech of certain characters.

Ōgai defends these alterations of the original material by claiming that they make the story more plausible. Nonetheless, that Ōgai felt he needed to comment at all on what were, after all, trivial alterations of the original—of an original, moreover, that was itself a folktale, not a factual account—indicates that something rankled. Despite his defense of the ways he “fictionalized” the story, he clearly seems to prefer taking history as it is. In the long-running debate over the relative value of history and fiction, Ōgai evidently sides with those who place history on the side of reality and who associate fiction with a “wanton” and arbitrary tinkering with reality. Ōgai thus poses his own *historical fiction* on the same uncertain terrain it has occupied ever since Walter Scott’s day. In setting fiction against history, falsity against fact, he implicitly raises the questions that, as Ina Ferris notes in her discussion of Scott’s *Waverley* novels, have been asked of historical fiction these last 200 years: “what will count as history? what are the limits and rules of historical discourse? ... what is it to which history must be true?”⁷

I noted above that “History as It Is and History Abandoned” is a curious essay. This is so for several reasons. The foremost oddity may well be Ōgai’s decision to cast “*Sanshō Dayū*” as the vehicle he uses for thinking about history and fiction. For this story is not a rewriting of actual events—as was the case with his other works of historical fiction—but a retelling of a story from the past. Ōgai’s “*Sanshō Dayū*” is distilled from

⁷ Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, 137.

seventeenth and eighteenth-century redactions of a family of legends and tales that date back to the sixteenth century or earlier. The “historical reality” that Ōgai seems so anxious to respect just isn’t to be found. The work is fiction, based on other fictions, and therefore doubly removed from any sort of “reality.”

Second, despite defense of his “fictionalization” of the story, Ōgai is not really interested in upholding fiction as an alternative to history. Unlike Scott or Bakin, he doesn’t stand up for historical fiction as a more accessible or more complete kind of history; he doesn’t make the argument that he’s offering a kind of history—the history of social life and customs, for instance—that official history, oriented toward high politics, is ill equipped to deal with. At the same time, interestingly, he isn’t really an advocate for history either. As he researched and wrote his historical tales, he found himself, he says, increasingly and “unknowingly” “bound by history.” It’s with the idea of escaping those bonds that he wrote “*Sanshō Dayū*.” When he admits at the end of the essay, in what he terms a “true confession,” to being disappointed with the results he achieved in the story, we might, I think, do well to wonder what exactly it was he hoped to accomplish. Fiction doesn’t seem to be an antidote to the feeling of being “bound” or “choked” by history. On the other hand, respecting historical reality and refusing to change the historical record—these don’t seem very satisfying ways of proceeding either.

Ōgai, it would seem, has a different set of problems in mind. It is not the fiction/reality binary that really exercises him, as a closer inspection of “*Sanshō Dayū*” will reveal. The first thing to note is that Ōgai is not at all forthcoming in “*History as It Is*” about the ways he has reworked the story. The changes he admits to are the least consequential of the alterations that he has made to the original tale. He emphasizes, as I noted earlier, his fiddling with the facts, (a transgression that is essentially meaningless

with respect to “Sanshō Dayū,” which was always fiction), but says nothing at all about the more profound ways he has altered his source materials. As Carole Cavanaugh notes, Ōgai reworks the Sanshō Dayū legends into “the unrealistic structure of a fairy tale.”⁸ (This includes manufacturing a happy ending for the story, “powerful talismans, separation from parents, parallel but gender-specific experiences, the repetition of the number three, coping with strange surroundings and unfamiliar tasks, the attainment of practical knowledge through the assistance of older strangers.”) The “original” legends came out of the *sekkyō bushi* tradition, and scholars have identified dozens of didactic and religious tales as possible sources for “Sanshō Dayū.” Ōgai’s immediate source, a seventeenth-century compilation of Buddhist parables and sermons, orders and edits these loosely connected legends into something approaching a coherent story, but it still retains some crucial *sekkyō bushi* features, including the narrator (i.e., the voice of the one delivering the sermon). In addition to telling the story, this narrator offers a running commentary on the story as it unfolds, mentions alternative plot lines, and in other ways makes his presence known. Perhaps the greatest change Ōgai made to the story was to recompose it to fit to the conventions of modern, realist narrative (that is, the conventions of modern historical writing, as well).

This suggests that Ōgai’s problems with “Sanshō Dayū” have less to do with what he identifies as the issue in “History as It Is”—that is, altering the sources—as with another feature of fiction. Ōgai defined fiction as a practice that involves “freely picking and choosing among facts and pulling everything together into a coherent whole.” It is this trick of tying everything together into a neat conclusion, in short narration, that truly vexes him.

⁸ Carole Cavanaugh, “‘Sanshō Dayū’ and the Overthrow of History,” in *Sanshō Dayū*, ed. Carole Cavanaugh and Andrew Dudley, London: British Film Institute, 2000, 14.

Ōgai and the limits of history

Of course, this trick, which Ōgai explicitly identifies with fiction, applies (as he surely knew) just as easily to history. Though he doesn't articulate it in "History as It Is," his sense of escaping from or overthrowing history develops along a different axis from the typical history vs. fiction debate. Even as he was writing historical fiction like "Sanshō Dayū," he was beginning to write the historical biographies that would crown his career. These are stupendous, flabby, massive things, compounded of undigested source material and digression upon digression. Their most obvious characteristic is that they consciously resist narration, story-telling.

In the introduction to *Izawa Ranken*, Ōgai lays out his method.

Since I am only a novice historian, I intend to take certain liberties with my use of source materials. It will not much matter if I happen to lose my way. And if it turns out that I end up hopelessly lost, then I will simply lay down my pen. A random, hit-or-miss plan, to be sure, something that I should like to term a "posture of posturelessness" [*mutaido no taido*]. Navigating one's course by such a planless plan may well appear perilous and foolhardy to the casual observer. But the novice historian is also an incurable optimist. I picture him lost in aimless meandering, when suddenly the path opens out onto an unanticipated vista, broad and stunning.⁹

Pursuing this "planless plan," Ōgai offers readers reams of undigested source materials and tidbits of poetry, biographical data, indeed any information that came to hand, as he wanders through the web of relationships—intellectual, familial, etc.—in which his subjects are enmeshed.

Ōgai describes his goals for these historical biographies in language that opposes fact to fiction: thus, midway through *Izawa Ranken*, he avows the following.

⁹ *Ōgai zenshū*, vol.7 (*Shiden 2*), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1936.

In my writing I have devoted myself entirely to transmitting facts and have studiously avoided crossing over into imaginative narration. I have sought a secure foundation in what is objective; indulging in the subjective has not interested me. Those instances where I appear to have violated this rule are mere touches of imagination that supplement deficiencies in the factual record. If I were suddenly to cross over into critical or evaluative commentary ... I would inevitably overindulge myself in subjectivity. There would be no way to prevent my imagination from running off at full gallop. This sort of thing I absolutely reject ...

Ōgai's real desire, it would seem, is to avoid any suggestion that there is someone "behind" the material, an author, historian, deity, or a providence organizing it and directing it. In these respects, Ōgai's practice of history bears an uncanny resemblance to the *shigaku* instituted at the Imperial University. In works such as *Izawa Ranken* and *Shibue Chūsai*, Ōgai, like university-trained historians, professes a deep devotion to "historical reality." He is also, like them, thoroughly objective and materialist: he is interested in sources, not interpretations, in the factual record, not ideas. What makes Ōgai's historical practice truly uncanny, however, is that his devotion to historical reality pushes him in directions never imagined or sanctioned by the professional practice of history. Enraptured by his archives, which he pretends to have stumbled across, Ōgai expresses an attitude that has been a commonplace for historians ever since Michelet descended into the "catacombs of manuscripts" so that "these papers and parchments, so long deserted ... [might] be restored to the light of day."¹⁰ In Michelet's case, the act of restoring those papers and parchments translated into a supreme duty.

Every one who dies leaves behind a little something, his memory, and demands that we care for it. For those who have no friends, the magistrate must provide that care This magistracy, is History. And the dead are, to use the language of Roman law, those *miserabiles personae* with whom

¹⁰ Quoted in Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002, 27.

the magistrate must preoccupy himself. Never in my career, have I lost sight of that duty of the historian.¹¹

But unlike Michelet and historians after him, Ōgai seems to feel no duty toward the past, except to follow its vicissitudes. History in Ōgai's hands is purposeless by design. His accumulations of fact are not intended to be marshaled into briefs in support of this or that cause (or interpretation). He reflects on his project in an essay titled "Kanchōrō Kanwa": "As I have said many times, it does not interest me to debate whether or not these works serve any useful purpose. I write them because I want to, and that is all." Determined not to pull his facts into some semblance of order, Ōgai seems to revel in their randomness and their distinctiveness, their ability to resist ordering. He resists as well the temptation to "unmask" his materials, to reveal them as stand-ins for something else. It would be relatively easy to convert Ranken and Chūsai into emblematic figures for broader phenomena. As intellectuals living through the tumults of the Bakumatsu period, when the orthodoxies of Tokugawa rule came increasingly under question, their lives and struggles might be read as symptomatic of the twilight of the shogunate; alternatively, since he stresses the ordinary and everyday, Ōgai, were he to operate as a historian, might find in the ordinariness of their lives a lesson about the ways political turmoil translates (or fails to translate) into the realm of everyday life. Ōgai, however, declines to look past his characters to the "real" political or economic context. He resists the historical imperative to turn them into exempla; he refuses to make their lives meaningful in the ordinary way.

Ōgai's historical works represent the limit of one possible trajectory for the historical endeavor enshrined in departments of history at places such as the Imperial University. But he takes the imperative of this history to represent the past "as it really

¹¹ Jules Michelet, "*Jusqu'an 18 Brumaire.*" Quoted in *Ibid.*, 39.

was” too literally. His passion for the materials of history is such that he forgets the historian’s role as magistrate, one who judges and sorts out what is pertinent and what is irrelevant to the case at hand. Ōgai seems very much the antiquarian, and it is the tradition that antiquarian knowledge be ridiculed by historians: it is excessive, deranged, and gullible, fundamentally liable to mistake unimportant items for things of true significance (and vice versa).

But there is, I’d like to suggest, a method to the antiquarian’s madness. The insistence that there is something valuable to the thing in itself—not in the narratives in which it is made to play a part or in the arguments for which it serves as data—that comprises a double rebuke to our conventional practice of history. On the one hand, it accords materials that are not readily included in historical narratives a place and a value. Much of daily life and material culture—or in Ōgai’s case, the everyday lives of insignificant scholars such as Chūsai and Ranken—falls within the category of things easily overlooked by history, either because they don’t seem to change or because they can’t be connected with bona fide events (such as the French Revolution or the Meiji Restoration). Second, antiquarian practice calls attention to the very material out of which history builds its narratives in ways that confound that fundamental propensity of the historical discipline. To historians, who insist that the past can be explained, that we can adduce beginnings and endings, that the material of the past is significant because it can be shown to lead somewhere, antiquarians like Ōgai seem to respond, “No, there’s just stuff, fascinating stuff that’s of no practical value.” Ōgai’s *shiden* indict, indirectly to be sure, the most fictional aspect of historical practice: the belief that history coheres, that it isn’t just one damn thing after another. Walter Bagehot objected to Macauley’s *History of England*, “It is too omniscient. Everything is too plain.” One can imagine Ōgai

concurring. (“We want historians to confirm our belief that the present rests upon profound intentions and immutable necessities. But the true historical sense confirms our existence among countless lost events,” Foucault says in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.”)

History and antiquarianism: yet another *shigaku*

The long collaboration between anthropology and history mimics, at least from a historian’s perspective, the division of labor between historians and antiquarians (without, I hope, quite as much of the condescension). The study of material culture and everyday life, of structures and other things that stubbornly resist change (and therefore the narration of change) has by and large been left to anthropologists. At the same time we historians have been plagued by the suspicion that anthropologists are onto something important, that we might be missing something by not paying attention to the realms they investigate. Hence, I suspect, the vast and long-lasting interest in Clifford Geertz and “thick description.” (Far more important, I’d guess, in history than in anthropology; even the much heralded return to narrative of the past decade is emphatically post-thick description. Simon Schama’s narratives are rife with the kind of telling moments Geertz made famous. In Japan, Amino Yoshihiko’s widely influential style was born out of a similarly long encounter with anthropology.¹²) Here was a method that bridged anthropology and history, allowing one to attribute significance to the seemingly random eddies of daily life (for, of course, thick description showed them to be far from random or insignificant). By such means, cat massacres could be connected to the French Revolution or *eejanaika* carousing to the end of the Tokugawa order.

¹² See Nakazawa Shin’ichi’s memoir: “Boku no ojisan: Amino Yoshihiko no omoide,” *Subaru* 26, nos. 5-7 (2004): 92-117, 304-318, 182-212.

One wonders whether historians will ever be similarly moved to pay attention to the products of antiquarians' knowledge. A love of old things is supposedly fundamental to historical study, yet our desire to find greater meanings in objects and events can easily lead to our forgetting the fact that they do not arrive ready-made with significance. It takes something of an antiquarian sensibility to put objects (events, social movements, etc.) into their true context, in which their meanings were not certain, in which they could play a part (or none at all) in a plurality of possible futures. History as a discipline is altogether too interested in explaining why things had to turn out the way they did; it takes something of the antiquarian to remind us that things might have been otherwise.

We might also remind ourselves that the indiscriminate, credulous, ardent collecting of the past that epitomizes the antiquary is critical to a way of representing past times that fulfills the modern discipline's dream of recovering the reality of the past. The wealth of details lovingly amassed in an antiquary's miscellany or pursued with such intensity in Ōgai's *shiden* is the precondition for making the past seem fully present. There is good reason that the masters of historical fiction in Japan, from Akinari to Kyōden to Bakin, were also enthusiastic collectors; all wrote antiquarian tracts in addition to their more famous stories and novels. Their interest in hairstyles, in food and clothing, in etymologies and antique language (to name just a few of their diverse concerns) translated into the ability to present readers with a fully realized historical realm. Tsubouchi Shōyō, the pioneering critic, translator and founder of the academic study of literature in Japan, in 1886 identified "elaborate description" as the "forté of the novel."¹³ The ability to record the "small facts" and "trifling matters" that "make a deep impression on people" is the reason, he writes, people prefer historical fiction over

¹³ Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Essence of the Novel*, Trans. Nanette Twine. *Occasional Papers 11*. Department of Japanese, University of Queensland, 1981, 21-22.

official histories.¹⁴ The history encompassed by the antiquary's archive is not that of the modern disciplinarian; its goal is not so much to explicate or to lay out causes and consequences as it is to describe and present. Richard Maxwell urges us to think of the antiquary's collection as "a period room in a museum, where the feel of a specific era is evoked by assembling furniture from several different decades."¹⁵ The antiquarian enterprise opened a different route to the past than that available in standard histories. It supplied authors with the wherewithal to capture the feel of a period and to imbue it with excitement and drama. And, again, cultivating something of an antiquarian sensibility may assist the modern discipline in its attempts to captivate and inspire, and not merely explain.

That, for the most part, Ōgai chose to focus his antiquarian explorations on figures and incidents from the late Tokugawa period also seems suggestive. History as it came to be practiced in the modern Japanese academy marked in many ways a retreat from the remarkable range of writings that declared themselves "history" in that period. As *shigaku* gained ascendancy, works that claimed or were understood to relate historical content—from war chronicles such as the *Taiheiki*, to popular histories like Rai San'yō's *Nihon gaishi*, to antiquarian tracts, to Takizawa Bakin's historical fictions—were declared spurious and came to be excluded from the realm of the properly historical.¹⁶ Throughout the broader world of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Japan we can detect a new interest in the past and a new understanding of its relationship to the present. For example, Tō Teikan, a poet and scholar of classical Japanese literature, prefaces his *Daily Record of the Love of Old Things* (*Kōko nichiroku*, 1796) with the

¹⁴ Ibid., 90.

¹⁵ Richard Maxwell, "Inundations of Time: A Definition of Scott's Originality," *ELH* 68, no. 2 (2001), 421.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Shigeno Yasutsugu, "Sejō rufu no shiden ooku jijitsu o ayamaru no setsu," *Tōkyō gakushi kaiin zasshi* 6.5 (1884): 2.

declaration that “A love of the past—this is a trait all men share.”¹⁷ I think we all realize—as Teikan himself must have, why else make the statement?—that a love of the past is not necessarily an innate human characteristic. In fact, Teikan was giving voice to something relatively new in Japan. The period in which he lived, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, saw history become a part of mass culture, and along with this emerged what Carolyn Steedman has referred to as “the self-conscious embrace of history”—the development, in other words, of the sense that history is an integral part of everyday life in the present.¹⁸ During this period, as Omote Tomoyuki notes, historically oriented approaches began to take hold in a stunning range of endeavors, from the study of language to sword-collecting and architecture.¹⁹ Teikan’s own intellectual range is typical. In addition to a number of studies of classical literature, Teikan also published at least two volumes devoted to the exploration of old things. These books are random collections of notes about old seals, documents, books, textiles, tea implements, ink stones, even field boundary markers. He shows a particular fondness for what we have come to call archaeology: the text just cited is filled with rubbings from old tombs, copies of the inscriptions on stone monuments, descriptions of grave goods, and drawings of the terracotta figurines that guard imperial burial mounds. Teikan’s own studies thus embrace archaeology, diplomatics, geography (he is always concerned with identifying historical place names), the study of antiquities in general. Teikan was not unique in his display of antiquarian zeal. In the salons of Edo and Kyoto, literati shared their investigations into such things as the “campaigns of Tametomo, conqueror of the Western marches,” “a piece

¹⁷ Tō Teikan, *Kōko nichiroku, Nihon zuihitsu taisei*, vol. 22, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994.

¹⁸ Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocation: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930*, London: Virago, 1995, 77.

¹⁹ Omote Tomoyuki, “Rekishi no uridashi, rekishi no jūnikuka: ‘kashōka’ no jūkyū seiki,” *Shisōshi no 19-seiki: kindai e no shiza*, Tokyo: Perikansha, 1997, 90.

of petrified wood found near the Natori River in Mutsu,” or a “statue of Tachimarō carved by Unkei [a medieval sculptor].”²⁰

In a variety of areas, in a variety of guises, one finds in late Tokugawa Japan a new, seemingly insatiable interest in the past. The institution of *shigaku* would label most of the work issuing from this fervor unhistorical. Bakin’s combinations of history and fiction would unequivocally be seen as works of literature, so, too, would texts like San’yō’s *Gaishi*. Antiquarianism was acknowledged as useful, but it was also asserted that true historical study only emerged in Japan when *shigaku* reorganized an indigenous field overly attracted to “fragments and minutiae,” as Shigeno Yasutsugu, founding president of the Historical Association in Japan and one of the first professors of history at Tokyo Imperial University, put it in 1890.²¹ And yet, as Shigeno himself admitted, this concern with “minutiae” was also an important and necessary feature of the new historical profession. In Japan, as Shigeno saw it, antiquarian scholarship contributed to the development of the historical discipline by encouraging an “inductive” approach, an approach marked by its attention to detail and to careful scrutiny of texts in order to establish the facts. But its value stopped there. In failing to order the facts into meaningful narratives, antiquarians fell short of being true historians. Ōkubo Toshiaki, perhaps the leading authority on the development of the modern historical discipline in Japan, characterizes antiquarians in much the same way. They helped to create, he declares, rigorous standards for the weighing of evidence, and he singles out for praise certain philological studies that settled questions of authorship or exposed widely regarded sources as fabrications. But, by and large, he portrays antiquarians, particularly

²⁰ These examples can be found in *Tanki manroku, Nihon zuihitsu taisei, dai-ikki, bekkā*, 2 vols., Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1993.

²¹ Shigeno Yasutsugu, “Gakumon wa tsui ni kōshō ni kisu,” in *Shigeno hakushi shigaku ronbunshū*, ed. Ōkubo Toshiaki, Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1938-1939, 1:35-47. See also Ōkubo Toshiaki’s standard account of the rise of the modern historical discipline, *Nihon kindai shigaku no seiritsu*.

those who were authors of miscellanies, as enthusiastic amateurs. In writing his miscellanies, Bakin, he states dismissively, was taking part in a “hobby popular among urban intellectuals.”²²

Yet I cannot help but feel that something was lost as history was disciplined according to the mandates of historical science. The discipline not only drove a wedge between itself and the enthusiasms of amateurs and the general public, it also misrecognized the character of its connections with the other forms in which history was practiced. Crafting for itself a progressive narrative which placed its methods at the evolutionary summit, *shigaku* lost sight of the fact that it existed alongside, indeed depended on, these other ways of engaging with the past. Ōgai’s *shiden*, pressing to the limit the fetish for “reality” that guides modern historical practice, demonstrates just how easily history can slip into forms of discourse it purports to have left behind.

²² Ōkubō, *Nihon kindai shigaku no seiritsu*, 77.