

**An Imperial Vision:
Nihon Fūkeiron (On the Landscape of Japan,
1894) and Naturalized Nature***

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Nihon fūkeiron (On the Landscape of Japan) appeared in October 1894 and became an instant bestseller of Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927). It marked an important moment in the competing discourses on Japan's national and cultural identity during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Along with Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957), Kuga Katsunan (1857-1907), Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945) and others, Shiga Shigetaka debated the meaning of Japanese identity contesting the Japanese government's Westernizing tendencies following the Meiji Restoration of 1868. By advocating the preservation of *kokusui* (national essence) as the foundation of Japanese identity--which Shiga equated with the English word "nationality"--Shiga highlighted the geographic distinctiveness of the Japanese archipelago as the locus for Japan's *kokusui* which permeated in his *Nihon fūkeiron*. Published immediately following the outbreak of the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Shiga's treatise attracted both critical attention and enormous popular support. The popularity of the text contributed to a timely intervention in public discourse as part of a concerted movement to create a unified atmosphere of national togetherness. In the following, I examine both the textual and visual components of *Nihon fūkeiron*, and argue that this text of 1894 is the embodiment of a vision of the Japanese Empire.

Shiga was regarded as one of the three most prolific writers of the day along with Tōkai Sanshi (1852-1922) and aforementioned Tokutomi Sohō. His eloquent writing produced the second and the

third editions of *Nihon fūkeiron* by March 1895.¹ His writing, which employs heavy poetic expressions from classical Chinese, described the particular mechanisms observed in climate, ocean currents, atmospheric influences, and other aspects of geography. Thus, his text generates vivid poetic imagery, rolling rhythm and movement in his narrative. The illustrations, carefully following the evocatively written narrative, allow the readers to reflect on the prose and confirm their understanding by looking at the visualized images of it. The text also offers charts listing the yearlong humidity and temperature among others, and maps depicting the yearly precipitation, the directions of the wind, and the locations of volcanoes. These visualizations of natural features help the reader understand the narrative, which discusses at length the varieties of winds, ocean currents, and climate as the essential factors for producing the beautiful landscape of Japan.

Among the visualizations which appear in *Nihon fūkeiron*, a map entitled “*Nihonkoku*,” (the country of Japan) stands out in the beginning section of this text. It is the ultimate valorization of the compositions of the beautiful landscape of Japan (Figures 1-3). Couched in the images of nature and the language of science, as the legend exemplifies, the map presents a configuration of the beautiful Japanese archipelago. The land mainly consists of volcanoes, granite, ocean currents, and the five key treaty ports, and these items seem to be the defining elements which mark the unparalleled beauty in

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¹ In fact, within the ten-year period following its first publication, fifteen editions were added, and critics and geographers continued to write numerous reviews of the work. For example, see Katō Norihiro, *Nihon fūkeiron* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000), 185-186, and Kojima Usui, “Kaisetsu” in Shiga Shigetaka, *Nihon fūkeiron* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1937), 5-7.

Japanese landscape. However, a question immediately comes to mind: why the treaty ports? How could the treaty ports contribute to making beautiful landscapes in the same ways that volcanoes and granite might? The very mix of natural and political features — volcanoes *and* politically charged treaty ports which symbolically “opened” the country of Japan to the West in the 1850s—seems to demand further examination of this map within the text that Shiga produced. Moreover, the ways in which the author conceptualized Japan within the space of “*Nihonkoku*” exhibit his tendency to include the Kurile Islands, the Ogasawara Islands (also known as the Bonin Islands), and the Ryūkyū Islands. Knowing that these are the islands that the Meiji government forcefully annexed into Japan’s territory only in the 1860s and 1870s, Shiga’s conceptualization of Japan’s physical and cultural boundaries requires more close reading of the map as a key visual text that the author included in his bestseller.

Shiga’s vision of landscape—a grandiose beauty embedded in the natural world that moved away from established Confucian aesthetic conceptions of moral goodness—has attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention. Especially, *Nihon fūkeiron* has drawn much interest, and indeed the critical analysts of the text have tackled varying aspects of its content. In fact, the transformation in the ways in which Japan’s space is represented can be viewed as one of the most innovative aspects of Shiga’s work.² For instance, Katō

² For example, see Kamei Hideo, “Chimongaku no keifu,” *Meiji bungakushi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003): 81-101; Katō, *Nihon fūkeiron*; Richard Okada, “‘Landscape’ and the Nation-State: A Reading of *Nihon fūkei ron*,” Helen Hardacre with Adam L. Kern eds., *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 1997): 90-107; Ōmuro Mikio, *Shiga Shigetaka ‘Nihon fūkeiron’ seidoku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003); Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (University of California Press, 2001); Yamamoto Norihiko and Ueda Toshimi, *Fūkei no seiritsu: Shiga Shigetaka to ‘Nihon fūkeiron’* (Osaka: Kaifūsha, 1997).

Norihiro (popularly known as Katō Ten'yō), writes that Shiga presented the scenic views (*keikan*) of Japan as “landscape” (*fūkei*) in “a way that was unknown” to the contemporary readers.³ Similarly, Richard Okada highlights the decisive change in perception that appeared in *Nihon fūkeiron*, which shifted from the former aesthetic and literary codes that were attributed to religious values to physical space depicted through scientific and technical language.⁴ In fact, Shiga, throughout the text, contrasted traditional Japanese views that are symbolized in the illustrated guidebooks of *meisbo zue* (illustrated views of famous places) with the image of the Japanese Alps epitomized in the Western style landscape. As Kären Wigen highlighted, Shiga’s ability to synthesize “past and present, East and West, aesthetics and science” and to forge a prime site for the “geographical enlightenment” was of key importance to the success for *Nihon fūkeiron*.⁵

As many scholars have demonstrated, while both traditional and Western elements coexist in *Nihon fūkeiron*, the text shows that the author was bringing about a new way to perceive landscape through the illustrations, writing style, layout, and quotations that the text included. In short, the significance of *Nihon fūkeiron* amounts to the presentation of the new relationships between man and space as well as of the new realities of Japan during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The power of Shiga’s text and its lasting influence on the “geographic enlightenment,” therefore, cannot be understood without considering the visual elements in his narrative. In this

³ Katō, *Nihon fūkeiron*, 186.

⁴ Okada, “‘Landscape’ and the Nation-State,” 94.

⁵ Kären Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 31 (2005), 6.

regard, maps hold vital importance because they are never innocent or neutral, but always woven with particular codes.⁶ Shiga's map, too, then, is a crucial tool to investigate his imperial vision that seemed to be ingrained in his text. However, despite many significant works on Shiga that are available today, his "*Nihonkoku*" map has not received sufficient scholarly attention. The lack of interrogation into his maps may derive from the fact that the map appears in various editions of the text inconsistently. In fact, for some reason, some editions of the publication do not even list the map of "*Nihonkoku*."⁷ Nevertheless, the map of "*Nihonkoku*" should be viewed as one of the key element of the text that occupies a vital place and requires further analysis in order to understand Shiga's text fully. For example, the map that appeared in the fifteenth edition of the text which was published in 1903 was entitled "*Nihon teikoku*" (the Japanese Empire). In it, the newly acquired territory of Taiwan is squeezed into a space between the Kurile Islands, Ogasawara Islands, and the Ryūkyū Islands (Figure 3). As the scholars of cartographical practices have aptly argued, maps contain only selected items by the mapmaker, and mapping is a technique "to engender the re-shaping of the worlds in

⁶ Dennis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1992), 111 and Ronald P. Toby, "Mind Maps and Land Maps: the Cognitive Geography of 'the Village' in Tokugawa Japan" (unpublished manuscript), 1.

⁷ The map of "*Nihonkoku*" was inserted in the beginning of the section on "the Issue of Numerous Volcanic Rocks in Japan" in the first edition of *Nihon fūkeiron*. However, as Shiga kept changing the content in the upcoming issues, the location of the map within the text also shifted. For example, the second edition published in December 1894 did not contain the map, while the map reappeared in the section on "the Issue of Abundant Steam in Japan" in the third edition. The Kōdansha version, which presumably followed the third edition, however, inserted the map in the section on "the Issue of Various Changes in Climate and Ocean Currents in Japan." For more details about the differences in various editions, see, Kojima, "Kaisetsu," 5-6 and Ōmuro, *Shiga Shigetaka*, 231.

which people live.”⁸ Therefore, it is my contention that the map of “*Nihonkoku*” in this text, too, was creatively designed and particularly staged in the context of the new realities of imperial Japan.

In the following sections, I turn my attention to the map of “*Nihonkoku*” which appeared in the first edition of *Nihon fūkeiron*.⁹ Then, I will proceed to examine Shiga’s text in further details to explore how his prose corresponds with the map that I introduced. Finally, I will bring these analyses back to the context of the last decades of the nineteenth century and position Shiga and his vision of Japan in his particular historical time. By reading Shiga’s prose against the illustrations and maps in his work, I will demonstrate that the intersection between his textual and visual components captures the emergence of cultural nationalism that appeared in Japan during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Shiga’s nationalist claim championed the beautiful landscape observed in Japan exclusively, yet his aestheticism was flexible enough to include foreign elements, such as the similar views or sites found in Europe, as well as the volcanic mountains in the Kurile Islands which were not originally Japanese. I call this form of Shiga’s nationalism rooted in the geographic distinctiveness of Japan an “aesthetic nationalism,” and distinguish it from the later Japanism (*Nihonshugi*) that insisted on the purity of Japan’s cultural identity. The ambivalence found in Shiga’s aesthetic nationalism that centered on invasive beauty, nonetheless, powerfully appealed to his contemporary readers. Consequently, as reflected in the popularity of his text, the readers identified with the

⁸ James Corner, “The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention,” Denis Cosgrove, ed., *Mapping* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 213.

⁹ Throughout this paper, I use the first edition’s version of the map for the sake of consistency which is available in the digital library of Japanese National Diet Library, unless otherwise noted.

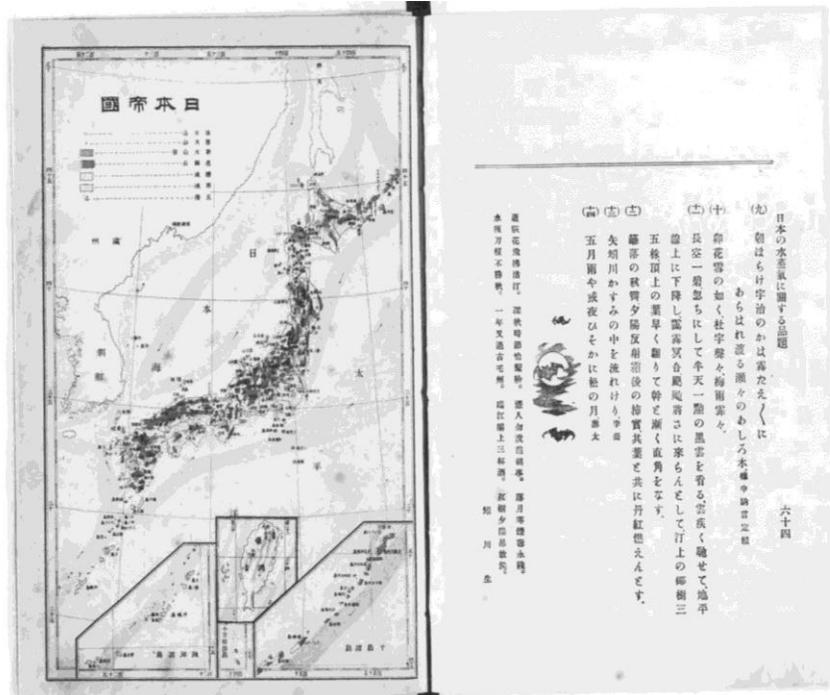


Figure 3. The map of “*Nihon teikoku*” (The Empire of Japan) inserted in the section of “Abundant Steam in Japan” of the fifteenth edition published in 1903. Note that the newly obtained Taiwan is included among the enlarged views of the other islands that were included in the earlier editions. Courtesy of the National Diet Library (<http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1150843>).

Valorizing the Japanese Archipelago: the Map of “Nihonkoku”
in *Nihon fūkeiron*

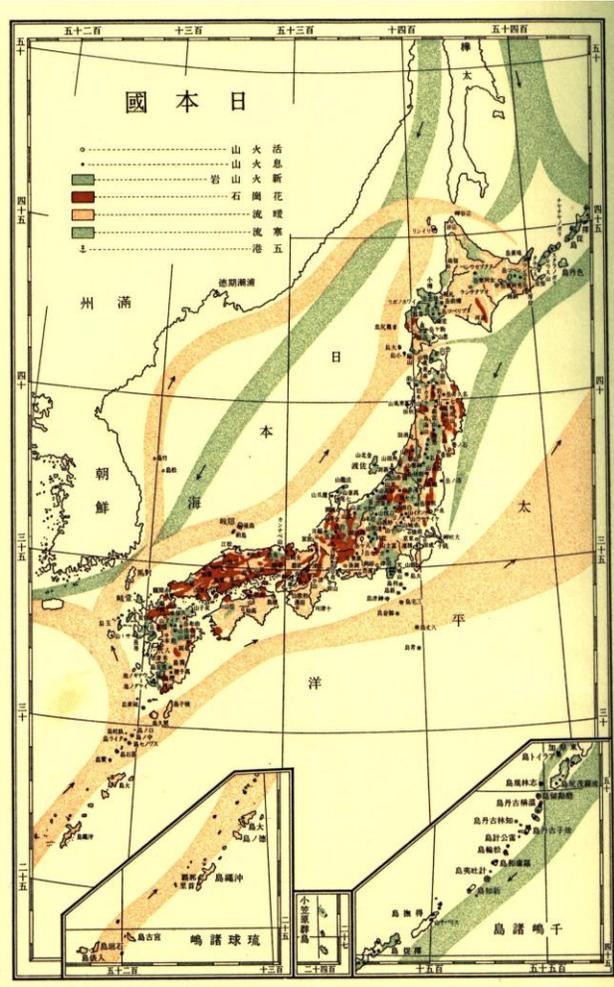


Figure 4. The map of “Nihonkoku” in (Reprinted in *Meiji bungaku zenshū* 37: *Seikyōsha bungakushū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1980).

Shiga's map of *Nihonkoku* portrays Japan accurately within a grid of latitude and longitude lines.¹⁰ It positions Japan in the center, surrounded by Sakhalin, Korea, and Manchuria (Figure 4). The neighboring areas remain blank while the Japan Seas, the Pacific Ocean, the Japanese archipelago with the enlarged sections of the "Ryūkyū shotō" (Ryūkyū Islands), "Chishima shotō" (Kurile Islands), and "Ogasawara shotō" (Ogasawara Islands) are labeled with symbols, colored in different zones, and arrows marking the directions of the winds. On the archipelago, there are numerous volcanic rocks that are both dormant and active. The intensity and density of these marks indicate the potential of volcanic explosions, which could destroy existing landscapes and transform the topographical surface of Japan. With the colors and symbols, one can also visualize the movement of the winds and the routes of the ocean currents. In particular, the orange and green broad zones of the ocean currents translate the dispelling energy beneath the ocean. One can imagine the steamy or icy air blowing above the roaring waves. What appear from this map, then, are natural motions and dynamic movements that are surrounding the archipelago.

A closer look at the map reveals that there are seven different keys in different colors. They densely mark the Japanese archipelago: the main island, the Shikoku island, the Kyūshū island, Hokkaidō island, and other islands shown in the enlarged sections, namely the Ryūkyū shotō, Chishima shotō, and Ogasawara shotō. The legend on the upper left corner of the map includes: 1) active volcanoes (*kakkaizan*), 2) inactive volcanoes (*sokkaizan*), 3) new volcanic rocks (*shin kasan'gan*), 4) granite (*kakōseki*), 5) warm ocean currents (*danryū*),

¹⁰ For the purpose of analyzing the detailed content of the map, I use the map of "Nihonkoku" from Shiga's *Nihon fūkeiron* as it was reprinted in the *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1980). To the best of my knowledge, only this *Meiji bungaku zenshū* version offers the colored map of "Nihonkoku."

6) frigid ocean currents (*kanryū*), and 7) five treaty ports (*gokō*). Even a quick glance confirms that the Japanese archipelago is heavily volcanic; especially the main island is marked in dark red to show granite and green new volcanic rocks. It is nearly impossible to distinguish which volcanoes are dormant and active, but the dark red and green colors confirm the ubiquity of volcanic soil. Hokkaidō and the Kurile Islands are also colored partly in green implying that these islands are rich in new volcanic rocks that could gradually form new volcanic mountains.

The orange and green are used to signal ocean currents, and the map portrays these currents moving perfectly over the Ryūkyū and the Kurile Islands, respectively. This topographic itinerary of ocean currents assures that these islands are parts of Japanese territory because they are within the travel routes of the same ocean currents and circulating winds that travel across this space where the archipelago is located. Also, while surrounding the archipelago generously, the ocean currents and winds move really closely along the neighboring shores of the Korean peninsula, northeastern China, the Sakhalin peninsula, to the chain islands between Hokkaidō and Russia. Taking it as natural phenomena, it is easily conceivable for readers to imagine that even slight shift in the routes of the currents and winds could impact the climatic conditions of these closely located neighboring areas. In this fashion, the map of “*Nihonkoku*” communicates the ideas of the energy and various movements that exist within the space where the archipelago is located. Then the map can be viewed as if it is suggestive of Japan’s interests in spheres of influence over its neighboring areas by portraying these winds and currents so closely running the shore of Vladivostok, the Korean peninsula, northern China, Sakhalin, and the chain islands between Japan and Russia.

Surrounded by all these moving forces from south to north, it is no surprise if suddenly the archipelago itself jumps. Dynamic leaps caused by the currents in the deep water might lead the archipelago

to jump toward Russia or Korea, while numerous volcanoes that are marked all over the archipelago could potentially explode to change the mountain formation. Such volcanic eruptions might melt the existing mountain ranges, merge some spaces, or invent new volcanic islands. The projection of these movements and potential destruction and renewal in landscape produces a sense of excitement associated with the energy and dynamism innately residing within the Japanese archipelago. Also by drawing the travel itineraries of wind and ocean currents on the map so skillfully—to almost touch the borders of neighboring nations—the map of “*Nipponkoku*” appears to be an embodiment of Japan’s imperial desires for expansion.

Returning to the map’s legend, the last symbol representing the five treaty ports (*gokō*) puzzles any critical reader of the map; these five ports are certainly different from the previous symbols that indicate the natural features. The ports of Nagasaki, Yokohama, Kōbe, Niigata, and Hakodate are known for their political significance attributed to the symbolic “opening” of Japan to trade with Western nations in the 1850s. These ports massively imported Western civilization and technologies into Japanese economy and society. The Meiji government launched rapid Westernization and modernization which cannot be separated from these ports. Thus, the symbolic meaning of these five treaty ports is the Westernization of Japan as a whole. Such transformation of Japan can be viewed as positive, turning Japan into a modern and industrialized society like the one in the West. However, it can be viewed as negative and these ports can be regarded as the origin of the destruction of traditional Japanese culture as well. Obviously, the inclusion of these five ports in the legend shows that the text endorses them as more than essential; they are defining elements of making the Japanese landscape beautiful. But how could the treaty ports contribute to the making or enhancing the natural beauty of Japan? What is the implication that these ports, which mediated the traffic of Western goods, knowledge, and people into the Japanese land are one of the

essential “natural” features for Japan’s beautiful landscapes? Perhaps, these questions need to be answered by looking at the text’s prose squarely which I turn to in the next section.

The Text: Galvanizing the Landscape in Western Knowledge and Poetic Language

By reading Shiga’s prose against the map, the intersection begins to emerge and reveal the flexible and also strategic nature of Shiga’s aesthetic nationalism. The following statement which appears in the beginning section of *Nihon fukeiron* designates the beauty of the Japanese landscape as unparalleled in the world:

Ōtsuki Bankei once expressed, “Truly beautiful rivers and mountains! And, that is where I belong.” Are there people who would not wax on about their homeland?...There was the village life of the indigenous people of Eskimo at the Chicago World Fair, and there were many indigenous people there at the Fair. They did not want to stay in Chicago but wanted to return to their homeland in the iceberg. How frail human emotions are! Who would not wax on about one’s own homeland? It is a natural notion. In case of Japan, however, there is only one reason for the Japanese to talk about “rivers and mountains” in the homeland. It is because beautiful “rivers and mountains” actually *do* exist in Japan, in an absolute sense. Foreign travelers find Japan the land of happiness (*gokurakudo*) in this world and think about it very hard why it is so. And they agree with Rai San’yō who wrote:

Observing the gradual dawn of spring, coming out cherry blossoms that surround entire Yoshino, Chinese (*morokoshi bito*) and Koreans (*koma bito*) altogether obtain the heart of the Yamato (*yamato gokoro*).

I think, looking around the Creations (*zōka*) that boundlessly spread throughout Japan, this masterwork of craftsmanship (*daiku no kyoku*) is gathered in Japan. And this

makes the landscape of Japan an unparalleled beauty on earth. There are reasons for the Japanese to talk about the beauty of mountains and rivers, which are:

1. There are varieties and various changes in climate and ocean currents in Japan.
2. There is an overabundant amount of steam (*suijōki*) in Japan.
3. There are numerous volcanic rocks (*kazari'gan*) in Japan.
4. The water erodes very violently in Japan.

Before explaining each of these....¹¹

In short, the longing for home is universal, but Japanese longing must be distinguished from such universal sentiments. For the Japanese, people speak about home and feel sentimental about it because there exists the beautiful landscape. The existence of Japan's unique and *absolute* sense of geographic beauty is made by the four climatic conditions and effects, namely 1) steam that is generated by the 2) changing climate and the ocean currents, 3) volcanic rocks and 4) process of water erosion. And the beauty generated by these natural phenomena makes the Japanese people proud of their country. That is to say, this aestheticism that derives from the natural beauty of the land is the essence of Japan's national identity, which everyone feels the same way.

Based on the four factors, the text first proposes to separate Japan into two regions: one facing the Japan Sea and another facing the Pacific Ocean. Then it is followed by a list describing differences observed in those two regions. As the map of "*Nihonkoku*" exhibited the different colors of ocean currents, the list effectively shows what differences can be observed. For instance, on the Japan Sea side, the direction of the wind is set, whereas on the Pacific Ocean side the

¹¹ The first edition of Shiga Shigetaka's *Nihon fūkeiron* (Tokyo: Seikyōsha, 1894), 1-3.

wind direction is not always the same.¹² All the differences are important because they constitute the varieties and various changes in climate, generating four seasons and allowing many different flowers, plants, animals, birds, and other living organisms to live on the archipelago. The text stresses the way different animals and flowers decorate the archipelago in different times of the year, which generates pretty sights and rich sentiments about seasons. Then, the narration shifts to explain the effects caused by various steams (*suijōki*) that produce a set of beautiful phenomena, such as a light from the sun reflecting the steam on leaves or water, misty showers, and fogs and haze. These are common poetic themes in ancient poetry, and, indeed, the text offers a long list of poems to demonstrate how the ancient poets sensitively noticed these subtle changes in nature. In a similar vein, the text continues to discuss the volcanoes as major factors that make the landscapes in Japan truly beautiful (*jumbi*). In this fashion, the narration describes how the varieties of climate and ocean currents affect the landscape and offers a lengthy explanation with poetic examples and excerpts from travel records.

The text in the first edition of *Nihon fūkeiron* includes the charts to show temperature and humidity, and portrays lovely views of haze or of sentimental fog. It also describes the intensity of volcanic eruptions and their energy bursting out. However, these descriptive explanations become much more effective in the second edition of the publication, in which the text structures the narrative differently within the three major aesthetic qualities: beauty (*bi*), elegance (*sbōsha*), and sublimity (*tettō*).¹³ In the second edition dated December 1894, the narration describes the quality of “elegance” which is represented in Japan’s autumn with the splendor of colored maple trees. The quality of “beauty,” on the other hand, is

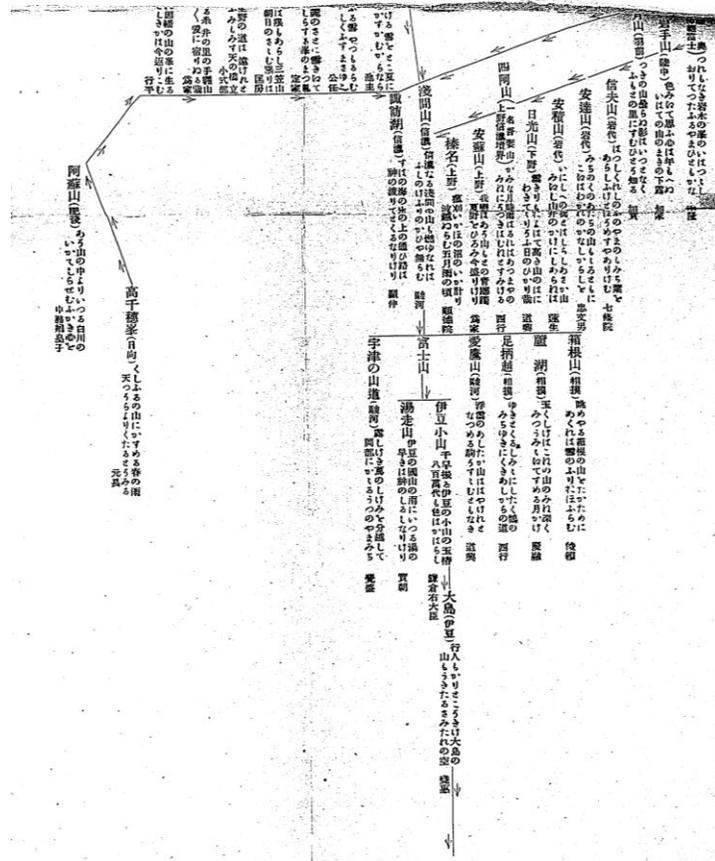
¹² Ibid., 3.

¹³ The second edition of Shiga Shigetaka’s *Nihon fūkeiron* (Tokyo: Seikyōsha, 1894), 3-7.

symbolized with Japan's spring when plums, cherry-blossoms, and other various flowers are in full bloom with bush birds (*uguisu*) flying. Captivating views of the fall and spring follow to give an imagination of these beautiful times. Equally, the third aesthetic quality *tettō*, which means the state of infinitely grand and dynamic (sublimity), is presented as the central element in making the Japanese landscape beautiful. In the first edition, the most space is given to the section on volcanoes, and the term *tettō* is used several times. The narration, however, is more focused on describing the grand and aggressive manner of volcanoes and the water eroding process. By using diverse words to express sublimity, such as *keikan* (strange view), *gōken no shō* (sight of bald and heroic), and *zesshō* (absolutely stunning), the text describes the process of the water corroding or lava and heat destroying the geographic surface.

The volcanoes embody the vitality of nature. The text declares that Japan is a nation of volcanic mountains, and volcanic mountains are another name for beautiful mountains.¹⁴ There follows a diagram after this section, starting with Mt. Iwaki in Aomori and ending with Mt. Aso in Kumamoto (Figures 5-6). Each mountain is identified with the location and an ancient Japanese *waka* poem to show how poets had been appreciating these mountains since the ancient era. However, the ancient poets called these volcanic mountains simply mountains, and regrettably none of these poems mentioned the energy or power of these volcanic mountains. Classic aesthetic sensibilities did not focus on the violent nature of volcanoes, and Shiga's text is introducing a new aesthetic sensibility, that is to say that sublime beauty is a defining characteristic of Japan's cultural identity.

¹⁴ Shiga, *Nihon fūkeiron* (First Edition), 56-59.



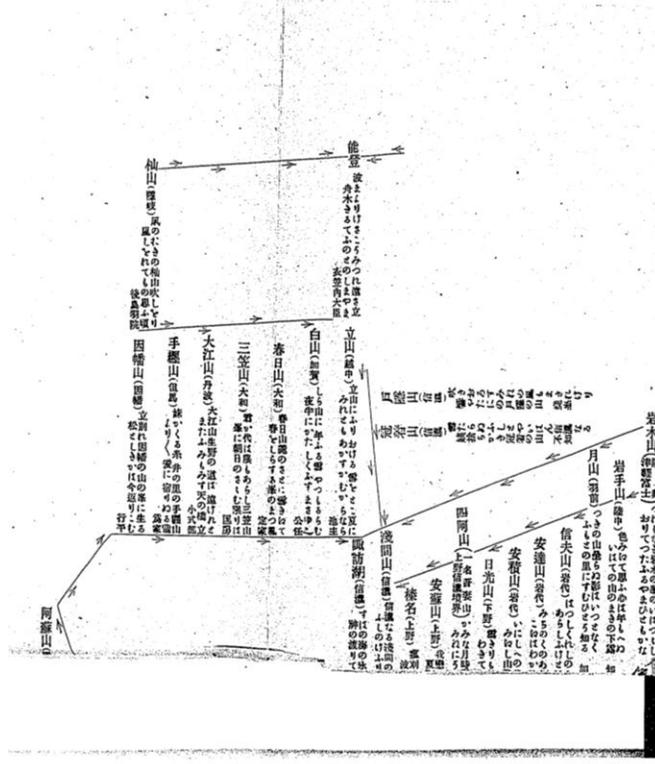


Figure 5-6. A diagram showing the mountains of Japan which classical poets had mentioned in their *waka* poems from Mt. Iwaki in Aomori to Mt. Aso in Kumamoto. The printing quality and readability of these diagrams improved over the course of new editions, and Shiga managed to place Mt. Fuji at the center of the diagram. Courtesy of the National Diet Library (<http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/762818>).

Shiga continued to list numerous volcanic mountains throughout the Japanese archipelago, starting with Mt. Fuji through the Kurile Islands, Hokkaidō, the mainland, and the southern part of Japan, including the Ryūkyū and Ogasawara Islands.¹⁵ The Kurile Islands are still in dispute between Japan and Russia even today while during the time of Shiga it was Japan's possession following the conclusion of the treaty of St. Petersburg in 1875. The description on the Kurile Islands reads:

Bursting out of the land of vitality, the Kurile Islands (Chishima rettō) emerged like an explosion. How virile (*gōken*) and vigorous (*rairaku*) of the sight of the Kurile Islands!...Countless small Fujis have arrived on these islands. The edgy surface of nearing mountains confronts the eye whereas the far away mountains sprouting up like bamboos...truly, this is at the height of breathtaking sight (*ikan*). The essence (*iki*) of Japanese landscape originates in volcanoes and volcanic rock. And, the essence of Japanese volcanoes and volcanic rock is located in the Kurile Island.¹⁶

Although unclear as to where the Kuriles burst out from, the passage still evokes a scene of natural birth accompanied by the sound of a loud explosion. The text throughout identifies many other volcanoes as Fuji A and Fuji B, just as here the Kurile Islands are called small Fujis. Volcanic mountains that are virile and vigorous are universal in Japan, presenting the strangely powerful views throughout the archipelago. Such gendered and sexualized descriptions in this passage, birthing mountains, “sprouting up like bamboo,” and phallic virile mountains thrusting vigorously, translate into vitality and motion as fearless and male. These words along with active verbs, such as “bursting out,” and emerging like an explosion, stand out to

¹⁵ Shiga, 63-98.

¹⁶ Ibid., 62-63.

the eye of the reader. The reading experience altogether, then, seems to translate into sharing the movement, power, strength, and courage that run through the furthest north of Japanese territory.

What is not focalized here, however, is the relevance of the place of origin of these volcanoes, which, in the case of the Kurile Islands, are not innately Japanese. Instead of complicating the issue of native origin, the focus is on the vitality and motion, and that is how the narration explains the spread of volcanic mountains throughout Japan. Without mentioning the fact that these islands were added to Japan only recently since the 1875 St. Petersburg treaty, the text focuses on projecting the idea that the volcanoes are ubiquitous in Japan, in particular, in the Kurile Island.

Two more diagrams that illustrate volcanoes in the Kurile Islands (Figure 7) and those of Japan (Figure 8) follow this section. Figure 7 presents the detailed facts such as the heights, location and relation to one another, and shape of these different volcanoes. As Shiga favorably called himself the Naturalist (*nōgakushi*) of Japan or Darwin of Japan, the illustration demonstrates a high mastery of the geography of the Kurile Islands and their mountains. Figure 8 introduces representative volcanoes found throughout in Japan by repeating that “beautiful mountains” (*meizan*) are always volcanoes in caption. Starting with the volcanoes that are found in northeastern Japan, the diagram flows from right to left, from up to down, and ends with the volcanoes found in southwestern Japan. The first volcano is depicted at the upper right of the diagram, which is a portrayal of Araitō (the Atlasova Island) in the Kuriles, located at the “northeastern tip of the Japanese Empire.” By laying them out, one by one, an image of a mountain, followed by a brief identification of the mountain, the diagram invites the readers to follow these image and words visually, which becomes the flow of reading this diagram. For instance, from the first Atlasova to the mountains in the upper right, one’s eyes move toward left, where the Oakan and Meakan Mountains in Hokkaidō are depicted. At the

same time, the short identification of the two mountains, that is, “[the mountains are in] the northeast from the mouth of the Ishikari River [which runs central west of Hokkaidō near Sapporo],” helps the readers locate themselves within the space of Hokkaidō. Then, the second row moves from left to right, listing the volcanoes in Hokkaidō, from Esan Mountain in a southwestern city Hakodate to Mt. Eniwa in the central west, moving from southwest toward the center of Hokkaidō. The next row starts with Iwaki Mountain in Aomori and comes to Mt. Fuji. The view of Fuji is captured from the Tōkaidō Road, elongating as if not to interrupt the continuous flow-like movement of the reader’s eyes. When the eyes reach the lowest left, which is also southwestern section of the diagram, Mt. Aso in southwestern Kumamoto prefecture receives the vision of the reader. Gradually the eye moves toward the eastward direction, both on the page and the map, passing a series of islands of Izu shotō and ends with Miharayama Mountain, the biggest mountain in the Izu Islands.

As shown above, the close reading of Shiga’s diagram along with his textual narrative leads to draw a sort of mental map of Japan in the minds of the reader. The reader’s eyes move from right to left, back and forth, in an uninterrupted manner. In the process, these volcanoes, with short explanations about their location and directions, begin to appear on the mental map of Japan and the readers are forced to maintain that mental map and order the rest of volcanoes in that mental map. A momentary period of reading the diagram then becomes an experience of spatializing Japan through these volcanoes. As the eyes move from one volcano to the next, from right to left on the two-dimensional diagram, readers are prompted to place these volcanoes onto a map in their mind. The mind cannot help but imagine these volcanoes in the space of the map of Japan to make sense of the diagram. Whether that map of Japan is Shiga’s map of “*Nihonkoku*” or the mental map that the reader might have, reading this diagram is a process of producing a

spatial narrative of Japan in which the Kurile Islands occupy an important part.

The inclusion of the volcanoes from the Kurile and the rest of Japan as altogether “the volcanoes of Japan” blurs the fact that some of these islands were only recently added to the territory of Japan. Also, their historical context of inclusion is erased in the process of imagining them as *Japanese*. In fact, the caption instructs the reader to refer to a section of the text in which the narration explains not only the location, volcanic activities, shape, and formations of the rocks in detail, but also how each of these volcanoes might be a part of bigger mountain range and mountain chains. By explicating the deeper connections and related nature of these volcanoes with one another, the narration reminds of the violent cycle of destruction and renewal process of volcanic eruptions, hinting at the continuous reproductive cycle in the Japanese landscapes.

the aftermath of harsh volcanic eruptions a new cycle of life begins, bringing renewed beauty to the one being destroyed.

Viewed in this light, Shiga's aesthetic nationalism aligns with the idea of natural selection. In fact, he had defined his view of national essence in these terms in the third issue of *Nibonjin* (the Japanese):

National essence (*kokusui*) has been preserved until today, and has been passed down to us *Yamato minzoku* in the last thousands and ten thousands years.... It has been refined, and carefully selected.... At the same time, there are other exterior factors that nurture a particular national essence. For example, changing surrounding environment (*igaibutsu*) that shapes the Japanese archipelago which is represented in the form of astronomy (*tenmon*), physical geography (*chimon*), climate (*fūdo*), weather (*kishō*), temperature (*kan'on*), humidity (*kanshitsu*), geology (*chishitsu*), allocation of sea and land routes (*suiriku no haichi*), mountain range (*sankei*), rivers (*kakei*), animals (*dōbutsu*), plants (*shokubutsu*), scenery (*keshiki*), and so on, and chemical responses (*kagaku-teki no hannō*), customs that continued over a thousand and ten thousand years, what one see and hear (*shichō*), and one's history....National essence, after going through changes in accordance with the environment and chemical reactions occurred in the land of Japan (*Nihon kokudo*), matures along with the process of reproduction and development of the *Yamato* people who preserved what they had inherited in the past thousand and ten thousand years and sophisticated it....Furthermore, national essence rightly adheres to the great principles of biology (*seibutsu-gaku no dai gensoku*).¹⁷

¹⁷ Shiga Shigetaka, "Nihonjin' ga kaihō suru tokoro no shigi o kokuhaku su," *Nibonjin* (April 18, 1888), 99.

In Shiga's view, a volcanic explosion might present a radically different view before and after, but the mountain remains there even if the shape is completely different. Similarly, the national essence of Japan "matures along with the process of reproduction and development of the *Yamato* people," meaning that the national essence stays with the future generations of the Japanese even if some "chemical reactions" transform it into a completely different, "sophisticated" form. These regenerations observe the "great principles of biology," and, whether the national essence is formless or with shape, its flexible nature always absorbs yet never being absorbed.

Indeed, Herbert Spencer's theory of social evolution, as well as Darwinian biological evolution, had powerful influence in Japan during the 1870s and 1880s, which went along well with a task of rebuilding Japan into a "Western" society.¹⁸ The ideas were especially prominent among the younger intellectuals, including Shiga, along with Tokutomi Sohō, Futaba Teishimei (1864-1909), Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), and Yamaji Aizan (1864-1917), who were part of a "new generation" in Meiji.¹⁹ They acquired Western technologies and liberal thoughts rapidly in college although they received the Confucian erudition at home when they were young. Along with reflecting social trends, Shiga was a geographer educated at the Sapporo Agricultural College (present-day Hokkaidō University),

¹⁸ Along the line of evolutionary theories, there were important books on geography, nation, and the world written by the major enlighteners in the Meiji era. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi's books, *Shōchū bankoku ichiran* (Catalogue of the World's Countries in the Palm of One's Hand, 1869) and *Sekai Kunizukushi* (Geography of Myriad Countries of the World, 1869) were used in schools, along with *Yochi shiryaku* (World Geography, 1870-1880) by Uchida Masao, *Chigaku kotobajime* (Introduction to Geography, 1870) by Matsuyama Tōan.

¹⁹ Kenneth B. Pyle, *New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

which was established specifically for the purpose of “colonizing” the land formerly known as Ezo through forceful “annexation” in 1869. Moreover, shortly after graduating from the college, Shiga had a rare experience of visiting the South Seas, including the Caroline Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, and Hawaii, where he witnessed imperial competitions and confrontations being practiced in a bloody manner.²⁰ Such experiences contributed to his serious consideration of Japan’s fate in the survival of the empire, while deepening his understanding of sense of place and the primacy of places in national consciousness.

Shiga’s acute awareness of the imperial competitions in the South Seas and ongoing Western presence and pressure in Japan since the 1850s shaped Shiga’s career as a public intellectual.²¹ In April 1888 Shiga founded the Seikyōsha (The Society for Political Education) with twelve other members and persistently criticized the government in their journal *Nihonjin* (The Japanese) for not protecting the interests for the people of the Japanese nation.²² He

²⁰ Masako Gavin, *Shiga Shigetaka 1863-1927: The Forgotten Enlightener* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001); Kamei Hideo, “*Nan’yo jiji kenkyū*,” *Hokudai hyaku nijūgo-nen shi: ronbun shiryō hen* (Sapporo: Hokkaidō University Press, 2003). See, also, Mita Hiroo, *Yamano shisōshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 59-60.

²¹ Kevin Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); James L. Huffman, *Creating A Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997); Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period* (Princeton University Press, 1985); Yukihiro Motoyama, *Proliferating Talent: Essays on Politics, Thought, and Education in the Meiji Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997); Nakanome Tōru, *Seikyōsha no kenkyū* (Kyōto: Shibunkaku, 1993); John D. Pierson, *Tokutomi Sobō, 1863-1957: A Journalist for Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Pyle, *New Generation in Meiji Japan*; Satō Yoshimaru, *Meiji nashonarizumu no kenkyū: Seikyōsha no seiritsu to sono shūben* (Tokyo: Fuyōshobō, 1998).

²² Other twelve members are: Miyake Setsurei, Sugiura Jūkō, Kikuchi Kumatarō, Inoue Enryō, Kaga Shūichi, Kon Sotosaburō, Matsushita Jōkichi, Miyazaki

also warned his fellow countrymen by publishing *Nan'yō jiji* (The Conditions in the South Seas, 1887), which was based on his ten-month experience in the South Seas with the Japanese navy. In it, he stated that Japan must become the “Britain of the East” (*tōyō no Eikoku*) by dominating the South Seas trade and becoming the leader in East Asia.²³ Shiga’s creation of *nan'yō* (the South Seas) was, in fact, more than the economic solution for Japan or rivalry against China. Rather, he created a conceptual space that generated “a room for non-Western colonial power.”²⁴ Thus far, Japan competed against the West, playing the same rules of the game. And yet Japan could not become the West within the Euro-centric colonial hierarchy where only the “colonizing West” and the “subjugated East” exist.²⁵ But creating the South Seas as a middle ground, Japan could ascend to halfway and have a subjugated other below, apart from the above, the colonizing West. In this manner, Shiga’s imperial vision was ingrained in his understanding of nation and geography, and his imperial vision is manifested as an aesthetic nationalism as it appears in *Nihon fūkeiron*.

Nonetheless, Shiga’s writing conceals the overt imperial desires, and, instead, has an effect that excited young readers. By

Michimasa, Shimaji Mokurai, Sugie Suketo, Tanahashi Ichirō, Tatsumi Kojirō when they found the group on April 3, 1888. Satō, *Meiji nashonarizumu no kenkyū*, 13; Nakanome, *Seikyōsha no kenkyū*, 6-7.

²³ The text also expresses his ambition that England is going to be “the Japan of the West” (*Seiyō no Nihon*) someday although Japan at that point is not yet capable of achieving that vision. Shiga Shigetaka, *Nan'yō jiji: Shiga Shigetaka zenshū*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shiga Shigetaka Zenshū Kankōkai, 1927), 53-54.

²⁴ Robert Thomas Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery: The Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame* (University of California Press, 2010), 22.

²⁵ Ibid.

focusing on the explication of the complex mechanisms that generate beautiful landscapes, *Nihon fūkeiron* presented landscape that many people endorsed as the core of their national identity. For instance, on the one hand, Kojima Usui (1874-1948), who actively promoted Shiga and his work, re-invented the Japanese Alps, and promoted the Alpine culture in Japan, expressed his fascination and awe-like sentiments he felt upon reading Shiga's *Nihon fūkeiron* for the first time.²⁶ On the other hand, Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930), who also graduated from the Sapporo Agricultural College, named Shiga the "Ruskin of Japan" in his review of *Nihon fūkeiron*.²⁷ Noting the similarity in depiction of beauty found in nature, Uchimura quotes lines from Shiga that describe pine trees in Japan and compares them with the lines which describe lichens and mosses from John Ruskin's (1819-1900) *Modern Painters* (1843). Just like Ruskin who discovered the beauty in nature, Uchimura states that Shiga located in the Japanese archipelago all the beauty in the world.

Although Uchimura criticized Shiga for his "patriotic bias," "the exaggeratory praises of Japanese landscape," and excessively nationalistic language reflecting the patriotic fever caused by the war,²⁸ Uchimura's positive remarks on Shiga's careful observations and his talent in expressing them in writing were similar to praises given to Shiga in the numerous reviews that appeared after the publication in 1894. Uchimura's equation of Shiga with Ruskin was, however, original and insightful, considering that both men had a profound influence in the realm of "geographic enlightenment" in their respective historical time. Both Shiga and Ruskin had the ability

²⁶ Wigen, "Discovering the Japanese Alps," 15-18; Kojima, "Kaisetsu," 7, 11.

²⁷ Uchimura Kanzō, "Shiga Shigetaka-shi cho *Nihon fūkeiron*," compiled in Shiga Shigetaka, *Nihon fūkeiron* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 363.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 365-367.

to capture the beauty in nature. They both understood the everyday lived-in landscape as “a fundamental concept central to a people’s sense of community, heritage, and nationhood” and shared the importance of everyday space in relation to the beauty in nature.²⁹ The first edition of *Nihon fūkeiron*, as I have analyzed, was all about explicating how such a space was generated climatologically, geologically, and geographically. By drawing insights from Ruskin’s vision of nature, beauty, and human within the natural world, I complete my analysis on Shiga’s aesthetic nationalism, deeply rooted in the beauty of the dwelling space of the Japanese people.

John Ruskin was an art critic while being an artist and poet. He also loved to climb mountains and to collect minerals and rocks. Heavily influenced by his evangelical mother, Ruskin held the idea that the external world reflects the ideal aesthetics of the Creator’s work. But more broadly, the belief that the image of God’s handiwork was the visible world was a prevalent idea at his time, which had originated in the European geographers prior to Ruskin. They had inherited the historical conception of the universe as a divine geometrical exercise that had started with *Timaeus*, a cosmological text by Plato.³⁰ Renaissance cosmographers, too, continued to develop the ways to “make visible, at each of these descending scales, the order and harmony, and the contents of creation.”³¹

While Ruskin shared this cosmographic vision, he held the position that artists, especially the landscape painter had to know the

²⁹ Brian S. Osborne, “Interpreting a nation’s Identity: Artists as Creators of National Consciousness,” Alan R. H. Baker and Gideon Biger eds., *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 230.

³⁰ Denis Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision: Seeing, Imagining, and Representing the World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 16-17.

³¹ Ibid.

“specifics of the natural world: ‘every class of rock, earth, and cloud, must be known by the painter with geologic and meteorologic accuracy.’”³² The landscape artist, whose task is to reproduce the ideal of Creator’s work, would fail to see anything in nature, unless the artist understood its geological and meteorological structures. Later when Ruskin taught at Oxford, he argued that “a duty in painting landscape” was to “reveal a beauty that is at once specific to, and inherent in, the forms of the natural world,” because that was “the signature of divine handiwork.”³³ Ruskin’s insistence on the artists to see perfectly was “as much a spiritual act as a physical one,” requiring them to “possess imaginative insight into the mysterious infinity of things, a gift few artists have.”³⁴

Coincidentally, when Ruskin became devoted to art education at Oxford, Oxford established the School of Geography. The newly founded School of Geography stressed nature’s influence on human history and relationships between geographical effects on human life.³⁵ Ruskin’s obsessive concerns for articulating the topographic details, such as the geological formations, climatic principles, and meteorological mechanisms in his drawing class, were to teach the students the system and structure of nature that generate fog, mist, shower, or the rough scars of water erosion left on the surface of the rock. By knowing the mechanisms behind these different natural phenomena, the artist can draw more accurately and also more

³² Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 182.

³³ Ibid., 26-27. Cosgrove discusses the educational goal for Ruskin and his geographer colleagues at Oxford, which centered on the supremacy of the sight. Ruskin wished to teach drawing that his students might “learn to love Nature [rather] than to teach the looking at Nature” that they might learn to draw. Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision*, 122.

³⁴ Ann C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Ashgate: 2010), 165.

³⁵ Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision*, 122.

imaginatively. The connection between art and geography in Ruskin's view is what constitutes the underlying idea of Shiga's *Nihon fūkeiron*.

Just as Ruskin insisted on the artists to know “specifics of the natural world” to reveal special beauty inherent in the natural world, *Nihon fūkeiron* articulates “the specifics of the natural world” of Japan. The text teaches different kinds of rocks, different mechanisms to generate various steams, ocean currents, and atmospheric influences “with geologic and meteorologic accuracy.”³⁶ Especially in the first edition, the narration is focused on explicating the mechanisms of natural phenomena and the composition of the beautiful landscapes by mobilizing specific knowledge such as climatology, geography, and meteorology. The visualization techniques, such as diagrams and maps, valorized the results from those mechanisms, revealing the structures that generate a special beauty in Japan.

When he began lecturing his geography course at today's Waseda University, Shiga encouraged his students by remarking that the “true study of geography is not only to enlighten the minds of young men, but also to enrich their knowledge about the world, and, further, to offer adventurous spirits to explore the world.”³⁷ Similar to Ruskin, Shiga shared the idea that love for nature among citizens is central to a communal life and expansion of that communal space. The territorial expansion of the nation and the empire-building project are thus promised in the view of both Shiga and Ruskin. Geography is integral to enlightening people because it empowers them, who will willingly defend their spaces against foreign threats and offend foreign lands for preserving their values and way of life.

³⁶ In this regard, Shiga was not always correct about geological facts or grouping volcanoes into a mountain range. See, for example, Kojima, “Kaisetsu,” 11-15 ; Ōmuro, *Shiga Shigetaka*, 125-134, for details.

³⁷ Shiga Shigetaka, *Chirigaku: Shiga Shigetaka zenshū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Shiga Shigetaka Zenshū Kankōkai, 1928), 270.

Conclusion

The success of Shiga's *Nihon fūkeiron* was precisely its capacity for visualizing the potential of Japan, the new realities for the country, namely "defending" their living spaces against foreign threat and potential territorial expansion. The overwhelmingly successful sales of the text suggest that readers were willing to accept such new realities and potentials, and demonstrated their support for the imperial vision of spreading the Japanese national essence in the new territories. Shiga's version of nationalism centering on the beauty of Japanese landscape effectively appealed to people as the country was in the middle of a war. This was Japan's first war in the modern era, and Shiga's aesthetic nationalism stirred emotional responses—to protect the national land, and for that, to defeat the enemy country. The preservation of the existing way of life meant to defeat and to expand its sphere of influence.

So, how did Shiga's aesthetic nationalism conceive such imperial desires? As I demonstrated in my analysis of Shiga's map of "*Nihonkoku*," the visual representation of Japan was presented as the energetic islands using various symbols and shaded colors as well as the marks of the wind directions and ocean currents. Densely located volcanoes on the map also gave a sense of volcanic action, squirting lava and birthing new volcanic mountains. The Japanese archipelago, in this map, projected vigor, movement, and invasive force, even to be carried away by the ocean currents toward north or south. Also, a closer look at the map revealed that the legend, which shows the defining elements for the beautiful landscape, included the five treaty ports that symbolized the "opening" of Japan to the Western Powers and the subsequent beginning of Westernization of Japan. The meaning of this inclusion was that the ports that brought Western civilization and technologies were crucial to what Japan had become by 1894. Such aspects of "Westernization" or importation of Western knowledge, goods, and people were naturalized in this view. In fact, fully embracing these treaty ports as the element for the unparalleled

beauty of Japan implies that the identity of these ports was once neutralized and they assumed a new Japan's identity. In other words, "the West" is integrated and fused into the foundation of Japan's cultural and national identity, and it is naturally growing as natural features, like volcanoes. As in the violent scar engraved onto the rocks after water erodes, such a scar turns into sublime beauty. As the recurring theme of renewal and reproductive cycle after volcanic eruption, the intrusion of the "West" in the 1850s, which left some destructive traces within Japan's history, did, in turn, bring about a new beginning.

Upon analyzing the textual details of Shiga's work, the flexible nature of his aesthetic nationalism and its inclusive power became far more apparent. Just as the national boundaries like "the West" was transmuted in the space of the map of "*Nihonkoku*," the volcanoes in the islands that were newly added to the territory of Japan were identified as Japanese. Only in the recent past in the late 1860s and 1870s, the northernmost island of Ezo, the Kurile Islands, and the tropical Ryūkyū and the Ogasawara Islands were forcefully merged into the Japanese map. Yet, the text assured that these "Japanese" islands were vital spots in the entire territory, embodying the sublime, the most important quality of beautiful landscape. Together with the motions depicted in the map of "*Nihonkoku*," *Nihon fūkeiron* as a whole presented the Japan's cultural identity as fearless, aggressive, and adoptive.

In this regard, Denis Cosgrove insightfully explains through his number of case studies in Europe: the concept of landscape was mobilized to emphasize the social roles of individuals with external nature, and the concept of landscape functions as a "vehicle for cultural production in social formations."³⁸ Viewed in this light, Shiga's *Nihon fūkeiron* was also a vehicle to produce and spread a

³⁸ Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 222.

particular form of cultural identity, which I called “aesthetic nationalism.” And, *Nihon fûkeiron* had a paradigmatic importance as it awakened great enthusiasm and support for Japan’s beautiful landscape empowering the invasive force to fulfill its imperial visions in the years to come.

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