<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| XIV     | From the Editors' Desk 編纂者から  
EMJNet at the AAS 2007 (with abstracts of presentations) | 1 |
|         | **Articles 論文** |      |
|         | Polyvocal Portolans: Nautical Charts and Hybrid Maritime Cultures In Early Modern East Asia  
Peter D. Shapinsky | 4 |
|         | Silence Without Secrecy? What is Left Unsaid in Early Modern Japanese Maps  
Marcia Yonemoto | 27 |
|         | Sai On’s Autobiography as Didactic Rhetoric  
Gregory Smits | 40 |
|         | Tokugawa Women and Spacing the Self  
Bettina Gramlich-Oka | 51 |
|         | **Book Reviews 書評** |      |
|         | Lawrence E. Marceau, *Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan*  
Peter Flueckiger | 68 |
|         | Andrew M. Watsky, *Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan*  
Janice Katz | 72 |
|         | Basic Style Guidelines for Final Manuscript Submissions to *EMJ* | 74 |
The editors welcome preliminary inquiries about manuscripts for publication in Early Modern Japan. Please send queries to Philip Brown, Early Modern Japan, Department of History, 230 West seventeenth Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210 USA or, via e-mail to brown.113@osu.edu. All scholarly articles are sent to referees for review.

Books for review and inquiries regarding book reviews should be sent to Carol Richmond Tsang, Review Editor, Early Modern Japan, 45 Sunset Drive, White Plains, NY 10604. E-mail correspondence may be sent to emj4reviews@verizon.net. Readers wishing to review books are encouraged to specify their interests in an e-mail to the Review Editor.
From the Editor:
編纂者のメッセージ

The four essays at the heart of this EMJ issue all originated as part of presentations at our annual meeting, held in association with the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies.

The first two essays focus on the theme of maps and mapping. Peter Shapinsky’s “Polyvocal Portolans” explores the ways in which Western and Japanese cartographic traditions developed in the truly multi-cultural atmosphere of the late sixteenth and early centuries. Marcia Yonemoto explores the ways in which modern scholars have understood the mapping traditions that emerged within Japan as the country restricted its interactions with the broader world and focused map-making on more domestic problems.

The second set of essays take an autobiographical focus. Gregory Smits explores the ways in which Okinawan scholar Sai On used his autobiography to convey specific arguments to his readers. Bettina Gramlich-Oka introduces mid-Tokugawa scholar Tadano Mukuzu’s autobiographical reflections, arguing that despite common impressions, women did compose autobiographies. These two papers were part of a larger panel and we hope to be able to publish additional essays based on the companion presentations.

EMJ at the AAS 2007. This spring the Early Modern Japan Network will once again have a very innovative and exciting set of presentations at its annual meeting in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting (Boston). We will gather on Thursday afternoon, March 22 from 2 to 5 p.m., Salon D. Please mark your calendars as this announcement will not appear in the AAS program. The full description of the panel follows.

See you in Boston!

Philip Brown
Early Modern Japan Network

"Kibyōshi: Parody, Porn, Alterity, and Autobiography in Mid Edo-Period Comicbooks"

Historically derided as a kind of frivolous comicbook for "women and children" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the kibyōshi was actually an urbane genre of pictorial comic fiction for adults, characterized by its mature wit, sophisticated visual-verbal play, radical allusivity to the entire thousand-year Japanese cultural imagination (if not also to the even longer Chinese one), and, perhaps most surprisingly, edgy sociopolitical satire. In spite of much rhetoric to the contrary, the readers of the kibyōshi were primarily educated townsmen. And although some notable merchants wrote in the genre, most authors were low-ranking samurai, a fact that suggests that the many politically irreverent works served as vehicles for nominal members of the ruling elite to criticize with relative impunity (albeit under pseudonyms) their superior—if not the very ideology of Tokugawa Japan itself.

Arguably the most widely read genre in its own day, the vast popularity of the kibyōshi is rivaled, perhaps, only by its subsequent scholarly neglect. Although interest in the genre has been growing over the past several decades even in the West, especially because of the recent "Edo boom," this panel draws together several scholars outside Japan whose works take a fresh look, albeit from different vantage points, at this genre that epitomizes one of the greatest peaks in Japanese cultural history.

As is evident from the abstracts below, each panelist explores a different dimension of the kibyōshi: its parodies de-centering symbolic (though viewed increasingly as reified) hierarchies, thereby serving as a crucial juncture between dominant and subordinate cultures (Hirano); its alleged relation to modern Japanese manga in terms of visual-verbal conventions, readership, and erotic representation (Kern); its power as a vehicle for presenting images of the foreign—especially the Western’ Other and the resultant impact on the Japanese visual regime (Screech); and its potential, in the hands of one of the period’s greatest littérateurs, as meaningful autobiography that can also be read against the grain of that author's more "serious" works (Walley).

In keeping with the visual-verbal mode of
the kibyōshi, each scholarly presentation takes the form not of a traditional talk, but of a documentary video.

ABSTRACTS

Katsuya HIRANO (Assistant Professor, Cornell University), "Power, Parody, Kibyōshi"

This presentation examines the political implications of parody enacted through the production and circulation of kibyōshi during the late eighteenth century in Tokugawa Japan. This particular moment marked an extensive, circular, and reciprocal influence between the cultures of subordinate and dominant classes. Popular culture prospered through its clever and creative appropriation of discourses and images produced in high culture (parody), and high culture found it necessary—to incorporate some literary, aesthetic, and intellectual elements from popular culture into its own form. This increasing reciprocity of influence between dominant and subordinate cultures inadvertently de-centered symbolic hierarchies—the cultural configurations of power—constructed by the Tokugawa regime. I argue that it was the kibyōshi and its authors that played a central role in this extensive interaction of these two cultural spheres, and that this interaction had a destabilizing effect on cultural distinctions designed to maintain the social hierarchies of Tokugawa Japan.

Adam KERN (Associate Professor, Harvard University), "Manga Culture' and the Kibyōshi"

A growing number of cultural critics in and out of Japan have begun to hail the kibyōshi as the progenitor of the modern Japanese comicbook (manga). Although the century separating the heyday of the former and the advent of the latter calls such characterizations into question, this presentation explores the relationship between the two genres by examining a number of apparent similarities often cited by the proponents of what can be termed "manga culture theory," such as the putative use in both genres of panelization, speech balloons, speed lines, and pornography. I argue that most of these similarities turn out to be superficial—hardly evidence of some direct historical link between the kibyōshi and the modern manga. Paradoxically, however, after debunking the notion that artist Katsushika Hokusai coined the term manga, I raise the possibility that in some regards the kibyōshi may actually have been the "original" manga.

Timon SCREECH (Professor, SOAS, University of London), "The Lens in the Art of the Kibyōshi"

Kibyōshi have recently been the subject of much study, and it has become increasingly apparent how wide was the range of material celebrated in them. Kibyōshi can now be see as an integral part of Floating World culture. One repeated theme is the encounter of Japan—or of Japanese people—with the foreign. Despite the relative seclusion of the Japanese state, kibyōshi reveal that an intense debate about overseas matters was underway. Of course, given the genre, this debate often takes the form of ridicule or satire. Often too, the foreign is given less as an authentic other voice, and is more an echo of the self.

This presentation will consider several kibyōshi in which specifically European matters are invoked (as opposed to other kibyōshi addressing Ezo, China or the Ryukyus). As will be shown, mention of European inventions, such as hot-air balloons or static-electricity generators, and European sciences, such as surgery and botany, can be found scattered across many works. I shall concentrate in my presentation on one matter: discussion of lensed devices.

Lenses could be ground in Japan from the late 18th century, but most were imported. In either case, they carried with them a foreign colouration. But the lens was also supposed to be something for lucid and objective vision. Telescopes and microscopes, as well as lensed peepboxes with hidden pictures, offered a metaphor for close, precision inspection of ones surroundings, and in the Floating World those surroundings were social.

Glynne WALLACE (Ph.D. candidate, Harvard University), "So this guy from Edo walks into a teahouse in Kyoto' Or, Kibyōshi as Autobiography: Bakin's 1802 Journey to the Capital and A
Rib-Tickling Journey to the West"

In 1802 journeyman author and *kibyōshi* specialist Takizawa (Kyokutei) Bakin traveled the Tokaido to Kyoto and Osaka on one of his rare trips outside of Edo. His experiences on the road furnished the material for two autobiographical writings: *Kiryo manroku*, a diary-style travelogue that circulated as a manuscript, and *Saritsu udan*, a cross between a travelogue and an antiquarian miscellany published in 1804. In addition, Bakin included references to his trip in some of his *kibyōshi* he published in 1803. Of these, *A Rib-Tickling Journey to the West* (*Heso ga wakasu sayu monogatari*) is the most extensively concerned with his journey, presenting itself as a collection of funny stories about things he heard or saw on his travels, done up in the style of *A Companion to Remember Saikaku By* (*Saikaku nagori no tomo*, 1699) while spoofing the title of the great Chinese classic *Journey to the West* (*Ch. Xi You Ji*, *J. Sayu-ki*, ca. 1590s).

This presentation will focus on *A Rib-Tickling Journey to the West* as an attempt on Bakin’s part to fashion an explicitly autobiographical *kibyōshi*. I will compare his treatment of his travels here to those found in his prose travelogues, addressing the effects on these disparate works of audience expectations and generic conventions. I will also examine Bakin’s evolving authorial persona as evident in this *kibyōshi*, and what the trip to the West meant for him and his writing. Finally, I will situate this work in the context of Bakin’s other late *kibyōshi*, as part of his interest in *kibyōshi* organized around principles other than narrative.
Polyvocal Portolans: Nautical Charts and Hybrid Maritime Cultures
In Early Modern East Asia*

© Peter D. Shapinsky, University of Illinois at Springfield

Scholarship on cartographical and other forms of technological exchange in Japanese studies is beset by a continuum of dangers ranging from simply describing it as adoption to reifying the essentialist Nihonjinron shibboleth that characterizes Japan as an isolated island-nation that when necessary borrows from abroad and perfects others’ technologies. In large part, these problems are the result of two pernicious narratives. The first centers on the nation—here understood as a modern conception of a people tied to a geography projected backwards in time1—as the proper object of historical inquiry. The second narrative tells the history of that nation’s science and technology teleologically,2 a historical trajectory that from premodern beginnings culminates in modern western science.

*This paper began as a project in a cartographic history class at the University of Michigan taught by Diane Hughes. I am grateful to Philip Brown for the opportunity to turn it into a conference presentation and to then submit it for publication in Early Modern Japan. I would like to express thanks for helpful comments received from Philip Brown, Adam Clulow, Tom Nelson, Watanabe Miki, Kären Wigen, Michael Wood, and two anonymous reviewers. All errors are of course my own.

1This idea is drawn from Benedict Anderson’s notion of nationality as partly being the perception of a shared history. See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, Rev. ed. (London; New York: Verso, 1992).

2The classic exposition that science does not progress as a teleological narrative—the incremental accretion of discoveries—can be found in Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

This paper offers an alternative to these narratives by de-centering the state and by exploring cultural exchange as a non-linear series of translations. To do so, I focus on a series of exchanges that occurred among individuals whose decisions to adopt a particular technology were not necessarily connected to the interests of a state—the participation of individuals from Japan in the development of cartography and other nautical technologies in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maritime world. The increased interaction and growth of commercial networks throughout maritime Eurasia in the early modern period stimulated innovation and borrowing in fields such as navigation, cartography, and ship design among seafarers from both Europe and Asia. However, the lack of a universally recognized hegemonic paradigm3 for navigation and other nautical matters in early modern maritime East Asia rendered technological exchange in these areas idiosyncratic and pragmatic. Seafarers from both Europe and Asia seem to have been particularly eclectic, sampling nautical practices from around the world and trying anything that might ensure a safe passage.

In this environment, seafarers developed hybrid,4 cosmopolitan sea-based cultures and identities. There was a significant cartographical component of this maritime culture as evidenced by a group of maps commonly labeled Japanese portolan5 charts, of which Figure 1, a chart held by the

3I am using paradigm in the sense suggested by Thomas Kuhn—that which forms the corpus of acceptable scientific practice and provides the models for legitimate research, the “normal science” of the day (Kuhn, 10-13). For the state of science without a paradigm, see Kuhn, 4.

4For the purposes of this paper, hybridity is defined as: elements that work together in a unified whole greater than the constituent parts originating in disparate reaches of the globe.


The word portolan itself is not found in premodern sources, but is instead a label applied by later scholars. It is derived from the Italian word “portolano” meaning a “collection of written
Hayashibara Museum is one of four extant originals.

Portolans, including those made in East Asia, are palimpsests containing infinite maritime itineraries. To make them, heterogeneous forms of local navigational knowledge—often coastlines of basins charted with compasses and calculations of speed and distance—were collected, synthesized and inscribed atop a grid of blossoming compass vectors (rhumb lines). This design enabled navigators to trace almost limitless trajectories using portolans in conjunction with written insailing directions.” Tony Campbell, “Portolan Charts from the Late Thirteenth Century to 1500,” History of Cartography, vol. 1, Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe, ed. J.B. Harley et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 375.

I am grateful to the Hayashibara Museum, Okayama, Japan for permission to reproduce this image here. The map was originally part of the holdings of the Ikeda family, daimyo of Okayama domain.

Campbell, 390. Mollat du Jourdin and others tie the appearance of the chart in Europe directly to the almost contemporaneous appearance of the receptacle used to hold the lodestone. Michel Mollat du Jourdin et al., Sea Charts of the Early Explorers, trans. L. le R. Dethan (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 12.

---

Figure 1: Ajia kōkaizu (Navigational Chart of Asia) in the holdings of the Hayashibara Museum

The Hayashibara chart measures approximately 52 cm by 76 cm and is drawn in ink on vellum. It depicts a region extending from Japan in the east to the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula and Africa in the west. Its size is consistent with other extant contemporary portolans of similar design. The styles of the equator, tropics lines, latitude bars, scale of miles, fleur-de-lis, compass rose, decorative motifs like Christian flags that embellish the empty inland areas on the map, and other iconography indicate Portuguese influence. The compass vectors are divided by color into black for the eight primary compass points, gold for the half-winds and red for the quarter-winds. Befitting a nautical chart, the Hayashibara portolan also has helpful descriptive devices such as red and black dots lining the coasts pointing out shoals, shallows, and rocks. The coastlines are shaded to exaggerate their size, providing additional detail. Place names are (for the most part) inscribed perpendicular to the coasts in Chinese characters, Japanese phonetic scripts, and Roman letters. Labels identify not just ports and anchorages, but also larger territorial units such as countries, islands, and regions. It is thought that the Hayashibara chart dates from the 1590’s due to the absence of Edo (capital of Japan from 1600) and the presence of Osaka—Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s capital from 1583-1598—on the

---

One previously owned by the vermilion-seal merchant Sueyoshi Magozaeemon measures 51.5 cm x 77.3 cm. An 1833 copy of a map owned by the shuinsen merchant Itoya Zuiemon of a similar geography is 56 x 80 cm.

For a useful summary of portolan iconography, see Heinrich Winter, “A Late Portolan Chart at Madrid and Late Portolan Charts in General,” Imago Mundi 7 (1950), 38.
Definitive analyses of the Hayashibara and other East Asian portolans have been hindered by a dearth of reliable information. Drafters, dates, and places of production for these charts all remain unknown. However, scholars are relatively certain about one aspect of these maps’ provenance. Charts such as the Hayashibara were extensively adapted and adopted for use by the pilots and shipmasters who conned the hundreds of shuinsen, cosmopolitan trading vessels licensed with passes stamped with vermilion seals for trade in East and Southeast Asia. These licenses were issued by both the Toyotomi and Tokugawa regimes from the 1590’s until the Tokugawa Bakufu abrogated the shuinsen system in the late 1630’s. The Hayashibara and other similar portolans all depict potential itineraries from major ports in Japan to East and Southeast Asian entrepôts frequented by shuinsen. Many of the surviving charts are known to have belonged to prominent vermilion-seal merchants such as Itoya Zueimon (1585-1650), Kadoya Shichirō Hyōei Eikichi (1610-1672), Sueyoshi Magozaemon Yo-shiyasu (1570-1617), and William Adams, an English pilot who sailed variously for Dutch, English, and Japanese sponsors. Itoya Zueimon made twenty-four licensed voyages to Southeast Asia between 1601 and 1632 and the Itoya family seems to have been prominent in Japanese diasporas in Cochin China and Siam. Kadoya Eikichi married a Siamese noblewoman and became head of the Japanese community there.

The toponomy of these marine maps also suggests a shuinsen context. For example, although the Hayashibara chart has labels for important Japanese ports like Sotogahama, Sakai, Shimonoseki, Nagasaki, and Hirado and larger seaboard regions like Shikoku, Hizen, Hyūga, Satsuma, Kii, and the Gotō islands, most of the map is dedicated to depicting the destinations of the vermilion-seal ships: Ryūkyū, Korea, and, on the Ming Chinese coast, Takasago [Taiwan], Nanjing, Fujian, Chinzhou [Zhangzhou], and Macao. Inscriptions of major Southeast Asian ports frequented by trading vessels listed on the chart include Tonkin, Champa, Cochin, Siam, Borneo, Melaka, Patani, and Luzon.

Otherwise, the small number of surviving examples has made typological analysis difficult—only four original vellum charts survive, along with several eighteenth and nineteenth-century paper copies. By comparing shapes and iconography of surviving vermilion-seal portolans, Unno Kazutaka has concluded that a single Portuguese progenitor map is the most likely source for these portolans. Indeed, the Hayashibara Museum

---

11 For a review of the state of the debate over the beginning of the Shuinsen trade, see Nagazumi Yōko, Shuinsen (Yoshikawa Köbunkan, 2001), 2-5.
12 To give a sense of the scale of this trade, in the 30-odd years in which shuin were issued, Iwao has calculated that upwards of 130 people received licenses for 370 ships (Iwao Seiichi, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū (Yoshikawa Köbunkan 1985, 220)), over half in the first 12 years.
15 Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kōkaizu, 539. For a list and description of the ports visited by the vermilion-seal ships, see Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, 149-176; Nagazumi, 48-54.
16 Nakamura Hiroshi’s extensive research only uncovered four original and ten copies of East Asian charts and another 5 charts of Japan alone. See his comprehensive opus Goshuinsen kōkaizu; Unno Kazutaka, “Waga kuni ni okeru portorāno kaizu no juyō.” For portolan technology being used to create domestic charts of Japan alone see Unno Kazutaka, “Nihon karuta” no shutsugen to teitai,” in Tōzai chizu bunka kōshōshi kenkyū, 271-304.
17 Unno Kazutaka, “Cartography in Japan,” 382.
chart closely resembles the 1833 copy of a chart owned by the Itoya family whose Portuguese inscription along one edge, “SEBÃSTIO AFEZ [created by Sebãstio],” may indicate one Portuguese mapmaker who influenced the development of vermilion-seal portolans. Surviving designs also suggest that at least two varieties of vermilion-seal portolans were drafted: a) from charts like the Hayashibara map that depicts a broad swathe from Japan in the East to Africa in the west, and b) others that only include East and Southeast Asia.

The scope of maps in the first group like the Hayashibara extends to India, Africa, and Arabia, regions where no Japanese ships are recorded as having visited. This geographic scope has puzzled cartographic historians, some of whom have speculated that such inclusions may be a result of latent Portuguese influence. It is also possible that vermilion-seal seafarers of the early 1600’s did not foresee a contraction in overseas trade and instead envisioned a time when they might travel as far as Africa. I suggest that the inclusion of geographies of no immediate concern to Japanese becomes much easier to comprehend if we view the Hayashibara-type portolans as less a product of Japan and more a creation of the cosmopolitan hybrid nautical cultures of ships and ports of East Asian seafaring. In contrast, the design of the second variety seems directly related to the shuin-sen trade as its scope is limited to the range of the vermilion-seal ships—it is bordered on the East by Japan and on the west by the straits of Melaka.

In any case, the relative paucity of extant examples does not negate the historical significance of these charts. Such maps were among the dominant navigational cartographical forms in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century East Asia as well as in Europe and the Middle East—part of many a pilot’s navigational toolbox. As utilitarian devices, maps may have simply been discarded when they deteriorated or became obsolete, especially after the Tokugawa Bakufu’s interdiction of Japanese traveling overseas in 1635. That said, in order to demonstrate the significance of these charts for seafarers in the vermilion-seal trade, it is necessary to overcome the limitations in historical evidence by exploring the charts in wider contexts.

While acknowledging the maritime usage of these portolans, most scholars have tended to employ classical cartographical and nation-centered contexts. Some have performed exhaustive toponymic and comparative analyses to create a genealogy of these nautical charts as an isolated entity. Others situate vermilion-seal portolans within the context of a linear, teleological genealogy of Japanese mapping. To some extent, this school of thought is characteristic of the larger historiographical traditions that focus on the state as the fundamental historical subject and the primary interlocutors in overseas relations. Many historians of East Asia have focused on the diplomatic and commercial relations conducted under the rubric of a tribute system adopted by China, Korea, or Japan for example. From this per-

18 The Portuguese phrase “Sebãstio Afez” is also found on a chart from Lisbon dated 1618 (Unno, “Cartography in Japan,” 382).

19 Unno Kazutaka includes a helpful table of possible families of vermilion-seal portolans in “Waga kuni ni okeru portorâno kaizu no juyô,” 240.


21 The Ottoman admiral Piri Reis is known to have incorporated European information into portolans that he drafted (Gregory C. McIntosh, The Piri Reis Map of 1513 (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000)).

22 Tony Campbell has argued that the majority of extant Mediterranean portolans survived because they were also considered works of art. More utilitarian charts would have been discarded once obliterated by constant use and seawater (Campbell, 436).


25 The classical exposition of the tribute trade is John K. Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,”
spective, the vermilion-seal trade and its nautical culture become subsumed within Japan’s overseas relations.

Yet, portolans are representations of sea-based worlds without a landed center. In both their European and Asian contexts, portolans contain detailed depictions of seas, coasts, bays, and shoals that leave the land as largely empty space to be filled with decorative ornamentation. These maps invert the terra-centric cartographical convention that abandons the sea to the imagination of the mapmaker.

Here I embrace the sea-centered nature of portolans as a means of escaping the national history of maps, a method that has fed myths of progressive evolution towards ever more scientific and objectively accurate maps determined by perceptions of the ‘western’ experience. Instead, I seek to understand these maritime charts as representations of and metaphors for collected multitudes of exchanges at the individual level that occurred in portside hostels and taverns, the cabins of ships, coastal offices, and other nautical spaces Mary Pratt has called “contact zones.”

The mixing of heterogeneous navigational lore in the charts epitomizes the “copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices” that occurred in these spaces. I conceptualize these processes of information exchange broadly, encompassing piracy and other forms of violence as well as trade and more peaceful forms of exchange.

Exploring the Hayashibara and other portolans born out of the maritime culture of the shuinsen trade in this manner reveals that despite the Japanese scripts that dominate their toponomy, these are not Japanese maps. Instead, they constitute particular endpoints of extensive translations and adaptations of nautical information by individuals from different lands whose cooperation produced a nautical culture.

The vermilion-seal trade contributed to such a hybrid nautical culture because seafaring in East Asia in this period tended to be cosmopolitan, as it was in many parts of the early modern world. Regardless of whether they were sponsored by institutions based in Europe, East Asia, or Southeast Asia, ships often carried multiethnic crews that found ways to communicate, work, and otherwise interact together aboard ships and in entrepôts. In particular, ships often carried local pilots and mercenary navigators-for-hire for their expert knowledge of particular maritime regions and their mastery of the haven-finding arts. These pilots played key roles in the development of portolans and the larger hybrid nautical culture. On European ships—and this custom seems to have been present on some East Asian ships in this period as well—pilots bore sole responsibility for ships’ safe arrivals. As such, they needed to effectively communicate with people from different linguistic and cultural groups and to master an array of different forms of navigational lore.

I conceptualize navigational technology broadly in order to encompass whatever practices

---

26 For a critique of the teleological narrative in historical cartography, see J.B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” Cartographica, 26:2 (1989), 1-20.

27 Thinking of maps as metaphors for different types of maritime interaction was partly inspired by Kären Wigen, “Cartographies of Connection: Ocean Maps as Metaphors for Interarea History,” in Interactions: Transregional Perspectives on World History, ed. Jerry H. Bentley et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), 150-166.


29 Pratt, 7. However, Pratt is focused solely on colonial “asymmetrical relations of power” that often did not exist in East Asia in this period.

30 Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, 243.
and tools mariners of the time may have considered necessary for ensuring safe passage. It is not my intention to trace a teleology of nautical techniques that engages in a debate over the superiority of one technology over another. In sixteenth and seventeenth-century East Asia, navigation was often an idiosyncratic hybrid system of apparatuses, rituals, and experiential knowledge derived from practices that originated in China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Arab world, and Europe. Yin-Yang theory, prayers and rituals for safe passage, watching the color of the water, astronomical observations made using astrolabes and cross-staves, incense sticks for measuring time, sounding leads to dredge the bottom and determine position by the color and type of sediment, and the use of compasses and maps all mixed with equal potentialities of use. These devices and practices were then melded with infinite varieties of local navigational lore including landmarks, the locations of shoals and havens, storm seasons, tides, and currents. Designed to be both repositories of this lore and used in conjunction with other technologies, portolans epitomize the hybrid nature of this nautical culture.

Studying these maps as part of a hybrid nautical culture developed by mariners in East Asia in this period also highlights the common fallacy of state-centered histories that identify a seafarer’s primary identity by his or her land of origin. Although commonly assumed to be primarily a man’s world, the histories of women like Cornelia von Nijenroode (a half-Dutch, half-Japanese wealthy merchant of Batavia in the mid-seventeenth century), families of boat-people in premodern East Asia, and the nineteenth-century pirate admiral Zheng Yi Sao demonstrate that seafarers’ primary identity is not necessarily tied to a land of origin.

Seafarers such as these also played roles similar to communities called “trade diasporas” by Philip Curtin, “cross-cultural brokers” who facilitated “trade between the host society and people of their own origin who moved along the trade routes.” Seafarers and mapmakers who lived and worked in such environments were responsible for the development of portolans like the Hayashibara.

I contextualize the Hayashibara and other vermilion-seal portolans in the seafarers’ culture of early modern East Asia in four settings. First, I compare the Hayashibara to Mediterranean portolans created in the cross-cultural traditions of European seafaring and to other forms of East Asian maritime itinerary cartography. Second I highlight the agency of individual pilots and navigators-for-hire such as William Adams and Ikeda Kōun in directing the creation of vermilion-seal charts and the wider nautical culture. Third, I examine the wider environment in which the Hayashibara chart would have been created and used—


32 Greg Dening, "Islands and Beaches" (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980), 157-158.

33 Murai Shōsuke, Chūsei Wajinden (Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 34-58.

the hybrid nautical culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century East Asian seafarers. In addition to mapping and navigational practices, mariners developed distinctive hybrid argots, ship-designs, and religious rituals. By way of conclusion, I meditate on the study of cultural exchange with a short examination of how, in the Edo period, the polyvocal vermilion-seal charts were domesticated and transformed into ‘Japanese’ portolans.

The Hayashibara Chart as a Portolan Chart

Placing the Hayashibara chart within the larger category of portolan charts deepens our understanding of it in two ways. First, Japanese portolans closely resembled their European cousins. In particular, in both European and East Asian contexts, portolans were hybrid creations designed to be used in conjunction with other technologies. Second, upon their arrival in East Asia, portolans represented not an unprecedented genre of cartography, but simply a new way to depict maritime itineraries, a style of mapping long present in East Asia. As Figure 2, a typical sixteenth-century Mediterranean portolan, illustrates, these charts have no objective top or bottom. Instead, orientation is determined by the course a pilot chooses to trace following particular rhumb lines to particular coasts. Names of ports line the inland sides of coastlines in marching ranks of perpendicular inscriptions, defining land by its relationship to maritime functions. Sanctuaries and other important nautical reference points such as islands, bays, coves, and estuaries are depicted in a number of standardized designs such as half-moon wedges—often exaggerated in size, emphasizing their importance to navigators. Black and red dots mark shoals, shallows, and rocks. Latitude lines and scales of miles began appearing on charts in the sixteenth century. Decorative motifs fill the otherwise meaningless inland spaces.

Portolans were originally designed for shipboard use. They were often made of vellum to better survive potential encounters with seawater, attached to rollers, bound into atlases, or—to prevent their shrinking after a dousing—glued to boards. Similarly, the Hayashibara chart and other vermilion-seal portolans can also be tied directly to use at sea. Extant originals were inscribed on vellum and some maps received coats of waterproof lacquer. Mounting practices ranged from placing the charts in wooden rollers (as is thought with the Hayashibara chart) to affixing them to two pine boards hinged together on one side to fold together like a book.

Although the origins of portolans are unknown, it seems clear that they were not the creation of one culture, state, or school. Present scholarly

---

35 Campbell, 376-377.
36 Ibid.
consensus argues that portolans were piecemeal assemblages—first of various collections of local knowledge of Mediterranean coastlines, and later the North Atlantic, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, China Sea, and other basins. According to the cartographic historian David Turnbull, portolans are “a mosaic of elements loosely assembled from separate but related navigational traditions.” He argues that the charts were not composed using any form of coordinate geometry or other quantifiable, mathematically rational system, but instead were conglomerations of linear notations of distance and wind and compass directions. Often there was no standard scale of distances, even within a single chart, and rhumb lines were not aligned between charts, even those assembled together.

These European patchworks were produced in the maritime world. Prominent drafters of portolans emerged in shipping hubs and entrepôts like Majorca, Genoa, and Venice. Mapmakers in these centers collected charts and information from the navigators and seafarers that gravitated to these ports from around the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds. Some pilots also drafted portolan charts while on their travels.

The hybrid origins of European portolans are mirrored by the processes of exchange that led to the development of vermilion-seal portolans. Analyses of place names as well as the shape of landmasses on the Hayashibara reveal that these marine charts were not the result of Japanese cartographers simply copying European maps. Instead, the maps resulted from diverse and compound influences. First, the European charts that constituted the base maps for vermilion-seal portolans were also derived from local Chinese, Korean, and Japanese knowledge. Second, East Asian mapmakers corrected those regions found to be in error with their own geographical or cosmographical world-views. For instance, Unno Kazutaka has demonstrated possible Korean influence in the depiction of the Korean peninsula in some portolans. In addition, some Portuguese imaginary geographies popular on European charts of Asia are left off of the vermilion-seal charts. For example, the Hayashibara chart lacks Portuguese favorites such as “the pirate islands (ilhas dos ladrones)” and “island of gold (ilha de Ouro),” although it does have a notation for the “island of silver (ilha de prata).”

A wide variety of writing systems was used to inscribe place-names on the Hayashibara and other vermilion-seal charts, raising the possibility that pilots of several different reading backgrounds may have read the maps as well as the possibility that there may have been a permeable argot of commonly understood words and place names from several linguistic traditions. On the Hayashibara portolan, most place names are written in Japanese kana scripts, but these toponyms are mixed with Portuguese names in Roman letters, Chinese character transliterations of Iberian place-names, and the use of original Chinese and Japanese place-names. For example, the Hayashibara’s drafter used Roman and Chinese characters for the

---

42 Campbell, 383-391.
43 David Turnbull, “Cartography and Science in Early Modern Europe: Mapping the Construction of Knowledge Spaces,” Imago Mundi, 48: (1996), 9. Turnbull further points out that because they were such agglomerations of local knowledge, portolans proved incapable of providing the rational, universal geographical representation needed to geographically catalog an empire Turnbull (esp. 8-14). Although the Mercator projection was invented in 1569 and provided a feasible mathematical-cartographic rubric for regularizing an imperial cartographic catalog, it would be another century before even single European states underwent comprehensive coordinate mapping, let alone far-flung reaches of the ocean (Turnbull, 14).
44 Turnbull, 9-10.
45 Campbell, 389-398.
46 Among portolan draftsmen of the Mediterranean, Grazioso Benincasa also sailed as captain of a ship and Andrea Bianco self-identified on one of his charts as a senior officer on a galley (Campbell, 432-433). Piri Reis was an Ottoman admiral as well as cartographer (see McIntosh, Chapters 1-2). As will be seen below, this tradition carried over into East Asian seas.
48 Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kôkaizu, 539.
name Nihon; Roman letters and Japanese kana for Pegu; and in Roman letters, Camtão (the Portuguese name for the region of Canton—Guangdong), Java, Borneo, and Siam, all important toponyms in Southeast Asia for the shuinsen trade. In contrast, the place-names on the chart that belonged to the Kadoya family of shuinsen merchants (another original on vellum) are almost entirely written in katakana.

The extensive use of Japanese kana scripts suggests that these maps represent Japanese endpoints of processes of translation that occurred in the maritime world of the vermilion-seal voyages. In some cases kana transliterates Chinese names into Japanese pronunciation as in Nankin (Nanjing) or Chinjo (Chinzhou) in China or Gian in today’s Vietnam. In other cases, the mapmaker used kana to sound out local pronunciations, as in the case of Champa, Patan, or Maraka. Although we cannot know how these choices were made, it seems probable that the mapmaker would have used names and pronunciations most in vogue in the environment in which he worked, suggesting connections to a polyvocal mélange of place-names used on the ships and in the trading ports of the vermilion-seal trade.

The hybrid nature of portolans was compounded by the ways in which they were used—in conjunction with other navigational technologies. To use these maps, sixteenth-century pilots and navigators needed tools such as compasses, astrolabes, quadrants, tables of declinations and tides, sounding leads, and compendia of navigational instructions and sailing instructions (known in Europe as rutters). Some mapmakers even included rutters in their atlases. For example, the Venetian cartographer Antonio Millo (fl. 1580s-1590s) inserted a rutter and pilot’s manual in his 1598 portolan atlas. In it, Millo insisted that pilots needed to understand the compass, wind-directions, sounding lead, how to take the requisite readings with the astrolabe to determine one’s position in relation to the sun and the equator, how to navigate south of the equator, and how to read and interpret maps and charts. The pilot needed to be familiar with coastlines, ports, shoals, sand banks, and other experiential knowledge. But Millo also stipulated that pilots master the Ptolemaic cosmography; they had to know:

that the world is round. Within this round shape four elements…and beyond these four elements are nine heavens….Above the heaven of Saturn lies the starry heaven, called the firmament, and above that is the further-most heaven, called the First Mover (primum mobile).

Experiential data of the coastlines, navigational devices, and spiritual technologies all fused into a hybrid amalgam that contained within it a cartographic form that was itself a hodgepodge of different sources of information.

Vermilion-seal portolans were also used together with other technologies. The chart of the Kadoya family actually contains needle holes from what is thought to be actual use by dividers (compasses) marking a course from Nagasaki to Cochin China. On the open seas, pilots might use dividers to inscribe arcs on the portolan to chart a

---

49 Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kōkaizu, 539-540.
50 Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kōkaizu, 550-551.
51 For a comprehensive list of the toponyms found on vermilion-seal portolan charts, see Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kōkaizu, 539-582.
52 Declination here means the position of the sun as its ecliptic course intersects the zodiacal ring. The sun’s position differed everyday in a four-year cycle and the navigator found his latitude by performing various calculations with the observed altitude of the sun, the declination number, and 90 degrees that differed depending on the ship’s position with regard to the equator and the season.
54 Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kōkaizu, 75.
Navigators in East Asia also profited from rutters. Chinese pilot manuals like the Ming-period *Shunfeng xiansong* and *Zhinan zhengfa* that predate the Portuguese arrival contain detailed compass headings and textual directions for sailing between ports in East and Southeast Asia like Nagasaki, Hyōgo, Ryūkyū, Fujian, Guangzhou, Cochin China, and Patani. These directions include textual descriptions of shoals and other dangers, instructions on how to use the compass, tables of tides, star charts, and descriptions of proper rituals used to appease ancestors and gods. And as will be explored later, an early seventeenth-century navigational treatise by the Japanese pilot Ikeda Kōun based on Portuguese pilot books mixes European and East Asian navigational knowledge, including rutters.

Furthermore, portolans were not a radically unprecedented technology in East Asia. Itinerary-style maritime maps were common in the China Sea region for centuries before and after the arrival of the portolans. And although they were usually dedicated to tracing single trajectories, such cartographical practices probably facilitated the development of the vermilion-seal portolans. Maritime itineraries can be found in such diverse sources as the remnants of charts collected from Zheng He’s voyages, a 1776 Thai map narrating a ship journey from Japan to Arabia, Korean and Chinese compendia of intelligence about Japan and Ryūkyū, a screen-painting map of Japan held by the Jōtokuji temple complex, and a seventeenth-century map of Ryūkyū.

Furthermore, just as the European portolan was born out of the cultural interactions of the Mediterranean and Atlantic maritime worlds, so too in East Asia, itinerary-style nautical charts emerged out of the cosmopolitan exchange that flourished in the zones of intercultural interaction found along the East Asian maritime trade routes. The Zheng He maps mix text and graphics to illustrate maritime itineraries from China through Southeast Asia to Arabia and Africa. Among the textual portions are navigational instructions for calculating the altitude of stars (in order to determine latitude) by using one’s arm and fingers as a cross staff, a method thought to be derived from Ming compendium *Wubeizhi*, chapter (juan) 240. It has also been published in Xiang Da ed., *Xiyang fanguzo*, Zheng He hanghaitu, Liangzhong haidao zhenjing.

55 Campbell, 441-444.
56 The Chinese pilot manuals *Zhinan zhengfa* (指南正法) and *Shunfeng xiansong* (順風相送) were acquired by the Jesuits in China, given to the English Archbishop Laud in 1639, and stored in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. They are available in Xiang Da ed., *Xiyang fanguzo*, Zheng He hanghaitu, Liangzhong haidao zhenjing (Beijing: Zhonghua Shu Ju, 2000).
57 Rather than the charts actually used by Zheng He, the extant 21-foot-long chart seems to be compilations of the sailing knowledge and experience gathered by Zheng He and his admirals and collated by later cartographers concerned with the wakō and other coastal issues. See Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan*, The Overall Survey of the Ocean’s Shores 1433, ed. J.V.G. Mills, trans. Feng Ch’eng-Chün (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1970), 238-241. The map itself is found in the late seventeenth-century periodical *Riben yijian* (Beijing: Republic of China, 1939), 1B-2A, 12A.
59 For Korea, see Shin Sukchu, *Haedong chegukki* (Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chuisei no Nihon to Ryūkyū), ed. Tanaka Takeo (Iwanami Shoten, 1991); For China, see Zheng Shun’gong, “Miandao xinbian [絶島新編],” *Riben yijian* (Beijing: Republic of China, 1939), 1B-2A, 12A.
60 The presence of red-lines inscribing an itinerary from Nagoya in Kyushu to Tsushima and Korea has caused some to suggest a connection to Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea and date it to the 1590’s, but there is not a consensus on the issue (See for example the discussion by Miyoshi Tadayoshi in Tokubetsuten Nanban kenbunroku (Kōbe: Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan, 1992), 107.
Arab seafarers in the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{62} Another lineage of maritime itinerary maps with inscriptions of shipping lanes seems to have resulted from the exchange linking the Japanese port of Hakata with Ryūkyū and Korea in the fifteenth century. Both the collection of itinerary maps found in a 1471 Korean handbook on Japan and Ryūkyū, \textit{Haedong chegukki},\textsuperscript{63} and a 1696 Japanese map of Ryūkyū\textsuperscript{64} are thought to be derived from a base map associated with the mid fifteenth-century Hakata monk-merchant Dōan who was active in trade and diplomacy connecting Japan, Ryūkyū, and Korea.\textsuperscript{65}

Thus, the portolan was probably an attractive tool for East Asian seafarers, once improved in light of East Asian local knowledge. It provided navigators in East Asia a cartographical form that was both familiar in its itinerary design and an improvement upon earlier itinerary-map models because it was designed for use in combination with other navigational technologies in order to depict infinite itineraries instead of just one. Because of their adaptability, portolans in combination with texts such as rutters provided a perfect receptacle for the largely experiential forms of knowledge that characterized navigational practice in the vermilion-seal trade.

---


\textsuperscript{64} The map was drafted by the Chikuzen domainal scholar Takemori Dōetsu. See Uezato Takashi, Fukase Kōichirō, Watanabe Miki, "Okinawa Kenritsu Hakubutsukan shozō Ryūkyū kokuzu."


\textsuperscript{66} Iwao, \textit{Shinpen shuin sen bōeki shi no kenkyū}, 243-261.

\textsuperscript{67} Anthony Farrington, \textit{The English Factory in Japan} 1613-1623, 2 vols. (London: The British Library, 1991), p. 1542-1546. For convenience, documents from this collection will be cited by the
settled in Japan for the rest of his life, became a trusted advisor to Tokugawa Ieyasu, made a living as a one-man trade diaspora, and was a pilot active in the vermillion-seal trade. Among other projects, Adams seems to have been involved in collecting and synthesizing cartographical and navigational information about Japan and East Asia. On behalf of patrons such as Tokugawa Ieyasu, the English East India Company, and Chinese merchants, Adams piloted ships across East and Southeast Asia that all carried diverse crews, providing Adams the opportunity to participate in exchanges of nautical lore with many different groups of seafarers. Adams piloted vessels to Cochin China, Tonkin, and two other voyages that ended prematurely in the Ryūkyūs. These ships carried English, Chinese, and Japanese crewmembers. Dealing with multiethnic crews required

number Farrington assigned documents and the page number

Curtin, chapter 1.

See Farrington, p. 1544-1545 for a summary of Adams’ voyages on behalf of various patrons.

See for example, a ledger listing money lent to members of the crew in William Adams’ journal of his voyage to the Ryukyu Islands in the Sea Adventure, with related accounts and notes, and miscellaneous accounts, November 1614-1616, in Farrington no. 409, p. 1067. Names include Englishmen such as Edward Sarris and Richard Wickham, Japanese such as Shinssemon, Shingero, and Yakeo, and perhaps a Chinese man known as “Chinna Tiquan.” Several Chinese involved in the vermillion-seal trade were known with the appellation Iquan (一官), Niquan (二官), Sanquan (三官), etc. (see Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, table 7). The head of the Chinese community in Hirado had sons known as both Iquan and Niquan and Cheng Zhilong was known for a time as Iquan (See Iwao Seiichi, “Li Tan 李旦, Chief of the Chinese Residents at Hirado, Japan in the Last Days of the Ming Dynasty,” Memoirs of the Tōyō Bunko, 17 (1958), 38-39, 73). During the 1616 Ryūkyū voyage, the Sea Adventure carried “58 Japones marines,” (“Richard Wickham at Edo to Sir Thomas Smythe in London, 23 October 1615,” in Farrington no. 409, p. 1071).
Adams himself admitted that his original navigational and cartographic information regarding the Japanese archipelago was erroneous. In a letter he stated that, “we proceeded on our former intention for Japan and in the hight of 30 degrees souht the northermost cape of the forenamed island but fownde it not, by reason that it lieth faulce in all cardes and mappes and globes; for the cape lieth in 35 1/2 degrees w’ch was a great difference.” Figure 4 reflects later corrections based on local East Asian seafaring knowledge that Adams would have acquired as a pilot in the vermilion-seal trade and on other ventures. It is one example of the way European portolans would be translated and adapted in creating vermilion-seal portolans.

In addition to correcting his old charts, Adams also drafted new charts based on his experiences and exchanges. For example, in 1613, he penned a letter to the English East India Company in 1613 saying, “I have sent a pateron of Japan for w’ch myself I hav been…alongs the cost in the shipping that I have made for the Emperour [Tokugawa Ieyasu].” Also in 1613 Richard Cocks, the head of the English Factory in Japan, described a map drafted by Adams in preparation for a proposed voyage to Ezo to search out the Northwest passage as “the plot of Japan, w’th p’te of that iland [Ezo] & Corea & other bordering places….” Although we do not know what types of maps Adams drafted, the dominance and adaptability of the portolan form in the period and the fact that the Doedtsz maps were portolans mean that Adams probably utilized portolan technology. For Adams and others like him, cartographical and navigational innovations were significantly facilitated by the intercultural exchanges made possible by the shuinsen trade. Adams’ modification of

---

73 Unno, “Waga kuni ni okeru portorâno kaizu no juyô,” 247. This map is known as Nanyôshinrozû. It is in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum and is reproduced here with their permission.

74 Boxer, “Some Aspects of Portuguese Influence in Japan, 1542-1640,” opposite p. 106. This map is known as Seiyôshinrozû Indoyô. It is also in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum and used with their permission.

75 William Adams at Hirado to his ‘unknown friends and countrymen, at Bantam, 23 October 1611,” in Farrington, no. 6, p. 68.

76 “William Adams at Hirado to Augustine Spalding at Bantam, 12 January 1613,” in Farrington, no. 8, p. 78. Ieyasu was of course retired shogun at this time.

77 “Richard Cocks at Hirado to Sir Thomas Smythe and the East India Company in London, 30 November 1613,” in Farrington, no. 18, p. 99.
Doedtsz’s chart epitomizes how portolans both represent and were a product of the cross-cultural translation and adaptation of navigational information in the maritime world of the vermilion-seal trade.

**Ikeda Yōemon Nyūdō Kōun.** Little is known about Ikeda Yōemon Nyūdō Kōun outside of what he tells readers in his *Genna-era Navigational Treatise*. There is some evidence that he was in Siam in 1604,78 in 1636, he is thought to have helped design a way to raise silver bullion from a sunken Portuguese ship in Nagasaki harbor.79 At any rate, in 1616 he sailed as part of a vermilion-seal crew and apprenticed himself to a Portuguese a pilot for two years. Upon returning, he wrote Japan’s earliest extant pilot’s manual, the *Genna kōkaisho*.80 This work demonstrates how the intercultural mixing of the vermilion-seal trade gave birth to new hybrid navigational practices and helped to create the wider nautical culture in which the Hayashibara and other charts were made and used.

Those Japanese who participated in the *shuinsen* trade and other ventures seem to have been actively seeking to improve navigational and shipbuilding techniques and technologies through commercial exchange, piracy, and cross-cultural apprenticeships. From the late sixteenth century, European, Chinese, and Korean observers characterized Japanese navigation as generally less advanced than their own.81 Contemporaneous Japanese navigational practices are unclear, but seem to have blended astronomical observation, experiential knowledge (such as reading information from landmarks, the color of water, and types of sediments from the sea bottom), and religious rites for trans-regional Buddhist deities and Japanese *kami*. A sixteenth-century Chinese compendium of intelligence on Japan and Japanese pirates, the *Chouhai tubian*, notes that “normally, Japanese ships only sail with a fair wind. If there is no wind or an adverse wind, they all take down their masts and row. They are unable to tack.”82 Similarly, in 1613, William Adams suggests that, although Japanese sailors were skilled, the islands lacked sufficiently advanced shipbuilding and navigational technologies: “the peopell of this land ar very stout seamen...the wantes be coordesh, pouldaves [canvas sailcloth], and tarr, pich or rossen, and coundpasses, rounninglasses, a payr of globes for demonstration, and cardes or mapes,”83 A Korean man named Cho Wanbyŏk who accompanied several vermilion-seal voyages records that “Japanese possess only small ships incapable of

---

78 The *Tsūkō ichiran* (comp. by the Tokugawa Bakufu in 1853) lists a Yōemon resident in Siam in 1604. (Saigusa Hiroto, “*Genna kōkaisho* kaisetsu,” 6.)

79 Saigusa, 6.

80 Ikeda Yōemon Nyūdō Kōun, *Genna kōkaisho*, ed. Saigusa Hiroto *Nihon kagaku koten zensho*, vol. 12 (Asahi Shimbunsha, 1943). Ikeda Kōun’s preface claims 1618 as the date of writing, but Saigusa argues from the contents of the declination section that parts of the text at least date from 1629 or 1630 (5, 8-10). The original is an untitled manuscript in the collection of the Kyoto University Library, and is known as both the *Genna kōkaiki* and *Genna kōkaisho*. It is published in several printed editions including the series *Kaiji shiryo sōsho*, but I have found the annotated version in *Nihon kagaku koten zensho* to be the most useful.

It is important to note that the *Genna kōkaisho* was not unique. Iwao Seiichi cites several examples of similar works in *Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū* (180-181). Japanese authors such as the Tokugawa Confucian and expert in overseas affairs, Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619), describe encountering Japanese with knowledge of Portuguese nautical sciences and devices. Saigusa also notes the existence of several similar texts written later in the Edo period, but their relationship to *Genna kōkaisho* is unclear.

81 For a history of Japanese navigation, see Iida Yoshirō, *Nihon kōkaijutsushi* (Hara Shobō, 1980).


83 “William Adams at Hirado to Augustine Spalding at Bantam, 12 January 1613,” Farrington no. 8, p. 78.
traversing the great ocean. So, with 80 pieces of silver, they purchase passage on Chinese ships.84

To offset these navigational limitations, Japanese ship owners—especially in the vermilion-seal trade—regularly hired Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, and Scottish pilots.85 The commander of a fleet of Dutch ships in 1609, Francois Wittert, wrote of encountering a Japanese ship near Luzon carrying a Spanish pilot. Upon interviewing the captain, Wittert wrote, “Knowing that Japanese navigation is not advanced and that as a result many ships were being lost, the Japanese court [Bakufu] ordered [the employ of foreign pilots]. According to the captain, this ship carried a crew of 200, 20 being Spanish….”86 The Chouhai tubian also records that Japanese hired Chinese pilots and bought deep-keeled boats that could travel in the deep ocean and tack into the wind.87 Alternately, by taking passage on Chinese ships, Japanese could watch Chinese shipmasters “who used the compass to determine east and west and who used large ropes to drop a hook [sounding lead] down to dredge the bottom and determine distance and direction by the color [of the sediment].”88 Japanese seafarers who sailed as part of these heterogeneous crews could master and help spread different navigational techniques and technologies.

Ikeda Kōun fit this mold. In the introduction to Genna kōkaisho, Ikeda writes, “This is the way of the navigator. In the second year of the Genna era [1616], I apprenticed myself to Manuel Gonzalo and for two years accompanied him on

his crossings to Luzon. During that time, I mastered those aspects of the arts that he knew.”89 Gonzalo was a Portuguese navigator who is known to have received trading licenses for Siam, Cochin China, and the Philippines in 1613, 1614, and 1618 respectively.90 Despite stringent statutes issued by the Iberian crowns against the sharing of navigational intelligence and charts,91 Gonzalo willingly imparted all he knew to Ikeda.

By labeling these techniques and technologies as a “way” [J. michi], Ikeda sought to demonstrate their significance, identifying them as a skill that when mastered could lead one to universal knowledge.92 Ikeda also emphasized the importance of these navigational ideas by exalting their widespread adoption: “[t]oday, what country’s mariners do not know these ideas?”93 At the same time, Ikeda did not hesitate to highlight their weak points. He describes how,

Once, I put to him [Gonzalo] three questions. The first was how to measure the sun before and after midday; the second was how to know one’s degree of latitude when the Southern Cross was to the right or left and one lay to the East or West. The third concerned one’s position in relation to the North Star. Although the ancient treatises diagramed eight methods [for the third issue]—four pertaining to the day, one to morning and evening, and the remaining three to darkness—when clouds cover the sky, they are meaningless even if one knows the time. For this third problem, I wondered if, when I want to accurately gauge altitude and distance, there was perhaps a method not dependent upon time.

My teacher answered, “in all likelihood, you will find no other teachings on these

____________________

84 See the text by Cho Wanbyŏk printed in full in Iwao Seiichi, “Anankoku tokō Chōsenjin Cho Wanbyŏk den ni tsuite,” Chōsen gakuhō, 6 (1954), 12. Cho Wanbyŏk was captured in the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1597 and was brought to live in Kyōto for a time. In order to buy his release, he sought a position on a ship trading with Southeast Asia (Cho, 10-12, as well as Iwao’s analysis on 2).
85 Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, 243-261.
86 Quoted in Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, 247.
87 Chouhai tubian, 51.
88 Cho, 12.
89 Ikeda, 21.
90 Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, 231-232.
91 Nakamura Hiroshi, Goshuinsen kōkaizu, 159.
93 Ikeda, 21, 24.
three issues. Regarding your first question about measuring the sun: even though it is said that there is only the one time during the day—the moment the sun reaches its zenith between East and West—if during this time of measurement, [the sun] cannot be measured, that day is wasted. So there really is no method for measuring the sun before or after noon. As for your second query, the star at the base of the Southern Cross resides thirty degrees away from the South Pole. When the star is straightly aligned with the pole, measurements can be taken. If it is even slightly askew, it is difficult to measure. You can do nothing if the star is at an angle or off to one side.

As for the third issue—whether I think there are methods for measuring the North Star other than those recorded in the classic texts—if you want to calculate down to the minute, then, most assuredly, there is not. Though you can pose these three questions to a navigator anywhere, I doubt you will come to any greater understanding of them.”

However, for Ikeda, these limitations were not overly disheartening; they meant only that there was more to learn. He advised those who came after him to “forget the ignorant sections and throw away the mistakes to await the emendations of those who follow.” From Ikeda’s perspective, mariners in East Asia left room to adapt and improve technologies and techniques through interpersonal interactions in the maritime world, a mind-set clearly at work in the cartographical and navigational practice of William Adams as well. In fact, Saigusa Hiroto argues that because the dates of the declination table that Ikeda included in the treatise range from 1629-1685, Ikeda may have added this information at a later date in order to mitigate some of the difficulties. Ikeda’s declination tables show the altitude of the sun at noon for everyday of every year in that period, allowing one to estimate one’s position even if the sun were obscured.

Ikeda devoted much of the remainder of the work to explicating some of the mechanics of navigation. In addition to the declination chart with instructions on its use, the Genna kōkaishō contains translations and explanations of conversions between Iberian and Japanese distances and calendars, including astronomical derivation of the European calendars and the mathematics behind leap years. Using both diagrams and text, Ikeda described the use of navigational devices such as the compass, astrolabe, quadrant, and sounding lead. As with any good pilot’s manual, Genna kōkaishō also includes rutters—in this case directions for sailing between Nagasaki and ports in East and Southeast Asia such as Macao and Siam—that contain compass directions and depth-measures as well as experiential elements such as landmarks and the meanings of the colors and forms of sediments from the seafloor.

Although usually understood as a translation of Portuguese knowledge, Genna kōkaishō is actually a representation of how Ikeda assimilated the diverse array of hybrid practices that characterized navigation aboard the vermilion-seal trade ships, creating a new, idiosyncratic totality. Scholars’ over-emphasis on the ‘western science’ portions of the text mirrors the traditional focus on portolans as part of a national teleology of ever-more scientific mapping. However there are significant portions of the Genna kōkaishō that are representations of, if not Chinese, then broader East Asian nautical practice.

Ikeda included mnemonic songs for the four seasons and the four directions that are almost character for character the same as those in the Ming pilot book, Shunfeng xiangsong. And, just as in the Shunfeng xiangsong and the Zhinan zhengfa, Ikeda provided a table instructing the reader in the identification of those days on which setting sail was inauspicious and inadvisable due

---

94 Ikeda, 21.
95 Ikeda, 21-24.
96 Saigusa, 8-10.
97 Scholars including Saigusa Hiroto, Nakamura Hiroshi, Iwao Seiichi, and Unno Kazutaka concentrate on those sections of the text that deal with European navigation.
98 Ikeda 101; Shunfeng xiangsong, 28.
to the presence of evil winds. In addition, Nakamura Hiroshi notes that Ikeda’s measurement of the degree comes from Chinese sources. Lastly, navigational devices such as sounding leads and compasses and the experiential knowledge included in Ikeda’s rutters can be found in both Portuguese and Chinese sources. However, it is also possible that the information found in Ming sources had by the early seventeenth century been adopted as common sense by Japanese mariners, especially given the extensive maritime exchange among seafarers from across East Asia who sailed with cosmopolitan pirate crews in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The hybrid character of Ikeda’s navigational methodology is most visible in a series of maritime maxims (of which only a few are here translated):

- When choosing sailors, old, middle-aged, and young, it is good to intermix them.
- In one day it is easy to find 1,000 ignoramuses, but in 1,000 days, you may never get one wise person.
- With those navigators who are able to study, it is like being in a room with four sold walls. Sailing with ignorant navigators is like sitting on a lake covered by thin ice.
- Traveling from desire makes it hard to go 1 mile, but traveling righteously makes it easy to go 1,000 miles.
- Waves and billows do not destroy a ship, carelessness causes ships to be lost.
- Tie up ships during a typhoon, but do not depend on the anchor cables to save you.
- High and low tides occur differently because of the proximity of the moon in its movements.
- The needle points north the same way in 10,000 countries.
- Do not place iron next to the needle. Do not use iron nails to make the compass box. Use wood or copper.
- Do not place garlic, onions, leeks, and other types of strong-smelling things by the needle. If they are placed by the compass, it will not register properly.
- When there are red clouds during a Yang month, there will be no rain for three days (Yang months last from the 3rd to the 8th months).
- When red clouds mount during a Yin month, there will be 3 days of misfortune (From the ninth month to the next second month is known as the Yin months).

If Genna kōkaisho had been a simple translation of a European pilot book, Yin-Yang cosmology and Confucian rhetoric presumably would have been replaced by the Ptolemaic cosmology that we saw in Millo’s account. Had it been a purely Chinese text, there would have been descriptions of the proper rites necessary to propitiate ancestors, the Yellow Emperor, and other deities. Instead, Ikeda seems to have compiled the types of knowledge most useful to him, suggesting the testing of different types of knowledge based on experiences gained sailing on vermilion-seal vessels. These nautical aphorisms mix navigational aids with Confucian maxims, Yin-Yang science, and experience-based advice. Like Antonio Millo, Ikeda seems to insist that a true mariner should master a wide array of knowledge-forms extending from what we would label the experiential, to the scientific, to the spiritual. When Ikeda wrote, “[t]oday, what country’s mariners do not know these ideas,” he referred not only to Portuguese devices and technology, but the hybrid, multiform practices of navigation common across East Asia in this period. These navigational ge- stalts might also be idiosyncratic as individual mariners decided what mix of spiritual technologies, astronomical science, and locally determined experience worked best for them.

---

99 Ikeda, 102; Shunfeng xiangsong, 26; Zhinan zhengfa, 112. The dates identified by Ikeda and in the Ming manuals do not always correspond. However, there is at least a century separating the works, suggesting that the idea retained currency and that the calendar may have required updating.  
101 Ikeda, 113-118.  
102 See for example the Shunfeng xiangsong, 26.  
103 Ikeda, 21, 24.
Although Ikeda does not mention maps in the *Genna kōkaisho*, the processes of interpersonal exchange, learning, and testing of knowledge clearly at work in the text’s production provide us a possible model with which to understand the processes by which the Hayashibara and other charts were created in the hybrid cultures of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century East Asian maritime world. Furthermore, C.R. Boxer has argued that the style of this text resembles European pilot-manuals and rutters that were meant to be used in conjunction with charts. In fact, there are labels on the Hayashibara and other charts for places like Gotō and Meshima in the Japanese archipelago or Lamao off the coast of China that were not ports, but instead appear as landmarks in rutters such as are found in *Genna Kōkaisho*. Another surviving chart actually contains a written description of the sites listed on the chart, further indicating that Japanese portolans may have been used together with written accounts such as rutters.

Examination of Adams’ cartography and Ikeda’s navigational treatise thus reveal how the practical desire to maximize the variety and efficacy of navigational technologies as well as the personalities and idiosyncrasies of individual pilots stimulated adaptation of portolan maps and profoundly shaped the development of the hybrid nautical culture in sixteenth and seventeenth-century East Asia.

The Hayashibara Chart and the Broader Hybrid Nautical Cultures of the Vermilion-Seal Trade

In this section, we expand our perspective from the pilots who exemplify the individual agency involved in the creation of the portolans to the wider nautical cultures that gave birth to the vermilion-seal portolans, in particular its seafaring argots, belief systems, ships, and ports. These examples further demonstrate how portolans like the Hayashibara are best understood as part of a hybrid seafaring culture that existed between land-based states and not as part of a national tradition of mapping.

**Language.** In the vermilion-seal trade, a single ship’s crew could be composed of mariners of many lands and languages. Mary Louise Pratt argues that this type of multicultural situation often led to the development of “contact languages”—“improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages.” On vermilion-seal ships, this diversity began at the top of the ship’s hierarchy and extended through the ranks of the mariners. Recipients of *goshuin-sen* licenses included one Ryūkyūan, eleven Chinese, and twelve Europeans in addition to Japanese. Mercenary pilots like William Adams and Ikeda’s teacher Manuel Gonzalo swarmed the trading ports of East Asia, feeding a market for experienced navigators whatever their homeland. Sponsors of vermilion-seal ships usually hired Chinese or European pilots, and European ships as a matter of practice used local pilots in foreign waters. Sailors from China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Europe, not to mention countless mariners of mixed heritage, congregated in entrepôts from Nagasaki to Melaka and constituted crews for ships from many lands. Portuguese vessels especially seem to have been undermanned and so augmented their crews with local sailors from across Asia. The need to

---

107 Pratt, 6.
form a cohesive crew among disparate linguistic groups stimulated development of a seafaring lingua franca and distinctive nautical culture in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century East Asia. Nagazumi Yōko has speculated that the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Portuguese, and others who crewed the wakō ships in the sixteenth century coupled with the spread of Chinese, European, and Japanese diasporas throughout East and Southeast Asia encouraged the development of a maritime lingua franca, possibly some hybrid form of Fujianese mixed with Portuguese and Malay.\textsuperscript{113} Her theory about the importance of southern Chinese dialects in at least parts of this trade is given further credence by the “bouk of Rememberance” William Adams appended to his journal to Cochin China. Adams recorded Cantonese equivalents for thirty words including the ordinal numbers one through ten, north, south, east, west, northeast, and southwest\footnote{Although the fact that Adams felt it necessary to record these terms indicates that he was not familiar with them prior to traveling to the South China seas, there may have been regional differences in languages used in the trade and the large percentage of maritime terms in his list implies that he recognized the importance of that dialect in the maritime world.}, compass, boatswain, captain, and “a bare wind.”\textsuperscript{114} Much textual evidence suggests that a mixture of Japanese, Portuguese, and Chinese was used on vermilion-seal ships, matching the multi-lingual textuality of the Hayashibara and other charts. 

\textit{Religion.} In addition to language, religious traditions held in common helped unite crews. Throughout the premodern period, rituals performed to ensure safe passage formed one part of the continuum of navigational practices in East Asia. Many sea travelers commonly worshipped trans-East Asian Buddhist deities, especially Avalokitesvara (C. Guanyin, J. Kannon).\textsuperscript{119} In the sixteenth century, the popularity of Christianity and the worship of Tianhou (also called Mazu, the wealthy merchant Suminokura Yoichi.\textsuperscript{115} At the end of the narrative Sōshin listed the words used for numbers and measures one through ten, hundred, thousand, and ten thousand: “inya, arasu, teresu, kuwatro, shinku, se’in, seiku, wobira, nobi, ten, tehen,”\textsuperscript{116} The numbers one through ten seem to be Japanese transliterations of Portuguese numerals, but the word for thousand, \textit{raki}, may derive from the Sanskrit \textit{lacasa} widely used in Southeast Asia, including by Malay speakers for either 10,000 or 100,000.\textsuperscript{118} The word \textit{han} for ten-thousand is clearly derived from the Chinese or Japanese. Tokubei Tenjiku monogatari and similar texts also allow us to compile a list of some of the terms used to refer to jobs on a ship. The original languages for these terms seem to have been Portuguese, Chinese, and Japanese (see Table 1).
Chinese goddess of the sea) among seafarers from different lands also created cross-cultural bonds based on belief that may have increased crew cohesion. Both religions found believers among seafarers from Japan, China, and Ryūkyū in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Catholic seafarers believed in the efficacy of prayer, giving alms, and hanging relics over the side to quell rough seas, whereas worshippers of Tianhou prayed to and performed rituals for her for aid in determining correct courses of action in a given situation. Extant records of the practices of Mazu worship include the sacrifice of animals as well as ritual mutilation by sailors. In the vermilion-seal trade, multiple religious traditions often co-existed on the same vessel and worked synergistically towards the same purpose: ensuring the safe arrival of the vessel. For example, Edmund Sayers noted in a journal entry on his return from Siam to Hirado in a Chinese junk how:

This night the captane mayed a sackaryfyes to his god for a fare wind and promised hime to geve him his jounc [junk] whe hee came to Langasacka [Nagasaki]. Theime all of ofeceres and mareneres that ware Chresyanes [Christians] mayed a ceremony and bought the roudere [rudder] of the jounce [junk] and promised to geive it, or the worth of it, to the Mesery Cordeye when theay came to Langasacka.

---

120 See for example, C.R. Boxer trans., “A Voyage from Macao to Japan in 1564,” The Great Ship from Amacon (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1959), 309-312.
122 Tsu Yun Hui, 77-82.
123 Edmund Sayers, Journal of his voyage from Hirado to Siam in the Sea Adventure and of his return in a chartered junk, with accounts of presents and goods in Siam, 7 December 1615—22 Nov 1616, in Farrington, entry for Thursday 12 [August], p. 1093.
124 Iwao, Shinpen shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū, 150-151, 136.
125 Nagazumi, 65.
126 “Araki-sen,” Ishii Kenji, Zusetsu Wasen shiwa (Shiseidō, 1983), frontispiece 12. The
In the ship depicted in Figure 5, the designs for the rear portion of the ships including the rudder, aft cabins, and aftercastles were derived from European galleons and galiots. In contrast, the prow's shape and its stations for rowers closely resemble the front ends of late sixteenth-century Japanese warships known as atakebune. The foremost and mainmast carry Chinese junk-style ribbed sails whereas the design of the bowsprit, cloth spritsail, topsails, and mizzen all suggest European influence. Textual evidence for these ships is scarce, but Willem Jansz, a member of the Dutch East India Company, wrote in his record of a sojourn in Nagasaki in 1630 that, “in the shallow sea in front of the town, two new ships rode at anchor built in the galiot style with pennants flying at the stern. One was bought by a Chinese merchant hoping to sail for Cochin China and another is owned by a Japanese, but chartered to a Chinese setting sail for Tonkin. Sailing as pilot is Vicent Romeijn, a Dutch resident of Nagasaki.”

Viewed from the rear, these new hybrid ships would have resembled a galiot, suggesting that at the very least, Japanese shipwrights were incorporating European hull designs into their ships. Furthermore, the passage suggests that ship designs were not necessarily tied to particular lands.

**Entrepôts.** The hybrid character of the ships used in the trade also marked the major trading ports. Many of the entrepôts labeled on the Japanese portolans were cosmopolitan centers of exchange where mariners and merchants from many different countries gathered and exchanged information, the perfect place to acquire new cartographic knowledge. Because sailing in this period was dictated by the seasonal monsoon winds, sailors might have to wait several months in port for winds to change, providing ample opportunities for rich intercultural exchange. In the Japanese archipelago, ports like Nagasaki and Hirado were home to Portuguese, Spanish, English, Dutch, and Chinese. In Hirado for example, the English rented their quarters from the “China Captain,” a Chinese merchant-pirate and vermilion-seal recipient named Li Tan.

This cosmopolitanism is even more evident in the ports visited by vermilion-seal ships. For example, in addition to being a major center of ship-construction, Ayutthya—the capital of Siam—was a bustling trading center conveniently located at the junction of rivers tying together oceanic basins and overland trade routes connecting the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Siam. Between 1604 and 1635, fifty-six shuin were issued for Siam, recipients of which included William Adams. In addition, Ayutthya contained separate wards for peoples from Japan, China, Pegu, Laos, Makassar, Tonkin, Cochin China, Cambodia, and Malaya. A permanent population of approximately 1500 Japanese merchants and mercenaries inhabited the Japanese ward. These wards were not isolated ghettos; opportunities abounded for cross-cultural interaction: battalions of Japanese and Chinese served the Siamese King and Japanese sailors and merchants sailed on Dutch,
Portuguese, and Chinese ships. Mapmakers in these cosmopolitan entrepôts could draw on the navigational knowledge of mariners from many lands.

Thus, in maritime East Asia, ships and ports constituted spaces of cross-cultural interaction, translation, and innovation, especially of new navigational techniques and knowledge. Records of hybrid linguistic and religious practices in these spaces give further credence to the idea that cartography and other navigational technologies were developed to be usable by pilots from disparate regions of the world. Portolans like the Hayashibara provide records of the processes of translation and adaptation and epitomize the hybrid maritime cultural forms that evolved in these nautical spaces.

Conclusion: Beaching the Portolan

The weight of evidence from varied cultural artifacts such as portolans and other forms of maritime itinerary mapping, the Genna kōkaisha, terminology, belief systems, ship design, ports, and other elements of the nautical culture of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century mariners in East Asia all suggest that vermilion-seal portolan charts like the Hayashibara should not be seen as belonging to one particular land-based national history. Instead, they were products and tools of individual seafarers living and working in a common hybrid, polyvocal maritime culture born out of the vermilion-seal trade.

The Hayashibara and other charts designed for use on vermilion-seal licensed merchant ships exemplify the hybrid nature of these cultures. Not merely transplanted and copied, these marine charts depict improved coastlines, different writing systems, different measuring systems, and perhaps even different motives all successfully melded into a single cartographic form. Through the idiosyncratic agencies of individual pilots and mapmakers, these former amalgams of Mediterranean and Atlantic navigational processes were absorbed and filtered through a larger East Asian collection of navigational ideas to form new hybrid unities.

Study of these charts demonstrates that—especially for the premodern period—it is necessary to transcend national paradigms of interaction and focus on regional and interpersonal levels of exchange to understand the dynamics of intercultural exchange in East Asia in this period. At the same time, it is also important not lose one’s self in binaries of East and West, Europe and Asia. From the maps, texts, and histories of figures like Antonio Millo and Mateo Prunes in the Mediterranean to the anonymous authors of Shunfeng xiangsong and Zhinan zhengfa; from the globe-trotting William Adams, to the student of navigation Ikeda Yōemon Nyūdō Kōun, to the unnamed draftsmen of the vermilion-seal portolans, commonalities deriving from shared maritime livelihoods transcended differences in cultures of the lands of origin. Furthermore, a universally accepted definitively hegemonic paradigm for navigation had yet to be established. Instead, experimentation, holistic methodologies, and hybridity characterized seafaring across cultures and oceans in the time of the vermilion-seal trade.

Last, by focusing on hybrid communities of seafarers instead of their lands of origin, an examination of these portolans pushes us to consider intercultural exchange as idiosyncratic, non-linear processes. Pilots and maritime mapmakers participated as individuals in the creation of portolans and hybrid nautical cultures during the vermilion-seal trade. However, after the Tokugawa Bakufu’s abrogation of that program, the hybrid character of the maps and the maritime world largely lost its utility.

After the 1630’s, Japanese could only legally participate in overseas relations via the ‘four gates’ (Satsuma, Nagasaki, Tsushima, and Matsumae), through observation, consumption, imitation, and imagination, and by extra-legal means such as

---

134 Nagazumi, 24, 37-44, 114.


136 See for example Ronald Toby, “Carnival of the Aliens,” Monumenta Nipponica 41:4 (1986),
smuggling or being castaway. During this period, portolan charts were not considered to have much value as nautical devices. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Nagasaki resident and scholar Nishikawa Jōken could describe portolan charts in his Ka‘i tsūshō kō as “maps used aboard ship, not commodities.”

Instead, as Unno Kazutaka has elaborated, there seems to have been a sea-change in perception of the charts in the Edo period that shifted from understanding them as part of the maritime world to associating them with the land of Japan. Portolan technology was used by Bakufu-sponsored cartographers to draft maps of Japan based on detailed soundings of the coastline from Northern Honshu to Kyushu to the Bonin Islands. At the same time, charts of East and Southeast Asia continued to be copied as evidence of draftsmen’s skill, but were given as certifications of land surveyors’ skills. There were some who even equated being a pilot (pirōto) with being a land surveyor, not a seafarer. Charts of sea routes tended to be confined to coastal regions defined by ‘land-marks’ and reproducing the style of land-itinerary maps. The archipelago’s coastal reaches and nearby seas became incorporated into the early modern terra-centric order and the outer ocean became a place where the imagination held sway. Japanese portolans only became Japenese after they were dragged ashore and domesticated.

However, use of portolans in East Asia did not die out with the cessation of the vermilion-seal trade. Vermilion-seal portolans sometimes underwent re-adoption by European cartographers who recognized the improved Japanese depictions of East Asia over European ones. Furthermore, there is some evidence that Chinese merchant mariners traversing seas between China, Southeast Asia, and Japan also carried portolan charts of similar design into the eighteenth century.

---

415-56; Marcia Yonemoto, Mapping Early Modern Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).


138 Quoted in Unno, “Waga kuni ni okeru portorâno kaizu no juyô,” 212. Nishikawa used the Japanese pronunciation of the Portuguese word carta (karuta-zu) to identify these charts.

139 Unno, “Cartography in Japan,” 384-386.

140 Unno, “Cartography in Japan,” 393-394. The equation of pilots with surveyors comes from Hosoi Kōtaku’s Hiden chiiki zuhô daizensho.


142 Nakamura Hiroshi, “The Japanese Portolanos of Portuguese Origin of the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries,” 44. João Teixeira in 1649 and Capt. John Kempthorne in 1680 used copies of Japanese portolans as the basis for their designs of East Asia in their own charts.

143 Unno, “Waga kuni ni okeru portorâno kaizu no juyô,” 213. The information comes from an eighteenth-century work by Nishikawa Jōken, but, as Unno relates, none of the Chinese portolans are extant, perhaps indicating that they may have used vermilion-seal charts.
Silence Without Secrecy? What is Left Unsaid in Early Modern Japanese Maps

© Marcia Yonemoto, University of Colorado at Boulder*

J.B. Harley’s pioneering work in the critical study of cartography, “Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe,” now seems a bit dated, especially in its attacks on what was then a much more teleological history of cartography, and like most of Harley’s work it focuses solely on the Western European experience. Nevertheless, Harley makes a number of thought-provoking points, and here I want to reconsider his arguments and extend them to the context of early modern Japanese mapmaking. Pace Harley, the present article will discuss how scholarship published within the last five years, mostly in Japanese, shows that what is left unsaid in maps—who controls what appears on the map and what does not, and when and why such control is exercised—can tell us as much about power relations in early modern Japan as what is actually “there” on the printed page.

*Author’s note: The “event” that occasioned my rereading of Harley’s article was Phil Brown’s invitation to speak at the Early Modern Japan Network session at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies. I would like to thank him for the initial invitation and for his extraordinary patience and persistence in seeing this article to print. I would also like to thank the three anonymous readers for EMJ, whose fully justified criticisms confirmed my own sense that an earlier version of this article was itself in dire need of strategic silencing.


Harley makes the observation, now commonplace in recent critical spatial studies, that “cartography was primarily a form of political discourse concerned with the acquisition and maintenance of power.” Rather than analyze what early modern European map discourses articulate, he focused on what they excluded. Harley argues that there are two kinds of “cartographic silence”: 1) silence due to politically motivated secrecy or censorship, and 2) “indeterminate silences” arising from discursive or intellectual presuppositions that privilege certain types of knowledge or information over others. The first category includes strategic secrecy, for example, state maps of boundaries or other map information potentially useful as military intelligence. By contrast, the second type of what he calls “indeterminate silence” is not caused by direct suppression or censorship but by “a sort of subconscious mentalité that mediates the knowledge contained in maps in order to maintain the political status quo and the power of the state.” Harley asserts that in early modern Europe the ascendance of scientific discourse to the status of truth led to assumptions that there was an objective world in which “the ‘universal science of measurement and order’ and the principle of classification or ordered tabulation,” would always be able to represent the world accurately and unproblematically, and that this sort of standardization “with its Euclidian emphasis on space as uniform and continuous, generates the silences of uniformity.”

Insofar as Harley’s category of “strategic secrecy” refers to the competitive and often combative relationships between nation states within early modern Europe, his arguments at first glance seem to apply poorly to early modern Japan. However, while it is true that the Tokugawa shogunal government did not map Japan in the context of international competition for power in the manner of contemporary European states, early modern Japanese domestic politics had its own internal tensions in which shogunal power...
and prerogatives were often exercised with an eye to subordinating the daimyo and other local power holders, who in turn reacted to and retaliated against those measures if and when it was possible and politically advantageous to do so. As we shall see, mapmaking played a significant role in these contests for political power. With regard to Harley’s second type of cartographic silence, the suppression of alternative or unorthodox discourses on the face of the map, the comparison again seems a poor fit, considering that the “universal science of measurement and order” did not attain the degree of orthodoxy in Japan that it did in Europe. Nevertheless, “official” map discourses did create the general intellectual and political climate in which non-state, privately produced maps and geographical writings were created and published.\(^7\)

Harley’s theoretical inquiry and its potential applicability to the early modern Japanese context lead us to pose two broad questions: first, what role did maps play in the competition for state power, at both shogunal and local levels, in the Tokugawa period? More specifically, how did the Tokugawa shogunate and the daimyo utilize and manipulate maps and mapmaking to gain and maintain political power? Secondly, what type of relationship existed between state-produced and commercial forms of map discourse? Were commercial mapmakers influenced by state mapmaking, and if so, how and to what degree? What effects (if any) did state mapmaking have on the substantial audience for published maps and geographical writings in the Edo period?\(^7\)

Mapmaking and Statemaking: Understanding the Tokugawa Bakufu Kuniezu (Provincial Maps) in Domestic and International Contexts

Most readers will be familiar with the broad contours of the Tokugawa shogunate’s attempts to map Japan by ordering the compilation of kuniezu 国絵図 and their accompanying cadastral records (gōchō 郷帳), and then constructing from these sources three large-scale maps of all Japan (referred to by scholars as Nihon sōzu 日本総図).\(^8\) To summarize briefly: the Bakufu initiated large-scale provincial mapping projects in 1604 (Keichō 9), 1644 (Shōhō 1), 1696 (Genroku 9), and 1835 (Tenpō 6).\(^9\) For each kuniezu project, orders went out to daimyo to cooperate in the drawing and submission of province-level maps.\(^10\)

\(^7\) Scholars disagree about the extent to which state mapmaking affected the makers of published maps; this debate is discussed in some detail below.


\(^9\) During the Tenpō era the Bakufu ordered the submission of gōchō in 1831 (Tenpō 2), four years before it ordered the submission of maps.

\(^10\) The Bakufu’s decision to make provinces, and within them districts (gun 郡), the principal territorial units represented is significant in that it places the kuniezu within the traditions of both Japanese and Chinese imperial mapmaking. Although Funakoshi Akio 船越昭生 has examined the influence of Qing dynasty maps of China made by Jesuit missionaries’ assistance on Tokugawa mapmaking, the connection between early modern Chinese and Japanese state mapmaking certainly merits further examination; see Funakoshi, Sakoku Nihon ni kita “Kōki zu” no chirigakuteki kenkyū 鎖国日本にきた「康熙図」の地理学的研究 (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1986).
Due to shifting technological and political climates, each kuniezu project differed slightly but significantly from those that preceded or followed it. Although the Bakufu issued increasingly specific instructions regarding the compilation and format of maps, there was considerable variation in the maps produced. By the Genroku period, however, a uniformly high level of standardization had been achieved.

These changes over time can be traced in the kuniezu themselves. For example, in some Keichō and Shōhō kuniezu, individual daimyo holdings (both their physical location and their value, as estimated in kokudaka 石高) occasionally are represented on the maps: in the kuniezu from Bungo 豊後 province dating from the Keichō (1596-1615) era shown here, each round circle symbolizes a village. Inside the circle one finds the village name as well as the name of the local ryōshū 領主, or lord, and the color of the circle also corresponds to the ryōshū domain in which the village is located (Figure 1). By looking at the map, one can see that the boundaries of ryōshū suzerainity did not always correlate with the boundaries of districts, for within each district—demarcated on the map by thick black lines—one finds villages controlled by several different ryōshū. In the Genroku-era Bungo kuniezu, by contrast, all references to daimyo governance were eliminated from the map in favor of depicting district and province boundaries exclusively: all villages are represented by uniform lozenge-shaped symbols, color-coded to the district, not the domain, in which they are located (Figure 2). Maps from other provinces show different types of discrepancies. For instance, the Shōhō-era kuniezu from Ōwari province reproduced in Figure 3 fails to conform to many of the Bakufu’s cartographic standards: in it, districts are demarcated by color, not by black lines as the Bakufu required; the village symbols (muragata 村型) are not color-coded by district, neighboring provinces are not set off in different colors, no sea routes appear, there is no legend, and the produce of

---

each village (muradaka 村高) is not precisely recorded. In the case of the Shōhō-era Ōwari map, the Bakufu’s established standards of cartographic representation were all but ignored at the province level, but in the Genroku-era map, all these discrepancies were rectified and the kuniezu conformed completely to Bakufu standards (Figure 4).

In the Genroku period, as part of its cartographic standardization efforts, the Bakufu also forbade the use of the term “ronchi 论地” or “ronsho 论所” (“disputed land”) in provincial maps. These terms referred to areas where local disputes over territory, boundaries, and/or access to resources impeded the drawing of decisive boundaries, and they appeared frequently in provincial maps submitted to the Bakufu for approval. Banning the use of the terms was intended to compel daimyo and other local officials to settle disputes over land and territory locally, and not simply pass them up the ladder to higher authorities. It is tempting to interpret the erasure of domain boundaries and the eradication of evidence of land disputes from the face of the map as a type of cartographic silencing particular to the Tokugawa context insofar as the provincial map became the medium for the negotiation of power relations between shogunate and daimyo, and local authorities became the objects as well as the agents of censorship from higher authorities. However, conflicts that were effectively suppressed on the face of provincial maps often continued on the ground. Thus, daimyo and other local officials devised ways to obscure rather than to resolve their disputes and thus cir-

---

11 This map may be a draft map (which may explain its discrepancies), but no later map is extant.
cumvent Bakufu demands for resolution.12

Evidence of these and other changes effected in the Genroku period have led to a general scholarly consensus that the Genroku kuniezu were the most ambitious and comprehensive of the provincial mapmaking projects. There is significantly less consensus among scholars as to whether the maps succeeded in fulfilling the political and strategic goals of the Bakufu, on the one hand, and local powerholders on the other. Since the major scholarly debates over kuniezu often focus on the Genroku maps, I will briefly describe them here.13

For the Genroku map project, the Bakufu appointed a quartet of its highest officials to oversee the mapping project: the ōmetsuke (chief police inspector), the jisha bugyō (magistrate of shrines and temples), Edo machi bugyō (city magistrate of Edo), and the kanjō bugyō (finance magistrate) jointly assumed control of the enterprise at the highest level. At the local level, in provinces containing more than one domain, certain daimyo were selected to serve as provincial “map intendants” (ezumoto 付図元). At the outset of the kuniezu project, Bakufu officials called the Edo representatives of all daimyo together and recited a list of detailed instructions for revising the previous kuniezu from the Shōhō era. At the same
time, the Bakufu established a map clearinghouse (ezugoya) in Edo. Here, each provincial map intendant was required to submit his draft maps to a battery of inspections by Bakufu officials. Each intendant brought his draft map, a draft of the land registers for areas depicted on the map, a copy of the Shōhō kuniezu (for comparison to the new map), a record of changes made in the land registers, and a document attesting to agreement with neighboring provinces over boundaries. If the new maps met with Bakufu approval, the officials sent them on to the Bakufu’s designated artists (goyō eshi 御用絵師) from the Kanō school, who would then redraw the draft map in final form.

The comprehensive nature of the Genroku kuniezu marked a strategic and symbolic watershed in terms of Bakufu-han cooperation in state mapmaking. Previous kuniezu projects had been far less cohesive in terms of both organization and output; the maps produced were not nearly as standardized and uniform as the Genroku maps.14 As we shall see below, the subsequent and final Bakufu kuniezu project undertaken in the Tenpō era differed considerably from the Genroku project in ways that reflected changes in the political context of Tokugawa mapmaking.

Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to kuniezu in Japan; the first studies of these maps appeared as early as the late Meiji period.15 However, in more recent years study of kuniezu has been dominated by two opposing


13 The most detailed survey of kuniezu in general and the Genroku kuniezu in particular in the context of Tokugawa state making is Sugimoto Fumiko, “Kuniezu sakusei jigyō to kinsei kokka,” op. cit.; see also Sugimoto, Ryōiki shihai no tenkai to kinsei, op. cit. Other works on kuniezu are discussed in more detail below.


15 An article entitled “Honpō chizu kō 本邦地図考” appeared in Shigaku zasshi, Vol. 6, Nos. 4-5, in 1895; cited in Sugimoto Fumiko, Ryōiki shihai no tenkai to kinsei, p. 154, p. 163, n. 2.
camps: on one side is Kawamura Hirotada 川村博忠, whose authoritative study *Edo bakufu-sen kuniezu no kenkyū* 江戸幕府選国絵図の研究 set the agenda for subsequent studies of Tokugawa mapmaking.16 On the other side is the historian Kuroda Hideo 黒田日出男 and his colleagues and students, most notably Sugimoto Fumiko 杉本史子, at Tokyo University’s Shiryō Hensanjo who have engaged in an exhaustive survey of Tokugawa kuniezu for more than a decade.17

Most kuniezu research, including that of Kawamura and Kuroda, focuses almost exclusively on the kuniezu as a strictly Japanese phenomenon, which is to say that aside from acknowledging the influence of Chinese imperial mapmaking in general and Qing cartography in particular, little consideration is given to what the Tokugawa mapmaking projects might mean in an East Asian or global context. In contrast, Ronald Toby recently has examined kuniezu for what they say about the formation of the boundaries of the early modern state vis-à-vis “borderland” regions like Ezo and Ryūkyū, and neighboring states, especially Korea.18 Since the debate between the Kawamura and Kuroda camps as well as Toby’s attempt to internationalize the analysis of the Tokugawa mapmaking projects all highlight the major issues in interpreting kuniezu and maps in general as historical sources, let us begin with outlines of these authors’ main arguments.

The debate between Kawamura and Kuroda is difficult to summarize in part because it is based on the two scholars’ differing interpretations of identical data drawn from their meticulously detailed analyses of individual kuniezu from each of the major Tokugawa mapping projects. It is important to stress that in addition to considering the maps as finished products, both scholars focus on the totality of the mapping process: from Bakufu edict through local execution of the surveying and mapmaking itself, to the submission of finished maps and gōchō and, ultimately, to the compilation by the Bakufu of provincial maps into maps of all Japan. The major point of contention between the two sides centers on the degree to which the kuniezu—both the process of making them as well as the maps themselves—represented the successful exercise of Tokugawa Bakufu central authority over daimyo and others involved in mapmaking at the local level.

Kawamura tends to see the kuniezu, especially the penultimate mapping effort undertaken in the Genroku period, as a “symbol of the maturation of the bakuhan state.”19 For him, the Bakufu’s kuniezu hearkened back in a self-consciously symbolic manner to the kokugunzō 国郡図 of the classical imperial state, and were part of the Bakufu’s attempt to create a “feudal social order within the framework of Confucian ideals.”20 In general, he sees state mapmaking as part of larger process in which the shogunate, from the early seventeenth through the early eighteenth centuries, consolidated its ability to compel daimyo to submit to its authority in matters of land distribution and control.21


17 The most comprehensive and current bibliography of research on kuniezu and other types of maps and visual materials can be found on Sugimoto’s page of the Shiryō Hensanjo website: [http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/personal/fumiko/bunken.top.html](http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/personal/fumiko/bunken.top.html)


21 It should be said that Kawamura points out the conflicts that occurred as a result of the
Kuroda and Sugimoto, by contrast, see kuniezu as documents of ongoing conflict and compromise between Bakufu and daimyo in which mapmaking served as a “mediating force in the relationship between shogun and ryōshū” in matters of land distribution as well as in mapmaking. Each side gained and lost the upper hand in discrete incidents of conflict, Kuroda and Sugimoto maintain that each round of map-making must be analyzed in its specific historical and spatial context.

Scholars on each side marshal formidable textual evidence drawn from their deep knowledge of the kuniezu and related documents. Perhaps what distinguishes the Kawamura and Kuroda approaches most is the former’s tendency to rely on a formalist analysis of maps, in which maps reflect quite directly the political goals of their makers. Kuroda and Sugimoto are more cautious about constructing general theories about Bakufu or ryōshū power based on map content alone, and rely instead on densely detailed analyses rooted in specific maps and in the times, places, and circumstances of their production.

A good example of the differences between the Kawamura and Kuroda approaches is the two sides’ interpretation of the Tenpō kuniezu, the last set of provincial maps made by the shogunate. Unlike in previous kuniezu, daimyo in the early nineteenth century refused outright to submit maps in response to the Bakufu’s demand and shogunal officials ended up drafting and compiling the maps themselves. Kawamura, like many scholars of kuniezu before and after him, sees the Tenpō mapping project as a political failure, a sign of increasing weakness on the part of the Bakufu. By contrast, Kuroda and Sugimoto compare the Tenpō kuniezu to their predecessors in the Genroku period in order to see exactly what types of changes occurred in the mapmaking process. They show how in the Genroku period peasants (hyakushō) and their lands were surveyed by ryōshū, who would then draw up maps to be submitted for confirmation by local and, later, Bakufu officials. In the Tenpō kuniezu, however, the Bakufu bypassed uncooperative ryōshū and ordered villages to submit village maps (mura ezu) directly to Bakufu authorities, who then used them to compile kuniezu themselves. Kuroda and Sugimoto argue that this shift reveals a social and political change that took place between the Genroku and Tenpō eras, and that in the latter period the Bakufu was compelled to communicate more directly with the people, thereby creating new avenues for the exercise of power as well as new antagonisms between ruler

22 Sugimoto Fumiko summarizes the debate between Kawamura and Kuroda (albeit from her perspective from within the Kuroda “camp”) in Sugimoto, Ryōiki shihai no tenkai to kinsei, op.cit., pp. 155-158.

23 The major point of contention was the Bakufu’s shift to the use of jitsudaka (“actual” crop yield) in place of the “assigned” kokudaka previously in use. The daimyo perceived the potential political and economic disadvantages in acknowledging to the Bakufu any practical increases in productivity within their domains.
and ruled. Sugimoto and Kuroda see an institution (the Bakufu) facing unprecedented challenges and attempting to craft new—if imperfect—solutions.

While both Kawamura’s and Kuroda’s analyses of kuniezu focus on the implications of Tokugawa state mapmaking for understanding domestic political relations in the early modern period, neither makes an extended effort to place kuniezu in a regional or global context. Ronald Toby undertakes this task in “Boundaries in ‘Maps of Japan’ and the Boundaries of ‘Japan’ in the Early Modern Era,” published in Japanese as part of a collection of essays edited by Kuroda Hideo, Mary Elizabeth Berry, and Sugimoto Fumiko to mark the culmination of a three-year cooperative international research project on early modern Japanese maps and mapmaking.

Toby’s aim is to discern the differences between the images of Japan as represented in Tokugawa maps and the “Japan” imagined by the greater community of map readers and users in the Tokugawa period. He compares the boundaries of Japan depicted in the Bakufu maps to the boundaries of Japan as depicted and described in published maps and encyclopedic geographical texts. Toby pays particular attention to the depiction of neighboring territories, especially the borderland regions of Ezo and Ryūkyū. He argues that the many discrepancies visible among Bakufu maps themselves, and between Bakufu maps and commercially published maps and geographical writings, indicates that the boundaries of Japan—as a geographical entity as well as an “imagined community”—were far from definitive or consistent.

According to Toby, the Bakufu repeatedly ordered Ezo and Ryūkyū to submit provincial maps as part of the various kuniezu efforts, indicating that the Bakufu envisioned both regions as inferior sub-states ostensibly subject to its control (much as daimyo domains were) in theory, if not in practice. However, cartographically as well as politically, the assimilation of borderland territories was much more complicated. Toby points out that despite demanding kuniezu from Ryūkyū, the region appears only once, in the Genroku period, on a map of all Japan compiled by the Bakufu, and in official diplomatic relations the Bakufu treated Ryūkyū as a “foreign” country. As for Ezo, the Bakufu’s maps of the region showed details only in the Wajinchi, the areas in the south controlled or dominated by mainland Japanese; everything else in Ezo was more or less unknown territory, mapped in a vague and highly abstract manner.

The inconsistency between one Bakufu map and another is only part of the problem, however, for Toby points to considerable differences between the “Japan” depicted in Bakufu maps and that shown in published maps and encyclopedias. He points out, for example, that the Fusōkoku no zu最初 published by Nakabayashi Yoshibe in Kanbun 幕末6 (1666) depicts Ezo as quite separate from the rest of Japan (Figure 5) and the widely disseminated maps of Ishikawa Ryūsen show the domain of Matsumae as an island separate from the rest of Ezo in a manner similar to the Meireki-era Bakufu map of the region (Figure 6). However, Ryusen’s maps, unlike their Bakufu-made predecessors, shows part of a large island representing Ezo looming to the north; it also depicts mythical lands from me-

---

24 Sugimoto, Ryōiki shihai no tenkai to kinsei, pp. 157-158.
25 See Ronald Toby, “Kinsei-ki no ‘Nihon zu’ to ‘Nihon’ no kyōkai,” op. cit.; note that translations of Toby’s title, and of all quotes from his article are mine.
26 Toby, Kinsei-ki no ‘Nihon zu’ to ‘Nihon’ no kyōkai,” pp. 86-87.

---

28 Toby, Kinsei-ki no ‘Nihon zu’ to ‘Nihon’ no kyōkai,” pp. 82-85.
dieval lore (the “no-man’s-land” called “Gándō” 赭道 or “Kari no michi” to the north, and “Rasetsu-koku 羅刹国,” the “island of women” to the south) that never appear on Bakufu maps. Other maps show still other visions of Japan: as Toby notes, the Shinzen Dai Nihon zuran 新選大日本図覧 (author unknown, Enpō 延宝 6 [1678], collection of the Kobe City Museum) resembles Ishikawa Ryūsen’s map, yet does not show mythical lands and more consistently depicts the borderland regions of Ezo and Ryūkyū as distinct from the rest of the archipelago, not as an integral part of a visually unified whole.29

29 Toby, Kinsei-ki no ‘Nihon zu’ to ‘Nihon’ no kyōkai,” pp. 88-91; curiously, Toby refers to the Shinzen Dai Nihon zuran as being more “advanced” (susunde iru) (p. 90) than the maps of Ishikawa Ryūsen or other contemporary mapmakers, a description that seems at odds with his otherwise anti-teleological argument.
Published geographic encyclopedias, Toby argues, show similarly inconsistent treatment of Ezo and Ryūkyū. Nishikawa Jōken's 西川如見 Ka'i tsuishō kō 華夷通商孝 does not consider Ezo at all, and places both Ryūkyū and Korea (Chōsen) in the category of gaikoku 外国, the middle of three categories of foreignness: Chūgoku 中国 (the Chinese empire and countries within the Sinocentric order); gaikoku (foreign, or outside countries), and gai'i 外異 (countries both “outside” and “foreign”). The maps in Terajima Ryōan’s multi-volume Wakan sansai zue 和漢三才図絵 show Ryūkyū and Ezo as “igoku 异国, a status shared by Korea, Ryūkyū, and the Indian subcontinent (Tenjiku 天竺), among others (Figure 7). In the Wakan sansai zue’s narrative description of relations between the three countries, however, Ryūkyū and Ezo are treated as part of “Dai Nihon 大日本”. Hayashi Shihei, the controversial expert on Japan’s late-eighteenth century defense policies, grouped Ezo, Ryūkyū, and Chōsen together as the three “foreign” (gaikoku) countries with which the Bakufu should be most concerned to defend itself.30

The variety of opinions concerning who and what constitutes Japan in published texts, and their variance with respect to Bakufu maps leads Toby to conclude that the Bakufu vision of an integral Japan which ideally included Ezo and Ryūkyū, was not transmitted to the general populace. Indeed, the “ragged” official boundaries of Japan seem to be even less solid in published maps, and hence in the popular imagination. Toby argues that the Bakufu vision of Japan did not compel any sort of cartographic orthodoxy among commercial mapmakers because the shogunate jealously guarded map information as secret; he repeatedly invokes “Foucault’s Panopticon” (sic) to propose that the shogunate wished to retain for itself the unique power to surveil and order the realm through maps.31

Toby’s arguments provide an opportunity to reconnect with Harley’s theses regarding map secrecy and to address the important and difficult issue of how map information was disseminated in the Tokugawa period. One of Harley’s principal arguments regarding the political functions of mapmaking is that “weak” states often keep map information secret, while stronger states tend to make map information public, in order to display cartographic knowledge as a symbol of the power of their own regimes.32 In similar fashion, Toby argues strongly that the Bakufu kept its maps secret, and that this secrecy was a means of gaining and maintaining power. Toby takes issue with scholars (specifically, with Kawamura Hirotada and me) who argue that there were both direct and indirect links between Bakufu-commissioned maps and commercially published maps.33 Toby’s main body of evidence is the many discrepancies between official and commercial maps, notably those outlined above. His argument rests on the premise that, had commercial mapmakers had access to Bakufu maps, they would have copied them, and done so in discernible ways. In the putative absence of Bakufu models, he reasons, commercial mapmakers envisioned the boundaries of “Japan” in various, contradictory and inconsistent ways. Toby presents these perspectives even though he explicitly acknowledges that there is “no way of knowing” for certain whether authors of published maps had access to Bakufu maps or other state-produced information, and if so, when and how.34

I concur that there is much that remains unknown about the details regarding the transmission of map information, but while Toby points to irrefutable concrete differences between Bakufu

Vintage, 1995), is referring to Jeremy Bentham’s famous invention.


33 Kawamura makes the argument for direct influence of Bakufu maps on commercially published maps numerous times, but does not give any evidence for his claims. My own arguments are explained below.

34 Toby, “Kinsei-ki no ‘Nihon zu’ to ‘Nihon’ no kyōkai,” pp. 91-96.
maps and commercially published maps, one can make a counter-argument using evidence of the direct and indirect influence of Bakufu maps on commercially published maps. I have argued elsewhere that the Bakufu did little to keep its maps of cities and of Japan secret, based on examples of what seem to me to be fairly clear incidences of commercial mapmakers borrowing information from Bakufu maps or even copying them directly. In one case, Fujii Hanchi, a Bakufu official who aided in the mapping of the city of Edo in 1658, subsequently gained permission from the Bakufu to publish the maps under the pseudonym Ochikochi Dōin.35 A published 1666 atlas was made by copying, dividing, and reducing in scale the first Bakufu map of Japan, a practice that was repeated throughout the Tokugawa period and into the early Meiji, as kuniezu were copied and reprinted in woodblock form as published regional maps (Figure 8).36 Aside from their differing treatment of Ezo, Nagakubo Sekisui’s much-reproduced map Nihon yochi rotei zenzu 日本輿地路程全図 (Figure 9) bears a clear resemblance to the Bakufu map of Japan produced in the Kyōhō period (c. 1702, Figure 10).37 The resemblance is more evident if one looks at the maps in outline form Figure 11. Finally, in what seems to me to be the most striking instance of lack of strategic cartographic secrecy,

---


36 Numerous reproductions of such printed kuniezu can be found in Yamashita Kazumasa 山下和正, Chizu de yomu Edo jidai 地図で読む江戸時代 (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1998), pp. 58-96.

37 Sekisui is known to have studied with disciples of Shibukawa Shunkai (1639-1715), an astronomer in the employ of the shogunate during the time the Kyōhō map of Japan was being made. See Marcia Yonemoto, Mapping Early Modern Japan: Space, Place, and Culture in the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 35-43.
the shogunate not only allowed its major rivals for power—the daimyo—access to cartographic information, it delegated the daimyo themselves to carry out the business of official mapmaking. Of course this ostensible privilege was in actuality a time- and resource-consuming obligation that daimyo fulfilled out of duty to the shogunate, and one to which daimyo sometimes gave short shrift.

**Harley Revisited**

These debates return us to the questions posed at the beginning of this article regarding the role maps played in the competition for state power at both shogunal and local levels in the Tokugawa period and the type of relationship that existed between state-produced and commercial forms of map discourse. With regard to the former issue, for both shogunate and daimyo the politics of power witnessed in and through mapmaking was a succession of gains and losses, and of assertions of strength followed by evidence of weakness that makes labels like “strong state” or “weak state” oversimplified and inappropriate. Tokugawa Bakufu maps do not “symbolize” a single or simple set or ideas; they represent a process of negotiation between forms and levels of authority. Tokugawa mapmaking reveals the ways in which political power was generated, displayed, exercised, and contested, and shows the complexity and ambiguity of shogunal authority and daimyo autonomy alike. With regard to the latter issue, if in Bakufu maps the visual representation of the polity provided a framework for the articulation and negotiation of power, the same can be said about commercially published maps of Japan. The diversity of map images and their wide dissemination is a testament to the vitality of print and popular culture, and of the relatively free, heterodox intellectual climate in which such diversification and circulation took place.38

---

38 This is in direct contrast to Harley’s claim of “indeterminate silence” in early modern European maps. On the wide circulation of many forms of “public information” in the early
Although consensus about the transmission of map information from “official” to “private” hands may be difficult to achieve, in the end, the disagreements between the scholars discussed above are not as important as the complementary aspects of their scholarship. Kuroda’s and Sugimoto’s research on *kuniezu* focuses on the domestic political implications of Tokugawa state mapmaking. My own work on Tokugawa maps, too, generally looks inward, toward establishing links between maps and other forms of cultural production that manifested a distinctly spatial sensibility, a mapping impulse. Toby’s work, by contrast, looks outward to understand how and why early modern Japanese maps and encyclopedias reflect an insular, relatively weak Japanese “territorial consciousness” (*kokudo ninshiki*) vis-à-vis neighboring states or regions, a consciousness that is often at odds with the official diplomatic stance toward those same states or regions. This aspect of Toby’s argument is most instructive in that it shows how early modern Japan, as distinct from early modern European (and modern global) states, had a firm sense of itself as a cohesive cultural entity without having a correspondingly firm sense of exactly where its boundaries lay.*

An examination of mapmaking in early modern Japan shows us that maps constitute as well as contest the political status quo, and they do so through strategies of silence as well as those of representation, for when maps are ideologically deployed, they utilize suppression as well as expression in equal measure. We can productively read enforced silences in maps as a form of political discourse, and by doing so we can help bring maps and other visual materials more fully into the purview of intellectual, political, and cultural history. Mapping doesn’t belong in some separate category, exempt from or inimical to the forms of analysis that we apply to other texts. We know we will have ceased to marginalize the map when we stop assuming that scholars who “do” maps are different from scholars who “do” political, cultural, or even literary history, of the early modern or other eras.

---


* Further research comparing the early modern Japanese case to other non-European states (one such case being Siam, as discussed in Thongchai Winichakul’s *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994) would be extremely useful.
The eighteenth century was a time of relative prosperity for Ryukyu, a small island kingdom existing literally and figuratively in a zone of tension created by overlapping Chinese and Japanese influence.  

Sai On 蔡溫 (1682-1761) was the kingdom’s most influential politician and intellectual, and all indications are that he was the first Ryukyuan to write an explicitly autobiographical account. The original title of his autobiography was Sai-uji Gushichan Ueekata Bunjaku anbun 『蔡氏具志頭親方文若案文』 (A Draft by Gushichan Ueekata Bunjaku of the Sai Lineage). Recognizing its autobiographical character, Iha Fyū 伊波普猷 (1876-1947) renamed the text Sai On no jijoden. Written in Japanese sōrōbu, the default written language of Ryukyuan officialdom, it was accessible to all officials and educated people throughout the kingdom. The majority of Ryukyuans at this time were illiterate and did not understand any form of Japanese. Therefore, Sai On wrote his autobiography for elites, broadly defined to include people such as local officials of minor rank and village leaders. His autobiography was a public document, in which Sai On presented his life as a model for emulation by these elites, and he carefully selected—or created—the events he narrated to stress several interconnected points. 

Sai On wrote his autobiography after retiring from public life following a long, successful, but sometimes turbulent career at the highest levels of government. His account is brief and asymmetrical. A mere ten percent of the work covers the period of Sai On’s life from age thirty-nine through his full retirement from public affairs at age seventy-nine—the period of his greatest impact on Ryukyuan society. Nearly thirty percent of the autobiography is devoted to an encounter with a mysterious recluse in Fujian during his first trip to China at age twenty-eight. The encounter was the second of two satori-like experiences.

---

* N.B. An English translation of Sai On’s autobiography is available at:
The URL is case sensitive.

1 The status of the early-modern Ryukyu kingdom is a complex topic. Simply stated, Ryukyu’s tributary ties to China made the kingdom valuable to Satsuma and the Bakufu as conduit for goods and information. Therefore, although the Ryukyuan king was ostensibly a vassal of the daimyō of Satsuma, the kingdom enjoyed a large measure of autonomy owing to a concern by both Satsuma and the Bakufu to avoid potential complications with China. For a detailed discussion, see Gregory Smits, Visions of Ryuku: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999), pp. 15-49.

The government of Ryukyu included some Japanese-derived institutions and some Chinese-derived institutions. Taken as a whole, however, the organization of the Ryukyuan state was substantially different from that of China, the Bakufu, or any Japanese domain government. For details see Matsuda, Mitsugu, The Government of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, 1609-1872 (Naha, Japan: Yui Publishing Co., 2001).

2 Sai On’s career combined academics and politics. As a young man his reputation as a scholar enabled him to become a tutor to the crown prince. When the prince became king at a young age, Sai On became his advisor. In this capacity, Sai On managed a series of projects that included forestry surveys, hydraulic engineering endeavors, laying the groundwork for major ceremonies of state, and revising an official history of the kingdom. Activities such as these set the stage for Sai On to become a member of the Sanshikan (Council of Three), Ryukyu’s highest organ of state, at age forty-seven. After this time he pursued a Confucian-inspired reform agenda with the king’s backing, much of which was successful. After retirement, he wrote a series of essays, the study of which became de rigueur for subsequent generations of Ryukyuan elites.
awakenings that figure prominently in the autobiography, neither of which can be corroborated by any outside source. It is entirely possible that the most important portions of Sai On's autobiography are fictional in whole or in part.

Sai On’s autobiography seems less peculiar when read in the context of his other writings. Indeed, each of his extant essays supplements and reinforces the others, much like chapters in a monograph. In particular, the sōrōban essay One Man’s Views (Hitori monogatari) complements the autobiography, discussing in detail Sai On’s policies during the peak of his power, the very years conspicuously absent in his autobiography. Much of One Man’s Views resembles a work like Arai Hakuseki’s (1657-1725) autobiography, Oritaku shiba no ki『折たく柴の記』(Told Round a Brushwood Fire). Like Hakuseki, Sai On explained the rationale for his policies, emphasized their success, and sometimes indulged in saying “I told you so.” As we will see, however, there were also significant differences between the autobiographical writings of these two men.

This essay analyzes Sai On’s autobiography as a piece of public, didactic rhetoric. Through a close reading I show that the autobiography stressed precisely the points that most characterized Sai On’s political agenda as expressed in his policies and other writings. The autobiography made these points in a manner which, for this serious and sober Confucian, likely represented his best attempt at dramatic writing. Indeed, Sai On’s autobiography may have been his only work of fiction. After analyzing Sai On’s autobiography, I briefly compare it with the autobiographies of Arai Hakuseki and Yamaga Sokō (1622-1685).

Making One’s Destiny Through Effort

The autobiography starts with a lengthy account of an ongoing disagreement between Sai On’s father, prominent scholar and diplomat Sai Taku 蔡鐸, and his mother Yōshi (葉氏, possibly “of the Yō lineage”). Although formally respectful of his father, Sai On clearly favored the views and deeds of his mother, portraying her as an example of someone in an ostensibly subordi-
interesting that in his various essays Sai On occasionally presented strong-willed, courageous women as exemplars. In One Man’s Views, for example, he praised the wife of the lord of Komeji for taking it upon herself to attack and defeat a local brigand who sought to kill her apparently hapless husband. Such accounts resonate with many of the tales in Chinese collections biographies of exemplary women. In Sai On’s writings, they serve as rhetorical devices to enhance the broader point that even the relatively weak—women in these cases—could change their circumstances for the better with righteous effort. Examples like Sai On’s mother forcing her husband to bend to her will have an allegorical significance in the context of the relatively weak Ryukyu kingdom. If there is one point that Sai On stressed above all others it was that Ryukyuans can, should, and must take responsibility for their own destiny despite the structural disadvantages of being subordinate to both China and Japan.

In his discussion of the disagreement between his parents, Sai On was explicit in portraying his father as an example of one who passively accepted what appeared to be his fate or destiny, when he should instead have been making an effort to change it for the better. Sai On, for example framed the issue of his father’s taking a concubine in these terms:

Then because some ten years passed without Yōshi becoming pregnant, Sai Taku thought that they must surely resign themselves to the will of heaven [tenmei 天命].

Although Sai On did accept that some things lie within the realm of unchangeable destiny, his emphasis was on what to him was the large realm in which effort could overcome adverse circumstances. Often, what might appear to be decreed or ordained by heaven was in fact alterable by steadfast effort.

Another aspect of Sai On’s early life that he presented as an apparently innate shortcoming was what today we might call a learning disability. Unlike his studious older half brother Sai En, Sai On portrayed himself at age fifteen as “unable to remember a single line he had read. I eventually was able to remember a little by reading a half line at a time twenty or thirty times over. But I would forget even this meager attainment after three or four days had passed.” At age sixteen, his lack of learning became such an embarrassment that he redoubled his efforts and enlisted the aid of several relatives as tutors. From this point on, he described steady and increasingly rapid upward progress in formal learning:

That year, I poured all my energy into reading, and I also received instruction in the meaning of what I read, one or two phrases at a time. From the ninth month of that year I became more at ease with study and the lessons in interpreting the meaning began covering a half page at a time. From the age of eighteen I could freely remember and interpret four or five pages, and from the age of nineteen I could read through books I had never before seen. From age twenty I had read through the greater part of the curriculum. At twenty one, I received the yellow cap [hachimaki 八巻] and became an in-
structor of reading. At twenty-five I became instructor of interpretation.8

Once again, effort and willpower transformed what appeared to be a serious, fated flaw into a personal strength.

Although the explicit emphasis in the autobiography is on overcoming and changing what might appear to be the decrees of destiny, there was also a more subtle use of a notion of fate or destiny that appears at several points. In each such instance, Sai On characterized an unexpected and beneficial encounter using the Buddhist term en 縁, a fated connection. The first encounter was Sai On’s meeting a recluse in Fujian and becoming his student. He stated twice that this meeting was occasioned by destiny and entirely unanticipated.9 Later during that same stay in Fujian, Sai On unexpectedly discovered a temple near the Ryukyuan Affairs Office (Ryūkyū kariya, 琉球仮屋) that possessed a complete collection of the major Sutras and books about conditions in India, all of which he was able to read.10 Finally, on the way to Beijing during his second trip to China, Sai On encountered a Buddhist priest from India who spoke Chinese. They were able to talk at length as they traveled through the river and canal system on the same boat.11

These three fated connections might have suggested to a reader that Sai On was destined for greatness, a message at some odds with the extensive discussion of the adversities of his youth. The more likely function of discussing the fated connections from Sai On’s point of view would have been to establish firmly his credentials as an expert on Buddhism. Sai On’s political agenda and the arguments he put forth in support of it relied heavily on discussions of Buddhism, which comprised the intellectual framework of many of his most vigorous opponents, especially the writer Heshikiya Chōhin 平敷屋朝敏 (1700-1734). On the one hand, Sai On sought to undermine the validity of Buddhism, yet on the other he regarded himself as a Ryukyuan version of Shakyamuni. I have discussed Sai On’s relationship with Buddhism at length elsewhere, and the point here is simply to explain the structural function of the three “fated encounters” in the autobiography.12 Furthermore, in the course of describing the details of each encounter, Sai On clearly stated that they furthered his knowledge of the nature of Buddhism and its relationship with Confucianism.

The details of most of the matters discussed thus far cannot be verified by any outside source. Critical readers might take with a grain of salt, for example, the vigor with which Yōshi urged her reluctant husband to take a concubine or the apparent passivity of Sai Taku, a veteran diplomat and eventual head of Kumemura 久米村, Ryukyu’s community of China specialists. It may strain credulity to think that someone previously incapable of mastering formal book learning could so quickly rise to the level of instructor of interpretation. Furthermore, given the relatively brief time Sai On was in China, it is hard to imagine that he mastered the major texts of Buddhism there, while also attending to his ordinary duties at the Ryukyuan Affairs Office. It is probably best to regard these and similar accounts as at least partly fictionalized allegorical tales presented as inspirational rhetoric by a man in his seventies concerned about shaping his legacy to maximum effect.

Twice Awakened

Central to Sai On’s autobiography are two accounts of experiences that awakened him to deficiencies in his knowledge and inspired him to

8 SOZ, p. 105.
9 SOZ, p. 108.
10 SOZ, p. 108.
overcome those deficiencies. To understand his first awakening, we need some knowledge of the peculiar Ryukyuan community of Kumemura, today a part of Naha. All the households of Kumemura enjoyed elite status during the eighteenth century. They received government stipends in return for taking Chinese surnames and mastering aspects of Chinese language and ritual forms to serve the state as interpreters, trade officials, and diplomats. By the late seventeenth century, Kumemura had become a virtual, not an actual, Chinese Diaspora community. Although it originated as land given to Fujianese immigrants to Ryukyu early in the Ming dynasty, by Sai On’s time, most of Kumemura’s population consisted of Ryukyuans without any direct connection to China in their family lineages. They settled in Kumemura with state encouragement because of their ability to master Chinese culture, ideally to the point where they could function as quasi-Chinese. Although he does not mention this point in the autobiography, both of Sai On’s parents were first generation “immigrants” to Kumemura from elsewhere in Okinawa. The concentration of talent in Kumemura resulting from this situation was one reason for that community’s dominance in Ryukyuan politics during the eighteenth century. The main point to bear in mind with respect to Sai On’s first awakening was that Kumemura was a community in which ability, especially academic ability, mattered more than the status of one’s ancestors.

When he was sixteen, Sai On gathered with other teenagers and young men outside the main gate of Kumemura to enjoy a spectacular moonlit night. For reasons not stated, Sai On got into an argument with Kobashigawa Niya, the son of a family that had recently purchased aristocratic status and moved to Kumemura. Kobashigawa told Sai On that he should go home immediately because he was not really of aristocratic status and thus did not belong in the group. Sai On, offspring of perhaps the most prominent family in Kumemura, was flabbergasted to be told such a thing by someone of Kobashigawa’s background. Kobashigawa explained that he and the others in the group were all making excellent progress in scholarship and were thus true aristocrats. You, he said to Sai On, merely wear the clothes of an aristocrat because of your family’s high status, but you have none of the requisite substance:

Even though you have forgotten the Greater Learning and the Mean, because you are the child of a man of usekata 親方 status, you wear splendid clothes. But in reality, you are no different from the son of a peasant. We have all made good progress in reading and have received the praise of our teachers. But what praise have you received? Saying this, he clapped his hands and laughed, and the others joined him.13

This shocking encounter was the culmination of a period of personal torpor resulting from the designation of Sai On’s half brother as household heir. One obvious rhetorical function of this part of the autobiography is to devalue accidents of birth in favor of actual accomplishments and ability.

The distinction between outward appearances and true substance is the underlying theme in both of Sai On’s awakening experiences. Owing to the encounter with Kobashigawa, the shocked Sai On brooded over his situation and then set his mind firmly on mastering book learning. We have already seen his description of advancing from a semi-literate ignoramus to a teacher of interpretation of the classics over an approximately eight year span. This rapid advancement set the stage for the second awakening, which Sai On portrayed as the pivotal event of his life and which comprises the lengthiest discussion in his autobiography.

During his first trip to China at age twenty-eight, Sai On served as a minor functionary who remained behind at the Ryukyuan Affairs Office in Fujian while most of the other members of a tribute mission traveled to Beijing. According to his account, he began visiting the nearby Lingyun 凌雲 Temple and befriended the head priest. One day the head priest mentioned to Sai On that a man from “Huguang” 湖広, a term indicating Hubei and Hunan Provinces, was visiting the temple and could be found in its library.

13 SOZ, p. 105.
The priest presented this information to Sai On in a manner calculated to pique his curiosity, portraying the visitor as an enigma and challenging Sai On to help figure him out. During the first visit, the man gave no indication of any special qualities, asking Sai On some simple questions about Ryukyu. Sai On’s inclination was not to waste any more time talking with this visitor, but the head priest urged Sai On to come back the next day, and he did so mainly out of deference to the priest.

During the next visit, the visitor asked Sai On about whether his kingdom valued the Confucian classics, and Sai On explained that he was well versed in the classics as were most of his colleagues. The day ended with the head priest saying to Sai On that the visitor resembled one of the sagely recluses of old (inja 隠者). Sai On was not impressed, however, characterizing the temple visitor as resembling “the sort of teachers we bring in to assist at the Ryukyuan Affairs Office.”

Again, in deference to the head priest’s insistent request, Sai On agreed to return the next day. During that visit, the man asked Sai On to compose a poem about the scenery surrounding the temple. Sai On dashed off a poem, which the visitor praised lavishly, reading it several times aloud before hanging it on the wall. Sai On surely knew that his poem was no great work of art, and he concluded that the visitor “must not be very good at composition.” Again, the same cycle ensued whereby Sai On did not want any further contact with the man, but the head priest eventually persuaded Sai On to come back for one last visit.

The first three encounters were apparently part of an elaborate setup calculated to magnify the psychological impact of the fourth visit. The man who had appeared so easily amused by Sai On’s poem the day before turned to him and accused him of having wasted his life and of learning nothing of value during his twenty-eight years of existence. Partially echoing Kobashigawa’s earlier accusation, the recluse characterized Sai On as possessing only the superficial, outward forms of learning, what the autobiography calls “the dregs of words” (moji no kasu 文字之糟粕). There was some difference between the two critiques. Kobashigawa likened the teenage Sai On to a farmer’s son, presumably someone lacking formal education and the sophistication associated with it. The recluse implicitly acknowledged Sai On’s accomplishments, but described them as the work of an artisan or craftsman (saiku 細工), beautiful and detailed, perhaps, but serving no purpose other than aesthetic pleasure. He accused Sai On of indulging in the dregs of words merely for his personal amusement, saying that because he lacked knowledge of true learning, Sai On was of no use to himself or his country.

Kobashigawa had been the catalyst for Sai On to open the books, and the recluse became the catalyst for Sai On to apply the knowledge contained therein to practical problems as opposed to aesthetic pursuits.

Similarly to the encounter with Kobashigawa, Sai On protested that the recluse’s accusation was unreasonable, pointing out he had “read through” all of the classics and even composed an impromptu poem the day before. To prove his point, the recluse opened a copy of the Analects, which the autobiography points out served as an elementary reading text for young students at the temple. He pointed to the term jingshi 敬事, which has little self-evident meaning and might be translated out of context as “respectful service.” A conversation ensued in which Sai On repeatedly glossed the term with other, equally vague expressions such as “loving people” and “carrying out the correct path.” In response to each gloss the recluse asked Sai On what specific steps a ruler or government official might take to put that nice sentiment into practice. Unable to answer any of these inquiries, Sai On awakened to the truth of the recluse’s accusation: his learning to date was indeed of no practical use.

In the course of his critique, the recluse referred to the steps of the Greater Learning:

The Four Books and the Six Classics as well as other wise writings are all tools for [what the Greater Learning calls]
making the will sincere [sei’i, 誠意] and governing the realm [chikoku, 治国]. But you have forgotten the great utility [taiyō, 大用] of making the will sincere and governing the realm. You “work” at things like reading and composition simply for amusement. In the end, you have forgotten yourself and your country, which is actually worse than being a craftsman.17

In One Man’s Views and in his philosophical essays, Sai On frequently made the point that academic learning has no legitimate function other than aiding government. Of course it might also assist in personal development, but, as the Greater Learning points out, personal development is the basis for governing one’s household and then governing the state, with peace throughout the realm as the final product. Elsewhere, Sai On wrote extensively about managing household finances, agricultural techniques, and other specific measures for enhancing the material basis of society. The corpus of his written work and the “text” of his policy agenda and activities in government all fit Sai On’s interpretation of the Greater Learning as authorizing concrete, practical knowledge as the true goal of learning. The unnamed recluse, with whom Sai On said he studied for five months, functioned, for all intents and purposes, as his alter ego in the autobiography.

It may seem unexceptional that Confucian scholars would make good government the goal of learning, and indeed they usually did so rhetorically. Sai On’s point was that actions speak louder than words. Parroting what the classics say about government is no substitute for things like knowing the soil and wind conditions of one’s territories, conducting surveys of conditions in remote villages and forests, and using such knowledge to instruct the subjects of a state in more efficient production methods—all activities that Sai On did prior to and after joining Ryukyu’s highest governing body, the Sanshikan (Council of Three). It was rare in East Asia, to find Confucian scholars and high government officials writing about such topics as, for example, the importance of mixing urine into batches of fertilizer.19 For Sai On, the proper

On no gakutō.” Sai On himself consistently spoke at the level of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, making no further distinctions. The broader intellectual environment of eighteenth century Ryukyu tended toward the pragmatic use of a variety of Chinese technologies, both in the sense of things like machinery for refining sugar or techniques for smallpox inoculations and in the form of geomancy and popular Daoism. Clarification of the disputed fine points of Confucian doctrine seems to have been of no use or interest to Ryukyuan elites. Kate Wildman Nakai’s characterization of Arai Hakuseki as “a Confucian ‘actor’ rather than a Confucian ‘thinker’” would apply nicely to Sai On as well. See Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), p. 79.

19 The discussion of urine as fertilizer is found in Heiji kanai monogatari 『平時家内物語』, a manual for framing households in Gushichan Magiri: “As for the extensive use of fertilizer on areas of poor soil, there are specific agricultural guidelines. Fertilizer is particularly effective when mixed with urine, but in this place, though several varieties of fertilizer are used, urine is not collected in very high quantities. It is for this reason that the use of fertilizer is often ill-informed and ineffective.” SOZ, p. 12. Regarding Sai On’s forest surveys and the system of forest management he developed, see Smits, Visions, pp. 103-110. For an English translation of Heiji kanai monogatari,
goal of learning was to promote results like increased sweet potato yields through better fertilizer mixes or a coastal transportation network, which enabled farmers more efficiently to bring their products to market. Sai On’s stress on utility and his specific critique of aesthetic-oriented learning was also a critique of his opponents in Ryukyuan politics.

One set of opponents, albeit one whose voice is muted in official records, consisted of some members of Kumemura, best represented by Tei Junjoku 程順則 (1663-1734). He was a diplomat and scholar of Chinese culture, particularly poetry and other aspects of aesthetic refinement. Such knowledge probably served Tei Junjoku well during his many official trips to China, but as we will see, Sai On portrayed him as utterly ineffective in the context of describing the Valuation Incident.20 Another set of opponents of Sai On’s policies were a group of playwrights, poets, and novelists influenced by Buddhism and classical Japanese courtly aesthetics. Heshikiya Chōbin was the leading figure of this group, and he and fourteen of his associates were executed in 1734 after an unsuccessful attempt to undermine Sai On via an appeal to Satsuma. Heshikiya’s aesthetics and his opposition to Sai On’s attempts to transform Ryukyu into a somber, efficient machine continued to appeal to some members of Ryukyu’s elite even after Heshikiya’s downfall. In short, Sai On’s antagonism toward both Buddhist and Confucian aesthetics was closely connected with his political agenda and battles. Locating the authority for such an agenda in the figure of a mysterious, sagely recluse in Fujian was a rhetorical strategy designed to provide that agenda with a greater aura of legitimacy.

In characterizing his encounter with the recluse and the distinction between verbal dregs versus true learning that it engendered, Sai On said that “it was like waking from a dream.” This expression comprises part of the title of one of his philosophical essays, Essential Views Upon Awakening 『醒夢要伝』 (Xingmeng yaolun). The essay features a detailed discussion of the workings of fate and destiny, the message of which is that we can control most aspects of what appears to be our destiny, but doing so requires great effort applied over a long period of time, perhaps even over several generations (thus benefiting a household’s fortunes more so than those of an individual).21 As he portrayed it, Sai On’s encounter awakened him to the possibility of altering Ryukyu’s destiny, and the path to doing so consisted of pragmatic knowledge that would increase the wealth and stability of society. Aesthetic pursuits were at best a distraction and at worst a clear hindrance to that goal.

The Valuation Incident

The last major topic in the autobiography is a detailed description of the so-called Valuation Incident (Hangaa jiken 評価事件), which took place in 1719 in connection with the investiture ceremonies for the new king, Shō Kei 尚敬 (r. 1713-1751). Ryukyu kings sought formal investiture from the Chinese emperor, which enhanced their prestige but was very expensive. Shō Kei’s investiture was delayed several years to allow the royal government to scrape together funds, and it resulted in additional ad hoc tax levies, one of which lasted until 1728.22 Typically, several hundred Chinese would arrive in Naha for the investiture ceremonies, where they remained for several months. Most were merchants whose goods the royal government purchased in a formal valuation process by which officials in Kumemura inspected the items and


20 Regarding Tei Junjoku, see Smits, Visions, pp. 62-70. Regarding muted evidence of a serious struggle between Sai On and at least some subset of Kumemura’s China experts, see pp. 128-132.

21 For a discussion of Essential Views Upon Awakening in the context of Sai On’s discussion of destiny, see Smits, Visions, pp. 91-94.

22 Smits, Visions, p. 77. Regarding the Valuation Incident, see pp. 77-78 and SOZ, pp. 110-111. In most reference books, the incident is known by the Okinawan pronunciation of “value,” hangaa, not the Japanese hyōka.
came to an agreement on prices for each type of goods. During Shō Kei’s investiture, the valuation process got off to a bad start when the Ryukyuan side announced that its government had 500 kanme of silver for the purchase of goods, and the Chinese merchants claimed to have brought goods with a total value of 2000 kanme of silver. Naturally, they were dismayed at the prospect of returning with so many unsold goods, even if they exaggerated by using the 2,000 kanme figure. According to the autobiography, the Chinese merchants claimed that even the poorest of kingdoms should be able to purchase 6,000 or 7,000 kanme of goods, and the investiture envoys backed the merchants in expressing discontent. The situation grew tense and the Ryukyuan valuation officials, led by Tei Junsoku, asked Sai On to intervene. Sai On stepped in to mediate between the top levels of the Ryukyuan government and the Chinese merchants. He portrayed the essential problem as poor communication exacerbated by a lack of courage on the part of the valuation officials. The poor communication was the result of Ryukyuan difficulties with spoken Chinese. Sai On therefore pressed for all communication to be conducted in writing. Apparently, however, he was not able to keep a lid on unauthorized verbal communication. Rumors spread, and the Chinese merchants eventually seized Sai On and held him hostage. According to his self-aggrandized account, Sai On betrayed no sign of fear and was eventually able to convince the merchants that the royal government indeed possessed no more than 500 kanme. The merchants agreed to begin the valuation process based on this amount the next day.

In the meantime, Tei Junsoku and the other valuation officials had fled to a nearby temple in fear. Despite direct orders from the Sanshikan to come out and start the valuation process, they refused to do so until Sai On promised to be present as well. Sai On assisted with the valuation process for five days and then let the normal officials handle the remaining negotiations. In the end, the chief investiture envoy, seeing the vast quantities of unsold goods, petitioned the Ryukyuan government to figure out some way to raise more money. Sai On’s idea was to collect jewelry and the large hairpins worn by the Ryukyuan nobility from all households in the urban areas around Naha. After melting them down into coins, the Ryukyuan government was able to purchase and additional 100 kanme of goods.

One obvious reason for Sai On essentially to end his autobiography with this incident (the rest of his life, age thirty-nine through seventy-five, flies by in less space than the description of the valuation incident) was to highlight his courage and indispensability, especially in contrast with the hapless Tei Junsoku. It also served to validate many of the points discussed above. Despite Ryukyu’s poverty, for example, it could still participate fully in the Chinese world order, its king receiving robes, a crown, a seal, and other accouterments from the Chinese emperor. Turning the near disaster of the Valuation Incident into a success was an example of taking control of one’s destiny. Furthermore, whatever the exact components of Sai On’s “true” learning may have been, the Valuation Incident showed them clearly to have been superior to Tei Junsoku’s aesthetic-oriented Confucianism. In Sai On’s account of the Valuation Incident, one can almost hear the recluse in Fujian berating Tei Junsoku for having forgotten the true meaning of learning.

There are some outside sources to corroborate the Valuation Incident, although it is still impossible to verify many details. Certainly Sai On’s description of it as largely a breakdown in communications and courage seems overly simplistic. Whatever may actually have happened, the incident served as an excellent rhetorical capstone to the points made throughout the autobiography. Sai On’s autobiography is a well-crafted text, which, although not reliable as a factual account, is an excellent allegorical summary of the agenda to which he devoted his life.

Conclusions

As a Confucian scholar who was influential in government, Sai On’s autobiography might be comparable to Yamaga Sokō’s Haisho zanpitsu『配所残筆』(Writings in Exile) or Arai Hakuseki’s autobiography, works Sai On might have read. Matsudaira Sadanobu’s (1758-1829) Uge no hitokoto 『宇下人言』would also be
an example of an autobiography of an influential, Confucian-oriented official, albeit one written well after Sai On’s time. Autobiographical writings, typically taking the form of instructions to later generations of a household, were common among Chinese literati. It is possible, therefore, that any number of Chinese or Japanese autobiographical writings could have inspired Sai On’s autobiography, although it also possible that the idea was largely his own. Even if autobiographies like those of Sokō or Hakuseki did influence Sai On, his work differs from theirs in many respects. In conclusion, I will comment briefly on Sai On’s autobiography in a comparative context.

Yamaga Sokō’s relatively short autobiography changes tone about half way through the work. The first half is a rather dry chronicle of Sokō’s encounters with teachers, scholars, and students, describing in detail his progress in mastering the Chinese classics, classical Japanese literature and poetic forms, and military literature. Interestingly, the very early material contains a passage reminiscent of Sai On’s claim of being initially unable to learn. According to Sokō: “When I was six I was ordered by my parents to devote myself to learning. I was inept, though, and it was only when I was eight that I could more or less read the Nine Chinese Classics, the Seven Books on Military Strategy, and the Books on Poetry.”

The tone of the work becomes more vivid and intense, however, as Sokō’s 1666 exile to Akō approaches. The apparent reason for this exile was that his book Seikyō yo roku 『聖教要録』 (Essential record of the sages’ teachings) offended one or more Bakufu officials. The relevant section begins with a letter from his lord demanding Sokō’s presence. It describes in detail Sokō’s last-minute preparations for what he thought might be a death sentence and describes the journey to Akō. Especially interesting is a letter Sokō included in the autobiography, addressed to his lord, Hōjō Yasufusa. In the letter, Sokō characterizes himself as merely having attempted to clarify the way of the sages and as having fallen victim to the slander of today’s degenerate scholars. It is defiant in tone. Sokō explained that he wrote the letter to be his last statement had he been sentenced to death, but that he withheld it when it became clear that he would be exiled instead. After this point, Sokō’s autobiography goes into detail on his interpretation of history and his intellectual views.

Saeki Shoichi points out that the tediousness of the first part of Sokō’s autobiography may have been intentional, a device to accentuate the significance of his exile. For Sokō, “The day of his exile had assumed for him the greatest moral significance, and in building up his narrative to that moment, he had realized amply the potential for self-dramatization in the genre.”

As we have seen, Sai On’s autobiography likewise, took moments of great moral significance and dramatized them. Indeed, such moments comprise the bulk of the entire work. Furthermore, with the exception of the Valuation Incident, in Sai On’s case we cannot be certain that anything he described even took place. This lack of verifiability is also a present in the early part of Arai Hakuseki’s biography. As Robert L. Backus points out, Hakuseki presented his youthful self as the ideal mixture of scholar and warrior, but “How closely he really approached this difficult synthesis is anybody’s guess.”

The autobiographies of both Sokō and Hakuseki, although written in part to justify their views and deeds, inevitably expressed their authors’ disappointment at failing to meet many of their goals. Sokō wrote his autobiography during what proved to be the final year of a nine-year

---


exile, though he did not know of the impending pardon while he was writing. Hakuseki was under virtual house arrest at the time he wrote, the administration of Tokugawa Yoshimune (r. 1716-1745) having reversed or abolished nearly all of the policies Hakuseki advocated as an advisor to the two previous shōguns, Ienobu and Ietsugu. By contrast, Sai On’s autobiography is a self-assured success story, ending with the sentence “Thus I finish my account with sincere gratitude and in comfortable retirement.” Sai On had his enemies, and to some extent they staged a political comeback in the decades after his death. Nevertheless, he seemed well aware of his stature and influence in the history of Ryukyu, and his autobiography reflects that confidence. Hakuseki, by contrast was so determined “to vindicate every detail and aspect of his administrative policies that he unwittingly destroys the structural balance of the book” according to Saeki.28

Sai On’s autobiography ends on a note of contentment, and is not addressed to anyone in particular, not even his posterity. In ending One Man’s Views, however, Sai On explicitly said that he hoped his essay would be of assistance to Okinawa’s urban aristocracy as well as minor officials on every island in the Ryukyu kingdom in their pursuit of the way of government.29 Clearly Sai On wrote his autobiography as an attempt to inspire Ryukyuans to greatness at a personal level. One Man’s Views complements the autobiography as a catalogue of specific policies Sai On advocated and as a broader explanation of Ryukyu’s relationship with Satsuma, one that placed responsibility for Ryukyu’s destiny in the hands of Ryukyuans. Unlike the autobiographies of Hakuseki and Sokō, there is no dropping of the names of famous scholars or highly-placed politicians in Sai On’s work. The effect, of course, is to spotlight himself even more intensely.

27 SOZ, p. 112.
29 SOZ, p. 89.
Tokugawa Women and Spacing the Self

© Bettina Gramlich-Oka*
Tübingen University, Germany

For too long literary expressions of the person—self-testimonies—have been categorized as a modern Western genre, one which conceives the classical autobiography as a testimony of individuality in the modern world. As feminist critics have pointed out, this genre does not work well even in Western discourses of self-narratives, in particular when considering gender and class, so it works even less well in a non-Western, non-modern context. The Western notion that individuality and autobiographical writing are closely connected is especially problematic in the case of Japan, where the diary literature of the Heian period (794-1185) is well known as a genre of women’s self-writing. According to secondary literature, the classical autobiographical genre seems not to have been represented in the vast quantity of literary production by women of the Tokugawa period (1600-1868). Modern scholars’ lack of attention to these self-narratives may stem from the narrow definition of autobiography itself, and hence the assumption that such texts simply do not exist. By relating to a greater range of autobiographical texts, the focus of this article is to introduce the production of self-testimonies by women writers of the Tokugawa period, which remains so little explored.

*A similar version of this essay is in press at Andreas Bähr (et.al.), ed, Räume des Selbst: Transkulturelle Perspektiven der Selbstzeugnisforschung / Spacing the Self, Transcultural Perspectives in Research on Self-Narratives (forthcoming 2007). I thank the participants of the conference Spacing the Self, Transcultural Perspectives in Research on Self-Narratives, Berlin, March 2006, and discussant Thomas Max Safley for their inspiring and insightful suggestions and questions. Also I thank the two anonymous readers for their comments on an earlier version which I presented at the Early Modern Japan Network meeting at the Association Asian Studies, Chicago, March 2005.


3 For a good reader of autobiography by women and different autobiographical genres, which includes the genre of the diary, see Martine Watson Brownley and Allison B. Kimmich, Women and Autobiography (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1999). In the past decades, many more diaries written by women in the Tokugawa period have come to light, which promises the rewriting of the standard history of Tokugawa literature. Shiba Keiko and Yabuta Yutaka are among the leading scholars in this area in Japan. Although scholars in Japan have been introducing women writers of the Tokugawa period, the topic is still mostly neglected in English literature.

4 In English, see Saeki Shōichi, “Autobiographical Literature in Japan,” in Japan Echo 10:3 (1983): 69-75, for an overview of autobiographical writings in Japan, which includes both men and women. For a mid-nineteenth century woman, see Anne Walthall’s biography of the poet and political activist Matsuo Taseko. Anne Walthall, The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the
In fact, we do come across texts that resemble what is commonly considered autobiography in the Tokugawa period, although these texts are written by men only. This raises the question why the style of personal expression by women should be different from that of men. One answer can be found in the link between the autobiographical genre, which can be construed as masculine, and Tokugawa male-centered society. Feminist theoretical discussions of female self-narrative have posited that the female subject is not able to write in the masculine genre of autobiography, an argument that can be extended to the Japanese case as well. Men and women in the Tokugawa period produced self-testimonies in a variety of forms, even though the forms as such are not consistent. In fact, there is a large variety of different genres of self-testimony that do not have much in common formally. Moreover, one work hardly resembles another. This has led critics to argue that we may simply not call them autobiographies proper. While in particular female self-narratives of the Tokugawa period are susceptible to this critique, I do not intend to describe an autobiographical tradition for women’s life-writing different from men.

Instead, I agree with Linda Peterson that gender alone cannot be the sole “hermeneutic key to authorial intention and textual production.” There are other important factors, such as social, regional, and religious practices, which need to be accounted for when investigating self-testimonies. For this reason, I will investigate here three women whose literary productions, I demonstrate how their social space has a bearing on their chosen form of self-narrative. Because the texts under discussion do not offer themselves as classical autobiographies, they point more distinctly to the social space the woman writer occupied and from which these works were generated. A reading of the different forms of self-testimony gives us the opportunity to witness how women participated in the struggle to position themselves within their respective social spaces. Each author examined here participated in a network or “field” (in the Bourdieusian sense), and it is their forms of expression that demonstrate the women’s sense of belonging, as well as their position within the social hierarchy of the field. Each woman was part of a socio-political environment dominated by husbands, fathers, sons, and male teachers. We find in the self-testimonies of these women how historic-
cultural concepts of the person in her particular social position have been navigated, addressed, and contested in a male-dominated society. In other words, the investigation of how these women performed their positioning within their respective social space (or field) will give us an indication of why they chose their particular form and style for doing so.

The three women I analyze here are Rai Shizuko (or Baishi) (1760-1842), Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825), and Iseki Takako (1785-1844). They used their ink brushes in ways that portray in each case a persona that was part of a social space. All three women meant to renegotiate their location within this space and its internal hierarchy. There is no direct connection between these women—they came from different backgrounds, and the forms of their texts differ not only from each other but also, as far as I know, from any other examples of self-testimony. The social spaces of these women conditioned the persona that each uses to write, and the differences in their social spaces produced different forms of self-representation.

Literacy, in particular among daughters of scholars, physicians, and samurai, was high during the late Tokugawa period (late eighteenth century through the 1840s) when these women lived. Literary production by women of all ranks included short and long forms of poetry, travel diaries, and diaries written mostly in classical language. In general, education for women took place at first at home, later with a poetry teacher, and would often continue throughout their lives within a network of poetry students and teachers. Shizuko, Makuzu, and Takako were all accomplished poets and life-long participants in poetry circles. In spite of their commonalities—their gender, and their training in the same classical canon of poetry and prose collections—we find individual forms of presentation in their literary activity due to how they aimed to position themselves within their respective social fields.

Rai Shizuko (1760-1843) and the Records of the Confucian Wife

Today Rai Shizuko is best known in Japan as the mother of Rai San’yō (1780-1832), famous painter, poet, calligrapher, scholar, and author of *Nihon Gaishi* (History of Japan, 1827). Some may know of Shizuko’s husband, the Confucian scholar Rai Shunsui (1746-1816), who mainly shaped the structure of teachings at the newly-founded domain school in Hiroshima and whose scholarship made him well-respected in the capital of Edo (today Tokyo). Still fewer historians know Shizuko for her diary, simply called Bai-shi’s Diary (*Baishi nikki*) after her *nom de plume*, Baishi. Next to travelogues and hundreds of poems, Shizuko wrote this diary, which spans fifty-eight years. Most of the diary was printed along with her son’s Collected Works in 1931. Its last ten years, however, are only available in manuscript form. Quite a few biographies have been

---

11 I chose these three women, since they lived around the same time, came from different backgrounds and moved in different spaces. Also, they are rather well-known in Japan even if not well-studied. For more about each woman, see below.

12 Names are given in the Japanese order, surnames first followed by personal names or sobriquets.

13 Classical language denotes here a contemporary version of the Heian language, written in the syllabary with only sparse use of Chinese characters. In contrast, Classical Chinese was considered the official language, including scholarship, in which boys were trained. While men used Classical Japanese as well in their letters, diaries, and essays, women only rarely used Chinese. About the gendered usage of language, see Schalow/ Walker, *The Woman’s Hand*.

14 The diary’s manuscript is kept today in the Rai San’yō Museum in Hiroshima. The Rai family kept Shizuko’s diary and we can assume that until its publication in the early twentieth century, probably only family members had read it. There is no evidence that further copies of the manuscript were made. Early on the diary was edited, but we do not know by whom, nor when. At that time, when the compiler put two years
written about Shizuko, mostly to explain the familial circumstances of her son. In 1997, Minagawa Mieko introduced Shizuko and the diary to the academic world in a monograph.15 Outside of Japan, Shizuko has yet to be discovered.

Shizuko was born 1760 in the merchant town of Osaka to the Confucian scholar and town physician Inooka Gisai (1717-1789) and his second wife Kijima Sawa. Shizuko was the elder of two daughters that Gisai was able to see live to adulthood. Since four other of Gisai’s children had died, he showed his devotion to these two daughters with much care and attentiveness, in particular to their education. After having probed various Confucian schools of thought, Gisai determined to study in depth the teachings of Zhu Xi (1130-1200), in which he also instructed his daughters. Through his network of fellow scholars he met Rai Shunsui (1746-1816), a promising young scholar who had opened his private school in Osaka at the youthful age of twenty-eight. Gisai was so impressed with his scholarship that he encouraged Shunsui to marry his daughter Shizuko. The marriage took place in 1779, when Shunsui was thirty-four and Shizuko twenty years old.16

Gisai also made sure that Shizuko was well trained in poetry. On the occasion of meeting her father-in-law Rai Kōō (1707-83), who came from his native Takehara (Aki province) to Osaka, the newly-wed couple, Shunsui’s father, and his youngest brother Rai Kyōhei (1756-1834) went on a sightseeing tour to the old capital of Kyoto. Shizuko drafted an essay, Yūrakuki (Leisure Trip to Kyoto, 1779), which reflects her thorough training in classical literature and a style that was common among many poets of her time.17 Shizuko mentions that her father and later her son introduced her to poets such as Ozawa Roan (1723-801) and Kagawa Kageki (1768-1843), both central figures in Kyoto poetry circles who would continue to instruct Shizuko in the newest poetic trends.18

Soon after their marriage in 1781, Lord Asano Shigeakira (1743-1813) of the Hiroshima domain offered Shunsui a position as teacher for the new domain school, which was to be opened in the following year. This was a great opportunity for Shunsui since it provided semi-samurai status with a regular income. Shizuko followed her husband a few months later to Hiroshima, on which occasion her father Gisai sent her a long memorandum of instruction. The lessons, consisting of 111 points, most of them in the form of a poem, were simple: Shizuko needed to learn to rise to her new status. Now that she was part of the ruling class and not a commoner anymore, she had to preserve and practice the Confucian Way even more rigorously, and her father’s list of advice should be of assistance.19 As the wife of a scholar in Hiroshima, she was supposed to leave behind her taste for the high culture of Osaka and the old capital, Kyoto, and instead to follow the Way seriously.20 Most important for Shizuko would be to adjust to her new social world, hence Gisai suggested:

15 Minagawa, Rai Shizuko. See also Ōguchi Yūjirō, Rai Baishi Nikki no kenkyū (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Joshi Daigaku. Jendā Kenkyū Sentā, 2001), in which students of the vast material of the Rai family published a compilation of articles related to Shizuko’s diary.

16 Ages are given by traditional Japanese reckoning, one or two years older than by Western count.

17 For a print version of the essay, see Kizaki Aikichi/Rai Seiichi, ed., Rai San’yō Zenshō, vol. 6 (Tokyo, 1931; repr. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1983). Shizuko wrote six travel diaries all together.


20 Ōguchi, Rai, p. 122.
Yo no naka ni
michi yori soto wa
nanigoto mo
supporapon no
pon ni shite oke

Whatever in the world
lies outside
the Way,
throw
away!²¹

Gisai knew that Shizuko would encounter dif-
ficulties in her new home and so he encouraged
her not to keep the worries and anger in her heart
but to take it easy and concentrate only on what
lay ahead of her, namely the running of a model
Confucian household.

Before the family could settle in their new life
in Hiroshima, however, Shunsui was ordered to
instruct the young lord-apparent in Edo.²² Shun-
sui, who had to leave wife and son behind in Hi-
roshima, worried how they would manage in the
unfamiliar town, and asked his lord for permis-
sion to let them go to Osaka with Gisai. The wish
was granted and Shizuko stayed with their young
son San’yō in her natal house while Shunsui
moved on to Edo.

Being reunited with her natal family gave
Shizuko time to consider her new life in Hi-
roshima. While the reasons are unclear, Shizuko
started a diary during her stay in Osaka.²³ The
diary, today called Baishi’s Old Diary (Baishi ko
niki), has many missing entries. It is significant
that the transmitted manuscript begins with the
day of her mother’s death.²⁴ Perhaps the shock
over the loss of her mother, who had died sud-
denly while still in her forties, made Shizuko
decide that it was now her turn to become a fe-
male role model.²⁵

Writing a diary was certainly nothing extraor-
dinary for men or women at the time. Shunsui
and Gisai, too, were keeping daily records. The
extant manuscript of Gisai’s diary, Hibi sōkō
(Daily Notes), covers the same period as Shi-
zuko’s old diary but we can assume that he had
already been writing his for some time.²⁶ Shun-
sui began to record his daily events on the day of
his appointment as a domain scholar and the last
entry dates two months before his death.²⁷ Back
in Hiroshima, Shizuko began writing the new
diary right after her arrival. She would continue
for fifty-eight years, ending two months before
her death.²⁸ It is one of the few instances where
we have diaries of a couple, often written side by
side, overlapping for about thirty years.²⁹

Each diarist, Gisai, Shunsui, and Shizuko,
wrote with a different focus according to his or
her function and duty. They documented their
roles within the social field they occupied. This
is most apparent in Shunsui’s diary, in which he
records his activities, meetings, and plans in his
new position as domain scholar. He meant to
advance Zhu Xi Confucianism, which was not in
vogue at the time, nor were scholars as such
highly respected, and so his diary is one testi-
mony of this task. Shizuko’s role was to docu-
ment the daily chores and duties of the wife in
the new Confucian household.

Shizuko’s new diary does not read as a voy-

²¹ Ōguchi, Rai, p. 126.
²² During the Tokugawa period the shogunate
ordered the lords to have their wives and heirs
residing in Edo under the shogun’s watch.
²³ Minagawa surmises that it was Gisai who
encouraged Shizuko to keep a diary. In Gisai’s
admonition we find a line in which he
encourages Shizuko to write a diary because it
was one’s duty to look back on the day and see if
one had acted rightfully. Minagawa, Rai, p. 73.
²⁴ It is difficult to establish when Shizuko
began writing the diary; the extant version today
dates from 1784/7/21 until 1785/5/12, after
which Shizuko left the following year to return
to Hiroshima with her husband on duty in Edo.
Days and months follow the lunar calendar.
²⁵ Her younger sister Naoko still lived at
home.
²⁶ All of Gisai’s diary is extant from New
Year’s Day of 1785 until 1785/11/24. Manu-
script kept by the Rai family. There was even a
short time when Shizuko’s sister wrote into both
diaries as a substitute for Gisai and Shizuko. The
entries overlap in content. Minagawa, Rai, p. 56.
²⁷ The diary covers the thirty-four years
between 1781/12/16 and 1815/12/2.
²⁸ The main diary begins the following day,
1785/5/13.
²⁹ Out of the thirty years, the couple recorded
their diaries in separation for more then ten years
when his duty kept Shunsui in Edo.
age to the innermost thoughts of the writer; in fact, it is a plain record written in abbreviated language. The diary simply begins with the day the Rai family returned to Hiroshima after an absence of almost two years:


5/14: Rain in the morning, later sunny. Many visitors come to welcome us. Among them [family doctor] Hayashi’s wife and daughter.

5/15: Clear skies. Completing the ceremony at the ancestral altar. I clean up the storage.

The diary was not meant to gain Shizuko literary acclaim, but rather to be a record for family members. When we compare Shizuko’s diary to Shunsui’s they are quite similar in form. For instance, Shunsui’s diary for the same days records:

1785/5/14: Off to work. Baien is in mourning over his mother-in-law . . . Kagawa came to work as usual. In the evening, I went to see Kawasaki Shikanosuke

5/15: Off-duty. Many visitors come to welcome us.

5/16: Off to work.

5/17: Off to work. Strong wind and rain, later clear.

Even though Shizuko was trained in classical women’s literature and knew many literary diaries of women, her style is as plain as her husband’s.

The entries differ according to the diarist’s function in the household, which is more evident from Shunsui’s diary when he resides in Edo, Shunsui, in addition to recording his daily affairs, copied shogunal edicts and letters he received. Shizuko wrote short daily entries describing such things as the coming and going of visitors, gifts received and given, letters sent or received, food served, and the illness of family members and its treatment. For instance,

1804/5/1: Clear skies. Preparations are completed. In the evening, Shunsui off to work.

5/2: Clear skies. Cleaning fish [for celebrating the departure of Shunsui’s students to Edo].

5/3: Clear skies. Preparing wrapped rice. Hirata and Fujimura, both students, going on board [to Edo].

Since Shunsui’s duties would often call him to Edo, he would rely on Shizuko’s records after his return to inform him what had occurred in the household during his absence.

Shizuko took care of the household while her husband was in Edo for more than ten years over all. Her first twenty years of recordkeeping is predominantly occupied with her four children’s health and upbringing. One year after their marriage, their son San’yō was born (1780-1832), nine years later their daughter Tō (1789-1826), and then two boys, in 1794 and 1798 respectively. Only San’yō and his sister Tō would survive past childhood. In the end, however, Shizuko survived them all. In minute detail she described

---

30 The quotations herein refer to the print version in Kizaki/Rai, Rai.

31 Shizuko, for instance, copied in 1793/1/10 Matsukage nikki (1685-1709) by Ōgimachi Machiko (d.1724) who was the mistress of Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658-1714), advisor to the shogun Tsunayoshi.

32 There is one month, from 1798/1/29 until 2/24, when Shunsui was sick and Shizuko continued to write in his stead. Shunsui’s Diary, p. 351, and Baishi Diary, pp. 124-25, in Kizaki/Rai, Rai. The entries of 1/29 are identical.

33 List of gifts given is by Odake Sachiko, “Rai San’yō no haha Shizuko ga nokoshita ‘Baishi nikki’ ni okeru tabemono kanrenkijutsu,” in Ōguchi, Rai.

34 This may explain the missing entries as well.

35 San’yō died at age 53, when Shizuko was 73, Tō at age 37 when Shizuko was 67. The youngest son Shirō died after only six days, and
when the children were sick and what she and the doctors administered. For instance, when her son was nine years old he was infected with smallpox.

1788/3/13: Clear skies. [San’yō] has fever. I asked Hayashi for medicine. After the eighth hour, he slept. In the evening Hayashi came for a sick visit. He prescribed some medicine. At dawn, temper outbreak, repeated two more times until the morning . . . [San’yō] had some vegetables for dinner.

3/14: Clear skies. [San’yō’s] fever was the same. For breakfast, he ate two small grilled rice balls. From two o’clock in the afternoon, he was again moody, later a bit better. He threw up some water. For lunch he had rice soup. In the morning he was more at peace. Had a bowel movement.

Shizuko’s description goes on for one more month until San’yō recovered from his illness and the family celebrated this event with steamed rice with red beans. Over the years, many similar entries about the care of sick children fill the pages.

Shunsui made it his task to practice Zhu Xi’s teachings, among which were family rituals. In particular, ancestor worship, which was at that time in Japan more commonly fashioned after Buddhist rites, became central to the Rai household. From Gisai’s diary we learn that the Inooka family already observed Confucian funeral rites, but it would be Shunsui’s legacy to perfect them. Shunsui recorded in his diary that when he was first on duty in Edo (1783-85) he performed the ancestor rituals, including the wearing of the proper garments. Once back home, Shunsui began to observe the ceremonies with more detail. Shizuko’s role was the preparation of the meals and the daily rituals prescribed for the wife of the household. In her diary, we find detailed descriptions of the rites. Just as Shizuko usually began her daily entry with the weather, she would continue by mentioning the morning rite in front of the ancestral altar before she recorded other events of the day.

1788/1/1 [New Year]: Clear skies. Reverence to the ancestors. Prepared as offerings: soup and rice wine.

2/1: Clear skies. Özôni (rice cakes boiled with vegetables for New Year) offered to the ancestors.


4/17 [Shunsui’s mother’s memorial]: Performance of the ritual. Offerings: Tray: radish, aralia cordata [mountain plant], perilla, knotweed, fish eggs; Soup: mushroom [gyrophora escutenta], arrowhead [sagittaria trifolia], shrimp…Plate: bamboo shoots, egg, citron… Grilled dish: sea bream; Rice; Rice wine[… tea and sweets.

The diary was intended to demonstrate how seriously the rites were taken, and also as a guide for future practice.

In the early years, apparently at least once she made the mistake of observing the ceremonies late by one month, so that the next time Shunsui left for Edo he gave Shizuko instructions not to forget the important dates. By 1793, Shizuko recorded that she honored ancestors up to the fourth generation. There were ten ancestors to worship: the former four generations, including Daijirō at age three, which caused Shizuko in particular much pain as we can read in her diary.

36 For a list of Shunsui’s writings on family rituals, see Minagawa, Rai, p. 257.

37 Shunsui would perform them with Shizuko when in Hiroshima; otherwise, his brother would do the man’s part.

38 On 1816/12/30, for instance, Shizuko documents in the diary even more details of the food she prepared, where she got the material from, in which order, etc.

39 Cited in Minagawa, Rai, p. 115.
one of Shunsui’s great uncles and his wife, since they did not have children who could perform their services. In order to complete the rites, Shunsui constructed a Confucian-style house that had an offering hall (mitamaya). It would take fourteen years before the family could move in. In 1804 the house, including the ancestral hall, was finally finished. By 1809, due to various deaths, the family held rituals for fifteen ancestors. By building the ideal scholar’s house in which Confucian rites could take place, Shunsui demonstrated that Confucianism was not only to be followed in the domain school but also at home. Inner and outer, public and private were not to be set apart.

The diary conveys the maturing of a woman. Shizuko went through a process of learning how to write the diary. The middle years are filled with anxiety over who the successor to Shunsui should be. In her later years, in particular after Shizuko turned sixty (four years after Shunsui’s death), after her husband’s successor, her grandson, was old enough to marry and his wife took over the household chores, Shizuko described how she would accompany her son San’yō on journeys and pursue the way of the poet. The poetry begins then to take up more pages, and so do her travel accounts, written in the classical language. Altogether, there are more than one hundred poems in the diary, while for the first thirty years we have only a handful of poems. Shizuko learned to balance in her diary her observance as a Confucian housewife including the daily rituals and ceremonies, while age gave her the freedom to indulge in leisure.

It would be a mistake to regard Shizuko’s diary as a linear narrative. There are many gaps, inconsistencies, and entries that do not fit, particularly in regard to language. Shizuko generally employed a short, abbreviated style that describes only the essentials. Over the years Shizuko included more poetry or the use of the classical style, but we can also find such occasions early on, usually in connection to separation from family members (going off to Edo, getting married, death) or her own departure. The most drastic change occurred when Shizuko retired to the language of the poet, namely, when her son San’yō, who was newly married, ran away. This act meant a great crisis to the entire family. A couple of days after she learned of San’yō’s absconding and visitors came constantly to give support and advice, Shizuko wrote in her diary:

Omou koto
nakute mimashiya
to bakari ni
nochi no koyohi zo
tsuki ni nakinuru
Without a thought,
for a while, I only observe,
but later this evening
I will shed tears under the moon. (1800/9/13)

40 For a map of the house, see Minagawa, Rai, p. 129.
41 The grandson’s first marriage lasted only one year, thus the second wife took over the household in 1822, when Shizuko was already 63.
42 Shizuko took four trips with her son: in 1819, 1824, 1827, and 1829.
43 Shizuko always was active as a poet, as her compiled poetry collection indicates. Azuma Shōko has a detailed analysis of Shizuko’s various stages as a poet from an apprentice, through to having a small salon in her house that would grow over the years until she was free to travel again to meet with many other poets. Azuma, Baishi.
Apparently Shizuko practiced her father’s advice, who once said, “When you feel sorrow, compose poetry.” Shunsui who was again on duty in Edo decided to disinherit San’yō in order to give him the freedom he desired.

There are also places in the diary that attest to Shizuko’s decision not to record her feelings at all. In 1796/5/27 her second son died of smallpox at the early age of three. Shizuko stopped writing for the rest of the year.46 Again, when her husband died in 1816/2/19, Shizuko noted his passing in the diary, but left the entry for the following day blank. She noted for the twenty-first only that it was raining. When Shizuko learned of the death of her sister who lived in Edo, and of San’yō’s death while he was in Kyoto, she only documented the bad news; there is no poem or further comment.47 In addition, while the diary is not supposed to be a space for Shizuko to demonstrate her talent as a poet, it is nonetheless the space where she mentions the poetry meetings she held at her house, the trips she took, and the correspondence she had with teachers, offering therefore another of Shizuko’s personae, even if only indirectly.

Shizuko’s diary is the self-testimony of a woman who is part of this social space; she is a vital member of the Confucian household. What was for Shizuko a new form of expression at first became routine over time, and perhaps her early lack of familiarity explains the missing entries and irregularities. She had found her voice in the persona of a Confucian housewife whose duty it was to record daily events. The positioning the couple took should have granted them a higher place in the hierarchy of the social field, and when we consider Shunsui’s reception in Edo and Hiroshima it appears that he, and in extension Shizuko as an essential part of the household structure, was successful.

Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825): The Woman Scholar

With the publication of Tadano Makuzu’s collected works in 1994 in Japan, a wave of interest in this thinker and poet was initiated. In English, there is the translation of Makuzu’s most debated work, the political treatise *Hitori kangae* (Solitary Thoughts, 1818-19), and recently the monograph by the author.48

Makuzu offers the rare example of how a woman positions herself within a social space explicitly, fitting well into the Bourdieusian complex of an academic field in which players attempt to gain a higher stance. Makuzu, since she attempted to participate in intellectual debate—to be accepted as a scholar—did exactly that. Having observed her father and brother, who were both scholars and physicians of some renown, she decided to take their position after their deaths, if not in real life at least on paper.

Makuzu’s main text is *Hitori kangae*, which she meant to be published in order to gain her recognition in the scholarly world. Makuzu criticized rulers and scholars alike for their remoteness from reality and delivered reform plans that deal with the current socio-economic misery in the country. Makuzu’s self-testimony is much more straightforward than Shizuko’s diary. Moreover, Makuzu’s text is more easily recognized as an autobiographical work. Makuzu supplied us with a personal history, while Shizuko did not do so in her diary. Makuzu was born as Kudō Ayako in 1763, the eldest daughter—out of seven—of the physician Kudō Heisuke (1734-1800), who served the lord of the Date family of the Sendai domain in Edo.49

---

46 Shunsui, too, who was at home, wrote only scattered entries in the following weeks, then his diary was resumed on a daily basis on 1796/7/1.

47 See the entries of 1832/8/12 and 1832/10/4, respectively. While not in the diary, we have in her poetry collection many poems that account for each loss.


49 Makuzu’s mother was the daughter of Kuwabara Takatomo Yukiakira (d. 1775), a fellow physician serving the same domain. The mother only plays an important role in the narrative when Makuzu means to emphasize the
We learn further how Makuzu’s life course was circumscribed and predestined by the existing family structure that centered on the patriarchal household. Her education was part of the preparation for Makuzu’s task of bringing social capital to the household. She therefore received the education appropriate to the girls of her time and status in the shogun’s capital of Edo. Makuzu’s first outside teacher was celebrated as one of the great female poetry teachers of her time. Kada no Tamiko (1722-1786) taught her to read and write in the style of Heian classics, such as the *Kokinshū* (Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems) or *Ise monogatari* (Tales of Ise). Makuzu’s principal teacher, though, was her father, who lifted her spirit and made her into an educated woman who could claim to be a connoisseur of the theater, the tea ceremony and Western Studies. Makuzu’s service at the Sendai upper mansion and later Hikone mansion nurtured her perceptions further, which should have equipped her to marry up to men of samurai ranking.

After a brief failed marriage, Makuzu was remarried in 1797 at the age of thirty-five to Tadano Iga Tsurayoshi (d. 1812). Makuzu’s marriage, to which she dutifully agreed, was meant to promote her brother’s career within the domain’s bureaucracy by building stronger ties with a Sendai domain retainer.

My father Heisuke had five daughters. He wished to marry one of them to a retainer [of the Date house], but none of my sisters said she would go. While they feigned ignorance of our father’s hope, one by one their life courses were decided. I realized that if I did not act, my father’s wish would go unfulfilled, so I set aside my own desires and moved to this place.

While her husband stayed in Edo most of their married life, Makuzu was welcomed in Sendai by his mother, a widow since 1790, Iga’s younger brothers, and Iga’s three sons. The move had far-reaching consequences for Makuzu. In her new role as the wife of a samurai, Makuzu started to develop a literary persona, expressing her impressions of her new environment and of the people she met. Makuzu stated that she started writing in Sendai. I surmise that within her new social place Makuzu meant to position herself within its hierarchy and her brush was her means to do so. Her recognition as a poet was acknowledged and we know that she participated in the poetry circles of her new domicile.

Yet, over time, Makuzu developed another persona that would claim a place as the rightful heiress of her father’s intellectual legacy. Heisuke was not merely a physician, as Makuzu repeatedly pointed out, but was also involved in shogunal politics concerning both the northern border to Russia and the Nagasaki trade. Both issues found a place in Makuzu’s own views, which provided her with authority in turn. Some twenty years after arriving in Sendai, and having lost first her father, then her brother and her husband, Makuzu meant to take her family’s place in her father’s and brother’s network of scholars.

Having made up my mind, I resolved to return to my father the body he had given me and, resigning myself to my life being over at the age of thirty-five, set out on a journey to...
journey of no return. There was little to it, I thought, since it was better than the road to death. Whatever hardships I encountered after arriving here, I endured, thinking them better than the tortures of hell. But ever since [my brother] Motosuke left this world, my mind has not been at ease. I wrote this book [Hitori kangae] thinking that unless I pursued my father’s goals, he would have developed his ideas in vain.\footnote{Hitori kangae, in Suzuki, Tadano, p. 283. Translation from Goodwin, “Solitary,” part 2, p. 174.}

Makuzu wistfully created the image of herself as the dutiful daughter, willing to do anything that would help her family.\footnote{Nevertheless, Makuzu does not speak ill of her marriage to Iga, which apparently worked well. See for instance Hitori kangae, in Suzuki, Tadano, p. 260.} Only after her father’s designs were shattered due to the premature death of his heir, Makuzu’s brother, who did not leave behind a son, Makuzu had to step up from her passive position and take over the lost rudder of the family’s intellectual legacy.

Makuzu’s strategy is straightforward: She complained, as many other autobiographers do, that there was nobody to whom she could reveal her thoughts, and therefore she used her brush to write those thoughts down, in solitude.\footnote{Hitori kangae, in Suzuki, Tadano, p. 260.} Yet, in Hitori kangae Makuzu is self-conscious and persuasive, and her decision to send the manuscript to Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), one of the most popular authors of the time, is certainly a sign of her true confidence.

As for half-baked scholars, their thinking is full of errors; the more they gather together, the more they argue without producing wisdom. This is the general situation among scholars. In what way do they differ from frogs?\footnote{Hitori kangae, in Suzuki, Tadano, p. 295. Goodwin, “Solitary,” part 2, p. 183.}

She wanted Hitori kangae to position her in the intellectual field, where her father had once been an influential player.

What distinguished Makuzu from a male scholar who meant to establish himself, such as Rai Shunsui, for example, is foremost her gender. Makuzu was well aware of this, and also of the fact that it would not allow her to participate in the world of scholars. For that reason Makuzu ends her treatise with a request to Takizawa Bakin:

Since I am a woman lacking in knowledge, I have stated whatever I wanted to without a second thought. Please correct my writings according to your judgment.\footnote{Hitori kangae, in Suzuki, Tadano, p. 307. Goodwin, “Solitary,” part 2, p. 193.}

While she ended her treatise on this note, using her gender as an excuse for possible mistakes, she utilized a different strategy in the beginning, when she wrote:

I have written this entire text without any sense of modesty or concern about being unduly outspoken...With this in mind, I feel neither pain nor irritation at being criticized by others.\footnote{Hitori kangae, in Suzuki, Tadano, p. 260. Goodwin, “Solitary,” part 1, p. 21.}

In the end, Makuzu failed in her self-repositioning. Hitori kangae was neither published, nor widely circulated. Nevertheless, it is a strong testimony by a person who sought to claim her father’s position of her father in an academic field and her membership in a certain group.

Iseki Takako (1785-1844), the Commentator

In comparison to the other two women, Iseki Takako has not yet received much attention, inside or outside of Japan. Her diary was discovered in 1972 and with its publication in the late
1970s some scholarly interest was stirred. However, the annotator of the diary, Fukasawa Akio, remains the only specialist. One hopes that Fukasawa’s recently published research on Takako will lead to a wider reception of this intriguing writer, whose known works are now all available in Japanese editions. In English, Donald Keene introduced Takako with a few pages in *Travelers of a Hundred Ages*.

In contrast to Makuzu but similar to Shizuko, Takako offered in her diary very little autobiographical material. Takako, unlike the other two women, was born into a samurai household. We find in her diary only brief comments that refer to her childhood, but they are too sketchy to present much of a biographical account. According to the family register, she was born in 1785/6/21 as Shōda Kichi to the shogunal retainer Shōda Yasutomo (1736-1792). When Takako was eight years old, her father passed away and her oldest brother Yasukuni, who was at the time twenty-four, became the household head. The family register also reveals that apparently Takako was once married when she was about twenty but divorced when about twenty-three. Yet, quite the opposite from Makuzu, Takako does not even mention her husband at all. Nor does she mention that she had served in the shogun’s castle. She probably lived at home until she was in her early thirties—sometime between 1815 and 1820—when she became the second wife of Iseki Chikaoki (d. 1826, 61 years old). Her husband, also a shogunal retainer, was a widower nineteen years her senior. His office was Unit Commander of the Inner Quarters to the future Shogun Ieyoshi (1793-1853; r. 1837-53). Both Chikaoki’s son and grandson served Ieyoshi during their careers. Takako, like Makuzu, had no children of her own, but raised her husband’s son. Indeed, the similarity to Makuzu’s life course is striking, but it may have been a relatively common experience, given the high mortality of women due to childbirth and its subsequent complications, and given that Makuzu and Takako had brothers who continued their natal families.

Concerning her education, we learn that Takako’s brother instructed her in the Chinese classics. Yasukuni gathered people in his house to hold *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) parties with much drink, and Takako herself was able to convert *kanshi* into Japanese. Japanese poetry (*waka*), however, was her true passion. Takako learned directly from the poet Hayashi Kunio (1758-1819). In addition to composing *waka*, Takako used her free time to paint, read, play *igo* and *shōgi* with her stepson Chikatsune (d. 1858), and to entertain friends with sake, of which she was extremely fond. During her widowhood—and her retirement as the woman in charge of the household—Takako began to study more thoroughly the writings of Kamo Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), and Katō Chikage (1735-1808), whom she respected for their profound scholarship.

Just as Makuzu flaunted her erudition in *Hitori kangae* when she commented on works by Kamo Mabuchi and Motoori Norinaga, evaluating the political ideas of the political advisors Arai Hakuseki (1675-1725) and Kumazawa Banzan (1619-91), and criticizing Confucianism and specific sections of the Chinese Classics, Takako, too, referred to books she had read, which covered the same vast range. She also criticized

---


66 Takako read *kanshi*, such as those by Gensō and his princess Yōkihi. In regard to her brother, see Fukasawa, *Iseki*, pp. 324-25.

67 Takako apparently also studied waka in the *Reisenryū*. Mentioned by Fukasawa, *Iseki*, p. 327.

68 In ten days Takako composed 1000 poems, which she dedicated to the shrine where Mabuchi was venerated (1840/3/3).

without constraint those with deficiencies as scholars, such as Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) and Ichikawa Tazumaro (1740-1795), including even her former teacher Hayashi Kunio (1840/1/6). Evidently, Takako was highly educated and participated in a scholarly intellectual space in which she meant to position herself by means of her diary and her distinct opinions.

Of the few works recovered, the diary is Takako’s major work. When, on 1840/1/1, Takako began writing her diary at the age of fifty-six, she was about the same age as Makuzu when the latter put *Hitori kangae* to paper. Takako had been in the Iseki household for twenty-seven years, and had been a widow for half that time. Her diary, twelve volumes all together and stretching over a period of almost five years, has 966 handwritten pages (1200 in print) and 18 illustrations. The diary ends on 1844/10/11, three weeks before Takako died at age sixty (1844/11/1).

Sometimes Takako recorded day by day; at other times there are gaps between the entries. There is no consistency to the length of each entry, either. Sometimes they are as short as one or two lines, while on other days the entries run over several pages. In general, an entry starts with the weather, the seasonal changes (where Takako exhibited her erudition in poetic conventions), followed by what happened that day in the house, some memories from her childhood, or her thoughts on people, politics, society and scholarship. In other words, Takako touched upon a wide variety of topics often in lengthy accounts in classical language interspersed with poetry.

Takako’s diary differs markedly from that of Shizuko. She did not aim to portray the duties of a Confucian housewife, but to be a commentator on her time. Takako did not record housework, as Shizuko did, which can be explained by the fact that she wrote the diary after she had given over the housework to her daughter-in-law, but also because she intended to comment on current events inside and outside of the house. As validation, she constantly mentioned the family’s close connection to the shogun’s castle. There is no evidence that someone had asked her to write the diary, as in Shizuko’s case, nor is there any example left behind by her family that could have inspired her to do so. Her style and form, even if in classical language, are independent since Takako used language not only to evoke poetic conventions but also to criticize political affairs, similar to how Makuzu did in *Hitori kangae*.

Takako mainly recorded events and incidents she learned about from her family and friends. Her stepson Chikatsune (d. 1858) and her grandson Chikakata (d. 1865) served as particularly valuable informants. Chikatsune had moved in 1839 to the Great Interior of the shogun’s castle (the women’s quarter) to attend the former shogun Ienari’s (1773-1841, r. 1786-1837) wife Kōdaiin (1733-1844) and Chikakata continued Chikatsune’s former service for current shogun Ieyoshi. Both worked therefore directly for the shogun’s family. Their neighbor, former Osaka magistrate and councilor, Shinmi Masamichi (1791-1848), supplied her as well with information from inside the castle. The older brother of Chikatsune’s wife, Toda Ujiyoshi (1799-1858), who served in various prominent positions, also came to compose poems with Takako. Therefore, not only her immediate family, but also acquaintances who had access to the Inner Quarters where policies were made, kept Takako updated with valuable information, which she discussed in her diary.

Takako’s descriptions and commentaries on current policies and laws are an important source for historians. As already mentioned, Takako

70 She defends her critique by saying that mistakes by teachers need to be corrected, and one should not hesitate to do so; however, it is important that one’s critique is backed up by one’s own argument. Fukasawa, *Iseki*, pp. 74-76.

71 The diary did not have a title, so today it is called after its author: *Iseki Takako’s diary (Iseki Takako nikki)*.
included in her diary discussions of scholarship and politics. When compared to other sources such as the official Tokugawa records (Tokugawa jikki), we find much correspondence and in some cases, inconsistencies. For instance, Takako gave information about events that were not publicly known, such as the death of the shogun Ienari, which Takako recorded on 1841/2nd intercalary month/10 that he had died on the 7th, while official records mention the 30th. The government meant to gain more than twenty days to avoid possible unrest and to decide upon his succession.73

Takako, as with many diarists, did not explain why she wrote the diary. It has no foreword, which is common, but she also began her entries with an allusion to the Tsurezuregusa (Leaves of Idleness, early fourteenth century), that in the future this meaningless writing will have some meaning (1840/1/1). Then Takako went on to acclaim the New Year, which started with society being at peace. The Tokugawa house was strong—current, previous, and future shoguns were well—and so was her family who served them (1840/1/1).74

On a different occasion, however, we find Takako’s reason embedded in an eight-page-long excursus about currency, pottery, clothing, superstition, the rebellion of Ōshio Heihachirō (1793-1837),75 and the debate over the usage of words in poetry:

What I am now writing, with my inadequate intelligence and clumsy brush, is not intended to be broadcasted to the world. I am writing this in order to let the young people of my family and their children in future generations know a little of how our family lives today and what our world is like. No doubt these scraps of paper will become the haunt of bookworms or be dragged off by mice for their nests, but even if that happens, it will make a wonderful diversion. (1840/2/12)76

This disclaimer serves Takako as a shield to hide her literary and intellectual ambition. Furthermore, she observed that as time passes, “even extremely dirty-looking and ugly things are prized as treasures, providing they are over five hundred years old” (1840/2/12).77 Clearly, Takako was not writing for her own diversion, but to ensure that others would respect her in the future for what she had written down.

Takako’s diary is her self-testimony. The appearance of the diary alone exposes the author’s aim: she meticulously edited the diary. There are hardly any writing mistakes, and she must have spent a lot of time drawing the pictures.78 Some of the illustrations point directly to Takako’s positioning in the social space. For instance, on 1841/10/04 Takako described a gift the family had received from the Great Interior: bonsai, planted in Chinese vases. While Takako usually depicted cultural capital with words, as Makuzu did, she also used her talent as a painter to underline symbolic capital as well. The reader would understand the gift of a bonsai as of particular value, because it was widely known that the shogun Ienari was fond of these miniature trees.

---

74 It would be worthwhile investigating if this kind of beginning of her diary reflects Takako’s appropriation of an available diary writing discourse, as one of the readers suggested.
75 At the revolt of the scholar Ōshio Heihachirō against the government during the Tempō famine, Takako responds with a comic verse:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Misago iru} & \quad \text{The people of Naniwa [Osaka]} \\
\text{iso uchikoeshi} & \quad \text{have had a most bitter time} \\
\text{ōshio ni} & \quad \text{because of the big tide [Ōshio]} \\
\text{karaki me mitsuru} & \quad \text{that has swept over the beach} \\
\text{naniwabito kana} & \quad \text{where the ospreys dwell.}
\end{align*}
\]

---

Takako blames further hardship the famine-ridden city of Osaka had experienced on Heihachirō, who had set the city on fire. Iseki Takako nikki, vol. 1, p. 47. Translation by Keene, Travelers, p. 381.
76 Translation by Keene, Travelers, p. 377.
77 Translation by Keene, Travelers, p. 378.
78 Fukasawa, Iseki, pp. 49-50.
That fondness apparently started a bonsai boom first in the shogunal quarters and then among the lower ranks.

Not only does the preparation of the diary illustrate Takako’s self-positioning in social space, but here and there she dropped a line as to why she wrote the diary. For instance, when Takako argued why it was her responsibility to record her world (1840/3/3):

When we look at the romances of long ago, they seem to have been inspired by a desire to portray, exactly as they were, in an interesting and amusing manner, the customs of the past and the circumstances in which people lived. However, the world has greatly changed, and even though human emotions are not all that altered, innumerable things differ from what they were in the past, from the laws of the land to the daily life of the people, and in most respects the differences are surely more numerous. If someone today planning to write an essay or a story merely imitates the elegance of the past, and does not describe the splendid world we live in now, this will surely be both unsatisfying and regrettable.79

Here we find Takako’s explanation for being the chronicler and commentator; as a contemporary, she is obliged to record her present for future generations. Even though at first she referred to and imitated Tsurezuregusa, which does not describe events particular to time or place, Takako chronologically described one particular day in a particular month of a particular year. Moreover, what she described are her own reflections. We get to know the persona Takako over a span of four years.

Takako occupied the space shared by the educated literati among shogunal retainers. With her wit and her talent as a writer she meant to make a mark in this field; an active player in the world of men who worked in the shogunal quarters. Takako was not directly part of it, but she entered that world through her diary. By doing so, she manifested her participation for future generations while the other members of the family would be forgotten. Takako was apparently successful in her positioning, since she was asked by an acquaintance to write a short piece for a literati meeting of celebrities.80

Conclusion

Individuals who engage and compete in cultural production occupy a social space or field. Each field has its own autonomous arena with certain rules that differ from other spaces.81 The person positions him or herself within the space, which in turn is built upon socio-political hierarchy. The hierarchical order of the field is constantly contested through the players’ position-taking. In the case of the three women, their literary works are the strategies for their position-taking in each respective space of cultural production.82

The reason why these women nevertheless could not make use of the more obvious or explicit autobiographical form employed by their male peers is explained by their gender.83 Each woman had a position within her field. They share gender, but why do they present themselves in different forms? The differences in presentation in their writings are related to the different fields of cultural production in which

---

79 Translation by Keene, Travelers, pp. 377-78.
80 The poet Sugishima Katsuichi (n.d.) requested this of Takako on 1843/11/5. Takako wrote Sakuraoga monogatari, a parody of government affairs concerning the construction of the Inbanuma dam as part of Mizuno Tadakuni’s unpopular policies that failed in the end.
83 While male autobiographical forms are certainly diverse as well, they appear to be more straightforward and thus identifiable as autobiographies. A comparative investigation is desirable.
they engaged, as well as their status. Certainly, Shizuko, Takako and Makuzu had many things in common. They all enjoyed a thorough education including poetry and poetic theory. Makuzu and Takako were married twice. Both remarried in their thirties, each to a widower whose children they raised, and neither had children of their own. Both became widows while still fairly young (Takako was in her forties and Makuzu in her fifties), and both started writing prose, as far as we know, only in married life. Makuzu and Shizuko came from similar, non-samurai background. However, while in comparison to Shizuko, Makuzu and Takako shared gender and age when they articulated their literary ambitions, their choices of self-testimonial form still differed. The difference in position of a woman from a family of shogunal retainers versus that of a physician’s daughter required a different set of strategies. Makuzu meant to be accepted as a scholar and advisor, which was the official function of the male members in her family. Takako, on the other hand, aimed to participate in a social field of poets where the gender boundaries were more fluid.

Shizuko’s form of self-testimony, too, is different due to her status. She started her diary at a young age, probably not so much on her own account but on the advice of either her father or husband. She was married only once, had her own children, but, not unlike Makuzu, was new to the world of the samurai. Since she married a commoner who himself had risen to a higher status, however, her situation differed. Her husband had to prove his own position and Shizuko was his collaborator.

Nevertheless, women are not only objects who are produced socially in a masculine world. As Terry Lovell insists, women, too, are subjects with capital-accumulating strategies of their own. Moreover, the individual’s self-testimony is also a text that has a space of its own, which does not reflect the person, but only the persona the author intends to portray. It is important to recognize that what is represented in their work is not Shizuko, Makuzu, or Takako, but the self-crafted personae, the narrative voices of these women. We need to consider the performance of the author. All three women have written other texts, such as poetry, where their performances express different personae. There, their poetry is meant to position them in their poetry networks, fields on their own.

Thus as historians we can learn much from these sources about the relationship between the person and social space in the Bourdieusian meaning, while at the same time the author’s space cannot be clearly defined, since it is fluid, temporal, and changing. The text reflects only one self of the woman’s flexible selves, which have permeable or semi-permeable boundaries. The Bourdieusian approach does not deal so much with inner and outer space of the individual and its permeability, as many feminists have argued. Performance, too, plays an important role in how the author creates his/her narrative persona.

---

84 Not having given birth may have been the reason why both their first marriages were terminated.

85 In comparison, women in premodern Europe tended to perform autobiographical writings rather before entering or after leaving married life. See for instance, Gianna Pomata, “Partikulargeschichte und Universalgeschichte: Bemerkungen zu einigen Handbüchern der Frauengeschichte,” in L’Homme Z.F.G. 2 no. 1 (1991), pp. 22-23; Gabriele Jancke, Auto biographie als soziale Praxis: Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum (Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit 10) (Köln: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 198-199; Heilbrun, Writing, pp. 76-95, on male biographers’ patterns for writing 20th c. female writers’ lives: In their narratives, marriage marks the end of literary activity whereas the writers themselves often had their most productive times later. A closer investigation which includes the household structure would be fruitful.


87 Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, Bodies that
In the end, we observe that these women certainly could not claim to achieve dominant positions within their social space, which suggests that this again falls back to their gender. Thus, gender appears to be outside the social fields of practice or social space of the time. The prevailing gender discourse of the Tokugawa period, as I argue elsewhere, is deeply imbedded in the social structure. Even if women were able to apply and employ various strategies to make a mark, which indicates an awareness of their position, it does not mean that they reached with their texts any position that men occupied. It can be argued that these women did not mean to attain a man’s position, but Makuzu’s case clearly shows that she, certainly, had this intention. In our case, gender, I surmise, is more important than age or status, while social space dictates the women’s practice, i.e. literary forms of expression.


^88 See Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking*, in particular Chapter Five (see note 4).
Lawrence E. Marceau.  
*Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan*  
Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2004. xxi, 369 pp. $69.00 (cloth).  
© Peter Flueckiger, Pomona College

In *Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan*, Lawrence Marceau explores the career of the poet, painter, and fiction writer Takebe Ayatari (1719-74) in the context of eighteenth-century Japanese bunjin culture. Marceau notes a number of possible translations for “bunjin” (the Japanese reading of the Chinese “wenren”), including “‘people of letters,’ ‘cultured persons,’ ‘literati,’ ‘litterateurs,’ ‘bohemians,’ and ‘idealists’” (p. 2, n. 5). The book’s title implies “bohemian” as a favored translation, but this notion of the bunjin as bohemian is not explicitly pursued in the book. Marceau ultimately leaves “bunjin” untranslated, a good choice in that the term as he uses it cannot be reduced to any one of the various possible translations he mentions.

In the introduction, Marceau characterizes eighteenth-century bunjin as “well-educated, talented, and socially aware individuals” who pursued cultural activities while “interact[ing] in new and loosely organized artistic communities,” and as “nonconformists [who] aspired to lead productive lives with a minimum of self-compromise, often in an ideological climate all too directed toward keeping people in their respective places” (p. 10). He discusses a number of modern scholars’ interpretations of the bunjin, the most useful of which is Nakamura Yukihiko’s list of four characteristics of early modern bunjin: versatility, antagonism to zoku (the common, or vulgar), eremitism, and aloof idealism (pp. 5-6). As factors contributing to the development of a bunjin consciousness in eighteenth-century Japan, Marceau cites the combination of continental models, the lack of opportunities for the educated to pursue official service, and the separation of private and public spheres advocated in the philosophy of Ogū Sorai (1666-1728), which encouraged a more generous view of private eccentricities. It is difficult to precisely define who is or is not a bunjin, and in the introduction Marceau at times strives for a more clear-cut delineation of the bunjin than is really possible. Also, as Marceau notes, the people that we classify as bunjin today did not necessarily use this label for themselves. Nevertheless, the notion of the bunjin provides a useful context for understanding Ayatari’s career, especially because of how Marceau emphasizes the historical specificity of eighteenth-century bunjin culture, calling attention to its discontinuities with earlier phenomena such as medieval eremitism.

The chapters are organized according to the different names Ayatari went by throughout his life (for the sake of readability I will simply refer to him as Ayatari, although this was actually one of his later sobriquets). Marceau provides detailed explanations of Ayatari’s sobriquets, explaining how they incorporate not only classical references and images of elegant detachment, but also markers of school allegiances. In this way, he highlights how bunjin culture provided a space for the exploration of new identities, while at the same time being governed by its own political struggles.

The clash with public norms that was to propel Ayatari into a literary career is described in chapter 1, “‘Leaving Home’: Kitamura Kingo Hisamura, Warrior of Tsugaru, 1719-38.” Ayatari was born into a high-ranking samurai family of Hirosaki domain in Mutsu, which Marceau describes as “a line of stoic, even Spartan, military stalwarts” (p. 27), a background in stark contrast to his later image as a free-spirited aesthete. His abandonment of
the world he grew up in was occasioned by a scandal in his late teens that appears to have involved an affair with his elder brother’s wife, and that exemplifies the kind of conflict between private emotions and public morality that is so often depicted in Tokugawa literature. Our knowledge of this comes from a single document that may or may not be genuine, but Marceau notes that whatever the exact facts of the case may have been, the picture we get in the document of Ayatari as a “sensitive, emotional, and profoundly intense figure” (p. 36) is consistent with what we see in his later artistic and literary career.

As a result of this scandal Ayatari was compelled to leave home and strike out on his own, and chapter 2, “Entangled Rat’ Kasso, Zen Pilgrim of Dewa Province: 1738-45,” covers his early years in exile. After leaving Hirosaki he made his way to Kyoto, where he became involved in haikai, receiving instruction from Shida Yaba (1662-1740), one of the few surviving direct disciples of Bashō. He soon had to travel back to Tōhoku, apparently because of a death in his family, and this served as the occasion for him to become acquainted with Buddhist clergymen, leading to his taking Zen vows in 1740 (he eventually returned to lay life in 1749). This did not signify an abandonment of his literary interests, as he only took this step when he became convinced that Zen was compatible with his pursuit of haikai, and he also connected literature and Buddhism more directly by writing collections of temple origin stories. He eventually made it back to the Kansai area, where Yaba’s students offered to set him up in Yaba’s former hermitage and make him leader of their haikai circle. Throughout this account of Ayatari’s early career, Marceau calls attention to his opportunism and political savvy, noting, for example, how he took Buddhist vows in large part to further his own career goals, and showing how his charisma and skill at making connections led to his being appointed Yaba’s successor at such a young age.

Despite the promise of a secure position, Ayatari was soon seeking out better opportunities, as recounted at the beginning of chapter 3, “Toin of the Capital: 1745-47.” He had recently made the acquaintance of the poet and painter Sakaki Hyakusen (1697-1752), who urged him to abandon Yaba’s old poetic circle, and instead take up with the rival Ise School of haikai. In an act of betrayal plotted by Hyakusen, Ayatari left the Kansai area for Kanazawa under the pretense of going on a pilgrimage, when his true purpose was to study haikai under Wada Kiin (1700-50), the leader of the Ise School in Kanazawa. Under Kiin he took on the sobriquet Toin, a combination of the character for “the capital,” indicating where he was coming from, and the second character of Kiin’s name. Marceau explains that he was the only student of Kiin’s to be granted the use of this character, indicating a high status within his circle. Eventually he had a falling out with Kiin, and on top of this the members of Yaba’s old circle became aware of his defection, leaving Ayatari in a difficult position. He was able to continue to receive teachings from the Ise School poet Bairo (d. 1747), though, and when he was called back to Edo in 1747 to reunite with his family and attend his grandmother’s memorial service, he was finally provided with a settled base from which to carry out his haikai activities over the next several years.

This period in Edo is described in chapter 4, “Haikai Master of Asakusa, Kyūroan Ryōtai: 1748-62.” Marceau explains how the name of his new hermitage, the Kyūroan (“Dew-inhaling Hermitage”) involves allusions to both the Zhuangzi and the “Li Sao,” with the effect of combining the image of the Taoist hermit with that of the exiled loyal minister. He argues that this second allusion relates to Ayatari’s self-image as a samurai who could not put
his talents to use in official service, and instead channeled them into the marginal world of literature. He also comments on the significance of Ayatari’s new sobriquet, Ryōtai (“Cool Sack”), which alludes to the Wind Deity statue guarding the temple where he resided, as well as signifying his allegiance to the Ise School of haikai, many of whose members had the character “ryō” in their names. This declaration of school identity was a particularly strong statement given that he was in enemy territory, so to speak, as the plainer style of the more rural Ise School was at odds with the urbane wit dominant among Edo haikai poets. Ayatari was highly successful as a haikai teacher, as evidenced by his publication of thirty-six collections of his circle’s haikai between 1747 and 1764. Never satisfied to simply stand still, he traveled to Nagasaki during this period to learn the latest Chinese painting techniques, and was able to gain employment as a painter-in-residence at a daimyo’s Edo mansion. In addition to being a profitable career move for the ambitious Ayatari, Marceau argues, painting also provided him with something “elegant” (ga) to pursue as a counterbalance to the “common” (zoku) art of haikai.

Chapter 5, “A Bunjin is Born – Ayatari, Clan of Yamato Takeru: 1763-74,” describes the final phase of Ayatari’s career, in which he became involved, though his contacts with Kamo no Mabuchi’s (1697-1769) school, in the nativist quest for the purity of ancient Japanese forms of linguistic and literary expression. One manifestation of this was his promotion of the katauta, an archaic 5-7-7 form that he put forth as an alternative to the lowly haikai. This also gave rise to his new sobriquet, Takebe Ayatari. Marceau explains that “Ayatari” means “cultured person,” while the “Take” of Takebe was taken from the name of Yamato Takeru, whose katauta from the Kojiki were cited as models by Ayatari. He notes that despite the martial image many have of Yamato Takeru, it was in fact his literary side that led Ayatari to identify with him. Ayatari’s newfound interest in ancient Japanese also found expression in a number of pseudoarchaic fictional prose works, which sometimes included interlinear notes or glossaries to explain the unfamiliar ancient language to contemporary readers.

Chapter 6, “Ken Ryōtai of the Cold-Leaf Studio: Ayatari as a Nagasaki School Painter and Promoter,” breaks away from the chronological progression of the previous chapters and focuses on Ayatari’s career as a painter, where he worked in the three genres of haiga, bird and flower painting, and landscape painting. Marceau discusses how Ayatari borrowed from Chinese motifs as well as Chinese theoretical ideas, such as the notion of grasping the general sense of what is being painted, rather than aiming at technical verisimilitude. At the same time, he points out how Ayatari used these as a launching point for his own creative endeavors, combining Chinese and Japanese motifs and mixing in elements not present in his models. Also, we see evidence of Ayatari’s relentless self-promotion in his publication of five painting manuals, which enjoyed great popularity. This discussion of Ayatari’s painting is aided by the inclusion in this chapter of more than eighty high-quality black-and-white reproductions of Ayatari’s paintings (sixteen of which are reproduced again in color in a separate appendix), along with more than a dozen examples of the kinds of paintings (mostly Chinese) that he took as his models.

The conclusion presents a number of judgments of Ayatari from the Tokugawa period, and despite some differences, there is a general consensus that he was talented and spirited, but of somewhat dubious character and lacking in scholarly rigor. Marceau comments that Ayatari’s reputation has suffered, in his own time and later, from how he “remained on the
fringes of the various expressive or intellectual movements of his time (including haikai, painting, and kokugaku) without successfully creating a movement at which he could occupy center stage” (p. 285). I would also add that the relative neglect of Ayatari in modern scholarship is symptomatic of a broader tendency in Tokugawa literary studies to focus on the one hand on the Genroku period, and on the other hand on the gesaku fiction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Nakano Mitsutoshi has pointed out, this pattern of canonization owes much to the value modern scholars have placed on zoku literature in the Tokugawa period. An emphasis on using poetic elegance to rise above the zoku world, characteristic of the writers that Marceau describes as bunjin, can easily appear to the modern reader to be cliché-ridden and divorced from reality. As Marceau’s discussion of Ayatari demonstrates, though, this literature too was not only highly creative in its own way, but also very much rooted in Tokugawa society. Moreover, the literature that came before and after it sometimes shares more of its qualities than is immediately apparent, so a greater understanding of bunjin modes of expression ultimately helps to shed light on the more canonical Tokugawa writers as well.

Marceau’s choice to use the medium of biography to discuss Ayatari has both benefits and drawbacks. The story he provides of Ayatari’s life is to a large extent the story of Ayatari’s personal relationships, which results in a richly textured picture of the social context of his cultural production. We see how his literary and artistic endeavors were not just the product of an eccentric and solitary genius, but came into being within a complex world of literary politics in which legitimacy and power were pursued through making and breaking alliances, courting patrons, recruiting disciples, and engaging in publishing activities. A weakness of the biographical approach is that at times it comes at the expense of textual analysis. This reader, at least, finished the book wanting to know more about some of Ayatari’s writings, particularly his late prose works. Nishiyama monogatari is available in English translation, but a more in-depth discussion of such works as Honcho suikoden would have been appreciated. This and other of Ayatari’s works, as Marceau mentions, have recently become available in annotated editions in the Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei, so this remains a promising area for future work on Ayatari.

This book is a welcome contribution to the scholarship on Tokugawa literature. It introduces the reader to multiple dimensions of an important but neglected figure, and shows how in his various pursuits he both manipulated and was shaped by the world of eighteenth-century cultural politics.

---

1 He discusses this in Jūhasseki no Edo bungei (Iwanami Shoten, 1999), pp. 2-19.

Andrew M. Watsky
Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan

© Janice Katz, Art Institute of Chicago

In Chikubushima, Watsky enfolds a captivating detective story within the larger context of sacred architecture in Momoyama period Japan. He untangles the history of a composite building, the Tsukubusuma Main Hall on the island of Chikubushima, the best-preserved example of divine adornment from the era. The result is a thoughtful study that may act as a model of how to make Japanese art accessible as well as meaningful to those outside of the field.

His purpose throughout is to show the ways in which the sacred was manipulated by the Toyotomi clan, military warlords of Japan’s tumultuous era at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries before the long and stable rule of the Tokugawa shogunate. As Watsky explains, “the sacred was traditionally a source of sanction for secular authority” and the most powerful material form of the sacred was religious architecture. In particular, the ensemble structure of the Tsukubusuma Main Hall, as the best surviving evidence of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s relationship with the sacred, is taken as the central case study. On the island in the middle of Lake Biwa outside Kyoto, a region that was Hideyoshi’s first domain (Ōmi), stood a shrine devoted to the worship of the deity Benzaiten whose buildings were largely destroyed in 1558 by fire. This led the way for the Toyotomi to reshape Chikubushima as they saw fit. The hall as it now stands is actually made up of two once unrelated structures; what Watsky calls the hisashi was likely a building that was reconstructed after the 1558 fire, and later modified when a new central core or moya was inserted into it. The moya was once a separate building first built in Kyoto as part of a memorial shrine to Hideyoshi’s infant son Sutemaru who died in 1591 at the age of two, then Hideyoshi’s sole heir. Watsky provides evidence that in 1602, this building was moved to Chikubushima and inserted into the pre-existing structure that was altered quite precisely to accommodate it and give the appearance that the composite building was instead one unified whole.

Chikubushima was already a sacred sight before Hideyoshi turned his attentions to it. In chapter one, Watsky chronicles the rise of Oda Nobunaga and his use of the sacred, setting the stage for Hideyoshi’s relationship with it, and more specifically, how the island came under his rule. Chapter two describes Hideyoshi’s impact on the city of Kyoto and its outlying areas through building projects such as Osaka castle, the Jurakutei residence, and The Great Buddha Hall at Hōkōji. It is here that Shōunji, the memorial temple to Hideyoshi’s son Sutemaru makes its appearance. Watsky believes this was the original grounds of the moya.

In chapter three, the author deftly describes the composite structure, the physical evidence for its appearance in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and, most intriguing of all, the analysis of the decorative scheme to prove that the building could only have been done for Sutemaru. The predominantly floral adornment is revealed to point towards the young boy specifically, who was referred to as the flower fuyō in eulogies by Nanka Genkō, abbot of Shōunji. Cranes and pines on the exterior, or tsuru and matsu form a rebus of Sutemaru’s nickname. While chapter three describes the meaning of motifs, Watsky goes one step further in chapter four by discussing the meaning of the materials themselves, that is, what the painting, wood carving, lacquer, and metalwork on the building say about its origins, function, and importance. By treating the whole, the ensemble, Watsky overcomes the weaknesses of studies that focus on only one medium or type of decoration at a time. Chapter five chronicles the way in which the Toyotomi clan continued to manipulate the sacred through building projects and festivals to commemorate the spirit of Hideyoshi. From that wide view, the author again focuses on Chikubushima in the final chapter and relates how the island and its shrine continued to make an impact on the minds of the people through the worship of its central deity, Benzaiten, related festivals, and a Nō play.
Among the strengths of the book is Watsky’s copious use of contemporary Portuguese accounts to give the Western reader leverage in analyzing the Japanese aesthetics of the era. Through the words of the Jesuit missionaries João Rodrigues and Alessandro Valignano, the author successfully compares Western and Japanese concepts without falling into the trap of many comparative studies in which differences are revealed but no conclusions reached. Watsky critiques the Portuguese statements as well as the contemporary Japanese sources and helps the reader navigate their observations. An appendix contains the Japanese sources referred to in the text, both in Japanese (if they are previously unpublished) and in English translation. Another tool that the author employs to great effect is the use of paintings to describe the context of the times. Specifically, folding screens of sights in and around Kyoto as well as maps illustrate the predominant position that Chikubushima held in the minds of the Japanese are cited.

The compelling detective story of the structure of the Main Hall itself tends to get a bit buried among the rest of the material of the book, but surely what is gained in context is much more than what is lost. Also, one wishes that the brief discussion of the attribution of the decorative program to Kano Mitsunobu could have been more fully developed.

With its creative use of primary sources, accessibility to those outside of the field, and its pioneering discussion of the meaning of materials and decoration, Chikubushima is a stimulating breath of fresh air for premodern Japanese art studies.
Basic Style Guidelines for Final Manuscripts

Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal

Please use Times New Roman 10.5 point font for the main text, Times New Roman 14 point font bolded for the main title, and for the author’s name, followed by the author’s institutional affiliation in normal Times New Roman 10.5 font, e.g.,

Early Modern Japanese Art History
©Patricia J. Graham, University of Kansas

Subheadings should be Times New Roman 12 point font bold, and flush left.

Italicize Japanese words in the text. Do not italicize Japanese words that commonly appear in English language publications such as samurai, shogun, bakufu, haiku, noh/nō, etc.

If possible, produce macrons over vowels; if you cannot produce macrons over vowels, choose a consistent, distinctive (e.g., not used for any other purpose in your essay text, notes, or citations) symbol, e.g., circum-flex or umlaut, and clearly note on the title page what convention you are following so our search-and-re-place routines can quickly make the substitutions.

EMJ employs footnotes, not endnotes. Please follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 13th edition. We use the same font and size for notes and the main text. Italicize the names of books, newspapers, journals, etc.

Article citations:


Thesis citations:
Willem Jan Boot, "The Adoption and Adaptation of Neo-Confucianism in Japan: The Role of Fujiwara Seika and Hayashi Razan" (D. Lit., University of Leiden, 1983).

Book citation:

EMJ can use color illustrations. Please submit these in a standard format (e.g., jpg, gif, tiff, or pdf; however, we can handle anything that Adobe Photoshop version 6.01 can edit.). Originals may be submitted in color, but you should test to see how well they convert to grayscale before you decide to include them. Clearly label illustrations in sequence and provide captions clearly associated with each illustration.

AUTHORS WILL BE ASKED TO IMPORT THEIR FINAL DRAFTS INTO AN MS Word TEMPLATE THAT WILL FORMAT TEXT FOR PUBLICATION. THIS WILL REQUIRE THAT AUTHORS RE-FORMAT CHARTS AND TABLES, LINE BREAKS IN POETRY, ETC. For reference, each EMJ column is 20.03 characters wide with the font setting as noted above.