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# REVIEW



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## *A Retiree's Chat (Shin'ya meidan): The Recollections of the Kyōka Poet Hezutsu Tōsaku*

Gerald GROEMER

In the late 1780s, the renowned *kyōka* poet Hezutsu Tōsaku (1726–1789) looked back at his life and set about notating some of his memorable experiences and the characteristics of his age. The result was a presumably unfinished *zuihitsu* entitled *Shin'ya meidan* (*A Retiree's Chat*). In this piece Tōsaku presents sixteen anecdotes and opinions regarding, among other things, famous writers, poets, thinkers, and artists of the past, renowned kabuki actors, connoisseurs and courtesans in Yoshiwara, rural poets and authors, personal friends, astute monks, conditions in Ezo (Hokkaido), and the benefits of city life. This wealth of subjects supplies not just a rare glimpse into the biography of a late-eighteenth century comic poet but also an unusually personal account of cultural life in Edo.

**Keywords:** Hezutsu Tōsaku, *kyōka*, Edo, kabuki, Yoshiwara, Ise, Ezo (Hokkaido)

### Introduction

*A Retiree's Chat* (*Shin'ya meidan* 莘野茗談) was written by Hezutsu Tōsaku 平秩東作 (given name: Tatematsu Kaneyuki 立松懷之, 1726–1789; see figure 1), a celebrated Edo man of letters best known for his *kyōka* 狂歌, humorous, parodic, or “wild” verse cast in a thirty-one-syllable *tanka* form.<sup>1</sup> The term *shin'ya* (Ch. shenye) in the title refers to the field that Yi Yin 伊尹, a “wise minister” at the start of the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1050 BC), cultivated after retiring; *meidan* signifies casual talk over tea.<sup>2</sup> The compound thus signifies chat arising from a relaxed, productive retirement. In fact, Tōsaku had become a lay monk in An'ei 安永 8 (1779), and *A Retiree's Chat* appears to have been written in installments up to roughly a year preceding his death.

*A Retiree's Chat* constitutes an example of a *zuihitsu* 隨筆, a genre of fragmentary prose cultivated in both China and Japan, and flourishing with particular vigor during the Edo

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1 For English-language discussions and translations of *kyōka*, see Carter 1991, pp. 413–16 (two of Tōsaku's verses are translated on pp. 413–14); Shirane 2002, pp. 528–32 (two of Tōsaku's verses are translated on p. 531); Tanaka 2006; Gill 2009 (two of Tōsaku's verses are translated on pp. 165, 192). The four ideographs “Hezutsu Tōsaku” are taken from the Chinese classic *Shujing* 書經 (Book of documents), “Yao dian” (Canon of Yao). Legge translates them “to adjust and arrange the labours of the spring” (Legge 1879, p. 33).

2 See Legge 1895, p. 362; *Mengzi* (Wang Zhang I), section 7.

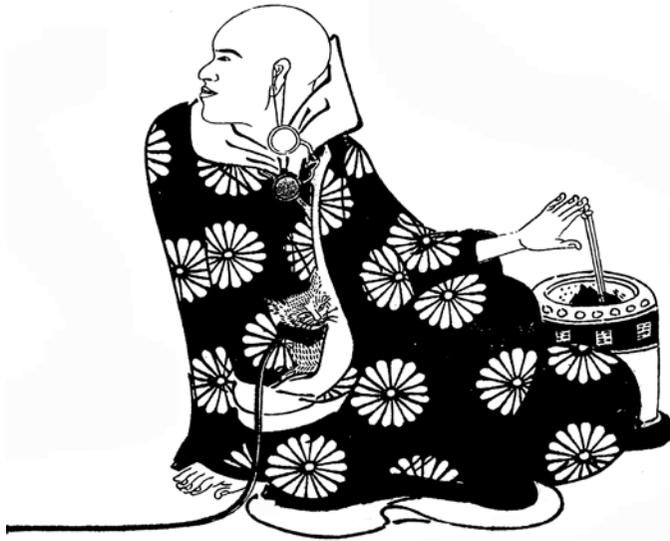


Figure 1. Hezutsu Tōsaku, with his monkish shaven pate, glasses dangling from the ear, and a kitten in his lapel. From *Azumaburi kyōka bunko* 吾妻曲狂歌文庫, illustrated by Kitao Masanobu 北尾政演 (Santō Kyōden 山東京伝), Tenmei 天明 6 (1786).

period. In most *zuihitsu* the sections or paragraphs stand in no direct or obvious relation to one another, even if chronological or thematic organization may at times be detected. Tōsaku's piece, too, consists of sixteen short, largely independent segments offering observations, recollections, insights, and judgments regarding a variety of subjects.<sup>3</sup> These fragments, some of which are highly autobiographical in nature, are apparently presented in the order in which the topics popped into the author's mind. Tōsaku's friend and *kyōka*-writing junior Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (Shokusanjin 蜀山人, 1749–1823) judged *A Retiree's Chat* unfinished (see the comment after no. 16 below), but the sudden swerve at the end, thematizing the plight of the poor, and voicing the prospect that social ills might finally be rectified, supplies room for doubt. Perhaps Tōsaku was here expressing his hope that the reforms of the bakufu “elder” Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1759–1829) would lead to a world renewal. If Tōsaku was writing these lines before the late months of Tenmei 7 (1787), he could hardly have foretold that the reforms Sadanobu enacted would also beget draconian forms of censorship. When in the same year the new regime forced Tōsaku to turn on his friend and sponsor, the bakufu official and poet Tsuchiyama Sōjirō 土山宗次郎 (1740–1787+)—of whom more below—he must have understood that the new age of which he had dreamt was unlikely to be a more liberating one.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it was exactly at this point that he laid down his writing brush.

3 On Tōsaku's biography and output, see Mori 1970a, 1970b, 1970c. More recently, Inoue (1993) has published an exhaustive chronology of materials relating to the poet's life. Unless otherwise noted, biographical information presented below relies on this study. For a short biographical sketch in English, see also Beerens 2006, p. 66.

4 Here and below I use the sign + to indicate that on the modern calendar the *nengō* 年号 in question had moved to the next Western year.

### Hezutsu Tōsaku: A Biographical Sketch

Hezutsu Tōsaku was born and raised in Edo. His childhood appears not to have been overly cheerful, for his father died in Kyōhō 享保 20 (1735), his mother remarried and divorced, and at age fourteen he was sent out as an apprentice of a tobacconist. During the early 1740s, while already running his own small tobacco shop in Shinjuku, he enrolled as a pupil of the poet and scholar of Chinese learning Ban Seizan 坂静山 (1665–1747). Seizan also tutored the poet of serious and comic verse, Uchiyama Chinken 内山椿軒 (Gatei 賀邸, 1723–1788), soon to become Tōsaku's intimate friend. Tōsaku married in Hōreki 宝曆 9 (1759) (his wife died in Tenmei 1 [1781]), and while continuing to manage his tobacco business and support a growing family, he nurtured a wide circle of highly educated and literate acquaintances. Around Meiwa 明和 1 (1764) he met the scholar, poet, and fiction writer Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1728–1779+), under whose influence he began to write light fiction.<sup>5</sup> This effort resulted in the novella *Mizu no yukue* 水濃往方 (Where waters go), published in Meiwa 2 (1765). Thereafter Tōsaku seems to have concentrated on humorous poetry, but in An'ei 8 (1779) he issued a *sharebon* 洒落本 entitled *Ekisha san'yū* 駅舎三友 (Three friends at a rural station) published under the name Chotto Kinanshi 秩都紀南子, and in An'ei 2 (1780) he published a “comical book” (*kokkeibon* 滑稽本) with the title *Tōsei otafukumen* 当世阿多福仮面 (Modern mask of the deity of mirth).<sup>6</sup>

Around Meiwa 2 (1765; see no. 1 below) Tōsaku was introduced to the young Ōta Nanpo, who would later play such a large role in the development of *kyōka* 狂歌 poetry. Tōsaku immediately recognized his junior's talents and did what he could to foster Nanpo's literary career. At roughly the same time Tōsaku's life was shaken by a far more dramatic event, one to which Suzuki Kyō 鈴木恭 (also Suzuki Hakutō 鈴木白藤, 1767–1851) briefly refers in his postface to *A Retiree's Chat*.<sup>7</sup> Tōsaku's family adhered to Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism, a sect that spawned a faction known as the Okura *monto* 御蔵門徒, which practiced a secret and unauthorized form of Amida worship. The Okura *monto* had apparently already been active in Kyoto from the 1750s and their influence was spreading to Edo, where dozens of groups were active. The bakufu soon reacted, banning the heterodox faction in the third month of Meiwa 3 (1766). Then on 11.29 of that year, largely thanks to Tōsaku's role as an informer, many Edo members were arrested and ultimately punished or executed. For his connection with the Okura *monto* Tōsaku was at first subject to a severe inquisition, but eventually his role as an informant was recognized and he was rewarded with three pieces of silver.<sup>8</sup> When in Meiwa 4 (1767) his first daughter was born, he named her “Gin” (silver) in commemoration.

5 When Gennai died in prison in An'ei 8 (1779), it was Tōsaku who received the corpse that, being one of a criminal who in a drunken rage had murdered two men, nobody else wished to accept.

6 The title of *Ekisha san'yū* plays on the homophonous expression from the *Analec*s of Confucius, (see *Lunyu*, Book 16, “Shiji”), referring to “three advantageous friendships”: those that are honest, sincere, and wise. The mask of Otafuku お多福 (the name means “much luck/happiness”) usually has large cheeks, a low nose, and an infectious smile.

7 Suzuki Kyō was a Confucian scholar who from Bunka 文化 9 (1812) served as “magistrate of books” (*shomotsu bugyō* 書物奉行) in the Tokugawa bakufu. He spent much of his time copying a vast variety of texts, most of which were later destroyed in a fire. For more biographical information, see *Kokusho jinmei jiten*, vol. 2, p. 614.

8 See Inoue 1993, pp. 56–62, 67–75, 80–81, 86–92. The amount was equivalent to a little more than two *ryō* in gold, hardly a staggering sum.

Selling tobacco did not make Tōsaku a wealthy man, and when his house burned down in Meiwa 1 (1764) he was further impoverished. Perhaps even more vexing, when he looked about, he saw that some of his friends were enjoying lavish lifestyles. It was thus only natural that he should embark on several business schemes that, alas, earned him little more than a reputation as a swindler (see Suzuki Kyō's postface below). First, from An'ei 2 (1773) Tōsaku sought to strike it rich by manufacturing charcoal at Mt. Amagi 天城 in Izu 伊豆 Province (see no. 15 below), a region that had long been a source of lumber, Japanese horseradish (*wasabi*), and various items reserved for bakufu use. He succeeded in obtaining official permission for this venture, but it soon collapsed, leaving Tōsaku with less capital than he had possessed at the outset. Undaunted, in An'ei 4 (1775), after relinquishing the tobacco shop to his fourteen-year-old son, Tōsaku founded a lumberyard at Aioi-chō 相生町 in Edo. Yet again, evidently because he left the running of the business to underlings, it soon proved to be a failure.

During the 1780s, perhaps in the hopes of finally filling his pockets, Tōsaku turned to the earlier mentioned Tsuchiyama Sōjirō. Tsuchiyama, of bannerman (*hatamoto* 旗本) rank, served the bakufu as “group head of the bureau of finance” (*kanjō kumigashira* 勘定組頭), and in Tenmei 6 (1786) was promoted to “clerk of the bakufu treasure house” (*Fujimi hōzō bantō* 富士見宝蔵番頭). Already in Tenmei 3 (1783) he had sensed the necessity of fortifying the north against possible encroachments by the Russians. He consequently dispatched several men, including Tōsaku, to scout out what is now Hokkaido. Tōsaku tarried in this frigid region from Tenmei 3 (1783).<sup>10</sup> and returned to Edo in the fifth month of the following year. Observations resulting from this voyage found their way into the volume *Tōyūki* 東遊記 (A record of a journey to the east, 1784), another piece entitled *Kagichō* 歌戯帳 (Album of amusing verses), and nos. 14–15 of *A Retiree's Chat*.<sup>9</sup>

Things took an unexpected turn when after the fall of the bakufu elder Tanuma Okitsugu 田沼意次 (1719–1788), who had been one of Tsuchiyama's chief supporters, Matsudaira Sadanobu began to enact reforms seeking to sweep away Tanuma's excesses. In Tenmei 7 (1787). 6, Tsuchiyama was dismissed from his post and accused of pocketing five-hundred *ryō* earmarked for rice aid to Echigo 越後 Province. This money had allegedly gone to support Tsuchiyama's profligate lifestyle, which included ransoming a Yoshiwara courtesan as his second wife for the astronomical sum of twelve hundred *ryō* (his first wife, a woman of identical occupational background, had been a relative bargain at seven hundred *ryō*).<sup>10</sup> On Tenmei 7 (1787).9.16, Tsuchiyama, having caught wind of the accusations, absconded. When he apparently begged Tōsaku for help, the latter suggested that Tsuchiyama conceal himself at the Yamaguchi Kannon 山口観音, a temple in Tokorozawa 所沢.<sup>11</sup> Shortly thereafter Tōsaku seems to have caved in to bakufu police pressure and revealed his friend's whereabouts (see Suzuki Kyō's postface below). Thanks to this maneuver, Tōsaku escaped with only a severe reprimand, but Tsuchiyama was arrested, tried, and, on Tenmei 7 (1787).12.5, executed. On account of this incident, which led to a government suspicion of *kyōka* coterie in general, Nanpo, too, withdrew from the *kyōka*

9 For an English-language discussion of the *Tōyūki*, see Winkel 2004, pp. 250–67.

10 On the Tsuchiyama Incident see the discussion and documents cited in Inoue 1993, pp. 256–57, 259–64. Tsuchiyama remarried in 1784.

11 This ninth-century Shingon school temple is officially named Hōkōji 放光寺 or Konjōin 金乗院. It is located in what is today Tokorozawa-shi, Kami-yamaguchi 2203, in Saitama Prefecture.

world. Around this time Tōsaku seems to have been working on *A Retiree's Chat*, but a little more than a year later, in Kansei 寛政 1 (1789).3.8, he too breathed his last.

### Hezutsu Tōsaku and the World of *Kyōka*

Throughout his career Tōsaku wore many hats, but it was for his *kyōka* creations that he would gain the bulk of his reputation. In particular his Tenmei 5 (1785) collection *Hyakki yakyō* 百鬼夜狂 (Nighttime craze of one-hundred demons; also *Kyōka hyakki yakyō* 狂歌百鬼夜狂 or *Ika Hyakki yakyō* 夷歌百鬼夜狂) rapidly established itself as a classic work of *kyōka* poetry. Tōsaku was of course not the first to write *kyōka*, nor was he to be the last. To understand his position in the world of Edo literature, it is necessary to review in outline the development of *kyōka*, the genre in which he excelled.

Comic verse in a thirty-one-syllable form can already be found in the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集, and the term *kyōka* appears in the twelfth century. Yet the Edo-period *kyōka* movement received its most important impetus from the Kyoto-based poet Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571–1654), onetime secretary of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Though lauded as a master of both serious and light verse (*haikai* 俳諧), Teitoku was even more highly regarded as a teacher. One of his disciples, the Edo-born Ishida Mitoku 石田未得 (1587–1669), earned fame for a parody of the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 he dubbed *Gogin wakashū* 吾吟我集 (My chanting, my collection, 1649), a title that on its own was already likely to raise eyebrows. This opus, like so many other poetry collections of the day, was often copied by hand, but its later repeated publication with woodblocks (in 1757, 1772, and 1776), testifies to its continuing popularity. Similarly, *Bokuyō kyōkashū* 卜養狂歌集 (Bokuyō's collection of *kyōka*, 1669; first published in 1681), by the bakufu physician and Teitoku disciple Nakarai Bokuyō 半井卜養 (1607–1679), also remained standard reading for *kyōka* poets throughout the early modern era. Yet another Teitoku pupil, a Buddhist cleric at the Iwashimizu Hachiman 石清水八幡 Shrine in Kyoto named Hōzōbō Shinkai 豐藏坊信海 (1626–1688), similarly composed verses appreciated by literati throughout the land. His efforts were anthologized in the *Kyōka hatō no tsue shū* 狂歌鳩杖集 (*Kyōka* collection: an old man's crutch), a volume published in Edo with woodblocks in 1783, 1784, and 1787. No doubt Tōsaku, like most other urban literati, had carefully studied these and other editions of humorous poetry created in the Kyoto area.

During the first half of the Edo period, Osaka also figured as an important center of *kyōka* composition. Seihakudō Gyōfū 生白堂行風 (?-?), perhaps a monk, perhaps a doctor, was active in the region in the 1660s and 1670s and had issued well-known volumes of verses such as the *Kokon ikyokushū* 古今夷曲集 (Collection of *kyōka* old and new, 1666), which included over a thousand poems by 241 poets, and a sequel entitled *Gosen ikyokushū* 後撰夷曲集 (1672). Yuensai Teiryū 油煙齋貞柳 (Taiya Teiryū 鯛屋貞柳 or Nagata Teiryū 永田貞柳, 1654–1734), whose teacher was the aforementioned Hōzōbō Shinkai, gained a reputation not just as the editor of a *kyōka* collection called *Kyōka iezuto* 狂歌家づと (Souvenirs brought home), but also as the instructor of thousands of *kyōka*-loving disciples in the Osaka region. Teiryū encouraged his pupils to write in a relatively simple style and succeeded in propelling the popularity of *kyōka* to new heights.

Teiryū and his countless students exercised an immense influence on eighteenth-century Edo, where one of the founding fathers of *kyōka* production, Ōya no Urazumi 大屋裏住 (Kusumi Magozaemon 久須美孫左衛門, 1734–1810), had studied with one Bokuryū

卜柳 (?-?), probably a Teiryū disciple. Just as had been the case in Kyoto and Osaka, Edo *kyōka* emerged chiefly from groups led by poets excelling in the creation of serious verse. A particularly well-known Edo figure of this sort, considered one of the city’s “six saints” of *waka* poetry, was the earlier-mentioned bakufu retainer Uchiyama Gatei who, during the *kyōka* fad in the 1780s, tutored many of the genre’s most brilliant exponents, including Karakoromo Kisshū 唐衣橋洲 (Kojima Gennosuke 小島源之助, 1744–1802), Yomo no Akara 四方赤良 (Ōta Nanpo), and Akera Kankō 朱楽菅江 (Yamazaki Kagetsura 山崎景貫, 1740–1798+). One of the listed men, Kisshū, had already exhibited a *kyōka* creation to his master at age twenty (that is, c. 1763) and the latter was duly impressed by its virtues.<sup>12</sup> Shortly thereafter, as Ōta Nanpo’s postface translated below reveals, the teenage Nanpo encountered Tōsaku at one of Gatei’s gatherings. A bond that was to last a lifetime was forged, and, as one reads in the first section of *A Retiree’s Chat*, in Meiwa 4 (1767), the older Tōsaku (he was already forty) saw to the publication of Nanpo’s collection of comic Chinese poetry (*kyōshi*) entitled *Neboke sensei bunshū* 寝惚先生文集 (A collection of writings by Master Groggy).

Two years later, in Meiwa 6 (1769), the first meeting devoted solely to *kyōka* composition was staged at Kisshū’s home. As Nanpo later recollected, “The first *kyōka* meeting in Edo was that of Kojima (Karakoromo) Kisshū, who lived at Yotsuya Oshihara Yokochō 四谷押原横町...”<sup>13</sup> Only four or five people attended this party: Ōne no Futoki 大根太木 (?-?), Batei 馬蹄 (Tobuchiri no Batei 飛塵馬蹄, ?-?), Ōya no Urazumi, (Hezutsu) Tōsaku, and Yomo no Akara (Ōta Nanpo).<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere Nanpo notes that the following spring several *kyōka* poets begged Gatei and the poet Hagiwara Sōko 萩原宗固 (1703–1784) to serve as adjudicators for a *kyōka* match whose results would be shaped into a volume entitled *Meiwa kyōka awase* 明和狂歌合 (A *kyōka* match of the Meiwa period).<sup>15</sup> Six poets, including Kisshū, Tōsaku, Akara, and the bath house operator Moto no Mokuami 元木阿弥 (1724–1811), each contributed ten verses to this competitive undertaking, whose winner was judged to be Kisshū. Nanpo reminisced that two years later (that is, 1771) Akera Kankō, again a Gatei student, likewise began to take part in Kisshū’s *kyōka* parties.<sup>16</sup> As others joined in or founded their own coteries, the popularity of Edo *kyōka* surged. Kisshū named his group the “Yotsuya-ren,” Akera Kankō called his the “Akera-ren,” and Yomono Akara dubbed his the “Yamanote-ren.” All of these groups gained stellar reputations, but none were as heavily populated as Moto no Mokuami’s “Ochiguri-ren” to which, according to Tōsaku’s *Kyōkashi saiken* 狂歌師細見 (A listing of *kyōka* masters, 1784), “half of Edo” belonged.<sup>17</sup>

Although the Edo *kyōka* craze peaked in the 1780s, the genre continued to be supported long thereafter by figures including Shikatsube Magao 鹿津部真顔 (Kitagawa Kahee 北川嘉兵衛, 1753–1829), who also assumed the pseudonym Koikawa Sukimachi 恋川好町, and Yadoya no Meshimori 宿屋飯盛 (Ishikawa Masamochi 石川雅望, 1754–1830),

12 *Yakko-dako*, p. 182.

13 This is today roughly at the border between Samon-chō 左門町 and Suga-chō 須賀町 in Shinjuku-ku.

14 *Yakko-dako*, p. 181.

15 See Ōta Nanpo’s Bunka 8 (1811) preface to *Meiwa kyōka awase*, p. 59. *Meiwa kyōka awase* was illustrated by the artist Miwa Kashinsai 三輪花信齋 (also known as Miwa Zaiei 三輪在榮, ?–1797).

16 This is according to the preface of the unpublished *Kyōka rōkashū* 狂歌弄花集 cited in Inoue 1993, p. 104.

17 *Kyōkashi saiken*, p. 93. This booklet parodies guides to Yoshiwara.

son of an *ukiyo-e* artist. Both of these poets had studied with Nanpo, and went on to tutor countless followers of their own.

### *Kyōka* and *zuihitsu*

As the existence of *A Retiree's Chat* indicates, Tōsaku also enjoyed writing *zuihitsu*.<sup>18</sup> In this, too, he was hardly unique among *kyōka* poets. Nanpo, for one, produced numerous specimens of the genre, including the massive *Ichiwa ichigen* 一話一言 (One tale, one word) on which he scribbled away between An'ei 4 (1775) and Bunsei 文政 5 (1822), and which encompasses not just a broad sampling of the author's erudition but plenty of excerpts from the writings of others. Nanpo also drafted a *zuihitsu* entitled *Yakko-dako* 奴師勞之 (Servant kite, 1821), which recounts events in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, including many relating to literary history.<sup>19</sup> Yadoya no Meshimori also made a name for himself composing notable *zuihitsu* such as *Koganegusa* こがね草 (Golden grasses), *Nezame no susabi* ねざめのすさび (Entertainment for waking up), and the 1808 *Miyako no teburi* 都の手ぶり (A guide to Edo). It is simple enough to discover plenty of other *zuihitsu* written by lesser poets, for after the late eighteenth century nearly every self-respecting Edo literati dabbled in *kyōka* composition and proudly possessed a *kyōka* name.

*Kyōka* and *zuihitsu* were natural bedfellows. Both genres thrived in urban areas, showcased one's sophistication, and relied on an ability to let oneself be moved by events and objects in daily life. Moreover, *kyōka* poets and *zuihitsu* writers alike tended to belong to groups that supported their respective efforts.<sup>20</sup> One strategy for stimulating creativity in such meetings was to tote along a conversation piece. In the case of *kyōka* groups, this item was usually a funny or fake "treasure," accompanied by a facetious or humorous prosimetric explanation (*kyōbun* 狂文), a genre that maintained the spirit of *kyōka* just as *haibun* 俳文 corresponded to the spirit of *haiku*. One of the first recorded gatherings of this sort was the *takara-awase* (treasure match) of An'ei 2 (1773).<sup>2.4</sup> sponsored pro forma by Shimada Sanai 島田左内, an Edo ward headman at Ichigaya who also called himself Sakanoue Jukune 酒上熟寝 (Sleeping well after getting drunk), but which was in fact organized by Nanpo.<sup>21</sup> This lighthearted event was staged at a study room of Ekōji 恵光寺, a temple at Ushigome Haramachi 半込原町. It was attended mainly by members of the *kyōka* group surrounding Gatei—though not Tōsaku, who had left for Izu Province in order to make a killing in the charcoal business. Each participant introduced an object in a faux-serious, quasi-religious manner by reciting a text replete with farcical verbiage. Then, when all presentations had been heard, a happy banquet ensued. Later, a publication illustrated the offered items and reproduced the words written.<sup>22</sup> Again in Tenmei 3 (1783).<sup>4.25</sup>, when the *kyōka* boom and the reputation of Nanpo, who had just published the famous collection *Manzai kyōkashū* 万載狂歌集, was nearing its zenith, a far grander *kyōka* match with over a hundred

18 Several of Tōsaku's other *zuihitsu* appear to be lost, but some of his prose was later issued as *Tōsaku ikō* 東作遺稿 (Tōsaku's posthumous manuscripts) by Ōta Nanpo.

19 A *yakko-dako* was a kite in the shape of a manservant with outstretched sleeves, but the expression was also a metaphor for someone easily swayed by flattery or slander.

20 On Edo-period *zuihitsu* associations, see Groemer 2019, pp. 30–35.

21 *Yakko-dako*, p. 184, dates the event to An'ei 2 (1773), but in the Tenmei 3 (1783) *Kyōbun takara awase no ki* 狂文室合記 (see Nobuhiro et al. 2000, p. 282), Ōta Nanpo gives the date as An'ei 2 (1773).<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of this and the Tenmei 3 (1783) meeting, see Nobuhiro et al 2000, pp. 290–94.

22 See *Takara awase no ki*.

participants—this time including Tōsaku, who offered a cloth cord representing a “snake of regret” (*zannen hebi* 残念蛇) relating to his absence at the first match—took place at the Kawachiya 河内屋, a restaurant located between Ryōgoku 両国 and Yanagibashi 柳橋. Once more a detailed chronicle of the occasion, an attractive three-volume illustrated edition to which Tōsaku contributed a preface, was published.<sup>23</sup>

Similar gatherings, if perhaps not as merry and dating from a slightly later era, also commonly supplied a cordial environment for *zuihitsu* writers, many of whom also composed *kyōka*. The “Uncha kai” 雲茶会, for instance, though only meeting twice (in Bunka 8 [1811]), adhered to rules drafted by Nanpo. These bylaws stipulated that members supply a maximum of five items, each of which was to be no older than two hundred years.<sup>24</sup> In the 1820s the “Toen kai” 兔園会, headed by Takizawa Bakin, also required each participant to donate a tale, anecdote, or interesting piece of information.<sup>25</sup> Similar groups existed in abundance, both in Edo and other cities. They too issued publications to which members contributed. Whether Tōsaku’s *A Retiree’s Chat* was encouraged by such an association remains a mystery, but the author no doubt took for granted the interest of precisely the sort of readers that were likely to attend meetings of *kyōka*-composing and *zuihitsu*-writing men and women throughout town.

### About the Text

The text of *A Retiree’s Chat* is fairly unproblematic for Tōsaku’s autograph, on which the translation below is based, remains in the possession of the National Diet Library in Tokyo and is available online (see the references). This manuscript contains a Sino-Japanese preface and concluding lines by Ōta Nanpo, as well as a second postface and several marginal and interlinear comments by Suzuki Kyō. Tōsaku’s original was apparently also hand-copied by other readers, and after the early twentieth century several printed editions appeared (see the references).

Since no currently available version of the text contains explanatory notes, I have added annotations where I believed them to be useful or necessary. For convenience’s sake, I have numbered the sections and divided longer segments into paragraphs. Dates of birth and death, alternate names, translated titles, and other unproblematic facts are placed in parentheses. My own emendations, explanations, and conjectures are enclosed in brackets.

### Translation

#### Preface to *A Retiree’s Chat* [*kanbun*, by Ōta Nanpo]

Old man Tōsaku—surname (*sei* 姓) Tatematsu, given name (*na* 名) Kaneyuki, pseudonym (*azana* 字) Shigyoku 子玉, pseudonym (*gō* 号) Tōmō 東蒙, shop name (*hogō* 舖号) Inage-ya 稲毛屋—was a tobacco dealer at Yotsuya Shinjuku in Edo. He read books, devoted himself to prose, and above all cultivated the comic. Even when he composed a thousand words in one sitting, nothing required revision. He authored several books, including the widely read five-volume *Mizu no yukue*. He also sketched many incomplete works and drafts, including

23 For an annotated critical edition, see Nobuhiro et al. 2000.

24 For details, see Groemer 2019, p. 32.

25 See Groemer 2019, p. 33.

*A Retiree's Chat.* In the last years of his life Tōsaku enjoyed traveling to distant parts. At home I have accumulated several of his marvelous accounts.<sup>26</sup>

Tōsaku died at his home of an illness on the eighth day of the third month of Kansei 1 (1789) and was buried in the rear of the Jōdo Shinshū temple Zenkyōji 善慶寺, to the west of Edo castle, at Yotsuya Kurayami-zaka 四谷蔵山坂.<sup>27</sup>

I was fourteen or fifteen years old when I first met Tōsaku at a gathering of [Uchiyama] Gatei. I decided to speak to Tōsaku and we sustained an intimate friendship for three decades. Those thirty years have passed like a flash in a dream.

Fourth month of Kansei 7 (1795), early summer

Nanpo Gaishi 外史<sup>28</sup>

### *A Retiree's Chat*

1. Many authors have written texts intended for recitation, but none excelled Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653–1724). Next in line came Namiki Sōsuke 並木宗輔 (1695–1751).<sup>29</sup> Many of the expressions used by Chikamatsu in dramas such as *Shinjū yoigōshin* 心中宵庚申 (Love suicides on the eve of the Kōshin festival, 1722), *Shinjū ten no Amijima* 心中天の網島 (Love suicides at Amijima, 1720), *Meido no hikyaku* (The courier of hell, 1711), *Keisei hangonkō* 傾城反魂香 (The courtesan of Hangon incense, 1708), and other plays reveal human emotions in wondrous ways.<sup>30</sup>

The best author of [kabuki] plays is Tsuuchi Jihē 津打治兵衛 (1679–1760).<sup>31</sup> Numerous plays by Tsuuchi have become classics of the kabuki repertory.

[Ihara] Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693) was the outstanding writer of fictional works (*yomihon*). He was succeeded by [Ejima] Kiseki 江島其磧 (1666–1735), who combined forces with the retiree [and publisher] Hachimonjiya Yazaemon Jishō 八文字屋八左衛門自笑 (?–1745). Kiseki wrote popular books (*sōshi*) including *Keisei kintanki* (Courtesans are forbidden to be short-tempered, 1711), and *Keisei irojamisen* (Erotic shamisen music, 1701),

26 Probably a reference to *Tōyūki*. See also nos. 14–15 below.

27 Zenkyōji (today usually read Zenkeiji) now stands at Tomihisa-chō 2-12 in Shinjuku-ku. Ōta Nanpo incorrectly writes the second ideograph 教.

28 Ōta Nanpo. The term *Gaishi* here suggests not so much a pseudonym as an indication that the author speaks from the position of an unofficial or unauthorized chronicler.

29 Namiki Sōsuke was an author of puppet-theater pieces with *jōruri* 浄瑠璃 recitation, usually written in collaboration with Takeda Izumo and others, such as *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* (Sugawara and the secrets of calligraphy, 1746), *Yoshitsune senbon-zakura* (Yoshitsune and the thousand cherry trees, 1747), *Kanadehon chūshingura* 仮名手本忠臣蔵 (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers, 1748), and *Ichinotani futaba gunki* (A chronicle of the battle of Ichinotani, 1751). Here and below Tōsaku often presents abbreviated titles of works, but I have given more complete names.

30 For a translation of *Shinjū yoigōshin*, see Gerstle 2001, pp. 278–324. *Shinjū ten no Amijima* and *Meido no hikyaku* have been translated by Donald Keene (Keene 1990, pp. 387–426 and pp. 161–95). A section of the kabuki version of *Keisei hangonkō* can be found in Brandon and Leiter 2002a, pp. 66–93.

31 No doubt the second generation, he was an actor, author, and, after Hōreki 宝暦 5 (1755), a Zen monk. He wrote more than one hundred plays, some of which mix aspects of contemporary life with elements of historical dramas. His *Isshin niga byakudō* 一心二河白道 (The white path to the Western Paradise across the River of Fire and the River of Water) was performed to much acclaim at the Edo Nakamura-za in 1710, and his *Shikirei yawaragi Soga* 式例和曾我 (Ceremonial gentle Soga) was premiered at the same theater in Kyōhō 1 (1716).

and *Ukiyo oyaji katagi* (Characters of fathers of the floating World, 1720).<sup>32</sup> No skilled writer [of such fiction] appeared thereafter.

A writer named Jōkanbō [Kōa] 静観房好阿 (?-?) composed a popular book entitled *Imayō heta dangi* (Modern bumbling sermons, 1752).<sup>33</sup> At first he sold a kind of tofu called “fluffy snow” (*awayuki* 淡雪) at the Hinoya 日野屋, a shop near the foot of Ryōgoku bridge. Eventually he had somebody else take over the business, assumed the name Yamamoto Zengorō 山本善五郎, lived next door to the shop, and worked as a calligraphy teacher.

The book *Nenashigusa* (Rootless weeds, 1763) is the work of Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1728–1779).<sup>34</sup> I recall that during those days fiction underwent a stylistic transformation. An author named Tanbaya Rihē 丹波屋利兵衛 (?-?) wrote a best-selling volume entitled *Yūshi hōgen* (The rake’s patois, 1770), published by Suharaya Ichibē 須原屋市兵衛.<sup>35</sup> In this work Rihē wrote in the style of a “mimic of worldly ways” (*ukiyoshi* 浮世師). Thereafter slender volumes bearing Chinese-style title pages were published.<sup>36</sup> These included [*Tōsei*] *kakuchū sōji* ( [Modern] brothel cleanup by Fukuwa Dōjin 福輪道人, 1777) and *Tatsumi no sono* (The southeastern garden, that is, the Fukagawa pleasure quarters, by one Muchū Sanjin Negoto Sensei 夢中散人寢言先生, “Useless dreaming master talking in his sleep,” 1770). After several dozen such books were issued, [the older] “large books” (*ōhon* 大本) went out of fashion.<sup>37</sup>

The collection of comic Chinese-language poetry (*kyōshi* 狂詩) entitled *Neboke sensei bunshū* (1767) was written by my friend [Ōta] Nanpo when he was only seventeen years old (1765). Nanpo visited me and explained that he was amusing himself composing *kyōshi*. I took twenty of the poems he had brought along and showed them to the publisher Shinshōdō 申椒堂 (Suharaya Ichibē). The latter said he much desired [to publish] them, so I fashioned a preface and postface and submitted the volume to Shinshōdō. This book earned great public acclaim, and soon many similar collections of *kyōshi* appeared in succession.

The volume *Taihei gafu* 太平楽府 (Ballads for an age of great tranquility, 1769), which included the widely known ballad-style masterpiece “Hijokō” 婢女行 (The housemaid’s ballad), was published only after *Neboke* [*sensei bun*] *shū* appeared.<sup>38</sup> Nanpo is the great *kyōshi* master. In the past, Gion Yoichi[rō] 祇園与一[郎] (Nankai 南海, 1676–1751) seems also to

32 Hachimonjiya Yazaemon Jishō refers to the second or third generation of the Kyoto publisher and bookseller Hachimonjiya who teamed up with the writer Ejima Kiseki from around 1696 and issued many best-selling books. For a discussion and partial translation of two of his books, see Hibbett 1959, pp. 99–152.

33 Jōkanbō Kōa’s volume set off a fad for books of “sermons” in a vernacular tongue critically lampooning the foibles of Edo commoners.

34 For excerpts in translation see “Rootless Grass” in Jones 2013, pp. 113–23.

35 This author used the pseudonym Inaka no rōjin Tadano Jijii 田舎老人多田爺, literally “just a provincial old man.” *Yūshi hōgen* set the standard for much of the content and style of *sharebon*, a genre of popular fiction thematizing visits to the “pleasure quarters.” In English, see Mori 2016. Images of the original are available online at the National Diet Library at <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2534130> (Accessed 20 January 2019).

36 This is a reference to *sharebon*. The first *sharebon* was already issued in 1728, but the genre did not enter its golden age until around 1770.

37 “Large books” were printed on Mino paper folded in half (one page measured c. 26 x 18 cm.). Older *kanazōshi* 仮名草子, the works of Saikaku and the like were printed in this format.

38 *Taihei gafu* is a volume of Chinese-language verse written by the eighteen-year-old Hatakenaka Kansai 畠中観斎 (Dōmyaku sensei 銅脈先生, literally “Master Counterfeit,” 1752–1801). The ballad “Hijokō” recounts the fall of a country girl as she is spoilt by Kyoto ways. See Markus 1998, which includes an annotated translation (pp. 29–36). Jones 2013, pp. 347–48 reproduces the translation but eliminates the explanatory notes that render many sections comprehensible to the non-specialist.

have been considered a skilled *kyōshi* poet. In addition Inoue Randai 井上蘭台 (1705–1761) and others briefly amused themselves by composing a few such verses. All the same, Nanpo is the one properly designated a *kyōshi* specialist. Unfortunately, his reputation as such has overshadowed his rarely equaled, but seldom noted abilities as a poet of [serious] Chinese verse.

The eight-line seven-syllable poem “Sending off a lowly foreign official returning to Korea” (送下官唐人還朝鮮, *gekan no tōjin no chōsen ni kaeru o okuru*) included in the collection [*Neboke sensei bunshū*] is actually my own creation.<sup>39</sup> The postface I composed for this collection was not carved [and printed].

2. Many *katōbushi* 河東節 *jōruri* texts were written by the *haikai* poet [Iwamoto] Kenjū 岩本乾什 (1680–1759). Each is a masterpiece of chant. “Matsu no uchi” (New Year’s days, 1717), authored by the late [Tsurumi] Ichigyo 鶴海一漁 (?–1735), is considered the greatest [*katōbushi*] piece of all time.<sup>40</sup> It seems that during that age many excellent scholars caroused in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters and earned a reputation for debauchery, but today’s authors cannot even reproduce the flavor of the works those men discarded. This is probably the case because the times have changed so much.

Men of taste included the *haikai* poets Tōsei 桃青 (Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉, 1644–1694) and [Takarai] Kikaku 宝井其角 (1661–1707), the artist [Hanabusa] Itchō 英一蝶 (1652–1724), and the calligrapher, Masumi Ranshū 十寸見蘭洲 (?–1731), though he was the proprietor of the Tsurutsutaya 蔓蔦屋 brothel.<sup>41</sup> Among warrior-class men, Yanagisawa Gondayū 柳沢権太夫 (1703–1758)—a good painter who was also called Yanagi Satotomo 柳里恭, and used the name (*na*) Kōbi 公美 and the pseudonym (*gō*) Kien 淇園—was a notorious profligate, but he too should be considered a renowned man of taste and wisdom.<sup>42</sup> Of course actors such as Ebizō 海老藏 (Ichikawa Danjūrō 市川團十郎 II?, 1699–1758), Sawamura Tōshi 澤村訥子 (1685–1756), and Nakamura Kichibē 中村吉兵衛 (1684–1765) can also hardly be thought to resemble today’s men of the stage.

During the Kyōhō period (1716–1736) Confucian scholars such as [Arai] Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725) and [Ogyū] Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), the Buddhist priest Hōtan 鳳潭 (1654–1738), and calligraphers such as [Hosoi] Kōtaku 細井広沢 (1658–1736) and [Kitajima] Setsuzan 北島雪山 ([sic] 1636–1697) should be considered the revitalizers (*chūkō* 中興) of their respective traditions.

39 See *Neboke sensei bunshū*, p. 351.

40 The origins of *katōbushi* date to a performance by Masumi Katō 十寸見河東 (1684–1725) of “Matsu no uchi” in the kabuki play *Keisei Fuji no takane* (Courtesans and Mt. Fuji) staged at the Ichimura-za in the second month of Kyōhō 2 (1717) (or the first month of Shōtoku 正徳 2 [1712], the date is disputed). The music was composed by the blind Ume-no-ichi, but in the performance the *shamisen* accompaniment was rendered by Yamahiko Genshirō because it was considered inappropriate for a man with a visual disability to appear in kabuki. See *Kabuki nenpyō*, vol. 1, p. 472; and the explanation to “Matsu no uchi,” p. 67.

41 Masumi Ranshū (Tsurutsutaya Shōjirō 蔓蔦屋庄次郎) was also famed as a *katōbushi* reciter and author. For more information, see *Kinsei kiseki kō* 近世奇跡考, pp. 364–65.

42 Yanagisawa Kien was a high-ranking warrior of the Yamato Kōriyama 大和郡山 domain (Nara Prefecture), a painter, and author of Chinese verse. The head of his household called himself Gondayū through many generations and Yanagisawa called himself Kien from about age forty. For more on him, see also no. 10 below. In English, see Brecher 2013, pp. 68–69.

3. Hara Tomigorō 原富五郎 (?–?), an assistant bakufu officer (*yoriki* 与力) who later called himself Budayū 武太夫 (1697–1780s?), lived until he was almost ninety.<sup>43</sup> From the Hōei 宝永 period (1704–1711) he gained a reputation as a *shamisen* player. A renowned profligate, he made his home in the Yoshiwara [licensed quarters] and the Sakai-chō [theater quarter], where he lived a life of pleasure. The actors Kakitsu 家橋 (Ichimura Uzaemon 市村羽左衛門 IX, 1724–1785) and Keishi 慶子 (Nakamura Tomijūrō 中村富十郎 I, 1719–1786) lounged about with him whenever they found themselves homeless because the theaters [where they were engaged] had burned down.

Suffice it to say that a genius of Hara's caliber did not behave like an average man. When his uncle, the abbot of the Zuirinji Temple 瑞林寺 in the Yanaka 谷中 area, left him an inheritance of 300 *ryō*, officials summoned Hara to take possession of it, but he refused to do so.<sup>44</sup> He maintained that as a layman he could not accept it. Instead, he suggested, it should be granted to two temple acolytes who had undertaken a journey to the Kamigata area for study and pleasure. He had them looked up and awarded them the money.

Budayū was utterly destitute, but he was praised by all for maintaining the aura of a samurai. I have just mentioned that he was a master of the *shamisen*, but he also excelled at martial arts and enjoyed composing *waka* poetry. His son still serves at the [Edo] residence of the Ōkusa 大草 house.<sup>45</sup> Participants at Buddhist services commemorating [Budayū's] death relate that [food] is served in black lacquerware bowls decorated in a manner that [the courtesan] Sendai Takao 仙台高尾 (?–1660) had considered stylish. In his testament Budayū seems to have requested that this be done.

When [the retired bakufu doctor] Takeda Chōshun'in 武田長春院 formed a club he called Shōshikai 尚齒会 (Association honoring the aged), its members included Teramachi Hyakuan 寺町百庵 (1695–1781), Matsuya Shōhē 松屋庄兵衛 (?–?) of Naka-no-chō [the central boulevard of Yoshiwara; see figure 2], and Budayū.<sup>46</sup> Yorozyua Kichiemon 万屋吉右衛門 (?–1798) of the [theater quarter at] Fukiya-chō had a menial and cook over a hundred years old who was invited to a Shōshikai meeting and introduced as an old acquaintance.<sup>47</sup> The servant possessed no proper attire, so Kichiemon lent him his own father's crested *kosode* kimono of *habutae* 羽二重 silk.<sup>48</sup> This servant once related his memories of the olden days. "Today," he said, "the theater quarters at Sakai-chō and Fukiya-chō have much declined. From the start, I was merely a menial and cook in Yorozyua Kichiemon's house,

43 Around Tenmei 8 (1788), when this was written, the author evidently takes Budayū as deceased and speaks of his funeral. Various dates for Budayū's death have been suggested. If Tōsaku is right, the commonly asserted date of Kansei 4 (1792) may be several years too late. Budayū was probably an assistant (*yoriki*) of the Edo castle representatives known as *rusui* 留守居. For more on him, see Seigle 1993, pp. 205–206.

44 Zuirinji is a Nichiren-school temple that today stands at Yanaka 4-2-5 in Taitō-ku.

45 This may have been located at Kanda Ogawa-machi 神田小川町 in the vicinity of Suidōbashi 水道橋. Several Ōkusa or Ōgusa houses existed. At the time in question the wealthiest one, rated at 3,500 *koku*, was headed by Ōkusa Takakata 大草高方 (1741–1790).

46 The club's name refers to a term found in the Confucian *Rites* (*Liji* [Jiyi]; see Legge 1885, p. 229). When the club met in Meiwa 6 (1769) at Chōshun'in's Sendaigashi villa, Budayū was seventy-three years old, the *haikai* poet and scholar Teramachi seventy-four, and Chōshun'in seventy. Matsuya Shōhē was the proprietor of a tea house in Yoshiwara whose specialties included *kanrobai* 甘露梅, a candied plum wrapped in *shiso* leaves. This sweet was evidently also a popular souvenir taken home after a brothel visit. As a *senryū* from Tenmei 5 (1785) had it, "Resentfully the wife munches on *kanrobai*" (*Yanagidaru* 柳多留, vol. 20; see *Kinsei bungei sōsho*, vol. 8, p. 354).

47 Yorozyua Kichiemon was the *jōruri* author and tea-house operator better known as Matsu Kanshi 松貫四.

48 *Habutae* is a soft, lightweight, lustrous plain-weave silk similar to taffeta.



Figure 2. Naka-no-chō in Yoshiwara during the mid-eighteenth century. In the right panel (center left) stands the Owariya, and next to it the Matsuya (left panel, center right). Fushimi-chō is located to the right; the entrance to Edo-chō is visible in the left panel. From *Ehon Edo miyage* 絵本江戸土産, vol. 1 (1753) illustrated by Suzuki Harunobu 鈴木春信 (1725–1770).

but time and again I received a gratuity from the guests. On one occasion, important visitors arrived and I worked in the parlor well into the night. The next day I looked to see what I had been awarded and discovered that it was more than forty *ryō*! I did not own as much as a change of clothes, but my bedclothes were of silk and so was my futon. In the old days when we received a windfall, we purchased that sort of thing.”

Budayū once explained that, “Today a ceremonial ‘first spreading of the bedding’ (*yagu no shikizome* 夜具の敷ぞめ, see figure 3) is celebrated at Yoshiwara, but in the days of my youth the ‘first spreading of the bedding’ meant that a customer paid for a new set of bedding for his favorite woman.<sup>49</sup> In those days, however, bedding did not feature the brocade or embroidered Phoenix birds one sees today. Instead, a so-called bed fee (*toko hana* 床花) was given to the woman in her boudoir. This fee was set at one hundred *ryō* wrapped in paper.”

4. Even the plots of “miscellaneous dramas” (*zatsugeki* 雜劇) derive from old sources. The *Tale of Genji*, too, is fiction, but much of it relies on a framework based on reality. The wasting away and death of the Kiritsubo consort draws on the Chinese poem “Changhen ge” (Song of everlasting regret, Jp. *Chōgonka*).<sup>50</sup> [The last section of] the chapter “Suma” [in

49 Such a celebration usually marked the promotion of a young apprentice or attendant to the status of a full-fledged courtesan. On Yoshiwara bedding, see Seigle 1993, pp. 187–88.

50 See *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, pp. 30–41; Waley 1925, pp. 9–14. The famous Tang-dynasty poem “Changhen ge” by Bo Juyi 白居易 (or Bai Juyi, 772–846) is a lament for the imperial concubine and legendary beauty Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 (719–756).

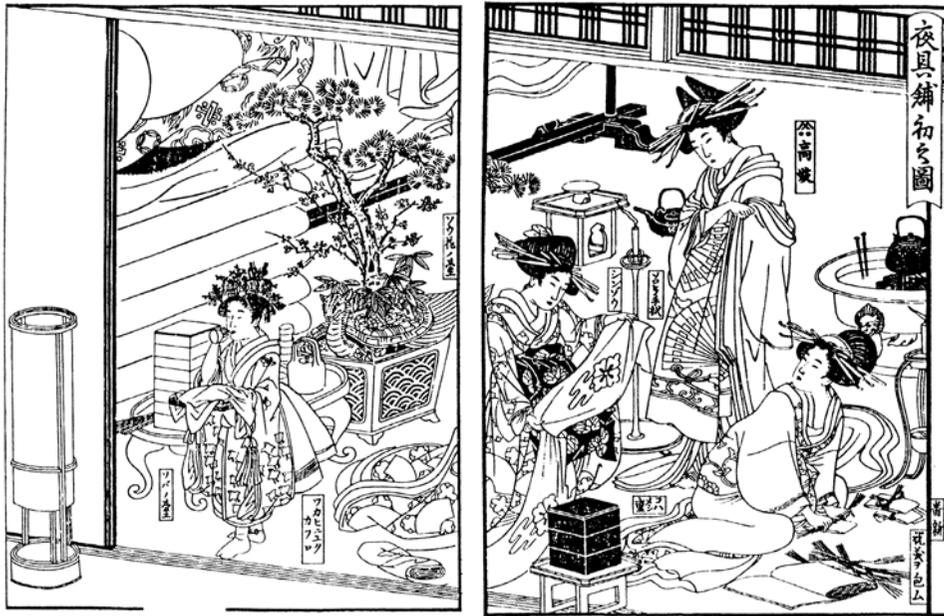


Figure 3. Activities surrounding the ceremonial “first spreading of the bedding” in Yoshiwara. From *Seirō nenjū gyōji*, 1804, illustrated by Kitagawa Utamaro 喜田川歌麿. The high-ranking courtesan stands at right center. Her junior (*shinzō* 新造, right) wraps gifts while her young helper (*kaburo* 禿, left bottom) is sent off on an errand.

the *Tale of Genji* shares significances with the story “Jin Teng” 金騰 (The golden coffer).<sup>51</sup> In recent *jōruri* plots, too, the de rigeur substitution of one person for another finds its origins in “The Orphan of Zhao.”<sup>52</sup> Another source of such tales is the narrative of the Duke of Wei 衛 (Hui 惠, r. 699–697 BC) in which a younger brother substitutes himself for an older half-brother who is to be murdered.<sup>53</sup> Plays treating a shrewd old mother seem to take their cue from the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) tale of the constancy of

51 *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, pp. 52–54; Waley 1925, p. 254. The tale “Jin Teng,” included in the last book (*Zhoushu*) of the *Shujing* (or *Shangshu* 尚書, Book of documents), counts as one of the “five classics” of Chinese literature. It is attributed to various historical and legendary figures in ancient Chinese history. For a translation, see de Bary 2000, vol. 1, pp. 32–35.

52 Tōsaku calls this story “Cheng Ying Chujiu” 程嬰杵臼. It is a tale of Gongsun Chujiu’s substitution of the imperial physician Cheng Ying’s child for his master’s baby boy, while Cheng Ying raises the master’s true offspring. The source of the tale is in the fourth book (*Shijia*) of *Shiji* 史記 (*Zhao shijia* 趙世家). The plot reappears in thirteenth-century China as a drama attributed to Ji Junxiang 紀君祥 (fl. thirteenth century), and was recounted in the late fourteenth-century *Taiheiki* 太平記 in Japan.

53 Wei (sometimes written “Wey” to distinguish it from the later Wei state) was a state founded in the early Western Zhou period (1046–771 BC). It flourished during the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BC). According to the *Shiji* (*Wei Kangshu shijia*), Prince Ji 伋 (?–701 BC), the heir apparent, was to be murdered by assassins hired by his father and Prince Zishuo 子朔. After warnings by Zishuo’s half-brother proved futile, the latter himself carried the white banner that identified him to assassins.

Wang Ling's 王陵 mother.<sup>54</sup> [In *jōruri* puppet plays] when in a show of strength [the Taira general] Akushichibyōe Kagekiyo 悪七兵衛景清 (?–1196) parts ways with the Chichibu clan's [Hatakeyama] Shigetada 畠山重忠 (1164–1205), who seeks to protect [Minamoto no] Yoritomo (1147–1199) and avenge the wrongs against his clan, this scheme relies on a historical event in which Wu Yun 伍員 told [Shen] Baoxu 申包胥, “I will overturn and defeat Chu at all costs,” and Shen Baoxu retorted, “I will support Chu at all costs.”<sup>55</sup>

The kabuki actor Ōtani Hiroji [I] 大谷広治 (1696–1747), three generations before the current bearer of that name, had a very dark complexion and was nick-named “black Jitchō” (黒十町). He excelled in the delivery of his lines. Although he could not read a word, he related historical events and used ancient phrases without sounding as if he were repeating what others had read out for him. When he spoke of the wrestling match of Matano [Kagehisa] 股野景久 (?–1183), he raised his voice with the lines, “And lo! He was thrown three inches deep into the black earth of Mt. Akazawa 赤沢,” and then, in a lower and softer voice, he continued, “Ah! He felt as if he had lived his life in vain!”<sup>56</sup> Listeners were deeply moved and shouted their approval. This manner was devised by Jitchō himself.

5. When the previous Ichikawa Danzō 市川團藏 [probably Danzō III, 1719–1772] acted the role of the warrior Kumagai Naozane, a certain child who played [the young Taira no] Atsumori (1169–1184) fell ill and died two months into the run of performances.<sup>57</sup> Danzō keenly sensed that even in the frivolous world of the theater the universal vanity of life had revealed itself. He vowed to live up to the standard set by Renshō 蓮生 [=Kumagai], shaved his head, and became a mendicant monk (*dōshinja* 道心者).<sup>58</sup> This must have been the result of karma, but it was a humbling aspiration indeed.

Sawamura Tosshi (Sōjūrō [I] 宗十郎, 1685–1756) was later known as Sukedakaya Takasuke [I] 助高屋高助. In a kabuki play staged at a time I cannot quite recall, Hakuen 栢蓮 (Ichikawa Danjūrō II, 1688–1758) played [Soga] Tokimune, while Nakamura Kichitarō 中村吉太郎 portrayed [Soga] Sukenari, and Ogawa Zengorō 小川善五郎

54 In this famous tale, the mother commits suicide to strengthen her son's resolve to serve the Han ruler. It is found in the tenth entry in the biographies section of the *History of the Han Dynasty* (*Hanshu: Zhang Chen Wang Zhou zhuan*), a work completed in 111 AD and covering the era from 206 BC to 25 AD. An English summary of the story can be found in Mair 1989, pp. 19–20.

55 According to the *Shiji* (*Wu Zixu liezhuan*), Wu Yun (Wu Zixu 伍子胥, died 484 BC) was a general and politician of the Wu kingdom during the Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 BC). Shen Baoxu, originally his friend, was a Chu minister. In 506 BC, King Helü of Wu invaded Chu with an army commanded in part by Wu Zixu, and decisively defeated the Chu army at the Battle of Boju. Shen Baoxu went to Qin to plead for assistance, which he received after a seven-day hunger strike outside the Qin palace. The tale of Kagekiyo and Shigetada was most famously recounted in Chikamatsu Monzaemon's *jōruri* piece, *Shusse Kagekiyo* 出世景清 (Kagekiyo Victorious, 1685).

56 According to the *Soga monogatari* 曾我物語 (The tale of the Soga) Matano Gorō Kagehisa supposedly wrestled with Kawazu Sukeyasu 河津祐泰 (1146–1176), the father of the Soga brothers, and was subject to a leg entanglement throw known as *kawazu-gake* 河津掛 (*Soga monogatari*, pp. 80–88). Mt. Akazawa in today's Shizuoka Prefecture is the spot where Kawazu Sukeyasu was murdered by his nemesis, Kudō Suketsune. The incident was commonly related in New Year's “Soga plays” such as the one staged from the spring of Kyōhō 6 (1721) at the Edo Nakamura-za (*Kichijō naotori Soga*) in which Ōtani Hiroji played the role of Asahina (see *Kabuki nenpyō*, vol. 2, p. 3).

57 No doubt this refers to the play *Kumagai jin'ya*, based on the latter half of the third act of Namiki Sōsuke's (1695–1751) *jōruri* piece *Ichinotani futaba gunki* (premiered in Osaka in Hōreki 1 [1751]). For an English translation of the puppet play, see Shirane 2002, pp. 410–34.

58 After retiring, Kumagai Naozane wished to atone for having killed so many men, so he became a devoted follower of Hōnen's Pure Land Buddhism. Renshō was the name Kumagai assumed after taking the tonsure.

(1682–1737) acted the part of Kudō Saemon [Suketsune].<sup>59</sup> Kichitarō suddenly took ill and withdrew, so the troupe head consulted Zengorō regarding a replacement. Zengorō asked, “Don’t we have a low-ranking actor named Sōjūrō? Confer with Hakuen and see if Sōjūrō can play the part.” When Hakuen was consulted, he laughed and opposed the idea, saying, “Sōjūrō ought to play a role proper for him.” Zengorō countered with, “I have my reasons for this request.” Hakuen replied, “My, my, aren’t you playing favorites! It must be because you performed together with Sōjūrō at the [Morita] theater at Kobiki-chō until the previous year’s [eleventh-month] ‘face showing play.’ But anybody will do, so just hurry up and get someone.”

The curtain opened. After the love scene of Tokimune and [the courtesan] Shōshō, [Sōjūrō in the role of] Sukenari thoughtfully adjusted himself [to Hakuen]. The play ended magnificently and Hakuen asked Zengorō, “Today, as you suggested, Jūrō [Sukenari]’s replacement acted quite confidently. I agreed to your proposal with no deep thoughts at the time, but this actor hardly seems inexperienced. Did you pick him as a substitute because you saw something in him?” Zengorō answered, “Indeed. Once, when I played the role of Kudō Suketsune at the Morita-za, Sōjūrō acted the part of Kudō’s young son, Inubōmaru 犬房丸.<sup>60</sup> In my formal kimono and courtier’s hat, I had climbed the edge of the railing next to the center-stage gable and after the curtain closed had to descend by a ladder. Sōjūrō positioned himself at the base of the ladder and warned me to be careful. He remained there and aided me until I had fully descended. He must have taken this to be a kindness properly shown to the elderly. I thought him an unusually upright young man, and he always continued to aid me thereafter. When I considered his actions, I realized that even though we were in a play, I was after all Inubōmaru’s father. Sōjūrō’s display of feeling for his ‘father’ seemed to me a sign that he held great promise as a skilled actor. As luck would have it, I could use him for the role of Sukenari and see if he had indeed become skillful.” He thus lavished praise on Sōjūrō, who in later years would become a major star. Later Hakuen remarked that he stood in awe of the discernment of a master [such as Zengorō]. These events were related to me by Yorozya Shōjirō よろづや莊次郎 (?-?).

In the puppet theater, too, men with high aspirations become proficient. When [Yoshida] Bunza[burō] [II] 吉田文三郎 (1732–1791) handled the puppet depicting Matsuemon [that is, the disguised warrior Higuchi] in the third act of the play *Hiragana seisuiki* ひらがな盛衰記 (A simply worded record of the rise and fall of the Heike and Genji clans), others puzzled over how he managed to make the puppet look so crestfallen

59 In 1193, the two brothers Soga Tokimune and Sukenari supposedly avenged the slaying of their father by Kudō Suketsune eighteen years earlier. The vendetta is recounted in the *Azusa kagami* and is developed at length in the *Soga monogatari*. It was treated in later theatrical and musical genres such as *kōwaka mai* 幸若舞 and kabuki. For a synopsis and discussion, see Araki 1964, pp. 133–39. For a translation of *Kotobuki Soga no taimen* (The felicitous Soga encounter), a kabuki play treating this theme, see Brandon and Leiter 2002a, pp. 24–40. Perhaps the play referred to here was the one staged at the Nakamura-za on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of Kyōhō 享保 9 (1724) where Danjūrō indeed played Soga Tokimune and Zengorō played Kudō Suketsune. The role of Soga Sukenari at the opening is listed as having been played by Sukejūrō, perhaps Mimasuya Sukejūrō 三升屋助十郎 I, who died in Kyōhō 10 (1725) (see *Kabuki nenpyō*, vol. 2, p. 65).

60 Zengorō played Kudō Suketsune at the Morita-za in a play starting from the first month of Kyōhō 5 (1720) and Sōjūrō did indeed play Inubō maru. Again, Sukenari was played by Mimasuya Sukejūrō I (see *Kabuki nenpyō*, vol. 1, p. 542).

and despondent when it begged farewell to the puppet of the lady-in-waiting, Ofude.<sup>61</sup> Bunza[burō] explained that, “At this moment in the play everything depends on making Higuchi appear humiliated. This is because Higuchi has not yet succeeded in avenging the enemy of his erstwhile lord and has survived as a boatman. Ofude, on the other hand, even though she is a woman, has journeyed to distant Fukushima to make inquiries. She can relax, because the young lord is in Higuchi’s hands and she will locate the enemy of her father, [Kamada] Haito. By contrast Higuchi is naturally quite mortified. When [Higuchi’s master and father-in-law] Gonshirō at first scolds Ofude with, ‘Shame on you!’ Higuchi would like to crawl into a hole and disappear.”

Skill means, first and foremost, distinguishing between affectations and realities.<sup>62</sup>

6. [Utei] Enba 烏亭焉馬 (1743–1822, see figure 4) scored a great success when he wrote the “Miyagino scene” of *Go-taiheiki Shiroishibanashi* 碁太平記白石噺 (The tale of Shiroishi and the Taihei chronicles).<sup>63</sup> Later [the puppeteer Yoshida] Bunza[burō] [II] ran into his own younger brother [Yoshida] Bungo [II] 吉田文吾 (?–1789) at the theater and, in the course of a conversation, laughed and said, “Enba committed a great blunder in the narrative when he has Miyagino ask, ‘Is it a lie or fabrication that those who display filial piety toward parents are blessed by heaven?’<sup>64</sup> In fact, those who display the virtue of filial piety never think themselves virtuous. If they do so, they are no longer virtuous. Truly virtuous individuals always think of themselves as lacking virtue and lament how unbearably sorry they are for possessing this fault. Enba did not grasp this while writing.” Bungo was greatly impressed by this observation. [Note by Suzuki Kyō]: “Enba was entirely unlettered, so he should not be censured too strongly.”

7. The statement “with the momentum of a man riding a tiger” in the *jōruri* piece [*Shinrei*] *Yaguchi no watashi* 神靈矢口渡 (Miracle at the Yaguchi ferry) is a blunder on the part of the playwright [Hiraga Gennai].<sup>65</sup> The phrase “the momentum of riding a tiger” (*kiko no ikioi* 騎虎の勢い) signifies a great predicament. It is hardly appropriate to use this expression for boasting of the victorious exploits of [Nitta] Yoshioki 新田義興 (1331–1358). In the play *Chūshingura*, the ingenious pun “a *shakuhachi* (= *hyakuhachi*, 108) of suffering” is also extremely disagreeable to the ear.<sup>66</sup>

61 *Hiragana Seisuiiki* is a five-act historical puppet *jōruri* piece written for the puppet theater by Takeda Izumo and his assistants; premiered at the Osaka Takemoto-za 竹本座 in Genbun 元文 4 (1739). Matsuemon is actually Higuchi Kanemitsu, a high-ranking warrior disguised as a boatman. Several of the best-known scenes of a kabuki version are translated in Brandon and Leiter 2002a, pp. 164–95.

62 This line contains the problematic term *mite suru* 見てする (“see and do”?). I conjecture it should read *miwakeru* 見分ける (“to distinguish”) or something of the sort.

63 A puppet *jōruri* piece in eleven acts by Kinōjō Tarō 紀上太郎, Utei (also Tarekawa 立川) Enba, and Yō Yōtai 容楊黛 (?–?); first staged in the first month of An’ei 9 (1780) at the Edo Gekiza. Two sisters, Miyagino and Shinobu, age eighteen and eleven respectively, avenge the murder of their peasant-class father. Sections of a kabuki version are translated in Brandon and Leiter 2002b, pp. 82–104.

64 From *Go-taiheiki Shiroishibanashi*, p. 578 (act 7). Miyagino is both a popular prostitute in Yoshiwara and the paragon of virtue in the play.

65 This was a puppet *jōruri* piece in five acts first staged in the first month of Meiwa 7 (1770) at the Edo Gekiza. The words in question are found on p. 364. *Kiko no ikioi* refers to the fact that once one rides a tiger, it is impossible to dismount. The phrase is found in chapter 24 (Tangchen zhuan 12, “Biographies of Tang subject, part 12”) of the *Xin wudai shi* (New history of the five dynasties, 974).

66 *Kanadehon chūshingura*, p. 131. Donald Keene renders the phrase “the flute tells of the 108 sources of suffering in this dream life.” See Keene 1981, p. 149. The number 108 is read *hyaku-hachi* and thus serves as a (bad) pun on *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute).



Figure 4. Utei Enba. From *Shin zōho ukiyo-e ruikō* 新增補浮世絵類考 (completed 1868).

[Ihara] Saikaku thoroughly read and digested many old narratives and put them to use when writing of his times. As a consequence, his diction is elevated. The felicitous phrases that [Ejima] Kiseki used throughout his life are all lifted from Saikaku. In his writing, Saikaku was a master at using the syllable “*te*” and the suffix “*keru*.”<sup>67</sup> When I wrote my five-volume *Mizu no yukue*, I imitated Saikaku’s style.

8. Many of the texts of the [folk song] “Ise ondo” 伊勢音頭 were composed by the *haikai* poet Bairo 梅露 (?-?), who belonged to the Jinbūkan 神風館 (or Jinpūkan) [group of Ise-based *haikai* poets]. Bairo was originally a lowly fish peddler who sold his wares tramping through the Yamada 山田 area.<sup>68</sup> Whenever he attended a [Jinbūkan] *haikai* meeting, he became so engrossed that he forgot to return home. He wanted to try his hand at composing some verses and after begging to participate was admitted. Bairo was a natural genius, so many of the poems he composed are now known to all. Since he was entirely unlettered, he enrolled as a pupil of [the *haikai* poet] Kaga Chiyojo 加賀千代女 (1703–1775).<sup>69</sup> After studying much Japanese literature (*washo* 和書), he was finally admitted into the Jinbūkan group. Clearly, he possessed extraordinary literary abilities, but unfortunately his lack of scholarly breadth seems to have kept him from writing as well as he could have.

67 *Te* is the conjunctive form (*ren'yōkei* 連用形) of the temporal auxiliary verb (perfective/continuation) *tsu*; *keru* is the attributive form (*ren'aikei* 連体形) of *keri*, a suffix often indicating the past or signaling a poetic emphasis.

68 Yamada is today in Ise City, Mie Prefecture, the location of Ise’s Outer Shrine (*gekū*).

69 Kaga Chiyo or Kaga no Chiyojo, literally “Chiyo, the woman from Kaga,” stemmed from what is now Hakusan-shi 白山市 in Ishikawa Prefecture (the old Kaga domain). Nationally renowned as a *haiku* poet, she took the tonsure at age fifty-two. For a brief entry regarding her in *Kinsei kijinden* 近世畸人伝 by Ban Kōkei 伴蒿蹊, see Carter 2014, pp. 325–28.

Nothing is as surprising as human abilities. It is impossible to guess who will eventually display what sort of innate talents. In this regard, Confucius's saying that "Youth is to be regarded with respect" supplies a valuable message.<sup>70</sup> Even today someone may possess the genius of the Duke of Zhou (Zhou Gong 周公, 11 c. BC), but one will hardly be able to assess such a person correctly unless one knows oneself. That the Duke of Zhou tirelessly solicited the wisdom of others supplies a model for political advisors of later ages. [Note by Suzuki Kyō: "strong arguments and vigilant eyes." Guo Wei's 郭隗 request [to King Zhao 昭王] to "begin with me" in recruiting talent is also counsel of unparalleled, timeless value.<sup>71</sup> Even a loyal retainer wishing only to benefit his lord will find it difficult to succeed if he relies on nothing but his own wisdom. While the lord scours the land in search of talent, men of ability may well lie unrecognized at his feet. The discretion of refusing to suggest, "There are no others, so just leave it to me," led to the appearance of great generals such as Yue Yi 樂毅 (?-?), who took more than seventy castles in battle.<sup>72</sup> What a victory this was for the wise elders of his house!

9. When one year I lived in Ise 伊勢 Province I sometimes visited Kyoto.<sup>73</sup> I had more chance encounters during that year than in any other period of my life. On one occasion I decided to go to Nijō in Kyoto to call on [Tejima] Toan 手島堵庵 (1718–1786), who had recently become quite famous.<sup>74</sup> At the Aogaiya 青貝屋 bookshop I saw a sign advertising a printed book of the Tejima school. I asked for Tejima's address and was told that I would not be able to meet him for he was ill. While purchasing two or three volumes I chatted a bit with a young man there. Our conversation drifted to hearsay about virtuous and loyal persons, and the man told me that an indigent woman named Soyo そよ who lived in Owari 尾張 Province at a village named Toriganji Shinden 鳥ヶ地新田 had apparently served her father so selflessly that she was granted an award by lord (*ryōshu*) Shimizu Kai no kami 志水甲斐守.<sup>75</sup> I remarked to the man, evidently a clerk, "My, you seem very well informed about Owari!" He explained that it was his father's province of origin. We talked about various things regarding the area, and when I finally asked the clerk his name, it turned out he was

70 See the *Analects of Confucius* (*Lunyu*, Book 9, "Zi Han").

71 According to a legend in the *Strategies of the Warring States* (*Zhan Guo Ce* 戦国策; *Yan Ce*, *Yan* 1), a historical work compiled between the third to first centuries BC, King Zhao of Yan 燕 (r. 311–279 BC) wished to attract talent to his state. Guo Wei, an advisor of the king, presented a parable regarding a king who wished to purchase a "thousand-mile steed" for 1,000 gold pieces, but nobody answered his offer. A minister volunteered to find such a horse but came back with nothing but a bag of bones procured for 500 gold pieces. The king was at first infuriated, but soon the rumor of this purchase moved many persons to offer their prize horses to the king. Guo Wei asked to be the king's bag of bones, thereby indicating that a strong ruler could attract talent by first esteeming those who were readily available. The king built a palace for Guo Wei and the state of Yan attracted many men of talent. The point of the phrase to "begin with Wei" is that if the king would treat well men like Wei—nearby and convenient, if mediocre—men of ability would also soon assemble.

72 Yue Yi of the state of Yan is discussed in the *Shiji* ("Yue Yi liezhuan").

73 This journey took place in Tenmei 天明 2 (1782). Inoue (1993, p. 194) suspects it was undertaken at the behest of Tsuchiyama Sōjirō.

74 Tejima Toan contributed to the religious/moral movement of *shingaku* (literally "heart learning") founded by Ishida Baigan 石田梅岩 (1685–1744). *Shingaku* was a syncretic teaching combining elements of neo-Confucianism and Buddhism.

75 Shimizu Kai no kami, whose name Tōsaku writes with an incorrect first ideograph (清), refers to a family that yielded important elders of the Owari domain. The region the clan controlled was located in Ōdaka Village 大高村 in Chita County 知多郡. See Kajikawa 1989. Toriganji Shinden is in today's Yatomi-shi 弥富市 in Aichi Prefecture.

the younger brother of Yajima Kihē 矢島喜兵衛 (?-?).<sup>76</sup> Kihē was a pupil of Okada Sentarō 岡田千太郎 (1737–1799), who was a relation of mine.<sup>77</sup> I had just stopped by there on my way back to Owari and we laughed over how fortuitous our meeting had been.

On another occasion, while passing through the town of Matsusaka 松坂 in Ise Province, I encountered a squall. I sought shelter at a nearby shop and was taking out my oil-cloth raincoat, when a man some twenty-two or twenty-three years old appeared from inside the shop and called me by my common name. I had never seen him before. When I asked him who he was, he answered that he was a clerk of [the tobacco wholesaler] Inui Kyūbē 乾九兵衛 (?-?) of Horidome-chō 堀留町 [in Edo]. He recognized me because in my youth I had frequented that shop. He told me that nothing had changed at the Edo branch and we traded childhood memories. At this distant spot, I thus heard tales of my home town. I told him that I would soon be returning to Edo, and we bade each other farewell.

Some time thereafter before reaching Yamada I met a man who seemed to be a priest (*oshi* 御師) of the Ise shrines. He was walking single-file with an attendant who looked like a clerk. When I stopped at a *sake* shop the two also entered, and we began to chat. When the shrine priest asked me where I was headed, I answered, “I am going to the home of a student named Tsuji Kiichi 辻喜一 (?-?). I don’t know if he lives in Uji 宇治 or Yamada, but I’d like to find out how he is doing.” The shrine priest answered, “He lives in Yamada. And you must be an acquaintance of Sugita Genpaku 杉田玄白 (1733–1817). After going to Edo, Kiichi became Genpaku’s disciple and has no doubt befriended you and benefited much from your kindness.” He explained that the attendant was in fact a friend of Kiichi’s named Ōgidate Kandayū 扇館縮太夫, a student of Shibano [Ritsuzan] 柴野栗山 (1736–1807) of the Awa 阿波 domain.<sup>78</sup> He was on his way to Kyoto to see how his teacher was faring. Thus, I quickly discovered where Kiichi lived. During my stay, we became friends and engaged in pleasant conversation.

Each of these three meetings was entirely fortuitous.

10. Many sophisticated gentlemen (*kōzu no shi* 好事の士) live in Ise Province. One such man is Nishimura Shōemon 西村荘右衛門, (1746?–1801?), a wholesaler of Yokkaichi 四日市. He calls himself Hyōtoku Basō 表徳馬曹, has literary talents, and maintains a lively interest in many concerns. Once when he came to Edo for a year, he begged me for assistance, so we stood in close contact. He was a disciple of my friend [Katō] Umaki 加藤美樹 (1721–1777).<sup>79</sup> Shōemon possessed a copy of *Hitori-ne* (Sleeping alone, written c. 1724), a fascinating

76 Or Yashima. See Inoue 1993, p. 193.

77 Okada Sentarō, better known as Okada Shinsen 岡田新川, was a retainer of the Owari domain who taught at the domainial Confucian academy. He was a scholar of Chinese learning and poetry, and author of many books. Owari was the province of origin both of Tōsaku’s father and teacher, Ban Seizan.

78 The Confucianist Shibano Ritsuzan was born in Sanuki 讃岐 Province (Kagawa Prefecture) and served the Awa domain in Edo from Meiwa 4 (1767) to Tenmei 7 (1787). Later he was employed by the bakufu and became one of the chief architects of the bakufu’s Kansei 2 (1790) “ban on heterodox teachings.” For a short biographical sketch, see Beerens 2006, pp. 139–40. Records from Keiō 慶応 3 (1867) list an Ōgidate Tayū 扇館太夫 (see *Jingū oshi shiryō, naikū-ben*, p. 45; see also *Jingū oshi shiryō, gekū-ben*, vol. 3, p. 18). Other documents suggest that an Ōgidate Handayū 扇館半太夫 was from a house of *oshi* located at what is now Toyokawa-chō near Ise (see *Jingū oshi shiryō, gekū-ben*, vol. 1, p. 42; vol. 3, pp. 17, 18, 23). Perhaps Kandayū is an error for Handayū; or else the ideograph 館 has been erroneously repeated.

79 The scholar of national learning and poet Katō Umaki was active mainly in Kyoto and Osaka. For a brief biographical sketch in English, see Beerens 2006, pp. 86–87.

volume by Yanagisawa Godayū 柳沢権太夫 (1703–1758).<sup>80</sup> I wonder if he still has it. [Note by Suzuki Kyō]: “I have [a copy of] the book *Hitori-ne* at home.”

*Hitori-ne* treats a variety of subjects. It begins with a description of matters relating to bordellos but includes discussions of more elegant matters. I remember that [Yanagisawa] notes that [the calligrapher and interpreter Hayashi] Dōei 林道栄 (1640–1708) of Nagasaki once declared that he would trade all the knowledge he had acquired since age thirteen for the *obi* of the courtesan he adored.<sup>81</sup> The author refers to [the Confucian scholar, painter, and poet Hattori] Nankaku 服部南郭 (1683–1759) as Shōhachi, and writes with understanding about the ideas of [Ogyū] Sorai, whom he refers to [by his “common name”] Sōemon 惣右衛門, and whose senior he seems to be.<sup>82</sup> The book also treats events during the time when the Owariya 尾張屋 [house of assignation], located at Ageya-chō [in Yoshiwara, see figure 2], still flourished.<sup>83</sup>

11. A clerk named Shōhē 莊兵衛 worked for the tobacco wholesaler Inui Kyūbē at Horidome-chō. Whenever I went to that shop, Shōhē, who evinced high ambitions from childhood, paid close attention to my remarks on literature. The main office of the shop was located in Ise, and since the operation of the Edo branch was relegated to the Edo clerks, they wielded considerable authority. [In Ise] the accounts were checked only by scanning the ledgers, and the finances were otherwise left up to the [Edo] clerks in charge. Moreover, during [the previous] two years the father and son heading the business had died in succession, so a young male successor was selected from the extended family and adopted as a future husband for a daughter who was only four or five years old. Thus, little attention was paid to the head’s authority, and the clerks’ influence increased proportionally.

Shōhē found this situation lamentable and had for some time consulted with Tōemon 藤右衛門 (?-?), the Ise shop manager, regarding what to do. When Shōhē became the manager of the Edo branch, he invested in oil and cotton when prices were low and sold the shares at a profit when prices rose. Because of this, the Edo clerks who were his inferiors convened and sent a letter to the Ise headquarters stating that Shōhē was disregarding the head’s house rules and embarking on selfish business schemes. In their joint missive, they demanded that Ise clerks be dispatched to Edo to take inventory. Shōhē had already discussed his true intentions with Tōemon and the latter soon arrived in Edo to check the finances and to transport the Edo shop deeds and other materials back to Ise. Even though Shōhē had not behaved properly, the business had experienced no losses. Since service on delayed loan repayments had increased, Shōhē was ordered not to engage in anything resembling short-term transactions. Then an inspection of the Edo branch’s finances commenced. Shōhē gleefully told me that everything had gone just as planned. Even in warrior-class households, elders rarely downgrade their own authority in order to uphold archaic house rules. Shōhē acted like a capable vassal representing an inept lord.

80 For a brief discussion of *Hitori-ne*, see Nakamura and Uetani 1965. On Godayū, see note 42 above.

81 *Hitori-ne*, p. 33.

82 Hattori Nankaku’s “common names” (*tsūshō* 通称) were in fact Kōhachi 幸八 and later Shōemon 小右衛門. On Ogyū Sorai, see *Hitori-ne*, pp. 50, 139, and elsewhere; Hattori Nankaku (Fuku Genkyō) is mentioned on p. 192. Sorai served the daimyo Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu 柳沢吉保 (1658–1714), who headed the Yamato Kōriyama domain. Kien was the second son of a house elder of this domain.

83 The Owariya is mentioned in *Hitori-ne*, p. 80.

Inui Kyūbē was a wealthy merchant based in Shimizu of Ise Province.<sup>84</sup> An Edo-branch clerk named Shōhē 小兵衛 was once to undertake a pilgrimage to the Great Ise shrines. Kyūbē told the clerk, “Before the gate of the so-and-so temple in Ise stands a small stone statue of the deity Jizō. Please offer two or three sprigs of *shikimi* 檜 for me to the Jizō there.”<sup>85</sup> When the clerk returned from the trip, he asked his master, “Whose grave does that Jizō mark?” The master answered, “It is the grave of a fool named Ichibē 市兵衛 from the local village. When I was seventeen years old, I was asked to help re-thatch the roof of my parental home. All the villagers turned out to lend a hand, and like everyone else that fool assisted in lugging thatch. My father directed the roofers by pointing here and there with a stick. When Ichibē was standing next to my father, he casually remarked, ‘Sir, even though you are troubling yourself re-thatching the roof, the son’s generation will probably just sell the house.’ My father listened, grinned, and answered, ‘That’s right, I think so too.’ Thereafter every time my father scolded me, he would say, ‘Even that fool Ichibē thinks you are the sort of fellow who will just sell our house, so be more prudent!’ This became his pet phrase. On reflection, these words turned out to be a good lesson for me, so I had a grave marker built in Ichibē’s honor, and every month pilgrims visit the temple and offer flowers and prayers.”

What an unusual, upright man Inui Kyūbē was! On occasion I met him at the Edo shop, and found that he was by nature a gentle and humble person. Whenever he checked the petty cash books and found that the returns had amounted to less than usual, he was cross and grumbled, “It is because we have treated the customers poorly!” At the Ise shop he would have extra rice cooked every day. This was formed into balls and when the needy came around, they would be called to the rear entrance and given some to eat. He demonstrated compassion in countless ways.

On consideration, it seems to me that Shōhē’s loyalty was also the beneficial result of having such a master. Today Shōhē lives at a spot called Hinaga-mura 日永村.<sup>86</sup> He sometimes comes to Edo.

[In China, the king] Pan Geng 盤庚 held that, “In men we seek those of old families.”<sup>87</sup> This is because when persons of average abilities, to say nothing of wise and able ones, repeatedly gain experience, encounter hardships, humiliate themselves, unwittingly judge erroneously, and are remorseful, they tend to make fewer mistakes. Spirited and gifted youths cannot remain silent when they detect the shortcomings of others. At every opportunity, they attack and ridicule others for faults that are in fact their own. It is thus laudable when youths speak little.

That reminds me of the time when I was in Owari Province while traveling on business to Kyoto. I passed through the town of Kuwana 桑名 and came out at Hinaga 日長. There I dropped in at the house of the aforementioned Shōhē. Shōhē was delighted, had much to report, and did everything he could to fête me. At that moment a child, twelve or thirteen years old, informed us of a schedule by announcing, “Shōhē, the guests are all present!” Wheat noodles to be shared with neighbors were being made at the house of

84 This is present-day Shimizu-chō, Matsusaka-shi, Mie Prefecture.

85 *Shikimi* is a star anise that is often placed on Buddhist altars.

86 Present-day Hinaga, Yokkaichi-shi, Mie Prefecture.

87 In the *Shujing* (Book of documents), in the first chapter regarding the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1050 BC), Pan Geng cites Chi Ren 遲任: “In men we seek those of old families; in vessels, we do not seek old ones, but new.” See *Shujing*, “Pan Geng I.”

Shōhē's father-in-law. Shōhē seemed hesitant to go, since I had unexpectedly arrived from Edo, so I proposed we walk there together. While chatting we hiked down the country road for half a mile or so, and he was truly delighted when I told him of my visits to his old shop. A doctor was present at Shōhē's house, and I was introduced as "the venerable Tōsaku about whom I have spoken." [When I arrived] the doctor remained there and conversed with me. When I asked for his name, he answered, "I am called Gen'ya." I questioned him about the ideographs he used to write this name. He explained that "*gen*" was written with the character meaning "black" (玄), and "*ya*" was the character used in the name "Yahē" (弥, also read *bi*, *mi*, or *iya*). A saying has it that "reading *bi* as *ya* is *iya* (disagreeable)," but I thought that since this man was an unlearned provincial, he believed *ya* to be the correct reading for the name "Gen'ya." In my wanderings far and wide, I had, however, encountered and befriended persons who seemed unlettered but were in fact quite well read. So I held my tongue, and when I later mentioned his name to Edo residents familiar with him, they all told me he was a renowned figure, highly literate, and an outstanding man. Gen'ya subsequently explained that he had used the hereditary character *gen* with the intention of having his name read Genbi or Genmi, but all the villagers only knew the second character as *ya*, so he was now always called Gen'ya. He laughed, saying that as an old and decrepit provincial he now left it up to the locals to decide how to call him. On this account, he was passing as Gen'ya. It was a good thing indeed that when he had at first spoken to me I had remained mum while judging him unlearned. If I had allowed myself to express a nasty opinion, he would surely have resented it.<sup>88</sup> I had gained in age, so I had gained a corresponding amount of discretion.

Gen'ya talked in detail about [the Confucian scholar Inoue] Kinga 井上金峨 (1732–1784) in Edo, and commended the writings of [calligrapher, author, and Confucian scholar Sawada] Tōkō 沢田東江 (1732–1796). He was truly a rare sort of provincial doctor.

12. When I visited the hot springs at Tōnosawa 塔ノ澤 in Hakone of Sagami 相模 Province I met an Ōbaku 黄檗 sect monk named Mokudō 黙堂, the abbot of Kirinji 亀林寺, a temple at Anryū-chō 安立町 in the town of Sakai in Izumi 和泉 Province (Osaka Prefecture).<sup>89</sup> He was an expert on Chinese rhyme schemes and mentioned that he had spoken at length to the Chinese while on a visit to the harbor of Nagasaki.<sup>90</sup> He explained that the interpreters there are well versed in the parlance of merchants, but many of them do not comprehend much of the language used for official matters.

Mokudō had gone to Edo because of business in Mito and was lodging at the house of the saké wholesaler Kajimaya Seibē 鹿島屋清兵衛 (?-?).<sup>91</sup> He had come to the hot springs of Tōnosawa with a monk from Kōfukuji 弘福寺, a temple in the Ushijima 牛島 area of

88 In order to make sense of this passage, I have read the character *sō* 惣 found in all printed versions of the text as the two characters *jashin* 邪心 (nasty or malicious opinions).

89 The Ōbaku sect was a branch of Rinzaï sect Zen Buddhism. In fact, Kirinji seems to have been a Sōtō sect Zen temple in Sumiyoshi Village (today Anryū-chō in Osaka Prefecture). It was abolished in Meiji 7 (1874).

90 Tōsaku writes only "Saki minato" (Saki harbor), but since no such place exists, I have assumed that an ideograph is abbreviated or missing.

91 Kajimaya Seibē was the hereditary name of a saké wholesaler (and later money exchanger and pawn broker) at Shinkawa in Edo, a canal in what is today Chūō-ku Shinkawa 1. He was a member of the powerful "ten wholesalers' guild" (*tokumi-doiya* 十組問屋).

Edo.<sup>92</sup> Mokudō wore a white summer cotton kimono and tied a three-foot hand towel dyed blue around his waist, and continued to wear this even after he left the hot springs. He had brought along *The Private Records of Morinaga*, which he was constantly reading.<sup>93</sup> One finds no mention of this work in scholarly books. He explained that he was well acquainted with [the priest] Daichō [Genkō] 大潮元皓 (1676–1768) of Higo 肥後 Province, and from his words seemed to be adept at writing Chinese verse.<sup>94</sup> As the days passed, he too gradually turned out to be far superior to my initial impression.

13. In Sunpu 駿府 (present-day Shizuoka City) stands a Zen temple whose name I cannot recall. It is the headquarters of its sect and has its own real estate holdings. Once, the retired abbot of this temple visited the hot springs at Atami 熱海. The lodge next to him was occupied by a party of seven or eight Edo travelers. Since the old priest wore tattered clothing, they took him to be something of a tramp and did not even bother to ask his name. They just called him “the beggar monk” (*o-dōshin* お同心) and even had him cook their rice. The priest was a joker and affably answered with, “Sir, yes sir!” One day when they had procured a flounder, they asked, “Hey, you beggar monk, won’t you fix it for us?” Now he was in trouble and did not know what to do. He announced that he would give it a try, picked up a cooking knife, fell to work in the scullery, and began to make a complete mess of it. Since the fish would be ruined, the others ended up slicing it themselves. They turned it into *sashimi* and ate it with their saké.

At that point two or three boys with a basket of seasonal fruit appeared, evidently wishing to pay a visit to someone at the hot springs. They asked, “Where is the room of the retired abbot of the so-and-so temple?” but the owner answered that there was no such priest here, only a monk in his thirties in a back room. They went to check, but he was not the one they were looking for, since they were searching for someone around sixty years old. They wondered if they had come to the wrong spot and said they would look elsewhere and then return home. At that point, I joined them and informed them that the man for whom they were hunting was in fact present. We looked far and wide, offering profuse apologies to the guests we bothered. When we reached the lodge of the Edo travelers, we detected the priest’s bundle of belongings. Just as we realized he was here, he came out of the bath. We exclaimed, “Ah, there he is!” but he replied, “It’s a secret!” and knowingly gestured and winked for us to keep quiet. But the truth was out, and the Edo travelers were utterly mortified. They all scurried off to the bath and stayed inside for a long time. The priest laughed and scolded the boys with the fruit, telling them that if they had only come a bit later, he could have had some more fun. Now all the guests honored him, for they realized they had encountered a venerable retired Zen master from a great temple.

14. Some years ago a man named Murakami 村上 (Yasobē 弥惣兵衛, 1726–1784) from the harbor town of Esashi in the Matsumae 松前 area [of Ezo, present-day Hokkaido]

92 Tōsaku writes the first character of the temple name incorrectly, using the name of the homonymous temple in Nagasaki 興福寺. The temple intended, founded in Kanbun 寛文 13 (1673), is indeed of the Ōbaku sect and stands at Mukōjima 5-3-2 in Sumida-ku.

93 Tōsaku identifies the book as *Morinaga nikki* 盛長日記, but he is probably referring to the *Morinaga shiki* 盛長私記, a forgery allegedly written by the general Adachi Morinaga 安達盛長 (1135–1200). It comprises more than fifty volumes recounting events from 1180 to 1225. No complete modern edition seems to exist.

94 Daichō Genkō was an Ōbaku sect priest from Hizen 肥前 Province (Saga Prefecture), not Higo. He was also renowned as a Confucianist and as a poet of Chinese verse. He knew enough Chinese to serve as an interpreter, and while in Edo consorted with Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 and Hattori Nankaku 服部南郭.

became my close friend. [Note by Suzuki Kyō]: “When this man came to Edo for commercial dealings he met Tōsaku and became his friend.” [In 1783–1784] I stayed at his house for six or seven months, and we enjoyed ourselves visiting various places [in Ezo]. [Note by Suzuki Kyō]: “I think that this was the first time that Tōsaku visited Ezo. It was the first time an Edo man ventured to this region.”<sup>95</sup>

A retired priest named Nisshō 日正 of a temple called Hokkeji 法華寺 excelled in both scholarship and Buddhist practice and was a highly cultured man.<sup>96</sup> He was a disciple of Nitchō 日潮 (1674–1748), who would later become the abbot of Kuonji 久遠寺.<sup>97</sup> Nitchō in turn was a great pupil of Saint Gensei 元政上人 (Nissei 日政, 1623–1668).<sup>98</sup> Near Hokkeji stood a Zen temple called Shōgakuin 正覚院.<sup>99</sup> Its previous abbot too had been an interesting fellow, and Nisshō spoke of him on many occasions. During a year of famines, when impoverished residents experienced great hardship, the abbot of Shōgakuin had handed out as much food to the starving as he could spare. When his provisions ran low and he could no longer aid them, he sought help from a wealthy local man named Shibata Yojihē 柴田与次兵衛 (?–?), whom he begged for three bales of rice. Yojihē asked the abbot of Shōgakuin what he was up to, and the latter answered that he was seeking to aid the poor, though three bales of rice would hardly suffice. Yojihē retorted that the abbot was wasting his time requesting something from one man in order to save others. Such a priest, he maintained, was no man of virtue and should not claim to be. But the abbot of Shōgakuin fired back, “You shameless scoundrel! What are three bales of rice to you? I am working for your sake by helping you accumulate good karma!” Then he pulled out a log smoldering in the fireplace and tried to strike Yojihē with it, but the latter beat a hasty retreat. Thereafter a servant appeared, handed over three bales of rice, and apparently apologized.

[The abbot of Shōgakuin] often summoned mothers and grannies in order to award them sweet saké and dumplings, and to lecture to them.<sup>100</sup> He fervently preached that high and low within a household should seek to live in harmony, that nobody should neglect the duties of loyalty and filial piety, and that everyone ought to be polite and humble. Thanks to his efforts, many evildoers supposedly repented and became virtuous. Now and again he practiced medical quackery (*chikusai ryōji* 竹齋療治), but he also contributed rice to the poor and even purchased bonito flakes for them to eat with their meals. When I met him, he merrily remembered that as a young acolyte he was much troubled when ordered to go out and buy bonito flakes.

95 Writer-explorers who had preceded Tōsaku include Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725), who had produced a volume entitled *Ezo-shi* 蝦夷志 (Records of Ezo, 1720), and Sakakura Genjirō 坂倉源次郎 (?–?), who searched for gold mines in 1737 and presents information on the north in his *Hokkai zuibitsu* 北海隨筆 (A northern miscellany, 1739). Numerous travel diaries and gazetteers treating northern areas and their inhabitants appeared in the 1780s and thereafter. For more information on Murakami, see the documents cited in Inoue 1993, pp. 212–13.

96 The Hokkeji in question here is probably the Nichiren school temple in Matsumae (Esashi-chō Honchō 71), whose main hall was built in 1721.

97 Nitchō was a Nichiren school priest born in Yamashiro 山城 Province (Kyoto Prefecture). In 1736, he assumed the headship of the Kuonji (Minobu-san 身延山, in Kai 甲斐 Province, Yamanashi Prefecture), the headquarters of the Nichiren school.

98 Nissei was a famed Nichiren monk and poet of Chinese verse.

99 Tōsaku writes “Shōgakuji” 正覚寺, but the temple intended is no doubt the one called Shōgakuin. I have also corrected this error below. Shōgakuin was a Sōtō sect temple standing some four hundred meters to the southeast of Hokkeji. Its main hall was built in Genroku 元禄 2 (1689).

100 Sweet saké (*amazake*) is a low-alcohol or non-alcoholic beverage made from fermented rice.

The retired abbot of Shōgakuin was particularly hard on guests who did not rinse the bowl of the sweet saké they had been offered, but just left it empty as is. He granted sweet saké to peasants from Assabu 厚沢部, when they brought him firewood.<sup>101</sup> Whenever someone ceded the drinking bowl unrinsed and started for home, he chased the offender beyond the temple gate, grabbed him by the collar and cried, “You, who labor as a peasant, don’t you know the blessing of grain? You are nothing but an out-and-out thief!” Then he dragged him back, and commanded, “Rinse the bowl and drink the liquid!” and held the bowl under the delinquent’s nose.

On another occasion, when this priest had ascended onto his pulpit and begun to lecture, his memory failed him. After spending some time in incomprehensible mumbling, he simply exclaimed, “I think that might have been from Mencius—in any case, Shibata Yojihee knows the passage well, so I’ll go ask him about it tomorrow.” This was typical of his candor. He seems to have been distantly related to someone in the Satake 佐竹 clan.<sup>102</sup> Although he knew his Buddhist scriptures, he avoided fame and fortune. Instead he remained secluded in the wilds of Ezo until the end of his life. He was truly an estimable fellow.

15. Matsumae lies some eight *ri* (thirty-two kilometers) from Minmaya 三厩 in the Tsugaru 津軽 domain. Near Cape Tappi 竜飛岬 an ocean current known as the “Shirakami tide” flows rapidly at three spots. Small boats from Tsugaru constantly ply the sea there.

The name of the domanical castle town is Matsumae. The harbor to the east is called Hakodate 函館, the one to the west Esashi 江差. At these three harbors merchants from Hachiman 八幡 and Yanagase 柳が瀬, both in Ōmi 近江 Province, operate branches of their enormous businesses by hiring fishermen to work for them.<sup>103</sup>

Kelp is exported from Hakodate. Herring, called *nishin* and resembling gizzard shad (*konoshiro*), is a product of Esashi. The fish converge [to spawn] in the sea—this is known as *kukiru*—about a week after the [vernal] equinox. Herring known as “bodyless herring” has flesh on the back that is eaten.<sup>104</sup> The rest is dried and used as fertilizer in the fields and paddies of southern, western, and northern regions [of Japan]. Legend has it that at one spot in Esashi herring worth ten thousand *ryō* were caught in a single day. Boats from throughout the land arrive at Esashi to tender competitive bids for herring.

Large quantities of salmon, trout, abalone, and sea cucumber are also netted here and purchased by wholesalers from the town of Nagasaki. Thus, although no rice is produced in the region, plenty of grain can be procured from other provinces, so shortages do not occur. Even during crop failures sufficient rice is stored in granaries to ensure that nobody dies of starvation. Vegetables are of high quality and yellow millet flourishes too. Additional details may be found in my *Tōyūki*.

101 Assabu-chō in Hokkaido belonged to the Matsumae domain, which valued the location chiefly for its lumber.

102 The Satake clan headed the Kubota domain in what is today Akita Prefecture. The house traced its lineage to the Genji clan of Kai Province (Yamanashi Prefecture).

103 Hachiman is today Ōmi-hachiman-shi 近江八幡市, and Yanagase is now Nagahama-shi 長浜市, both in Shiga Prefecture.

104 “Bodyless” (*migaki* 身欠き) because the gills, guts, and spine were removed, leaving only the flesh on the back.

The recently published *Sangoku tsūran* 三国通覽 (A survey of three countries, 1785–1786) notes that much gold is to be found in the Matsumae domain of Ezo.<sup>105</sup> Murakami Yasobē, who has lived in Ezo for years and knows the area well, says that in the past productive gold and silver mines existed at Shiriuchi 知内 (present-day Shiriuchi-chō). But today they have closed or are no longer profitable. Gold is still mined at places such as Yūrappu 遊楽部 (present-day Yakumo-chō 八雲町) and Kunnui 国縫 (present-day Oshamanbe-chō 長万部町), but earnings hardly cover costs. In fact, no spot worth mining for gold exists anywhere in Ezo. Yasobē says that even plenty of manpower and effort would not render it worthwhile. Although the metal is present in diverse locations, if one discovers nothing after digging a shaft, the effort is wasted and no reward ensues. The claim [in the *Sangoku tsūran*] that gold is found in Ezo is probably merely based on hearsay.

The *Sangoku tsūran* also introduces verses from the Ryūkyū kingdom. Some years ago, a boat with thirteen castaways from Nishi-Magiri 西間切 on the island of [Amami] Ōshima 奄美大島 drifted to the island of Hachijōjima 八丈島.<sup>106</sup> From there the ship proceeded to the island of Miyakejima 三宅島, from where it was summoned to Edo. There the passengers were questioned at the office of the inspector of finance (*kanjō bugyō* 勘定奉行), Matsumoto Izu no kami [Hidemochi] 松本伊豆守秀持 (1730–1797). In Edo they lodged with San'emon 三右衛門 at the Ōshimaya 大島屋 in the Teppōzu 鉄砲洲 area. They frequently paid visits to Egawa [Tarōzaemon] 江川太郎左衛門, the intendant in Izu Province.<sup>107</sup> On one such occasion, when I was involved in business at Mt. Amagi [in Izu Province, under the control of Egawa] and also visited the same office, I asked a Ryūkyū man named Nakaei 中榮 for a verse. He wrote down the following and handed it to me:

Because our boat was adrift  
we prayed to the deities.  
Their commands favored us—  
ah, how moved we were!<sup>108</sup>

Ōta Nanpo wished to see what the man had written, so I gave it to him. Since the writer was a merchant, it was scrawled in a poor hand. I wonder who composed and transmitted this verse, which is also reproduced in the *Sangoku tsūran*.<sup>109</sup>

105 The book and maps more fully known as *Sangoku tsūran zusetsu* 三国通覽図説 (An illustrated survey of three countries) were drafted by Hayashi Shihei 林子平 (1738–1793), who had traveled far and wide within Japan and warned the Tokugawa regime of the Russian threat. The “three countries” in question are Korea, Ryūkyū, and Ezo. The book was subject to a ban during Matsudaira Sadanobu’s earlier mentioned Kansei reforms (1787–1793). The reference to gold can be found on p. 36 (in the Tenmei 天明 6 [1786] version, f. 23v). For a detailed English-language discussion, see Winkel 2004, pp. 233–50. For online images of the 1786 edition in 6 vols. (the first printing was by Suharaya Ichibē in 1785) see [http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ru03/ru03\\_01547](http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ru03/ru03_01547) (Accessed 20 January 2019).

106 Ōshima lies c. 380 kilometers south of the southern tip of Kyushu; Hachijōjima lies c. 287 kilometers south of Tokyo; Miyakejima lies some 175 kilometers south of Tokyo. This incident occurred in An’ei 3 (1774).9. See Inoue 1993, pp. 173–74.

107 Egawa was the so-called Nirayama *daikan* 葦山代官 of this province.

108 *Nagare-bune yoe* [=yue] *ni, onkami-sama ogade* [=ogamite], *oyose* [probably *ofuse*, i.e., *ōse*-] *uru koto nō, natsukashu-yan*. The poem is in an 8-8-8 [or 9]-6 syllabic meter and reproduces some words in a southern Japanese pronunciation.

109 See p. 31 (6r of the 1786 text) of *Sangoku tsūran zusetsu*.

Perhaps [the author of the *Sangoku tsūran*] did not know Ezo well, for many things differ from what he writes.

The *Nihongi* (*Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, “Chronicles of Japan,” compiled 720) mention an Ezo mountain spelled with the ideographs [read in Japanese as] *kō hō yō tei* 後方羊蹄.<sup>110</sup> The natives call it Shiribeshi. The character *kō* was read *shiri*, the character *hō* was read *be*, and in ancient times the characters *yō* and *tei* were pronounced *shi*. Ezo natives [that is, the Ainu people] call a river *beshi*.<sup>111</sup>

Little bamboo is found in Ezo. Spotted bamboo grows in a place called Shakodan.<sup>112</sup> The word *shakodan* may be an erroneous pronunciation of the [Sino-Japanese] term *shako-han* 鷓鴣斑.<sup>113</sup> Ezo natives call ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) [by its Sino-Japanese name] *goyōsō* 五葉草 (literally, “five-leaf plant”; *Panax japonicus*), which is of the three-forked five-leaf variety (*mitsumata goyō* 三椏五葉). Thus, it is difficult to insist that no word of Chinese has ever been transmitted to Ezo.

When someone dies, [Ezo natives] strictly maintain a three-year mourning period and even have special mourning outfits. The corpse is buried [wrapped] in woven rush matting known as “patterned matting” (*aya-mushiro* あやむしろ). They bury the body in woven rush mats instead of a casket, saying that one never knows [when the matting will be needed by the dead], and that it cannot be taken [from the deceased] for even a moment.

In ancient times the Japanese government seems to have maintained an administrative office in Ezo, so old customs must have been transmitted to the region. After the Ōnin 応仁 Wars (1467–1477), however, nobody crossed the ocean to visit Ezo anymore, since it was unsuited for rice production. Thus, the land must have become truly barbarian.

The current Matsumae clan evidently stems from Wakasa 若狭 Province. The family descended from the kings of Silla and is related by blood to the Takeda clan. In time, the family arrived at Kakizaki 蠣崎 in Tsugaru and from there it crossed over to Matsumae. Little by little it captured local castles until it finally gained control of all Ezo. During the days of Hideyoshi’s Korean campaign (1592–1598) the lord of Matsumae dispatched couriers with a congratulatory message. At the siege of Osaka castle (1614–1615), he apparently also sent delegates to acknowledge the victory.

When at Setanai せたない (present-day Setana-chō せたな町) the hairy people [that is, the Ainu people] excavated an old grave and found a sizable skull, items that appeared to be rusty swords, *magatama* 勾玉 beads, and a whetstone. Several dozen man-made objects of a bluish stone in the shape of a broad-axe were also unearthed. These articles were fashioned from an extremely delicate stone not found locally. When one tries to sharpen such an item with the aforementioned whetstone one discovers that the stone of the object is soft. Each object appears to have a sharp blade, which feels like the edge of a sword when touched with the fingertips. The retired priest of Hokkeji possessed five of these axes and I obtained one of them. I used a red whetstone to try to hone it, but at first I was too hasty and some of the blade broke off. “Thunder axes” or “thunder hammers” reputedly fall to earth from heaven, but the objects in question here appear to be man-made.<sup>114</sup> Murakami related that last year he argued

110 See *Nihon shoki*, vol. 2, p. 338; in English, Aston 1972, vol. 2, p. 260.

111 In the Ainu language, *bet* is more accurate.

112 This no doubt refers to the Shakotan Peninsula, some two hundred kilometers north of Matsumae.

113 *Shako-han* is a pottery glaze producing spot resembling the coat of a Francolin partridge (*shako*).

114 It was believed that stone-age tools found after thunderstorms had been placed there by the thunder god.

this point with Hiraga Gennai, whose pseudonym [as an artist] is Kyūkei 鳩溪. Murakami and Gennai became friends through [their mutual interest] in natural products (*bussan* 物産).

Murakami was an unusual, sincere man. He died on the twenty-second day of the eighth month of Tenmei 4 (1784), after I returned from Ezo. We must have been bound by deep karmic ties. From the tenth month of Tenmei 3 (1783) to the fourth month of Tenmei 4 (1784), we sat around a hearth surrounded by snow and talked through the night. We were of the same age and fellows in [the Jōdo Shinshū] faith (*dōgyō* 同行), who never wearied of the other's company. [Suzuki Kyō comments]: “Fellows in faith are those called *dōbō* 同奉 (“serving the same”) in Pure Land and Shingon Buddhism.” Even when we were thousands of miles apart, our spirits always stayed in touch. With his death, I lost a true friend.

16. It must be considered a piece of good luck to have been born in a flourishing area like Edo. Being born in the city of the nation's ruler (*ōjō* 王城) ought to be estimated one of the “three comforts” of life.<sup>115</sup>

When I was in Matsumae, I beheld a picture expertly painted by a woman named Yone 米女 from the town of Niigata in Echigo 越後 Province. In Matsumae I had seen her screen and scroll paintings at the homes of many persons, and I inquired if she had been called away to Niigata to paint. I was told, however, that in fact she was desperately poor and had to work as a prostitute in [one of] the three provinces of the eastern seaboard (Echigo, Etchū 越中, Echizen 越前). She was apparently also an accomplished calligrapher. How unfortunate that she was not born in Edo, where she could have become a respectable attendant of a daimyo's daughter. Alas, she instead had to become a prostitute in a remote province.

Incidentally, in Edo not a few daughters of outcastes (*kawaramono* 河原者) and similar sorts serve noble families as performers of indecent vocal music. Many such girls chant Edo *jōruri* in the style of [Tokiwazu] Mojitayū 常磐津文字太夫 (1709–1781) or [Tomimoto] Buzen no jō 富本豊前掾 (1716–1764), dance in the style of Nakamura Denji[rō] 中村伝次郎 (I, 1673–1729) or Fujima Kanbē 藤間勘兵衛 of Hatchōbori (?–1769), or sing *nagauta* in the style of Fujita Fūkō 富士田楓江 (Kichiji 吉治, 1714–1771) or Ogie Royū 荻江露友 (?–1787). Those who learn to chant *gidayū* from Shi[ba]masu 芝枿 call themselves “Oden” おでん or “Toyo” 豊 or use the characters “Moji” 文字 in their names.<sup>116</sup> The ones whose names

115 According to the Daoist text *Liezi* 列子 (attributed to a writer from the fifth century BC, but probably compiled around the fourth century AD) Confucius considered the “three comforts” (or “three pleasures,” *san yue* 三樂) as being born human, being born male, and living to old age. See the “Tian-rui” chapter of *Liezi*.

116 Tōsaku writes “Shimasu” 紫枿, but this is doubtless an error for Shibamasu (?–1816.5). A character read “Shiba” 柴, though not the correct ideograph in this case, closely resembles “Shi” 紫 (also read *murasaki*, “purple”) when written by hand. Perhaps Tōsaku was thinking of Shibamasu's nickname “Edo *murasaki*.” According to *Gidayū shūshin-roku* (p. 75), a record written around Bunsei 文政 2 (1819), from Hōreki 宝暦 4 (1754) a female reciter from Shiba named Oden had studied with an old man named Kawachi-dayū 川内大夫 [*sic*] who lived in Ginza. After her teacher died, she became a pupil of one Masutayū 升大夫 [*sic*] (Takemoto Tango-no-jō 竹本丹後掾 II) and received the ideograph “Masu” from him. This was added to the “Shiba” (homophonous to 芝, the area of Edo where she lived), resulting in the name Shibamasu. She was considered the “originator” of women's *jōruri* and gained national renown as a chanter and especially as a virtuoso *shamisen* player. Already on the eleventh day of the fourth month of An'ei 2 (1773) *En'yū nikki* 宴遊日記, the diary of the daimyo Yanagisawa Yoshitoki 柳沢信鴻, who often summoned performers to his residence, recorded the performance of Kayo, “student of Oden,” and Kiyō, “[student of] Den” (*En'yū nikki*, pp. 15–16). *Gaidan bunbun shūyō* (p. 443) later notes that one of Shibamasu's best pupils was awarded the name “Oden.” *Morisada mankō* 守貞謄稿, from the mid-nineteenth century, explains that in *tomimoto*-style *jōruri*, female reciters were granted names beginning with “Toyo”; in *tokiwazu*-style *jōruri*, their names began with “Moji” (*Morisada mankō*, vol. 3, p. 252).

begin with the character “Kane” 兼 are students of [Tokiwazu] Kanetayū 常磐津兼太夫 (1731–1799). Okuni of Kōjimachi is a student of [the *kabuki* actor Nakamura] Nakazō 中村仲藏 (1736–1790). Even though she is already thirty, she does not shave her eyebrows and still behaves like a girl. It seems she is now a well-established teacher of dance.

Kamigata musicians in Edo are particularly clever at earning money. [The *jōruri* chanter] Miyakoji Kagatayū 宮古路加賀太夫 (Fujimatsu Satsuma-no-jō 富士松薩摩摩, 1686–1757), who ran a pawn shop, was so wealthy that when several years ago someone stole fifteen or sixteen hundred *ryō* from him, he experienced no hardship. [Tokiwazu] Mojitayū (I, 1709–1781) became a farmer at Sunamura 砂村 and lives in grand style.<sup>117</sup> When [Takemoto] Sumitayū 竹本住大夫 I (?–1810) held a *jōruri* recital at [the restaurant of] Kawachiya Hanjirō 河内屋半次郎 (?–?) at Ryōgoku Bridge, he earned five hundred *ryō* in a single day. He is an acquaintance of mine, so I was invited to the event. The advertisements, made of two connected sheets of paper, were bigger than what fits between two wall beams.

Such things are possible only in Edo. Gold and silver are handled like bricks. It is an age in which idlers succeed. Farmers in distant provinces, woodsmen, or fishermen, all of whom live under the selfsame heaven, must spend their days like the damned wasting away in hell. They must pay their taxes and perform corvée, can wear no decent clothing, consume mere chaff even during bumper years, chap their hands and feet red, and enjoy at best the view of cherry blossoms in spring or maple leaves in fall. As the old phrase has it, all must taste the “bitter grains of hardship.”<sup>118</sup> Every time I read the poem “Yesterday I went into the city with its castle,” I am moved to tears.<sup>119</sup>

Today able advisors are appearing in rapid succession. The time has arrived when rural inhabitants will be released from their plight and barren ground will again be rendered fertile. For this we must all be very grateful.

Unfortunately, the above manuscript, left behind by the aged Tōsaku, seems to be incomplete.

Summer, Kansei 7 (1795), Kyōkaen Shujin 杏花園主人 [Ōta Nanpo]

[Postface by Suzuki Kyō]

Tōsaku was a man of great talents and a so-called swindler (*yamashi* 山師). He was a close friend of Tsuchiyama Sōjirō. During the Tenmei period (1781–1789) he was the first Edo man to venture into Ezo. When [Tōsaku] went to Ezo, Tsuchiyama composed the following Chinese-language verse: .

117 Sunamura is perhaps Sunamura Shinden, in what is today Kōtō-ku in Tokyo.

118 From the last line of the famous two-stanza poem “Minnong” 憫農 (Pitying the peasant) by Li Shen 李紳 (772–846), a Tang-dynasty poet and official. The poet asks whether people understand that every grain of rice is the product of a farmer’s toil. This line generated the common Japanese expression for hardship, *ryūryū shinku* 粒々辛苦.

119 The reference is to a famous poem, entitled “Can Fu” 蚕婦 (The silk woman), by Zhang Yu 張俞 (?–?), a literary figure of the Northern Song period active around 1039: “Yesterday I went into the city with its castle, and when I returned my handkerchief was drenched with tears. Those swathed in beautiful silk robes, they were not the silk workers” (昨日入城市，婦來淚滿巾，遍身羅綺者，不是養蠶人). Tōsaku writes 到 instead of 入, and 城郭 instead of 城市, but I take the purport to be the same.

At the lofty pavilion in moonlight,  
wine flows as if gushing from a spring.  
Before the wine jug  
obscure men of talent sing their songs  
here, alone, far from home,  
as the fall wind sweeps over the foaming river.

Tōsaku went to Ezo at Tsuchiyama's behest. Later, when Tsuchiyama became a fugitive, Tōsaku schemed to have him make his way to the "Yamaguchi Kannon," where officials caught him, tortured him, and forced him into a confession.<sup>120</sup> Tōsaku also served as an informer when several years ago [1766] the Okura *monto* were captured.

I often met Tōsaku at Tsuchiyama's house. He was a skilled *kyōka* poet and wrote under the name of Hezutsu Tōsaku. He had the volume *Hika rakuyō* 飛花落葉 (Blossoms fall, leaves scatter) printed, and wrote a book entitled *Mizu no yukue*.<sup>121</sup> He was no ordinary man.

Third month of Bunsei 7 (1824)

Suzuki Kyō

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EKHS *Edo kyōka hon senshū* 江戸狂歌本選集

NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系

NZT *Nihon zuibitsu taisei* 日本随筆大成

SGR *Shin gunsho ruijū* 新群書類従

SNKBZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集

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## Pushing Filial Piety: *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* and an Osaka Publisher’s “Beneficial Books for Women”

R. Keller KIMBROUGH

At some time in the Kyōhō period (1716–1736), but prior to 1729, the Osaka publisher Shibukawa (Kashiwaraya) Seiemon published a box-set anthology of twenty-three *otogizōshi*—works of short medieval fiction—which he titled *Shūgen otogi bunko* (The felicitous wedding companion library) and advertised as being “beneficial for women.” Among the twenty-three works is a Japanese translation of Guo Jujing’s early fourteenth-century *Quan xiang ershisi xiao shi xuan* (Selected verses on all aspects of the twenty-four filial exemplars), which, since the late Muromachi period (1337–1573), has been known in Japan simply as *Nijūshikō* (The twenty-four filial exemplars). Around the same time, between 1698 and 1729, Shibukawa published at least six major educational texts for women, three of which include illustrated tales from *Nijūshikō*. The present article considers Shibukawa’s *otogizōshi Nijūshikō* in light of his *Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku* (Models of writing for women: An inventory, 1698), *Onna dōji ōrai* (Models of correspondence for women and children, 1715), and *Onna daigaku takarabako* (A treasure box of learning for women, 1716). By doing so, it seeks to explore the significance of *Nijūshikō* for women, both as Shibukawa might have imagined it, and as women themselves may have conceived of it upon reading *Nijūshikō* in the context of Shibukawa’s didactic works for women.

**Keywords:** Shibukawa (Kashiwaraya) Seiemon, *Nijūshikō*, *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars*, *otogizōshi*, *Otogi bunko*, *Onna daigaku*, *Onna daigaku takarabako*, *ōraimonno*, *jokunsho*

### Introduction

In a half-page catalogue of books at the back of the Kyōhō 享保 14 (1729) edition of *Onna-yō chie kagami* 女用智慧鑑 (A mirror of wisdom for women, first published circa 1712), the Osaka publisher Shibukawa Seiemon 渋川清右衛門, also known as Kashiwaraya Seiemon 柏原屋清右衛門, included an advertisement for his *Shūgen otogi bunko* 祝言御伽文庫 (The

felicitous wedding companion library, hereafter the *Companion Library*).<sup>1</sup> He described it as a “complete compilation, without omission, of all the books and tales of the past in a thirty-nine-volume box-set anthology.”<sup>2</sup> The thirty-nine volumes comprise twenty-three works of late-medieval fiction, which, because of their inclusion in Shibukawa’s *Companion Library*, are known to us today, along with other relatively short and usually anonymous works of their kind, as *otogizōshi* 御伽草子 (companion books). In advertising his anthology in the 1729 edition of *Onna-yō chie kagami*, Shibukawa must have assumed that it would be of interest to readers of that work. Moreover, he listed it in the catalogue alongside two of his more prominent educational texts for women: his best-selling *Onna daigaku takarabako* 女大学宝箱 (A treasure box of learning for women, 1716), and his lesser known *Onna bunko takamakie* 女文庫高蔭絵 (The women’s library: An embossed golden design, 1721).

Unfortunately, there is no catalogue of publications in the edition of *Onna-yō chie kagami* released in Kyōhō 5 (1720)—Shibukawa’s *Companion Library* may or may not have been published by then—but in the Meiwa 明和 6 (1769) edition of that work, the *Companion Library* is included in a two-page “catalogue of books beneficial for women to see.”<sup>3</sup> In that case, Shibukawa advertised it alongside five works whose titles all began with the word “women” (*onna*): *Onna daigaku takarabako*, *Onna bunko takamakie*, *Onna dōji ōrai* 女童子往来 (Models of correspondence for women and children, 1715), *Onna monzen ryōshi bako* 女文選料紙箱 (Selected writings for women: A box of paper, prior to 1769), and *Onna-yō bunshō itoguruma* 女用文章糸車 (Models of writing for women: A spinner’s wheel, prior to 1769). It is clear from his advertising that Shibukawa intended his *Companion Library* for a female audience. Considering the full title of the anthology, referring as it does to wedding felicitations (*shūgen* 祝言), he may have thought that it would make an appropriate gift for a bride.

Despite Shibukawa’s advertising, a reading of the tales in his *Companion Library* does not suggest that the stories were particularly beneficial for women. It is hard to imagine what useful lessons women might have learned from works like *Shuten Dōji* 酒吞童子 (The demon Shuten Dōji), *Onzōshi shima watari* 御曹子島渡り (Yoshitsune’s island-hopping), and *Monokusa Tarō* ものくさ太郎 (Lazy Tarō), to name just a few.<sup>4</sup> Thus, we might be tempted to dismiss Shibukawa’s claim for the merits of the *Companion Library* as an obvious and disingenuous marketing ploy. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that Shibukawa was sincere, at least in regard to some of the stories in his anthology, when he recommended them for women. As we have seen, Shibukawa and his heirs were prolific publishers of educational texts for women—Koizumi Yoshinaga counts over sixty-four extant titles in two

1 The oldest extant edition of *Onna-yō chie kagami* dates from Kyōhō 5 (1720). However, Koizumi Yoshinaga makes a strong case that it was first published between 1709 and 1715, and possibly in 1712 (Koizumi 1994, pp. 44–45). The 1729 edition of *Onna-yō chie kagami* is photographically reproduced on the website of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, at <https://www.nijl.ac.jp/>.

2 The advertisement reads, *Shūgen otogi bunko: zen sanjūkyū-satsu, hako-iri, inishie no sōshi narabi ni monogatari no bun nokorazu atsumu* 祝言御伽文庫 全三十九冊、箱入、いにしへの草紙并に物語の分不残あつむ。In the present article, I include my own transcriptions of Japanese passages when there are no existing published transcriptions. I am grateful to Kiba Takatoshi, Ishigami Aki, and Lawrence Marceau for their help in transcribing some of the more difficult passages reproduced here; all mistakes are my own.

3 Jochū no mitamai eki aru hon mokuroku 女中の見給ひ益有本目録。The 1720 and 1769 editions of *Onna-yō chie kagami* are photographically reproduced in Ishikawa 1994, vol. 94, n.p. For a brief history of early-modern “books for women,” see Kornicki 2010, pp. 23–32.

4 Barbara Ruch makes a similar observation in Ruch 1971, p. 594.

categories of books alone<sup>5</sup>—and among the many didactic works that Shibukawa produced between 1698 and 1729, when he is first known to have advertised his *Companion Library*, at least three include illustrated biographies of the filial heroes in *Nijūshikō* 二十四孝 (The twenty-four filial exemplars), one of the twenty-three works in the *Companion Library*.<sup>6</sup> By considering Shibukawa's repeated use of *Nijūshikō*, both as a whole and in part, in his treatises for women, I will seek to answer a simple yet puzzling question: for Shibukawa and his readers, what exactly were the lessons of *Nijūshikō* for women other than a general exhortation to filial piety?

### Reading *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars*

*Nijūshikō* is a Japanese translation of Guo Jujing's 郭居敬 early fourteenth-century *Quanxiang ershi xiao shi xuan* 全相二十四孝詩選 (Selected verses on all aspects of the twenty-four filial exemplars), which, since around the sixteenth century, has been known in Japan simply as *Nijūshikō*. The translation that Shibukawa reproduced in his *Companion Library* is of unknown origin, but it was previously published in the Keichō 慶長 period (1596–1615) in a so-called Saga-bon 嵯峨本 edition (a *kokatsuji-ban* 古活字版 moveable-type-printed book with calligraphy by Hon'ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦).<sup>7</sup> In producing his *Companion Library*, Shibukawa did not draw directly from the Saga-bon *Nijūshikō*; instead, he seems to have either reused or re-carved a set of printing blocks that were originally used in the mid-seventeenth century to produce a set of *tanrokubon* 丹緑本 “red and green books” (woodblock-printed volumes with colorfully hand-daubed illustrations). The *tanrokubon Nijūshikō* is no longer extant, but judging from the text and illustrations of Shibukawa's *Nijūshikō*, which closely resemble those of the Saga-bon, the publisher of the *tanrokubon* based both the text and illustrations of his *Nijūshikō* on either the Saga-bon or on a text that was more-or-less directly derived from it.<sup>8</sup> Thus, although it is true that Shibukawa chose to include *Nijūshikō* in his *Companion Library*, he played no significant role in shaping its contents.

*Nijūshikō* and its illustrations were widely reproduced in the early modern period in a variety of printed and painted media, including woodblock-printed books, colorfully illustrated manuscripts and handscrolls (*nara ehon* 奈良絵本 and *otogizōshi emaki* お伽草子絵巻), fan paintings, folding screens, and even *fusuma* 襖 sliding doors.<sup>9</sup> The work comprises twenty-four discrete stories, each of which is prefaced by a verse in Chinese with Japanese *kundoku* 訓読-style annotations (diacritical marks and appended *furigana* that demonstrate

5 Koizumi 1994, p. 50. The categories are *ōraimono* 往来物 (books of model correspondence) and *Hyakunin issbu* 百人一首 (One hundred poems by one hundred poets). Koizumi counts over eighty titles in these categories including nonextant works listed in Edo-period book catalogues and publisher's advertisements.

6 In addition, Shibukawa's *Onna dōji ōrai* (discussed below) includes a full reproduction of *Hachikazuki* 鉢かづき (Hachikazuki), another one of the works included in the *Companion Library*. For a discussion of Shibukawa's intended audience of women in connection with the *otogizōshi Izumi Shikibu* 和泉式部 see Kimbrough 2008, chapter 3.

7 Tokuda 1988, p. 340. The Saga-bon *Nijūshikō* is photographically reproduced in Tōyō Bunko 1974, pp. 437–61.

8 As of 2002, only ten of the *tanrokubon* antecedents of Shibukawa's twenty-three *otogizōshi* had been found, and they do not include *Nijūshikō*. Hashimoto 2002, p. 54b.

9 Uno Mizuki documents twenty-two examples of premodern Japanese *Nijūshikō* paintings on folding screens, fans, sliding doors, *nara ehon*, and *emaki* handscrolls. Her list does not include woodblock-printed publications. Uno 2016, pp. 719–40.

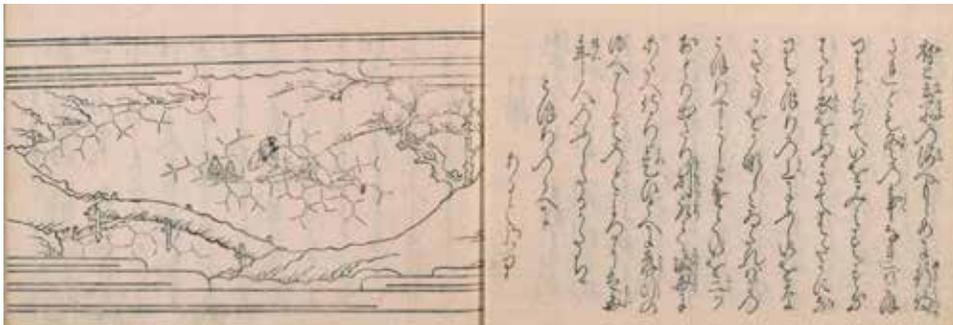


Figure 1. Ō Shō (Wang Xiang) uses his warm body to melt a hole in a frozen stream. From the *Companion Library* edition of *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* (*Nijūshikō*, prior to 1729). Courtesy of the National Diet Library.

how to read the Chinese as Japanese), and each with its own illustration. As a collection of short, unconnected anecdotes, rather than a single sustained narrative, it reads more like an anthology of medieval *setsuwa* 説話 tales than a typical *otogizōshi*. The unknown medieval translator took liberties with the work, changing significant details and in some cases altering the plots of stories, and for this reason the Japanese *Nijūshikō* should be considered both as a loose translation and as an independent work of medieval Japanese fiction.

One of the reasons for *Nijūshikō*'s enduring popularity may be that it is so startlingly strange. While the work purports to elucidate a conservative Confucian morality, it does so with a series of outrageous tales about cruel parents and frequently masochistic children that can be alternately shocking, appalling, or inscrutably weird. Many of the heroes seem to revel in their own suffering and degradation. Ō Shō 王祥 (Wang Xiang), for example, is said to have been rewarded by Heaven for choosing to lie naked on a frozen river so that he could melt a hole in the ice to catch fish for his stepmother, despite the fact that she had lied about him to his father (figure 1). Likewise, the eight-year-old Go Mō 呉猛 (Wu Meng) is praised for sleeping naked in the summer so that the mosquitoes in his house would bite only him and not his parents (figure 4). The government official Yu Kinrō 庾黔婁 (Yu Qianlou) demonstrates his own valor in a particularly demeaning way, which is all the more impactful given his exalted position. Upon learning that his father has fallen ill, he asks a doctor for his prognosis. The doctor replies:

“You should lick the patient’s stool to see if it tastes bitter or sweet.”  
 “That’s easy enough,” Kinrō said, and when he licked it, he found that it tasted bad. Thus, he grieved that his father would likely die. People say that he prayed to the stars of the Big Dipper that he might exchange his own life for his father’s.<sup>10</sup>

10 Ōshima 1974, pp. 320–21 (episode 19). The *Companion Library* edition of *Nijūshikō* is translated in full in an appendix to this article; it is also photographically reproduced on the website of the National Diet Library, at <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2537581>.

Whether or not Kinrō's sacrifice had any effect on his father's illness is unclear. In fact, the text suggests that it only helped him to understand the gravity of his father's condition. But that is beside the point; what matters is that Kinrō was inclined to do anything for his father's sake. One might say that, metaphorically speaking, a willingness to eat one's father's shit is the very essence of filial piety. The metaphor is grotesque, but it is precisely this grotesquerie that Shimauchi Keiji argues was responsible for the proliferation of *Nijūshikō* parodies in the early-modern period, including Ihara Saikaku's 井原西鶴 *Honchō nijūfukō* 本朝二十不孝 (Twenty tales of filial impiety in Japan, 1686) and the *rakugo* 落語 *Nijūshikō*.<sup>11</sup>

The horror and even absurdity of the stories is not likely to have been lost on audiences of any century. The account of Zen Shi 剡子 (Tan Zi) is a telling example. Together with its poem, the entire episode reads:

Because his old parents yearn for deer's milk,  
he swathes himself in a brown furry robe.  
Had he not spoken up loudly, he would have  
gone home wearing an arrow from the mountains.

Zen Shi was so filial that he sought to throw away his life for his parents' sake. The reason is this: Zen Shi's mother and father were old, and because they both suffered from maladies of the eyes, they longed to have the milk of a deer as medicine. Because Zen Shi had always been a filial child, he wished to achieve his parents' desire. He therefore donned a deerskin and slipped inside a large herd of deer. Seeing this, some hunters took Zen Shi to be a real deer, and they prepared to shoot him with their bows. At that moment Zen Shi shouted, "I am not a real deer! My name is Zen Shi, and I have disguised myself as a deer so that I might fulfill my parents' desire." The hunters were surprised, and when they asked him how this could be, Zen Shi explained everything. Thus, it was thanks to the profundity of his filial devotion that Zen Shi was able to return home without being shot. Indeed, as a person, how could anyone acquire the milk of a deer just because someone wants it? Nevertheless, it is moving to imagine the thoughtfulness of Zen Shi's filial piety.<sup>12</sup>

Apparently, Zen Shi was unable to acquire any deer milk. Like Yu Kinrō, he is not praised for his success, but rather for his willingness to debase himself by dressing like an animal in order to milk a deer for his parents. His strange plan suggests a transgression of the human/animal divide—something akin to bestiality, but without the sex—and one can imagine that the hunters might have been disturbed enough to kill him for it were it not that his motive was so pure. Thus, as the narrator explains, it truly might have been "thanks to the profundity of his filial devotion that Zen Shi was able to return home without being shot." The conflict between *Nijūshikō*'s implicitly serious intentions and its seemingly farcical contents (which the *Nijūshikō* narrator treats without a trace of irony) creates a tension within the work that, for readers, can be highly provocative and compelling, and which may account for much of its appeal.

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11 Shimauchi 1988, p. 179. David Gundry discusses *Honchō nijūfukō* at length in Gundry 2017.

12 Ōshima 1974, pp. 317–18 (episode 17).

### Shibukawa Seimon's Educational Works for Women

One of Shibukawa's first educational works for women was his three-volume *Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku* 女用文章綱目 (Models of writing for women: An inventory; hereafter *Models of Writing for Women*), also known as *Onna-yō bunshō taisei* 女用文章大成 (Models of writing for women: A compendium), published in Genroku 元禄 11 (1698). In its third volume, in a multipage header-column, it includes four illustrated biographies from *Yamato nijūshikō* 大倭二十四孝 (Twenty-four Japanese filial exemplars, 1665), which is traditionally, though inconclusively, attributed to the *kanazōshi* 仮名草子 author Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (ca. 1612–1691), followed by two illustrated biographies of figures who also appear in *Nijūshikō*. (Whether the latter two tales were drawn from a pre-*Companion Library Nijūshikō*, or from another source altogether, is unclear.) These are followed in the uninterrupted header-column by a lengthy, unillustrated, and eminently practical section titled “Methods for Removing All Types of Stains.”<sup>13</sup> The majority of the volume—approximately two-thirds of nearly every page, in the large field below the header-column—is devoted to calligraphic models of written correspondence (that is, sample letters) for study and consultation in calligraphy practice and letter-writing (figure 2). Specific topics include what to write after a snowfall; how to write an end-of-year greeting; what to write to someone traveling to the countryside; how to answer a letter after a delay; and the like.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, *Models of Writing for Women* is a typical *ōraimono*, a “book of model correspondence.”

But there is also something more. As Koizumi Yoshinaga has indicated, Shibukawa's *Models of Writing for Women* is in fact an adaptation of another *ōraimono*, published eight years earlier and written by the female author and calligrapher Isome Tsuna 居初津奈, titled *Onna shokan shogakushō* 女書翰初学抄 (First instructions on women's letter writing, 1690; hereafter *First Instructions*).<sup>15</sup> Published in Kyoto in three volumes, Tsuna's *First Instructions* includes fifty-seven sample letters arranged by the season. Unlike Shibukawa's *Models of Writing for Women*, it contains no illustrations, and its header-column contains only written explanations of the words and sentences in the writing samples—no filial piety tales, and no advice on stain removal. Although Shibukawa was certainly the publisher of *Models of Writing for Women*, which Koizumi describes as essentially a “pirated edition” of Tsuna's *First Instructions*, it is unclear whether or not he himself revised Tsuna's earlier work, erasing her name and her introduction and replacing her headnotes with miscellaneous information and moral and practical instruction.<sup>16</sup> But if Shibukawa did (and he is the most likely—indeed only—candidate), then his decision to include the filial piety tales of *Nijūshikō* and *Yamato Nijūshikō* would be consistent with his inclusion of the entire *Nijūshikō* in two of his later educational texts for women: *Onna dōji ōrai*, and *Onna daigaku takarabako*.

In Shōtoku 正徳 5 (1715), seventeen years after publishing *Models of Writing for Women*, Shibukawa published his single-volume *Onna dōji ōrai* (hereafter *Correspondence*

13 Yorozu shimimono otoshiyō 万しみ物おとしやう. *Models of Writing for Women* is photographically reproduced on the websites of the National Institute of Japanese Literature (three-volume copy in the National Library of Korea) and the Waseda University Library (third volume only), at <http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp>.

14 Yuki no furitaru toki tsukawasu fumi no koto 雪のふりたる時遣文の事; Seibo no shūgi tsukawasu fumi no koto 歳暮の祝儀遣文の事; Inaka e yuku hito e tsukawasu fumi no koto 田舎へ行人へつかはす文の事; Yoso yori fumi o ete nochi ni henji no koto よそより文をえて後に返事の事.

15 Koizumi 2001, p. 131a. For a broader discussion of Isome Tsuna's *ōraimono*, see Koizumi 1997. The 1690 edition of *Onna shokan shogakushō* is photographically reproduced in *Edo jidai josei bunko* 1996, n.p.

16 Koizumi 2001, p. 131b.

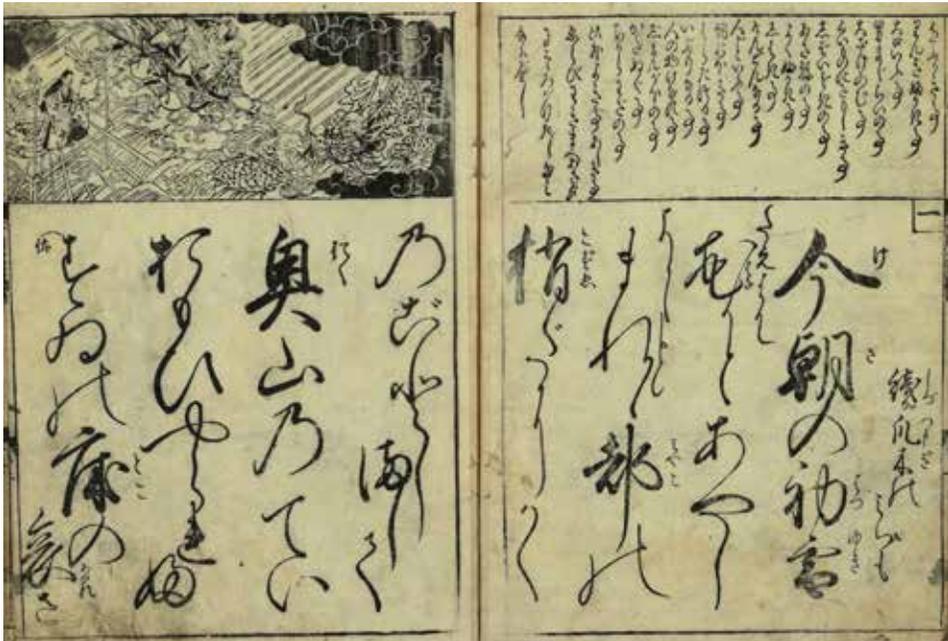


Figure 2. Two opposing pages from *Models of Writing for Women* (*Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku*, 1698), including an image of Atsuta no En'uneme and a great snake (upper left). Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

for Women and Children) in cooperation with the Osaka publisher Murai Kitarō 村井喜太郎.<sup>17</sup> The relationship between Shibukawa and Murai is unknown, as are their relative contributions to *Correspondence for Women and Children*. Unlike *Models of Writing for Women*, *Correspondence for Women and Children* contains a complete illustrated edition of *Nijūshikō* (although without the Chinese verses that appear in the Saga-bon and *Companion Library* printings of the work; figure 3), as well as illustrated editions of *Hyakunin issshū*; *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (Tales of Ise); *Hachikazuki* (although in a different textual line than the *Companion Library* version of the work); and the *kanazōshi Usuyuki monogatari* 薄雪物語 (The tale of Usuyuki, 1615 or before).<sup>18</sup> In addition, *Correspondence for Women and Children* includes poems and portraits of the Sanjūrokkasen 三十六歌仙 (Thirty-six poetic geniuses), Fujiwara no Kintō's 藤原公任 eleventh-century selection of the greatest poets of the Nara and early Heian periods; the *iroha* いろは poem, by which the order of the Japanese syllabary was learned; and a section of model correspondence. As Yamamoto Jun has observed, and as we can see from a simple description of the book's contents, *Correspondence for Women and*

17 The 1715 edition of *Correspondence for Women and Children* is photographically reproduced in Ishikawa 1994, vol. 93, n.p.

18 Yamamoto Jun has pointed out that although the textual portions of the *Hachikazuki* in *Correspondence for Women and Children* are in the same textual line as those of the *Hachikazuki* published by Shōkai 松会 of Edo in 1659, the *Hachikazuki* illustrations in *Correspondence for Women and Children* are highly similar to those in the *Companion Library*. Yamamoto has also shown that the *Hachikazuki* in *Correspondence for Women and Children* has been abridged and revised in some ways that are consistent with the *Hachikazuki* in the *Companion Library*, suggesting that Shibukawa had both the Shōkai and pre-*Companion Library* texts of *Hachikazuki* on hand when he compiled *Correspondence for Women and Children*. Yamamoto 2005, pp. 15a and 21a.



Figure 3. Two opposing pages from *Correspondence for Women and Children* (*Onna dōji ōrai*, 1715), including the *Nijūshikō* biographies of Tō no Bujin (Tang Furen, upper right) and Yō Kyō (Yang Xiang, upper left). Courtesy of Tōsho Bunko archive.



Figure 4. Two opposing pages from *A Treasure Box of Learning for Women* (*Onna daigaku takarabako*, 1814 edition), including the *Nijūshikō* biographies of Kyō Shi (Jiang Shi, middle right) and Go Mō (Wu Meng, middle left). Author's collection.

*Children* is remarkable for its tendency “to eschew practical content, which is a hallmark of *ōraimono*, in favor of a focus on literary works.”<sup>19</sup>

A year later, in Kyōhō 1 (1716), Shibukawa published *Onna daigaku takarabako* (hereafter, *A Treasure Box of Learning*) in cooperation with the Edo publisher Ogawa Hikokurō 小川彦九郎, to whom Shibukawa seems to have entrusted sales of the work in Edo until around 1790, when his publishing house found a new partner in Yamazaki Kinbē 山崎金兵衛. Over the course of some one hundred sixty years, the single-volume *Treasure Box of Learning* would become one of the great bestsellers of the Edo and early Meiji periods, published in at least seventeen faithful editions (and many more pirated, plagiarized, derivative, and parodic versions) between 1716 and 1876.<sup>20</sup> Like *Correspondence for Women and Children*, *A Treasure Box of Learning* contains a wealth of information and instruction for women, but with a better balance of literary, moral, and practical content. In addition to its titular treatise (*Onna daigaku* 女大学, The great learning for women), which it dubiously attributes to the Neo-Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714),<sup>21</sup> *A Treasure Box of Learning* includes illustrations and explanations of approximately thirty female occupations, including farming, weaving, spinning, sewing, decoration-tying, paper-making, prostitution, fan-making, *sōmen* 素麵 noodle-making, salt-making, abalone-diving, and many more.<sup>22</sup> It also includes sets of illustrated poems on the twelve months, the famous views of Nara, and the fifty-four chapters of *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, and a complete illustrated edition of *Nijūshikō*, without its accompanying Chinese verses, sandwiched between an illustrated rendition of *Hyakunin issbu* and unillustrated essays on childbirth and neonatal care (figure 4). Interestingly, both the text and illustrations of the *Nijūshikō* in *A Treasure Box of Learning* differ from those in *Correspondence for Women and Children*.

### **Models of Writing for Women and The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars**

So what did Shibukawa think that women should learn from *Nijūshikō*? And what lessons might his female readers have actually retained? To answer these questions, we should begin by considering *Models of Writing for Women*, because it contains only two of the filial piety tales in *Nijūshikō*—a selection, that is—rather than the work as a whole. Insofar as Shibukawa chose only two of the twenty-four *Nijūshikō* stories for inclusion in *Models of*

19 Yamamoto 2005, p. 15a.

20 Koizumi 1994, pp. 38–39. The 1716 edition of *A Treasure Box of Learning* is photographically reproduced in Ishikawa 1994, vol. 87, n.p. The pornographic parody *Onna dairaku takarabeki* 女大楽宝開 (ca. 1656–1657; translated by C. Andrew Gerstle as *Great Pleasures for Women and Their Treasure Boxes*), with illustrations by Tsukioka Settei 月岡雪鼎, is typeset, translated, and photographically reproduced in Gerstle and Hayakawa 2018.

21 Koizumi Yoshinaga argues that *Onna daigaku* is Shibukawa Seiemon’s free revision of the essay *Shin jokunshō* 新女訓抄, which Shibukawa included in *Onna-yō chie kagami* (ca. 1712), and that *Shin jokunshō* is Shibukawa’s free revision of the essay *Joshi o oshiyuru hō* 教女子法 (Methods for teaching women), volume five of Kaibara Ekiken’s *Wazoku dōjikin* 和俗童子訓 (1710). Koizumi speculates that Shibukawa published *A Treasure Box of Learning* to commemorate the second anniversary of Ekiken’s death, and that he attributed *Onna daigaku* to Ekiken in recognition of Ekiken’s authorship of *Wazoku dōjikin*, upon which *Onna daigaku* was ultimately based. Koizumi 1994, pp. 40 and 46–47.

22 Yokota Fuyuhiko calculates that 24 percent of *A Treasure Box of Learning* is dedicated to visual and textual depictions of women’s labor (Yokota 1995, p. 366). Also see Nakamura 2002 for a discussion of the secondary contents of *A Treasure Box of Learning* and other educational texts for women, particularly as they pertain to women’s employment.



Figure 5. The first two pages of *Models of Writing for Women* (*Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku*, 1698), including the table of contents (right). Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

*Writing for Women*, it is reasonable to suppose that he considered them to have particular significance for women.

On the first page after its table of contents, *Models of Writing for Women* contains a large illustration of women engaging in a variety of activities, including reading, writing, playing the *koto*, sewing, cutting cloth, weaving, and spinning (figure 5). The multipage header-column begins with a list of “accomplishments at which women should excel.”<sup>23</sup> Among other things, it includes “knowing the import of *Hyakunin isshu*, *Ise monogatari*, *Genji monogatari*, and [the poetic anthologies] *Kokinshū* 古今集 and *Man’yōshū* 万葉集.”<sup>24</sup> This particular imperative would explain the prevalence of these works, or at least the titles of these works, in *Correspondence for Women and Children, A Treasure Box of Learning*, and other didactic books of their kind. The first list is followed by a second, more general list of two dozen “things at which women should excel.”<sup>25</sup> This in fact resembles a list in Namura Jōhaku’s 苗村常伯 (n.d.) *Onna chōhōki* 女重宝記 (Precious treasures for women), published six years earlier, in Genroku 5 (1692).<sup>26</sup> The first five items on the list in *Models of Writing for Women* are:

おやにかうかうの事	Oya ni kōkō no koto	Being filial to one’s parents
しうとめにかうかうの事	Shūtome ni kōkō no koto	Being filial to one’s mother-in-law
をつとをうやまふ事	Otto o uyamau koto	Revering one’s husband

23 Onna tashinamite yoki gei aramashi 女たしなみてよきげいあらまし。

24 *Hyakunin isshu Ise monogatari Genji Kokin Man’yō no giri o shiru koto* 百人一首いせ物語源氏古今万葉の義理をしる事。

25 Jochū tashinamite yoki koto aramashi 女中たしなみてよき事あらまし。

26 Marcia Yonemoto translates and discusses Namura Jōhaku’s list in Yonemoto 2016, pp. 52–53. The 1692 edition of *Onna chōhōki* is photographically reproduced on the website of the National Diet Library, at <http://dl.ndl.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2533891>. The list is in photo 10.

をつとをうやまう事 Otto o uyamau koto	Revering one's husband
ゑがほよき事 Egao yoki koto	Keeping a smile on one's face
まま子をにくまざる事 Mamako o nikumazaru koto	Not resenting one's step children

These admonitions set the tone for the filial piety tales that follow. The first four stories, which concern the lives of the women Atsuta no En'uneme 熱田縁采女 (also read Enneme), Teruta no hime 照田姫, Chiyono 千世能 (also read Chiyonō, and Chiyonōhime 千世能姫), and Suō no Naishi 周防内侍, are drawn from *Yamato nijūshikō*. The illustrations, too, have been copied from that source, and they include, as a prefatory image, an especially wide and dramatic depiction of Atsuta no En'uneme fending off a great snake with her recitation of the *Lotus Sutra* (figure 2).<sup>27</sup> Her story begins on the following page, but even by itself, her portrait is a strong statement of female empowerment.

The first filial exemplar from *Nijūshikō* whom Shibukawa chose to include in *Models of Writing for Women* is surprising, because unlike the four preceding exemplars from *Yamato nijūshikō*, it is neither a woman nor a girl. Instead, it is a boy named Bin Shigen 閔子騫 (Min Ziqian) who, despite being mistreated by his stepmother, intercedes with his father on her behalf so that she will not be banished from their home.<sup>28</sup> In the *Companion Library* version of *Nijūshikō*, the story and its poem read as follows:

The Bin family has a wise son, so  
 why should he have resented his stepmother?  
 Because he keeps her by his father's side,  
 all three children escape the wind and frost.

Bin Shigen lost his mother when he was young. His father took a second wife, and she bore him two children. The new wife loved her own children deeply, but she despised her stepson. Even in the cold of winter, she would take the ears of reeds and use them to pad his clothes. Because she dressed him in such things, he was chilled to the bone, and when his father saw how he could barely endure, he sought to drive her away. Bin Shigen spoke, saying, "If you drive away your wife, all three children will be cold. As it is now, if I alone can endure the cold, then my two younger brothers will be warm." Because he dissuaded his father, his stepmother was deeply moved, and from then on she doted on him without reserve, like his very own mother. People of old seem to have been right when they said that the good and bad of a person lie within their own heart.<sup>29</sup>

The story's lesson for women is not entirely clear, but we might suppose that it pertains to Shibukawa's previous admonition "not to resent one's stepchildren." In that case, the model

27 The story of Atsuta no En'uneme is based on the medieval tale of the teenage Sayohime さよひめ, which is preserved in the *otogizōshi Sayohime* and in the *sekkyō* 説経 *Matsura chōja* まつら長者. *Yamato nijūshikō* is typeset in Asai 2011, pp. 207–449.

28 The story of Bin Shigen was known in Japan even prior to Guo Jujing's composition of *Quan xiang ershi xiao shi xuan*. Mujū Ichien 無住一円 included it in his *setsuwa* anthology *Shasekishū* 沙石集, compiled between 1279 and 1283. See Watanabe 1966, pp. 156–57.

29 Ōshima 1974, pp. 303–304 (episode 5).



Figure 6. The biography of Bin Shigen (Min Ziqian, top). From *Models of Writing for Women* (*Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku*, 1698). Courtesy of Waseda University Library.



Figure 7. The biography of Bin Shigen (Min Ziqian). From *A Treasure Box of Learning for Women* (*Onna daigaku takarabako*, 1814 edition). Author's collection.

for women would be the cruel stepmother, who, despite her selfish inclinations, learns from her filial stepson's example.

In *Models of Writing for Women*, Bin Shigen's story is more than twice as long as it is in Shibukawa's *Companion Library*, but it lacks the final platitude about the good and bad of a person existing within their heart, suggesting that this was not an essential moral of the tale. The narrative is fleshed out with significantly more detail, but its plot is generally the same. Bin Shigen's father discovers that his son's robe is padded with reeds when his son drops a horse's lead rope, because his hands are too cold to grip; then, in an emotionally charged scene, the father weeps for his son before turning on his wife. The accompanying illustration (figure 6) shows Bin Shigen pleading with his father as his stepmother walks away. It is similar to the images in the Saga-bon *Nijūshikō*, the *Companion Library*, and even *A Treasure Box of Learning*, except in one respect: in those other images, the stepmother is shown leaving with her own two children, but in *Models of Writing for Women*, her children remain with their father as she departs alone.

In *A Treasure Box of Learning*, Bin Shigen's story is much closer to the one in the *Companion Library*, with a few small differences. For example, when the father discovers what his wife has done to his son's robe, he shouts, "Well then, you're a hateful woman!" adding an additional touch of drama to the tale.<sup>30</sup> Despite these changes to the text, the illustration (figure 7) is nearly the same as the one in the *Companion Library*. Conversely, in *Correspondence for Women and Children*, the text of the story is nearly identical to the one in the *Companion Library*, while the illustration is different.

At the end of the Bin Shigen story in *Models of Writing for Women*, Shibukawa includes an editorial aside—a direct address to his readers. He explains that "in China there is Bin Shigen, while in our land there is Teruta no hime. Although one is a model for boys, and the other, for girls, I have included Bin Shigen here so that we might compare the two."<sup>31</sup> Teruta no hime is the hero of the second filial piety tale that Shibukawa borrowed from *Yamato nijūshikō*. Like Bin Shigen, she is said to have lost her mother when she was young; to have been mistreated by her stepmother, who, in winter, also stuffed her clothes with ears of reeds; and to have pleaded with her father not to drive her stepmother away when he discovered her abuse. In fact, Teruta no hime's story is so similar to Bin Shigen's that in *Yamato nijūshikō* (although not in *Models of Writing for Women*), Teruta no hime's father actually tells her about Bin Shigen, comparing her favorably to her Chinese counterpart.<sup>32</sup> It is perhaps because of this comparison that Shibukawa, too, was inspired to contrast the two. For Shibukawa, Bin Shigen's story seems to have been important for what it tells us about a filial child who happened to be a boy, rather than about a woman who learned to love her stepson.

The second filial exemplar from *Nijūshikō* whom Shibukawa chose to include in *Models of Writing for Women* is a more predictable selection: Yō Kyō 楊香 (Yang Xiang), a fourteen-year-old girl who saves her father from a tiger. In the *Companion Library* version of *Nijūshikō*, the story and its poem read as follows:

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30 Sate sate nikkuki onna-me 扱扱につつき女め。

31 Morokoshi nite wa Bin Shigen. Wagachō nite wa Teruta no hime. Sore wa nanshi kore wa joshi no kagami naredomo aiterasan tame ni Bin Shigen o mo ima koko ni irehaberu nari もろこしにてはびんしけん。我朝にてはてる田姫。それは男子これは女子のかがみなれ共あひてらさんためにびんしけんをも今爰に入侍る也。

32 Asai 2011, p. 389a.



Figure 8. The biography of Yō Kyō (Yang Xiang, top). From *Models of Writing for Women* (*Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku*, 1698). Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

Meeting a white-browed tiger deep in the mountains,  
 she strikes with all her strength at its rancid breath.  
 Father and child together, without harm,  
 escape the clutch of its ravenous maw.

Yō Kyō had only a father. Once when Yō Kyō went into the mountains with him, they suddenly encountered a savage tiger. Fearing for her father's life, Yō Kyō tried to chase it away. However, because she could not, she called on the mercy of Heaven. "I beg of you," she earnestly prayed, "give my life to the tiger, and save my father!" Heaven must have been moved, because the tiger, which until then had been most ferocious in its appearance and had been on the verge of devouring her father, quickly furled its tail and ran away. Parent and child, together, had escaped the tiger's maw, and without further ado they returned to their home. It is entirely because of the depth of Yō Kyō's filial devotion that she could produce such a miracle.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the translation, which, because of the constraints of English, identifies Yō Kyō as a girl, none of the *Nijūshikō* texts in the *Companion Library*, *Correspondence for Women and Children*, or *A Treasure Box of Learning* state her gender. Furthermore, Yō Kyō's story is highly similar in all of those works, with *A Treasure Box of Learning* again being the outlier of the three.

33 Ōshima 1974, pp. 310–11 (episode 11).

*Models of Writing for Women*, however, is different. It begins by describing Yō Kyō as “the daughter of a person called Yō Hō” in “the Nankei district of Ro province in China,” explicitly identifying her as a female exemplar.<sup>34</sup> The version of her story in *Models of Writing for Women* is longer than the one in *Nijūshikō*, but it is generally the same, with a few exceptions. For example, rather than simply trying to chase away the tiger, Yō Kyō grabs it by the neck, as we can see in the illustration (figure 8). In *Nijūshikō*, Yō Kyō’s success is its own reward, but in *Models of Writing for Women*, Yō Kyō is said to have received further, material compensation. The narrator explains that “the governor of the Nankei district—a person by the name of Mō Jōshi—heard of what had happened, and he thought that it was truly amazing. As a reward, he granted Yō Kyō one hundred *koku* of rice. Her fame spread far and wide.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, like many of the other biographies in *Nijūshikō*, the *Models of Writing for Women* version of Yō Kyō’s story teaches that in addition to being virtuous, filial piety can be profitable.

Yō Kyō’s story seems to have been well known in the late seventeenth century, judging from its additional inclusion in the *kanazōshi Kenjo monogatari* 賢女物語 (Tales of wise women), published in Kanbun 寛文 9 (1669), and in Asai Ryōi’s Japanese translation of the Korean *Samgang haengsildo* (*Sankō kōjitsu zu* 三綱行実図, Illustrated conduct of the three bonds, 1432, written in classical Chinese), published circa Kanbun 10 (1670).<sup>36</sup> Like *Models of Writing for Women*, both *Kenjo monogatari* and Asai Ryōi’s *Sankō kōjitsu zu* identify Yō Kyō as a fourteen-year-old girl (only *A Treasure Box of Learning* says that she is fifteen), and they both conclude with the story of the district governor’s reward. Although Yō Kyō’s story in *Models of Writing for Women* is relatively similar to the ones in these two Kanbun-period sources, there are still substantial differences among them, suggesting that none is a direct copy of the others. In *Kenjo monogatari*, Yō Kyō’s biography is included in a section titled, “How One Should Not Begrudge One’s Life for the Sake of a Parent,” which, of course, is an obvious moral of the story. *Models of Writing for Women* lacks such a clear imperative, but readers likely understood that this was an important point.

### More Lessons for Women?

In her recent book on filial piety tales, Uno Mizuki provides a gendered breakdown of the contents of *Nijūshikō* by considering both the objects and the agents of the filial deeds. She explains that women (mothers, mothers-in-law, and stepmothers) are the object of the action in thirteen of the tales; fathers are the object of the action in four of the tales; and that both parents, including stepmothers, are the object of the action in seven of the tales. Despite the tendency for women to be the beneficiaries of filial deeds, the filial child is male in twenty-two of the tales and female in only two (and that is only if we count Yō Kyō as female, which, in

34 Yōkyō wa Morokoshi Rokoku Nankeiken ni sumeri. Yōhō to iishi hito no musume nari 楊香はもちろし魯国南卿縣にすめり。楊豊といひし人のむすめ也。

35 Nankeiken no taishu Mōjōshi to iu hito. Kono koto o kikiyobite. Sukoburu kidoku no koto ni omoi. Sunawachi Yōkyō ni kome hyakkoku o ataete hōbi to shi. Sono na o arawashi tsutaeraretari 南卿縣の太守孟肇之といふ人。この事を聞かよびて。すこぶる奇特の事に思ひ。すなはち楊香に米百石をあたへて褒美とし。その名をあらはしつたへられたり。

36 *Kenjo monogatari* is typeset in Asakura and Itō 1999, pp. 178–245. Yō Kyō’s story is on pp. 195–97. Asai Ryōi’s *Sankō kōjitsu zu* is typeset in Asai 2011, pp. 15–203. Yō Kyō’s story is on pp. 21–22. The biographies of Bin Shigen and many of the other filial heroes of *Nijūshikō* are also included in *Sankō kōjitsu zu*.

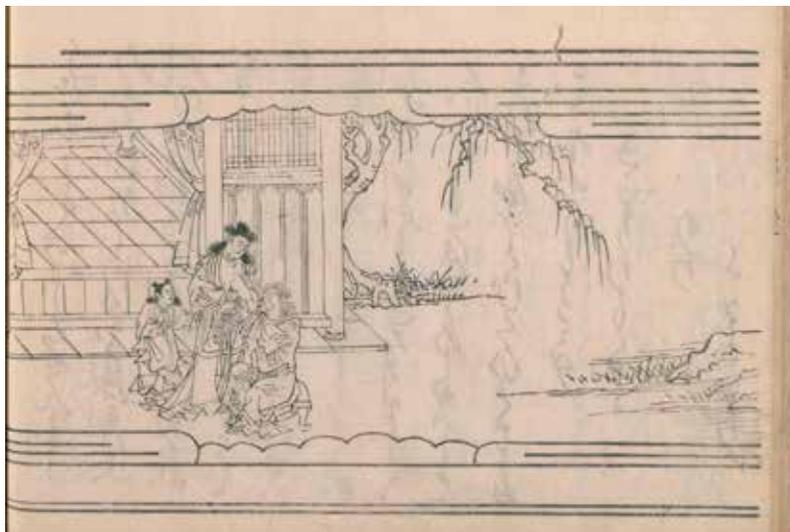


Figure 9. Tō no Bujin (Tang Furen) breastfeeds her mother-in-law. From the *Companion Library* edition of *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* (*Nijūshikō*, prior to 1729). Courtesy of the National Diet Library.

most editions of *Nijūshikō*, is unclear).<sup>37</sup> With this in mind, what else might female readers of *Correspondence for Women and Children, A Treasure Box of Learning*, and the *Companion Library* have learned from reading *Nijūshikō* in these works?

Some women might have looked to the story of Tō no Bujin 唐夫人 (Tang Furen, “Madam Tang”), the second and only explicitly female filial exemplar in *Nijūshikō*, who is famous for breast-feeding her mother-in-law. In the *Companion Library* version of *Nijūshikō*, the story and its poem read as follows:

Filial and reverent, the Sai family bride:  
she breastfeeds her mother-in-law, and grooms her for the day.  
It is a debt that cannot be repaid;  
one asks that her descendants will do the same.

Tō no Bujin’s mother-in-law, Chōson Bujin, was very old. Because she could not chew food, Tō no Bujin would feed her from her breast. In addition, every morning she combed her mother-in-law’s hair. She served her well in other ways, too, caring for her for many years. One time, Chōson Bujin fell ill and thought that she would die. She gathered together all the household and said, “To die now without repaying my years of debt to Tō no Bujin fills me with regret. If my descendants emulate her filial rectitude, then the family is sure to prosper.” Everyone praised Tō no Bujin’s devotion, remarking that there had been few in the past or present who had been so filial to their

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37 Uno 2016, p. 145.

mothers-in-law. People say that for this reason the family immediately received its reward, flourishing in a most extraordinary manner.<sup>38</sup>

Both the agent and the object of the filial piety are women. As Uno has observed, if that were not the case—if the breastfed parent had been a father-in-law rather than a mother-in-law—then the story might have struck readers as being suggestive of an immoral, even incestuous sexual transgression.<sup>39</sup>

Tokuda Susumu has discussed the story, and he has shown that it was specifically selected for reproduction in at least eight publications for women between 1762 and 1868.<sup>40</sup> This is an unusually large number, and it suggests that in the late Edo period Tō no Bujin was one of the most frequently invoked role models for women. Tokuda argues that Tō no Bujin was so popular because there are few filial women in *Nijūshikō*; because Tō no Bujin's filial piety is directed toward a mother-in-law; and because Tō no Bujin performs her filial duty in a particularly feminine way.<sup>41</sup> It is unclear why Shibukawa chose to omit her story from *Models of Writing for Women*, but it is included in *Correspondence for Women and Children* and *A Treasure Box of Learning* in nearly the same form as it is in the *Companion Library* (with the version in *A Treasure Box of Learning* again being slightly different).

As in the case of so many of the biographies in *Nijūshikō*, it is hard not to read Tō no Bujin's story metaphorically, especially given its accompanying illustration (figure 9), which is largely the same in the Saga-bon *Nijūshikō*, the *Companion Library*, *Correspondence for Women and Children*, and *A Treasure Box of Learning*. The image shows Tō no Bujin breastfeeding her mother-in-law while her own child looks on. Her back is turned to the toddler, suggesting her rejection of the child in favor of her husband's mother. Although it is not stated in the text itself, the message of the illustration is clear: when faced with a choice between a parent and a child, the filial hero chooses the parent. That message is reinforced at the end of the story by Tō no Bujin's wondrous reward, which manifests as material prosperity for her family and her descendants. Paradoxically, by neglecting her child in favor of her mother-in-law, Tō no Bujin ensures the prosperity of her progeny.

This is a message that is conveyed in more than one of the *Nijūshikō* biographies. For example, we can see the same lesson in the story of Kaku Kyo 郭巨 (Guo Ju) and his loyal wife, who agree in their poverty to murder their three-year-old son so that they might better provide for Kaku Kyo's mother.<sup>42</sup> (Kaku Kyo explains to his wife that although they can have another child someday, they can never have another mother, and she sadly agrees.) Kaku Kyo and his wife dig a hole in which to bury their son alive, and when they do, they unearth a golden vessel sent to them by Heaven as a reward for their filial piety. Shimauchi Keiji has described the story as the epitome of a "grotesque and even immoral" filial piety tale,<sup>43</sup> but if we resist taking the story too literally, we can see that it simply teaches that we should always choose our parents over our children (or, in the case of Yō Kyō, Bin Shigen, and others, over ourselves), and that there are glorious rewards for those of us who do.

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38 Ōshima 1974, pp. 309–10 (episode 10).

39 Uno 2016, p. 163.

40 Tokuda 1963, pp. 102–103.

41 Tokuda 1963, p. 104.

42 Ōshima 1974, pp. 315–16 (episode 15).

43 Shimauchi 1988, p. 175.



Figure 10. Tō no Bujin (Tang Furen) breastfeeds her mother-in-law. From *A Celebration of Teachings from the Classic of Filial Piety for Women* (*Jokun kōkyō oshie kotobuki*, 1822). Author's collection.

This seems to be one of the points made by the *kokugaku* 国学 scholar Tajiri Baiō 田尻梅翁 (1731–1808) in his *Jokun kōkyō oshie kotobuki* 女訓孝經教寿 (A celebration of teachings from the classic of filial piety for women), which was simultaneously published in Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo with a preface dated Bunsei 文政 5 (1822).<sup>44</sup> Although its main part constitutes a Japanese translation of *Nu Xiaojiao* 女孝經 (The women's classic of filial piety), attributed to Zheng Shi 鄭氏 of the Tang Dynasty (618–907), *Jokun kōkyō oshie kotobuki* includes in its front matter a single-page illustration of Tō no Bujin breastfeeding her mother-in-law while her child sleeps to the side. The accompanying anecdote, which is inscribed in the upper part of the image, combines Tō no Bujin's story with that of Kaku Kyo and his wife:

According to the Chinese work *Nijūshikō*, there was once a poor family with an old mother. Because the old mother's teeth had fallen out, it was difficult for her to eat, and for this reason, her daughter-in-law nourished her with her breast. As a consequence, there was not enough milk for the daughter-in-law's young child. The daughter-in-law was distressed, and since there was nothing else that she could do, she explained the situation to her husband. The couple agreed to dig a hole and bury their child. They knew that the sadness would be wretchedly hard to bear, but they could not exchange their mother's life for the child's. Discreetly, they went to the fields after dark. When

<sup>44</sup> *Jokun kōkyō oshie kotobuki* (also read *Nyokun kōkyō oshie kotobuki*) is photographically reproduced in Ishikawa 1994, vol. 84, n.p. The preface from Bunsei 5 is attributed to Takai Ranzan 高井蘭山 (1762–1838).

they dug a hole and were about to bury their little one, they found a golden vessel. It was a blessing from Heaven. The rewards of filial piety are just like this. People say that there are many such examples from Japan and China.<sup>45</sup>

The daughter-in-law is never explicitly identified, perhaps because she is both Tō no Bujin and the wife of Kaku Kyo. As an amalgam of the two, she is able to doubly fulfill the filial ideal, choosing her mother-in-law over her child twice in the same story. Moreover, unlike Kaku Kyo's wife, who simply goes along with her husband's plan to murder their three-year-old son, the daughter-in-law demonstrates heroic agency, for it is she who chooses to breastfeed her mother-in-law at the expense of her child, and it is she who approaches her husband about their problem. Thus, we might say that she is the greater filial hero. Her reward for her deeds is concrete and quick—as divine validation, it is far more convincing than a vague promise of later prosperity—and as Tajiri Baiō points out, her experience is relatively common in both China and Japan.

While Uno Mizuki's consideration of gender and agency in *Nijūshikō* is illuminating, it is also somewhat misleading insofar as it suggests that there are fewer female agents in *Nijūshikō* than there really are. This is because in cases in which the filial child—the principal filial agent—is male, there is often a filial accomplice—a kind of secondary supporting actor—who is not. We have seen this in the story of Kaku Kyo and his wife, and we can see it in several other episodes as well, including the stories of Kyō Shi 姜詩 (Jiang Shi) and his wife, who is rewarded for faithfully obtaining fresh fish and river water for her mother-in-law, and Tei Ran 丁蘭 (Ding Lan) and his wife, who is attacked by a living wooden statue of her mother-in-law after she burns it with a flame.

In Shibukawa's *Companion Library*, the latter story and its poem read as follows:

Carving wood, he makes it his father and mother;  
every day their expressions shift anew.  
Children and nieces all tell the tale,  
and word of his filial piety quickly spreads.

Tei Ran was from a place called Yaō in Kadai.<sup>46</sup> He lost his mother at the age of fifteen, and because he long mourned the separation, he had a wooden statue carved in her likeness, which he served as if it were a living person. One night, Tei Ran's wife burned the statue's face with a flame, whereupon [the wife] broke out in blisters seeping pus

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45 Morokoshi *Nijūshikō* no sho ni iwaku ie hin ni shite rōbo ari haha ha nukikereba shokuji narigatashi yue ni yome chichi o motte yōiku su yotte shōni no yashinai ni tomoshiku kokoro o nayami zehinaku otto ni sono yoshi monogatari ana o hori ko o umen koto nagekawashiku kanashimi ni taezaredomo haha no inochi ni kaegatashi to fūfu kokoro o awase hitome o shinobi yo ni iri nobe ni yukite ana o hori ko o umen to seshikaba kogane no kama o etari kore tendō no o-megumi kōshin no toku kaku no gotoshi wakan tomo sono tameshi ōshi to nari 唐土二十四孝の書に云家貧にして老母あり母齒ぬきければ食事成がたし故に嫁乳を以て養育す因て小児のやしなひに乏く心をなやみぜびなく夫に其よし物がたり穴を掘り子を埋ん事歎しく悲みにたえざれとも母の命に替がたしと夫婦心を合せ人目をしのび夜に入野辺に行て穴を掘子を埋んとせしかば黄金の釜を得たりこれ天道の御恵み孝心の徳かくのことし和漢ともそのためし多しと也。

46 Yaō 野王 (Yewang) and Kadai 河内 (Henei) are places in present-day Henan Province.



Figure 11. Tei Ran (Ding Lan) venerates his mother's statue. From the *Companion Library* edition of *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* (*Nijūshikō*, prior to 1729). Courtesy of the National Diet Library.



Figure 12. Tei Ran (Ding Lan) venerates his mother's statue. From *A Treasure Box of Learning* (*Onna daigaku takarabako*, 1814 edition). Author's collection.

and blood.<sup>47</sup> After two days, the hair on the wife's head fell out as if it had been cut with a sword. In her surprise, she apologized for what she had done. Tei Ran was amazed, and he moved the statue out onto the street. He had his wife pay penance for three years. Then, on a certain night, with the sound of a storm, the statue moved back inside the house of its own accord. From that time on, Tei Ran and his wife would consult the statue about even the most trivial matters, or so people say. There are few who have performed such filial service to cause such strange things to occur!<sup>48</sup>

As an exemplary filial son, Tei Ran continues to serve his mother after death, establishing a curious triangular relationship between his mother's statue, his living wife, and himself. *Nijūshikō* is in this case wildly unfaithful to its presumed source, which, like the poem that precedes the story, maintains that Tei Ran carved wooden effigies of both his father and his mother. Guo Jujing explains that “the wife did not revere the statues, and she stabbed them with a needle. Blood sprang out. When Ding Lan came home and saw this, he discarded his wife, after which [he] wept without cease.”<sup>49</sup> In *Nijūshikō*, it is unclear why the wife burns the statue, and although it is tempting to imagine that she does it on purpose—that it is a consequence of her “burning” jealousy for the object of her husband's divided attentions, as it seems to be in the Chinese source text—in *A Treasure Box of Learning*, Shibukawa suggests that she does not; he explains that she “burned the wooden image's face while lighting a flame,” which, presumably, is a votive candle.<sup>50</sup> In any case, the statue's punishment is swift and severe, and in *A Treasure Box of Learning*, Tei Ran thinks to himself, “Well, this must be the punishment of the wooden statue,” leaving little doubt as to who or what is to blame for the wife's sudden disfigurement.<sup>51</sup>

In the source text by Guo Jujing, Tei Ran abandons his wife, choosing his parents over his spouse, as we know that he should based on our reading of the biographies of Tō no Bujin and Kaku Kyo. However, in *Nijūshikō*, Tei Ran does the unthinkable: he chooses his wife over his mother, whose statue he places outside, on the street. It is an amazing thing to do in a filial piety tale, and apparently the dead mother will not stand for it. After the wife's three years of atonement, the statue flies back inside the house to take its rightful place in the family. Tei Ran and his wife serve it dutifully after that, demonstrating for readers that even in death, a mother-in-law should always come first. In the accompanying illustrations in the *Companion Library*, *Correspondence for Women and Children*, and *A Treasure Box of Learning* (figures 11 and 12), Tei Ran is shown with his back turned to his wife as he dutifully venerates the statue. The image suggests that just as a woman must put her mother-in-law ahead of her child, a man must put his mother ahead of his wife. In *Correspondence for Women and Children*, the story ends with the observation, “That such a

47 I follow Ōshima in supposing that it is Tei Ran's wife who breaks out in blisters. However, insofar as the subject of the clause is unstated, and blistering is a natural result of a burn, it is possible that it is the statue that is injured.

48 Ōshima 1974, pp. 300–301 (episode 3).

49 Quoted in Ōshima 1974, p. 301, note 14. Asai Ryōi includes an altogether different version of Tei Ran's story in his *Sankō kajitsu zu*, in Asai 2011, pp. 30–31.

50 Tei Ran ga tsuma hi o tomosu tote mokuzō no kao o kogashikeru ていらんがつま火をとますとて木像の面を焼ける。

51 Sate wa mokuzō no togame narubeshi 扱は木ぞうのとがめ成べし。

strange thing occurred was the result of [Tei Ran's] deep filial piety."<sup>52</sup> Shibukawa asserts that filial piety is a powerful force, capable of bringing even a wooden statue to life, but his message is a mixed one insofar as the effigy's animation is probably more terrifying than auspicious for Tei Ran and his wife.

### Conclusion

In advocating *Nijūshikō* for women, Shibukawa seems to have been following a convention of his time. In the ninth month of 1680, eighteen years before Shibukawa published his *Models of Writing for Women*, a merchant by the name of Enomoto Yazaemon 榎本弥左衛門 from Kawagoe 川越 in Musashi 武蔵 Province wrote in his memoir, *Mitsugo yori no oboe* 三子より之覚 (Reminiscences from the age of three):

When a woman marries into another family, she should be given the following volumes to take with her: (1) *Onna kagami* 女鏡, (2) *Yamato seimei* 大和西銘, (3) *Nijūshikō*, (4) *Chōjakyō* 長者教, (5) *Shingaku gorinshō* 心学五りんせう, (6) *Imagawa* 今川, and (7) *Jishin'yōki* 自心養記. She should read these seven types of books in this order every day, receiving instruction on them from her husband. If she grasps their meaning, then her mood will settle, her heart will calm, and she will be unlikely to fall ill.<sup>53</sup>

The third book is *Nijūshikō*, and Enomoto's suggestion that it be given to brides is consistent with Shibukawa's inclusion of it in his *Felicitous Wedding Companion Library*. In addition, Enomoto's assertion that a woman may achieve and/or maintain mental and physical health as a result of reading these works anticipates Shibukawa's advertisement of his *Companion Library* in the 1769 "catalogue of books beneficial for women to see." Shibukawa may indeed have been influenced by a popular opinion that *Nijūshikō* was good for women, but from among the seven books listed in Enomoto's memoir, his decision to reproduce only *Nijūshikō* in both the *Companion Library* and three of his early educational works suggests that he really did set special store by *Nijūshikō*.

As we have seen, *Nijūshikō* contains several interesting secondary female characters—for example, the wives of Kaku Kyō, Kyō Shi, and Tei Ran—but that may not have mattered very much to Shibukawa. He clearly considered gender to be a factor in selecting models for women, as we can see from the fact that five of the six exemplars in the header-column of *Models of Writing for Women* are female, as well as from Shibukawa's decision to include the story of Hachikazuki, another benighted yet admirable young woman, in his

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52 Kayō ni fushigi naru koto aru wa kōkō fukaki koto narubeshi かやうにふしぎ成事あるはかうかうふかき事成べし.

53 Ōno 2001, p. 74. According to Ōno Mizuo's annotations, these books are *Onna kagami hidensho* (A secret mirror for women), published in 1650; Kumazawa Banzan's 熊沢蕃山 *Yamato seimei* (Japanese western precepts), published in 1650; *Nijūshikō*; *Chōjakyō* (The millionaire's sutra); *Shingaku gorinsho* 心学五倫書 (Five moral treatises on the teachings of the heart), published in 1650; Imagawa Ryōshun's 今川了俊 *Imagawa jō* 今川状 (Imagawa letters), compiled in 1412; and *Jishin'yōki* (A record of self cultivation), which is unknown. I am grateful to Kiba Takatoshi for bringing this passage to my attention.

*Correspondence for Women and Children*.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, Shibukawa does not seem to have considered gender to be a decisive factor, judging from his inclusion of Bin Shigen, rather than Tō no Bujin, in *Models of Writing for Women*, as well as from his surprising failure to point out in *Correspondence for Women and Children* and *A Treasure Box of Learning* that Yō Kyō was a girl. Thus, we might suppose that for Shibukawa, the lessons for women were essentially the same as those for men, and that women could learn those lessons equally well from men as from women. This would be consistent with what Marcia Yonemoto has observed in regard to Kaibara Ekiken's *Joshi o oshiyuru hō*, upon which *Onna daigaku* seems ultimately to have been based: that "while Ekiken constructs the 'Four [Proper] Behaviors [for Women]' as gender-specific, with the exception of sewing and spinning and looking 'ladylike,' they consist of values that could and did apply to men as well as women."<sup>55</sup>

Still, this does not answer the question of what eighteenth-century women themselves might have learned from *Nijūshikō*, both in the *Companion Library* and in Shibukawa's other publications. Without records of women's perceptions of the work, it is impossible to say. Furthermore, no two women are likely to have reacted to *Nijūshikō* in quite the same way. But considering the many stories of women's devotion to their mothers-in-law, including the accounts of Tō no Bujin, Kaku Kyo's wife, Tei Ran's wife, and Kyō Shi's wife, as well as the stories of the numerous men who also faithfully served their mothers, it is tempting to imagine that many women may have concluded that a woman's greatest duty was to her husband's mother. In *A Treasure Box of Learning*, this is a lesson that is reinforced by the central essay, *Onna daigaku*, which admonishes, "Because a woman will not succeed to her own parents' household, but rather to that of her father-in-law and mother-in-law, she should cherish and serve them more filially than she does her own parents."<sup>56</sup> There are of course many instructions in *Onna daigaku*, the essence of which may be that "in all things, the Way of the Wife (*fujin no michi* 婦人の道) is that of obedience."<sup>57</sup> However, the striking convergence of the explicit and implicit admonition regarding parents-in-law in *Onna daigaku* and *Nijūshikō* is likely to have made a powerful impression on careful readers of *A Treasure Box of Learning* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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54 Shibukawa's decision to include *Hachikazuki* in *Correspondence for Women and Children* may have had less to do with the virtuous character of the eponymous protagonist than with the status of *Hachikazuki* in the early-modern literary imagination. A 1788/1852 edition of the bestselling *Onna imagawa* 女今川 (Imagawa admonitions for women; author's collection), for example, lists *Hachikazuki* in a twenty-three-title "catalogue of poetry books" (*kasbo mokuroku* 歌書目録) that includes *Hyakunin isshu*, *Ise monogatari*, *Genji monogatari*, *Eiga monogatari* 栄花物語, *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子, *Utsuho monogatari* うつほ物語, *Taketori monogatari* 竹取物語, the eight imperially sponsored poetry collections (*bachidaishū* 八代集), and several other works, demonstrating *Hachikazuki*'s perceived importance in the eighteenth century.

55 Yonemoto 2016, p. 58. Regarding the connection between *Joshi o oshiyuru hō* and *Onna daigaku*, see note 21, above. For a further discussion of *Joshi o oshiyuru hō*, as well as women's early-modern education in general, see Tocco 2003, pp. 195–97.

56 Araki and Inoue 1970, p. 204a.

57 Araki and Inoue 1970, p. 203a.

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TRANSLATION

*The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars*<sup>1</sup>

Translated, annotated, and with an introduction by R. Keller KIMBROUGH

**Introduction**

The following set of stories is an English translation of *Nijūshikō* 二十四孝 (The twenty-four filial exemplars), which is a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Japanese translation of the early fourteenth-century *Quan xiang ershi xiao shi xuan* 全相二十四孝詩選 (Selected verses on all aspects of the twenty-four filial exemplars), compiled by the scholar Guo Jujing 郭居敬 from a variety of earlier Chinese sources. Records indicate that the work was first imported to Japan in 1381, and although the identity of the translator is unknown, Tokuda Kazuo argues that the translation was likely produced in or around the Tenshō 天正 period (1573–1592), when there was a noticeable spike in interest in the work in Japan.<sup>2</sup> The oldest extant text of the translation dates from the Keichō 慶長 period (1596–1615), when it was published in an illustrated “Saga-bon” 嵯峨本 moveable-type-printed edition with calligraphy by Hon’ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦. The work was widely reproduced in text and illustration from the seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries.

Like its Chinese source, *Nijūshikō* contains twenty-four stories about twenty-seven principal protagonists. (Episodes 21 and 22 are about sets of two and three brothers respectively.) The work begins auspiciously with accounts of the Chinese emperors Shun and Wen (r. 2233–2184 BC and 180–157 BC). All of the stories are moralistic in tone, and with the possible exception of episode 22, they are all concerned with the Confucian virtue of filial piety and its frequently miraculous effects. Each of the episodes is prefaced by a Chinese verse in four five-character lines. The verses are untranslated within the larger Japanese translation, but in some editions of *Nijūshikō*, including the one translated here, they are glossed with Japanese readings and creative interpretations of the Chinese. Each of the verses is followed by an explanatory tale in Japanese (which, in some cases, is inconsistent with the poem that it supports), and depending on the published edition of the work, each of these is either prefaced or followed by a block-printed illustration that is also sometimes inconsistent with its episode.

The version of *Nijūshikō* that is translated here was published in Osaka at sometime between ca. 1716 and 1729 as a single book within a box-set anthology of short medieval

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1 The following translation is from the early eighteenth-century edition of *Nijūshikō* typeset and annotated in Ōshima 1974, pp. 298–327. The illustrations are from a printing of the same edition of the work in the collection of the National Diet Library (Tokyo).

2 Tokuda 1988, pp. 343–44.

fiction titled *Shūgen otogi bunko* 祝言御伽文庫 (The felicitous wedding companion library), or simply *Otogi bunko* (The companion library). Because of its inclusion in that anthology, *Nijūshikō* tends to be regarded today as an *otogizōshi* (a companion book), which is a catch-all term for a multitude of relatively short and usually anonymous works of medieval prose fiction. The publisher, Shibukawa Seiemon 渋川清右衛門, specialized in educational works for women, and there are at least two eighteenth-century advertisements in which he either insinuated or proclaimed that his anthology was “beneficial for women.” At around the same time that he published *Otogi bunko*, Shibukawa incorporated complete illustrated editions of *Nijūshikō* in at least two of his didactic and eclectic tomes for women (published in 1715 and 1716), suggesting that he really did believe that *Nijūshikō* was good for women.<sup>3</sup>

The unknown Japanese translator took substantial liberties with his or her translation of Guo Jujing’s collection of tales, resulting in what is essentially a Japanese, rather than Chinese, work of literature. For this reason, in my own English translation of the medieval Japanese, I privilege Japanese rather than Chinese readings of Chinese names. However, for the sake of convenience, I also provide pinyin romanization of the protagonists’ names in parentheses at the head of each story. All figures are from *Nijūshikō* (*Otogi bunko* edition, ca. 1716–1729), courtesy of the National Diet Library.

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3 For a further discussion of this issue, see the article that accompanies the present translation.



Figure 1. With the help of elephants and birds, Great Shun tends his fields.

[1] **Great Shun 大舜 (Da Shun)**

Elephants in a row, tilling in the spring;  
a flock of birds weeds the fields.  
Succeeding Gyō, he rises to the jeweled throne;<sup>4</sup>  
his filial piety moves the emperor's heart.

Great Shun was an exceedingly filial person. His father, whose name was Kosō 瞽叟—“Blind Old Man”—was remarkably stubborn, and his mother had a twisted heart. His younger brothers were extremely arrogant, and they were worthless, too. Nevertheless, Great Shun was fervent in his filial piety. One time when he was farming at a place called Mount Reki, Heaven was moved by his filial devotion.<sup>5</sup> Great elephants came and tilled his fields, and birds flew to him and pulled the weeds, aiding him in his cultivation. At that time the ruler of the realm was named Emperor Gyō 堯王. He had two daughters, the elder of whom was called Gakō 娥皇, and the younger, Joei 女英. Having received word of Shun's filial piety, Emperor Gyō immediately gave him his daughters to be his empresses, and in the end he left him the realm. This happened entirely as a result of Great Shun's profound sense of filial piety.

<sup>4</sup> Emperor Gyō 堯王 (Emperor Yao) was a legendary ruler of early China.

<sup>5</sup> Mount Reki 歷山 (Li-shan) is a mountain in present-day Shandong 山東 Province.

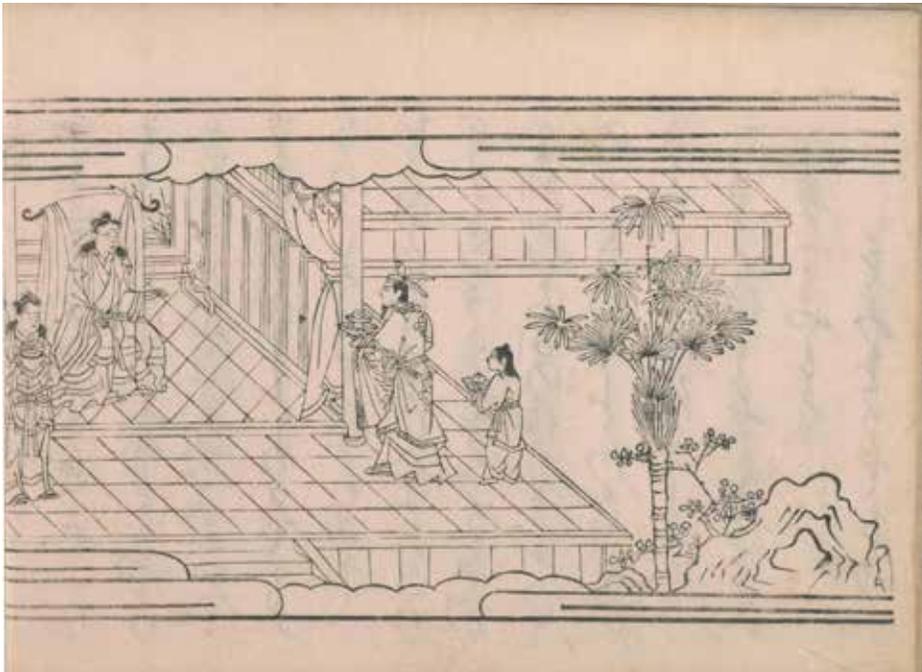


Figure 2. Emperor Bun serves his mother.

[2] Emperor Bun of Kan 漢文帝 (Emperor Wen of Han)

Ruling the land with benevolence and filial piety,  
he towers high, surpassing a hundred other kings.  
Serving his wise mother at the Imperial Court of Kan,  
he always tastes her medicinal decoctions.

Emperor Bun of Kan was a son of the patriarch of Kan.<sup>6</sup> As a child, he went by the name of Gō. He was filial toward his mother, Empress Dowager Haku 薄太后. Whenever she was served any kind of food, he would always taste it first himself. Emperor Bun had many brothers, but none of them were as benevolent and righteous in their conduct, or as filially pious as he. This is why the retainers Chin Bei 陳平, Shū Botsu 周勃, and others made him king. From that time forward, he was called Emperor Bun of Kan. Now, although we may know that everyone should follow the Way of Filial Piety, from the sovereign on high to his myriad subjects below, in fact it can be difficult to put into practice and to keep lodged within our hearts. Nevertheless, as the august ruler of the forty-thousand-and-more provinces, Emperor Bun behaved in just this way, thanks to his venerable disposition.<sup>7</sup> People say that as a result, the realm thrived and the people dwelled in tranquility.

6 Kan 漢 is the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), and the patriarch of Kan was Liu Bang 劉邦, later known as Emperor Gaozu of Han. He was both the founder and the first emperor of the Han Dynasty.

7 “Forty-thousand-and-more provinces” is an epithet for China.

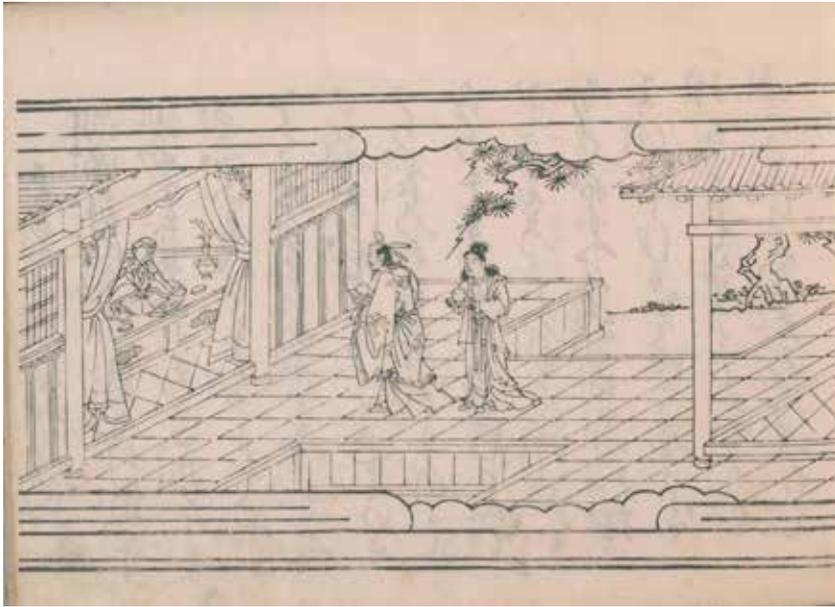


Figure 3. Tei Ran venerates a statue of his mother.

[3] Tei Ran 丁蘭 (Ding Lan)

Carving wood, he makes it his father and mother;<sup>8</sup>  
 every day their expressions shift anew.  
 Children and nieces all tell the tale,  
 and word of his filial piety quickly spreads.

Tei Ran was from a place called Yaō in Kadai.<sup>9</sup> He lost his mother at the age of fifteen, and because he long mourned the separation, he had a wooden statue carved in her likeness, which he served as if it were a living person. One night Tei Ran's wife burned the statue's face with a flame, whereupon [the wife] broke out in blisters seeping pus and blood.<sup>10</sup> After two days, the hair on the wife's head fell out as if it had been cut with a sword. In her surprise, she apologized for what she had done. Tei Ran was amazed, and he moved the statue out onto the street. He had his wife pay penance for three years. Then, on a certain night, with the sound of a storm, the statue moved back inside the house of its own accord. From that time on, Tei Ran and his wife would consult the statue about even the most trivial matters, or so people say. There are few who have performed such filial service to cause such strange things to occur!

8 The poem speaks of two carved statues, but the story, which differs radically from the one in the source text by Guo Jujing, speaks of only one.

9 Yaō 野王 (Yewang) and Kadai 河内 (Henei) are places in present-day Henan 河南 Province.

10 I follow Ōshima in supposing that it is Tei Ran's wife who breaks out in blisters. However, insofar as the subject of the clause is unstated, and blistering is a natural result of a burn, it is possible that it is the statue that is injured.

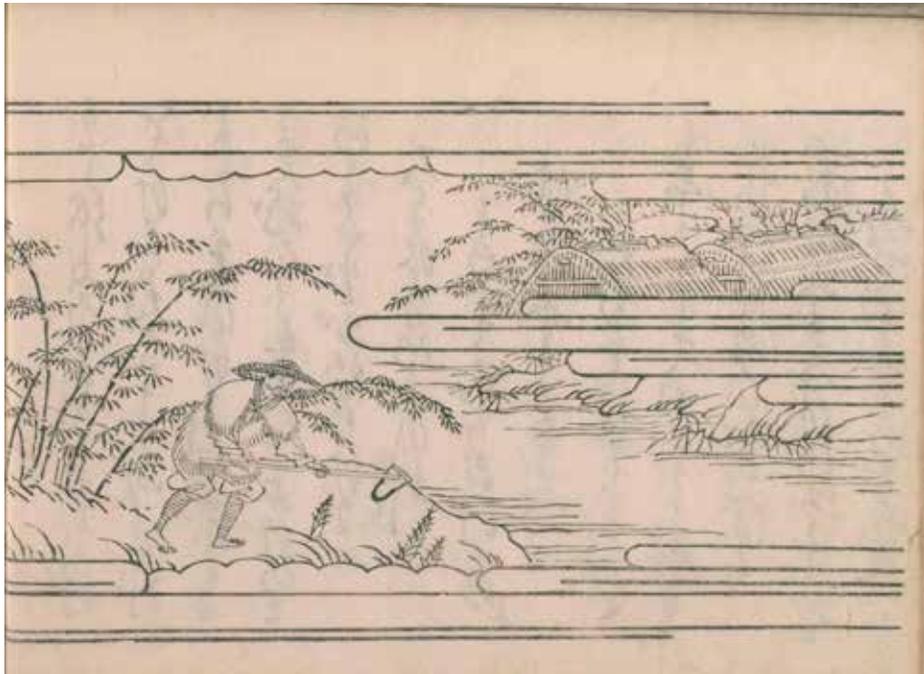


Figure 4. Mō Sō harvests bamboo shoots in winter.

[4] Mō Sō 孟宗 (Meng Zong), also known as Kyō Bu 恭武 (Gong Wu) or Shi Kyō 子恭 (Zi Gong)

His tears fall in drops, and the north wind is cold;  
standing lonely, a few stalks of bamboo.  
In a moment, the spring shoots emerge;  
Heaven repays him with tranquility and peace.

Having lost his father when he was young, Mō Sō supported his single mother. She was old and constantly ill, and because the taste of food changed for her every time she ate, she would long for inappropriate things. Despite it being winter, she wished for bamboo shoots. Thus, Mō Sō immediately went to the bamboo grove to find some. However, because it was the season of deep snow, how could he have easily obtained them? Wretched with grief, he prayed, “I implore you, Heaven, please show your mercy.” As he pushed against some bamboo, the earth suddenly split apart and a profusion of bamboo shoots sprang up from the ground. Mō Sō was overjoyed. He immediately took them home and cooked them in a broth. When he gave them to his mother, she ate them, and at that moment her illness was cured and her life prolonged. The bamboo shoots were a gift from Heaven, which was profoundly moved by the depth of Mō Sō’s filial piety.

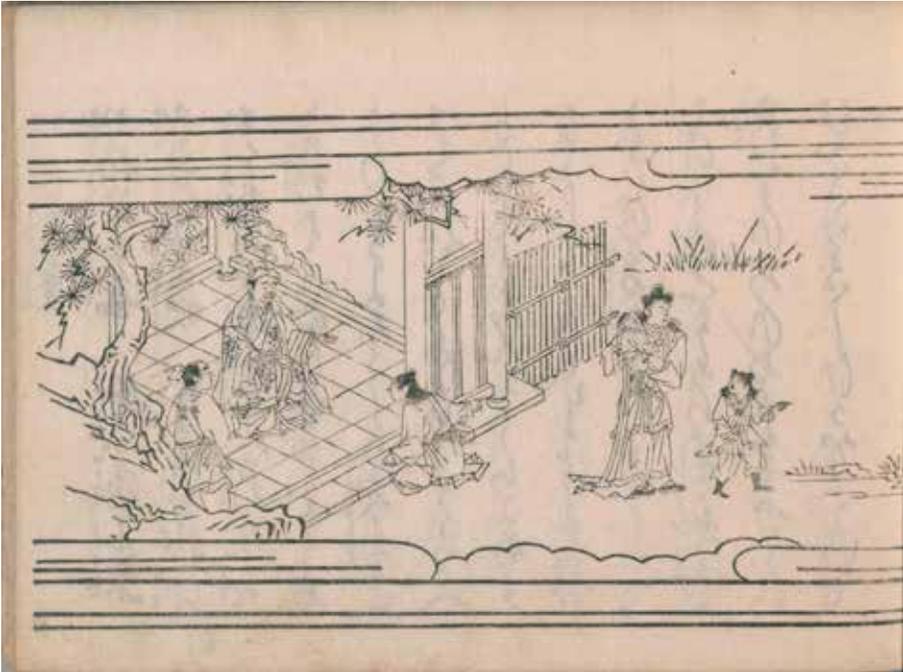


Figure 5. Bin Shigen pleads with his father to spare his stepmother.

[5] **Bin Shigen 閔子騫 (Min Ziqian)**

The Bin family has a wise son, so  
why should he have resented his stepmother?  
Because he keeps her by his father's side,  
all three children escape the wind and frost.

Bin Shigen lost his mother when he was young. His father took a second wife, and she bore him two children. The new wife loved her own children deeply, but she despised her stepson. Even in the cold of winter, she would take the ears of reeds and use them to pad his clothes. Because she dressed him in such things, he was chilled to the bone, and when his father saw how he could barely endure, he sought to drive her away. Bin Shigen spoke, saying, "If you drive away your wife, all three children will be cold. As it is now, if I alone can endure the cold, then my two younger brothers will be warm." Because he dissuaded his father, his stepmother was deeply moved, and from then on she doted on him without reserve, like his very own mother. People of old seem to have been right when they said that the good and bad of a person lie within their own heart.

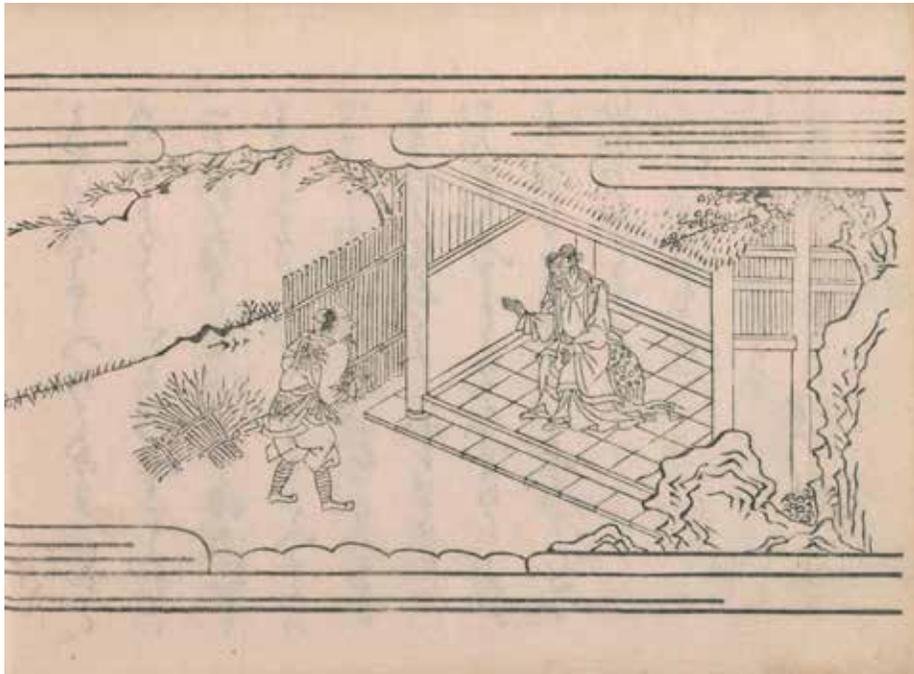


Figure 6. Sō Shin comes home at his mother's call.

[6] Sō Shin 曾參 (Zeng Shen)

As the mother gently bites her finger,  
the child's heart is pained beyond endurance.  
Shouldering his firewood, he takes so long to return;  
the bonds of blood are profoundly deep.

One time, Sō Shin went into the mountains to gather firewood. His mother was minding the house when a close friend arrived. The mother wanted to provide for their guest, but Sō Shin was away, and since their family was poor, she had nothing to serve him. "Come home, Sō Shin!" she said to herself, and she bit her finger. Sō Shin was gathering firewood in the mountains, but suddenly he felt his heart race. He rushed home, whereupon his mother explained everything from beginning to end. She bit her finger, just like that, and because of Sō Shin's profound filial piety, he responded from far away, demonstrating the deep affection that exists between parents and their children. Generally speaking, Sō Shin's filial piety differed from that of others, because his was a connection from heart to heart. There must be an extraordinary truth in this.

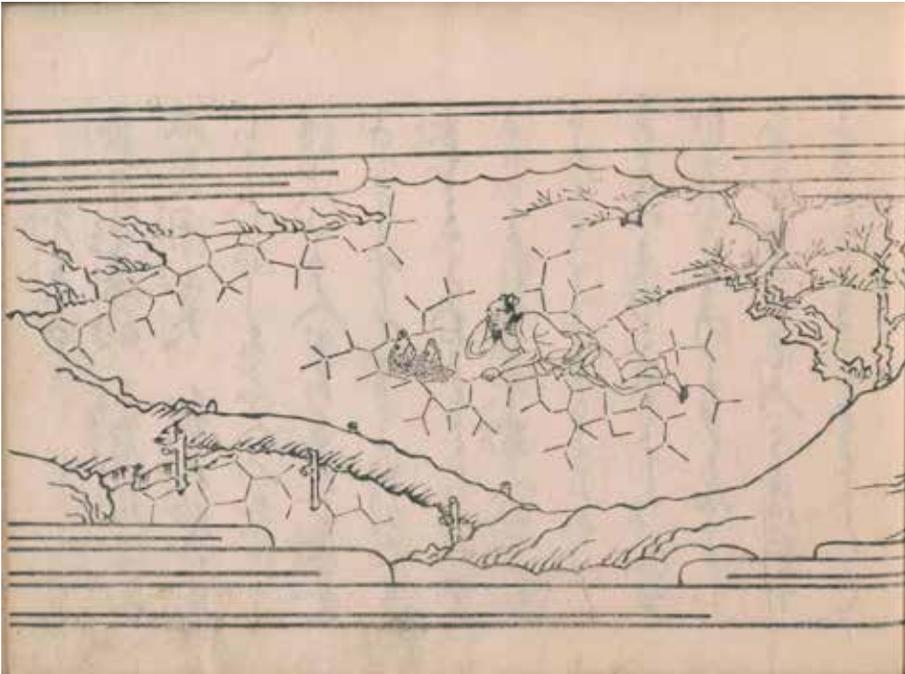


Figure 7. Ō Shō melts a hole in the ice, and two fish appear.

[7] Ō Shō 王祥 (Wang Xiang)

There are stepmothers in the world,  
but there is no one in the land like Ō Shō.  
Even now, on the surface of the river,  
there is a shelf of ice that shows where he lay.

Ō Shō lost his mother when he was young, and his father took another wife. Her name was Shu Shi 朱氏. As is the way with stepmothers, Shu Shi told lies to create discord, estranging the father from his son. However, Ō Shō was not resentful, and he served her filially. Being the kind of person that he was, when his stepmother wanted fresh fish in the bitter cold of winter, he went to the river at a place called Jōfu in order to find some.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, because it was winter, the river was frozen and there were no fish to be seen. Ō Shō therefore took off his robes, becoming naked. He lay down on the ice and bewailed the lack of fish, whereupon a portion of the ice melted and two fish leaped out of the water. Ō Shō immediately took them home, and he gave them to his stepmother. This happened entirely as a result of Ō Shō's filial piety. It seems that every year in that place, there is a shape in the ice of a person lying down.

<sup>11</sup> Jōfu 肇府 (Zhaodong-fu 肇東府, according to Guo Jujing's source text) is in present-day Guangdong 廣東 Province.

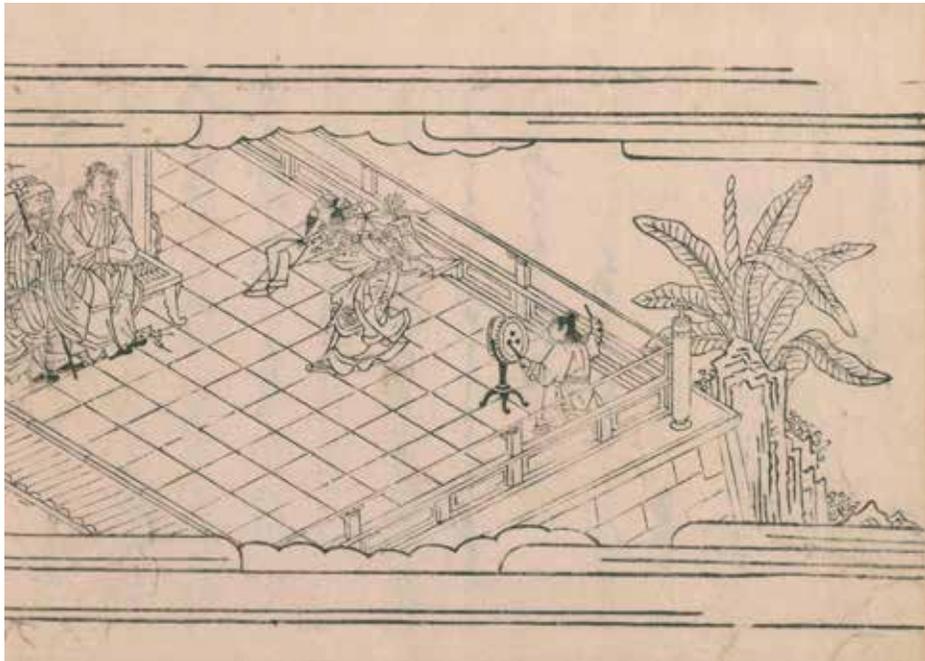


Figure 8. For his parents, Old Raishi pretends to be a child.

[8] Old Raishi 老萊子 (Lao Laizi)<sup>12</sup>

Frolicking, dancing, playing the fool;  
a spring breeze rustles his colorful robes.  
His parents open their mouths and laugh;  
their room is filled with joy.

Old Raishi was a man who served his parents. Thus, when he was seventy years old, he would wear pretty robes so that he resembled a child. Dancing and frolicking, he would attend to his parents' needs, and he would purposely trip and fall and then cry like a baby. Why? Because having reached the age of seventy, his looks were marred by age, and he feared that upon seeing him, his parents would lament that he had grown so very old. In addition, people say that he did this so that his parents would not notice their own advancing years.

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<sup>12</sup> The name Old Raishi is written with characters that can mean, "old [man] becomes a child."

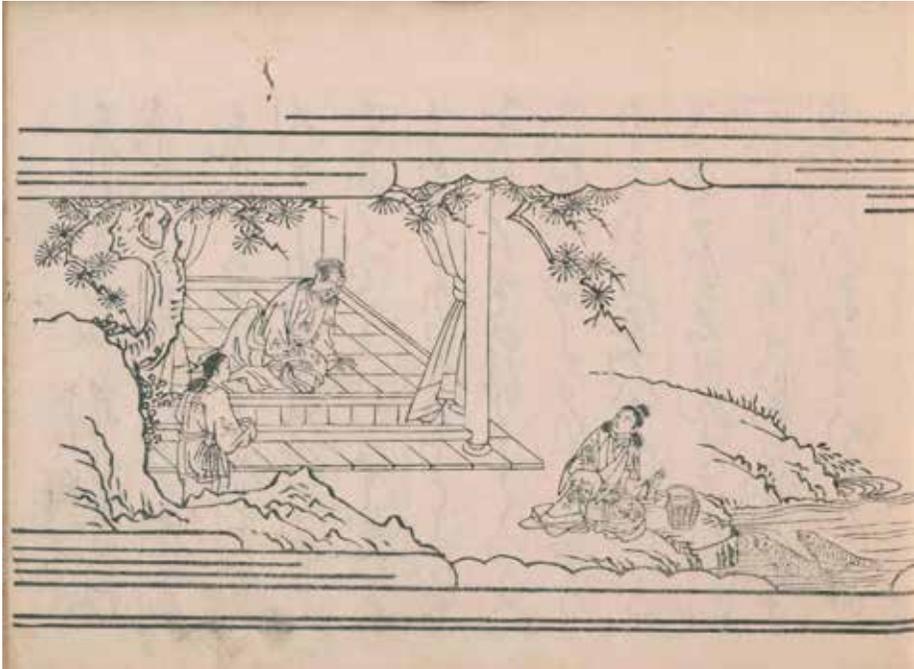


Figure 9. Kyō Shi's wife draws water for her mother-in-law.

[9] **Kyō Shi 姜詩 (Jiang Shi)**

A sweet spring erupts beside the house,  
and one morning there are two carp.  
The son knows well how to serve his mother;  
his wife, too, is filial toward her mother-in-law.

Kyō Shi was filial toward his mother. She always wanted to drink water from the river, and to eat fresh minced fish. Thus, Kyō Shi would send his wife to fetch water from a river that was six or seven leagues away, and he would have her carefully prepare minced fish and give it to his mother. Together, they were constantly diligent in their service. One time, beside Kyō Shi's house, water suddenly sprang from the ground and flowed like a river. Every morning there were carp in the water, so they would catch them and give them to Kyō Shi's mother. These amazing things were gifts from Heaven, and they occurred because Heaven was moved by the filial piety of Kyō Shi and his wife.

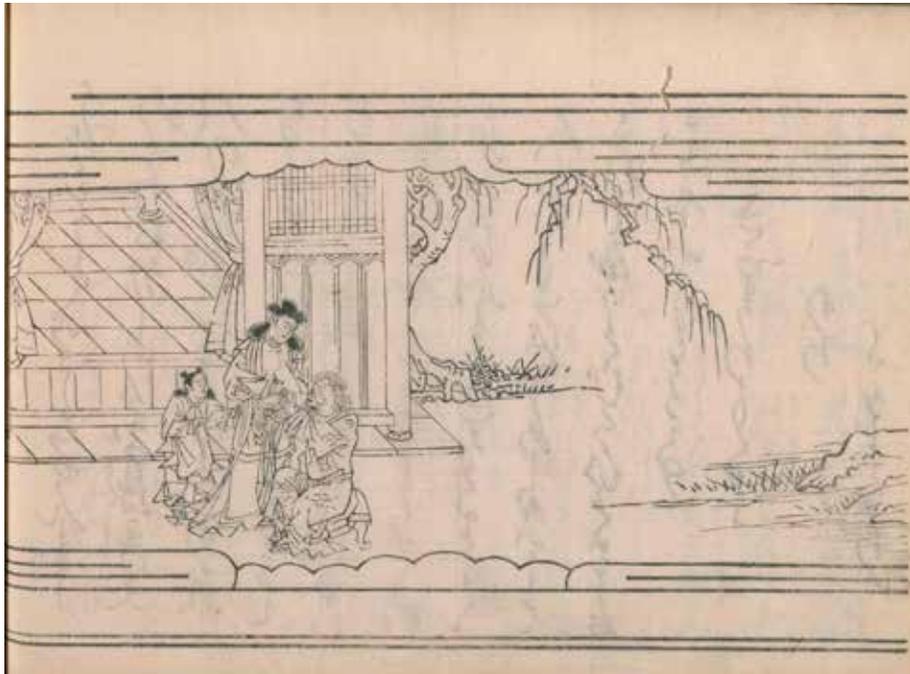


Figure 10. Tō no Bujin breastfeeds her mother-in-law.

**[10] Tō no Bujin 唐夫人 (Tang Furen, “Madam Tang”)**

Filial and reverent, the Sai family bride:  
she breastfeeds her mother-in-law, and grooms her for the day.  
It is a debt that cannot be repaid;  
one asks that her descendants will do the same.

Tō no Bujin’s mother-in-law, Chōson Bujin 長孫夫人, was very old. Because she could not chew food, Tō no Bujin would feed her from her breast. In addition, every morning she combed her mother-in-law’s hair. She served her well in other ways, too, caring for her for many years. One time, Chōson Bujin fell ill and thought that she would die. She gathered together all the household and said, “To die now without repaying my years of debt to Tō no Bujin fills me with regret. If my descendants emulate her filial rectitude, then the family is sure to prosper.” Everyone praised Tō no Bujin’s devotion, remarking that there had been few in the past or present who had been so filial to their mothers-in-law. People say that for this reason the family immediately received its reward, flourishing in a most extraordinary manner.

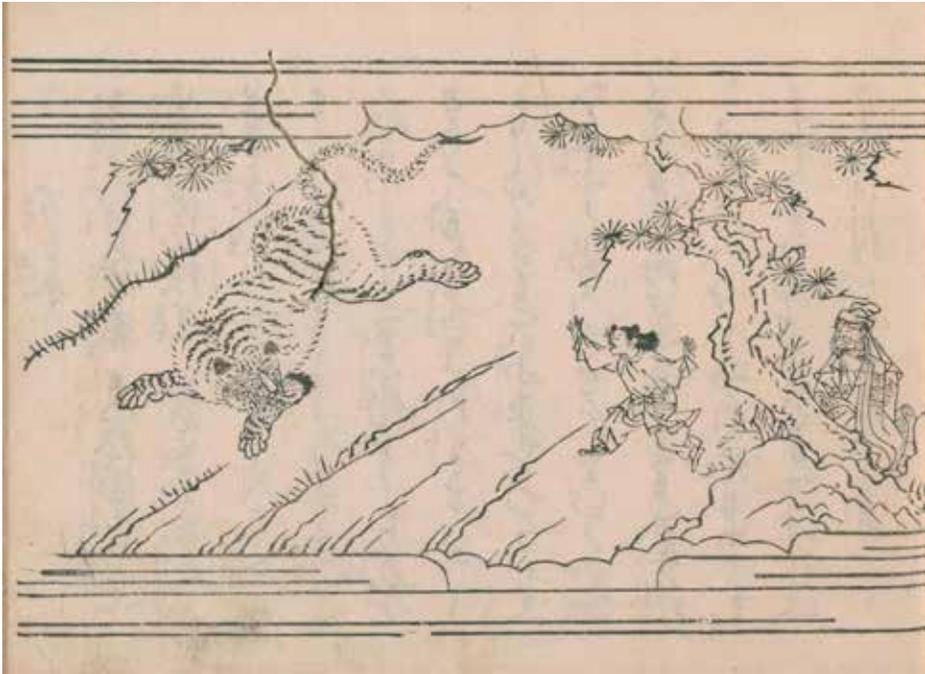


Figure 11. Yō Kyō defends her father from a tiger.

[11] Yō Kyō 楊香 (Yang Xiang)

Meeting a white-browed tiger deep in the mountains,  
she strikes with all her strength at its rancid breath.  
Father and child together, without harm,  
escape the clutch of its ravenous maw.

Yō Kyō had only a father. Once when Yō Kyō went into the mountains with him, they suddenly encountered a savage tiger. Fearing for her father's life, Yō Kyō tried to chase it away. However, because she could not, she called on the mercy of Heaven. "I beg of you," she earnestly prayed, "give my life to the tiger, and save my father!" Heaven must have been moved, because the tiger, which until then had been most ferocious in its appearance and had been on the verge of devouring her father, quickly furled its tail and ran away. Parent and child, together, had escaped the tiger's maw, and without further ado they returned to their home. It is entirely because of the depth of Yō Kyō's filial devotion that she could produce such a miracle.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Despite the translation, which uses female pronouns to refer to Yō Kyō, the Japanese text does not indicate Yō Kyō's gender. However, according to the story in some other Japanese sources, she was a teenage girl.

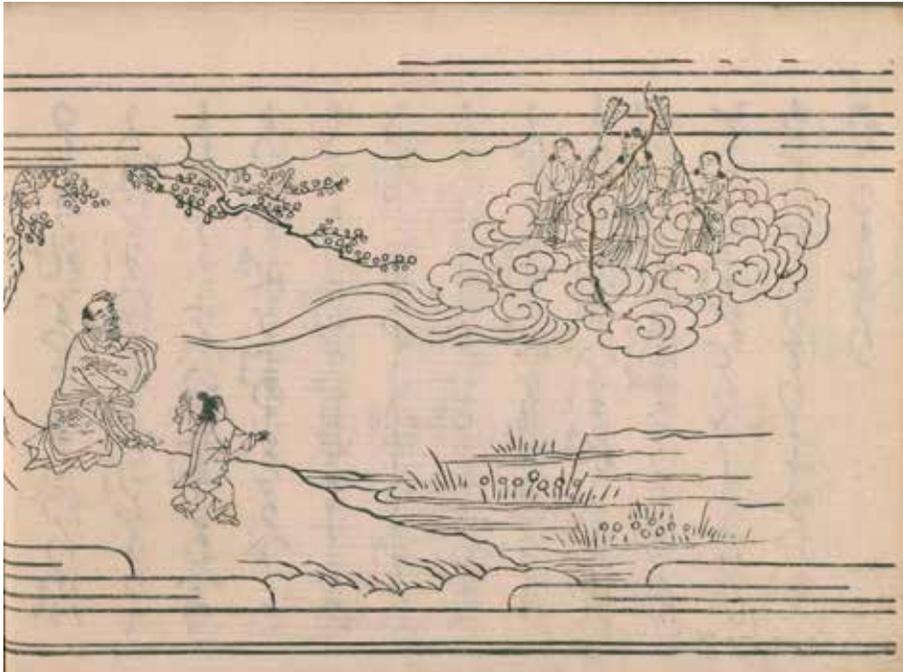


Figure 12. Tō Ei watches his celestial wife fly away.

[12] Tō Ei 董永 (Dong Yong)

He borrows coins to bury his father,  
and a heavenly maiden meets him on the road.  
She weaves silk to repay the lender.  
Moved by his filial piety, everyone knows his name.

Tō Ei was separated from his mother when he was young. His family was poor, and he passed his days working for others, farming to earn wages. Because his father was crippled and could not stand, Tō Ei built a small cart, set his father on it, and parked it on the ridges between rice paddies so that he could tend to him there. The time came when his father died. Tō Ei wanted to arrange a funeral service, but because he had always been poor, he could not. Thus, he sold himself for a payment of ten *kan*, and he held the funeral rites. Later, when he set out for the master's house, he encountered a beautiful woman on the road. Saying that she would be his wife, she went with him, and in a single month she wove three hundred bolts of tight silk. When she presented it to the master, he was so moved that he set Tō Ei free. After that, the woman said to Tō Ei, "I am a celestial weaver-woman. The Emperor of Heaven was moved by your filial piety, and he sent me here to repay your debt." With that, she rose up into the sky.



[13] Ō Kyō 黄香 (Huang Xiang) Figure 13. Ō Kyō fans his father's robe.

Warming the blankets in the winter months  
and fanning the pillows in summer to make them cool;  
as a youth, he knows the duties of a child.  
Since the ancient past, there has been only one Ō Kyō!

Ō Kyō was from a place called Anryō.<sup>14</sup> He lost his mother when he was nine years old, after which he did all that he could to serve his father. Thus, in the extreme heat of summer, he would fan his father's pillow and seat cushion to keep them cool, and in the bitter cold of winter, saddened by the chill of the blankets, he would warm them with his body before giving them to his father. Because Ō Kyō was so filial, the district governor—a person known as Ryū Kan 劉謹—set up a placard in praise of his filial piety. People say that from that time forward, everyone knew that Ō Kyō was an outstandingly filial child.

<sup>14</sup> Anryō 安陵 (Anling) is the name of a district in present-day Hubei 湖北 Province.

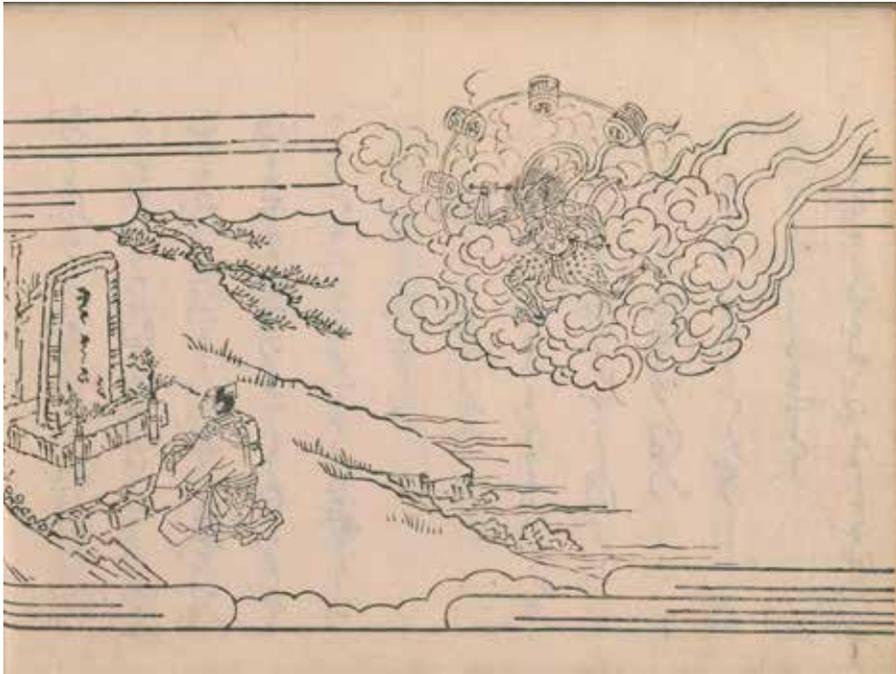


Figure 14. Ō Hō visits his mother's grave as a thunder god rages.

[14] Ō Hō 王褒 (Wang Pou)

His loving mother, afraid of thunder—  
her pure spirit dwells in the pedestal of night.  
At a single clap of the thunder god,  
he visits her tomb and circles it a thousand times.

Ō Hō was from a place called Ei'in.<sup>15</sup> His father, Ō Gi 王義, had been executed by the emperor as a result of some unexpected affair, and because Ō Hō held a grudge about it, he refused for the rest of his life to sit facing in the direction of the emperor. He would stay at his father's grave, kneeling and praying, and as he clung to an oak tree, he would weep and grieve. His tears fell on the tree, and people say that it withered. His mother had always been afraid of thunder, and so after she died, he would rush to her grave whenever there was thunder and lightning. "Ō Hō is here," he would say as he circled her tomb, giving strength to his dead mother. Considering that Ō Hō was so filial after his parents had died, one can imagine how filial he must have been while they were alive. His were rare and wonderful deeds!

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15 Ei'in 營陰 (Ying'yin) is unknown.



Figure 15. Kaku Kyo and his wife unearth a golden vessel.

[15] **Kaku Kyo 郭巨 (Guo Ju)**

Wishing to provide in their poverty,  
they would bury a child to prolong their mother's life.  
Heaven granted them a golden vessel,  
the lovely light of which illumined their impoverished home.

Kaku Kyo was from a place called Kadai. His family was poor, and he supported his mother. His wife bore a single child, who was now three years old. Kaku Kyo's old mother doted on her grandchild, and she would share her food with him. One time Kaku Kyo said to his wife, "Because we are poor, we hardly have enough food even for our mother, or so I've thought. Nevertheless, she takes some and gives it to her grandchild, so that there really isn't enough. This is all because we have a little one. In short, since we are husband and wife, we'll surely have another child someday, but we'll never have another mother. So, I would like to bury our baby and take good care of our mother." The wife was indeed sad, but she did not disobey her husband, and they took their three-year-old child out for burial. Holding back his tears, Kaku Kyo began to dig, whereupon he discovered a golden vessel. There were astonishing characters inscribed on the object. They read: "This a gift from Heaven for the filial Kaku Kyo. It is not to be seized by any official or taken by anyone else." This meant that because Heaven had granted the vessel to Kaku Kyo, it was not to be taken by any other person.<sup>16</sup> Kaku Kyo and his wife accepted the vessel with joy, and they went home together without burying their child. People say that after that, Kaku Kyo served his mother more filially than ever.

<sup>16</sup> The message is written in Chinese, so it is followed by an explanation in Japanese.

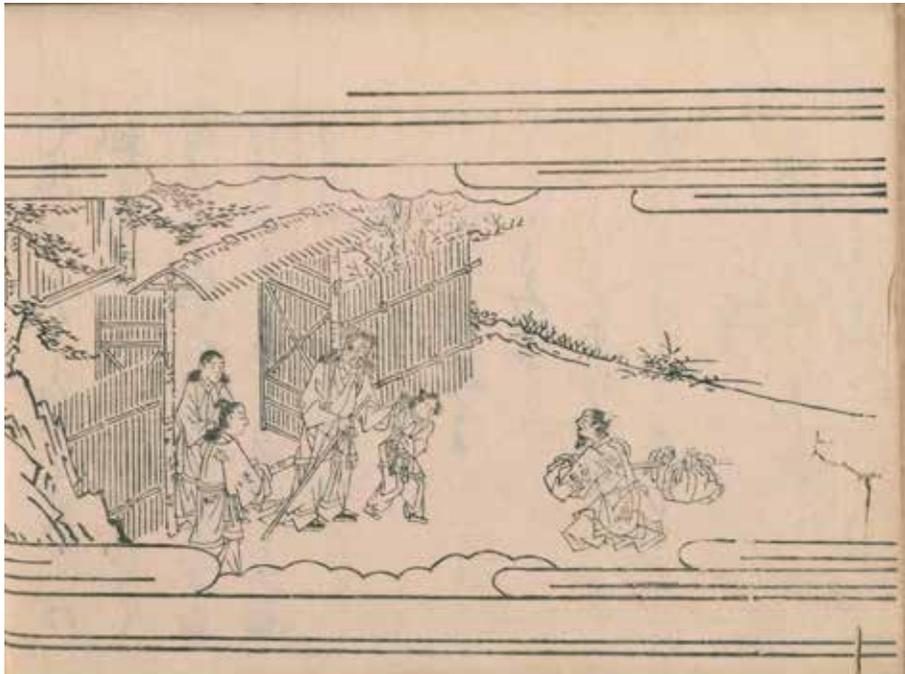


Figure 16. Shu Jushō finds his mother after fifty years.

**[16] Shu Jushō 朱寿昌 (Zhu Shouchang)**

Taken from his mother at the age of seven,  
he was her opposite star for fifty years.  
Then one morning they were reunited, and  
their joy moved the Emperor of Heaven.

When Shu Jushō was seven years old, his father sent his mother away. Thus, he did not know her well, and so although he pined for her, fifty years passed without their meeting. One time, despite being a government official, Jushō abandoned his position and his salary, as well as his wife and his children, and he went to a place called Shin to search.<sup>17</sup> “Please let me find my mother,” he prayed. He took blood from his own body and used it to copy a sutra. He prayed to Heaven and searched, and because of the depth of his feeling, he eventually found her.

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<sup>17</sup> Shin 秦 (Zou) is in present-day Shaanxi 陝西 Province.

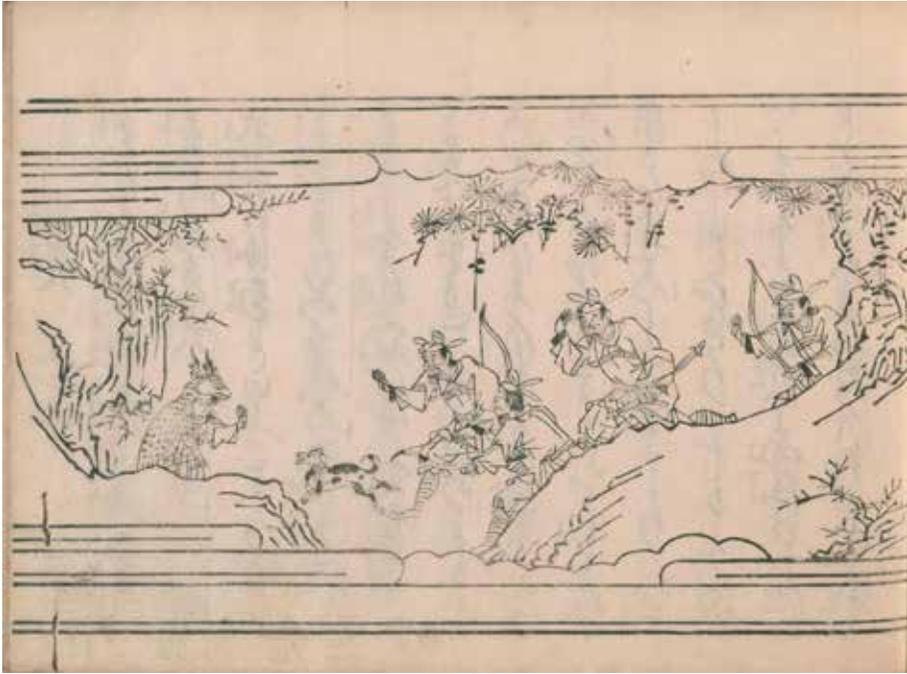


Figure 17. Dressed as a deer, Zen Shi speaks with a party of hunters.

[17] **Zen Shi** 刻子 (Tan Zi)

Because his old parents yearn for deer's milk,  
he swathes himself in a brown furry robe.  
Had he not spoken up loudly, he would have  
gone home wearing an arrow from the mountains.

Zen Shi was so filial that he sought to throw away his life for his parents' sake. The reason is this: Zen Shi's mother and father were old, and because they both suffered from maladies of the eyes, they longed to have the milk of a deer as medicine. Because Zen Shi had always been a filial child, he wished to achieve his parents' desire. He therefore donned a deerskin and slipped inside a large herd of deer. Seeing this, some hunters took Zen Shi to be a real deer, and they prepared to shoot him with their bows. At that moment Zen Shi shouted, "I am not a real deer! My name is Zen Shi, and I have disguised myself as a deer so that I might fulfill my parents' desire." The hunters were surprised, and when they asked him how this could be, Zen Shi explained everything. Thus, it was thanks to the profundity of his filial devotion that Zen Shi was able to return home without being shot. Indeed, as a person, how could anyone acquire the milk of a deer just because someone wants it? Nevertheless, it is moving to imagine the thoughtfulness of Zen Shi's filial piety.

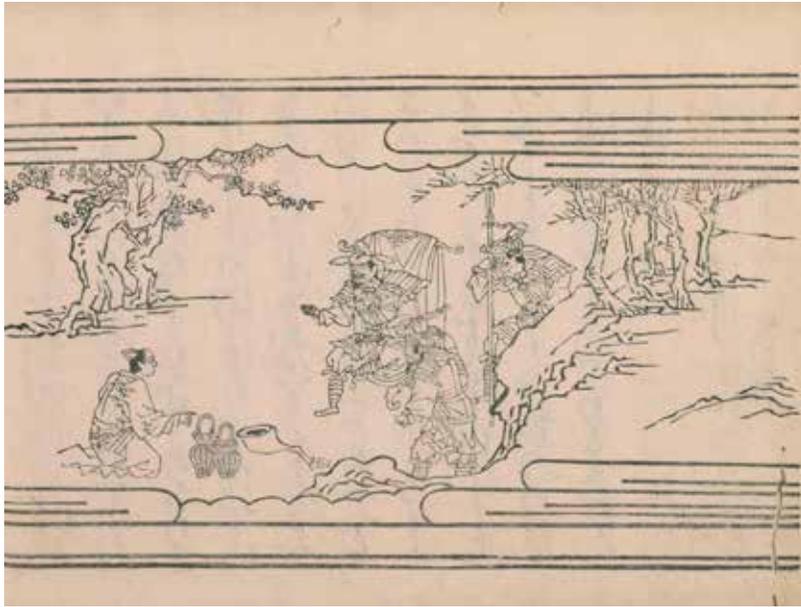


Figure 18. Sai Jun speaks with a band of murderous thieves.

[18] Sai Jun 蔡順 (Cai Shun)

He offers the black mulberries to his mother;  
bemoaning his hunger, his robes are soaked with tears.  
The red-browed bandits recognize his filial obedience;<sup>18</sup>  
they repay him with meat and rice, and then let him go.

Sai Jun was from a place called Jonan.<sup>19</sup> Toward the end of the age of the man called Ō Mō 王莽, the realm had fallen into terrible disarray, and there were drought and famine, too.<sup>20</sup> Because there was not enough to eat, Sai Jun gathered mulberries for his mother, separating the ripe berries from the unripe ones. At that time, because disorder had swept the land, a band of murderous thieves approached Sai Jun and asked, “Why do you divide your berries according to their two colors?” “I have a mother,” Sai Jun explained, “and I’ll give these ripe ones to her. The unripe ones are for me.” The bandits were evil, hard-hearted men, but they were moved by Sai Jun’s filial piety, and they gave him a bushel of rice and the leg of an ox before going on their way.<sup>21</sup> Sai Jun gave the rice and the meat to his mother, and although he constantly partook of them, too, people say that over the course of his lifetime, he never ran out. This was a result of his filial piety.

18 The bandits have daubed rouge on their eyebrows to distinguish themselves from other men.

19 Jonan 汝南 (Runan) is in present-day Henan and Anhui 安徽 Provinces.

20 Ō Mō (Wang Mang, 45 BC–23 AD) is known as the founder and only emperor of the Xin 新 dynasty (9–23 AD).

21 The bandits actually gave him two *to* 斗 of rice, which is equivalent to approximately eighteen liters, or one U.S. bushel.

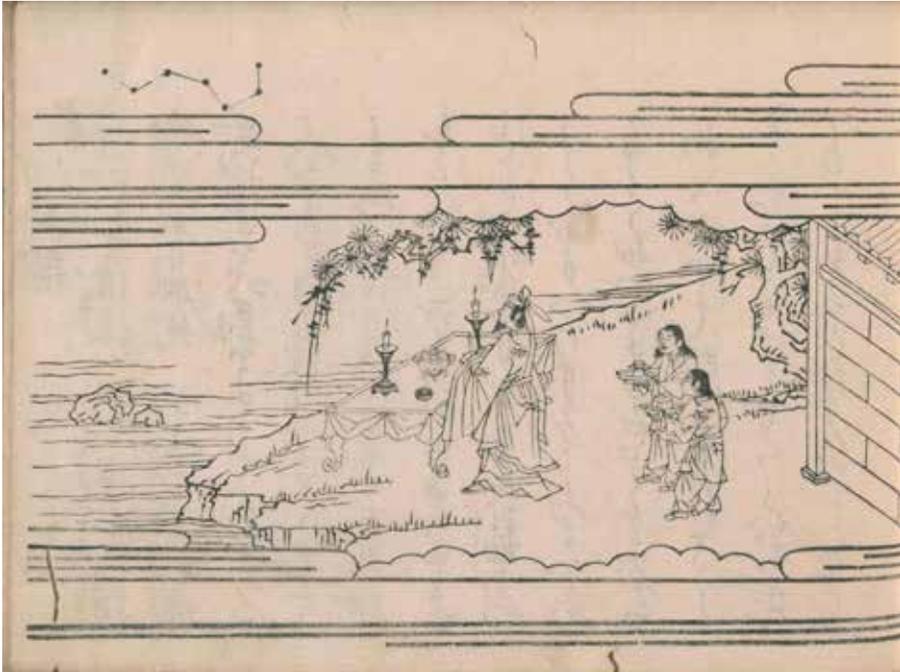


Figure 19. Yu Kinrō prays to the Big Dipper to save his father.

[19] Yu Kinrō 庾黔婁 (Yu Qianlou)

He arrives at his province, and before ten days have passed,  
his long-lived father falls gravely ill.  
Praying that he might die instead,  
he sets his hopes on the north and speaks his sad heart.

Yu Kinrō lived in the Nansei period.<sup>22</sup> He was appointed a government official of Senryō Province, and he quickly made his way there.<sup>23</sup> But before even ten days had passed, he felt a sudden palpitation in his chest. Thinking that his father might have taken ill, he abandoned his position and returned home. Just as he had feared, his father was grievously unwell. When Kinrō asked the doctor for his prognosis, the doctor replied, “You should lick the patient’s stool to see if it tastes bitter or sweet.” “That’s easy enough,” Kinrō said, and when he licked it, he found that it tasted bad. Thus, he grieved that his father would likely die. People say that he prayed to the stars of the Big Dipper that he might exchange his own life for his father’s.

22 The Nansei 南齊 (Southern Qi) dynasty spanned from 479 to 502 AD.

23 Senryō 孱陵 (Chanling) is a place in present-day Hubei Province.

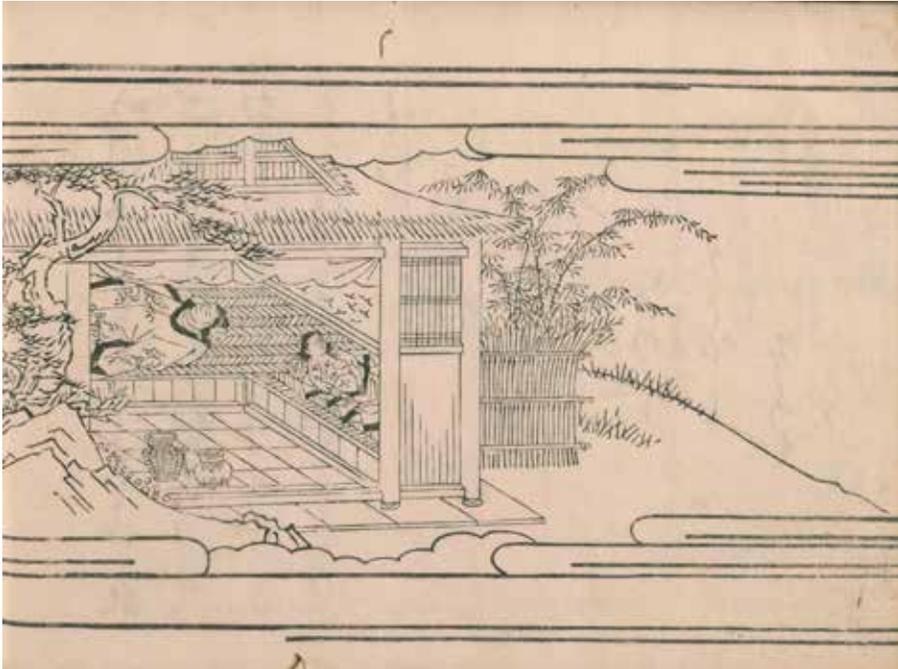


Figure 20. Go Mō draws the mosquitoes away from his parents.

[20] Go Mō 吳猛 (Wu Meng)

Without a net in the summer night,  
he never drives the many mosquitoes away.  
Letting them feast as they please on his fat and blood,  
he keeps them from his parents' room.

At the age of eight, Go Mō was a filial child. Because his family was poor, they had none of the things that they wanted. Thus, although the summer arrived, they had no mosquito net. Go Mō thought to himself that if he took off his robe, put it on his parents, and then lay naked so that the mosquitoes would bite him, then they would bite only him and he could spare his parents. For this reason he always lay naked through the night, allowing the mosquitoes to bite him. He served his parents by keeping the mosquitoes away. For a child to be so filial is truly amazing!



Figure 21. Chō Kō and Chō Rei plead with a pair of would-be cannibals.

[21] Chō Kō 張孝 (Zhang Xiao) and Chō Rei 張礼 (Zhang Li)<sup>24</sup>

They happen upon a child of the green forest,<sup>25</sup>  
 and to be boiled instead, one speaks of fat versus thin.  
 Everyone has a brother, but whether  
 now or then, few have been like the brothers Chō.

Chō Kō and Chō Rei were brothers. They were supporting their mother, who was over eighty years old, when a famine swept the land. When Chō Rei was out gathering fruit and nuts, a single man approached. Panting with exhaustion, he said that he intended to kill Chō Rei and eat him. Chō Rei replied, “I have an elderly mother, and since I have not fed her yet today, please allow me a little time. I will come right back after I take her something to eat. If I break this promise, then please come to my house and kill my entire family.” With that, he returned home. He served his mother a meal, and then, just as he had promised, he came back to where the man was. Having heard what was afoot, the elder brother Chō Kō followed from behind. Addressing the bandit, he said, “I am fatter than Chō Rei, so I would be better to eat. Please kill me and spare my brother.” Chō Rei said, “But I made an arrangement with him first.” Thus, the two brothers argued over who would die. The wicked man was moved by the brothers’ righteousness and filial piety, and he let them both live. Observing that there had rarely been such brothers in the past or the present, he gave them two bushels of rice and one horseload of salt. Chō Kō and Chō Rei took it home, and people say that they pursued the Way of Filial Piety even more than before.

<sup>24</sup> The names Chō Kō and Chō Rei are written with characters that can mean, “stretched with filial piety” and “stretched with propriety.”

<sup>25</sup> “Child of the green forest” is a euphemism for a bandit.



Figure 22. Den Shin, Den Kō, and Den Kei discuss dividing up a tree.

[22] Den Shin 田真 (Jia Zhen), Den Kō 田広 (Jia Guang), and Den Kei 田慶 (Jia Qing)

Branches like purple coral at the bottom of the sea;  
among scores of fragrant blossoms, none can compare.  
In the spring breeze, a tree full of flowers;  
the brothers dwell together again.

These three were brothers. After they lost their parents, they took their parents' wealth and split it three ways. However, in the garden there was a Chinese redbud tree with flourishing branches and leaves and flowering, scattering blossoms. Saying that they should divide it into three parts, too, they stayed up all night discussing the situation. Dawn soon arrived, whereupon the brothers went to the garden to cut down the tree. The tree, which had been thriving until the day before, had suddenly withered. Den Shin stared and said, "Grasses and trees have feelings, too. This one must have withered because it heard us say that we were going to cut it down and divide it up. Truly, as human beings, how could we not see that this is so?" Thus, the brothers left the tree as it was, and people say that it flourished anew, just as it had before.

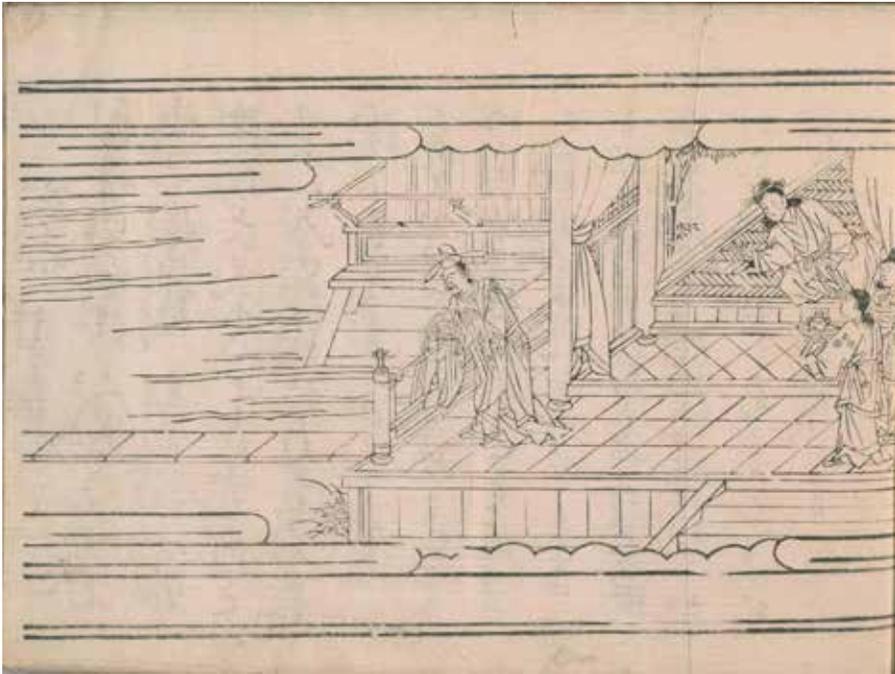


Figure 23. Sankoku empties his mother's chamber pot.

[23] Sankoku 山谷 (Shangu)<sup>26</sup>

He is known throughout the land,  
and ever filial, he serves his parents.  
He scoops from the spring to rinse the chamber pot,  
and not because he lacks servant-women.

Sankoku was a poet in the age of Sō 宋.<sup>27</sup> Even now he is regarded as a founding father of poetry. He had many servants, as well as a wife, but he took personal charge of his mother's chamber pot, washing it with his own hands when it was soiled before returning it to his mother. Morning and evening, he served her well, and he was never remiss. Thus, as we can know a myriad of things from a single example, we can imagine the full extent of his filial deeds. For this reason, his filial piety came to be known throughout the land. Unlike the other people here, this Sankoku is famous.

26 Shangu (Jp. Sankoku) is a pseudonym for the artist, poet, and calligrapher Huang Tingjian 黄庭坚.

27 The age of Sō is the Song 宋 dynasty, 960–1279.

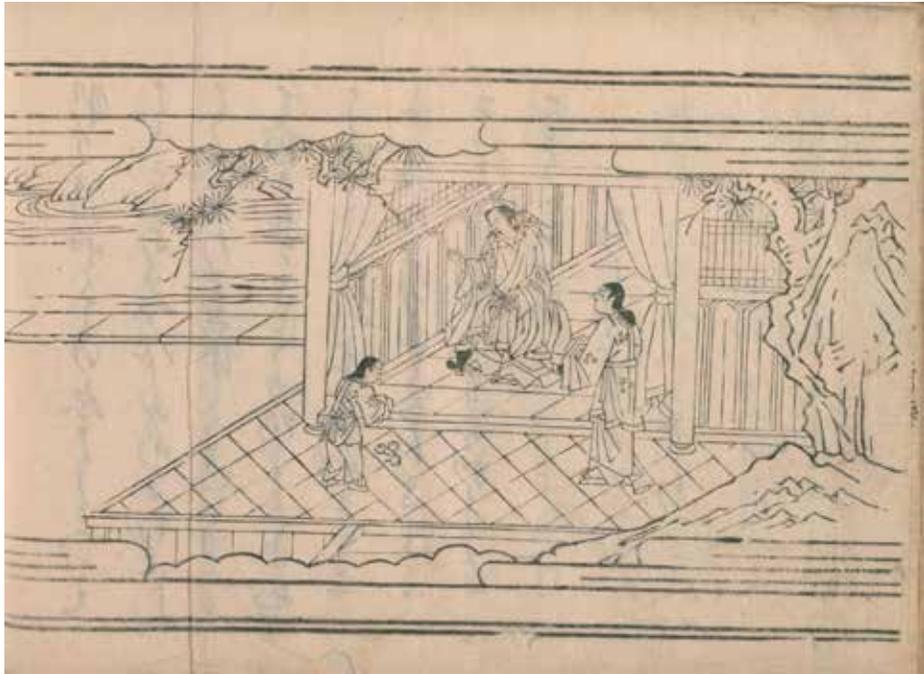


Figure 24. When Riku Seki bows, oranges fall from his sleeve.

[24] Riku Seki 陸績 (Lu Ji), also known as Kō Ki 公紀 (Gong Ji)

Filial piety and obedience are endowed by nature;  
a child, six years among people,  
puts oranges in his sleeve to  
repay his mother for sweets.

When Riku Seki was six years old, he visited a person by the name of En Jutsu 袁術, who put out some mandarin oranges as a refreshment for his guest. Riku Seki took three, placed them in his sleeve, and announced that he was leaving. He bowed to En Jutsu, whereupon the oranges tumbled from his robe. Seeing this, En Jutsu said, “Master Riku Seki, this is unfitting for a child.” Riku Seki replied, “They looked so wonderful that I wanted to go home and give them to my mother.” People say that when he heard this, En Jutsu praised him, declaring, “With his childish heart, to be so very thoughtful! Whether in ancient or modern times, it’s a rarity.” It was because of this, they say, that all under Heaven came to know of his filial piety.

## The Filial Piety Mountain: Kanno Hachirō and The Three Teachings

MIURA Takashi

This article examines the writings of Kanno Hachirō (1813–1888), a mid-scale farmer from Fukushima, and argues that the binary between “religion” (*shūkyō*) and “morality” (*dōtoku*) is of limited usefulness in comprehending his worldview. Hachirō wrote extensively on the virtue of filial piety (*kō*) and claimed that it represented the highest ideal of Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism. He expressed this through a diagram of what he called the Filial Piety Mountain (*kōkōzan*), in which he depicted Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism as three paths leading toward the summit. Utilizing recent scholarship that has illuminated the modern origin of the category of “religion,” this article highlights the absence of the dichotomy between “religion” and “morality” in Hachirō’s writings and his conception of the Filial Piety Mountain. Just as an uncritical imposition of the category of “religion” on premodern sources can result in distortions, approaching Hachirō’s writings through the modern lens of “morality” or “conventional morality” (*tsūzoku dōtoku*) that is apart from “religion” can lead to an overly compartmentalized view of his thought. The article suggests an alternative approach through Ann Swidler’s model of “cultural repertoire.”

**Keywords:** Filial piety, *tsūzoku dōtoku*, *shūkyō*, cultural repertoire, Filial Piety Mountain (*kōkōzan*), farmer, nineteenth century

### Introduction

Recent scholarship by Jason Josephson and Trent Maxey has illuminated the development of the category of “religion” in modern Japan and at the same time has highlighted the absence of that category in premodern Japan.<sup>1</sup> This body of new scholarship not only reminds scholars to practice caution when applying the category of religion to premodern materials, but also suggests that more work is needed to analyze emic concepts such as “teaching” (*oshie* 教え, *kyō* 教) and “way/path” (*michi*, *dō* 道), which preceded but were eventually subsumed under the category of religion. In particular, more research is necessary to illuminate how villagers and townspeople in premodern Japan understood these concepts, beyond the circles of religious professionals and intellectuals. This article contributes to this objective

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1 Josephson 2012 and Maxey 2014.

by examining the writings of Kanno Hachirō 菅野八郎 (1813–1888), a farmer of moderate means from Fukushima 福島 whose life spanned much of the nineteenth century, and by investigating his understanding of Japan’s “three teachings,” Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism, as “paths” leading toward a mastery of filial piety (*kō* 孝).<sup>2</sup>

Kanno Hachirō was a literate farmer and a prolific writer.<sup>3</sup> He wrote extensively about virtues he regarded as essential to a farmer’s life, such as frugality, diligence, and obedience, but his greatest preoccupation was filial piety. Scholars such as Yasumaru Yoshio and Shōji Kichinosuke have characterized Hachirō as a quintessential pursuer of “conventional morality” (*tsūzoku dōtoku* 通俗道德), a set of moral ideals shared among farmers in Tokugawa Japan.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, a group of scholars led by Suda Tsutomu has more recently highlighted how Hachirō in some instances sought to deviate from the norms of the Tokugawa status system and rise beyond his status as a farmer.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Hachirō also gets occasional mention in English-language scholarship as the purported leader of a major uprising that occurred in Keiō 慶応 2 (1866) in Fukushima.<sup>6</sup>

I build upon this body of scholarship to reexamine Hachirō’s writings in light of Josephson and Maxey’s insights on the modern origin of the category of religion. More specifically, I focus on Hachirō’s conception of what he called the “Filial Piety Mountain” (*kōkōzan* 孝行山 or *kōzan* 孝山). According to Hachirō, the objective of human life was to climb to this mountain’s summit, a realm of prosperity governed by the “way of filial piety” (*kōdō* 孝道). Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism represented three major paths leading up to it. Hachirō evidently regarded filial piety both as the highest ideal and also as a path to be perfected simultaneously.

Hachirō’s discussion of the Filial Piety Mountain problematizes the binary between “religion” and “morality” often presupposed when discussing Tokugawa Japan. Fifty years ago, Robert Bellah noted the religious undertones of Tokugawa morality, arguing that religion “supplied a context of ultimate meaning to the central value system.”<sup>7</sup> More recently, scholars have illuminated the ways in which preachers from a variety of traditions, including Buddhism, Shingaku 心学 (the “Learning of the Mind”), Shinto and new religions, gave sermons to local communities promoting the importance of moral ideals from their respective doctrinal standpoints.<sup>8</sup> While these observations highlight the porous boundary between “religion” and “conventional morality,” scholars continue to take for granted the applicability of the religion-morality binary itself.

2 The history of the “three teachings” discourse in Japan dates back at least to the medieval period. Paramore 2016, pp. 38–39.

3 On the rise of literacy in farming communities, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Rubinger 2007, pp. 2, 78–79, 113. Writings left by literate farmers promise perspectives not confined to sectarian narratives. See Ambros and Williams 2001 and Hardacre 2002 for examples of religious studies scholars making use of these local documents. Also see the scathing critique of Edo society, including temples and shrines, by a samurai writing as Buyō Inshi 武陽隠士 in *Bunka* 文化 13 (1816). This is another example of a “nonreligious” text offering a non-sectarian perspective. Teeuwen et al. 2014.

4 Yasumaru 1974 and Shōji 1979.

5 Suda 2010a. Also see Fukawa 2000 for another example of recent Japanese scholarship on Hachirō.

6 For brief accounts of Hachirō’s involvement in the 1866 uprising, see Bowen 1980, p. 78 and Vlastos 1986, pp. 136–37, 164.

7 Bellah 1957, p. 39.

8 For comprehensive discussions of popular education in the late Tokugawa period, see Takahashi 1978. Also see Hardacre 1986, pp. 38–39; Hardacre 2016, pp. 301–305; Paramore 2016, pp. 72–73; and Sawada 1993, p. 12.

In examining Hachirō's writings, it becomes quickly evident that this dichotomy is of limited usefulness. Hachirō had an integrated understanding of filial piety, Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism, conceiving of them all as means through which to achieve prosperity. This not only corroborates Josephson and Maxey's arguments concerning the irrelevance of "religion" as a separate category in premodern Japan, but also questions the relevance of the modern category of "morality" or "conventional morality" for farmers like Hachirō.<sup>9</sup> According to Isomae Jun'ichi, in modern Japan, "religion" was entrusted to the sphere of the individual's interior freedom, while the 'secular' sphere of morality was determined to be a national, and thus public, issue."<sup>10</sup> This distinction is starkly absent in Hachirō's writings.

To use Hachirō's own language, filial piety, Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism were all "paths" that helped people lead fulfilling lives. Here it is useful to think of the "path" as an element of the "cultural repertoire" shared by people in Tokugawa Japan. Ann Swidler conceptualizes culture as such a repertoire, consisting of myriad images, stories, examples, knowledge, skills, and habits that can be articulated or performed by historical actors in different ways. Individual actors strategize the pieces to draw from the existing repertoire depending on what attitudes, arguments, and moods they wish to convey.<sup>11</sup> This model helps us more accurately to grasp the ways in which Hachirō invoked the imagery of the "path" to express his vision of a flourishing farmer. The path encompassed elements that modern Japanese society classified separately as "religion" and "morality" as Isomae suggests, but such a demarcation was foreign to Hachirō. Many have already noted that the "separation between kami and buddhas" (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) in Meiji Japan irrevocably altered the Japanese religious landscape, but equally significant was the "separation between religion and morality," which required a radical reformulation of conceptual fields.

This article will first contextualize Hachirō's thought through critical examinations of his biography and representative writings. It will then analyze his depiction of the "Filial Piety Mountain" and his discussion of the multiple "paths" toward the summit. The article concludes by referring briefly to Hachirō's activities in Meiji Japan and his evaluation of the era of "civilization and enlightenment."

### 1. Kanno Hachirō: An Engaged Farmer

Kanno Hachirō lived from 1813 to 1888, and, in many respects, his life reflected the tumultuous nature of his times. As a farmer, Hachirō maintained his economic base in the village of Kanaharada 金原田 in Fukushima (present-day Hobara 保原 in Date 伊達, located to the northeast of Fukushima City). At the time of Hachirō's birth, Kanaharada belonged to the Matsumae 松前 domain, but from Bunsei 文政 5 to Ansei 安政 3 (1822–1856), it was placed under the direct supervision of the Edo bakufu (*tenryō* 天領), before being redesignated as part of the Matsumae domain from Ansei 3 to Meiji 3 (1856–1870).<sup>12</sup> Shōji characterizes Hachirō as a mid-scale farmer (*chūnō* 中農), who had the possibility of either rising to wealth or falling to poverty. Hachirō's family engaged in a combination of

9 Josephson 2012, pp. 233–34.

10 Isomae 2007, p. 93. Also see Maxey 2014, p. 156.

11 Swidler 2001, pp. 7, 31, 38 and Company 2003, pp. 317–18.

12 Suda 2010b, pp. 9–11.

traditional agriculture and sericulture, the latter being one of the primary sources of income for the region.<sup>13</sup>

Not much is known about Hachirō's early years, but it is clear from his own later writings that his father, Wazō 和藏, played a central role in his upbringing. This is evident in Hachirō's composition titled *Kanno jikki* 菅野実記 (Faithful records of the Kanno family), most likely written between Ansei 3 and 5 (1856–1858). Hachirō devotes a significant portion of this document to highlighting the accomplishments of Wazō.<sup>14</sup> Wazō was a student of a local Wang Yangming scholar by the name of Kumazaka Sadakuni 熊坂定邦 (1739–1803), also known as Kumazaka Taishū 台州. Sadakuni spoke critically of elites and intellectuals, denouncing Confucian scholars as lacking in virtue and Buddhist priests as disrespecting the Buddha. He also stressed that governmental policies should be people-focused. As he articulated it in one of his treatises, “a ruler is established by the populace and his demise is also brought about by the populace.”<sup>15</sup> It is not certain to what extent Sadakuni's teachings of philosophical independence influenced Wazō, but Wazō ended up becoming a leader in his community and, despite his low economic status, was elected by his peers as headman (*nanushi* 名主) of the village of Kanaharada in Bunsei 11 (1828). Hachirō inherited the Kanno household in Tenpō 8 (1837) after his father's death.

An important turning point for Hachirō, both in terms of his personal endeavors and philosophical development, occurred when Commodore Perry arrived in Kaei 嘉永 6 (1853), demanding the bakufu open Japan's ports. The news of Perry's arrival soon reached Kanaharada and motivated Hachirō to action. In the fifth month of Kaei 7 (1854), Hachirō composed an essay titled *Ame no yo no yumebanashi* あめの夜の夢咄 (A dreamy talk on a rainy night), in which he wrote of a series of “spiritual dreams” (*reimu* 霊夢). In the first month of the same year, a mysterious old man with white hair appeared to him in a dream, identified himself as a messenger spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and warned him of a foreign threat approaching Japan. The messenger spirit furthermore revealed to Hachirō “ten protective strategies” (*bōhō jukkajō* 防方十ヶ条) that needed to be implemented to defend Japan, and urged him to share this knowledge with the leaders of the country.<sup>16</sup> After experiencing several of these dreams, Hachirō travelled to Edo in the second month of the same year in order to warn bakufu officials of this threat.<sup>17</sup> He first attempted to speak directly to Elder Abe Masahiro 阿部正弘 (1819–1857), but was eventually instructed by Finance Magistrate (*kanjō bugyō* 勘定奉行) Tamura Kenshō 田村顕彰 (dates unknown) to submit a letter outlining his views, which he did before returning to Kanaharada. Hachirō remained hopeful that the bakufu would one day summon him back to Edo to deliberate his strategies against the foreign threat, but this was not to be.<sup>18</sup>

Hachirō's concerns for the welfare of his country did not wane. In Ansei 2 (1855), he contacted his brother-in-law, Dazai Seiemon 太宰清右衛門 (1828–1864), a merchant who had acquired samurai status in Mito on account of his substantial donations to the domain. Hachirō sent an essay to Seiemon denouncing the bakufu in Edo for its incompetence,

13 For more on Hachirō's economic base, see Shōji 1979, pp. 213–15, 241–44.

14 Kanno 2010b.

15 Shōji 1979, pp. 139–72, 212 (the quote is on p. 212).

16 Hachirō does not reveal the specifics of the protective strategies, stressing the need for secrecy.

17 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 90–93.

18 Suda 2010b, p. 20.

offering his services to the Mito lord, Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (1800–1860), whom he held in high esteem.<sup>19</sup> This came to nothing, but his connection to Seiemon did implicate him in the greater political developments of the late 1850s. With the beginning of the Ansei Purge (Ansei no Taigoku 安政の大獄) in Ansei 5 (1858), Great Elder Ii Naosuke 井伊直弼 (1815–1860) rounded up, and imprisoned or executed thinkers and activists opposed to the bakufu’s signing of a series of trade treaties with foreign powers. Ii targeted many Mito activists with staunch anti-foreign agendas. Seiemon himself managed to avoid arrest, but bakufu officials soon discovered the essay Hachirō had sent to Seiemon, and arrested Hachirō in the eleventh month of Ansei 5 (1858). The bakufu detained and interrogated him in Edo, and eventually sentenced him to exile in Hachijō Island, south of the Izu Peninsula.<sup>20</sup>

From the seventh month of Man’en 万延 1 (1860) to the ninth month of Genji 元治1 (1864), Hachirō lived on Hachijō. During these years, he came into contact with individuals from diverse backgrounds, such as the Shinto priest Umetsuji Norikiyo 梅辻規清 (1798–1861), the poet Kaneyama Kinjūrō 金山金十郎 (dates unknown), and the samurai Kondō Tomizō 近藤富蔵 (1805–1887), all of whom had been exiled to Hachijō for a variety of reasons.<sup>21</sup> Umetsuji Norikiyo had a particularly close association with Hachirō. Also known as Kamo no Norikiyo, Umetsuji came from a family related to the Kamigamo 上賀茂 Shrine in Kyoto. Heavily influenced by Neo-Confucianism, Norikiyo viewed the universe as governed by complementary yin-yang forces.<sup>22</sup> He had proselytized actively to the masses before being exiled to Hachijō for propagating “heterodox” teachings, and claiming, for example, that purification rituals performed by other Shinto priests were meaningless, and that personal cultivation was the only means of purifying one’s mind.<sup>23</sup> Hachirō references Norikiyo in some of his writings while exiled on Hachijō as a teacher figure, or simply as an “elderly man” (*rōō* 老翁), and also later adopted Norikiyo’s basic yin-yang paradigm to critique Meiji society as a dark era governed by yin forces.<sup>24</sup> Hachirō was eventually released from his Hachijō exile in the ninth month of Genji 1 (1864), due to an amnesty extended to farmers implicated in the Ansei Purge.<sup>25</sup> The years spent on Hachijō were crucial to the development of Hachirō’s thought, as it was there that he came up with his conception of the Filial Piety Mountain.

On his return home to Kanaharada, Hachirō found the local community in a state of disarray. According to his own account, theft, rape, and gambling abounded. He attributed the disorder to “evil governance” (*akusei* 悪政) by the bakufu intendant (*daikan* 代官)—most likely he referred to the intendant based in Kōri 桑折, close to Kanaharada—and the greed of wealthy merchants whose businesses prospered by bribing officials.<sup>26</sup> He responded by organizing what he called the *Seishinkō* 誠信講, literally, “the sincerity and trust

19 Hayata 2010, p. 79; Shōji 1979, pp. 215–16.

20 Suda 2010b, pp. 22–30.

21 Sugi 2010, p. 132. Kaneyama Kinjūrō had been exiled for his father’s usurious activities, and Kondō Tomizō for murdering his neighbors. Umetsuji Norikiyo had been exiled for spreading heterodox teachings, as discussed below.

22 Sano 2010, pp. 166–73.

23 Hardacre 2016, pp. 320–21.

24 Sano 2010, pp. 166–73.

25 Suda 2010b, pp. 29–31, 36–37.

26 Hayata 2010, pp. 87–88.

association.” This was a gathering of local farmers who practiced fencing in order to protect themselves from miscreants.<sup>27</sup> Hachirō thus became an active agent in his community.

In the sixth month of Keiō 2 (1866), less than two years after Hachirō’s return, a major uprising broke out in Fukushima. The primary reason was a new tax imposed on local sericulture by the intendant’s office, with the support of merchants who sought to exert tighter control over farmers by serving as collectors of the said tax. On the fifteenth day of the sixth month, thousands of local farmers responded by rising up and destroying the houses of merchants who had colluded with government officials to pass the new tax. The farmers demanded the repeal of the tax as well as a reduction in the price of goods. The uprising ceased after the intendant agreed to accept the demands. The intendant, however, arrested Hachirō for organizing the uprising. Hachirō denied the charge and claimed that men of ill will had spread false rumors of his involvement.<sup>28</sup> Hachirō was interrogated but was soon released.<sup>29</sup> The nature of his involvement remains unclear, but it is certain that there was at least a local perception that Hachirō was the organizer. The news of the uprising reached Edo, and a *kawaraban* 瓦版 news leaflet there reported it as a case of “world renewal” (*yonaoshi* 世直し) led by a certain Hachirō from Kanaharada.<sup>30</sup>

Hachirō’s activity in the Meiji period mostly remains unknown. Nonetheless, we have seen enough to appreciate that Hachirō’s endeavors had both local and countrywide dimensions, the former driven by pressing issues within the immediate communities and the latter stimulated largely by Japan’s contact with the West. In his analysis of the making of the Meiji Restoration, George Wilson presented a “fourfold narrative,” outlining the diverging motives of four groups of actors in the bakumatsu period, including Western envoys, bakufu loyalists, popular (religious) revivalists, and imperial loyalists. Intriguingly, Hachirō does not fit neatly in any of these explicit groupings, yet he was no doubt a part of the complex network of historical actors that foregrounded the Meiji Restoration.<sup>31</sup> What guided Hachirō in his variegated endeavors was, as we shall see, his commitment to filial piety.

## 2. Hachirō and Filial Piety

Hachirō’s earliest compositions that deal explicitly with filial piety and other related virtues date from 1854. It is not entirely clear why it was around this time that the theme of filial piety became manifest in Hachirō’s writings. It was possibly inspired by the arrival of the West or his interest in the Mito school. In any case, the aforementioned *Ame no yo no yumebanashi*, which Hachirō wrote in 1854, reveals that filial piety was now integral to

27 The name implies that “sincerity” and “trust” were the basic principles of this association, but it is not clear whether there was explicit moral content to its activities. Nor is it clear whether there was an economic dimension to this association, as was typically the case with local *kō* associations.

28 Suda 2010b, pp. 53–54.

29 Scholars such as Suda Tsutomu and Mizumura Akito are skeptical about Hachirō’s role in organizing the uprising. They argue that Hachirō remained deferential to authority throughout his life and did not favor violent means of resolving issues (Suda 2010b, pp. 52–53, and Mizumura 2010, pp. 235–36). Shōji Kichinosuke and Haga Noboru, however, maintain that Hachirō was the leader of the uprising (Shōji 1979, pp. 210–11, and Haga 1984, p. 88). I agree with Suda and Mizumura’s assessment of Hachirō’s deference to authority; even if he was involved in the uprising, his objective would have been to rectify concrete economic injustices, not to deny the legitimacy of the bakufu itself.

30 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 384.

31 Wilson 1992, pp. 43–75.

Hachirō's self-awareness as a Tokugawa subject. He composed this essay in the fifth month of the year, after having approached the bakufu in Edo with the new knowledge imparted to him by the messenger spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu. In *Ame no yo no yumebanashi*, Hachirō describes his interactions with bakufu officials in Edo, and inserts a copy of the letter he submitted to the bakufu before returning to Kanaharada. Hachirō begins this letter with an inventory of the guiding principles of his life:

[F]irstly, to exhaust filial piety for the sake of parents (*oya ni kō o tsukushi* 親に孝を尽し); to embody loyalty, for those with masters to serve; to carry out the family business diligently and meet obligations to the bakufu by paying taxes and offering other necessary services flawlessly; never to deceive others even slightly or use flattery; to have a good grasp of what is appropriate and inappropriate and what is good and evil; to help the weak and rebuke the strong; not to entertain selfish and corrupt thoughts even slightly; to [act with] honesty; and to give up one's life willingly for righteousness, sincerity, and trust.<sup>32</sup>

Hachirō enumerates here virtues he deems suited to appearing before the bakufu, the supreme authority in the land, as a man ideally qualified to present his opinion. It is significant that Hachirō refers first to filial piety.

Hachirō has more to say about filial piety in *Kanno shi senzo yori mōshitsutae narabi ni Hachirō yuigon* 菅野氏先祖より申伝并二八郎遺言 (Messages from Kanno family ancestors and Hachirō's will). Hachirō left several wills at different points in his life, and this particular one is dated the ninth month of Kaei 7 (1854). He starts the will with a reference to the benevolent spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who ensures peace in the world and guarantees abundant fulfillment for all people (*tenka taihei ni osamari, banmin hōraku no miyo* 天下泰平ニ治リ、万民豊樂之御代). The Kanno ancestors—he insists—demand that family descendants repay their debt to Ieyasu by being filial to their parents, remaining loyal to their masters, engaging in their occupations diligently, and paying taxes dutifully, among other things. Hachirō stresses the importance of such moral acts as fundamental obligations for all who benefitted from the peaceful governance of the Tokugawa shogunate. Furthermore, he gives the following seven injunctions as vital constituents of the practice of filial piety:

- (1) Do not disobey the words of your parents.
- (2) Do not gamble, as it often leads to a depletion of the family wealth.
- (3) Do not indulge in sexual pleasures, as this is the beginning of myriad diseases.
- (4) Do not drink excessively, as this is a major cause of disease.
- (5) Do not go out at night, as it causes your parents to worry, and also is a cause of disease.
- (6) Do not get angry at your subordinates, as it disrupts peace in the family.
- (7) Do not overeat or indulge in an unhealthy diet, as such habits lead to disease.

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32 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 92–93.

Hachirō clearly conceptualized the practice of filial piety as intersecting with ideals such as frugality and diligence, and involving an observance of prohibitions against specific actions that hindered familial prosperity. He furthermore claimed that by adhering to filial piety, people can attain the status of the heavenly Tathagata (*gokuraku nyorai no kurai* 極樂如来の位) regardless of their economic or educational background. On the other hand, the kami and buddhas will provide no help to those who pray to them if they neglect to respect their own parents.<sup>33</sup>

In a short, title-less document from Ansei 3 (1857), Hachirō laments that many farmers fail to practice filial piety, and waste their wealth on unproductive things such as theatrical and circus entertainment, gambling, prostitutes, alcohol, expensive food, and lavish clothing. He observes that these habits can eventually force farmers into debt and put at risk lands inherited from parents and ancestors. He also warns those who hope to get out of debt through sericulture that the kami of silkworm, *sanjin* 蚕神, does not favor lazy farmers.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the kami of prosperity, *fukujin* 福神, detests overspending and idleness while the kami of poverty, *binbōgami* 貧乏神, is particularly fond of indolent individuals. Unproductive farmers, Hachirō claims, wake up late in the morning, and all they do is complain to their wives about their miserable state. Such individuals are a disgrace to their ancestors and violate the principle of filial piety, the basis of the “path of humanity” (*ningendō* 人間道). Those who stray from this path are no different from mere beasts (*chikushō* 畜生). People should remember the saying, “When one wishes to do filial deeds on behalf of one’s parents, the parents are no longer there” (*kōkō o shitaki jibun wa oya ga nashi* 孝行をしたき時は親がなし).<sup>35</sup> Hachirō here highlights a variety of virtues such as diligence and frugality, but ultimately ties them all together within the framework of filial piety.

In Bunkiyū 文久 3 (1863), Hachirō composed for young children and their parents in his extended family a guide to ethical behavior, titled *Shōni hayamichi annai* 小児早道案内 (A children’s guide to the quick path). He begins by once again pointing to filial piety as the fundamental ideal for all farmers and their children, and gives a set of specific instructions, such as waking up early in the morning, greeting and obeying one’s parents, not drinking, not gambling, not going out at night, and not deceiving others. By following these rules, he claims, one’s heart will naturally become pure and one’s life prosperous. He uses Buddhist language and symbolism to elaborate on the importance of filial piety. The Pure Land of Amida is not to be located in the far west, but is to be perceived through the heart; embodying filial piety is the first step in seeking this paradise within. On the other hand, saké, women, and gambling lead people to the “Three Paths of Evil” (*san’akudō* 三悪道), which Hachirō describes as the paths of beasts, hungry ghosts (*gaki* 餓鬼), and hell (*jigoku* 地獄). He then connects this discussion to the value of learning. Even if people are well educated, so long as they fail to uphold filial piety, they are “great criminals of the realm” (*tenka no daizainin* 天下之大罪人).<sup>36</sup> The goal of all learning first and foremost is to foster individuals who value and put in to practice the ideal of filial piety. Embodying filial piety is the “quick path” to success.

33 Kanno 2000, pp. 336–39.

34 As mentioned above, since the mid-eighteenth century, the agriculture in Hachirō’s region had revolved around the production of silk, textile, and silkworm eggs (Shōji 1979, pp. 241–42).

35 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 101–103.

36 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 105–106.

Hachirō, like many others of his social class in Tokugawa Japan, actively pursued the perfection of filial piety. The ideal of filial piety permeated almost every segment of Tokugawa society, and was interpreted by a variety of thinkers. Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608–1648), for example, offered an abstract interpretation and claimed that the objective of human life was to become one with the universe through the embodiment of filial piety; Tejima Toan 手島堵庵 (1718–1786) offered more concrete interpretations by stressing the centrality of specific filial actions that accorded with social and familial duties, resonating more closely with Hachirō's accounts above.<sup>37</sup> The fact that Hachirō's writings emphasize filial piety is not surprising or unique in and of itself. What is noteworthy, however, is that he offers a particularly intriguing perspective by elaborating on the relationship between filial piety and the teachings of Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism through his depiction of the aforementioned Filial Piety Mountain.

### 3. The Filial Piety Mountain

Hachirō articulates his conception of Filial Piety Mountain in a didactic text written for his family, titled *Hachirō jukkajō* 八郎十カ条 (Hachirō's ten principles). In it, he addresses many of the same themes discussed above but also utilizes the striking image of the Filial Piety Mountain (figure 1) to showcase his understanding of the “three teachings” as avenues through which to embody filial piety. He composed this in Bunkyū 2 (1862) while exiled on Hachijō Island and dedicated a significant portion of the text to comment on the accompanying diagram of the Filial Piety Mountain.<sup>38</sup>

As Hachirō describes it, the top of the mountain is the realm of kami, buddhas, and sages or “a vast plain called peaceful mind” (*anshin to iu kōdai no heichi* 安心と言広大の平地).<sup>39</sup> He inserts the legend “way of filial piety” (*kōdō*) conspicuously just above the mountaintop, adjacent to which are “when governing the realm under heaven” (*tenka o osamuru mo* 天下ヲ治ルモ), “when governing the country” (*kokka o osamuru mo* 国家ヲ治ルモ), and “when governing the self” (*mi o osamuru mo* 身ヲ治ルモ). This *kōdō* is the ultimate principle of the sacred mountain summit as well as the basis for social order and personal cultivation. Hachirō claims that those able to reach the pinnacle of filial piety are extremely rare.<sup>40</sup>

The middle portion of the mountain is the human realm (*ningenkai* 人間界), but, as Hachirō insists, most humans actually occupy the very foot of the mountain, the beastly realm (*chikushōkai* 畜生界).<sup>41</sup> The beastly realm is populated by those who exhibit “great neglect of filial piety” (*daifukō* 大不孝), and is occupied by various evils such as greed (*yoku* 欲) and covetousness (*nusumi gokoro* 盗み心), and beasts such as ogres (*oni* 鬼) and monsters (*bakemono* 化物). Those who dwell in the beastly realm are tormented by bribery, debt,

37 Bellah 1957, pp. 79–80; Nosco 1984, pp. 12–13; Sawada 1993, pp. 88–90; Paramore 2016, p. 41. Also see Kurachi 1996, pp. 289–94, for a discussion of the spread of Confucian learning as a kind of “cultural wisdom” (*kyōyō* 教養) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, primarily within the samurai class. For a discussion on the tenuous relationship between filial piety and loyalty in Tokugawa Japan, see McMullen 1987.

38 Readers are referred to figure 1 here.

39 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 113.

40 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 113.

41 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 114–15.



Figure 1. Hachirō's illustration of the Filial Piety Mountain (photo by the author, Fukushima Prefectural Archives).

murder, betrayal, arson, deceit, gambling, and other evils. Hachirō cannot bear to see people ruin their lives (*inochi o horobosu* 命を亡す) in the beastly realm with endless suffering.<sup>42</sup>

Luckily, however, divine beings such as Confucian sages, kami, and buddhas have pitied the plight of humans and, throughout history, have encouraged them to climb back to the human realm and on to the summit by laying paths called Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism.<sup>43</sup> These three main paths extend from the human realm to the heavenly summit. Hachirō comments that people have largely ignored this divine help, partly because the ascent of the mountain requires perseverance.<sup>44</sup> In fact, just as there are paths leading to the summit, so there also are paths descending from the human realm to the beastly realm, those of illusion (*mayoi* 迷), mountain goblins (*tengu* 天狗), and evil (*ma* 魔). Malevolent beings are constantly luring people into these paths. Hachirō lists beautiful women, exquisite saké, and other temptations of the flesh as reasons why people often take the downward paths.<sup>45</sup>

Hachirō proceeds to describe in detail each of the three paths that lead from the human realm to the summit, highlighting the difficulties entailed in each. First is the path of Confucianism, the best of the three paths, and which runs up the middle of the mountain:

42 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 114–15.

43 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 115.

44 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 113–14.

45 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 114–15.

People can benefit greatly by treading the path of Confucianism. This path is straight, and on this path, people first go through a great gate called learning and obtain a marvelous medicine for the eyes called the Wisdom Clarity Scroll (*ganbyō no myōyaku chimeikan* 眼病の妙薬知明卷).<sup>46</sup>... As they proceed along this path, their insight becomes ever clearer, and with great insight, they become able to penetrate any darkness. As they climb the mountain gradually and approach the summit, they will acquire yet another item, this time a wonderful pair of eyeglasses, the Sage Wisdom Teaching (*seikenkyō* 聖賢教).<sup>47</sup> There are plenty of these eyeglasses available. As people reach the summit and look around through the eyeglasses, they will notice that there is nothing they cannot comprehend or see under heaven. On top of that, they will find a medicine of immortality at the summit and will live with a peaceful mind.... However, in order to tread this path, one must be well educated and must be able to rely on nothing but one's own strength. Otherwise, this path will prove to be quite difficult. Therefore, all we can do [as farmers without education or willpower] is to gaze upon the mountain summit from afar.<sup>48</sup>

Hachirō first acknowledges the benefits of Confucianism, focusing particularly on the notion of learning. He uses the imagery of light and darkness and the metaphors of medicine and eyeglasses to highlight the wisdom people can gain by following Confucianism. Those lucky few who ever reach the summit can become omniscient and immortal sages themselves. Yet, Hachirō concludes that the Confucian path is not suitable for farmers like himself as it requires a significant commitment to learning and self-discipline. His assumption is that farmers do not have the time, the resources or the will power to dedicate themselves to learning. Self-deprecating language appears frequently in his writings, particularly when discussing farmers' social role in relation to that of the samurai class.<sup>49</sup> Here he uses the same language to explicate why Confucianism, despite all its advantages, is not a path designed for farmers.

Next is the path of Shinto, depicted on the right-hand side of the mountain:

For those treading the path of Shinto, their guide will be an honest old man (*shōjiki jiji* 正直祖父) who walks slowly and rather unstably. They may eventually reach the summit, yet they will be equipped neither with the medicine for the eyes nor the eyeglasses [of Confucianism], and therefore, they will remain unable to see through the ten directions under heaven. For this reason, those who are intelligent and can rely on their own power refuse to take this path, choosing instead to climb the mountain through learning [Confucianism]. Of course, there are also those on the Shinto path who cannot reach the summit because, day after day, they complacently engage in purification rites (*misogi* 禊) and wish-granting prayers (*kitō kinen* 祈とふ 祈ねん).<sup>50</sup>

46 There is a pun intended between *kan* 卷 (scroll) and *gan* 丸 (pill). The character for *gan* 丸 is often used in names of medicine.

47 There is another pun here between *kyō* 教 (teaching) and *kyō* 鏡 (mirror, eyeglasses).

48 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 115–16.

49 For more on Hachirō's self-deprecating attitude in relation to his identity as a farmer, see Suda 2010b, pp. 28–29, and Hayata 2010, pp. 81–83.

50 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 116.

Hachirō writes rather dismissively of this path. Although he attributes the positive virtue of honesty to Shinto, he suggests that it will not bring the kind of insight one acquires along the Confucian path.<sup>51</sup> Neither Shinto purification rites nor prayers for worldly benefits are conducive to mastering the way of filial piety. He characterizes Shinto as a slow and unreliable path that many prefer not to take. It is not clear what specific form of Shinto Hachirō has in mind here, as his depiction is vague. The stark absence of any kind of ethnocentric or nationalist discourse in his description of Shinto is not surprising. Neither does he endorse Shinto as the “indigenous” path suitable for the Japanese.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, Hachirō discusses Buddhism, the path on the left side of the mountain:

Those treading the path of the expedient means of Buddhism can expect a winding road up to the summit. It does not necessitate learning, so even women, children, the blind, and the physically challenged can climb the mountain with ease of mind. However, they can never be sure when they will reach the summit. The path requires a tremendous amount of time and is, therefore, cumbersome. Most likely, people can only get to the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss (*gokuraku jōdo* 極楽浄土) or thereabout. Furthermore, Buddhist monks these days, although they may try to serve as guides, do not practice what they preach, and all they do is talk. Even though they are supposed to be guides toward the summit, they behave more like guides to the beastly realm. They themselves are moving downward to the beastly realm, with one arm pulled by saké and the other by women. While they descend, they tell others, ‘Go that way, upward.’ People thus cannot trust them, and they lose their way.<sup>53</sup>

Hachirō first recognizes the universal nature of Buddhist salvation, open to all people regardless of gender, intelligence, and physical capacity. But he quickly turns critical, for the path of Buddhism is not straight and requires an unreasonable amount of time, allowing many to go no further than the Pure Land (*gokuraku jōdo*), a midway destination well below the summit. Furthermore, Buddhist monks are unable to guide people because they themselves are incapable of climbing the mountain and are indeed descending to the beastly realm. His descriptions of Buddhist monks here fit the classic (but often critiqued) notion of “degenerate Buddhism” (*daraku Bukkyō* 墮落仏教).

Of the three paths outlined above, Hachirō clearly favors Confucianism. This is perhaps to be expected given the ubiquitous influence of Confucian discourse in Tokugawa society, and the fact that his father had been a student of a local Confucian scholar. Yet, he suggests that Confucianism is not suitable for farmers because of the amount of learning—therefore, the investment of time and wealth—required. Shinto and Buddhism are more accessible, but they take too long and are each in their own way deficient. In short, he concludes that for farmers like him none of these three paths lead to the summit of the Filial Piety Mountain.

51 On the connection between honesty and Shinto, see Scheid 2002, pp. 318–19.

52 Kuroda 1981. For a more updated and nuanced analysis on the construction of Shinto and its multiple facets in modern Japan, see Breen and Teeuwen 2010, pp. 18–22.

53 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 116–17.

Hachirō then informs the reader that there is an alternative passage to the summit called the Quick Path (*hayamichi* 早道). It is depicted in the diagram on the left side of Confucianism and, according to Hachirō, most directly embodies filial piety:

Next, there is a small passage called the Quick Path, which allows people to reach the summit extremely quickly, in no time. Even those who have no learning at all can climb very quickly. This is because, on this path, people obey their parents' words, stay by their parents' side day and night, and tread the path together with their parents. The father leads the way and pulls the children's hands, encouraging them to work and work and instructing them not to spend money, not to oversleep in the morning, not to go out at night, not to catch flu, not to get injured, not to get wet by rain, not to commit wicked acts, not to drink excessively, not to get angry, not to get into arguments, not to gamble, not to buy prostitutes, and not to commit adultery—all so that the children can keep climbing the path diligently. The mother pushes the children from behind, wholeheartedly encouraging them to climb and climb. Therefore, by following the parents' words carefully, one will be at the summit in no time, residing in the same realm as kami, buddhas, and sages.<sup>54</sup>

He conjures up an image of the family working together as a cohesive unit, with the father in charge and the mother offering assistance. Hachirō's strategy makes sense given his audience, his own family and relatives. Echoing his discussions of filial piety elsewhere, he enumerates a number of prohibitions that should be observed in order to ensure familial prosperity. He proposes the simple observance of filial piety as a practical alternative for farmers, for whom the other three paths are not suitable.

Using the image of the Filial Piety Mountain, Hachirō characterizes filial piety simultaneously as the highest goal of human life and as the underlying path or way that unifies Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism. The Filial Piety Mountain defies comprehension when we try to compartmentalize its individual elements based on the binary of "religion" and "morality." For Hachirō, filial piety was integral to and never detached from the paths of sages, kami, and buddhas. This renders problematic the retroactive extraction of filial piety as an element of "conventional morality," separable from "religion." To return to Swidler's model introduced earlier, filial piety, Confucianism, Shinto, Buddhism, path, and mountaintop were all ingredients in Hachirō's "cultural repertoire." Hachirō strategically invoked these concepts and imageries to articulate his understanding of the world and his vision of how to live prosperously in it.

### **Conclusion: Hachirō and Meiji Japan**

Hachirō's writings from the Meiji period reveal his concerns for the future of the country. In the fourth month of Keiō 4 (1868), Hachirō sent his nephew Yasuzō 安藏 to the Kantō region to investigate the situation on the ground as the battlefield of the Boshin War approached. In the sixth month of the same year, based on Yasuzō's reports, Hachirō composed an essay titled *Hachirō dokunendaiki* 八老独年代記 (Old Hachirō's solitary chronicle), expressing his views on contemporaneous political developments. Hachirō

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54 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, pp. 117–18.

described bakufu loyalists as corrupt, claiming that the root cause of turmoil was the moral lassitude of domain lords, who were causing the deaths of innocent villagers and townspeople on account of their own selfishness. In his eyes, domain leaders lacking in trust and benevolence (*fushin fujin* 不信不仁) and committing violent and wayward acts (*bōaku mudō* 暴悪無道) had lost their legitimacy to rule.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, he also lamented that those supporting the emperor now welcomed foreigners to Japan and engaged in commerce with them. The imperial troops were even dressed in Western clothing, and appeared no different from foreigners. What the new government needed to do, he insisted, was to grasp people's hearts and to demonstrate its virtuous intentions by exempting people of tax burdens (*mitsugi o yurusare* 貢を免され).<sup>56</sup> In other words, he sought from the new Meiji regime the same benevolent governance (*jinsei* 仁政) that he had sought from the Tokugawa.

Yet, the new government failed to live up to Hachirō's expectations. In his last will, composed in 1882, he borrowed Umetsuji Norikiyo's language to describe modern society as a dark world dominated by yin forces. He lamented that people completely lacked the spirit of filial piety (*kōkō no kokoro sara ni nashi* 孝行ノ心更ニ無シ), and treated their parents like dogs and horses (*kenba o yashinaiu gotoku* 犬馬ヲ養フ如ク).<sup>57</sup> He warned that for the foreseeable future, people's spirits would deteriorate precipitously (*massaka kudari ni ninki ashiku otoroe* 真坂下リニ人氣悪ク衰へ).<sup>58</sup> Hachirō thus continued to stress the importance of filial piety in the Meiji period even as he deplored the degradation of society due to its neglect of this basic virtue. This was nothing new, as he had despaired of Tokugawa society in the same way. For him, the Meiji Restoration did not represent such a radical break; things were as bad now as they ever were.

This article has focused on Kanno Hachirō and his writings as a way of getting at Japanese "religion" in the nineteenth century from the standpoint of a local farmer, and so offers a rare perspective in the field of religious studies. Beyond the scope of this article is an analysis of the emergence of the category of "morality" that stands separately from "religion."<sup>59</sup> For many years, the framework of "conventional morality" served as a dominant analytical lens in the study of Tokugawa society, particularly in Japanese scholarship. Yet, just as an uncritical imposition of the category of "religion" on premodern sources can result in distortions, so too can an approach to Hachirō's writings through the modern lens of "morality" as distinct from "religion" lead to an overly compartmentalized view of his thought.

Of course, the fact that Hachirō himself did not have in mind categories of religion and morality does not necessarily preclude scholars from meaningfully employing them for analytical purposes. It is possible, for example, to draw a rough parallel between the modern category of "morality" and early modern "virtues" or "principles" such as filial piety, loyalty, and diligence. Identifying these conceptual analogues is necessary, for it helps us to see that the emergence of categories like religion and morality was not merely a Western imposition;

55 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 163. Hachirō does, however, speak positively of Tokugawa Yoshinobu for his decision to give up the right to rule over the Japanese archipelago, thereby preventing unnecessary bloodshed.

56 Ienaga and Shōji 1970, p. 163.

57 Kanno 2010a, p. 286.

58 Kanno 2010a, p. 287.

59 For an analysis of discussions on "religion" and "morality" or "ethics" by leading thinkers in the Meiji period see Josephson 2012, pp. 198–210. Also see Maxey 2014, pp. 106–107.

these categories were informed by native ideas as well.<sup>60</sup> Yet, much more relevant than the religion-morality binary in understanding Hachirō's thought is his identity and concerns as a farmer, which he articulated through concepts and discourses available to him. More effort is needed to examine these formulations from an emic standpoint, in order to disrupt the neat boundaries set by modern categories and highlight areas of overlap. It is precisely through these points of ambiguity that we can begin to understand the worldviews of Hachirō and his contemporaries.

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## **Juvenile Science and the Japanese Nation: *Shōnen'en* and the Cultivation of Scientific Subjects**

**Ruselle MEADE**

Juveniles were the foremost target of attempts to transform the Japanese people into imperial subjects during the late nineteenth century, with prominent intellectuals marshalling the influence of mass media in support of this goal. This essay examines the case of *Shōnen'en* (1888–1895), Japan's first major juvenile magazine, exploring its use of science in shaping the identity of the modern imperial subject. With the turn to morals-driven education in the mid-Meiji period, the government sidelined science instruction in schools, considering it a Western import detrimental to developing loyalty to the emperor. However, at this time, *Shōnen'en*'s editor placed great emphasis on science, believing it to be not only compatible with, but also an important means of nurturing juvenile subjecthood. Drawing on an image of science that had taken shape during the eighteenth century, when scientific discovery came to be seen as an endeavor requiring both intellectual and physical prowess, *Shōnen'en* (Youth's garden) offered Japanese adolescents an imaginary landscape in which they could envisage themselves as heroic and truth-seeking imperial officers. This examination of a magazine published before Japan's modern international wars broadens our understanding of the role of science in mid-Meiji Japan by demonstrating how an influential publication used science to shape the identity of the modern imperial subject, and shows that these efforts predated the establishment of Japan's formal empire.

**Keywords:** juvenile magazines, Meiji period, Yamagata Teisaburō, *Shōnen'en*, popular science, science popularization, masculinity, Sino-Japanese War, imperialism

### **Introduction**

The project of transforming the Japanese people into imperial subjects during the late nineteenth century was state-directed, but it was also one in which magazine and newspaper editors played an influential role. It is no coincidence that juvenile magazines flourished from the late 1880s, as this was a time when the Ministry of Education was intensifying efforts to use the educational system to cultivate loyal young subjects. Working in a symbiotic relationship with the state, magazine proprietors increasingly directed their

attention to youth. The first major juvenile magazine to appear on the scene was *Shōnen'en* 少年園 (Youth's garden) in 1888. Its emergence prompted a deluge of similar publications, and over the subsequent decade several other juvenile magazines were launched. Among these were long-lived successes, such as the children's magazine *Shōnen sekai* 少年世界 (1895–1933), noted for playing an important role in shaping modern Japanese childhood.<sup>1</sup>

*Shōnen'en* was published by the former science educator and translator Yamagata Teisaburō 山県悌三郎 (1858–1940), who aligned his magazine with the tenets of the Imperial Rescript on Education (*kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語). Although the Rescript was promulgated in 1890, two years after *Shōnen'en* was launched, the intentions of the government had been known for some time. The Rescript reconciled differing visions of education that had been promoted by influential actors within the government. It assimilated a notion, based on traditional Confucian principles, of Japan as a family headed by the emperor, with a more German-influenced perspective of education as serving the needs of the state, not the individual. Aligning itself with the government's aims, *Shōnen'en* carried in every issue a statement of the magazine's intention to provide moral, intellectual, and physical training, a reflection of the tripartite vision of education that underpinned the Japanese education system. Keenly aware of the considerable influence exerted by materials read outside the classroom, Yamagata did not want to leave this space unattended lest pernicious influences undermine the government's efforts. While the Ministry of Education directed its attention to commissioning and publishing textbooks, Yamagata focused his energies on the extracurricular realm.

Despite being sympathetic to the state's ambitions, *Shōnen'en* eventually fell foul of government censors and was shut down in 1895, an indication of how precarious publishing was under the Meiji regime's strict publication laws.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it left a longstanding influence on juvenile publishing. The number of juvenile magazines grew after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War, and mushroomed after the Russo-Japanese War. Like *Shōnen'en*, the focus of these magazines on masculine heroes and adventure made them appealing to male youngsters. However, *Shōnen'en* differed from its successors in a number of respects, most notably in its emphasis on science. Yamagata believed that science should play a central role in shaping the identity of elite imperial subjects. The role of science in creating loyal subjects had not always been self-evident. During the 1870s, proponents of morals-driven education, such as Motoda Nagazane 元田永孚 (1818–1891), argued that science was inimical to the aim of instilling loyalty to the emperor. Not only would science

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1 There were earlier children's periodicals, such as *Eisai shinshi* 英才新誌 (New journal for the talented, 1877–1898). However, these primarily existed to provide a forum for youngsters to showcase their writings, meaning that their authors and readers were one and the same. *Shōnen'en* marked a departure in that it was written by adults for children. See Tsuzukihashi 1972.

2 Details about the article that ultimately resulted in the magazine's closure are unclear, but *Shōnen'en* sometimes ruffled feathers through its unflattering coverage of figures close to the government. For example, it was once censured for criticizing the lavishness of a party held by the businessman Shibusawa Eiichi 渋沢栄一, a close associate of some government figures. Tsuzukihashi 1972, p. 54. As discussed below, the Meiji government perhaps allowed the magazine to continue publication during the Sino-Japanese War having sensed its value in disseminating state-sanctioned information.

take up valuable class time, it demoted “benevolence, justice, loyalty, and filial piety to a secondary position.”<sup>3</sup> Clearly, Yamagata did not share this view. In fact, he saw science as a means of promoting the very type of imperial subject that the state wanted to cultivate. Yamagata therefore made science a significant part of *Shōnen'en*'s identity, calling on some of the leading lights of Japanese science to contribute articles to his magazine.<sup>4</sup>

In promoting science in *Shōnen'en*, Yamagata drew on British examples, and on the Victorian magazine *The Boy's Own Paper* (1879–1967) in particular. Invoking an image of science that had taken shape during the eighteenth century, when scientific discovery became synonymous with exploration and adventure, these British magazines often associated science with masculine outdoor activities, and sought to portray it as an endeavor requiring not only intellectual but also physical prowess. A mutually-reinforcing relationship between militarism and science developed. Many men of science borrowed martial imagery when describing their discoveries by foregrounding activities that required “risk-taking and physical toughness,” while imperial officers sought to legitimize their activities by associating them with science.<sup>5</sup> Juvenile magazines such as *The Boy's Own Paper* portrayed the prospecting activities of British officers in empire as crucial in building up the scientific collections of public and private museums, and presented them as aspirational models to young readers. By portraying the exploits of officers as selfless, heroic, and truth-seeking, juvenile magazines held them up as paragons of stoicism, bravery, and self-control. These were qualities that distinguished them from those they ruled, and therefore legitimized their position.

Yamagata wanted to cultivate similar manly attributes among his young readers, whom he envisaged as Japan's future imperial elite. However, he knew that it was impossible for his readers to actually engage in the same sort of dangerous heroic pursuits as these British imperial officers. *Shōnen'en* therefore provided adolescent readers with an imagined landscape that they could enter simply by opening the pages of the magazine, and wherein they could engage vicariously in character-building scientific pursuits. Initially, these pursuits focused on interactions with nature, with hunting and mountaineering as two recurrent topics. However, with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the tenor of the magazine changed dramatically and the battlefield in Korea supplanted *Shōnen'en* as a site for imagined adventure in the magazine's last year of publication.

This essay starts by exploring how the Middle School Ordinance (*Chūgakkō rei* 中学校令) of 1886 gave rise to an elite youth culture comprising ambitious male students who saw themselves at the vanguard of a new Japan, and who distinguished themselves by their penchant for using print media to share their literary creations and promote their ideas. Yamagata targeted this audience because he envisaged them as the archetype of the imperial

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3 Duke 2009, p. 260.

4 In *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought*, Earl Kinmonth discusses *Shōnen'en*, focusing on how the magazine promoted personal advancement among youths by providing advice on preparing for middle school examinations and on financial support. Kinmonth also notes that *Shōnen'en* cautioned youngsters about “bad habits” that might thwart their ambitions, such as smoking, drinking, and involvement in political activities. However, Kinmonth makes no reference to its scientific content. See Kinmonth 1981, pp. 120–31.

5 Terrell 2011, p. 85. Officers stationed in empire often contributed scientific articles to British juvenile magazines. These carried such titles as “African Exploration,” “Man-eating Tigers,” and “The Moose Hunt.” See Mangan and McKenzie 2010, p. 147. For more on the link between physical fitness and intellectual endeavor in the elite British tradition, see Warwick 2003.

subject. To Yamagata, this ideal imperial subject was physically skillful and intellectually astute, morally upright and scientifically literate. And he was male. This essay demonstrates how Yamagata encouraged his readers to engage in outdoor, hypermasculine, scientific pursuits as a means of acquiring the dispositions required of Japan's future leaders.<sup>6</sup> It is important, however, to point out that Yamagata did not consider science useful simply as a character-building enterprise. He passionately believed that Japan's future prosperity depended on the nation cultivating scientists and technologists. He therefore appropriated the *risshin shusse* 立身出世 ideology of personal advancement to encourage youngsters to pursue science as a vocation, and repeatedly pointed to examples of Westerners who had found fame and prosperity through their scientific pursuits.<sup>7</sup> This essay concludes by demonstrating how *Shōnen'en* sought to encourage youthful enthusiasm for Japan's military campaign during the Sino-Japanese War. It encouraged readers to become vicarious participants in the war by imagining themselves as military strategists active on the frontline. The magazine carried reports vetted by the military, which were full of detail on the latest technologies used in the war effort. By pitching the war as a battle of technology, *Shōnen'en* sought to reinforce the importance of technology to Japan's international standing.

Because of their important role in socializing children into imperial subjecthood, late-Meiji and Taishō juvenile magazines have received considerable attention from historians. These magazines, which carried narratives that were often set in the Pacific, clearly advocated territorial expansion and the acquisition of empire. It is this jingoistic literary material that has received the most attention from historians.<sup>8</sup> Thanks to the work of Hiromi Mizuno, we now have a greater understanding of how science was used to engender juvenile nationalist sentiment through the mobilization of "wonder."<sup>9</sup> However, this work focuses on magazines published during the period of 1920–1945. Such scholarship may leave the impression that the subject-cultivating work of these magazines was a phenomenon that started in earnest only once Japan became involved in wars overseas. This essay demonstrates, however, that magazines were already active in stoking a sense of imperial mission before the establishment of Japan's formal empire and, importantly, that science played a key role in this process.

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6 The term "science" is used here as a catchall to describe what we today might refer to as science and technology. Today, these terms have a degree of precision that they did not have in nineteenth-century Japan. As historians of science point out, what counts as science has always depended on historical and social context (See, for example, Dear 2007). During the Meiji period, Japan's leaders deliberately conflated science and technology by assessing their value exclusively through the prism of prosperity and national security (Samuels 1994). Science and technology were as much cultural symbols as they were bodies of study or sets of practices. And, as was the case with other cultural symbols and practices deemed to be "Western," they became sites for contestation and manipulation by public elites in their attempts to shape the character of modern Japan.

7 The four-character slogan *risshin shusse* signified "raising one's status in society." This ambition was promoted widely in the Meiji period, especially by the government, through textbooks and school songs. See Maeda 1965.

8 See, for example, Griffiths 2007, Carter 2009, and Karlin 2014. Scholarship exploring how other literary content promoted chauvinistic attitudes among Japanese youth includes Chua 2016.

9 Mizuno 2008.



Figure 1. The landscape of the Youth's Garden, modeled on the Song Chinese landscape, the "Eight Views of Xiaoxiang."

### ***Shōnen'en* and the Elite Meiji Male**

"Come youth, come and see. The Youth's Garden opens today," beckoned the leading article of *Shōnen'en's* inaugural issue. "The garden is enormous, about half the size of Tokyo," it continued. "There is a bridge just as one enters the garden, with mountains straight ahead."<sup>10</sup> These were just the first brushes of an elaborate landscape that included a "grove of literature" and a "sea of learning," and which would gradually develop into an expansive scene modeled on the eleventh-century Chinese ink painting, "Eight Views of Xiaoxiang" (figure 1). Yamagata was fond of spatial metaphors; his earlier *Rika senkyō* 理科仙郷 (1886), a translation of Arabella Buckley's children's science primer *The Fairy-Land of Science*, was also conceived as an outdoor space for learning and adventure. In fact, this fairyland was incorporated into the eponymous Youth's Garden; it was an area covered in luxuriant trees (a "forest of letters") that could be found just "beyond Mount Yamagata." The garden, it was noted, was covered in *oshieghusa* 教之草 or "moral lessons." The use of the character *kusa* 草 (grass) in this term evoked a garden literally resplendent with virtue. By opening its pages, readers crossed a threshold to enter a realm of enlightenment in which they would engage in wholesome and edifying pursuits.

The Youth's Garden was portrayed as an outdoor space to underscore its extracurricular character, and to allow its readers to imagine it as a boundless space of discovery. The small but growing number of science popularizers, such as Yamagata, reinforced the extracurricular character of their works by situating themselves in the natural outdoors. They placed emphasis on interaction with and immersion in nature. Authors perhaps thought that this was the most effective way of arousing interest in science, but by situating learning

<sup>10</sup> *Shōnen'en* 1:1 (1888), p. 17.

outside the classroom these writers also avoided trespassing on the government's territory of formal education. For example, Nakagawa Shimei 中川四明 (1850–1917), another early science popularizer and author of *Rika shunjū* 理科春秋 (Spring and autumn science, 1890), made a point of stressing that his aim was to supplement what students learned in class.<sup>11</sup>

Although science popularizers such as Yamagata and Nakagawa stressed the extracurricular character of their books, they clearly worked in a symbiotic relationship with the formal education system. In 1886, the government issued the Middle School Ordinance, which led to the establishment of ordinary middle schools in each prefecture and five nationally-funded higher middle schools to prepare the elite for university. Yamagata explicitly identified the demographic codified by this ordinance as *Shōnen'en*'s target audience, noting,

It is a wonderful thing that facilities have now been provided for education at all levels, from primary education to university level, but although students above middle school level have much extracurricular reading material to choose from, this is not the case for those below (and including middle schools). The publication of *Shōnen'en* is intended to redress this deficiency.<sup>12</sup>

*Shōnen'en*'s target audience was therefore youth between the ages of twelve and nineteen. However, the implied reader came from an even smaller demographic.<sup>13</sup> At the time of *Shōnen'en*'s launch, only a miniscule number of youngsters—fewer than eleven thousand—benefited from a middle school education. While primary education was intended to be universal (albeit only in theory at this time), middle schools were designed to be elitist. Education Minister Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847–1889) described middle school graduates as “society's upper crust” (*shakai jōryū* 社会上流), adding that they were destined to “direct the thoughts of the masses” (*shakai tasū no shisō o sayū suru* 社会多数の思想を左右する).<sup>14</sup>

*Shōnen'en* appeared in tandem with a new form of youth culture that arose with the emergence of middle schools in Japan. This new generation of ambitious middle school students, to whom the term *seinen* 青年 was often applied, were confident of their role in shaping the future of Japan. Attendance at middle school often meant separation from family and relocation to an urban area, so students often found themselves in a new milieu rubbing shoulders with new people and ideas. *Seinen* created school-based societies and launched amateur magazines, using print media to share their literary creations and discuss

11 Nakagawa 1890. Nakagawa was also a contributor to *Shōnen'en*.

12 *Shōnen'en* 1:1 (1888), p. 3.

13 “Implied reader” is a term coined by Booth (1961) to describe the ideal reader that the author imagines when crafting a text. It does not reflect *Shōnen'en*'s actual readership. By *Shōnen'en*'s second year of publication, Yamagata claimed to be attracting over 20,000 readers, which was considerably more than the middle school population of 11,620 in 1889. The magazine may owe some of its success to its affordable price of just 5 *sen*, and its wide distribution network, which included bookstores in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya and further afield. Undoubtedly another factor was its eclectic mix of news, opinion pieces, translations of foreign articles, short stories, and its articles on science, which attracted a diverse readership. Those sending correspondence to the magazine included elementary school children. Moreover, *Shōnen'en* carried advertisements for women's magazines, as well as for books on educational theory for teachers, and services for mining industrialists, suggesting that Yamagata expected that his magazine would be read by parents, teachers, and other professionals.

14 Roden 1980, p. 40.



Figure 2. Cover of *Shōnen'en* carrying an illustration of a boy and girl reading a book together under a tree.

their ideas about the future of Japan. Those who contributed to such magazines included the future novelists Natsume Kin'nosuke 夏目金之助 (Sōseki 漱石) (1867–1916) and Iwaya Sazanami 巖谷小波 (1870–1933). Although *seinen* now simply refers to “youth,” the term then implied a youth who was educated, refined, and concerned with personal advancement. Unlike their predecessors, *seinen* tended not to be interested in the type of political agitation that typified the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (*jiyū minken undō* 自由民権運動) and instead directed their energies to personal advancement.<sup>15</sup>

*Shōnen'en*'s audience was also predominantly male. In 1892, the first year for which figures are given, girls accounted for a mere 3 percent of middle school students.<sup>16</sup> Girls were as marginal a presence in *Shōnen'en* as they were in middle school education.<sup>17</sup> Although *Shōnen'en* sometimes carried essay competitions for girls and featured guides to girls' schools in its column on schools, very little content was targeted at them. These were mere gestures, important to *Shōnen'en* because the education of girls provided evidence of Japan's credentials as a civilized country. A girl was also included in the illustration that appeared on the cover of every issue of the magazine. It comprised a drawing of a boy and a girl reading a book together under a tree (figure 2). However, the girl's pose—she engages

15 Unlike *Shōnen'en*, magazines created by *seinen* typically included only compositions by students. On the emergence of *seinen* as a new social category in the mid-Meiji period, see Kimura 1998.

16 Monbushō 1954, p. 1047

17 At the time of *Shōnen'en*'s publication, the term *shōnen* had not yet taken on its gendered character, and referred broadly to youth. It was not for another decade—after the appearance of *shōjo* 少女 magazines specifically for girls—that *shōnen* came to signify boys. Kanayama 2014, p. 65.

from the periphery, her reading subject to the boy's whims—betrays her subordinate position in the pages of the magazine. Yamagata was no proponent of equality; he criticized women who complained about the lack of equality as “dim-witted,” and “seduced by the West.”<sup>18</sup> Apart from the occasional letter to the editor from a girl, which appeared in the correspondence section, females exercised no agency in the magazine, which was written exclusively by males.<sup>19</sup>

The ideal imperial subject portrayed by *Shōnen'en* was one constructed in Yamagata's own image. A surviving photograph of Yamagata taken when he was aged fourteen makes apparent the social milieu into which he was born. The photograph, taken on his entrance to an English school in Kyoto, shows him in a Western-style suit holding an English book.<sup>20</sup> Born into a high-ranking samurai family of Minakuchi domain 水口藩 (modern-day Shiga Prefecture), Yamagata benefited from the proliferation of opportunities for Western studies in the early Meiji period. Alongside him in the photograph is the future chemistry professor at Tokyo Imperial University Ikeda Kikunae 池田菊苗 (1864–1936), an indication of the social circles in which Yamagata was embedded from an early age. After studying English and Western arithmetic in Kyoto, Yamagata entered the Tokyo School of English, before serving as a middle school teacher in Saitama and Miyagi and then gaining promotion to head of the Ehime Normal School. While in this position, he was recruited by Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹 (1828–1902) to join the Ministry of Education textbook publishing department where he translated British and American works on education, history and science.<sup>21</sup>

This attention to the West did not mean a sidelining of the Chinese cultural and intellectual heritage of his class. Yamagata studied Chinese under the eminent Confucian scholar Ema Tenkō 江馬天江 (1825–1901) and his books all carried his personal insignia, which comprised the samurai iconography of a pen and sword.<sup>22</sup> The sword pointed toward a chivalrous martial past, while the pen represented literacy in Chinese.<sup>23</sup> Chinese was used to assert *Shōnen'en's* masculine character. Sinitic styles, considered the preserve of the highly educated male, were often employed in the magazine and Yamagata used every opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of Chinese. His earlier *Rika senkyō*, for example, was praised by a contemporary for its “elegant,” “richly layered” prose, liberally peppered with Chinese literary allusions.<sup>24</sup> Yamagata displayed his literary dexterity in Chinese in *Shōnen'en* from the very first issue, drawing heavily on the T'ang poem “Jiangnan Spring” in crafting the magazine's mission statement.<sup>25</sup> This statement's sonorous style, described as having a “masculine rhythm,” demanded to be read aloud, a practice that harked back to the *ondoku*

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18 Tsuzukihashi 1972, p. 50.

19 On the restrictions to women's participation in the public sphere, see Anderson 2010 and Sasamoto-Collins 2017.

20 This photograph can be found in Kojima 1937, p. 181.

21 Yamagata 1987.

22 Kojima 1937, p. 174.

23 On the resuscitation of samurai iconography during the Meiji period to define Japanese masculinity, see Mason 2011 and Benesch 2014.

24 Kojima 1937, p. 174.

25 Tsuzukihashi 1972, p. 22.

音読 tradition of communal oral recitation, the primary means by which the Chinese classics were encountered in the male scholastic environment.<sup>26</sup>

Considering his background, Yamagata's support for the imperial project is unsurprising. As James L. Huffman notes, the "leading lights" of Meiji publishing were almost without fail "state-oriented emperor-loving nationalists."<sup>27</sup> In accordance with the spirit of the Imperial Rescript on Education, Yamagata aimed to cultivate a reverence of the imperial system among Japan's youth. Yamagata deliberately chose to launch the magazine on 3 November so that it fell on *tenchōsetsu* 天長節, the national holiday to celebrate the emperor's birthday. In this way, the magazine's anniversary would necessarily be a celebration of the imperium. In its first issue, the magazine initiated a custom, continued throughout its existence, of carrying songs to celebrate the occasion. The first was composed by Isawa Shūji 伊澤修二 (1851–1917), the principal of the Tokyo School of Music 東京音楽学校 (Tōkyō Ongaku Gakkō), who exhorted pupils across the country to sing the *Tenchōsetsu* song in unison:<sup>28</sup>

It's the morning of 3 November  
The Hinomaru glitters in the morning sun  
The nation's flag at every door, bright, bright, bright  
The nation's flag at every door, bright, bright, bright

It's the noon of 3 November  
On land, on sea, valiantly  
The gun salute goes boom, boom, boom  
The gun salute goes boom, boom, boom

Children! Let's all gather together  
And sing this song at school  
Singing, drumming, hey, hey, hey  
Singing, drumming, hey, hey, hey

What are we celebrating today?  
A prince was born  
Let's celebrate this day, hooray, hooray, hooray  
The emperor's birthday, hooray, hooray, hooray

### ***Shōnen'en* and Scientific Masculinity**

*Shōnen'en* is today remembered as a literary magazine because of the pedigree of its contributors, which included such future household names as the novelists Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862–1922) and Ozaki Kōyō 尾崎紅葉 (1868–1903). However, its scientific material is of

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26 Tsuzukihashi 1972, p. 24.

27 Huffman 1997, p. 9.

28 *Shōnen'en* 1:1 (1888), p.13. On efforts by the government to promote loyalty to the emperor in the school system through song during the Meiji period, see Yamamoto and Konno 1987, Duke 2009, Tsukahara 2013, and van der Does-Ishikawa 2013. On the continued use of song to promote nationalism among juveniles during the Taishō and Shōwa periods, see Cave 2016.

such quantity and quality that it should be considered no less a scientific magazine than a literary one. *Shōnen'en* reflects Yamagata's longstanding enthusiasm for science. His first major publication as a science popularizer was the highly successful 1886 work, *Rika senkyō*. Yamagata claimed that this challenging ten-volume work sold over twenty-eight thousand copies in its first year.<sup>29</sup> In 1887 he published *Danjo tōta ron* 男女淘汰論 (On sexual selection), a work synthesizing translations of excerpts from Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871), and Ernst Haeckel's *The History of Creation* (1868), and followed this up with an expanded translation of Haeckel's work under the title *Shinka yōron* 進化要論 (The essentials of evolution) the subsequent year.

Through his publishing activities, Yamagata could call on a vast network of highly regarded writers to contribute to his magazine. Among *Shōnen'en*'s scientific contributors was Yamagata's childhood friend, the Imperial University professor Ikeda Kikunae. Others included Sekiya Kiyokage 関谷清影 (1855–1896), one of Japan's first modern geologists, and the American-trained systematic biologist Yatabe Ryōkichi 谷田部良吉 (1851–1899), whose opus, *Iconographia Florae Japonicae*, provided a foundational text for modern Japanese botanical research. These are but a few of the dozens of scientists who wrote for the magazine on topics ranging from explanations of the causes of natural phenomena such as earthquakes, typhoons, and solar eclipses, to the science of sound, the flora of Japanese hot springs, and the trajectory of planets. Civilian technologies, such as telegraphs and cameras, also featured, and with the start of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, military technology came to be a prominent feature of *Shōnen'en*'s coverage.

Yamagata and his associates wanted youngsters to draw an association between adventure, science, and prosperity. He impressed on his readers that it was by conquering nature that they would attain scientific knowledge, and that by winning “battles of knowledge” they would secure Japan's prosperity.<sup>30</sup> *Shōnen'en* thus promoted physically-based pursuits of science. One such pursuit advocated by *Shōnen'en* was mountaineering, an endeavor whose aim is to triumph over nature in its most literal sense. It was also an activity that was highly newsworthy in the late nineteenth century. The peaks of the European Alps had finally been conquered, but many of the highest mountains across the globe remained tantalizingly out of reach.<sup>31</sup> Yamagata and his scientist contributors were keen to promote mountaineering among young Japanese readers, not least because the ability to conquer the highest altitudes was considered an innate ability limited to only the most “civilized” countries.<sup>32</sup> If Japan was to be considered on a par with its European counterparts, its men also needed to demonstrate this by attaining the highest zones.

One contributor particularly enamored by this topic was the German-educated botanist and Imperial University professor Miyoshi Manabu 三好學 (1861–1939).<sup>33</sup> In his articles on alpinism, Miyoshi discussed the feats of mountaineers who scaled the world's highest mountains and the glory they achieved, but he was also keen to stress the scientific

29 Cited in Kojima 1937, p. 174.

30 *Shōnen'en* 6:66 (1889), p. 1.

31 On the rise of alpinism in the nineteenth century, see Hansen 2013 and Isserman 2008.

32 Reidy 2015.

33 Some of Miyoshi's contributions were transcripts of oral presentations at the Tokyo Anglo-Japanese College (Eiwa Gakuin 英和学院), but his endorsement of their appearance in *Shōnen'en* is evidenced by the fact that he also contributed articles on mountaineering directly to the magazine.

discoveries available to those who engaged in this pursuit. “The observation of nature,” he emphasized, was the true purpose of mountaineering. He wrote at length of the Swiss scientist-mountaineer Horace-Bénédict de Saussure (1740–1799), emphasizing the many scientific discoveries revealed by his research in the mountains and highlighting the role of the mountain as a laboratory for scientists such as Joseph Dalton Hooker, John Tyndall, Alexander von Humboldt, and Asa Gray.<sup>34</sup> Miyoshi exhorted youngsters to emulate these scientists. Japan was a land of mountains, he reminded them. Listing Japan’s peaks by name, and giving their locations and altitudes, he encouraged readers to use the new maps produced by the government to locate and climb them.

The activity Miyoshi promoted was not the relatively risk-free social activity it later came to be.<sup>35</sup> He made much of the many perils of mountaineering, such as avalanches and the death and injury that may result from falls. Central to Miyoshi’s mountaineering “science” was the idea that it required physical toughness alongside intellectual acumen. Miyoshi’s scholarly infatuation with mountaineering stemmed from his belief that it provided a passport to an exclusive club of scientists. He described the meteorological, botanical, and psychological discoveries available only to those who engaged in this pursuit. Mountaineers would, for example, notice a deepening in the color of the sky, brighter and more numerous stars would be visible, they would experience a quickening of the pulse and an increase in the breathing rate, and they would see for themselves the effects of lower air pressure on the boiling point of water.<sup>36</sup>

Despite these vivid descriptions, it is unlikely that Miyoshi engaged in mountaineering himself. All of his so-called observations about natural phenomena at altitude are culled from others’ sources, especially those of de Saussure. This is in keeping with the Youth Garden’s character as an imaginary landscape. The fanciful nature of the activity Miyoshi promoted can also be seen in his description of the instruments necessary to engage in mountaineering. According to Miyoshi, to be a successful mountaineer-scientist, a mid-Meiji youngster would need not only “a tent, pen and notebook,” but also exorbitantly priced equipment such as a “barometer, watch, magnet, thermometer, telescope and binoculars.”<sup>37</sup> And, not to be outdone by their scientist role models, they would also need to hire sherpas (*yatoi* 雇い) to assist them with carrying their equipment and guiding them along the most accessible route. Clearly Miyoshi was not expecting many, if any, of his young readers to actually engage in this pursuit, at least not in the way he described.

Mountaineering was an attractive subject for *Shōnen'en* because of its association with the pursuit of yet undiscovered vistas and the conquest of virgin territory. The relationship between mountaineering and ambitions for territorial expansion come into view when we look at the figure who sought to cleave these two projects together. Among the first to

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34 Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817–1911) was a British botanist well known to his contemporaries for his expedition to the Himalayas to collect botanical specimens. The physicist John Tyndall (1820–1893) studied the motion of glaciers in the Alps. The Prussian naturalist, Alexander von Humboldt, reached the summit of Chimborazo in the Andes, then believed to be the highest mountain in the world, in 1802. Asa Gray (1810–1888), a professor of botany at Harvard University, collected specimens for his research on mountains in the American west. On the links between mountaineering, masculinity, and science, see Reidy 2015.

35 On the rise of mountaineering as a social activity in the late Meiji period, see Wigen 2005.

36 Miyoshi wrote on mountaineering in *Shōnen'en*, vol. 4, no.40 (1890) pp. 11–13; vol. 5, no. 54 (1891), pp. 2–7; no. 55, pp. 7–10, and no. 56, pp. 2–6.

37 *Shōnen'en* 5:56 (1889), p. 3.



心初の獵銃  
 ぬかつびが狙てくまり餘 早く早にレゾ

Figure 3. “The first hunting experience.” Meiji youngsters were encouraged to engage in hunting with rifles and dogs.

promote mountaineering in Japan was the geographer Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 (1863–1927), whose outlook was shaped by a ten-month naval journey to the South Seas, after which he published the bestselling *Nan'yō jiji* 南洋時事 (Current conditions of the south seas, 1887). A staunch advocate of imperial expansion, he published this work in the hope of encouraging Japanese territorial acquisition of islands in the South Seas. He followed up *Nan'yō jiji* with *Nihon fūkeiron* 日本風景論 (On Japanese landscape) in 1894, a book that, as Kären Wigen puts it, was “salted with injunctions” to readers to climb Japanese mountains, offering itself as a manual for those who wanted to do so.<sup>38</sup> Shiga’s desire to cultivate a “mountaineering spirit” (*tozan no kifū* 登山の気風) was borne of a worldview refined in the South Seas. The natural surroundings—be they domestic or international—were filled with resources. Engaging with nature meant conquering it, exploiting it, and using its resources to further Japan’s geopolitical aspirations.

Another physically demanding scientific endeavor promoted by *Shōnen'en* was hunting. Like mountaineering, hunting lay at the nexus of manliness and science, and it drew an even more explicit association with imperial endeavor. As John M. MacKenzie notes, during the nineteenth century hunting became an ingrained part of British imperial culture, which a “largely masculine elite attempted to reserve for itself,” and which it transformed into “a ritual of prestige and dominance.”<sup>39</sup> Trophy hunting was considered “good imperial work,”

38 Wigen 2005, p. 11. Shigetaka trailed *Nihon fūkeiron* in *Shōnen'en* by publishing excerpts in the magazine.

39 Mackenzie 1997, p. 22.

not least because it was associated with the virtues of “endurance, aggression, courage, self-control and sacrifice,” and for this reason it was promoted at many British public schools and universities.<sup>40</sup> The perceived character-building qualities of hunting made it a mainstay of Victorian juvenile publications, and in time *Shōnen'en* began to promote hunting enthusiastically as a suitable pastime for Meiji adolescents.

Here again, it is unlikely that any of *Shōnen'en*'s proponents of hunting had much, if any, experience of the activity. Yamagata and his associates were from a generation where masculinity was primarily enacted through cerebral rather than physical pursuits. Hence we see Yamagata tying himself in knots trying to argue that hunting had long been a custom in Japan, where it had been a ritual of refinement. Though there is some truth in this assertion, the reality is that it never spread beyond a very small elite.<sup>41</sup> Along with the exorbitant fees for a hunting license, what made hunting such a niche pursuit was that it required not just a rifle but also a four-legged companion (figure 3). *Shōnen'en* appropriated the notion of the dog as a hunting companion from the British tradition wherein “manly” breeds acted as shibboleths of the British imperial officer class. That such dogs were considered essential for hunting underscores the extent to which it was intended to be a vicarious pursuit.<sup>42</sup>

In discussions of hunting, *Shōnen'en* consistently reinforced its link with science. It impressed upon readers that hunting not only required deep knowledge of the natural world, but also that it was a means of producing such knowledge. *Shōnen'en* reminded readers that it was the discoveries of the naturalist and the hunters that filled the museums and gardens of Europe's metropolises where they would be subject to the collective scientific enterprise.<sup>43</sup> In *Shōnen'en*, hunting was used as an opportunity to discuss various animals, their behaviors, and the concept of species. For example, articles on hunting educated readers about various species of birds, including wild geese, egrets, poison-feather birds, water wagtails, and winter wren. Readers were told about their flying styles, habitat, and feeding patterns.

To whet readers' appetites further for outdoor exploration, the biography section of the magazine was replete with the stories of adventurers, such as David Livingstone and Henry Morton Stanley.<sup>44</sup> Parroting the British narrative, the magazine argued that the spirit of adventure epitomized by these explorers lay behind the success of the British Empire: “Britons had become rich by fearlessly journeying from the poles to the tropics and claiming for themselves the riches of the lands they encountered.”<sup>45</sup> It was not a leap to see what lessons the British sense of adventure held for Japan. Japan, too, once had a desire for adventure,

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40 Mangan and McKenzie 2010, p. 17.

41 Even after the Wildlife Hunting Law (*Chōjū ryō kisoku* 鳥獸獵規則) of 1873, hunting remained very much a niche activity as the yearly taxes levied on its practice made it prohibitively expensive. Annual permits for hunting for occupational purposes (*shokuryō* 職獵) cost one yen, whereas those for recreational hunting (*yūryō* 遊獵) cost ten yen. In 1877, for example, only 166 licences were issued. Most were to members of the imperial family, nobility, and former samurai; only nineteen were commoners. See Setoguchi 2010.

42 Skabelund 2011.

43 Contributions from officers stationed in empire increased the British Museum's wildlife collection “from zero in 1870 to 60,000 in 1890.” Mangan and McKenzie 2010, p. 4.

44 General Fukushima Yasumasa 福島安正 (1852–1919), who journeyed for fourteen months from Berlin to Vladivostok in 1892–1893, later gave *Shōnen'en* a contemporary Japanese hero to profile in its pages. His exploits provided much fodder for writers and readers, whose contributions ran the gamut from biographical profiles, songs, illustrations, and moralistic lectures.

45 *Shōnen'en* 3:29 (1890), pp. 16–21.

readers were told, but this had been “quashed by the Tokugawa Shogunate’s ban on foreign travel,” an experience that had left the lives of the Japanese impoverished like that of “an insect trapped in a well.”<sup>46</sup> But this was all now to change in the new era. *Shōnen’en* told readers that Japan’s future prosperity relied on their generation reviving this spirit of adventure:

Look! To the West is the goldmine of an undeveloped China. To the south are islands rich in natural resources, and to the east lies the vast expanses of the American west: go there quickly and claim these lands! By claiming them we will enrich our country.<sup>47</sup>

The salient difference between the readers of British and Japanese juvenile magazines was that the British audiences had access to the tangible artifacts of empire through botanical and zoological gardens where imperial spoils could be assembled, classified, and displayed.<sup>48</sup> Readers of British juvenile magazines also knew that they were reading the exploits, undoubtedly embellished though they were, of actual officers stationed in empire. However, at a time when Japan’s imperial ambitions were as yet unrealized, *Shōnen’en* provided Japanese youth with a landscape where they could imagine themselves engaging in these adventurous hypermasculine pursuits.

### **Science as a Means of Personal Advancement**

Yamagata did not seriously entertain the idea that he would inspire most of his young readers to don mountaineering equipment or purchase a recreational hunting license, but he hoped that the interest piqued by their vicarious endeavors would make them seriously consider science as a vocation. To contribute meaningfully to Japan’s prosperity, young readers would at some point need to apply to the real world what they learned from the pages of *Shōnen’en*. Yamagata’s zeal for science stemmed from his belief that it not only helped cultivate a self-image of brave truth-seekers among his elite middle school audience, it also underpinned the civilian technologies that would motor Japan’s progress.

Reporting on the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, *Shōnen’en* told readers that the exhibition provided evidence that the world had now entered “an age of science.” The author of the report from Chicago spoke of his awe in seeing the latest developments in machinery, which had been applied across all fields from aquaculture to mining and transportation. Science, he argued, was the ultimate basis for civilization: all of the trappings of civilized society, be they “steamships, locomotives, telegraphs, or telephones” relied on science.<sup>49</sup> It was now imperative that youngsters devote themselves to scientific endeavor, he argued. He noted that although Japan’s exhibits had been praised, they were seen merely as “arts and crafts,” and warned that if Japan did not seek to apply science to its industries, the country would remain a “relic.” “Building our national strength,” the author stressed, “requires the application of science.”<sup>50</sup>

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46 *Shōnen’en* 3:29 (1890), pp. 16–21.

47 *Shōnen’en* 3:29 (1890), pp. 16–21.

48 In time, Ueno Zoo would come to play such a role for Japan, becoming a “display case” for animals captured by Japanese troops during both the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. Miller 2013, p. 48.

49 *Shōnen’en* 11:122 (1893), pp. 1–3.

50 *Shōnen’en* 11:122 (1893), pp. 1–3.

Yamagata knew that convincing young readers to pursue science depended on his ability to align it with their personal ambitions. Appeals to youngsters to engage in science for the benefit of the nation alone would be ineffective because, despite the government's efforts, the "nation" remained far removed from their immediate concerns. *Risshin shusse* (success and advancement), the mantra of the age, had great appeal among adolescents (and was thus a frequent topic in *Shōnen'en*), who were more concerned about bringing honor to their families through success in the public sphere. However, Yamagata wanted his readers to conceive of the nation as their family, and to see science as the path to the success they so craved.

The late 1880s were a politically exciting time. Within months of *Shōnen'en*'s launch, the Imperial Constitution, the Imperial Household Law, and the Election Law were all promulgated, and there was much anticipation about the opening of the Imperial Diet, scheduled for 1890. The world of politics therefore attracted significant attention in the public sphere. For impressionable youngsters, politics was *the* field for achieving success in life and making a name for oneself.<sup>51</sup> Science, on the other hand, suffered from its reputation as a path for those lacking in ambition.<sup>52</sup> Yamagata's challenge, therefore, was to steer youngsters away from law, the study of which was a passport into politics and the government bureaucracy. Yamagata warned youngsters that politics would soon lose its luster. Politics was for their fathers and older brothers.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, he cautioned, any glory achieved in the field of politics or law would be temporary because it affected only the "surface" of society, whereas science would produce longstanding and tangible benefits for Japan. Yamagata warned that despite Japan's strides in politics, it had merely bought its material civilization and industrial knowledge from the West, a situation that was unsustainable in the long term. Japan needed science if it were to become truly independent: "If Germany had no Krupp artillery or six-sided gunpowder cases, do you think it would have the strong military it has today?" he asked, entirely confident of the answer. "If Britain had no Watt or Stephenson, do you think London would enjoy its current prosperity?"<sup>54</sup>

Britain provided ready examples of scientists and engineers who had gained the success and glory so sought after by Japanese youngsters, and thus proved to be popular subjects for biographical profiles in the magazine. It was reported with delighted incredulity that science and engineering were bona fide paths to success and glory in Britain. In introducing Henry Bessemer (1813–1898), the magazine pointed out that his invention of a new steel-making process was considered a "meritorious deed" (*kunkō* 勲功) because it introduced enormous cost savings and was adopted widely in key technologies, such as steam engines and artillery. For this grand achievement, he had been "made an aristocrat." In Britain, the magazine

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51 Shimizu 2013.

52 Yamagata noted that "many youngsters mistakenly believe that science is a land of leisure, where second-rate people engage in flânerie." *Shōnen'en* 1:7 (1889), p. 1. For discussion on the low levels of recruitment to science during mid-Meiji and Taishō periods, see Bartholomew 1989.

53 Earl Kinmonth notes that particularly "worrisome" to *Shōnen'en* was the possibility that youngsters "would become involved in politics as *sōshi* 壮士 ("stalwart youth," "bullies")" like their predecessors in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. The magazine, he adds, "attacked the *sōshi* repeatedly, and told youth that politics was not for them." Kinmonth 1981, p. 129.

54 *Shōnen'en* 1:7 (1889), p. 3.

noted, “If one delivers great benefit to the nation,” it matters not “whether one is a poet, a writer, a blacksmith or a carpenter,” one can elevate oneself to the highest rungs of society.<sup>55</sup>

The honors with which scientists, engineers, and industrialists were garlanded in the West made it easy for *Shōnen'en* to hold them up as role models to promote its desired values and dispositions. Subjects of biographical profiles included scientists such as Galileo and Newton, but those who had endured poverty and hardship during their youth before going on to achieve success received the most fulsome treatment, as they most fully epitomized the *risshin shusse* ideal. For example, the magazine serialized James Watt’s biography over two issues, while George Stephenson’s extended to six. The success of “poor and powerless scholars” was useful for promoting the virtue of perseverance, the lack of which Yamagata claimed was “the greatest defect of the Japanese.”<sup>56</sup> The feats of engineers, stressed *Shōnen'en*, showed the importance of immersing oneself in nature. Nature, readers were told, held the secrets to the century’s greatest technological feats. In *Shōnen'en*’s account, Watt was inspired by the images of crustaceans in natural history books when he designed the shape of the Monkland Canal; Isambard Brunel’s idea for his tunnel under the Thames came from examining the behavior of shipworms; and Samuel Brown’s suspension bridge was based on his observation of spider’s cobwebs.<sup>57</sup>

The magazine also provided a valuable platform to advocate for disciplines, many of which had very little recognition, even among an elite middle-school audience. When *Shōnen'en*’s first issue was published in 1888, Tokyo University (which was renamed the Imperial University in 1886) had only been in existence for eleven years. Although its science departments had a longer history dating back to the *bakumatsu* period, many subjects taught there had only just been introduced to the modern university environment and few outside its walls were aware of their existence. Science practitioners therefore had to act as champions of their disciplines. *Shōnen'en*, whose readership comprised potential recruits, was an obvious podium. Among those who used *Shōnen'en* as a vehicle to proselytize their discipline was Ashino Keizaburō 蘆野敬三郎 (1866–1941), an astronomer who contributed over fifteen articles on his specialism. In *Shōnen'en* he argued that astronomy should rank as the most important of the sciences. Astronomers, he suggested, were “the only ones who could provide sound theories about such fundamental issues as the origins of life.”<sup>58</sup> But youngsters’ lack of interest in the subject had left him fearful for Japan’s future. He encouraged his audience to choose mathematics as a specialism. Unless they did so, he warned, the country would forever be a passive consumer of facts ascertained elsewhere, rather than participants in extending the boundaries of knowledge.

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55 *Shōnen'en* 4:37 (1890), pp. 18–20.

56 *Shōnen'en* 2:13 (1889), pp. 1–3.

57 *Shōnen'en* 2:13 (1889), pp. 21–24. The scientists profiled were invariably male, but their stories were also useful in promoting appropriate virtues among girls. In “Garuhuan denki hakken no hanashi” ガルフアニ電気発見の話 (The story of the discovery of galvanism) (1:12, pp. 20–23) readers were told that the Italian physician and physicist Luigi Galvani (1737–1798), known for his investigations on electricity in animal tissue, was successful in opening up new areas in the study of electricity thanks to his wife. The article spoke of Mrs. Galvani’s intelligence and her love and respect for her husband, but particularly stressed her exemplary household management skills. Her husband, it explained, was able to work diligently because she supported him in whatever he needed so that he could spend night and day in his laboratory.

58 *Shōnen'en* 3:32 (1890), p. 5.

The extent to which scientists' entreaties to young readers were effective is difficult to ascertain. However, there soon arrived an event that afforded *Shōnen'en*—or perhaps the government—a welcome opportunity to convince youngsters of the power of science: the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. This conflict was particularly effective for extolling the power of science—this time under the guise of military technology—because it aroused the sentiment of Japanese people in just the way that its instigators had intended.<sup>59</sup> It created a more bounded relationship between the individual and the nation. War heroes would become paragons of the *risshin shusse* ideal, achieving their glory through contributions to the nation. These contributions would in turn elevate Japan's international standing—and, by extension, the status of the Japanese people—through its newfound prestige as a colonial power.

### **The Sino-Japanese War and the Demise of *Shōnen'en***

*Shōnen'en* ceased publication on 18 April 1895, one day after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which concluded the Sino-Japanese War and granted Japan its first colonial territories. In a sense, *Shōnen'en's* demise was perfectly timed. With the establishment of Japan's formal empire, there was no longer a need for the type of imaginary landscapes that the Youth's Garden provided. However, what actually precipitated the decline of the Youth's Garden as a site for vicarious adventure was the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1894. So compelling were the reports from the warfront that the battlefield in Korea supplanted the Youth's Garden as the main site for imagined heroic pursuits.

The Sino-Japanese War had a transformative effect on childhood imagination in Japan. As Sabine Frühstück has pointed out, the war precipitated an upsurge in war games among children.<sup>60</sup> As every pupil was now theoretically a future soldier in Japan's conscript army, teachers and military instructors aimed to stoke enthusiasm for the war by having schoolchildren engage in choreographed war exercises. As ever, *Shōnen'en* sought to reinforce these school-based activities in the extra-curricular realm.

Military-related content featured little in *Shōnen'en* for the first five years of its existence, but with tensions brewing in Korea, there was a change in focus which was as complete as it was sudden. From the summer of 1894, *Shōnen'en* became a veritable military encyclopedia carrying articles with an astonishing amount of detail on the war effort. The first such article was in the 3 July 1894 issue, which focused on the Qing's preparedness for the war. This article detailed the Chinese army's structure and size and explained where troops were deployed, the type of training they had received, and the armaments they had at their disposal. This was followed by a torrent of war-related articles. Young readers could become not just acquainted but deeply knowledgeable about the military situation in Korea by reading articles such as "Shinkoku no hōhei" 清国の砲兵 (Qing artillery), "Shinkoku no hohei" 清国の歩兵 (Qing infantry), "Suirai no hanashi" 水雷の話 (Torpedoes), and "Kaigun heiki no shinpo" 海軍兵器の進歩 (Advances in naval artillery). They carried detailed information on the location of Qing fleets, the number of ships in each location, their tonnage, and military capacities. *Shōnen'en* wanted young readers to feel invested in the war effort. Youngsters were told that, with a war now on, all Japanese were to unite with "no

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59 Paine 2005.

60 Frühstück 2017, p. 30.

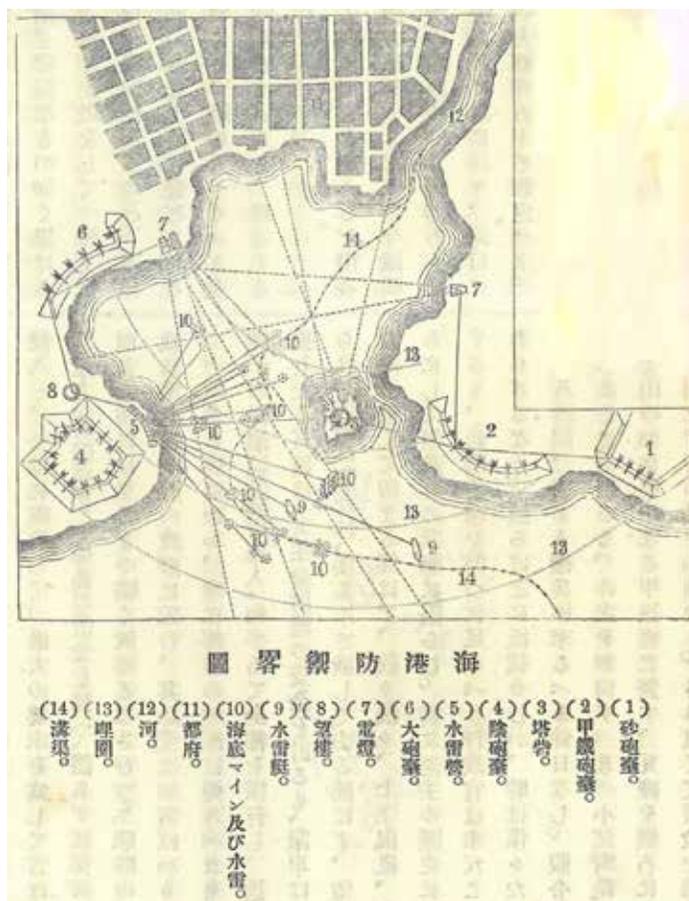


Figure 4. Map entitled “Kaikō bōgyo ryakuzu” 海港防御略図 (Seaport defense plan) illustrating coastal defense strategies that could be employed if the Japanese coastline came under attack.

division between rich or poor or old or young.”<sup>61</sup> To make young readers feel thoroughly embedded in the war effort, *Shōnen'en* published transcripts of speeches by various war commanders.<sup>62</sup> It also carried articles explaining strategies used on the battlefield. These were sometimes accompanied by maps (figure 4) that allowed youngsters to imagine themselves as military commanders on the frontline.<sup>63</sup> These articles, which provide perhaps the most up-to-date information on the war anywhere in the public sphere, mushroomed in

61 *Shōnen'en* 12:140 (1894), p. 1.

62 Articles came from the very top of the command structure. One article, for example, was by Vice Admiral Kimotsuki Kaneyuki 肝付兼行 (1853–1922), and provided a breakdown of Japan’s naval capacity detailing the length, speed, power, and weaponry on each ship in Japan’s naval fleet. *Shōnen'en* 13:148 (1894), pp. 6–18.

63 *Shōnen'en* 13:149 (1895), p.4.



Figure 5. A photograph of Japanese sailors on the Kotaka torpedo boat, which was published in *Shōnen'en* 13:147 (1894).

length and detail, eventually monopolizing the content of *Shōnen'en*.<sup>64</sup> Coverage of the war dominated the content in *Shōnen'en* to such an extent that the announcement of its feature article on military technology was moved to its cover, above the magazine's nameplate.

Despite *Shōnen'en*'s impressive circulation figures, most of the population was receiving information on the war not from *Shōnen'en*, but from other mass media formats. Notable among such formats were woodblock prints, which were churned out in huge numbers during the war. These woodblock prints provided a publicly accessible record of the rise of anti-Chinese sentiment. They encouraged the dehumanization of the enemy by portraying them wounded, dead, and dying, or in cowardly flight from the onslaught of well drilled and disciplined Japanese troops.<sup>65</sup> The vivid descriptions of these prints made them a highly sought-after source for information on the conflict.

Not so for *Shōnen'en*. In fact *Shōnen'en* admonished those who created and sold such prints. It did not criticize them for their jingoism or for the way they dehumanized the Chinese. Rather, *Shōnen'en* accused these prints of peddling "inaccurate" and "outdated" representations of Japan's battleships. According to *Shōnen'en*, such prints were produced by charlatans who, having no knowledge of the latest technologies, based their drawings on "glimpses of steamships that pass through the Tonegawa," rather than the cutting-edge

64 The amount of detail provided in these articles, which were almost all unattributed, suggests direct government involvement or contribution. Prior to the Sino-Japanese War, legislation was enacted to prohibit the publication of information on the movement of troops, ships, military armaments, or on military strategy without the express permission of both the army and navy ministries. See Inoue 2012, p. 39.

65 Okamoto 1983.

battleships that were bringing honor to Japan.<sup>66</sup> The focus of the magazine's criticism is telling. *Shōnen'en* was unhappy that the prints undermined the narrative of the war that the magazine had been building, particularly once events had turned in Japan's favor: that the Sino-Japanese War was a battle of technology, and that it was one Japan was winning because of its openness to science and technology, contrasted with the enemy's closed-mindedness.<sup>67</sup>

For this reason, *Shōnen'en* eschewed prints and instead focused on a new medium that would provide objective evidence of Japan's technological superiority: the photograph.<sup>68</sup> The photograph was a cutting-edge technology that had not yet become established in the periodical press, and became a means for *Shōnen'en* to demonstrate that it was the most authoritative source for information on the war. *Shōnen'en* publicized the fact that it carried "clear photographs" from the war front, and used these to reinforce its narrative of Japan's technological supremacy. The subjects of photographs included some of the most treasured possessions of the Japanese army and navy. For example, the *Kotaka* 小鷹, which at the time of its launch was the largest torpedo boat in the world, was one subject (figure 5), as was the Imperial Navy light cruiser *Tatsuta* 龍田. Photographs were sometimes presented as large foldout posters that one can imagine being used decoratively or circulated independently as objects of visual consumption.

One can sense some tension in the portrayals of China in *Shōnen'en* during the war. Yamagata's affinity for Chinese learning and his view that mastery of Chinese learning was as important as acquiring Western knowledge remained unshaken even at the height of the Sino-Japanese War. He deplored as "silly youth," those who turned their back on Chinese learning "due to excessive animosity toward Chinese." "Chinese learning is the basis of our nation's learning and should thus be studied by all learned persons," he asserted. "The importance of Chinese learning remains irrespective of China's current position."<sup>69</sup> Yet the magazine was not immune from the pejorative descriptions of the Chinese found in more mainstream publications. *Shōnen'en* described the Qing troops as cowards with "thin fingers and long nails," who were "disorganized and lacking in spirit," and who flee "leaving their best weapons in the streets" when subject to Japanese attack.<sup>70</sup> This inconsistent messaging probably resulted from the government being the source (if not the author) of much of the military coverage in *Shōnen'en* during the war.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, it is likely that *Shōnen'en* lasted as long as it did because the government sensed its value as a propaganda outlet during the war.

66 *Shōnen'en* 12:140 (1894), p. 28.

67 At the outset of the war *Shōnen'en*'s coverage betrayed a wariness of the Qing's military might. The Qing's fleet of ships in the northern seas were said to be "formidable" and "equipped with the latest artillery from the West." Many of their crew, *Shōnen'en* warned, had visited Britain and were now "carrying out drills fastidiously." See *Shōnen'en* 11:138 (1894), pp. 5–9. However, once news of Japanese naval successes rolled in, appraisals of the Qing's war technology were abruptly revised. The Qing's ships, in turned out, were outdated and unfit for modern battles. Its ships, it was now asserted, were in fact not really battleships, but more akin to convoy. See *Shōnen'en* 12:139 (1894), p. 10.

68 Photographs became a feature of newspaper coverage after the turn of the century. Although photographs were rare in the periodical press, they were produced and were relatively popular during the Sino-Japanese War. One example was a collection of photographs, *Nishin sensō jikki* 日清戦争実記, published by Hakubunkan. On photography during the Sino-Japanese War, see Inoue 2012.

69 *Shōnen'en* 11:144 (1894), pp. 30–31.

70 *Shōnen'en* 12:140 (1894), p. 26.

71 See Paine 2005.

What does, however, clearly distinguish *Shōnen'en*'s wartime coverage from that of other outlets was its almost obsessive focus on technology. Its emphasis on accurate representation of Japan's military technology through photographs and detailed data was in keeping with its self-image as a publication for future elites.

It is not possible to predict whether *Shōnen'en*'s coverage would have continued in this militaristic vein after the war, but we do know that the mania for military themes was a feature of many juvenile magazines that succeed *Shōnen'en*. However, these magazines, of which *Bōken sekai* 冒険世界 (Adventure world) was the most popular, tended to focus significantly less on technology, preferring to push a more overtly jingoistic narrative through serialized pro-war adventure stories. In *Shōnen'en*'s case, its focus on war was not a departure, but rather the conclusion of efforts to align Japanese youngsters' ambitions as imperial subjects with the pursuit of science and technology.

### Conclusion

The science writer and translator, Yamagata Teisaburō, amply understood that science could be mobilized to advance the government's aim of creating loyal imperial subjects. It was to this end through *Shōnen'en* he fashioned an imaginary landscape in which youngsters could engage in scientific endeavor. Careful not to trespass on the government's territory of formal education, Yamagata focused on the extracurricular realm. His aim was not only to promote study outside the classroom, but also to make the area outside the classroom an object of study. Youngsters were encouraged to immerse themselves in nature, learning its secrets and, in so doing, developing key dispositions such as stoicism, bravery, and self-control, which were expected of Japan's future elite.

Magazines are in the business of selling aspiration, and so it should not be surprising that the activities *Shōnen'en* promoted were unlikely to be copied by its readers. What is notable, however, is the extent to which the aspirational models in *Shōnen'en* borrowed from the British idea that the heroic adventures of imperial officers were integral to the scientific enterprise. Notably, these British models were not intended to supplant traditional Japanese markers of masculinity. Indeed, there was some defensiveness on Yamagata's part about the extent to which his chosen model was a foreign one. He was keen to draw parallels between the culture of the British imperial officer class and that of the samurai, even where such links were tenuous, to show that the traits he valued so highly were part of the Japanese tradition. It is for this reason that he was also keen to remind his young male readers that Chinese learning remained the bedrock of their intellectual tradition. By combining Japanese, Chinese, and Western traditions, Yamagata mirrored the ethos of the Imperial Rescript on Education. The appeal of the British imperial officer model was the ease with which it could be integrated into existing Japanese ideas about masculinity and the mania for personal advancement. Some years ago, the science historian Steven Shapin memorably asked why is it that science "travel[s] with what seems to be unique efficiency."<sup>72</sup> The case of *Shōnen'en* perhaps provides some clues. For Yamagata, the link that the British elite drew between physical fitness and intellectual endeavor suggested that science was not simply about "fact-gathering and technique" as its detractors implied. Rather, the pursuit of a heroic science spoke to priorities of youth, who saw it as a vehicle for personal advancement,

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72 Shapin 1998, p. 7.

and educators such as Yamagata, for whom it was an effective means of cultivating the dispositions desired in the ideal imperial subject.

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## Revisiting Tsuda Sōkichi in Postwar Japan: “Misunderstandings” and the Historical Facts of the *Kiki*

ISSE Yōko

In his later years, Tsuda Sōkichi (1873–1961) confronted his readers’ “misunderstanding” of his work on the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* (the *Kiki*), which had concerned him since before the war. After the war, his *Kiki* studies were newly recognized as “historical science.” Tsuda denounced the postwar appropriation and misinterpretation of his work, as he became renowned as a “denier of historical facts and of the earliest emperors.” This was far from what he intended, however. He was always reluctant to deal head-on with the issue of the historical existence of the early emperors. Postwar scholars formed a collective perception of Tsuda as a “denier,” and overlooked his important remark regarding the notion of “historical facts.” He loathed the postwar tendency to label him a Marxist, and he criticized new interpretations of the *Kiki*. Postwar scholars relied upon the “imagined Tsuda” and upon archaeological discoveries too to reconstruct a new national history minus its imperial tradition. Postwar scholars, who regarded Tsuda as a Marxist, were taken aback by his declaration of “love” for the imperial family, and struggled to understand his work in its entirety. As a result, they were guilty of oversimplifying his achievements.

**Keywords:** *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, historical science, interpretive community, banned books, academic freedom, postwar historiography, Marxist history, philological studies, historical imagination, imperial family

### Introduction

Tsuda Sōkichi’s 津田左右吉 (1873–1961) research into the *Kojiki* 古事記 and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (the *Kiki* 記紀) has been referred to as a “historiography of denial” (*hitei no shigaku* 否定の史学).<sup>1</sup> In 1947, Izu Kimio 伊豆公夫 (1907–1989), a founding member of Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai 歴史学研究会 (Rekiken 歴研), noted that “Tsuda’s historical accounts were like peeling a pickled scallion,” by which Izu meant that Tsuda had set out to obliterate

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1 Kawamura 1987, p. 270. According to Kawamura, Tsuda frequently used the Japanese negative form *nai* ない in a hasty attempt to deny the myths of the *Kiki*.

the historical facts of the *Kiki* through close examination.<sup>2</sup> Since then, many scholars have claimed that Tsuda failed to acknowledge the historicity of the *Kiki*. The criticism is still made to this day.<sup>3</sup> However, in a short essay titled “Watakushi no *Kiki* no kenkyū no shushi” わたくしの記紀の研究の主旨, published in 1958, Tsuda insisted that his previous books on the *Kiki* had been “misunderstood” by many of his readers.

In this essay, I set out to reflect on the reception of Tsuda’s work on the *Kiki* in postwar Japan.<sup>4</sup> First, I focus on how his theory was “misunderstood” or appropriated by other scholars. Previous studies have illustrated that the problems of readers’ interpretations of his books lie within postwar historiography.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, his works have begun to receive international recognition. Joel Joos, for example, discusses the “imagined Tsuda” and his active stance as an “old liberal” intellectual in postwar Japan, insisting that the presuppositions and perceptions of his readers shaped the reception of his work after the war.<sup>6</sup> The questions I address here are why and how Tsuda became renowned as the “denier of historical facts,” when this was far from what he intended.

Second, I discuss the historical interpretation that Tsuda inspired. Although Tsuda was charged with *lèse-majesté* during the war, he earned the admiration of many postwar historians and greatly influenced the thought of Marxist and left-wing nationalists.<sup>7</sup> I consider how postwar historians—Tsuda’s “interpretive community” in Stanley Fish’s terms—imagined Tsuda, and collectively constructed the past based on public memory.<sup>8</sup> By discussing how Tsuda’s “interpretive community” shaped his postwar image, I revisit a critical moment when a national history free of its imperial tradition was desired.

Finally, I investigate the cause of what Tsuda termed the “misunderstandings” of his work in postwar Japan. Tsuda’s readers often cited him as an intellectual who agreed with Marxists. After Japan was defeated in World War II, postwar Marxists sought to demystify the imperial institutions and reinterpreted the *Kiki* using a Marxist perspective and Tsuda’s accounts, focusing on class conflict. However, Tsuda had opposed Marxist history since before the war. Moreover, Tsuda’s work was also influential among archaeology-oriented postwar historians. Incorrect perceptions of his work on the *Kiki* and trends in archaeology forced Tsuda to explain his prewar publications.

2 Izu 1947, p. 129. On *Rekiken*, see Gayle 2003, pp. 22–23, and 166. The Tokyo Imperial University students’ circle named *Kōgokai* 庚午会 later became the Historical Science Society of Japan in 1932. See *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai* 2012 for details.

3 Hagino 2005.

4 Imai Osamu 今井修 makes a list of Japanese scholars’ references to Tsuda’s work in postwar Japan. See Imai 1988 and find more in *Dainiji Tsuda Sōkichi zenshū geppō* 第二次津田左右吉全集月報.

5 Hayakawa 2005, pp. 137–38; Ueda 1974, p. 187, 189–90, 212–16. Hayakawa suggests that Tsuda’s books on the *Kiki* were frequently referenced and utilized without due regard to his intention.

6 Joos 2008, p. 38.

7 Gayle 2003, pp. 85–105. Curtis Anderson Gayle focuses on postwar Japanese nationalists such as Ishimoda Shō 石母田正 (1912–1986) and Tōma Seita 藤間生大 (1913–2018), who were members of *Rekiken* and *Minshushugi Kagakusha Kyōkai* 民主主義科学者協会 (Democratic Scientists Association) though he did not mention Tsuda, who greatly influenced the development of their thought. Gayle refers to them as the “*minzoku* faction,” which consisted of Ishimoda, Tōma, and Matsumoto Shinpachirō 松本新八郎 (1913–2005). While these men treated his books with respect, Tsuda turned down a request to be the president of *Rekiken*.

8 Fish 1980, p. 14. Fish argued that interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies for writing texts or constituting their properties.

### 1. Misunderstandings

Tsuda ended his article “Kenkoku no jijō to bansei ikkei no shisō” 建国の事情と万世一系の思想 (1946) with a declaration of his “love” for the imperial family. His views on the imperial institution stirred controversy everywhere.<sup>9</sup> In November 1948, he published a book titled *Nihonjin no shisōteki taido* ニホン人の思想的態度, in which he touched upon the Comintern theses of 1932, and criticized left-wing intellectuals’ “distortion” of history as a class struggle, which situated the imperial family as an enemy of the Japanese people and the emperor as a despotic ruler. In Tsuda’s view, “such scholars of the left are equivalent to right-wing wartime intellectuals” in that “they ignore the historical facts and regarded the imperial family as despotic and powerful.”<sup>10</sup> Such, in brief, was Tsuda’s position on the imperial institution.

This book deserves attention since it delivered a stinging rebuke to Marxists such as Tōyama Shigeki 遠山茂樹 (1914–2011) in the late 1940s.<sup>11</sup> Postwar intellectuals who called for the emperor’s abdication regarded this and other writings by Tsuda as uncomfortable commentaries on current affairs. However, they still saw Tsuda as an outstanding scholar because of his prewar publications. Indeed, Tōyama showered praise on Tsuda’s *Bungaku ni arawaretaru waga kokumin shisō no kenkyū* 文学に現はれたる我が国民思想の研究 (1916–1918) for its “historical science,” even as he expressed his disappointment with Tsuda.<sup>12</sup> In 1951, Tsuda confirmed his opposition to postwar Marxist historians and questioned what they called “historical science.”<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, many postwar historians drew on Tsuda’s work to achieve their goal of developing “historical science,” despite their awareness that Tsuda supported the imperial institution.<sup>14</sup>

Of all his many prewar publications, Tsuda’s critical analysis of the *Kiki* was most highly regarded for its “historical science.”<sup>15</sup> For example, the renowned historian Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎 (1913–2002), the author of a national history book titled *Kuni no ayumi* くにのあゆみ in 1946, noted that Tsuda’s denial of the early emperors’ historical existence was an epoch-making achievement that elevated Japanese historiography to a new height of “historical science.”<sup>16</sup>

Tsuda’s intention in writing books on the *Kiki*, however, was entirely at odds with Ienaga’s interpretation. In his essay “Watakushi no *Kiki* no kenkyū no shushi” (1958), Tsuda

9 See Tsuda 1946, p. 54; Yoshino 1946. He expressed his love for the imperial family not only in the article but also in his postwar speeches at universities; for example, he referred to nothing but the imperial family during his talk about Japan’s future. Also see Tsuda 1965a.

10 See Tsuda 1948a, pp. 170–74. According to Tsuda, the responsibility for the war lay with the Japanese military authorities, not Emperor Shōwa. Tsuda published his book *Nihonjin no shisōteki taido* after the end of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East on 20 November 1948.

11 Hirota 2006, pp. 11–12. Tōyama’s book *Shōwa shi* 昭和史, an account of modern history through the lens of class struggle, was harshly criticized in 1955.

12 Tōyama 1948. Many others called Tsuda “the greatest historical scientist.” See Isse 2005.

13 Tsuda 1951, pp. 10–12.

14 Gayle 2003, p. 41.

15 Tsuda’s early publications were already well known among Marxists scholars. Since he covered a broad range of topics, he was also well-regarded among those who majored in different areas of ancient Japanese history. For example, one of Tsuda’s students at Waseda University, Matsushima Eiichi 松島栄一 (1917–2002), who saw himself as a Marxist, admired Tsuda for his radical and critical attitude. Matsushima, a historian who explored Tokugawa Japan, affirmed that the ultimate purpose of Tsuda’s study was to analyze the Meiji Restoration. See Matsushima 1950, pp. 46–47.

16 Ienaga 1972, pp. 250, 404; Brownlee 1997, p. 198.

explained that he was concerned with four issues: (1) the character of the tales of the *Kiki* in light of their lack of authenticity; (2) the nature of the materials used by the authors of the *Kiki*; (3) the authors' identities and the timing of their composition of the tales; and (4) the substance of continuity and change in the tradition of the *Kiki*.

Tsuda's own position on these several issues was as follows: (1) *jindaishi* 神代史, the history of the Age of Gods that occupies the first half of the *Kiki*, was created for the political purpose of explaining the origins of the imperial family; (2) the *Kiki* authors employed a combination of fanciful tales, popular ideas about the imperial family, religious and ceremonial accounts, and Chinese thought and folktales; (3) the earliest authors were intellectuals who enjoyed some rank and position in the Yamato court during the mid–sixth century; and (4) many sections of the *Kiki* were altered by authors who rewrote the narratives from the mid sixth through the early eighth centuries.

In “Watakushi no *Kiki* no kenkyū no shushi,” Tsuda also voiced his criticism of postwar historians and intellectuals for misinterpreting his intentions. Their misunderstanding was that Tsuda portrayed every story of the *Kiki* as a myth or fabrication. He tried to explain that his denial of factuality was, in fact, a technique for revealing the truth, namely that the myths were expressions of devotion for the imperial family narrated by ancient aristocrats from the earliest period of recorded history. Tsuda repeatedly affirmed the importance of these myths as invaluable historical sources that reflected ancient political beliefs, and insisted he was more concerned with revealing the truth than denying the facts.<sup>17</sup>

In 1972, Ienaga published a book titled *Tsuda Sōkichi no shisōshiteki kenkyū* 津田左右吉の思想史的研究, in which he demonstrated a dedication and commitment to understanding Tsuda's work, even as he placed great value in Marxist history.<sup>18</sup> Ienaga rated Tsuda's prewar study, *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no kenkyū* 古事記及日本書紀の研究 (1924) highly, but attached less importance to the revised postwar edition, *Nihon koten no kenkyū, jō* 日本古典の研究 上 (1948). However, in the opinion of the present author, neither edition was “scientific” or rational because Tsuda was careless in his use of the term *rekishiteki jijitsu* 歴史的事実, or “historical facts.”<sup>19</sup> The following excerpt from Tsuda's conclusion to both editions reveals his lack of coherence regarding the notion of “historical facts”:

I cannot acknowledge the tales and accounts of the *Kiki* as a part of history that describes historical facts (*rekishiteki jijitsu*), but the spirit and the thought that appear in them should be recognized as uncompromising historical facts (*rekishiteki jijitsu*) of the eras when those tales were created.... The *Kiki* are invaluable sacred texts, and their value is not harmed by the fact that their narratives do not contain historical facts about the progress of affairs.<sup>20</sup>

According to Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞, postwar (and later) historiography did not pay sufficient attention to the sentences cited above.<sup>21</sup> In other words, many historians

17 Tsuda 1958, pp. 1–4.

18 Kimura 1973, p. 37.

19 Umehara 1981, p. 27.

20 Tsuda 1924a, p. 503. Also see the revised edition, Tsuda 1948b, p. 315.

21 Inoue 1972, pp. 263–64.

appreciated Tsuda's denial of the *Kiki* and ignored his favorable comments on the *Kiki* as "sacred texts." Moreover, it is noteworthy that Tsuda used the term *rekishiteki jijitsu* with both positive and negative connotations. He rejected the idea that the tales of the *Kiki* could be recognized as objective historical facts, and yet he acknowledged those imaginary tales as history in the positive sense of reflecting ancient thought, political ideology, and the zeitgeist.

In 2001, Ienaga reflected on the consequences of writing his 1946 book, *Kuni no ayumi*, and, as an archaeology-oriented scholar, declared his own "scientific" standpoint, explaining that Tsuda's work had inspired him to eliminate all the stories that could not be regarded as objective facts, such as the episodes from the Age of Gods, other accounts of Japanese deities, and the mythical legends of the early emperors.<sup>22</sup> Certainly, Tsuda himself had never intended to "eliminate" these tales. Indeed, he placed more emphasis on uncovering the ideas and beliefs behind them than on ascertaining the degree of their historical veracity.<sup>23</sup> Ienaga ignored Tsuda's ambivalent use of the phrase "historical facts," choosing rather to admire his critical stance, acknowledging the significance of his repudiation of literal historicity regarding the first half of the *Kiki*.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Ienaga was obsessed with the issue of the emperors' existence, and believed that the lack of original records signified an absence of both historical facts and historical persons. Tsuda, however, made a clear distinction between historical records on the one hand and historical facts on the other.<sup>25</sup> Ienaga used Tsuda to break away from prewar nationalist orthodoxy and ideology, and appears to have projected his purposes onto Tsuda.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of Tsuda's declared intention to analyze the changes in the tales over time, Ienaga regarded his work as a shattering of the imperial tradition.

## 2. Tsuda's Interpretive Community and Historical Imagination

Ienaga was not the only admirer of Tsuda's critical thinking and repudiation of literal historicity. Indeed, Ienaga was a member of what we might call—using Stanley Fish's term—Tsuda's "interpretive community." Repudiation of the "facts" of the *Kiki* was not allowed during the prewar period, but postwar scholars were at liberty to interpret the *Kiki* as they wished, and it was in this context that Tsuda's work became accepted as orthodox. The scholarly world collectively formed a consensus regarding Tsuda's work at a time when a new national history was urgently needed: namely, that his work was a "historiography of denial" (*hitei no shigaku*). Relying on Tsuda's critical analysis, scholars came to agree that the mythical accounts included in the first half of the *Kiki* were of no value to postwar Japan.

As is well known, in 1965, Ienaga filed lawsuits against the government, seeking compensation for persecution on account of the government's screening of his history textbook, *Shin Nihonshi* 新日本史. The records of Ienaga's trial highlight the existence of a notable interpretive community centered on Tsuda's books. The postwar historian Naoki Kōjirō 直木孝次郎 (1919–2019), who consented to serve as a witness during Ienaga's trial in

22 Ienaga 2001, pp. 58, 69. Ienaga asked for Tsuda's advice on writing his own history textbook. However, he did not mention there Tsuda's authorized textbook written in the Meiji period. See Tsuda 1965b.

23 Tam 1983, p. 169.

24 Ienaga 1972, p. 280.

25 Tsuda 1946, p. 29.

26 Imai 1988, p. 12.

1968, provided the following answer to a question in court about the theory of the existence of Emperor Jinmu 神武:

Of course there are, based on a thesis predating Dr. Tsuda's, scholars who still insist on the historical existence of Emperor Jinmu, but this idea is not confirmed to be a scientific fact.... I know of contemporary scholars who are likely to take the same view as Dr. Tsuda.<sup>27</sup>

Naoki specifically mentioned several scholars affiliated with universities in the Kansai district: Ueda Masaaki 上田正昭 (1927–2016), Kishi Toshio 岸俊男 (1920–1987), Inoue Kaoru 井上薫 (1917–2009), Kitayama Shigeo 北山茂夫 (1909–1984), Yokota Ken'ichi 横田健一 (1916–2012), and Kadowaki Teiji 門脇禎二 (1925–2007), among others. This postwar consensus clearly demonstrates that many historians shared with Naoki an image of Tsuda as an outstanding historian who denied not only the authenticity of the *Kiki* but also the existence of the early emperors. These scholars (including Naoki and Ienaga) did not profess themselves to be Marxists, but they were more or less Marxist-informed.

The origin of this interpretive community dates back to 1940, when the government imposed a ban on four of Tsuda's books: *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no kenkyū* (1924), *Jindaishi no kenkyū* 神代史の研究 (1924), *Nihon jōdaishi kenkyū* 日本上代史研究 (1930), and *Jōdai Nihon no shakai oyobi shisō* 上代日本の社会及び思想 (1933). Facing a severe backlash from his readers, Tsuda was forced to resign from Waseda University. On 8 March 1940, Tsuda was indicted on charges of violating publishing law. He stood before the Tokyo Municipal Court as a criminal "for having declared that the chapters of the *Kiki* from Emperor Jinmu to Chūai 仲哀 were completely fictitious stories."<sup>28</sup> It was a closed-door trial, with only a few spectators admitted. The judges were sympathetic to Tsuda from the beginning of the trial. Although today we regard the trial as an infringement on academic freedom, it is notable that Tsuda never considered himself a victim.<sup>29</sup>

As for his research on the *Kiki*, Tsuda first published *Jindaishi no atarashii kenkyū* 神代史の新しい研究 in 1913, then issued enlarged editions, namely *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no shinkenkyū* 古事記及び日本書紀の新研究 (1919), *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no kenkyū* (1924), and *Jindaishi no kenkyū* (1924). After deep deliberation, his writing style became increasingly complicated and his standpoint correspondingly less clear. Tsuda's students at Waseda University recognized that examining the historical reality of the early emperors was not the purpose of his research in the banned books.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, in Tsuda's view, refuting the tales' authenticity did not amount to repudiating the existence of the emperors. Tsuda duly appeared in court every week, most frequently from November to December 1941, and calmly repeated that he had not denied the existence of the emperors from Jinmu

27 "Naoki Kōjirō shōgen" in *Kyōkasho Kentei Soshō o Shien Suru Zenkoku Renrakukai* 1969, p. 353.

28 Kakegawa 1976.

29 Sakisaka 1952, pp. 63–78.

30 According to Tsuda's student Kurita Naomi 栗田直躬, who was admitted as one of a few spectators during the trial, Tsuda did not set out to critique the existence of the emperors in his banned books. See Kurita 1976, p. 2. Tsuda's disciple Kimura Tokio 木村時夫 also pointed out that Tsuda's prewar work did not constitute a strong denial of the existence of the early emperors. See Kimura 1973, pp. 38–39.

to Chūai.<sup>31</sup> Tsuda's statements during the trial clarify that he neither questioned nor denied the existence of the early emperors, nor did he completely deny the historical reality of the tales mentioned above.<sup>32</sup>

During the trial, Tsuda had at least fifty supporters, but no members of Rekiken came to his aid.<sup>33</sup> Tsuda was bitterly criticized by a number of intellectuals until his eventual conviction for violating publishing law in 1942.<sup>34</sup> For example, Minoda Muneki 蓑田胸喜, leader of the fanatical right-wing group Genri Nihonsha 原理日本社, proposed the following:

Look! Tsuda used the term “authors” of the *Kiki* to make the tendentious remark that they “must have been important persons at the Imperial Court who had been involved in politics, or had come to power.” He used the terms “monarchy,” “imperial court,” and “imperial household” to declare without reservation that the history of ancient matters and imperial rescripts included in the preface of the *Kojiki* was “a work of fiction, fabricated for political purposes.”<sup>35</sup>

Minoda's harsh condemnation of Tsuda's publications was triggered by Tsuda's lectures at Tokyo Imperial University in late 1939.<sup>36</sup> Minoda branded Tsuda's view as “a theory that obliterated the Age of Gods and Japan's earliest history” (*jindaishi jōdaishi massatsu ron* 神代史上代史抹殺論). He and his colleague Mitsui Kōshi 三井甲之 formed an organization called Teidai Shukusei Kisei Dōmei 帝大肅正期成同盟, which published a statement in the magazine *Genri Nihon* 原理日本 in December 1939 titled “Seimeisho: Waseda Daigaku kyōju Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku kōshi bungaku hakase Tsuda Sōkichi shi no jindai oyobi jōdai massatsu ron ni tsuite” 声明書: 早稲田大学教授東京帝国大学講師文学博士津田左右吉氏の神代及び上代抹殺論に就て.<sup>37</sup> They sent this statement to approximately five thousand intellectuals with a questionnaire regarding their views on Tsuda and the current state of academia in Japan. More than three hundred replied. One stated, “Dr. Tsuda has exposed his materialistic dogmatism,” and another responded, “He ridiculed the commemoration of the 2600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the imperial household and rejected the credibility of authorized history. Western science has corrupted his writings. He carelessly examined our national records and committed an outrage against the vital facts.” Yet another said, “Needless to say, because of his blind and unscientific belief, Dr. Tsuda's opinion must be rejected. His repudiation of our authorized history is intolerable.” The majority of intellectuals agreed

31 “Kōhan sokkiroku,” pp. 713–14. The trial record (on 27 November 1941) suggests Tsuda's interest in the early emperors' names and titles.

32 Brownlee 1997, pp. 191–92.

33 Brownlee 1997, p. 196; *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai* 2012, p. 180. For example, Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 became a witness. Nanbara Shigeru 南原繁 and Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男 took up a petition.

34 Sakisaka 1952, p. 74.

35 Minoda 1939, p. 23.

36 Genri Nihonsha 原理日本社 had published the magazine *Genri Nihon* 原理日本 and was preoccupied with Tsuda from before 1939. For instance, Matsuda Fukumatsu 松田福松 labeled Tsuda's book *Shina shisō to Nihon* 支那思想と日本 as “Tōyō bunka massatsu ron” 東洋文化抹殺論 (Annihilation of Oriental Culture). See Sakisaka 1952 for details.

37 Teidai Shukusei Kisei Dōmei 1939a. (This translates as “Statement: Regarding the Theory of the Annihilation of the Age of the Gods and Ancient History according to Tsuda Sōkichi PhD, Professor at Waseda University and Lecturer at Tokyo University.”)

with the Teidai Shukusei Kisei Dōmei's statement.<sup>38</sup> They condemned Tsuda for denying the *Kiki*, which was authorized and sacred history during the war. Indeed, Minoda referred to Tsuda as “the Imperial University's red communist professor.”<sup>39</sup>

After the war, in 1948, Marxist scholars Watanabe Yoshimichi 渡部義通, Matsushima Eiichi 松島栄一, Tōma Seita 藤間生大 and Tōyama Shigeki—all members of Rekiken—held a roundtable discussion in which they confirmed their belief that Tsuda had endorsed a materialistic view of history.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, during the war, Tsuda was widely condemned as an “unscientific” Marxist historian, and, consequently, postwar Marxists were strongly encouraged by his critical analysis of the *Kiki*.<sup>41</sup> Japan's defeat made them reevaluate Tsuda's work to the point where Marxism became acceptable in postwar academia. Thus, on discovering in the postwar period that Tsuda both supported the imperial institution and also dismissed Marxists' “distortion” of history, some Marxist scholars, such as Ishimoda Shō 石母田正, were disappointed.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many other Marxists continued to admire Tsuda as a great “scientific” historian for undermining the alleged authenticity of the *Kiki*, thus shattering the imperial tradition.

Tsuda's image was thus reversed. Naoki, along with the scholars cited above, transformed what had been “unscientific” into “scientific,” based on his incorrect belief that Tsuda intended to “annihilate” Emperor Jinmu. In sum, despite Tsuda's adamant protests, he was misinterpreted; he became an academic hero and a source of inspiration to postwar historians who sought to overthrow the imperial institution.

### 3. Tsuda's Hypothesis on the Early Emperors and the New Trends of Postwar Academia

In his *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no kenkyū* (1924), Tsuda had argued that the *Kiki* authors had written the early emperors' sections without credible sources. In his view, the tales in the *Kiki* conflicted with each other because they were rewritten over the centuries by a multiplicity of authors. He understood that there must have been a complex “development of narratives” over time, and that the chronicles of the emperors from Suizei 綏靖 (r. 581 BC?–549 BC?) to Kaika 開化 (r. 158 BC?–98 BC?), and indeed those of Jinmu (r. 660 BC?–585 BC?) and Sujin 崇神 (r. 97 BC?–30 BC?), were probably written at different times.<sup>43</sup> In other words, Tsuda was implying that the imperial genealogy had been manipulated.

Tsuda realized that some of his explanations invited misunderstanding. In 1948, he reorganized and considerably revised his 1924 publication, *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no kenkyū*. Among the changes he made, the following addition was noteworthy, in that Tsuda acknowledged the existence of the “eight undocumented sovereigns” (*kesshi hachidai* 欠史八代):

38 Teidai Shukusei Kisei Dōmei 1939b.

39 Minoda 1940, p. 53.

40 Watanabe et al. 1948, p. 15.

41 Watanabe et al. 1948, p. 19.

42 Oguma 2002, p. 317.

43 Tsuda 1924a, pp. 445, 472–73. Opinions differ regarding the year of reign regarding the earliest emperors. Inoue Mitsusada, for instance, presumed that Sujin's dynasty had been 270 AD–290 AD. These reign dates do not imply that the emperors actually lived; they are the dates derived from the *Nihon shoki*. See Fujishima and Nogami 1955, pp. 1–32; Inoue 1965, p. 283.

We find in the *Kiki* that the emperors from Jinmu to Kōan 孝安 (r. 392 BC?–291 BC?) had only sons, and did not have daughters. This may lead to the conclusion that the lineage account is false.... Despite my conclusion that the accounts of the *Kiki* do not include historical facts, the hypothesis that these emperors did exist is not groundless. The absence of stories from emperors Suizei to Kaika is not a strong reason to question their existence.<sup>44</sup>

In this 1948 edition, Tsuda also positioned Emperor Sujin as a historical figure and questioned the existence of earlier emperors.<sup>45</sup> Tsuda's newly revised text caused confusion among postwar scholars. Inoue Mitsusada, for example, understood from the sentences added to the 1948 edition that while “Tsuda had refused to acknowledge these emperors as actual historical persons” in the prewar edition, he had shifted his opinion for the postwar revision.<sup>46</sup> I argue that Tsuda changed far less in the postwar period than Ienaga believed, but Tsuda did undergo a change in attitude after the trial in the early 1940s, which gave him an opportunity to consider whether certain emperors had or had not existed. Indeed, he was ambivalent about the existence of the early emperors in the 1948 edition.

In neither edition was he clear in his assertions regarding their existence. In the excerpt from the postwar edition cited above, it appears that Tsuda did not abandon his hypothesis that the authors of the *Kiki* had manipulated the lineage accounts of the earliest emperors. Instead, he was asserting that this manipulation did not in itself mean that they had not existed. It might be argued that Tsuda's work on the *Kiki* should have earned him recognition as a textual critic in the field of Japanese literature, rather than the field of historiography, since he sought to treat the *Nihon shoki* as Japanese literature.<sup>47</sup> He consistently focused on the “development of narratives” over time and the creation of the tales; he avoided becoming involved in the problems of the earliest history.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, many historians were inspired by the “imagined Tsuda,” and availed themselves of his scholarship to construct a common past without the imperial tradition.

For example, in 1952, historian Mizuno Yū 水野祐 published *Nihon kodai ōchō shiron josetsu* 日本古代王朝史論序説, in which he argued persuasively that the early emperors were fabrications of the *Kiki* authors.<sup>49</sup> Scholars such as Naoki, Okada Seiji 岡田精司 and Ueda Masaaki later developed Mizuno's argument, and put forward a new theory of dynastic change.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, Mizuno understood that Tsuda did not question the historical reality of Emperor Jinmu.<sup>51</sup>

Tsuda himself could not resist justifying his publications. Why did he criticize his readers? He did so not only because he hated being labeled a Marxist, but also because his readers misinterpreted his work. There was also a new trend within postwar historiography, a demand for “historical science” and the demystification of the imperial tradition. A

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44 Tsuda 1948b, p. 303.

45 Tsuda 1948b, p. 304.

46 Inoue 1965, p. 275.

47 Tsuda 1966, p. 34.

48 Tsuda 1958, p. 7.

49 Mizuno 1954, pp. 45, 136–40. Mizuno assumed the post of professor at Waseda University in 1961.

50 For the development of the changes in dynasties theory, see Maenosono 1986.

51 Isse 2006a, pp. 50–51.

feature of this new trend was that scholars (especially Marxists) presupposed Tsuda to be in denial of historical facts, especially as they related to the earliest emperors. Scholars had different understandings of Tsuda's work on the *Kiki*, but those who sought to undermine the imperial tradition misunderstood his work without examining his position on historical veracity.

Their misunderstandings of Tsuda's work emerged from their belief and methodology. First, for instance, their investigation of the range of "myth" (*shinwa* 神話) and its definition produced a popular misconception. The use of the term "myth" depended on the scholars, which made for a lack of clarity, but Naoki Kōjirō conceded that, in general, it referred to what Tsuda called *jindaishi*, the tales of Japanese deities included in the first half of the *Kiki*.<sup>52</sup> Despite Tsuda's refusal to term this part of the *Kiki* "myth," Saigō Nobutsuna 西郷信綱 (1916–2008), a Marxist scholar who became a follower of Tsuda, replaced what Tsuda called *jindaishi* with the term "political myth" (*seijiteki shinwa* 政治的神話), and attached greater importance to his analysis of *jindaishi* than of the other parts of the *Kiki*.<sup>53</sup>

It was also common to define the entire *Kiki* as "myth," but Naoki and Saigō rarely referred to tales other than *jindaishi* as "myth." Tsuda, for instance, had argued that many episodes concerning *be* 部 (the name given to an assortment of occupation-based groupings) described in the latter half of the *Kiki* were not historical facts, but legendary narratives describing their origins.<sup>54</sup> Given that in one definition myth tells us the origin of things in a distant past, we can deal with *be* episodes as an example of such myths.<sup>55</sup> However, these scholars did not call these episodes "myths" or legends of *be* narrated in the early emperors' tales. Tsuda's denial of the authenticity of the Age of Gods' narratives was perhaps more important than his analysis of *be*, meeting postwar needs to "eliminate" the authorized history during the war. Naoki reduced Tsuda's term *jindaishi* to a work of fiction made by ancient intellectuals, even though Tsuda refused to "eliminate" the history.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the Marxist historian Tōma Seita referenced Tsuda's books to claim that the first half of the *Kiki* included fiction.<sup>57</sup> The "imagined Tsuda" was a scholar who transformed *jindaishi* into fiction. Postwar research into *be*, as indicated by Kita Yasuhiro 北康宏, was based on a superficial understanding of Tsuda's work.<sup>58</sup> Those who welcomed the new interpretation of *jindaishi* as fiction did not pay sufficient attention to (or did not agree with) Tsuda's discussion of these *be* episodes.

A second example of postwar scholars' misunderstanding of Tsuda is in their erroneous assertion that Tsuda denied the truth of all the stories preceding the sections on Emperor Ōjin 応神 (270 AD?–310 AD?) in the *Kiki*.<sup>59</sup> In fact, Tsuda discussed these stories in the following terms:

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52 Naoki 1971, p. 20.

53 Saigō 1961, p. 48; Isse 2005, p. 49.

54 Tsuda 1930, pp. 470, 543. For a definition of *be*, see Asakawa 2006, p. 110.

55 Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 131.

56 Naoki 1955, pp. 64–68; Naoki 1971, pp. 20–21; Tsuda 1958, p. 7. Naoki recognized that Tsuda's questioning of authenticity throughout the *Kiki* did not always amount to a denial of historical facts.

57 Tōma 1958, p. 11. Tōma referenced Tsuda's *Jindaishi no atarashii kenkyū* (1913) and Kojiki *oyobi Nihon shoki no shinkenkyū* (1919).

58 Kita 2013, p. 39.

59 Fujishima 1955, pp. 47–49.

Actual incidents such as the governing of the Korean Peninsula, Emperor Jinmu's eastern expedition, Yamato Takeru's ヤマトタケル conquest of Kumaso 熊襲 in Kyushu and the pacification of Izumo 出雲 should have been inserted in the sections on Emperor Ōjin and later. The authors of the *Kojiki* had nothing to write after describing them in the earlier sections.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, as early as *Jindaishi no atarashii kenkyū* (1913), Tsuda acknowledged these tales as being true to some extent.<sup>61</sup> Despite this, Ishimoda, in his discussion of what he calls *ei'yū jidai* 英雄時代, that is, the heroic age of Emperor Jinmu and Yamato Takeru, emphasized that Tsuda was intent on denying the historical facts of the *Kiki*.<sup>62</sup> We should note that what Tsuda called “historical facts” sometimes included the thought of intellectuals and the “spirit” of the seventh century. Ironically, Ishimoda shared with Tsuda the view that the tale of Yamato Takeru was based on “historical facts.”<sup>63</sup> Leftist scholars have located Tsuda simply as the one who denied historical facts, since his ambivalent usage of the phrase “historical facts” was beyond their understanding.

A third example of postwar scholars' misunderstanding lies in their interpretation of lineage accounts. Tsuda himself argued that almost none of the *miyake* 屯倉 (state-controlled territory) episodes, including those in the reigns of emperors Keitai 繼体 (r. 507–531) and Ankan 安閑 (r. 531–535) in the sixth century, could be considered historical facts.<sup>64</sup> However, as indicated by Yamao Yukihisa 山尾幸久, some postwar scholars drew on Tsuda's discussion of the chronicles of imperial genealogy to argue that the legend of Emperor Sujin and the later tales, including the accounts of *miyake*, were fairly credible as historical facts.<sup>65</sup>

There are a couple of explanations for this misunderstanding: this was either because of the impact of Tsuda's account on “manipulated” imperial genealogy, or because he had acknowledged as factual that Silla overthrew the Mimana *miyake* 任那屯倉 in the twenty-third year of Emperor Kinmei's 欽明 reign (r. 539–571). His account was based on the existence of the Mimana Nihonfu 任那日本府 (the Japanese Mimana government that controlled *miyake* in the Korean peninsula). Kim Sok-hyong 金錫亨 denounced the “Japanese scholars' accounts” for forging a state that kept managing the Mimana *miyake* in the fourth or fifth century and “their misleading and imperialist/colonialist approach.”<sup>66</sup> Kim was implying that Tsuda was one of the “Japanese scholars.”

Those who welcomed the “imagined Tsuda” focused on the problem of the emperors' existence. They believed that the latter part of the *Kiki* contained history and paid little attention to Tsuda's accounts. Tsuda also cast doubt on the authenticity of the chapters of *Nihon shoki* that dealt with emperors from Ōjin 応神 to Tenji 天智 (r. 668–671). In

60 Tsuda 1924a, pp. 478–79, 487–89.

61 Tsuda 1913, pp. 12–13, 117–19; Tam 1983, p. 175. Some contemporary scholars overlook the fact that Tsuda interpreted these tales as the reflections of historical facts. See Hagino 2004, pp. 23–24, Tanaka 2008, p. 64, for instance.

62 See Isse 2004, p. 47 and Isse 2006b, pp. 32–34, for details.

63 Isomae 1998, pp. 146–54; Ishimoda 1948, pp. 52–55, 61. Ishimoda declared that only the poems in the *Kiki* retained some traces of *ei'yū jidai* as a historical era and censured the *Nihon shoki* authors for depicting the earliest emperors as “despotic rulers.”

64 Tsuda 1930, p. 122.

65 Yamao 1975, pp. 224–25.

66 Kim 1969, pp. 5, 51–53.

his *Nihon jōdaishi kenkyū* (1930), he demonstrated that the later chapters of the *Kiki* incorporated many creations, fabrications, and transliterations from old Chinese books, despite their location in the historically “reliable” parts of the imperial genealogy.<sup>67</sup> Postwar historians nevertheless ascribed more importance to Tsuda’s accounts of imperial genealogy than to his *Nihon jōdaishi kenkyū* (1930), which included a philological analysis of the chapters following Emperor Ōjin, of *Kogo shūi* 古語拾遺, and of *be* and *miyake*. Inoue Mitsusada, for instance, who took a positivist approach, referenced Tsuda’s idea of “manipulated” imperial genealogy and discussed the origin of the social structure of the early Yamato court as reflected in the *Kiki*.<sup>68</sup>

Because of these misinterpretations resulting from their common desire to reconstruct a new Japanese history, postwar scholars neither cited nor disputed *Nihon jōdaishi kenkyū* of 1930 as frequently as they did the rest of Tsuda’s banned books.<sup>69</sup> Many postwar historians searched for a detailed picture of the Yamato imperial court of the earliest era in archeology. If *Nihon jōdaishi kenkyū* did not influence the historical accounts of the Kofun period, it was because Tsuda mostly ignored archeological findings. When the discovery of iron swords reinforced the *Kiki* interpretation that Emperor Yūryaku 雄略 ruled the Yamato state as a coercive and absolute monarch, *Nihon jōdaishi kenkyū* was sidelined.

Postwar archaeology set out to conduct a full-scale study of the earliest period.<sup>70</sup> The designated burial mounds of the earliest emperors became a prompt to the imagination. Naoki, for example, argued that the origin of the Yamato court dated back to the late third century, when, it is alleged, Emperor Sujin’s burial mounds were constructed.<sup>71</sup> These burial mounds inspired postwar scholars such as Naoki to depict the early Yamato authority and associate archaeological findings with the *Kiki* documents.

However, the alleged burial mound of Emperor Yūryaku did not unequivocally authenticate the tales of Emperor Yūryaku in the *Kiki* or the idea that Yūryaku was a despotic ruler.<sup>72</sup> As for the chapters of Ōjin and subsequent rulers, Tsuda admitted that

67 Tsuda 1930, pp. 57, 102, 123, 150, 154, 196, 200, 226, for instance. Despite Tsuda’s remark that the story of the Iwai Rebellion in 527 during the reign of Keitai drew on unreliable sources, Tōma Seita not only acknowledged it to be true but also gave it a new meaning, namely that it was an expression of popular protest against the invasion and exploitation of the Korean Peninsula (Tōma 1951, p. 211).

68 Inoue 1985, p. 233. Inoue refused to reference *Kuni no miyatsuko hongī* 国造本紀, that genealogy of Kuni no miyatsuko, men who governed small territories in antiquity. Instead, he employed the method of extracting examples of Kuni no Miyatsuko, such as the tale of Shinetsuhiko 椎根津彦 in the *Nihon shoki*, or Saonetsuhiko 槁根津日子 in the *Kojiki*, or the legendary narrative of Yamato no Kuni no Miyatsuko 倭国造 from the *Kiki*. Unlike Tsuda, whose research on *be* treated *Kogo shūi* as a historical record and tended to deny the authenticity of the *Kiki*, Inoue’s analysis of *be* and of the *Kuni no Miyatsuko* system still used the *Kiki* as though it was a historical record. See Satō 1995, p. 144. Inoue’s publications expressed a certain degree of understanding of Marxist history.

69 Scholars frequently referenced *Jōdai Nihon no shakai oyobi shisō* (1933), which his work on the Taika reforms included, as well as his books on the mythical legends. See Kadowaki 1991; Isse 2007b.

70 See Edwards 1996; Harunari 2006.

71 See. “Naoki Kōjirō shōgen,” 8 October 1969, in Kyōkasho Kentei Soshō o Shien Suru Zenkoku Renrakukai 1969. Tsuda argued that one could not understand the origin of the Yamato court exclusively from the *Kiki*. See Tsuda 1948b, pp. 307–308. Some contemporary studies conclude that the Yamato hegemony had been established earlier (such as Allen 2003). This might be similar to his opinion.

72 Ishimoda 1948, p. 29; Mizutani 2013, pp. 22–23. Until recently, scholars have presupposed a tyrannical reign by Emperor Yūryaku, or a despotic state in the fifth century because of the existence of the Oka misanzai 岡ミサンザイ burial mounds, and the tales of Emperor Yūryaku as reliable sources.

the *Kiki* authors had often invented the stories and failed to draw on original records.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the putative burial mounds of early emperors and archaeological findings made up for what Tsuda referred to as a lack of original records in postwar Japan. Tsuda maintained that the chronicles of *Yūryaku* and the descriptions of his oppressive personality were derived from Chinese books.<sup>74</sup> He proposed that the *Kiki* authors interested in Chinese letters adapted the tales perhaps during the sixth to the seventh centuries, but he acknowledged the tales' description as an embodiment of those intellectuals' sentiments and ideas.<sup>75</sup>

In sum, postwar historians did not regard Tsuda's analysis of the tales of the early emperors in the latter half of the *Kiki* highly. They disregarded his hypotheses about *be* and *miyake*. For Tsuda, *be* was neither a group of people united by kinship nor a group of commoners. Instead, in his prewar work, he argued that *be* included farmers and government officials.<sup>76</sup> In contrast, influential Marxists such as Watanabe Yoshimichi argued that *be* referred to a group of subordinated or vanquished people.<sup>77</sup> The *Kiki*, at least in its latter portions, took on a new meaning as the people's history or a history of class struggle. Unlike Watanabe, who emphasized the existence of a Japanese form of slavery, Tsuda took a philological approach.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, Marxists did not draw on Tsuda's work in their new interpretation of the early emperors' tales.

Whereas Marxist historians presupposed an underlying distinction between high authority and exploited slaves behind the construction of large burial mounds, Tsuda maintained that they were not intended as displays of the sovereign's authority.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, there was no evidence that these people had been forced to work. Some Marxist scholars wished to transform the first half of the *Kiki* into fiction (and Ienaga likewise sought to "eliminate" the existence of the earliest emperors from history because of "the lack of original records"), but Tsuda, in his *Nihonjin no shisōteki taido* (1948), chose to reject the Marxist reinterpretation of the *Kiki* such as that by Hani Gorō 羽仁五郎 (1901–1983). Hani acknowledged the *Kiki* authors' accounts of subordinate people as true: they were not sufficiently recompensed, and they suffered at the hands of, or were enslaved by, the earliest emperors.<sup>80</sup>

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73 Tsuda 1930, p. 63.

74 Tsuda made a distinction between his terms. He defined *jutsusaku* 述作 as a creation or fabrication based on original records, and *zōsaku* 造作 as a creation or fabrication without such records. According to Tsuda, the accounts of early emperors' personalities were the authors' *zōsaku*. In other words, these accounts included many copies of old Chinese books. See "Kōhan sokkiroku," pp. 516–17, pp. 796–801.

75 Tsuda 1930, pp. 108–15, 201, 273–81, Tsuda 1948b, p. 293. For scholars' understanding of the process of adaptation, see Nitō 2011, p. 73.

76 Tsuda 1930, pp. 462–63, 485.

77 Tanaka 2008, pp. 69, 86. Marxists such as Watanabe tended to focus on "slaves" in the *Nihon shoki*. On Marxist historiography in the 1930s, see Tanaka 2008 for details.

78 Watanabe 1948, pp. 98–101; Tsuda 1930, pp. 541–43, for instance.

79 Hayakawa 1937, p. 162; Tsuda 1918, p. 14. Recent studies focus on the excavated crowns and swords as "authorized items" possessed by Emperor Keitai. See Takamatsu 2007, for instance.

80 In 1946, Marxist historian Hani Gōro enumerated twelve "facts regarding popular rebellion, flight, death of slaves, and their uneasiness" described in the latter part of the *Nihon shoki* as having led to the Taika reforms. See Hani 1946, pp. 58–59.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Tsuda's work has been greatly misunderstood. My analysis of Tsuda's writings reveals, in particular, that his use of the term *rekishiteki jijitsu* (historical facts) was ambivalent and could be interpreted in different ways. Tsuda employed the phrase in the sense of both objective fact and imaginary tale. Thus, he could never be the "denier of historical facts" that some insisted he was. The preceding discussion has offered evidence that postwar scholars reinterpreted the Age of Gods sections of the *Kiki* as imaginary tales without value. This was not merely the case with Marxists who emphasized that the *Kiki* included fiction, but also with scholars such as Ienaga, Inoue, and Naoki.<sup>81</sup> They accentuated the absence of Emperor Jinmu and ignored Tsuda's affirmation that "the *Kiki* are invaluable sacred texts" for what they reveal of the thought and beliefs of ancient intellectuals, which Tsuda referred to as "historical facts." Mainstream critics of the left stressed Tsuda's impact and brought him fame.

As Tsuda himself wrote, postwar Marxists were equivalent to wartime right-wing intellectuals. They interpreted his work on the *Kiki* as Minoda Muneki did: as "a theory that obliterated the Age of Gods and Japan's earliest history." His assertions regarding the existence of emperors appeared ambiguous. Many postwar historians were obsessed with the matter of the earliest emperors as historical figures. As they struggled to understand Tsuda's work in its entirety, they oversimplified his achievements. They reduced him to a "denier of historical facts" or a "historian who undermined the existence of the earliest emperors." While the "imagined Tsuda" motivated postwar Marxists to reinterpret the *Kiki*, Tsuda himself set out to analyze the changes in narratives and avoided engaging too much with the earliest history. I suggest that Tsuda's interpretive community was mistaken in believing that he denied the existence of the earliest emperors. Their collective perceptions of Tsuda bore little resemblance to his actual intention.

In "Watakushi no *Kiki* no kenkyū no shushi" (1958), Tsuda was determined to confront his readers' misunderstandings. They had conjured up an "imagined Tsuda" who eliminated all traces of historical facts from the Age of Gods and the earliest eras of the emperors in the *Kiki*. This imagined, oversimplified version of his work became a symbol of hope amid the despair following Japan's defeat in the war. Although Marxist historians found Tsuda's love for the imperial family offensive, they praised him and sought to follow him as a "historical scientist." For those who sought to reinterpret the *Kiki* from a Marxist perspective or demystify them, Tsuda's critical analysis was useful. It is unfortunate that his analysis was not fully appreciated as literary criticism, one which explores the process of the text's creation. The misinterpretations of his work on the *Kiki* compelled Tsuda in his later years to clarify its purpose. He remained active past the age of seventy, continuing to publish articles and revise his old books. He did not set out to be a "denier of historical facts," but rather to understand the text of the *Kiki* by examining the layers of myth within it, and in so doing to verify real "historical facts."

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81 For Inoue's case, see Isse 2006a, p. 50.

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## Death and the Prospects of Unification: *Nihonga's* Postwar Rapprochements with *Yōga*

Matthew LARKING

Over the course of 1947, four *yōga* painters, Suda Kunitarō (1891–1961), Nakagawa Kazumasa (1893–1991), Ishii Hakutei (1882–1958) and Kimura Shōhachi (1893–1958), published their views on *nihonga* in the periodical *Sansai*. The positions these artists adopted were instrumental in initiating the Westernization discourse in the early postwar *nihonga metsubōron*. In this essay, I introduce the *metsubōron* and a number of historical and terminological issues, particularly relating to correspondences between the mid-twentieth century postwar situation and the earlier Meiji period (1869–1912), in which *nihonga* was emergent as a modern painting idiom. Thereafter I chart the pervasiveness of the *nihongalyōga* divide across Japanese modernism, then critically discuss the four *yōga* painters' 1947 commentaries that contributed to speculation about *nihonga's* postwar death. Following this, in an extended coda, I indicate the pressure exerted upon early postwar *nihonga* painters by these Westernization discourses, which resulted in artistically productive solutions to *nihonga's* mid-twentieth century malaise.

**Keywords:** *metsubōron*, death of painting, Westernization, postwar, Suda Kunitarō, Nakagawa Kazumasa, Ishii Hakutei, Kimura Shōhachi

### Introduction

The debate concerning the death or destruction of *nihonga* (*nihonga metsubōron* 日本画滅亡論) was the salient crisis for the tradition of *nihonga* 日本画 (Japanese painting) in the early post-WWII period.<sup>1</sup> It is not entirely clear if these discussions should in fact be viewed as a single debate, or as a plurality of debates, for their often diverging, sometimes unrelated, occasionally intersecting, concerns. Much of what came to be known as *metsubōron* commentary tended to be less formal argument or counterargument than positional statement or opinion.

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1 *Nihonga* is the modern umbrella term given to the amalgamation and modernized forms of a number of premodern Japanese schools of painting. The term is usually posited in contrast to the Western painting-inspired practices of *yōga* 洋画 that formed the other half of major painting practiced in Japan from the end of the Edo period and thereafter. The division of modern painting in two was formalized when the government invited submissions in *nihonga*, *yōga*, and sculpture for the first Bunten 文展 (Ministry of Education Art Exhibition) in 1907.

The central concerns of the *metsubōron* have mostly gone unarticulated to date, and there are few serious scholarly sources to turn to on this subject.<sup>2</sup> Many of the issues that emerged in the early postwar period and engaged *metsubōron* contributors have not secured wider critical purchase in ways commensurate with the generalized art-historical disregard for the exploration of *nihonga*'s roles in the formation of Japan's early postwar modernism. The *metsubōron* gave rise to a host of intermingling cultural, social, and art-political considerations and anxieties in a period of dramatic upheaval and turbulence, but my purpose here is to address the specific issues surrounding the calls for an early postwar Westernizing of *nihonga*. This was inarguably the most pressing issue facing *nihonga* in the first couple of decades following WWII. *Nihonga* was faced with a supposed death, followed by cultural renewal of variant sorts. Renewal, it appeared to a number of artists and critics, could be delivered through the further Westernization of *nihonga* through *yōga* 洋画, or by the adoption and development of Western painting practices, styles and movements, within *nihonga*.<sup>3</sup> At this early postwar historical point, *nihonga* and *yōga* mostly remained relegated by conventions to separate spheres of cultural operation.

The very term *nihonga* carried the implication that the idiom could not be appreciated abroad on account of its hermetically sealed, pictorial language and artistic practices that were rooted in considerably older, premodern art traditions.<sup>4</sup> Aspirations to reform postwar *nihonga* were part of a period trend for internationalism in the broader field of modern painting in Japan. The progression of this trend would potentially expel the localism and nationalism characteristic of some *nihonga* in the early and mid-twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> *Nihonga* might, according to some artists and critics, attain internationalism through further enduring rapprochement with the idiom's ostensible antonym, *yōga*. In doing so, *nihonga* would be engaging a variety of pictorial styles and associated painting practices that were conventionally said to take place outside of the field of *nihonga* proper. In theory, this would eventually, perhaps finally, overcome the bisection of modern Japanese painting into *nihonga* and *yōga*, and result in a singular postwar painting idiom.

I suggest in this essay that the critical year for the inauguration of what came to be known as the postwar *metsubōron* was 1947, which saw the emergence of a small but critical corpus of essays penned by highly esteemed *yōga* painters. These essays featured in the *nihonga*-focussed journal, *Sansai* 三彩, and were written by Suda Kunitarō 須田国太郎 (1891–1961), Nakagawa Kazumasa 中川一政 (1893–1991), Ishii Hakutei 石井柏亭

2 Chelsea Foxwell charts some territory similar to mine. Her conception of the significance of the *metsubōron* for *nihonga* in general, however, goes in other scholarly directions. See Foxwell 2015.

3 *Yōga* typically refers to painting done in Japan by Japanese painters, usually in oil paints. *Yōga* began to take root in Japan from the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and usually addressed antecedent European painting in subject or style while undergoing a lengthy process of Japanization, particularly in terms of subject matter. *Yōga* later took stylistic and conceptual cues from further diverse cultural geographies over the course of the twentieth century.

4 Note that the *nihongalyōga* distinction was not entirely a product of modernism. The earlier structural binaries of *yamatōe* 大和絵/*karāe* 唐絵, Japan/China, were gradually usurped over the decades of the mid-to-later Meiji period by that of the *nihongalyōga* binary, or Japan/the West. The *nihongalyōga* binary also frequently seems more of a terminological distinction than one of actual pictorial practices. For a discussion of some of the terminological polysemy relating to the term *nihonga*, for example, *kanga* 漢画, *yamatōe*, *waga* 和画, *hōga* 邦画, *ranga* 蘭画, *seiyōga* 西洋画, and *seiga* 西画, see Furuta 2006, p. 219.

5 Disdain for localism, replaced by internationalist art aspiration, was a particular early postwar concern. See Mitsuda 2014, p. 565.

(1882–1958), and Kimura Shōhachi 木村莊八 (1893–1958). These texts in large part appear to have provided the critical foundation initiating the rhetoric that built up around postwar *nihonga's* future-oriented, Westernization discourse. The positions articulated by these four painters became the basis for the slightly later *metsubōron*, a term not widely in use at this historical point in relation to *nihonga*, and not one employed by these painters at their times of writing.

Hereafter I discuss in sequence the emergence of the postwar *metsubōron* and some conspicuous historical and terminological issues. Following this I make historical reference to the pervasiveness of the *nihongalyōga* divide over the course of Japanese modernism, focusing on the seemingly elusive desire for the unification of Japan's painting idioms that was at issue in the mid-twentieth century *metsubōron*. I then chart and critically discuss the commentaries in 1947 that inaugurated what subsequently became known as the *metsubōron*, with specific concern for calls for the rapprochement of Japanese and Western painting. I conclude by means of an extended coda, indicating some of the artistic directions the influential *metsubōron* had upon early postwar *nihonga* practitioners. This suggests that rather than “death,” the ostensible conflicts of *nihonga* and *yōga* were artistically productive.

### **The *Metsubōron***

Who first used the term *metsubō* to characterize early postwar *nihonga* remains opaque. Indeed, in none of the four *yōga* painters' commentaries I discuss below does the terminology appear, suggesting that it was not in common usage in 1947. It was, however, by 1949, when the editors of the *nihonga*-focused journal, *Sansai*, articulated a summary of contemporary issues mirroring *nihonga*. Entitled “Nihonga *metsubōron*” 日本画滅亡論, the editorial indicates that the term “*metsubōron*” was by then a recognized *nihonga* art world phenomenon.<sup>6</sup>

But *metsubō* was not so much a newly coined locution used in relation to postwar *nihonga*; rather, it had specific Meiji period (1868–1912) roots. One of the earliest references to the relation between *nihonga* and the proposition of its death known to this author was set forth in 1899 by the painter Nakamura Fusetsu 中村不折 (1866–1943), who wrote

I note that Japanese-style painting has been infected with Western-style painting. [...] It would be more appropriate to call these works Western-style paintings rather than Japanese-style paintings.

He continued, “Japanese-style painting will disappear at length and Western painting alone will exist as painting.”<sup>7</sup> Nearly a decade later in June, 1910, the *nihonga* painter Hishida Shunsō 菱田春草 (1874–1911) wrote that *sumi* ink and exquisite lines were not the special province of *nihonga*. If they continued to be so regarded, wrote Hishida, *nihonga* would be “destroyed” (*metsubō* 滅亡).<sup>8</sup> Nakamura Fusetsu again predicted the downfall of Japanese

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6 Jihyō 1949, p. 14.

7 Nakamura Fusetsu cited in Furuta 2006, p. 222.

8 Hishida Shunsō cited in Aoki 1996, p. 91.

painting in print in 1911, foretelling *nihonga's* death as a protracted one, extending beyond its initial Meiji period parameters.<sup>9</sup>

The postwar *nihonga* debates appear to have been first stimulated by the early postwar critiques of contemporary poetry, *tanka* and haiku. The values of *tanka* were interrogated in print as early as March 1946, and the debates concerning the future of *tanka* went under a number of designations, including the *tanka hiteiron* 短歌否定論 (negation of *tanka* debate) and the *tanka ketsubetsuron* 短歌決別論 (the break with *tanka* debate).<sup>10</sup> Comparatively contemporaneous to postwar uncertainties about *tanka* was the publication of an influential article by the French-language scholar, Kuwabara Takeo 桑原武夫 (1904–1988). This was published in the November 1946 issue of *Sekai* 世界 as “Daini geijutsuron: Gendai haiku ni tsuite” 第二芸術論: 現代俳句について (Second-class art: About contemporary haiku).<sup>11</sup> Kuwabara here demoted contemporary haiku to the status of a lesser art, likening the schools of haiku to medieval guilds that supposed ancient authority, and gave to haiku a formalized, mannered, and so mediocre quality. Kuwabara disparagingly called contemporary haiku an activity for “whiling away the time or serving as a diversion for the ill or elderly [...]”<sup>12</sup> These antecedent and partly equivalent types of literary disputation subsequently metamorphosed into questions of a visual nature, fueling the ensuing *metsubōron*.

*Metsubō*, in its postwar, painting-related usages, was a term of extremity, even violence. It was used predominantly in art journalism to cast a shadow of anxiety over early postwar *nihonga* and its prospects.<sup>13</sup> Some latter-day commentaries referring to the mid-century *metsubōron* as the artistic backdrop have tended to exacerbate this violence. One of the more radical statements in this regard was made by philosopher Umehara Takeshi 梅原猛 (1925–2019). In the 1982 context of discussing the early career of the *nihonga* painter Ōno Hidetaka 大野秀隆 (1922–2002) and that artist’s supposed suffering from “Picasso-shock” as an artistic form of PTSD following his decommissioning from WWII conscription, Umehara wrote of young artists returning home from war to pursue radicalized avant-garde aesthetics. He proposed that, by drawing keenly from Western art rather than from local art traditions, young painters set *nihonga* on a suicide course.<sup>14</sup> For Umehara, *nihonga* was being killed off by its own practitioners, and Westernization was the means of dispatching it.

The art historian Kawakita Michiaki 河北倫明, a significant early postwar *metsubōron* contributor in his youth, also offered what was perhaps an immoderate characterization in

9 Nakamura Fusetsu cited in Furuta 2006, p. 222.

10 The thirty-one-syllable form of *tanka* was described in the Meiji period as “inadequate to the literature of today,” and disparaged as a form in which “no meaning could be discovered” (Katō 1993, pp. 448–49). However, these early postwar debates about haiku and *tanka*, and later *nihonga*, were largely about the value of some (but not all) traditions and their ongoing significance. In the wartime period too, in 1942, for example, the novelist and critic Sakaguchi Ango 坂口安吾 (1906–1955) had argued against the significance of tradition in architecture in the urban landscape. He stated that, if necessary, the temple Hōryūji 法隆寺 should be pulled down and a parking lot put in its place. For Sakaguchi, it was vital to address the realities of contemporary life and the degree to which tradition should influence it. See Mitsuda 2014, p. 551, and Katō 1993, p. 447.

11 Shimada 1995, p. 6.

12 Kuwabara Takeo cited in Jewel 2006, unpaginated.

13 Kitazawa 2003, p. 179.

14 Umehara 1982, p. 163.

later years. In the mid-1980s he wrote of the death of *nihonga* as being none too distant from the theory of the destruction of Japan (*Nihon metsubōron* 日本滅亡論).<sup>15</sup> But as another art historian, Kitazawa Noriaki, has pointed out, the early postwar period literature on *nihonga* did not specifically equate the destruction of Japan in WWII with the demise of *nihonga*.<sup>16</sup>

Another value-laden characterization in the postwar *nihonga* debates was “second-class art.” This was a nomination which not only appears to have migrated to *nihonga* from the late-1946 critical demotion of haiku to “second-class art” status by Kuwabara, but which also followed some of the lexical symmetry of one of the Japanese designations for WWII, (*dainiji sekai taisen* 第二次世界大戦), though in this latter case indicating chronology rather than a value judgment. Some circumspection, however, is necessary in dealing with the more extreme terminologies. Indeed, in discussing what I consider to be the originating mid-twentieth century *metsubōron* commentaries below, it will become apparent that the beginnings of the *metsubōron* were of a rather more benign character.<sup>17</sup>

The postwar death of *nihonga* was, like other cultural deaths, a form of rhetorical fiction. “Death” would necessarily be an occurrence of a once-and-for-all-time nature, and “destruction” depicted *nihonga* as either somehow in ruins, or ruined beyond retrieval, which it was not. Because *nihonga* continued to be practiced in various forms, such a death could only take place by distorting much about the actual contemporary and historical situations, or by mistaking period concerns for the longer history, or *raison d'être*, of *nihonga*. Perhaps, in preemptive form, the postwar *metsubōron* represented the reoccurrence of perennially unresolved issues in Japan's modern painting that have migrated, without resolution, into contemporary art.

The postwar *nihonga* debate also has important parallels within international modernist painting. The art historian and theorist Thierry de Duve has written, for example:

It is both amusing and pathetic that about once every five years the death of painting is announced, invariably followed by the news of its resurrection. This doesn't mean there isn't a certain truth hidden in this swinging of the pendulum—otherwise the phenomenon would have ceased long ago. Is it not symptomatic that just shortly after the invention of photography, Paul Delaroche prophesied the death of painting for the first time? This certainly points to one of the causes, not of the actual death of painting—there is no such thing—but rather of the feeling that painting was under threat. This feeling is as old as modernity [...].<sup>18</sup>

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15 Kawakita 1986, p. 6.

16 Kitazawa 2003, p. 178.

17 The early years of the *metsubōron* were not without acerbic commentators. For example, in 1948, the *yōga* painter Somiya Ichinen 曾宮一念 (1893–1994) leveled a concerted attack on *nihonga* that nonetheless reflected some of the 1947 calls for *nihongalyōga* rapprochement. Somiya thought *nihonga* had reached its terminal stage; the idiom was without life, mired in depression, and wore a death mask heavily made up (Hirano 1997, p. 189). Somiya gave five reasons for this: (1) mistakes in *nihonga* instruction in educational institutions; (2) a decreasing number of those disposed to *nihonga*; (3) lack of learning from nature and old paintings; (4) the relative ease of earning a living as a *nihonga* painter compared to the same for a *yōga* painter; and (5), the marked murdering of individual expression in *nihonga* (Hirano 1997, p. 189). Somiya concluded by asking readers to forgive his malicious tongue. Somiya 1948, p. 32.

18 Thierry de Duve cited in Danto 2003, unpaginated.

And in early postwar *nihonga*, the threats of modernity and Westernization were again anxiously felt in seemingly overwhelming ways, as they had earlier been in the very different cultural circumstances of the Meiji period.<sup>19</sup> In the early mid-twentieth century, however, the tradition of *nihonga*, was not being challenged. Predominantly, the concern was with *nihonga* in its present state, and its future forms, and what it should perhaps look like, address, or aspire to.

The majority of the arguments for or against the postwar demise of *nihonga* took place in the pages of *Sansai*. These took place throughout the years 1947–1949, but they also continued in variant forms through the early 1950s, and on into the present. The tenor of the debates over this 1947–1949 period tended to move from initial doubts about the future of *nihonga*, or pessimism regarding even *nihonga*'s short-term durability, to a later optimism that emerged from at least around 1949, particularly from younger artists.<sup>20</sup> *Nihonga*, then, went from being dismissed as a ghost of times past (*bōrei* 亡霊), to the postulation that the idiom was encountering a renaissance of sorts: death, then potential rebirth.<sup>21</sup>

The stakes were high. Could *nihonga* be eclipsed by *yōga* in the forward thrust of postwar modernity, relegated to a stockpile of merely historical interest? Or should *nihonga* be eventually and seamlessly absorbed into oil painting, so unifying the divided field of modern painting, *nihonga* and *yōga*? Alternatively, would a future with the divisions maintained be a possibility, or would *nihonga* have a future of an altogether different kind?

### Elusive Unification

*Nihonga* was, in originating conception, a composite form of painting. The art historian Satō Dōshin 佐藤道信, writing of the Tokyo-centric quotient of *nihonga*, noted that it was in 1885 that Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心 (1862–1913) and Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) “initiated a movement to create ‘new *Nihonga*’ which would incorporate aspects of Western art.”<sup>22</sup> Even predating this, *nihonga* painters (or painters working within earlier Japanese painting traditions who contributed to forming concepts of modern *nihonga*) borrowed from *yōga*'s serviceable resources: perspective for compositional organization, chiaroscuro for further palpable modeling, and subject matter. *Yōga*, too, was frequently “Japanized” by its practitioners across the later nineteenth century and through the twentieth. This was particularly in regard to subject matter, and a contemporary example complicit with the emergence of the *metsubōron* would be Kitawaki Noboru's 北脇昇 (1901–1951) *Sesshū paranoia zusetzu* 雪舟パラノイア図説 (1947) (figure 1). In Kitawaki's oil on canvas, in the right section that apes the appearance of *sumi* ink conventions, the painter collaged together landscape elements from four different late fifteenth-century works by Sesshū Tōyō 雪舟等楊 (1420–1506). Utilizing the doubling concept of Dali's surrealist provenance, Kitawaki turned an amalgamation of Sesshū's craggy mountain forms into a number of obliquely angled human faces, especially conspicuous in the far-right section of the landscape.<sup>23</sup>

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19 Kawakita 1980, p. 103.

20 See, for example, *nihonga* painter Asakura Setsu's impassioned rallying call in “Riaru no jikaku.” Asakura 1949.

21 Suzuki 1949, p. 40.

22 Satō 1995, p. 79.

23 Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 1997, p. 125.



Figure 1. Kitawaki Noboru 北脇昇, *Sesshū paranoia zusetsu* 雪舟パロノイア図説 (Explanatory diagram of Sesshū's paranoia; 1947). 60.6 x 72.0 cm. Collection of Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan. In Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 1997, p. 125.

Centrist pictorial propositions combining elements of Japanese and Western painting, however, are much longer in evidence before the advent of modernism.

Approximately coincident with the mid-Meiji emergence of the mutually regarding painting discourses of *nihonga* and *yōga* were critical voices calling for painting's unification. Okakura Tenshin made one of the first statements of the kind in 1887: "I say to the Japanese artists, art is something to be shared by the entire world. There should be no distinction between the Orient and the West."<sup>24</sup> And then in 1896, Okakura responded when questioned whether oil painting included Japanese-style painting: "All works painted by Japanese people are Japanese-style paintings."<sup>25</sup> Inarguably the best known statement of this kind was by painter Hishida Shunsō in 1910:

I firmly believe that the day will come—of course not in the near future—when all the painting we know today by the different names of *yōga*, watercolor, and *Nihonga* will be regarded as *Nihonga*, that is, painting conceived and produced by Japanese people. There will be no difference between what we call *Nihonga* and *yōga*, except on one point: their different painting materials.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Okakura Tenshin cited in Furuta 2006, p. 216.

<sup>25</sup> Okakura Tenshin cited in Furuta 2006, p. 218.

<sup>26</sup> Hishida Shunsō cited in McDermott 1995, p. 296.

The desire for a unified field of painting, an indefinitely deferred issue in Japan's modern painting, was also of significance in the postwar period following the crucial *metsubōron* period of the later 1940s. Painter-poet-writer Takiguchi Shūzō 瀧口修造 (1903–1979) hoped the day of unification for *nihonga* and *yōga* could yet arrive, writing in 1957 that: “I believe, rather, that there will come a time when the two will be unified.”<sup>27</sup> Recent commentators have also addressed the issue. Curator Furuta Ryō has written:

From after the war to the present day, both genres have been swallowed into the contemporary art trend so that the anatomy of conflict has been relatively nullified. [...] I suggested that the term “Japanese-style painting” should not be used in contemporary art history from the 1960s onwards. I recommended unifying everything into “painting” and, if necessary, distinguishing the material as “*kōsai* [*nikawa* 膠 paint]” and “*yusai* [oil paint].”<sup>28</sup>

Furuta's comments are largely in accord with Hishida's about *nihonga's* and *yōga's* respective painting materials. His vision of an “anatomy of conflict” being nullified, however, is suspect. For the unification of painting has remained elusive, even in contemporary times. Hishida's seemingly prophetic words intuiting modern Japanese painting's unification, however, appeared to approach realization in 1947. This was when issues leading to the slightly later claims about *nihonga's* postwar death were first raised, later exaggerated. They were made by hybrid *yōga* painters, looking across the bisection of modern painting, at *nihonga*.

### ***Metsubōron* Beginnings: Oil Painters Regarding *Nihonga***

The rhetoric giving rise to the demise of *nihonga* debate began with a number of articles in the journal *Sansai* in 1947, the principal print forum for discussions about the postwar roles of *nihonga*. These were authored by influential *yōga* painters born in the late nineteenth century: Suda, Nakagawa, Ishii and Kimura. What distinguished these artists was their range of cultural activities. Suda was also an academic, occasionally painted *nihonga*, and produced an ostensible fusion of Eastern and Western painting practices in oils; Nakagawa engaged the indigenized form of Chinese literati painting (*nanga* 南画), and practiced calligraphy in addition to ceramic decoration; Ishii was one of the founders of the modern printmaking movement (*sōsaku hanga* 創作版画) and occasionally made *nihonga*-type painting; Kimura was additionally an illustrator. All four were polemical essayists and senior artists with established reputations. These four took issue with a variety of *nihonga*-related issues, primarily dealing though with the rapprochements of *nihonga* and *yōga*, thus engendering the critical beginnings of the postwar *nihonga* debates.

It is notable that these formative *metsubōron* critiques were articulated one-sidedly by *yōga* painters who happened to work in media other than oils. In this sense, their observations could be considered art-political: they were painters overlooking the historical bisection of painting from the position of *yōga*, discerning *nihonga* becoming incrementally closer to their own art practices. This is of some significance because there was no

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27 Takiguchi 2012, p. 74.

28 Furuta 2006, p. 228.

comparable *yōga metsubōron* in this period. As a later *metsubōron* contributor, the *nihonga* painter Asakura Setsu 朝倉攝 (1922–2014), was to write in 1949, *yōga* was filled with “made in Japan” type “imitations,” and frequently aped recent European painting precedents and practices.<sup>29</sup> *Yōga* had also long been beset by problems of its own kind, and so perhaps one way of not addressing these was for *yōga* painters to direct attention to the ostensible malaise afflicting *nihonga*.

It may come as some surprise that *nihonga* painters were largely uninvolved in the first years of the *metsubōron* from 1947. Asakura pointed out in 1949 that *nihonga* painters were almost entirely absent from the *metsubōron* debates to date. Asakura was indeed among the first practitioners of *nihonga* to come to the defense of her besieged idiom.<sup>30</sup> Highly regarded *nihonga* painters may not have felt threatened by the critiques, particularly since many originated in the sometimes anti-*nihonga* position of *yōga*. But it remains that neither *nihonga* painters of reputation from an older generation, nor younger radicals, came forward in print until 1949 to defend *nihonga* publicly against its alleged shortcomings. As such, in the early years of discussion giving rise to the *metsubōron*, *nihonga* was essentially being critiqued from the outside, by representatives of its supposed rival, *yōga*, and also by art critics and art historians.<sup>31</sup>

In this regard, the four essays discussed below can implicitly be understood as art-political polemics by painters in elevated positions. Suda, for example, had been admitted to the highest artistic honor of Teikoku Geijutsuin 帝国芸術院 (Imperial Arts Academy) in 1947.<sup>32</sup> But honors aside, these were also senior and practicing *yōga* painters, ones who had forged and developed the very idiom they worked in over decades. The early postwar period was a time of recovery, rupture, and disarray, in which these painters took advantage of their positions to assert the media, and associated painting practices, that were in postwar ascendancy.

Suda's “Seiyōga kara nihonga o miru” 西洋画から日本画を見る began from his personal experience as an artist who undertook Western art training, even though his background was also in Eastern art. He claimed in-depth familiarity with two broad traditions of painting, and did not distinguish himself as an arbiter of either. In Suda's conception, Eastern painting was embodied by “empty space” (*yohaku* 余白) in which the unpainted areas became, in a sense, the “painted,” distinguished from the typical all-over surface application of oil paint on canvas.<sup>33</sup> The spatial character of Western painting, for Suda, arose with *chiaroscuro* in ancient Greek painting, and then the later invention of pictorial perspective.<sup>34</sup> But, Suda noted, Eastern art was never entirely ignorant of, nor unconcerned,

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29 Asakura 1949, p. 43.

30 Asakura 1949, p. 41.

31 Pictorial propositions, and not the penning of essays, stand as an alternative means of rebuttal. Curator Furuta Ryō offers a significant example of this sort: “During his final years [Yokoyama] Taikan was most interested in the future of Nihonga. The cause for this focus can be found in the immediate post war eruption of the ‘theory that Nihonga was dead’ and the resulting strong criticism that Nihonga was a form of an art dedicated to national purity. [...] Even at the age of almost 90 years old, Taikan continued to produce works and discuss the revival of Nihonga. Taikan never took on any disciples or followers throughout his life, and can be said to have continued his solitary battle until his final period” (Furuta 2008, p. 14).

32 Suda 1947, p. 25.

33 Suda 1947, p. 22.

34 Suda 1947, p. 22.

with *chiaroscuro* or perspective. Western pictorial organization, he implied, was also part of the formal repertoire of Eastern art.<sup>35</sup> East and West were partially congruent, as Suda demonstrated in his own mature painting practices.

Suda thought that within early postwar *nihonga*, one approach was to adopt *yōga*'s appearance, such that the two were barely visually distinguishable. But while Suda rejected the idea that *yōga* and *nihonga* were essentially characterized by differences in painting materials and appearances, he understood that contemporary *nihonga* had unmistakably entered *yōga*'s territory, and wondered what future directions *nihonga* might take.<sup>36</sup> In Suda's early postwar perception, *nihonga* was becoming increasingly cognizant and adoptive of *yōga*'s spatial conventions. Some contemporary *nihonga* painters were producing types of Westernized *nihonga* which persuaded Suda that they wanted to be *yōga* painters. *Nihonga* painters were courting the resources of *yōga*, and not the reverse.

For Nakagawa Kazumasa in his essay "Nihonga o dō miru" 日本画をどう見る, the major distinction between *nihonga* and *yōga* was their respective, though essentialist, painting materials—oils, or mineral pigments with a binding agent.<sup>37</sup> Another potential difference for him, however, was that *yōga* painters used their "heads," while *nihonga* painters used their "hands."<sup>38</sup> Discerning a technical amateurism in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), and Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), Nakagawa considered their techniques to arise from the individuals themselves in relation to the demands of their respective painting practices. Hence, the individual oil painter determined what was technically sufficient to arrive at particular pictorial effects. The *nihonga* painter, on the other hand, cobbled together pictorial effects from an already existing repertoire of techniques.

In Nakagawa's view, oil painting was a "simple and honest art" (*junboku bijutsu* 純朴美術), whose exemplary practitioners were found in early European modernism (and not, interestingly, among modern Japanese oil painters, of whom the author could count himself).<sup>39</sup> It was ideally pursued in individually expressive, and technically unmediated, ways. Nakagawa conceived *yōga* as technically creative, and continually refashioned anew according to the creative aims of the individual artist.

By contrast, the technical skills of *nihonga*, for Nakagawa, resulted in passivity in artistic production. They demonstrated a mastery of what the painter had been taught, rather than what he or she had individually created. In this sense, painting *nihonga* was akin to a performance of technical skill; painters were technicians as opposed to individual creative artists. And as technical performances, *nihonga* was the staging of somebody else's techniques and processes, enacting the past, rather than proposing new painting directions.

Nakagawa went on to express a distinctively Western aesthetic attitude to painting, one that drew on Kantian aesthetics and the usual Western distinctions about fine art concepts. He noted that the "honest art" of oil painting did not have any practical use value. If art had a "purpose," he believed, it could not be an honest one.<sup>40</sup> He turned to *haikai* by Matsuo

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35 Suda 1947, p. 23.

36 Suda 1947, p. 25.

37 Nakagawa 1947, p. 3.

38 Nakagawa 1947, p. 3.

39 Nakagawa 1947, p. 3.

40 Nakagawa 1947, p. 3.

Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) and Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716–1784) to illustrate his point. Their poetry fulfilled no practical use in daily life, and was without any particular relation to the public masses.<sup>41</sup> Buson's "Cuckoo, flying obliquely over Heian-jō" (*hototogisu Heianjō o sujikai ni* ほととぎす平安城を斜かひに) embodied the qualities of Nakagawa's honest, top-tiered art.<sup>42</sup>

There were of course useful and purposeful arts, Nakagawa conceded, and among (oil) painting examples, he included portraits, religious art, and war and reportage imagery. However, the core of art was its purposelessness. Use-values could only paralyze painting, relegating it to a second level, somewhat as haiku had been demoted to a lesser creative rung in 1946. Nakagawa was dissatisfied with contemporary *nihonga* painters' insistence on explaining "things" (*monogoto* 物事). Such "useful" paintings were behind the times of more progressive *yōga*.<sup>43</sup> Having elaborated at length on differences, Nakagawa concluded by calling for the abolishment of distinctions between *nihonga* and *yōga*.<sup>44</sup>

But if *nihonga* was behind the times, so also were Nakagawa's exemplars. Bashō was centuries old and with a literary provenance. Buson was an Edo-period painter/poet/calligrapher, though Nakagawa privileged his verse. Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne were among the European inspirations for early Japanese oil painting (post-impressionist and expressionist, as these artists were received in Japan) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But these painters had died more than half a century before Nakagawa's critique.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Nakagawa had practically nothing to say about Japanese painting over the centuries prior to the time of his writing. Such grand elisions came to characterize the early postwar *metsubōron*. It was almost as if thinking about significant art and artists in the early postwar period had never moved beyond the Meiji period.

Ishii Hakutei's "Waga no zento" 和画の前途 avoided conventional terminology. *Nihonga* was not to be used, nor was *yōga*. Ishii stated that even the Tokyo School of Fine Arts had changed the name of its department of Western-style painting from *seiyōgaka* 西洋画科, signaling a Western painting orientation, to *aburagaka* 油画科 (Department of Oil Painting), indicating that the institution was no longer concerned with oil painting's geographic origins or the cultural implications these might entail. Ishii's reluctance to use the designations *nihonga* and *yōga* also suggested that these were outdated terms. Extending Ishii's characterization in this respect, oil painting might no longer be Western, might potentially have become Japanese through the passage of time since its later Edo period introduction, or even a painting medium now without regional affiliation. Perhaps early postwar "oil painting" could name painting aspiring to international engagement and participation.

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41 Nakagawa 1947, pp. 3–4.

42 Nakagawa 1947, p. 4.

43 Nakagawa 1947, p. 4.

44 Nakagawa 1947, p. 5.

45 Many Western artists mentioned in texts concerning the early postwar *nihonga* debates were introduced to Japan during the Meiji period, or shortly afterwards. Contemporary photographer Morimura Yasumasa 森村泰昌 (b. 1951), noted of his formative postwar art education: "In terms of both knowledge (textbooks) and techniques (materials and methodology), the Western art that was introduced to Japan during the Meiji period was the basis of my art education, as someone who was born in Japan in 1951." Even many years after the early postwar *nihonga* debates, Western artists introduced to Japan during the Meiji period appear to have remained the salient ones in art education and art circles. Morimura Yasumasa cited in Uematsu 2016, p. 165.

In analogous fashion, Ishii proposed the term *kōsai* 膠彩 (signaling the *nikawa* binding agent and colored mineral pigments) as a substitute for the designation, *nihonga*. Like *abura* 油 (oils), *kōsai* appeared to obviate many of the national, political, geographical, and cultural implications of *nihonga* (“Japanese” painting). In using *kōsai*, there would no longer be a specifying “Japan (*nihon*)” in the name for one half of modern painting.

But instead of maintaining a bisection of painting through the employment of *nihonga* and *yōga*, or through his surrogates of *abura* and *kōsai*, Ishii proposed the single unifying term, *waga* 和画 (Japanese painting), to refer to all painting done by Japanese artists. Why should painting alone be singled out for division into Western and Japanese forms, he asked, when sculpture and architecture, say, were not divided along similar lines?<sup>46</sup> Ishii’s conception was, however, not unproblematic. For example, Buddhist woodcarvers had largely been tasked with originating Japan’s modern sculptural idiom while Western-style sculpture was increasingly promoted from the early twentieth century in the government-sponsored salons. Architecture similarly had its modern divisions and cultural allegiances.

Ishii’s disillusionment with the partitioning of painting was practically related to his artistic activities. He had felt troubled when replying to his interlocutors about his particular specialty, because he worked in oil paints, watercolors, sumi ink, and mineral pigments. Rembrandt was never asked to make distinctions between being a painter and a printmaker.<sup>47</sup> Michelangelo, he wrote, was both painter and sculptor. Again, as in Nakagawa’s essay, we can observe here a rhetorical recession into the Western past for examples to elucidate vexations concerning mid-twentieth-century Japanese painters. But in Ishii’s view, a painting smelling of oil paint was produced by the hand of a practitioner of *waga*, and works fashioned from *nikawa* and mineral pigments (*nihonga*) were also “Japanese painting (*waga*).”<sup>48</sup>

Even so, Ishii was pessimistic about the future of Japanese painting. One issue he discerned—which also applied to other traditional arts such as *noh* theater and *bunraku* puppetry—was that no new generation of revered exponents was emerging to take over.<sup>49</sup> Painters of the past had copied old pictures and learned the traditions along with brush techniques, but these practices were disappearing in the postwar art world. Ishii also thought that the quality of the materials for painting, such as the binding agent *nikawa*, was worsening. He also denigrated imported painting materials. Their use resulted in diminished visual beauty.<sup>50</sup>

Ishii had long been convinced of the decline of Japanese painting. A near half-century earlier in 1902 he had written of his desire to see a syncretic field of painting develop that “would synthesize *yōga* and *nihonga* in the name of a ‘new, perfect Japanese painting.’”<sup>51</sup> Even at this earlier time, however, he had been disenchanted with *yōga* and *nihonga*, questioned

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46 Ishii 1947, p. 27.

47 While Ishii sought to unify Rembrandt’s artistic practices, art historical scholarship indicates Rembrandt himself made significant practical distinctions. Svetlana Alpers writes, for example, “One of the remarkable things about Rembrandt’s production as an artist is the almost total separation that he maintained between the three media in which he worked—drawing, painting, and etching.” Alpers 1990, p. 71.

48 Ishii 1947, p. 27.

49 Ishii 1947, p. 27.

50 Ishii 1947, p. 28. Perhaps Ishii was referring to imported Western pigments, though it is unclear. Japanese painters had long imported a number of painting materials. Historically, imports from China were of a higher quality than was usually available in Japan.

51 Ishii Hakutei cited in Hirayama 1996, p. 58.

whether *nihonga* was superior or inferior to *yōga*, and wondered whether *nihonga* would “be more prosperous in the future, with its characteristics intact, or will it eventually perish?” According to art historian Mikiko Hirayama, Ishii came to conclude that any and all paintings by a Japanese hand would eventually be called “Japanese painting.”<sup>52</sup> In this respect, Ishii’s views had largely not changed over half a century.

Several of these mid-twentieth-century *nihonga* art world positional statements published in *Sansai* embodied a distinctive Meiji period character. One reason was that the authors had acquired their own formative artistic educations at that time. And indeed, for some *metsubōron* commentators, the early postwar period was in fact comparable to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. While there are important political implications to the use of *ishin* in relation to intellectual positions established in the 1930s, my concern here is specifically with its usage in the context of early postwar *nihonga* and its future prospects. In 1952, for example, the art historian Kitakawa Momoo 北川桃雄 (1899–1969) explicitly referred to the postwar period as a “second restoration” (*daini ishin* 第二維新).<sup>53</sup> Other commentators in the same year were implicitly referring to it. Painter Asada Benji 麻田辨次 (1900–1984) wrote of the early postwar period as one in which Japan was once again open to other countries following an Edo-period-type closure (*sakoku* 鎖国).<sup>54</sup> *Nihonga* painter Iwasaki Taku 岩崎鐸 (1913–1988) noted that a modern sense of *nihonga* was coming, giving birth to an art that was not simply the exotic local color of a single island nation.<sup>55</sup> In particular cases, like the views expressed by Ishii, Meiji period rhetoric could be overlaid on early postwar cultural situations.

A final *yōga*-based commentator active in 1947 was Kimura Shōhachi who had decided, as had others before him, that the distinction between *nihonga* and *yōga* was essentially one of materials. But for this painter, *nihonga* and *yōga* could not unify because they had differing forms of artistic consciousness.<sup>56</sup> For Kimura, *nihonga* and *yōga* were as different as *shamisen* and piano.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, Kimura also referred to the two painting traditions as “mortal enemies” (*shiteki* 死敵).<sup>58</sup> *Nihonga* wants to be like *nihonga*, he wrote, and *yōga* like *yōga*.<sup>59</sup>

Chronologically following the essays by his *yōga* peers, Kimura’s position was a polemical one of antithetical concern, that was never true in any absolute way. Variant forms of the Westernization of *nihonga*, and the Japanization of oil painting, had taken place for well over half a century by this point. But for Kimura, an amalgamated idiom was monstrous. The time of the “*nue*” 鶺鴒, he wrote, was over.<sup>60</sup> In referring to the mythical

52 Hirayama 1996, p. 59.

53 Kitakawa 1952, p. 42.

54 Asada Benji cited in *Sansai* 1952b, p. 64.

55 Iwasaki Taku cited in *Sansai* 1952b, p. 60.

56 Kimura 1947, p. 12.

57 Kimura 1947, p. 13.

58 Kimura 1947, p. 12.

59 For Kimura, *nihonga* and *yōga* possessed distinctive spirits (*esupuri* エスプリ), and these were embodied in the particular painting materials used (Kimura 1947, p. 12). *Nihonga* and *yōga* were also defined for him by characteristic forms of aesthetic feeling or consciousness (*bikan* 美感). Kimura 1947, p. 15.

60 A Meiji period criticism utilizing the term *nue* can also be found in relation to Takeuchi Seiō’s 竹内栖鳳 (1864–1942) *Byōji fukēn* 猫兒負喧 (Cat with Kittens; 1892), a painting that amalgamated elements of various schools of Japanese painting without apparently achieving a unity of the parts in the whole. This term *nue* as used in the Meiji and Taishō periods could also refer to an incongruous amalgamation of Western and Japanese cultures, such as a man dressed formally in kimono while wearing a Western top hat. See Szostak 2005, p. 34.

beast mentioned in the *Heike monogatari* that was a single entity, though also a frightening and unnatural composite of parts (the head of a monkey, the body of a badger, a tiger's legs, and the tail of a snake), Kimura was implying that a satisfactory fusion was fictitious.<sup>61</sup> For Kimura, *nihonga* and *yōga* were as water and oil—no amount of mixing could result in a lasting fusion.

The principal concern with *nihonga* for senior *yōga* painters in 1947 was whether *nihonga* and *yōga* should, or could, unify. This had been a practical and conceptual issue percolating through modern Japanese painting from the late nineteenth century, and it was now assuming reinvigorated critical importance as painters began to reflect on their artistic traditions, and their relations to them, as the sense of a new postwar era was beginning to take shape. The chasm dividing *nihonga* and *yōga* appeared to several of these 1947 commentators to have been exaggerated. Little apart from the materials used, oils or mineral pigments, seemed to distinguish them. Suda thought that *nihonga* had become like *yōga* to the degree that the two could appear almost visually identical. Nakagawa considered the two traditions to be distinguished only by their materials, though *yōga* was the more intellectual whereas *nihonga* was mired in adherence to slavish and uncreative technical facility. He did, however, think the distinctions between *nihonga* and *yōga* should be abolished. Ishii had gone further, doing away with the terms of *nihonga* and *yōga* altogether. In their place, he advocated the use of *waga*, uniting modern Japanese painting under a single term. Among the *Sansai yōga* critics of *nihonga* in 1947, only Kimura believed that the modern painting idioms could not be reconciled.

These dialogues implied that a unified painting idiom would probably obliterate much of the traditions of both *nihonga* and *yōga*, though there was no crisis concerning *yōga* comparable to that coalescing around *nihonga* in the early postwar period. Historically, *nihonga* and *yōga* had been mutually regarding painting discourses. But they also held or adhered to separate and distinct techniques, normative subjects and motifs, had distinctive histories, and differed in their reverences for particular lineages, personages, geographies, seminal works, and institutions. The future of painting as posited in 1947 was an intriguing one. *Nihonga* might now only have a past, and if it were to have a future at all, it would go by another name in forging a new postwar identity. This could have been *kōsaiga* 膠彩画, perhaps, or Ishii's *waga*, though neither of these ultimately prevailed over the status quo of *nihonga* and *yōga* in the early postwar period. The revival of the painting unification dialogue in the early postwar period did, however, have marked effects on early postwar painting production.

### Coda

*Nihonga* was faulted for many more diverse issues in the subsequent years of the late 1940s' *metsubōron* and also in the years thereafter, often in regard to Western painting-related concerns: *nihonga's* generalized conservatism, particularly regarding themes and subjects that neither resonated with contemporary society, nor engaged postwar realities; the inability to compete with or compare favorably to international art trends; implicit restrictions on individual artistic proclivities in favor of propagating technical or thematic conventions; mannerism; anti-humanism; and a generalized creative exhaustion. *Nihonga's* institutions

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61 Kimura 1947, p. 15.

were said to be feudal organizations, embodied by top-down hierarchies. Painters were said to be complicit, maintaining the status quo propagated by senior generations schooled in ways that were outdated.

*Metsubōron* theorists were fundamentally concerned with what and how to paint at the dawn of a new age, and what *nihonga* ought to look like in this postwar period. At stake were both the contemporary circumstances of *nihonga* and its future. Westernizing *nihonga* further was the solution proposed by artists and critics for the idiom's troubled state, both in the critical year of 1947 when Suda, Nakagawa, Ishii, and Kimura expressed their views on *nihonga*, and in the years thereafter through to at least the early 1960s.<sup>62</sup> This Westernization, it appeared to many artists and critics, was already long in evidence, and could eventually result in a singular postwar painting idiom. In many ways, then, the early postwar *metsubōron* beginnings as they were shaped in 1947 were simply the verbal acknowledgement, and perhaps encouragement, of what had been taking place in regard to *nihonga* for decades. Indeed, many of the issues addressed in the postwar dialogues had been part of the formative Meiji period conceptions integral to the birth of *nihonga*. In Westernizing *nihonga*, these Meiji period concerns were being revived, bolstered, and pushed into the critical foreground as crucial to the directions *nihonga* should take in the postwar period.

But this is not to say that every *nihonga* painter was compelled to suppress the tradition(s) that he or she had trained in and thereafter practiced and developed. Nor would I want to imply that every artist was engaged with Western painting in the early postwar period for significant stretches of time. Even though some artists and critics had called for the dispensation of the past, or called for a *nihonga* made anew for postwar realities, it was usually not the case that the themes, formats, and materials of prewar and wartime painting were now irrelevant to *nihonga*. Nor were all *nihonga* painters enjoined to change their artistic practices and start afresh with subjects that dealt with postwar realities, or to use pigment treatments that aped the look of *yōga*, or to create *nihonga* that was otherwise indistinguishable from *yōga* in subjects, styles, and perhaps even ideologies. The evidence for this is found in the pages of *Sansai* during the early years of the debates. The illustrations that were editorially privileged were the usually conservative and decorative images of *nihonga* censured by the more acerbic of *metsubōron* critics. These were still lifes or pictures of animals, landscapes, and *bijinga* 美人画 (figure 2).<sup>63</sup> This indicates the prestige and importance, even the centrality, of this kind of imagery in the early postwar period. It was also not usually imagery by the young and passionate individuals or vanguards of *nihonga* that featured in these pages. Rather, it was the sketches and paintings of the prominent figures from earlier generations, established artists with significant reputations. The early

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62 It would be incorrect to conclude that *nihonga's* seemingly perilous situation had been righted by the end of the 1940s or even in the following decades. Articles, positional statements, and verbal reflections of variant kinds continued to condemn or praise *nihonga* thereafter. For example, in a special issue of *Sansai* in 1952 which reported on the status and prospects of contemporary *nihonga*, artists and critics mostly restated or elaborated on concerns that had arisen in the *metsubōron* between the years 1947–1949. See *Sansai* 1952a and *Sansai* 1952b.

63 Note that this image differs slightly from the often reproduced painting of the same name in the collection of Kyōto Furitsu Ōki Kōtō Gakkō 京都府立鴨沂高等学校.



Figure 2. Uemura Shōen 上村松園,  
*Yūgure* 夕暮 (Twilight; 1941). Collection  
unknown. In Sansai 三彩, ed. *Sansai 2*  
(1946), p. 10.

*metsubōron* rhetoric, however, was followed by the formation of a pictorial corpus of more radically Westernized *nihonga* by those of both older and younger generations.

Many *nihonga* painters engaged with pictorial Westernization fleetingly or in piecemeal ways, limited to only a small number of works, or to individual works that used Western painting in partial ways. Some of the more overt Western art concerns included subject matter, formal or compositional concerns, and the employment of European and American modernisms: prewar expressionism, cubism and surrealism, and postwar Parisian Salon de Mai, Art Informel, and Abstract Expressionism, for example. A further concern was with the impasto layering or coagulations of pigments by which artists attempted to procure for *nihonga* something of the *matière* of oil painting.

But it is also important to note that there was a seemingly totalizing element stemming from the influence of the postwar *metsubōron*, one that cut across the generations, *nihonga* art world status, reputation, institutional affiliations, and apparent stylistic allegiances and idiosyncrasies. While each artistic case has its particularities of crucial significance, the production of Westernized *nihonga* in the early postwar period was indicative of this or that painter or art organization participating in a new postwar sense of *nihonga* modernity, even if that sense of new modernity was only defined by attempting or advocating forms of Westernized *nihonga*.

The scope of this Westernized *nihonga* advocacy included major artists of the prewar generation who were both inspired by and practiced variant forms of Western painting in *nihonga* in the postwar period. They include Dōmoto Inshō 堂本印象 (1891–1975) (figure 3), a painter using mineral pigments and *nihonga* materials while utilizing Western ways of



Figure 3. Dōmoto Inshō 堂本印象, *Hachi jikan* 八時間 (8 Hours; 1951). 130.0 x 160.0 cm. Collection of Kyōto Furitsu Dōmoto Inshō Bijutsukan 京都府立堂本印象美術館. In *Chō "nihonga" modanizumu* 超「日本画」モダニズム, ed. Kyōto Furitsu Dōmoto Inshō Bijutsukan. Kyōto Furitsu Dōmoto Inshō Bijutsukan, 2008, p. 22.



Figure 4. Ikeda Yōson 池田遙邨, *Sengo no Ōsaka* 戦後の大阪 (Postwar Osaka; detail; 1951). 130 x 112 cm. Collection of Ōsaka-shi Shōbōkyoku 大阪市消防局. In *Asahi Shinbun Ōsaka Honsha Kikakubu* 朝日新聞大阪本社企画部, ed. *Ikeda Yōson kaiko ten* 池田遙邨回顧展. Asahi Shinbunsha, 1982, p. 33.

thinking about art through composition, coloring, and perspective;<sup>64</sup> Yamaguchi Hōshun 山口蓬春 (1893–1971) and Nakamura Gakuryō 中村岳陵 (1890–1969); the painting by Ikeda Yōson 池田遙邨 (1895–1988), *Sengo no Ōsaka* 戦後の大阪 (1951) (figure 4), that was inspired by Paul Klee (1879–1940) and exhibited in the seventh Nitten; the Western-type *nihonga* of Ono Chikkyō 小野竹喬 (1889–1979), in both his early and later oeuvres. As for the near-abstractions of Fukuda Heihachirō 福田平八郎 (1892–1974) and Tokuoka Shinsen 徳岡神泉 (1896–1972), they appear to accept both deeply Japan-traditional, and European-American modernist, interpretative readings.<sup>65</sup> Among these painters, Ono, Ikeda, Dōmoto, Fukuda, Tokuoka, Yamaguchi, and also Dōmoto's head *juku* student, Miwa Chōsei 三輪晁勢 (1901–1983), all held organizational affiliation with the Nitten, the most significant postwar *Kanten* successor and the dominant exhibition forum in the early postwar years.<sup>66</sup>

What was distinctive about the works of these Nitten painters was the frequently conservative level of abstraction, though Dōmoto may be considered an exception. They often shared a predilection for the adoption of reduced palettes dominated by a color or two, and the inclusion of largely blank or near-blank areas of pictorial space somewhat reminiscent of attenuated modernist color-field painting. Fukuda Heihachirō's *Shinsetsu* 新雪 (1948), for example, had a palette restricted to whites and greys for a scene celebrating snow covering the ground and shallow set stones, in what is ostensibly a Japanese garden. His *Mizu* 水 (1958) in blue and green represented swirling movements on the meniscus. Tokuoka Shinsen's *Nagare* 流れ (1954) (figure 5) portrayed a brown ground bisected by a horizontal blue flow of paint through the center, resembling the mid-twentieth century American color-field paintings of Mark Rothko in *No.61 (Rust and Blue)* (1953), for example. Tokuoka's *Akamatsu* 赤松 (1956) had three tree trunks represented and these were set against a further diluted brown background that could be read as a conservative take on American Barnett Newman's "zips." Miwa's geometricized paintings also recalled Newman's "zips." One of Miwa's titles was *Shubashira* 朱柱 (1961) (figure 6), which grounded the painting in the representational field of traditional sanctuary architecture.

Nitten-affiliated abstraction was conservative because, even as representational imagery was to degrees eroded by the painters, stylized, and reduced in palette range, painting titles could allege entirely representational content. This content commonly referred to traditional Japanese aesthetic sensibilities—poeticized landscapes or seasonal elements, the snow on garden stones, rippling water, flora and fauna—all imagery at the thematic and aesthetic core of the *kachōfūgetsu* 花鳥風月 (nature-based and poeticized imagery) sensibility. The art journalist Hashimoto Kizō 橋本喜三 (b. 1912) wrote that within the Nitten in the

64 Kitakawa 1952, p. 37.

65 Kitakawa 1952, p. 37.

66 *Kanten* (governmental exhibitions) is an umbrella term referring to public competitive art exhibitions sponsored by the Japanese government, usually through the Ministry of Education. The Nitten was the last major manifestation of the sequence of government-sponsored exhibitions. Waei Taishō Nihon Bijutsu Yōgo Jiten Henshū Iinkai 1990, p. 132. A summary outline of the major formal *kanten* organizations and reorganizations is as follows: the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (Bunten) was established in 1907 and ran until 1918, when it was reorganized as the Imperial Academy Art Exhibition (Teiten) until 1934. Subsequently it was reorganized as the New Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (Shin Bunten) from 1935–1943, then the Special Wartime Exhibition in 1944, becoming the Nitten from 1946. Retaining the Nitten name, the exhibition forum relinquished its government affiliation in 1958, becoming a private organization, which it has remained since. Tōkyō-to Teien Bijutsukan 1992, p. 148.



Figure 5. Tokuoka Shinsen 徳岡神泉, *Nagare* 流れ (Stream; 1954). 137.0 x 170.0 cm. Collection of Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan 京都市美術館. In *1950 nendai Kyōto no nihonga: Nenshō no toki* 1950年代京都の日本画: 燃焼の時代, ed. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan, 1990, p. 18.



Figure 6. Miwa Chōsei 三輪晁勢, *Shubashira* 朱柱 (Vermillion Pillars; 1961). 192.0 x 142.0 cm. Collection of Nihon Geijutsuin. In *1950 nendai Kyōto no nihonga: Nenshō no toki*, ed. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan, 1990, p. 24.

1950s and 1960s, the pursuit of abstraction was generally censured and became increasingly so over that period. The majority of Nitten artists engaging with abstraction eventually shifted back to increasingly representational imagery, bringing an end to the trend of an intensifying Westernization in painting via abstraction in that particular forum at that point in recent history.<sup>67</sup>

The figures who defined significant, though relatively conservative, threads within the postwar generations of *nihonga*, include the following: the Nitten's Higashiyama Kaii 東山魁夷 (1908–1999), Hirayama Ikuo 平山郁夫 (1930–2009) of the Inten, and Kayama Matazō 加山又造 (1927–2004) of the Shinseisaku Kyōkai 新制作協会 (formerly the Sōzō Bijutsu Kyōkai 創造美術協会 established in 1948 in opposition to the Nitten).<sup>68</sup> These three painters similarly pursued *yōga*-type orientations in their own *nihonga* vocations, particularly in their early postwar careers.<sup>69</sup> Higashiyama, for example, was primarily a landscape painter who began to make boldly simplified and abstracted compositions that became evermore abstracted in the early postwar years.<sup>70</sup> His early body of work followed after Western-style painting for its address to realism, though the difference between *nihonga* and *yōga* was for him at the time probably “not of much concern.”<sup>71</sup>

Higashiyama made his major postwar *nihonga* debut with the realistic though romanticized mountain landscape of *Zanshō* 残照 (1947), a work purchased by the government.<sup>72</sup> One of the most representative and well-known *nihonga* paintings of the early postwar period, however, and certainly Higashiyama's most well-known work, was *Michi* 道 (1950) (figure 7). This has been called “a major breakthrough in postwar *nihonga*,” and a work by a painter “acutely conscious of oil painting.”<sup>73</sup> Sketched before the war, the scene was modeled on a “road leading to the Tanesashi Coast in Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture.”<sup>74</sup> Revisiting the livestock farm area in 1950, Higashiyama re-sketched the scene but eliminated the fences, horses, and lighthouse. Instead he concentrated on the road, soil, and the grass moist with dew.<sup>75</sup> This pictorial shift was from an earlier realism to an increasing abstraction that pushed his painting toward quite literal “color-field” painting, and abstraction through the elimination of representational details. Higashiyama's pictorial approach in *Michi* eschewed lines in favor of suffused brushwork and coloring. With all the major details erased except the field, path, and a minimal sky, the subject signified what

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67 Hashimoto 1986, p. 108. For the most significant scholarly treatment of Dōmoto's oeuvre, see Tsuchikane 2009.

68 Inten is the commonly used abbreviation for the exhibiting forum, the Nihon Bijutsuin 日本美術院 (Japan Art Institute), established in 1898. Sōzō Bijutsu members formed the core of the *nihonga* section of the Shinseisaku Kyōkai from 1951.

69 In the Nitten, Higashiyama was known as one of the “three mountains” 三山, the other two being Takayama Tatsuo 高山辰夫 (1912–2007) and Sugiyama Yasushi 杉山寧 (1909–1993). The name derived from the fact that the surnames of all three included the word “yama” or mountain. Along with the Inten's Hirayama Ikuo and Sōzō Bijutsu's Kayama Matazō, these artists were known collectively as *nihonga*'s “five mountains” (*gozan* 五山), indicating their towering and influential presence in postwar *nihonga*. Mitsuda 2014, p. 596.

70 Kimura 2004, p. 21.

71 Ozaki 2008, pp. 232–33.

72 Yokohama Bijutsukan 2004. It is of interest that the government was buying contemporary art at all in this period, when much of the country remained impoverished and recovering from war.

73 Yokohama Bijutsukan 2004; Yamashita 2013, p. 192.

74 Yamashita 2013, p. 192.

75 Yukiama 2004, p. 19.

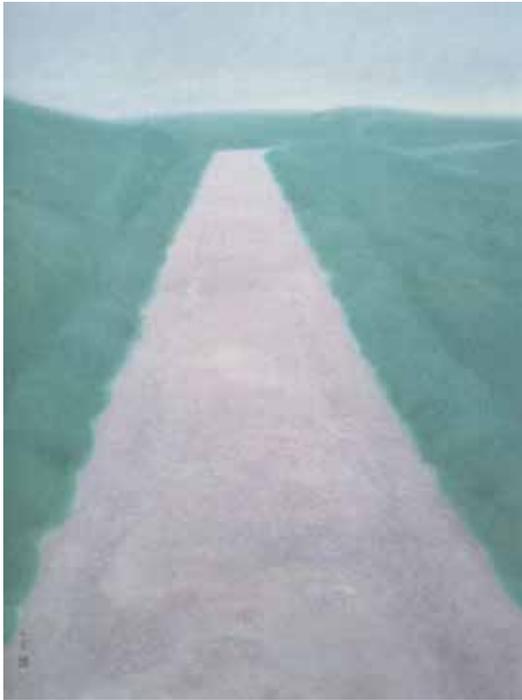


Figure 7. Higashiyama Kairi 東山魁夷, *Michi* 道 (Road; 1950). 134.4 x 102.2 cm. Collection of Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan. In Yokohama Bijutsukan 2004, p. 54.

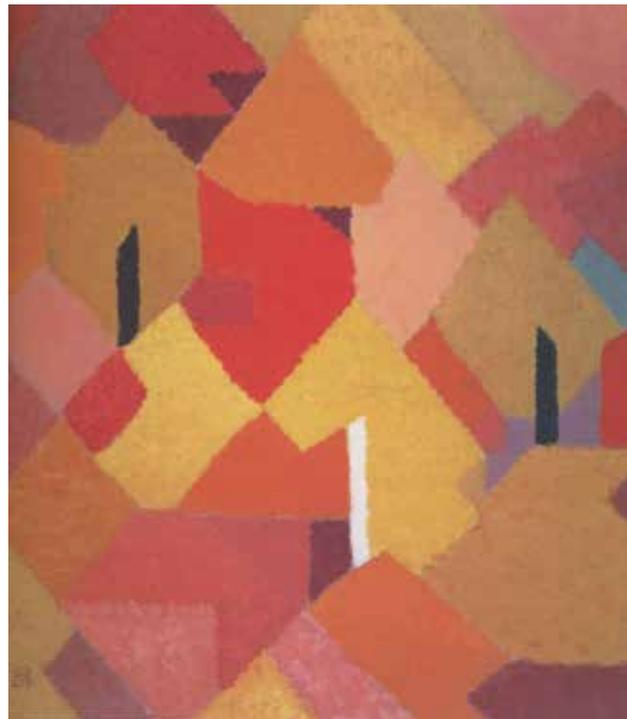


Figure 8. Higashiyama Kairi 東山魁夷, *Kōyō no tani* 紅葉の谷 (Autumn valley; 1952). 57.5 x 51.5 cm. Collection of Nagano-ken Shinano Bijutsukan, Higashiyama Kairikan. In Yokohama Bijutsukan 2004, p. 56.

Higashiyama himself called “a scene that could be found anywhere.”<sup>76</sup> Perhaps the painting might be called a form of *nihonga* absenting the cultural/geographical *nihon*. Higashiyama’s artistic thinking at the time eschewed the particular in favor of more generalized effects in scenes of representation/abstraction. Another slightly later work in a more heightened, though more conservative, form of abstraction was his *Kōyō no tani* 紅葉の谷 (1952) (figure 8). In this, the autumnal forests become pictorially reduced to colored, blocky areas in red, orange, yellow, and brown. The painting is almost unrecognizable as a landscape. Rather it appears as a collage of interlocking areas of color in a loosely geometrical abstraction.

The Sōzō Bijutsu Kyōkai (Creative Art Society) was formed in 1948 by artists breaking away from the Nitten. This organization too can be included within the characterization of *nihonga*’s rapprochement with Western painting, witnessed in the oeuvres of artists such as Uemura Shōkō 上村松篁 (1902–2001), Yamamoto Kyūjin 山本丘人 (1900–1986), Yoshioka Kenji 吉岡堅二 (1906–1990), Fukuda Toyoshirō 福田豊四郎 (1904–1970), Hashimoto Meiji 橋本明治 (1904–1991), Katō Eizō 加藤栄三 (1906–1972), Nishiyama Hideo 西山英雄 (1911–1989), Sugiyama Yasushi, Mukai Kuma 向井久万 (1908–1987), and Hirota Tatsu 広田多津 (1904–1990) (figure 9) among others. Indeed, this organization’s formation at the time the *metsubōron* was acquiring critical traction, and the group members’ Western art-looking focus in *nihonga*, suggested to some critics that the organization was the best initial first step forward out of *nihonga*’s postwar crisis.<sup>77</sup> This was largely because of the group members’ diverse artistic borrowings from the Western art repertory and from longer-held Japanese artistic sensibilities. This includes Yamamoto’s bold landscapes, the gorgeous decorative qualities of Yoshioka’s bird and flower paintings, Fukuda’s monumental genre scenes, the general penchant for primitivism among group members’ painting styles, and an impasto application of pigments that resonated with the “look” of *yōga*. In later Sōzō Bijutsu Kyōkai members’ paintings, there was also a generalized tendency for the deformation of the painted subject.

The Pan Real Art Association (パンリアル美術協会) formed later in 1948 and represented a more radical form of the Westernizing trend in postwar *nihonga*. Group members from the late 1940s turned to cubism and surrealism, and then explored European and American abstraction in *nihonga*, though these forays were frequently moderated in further complex relation to a wider number of traditions, Japanese or otherwise. In an unusual early example of revolt against the conservative *nihonga* practitioners preference for elegant subjects and esteemed materials, Mikami Makoto 三上誠 (1919–1972), in *Sakubin (F41)* 作品 (F41) (1949) (figure 10), created a lyrical abstraction from what are perhaps body parts such as limbs and organs. Mikami utilized cement (possibly because of its ready availability in the postwar period) as his primary “pigment,” and gave the work the appearance of the collaging techniques of earlier twentieth-century cubism and modernist experimentation.<sup>78</sup>

In some later instances, Pan Real painters such as Shimomura Ryōnosuke 下村良之助 (1923–1998) and Nomura Kō 野村耕 (1927–1991) conducted experiments in sculptural

76 Higashiyama 2004.

77 Ueshima 1948, p. 28.

78 Mikami’s penchant for fragmented body parts, and line work of this kind, was more common in the works of his middle and later oeuvre. Hoshino 2009, p. 9. It appears that Mikami reworked a number of his early paintings later in his career.

Figure 9. Hirota Tatsu 広田多津, *Rafu* 裸婦 (Nude; 1951). 152.0 x 62.0 cm. Collection of Kyoto-shi Bijutsukan. In *1950 nendai Kyōto no nihonga: Nenshō no toki*, ed. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan, 1990, p. 32.



Figure 10. Mikami Makoto 三上誠. *Sakubin* 作品 (F41) (Work (F41); 1949). 74.6 x 91.2 cm. Collection of Kyoto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan. In Hoshino 2009, p. 9.



Figure 11. Ōno Hidetaka 大野秀隆 (俣嵩), *Kin to kuro no korāju* 金と黒のコラージュ (Gold and black collage (detail); 1958). 61.0 x 212.0 cm. Collection of Tōkyō-to Gendai Bijutsukan. In *1950 nendai Kyōto no nihonga: Nenshō no toki*, ed. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan. Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan, 1990, p. 32.



Figure 12. Ōno Hidetaka 大野秀隆 (俣嵩), *Hi 緋 No. 24* (Scarlet no. 24; 1963). 141.0 x 129.0 cm. Collection of Kyōto-shi Bijutsukan. In *Pan Riaru sōseiki-ten: Sengo nihonga no kakushin undō* パンリアル創世記展: 戦後日本画の革新運動, eds. Shino Masahiro 篠雅廣 and Nakai Yasuyuki 中井康之. Nishinomiya-shi Ōtani Kinen Bijutsukan, 1998, p. 66.

forms of painting, stimulated by the generalized thrust of postwar Western modernism. The Pan Real painters' entry into forms of abstract and sculptural *nihonga* was inaugurated following the piecemeal introduction of Art Informel in Japan over the 1950s. Instrumental to this group shift in artistic focus was Ōno Hidetaka 大野秀隆 (俣嵩) (1922–2002) who, after initially pursuing forms of cubist painting inspired by Pablo Picasso's (1881–1973) *Guernica* (1937), developed his *Dongorosu* ドンゴロス series made from organically bunched burlap over, or around, which he painted as a form of low-relief sculptural painting. The first such work was *Kin to kuro no korāju* 金と黒のコラージュ (1958) (figure 11), the year of Ōno's departure from Pan Real to pursue painting without group affiliation. Ōno's *Dongorosu* series was initially inspired by the textiles of the Egyptian Copts that he had seen in an exhibition of Asian and African art at a department store in Osaka, and the textiles that wrapped the Chūsonji 中尊寺 mummified bodies that were exhumed briefly in 1950.<sup>79</sup> The influence on Ōno of the early postwar paintings of the Italian, Alberto Burri (1915–1995), is suggested by the coincidence of material and surface effects. From the early 1960s, Ōno gradually began to minimize the wrinkles in the fabrics of his paintings, which also became incrementally geometrical in composition. By the mid-1960s, Ōno insisted on his geometries by folding the burlap sacking into crisp shapes, thereby arriving at an almost sculptural origami, as with *Hi No.24* 緋 No.24 (1963) (figure 12). The significance of these sculpture-paintings by Ōno, and those by his earlier Pan Real painter colleagues, remains mostly unrecognized in Japanese art history and elsewhere.

The postwar *metsubōron*, then, was evidently instrumental in bringing about Westernized forms of pictorial consciousness and an increasingly Westernized sense of identity within *nihonga*. The ostensible artistic conflicts between *nihonga* and *yōga*, while occasionally surrounded by a rhetoric of death and despondency, were indeed generative of new pictorial approaches within *nihonga*, and productive of extensive bodies of work, which remain little known and little studied today. For *nihonga* painters of the early postwar period, particularly those working in the later 1940s, through to the early 1960s, Westernization came to appear as a pursuit that was not merely about closing the gap with *yōga*, or obviating distinctions between *nihonga* and *yōga*. The early postwar period was a time when parity, or contemporaneity, with international modernism, appeared possible. It was additionally a time when *nihonga* painters looked abroad to Western modernism for artistic stimuli, rather than relying upon the filtered versions relayed to them by their *yōga* peers whose pictorial expressions developed within Japan. *Nihonga* seemed it might shed its conservative image, surpass the languishing imitative phase that *yōga* appeared to be mired in, and result in styles of painting in Japan that favorably compared to contemporary painting elsewhere.

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<sup>79</sup> For the Osaka exhibits, see Kimura 1986, unpaginated. See also Ōno 1987, p. 7. For a discussion of these mummified bodies, see Yiengpruksawan 1998, pp. 131–42.

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## Fracturing Realities: Staging Buddhist Art in Domon Ken's Photobook *Murōji* (1954)

Chun Wa CHAN

Against the backdrop of the immediate postwar, photographer Domon Ken (1909–1990) embarked on a journey to the Murōji Temple in Nara Prefecture to capture its Buddhist treasures. The body of work was published in his photobook *Murōji* (1954), and has often been interpreted as a nostalgic spectacle that romanticizes Japan's Buddhist heritage for mass consumption. Yet, a close examination of the images and their arrangement in the photobook reveals Domon's indifference to reconstructing an accessible past. Contrary to the resurgence of Zen Buddhism in the 1950s, Domon's project absconded from any politicized attempt that sought to authenticate the "tradition" or spiritual "essence" of Japan. While beholders are granted with unprecedented proximity to the icons, Domon's interest in tactility and his manipulation of scale paradoxically render these statues illegible and unfamiliar. Equally significant is his juxtaposition of legible and abstract close-ups, which shatters the past into incongruent fragments. The photobook *Murōji* thereby raises questions that continue to resonate today: what is the role of documentary photography in postwar Japanese culture? In what ways can photography function as a metaphorical ground upon which competing ideas of nation, cultural memory, and subjectivity are mediated?

**Keywords:** Domon Ken, photobook, documentary, realism, postwar photography, avant-garde, New Objectivity, Buddhism, cultural heritage, pilgrimage

### Introduction

Historians of modern art have often been drawn to the narratives of the avant-garde, yet such an approach often leaves little room for a nuanced reading of works that eschew overt radicalism. Consider, for instance, the oeuvre of Japanese photographer Domon Ken 土門拳 (1909–1990). Best known for his "absolutely unstaged" (*zettai hienshutsu* 絶対非演出) style, Domon championed the genre of documentary photography whose sociopolitical

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currency is predicated on its claim to objectivity.<sup>1</sup> However, the reading of Domon's works solely through the lens of documentary realism has adversely affected the reception of his oeuvre, which is often discussed either separately or antithetically in relation to those of his younger contemporaries in current scholarship. Such a narrative of generational clashes, which positions Domon's works in the conservative faction against which postwar avant-garde movements were defined, may appear to be rich in meaning, but it problematically glosses over the productive dialogues among photographers from the 1950s to the 1960s. Through a close reading of the photobook *Murōji* 室生寺 (1954), this article connects Domon's oeuvre with the expanding discourses on realism in postwar Japan. I argue that the staging of anachronism in the photobook and its refusal to offer a totalizing narrative foreground Domon's critical reflection on the notion of pure objectivity in photography. Moreover, I show how Domon recast the photobook as a receptacle of heterogeneous visions by highlighting reality perception as innately fractured rather than coherent. The case of *Murōji* therefore demonstrates a different trajectory of postwar Japanese photography, one that centered on stylistic resonances rather than antagonism.

### 1) The Crisis of Documentary

Named after an eighth-century Buddhist temple in present-day Nara Prefecture, *Murōji* opens with the natural scenery of Mount Murō 室生山 (figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Meandering through the Uda River, the viewer proceeds to the long stone pathway leading up to the temple's Golden Hall (figure 2). To heighten the sense of immediacy, the next pages situate the viewer at the corner of the edifice (figure 3). Its low vantage point—roughly at the level of the raised altar for the sculptural ensemble at the back—appears to mimic how one would approach the sacred space from its side entrance in a kneeling position. Perusing further, one encounters two of the twelve guardian figures that are removed from the altar and individually framed like artworks in glass cases (figure 4). With their dramatic poses, exaggerated facial expressions, and billowing draperies, these statues convincingly declare their presence as if they have just manifested themselves before one's eyes. Consider, for example, the kind of gestural dynamism of the guardian on the right when he spirals his legs. Absorbed in contemplation, his sidelong gaze seems to acknowledge the viewer while playfully denying any intent at communication.

However, what appears to be a conventional photographic survey of temple treasures gradually morphs into an exercise of free association. After the aforementioned guardian figures, the viewer is confronted with provocative juxtapositions and incongruous jumps between images. Instead of guiding the viewer from one icon to another, the photobook abruptly transits from the statues in the Golden Hall to the seated Buddha in the adjacent Maitreya Hall (figures 5, 6, and 7). Spatially, the transition is at odds with the actual layout of the temple complex. Temporally, the leap is anachronistic, considering that medieval statues are showcased before those from earlier times. To amplify the sense of disorientation,

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1 The term *zettai hienshutsu* appeared frequently in Domon's writings during the 1950s. See Domon 1953. Note that major photographic magazines of this period, such as *Camera* カメラ and *Nippon Camera* 日本カメラ, often mixed romanized and *katakana* titles together, and hence following Julia Adeney Thomas, I retain the romanized title *Camera* rather than *Kamera* (for this reason I have left these as they are in the refs.). See Thomas 2008, p. 371.

2 The English version, with essays translated by Roy Andrew Miller, was published in the same year.



Figure 1. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 10–11.  
Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 2. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 14–15.  
Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 3. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 18–19. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 4. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 30–31. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 5. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 36–37. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 6. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 38–39. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 7. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 40–41. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 8. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 48–49. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.



Figure 9. Domon Ken. *Murōji*, 1954, pp. 52–53. Reproduced with permission of the Domon Ken Museum of Photography.

the trajectory of the viewer's journey becomes increasingly ambiguous thereafter, with more cropped and abstract close-ups of lesser-known statues (figure 8) intersecting with those of natural surroundings and other edifices of the temple complex (figure 9). While the photobook format invites the viewer to interpret the images sequentially, the disjointed journey shatters the past into an array of historical fragments, and thereby renders the temple's heritage as an open-ended narrative that impedes any definitive reading.

What drew Domon to Buddhist art, and why the *Murōji* temple in particular? To contextualize the photobook *Murōji*, it should be noted that the work was produced against the backdrop of the resurgence of documentary photography (*hōdō shashin* 報道写真) in the 1950s.<sup>3</sup> The genre first gained currency in Japan during the interwar period when Domon began his career under the tutelage of Natori Yonosuke 名取洋之助 (1910–1962) in 1935.<sup>4</sup> Dissatisfied with the contrivance of salon pictorialism that was in vogue during the 1920s, Domon was drawn to documentary photography for its commitment to sociopolitical truth. Yet, the onset of total war soon made it evident that even this supposedly objective genre was prone to manipulation by the authorities in their effort to legitimize colonial expansion.

3 According to Jonathan M. Reynolds, the critic Ina Nobuo 伊奈信男 (1898–1978) and the photographer Natori Yonosuke are to be credited with coining the term *hōdō shashin* (*hōdō* meaning “to report”) as the Japanese equivalent for documentary. However, the usage of the term was never uniform. For instance, the photographer Hamaya Hiroshi 濱谷浩 (1915–1999) preferred *kiroku shashin* 記録写真 (*kiroku* meaning “to document” or “to record”) for photobooks on subjects associated with anthropology and cultural geography. See Reynolds 2015, pp. 8–10; Weisenfeld 2000, pp. 751–54.

4 From 1935 to 1939, Domon worked for Japan Studio (Nippon Kōbō 日本工房, which became Chūō Kōbō 中央工房 in 1936) under the tutelage of Natori Yonosuke. After a personal conflict with Natori, Domon began to work as a commissioned photographer. In the 1950s, he was invited to serve as a judge for the monthly photography contest hosted by the magazine *Camera*. See Domon 1954, p. 14. For a comprehensive account of Domon's life and career, see Kai 2012, pp. 109–12; and Mainichi Shinbunsha 1995, pp. 180–85.

As a matter of fact, the documentary style was widely employed in propaganda magazines and films that promoted the puppet-state of Manchukuo 満州国 (1932–1945). Attempting to mask, if not neutralize, the social-political hierarchies in the colonies, editors saturated these propaganda materials with images of happy farmers, factory workers, and bustling cityscapes.<sup>5</sup> While it remains unclear whether or not Domon was coerced into contributing to wartime propaganda, his works were featured in photomontages designed for wartime murals and in the multilingual propaganda magazine *NIPPON* (1934–1944) that was edited by none other than Natori.<sup>6</sup>

To redeem the image of documentary photography, Domon turned his lens to pressing social issues in postwar Japan during the 1950s. For instance, in the photobook *Hiroshima* ヒロシマ (1958), he documented the victims of the atomic bombings. Following the convention of photojournalism, Domon's *Hiroshima* paired each image with a descriptive caption to emphasize the author's impartial role in recording unmediated facts.<sup>7</sup> In another series named *Chikuhō no kodomo tachi* 筑豊の子どもたち (The children of Chikuhō, 1960), Domon investigated a coal-mining town in Fukuoka Prefecture in which war orphans suffered from extreme pollution and poverty. Printed on rough paper and priced at only a hundred yen, the photobook contributed to a mass fundraising campaign for the suffering community, the better to actualize Domon's goal of using art to effect social change.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, his effort was replicated by admirers such as Kimura Ihei 木村伊兵衛 (1901–1974) who began to capture beggars, prostitutes, and other socially marginalized groups across Japan. The sudden proliferation of these images in national photographic contests led critics of the time, in a somewhat derogatory manner, to typecast works by Domon and his followers as “beggar photography” (*kojiki shashin* 乞食写真).<sup>9</sup>

The publication of *Murōji* coincided not only with the resurgence of documentary photography, but also with the growing popularity of ethnographic studies in postwar Japan.<sup>10</sup> As Jonathan M. Reynolds has argued, the return to the ethnographic was in part triggered by the large-scale migration of young people from rural areas to Tokyo and other city centers in the early postwar period.<sup>11</sup> The gradual dissolution of rural communities thereby operated simultaneously with the representation of them as the token of a pristine, unchanging past threatened by the influx of foreign culture. The phenomenon is best exemplified by the discourse of *furusato* 故郷 (“hometown”), which homogenized Japan's variegated pasts and regional cultures into mass-manufactured, readily consumable

5 Shepherdson-Scott 2012, pp. 92–99. See also Shepherdson-Scott 2018. For earlier use of photography in Japanese expansionist policies, see Odo 2009.

6 Weisenfeld 2000, p. 774. For a summary of Natori's career and the founding of Nippon Kōbō, see Germer, 2011.

7 For a comprehensive analysis of different photographic strategies that engage with the trauma of the atomic bombings, see Merewether 2006. For an analysis of Domon Ken's *Hiroshima*, see Felten 2011.

8 Kai 2012, p. 161.

9 Thomas 2008, p. 373. Tanaka Masao 田中雅夫 (1912–1987), the editor-in-chief of *Nippon Camera*, even lamented about the absurdity of how Japanese photography was “haunted” by tragic images of beggars and prostitutes. See Tanaka 1953. For the full translated text by Ryan Holmberg, see Chong et al. 2013, pp. 50–53.

10 Domon's interest in Buddhist art began as early as 1939 when he first visited Murōji with the art critic Mizusawa Sumio 水沢澄夫 (1905–1975). See Tseng 2009, p. 114.

11 Reynolds 2015, pp. 10–23.

images or products that fulfilled a collective yearning for the cultural commons.<sup>12</sup> The visual culture of *furusato* relied heavily on photography to mask its artificiality and so authenticate the rural hinterlands of Japan as exotic yet familiar.<sup>13</sup> Here, the architectural discourse of Japanese vernacular houses known as *minka* 民家 warrants specific attention. The subject garnered significant interest among Japanese intellectuals in the immediate postwar, which culminated in the ten-volume photobook series *Nihon no minka* 日本の民家 (Japanese traditional country houses) that was published from 1957 to 1959. In this series, the photographer Futagawa Yukio 二川幸夫 (1932–2013) traversed remote communities in Japan to document the forms, materials, and construction processes of vernacular houses. Futagawa's photobook rendered the rural edifices as though they possessed the modernist architectural concepts of functionalism, sustainability, and the rebuilding of the communal, ideals that countered the negative impact of urbanization. In doing so, Futagawa's lens transformed these rural hinterlands from cultural backwaters to the last frontier of the core communal values of premodern Japan.<sup>14</sup>

## 2) The Photobook as Experimental Site

The relationship between the *furusato* phenomenon and *Murōji*, however, appears tenuous at best. Domon gave no strong indication in his writings that he conceived the photobook as shorthand for traditional Japanese art.<sup>15</sup> Any reading that reduces *Murōji* to a nostalgic spectacle thus fails to account for Domon's participation in the broader debate on photographic realism in the 1950s, which explored the heterogeneity of reality unbound by any one-sided representation. While current scholarship tends to credit Domon's younger contemporaries with reinventing documentary realism, a closer examination of the photographic circles from the 1950s through the 1960s suggests otherwise. It should be noted that both veteran and emerging photographers chose the medium of the photobook to experiment with new techniques and modes of narration.<sup>16</sup> It is thus of paramount importance to recover the ways in which the photobook images communicate *sequentially* rather than as stand-alone works in the museum or gallery context. Put differently, it is the association between images that the viewer generates from perusing the photobook, rather than the meanings of individual images per se, that merits critical analysis.

Apart from the centrality it gives to sequential reading, *Murōji* departs from Domon's earlier works in its frequent insertion of close-ups that incite haptic engagement. Take, for

12 The immediate postwar witnessed intellectuals, architects, and photographers—most of them born and raised in the city—venturing into remote locales to chart the “traditional” ways of living. For instance, the 1955 photobook *Yukiguni* 雪国 (Snow country) by Hamaya Hiroshi staged an immersive journey into the Echigo areas of Niigata Prefecture. It lionized the northern villagers as upholding the endurance, work ethic, and communal spirit in premodern Japan. See Reynolds 2015, pp. 12–16 and Tunney 2015.

13 For the intersection of Japanese popular culture, local tourism, and the *furusato* phenomenon, see Robertson 1988; Greene 2016; and Solomon 2017, pp. 14–28.

14 Zimmerman and Zimmerman 2015.

15 It should be noted that the construction of national museums in Tokyo, Nara, and Kyoto since the 1870s contributed to the formation of the category of “Buddhist art” and its integration into the larger fabrics of Japanese art history and national identity. See Guth 1996; Aso 2013, pp. 20–35.

16 The recent boom in scholarship on Japanese photobooks is too numerous to be listed here. For major monographs and exhibition catalogues, see Kaneko et al. 2009; Keller and Maddox 2013; Nakamori and Pappas 2015; and Kaneko and Heiting 2017. Japanese photobooks are also discussed in Badger and Parr 2004–2014.

instance, the spread pages of the seated Buddha, whose profile is paired with an abstract image of its drapery composed of rhythmic curves in sharp tonal contrast (figure 5). As Stella Kramrisch argued, the vitality of an icon is expressed through the intersection of sight and touch, in which the sensuousness of the icon's body, posture, or drapery conjures one's psychological proximity to the sacred.<sup>17</sup> In subsequent pages of the photobook, Domon dramatically showcases the statue's palms by rescaling them to match those of the viewer (figure 6). What is more, he metaphorically contorted these palms: originally, the left palm hovers above the icon's crossed legs in the wish-granting gesture, while the right palm in the mudra of fearlessness is drawn towards the icon's chest. In other words, Domon captures the palms from two different angles. But by aligning the frontal and the top down shots on the same plane, he uses the two-page spread to generate an unsettling feeling with both palms pressing forward and intruding into the viewer's space.<sup>18</sup> The same play of viewing angles continues through subsequent pages, where Domon displays the icon's upturned feet from above, a vantage point that is hardly attainable on an actual visit (figure 7). Thrusting towards the surface of the page, the image appears to invite an almost forensic scrutiny of the statue's craftsmanship.

Yet, rather than granting the viewer access to the totality of these icons, the close-ups in *Murōji* metaphorically shatter them into incongruous fragments. Here, we return to the aforementioned statue of the Buddha. With its profile headshot juxtaposed with details of its drapery (figure 5), the icon appears to contemplate upon its fragmented self. The uncanny effect is amplified by the absence of any caption in the spread pages. Without textual description, the sequence of the icon's body parts prompts the viewer to wonder whether these images should be read independently or associatively. Domon's removal of descriptive details—and so of narrative clarity—affords him the creative license to juxtapose images in the photobook. In his toying with the tension between the part and the whole, Domon's images recall Mary Ann Doane's theory of the close-up, in which she argues that enlarged details often operate as autonomous entities in their refusal to disclose their referents.<sup>19</sup> In this light, the images in *Murōji* appear to be ontologically suspended between objective reportage and subjective reverie.

### 3) An Alternative Realism

Domon's withholding of narrative clarity in *Murōji* underscores his critical reflection on the nature of documentary photography and its premise of objectivity. In his 1950 article “Hifu ni kansuru hasshō” 皮膚に関する八章 (Eight chapters about skin), Domon compares two modes of photographic practice with reference to the Japanese scrubbing brush (*tawashi* 束子):

Originally, the term *tawashi* denoted not only a kitchen utensil, but also a psychological entity (*shinriteki sonzaibutsu* 心理的存在物). The latter is evoked by the material property of *tawashi*. Although the camera lens might seem more effective than a pen or a paintbrush to visualize such property, if the photographer focuses on

17 Kramrisch 1946 (vol.1), p. 136. I am grateful to Nachiket Chanchani for introducing me to this source.

18 Alice Y. Tseng has pointed out the stylistic resemblance between images of distorted body parts from Domon's *Hiroshima* and that of the Buddhist statues in *Murōji*. See Tseng 2009, pp. 116–18.

19 Doane 2003, p. 90.

the merely visible, the image would only communicate the former meaning. Consider the historical significance of the New Objectivity Movement (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) that gained momentum in Germany at the end of the 1920s, which reflected upon the mechanical property of the camera itself... Although the movement was introduced to Japan during the early 1930s by photographers such as Kanamaru Shigene 金丸重嶺 (1900–1977), these advocates remained uncritical towards the meaning of their photographic motifs. Unfortunately, their works failed to transcend the kind of decorative formalism (*sōshokuteki keishiki shugi* 裝飾的形式主義) that was symptomatic of the period.<sup>20</sup>

Invoking the history of the New Objectivity Movement, Domon differentiated two approaches to photography: the former strives to reproduce the physical appearance of things, while the latter penetrates through the visible to foreground their material and conceptual constituents. It should be noted that in the European context, New Objectivity Movement photography was widely deployed as a pedagogical tool in art-historical lessons.<sup>21</sup> These images, which hovered between documentary and art photography, informed Domon's use of the photobook as a mode of intellectual inquiry. Here, his choice of Buddhist sculpture as subject proved ideal for his experimentation: the ubiquity of Buddhist icons in Japanese visual culture challenged Domon to render the all-too-familiar anew, an undertaking which aligned with the New Objectivity Movement's interrogation of what constitutes a sense of reality. Perhaps most indicative of such resonance are the close-ups of Buddhist statues in *Murōji*, which invite speculation not only on their materiality but also on their assembling processes. As Samuel C. Morse has pointed out, the rise of artisanal workshops in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) registered a major shift in sculptural making process from the single-woodblock method (*ichiboku zukuri* 一木造) to the joint-woodblock method (*yosegi zukuri* 寄木造).<sup>22</sup> By crafting the body parts of an icon in separate woodblocks, the new technique allowed sculptors to produce Buddhist statues much faster and in larger scale, allowing additional time for experimentation with dramatic gestures and intricate details.<sup>23</sup> Seen in this light, the spread pages of *Murōji* can be regarded as an exercise in reverse engineering: by dissecting Buddhist statues into discrete body parts, the photobook invites the beholders to trace and mentally reenact the making of these icons.

Domon's interest in probing the hidden mechanism beneath the visible was a corollary of the larger debate surrounding realism during the 1950s, in which the claim to objectivity in literature and the arts came under increasing scrutiny.<sup>24</sup> The pivot of the debate is best encapsulated in the 1952 essay "Atarashii riarizumu no tame ni: Ruperūtāju no igi" 新しいリアリズムのために: ルポルターージュの意義 (For a new realism: The meaning of reportage)

20 Domon 1950, pp. 3–4.

21 Stetler 2011, pp. 283–89. For a discussion on how technology conditioned early art-historical education, see Nelson 2000.

22 Morse 2016.

23 Covaci 2016.

24 As Thomas and Kai have observed, there was no consistency in how "realism" was rendered in the Japanese language. It was expressed in photo magazines and contests with loan words such as *riarizumu* リアリズム or *rearizumu* レアリズム (based on the Japanese *katakana* rendition of the English word), or the Japanese *genjitsu shugi* 現実主義 and *shajitsu shugi* 写真主義. See Thomas 2008, p. 370; Kai 2012, pp. 114–18; Jesty 2014.

by the writer Abe Kōbō 安部公房 (1924–1993), who advocated a new mode of artistic expression for the heterogeneity of reality perception. As the author explicated:

The world as it is seen or felt can no longer be the reality today. At the very least, it is inadequate to express a constantly changing reality ... those confined within the framework of the quotidian, empirical, and naturalistic will come to realize for themselves that reportage is difficult—almost an impossible task. Those of you who consider reportage to be something easy or something that depicts experience will ultimately be strangled by it, only to face the choice of either abandoning it or dropping out. You should recognize that, far from being a trend that will serve to vindicate your position, reportage will call for your demise.<sup>25</sup>

Against the formulaic naturalism in documentary reportage, Abe urged artists to capture facets of a world whose idiosyncrasies repudiate any one-sided representation.<sup>26</sup> In other words, since the search for pure objectivity is a futile exercise, it follows that any claim for a disinterested position in artistic expression is self-serving and deceptive. Instead of concealing subjectivity in art, the artist should foreground his or her role in mediating conflicting information from a world in flux. Abe's insight strongly resonated with similar debates in photographic circles. Given his active involvement in juried photography contests, Domon was no doubt aware of Abe's proposition.<sup>27</sup> As a matter of fact, in the 1953 roundtable discussion "Kindai shashin no shomondai" 近代写真の諸問題 (The problems of modern photography) organized by the magazine *Camera*, Domon argued that it was misleading to evaluate photography based on the subjective-objective divide, claiming that even though the photographer may have no intention of expressing himself or herself, "there's still always something that belongs to you" in the resultant works.<sup>28</sup>

Domon's interest in transcending the subjective-objective binary is evident when we examine his photobooks in relation to those of his younger peers. It should be noted that key members of avant-garde groups such as VIVO ヴィヴォ (1959–1961) had worked with Domon and other documentary photographers. For instance, Domon collaborated with Tōmatsu Shōmei 東松照明 (1930–2012) in compiling the photobook *Hiroshima-Nagasaki Document 1961*. The photobook was significant in that Domon allowed a selection of his previous works on Hiroshima atomic-bomb survivors to be placed alongside those of Tōmatsu, rendering the timeframe of the photobook ambivalent.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, similar to *Murōji*, captions are absent from the spread pages, thus allowing viewers to formulate their own interpretation. In this 1961 photobook, we find a tacit agreement between the two photographers: instead of offering a coherent narrative, they immerse viewers in a flow of images that conveys the inexplicable trauma. These visual strategies would later reverberate in other photobooks on wartime memory, most notably *Chizu* 地図 (The map,

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25 Abe 1952. For the full translation by Yoshida Ken, see Chong et al. 2013, pp. 44–48.

26 For an in-depth study of Abe's engagement with realism, see Key 2011, pp. 7–33.

27 Kai 2012, p. 83.

28 Domon et al. 1953. See the translation by Ryan Holmberg in Chong et al. 2013, pp. 53–58.

29 Merewether 2006, p. 124.

1965) by Kawada Kikuji 川田喜久治 (b. 1933).<sup>30</sup> Wandering through a desolate landscape consisting of wartime ruins, the ruffled national flag, and memorial photos of the dead, Kawada presents a puzzling array of unlabeled images that render the viewer both spatially and temporally disoriented. Such a strategy of disorientation appears to mimic the struggle of the postwar baby boomers, who attempted to make sense of the war with fragmented information sieved from censorship.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in *Murōji* Domon acts as a desultory wanderer, who deploys the camera as a somatic surrogate to record his impromptu experience of space and time. Instead of offering a chronological survey of the temple's treasures, Domon conjures an immersive environment from his impressions of the visit.<sup>32</sup>

The act of wandering also refashions time as a subjective experience. Devoid of a clear narrative structure, *Murōji* abnegates causality and highlights the malleability of temporal perception. Through jump cuts that arbitrarily pan through statues in different periods, Domon confronts viewers with close-ups of stylistic oddities and incoherencies that declare each icon as a unique artifact unbound by any historical category rather than as a "period piece." In this way, the photobook calls into question the predicament of stylistic progress or evolution so central to art-historical teleology. In fact, Domon's negation of linear temporality resonates with the temple's history. As art historian Sherry Fowler has pointed out, most Buddhist statues in Murōji's Golden Hall were once borrowed, discarded, or even altered to conjure new iconographic programs to reflect the temple's changing patronage and sectarian affiliations.<sup>33</sup> In this light, Domon's denial of teleology befits the anachronism of Murōji's sculptural heritage.<sup>34</sup>

Domon's renewed understanding of realism is further supported by his last photobook series, *Koji junrei* 古寺巡礼 (Pilgrimages to old temples, 1963–1975). Although this five-volume project was inspired by the 1919 travelogue of the same title by the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960), Domon's images do not serve as illustrations to Watsuji's text. Moreover, rather than limiting his study to ancient temples in Nara, Domon's project examines Buddhist structures across Japan built from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries. Despite such an ambitious scope, the series as a whole offers no coherent narrative predicated on historical period or regional style. It focuses instead on provocative juxtapositions of details that amplify the tension between sight and touch, proximity and invisibility. Consider, for instance, Domon's depiction of Hōryūji's Golden Hall in volume one, which juxtaposes a section of its corridor with a statue that is completely enveloped in shadow. While the former expands spatial depth through perspectival view, the latter abruptly refutes visual penetration. A similar play in spatial compression is evident in the concluding shot of volume three, which showcases a section of the door panels at the Phoenix Hall of Byōdōin. While the absence of any discernible Buddhist element appears at odds with the rest of the photobook, Domon was drawn to the defacement on the wooden panels that were once painted with religious scenes. That Domon deploys the door panel

30 Merewether 2006, pp. 127–30.

31 For an analysis of *The Map* in relation to Japanese postwar identity, see Hayashi 2014.

32 On the postwar discussion of *kankyō* 環境 (environment) as an interactive zone that solicits active participation from the audience, see Charrier 2017; Furuhashi 2014; Yoshimoto 2008.

33 As a matter of fact, the current arrangement is dated to the seventeenth century. See Fowler 2001.

34 Apart from anachronism, Japanese photographers of the 1970s also experimented with seriality to complicate the notion of time; see Praepitpatmongkol 2015. For a similar tendency in conceptual art, see Kee 2015.

to conclude his photobook indicates its role as a self-reflexive coda: it recalls not only the flatness of the medium of the photobook, but also its compression of multiple temporalities, here expressed in terms of the centuries-long human trace of marking and tagging. Despite the ten-year interval between *Murōji* and *Kōji junrei*, it is clear that Domon continued to complicate the visual experimentation he had conducted in the 1950s. Questioning the premise of “period style,” both photobooks refuse to serve any teleological narrative of Japanese Buddhist art, and serve as a persistent reminder that any reading of the past is bound to be conditioned by the socio-historical constituents of the present.

### Conclusion

By underscoring reality perception as fractured and situational, Domon Ken’s *Murōji* interrogates the claim of objectivity in documentary photography and exposes the arbitrariness of art-historical teleology. While existing scholarship on postwar Japanese art has tended to pit Domon’s career against his younger counterparts, the discourse of intergenerational clashes reveals less about the photographic circles in postwar Japan than the preoccupations of art historians. Perhaps even more detrimental to the recuperation of Domon’s legacy is the afterlives of his images in curatorial practices, which often singularize certain works and display them as representatives of the “essence” of Japanese Buddhist art. Most notable in this regard was the 2000 exhibition at the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, which showcased Domon’s images alongside those of his predecessors under the exhibition title *Utsusareta kokuhō: Nihon ni okeru bunkazai shashin no keifu* 写された国宝: 日本における文化財写真の系譜 (Image and Essence: A Genealogy of Japanese Photographers’ Views of National Treasures). This framework, which renders Domon’s images as textbook illustrations of the history of Japanese Buddhist art, sharply contrasts with the original photobook that questions the viability of any totalizing narrative. A refusal to recognize Domon’s critical reflection of documentary realism in *Murōji* is to impede a fair assessment of his postwar career and artistic legacy.

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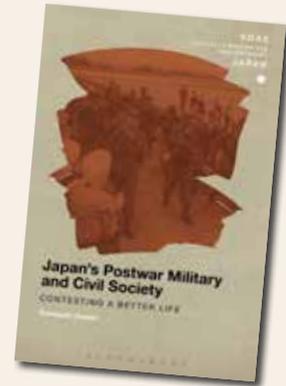
**BOOK REVIEW**

***Japan's Postwar Military and Civil Society: Contesting a Better Life***

**By Tomoyuki Sasaki**

Bloomsbury, 2015  
xiv + 208 pages.

**Reviewed by Guy ALMOG**



Much has been written about the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) in recent years, and especially with regard to the issues of its constitutionality (or lack thereof) and the scope of its acceptable legal activities (for example, participation in international “peacekeeping operations”). As the struggle to “protect” or “revise” the Constitution rages on with growing intensity under the current administration of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō (incumbent since December 2012), Tomoyuki Sasaki’s *Japan’s Postwar Military and Civil Society: Contesting a Better Life* is a stimulating read. Throughout the book, Sasaki examines the ways in which the SDF has managed to integrate into civil society in postwar Japan, that is, to “militarize” substantial parts of it, through such different means as recruitment, disaster relief, and propaganda, despite the possible contradictions with the Constitution.

Sasaki adopts such terms as “militarization” and “militarized” in a broad sense in order to encompass “a wide variety of interactions and interdependence between the military and civilians” (p. 7). His main focus (chapters 2–5) is set on Hokkaido between the 1950s and the 1980s, due to the proportionately large congregation of military facilities and personnel there, a focus which, according to Sasaki, “allows us to see most clearly and vividly how the SDF strove to build solid relations with civil society and to solicit popular support, how civilians responded, and how such intimate civil-military relations altered society and residents’ way of life” (p. 11). Throughout the five chapters of the book Sasaki manages to present this intricate subject with a careful and multifaceted analysis. While such an analysis can certainly provide significant insights for anyone who is interested in the relations between the military and civil society in Japan in particular, and everywhere else in general, it also leaves the reader with many unsolved questions as Sasaki himself admits in the conclusion of this book:

How would it be possible to stop militarization, slow it down, or minimize its effect? Providing concrete solutions is beyond my capacity, and it has not been the aim of this book. But one crucial point that this book has made clear is that militarization is not a problem that individuals or communities alone face, but a structural problem deeply embedded in postwar Japan’s capitalist development. (p. 164)

Sasaki on the whole succeeds in producing a relatively objective picture, one which presents both sides of the “militarization” coin with subtlety and clarity. For example, the SDF is analyzed and presented as a provider of mass employment and as an absorber of “surplus population,” but also as an organization which possibly infringes civilians’ “right to live in peace.” Yet, reading between the lines, it seems that Sasaki inclines to a view of the SDF, and the increasing “militarization” processes within Japan, as negative. For instance, he refers to “militarization” as a “structural problem” (pp. 19 and 164), and relates it to the growing militarization of Hokkaido from the 1970s as “exploitation” (p. 11). Such a choice of wording is not necessarily to be avoided, of course, but it carries moral implications and evaluative judgments, and calls for further elucidation and exploration.

For example, Sasaki provides some theoretical framework regarding the nature of the modern military itself in the first chapter. He claims, *inter alia*, that the military “is at odds with individual rights and freedoms” which are “the very ideas upon which modern nation-states place the greatest value,” and that in the military “the rank system is rigid, and those in lower ranks are expected to obey unquestionably the commands of their superiors” (p. 41). Yet, this characterization of the military presents two kinds of gaps. The first is theoretical: it is not clear from Sasaki’s argument how the military is different from other kinds of governmental organizations within the modern state. The police and the courts of law also limit the rights and freedoms of citizens on a daily basis. Like the military, they do so in order to protect other (and, theoretically at least, more important or vulnerable) freedoms and rights. The courts in Japan, for instance, can limit a murderer’s freedom by putting him or her behind bars, and even overrule the murderer’s right to life with a death sentence, in order to protect the rights and freedoms of the general public. The military, as well as the police, may restrict similar rights and freedoms under similar circumstances. For example, both of these organizations can utilize lethal force in certain situations, and by doing so they override various rights and freedoms of some individuals in order to protect rights and freedoms of other individuals. The second gap is empirical: the claim that “those in lower ranks are expected to obey unquestionably the commands of their superiors” is simply not true, not in the case of the Japanese SDF, and not in other modern militaries of democratic states. In fact, soldiers are expected to constantly question the commands of their superiors and to make sure that the commands are *lawful* before they execute them. In other words, if the command is blatantly unlawful (like orders to rape, pillage, or commit suicide) soldiers are obligated by law not to fulfill it.<sup>1</sup>

All in all, and despite such gaps, *Japan’s Postwar Military and Civil Society: Contesting a Better Life* is a fascinating book which sheds light on an important yet understudied subject. The amount of previously unexamined primary sources in Japanese that the book employs is also very impressive. Finally, Sasaki’s approach to militarization and to the civil-military interdependence is thought provoking, and can certainly be adopted by future studies which focus on different case studies, both within and outside of Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Okuhira 2010, p. 53.

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## BOOK REVIEW

*Clans and Religion in Ancient Japan: The Mythology of Mt. Miwa*

By Masanobu Suzuki

Routledge, 2016  
vi + 161 pages.

Reviewed by Anna ANDREEVA

Detailed studies of ancient Japan available in English are relatively scarce, and so all the more precious. The scarcity attests to the well-documented difficulties: that is, how to discern, synthesize, and analyze the already existing or newly discovered archaeological and written sources that emerged in Japan before the eighth century, and, indeed, later records portraying the events of Japan's early past in retrospect with new goals and agendas in mind. Such studies usually reflect on methodological limitations in reconstructing the historical matter, and may reveal one or two struggles in finding the right tone in presenting a vista of ancient Japan and its role in the broader East Asia region. In English, numerous recent works have presented ancient Japan as a moving, unstable, changing entity existing in a lively terrain of constantly shifting imagination, enlivened by gods, political rivalries, geographical alliances, and conflicts which unfolded at different locations both within the Japanese isles and broader maritime regions of early East Asia.<sup>1</sup> This is not to mention the newly thriving field of the history of Shinto that has recently seen several contributions analyzing the veneration of Japan's local deities in a variety of historical contexts; few recent works can do without a consideration of the early forms of kami worship.

From this perspective, Masanobu Suzuki's study of the Ōmiwa clan, set as it is precisely within this vital and important period of Japan's history, could be another welcome addition to the already impressive, if limited, number of studies published in English. It abounds in historical and philological detail, and provides pages of carefully selected technical and historical information. The primary source quotations are meticulously provided, and the study gives an impressive overview of twentieth century and contemporary Japanese scholarship on all things related to Mt. Miwa, which is near Sakurai in present-day Nara Prefecture, and its early history. It may be helpful to know that Suzuki's study was published in Japanese in 2014; the volume's current English translation, conceived of as a contribution to the world's scholarly community, was made by the author on the basis of the Japanese monograph, revised and expanded.<sup>2</sup>

1 To mention just a few, Barnes 1988, Barnes 2007, and Barnes and Okita 1993. See also Batten 2006, Como 2008, Como 2009, Durhie 2014, Ooms 2009.

2 Suzuki 2014.

The one-page introduction starts from the premise that “Shinto is the unique and traditional Japanese religion,” and offers to “shed light on differences between the religious systems of Japan and those of other Asian countries and even differences between Eastern and Western cultures” (p. 1). To some readers specializing in the history of Japanese and East Asian religions, and Shinto in particular, this approach may indicate a certain path that this study intends to take. Rather than answering directly its own broad questions regarding Japan and “other Asian countries,” the book’s focus on ancient Japan is maintained through an analysis of the activities of fictional and historical figures from the Ōmiwa clan whose mythology and religious traditions linked them to Mt. Miwa, one of the earliest sites of ritual and political activities in central Honshu (pp. 10–35). This somewhat narrow focus allows a detailed philological analysis of Japan’s well known earliest written records and selected archaeological remains. Through these, Suzuki traces the political fortunes of the Ōmiwa clan from the late fifth to the early eighth centuries.

One of the most thought-provoking contributions this volume makes is a meticulous study of who exactly comprised the Ōmiwa (pp. 36–46). According to Suzuki, the cognate clans of Ōmiwa lived in Yamato Province, most likely within a short distance of Mt. Miwa. Based on the distribution of *sue* ceramic ware, their habitat extended through Yamashiro and Settsu in coastal and central Honshu, and Izumo and Buzen provinces in western Japan. There is, however, a sense that, despite the mythological connections of certain Ōmiwa deities to the lands “over the sea” (as is documented in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*), the Ōmiwa clan portrayed in the current study belongs firmly in Japan. The author evidences no recognition of, or willingness to discuss, its potential prior history and possible overseas origins, however forgotten or “written-out” these may have been from the eighth-century Japanese histories. One could well ask how the Ōmiwa were able to perform so successfully as ambassadors and military dispatches to the Korean peninsula or as skillful interlocutors of the Korean envoys in early Japan, had they not possessed a formidable hereditary expertise, based on their own overseas family connections and pedigree.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss Mt. Miwa’s deities, or rather, as Suzuki puts it, the “Ōmiwa god” (which he seems to understand as a more or less single deity, albeit with a variety of different characteristics), and the change in religious activities, which he analyzes on the basis of archaeological remains and eighth-century written records (pp. 66–85 and 86–111, respectively). These and other arguments have already been attested to in twentieth century Japanese-language scholarship, which Suzuki uses meticulously and exclusively. Curiously, though, the current volume does not refer to scholarship in Western languages. The study is rich in detailed and potentially interesting and significant information. For example, Suzuki provides impressive lists of the Miwa clansmen whose abode he has been able to reconstruct through a careful reading of primary sources. In this regard, it may be disappointing that the necessary citations of Japanese written sources are quoted only in Japanese with short summaries in English, but with no direct translation. That these citations offer little philological detail in the main text that follows will not be a particular problem for a specialist scholar of premodern Japan, but for a broader scholarly audience, good English translations of primary sources will be sorely missed.

The vision of ancient Japan that emerges from this book is still confined to a narrow point, a kind of beautifully frozen fountainhead from which all things spring forth and travel to “other Asian countries,” with no deliberation of the possibility that historical

migration can operate in the completely opposite direction, as other studies have already suggested. The amount of work that has gone into the English translation of Suzuki's book is admirable, and its introduction of earlier Japanese scholarship is impressive. Is it not time, however, to try at last to bridge the divide between the competing and unconnected versions of Japanese history, including early Japan?

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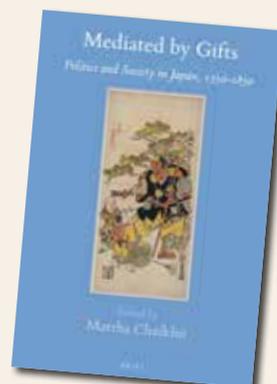
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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Mediated by Gifts: Politics and Society in Japan, 1350–1850*

Edited by Martha Chaiklin

Brill, 2017  
xiv + 252 pages.



Reviewed by Karen M. GERHART

A compilation of essays examining historical gift-giving practices in Japan, *Mediated by Gifts: Politics and Society in Japan, 1350–1850* presents seven case studies in chronological order. In her introduction, Martha Chaiklin discusses contributions of earlier scholars, notably Befu, Gudeman, and Mauss, and offers examples of a wide variety of material objects and nonmaterial exchanges discussed here as “gifts.” Chaiklin suggests that what comprises a gift is based largely on how an object or action of exchange is perceived; she proposes that gifts can be “tangible or intangible, offer physical or emotional benefit, or they may merely create an obligation” (p. 5). The essays make full use of the elasticity of this definition. The strength of the volume, therefore, rests on how the individual essays expand the boundaries of that term through their discoveries of a wide variety of exchanges in the prescribed time period. All of the details are hard-won, excavated as they are from difficult-to-read and under-utilized primary sources, and a boon for researchers.

In chapter 1, “Unexpected Paths: Gift-Giving and the Nara Excursions of the Muromachi Shoguns,” Hiraku Kaneko examines gifts exchanged between shoguns Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, Yoshinori, and Yoshimasa, and important temples and shrines in Nara from the late fourteenth to the late fifteenth century. Kaneko’s analysis creates a nuanced picture of exchange relationships that effectively facilitated upkeep and reconstruction at several important religious institutions, including Kōfukuji and Kasuga Shrine. The many gifts (armor, swords, and money) presented to the shoguns as tribute by religious institutions were ultimately returned to them as donations for repair projects. This arrangement satisfied both parties, creating a venue for the shoguns to display their munificence and benevolence and allowing the shrines and temples to rely on shogunal protection and favors in return.

Lee Butler’s essay, “Gifts for the Emperor: Signposts of Continuity and Change in Japan’s Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” examines entries in *Oyudononoue no nikki*, written by female palace officials between 1477 and 1826. Butler’s chapter, which focuses on gifts presented to the emperor in 1488 and 1500, reveals for example that in 1488 imperial family members male and female, male and female courtiers, monks and nuns (also temples and shrines), and warriors presented to the emperor an estimated 457 gifts—fresh and prepared food and drink, rare plants or animals, handicrafts, and religious artifacts (pp. 52–53). Butler’s main interest lies in the warrior givers of gifts. Using data for 1488 and

1500, he tracks how the quality and quantity of gift interactions with the emperor reflect important changes in the political motivations and shifting attitudes among warrior groups and individuals. The chapter is a rich mine of information.

In chapter 3, “Physician Yamashina Tokitsune’s Healing Gifts,” Andrew Goble examines *Tokitsune kyōki*, the diary of Kyoto aristocrat and physician, Yamashina Tokitsune (1543–1611). Tokitsune interacted with of all sorts of patients, and recorded names, ages, residences, occupations, parents, children, births, illnesses, and medicines. Goble’s essay provides an unparalleled look at gift-giving patterns and practices in an urban society, and demonstrates the importance of gift giving in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Goble has done yeoman’s work in bringing individual lives to our attention. Although not the focus of the essay, the information he provides on gifts offered by women patients and acquaintances—seasonal fruits, silver coins, paper and brushes, bolts of cloth, and ceramics—is remarkable and should strengthen our understanding of the economic and social standing of women in this period.

In “Tokugawa Tsunayoshi and the Formation of Edo Castle Rituals of Giving,” Cecilia Segawa Seigle first examines the development of Tokugawa gift-giving practices and, more specifically, the strict rules formulated for gift exchanges by the fifth shogun Tsunayoshi (r. 1680–1709). She then looks at the impact of his gift-giving protocols on the women of the Ōoku, namely his wives and concubines and other women related to the shogun, who were required to both give and receive gifts according to a strict code of reciprocity that reflected the current social and biological hierarchy at Edo Castle. The remainder of the chapter examines Tsunayoshi’s precedents for amassing wedding trousseaus for his daughters and his demands that all daimyo contribute to them, even obliging women of the Ōoku to give presents. Seigle concludes that Ōoku gift-giving practices offered women little power to exercise free will and resulted in “routine fossilized rituals by the end of the Edo period” (p. 160).

Emiko Ozawa’s chapter 5, “Mitsui Echigoya’s Gifts to the Tokugawa Shogunate,” examines how Mitsui Echigoya merchants used gifts in the eighteenth century to negotiate and define their relationship with the Tokugawa shoguns and with other officials in the government’s financial and commercial bureaus. By utilizing the Mitsui Bunko, Ozawa demonstrates the significant difference in quantity, quality, and rationale between the gifts Mitsui merchants presented to the shoguns and those they gave to members of the Bureau of Exchange. The former were not particularly valuable, given at certain annual celebrations, and intended to express the merchants’ appreciation for the shogun’s support and subservience. Bureau members, on the other hand, were treated as colleagues, with gifts to them given without regard to work requirements or events of the calendar. There is also evidence that at least some of their “gifts” to Exchange Bureau officials were intended to influence policy.

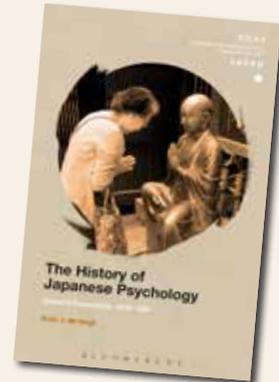
Chapter 6, “Travel and Gift Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Japan,” by Laura Nenzi, elucidates how gifts given and received at various stages of travel served as a mirror of new social relationships developing in early modern Japan. By examining gifts given by family and friends as farewell presents (*senbetsu*) and souvenirs (*miyage*) brought back by the traveler, Nenzi seeks to understand how travel-related gifts came to ease the fears of separation and death long associated with movement and separation. She demonstrates that extant lists of gifts purchased by travelers can be read as “social maps” to shed light on a

broad range of networks—personal, professional, religious, ideological, and political—that were active in the nineteenth century (p. 210). Nenzi also provides numerous examples of the role of women in gift giving, thereby broadening our understanding of the economics of travel for women at this time.

The focus of the final chapter, “Gift Exchange and Reciprocity: Understanding Antiquarian/Ethnographic Communities Within and Beyond Tokugawa Borders,” by Margarita Winkel does not examine gifts themselves, but rather the exchange relationships that developed among Japanese intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Winkel acknowledges that collectors and connoisseurs exchanged both information and objects (p. 220), but focuses her essay on “the *role* played by gifts ... in Tokugawa antiquarian life” (p. 221). Her discussion of exchange relationships among the members of the well-known circle of “curiosity lovers” called Tankikai, which included notables such as Tani Bunchō, Yamazaki Yoshinari, and Takizawa Bakin, provides pockets of fascinating details, such as the documented efforts of Suzuki Bokushi to publish his book on Echigo snow stories by working his connections with famous artists and literati in Edo and Kyoto. Through such examples, Winkel exposes how exchange relationships depended on the currying of favors among like-minded individuals who highly valued face-to-face communications. Winkel also creates a picture of the “delicate exchanges of concrete gifts, knowledge, and acknowledgments” that played an important role in Japanese interactions with scholars and collectors from Europe and Southeast Asia (via the Dutch East India Company), and led eventually to Japanese individuals becoming known abroad and being included in foreign publications and foreign societies (p. 231).

*Mediated by Gifts* covers gift giving across a span of five hundred years in the most useful way possible: by focusing on the details extracted from primary sources through painstaking research. If the essays are sometimes short on analysis and contextualization, it is perhaps because they provide so much information that it is impossible to do justice to all of it in one chapter. The book provides an essential foundation for further research on a myriad of questions, many of them relevant to studies of gender, economics, and politics.

## BOOK REVIEW

***The History of Japanese Psychology:  
Global Perspectives, 1875–1950*****By Brian J. McVeigh**Bloomsbury Academic, 2017  
xxvii + 375 pages.**Reviewed by Helena JASKOV**

For many years there has been a trend to broaden the scope of enquiries concerned with the history of specific fields of knowledge from their focus on the perceived place of origin of all modern sciences, namely Europe. The engagement with non-European sites of knowledge production has yielded diverse results depending on the disciplines under whose auspices the research was undertaken (general history, history of science, area studies, etc.). However, regardless of the labels attached to these various projects, be they “transnational,” “transcultural,” or “global” histories, they all consider traditional narratives of center and periphery and address the relationship between global and local knowledge. *The History of Japanese Psychology: Global Perspectives, 1875–1950*, by the anthropologist Brian McVeigh is likewise intended as a contribution to “the worldwide history of Psychology and the globalization of the social sciences” (p. 4). However, at the same time McVeigh aims to redefine the meaning and evolution of modernity itself. By introducing the concept of “interiorization” as the driving force behind the emergence of psychology, he argues for the great significance of this mentality-changing process and bestows “interiorization” with the same transformative power as democratization, [the rise of] capitalism, or the global flow of knowledge (p. 180), which are commonly used to explain processes of modernization.<sup>1</sup>

Addressing the “global” elements of the history of Japanese psychology, this book describes the importation of Western institutional structures and scholarly practices during the Meiji period, the creation of global academic networks of scholars investigating the workings of the human mind, and the translation of contemporary British, American, French, and German treatises on the subject into Japanese. Readers familiar with *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Psychology: Global Perspectives* (2012) will find much of the same data regarding Japanese scholars and their achievements, the founding of institutions, laboratories, academic societies, and academic journals, as well as publication details on Japanese translations of foreign texts and original Japanese contributions as in Miki Takasuna’s chapter on Japan. But while the *Handbook* provides a straightforward chronological overview of this data, McVeigh tries with limited success to combine a

<sup>1</sup> The concept of “interiorization” as “a lens for understanding history” has already played a prominent role in McVeigh’s earlier publications; see especially McVeigh 2015 and McVeigh 2016.

“fact”-collection with his narrative on modernity and the impact of “interiorization.” Accordingly, the book is interspersed with long passages simply listing the abovementioned data as well as “snapshots” (boxes with encyclopaedia-like entries on people, events, and “milestones” in psychology). This arrangement impedes the text’s readability without offering much interpretation on the significance and relevance of the listed data.

The global connections of Japanese philosophers, religious thinkers, and experimentally-minded scholars are contrasted with these people’s engagements with local knowledge about the workings of the human mind and soul. McVeigh explores the fascinating symbiosis of Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto thought with ideas nowadays attributed to Western mental philosophy and psychology. Many of the examples investigated here have already been analyzed in Christopher Harding’s edited volume *Religion and Psychotherapy in Modern Japan* (2015), and I would recommend Harding’s book to those who are primarily interested in the “religion-psy dialogue” as it played out in Japan.

Overall, McVeigh’s approach to the topic remains very descriptive, and suffers from his anachronistic and ahistorical conception of the boundaries of what counts as psychology in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though McVeigh admirably aims for a genuine appreciation of local knowledge, this is unfortunately hindered by his acceptance of arbitrarily imposed, Western-derived categories which have divided local Japanese knowledge into religion, medicine, philosophy, and psychology. This act of “epistemic violence” is related to McVeigh’s positivist conception of the history of science, which is more in line with Edwin Boring’s (1929) depiction of psychology’s transformation into a “scientific discipline” than with any debate that has shaped the history of science since the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> It may thus come as a surprise to find a reference to Daston and Galison’s seminal work on *Objectivity* (2007) in McVeigh’s book to support his positivist views (p. 35). Multiple uses and interpretations of Daston’s work notwithstanding, McVeigh’s reference seems misplaced when he repeatedly equates “being scientific” with “being objective” (pp. 14, 35, and 42), considering that one of Daston and Galison’s main arguments was to show that “objectivity has not always defined science,” and that the history of science should not be equated with the history of objectivity.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, McVeigh even ventures to propose that it was in fact the all-explaining process of “increased interiorization,” traceable “since at least the time of Locke and Descartes,” which gave rise to the subjective-objective divide and by his implication to scientific thought itself (p. 35).

*The History of Japanese Psychology* provides a present-centered, Westernized view of psychology in Japan, and a source collection which privileges those “national heroes” who fit a positivist conception of engaging with the “psychological.” It does raise general questions about the relationship between modernity and the birth of psychology, linking them via the concept of “interiorization.” However, no direct evidence is provided to substantiate this link, and there is no explanation why the Japanese history of psychology in particular should be suited to answer these general questions.

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2 See Spivac 1988 on epistemic violence. For a short historiography of the directions taken within the history of science since the 1990s, see, for example, Romano 2015.

3 Daston and Galison 2007, pp. 17 and 372.

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BOOK REVIEW

*The Uses of Literature in Modern Japan: Histories and Cultures of the Book*

By Sari Kawana

Bloomsbury Academic, 2018  
ix + 280 pages.

Reviewed by Andrew T. KAMEI-DYCHE



Anyone who has taught literature has likely wrestled with the conundrum of explaining the afterlife of books. Why do some works stand the test of time, enduring through generations, while others, even if heralded as masterpieces in the past, become forgotten? In *The Uses of Literature in Modern Japan*, Sari Kawana explains that the persistence of a work in the public consciousness often comes down to what uses—whether ideological, economic, or social—the work serves. Works that can be put to a range of uses and transformations across context, media, and language have a higher “use value,” contributing to their longevity. However, Kawana points out that it is still difficult to discuss literature from this perspective: “[I]n most formal literary criticism, the potential of literary works to be ‘useful’ has been neglected—or even discouraged—as a frame of reference in favor of artistic quality or even sheer entertainment value” (p. 3). Her point is a pertinent one. While among philosophers the “use” of philosophical systems is a long-standing concern, and one explicitly articulated since at least Nietzsche, among literary circles the notion of “using” literature still seems somehow unsavory. Yet the use value factors into which books are republished, chosen for translation, or selected for educational curricula. From this starting point, Kawana sets out to demonstrate the importance of considering the use value of literature, as seen in the life and afterlife of various works of modern Japanese literature.

She does so through a range of examples drawn from the early twentieth century, with each chapter of the study constituting an aspect of Japanese literary production, reproduction, and consumption. Chapter 1 looks at the *enpon* (one-yen book) boom in the late 1920s, considering the context, causes, and agents involved. Kawana asks why people sought to buy books even when their economic circumstances did not appear conducive to that decision, and finds the answer in the cultural capital accorded to the reading of literature by the intellectual context at the time, as well as how shrewd publishers marketed to precisely that concern. Kawana’s examination of the rivalry between advertising agencies Dentsū and Hakuōdō (pp. 41–44) is especially salient because it illustrates the impact business and market concerns among non-book agents can have on the book trade. Given the significance of the *enpon* boom not only for Japanese publishing but the entire intellectual culture of the era, this solidly researched chapter is a welcome addition to the scholarship. Whereas chapter 1 focuses more on publishing, chapter 2 turns to consider

the readers. The topic here is the wartime practices of young readers. Kawana seeks to problematize the view of wartime youth as possessing little in the way of literature and occupying a passive role in uncritically swallowing propaganda. Through retrospectives written by wartime youth, she shows how young readers had a degree of access to prewar children's literature, and how to some extent they idealized the prewar era with its material and literary wealth. Moreover, she argues, particularly through considering the works of Unno Jūza, that children read between the lines to interpret wartime literature in a variety of ways, including some entirely antithetical to the objectives of the state. The chapter is therefore a reception history, revealing what material was available to young wartime readers and how they read it.

Chapter 3 is in a different vein, focusing on one particular work—Natsume Sōseki's *Kokoro*. Kawana explains that the work, while ambiguous, has suffered from a prescribed reading imposed upon it by the education curriculum. However, by drawing upon a range of adaptations of the work, and the historical context, she shows how an entirely different reading is possible. Fittingly for an authority on Japanese detective fiction, she approaches the work as a whodunnit and seeks to solve the crime she believes lies at the heart of the novel.<sup>1</sup> The chapter differs from the earlier ones in two ways: first, in its orientation around a single work, and second in its character as a work of literary interpretation, deploying historical material in the service of cracking a fictional case. It makes for fascinating reading, although it does not mesh well with the other chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5 return to a focus on the production and consumption of works, though with a wider chronological coverage than the earlier chapters, considering the uses of literature into the late twentieth century. The first considers the involvement of authors (primarily Ozaki Kōyō and Yokomizo Seishi) and publishers in visual depictions of works, covering everything from illustrations to theater and film adaptations. Here Kawana employs the notion of media mix, whereby a novel plus other renditions of the fictional universe such as films or games, are orchestrated together—a common phenomenon in modern pop culture. Finally, chapter 5 discusses literary tourism, the phenomenon of readers visiting sites associated with authors and their works, and the purposes served by such activities and related institutions such as literary museums. Kawana discusses the dynamics of what she calls *hodoku*, or literary ambulation: readers enhancing their experience of the text by encountering sites that pertain to the fictional world depicted within it and/or the historical world of the author who created it.

Kawana's study makes two significant contributions. First, it offers a rethinking of literary canons in light of use value. In the ongoing debates over the hows and whys of canon formation, Kawana's portrayal of canons as dynamic, fluid constructs rather than enduring monuments or oppressive but arbitrary inventions is a breath of fresh air. She clearly illustrates how we—authors, publishers and readers across generations—assemble and reassemble canons based on the uses to which we put literature. Second, the work demonstrates the value of tackling literature anew from the insights offered from book history, studies of reception, and other areas of analysis.<sup>2</sup>

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1 See especially Kawana 2008.

2 In this regard, the work dovetails with Edward Mack's *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature* (2010).

If the study has a drawback, it is in the limited degree of cohesion among the chapters. Each feels like an independent work knitted together under the theme of use value, a framing concept that occupies a more significant role in some chapters than in others. However, from another perspective the relative independence of each chapter is a strength, because each could be readily assigned to students. Chapter 1 belongs in any course on Japanese publishing and print culture, for instance, while chapter 3 would prompt fruitful discussion in a modern literature seminar among students used to conventional readings of *Kokoro*. The work is also remarkably free of errors, and employs refreshingly readable prose, making it an accessible text for students. A thoughtful and well-researched study, it belongs in the library of any scholar of modern Japanese literature or print culture.

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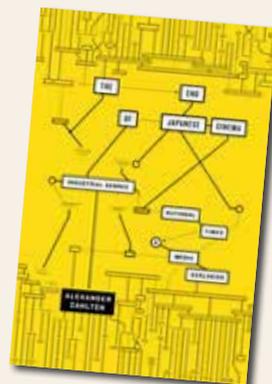
## BOOK REVIEW

*The End of Japanese Cinema:  
Industrial Genres, National Times,  
and Media Ecologies*

By Alexander Zahlten

Duke University Press, 2017  
viii + 305 pages.

Reviewed by Lauri KITSNIK



This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the publication of the book that still has to be considered the most, if not the only comprehensive history of Japanese cinema in the English language. While *Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (1959, co-authored by Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie, and slightly updated in its 1982 edition) was criticized for its auteurist and Cold War-era attitudes, its immense achievement and authoritative status is impossible to ignore. Its very existence seems to have effectively prevented any study of comparable scope from emerging, while the field of Japanese film studies itself has expanded considerably during the last few decades. This lasting anxiety of influence is visibly imprinted on Alexander Zahlten's first monograph, *The End of Japanese Cinema*, both in its provocative title and in its book design that borrows from Anderson and Richie the intricate charts that delineate apprenticeship lineages and studio affiliations and blurs out all names, as if to suggest the need to eschew these industrial relations that have been hitherto considered an inextricable part of structuring Japanese film history.

It is not surprising then that Zahlten picks up from where Anderson and Richie left off, and seeks to present a more balanced and, as a result, more complicated picture of Japanese cinema since the beginning of the decline of the studio system in the early 1960s. From the first pages on, his lucid prose captures the reader's full attention, and the careful unfolding of the three case studies of under-researched genres (Pink Film, Kadokawa Film, and V-Cinema) lets Zahlten emerge as an authority on his chosen subject. It is an easy feat simply to claim that certain phenomena have been neglected in scholarship, but what provides an impetus here is the sheer volume of screen works belonging to the respective genres, often making up half of Japan's entire film production in a given year, while being unanimously ignored even by Japanese film scholars. In fact, it emerges quite clearly from Zahlten's analysis that this deliberate overlooking has long been a mechanism to delimit the boundaries of what is commonly considered Japanese cinema.

It seems appropriate, then, that *The End of Japanese Cinema* is not a study of art works devised by great filmmakers but rather a story about cinema's crucial, albeit gradually diminishing, role—if not quite its demise—within the larger media environment during the second half of the twentieth century. In contrast to various recent studies on Japanese cinema that could be characterized as microhistories of particular filmmakers, genres, or

periods, Zahlten's is an ambitious project that seeks to reconsider the way we think about Japanese cinema and popular media in general. While its theoretical underpinnings can be criticized, the book largely succeeds in this task by providing three instructive case studies from different decades with insights and implications that extend well beyond their own time and respective creative and industrial agendas.

The first two chapters relate to the "industrial genre" of Pink Film, low-budget features known for displaying semi-explicit sexual situations as well as politically subversive material. It is true that certain trends of that period of Japanese cinema have been thoroughly researched in studies such as David Desser's seminal *Eros Plus Massacre* (1988). However, while Desser discussed the work of the Pink director Wakamatsu Kōji within the context of Japanese independent cinema, Zahlten delineates the genre's genealogy within its production and exhibition contexts. The fact that many of the films discussed are lost makes the task truly admirable. Uncovering early Pink Films is not unlike studying prewar Japanese cinema, but while the latter can often rely on various readily available (para-)textual sources, Zahlten has had to employ marginal, difficult-to-obtain publications and oral histories. What I found particularly enlightening about Zahlten's analysis of Pink Film is the way he manages to relate the genre to shifting audiences and gendered spaces amid the suburbanization of Japan during the 1960s.

When discussing Kadokawa Film, the genre that occupies the next two chapters, Zahlten meticulously delineates the shrewd media-mix business strategy initiated by the publishing tycoon Kadokawa Haruki. What makes this genre different from both Pink Film and V-Cinema is that it very much represented what mainstream Japanese cinema looked like around the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, all genres bear a close affinity in their capacity to inspire major studios in adapting new strategies. Ironically, initial intentions often get lost in the process of becoming common mainstream practice, an important part of which is taking a strong stand against the established film industry. In this underground-becomes-mainstream template of film history, the solidifying of any genre leads to its inevitable demise, while big business is ready to subsume everything.

The final case study is that of V-Cinema, straight-to-video films that proliferated in the 1990s, a genre perhaps better known to general audiences through the early work of Miike Takashi. Even more than with Pink Film, quantity is clearly important here with output of the genre (and its numerous subgenres such as mahjong and pachinko films) reaching mind-boggling figures. At the same time, while the particular films discussed in detail are interesting enough, there is still a feeling that the excruciating majority of them are mostly only good for their curiosity value. At the same time, it could be argued that V-Cinema represents an early example of binge-watching, particularly in the way it relates to how the film-watching experience is shifting to domestic spaces. Indeed, the three case studies together make a strong argument about the arc of different spaces for cinema, beginning with small theaters for Pink, the biggest possible ones for Kadokawa, and private screens for V-Cinema. As the focus of Zahlten's study is removed from individual filmmakers, audiences and exhibition spaces necessarily take central stage.

Perhaps the biggest question that remains after reading *The End of Cinema* is whether the term "industrial genre" is really applicable to these three very different cases. We are left to wonder what it means exactly in each context. Zahlten somewhat succumbs to the temptation to tie everything too neatly together, while at the same time repeatedly

confessing how confusing and inconsistent the agendas of the phenomena that he observes really are. Importantly, each of the three genres is compelling enough in its own right and does not require a too narrow terminological umbrella. What these three clearly have in common, however, is the way they went against the common sense of the established film industry and by so doing managed to revitalize it. If anything, they should be called “anti-industrial” for their capacity to subvert what was considered standard practice at the time and to reconfigure the field, especially when it comes to finding and catering for specific new audiences.

The book ends with Zahlten shifting his attention to more recent developments, discussing platforms, fan labor and Japan’s soft power. One of the paradoxes of this study is that while it attempts to break away from a template that isolates cinema as an object of scholarship from a wider media environment, it still cannot shrug off the notion that cinema is something that can be discreetly observed, confirming the usefulness of studying Japanese films, or, as Zahlten would put it, films from Japan. The timeline of Zahlten’s study comes to an end with Abe Shinzō’s resignation as prime minister in 2007. One suspects that his subsequent comeback with a vengeance would certainly add yet another layer to the never-ending story of endings and beginnings.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Land, Power, and the Sacred: The Estate System in Medieval Japan*

Edited by Janet R. Goodwin  
and Joan R. Piggott

University of Hawai'i Press, 2018  
xxxvii + 532 pages.

Reviewed by Jason MORGAN



There are some excellent studies in English and other Western languages on premodern Japanese history—the works of Martin Collcutt, Mary Elizabeth Berry, and Herman Ooms come immediately to mind. But researching the distant Japanese past remains daunting for many. A formidable challenge facing anyone who would study premodern Japan is the “estates,” or *shōen*. The *shōen* were owned by (usually) off-site landlords who delegated the actual day-to-day running of the estates to various stewards, reeves, and overseers. These, in turn, managed the peasants who worked the paddies and fields. They also procured the materials needed for efficient operation, ensured that produce went smoothly to market and proceeds duly returned, commissioned security details to keep the peace, and stood firm against predatory neighbors. Adding to this complexity was the practice of *shiki*, schema for apportioning yields and keeping track of the diverse patterns of landownership, and the value that they brought to powerful holding families. The *shōen* were at the very heart of the medieval Japanese economy and social array, and yet they are so manifold and convoluted that understanding them is no small task.

To the rescue now springs Janet R. Goodwin and Joan R. Piggott’s new edited volume, which is sure to be the classic work on the subject for years to come. Combining some of the best Japanese scholarship with new research in English, *Land, Power, and the Sacred* is a major resource on the *shōen* and a most welcome addition to the literature on premodern Japan overall. Edited volumes are often difficult to read, and even harder to review. This one, though, is a delight of thematic consistency balanced with compelling detail. Goodwin and Piggott have so expertly streamlined the overall volume that it reads almost monographically. There are no weak essays here.

After Piggott’s very helpful overview of estates and Sakurai Eiji’s essay on “medieval Japan’s commercial economy and the estate system” (p. 37; part 1), part 2 begins with Nishida Takeshi’s hands-on investigation of the archaeological record from the Ōbe estate (in modern-day Hyōgo Prefecture), which belonged to Tōdaiji in Nara. Here we meet the monk Chōgen. Monks, often especially adept managers and businessmen, were typically the engines behind estate maintenance and growth. The next chapter focuses on Ōbe as seen through documents. Here, Endō Motoo brings to life the day-to-day, year-to-year workings of both the grand Tōdaiji Temple and its various holdings throughout Japan. (Chōgen

is back on stage in this chapter, too.) The last chapter in part 2 shifts focus to the Hine estate in Izumi (present-day Osaka), owned by the Kujō, a powerful regent family. Hirota Kōji reminds us here that archaeology and documents are complementary, and must be supplemented with fieldwork in order to get a feel for the lay of the land.

Kimura Shigemitsu begins part 3, “Making the Land Productive,” by arguing that focusing on labor is a good way to overcome unhelpful dichotomies, such as between “rice and nonrice agriculture,” and between mountain and plains communities (pp. 143–44). Labor, Kimura reminds us, also includes fishing, salt manufacturing, silkworm raising, and other estate-based activities. In the next chapter, Joan R. Piggott takes up Kimura’s challenge to focus on logging and the process of clearing land for cultivation. Piggott foregrounds here a major theme of this volume, namely that the medieval period was a time of “fierce competition among court nobles in the capital, middling officials of various sorts, and locals who wanted to secure greater profits from the soil” (p. 164).

Part 4, “Secular and Sacred,” opens with Nagamura Makoto’s intriguing contrast between the estate management styles of *hijiri*, or religious freelancers, and temple monks like Chōgen. In the various clashes among the holy men, we encounter *gōso*, the showdown between different deities who were (invisibly) mounted on carriages and delivered to the enemy’s temple for spiritual battle. Chōgen returns in the chapter by Ōyama Kyōhei, who skillfully weaves together the secular and the devotional to show how religious practices undertaken by manager-monks overlapped with material benefits for local communities. The next chapter, by Janet R. Goodwin, again features Chōgen, whose management of the Ōbe estate was a delicate balancing act among donors, power brokers, local bigwigs, and the surrounding estates and their vested interests. Yoshiko Kainuma then shifts to the “Jōdoji Amida Triad,” the splendid tri-figure Buddhist statue sculpted by Kaikei (active ca. 1189–1236) to point up the intersection of iconography and theology with the realities of temple building and estate management. (The Amida Triad at Jōdoji Temple is, incidentally, one of the many excellent color plates in the book.)

Part 5, “Power, Space, and Trade,” takes us beyond estates and temples. Sachiko Kawai’s chapter on the *nyoin*, or retired empresses, shows how women navigated the many intrigues at court, all while trying to build up power bases not only within Japan but overseas, too. Rieko Kamei-Dyche then takes us through the life of Saionji Kintsune (1171–1244), a man so wealthy that he “had porters carry two hundred buckets of [*onsen*] water from the spring [at Arima] to his villa, a distance of some twenty-five miles, *on a daily basis*” (p. 319). Kamei-Dyche uses Erving Goffman’s “dramaturgia” theory to demonstrate how the Saionjis and their peers thought spatially to gain advantages on their rivals. In the next chapter, Michelle Damian looks at shipping in the Seto Inland Sea at a time when increased mobility and tighter economic connections changed the estates’ dynamic from earlier centuries.

In part 6, “Power: Challenges and Conflicts,” Philip Garrett uses a border dispute in mid-Kamakura Kii Province to highlight how security issues changed in response to the breakdown in government control and the rise of local lordship. Dan Sherer advances this theme with a fascinating look at the *akutō*. These were “evil bands” (pp. 403, 404) of rowdies who terrorized decent people; or else they were social outcasts or other misfits *called* *akutō* by petitioners seeking to rouse the authorities to remove them. Noda Taizō

then focuses on “warriors and estates in Muromachi-period Harima” (p. 427), gathering in the lingering cultural tendrils of the Heian with a view of military intervention into local disputes.

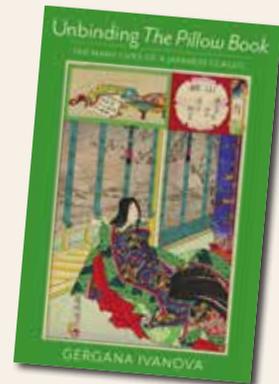
Part 7 of the volume comprises a single chapter by Ethan Segal, who provides a very helpful survey of estates, explains why they are so difficult to teach, and suggests strategies for overcoming these potential obstacles.

While Goodwin, Piggott, and their authors and translators deserve full credit for producing such a consistently good volume, they readily acknowledge the hard work of generations of earlier scholars working exclusively in Japanese. Debates about the *shōen* have been underway in Japan for decades, and the shadow of two major scholars in particular lies heavy across the present volume: Kuroda Toshio and Amino Yoshihiko. Kuroda’s “gates of power” (*kenmon taisei*) theory (a conceptual shift away from viewing medieval Japan as dominated by warriors, and instead as a power-sharing scheme among warriors, monasteries, and courtly elites), and Amino’s voluminous research inform many of the chapters here. The Goodwin and Piggott volume is thus truly a model of transnational research, and as such deserves the attention of anyone interested in Japan, or in the premodern past in general.

## BOOK REVIEW

***Unbinding The Pillow Book:  
The Many Lives of a Japanese Classic***

By Gergana Ivanova

Columbia University Press, 2019  
xi + 226 pages.

Reviewed by Gouranga Charan PRADHAN

Gergana Ivanova's *Unbinding The Pillow Book: The Many Lives of a Japanese Classic* is a welcome addition to a small but growing body of scholarship focusing on the Benjaminian "afterlives" of Japanese literary classics. "Afterlives" remains nevertheless a bad translation of the German terms *Überleben/fortleben* that Walter Benjamin uses in his essay. In my understanding, Ivanova's is only the second book-length study on *The Pillow Book* in English-language scholarship, and it follows Valerie Henitiuk's *Worlding Sei Shônagon: The Pillow Book in Translation* (2012). However, the comparison between these two books ends there. For Henitiuk's book focuses on the complexities involved in the global circulation of literature through translation by directing her investigation toward a single passage from *The Pillow Book*. Her examination of almost fifty translated versions in as many as sixteen European languages shows the extent of the "worlding" of the work. In contrast, Ivanova pays closer attention to the classic's reception history in Japan starting from the latter half of the Edo period through to the present day.

Ivanova's narrative approach is similar to Joshua S. Mostow's *Courtly Visions: The Ise Stories and the Politics of Cultural Appropriation* (2014) and Michael Emmerich's *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (2013), which she duly acknowledges in the introductory chapter. As with Mostow and Emmerich's seminal works, Ivanova does a great service to the scholarship of *The Pillow Book*. This study is noteworthy not simply because it explores hitherto unknown areas about the work's reception history. It is equally crucial for adding critical perspectives to gender and sexuality in premodern Japan, and to studies on Japanese literary genres, canonization, and translation. By covering around four centuries of the work's textual reception and its shifting social functions over centuries, Ivanova deals with one of the most perplexing questions that have caught literary scholars' attention for decades: What exactly constitutes the so-called untainted "original" classical literary work? What, after all, is *The Pillow Book*?

Ivanova sets out to answer this question in her book. The volume consists of six thematically arranged chapters. The first chapter outlines the frameworks and objectives of the study: that is, to "deconstruct the constructed nature of Japanese women's literary works with the stubbornly unchanging image of their authors" (p. 15), the ultimate objective being to "release the work and its author from the fetters into which they have been forced,

specifically *The Pillow Book* as a *zuihitsu* (miscellany) and the image of Sei as the boastful female writer” (p. 14). Instead of engaging in a futile attempt to pursue an unknowable unmediated original, she focuses rather on the work’s derivatives as they open a window to the reader’s “imagined” literary past, and offer clues about the work’s social functions. The introductory chapter thus serves as a platform upon which the remaining chapters are developed. The second chapter studies three complete commentaries of *The Pillow Book* produced during the Edo era, and exposes the arbitrary manner in which the authors selected multiple manuscripts and categorized the contents to facilitate reading. This chance categorization resulted in the work being labeled a *zuihitsu*, thus disregarding the work’s reception plurality.

One of the work’s multiple imageries is its eroticization; this is explored extensively in the following two chapters. The Edo era appropriation of the work as a guidebook to the pleasure quarters may appear as mere parody, but Ivanova convincingly shows its social function: a strategy to subvert the established notions of class and social identity imposed by the state. The popular opinion of Sei Shōnagon, combined with the work’s perceived didactic contents, facilitated *The Pillow Book*’s usage by Edo era women as a tool for potential social upward mobility not only in familial settings but also in the pleasure quarters. The work’s adaptations in the form of picture books, sex manuals, and letter-writing textbooks were all directed towards the female audience which shows its gendered interpretations mediated by the author’s constructed historical images. Popular as well as scholarly attention to Sei Shōnagon’s femininity continues to reverberate to the present day, as Ivanova discusses in the last two chapters. Ivanova contends, through the examination of the recent comical adaptations and translations into girlish slang, that while premodern adoption of the work for imbuing feminine ideals is no longer persuasive, its association with femininity persists. In fact, this image of Sei Shōnagon as amorous and sexually unrestrained has now been proliferated beyond Japan as evidenced by the recent cinematic and novel adaptations of the work in foreign languages. Ivanova deserves commendations for presenting this new perspective on gender and sexuality in premodern Japan through the work’s literary analysis.

The vast scope of this study is both its strength and weakness. Ivanova’s treatment of the work’s reception history starting from the early Edo era through to the present day makes it clear that labeling the work a *zuihitsu* was facilitated by the absence of an authoritative manuscript which resulted in further textual hybridity by Edo-era male interpreters. It is precisely this generic fluidity of *zuihitsu* which allowed the clubbing together of *The Pillow Book*, *Tsurezuregusa*, and *Hōjōki* into this category despite the striking differences in their contents. There is no doubt that this study, as the blurb on the back cover claims, successfully “elucidates the complex reception of the text as an ongoing dialogue between the irretrievable past and the dynamic present.” Concurrently, the cosmic scope of the study precludes a detailed treatment of the work’s presence in contemporary society. In fact, Ivanova’s eagerness to convince us of the work’s continuing association with a female readership since the eighteenth century perhaps led her to add the last chapter of the book, the content of which is not only marginal but also insufficient. Even chapter 5, where she examines the work’s Meiji-era reception, is mostly restricted to academia with little discussion of the work’s social functions. Rather than relying on academic readings, an analysis of a broader range of resources like magazines, newspapers, and other nonacademic

works would surely have provided fresh perspectives on the work's social roles. In any case, we look forward to more studies from Ivanova on the work's modern reception patterns, especially Sei Shōnagon's visual representations in contemporary popular culture.

As usual with studies of this nature, Ivanova greatly relies on secondary sources for her explications. However, its broad scope is indeed what helps in clarifying the constructed nature of *The Pillow Book's* femininity, for which Ivanova merits the highest praise. The book, which is extensively noted and comprises a comprehensive bibliography—constituting a quarter of the book—will surely be of immense help to both graduate students and scholars interested in literary reception across disciplines.

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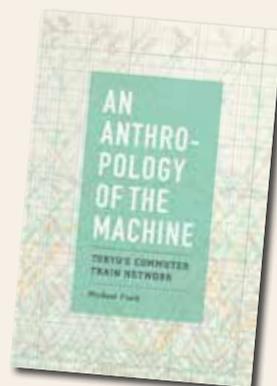
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## BOOK REVIEW

### *An Anthropology of the Machine: Tokyo's Commuter Train Network*

By Michael Fisch

University of Chicago Press, 2018  
xi + 302 pages.



Reviewed by Anthony ROBINS

As Alisa Freedman writes, “The sight of long trains rapidly snaking between skyscrapers and of commuters, especially workers in suits and students in uniforms, flooding station platforms, characterizes the allures and difficulties of Tokyo in the global imagination.”<sup>1</sup> The city hosts the busiest station in the world, Shinjuku. Images of “tremendous tidal flows of commuters,” as Hirooka describes them, forcing themselves onto trains or being forced onto trains are familiar globally, not least in the age of YouTube.<sup>2</sup> Passengers elsewhere marvel at apologies for a train departing twenty seconds early, as reported for the Tsukuba Express in November 2017. Although daily commuting by train takes place in numerous cities around the world and elsewhere in Japan, Tokyo is unmatched in its intensity and its extremes, both positive and negative, of crowdedness, duration (until late at night), punctuality, and sleepiness. It is also unrivalled in the extent to which it touches the population, with operators’ typical symbiosis of railway, real estate, retailing, and other businesses. In Fisch’s words, “To live in Tokyo is to live on and by the commuter train network” (p. 17).

In *An Anthropology of the Machine*, the machine is this commuter network in Tokyo in the form of both its trains and its wider infrastructure. Commuters in Tokyo whom the writer describes probably do not reflect on it, as they sit gazing at their smartphones or catch up on sleep before almost miraculously exiting the train at the correct location, but Fisch’s aim is to show how passengers and machine interact mostly successfully in a collective relationship. This interaction, or even synergy, means that rail travel in Tokyo can largely proceed smoothly day after day. Central to Fisch’s ideas is the theoretical underpinning of Gilbert Simondon’s ideas of “technicity” and Simondon’s view that machines are not something merely external or intrinsically negative, but “integral to the processes of human thinking and social becoming” (p. 7).

As Fisch makes clear, to achieve this, there is the necessity for *yoyū*—literally “an excess of what is required” but effectively “leeway”—however constrained and overworked the Tokyo rail system is. This is achieved through a flexible equilibrium between two kinds of *ressha daiya* (train diagram), the carefully calculated and ideal *kibon* (principle), and the

1 Freedman 2011, p. 5.

2 Hirooka 2000, p. 23.

real and at least somewhat fluctuating *jissshi* (practice). Advances in efficiency, such as more powerful rolling stock or contactless ticket gates, have been crucial in dealing with rising numbers of passengers and in allowing for recovery time, such as *kaifuku unten*, when train drivers have a margin of opportunity to make up for running late.

However, it is when this *joyū* is sacrificed that the equilibrium is lost and indeed tragedy can result. To show this, Fisch moves away from Tokyo to the Kansai area to devote “90 Seconds,” his sixth chapter, to the Amagasaki rail crash. The crash occurred on 25 April 2005 and killed 107 passengers and the train’s driver. He shows effectively and comprehensively how the relationships involving humans and machine can break down following a loss of trust, in this case between local inhabitants and the operator, JR West. One part of the chapter, “An unforgiving system,” refers to the constraints and pressures which resulted in the crash itself, but can also be seen as anticipating the discussion later in the chapter, where the company is seen as needing to ask for forgiveness, rather than expressing apologies. Almost every chapter title refers to times or intervals, but not mere time intervals, that allow successful recovery for the system to function. However, the fifth chapter, “Forty-Four Minutes,” considers recovery from a particularly challenging and prevalent form of disruption in the form of *jinsjin jiko*, literally “human body accident.” This is actually suicide in the majority of cases. While again adeptly fitting it within his overall thesis, Fisch gives profound insights into an area about which railway companies are usually extremely circumspect.

In the previous chapter, “Gaming the Interval,” the author’s analysis ranges from a 1957 film, Ichikawa Kon’s *Man’in densha* (The Full-up Train), through a more recent film, *Densha Otoko* (Train Man, 2005), with its parallel book and internet roots, on to a hypertext novel and finally to a *keitai* game. While Fisch was undertaking research, the then-*keitai* (mobile phone) had yet to be superseded by the more advanced smartphone. What is more, those limits were actually central to the hypertext novel and game. With the now almost all-pervasive smartphone, there is little doubt that commuting and being online can be and are “complementary experiences” (p. 142), not least because Tokyo commuters are provided with an interval to do this, which may be lacking at almost any other time in their day. What the author describes as, “the remediation of the train via the web” (p. 124) can be seen through this human interaction with a machine (the *keitai* or smartphone) within a machine (the train and its infrastructure). However, it is a challenge to follow the author when he writes that, “If web connectivity promises to transform the commute into a kind of game space ... then it opens the possibility for the train to serve as a point of critical intervention and transformation that begins with the question, Can the train teach us to care?” (p. 125)

*An Anthropology of the Machine* comprehensively succeeds through its synergy of describing the development of railways in the Tokyo area, with their key function as commuter carriers, and, to use a railway-related term, providing an inspired “platform” by taking a familiar environment in which to explore complex theories of relationships and balance between humans and machines. Given the technological advances now on the horizon with, for example, a series of tests in December 2018 and January 2019 of driverless operation of that most iconic of Tokyo’s lines, the Yamanote line which circles the city, plus the ever increasing interworking of various rail companies’ trains which has caused a rise in perturbations, and finally the possibility of the system being overstretched during the 2020

Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, the challenge is to keep this balance whose foundation is the leeway of *yojū*.

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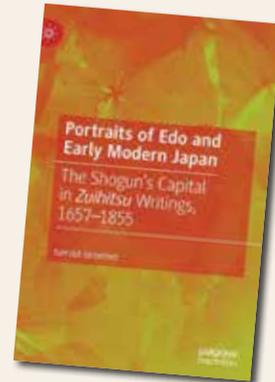
## BOOK REVIEW

***Portraits of Edo and Early Modern Japan: The Shogun's Capital in Zuihitsu Writings, 1657–1855***

Translated and edited by Gerald Groemer

Palgrave Macmillan, 2019  
xxix + 372 pages.

Reviewed by Timon SCREECH



This inviting compilation follows Gerald Groemer's previous offering of translations from the same genre published in 2018, *The Land We Saw, the Times We Knew* (University of Hawai'i Press). While the former volume covered topics of Edo life, this focuses on Edo itself, "the shogun's capital" (not of course Japan's capital, which was Kyoto). As all who study Edo are fully aware, *zuihitsu* are a fundamental point of access to the life and thought processes of the period, or at least of the urban classes. The genre label can be translated as "random jottings." It is traceable to Sei Shōnagon's *Makura no sōshi* (*The Pillow Book*, 1002), and Yoshida Kenkō's *Tsurezure-gusa* (*Essays in idleness*; 1330–1332). But the genre took off in Edo's civic spaces. Many an educated townsman, and the occasional townswoman, picked up brushes to write about the world they lived in, with its pleasures and trials. Unlike the Italian *zibaldone* or wider European *locus communis* collections (aka "commonplace books")—with which they have some affinities—*zuihitsu* are entirely inward-looking. John Locke or Ralph Emerson made scrapbooks by transcribing what they read and mused upon, as well as what they heard and saw in the street. But their Edo confreres restrict themselves to the local orbit. By telling us so deliciously about changes in haircut, or types of towel, Edo writers also shock us with the narrow range of their interests. This is the dilemma of *zuihitsu* for readers today. They are valuable for those delving into the minutiae of Edo lore, but are without interest for other people. Later writers lacked the caustic wit of Sei Shōnagon or the literary flourish of Kenkō. To be blunt, they can be pretty boring. It is raw data. Historians in the Annales school would cry out for this kind of material in relation to France, but such people are few. I, for one, find it valuable to learn that when Edo had a population of 1.29 million, there were 52,000 monks and nuns, and 36,000 Shinto priests (p. 256). However, when another writer tells us, "until the Kansei period kites did not possess as many horizontal ribs as they do in today's Kaei Period" (p. 271), I am one of a larger body of readers who do not care.

Most *zuihitsu* are without *event*. Being often written by the elderly, they hark on about change, but in an organic, incremental way. In the introduction, Groemer ponders whether *zuihitsu* can be called "literature." He is too honest to propose that they are, admitting that texts are often cobbled together—"scribbled words" in which the author just "whines" (pp. 9 and 11). It is interesting, in this regard, that *zuihitsu* (including the first two given here)

often have unknown authors. Writers' personalities were not cherished, even when the texts were handed on. Or perhaps concealing identities conveyed an aura of objectivity.

It is Groemer's goal, of course, to promote *zuihitsu*. He does this in two ways. One is by applying to the Japanese texts his own broad command of English. Page after page we have Groemer's beautiful use of language. It certainly compels us through. But it is a significant upscaling of the originals. Some may actually find it overdone, where no noun is allowed to pass without an adjective, and no verb without an adverb—though to be fair, this is more often in the Introduction, where Groemer has free rein. Elsewhere, he comes up with some wonderful translations that I hope will be widely adopted: “kickovers” for *ke-korobashi*, or low-grade sex workers, and “cabin boats” for *yakata-bune*. I wish I had thought of these myself.

The second valorising stance is in the selections themselves. It is natural that Groemer chose interesting texts, but the result is that we do not quite have an overview of the genre, even those that discuss the shogunal seat. Some works included here are not considered *zuihitsu* by most scholars. Still, thanks to the nature of Groemer's prose, and the texts he has chosen to work with, we have here a nice vista into Edo life and times.

We are told that most *zuihitsu* were written by “staunch conservatives” often moved to write in their riper years. Over history, old people, especially if also conservative, have tended to look back and regret how things have changed. *Zuihitsu* are, in essence, repositories for the moanings of such people. It is valuable for some types of historian (I am one) to have access to most of this, but there is always the rub that grievances may not be legitimate, nor even accurate. When an eighty-year-old man reports on what the world was like when he was ten, his claims are suspicious, even if the intent is honest. Many remonstrances are also distinctly off-the-peg, such as that young men no longer greet their parents properly at New Year, but “just scuttle about town in search of loose pleasures” (p. 94). So, too, complaints that parents no longer help children with their homework, nor even care if schooling across ages and periods takes place at all, such that “few [children] practice anything” (p. 99). Sadly typical, too, are the many condemnations of women getting out of place. To the modern reader, actually, many of the deplored changes sound like improvements. But to *zuihitsu* writers, the world was going to the dogs. The cause, women being above themselves, yes, but this was all part of “luxury” (*zeitaku*), “which should be shunned and feared” (p. 231). Edo consumerism had its discontents, and it was the role of *zuihitsu*, above all, to capture this. I do not think anyone could have made the genre more approachable than Groemer has.

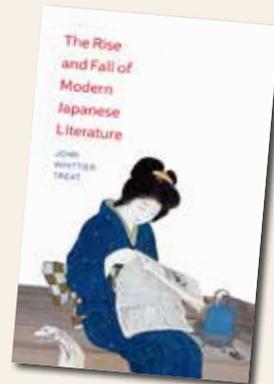
## BOOK REVIEW

*The Rise and Fall of Modern Japanese Literature*

By John Whittier Treat

The University of Chicago Press, 2018  
v + 401 pages.

Reviewed by Roy STARRS



John Whittier Treat's new book offers some brilliantly original, delightfully offbeat perspectives on modern Japanese literature, but its rather overblown title and introduction probably should not be taken too seriously. Treat does not establish himself here as the Edward Gibbon of modern Japanese literature. Indeed, anyone familiar with that vast body of literature may well question whether his book amounts to a "history" of it at all. There is simply too much missing, not only whole genres (poetry and drama) but so many major writers (only two canonical writers, Higuchi Ichiyō and Natsume Sōseki, are given anything like in-depth treatment; others are mentioned only in passing) that the perplexed reader is left wondering exactly what constituted the "rise" claimed by the book's title.

Indeed, Treat himself assures us that "I will soon be lectured on all my omissions..." (pp. 24–25). This does seem highly likely, given that he also tempts fate by inviting comparisons of what he calls "my history of modern literature in Japan" with the three magna opera already available in English (by Donald Keene, Katō Shūichi, and Konishi Jin'ichi), works that actually do offer the sustained argument and comprehensive narrative one expects from a "history." Even more ill-advisedly, Treat attempts some one-upmanship over the late, great historian of Japanese literature, Donald Keene, by implying that his own history is less arrogantly or arbitrarily "confident" or definitive in its judgments than Keene's. To illustrate what he means, he quotes Keene's summary dismissal of a number of Japanese writers that the critical consensus now evaluates more highly. But are Treat's own judgments any less opinionated, or so entirely free of personal prejudice? Of Murakami Haruki, for instance, he writes: "Murakami is not thoughtful enough to be postmodern (though he would like to be) and does not have a unique style (it's familiar, recycled American literary minimalism)" (p. 256). This may or may not be true (I am no great fan of Murakami myself), but it is certainly as definitively dismissive of a popular writer as Donald Keene ever dared to be—and in an even more ad hominem way—and it hardly lives up to Treat's claim to be a humbler kind of literary arbiter.

One might also ask, of course, whether it is actually possible, or even desirable, to write a literary history completely free of one's personal tastes and prejudices. In my view, Treat himself is at his best here when he writes with personal warmth and enthusiasm about certain writers one might describe as "rebellious outsiders" to the Japanese literary

establishment, writers such as Fukazawa Shichirō and Takahashi Gen'ichirō. The eccentricity and quirkiness of these writers seems to seriously tickle Treat's funny bone. Takahashi is the literary hero of the concluding chapter, not so much because his parody fictions do anything to forestall the anticipated end of literature and the nation-state—or, indeed, life on earth as we know it—but because they teach us how to have fun on the way out. Of Fukazawa, Treat tells us that, in lieu of the traditional death poem, he ordered Rod Stewart's "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?" to be played at his funeral. With obvious relish, Treat writes: "His real-life death poem was poetry written not in the idiom of traditional Japanese aesthetics but in the vulgar, popular, irreverent slang of a British rocker" (p. 197). One might say that Treat's own "history" is infused with the same defiantly unconventional, thumb-nosing spirit.

And certainly, this approach yields some fresh and thought-provoking insights. The chapter on the early days of modern Japanese fiction, for instance, eschews the usual origins narrative that begins with Tsubouchi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei, and argues persuasively that popular tales of "poison women," real-life female murderers, may be regarded as the true precursors of the newspaper novels that later flourished in the hands of major writers such as Sōseki. As is currently the literary-critical fashion, Treat expands the boundaries of what is considered both "literary" and "Japanese," so that he offers a chapter, for instance, on the "creole Japanese" of the Occupation era, analyzing the sometimes awkward, sometimes charming *mélange* of English and Japanese found in a popular novel, in the postwar Constitution, and in the boogie-woogie songs that were all the rage at that time of the first great wave of Americanization. Likewise, he offers a chapter on the graffiti and manga popular with radical leftwing students in the 1960s, and another on colonial Korean authors who wrote in Japanese, including the "abject" Kim Mun-jip, who achieved some notoriety writing about his infatuation with Japanese women but is now perceived as a sycophantic traitor by his fellow Koreans.

These are all first-rate essays and, of the eleven (including the conclusion that focuses on the aforementioned Takahashi), only one raised some critical resistance in this reader: the chapter on the literature and painting of the Taishō era. It interprets the inward-turn characteristic of the writers and painters of this age in Japan (and indeed globally) along classic Freudian lines as a series of clinical cases of narcissistic self-absorption. To me this seems altogether too reductive and simplistic. For instance, to reduce a novel such as Shiga Naoya's masterpiece, *An'ya kōro* (*A Dark Night's Passing*, 1921–1937) to a mere exercise in narcissism is to deny it that all-important spiritual dimension that made it so profoundly moving to generations of Japanese readers. In the final celebrated scene on Mt. Daisen, the protagonist experiences what is unmistakably a *satori* of sorts, his self-absorption leading not to a narcissistic self-image, as Treat would have it, but to self-dissolution and self-transcendence, and thereby to a sense of unity with the natural world and with the "other." Whatever one thinks about the psychological or ontological status of such "mystical" experiences, their sociocultural significance in Japan, as in other Buddhist countries, makes it hard to dismiss them as mere infantile displays of narcissistic self-absorption.

But Treat's retro Freudianism here is only a momentary lapse in what is, as I have said, a book full of original and provocative insights. Whether a "history" or not, it is greatly to be welcomed at the present time, when there is so little first-rate writing in English on modern Japanese literature.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Japanese Gardens and Landscapes,  
1650–1950*

By Wybe Kuitert

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016  
ix + 372 pages.

Reviewed by Christian TAGSOLD

In 1988 Wybe Kuitert published his book, *Themes, Scenes and Taste in the History of Japanese Garden Art* with the Dutch publisher J. C. Gieben. His historical overview proved so groundbreaking that the University of Hawai'i Press later republished it as *Themes in the History of Japanese Garden Art* in 2002. Kuitert avoided glorifying and essentializing Japanese gardening, and instead offered a rich socio-historical account. Furthermore, he shattered several myths, such as the idea of the Zen garden. Kuitert proved that this concept was only invented in the 1930s for Ryōanji's stone garden, which up to that point had simply been interpreted as a landscape symbolizing a Chinese legend, but not as a deeply spiritual place that reflected the essence of Japanese culture.<sup>1</sup> Kuitert's book, however, had one important shortcoming: it only covered gardens and garden art up to the early seventeenth century. Aficionados of Japanese gardens might argue that the Edo period only saw the decay of gardening anyway, and that most gardens laid out under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate do not merit much attention. However, in the last two or three decades, Japanese garden historians such as Shirahata Yōzaburō and Hida Norio have published various books and papers in which they rehabilitated the Edo period as a time of lively gardening and garden theory.<sup>2</sup>

Kuitert's new book, *Japanese Gardens and Landscapes, 1650–1950*, not only follows this trend, but discusses landscaping up to the mid-Showa period. The book is richly illustrated. Many of the maps, drawings, and photographs are unique findings from the archives and fascinating in their own right. Over seven chapters, Kuitert moves through premodern and modern garden history chronologically, but divides the periods topically. Thus, the first three chapters are dedicated to the Edo period. The first treats daimyo gardens, the second, the broad affection for plants, garden manuals, and gardens among commoners, and the third, the tea culture of noble and high-ranking intellectual circles in relation to gardens. From the fourth chapter onwards, Kuitert shows how modernity and Japanese gardens were initially at odds immediately after the Meiji restoration until the dust of the

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1 Kuitert 1988, pp. 150–55.

2 The most important of these publications are Shirahata 1997 and Hida 2009.

immense political and social changes settled, and fresh impulses rejuvenated gardening in the twentieth century.

The influx of Western knowledge and techniques did not leave landscape architecture untouched. Those who had seized power and wealth during the Meiji Restoration had new gardens built, whose style reflected this influence. However, as the century drew to its close, garden historians like Ozawa Keijirō rediscovered and saved many historical resources on Japanese garden history, subsequently arguing for their relevance in modern times. By and by, gardens turned into a national symbol which also drew the interest of the West. At the same time, the appreciation of nature changed fundamentally. In chapter 5, Kuitert takes up the example of the Musashino plain, and especially Kunikida Doppo's romantic vision of it, to illustrate how naturalism emerged. This led to the somewhat eclectic approach of landscape architect Ogawa Jihē discussed in the ensuing chapter. Ogawa started his career in Kyoto at the end of the nineteenth century when the old imperial city was rebranding itself to compensate for the loss of its role as the capital. With patrons such as Yamagata Aritomo, for whom he laid out Murin'an, and commissions such as the gardens of the Heian Jingu, Ogawa became well known. He was thus able to extend his work to Tokyo and exert a fundamental influence on Japanese gardening up to the 1940s. Finally, in the last chapter, Kuitert explains the seeds of contemporary gardening and landscape architecture in Japan.

Through stressing the social and cultural context of gardening and embedding his story in a rich flow of sources, Kuitert avoids the essentialism of many books on Japanese gardens. Kuitert, however, cannot completely shed the influence of Japanese garden culturalism. "Tradition" occasionally pops up as a self-explanatory argument for Japanese garden history in some cases where it would have been more illuminating to discuss precisely which figures drew on historical resources and to what ends. The discussion of the influence of the *Sakuteiki*, a garden treatise from the late Heian period, largely reflects the status it has been given by Japanese garden historians in the twentieth century in order to forge a strong tradition:

The *Sakuteiki* so precisely and concisely catches the full essence of garden making that it can be correlated to the English *genius of the place*, both in themselves easily extended to apply to landscape architecture as a whole. (p. 158)

Here, one gets the slightly distorted idea that the *Sakuteiki* consists of a timeless message, while in reality the text fully reflects Heian belief systems that modern readers simply do not share anymore. A more nuanced presentation of the *Sakuteiki* as an invaluable historic source and of the way it was rediscovered and interpreted in modern times would have helped here.

However, the book is so rich in discussion and brings so many historical sources to the readers' attention that these faults are of little consequence in the overall assessment. Kuitert's book makes premodern and modern Japanese garden history highly accessible, while eschewing the common distortions of popular literature. Here we get a serious and comprehensive treatment in an enjoyable prose style which is open to a broad range of readers.

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*Gosokui shiki shikizu* 御即位式々図.

(In *Gosokui daijōsai taiten zuan: Taishō no bu* 御即位大嘗祭大典図案 大正之部, by Shimomura Tamahiro 下村玉廣. Unsōdō, 1913)

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