

## A Jester and His Kings – Nakai Hiromu and the Meiji Elite （太鼓持ちとその王者たち—中井弘と明治の元勳）

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### 概要

歴史研究には対人関係や人間相互関係の影響の重要性を過度に強調する事ができない。歴史上有名な人物の他、歴史書で少ししか触れていない人物は数えられないほどいるが、生きていた当時、きわめて重要な役割を果たしていたことは少なくもない。本稿で現在はよく知られていない元薩摩藩士で後に京都府知事となった中井弘（1839-1894）という人物について検討し、幕末・明治時代日本史で知られている有名な仲間たちとの関係に関して考察する。

中井は長州藩士の伊藤博文と井上馨と深い関係があった。更に土佐藩士の後藤象二郎と坂本龍馬とも知り合い、1866年にこの二人の勧めと支援で中井は始めて英国に旅した。その他に明治時代に生きた有名な人物で中井の友人だったのは、大久保利通、木戸孝允、大山巖、大隈重信などが例に挙げられる。大物歴史人物への影響はかなり大きいことから、中井弘自身は現在知られていなくても彼の影響は日本史に残ることが明らかになる。

キーワード：対人関係の影響、人間のネットワーク、明治政府、明治時代の日本、日英関係史

### Abstract

The importance of human connections and interpersonal influence when studying history cannot be over-emphasized. Aside from the major historical figures there are also a number of more minor characters who often receive only a passing mention in the history books and yet played important key roles during their time. This paper considers the little-known figure, Nakai Hiromu (1839-1894) and his personal network, looking at the influence he had on several of the key leaders from the late-Edo and Meiji periods of Japanese history.

Nakai had close relationships with Japan's first PM, Itō Hirobumi and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Inoue Kaoru, both of whom were from Chōshū. He was also closely associated with men from Tosa, such as Gotō Shōjirō and Sakamoto Ryōma, both of whom are believed to have encouraged Nakai to travel to Britain in 1866. Other notable Meiji period government figures in Nakai's list of associates include Ōkubo Toshimichi, Kido Takayoshi, Ōyama Iwao, Ōkuma Shigenobu. Nakai, who is little remembered today, was able to influence some of Japan's key players in this important time in its history. An attempt is made to gauge the level of influence Nakai had on these key political and social figures.

Keywords: interpersonal influence, human networks, Meiji government, Meiji Japan, Britain-Japan historical relations

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## 1. Introduction

Yashiki Shigeo, who passed away in 2021, entitled his work about his illustrious ancestor Nakai Hiromu, *Nakai Ōshū – Meiji no Genkun ni Mottomo Tayorareta Meisanbō* (2010). A simple translation of that title in English might be *Nakai Ōshū – Most Trusted Advisor to the Meiji Elite*. The title is an accurate one. Nakai Hiromu, whose pen-name was Ōshū, was a key figure among the elite members of society during the Meiji period, but did not himself aspire to the high ranks of office as many of his good friends and colleagues did. Instead, Nakai was more of an influencer behind the scenes. Often those scenes happened at parties and other formal and informal gatherings and functions, an example of which is the Rokumeikan.

Another earlier publication, which discusses Nakai, from 1978 by the author Katsube Mitake is titled, *Ōja to Dōkeshi*, which for Katsube can be translated in English as *Crown and Clown*. Katsube's book looks at the relationship between Nakai Hiromu (the clown?) and his son-in-law and later Prime Minister of Japan, Hara Takashi (the crown?). In the title of this current paper, the author has chosen to use the word “jester” rather than “clown” to describe Nakai because the British diplomat and later ambassador to Japan, Sir Ernest Satow (1843-1929) has described Nakai Hiromu as the “jester of the foreign department” in his work published in 1921, *A Diplomat in Japan*. The nuance of either “clown” or “jester” here does not mean “fool”, but rather denotes Nakai's jovial personality; an aspect of his character that many of his associates at the time appreciated about him. As Satow has said, he was an entertaining and popular figure in his time.

Although modern-day history books do not often mention Nakai Hiromu to any great extent, his influence on the leaders of his time was considerable. Influence is of course a difficult concept to measure. However, particularly with the increase in online social system networks, the study of influence has expanded in recent years within the field of social science (see for example, Aral & Walker, 2012, or Bersma, Mandryk & Macalla, 2014, or Jackson, 2019). In an historical context however, measures of influence and connection become more challenging, but one of the ways to gauge the levels of connection and influence is to measure them with the documents and letters that remain in various collections. Instead of looking at online influence data as a social scientist would, historians must turn to the letters and old documents of the time written or received by the figures they are studying. The accuracy of such measures may be called into question, of course, because old letters or documents might have been destroyed, or are missing, and the connections may not always be clear due to a lack of evidence. The thing historians can do is work with the available resources, and this, of course, is one of the basic elements of studying history. From the sources however, some light may be shed on the relationship between the people who wrote and received them.

This paper suggests that the measurements of influence in an historical context may still be carried out by gauging the amount and quality of connection between actors (in the form of letters and documents), and the amount of action taken by each actor that overlaps with the ideas and actions of another actor. It is imperative to examine an actor's social network of friends, colleagues and other associations. This paper will examine the network of key figures and leaders that Nakai Hiromu was associated with, and consider what influence Nakai possibly had on them in such a way that, despite his own relative obscurity, it becomes clear that he was an influential actor in his time, and indeed for a brief period after his death.

Primarily, the paper will examine Nakai Hiromu's role within the Meiji government in the early days of the Meiji period. Today, Japan is still recognised for its techniques within business and society, of using *nemawashi*; a concept often utilized in Japanese companies for laying down the groundwork in advance to obtain approval from the people involved to get a plan or proposal passed. Japan is also known for its *sempai-kōhai* system, a strict system of ranking seniors and juniors by age. The notion of “not what you know, but who you know counts” is a strong common tradition in Japanese society. One question that immediately arises upon coming to know more about Nakai is why he did not gain a higher rank within the government when he had such a vast array of illustrious friends. Nakai Hiromu himself never particularly wished to reach any high ranks within the government and the work he was doing was just a ‘way for paying the bills’ (Katsube 1978: 184). As long as he could enjoy life, he was happy to rise no further than the position of prefectural governor, which he was in both Shiga and Kyoto prefectures. He was not interested in titles and honours. Although he was awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure and the Order of the Rising Sun among other important positions. His apparent reluctance to reach higher ranks is perhaps also one of the reasons that Nakai has been remarkably easily forgotten in the years after his death, particularly in the post-war era.

First, in 'Remembering Nakai in 1930s Kyoto', this paper will consider the memorial service held in Kyoto in 1934, forty years after Nakai's death. A publication was produced for this event and it provides clues as to how Nakai was remembered. Secondly, in 'Letter Collections', the paper will consider, among others, the collection of letters held in the Reimeikan Museum in the city of Kagoshima (former castle town of the Satsuma domain), Nakai's birthplace. The paper will also briefly look at the collection of letters in other archives, such as those held in Waseda University. Following that, the paper will then discuss Nakai's relationships with some of the key historical figures of Meiji history and examine what kind of relationship Nakai had with them in sections titled, 'Chōshū Chums', 'Relationships with Satsuma Fellows', 'Shikoku Connections', 'The King and His Jester?' and finally 'A Network of Key Figures'. Lastly, a consideration of Nakai's personality and propensity for sociability, as well as his connection to the Rokumeikan building will also be made in the section titled 'Sociability and a Connection to the Rokumeikan'. The connection with the Rokumeikan, famous for its *Rokumeikan Gaikō*, or "Rokumeikan Diplomacy" of the 1880s, will demonstrate an example of one of the spaces used for connecting actors and allowing them to expand their influence.

The paper is based on original research that was carried out for a chapter in a doctoral thesis presented to Kyoto University in 2012 by the same author (then under the name of Eleanor Robinson). However, this paper reflects the new findings and additional research that has been carried out since that initial thesis was written.

## 2. Remembering Nakai in 1930s Kyoto

In 1934, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Nakai Hiromu's death in 1894, a special service was held, at Sokushūin, the temple where his grave now stands in the southeast of Kyoto city within the precincts of Tōfukuji Temple. Many of Kyoto's well-to-do residents, entertainers from the pleasure quarters of Gion and VIPs from elsewhere around Japan attended this ceremony. Many who had known Nakai personally, his family, colleagues and friends attended, and the famous author and politician, Itō Chiyū (1867-1938), gave a speech. A commemorative publication was put together for this event, which records the proceedings of this special Buddhist ceremony that was held in his remembrance.

In Buddhist tradition, there are several occasions after a person has passed when they are remembered in a memorial ceremony. Traditionally, these ceremonies occur on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup> and finally the 49<sup>th</sup> day after the death of the departed. These first forty-nine days are considered a period of mourning and on each occasion the deceased is believed to be in attendance at a trial at the court of the judge of the afterlife (*Enma daiō*). On the 49<sup>th</sup> day, the judge decides the fate of the soul of the departed and judgement is made. After this initial forty-nine days, the memorial services for the dead are then given after one-year (*isshūki*), two years (*san-kaiki*) six years (*nana-kaiki*); then 12 (*jūsan-kaiki*), 16 (*jūnana-kaiki*), 22 (*nijūsan-kaiki*), 26 (*nijūnana-kaiki*), 32 (*sanjūsan-kaiki*), 36 (*sanjūnana-kaiki*), 42 (*yonjūsan-kaiki*), 46 (*yonjūnana-kaiki*), 49

(*gojū-kaiki*) and 99 (*hyakkaiki*) years after the death of the departed. In the introduction to *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku* (Hamatani, 1934), the publication made for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nakai's death, Iida Shinshichi IV (Chairman of the Takashimaya Department Store) writes that the reason for having a ceremony on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary was because waiting until the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary would mean that many of the people still living who remembered and knew Nakai personally might not still be alive, including Iida himself (1).

Since the occasion of this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony, the memory of Nakai Hiromu has grown gradually dimmer. Although his statue was newly erected sixty years after his death by two of his descendants, Nakai Kise and Nakai Hiroko, in Kyoto's Maruyama Park in 1964 (after the first one was removed to use the metal for the war effort in the 1940s), this statue too, has now come to be almost entirely neglected. Unlike the famous double statue of Sakamoto Ryōma and Nakaoka Shintarō, which occupies the same park and in modern times receives many visitors from all over Japan and the rest of the world, the Nakai Hiromu statue situated behind the entrance way to the underground car park, is not maintained and is crumbling at the plinth.

Much of what is remembered of Nakai Hiromu today is information that comes from the publication, *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku*, and forty years after his passing the recollections of old friends and associates are perhaps somewhat fuzzy, but the publication is useful in that it provides insight into how people remembered him. In other words, the publication demonstrates the influence Nakai had on people especially those who attended the ceremony. Forty years is a long time, but Nakai was still fondly remembered and described by a number of well-to-do society members. The above-mentioned Iida Shinshichi IV who would himself pass away in 1944 at the height of the Second World War, ten years after this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony, wrote the introduction and gives readers the impression of his strong bond with Nakai Hiromu. With World War II ongoing, it would have perhaps been difficult to hold the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony, and as Iida had mentioned not many of Nakai Hiromu's contemporaries were still around to celebrate his life. In the post-war era, too, the heroes of the *Bakumatsu* and Meiji eras were already being forgotten, and in many cases were also being criticised for being the cause of Japanese Imperial expansion and aggression in Asia. Japan's position in the world had changed drastically. Countries who were once allies, such as Britain, had become enemies and the geo-political atmosphere was a very different reality in the years after the war.

Despite Nakai's own apparent reluctance to be recognised however, he and the part he played in Japanese history should not be forgotten. It is his efforts and the role he played as a figure within both Japanese and Anglo-Japanese relations' history that should be remembered in particular. Aside from the titles and honours he received on the Japanese side, he was also given a letter of thanks and a decorative sword from the British government to commemorate his heroics in the Nawate Incident of 1868.

In the Nawate Incident, the British government representatives were on their way to visit the Meiji Emperor for the first time in Kyoto. On the way to the Imperial Palace, however, the group of delegates and soldiers

were attacked by two men, whose aim it was to kill any foreigners on Japanese soil. They were believers in the then popular *Sonnō Jōi* (or Revere the emperor, expel the barbarian) Movement. Nakai Hiromu, along with Gotō Shōjirō, originally from the domain of Tosa, were in charge of security having been despatched from the newly created Meiji government. As soon as Nakai realised the attack was happening, he jumped down from his horse and engaged one of the attackers who managed to hit Nakai on the head with his sword. Gotō came to the aid of Nakai, allowing him the time to get back on his feet and chop off the head of the attacker who they later learned was 18-year-old Hayashida Sadakata (also known as Suzaku Misao). The second man, Saegusa Shigeru, was caught, and before being beheaded as a criminal, was questioned by the Japanese authorities as well as one of the then British legation secretaries Algernon Bertram Mitford (an aristocrat who later became grandfather to the famous British “Mitford Sisters”). A record of this interview is given in Mitford’s Memoirs. The late Hugh Cortazzi has edited and introduced parts of these memoirs (Cortazzi, 2002). In the memoirs, Mitford talks about the “courage and loyalty which has been exhibited by Goto [*sic*] and Nakai” (112), and “the gallant behaviour of Goto [*sic*] and Nakai” (114), and he makes further mention of Nakai saying, “our gallant little friend Nakai was badly hurt, but quite gay, as usual.” (111). Mitford also mentions the decorative swords given to both Nakai and Gotō, “I should add here that the Queen presented swords of honour to Goto Shojiro [*sic*] and Nakai in recognition of the gallantry with which they protected her minister” (116). Queen Victoria herself then seems to have been made aware of the attack and the bravery of Nakai and Gotō, thereupon she requested the creation of two beautifully decorated swords. Both the sword and letter that Nakai received are now housed in the Kyoto National Museum’s collection along with some other artifacts that were donated in 1903 (Miyakawa, 2003: 165) by Hara Takashi after Nakai’s death. When it was initially made, the sword would have been a very rare and precious item. However, according to one of the anecdotes of Nakai’s life, upon receiving the sword, Nakai pulled it out of its case, strapped it around his waist and began strutting around in a jovial, jester-like manner showing it off. This anecdote gives a clear indication of the cheery nature he was well known for among his peers, colleagues and friends. He is frequently described as a jolly and fun a character. He was very clearly the life of the party and almost everybody enjoyed his company. His jokes and fun-loving nature may have irritated some of his more serious-minded contemporaries, but for the most part, he was a well-liked figure.

This attack on British representatives at Nawate is mentioned in the publication for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary after Nakai’s death, *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku* (Hamatani, 1934). The first mention of the attack is noted by Itō Chiyū (20). Following that, a document written by Nakai himself in January of 1890 gives Nakai’s own recollection of the incident. This, of course, is written many years after the incident occurred and Nakai’s own memory of events may well have been unclear, but as a testimony from the man himself, this is an important addition to the text of the publication (1934: 35-37). Following that, the incident is mentioned again as one of the recollections of Nakai’s half-brother Yokoyama Eitarō as he told it to Itō Chiyū, and a reprint from the short pamphlet it was originally published in, *Nakai Ōshū*, is given in this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

publication (1934: 43-49). This section goes into much more detail regarding the responses from the British, such as Harry Parkes. Following this longer section, a Japanese translation of British representative, Ernest Satow's own recollections of the incident are also given (1934: 50-53). Satow's own English version can be seen in his work, *A Diplomat in Japan* originally published in 1921 (Satow, 2000). Nakai appears in Satow's work several times and he is depicted in a positive light. The British representative, Ernest Satow, spoke of Nakai as being the one to whom the organising of parties and get-togethers was often left (2000: 324).

In another recollection noted by Itō Chiyū in *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku*, stories of Nakai's antics tell of how at one very drunken party, he got into an argument with a fellow party guest and smashed a beer bottle over his head. The incident happened in the presence of the Meiji Emperor who responded with the words, "I see Nakai is up to his old tricks again" (Hamatani, 1934: 14). The fellow party guest in question was Nishimura Shigeki who, at the time, was secretary to the Minister of Education. Nakai was passionate about education in his lifetime, so perhaps it was a difference of opinions that caused the argument and Nakai's outburst.

Itō Chiyū, in his work, *Kaiketsuden* (1929) also mentions an incident in which Nakai fell asleep in a drunken stupor and had his beard and moustache shaved off (Itō, 1929: 259). This incident is not mentioned in *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku* perhaps for obvious reasons. It may have been considered a step too far in recalling somewhat embarrassing memories of Nakai at an event for the anniversary of his death. This is perhaps one reason that there are no photographs of Nakai with the grand-looking facial hair that was very popular among government men such as Itagaki Taisuke (1837-1919) during the Meiji period. There is, however, one photograph of Nakai Hiromu now held at the National Diet Library (NDL, a) that was taken in London at the London Stereoscopic and Photograph Company on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1873. In this photograph, it can clearly be seen that Nakai has some facial hair in the form of a moustache. No doubt he was following the Victorian British trend of having facial hair at the time. Nakai Hiromu was in Britain in 1873 in the capacity of a Japanese government representative. At the same time, the members of the Iwakura Mission, led by Iwakura Tomomi, were also in London.

Such episodes and stories about him given in both Itō Chiyū's *Kaiketsuden* and in the recollections of the attendants at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his passing give the modern reader a real sense of Nakai as an actual person rather than simply a character in a history book. It is stories such as these that may endear people to his character. Particularly, with Itō's work, he was a journalist and an author who may well have been tempted to exaggerate somewhat for the sake of his narrative. However, it is not only Itō's writing but other works as well that depict Nakai as a larger-than-life type of character.

Modern historical literature presents the same kind of perspective, of course. A good example is Shiba Ryōtarō's work. His historical novels, such as *Ryōma ga Yuku*, about the life of Sakamoto Ryōma (1835-1867) have worked to develop Sakamoto into the hero that he is today. Indeed, if Shiba had written a novel that included the life of Nakai in more detail, perhaps Nakai would not have so easily been forgotten. Novels and other literature draw the attention of the general masses to historical stories. However, these forms of

media are fiction based on actual history, and therefore the writer has a great deal of artistic license in what they write. Shiba's novels about Ryōma portray him as a very heroic character. Shiba describes Sakamoto in a way that has drawn large numbers of readers to his story. Many people see Ryōma as a great hero and a large number of people in Japan quote Shiba's work as their source of information about who Ryōma was. Another example, is the series of comic books, *Oi Ryōma!* by Takeda Tetsuya and Koyama Yū, which have also been a great influence on many Japanese children since their initial publication in 1986, and like Shiba's novel, they have created the character of Ryōma that many people in Japan are familiar with today. There is no such portrayal of Nakai Hiromu.

Ernest Satow has described Nakai Hiromu as the “jester of the foreign department” and “our cheery little friend”. From a number of texts, including the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication, it is clear that Nakai was what might be termed today, “the life and soul of the party”. He was a man with many friends and acquaintances, and one of the final sections of *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku* provides the text of several letters written to and from Nakai Hiromu.

On the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, some of the letters along with some of Nakai's handwritten hanging scroll texts were put on display at the event, and in the anniversary publication, there are some photographs showing this display. It should also be noted that in addition to the pieces of writing by Nakai, there is also a hanging scroll portrait of him by an artist called Taniguchi Kōka (it has been difficult to find more information about this artist). The portrait is now kept in the collection of the Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives (Rekisaikan). It was put on public display, perhaps for the first time since the 1934 anniversary ceremony, as part of an exhibition in December 2021 to January 2022. This exhibition was held jointly at the exhibition room of the Rekisaikan between students and staff from Kyoto Prefectural University and the Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives. It was the organizers' hopes to be able to invite Yashiki Shigeo, Nakai's biographer and descendant, to the exhibition but he passed away just months before the exhibition began.

Of the letters noted in *Ōshū Sanjin no Tsuioku* and displayed at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a number of famous names can be seen; Itō Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, Ōyama Iwao, Saigō Tsugumichi, Shinagawa Yajirō, Itagaki Taisuke, Ōkubo Toshimichi, Ōkuma Shigenobu, Gotō Shōjirō, Mori Arinori, Yamagata Aritomo, among others. One aspect of these letters that becomes noticeable immediately is the use of words to address Nakai from those who are clearly close to him; namely Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru, Japan's first Prime Minister and first Foreign Minister respectively. They are on first name terms, and they use the expressions “brother” and “old friend” to describe each other. In the next section, the paper will discuss some of the letter collections held in various archives around Japan to demonstrate Nakai's relationships with some of the most important figures in Meiji period history.

### 3. Letter Collections

The list below, titled ‘Letters to and from Nakai Hiromu in the Reimeikan Collection’, gives some idea of the people Nakai was connected with. This is a list of the letters received by and sent to Nakai Hiromu over the course of his life. However, this list only shows the collection of Nakai-related letters kept in the Reimeikan Museum in Kagoshima city where Nakai was born.

As can be seen from the Reimeikan collection, Nakai was in contact with a large number of famous names from the Meiji elite. His two close friends, Itō Hirobumi (47 letters) and Inoue Kaoru (4 letters), are there, but many other famous names are there too, including Itagaki Taisuke (4 letters), Yamagata Aritomo (16 letters), Iwakura Tomomi (1 letter), Nakae Chōmin (1 letter), among others. Shiomichi Ikuo and Dohman Sachiko (1987, 1988, 1989, 1990) have transcribed these letters and made them available for those who do not read the cursive script of old Japanese handwriting, which means many more people are able to read them.

**Letters to and from Nakai Hiromu in the Reimeikan Collection**

Name	Number of letters	Name	Number of letters
Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909)	47	Mori Arinori (1847-1889)	2
Inoue Kaoru (1835-1915)	4	Sameshima Hisanobu (1846-1880)	3
Ōyama Iwao (1842-1916)	1	Shinagawa Yajirō (1843-1900)	2
Saigō Tsugumichi (1843-1902)	1	Kuroda Kiyotaka (1840-1900)	3
Kido Takayoshi (Katsura Kogorō, 1833-1877)	10	Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1924)	8
Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883)	1	Saisho Atsushi (1827-1910)	5
Enomoto Takeaki (1836-1908)	5	Takashima Tomonosuke (1844-1916)	2
Godai Tomoatsu (1835-1885)	1	Yoshii Tomozane (1828-1891)	8
Iwasaki Yanosuke (1851-1908)	42	Higashikuze Michitomi (1833-1912)	2
Hara Takashi (1856-1921)	3	Date Munenari (1818-1892)	1
Sanjō Sanetomi (1837-1891)	3	Kusunoki Masataka (1838-1902)	13
Gotō Shōjirō (1838-1897)	2	Tanaka Mitsuaki (1843-1939)	1
Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901)	1	Yamao Yōzō (1837-1917)	1
Itagaki Taisuke (1838-1919)	4	Mutsu Munemitsu (1844-1897)	1
Shibusawa Eiichi (1840-1931)	1	Higashikuze Michitomi (1834-1912)	2
Terashima Munenori (Matsuki Kōan, 1833-1893)	3	Ueno Kagenori (1845-1888)	4
Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922)	16	Yoshida Kiyonari (1845-1891)	10

\* The above list shows the names of people Nakai Hiromu received or sent letters to with the number of letters related to each person. These letters are kept in the Reimeikan Museum in Kagoshima City. The list is not exhaustive. There are a total of 358 documents related to Nakai in the Reimeikan Museum and these have been catalogued and made available in printed form (*Nakai Hiromu Kankei Monjo no Shōkai 1-4* in Reimeikan Chōsa Kenkyū Hōkoku No. 1-4). The above list merely illustrates some of the more famous names Nakai Hiromu was on letter writing terms with.

Noticeably missing from the Reimeikan list are letters to and from Waseda University founder Ōkuma Shigenobu (1838-1922), but those letters are kept in the archives at Waseda University. Tomoda Masahiro has worked with Waseda University to transcribe the letters connected to Nakai Hiromu in that collection. These were put into print in 2012 and can be read in volume 8 of the *Ōkuma Shigenobu Kankei Monjō* series. In that publication there are 45 letters related to Nakai Hiromu, both written to and from him. The first of these letters is written from Nakai to Ōkuma on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Keiō (September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1868). This shows that Nakai was already connected with Ōkuma in the early days of the Meiji government's establishment. Ōkuma was in charge of the Meiji government's Foreign Department where Nakai Hiromu was working at the time. Nakai also often frequented the gatherings at Ōkuma Shigenobu's residence known as the Tsukiji Ryōzanpaku in Tōkyō where several important Meiji government officials got together to discuss politics during the years 1869-71. Little is known about these gatherings and the discussions were not recorded, but it is easy to imagine that Nakai who had recent experience abroad in Britain in 1866-67 was given plenty of opportunity to voice his opinion and talk about his experiences.

Another noticeable omission from the Reimeikan collection in Kagoshima is the name of Satsuma man, Ōkubo Toshimichi (1830-1878), and again letters to and from Nakai Hiromu can be found in the *Ōkubo Toshimichi Monjō*, in volume two of the series first published in 1927 and re-published in 1967. Twelve letters related to Nakai Hiromu can be found in volume two of the Ōkubo collection, all of which are written in the first year of the Meiji period, 1868. Nakai was clearly very well connected from an early stage with a number of the key figures in the Meiji government. Again, this is perhaps much to do with the fact that Nakai had international experience, but also perhaps because he was a fellow Satsuma man. In the final months of 1866, Nakai had travelled to Britain. He stayed there for a period of about four months and then returned to Japan in 1867. Thanks to this experience, he was given a post in the newly created Foreign Department of the Meiji government, and in this capacity, he worked closely with key British representatives such as Ernest Satow, Algernon B. Mitford and Harry Parkes as already noted above.

In the Reimeikan collection there are only two letters connected with Mori Arinori (1847-1889), Japan's Minister for Education, and proponent for making the English language Japan's national language. However, as the subject of education was close to Nakai's heart, and the fact that Nakai was in Britain in 1866-67 during the time that Mori was also there as a representative from the Satsuma domain and they spent much

time together as Nakai mentions in his travel journal (Robinson, 2013), it seems only natural that the pair wrote many more letters to each other. A majority of these will have been lost to time, so it is not possible to get a clearer picture of their relationship, but examples of letters may still be kept in both public and personal collections as yet undiscovered. In volume two of *Mori Arinori Zenshū* (Ōkubo [ed.], 1972), there is a printed version of a letter written by Nakai to Mori Arinori. Nakai uses the name Nakai Kōzō in the letter, so although there is no year dated on it, the likelihood is that it was written in the early years of the Meiji period when he was using that name. This is just one example of how challenging it can be to find letters such as these, which then need to be deciphered and understood in their context. Nakai Hiromu frequently changed his name and used aliases throughout his lifetime particularly in the days before the Meiji Restoration. Old letters and documents are often kept in disorganized collections in old private storehouses and the like. In modern times, Japanese newspapers and other media frequently break news that another letter written by some famous historical figure has been rediscovered in a long-lost pile somewhere, thus changing the way historians view certain incidences and events in history. The same may well be true of old letters and documents related to Nakai. The only difference is that any new findings related to Nakai are unlikely to make headline news because of his relative obscurity unless the recipient or writer happens to be somebody well-known.

Despite being from the domain of Satsuma, Nakai Hiromu was also on close and friendly terms with several prominent figures from the long-time, so-called enemies of Satsuma, the domain of Chōshū. As already noted, he was close, in particular, to the two great Meiji oligarchs, Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru. The following section of this paper will examine Nakai's relationships with these men of Chōshū.

#### 4. Chōshū Chums

Nakai Hiromu was on good terms with Itō Hirobumi from an early stage. However, it is not known exactly when the two met for the first time. It is understood that they met during the so-called *Bakumatsu* years at the end of the Edo period, and their first contact was likely to have happened before Nakai travelled to Britain in late 1866. It is known that Itō and Inoue had travelled to Britain in 1863, but returned in 1864 to try and convince the Chōshū domain not to get into a fight with western powers. Chōshū however, had already done battle with the west in the Bombardment of Shimonoseki in July 1863, and Itō and Inoue returned to Chōshū to try and prevent any more such fights by advising their superiors.

There are a number of letters still in existence that demonstrate the strong bond between Itō and Nakai. The largest number of letters in the Reimeikan collection noted above is between Itō and Nakai. There are forty-seven letters in total. To give an example of the kind of connection they had, the following is an English translation (by this author) of just one of the letters.

Letter no. 14:

Dear Ōshū [Nakai's pen name], my old brother,  
I am sorry to hear that you have caught a bit of a cold. Your health is most important,  
so I won't bring the cigars I have for you. You won't be able to taste them.  
This morning Ozaki, Inoue Kowashi, Yoshikawa and Furusawa came to visit me.  
They seemed very tired by the continuous war(s).  
Tonight though, we'll have great fun!  
You stay by the heater and keep yourself warm.  
And of course, don't be going out!  
Sincerely,

18<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month  
(March 18th)

This letter (given in Shiomichi and Dohman, 1988: 95) demonstrates the kind of relationship Itō and Nakai had. At the time of writing, Nakai has a cold, so Itō has chosen not to bring some cigars that he has for his old friend. Nakai is known to have loved smoking, but Itō suggests he would not be able to enjoy the cigars he has brought because of his cold. Then Itō goes on to note a gathering of friends. The person called Ozaki mentioned here is likely to be the Japanese politician, Ōzaki Yukio (1858-1954) who was born in what is now Kanagawa prefecture. Inoue Kowashi (1843-1895), who was born in Higo, now Kumamoto prefecture, spent a great deal of time with Itō Hirobumi and Ōkubo Toshimichi, and so he will have also been on familiar terms with Nakai, too. Inoue Kowashi travelled to Beijing with Ōkubo for negotiations with the Qing administration in the mid-1870s. The person called Yoshikawa is likely to be Yoshikawa Akimasa (1842-1920), a samurai from Tokushima. In 1893, during the second Itō cabinet, Yoshikawa was made Minister of Justice. The person called Furusawa here is likely to be Furusawa Shigeru (1847-1911), a Tosa samurai who was later made prefectural governor of Nara, Ishikawa and Yamaguchi prefectures. As well as having travelled to Britain, like Nakai, Furusawa was also a secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs at one time.

It is difficult to know what year this letter from Itō is from. The only date written on the letter is the "18<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month". It is possible, however, that this letter is from the time after Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873. Therefore, this date may be March 18<sup>th</sup>. It is not clear what the "continuous war(s)" that Itō speaks of in this letter are. The Boshin War had occurred in 1868-69. The Satsuma Rebellion had happened in 1877. The Sino-Japanese War broke out in the August of 1894. Nakai died in October 1894. This letter was written in the third month of the year, so it is unlikely that Itō is talking about the Sino-Japanese War. Itō addresses Nakai as "my old brother", so it is perhaps likely that this letter was written at some time in the 1880s or early 1890s. It is likely that Itō is simply referring to the frequent wars that had occurred in Japan

since the upheaval of the Meiji Restoration and the opening of Japan to trade with the west. The time of Tokugawa rule had largely been a peaceful time. Japan had not really known real war since the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. Therefore, the period from the end of Tokugawa rule and through the Meiji period must have seemed like a period of continuous wars and battles.

One particularly important aspect of this letter from Itō to Nakai is that it seems that Itō is goading Nakai somewhat. This suggests an image of friendly banter between old, close friends. By telling Nakai he would not bring the cigars and then going on to describe a gathering of friends, but also telling Nakai not to go out himself, Itō seems almost to be poking fun at Nakai by trying to make him jealous. Yet, at the same time he is showing a great concern for his friend. This clearly demonstrates the level of friendship and closeness these two men enjoyed. They had been through a lot together during their years of knowing each other, and they were so close that they could feel comfortable together, almost like actual brothers by blood. It is known from other sources how much of a friendly, jovial nature Nakai had, so to have missed a gathering of friends such as Itō mentions in his letter must have made Nakai feel quite envious. Although this letter is only very brief, it gives a clear sense of the kind of relationship Nakai had with Itō. Nakai and Itō were very close professionally, but also on a personal level, too. Indeed, it was Itō who recommended Nakai for the post of prefectural governor of Kyoto and the words on the epitaph written on the small statue of Nakai Hiromu in Maruyama Park in Kyoto were also written by Itō Hirobumi.

Nakai Hiromu also had a strong, brotherly-like bond with Inoue Kaoru, another Chōshū man, who was also close to Itō Hirobumi. Inoue's wife, Takeko, had formerly been romantically involved with Nakai. As the anecdote goes, Nakai left Takeko at Okuma Shigenobu's house in Tokyo when he travelled back to Satsuma in the early 1870s. Whilst he was away, Inoue Kaoru visited Okuma's house. There he met and fell in love with Takeko whose feelings became mutual. When Nakai returned to Tokyo however, he was not even slightly angry, and gave the couple his blessing, with not a hint of jealousy. In the long term, it was perhaps better for Takeko that she married Inoue rather than staying with Nakai in terms of her own career. She became well-known for her hospitality at the Rokumeikan. Even the French commentator, Pierre Loti, made note of her in his critique of the Rokumeikan, calling her, in a somewhat derivative manner, "Countess Sodes(u)ka" (Rosenfeld).

There has been some confusion over this Takeko. It was believed by many of the time that she was actually the mother of Nakai's daughter Sadako who married the later first prime minister of 'common stock', Hara Takashi. However, this was not the case. Sadako's mother was a woman called Fumi, who later divorced Nakai and went on to marry a printer by the name of Imamura. More will be said later in the paper about Hara Takashi, but he received a great deal of support from both Nakai and Inoue in advancing his career, and it was believed by some that Hara was using this marriage to Sadako to earn the support of Inoue. However, this was not the case. It was through Nakai Hiromu that Hara was able to earn the support that he did. Nakai was on good terms with Hara well before Hara married Sadako, and Nakai also made efforts to introduce

Hara to Inoue Kaoru.

Inoue Kaoru was, of course, on very friendly terms with Nakai since they had both been much younger. However, as with the case of Itō Hirobumi, it is not known exactly when the two met for the first time. It is most likely that Nakai met both men at the same time. In addition, as the paper will discuss later, Inoue Kaoru asked Nakai to name the Rokumeikan building. As close friends and colleagues, Inoue knew he could trust his friend to come up with an appropriate name.

Another Chōshū man who Nakai was on close and friendly terms was Kido Takayoshi, or as he was known until 1865, Katsura Kogorō (1833-1877). In Yashiki Shigeo's book there is an interesting anecdote of Nakai hopping out of a horse-drawn carriage with Kido, and Yashiki's grandfather, Nakai's third son, Yōichi saw this as a child (Yashiki, 2010: 148). The image of Nakai jumping out of the carriage of such an important man seems to have left Yashiki and his grandfather with a feeling of pleasant surprise. To Nakai himself, Kido was simply an old friend and his elevated status was not an important issue. As already noted, Nakai did not have much concern about important status and titles. The earlier mentioned anecdote of the time Nakai became heavily inebriated, and during an argument, smashed a beer bottle over Education Secretary, Nishimura Shigeki's head in front of the Meiji Emperor, provides plenty of clues to Nakai's perspective on titles and honours. For Nakai Hiromu, people were simply people, regardless of their rank or position in life.

Nakai had strong bonds with several men from the domain of Chōshū, but he was born in the domain of Satsuma (present-day Kagoshima prefecture). The next section of the paper will briefly examine Nakai's connection with those from his home domain.

## **5. Relationships with Satsuma Fellows**

Nakai Hiromu was raised in a domain of such forward thinkers as Shimazu Shigehide (1745-1833) and Shimazu Nariakira (1809-1858). This forward-thinking no doubt rubbed-off on Nakai. On an examination of what might be termed the 'Satsuma mindset', it is clear that historically the leaders of Satsuma had long been ready to connect with the outside world even during the years that such international connections were banned by the ruling Tokugawa government. Satsuma was the gateway to relations with the Ryūkyū Kingdom, which had ties with China and the wider world. Satsuma was also geographically far from the seat of Tokugawa power in Edo. The leaders of Satsuma were keen to build a strong domain and therefore the education of its samurai was important to develop intelligent and strong men.

It has been suggested in several publications that Nakai Hiromu attended the well-known Zōshikan School for samurai of the Satsuma domain. If this was true, his fellow schoolmates would have included, among other notable Satsuma men, Saigō Takamori and his younger brother, Tsugumichi, Ōkubo Toshimichi, Ōyama Iwao, Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1924, the first Minister of Finance under Itō Hirobumi, and who later became the 6th Prime Minister of Japan), and Takashima Tomonosuke (1844-1916, who fought in the

Boshin War of 1868-1869 and the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, and who later became a general in the Imperial Japanese Army, and the Minister of War in 1891 and again in 1896-98). Nakai's descendent, Yashiki Shigeo, however, has refuted the suggestion that Nakai attended the Zōshikan School (Yashiki, 2010: 21) noting that there is no record of him having attended the school. However, he may still have made acquaintance with some of the famous names from the school during his youth.

Kirino Toshiaki, also known as Nakamura Hanjirō, or *Hitokiri* (assassin) *Hanjirō*, who was a general in the Imperial Army and fought alongside Saigō Takamori in the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, was a close friend of Nakai's. Nakai makes a number of appearances in Kirino's diary, which has been reproduced by Kurihara Tomohisa in 2004. In the diary, Nakai and Kirino spend a lot of time together drinking and enjoying their younger days in Kyoto.

Nakai was also particularly close with Ōkubo Toshimichi. Ōkubo and Saigō were the two most prominent men from Satsuma to play leading roles in Meiji politics and although they were good friends they differed somewhat in their ideas for Japan's future. For example, Saigō wanted to invade the Korean Peninsula but Ōkubo appeared not to see that as a positive path for Japan to follow. Nakai was closer to Ōkubo than he was Saigō, and despite Saigō being highly respected and having an almost godlike status among many Satsuma men, Nakai did not appear to be impressed by him. This may be another one of the reasons why today Nakai is not well-remembered in Kagoshima. In the city of Kagoshima, there is a very large statue of Saigō Takamori with its own surrounding ornamental garden. There is also a statue of Ōkubo, but it has nowhere near the same level of impressiveness as the Saigō statue does. There is, as yet, not a single statue of Nakai Hiromu or even a stone marker to show where he was born and grew up. Saigō Takamori is probably the most respected character from the domain of Satsuma in late Edo/Meiji period history; perhaps even more so than the domain lord Shimazu Nariakira (1809-1858). Nakai was certainly associated with Saigō, but he did not show the same kind of respect that other Satsuma men showed to the Great Saigō. Even in modern Japan, criticism of Saigō is not appreciated by the people of Kagoshima and that Nakai considered Saigō to be a fool is not likely to have impressed the people of Kagoshima.

From a young age, Nakai abandoned his home domain of Satsuma and went to work closely with men of the Tosa domain. He did still maintain close contact with many Satsuma men, however. On his death bed, he was surrounded by Satsuma men, including Ijūin Kanetsune (1836-1909) and Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1924). He was also buried at the Sokushūin Temple within the Tōfukuji Temple complex in Kyoto city. Sokushūin Temple belongs to the Shimazu family, the domain lords of Satsuma, and it still maintains a strong connection with Satsuma. If Nakai was not appreciated by at least some Satsuma people, he would not have been able to be buried in Sokushūin Temple. The next section will consider the relationship Nakai had with some of the men from the domain of Tosa (present-day Kōchi prefecture) and other areas in Shikoku, one of the four largest islands that make up the Japanese archipelago.

## 6. Shikoku Connections

Nakai Hiromu's strongest connection with samurai from Tosa was with Gotō Shōjirō (1838-1897). When Nakai left Satsuma for a second time after having been imprisoned for a year for leaving once before without the required official permission, he met and became close friends with Gotō. Gotō and another Tosa man, Sakamoto Ryōma, are believed to have suggested that Nakai travel to Britain in 1866. Upon his return to Japan, Nakai rejoined his friends in Nagasaki where he is noted to have paid several visits to another Tosa man, the now famous Iwasaki Yatarō, founder of the Mitsubishi Shipping Company.

Nakai was so close to Gotō that during one period in the late Edo period, he used the name Gotō Kyūjirō and pretended to be a Tosa samurai. Ernest Satow also noted Nakai's use of this name in his work, *A Diplomat in Japan* (Satow, 2000: 324).

Upon his return to Japan from Britain in 1867, Nakai was given a position working for the domain of Uwajima in Iyo-no-kuni (present-day Ehime prefecture in Shikoku). He worked in Kyoto at this time as an agent for the Lord of Uwajima, Date Munenari. Unfortunately, there is very little information available about Nakai's time working for his Shikoku connections. It was around this time that he was an agent for Uwajima in Kyoto, so how long he was actually in Shikoku for is not known. Nakai's strongest and most well-known connections with Shikoku are his relationships with Gotō Shōjirō, Sakamoto Ryōma and Iwasaki Yatarō. For the most part, however, Nakai would have likely associated with these men in Nagasaki where Iwasaki ran his shipping business. From Iwasaki's diary, it can be seen that Nakai was connected to Gotō and Sakamoto. Iwasaki uses Nakai's alias, Tanaka Kōsuke to describe him just returned from his journey to Britain, whereupon he no doubt regaled Iwasaki and the other guests with tales of his epic travels abroad (Iwasaki, 1975: 178). Nakai had travelled to Britain with Yūki Yukiyasu, another Tosa samurai, but shortly after arriving in Britain the two men went to stay with different families. The last recorded data available on Yūki is that he travelled to America with some of the Satsuma men and the British aristocrat Laurence Oliphant to join the Brotherhood of the New Life, a religious cult established in California by Thomas Lake Harris (1823-1906).

The difficulty in learning more about Nakai's early Shikoku connections is the lack of available sources. In addition, Nakai is understood to have been working as a secret agent at this time, so any documentation that did exist is more than likely to have been destroyed or lost. For some time, it was believed that Nakai had a hand in Sakamoto's so-called "Eight Point Plan", which laid out the groundwork for the new Meiji government, however in recent years Japanese historians have refuted the actual existence of this plan. Certainly, Nakai would have shared his knowledge of Britain with Sakamoto who then encouraged Gotō to push the Tosa domain lord, Yamauchi Toyoshige (1827-1872, also known as Yamauchi Yōdō), to bring a petition to the then Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837-1913) to end the Tokugawa rule. Whether there was an 'Eight Point Plan' document or not, Nakai's influence was certainly made on Sakamoto Ryōma, who had,

as is believed, put forward the money to cover the cost of Nakai's trip to Britain. Nakai's Shikoku connections are not clear because of the lack of documentation and an abundance of hearsay and rumour. However, as with any rumours there is very often an element of truth. There is the evidence of Iwasaki's diary, which describes the meetings between Nakai and Sakamoto, and Ernest Satow has also recorded the strong connection between Nakai and Gotō Shōjirō, so it is clear the relationships were there, and it may be that more documents will surface in the future with leads to learn more about these connections.

### **7. The King and His Jester?**

Hara Takashi was born in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture in 1856 on March 15<sup>th</sup> (the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, Ansei 3). He is now famous for being the first prime minister of Japan to have come from a 'common' background. In other words, he was not a member of the aristocracy as all prime ministers had been prior to his appointment. He was also not from a domain that had sided with the new Meiji government during the Boshin Civil War of 1868-1869. Rather, he was from one that had sided with the losing Tokugawa forces. However, the nickname for him, *heimin saishō*, literally "the common people's prime minister", is somewhat misleading because his family were actually relatively high-ranking samurai, and only Hara himself renounced his family status so as not to bring any shame to them when he failed an examination to enter a school in Tokyo (Hara and Yamamoto, 198: 19).

Nothing says "interpersonal influence" like a family connection, and Hara's connection with Nakai became a family one when Hara married his first wife, Sadako who was Nakai Hiromu's first and only daughter. Hara married Sadako in 1883 when he was 27 years old and she was 14 years old. The age of consent in Japan has remained at 13 years old since the enactment of the 1907 Penal Code. Prior to that, a legal marriage required the permission of the head of a household for a man under 30 and a woman under 25 wishing to marry. In the case of Hara Takashi and Nakai's daughter Sadako getting married the heads of both families had to be in agreement. Hara, who at the time was working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had been ordered to go to Tientsin (now Tianjin) in China, and after marrying Sadako, he took her along and she stayed there with him for a year and seven months until she turned 16 years old. The pair were married for thirteen years until their divorce in 1896, two years after Nakai Hiromu's death, so Nakai did not know of their divorce. Even before Sadako married Hara however, Nakai took a particular interest in Hara's career, and assisted him in his climb up the ladder of success. Once Hara became his son-in-law however, the bond between them, and Nakai's interest in Hara's career, naturally became stronger.

Thanks to Hara Takashi's conscientious nature for maintaining old documents, there is now an extensive collection of Hara Takashi documents relating to Nakai housed in the Hara Museum in Morioka. In Iwate Prefecture, there are a number of letters, sixty-six in all, to Hara from Nakai Hiromu. This count of sixty-six was made by Hara Keiichirō and Yamamoto Shirō and is mentioned in their work (1981: 46). In addition,

these sixty-six letters have been made available in volume two of the *Hara Takashi Kankei Monjo* series edited by the Hara Takashi Monjo Kenkyu-kai and published by the Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyokai in 1984. The letters include those that Nakai wrote to Hara, as well as letters from Nakai's sons, Ryūtarō and Shōtarō, and his father Eisuke. Volume three of the series has letters from Nakai's younger half-brother Eitarō and others related to Nakai, such as Yoshii Tsunenari who in later years aspired to be a politician himself. Incidentally, this Yoshii later put himself up for the Gifu prefectural assembly member elections but came out with the lowest number of votes in March 1903. The supplementary volume of the *Hara Takashi Kankei Monjo* collection also provides a large amount of Nakai-related documentation. For example, there is an autobiographical piece by Nakai describing his own life, which was written to commemorate his father Eisuke's 75th birthday (Hara, 1984: 110-111).

It may be said that Hara returned the favour for the help Nakai gave him in his career by dealing with, and looking after the affairs of, Nakai's somewhat wayward children. Even after Nakai's death, Hara continued to look after the affairs of Ryūtarō, Nakai's eldest son and Yōichi, Nakai's third son and great-grandfather to Yashiki Shigeo, in particular.

Despite Hara's marriage to Sadako eventually being annulled in 1896, Hara's connection with the Nakai/Yokoyama family continued for some time after Nakai's death as can be seen from some of these letters and documents in the Hara Collection. Hara also put much effort into the distribution of Nakai Hiromu's wealth among his children after his death in 1894.

Amongst the documents in the Hara Letter Collection, one interesting piece is the receipt (Hara, 1984: 120) from Dr. E. Baelz, the German physician who was sent to attend to Nakai on his deathbed. Dated November 4<sup>th</sup> 1894, the document, addressed to "The late Excellency Nakai's Family", notes the fee of 150 US dollars for medical attendance, no small amount of money for the time. It is believed that Inoue Kaoru sent Dr. Baelz from Tokyo to take care of his dear friend. Unfortunately, however, as history describes, Dr. Baelz's was unable to help and save Nakai's life. He passed away on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1894 from a brain haemorrhage. At the time, he was the prefectural governor of Kyoto. Kyoto was planning for the 1,100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the city being Japan's capital, as well as hosting the 1895 National Industrial Exhibition. Nakai, as governor, was probably feeling overloaded with work and his death may perhaps be considered to be one of Japan's earliest cases of *karōshi*, or 'death from overwork' that has afflicted many a salaryman in modern times.

A number of other documents in the Hara collection give details of the plans for establishing a commemorative statue of Nakai Hiromu after his death. The statue was erected in Maruyama Park in Kyoto City. The site now, however, has a different statue to this original one, which Hara helped to have erected. The original statue was much grander and larger in scale and it had a wrought iron fence surrounding it. However, this first statue was removed and the metal was used for the war effort during the Second World War. As noted in an earlier section of the paper, this original statue was replaced by a new one by two of Nakai's descendants,

Nakai Kise and Nakai Hiroko in 1964, sixty years after Nakai's death.

Again, in the same collection, there are also documents related to Sadako's funeral arrangements and the one-year anniversary ceremony of her death. Sadako died in 1919. Hara, as noted above, had divorced Sadako in 1896 and he had gone on to marry another woman, 28-year-old former *geisha*, Asa, when Hara was 43 in 1899. Despite this, Hara still maintained the connection with Sadako's family to the level that these documents relating to Sadako's death are kept in the Hara Collection; and of course, Hara attended Sadako's funeral and the one-year anniversary of her death. Sadako's grave now stands next to her father's in Sokushūin Temple within the precincts of Tōfukuji Temple in the south-east of Kyoto city.

Again, there is a letter in the Hara Collection (Hara, 1984: 143) directly from the priest of Sokushūin Temple related to arrangements for the Nakai/Yokoyama family grave plot. So, although Hara was not actually a blood relative of Nakai's, he was certainly very deeply involved with the personal affairs of Nakai's family even a long time after Nakai's own death. Nakai Hiromu and his family clearly owed a lot to Hara Takashi. However, Hara also clearly owed a lot to Nakai Hiromu. Nakai apparently introduced Hara to Inoue Kaoru and Itō Hirobumi, so if not for Nakai assisting Hara in his career, Japanese politics as a whole might have been very different.

After Nakai's death, Hara assisted with the publication of a work called *Ōshū Sanjin Sekijō Enzetsu*, or 'Public Orations by Ōshū Sanjin', which is a collection of political speeches made by Nakai. To what degree Hara was influenced by Nakai in his political ideology can only really be speculated. However, the publication of this work under Hara's supervision provides some clues. *Ōshū Sanjin Sekijō Enzetsu* is available to view online in its entirety on Japan's National Diet Library website (Nakai, 1896). It begins with an introduction written by Hara Takashi, who describes the publication as being a collection of talks that Nakai gave to Hara himself in the spring of 1894. A quick scan of the contents pages gives an idea of the topics that Nakai discusses. He begins with issues raised at the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, such as a discussion on the subject of Japan's constitutional government and its comparison to western nations. There is another section about the Meiji oligarchy, and another about the development of the Japanese navy. The publication also talks about the Emperor, Imperial rule and its connection to the Japanese people. Nakai also discusses the aristocracy and then goes on to talk about the preservation of artefacts of antiquity. He was, after all, a close friend of Tokyo National Museum founder and former Satsuma samurai, Machida Hisanari who had established the Tokyo National Museum as the first museum in Japan in 1872. The two men had been very close when they were both in Britain in 1866-67. Machida was one of the members of the Satsuma student group who travelled secretly to Britain in 1865. In *Ōshū Sanjin Sekijō Enzetsu*, Nakai also talks about Japan's financial issues and other areas of political interest. It is a work that has, thus far, largely been ignored by historians and other scholars. Perhaps it has only been regarded as the ramblings of an old man, but like Nakai's other publications, it is very telling of the trends of the times, and therefore, an important historical document.

Katsube Mitake's 1978 publication, *Ōja to Dōkeshi*, which is now out of print, is written in two parts and is entirely dedicated to the lives of Nakai Hiromu and Hara Takashi. The first part concerns Hara Takashi and the second is about Nakai Hiromu. It is written in the style of a novel with storytelling-like prose and dialogue. Oddly, it merely describes certain episodes in the lives of each of these two men, and does not go into great detail about their relationship. There are only three pages out of a total of 268 which talk about the relationship of these two men, and it only describes how they were related due to Hara's marriage to Nakai's eldest daughter Sadako. The book paints a comical picture of Nakai and his drunken escapades in which he sometimes got into brawls with other members of the parties he attended. These anecdotes have been described in several popular books dating from the Meiji period. The books portray various anecdotes about elite members of Meiji society. The way they describe their activities is akin to the gossip magazines that discuss famous people in today's modern world.

Many Japanese historians have studied and written about Hara Takashi and his importance to Japanese political history, and Nakai usually receives several mentions in these works, but a thorough examination of the relationship between Hara and Nakai has yet to be made. A thorough study of *Ōshū Sanjin Sekijō Enzetsu* would probably be a good place to start, but as noted above this publication has mostly been ignored thus far. It has never been republished and although it is available online it has not been referenced by many scholars as of yet.

## 8. A Network of Key Figures

The old adage, "it's not what you know, it's who you know," rings especially true when considering the life of Nakai Hiromu. Certainly, as this paper has demonstrated, he had many strong connections within the new Meiji government. Being from the castle-town of Kagoshima and being familiar with the numerous great Satsuma men such as Saigō Takamori, Ōkubo Toshimichi among others, it is perhaps quite natural that Nakai would have had the many acquaintances that he did. Evidence of this can be seen in the already mentioned variety of letters sent to and from him between people such as Itō Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, Ōyama Iwao, and so on, but also one piece of very concise evidence can be seen in two photograph albums, which are now kept in the Kyoto National Museum. These are called the Iguchi Albums because they were in the care of Iguchi Shinsuke, a Kyoto merchant, for some time before being donated to the Kyoto National Museum.

In these albums there are many photographs of the numerous late-Edo and Meiji period 'celebrities', such as Sakamoto Ryōma, Kido Takayoshi, and others. At the time, photographs such as these were used as a type of calling card, somewhat akin to the *meishi*, name cards, that are a familiar part of Japanese business culture today. The albums containing these photographs are kept in the storerooms of the Kyoto National Museum, and are not available for regular viewing. Curator, Miyakawa Teiichi has given a brief description of them in his work, *Ryōma wo Yomu Tanoshisa* (2003). It should also be noted that the only photograph of a female in

the collection was in recent years discovered by Japanese historians to be that of Oryō, the woman recorded as being the wife of Sakamoto Ryōma.

This paper has looked at Nakai's connection with men of three of the main domains responsible for pushing for the end of Tokugawa rule and re-establishing the power of the emperor; namely, Satsuma, Chōshū and Tosa, as well as briefly examining Nakai's connection with Hara Takashi, Nakai's son-in-law. However, Nakai was well connected with many other members of the Meiji elite. Some of the other figures of that time with whom Nakai was associated with include, for example, the Meiji Emperor. The paper has already noted the well-recorded episode in which Nakai, in a drunken stupor, left an impression on the emperor. The story is told in several texts from the Meiji period. The emperor is reported to have said something like, "Oh, Nakai is up to his usual antics, again," and this demonstrates the level of familiarity Nakai shared with the emperor. Another hint regarding the closeness Nakai had with the emperor and the imperial family is Nakai's written works regarding the imperial system. As noted above, Nakai wrote a section regarding the imperial family in his posthumously published, *Ōshū Sanjin Sekijō Enzetsu*. In 1883, he also wrote a proposal paper for the Meiji government on the rules of etiquette within the imperial household, its dignity, the debt of gratitude and improvement in education regarding the imperial family as well as its connection to the Japanese people. This was published in a volume edited by Itō Hirobumi, which was published in 1935 and is available to view online on the National Diet Library website (Itō, 1936: 434-443).

Another Meiji notable that Nakai was friendly with, but managed to perhaps upset is Narushima Ryūhoku (1837-1884). He was a well-known scholar and Meiji intellectual. Of him, Nakai is recorded as having said, "There are many things that are topsy-turvy in this world. Here the horse has a rounder face than its rider!" (Shōu, 1895: 88). In Nakagawa Katsuichi's (1862-1913) *Kinsei Ijin Hyakuwa* published by Shiseidō in Tokyo in 1912, pages 96-98 give some anecdotes on Nakai Hiromu and page 95 tells the Narushima story. In addition, this story about Narushima is also given in Machida Gentarō's *Kokkei Tokugawa Meiji-shi* (1907) on page 202-203. Notably, in the text by Nakagawa, there is also clear furigana giving the reading of Nakai's given name as "Hiromu". In the work by Machida, the furigana gives the reading 'Kō' for the character 'Hiromu'. Additionally, a photograph of Narushima, showing his supposedly long face, can be seen in the online archives of the Japanese National Diet Library (NDL, b). Certainly, upon seeing the photograph of Narushima it is understandable why Nakai would come up with such an outrageous and rude outburst, but his comment may well have offended Narushima. However, Narushima was still kind enough to write commentary for Nakai's work *Man'yu Kitei*, and Nakai's jibe might be put down to the typical sort of banter that may occur between good friends such as the earlier example of the letter from Itō Hirobumi. Indeed, this episode gives a good demonstration of Nakai's character stemming from similar stories of his childhood, as mentioned in the Itō Chiyū text about him being quite a mischievous child.

Another figure Nakai would have been acquainted with was Doshisha University founder, Joseph Hardy Neesima (1843-1890). How close the two were is not very clear, and needs further research done, but Nakai

donated money for a student scholarship, which is still available today for students of Doshisha University to apply for. It is now known as the Mizusaki Kiichi Scholarship, named after the student at Doshisha that Nakai originally supported financially, and who himself went on to provide scholarships for Doshisha students.

To reiterate, Nakai left the impression of a very jovial and fun character to be around. He was often the one requested to organize a party of any kind. As already noted, Ernest Satow describes him as such in his work *A Diplomat in Japan*; he calls him “our cheery little friend Nakai” (Satow, 2000: 353) and says,

“He was a very cheery and gay personality, always ready for any kind of fun and jollity, and when an entertainment had to be got up, it was to him that its organization and conduct were entrusted. In this way he earned the nickname of *Gaimushō no taikomochi*, ‘jester of the Foreign Department’” (324).

## 9. Sociability and a Connection to the Rokumeikan

In his day, Nakai Hiromu was a well-known and clearly well-loved figure among his peers. His choosing the name for the Rokumeikan therefore, is very appropriate. Many famous Japanese Meiji period personalities were on friendly terms with him and he was well liked by the many foreign visitors to Japan at the time. The paper has already demonstrated how much Nakai was appreciated by the British government for his actions in saving the lives of the Queen’s representatives in the Nawate Incident of 1868. Both Harry Parkes and Ernest Satow gave high praise for Nakai’s heroics in that tragic affair. Algernon B. Mitford, or Lord Redesdale as he was later known, also praises Nakai’s good character in a number of his publications. In his work *The Garter Mission to Japan* of 1906, he also gives his account of when, after several years, he returned to Japan only to learn that Nakai Hiromu had already passed away. Mitford tells us of his going out of his way especially, to visit Nakai’s grave because he had such fond memories of him:

*Thursday, March 1.* — We had some hours in hand this morning. I was anxious to go and see the graves of my two friends, Governor Nakai Kōzō and Marquis Kido. General Kuroki very kindly insisted on accompanying me, for both had been friends of his as well as of mine. Governor Nakai especially was a fellow-clansman, a Satsuma man. The latter and his wife lie buried in the beautiful park of the temple of Tōfukuji, south of the city, at the foot of the Eastern hills. Across a mountain torrent which runs through the temple enclosure, surrounded by a grove of bamboos, cherry-trees, maples, and pines, lie the graves, carefully tended, lovingly decked with fresh flowers in little bamboo vases, to which I added my small tribute. Poor Nakai! He was a small man, but he had the heart of a lion, and he risked his life, as I have already told, to save ours. He was one of the merriest of men, always joking, always ready with some witty thought which would set a whole company laughing. And what men they were with whom Satow and myself

spent so many happy evenings in the old time — the men who helped to make the new Japan!  
— Kido, Komatsu, Gotō, Nakai, Terashima, Okubō, Okuma, Inouyé. Only the last two left alive  
to-day. (Mitford, 1906: 120-121).

From Mitford's writing, it is clear that he was fond of Nakai. His description of him as having the heart of a lion and always joking is in keeping with the picture of him painted by other contemporaries of Nakai's, both Japanese and British. It is also important to notice in this quote that Mitford lists Nakai's name alongside the other key figures who are recognised more prominently to have influenced the path of Japanese history. This demonstrates the clear influence that Nakai himself also had on Japanese history and the input he gave to developing his country. All of the other names in the list receive frequent attention in Japanese history books today. Only Nakai's name is not so well recognised.

This section of the paper will consider the role of the Rokumeikan, a symbol of the friendly, equal-footed relations the Japanese hoped to entertain with the rest of the world. The building is also symbolic of the personal relations between the many famous figures in Meiji period Japan. The Rokumeikan building was completed in 1883, the year before Nakai Hiromu became governor of Shiga Prefecture and the year that Nakai's daughter, Sadako, married the future "prime minister from common stock", Hara Takashi (1856-1921).

Before looking at the Rokumeikan, however, in order to examine Nakai's personal connections with the many high-ranking, and other officials of the time, it is necessary to track back in time, and examine Nakai's early years as a young boy. A key source for that is the text in Itō Chiyū's *Kaiketsuden*. As already mentioned, Chiyū put this text together upon receiving a draft of the text from Nakai Hiromu's younger half-brother, Yokoyama Eitarō. Therefore, the source of the information is a close relative. However, it should also be taken into account that Eitarō was quite a few years younger than Nakai and could not therefore have been witness to the very early childhood years of Nakai. No doubt therefore, Nakai himself, or possibly their father Eisuke, told Eitarō the stories of Nakai as being somewhat of a wild child. With a lack of solid documentation, there is no way of telling whether the stories are true or otherwise, but again the stories demonstrate the memories of the people that knew him and the impression, or influence, he left on them. According to the text by Chiyū, Nakai was largely raised by his grandmother on his father's side. He made great progress in his studies of the Chinese writings as a boy, but he also got into a lot of mischief. On one occasion, he sneaked some poisonous sulphur into a chicken shed, which caused all the chickens to die. Also, according to the Chiyū text, Nakai is said to have been a bit of a ruffian and a bullyboy as a child. However, his grandmother would leave him to it, and never scolded him. One day, in order to try to curb his behaviour, Nakai's teacher in the Chinese classics, a man called Imafuji Shinzaemon, gathered Nakai and his friends together and forced them all to sit down and study very hard. It was around the end of the autumn season when the persimmon fruits were ripe. According to the anecdote, the young Nakai Hiromu suddenly jumped up from his studies and plucked a persimmon fruit from the tree of the neighbouring house. He then calmly

went and sat back down to his studies whilst munching away on the fruit, leaving his teacher, Imafuji, dumbfounded. Tales such as these may be typical of young boys and their mischief, but in some ways, this sense of mischief never left Nakai even as an adult. As Mitford and Satow have both noted, Nakai was a fun character and the 'life and soul' of any party, being the jester and always making people laugh. It is not difficult to recognise that Nakai made friends easily and he clearly had a great many friends in later life.

Thanks to his experience abroad, Nakai at one time, worked for the Foreign Department, and was always in some capacity involved with the welcoming of foreign representatives to Japan. When the former US president Ulysses S. Grant came to Japan in 1879, he stayed in the Enryōkan, as the Rokumeikan was not yet built. On one occasion, he was entertained with a lavish party at the Shimadzu family residence in Tokyo where, according to Itō Chiyū, Nakai perhaps left a bad impression on Grant by getting into the aforementioned drunken brawl with Nishimura Shigeki (Itō, 1929: 249-250).

Nakai Hiromu is understood to have chosen the name "Rokumeikan" for the building. Nakai, as already mentioned, was a close friend of Inoue Kaoru and he was also the former husband of Inoue Kaoru's wife Takeko who later became known as one of the "flowers of the Rokumeikan". It was Inoue Kaoru who asked Nakai to come up with a good name for the building.

Nakai Hiromu was well known for his skill and knowledge of Chinese poetry, and he enjoyed both reading and writing it. The name of the Rokumeikan building comes from a poem in the collection of poems in the *Shi Jing* or "Classic of Poetry", one of the Five Classics (Wu Jing, which also includes the famous *I Ching* or 'Book of Changes') of ancient Chinese literature. The *Shi Jing* is recognised to be the earliest existing collection of Chinese poems. The poem from which the name Rokumeikan comes, was translated by the British scholarly expert on China and Japan, Arthur Waley. The poem is published in his "Book of Songs" (1937), No. 138, *The 'Ways of Chou' are Foreign Ways*. In addition, *The Deer Cry Pavilion* (1968) by Pat Barr quotes the Arthur Waley translation. It goes as follows:

Yu, yu, cry the deer  
Nibbling the black southernwood in the field.  
I have a guest.  
Let me play my zither, blow my reed-organ,  
Blow my reed-organ, trill their tongues,  
Take up the baskets of offerings,  
Here is a man that loves me  
And will teach me the ways of Chou. (Barr, 1968:13).

The work by Pat Barr entitled *The Deer Cry Pavilion* is somewhat misleading in its title. The content of the book delivers little actual reference to the Rokumeikan building itself. However, Barr explains "my book has been named after the *Rokumeikan* (The Deer Cry Pavilion), a social centre opened in Tokyo in 1883" (Barr,

1968: 12), and the content of Barr’s book looks at the “railway men, schoolmasters… travellers, missionaries… diplomats… writers and consuls” (7), a variety of different foreign residents in Japan between 1868 and 1905. Although there is little direct discussion of the Rokumeikan, Barr uses the English name for it perhaps as a representative structure for socialising for the various elements of both international and Japanese society in Japan during those years. The name, *The Deer Cry Pavilion* was the English translation for the Japanese word, *Rokumeikan*. Another translation of the name into English is *Hall of the Baying Stag*, which has also been used in other texts. However, in recent years many writers simply maintain the Japanese name for clarity’s sake, which this paper also does.

Nakai’s choice for the naming of the Rokumeikan is well considered when examining the purpose for which the structure was originally built. Nakai Hiromu’s gift for naming things can also be seen in his creation of the Japanese word *bōnenkai*, or “end-of-year-party” (literally “forgetting the year party”). In his first travel journal, *Seiyō Kikō Kōkai Shinsetsu* (Nakai, 1928), Nakai uses the word *bōnenkai* to describe the party he participates in with fellow passengers onboard one of the ships taking him to Britain, and this is believed to be the first usage of this word. The late Edo and early Meiji periods saw a plethora of new words to describe different things enter into the Japanese lexicon as the country came to learn of many new concepts and ideas from the western world. Again, with the naming of the Rokumeikan, his genius for language can be observed. His choice of the word *rokumei* demonstrates how well-versed Nakai was in the Chinese Classics. *Rokumei* is the sound of the crying deer noted at the outset of the poem. In Waley’s translation, it is the ‘yu, yu’ at the beginning of the poem. It is clear to see why Nakai chose this particular poem when we read the poem in full, whilst keeping in mind, the purpose of the Rokumeikan building. Nakai understood this poem to be one expressing the receiving and entertaining of foreign guests. The concept of being taught “the ways of Chou”, or “the foreign ways”, also demonstrates the idea that Nakai recognised the Rokumeikan as a symbol of learning from western ways in order for Japan to be recognised as a modern civilised nation. Meiji Japan had a strong desire to learn about western industrial, political, educational and other methods of running society in order to be on par with western standards, and to be recognised by western nations as an equal. Therefore, the wording of the poem in the *Shi Jing*, which Nakai chose to quote from, expresses exactly the purpose of the Rokumeikan building; that is, to entertain foreign guests and to learn from them. The Rokumeikan certainly did serve its purpose and was successful in that. Inoue Kaoru, and Japan as a whole, might not have been successful in renegotiating the Unequal Treaties during the Rokumeikan years, but Japan was successful in entertaining foreign guests, although some like Pierre Loti were unappreciative (see Rosenfeld’s 2001 translation of Loti’s *Un bal à Yeddo*), and Japan certainly also learned a great deal from the west during these years.

Although they became highly criticised by the general public as a waste of money that could be spent to help more in Japanese society, the parties at the Rokumeikan were one of the ways elite society could mingle and share ideas and influence. This author is yet to find direct evidence that Nakai Hiromu attended parties at the

Rokumeikan, but he was no doubt in attendance since he named the building and was close with Inoue Kaoru whose idea it was to build it. The Rokumeikan building is no longer in existence. It was demolished in 1941, and now only a marble plaque commemorates where it once stood opposite Hibiya Park on ground upon which now stands the Hibiya U-1 Building (or NBF Hibiya Building). The Rokumeikan building was a space for bringing together the important figures of Meiji high society and the international community and guests. As such it was an important venue, as Dallas Finn eruditely explains,

To the government, such a building probably seemed well justified considering Tokyo's lack of Western-style hotels, clubs, and auditoriums. The number of official visitors and the need to impress the Western world had increased, particularly since Inoue had begun treaty negotiations in Tokyo with the Western powers. Using a building like the Rokumeikan to entertain foreign officials would demonstrate Japan's modernity. It would also provide a place for influential Japanese to practice the social skills needed for dealing with foreigners: giving toasts, speaking foreign languages, playing whist, smoking cigars, and even doing a bit of ballroom dancing, a daunting exercise that might put them in the arms of foreigners of the opposite sex. To deal with this peril, dancing classes were set up briefly under a foreign instructor (Finn, 1995: 97).

The dancing, playing whist, giving toasts and smoking cigars were Victorian era western trends that were an essential background to the ability to negotiate and associate with the international community. Nakai himself, along with a number of the Meiji government elite had had first-hand experience of this sort of western culture that was taken for granted. However, for many of the Japanese, particularly for many of the women who were no longer the *okusan* (lady indoors), which in traditional Japanese culture had been in the home and did not venture out to attend such public events as their counterparts in the western world did, the Rokumeikan was a useful practical training ground to help them enter western-style society norms. It was also a place to influence and be influential.

## 10. Conclusion

As this paper has attempted to demonstrate, Nakai Hiromu had many strong connections with several well-known figures of the late Edo and early Meiji eras. He never rose to great heights of fame himself, and as has been suggested, this was partly a condition of his own choosing. As he notes in one of his poems in his first travel journal (English translation in Robinson, 2013: 281), he envied his friend who lived a simple life in the comfortable environment of the countryside, and he seemed to wish for such peace and quiet for himself. Unfortunately perhaps for him however, he was given responsible roles within government circles thanks to the strong connections he had with the top leaders of the Meiji government. He was also glad to help others, such as Hara Takashi who wished to climb the professional ladder of success, or to help those in financial need to get a good education like Mizusaki Kiichi at Doshisha University, but Nakai does not appear to have

wanted such glory for himself. He simply wanted to enjoy a comfortable, simple life.

He influenced many of the late Edo and early Meiji period notables with his written proposal papers and books and sharing his knowledge of the western world. His close and personal relationships with big names in Meiji politics such as Itō Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, and Ōkubo Toshimichi gave the advantage of gaining higher office, but he was not interested in becoming a big name himself. From the letters and documents he left behind, a picture emerges of a man in a position able to gain political advantages, but not displaying such ambitions. Nakai was the entertainer, the jester, but he also had a lot of knowledge and ideas to share with his friends and acquaintances, the elite members of Meiji period Japanese society.

Influence is a difficult area to study particularly in the field of history because the documents and letters are not always available, either having been destroyed or lost. Some do re-surface, being dug out of long-lost archives or personal collections, and the historical picture is given some more detail for modern generations to learn about. It may be that such documents or letters of Nakai's re-surface and the world can learn more about his connections and influence. However, there are plenty of letters and publications that he has done that are freely available and have even been put into print already. A deeper investigation will no doubt reveal a better understanding of the role Nakai played. This area of investigation requires much further in-depth study and the current paper has only scratched the surface giving examples of the networks that Nakai had. However, this brief introduction to the topic of Nakai's network and his influence on the Meiji elite has made it clear that this is one reason why Nakai Hiromu should not be forgotten by the history books. He was clearly a key player, not always a willing one and an often entertaining one, albeit a behind-the-scenes one. A further in-depth examination of Nakai's individual connections is necessary. His connection to Hara Takashi, his one-time son-in-law has been examined to some extent, but even that connection does require further study. Indeed, an examination (and English translation) of the many letter collections, writings and publications that Nakai produced and that were produced posthumously will be the next task of this author for future research.

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