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

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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*, *ōraimono*, *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*).¹ 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.”² 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.”³ 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.⁴ 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 alone⁵—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*.⁶ 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).⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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*.¹¹

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 劔子 (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.¹²

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.

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.”¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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*).¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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.

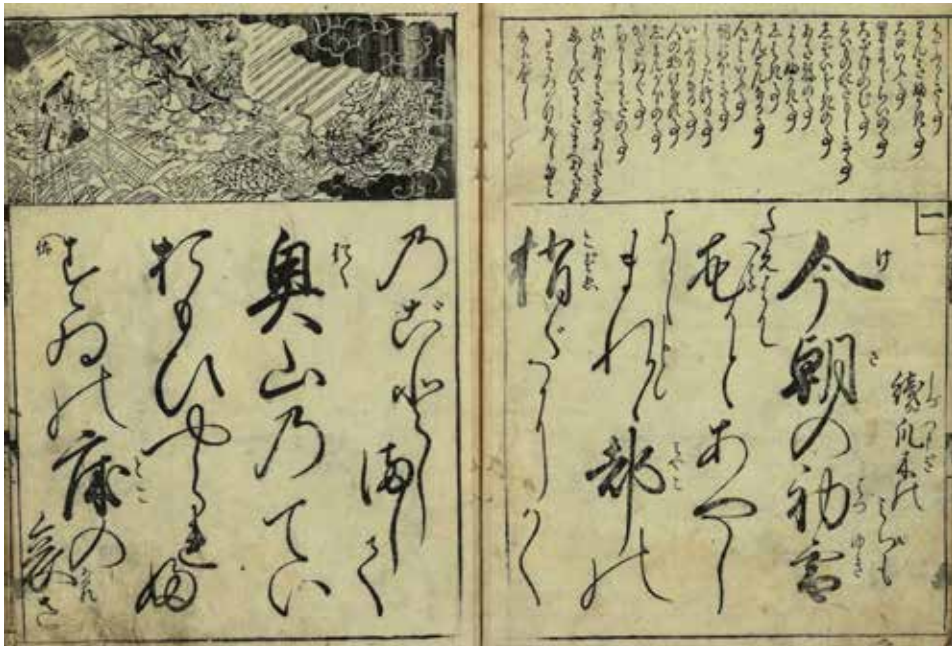


Figure 2. Two opposing pages from *Models of Writing for Women* (*Onna-yō bunshō kōmoku*, 1698), including an image of Atsuta no En'uneme and a great snake (upper left). Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

for Women and Children) in cooperation with the Osaka publisher Murai Kitarō 村井喜太郎.¹⁷ 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 issbu*; *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).¹⁸ 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.”¹⁹

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 1876.²⁰ 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),²¹ *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.²² 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.”²³ 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.”²⁴ 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.”²⁵ 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).²⁶ 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).²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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.³⁰ 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."³¹ 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.³² 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:

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.³³

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.³⁴ 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.”³⁵ 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).³⁶ 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).³⁷ 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

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.³⁸

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.³⁹

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 1868.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ 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.⁴² (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,⁴³ 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.

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).⁴⁴ 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

⁴⁴ *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.⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶ 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

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.⁴⁷ 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!⁴⁸

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.”⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹

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."⁵² 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.⁵³

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

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.⁵⁴ 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."⁵⁵

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."⁵⁶ 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."⁵⁷ 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.

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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