

Japanese knowledge from *Onmyôdô* or from esoteric Shingon Buddhism practices. Together with Kusunokiryû, Yoshitsuneryû²⁵ is considered an ancestor school of Ninjutsu.²⁶ This assumption is to be kept in mind for later discussions. At this moment, it cannot be answered upon Shôninki's translation and analysis alone.

The transmission within the Minamoto line and its most prominent treatise, *Heihô hijutsu ikkansho* (aka *Tora no maki*)²⁷, is strongly influenced by spells from *Onmyôdô* or Shingon Buddhism. No analogies as regards content are found in the *Kiichi no tsutae* or in Shôninki.

2.2.2. Literature

In Japanese history legitimacy based on semi-fictional scripts (as seen earlier in Kusunoki and the *Taiheiki*) is not uncommon. Even the nation Japan traces back its ancestry

²⁵ Yoshitsuneryû is a school from the Fukui province that claims Minamoto Yoshitsune as its ancestor. The claim is most likely based on the chronicles of *Yoshitsune kakisute monogatari*. It is said that they taught Ninjutsu, amongst others martial arts, and transmitted *Yoshitsune hyakusho*. The knowledge was passed on to Igaryû during mid 17th century (WATATANI & YAMADA, 1978: p. 904).

²⁶ (KUROI, 2009: p. 173).

²⁷ (FUKAZAWA, 2004).

to the semi-fictional *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*.²⁸

Fictional legitimacy is one possible basis for old Japanese warrior guild traditions as well. Already in the Muromachi period there were war tales (*gunki monogatari*), trusting reverences to the past, and depictions of ancient warriors in a large body of Nô plays, dramatic dances (*kôwakamai*) or anonymous short stories (*otogi zôshi*). The tales of heroes of old, predominantly Yoshitsune, were sung, elaborated and embellished.²⁹ This custom was especially strong during the Edo period. Simultaneously, *koryû bugei* picked up the tales of a great number of legendary warriors, while other kinds of popular culture promoted specific heroes and tales of the *golden* past that moved people's hearts.³⁰

At the time, mass produced literature and popular culture was available nation-wide, and appreciated by a great number of people. This new culture exerted great influence on people by covering and reflecting all aspects of daily life. Military tales focused on the bravery and ac-

²⁸ (KIRKLAND, 1997: p. 115).

²⁹ (MCCULLOUGH, 1966: p. 31).

³⁰ The most prominent hero plays, e.g. by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1725), had a big influence on the discussion of samurai ethics and ideals in Edo period (GERSTLE, 1997). Later, these discourses were continued and critically discussed by Edo period scholars (HURST, 1990: p. 524).

accomplishments of war heroes. New forms of military theory emerged, e.g. individual or regional records of battles that lead to the unification of the nation,³¹ or scripts like the *Kôyô gunkan* that focused on samurai ethics and moral and described the lives of Takeda Shingen and his heirs.³² It was inevitable that treatises on past and present warfare were influenced by semi historical tales.³³ There are no such literal influences in *Shôninki*, the text does not elaborate on historical passages or heroes and military ancestors are mentioned sparsely in passing.

2.2.3. Neo-Confucianism

On the basis of Tokugawa philosophy, Neo-Confucianism was widespread among samurai retainers for ethical and educational purposes during the early days of Tokugawa reign.³⁴ Interestingly enough, this new ideology was not immediately taken up by the wider pub-

³¹ (SHIRANE, 1996: p. 39).

³² *Kôyô gunkan* is a compilation from the early Edo period that had a very strong impact on military strategy, military history and the discourse on Samurai ethics (BENNETT, 1999: p. 35).

³³ *Mikawa monogatari*, *Date nikki* or *Oan monogatari* etc. draw a faithful portrait of everyday life during past battles (SHIRANE, 2002: p. 39).

³⁴ The situation in the early Edo period is complex and difficult to define, since the Tokugawa shogunate did not proclaim an official new philosophy, and no privileged institutional support can be attested. For a detailed analysis see (OOMS, 1998).