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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

EMJ at the AAS 2008. The Early Modern Japan Network will host two panels at the start of the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Thursday, April 3, 2008, 1-6 p.m. These two programs bring together an international group of scholars to discuss two themes in early modern Japanese and East Asian literature: "Impersonating the Old, Impersonating the New: Transformations of Literati Identities in China and Japan," and “Live from Edo, It's Saturday Night: Ticklish Tales of Text, Image, and Performance in Tokugawa Japan.”

Panel I: "Impersonating the Old, Impersonating the New: Transformations of Literati Identities in China and Japan"

This panel looks at the ways that the persona of the scholar transformed and was transformed by shifting intellectual landscapes in late imperial China and early modern and Japan. Far from being a static category bounded by geographical borders, this persona derived its enduring attraction both from its association with prestigious aspects of early Chinese elite culture, and from a flexibility which enabled a diverse set of intellectuals to continue to return to it as late as the _bakumatsu_ period.

To consider these transformations, Martina Siebert (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science) examines _pulu_, a genre of contested scholarly value that flourished from the 17th to the 19th centuries. She shows how _pulu_ authors' justifications of an apparently frivolous pursuit offers insight into the ways that early modern Chinese intellectuals "impersonated" new and prestigious roles as legitimate scholars. Angelika Messner (Christian-Albrechts-Universitaet zu Kiel) investigates physicians in 17th century China who were involved in a process of re-creating professional identities in the context of a social system that no longer supported them. Cheryl Crowley (Emory) discusses the work of 18th century Japanese _haikai_ poets associated with the Yahantei school who emulated the ideal of the Chinese scholar-poet in their efforts to claim social and cultural capital. Matthew Fraleigh (Brandeis) explores the close identification of the 19th century Japanese intellectual Narushima Ryuhoku with the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming, showing how the persona of the virtuous poet-recluse could be fashioned into a symbol of political and ethical engagement well into the Meiji period, far removed from the time and place in which it originated. Discussant: Benjamin Ridgway (Valparaiso).

Panel II: Live from Edo, It's Saturday Night: Ticklish Tales of Text, Image, and Performance in Tokugawa Japan

In its open defiance of the literary, dramatic, and cultural past, early modern Japan (1600-1868) saw an increase in the incorporation of humor -- be it scatological, witty, or absurd.

It is easy to suggest that this rise in humor as a mode in numerous arts and genres may have to do with the emergence of a new and unique urban-commoner class in the ballooning city of Edo, a class who needed to let off steam by laughing at themselves as well as at the ruling elite. Scholarship has hardly explored this phenomenon in greater depth until recently, perhaps on account of the difficulty of Edo-period texts, especially their wordplay, highly topical allusions, and concealed parodies. And yet consideration of this humor allows us to understand and appreciate the popular imagination of the day and to assess the impact on the Japanese of the twenty-first century.

This moderated panel brings together scholars working on humor to explore its contours in literature, theater, and narrative arts. Talks will broach: the humor of story books (_hanashibon_); the stage and literary humor of Ichikawa Danjuro II (specifically his use of visual juxtapositions or _mitate_, and _haikai_ and comic _serifu_; and the humorous tension between center and periphery in popular travel literature and comic storytelling. Papers by Charo D’Etcheverry (Wisconsin, Madison) “Standing Up’ to the Past: Saint Narukami’s Sexy _mitate_,” Laurence R. Kominz (Portland State) “Ichikawa Danjuro II: Writing Laughter for the Stage and for the Page,” Matthew W. Shores (Hawai’i, Manoa) “Center and Periphery in the Humor of the Edo Period,” Zane Torretta (Columbia) “Hanashibon and the City: Comic Storytelling and the Urban Imagination in Early Modern Japan,” Discussion: Adam Kern (Harvard).

Philip Brown, Early Modern Japan Network
Kiōshi in the Harvard-Yenching Library: A Guided Tour

© Adam L. Kern, Harvard University*

Scholarship on the woodblock-printed comic-book known as the “yellowback” (kiōshi 黃衣紙) received a hefty boost recently with the completion in 2004 of Tanahashi Masahiro’s Kiōshi Overview (Kiōshi sōran), a massive work in five volumes spanning some 3,500 pages and providing précis for virtually all 2,500 or so extant kiōshi.¹

This is an ironically substantial monument for a genre that was relatively ephemeral, having been produced and primarily consumed from 1775 to about 1806, confined in its readership mostly to the denizens of Edo (present-day Tokyo), and above all else irrepressibly light-hearted. Yet as an urbane comicbook for adults that both was arguably one of the most popular genres of its day and also remains a valuable repository of cultural history illustrated, the kiōshi perhaps merits such weighty treatment.

* The author wishes to express his gratitude to: his graduate research assistant, Mr. Will Fleming, for his hard legwork on this project; the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, for its generous financial support; Mr. James Cheng, Director of the Harvard-Yenching Library, for the courtesy of the images appearing herein; and the two anonymous readers for their perceptive editorial suggestions. The author further thanks the several people who granted physical access to the kiōshi mentioned in this article: Ms. Kuniko Yamada McVey and Mr. Xiaohu Ma of the Harvard-Yenching Library; Ms. Anne Rose Kitagawa of Harvard University’s Arthur M. Sackler Museum; and Ms. Rachel Saunders of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The present article has been adapted and modified from Adam L. Kern, “Hābādo daigaku Yenchin toshokan shozō no kiōshi,” in Suzuki Jun, ed., Hābādo daigaku Enkyō toshokan no Nihon kotenseki (Yagi shoten, forthcoming 2008).

¹ Tanahashi Masahiro, Kiōshi sōran, in Nihon shoshigaku taikei, vol. 48, nos. 1-5 (Seishōdō shoten, 1986–2004). The first three volumes contain publishing information and précis; the fourth, several indices; and the fifth, mostly reproductions (mostly in black and white) of cover art.

Thankfully, during his couple of decades surveying libraries and museums and private collections in Japan for individual works, Professor Tanahashi left just about no stone unturned. The result, with its comprehensive indices, can serve as an encyclopedia not just of the kiōshi, but also of nothing less than the Japanese popular imagination of the day, albeit as glimpsed through the ingeniously distorted lens of the genre.

What might be counted as the only conspicuous omission in this magnum opus—at least to a non-Japanese scholar interested in the kiōshi—is that not one archive outside of Japan was consulted, let alone visited. Since not all kiōshi are to be found in Japan, after all, a comprehensive survey in non-Japanese collections should probably be undertaken, eventually. Here, however, I take a more modest and decidedly local first step by providing a kind of “guided tour” of kiōshi in the Rare Book room at the Harvard-Yenching Library, most of which have never before been transcribed into modern Japanese, let alone translated into or even discussed in English. Two other affiliated collections—one at Harvard’s Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and the largest one at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston—shall be left for future surveys.

The Kiōshi

The Harvard-Yenching Library can boast a small but captivating collection of kiōshi. Produced by the most popular literary and artistic lights of the day—and merely one of many genres of “playful literature” known as gesaku 戲作—the typical kiōshi was mass produced in one to three volumes, with black-and-white interior pictures dressed up by occasionally colorful frontispieces affixed to soft yellowish covers. Although long ignored as a kind of pulp fiction, interest in the kiōshi has been growing over the past few decades in the West as well as in Japan, no doubt as part of both the “Edo boom” and the realization that the kiōshi might be a distant progenitor of the multibillion-dollar a year industry that is the modern manga.²

² The kiōshi is also compelling unto itself, of course, as an expression of the rich visual-verbal, comic, and popular imaginations of the Edo-period Japanese. For more on this in English, see Adam L. Kern, Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kiōshi of Edo Japan, in Harvard East Asia Monographs, no. 279 (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006).
Sixteen kibyōshi are listed in the catalogue Early Japanese Books at Harvard-Yenching Library. Of these, at least one is of questionable attribution: the copy of Santō Kyōden’s 山東京傳 (1761-1816) Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice (Ryōtō hitsu zen’aku niki 「兩頭筆善悪日記」, 1799) appears not to be an original Edo-period kibyōshi. Although its panels of printed text and pictures are the right size, the physical pages are much larger than the usual 5 x 7 inch mid-sized (chābon 中本) format invariably observed by the genre, and its paper and ink are uncannily pristine. This particular work may well be a facsimile reproduction, then, or at least a reprinting from a later age—perhaps the Meiji period (1868-1912)—but it is most likely not a “genuine” kibyōshi.

Conversely, it might be argued that there are actually more kibyōshi in the collection than the catalogue has hitherto acknowledged, for several works categorized as “bluebooks” should more aptly be considered kibyōshi. This is because the bluebook (aohon or aobon 青本) was a loosely defined comicbook genre that actually includes both kibyōshi as well as earlier works for children—or at least for semiliterate readers.

To expand upon this slightly, during the late eighteenth century the line between genres was typically amorphous. Works could be categorized—and often were categorized—in more than one way. It is oftentimes exceedingly difficult to determine a genre, then, only by the color of its cover. Not all books with blue covers are generically bluebooks; nor are all books with yellow covers generically yellowbooks, since the covers of some generic bluebooks faded to yellow. (In this sense, the term kibyōshi actually refers more to comicbooks with “yellowed” covers than with “yellow” covers.) This is why most specialists today, like Tanahashi, differentiate between the genres of bluebook and yellowbook less by cover color—especially since many covers have gone missing (as is the case with a few of the works in the Harvard-Yenching collection)—but more by the presumed readership based on the general level of the content of the story and the complexity of its visual-verbal idiom. Simply put, books with either blue or yellowed covers for children tend to be bluebooks, and books with either blue or yellowed covers for adults tend to be kibyōshi.

One example of a kibyōshi that the catalogue miscategorizes as a bluebook is Kyōden’s Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream (Kingin sensei zōka no yume 金々先生造化夢, 1794)(Fig 1). The adult content of the story alone no doubt qualifies this piece as a kibyōshi. In fact, this is the consensus among leading specialists: Tanahashi lists Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream in Kibyōshi Overview; and Mizuno Minoru includes it in one of the five volumes devoted to the kibyōshi within Santō Kyōden’s Collected Works (Santō Kyōden zenshū). Thus, Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream should probably be recategorized as a kibyōshi.

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4 The titles of kibyōshi are challenging to render in English because they often contain complex forms of wordplay that typically become clear only with a close reading of the work, something that is particularly difficult when the work has never before been annotated or transcribed into modern Japanese. Even Japanese scholars find kibyōshi titles daunting, which is probably why Tanahashi himself as a rule refrains from explaining titles in Kibyōshi Overview.


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Figure 1 Scene from Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream (Kingin sensei zōka no yume, 1794).
Similarly, of the 34 bluebooks and blackbooks (kurohon or kurobon 黒本) in the catalogue—the two related genres are lumped together into the same category—a dozen or so are treated as kibyōshi by Tanahashi in Kibyōshi Overview. These works are:


2. *Ōtsu’s Specialty Products* (Ōtsu no meibutsu 大津名物), 1781. Written by Iba Kashō 伊庭可笑 and illustrated by Kitao Masanobu 北尾政演. HYL #332

3. *Trilateral Intrigue of the Soga Brothers* (Sanbukutsui murasaki Soga 三条紅紫桜). Illustrated and presumably written by Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春厳. HYL #333

4. *The Invisible City Revisited* (Shin kakurezato 仏金久連里), 1788. Illustrated by Torii Kiyo-shige 鳥居清政. HYL #335

5. *The Young Prince’s Bow-PullingFeat* (Yōkun yunzei no isaoshi 仰君弓勢繩), date unknown. Anonymous. HYL #338


7. *Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream* (Kingin sensei zōka no yume 金先生造化夢), 1794. Written by Santō Kyōden 山東京傳 and published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō 条屋重三郎. HYL #340

8. *Début of the Black-Capped Golden Carp* (Hatsuyaku kogane no eboshi uo 初役金烏帽子魚), 1794. Written by Santō Kyōden 山東京傳 and illustrated by Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九. HYL #341

9. *The Flowery Tale of Masters Gold and Silver* (Natori no kiku kōhaku chōja 名取菊黄白長者), 1779. Written and illustrated by Santō Kyōden 山東京傳. HYL #342

10. *The Salutary Story of a Soul Restored* (Enju hangontan 延寿反魂談), 1789. Written and illustrated by Santō Kyōden 山東京傳. HYL #343

11. *Nonomiya’s Proverbially Profitable Gambol* (Kotowaza Nonomiya mōde 仏子化冬雪物語), 1804. Illustrated and presumably written by Kitao Masayoshi 北尾政義. HYL #344

12. *A Mother and Daughter Laid to Rest, Part One: A Tale of Winter Snow* ((Oyazukazuka zenpen Tōsetsu monogatari 奥竹屋冬雪物語). Written by Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑和尚 and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊国. HYL #345

13. *A Mother and Daughter Laid to Rest, Part Two: A Tale of Spring Snow* ((Oyazukazuka kōhen Shunsetsu monogatari 奥竹屋春雪物語), 1804. Written by Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑和尚 and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川丰国. HYL #346

Although Tanahashi considers all 13 of these to be kibyōshi, one might take issue with him on as many as 3 works: (1) *The Life of Kusunoki Masashige* (Kusunoki ichidaiki), on the grounds that it exceeds by 20 pages the usual 30-page length of the longest kibyōshi; (4) *The Invisible City Revisited* (Shin kakurezato), since its story hardly rises above a relatively straightforward updating, in an overly simplistic visual-verbal idiom, of the children’s story about the split-tongue sparrow; and (8) *Début of the Black-Capped Golden Carp* (Hatsuyaku kogane no eboshi uo), since it is really only lightly illustrated, with long extended passages of text without any pictures at all, and therefore as something other than a comicbook per se, cannot be a kibyōshi by definition.

Thus, setting aside for now the caveat that not everything in Tanahashi’s Kibyōshi Overview is indisputably a kibyōshi, in a liberal reinterpretation, subtracting 1 title for the facsimile version of *Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice*, but moving 10 titles from the category of bluebook to that of kibyōshi, the Harvard-Yenching
Library might be said to have a revised total of about 25 kibyōshi in its collection. This number is larger than the 16 works previously thus classified.

Still, this is not a great number, to be sure. It is merely a small percentage of the approximately 3,387 titles—accounting for 13,828 books and manuscripts—in the Harvard-Yenching’s rare book collection. True, this number represents a significant portion of the mid-Edo genres of playful literature in the collection, to wit: 13 fashionbooks (sharebon 洒落本), including Santō Kyōden’s masterwork (The Stylishly Slangy) Latticed Bordello ((Tsūgen) Ŝōmagaki 「総縞」, 1787); 5 “sentiment books” (ninjōbon 人情本), including some by leading ninjōbon author Tamenaga Shunsui 為永春水 (1790-1843); 7 “multivolume comicbooks” (gōkan 合巻), such as Revenge of the Two Butterflies (Katakiuchi futatsu chōchō 「敵討双蝶々」, 1807); 2 jokebooks (hanashibon 話本); and 34 titles catalogued as blackbooks and / or bluebooks, but 24 if going by the adjusted numbers. This means that, by my reckoning, the 25 kibyōshi in the collection account for one third of the 76 works of Edo gesaku. Even so, this is only a fraction of the collection’s Edo-period works at large, including novellas of the floating world (ukiyozōshi 浮世草子), reading books (yomihon 読本), broad sheets (jitsuroku 実録), funnybooks (kokkeibon 滑稽本), and so forth.

And it is certainly not a great number by the standards of kibyōshi collections in Japan. The Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library (Tōkyō chūō toshokan 東京中央図書館) in Hibiya houses approximately 1,300 kibyōshi in its Kaga Collection (Kaga bunko 加賀文庫) alone—not counting the kibyōshi in its Special Acquisitions Collection (Tokubetsu kaiage bunko 特別買上文庫) and Tokyo Collection (Tōkyō shiryō 東京資料). The National Diet Library and the Toyo Bunko (Tōyō bunko 東洋文庫) have approximately 1,000 kibyōshi each. The kibyōshi in several university libraries, like the Ebara Taizo Collection (Ebara Taizō korekushon 須原退蔵コレクション) at the University of Kyoto, or the collection at Waseda University, can be counted in the hundreds. Even the Matsuura Historical Museum (Matsuura shiryō hakubutsukan 松浦史料博物館) in Hirado—one of the most far-flung places from Edo on the three major islands of Japan at the time—has approximately 340 kibyōshi, which is over tenfold larger than the Harvard-Yenching’s batch. Granted, the daimyō Matsuura Seizan 松浦靜山 (1760-1841) must have collected these during his mandatory attendance in the shogun’s capital. Yet his collection is testament to how popular the kibyōshi was and how much larger even Japanese collections distant from Edo remain today.

Nor is the Harvard-Yenching kibyōshi collection the largest by the reduced standards outside Japan, for that matter. The British Library in London has approximately 100 titles, though some of these may well be duplicates or reprints; the Art Institute of Chicago seems to have as many as 72 kibyōshi;8 the University of California at Berkeley lists about 40 in its catalogue;9 the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies, only 13;10 Mount Holyoke College houses about 10 works in its Special Collection; and the C. V. Starr Library at Columbia University, which can boast an otherwise first-class collection, regrettably has only a single catalogued kibyōshi.11 Of course, these numbers might be low, if the Harvard-Yenching collection is any indication, since it is possible that some kibyōshi in these collections may also have been misclassified as bluebooks.

Nevertheless, when considering the kibyōshi in the Harvard-Yenching Library along with the score of kibyōshi in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, and the 150-200 kibyōshi in the archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston—many of which have yet to be catalogued—then the grand total of kibyōshi in the extended Harvard-affiliated network is undoubtedly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, in the Western world.12 It may even add up to be among the top 25 collections anywhere, including Japan.

8 My thanks to Ms. Janice Katz of the Art Institute of Chicago for this number.
10 My thanks to Professor Timon Screech of the School of Oriental and African Art for this number.
11 My thanks to the Japanese Studies Librarian at the Starr Library, Ms. Sachie Noguchi, for this number. Ms. Noguchi also informs me that although Professor Okuda Isao of Seishin University is in the process of cataloguing hitherto uncatalogued works in the Starr’s rare book collection, no kibyōshi have yet been unearthed.
12 My thanks to Ms. Rachel Saunders of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston for this information.
Brahmin Benefactors

Just why Boston houses such a formidable collection should not be too hard to divine. Boston was, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, at the direct epicenter of a seismological flow of Japanese art—lowbrow as well as highbrow—toward the Western world at a time when the Japanese themselves were largely dismissive of what was then considered to be lowbrow forms like the woodblock print (ukiyo-e) and its sisters, particularly printed chapbooks (kusazōshi 草双紙) like the redbook (akabon or akahon 赤本), blackbook, bluebook, yellowbook, and multivolume comicbook.¹³

Be that as it may, one may well wonder how and why the Harvard-Yenching Library came to possess any kibyōshi at all when the Museum of Fine Arts was seemingly absorbing almost anything Japanese? Although there is no definitive answer, it is possible that some of the Bostonians who collected Japanese art decided, for one reason or another, to direct a fraction of their bounty toward Harvard’s Sackler Museum and / or Yenching Library. The kibyōshi was such a bestselling genre in its day that anyone collecting popular literature and art in Japan even a century or so after the genre’s heyday could not but have ended up with some titles in the pot, however cognizant he may or may not have been of the nature and value of the kibyōshi in the first place. Perhaps some kibyōshi were simply acquired as an example of Japanese children’s picture books, for although possessed of adult content, to the untrained eye, most works in the genre appear decidedly juvenile.

One might also speculate that the majority of the open-minded and deep-pocketed Bostonians who built the Japanese collection in the MFA must have had close ties with Harvard, since it is hard to imagine prominent figures in Boston who did not. As it turns out, the facts would seem to support this conjecture. For instance, one of the foremost contributors of the Japanese art to the MFA, Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908), although famously associated with Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) as an instructor of Philosophy, was graduated from Harvard College in 1874. That same year, Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926), another of the principal contributors, had obtained his M.D. from Harvard before traipsing off to Europe to study bacteriology under Louis Pasteur and then onto Japan, where he became friends with the likes of Fenollosa and Okakura Tenshin (a.k.a. Okakura Kakuzo 1863-1913). Dr. Charles Goddard Weld (1857-1911), who generously underwrote much of Fenollosa’s collecting, came from a family with Harvard connections spanning four centuries, including one recent governor. And the painter Denman Waldo Ross (1853-1935), who bestowed many artworks upon the MFA, taught at Harvard. To make a long story short, of the major collectors and donors of Japanese art to the MFA, all but Tenshin and the famous Orientalist Edward S. Morse (1838-1925) were Harvard men. It is therefore not inconceivable that one or more of these local scions, in addition to building arguably the largest collection of kibyōshi (not to mention Japanese art) in the Western world, also donated a few to the college.

In the case of the bluebooks and blackbooks that might be reclassified as kibyōshi, most of these were purchased in 1954 through a vendor by the name of J. K. Morse (whose connection to Edward Morse, if any, is unclear). At least that is the name that has been stamped onto most of the works in question. A handful of others bear the red seal of one Horikoshi Yoshihiro 堀越文庫. Although no accurate records have been kept, it appears that Horikoshi donated a large sum of books—over 10,000 titles (including many first editions of Japanese, Manchurian, and Western literary works)—to Harvard, apparently through a certain Dr. Cleaves. After being graduated from Tokyo Imperial University with a degree in Japanese literature, Horikoshi became a principal of a Japanese middle school in Tienjin 天津 in then-occupied Manchuria. When the war ended, he was repatriated (only to die the following year, as it turns out), though prior to that he was unable to ship his private library back to Japan. Thus, he leapt at the offer of two Harvard graduates—one being noted historian Donald Shively (class of 1944)—to arrange for his collection to be donated to their alma mater, which it was in 1946.¹⁴

Skewed, Eaten, and Doodled

However one explains the existence or reckons the number of kibyōshi at the Harvard-Yenching

¹³ For a detailed discussion of these genres, see Kern, Manga from the Floating World.

Library, the collection strikes one, upon initial glance, as having two primary shortcomings. First, the works catalogued as kibyōshi are skewed toward the later periods of the genre’s history; only 2 of the 16 come from the so-called “Golden Age” of the genre that was the mid 1780s.15 These 2 are: Beyond the Pale-ings of the Billion Worlds (Daisen sekai 「大千世界」, 1784), by Tōrai Sanna 唐来参和 (discussed more fully below); and Otohime, Princess of the Sea (Kore otohime 「是男度比女」, ca. 1784), by one Kenkō 嫄好.16

Kenkō’s piece, it is worth mentioning, performs an “intertwining” (naimaze 御い交ぜ)—and serves as a “latter day” (gonichibanashi 後日話) updating—of the legends of Urashima Tarō 浦島太郎 and Momotarō 桃太郎. This it does by marrying the descendents of these two characters, the wealthy Tarōhachi 太郎八 and the maiden Otome おとめ [sic], to each other. The story goes on to describe how Tarōhachi squanders his money in the pleasure quarters and is about to elope with a courtesan when he suddenly wakes up from what has all along been a dream. Although this ending would have been familiar to readers from the very first kibyōshi—Koikawa Harumachi’s Master Flashgold’s Splendiferous Dream (Kinkin sensei eiga no yume 『金髪先生絵画の夢』, 1775) had a similar dénouement—by now the gimmick must have seemed particularly passé as well as contrived. No wonder critics have generally dismissed this piece as lacking the comic “zing” of comparable stories.

Of the 14 remaining catalogued pieces, 8 date from the 1790s and 6 date from the early years of the nineteenth century. There are no pieces from the 1770s, however, meaning that the collection fails to provide so much as a fleeting glimpse of the kibyōshi in its vibrant early years. This lack of balance can be considered one of the major weaknesses of the collection. Even counting the 10 bluebooks in the catalogue as kibyōshi, the lopsidedness evens out only slightly; for of these, 3 were published in the 1770s, 2 were published in each subsequent decade, and 1 is of unknown date of issuance. In short, the Harvard-Yenching collection is skewed toward the post-Kansei Reforms kibyōshi that have not been hailed as the finest exemplars of the genre.

The second drawback of the collection is that not one of its catalogued entries bears its original woodblock-printed pasted-on frontispieces (hari edaisen 貼り絵題簽). Although one would not expect to find frontispieces gracing the few works that have been remounted, either as a kind of personal collectanea (gooseibon 合成本) or as a preservation measure in a later age, since remounting often entails discarding the original covers, it is nonetheless disheartening that all of the original works are shorn of their cover art. Moreover, this absence is disturbing, since it means that someone must have ripped off the colored and flashy frontispieces from the covers, perhaps to frame or to sell on the open art market, thereby desecrating these rare works of popular art.

One of the bluebooks that may be a kibyōshi, however, bears the frontispiece to its first volume. This is Iba Kashō’s Ötsu’s Specialty Products (Ötsu no meibutsu 「大津名物」, 1781), which was illustrated by Kitao Masanobu (Fig. 2). Interestingly, the very next year, Masanobu—a.k.a. Santō Kyōden—would go on to publish his début kibyōshi, Those Familiar Bestsellers (Gozenji no shōbaimono 「御存知商売物」, 1782). Those Familiar Bestsellers contains a scene in which the personified character Ötsu Print 大津絵 (Ötsue) from Ötsu’s Specialty Products—visible in the “dream bubble” of the frontispiece here, above the lantern—plays a prominent role. In fact, both stories open with scenes in which the figures depicted within pillar prints (hashira 柱絵) in the background leap out of their artistic confines, literally, to “come to life” self-reflexively as personified characters within the stories themselves. Thus, in writing Those Familiar Bestsellers, Kyōden undoubtedly borrowed a few artistic ideas from Ötsu’s Specialty Products, which he himself had also illustrated, after all.

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16 A few sources claim that Kore otohime was published in 1783. However, it is mentioned in Edo miyage as having been published in 1784. Furthermore, its cover design is identical to other works issued in 1784 by the work’s publisher Murataya. For a transcribed version of this text, see Mikan Edo Bungaku Kankōkai, Mikan kibyōshisen 1 (Mikan Edo bungaku kankōkai, 1956), pp. 29-39.
Figure 2 Frontispiece to Ōtsu’s Specialty Products (Ōtsu no meibutsu, 1781).

Most of the kibyōshi in the Harvard-Yenching collection are in relatively good shape otherwise, with foxing, dampstaining, and similar blights of wear and tear not appreciably affecting more than a few volumes. One of the badly damaged works is Revenge of Edo’s Golden Nuggets Girl (Edo sunago musume katakiuchi 「江戸砂子娘敵討」, 1804, written by Kyōden and illustrated by Kitao Masanobu). This is actually a notable piece, providing humorously confabulated etymologies (kojitsuke 故事付) for many of the famous people and places of the day (though the story is set several centuries earlier). Another one, titled Quintuple Cut-Down at the Watermelon Stand (Goningiri suika no tachiuri 「五人切西瓜斬売」, 1804, written by Kyōden and illustrated by Eishōsai Chōki 杹松斎長喜), is a wonderfully inventive “house succession piece” (ōie sōdōmono お家騒動物) involving personified characters based on foods popular in Edo. Unfortunately, and rather ironically, the Harvard-Yenching copy is more than a little worm-eaten.\(^\text{18}\)

Regrettably, several of the volumes also have been effaced by hand coloring and / or doodling in black ink on some of the blank pages, perhaps by younger readers (particularly in the case of the blue-book, The Flowery Tale of Masters Gold and Silver, Natori no kiku kōhaku chōja 「名取筍白長者」). In Mongaku’s Subscription List (Mongaku kanjincho 「文覚勧進帳」, 1793, written by Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑楚満 and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊国), one reader has made a sketch, inside the front cover, of one of the characters on the very first page of the story (Fig 3). This sketch may have been made circa 1815, since a handwritten note on the back cover, in what appears to be the same ink as the sketch, bears the corresponding year (Bunka 12 文化十二年). This sketch could only have defiled the pristine condition of this particular kibyōshi. However, it both adds to our knowledge of the life of works in the genre as material objects, and provides an example of how one reader seems to have been inspired to try her or his own hand at comicbook illustrating—perhaps not unlike some manga fans today.

Figure 3 A reader’s sketch (right) of a character (left). From Mongaku’s Subscription List (Mongaku kanjincho, 1793).\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{17}\) Kibyōshi written by Iba Kashō and illustrated by Kitao Masanobu. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

\(^{18}\) For a transcribed version, see Hanasaki Kazuo, Edo arakaruto (Miki shobō, 1986), pp. 109-134.

\(^{19}\) Kibyōshi written by Nansenshō Somahito and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
Overall, then, the physical condition of the collection’s kibyōshi is somewhat disappointing. A few pieces at the MFA are similarly vexed, it might be mentioned for comparison’s sake, yet overall, my impression, after having thumbed through nearly a hundred titles, is that long years of isolation have admirably preserved its kibyōshi. Thus, the works in the Harvard-Yenching Library have either not fared as well over the years, or else were never in peak shape when originally acquired.

**Strengths of the Collection**

Happily, the Harvard-Yenching collection has many virtues. For one thing, it provides some representative aspects of the genre. Santō Kyōden’s Tsukiji Zenkō’s Mathematical Manual for Merchants (Tsukiji no Zenkō 通気智之銭光記, 1802), for instance, includes at the end of its first fascicle a notice of newly issued titles by several different authors (Fig 4). For another thing, ten professional authors are represented in the collection of works catalogued as kibyōshi. Nine of these authors penned one work each. Some are major writers of the period (though not necessarily most famously in the kibyōshi), such as Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822), Jippensha Ikku (1765-1831), and Kyokutei Bakin (a.k.a. Takizawa Bakin 遠沢馬琴, 1767-1848). Other authors, though perhaps obscure to the average student of Japanese literary history, were popular in their own day, such as Kanwatei Onitake (感和亭鬼武), Kenkō (鎌小), Nansenshō Somahito 南善師楚滿人, Sakuragawa Jihinari (桜川慈成), Shitchin Manpō (正信万宝), and Tōrai Sanna 唐来參和.

Missing from the roster, however, are many of the greatest authors of the genre: Hōseidō Kisanji (長谷寺清見), Ōta Nanpo (大田南嶋), Ichiba Tsūshō (市場通笑), Shiba Zenkō (芝全交), Shirō Banshō (森長万角), and the progenitor of the kibyōshi itself, Koikawa Harumachi (恋川春町). In this respect, as mentioned above, the Harvard-Yenching collection may be wanting.

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20 The title of this work pivots the name Tsukiji Zenkō, which refers not to Morishima Chūryō (as the scholar Koike Tōgorō suggests in Santō Kyōden no kenkyū) but to the kabuki actor Bandō Zenji, with Jinkōki, a mathematical text first published in 1627 but reissued repeatedly throughout the Edo period. In Tanahashi, Kibyōshi sōran 3, pp. 66-67.

interjecting a series of lectures on “Mind Study” (shingaku 心學) presented by a monk in the form of pictorial storytelling (etoki 絵解き), this kibyōshi wears its didacticism on its sleeve too blatantly, according to Mutō Motoaki (Fig 5). Although it would be foolhardy to assign any moralistic work to Bakin merely because his yomihon would later deal famously with the Confucian injunction “commend virtue, condemn vice” (kanzen chōaku 勧善懲惡), Bakin is more likely an author than Kyōden, whose depression over the premature death of his beloved wife around that time resulted in a slump in his publishing activities.

Then again, Bakin’s kibyōshi themselves were undeniably marked by a strong didactic bent. This is certainly true of The Unfathomable Ocean of Fortune and Longevity (Fukujukai muryō no shinadama 「福寿海无量品玉」, 1794, illustrated by Hokusai under the pseudonym Shunrō), which is also in the collection. The story centers around Fudaraku’s Daijirō 普陀落屋大次郎, who is disowned for having squandered the family fortune on women in the pleasure quarters. Daijirō and his wife, and then those close to them, begin to question their lifestyle, and eventually see the light of Buddhist teachings. Another reason is that Bakin himself confessed—in both his biography of Kyōden (Iwadema no ki 「伊波伝毛乃記」, 1819) and his study of mid-Edo period authors (Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui 「近世物之本江戸作者部類」, 1834)—that he ghostwrote two of Kyōden’s kibyōshi: The Stinky Potted Plant at the Dragon King’s Palace (Tatsunomiya konamagusa hachinokī 「龍宮瓊鉢木」, 1793) as well as The Guide to Morality for Dummies. Other writers at the time likewise recognized Bakin as the true author of these pieces.

Granted, it was standard practice for members of an artistic atelier to execute a work and have the master sign it. However, this is one of the earliest known cases of kibyōshi ghostwriting. Since the kibyōshi had already become a phenomenally popular form of mass literature—with the names of authors commanding a reading public in a way analogous to brand names on commercial goods—it is possible that either Kyōden or his publisher had Bakin use the Kyōden moniker simply to sell copies.

24 This work was later reprinted—suggesting its popularity—under the title Yōjin kanshin 「用心肝心」.
26 In Tanahashi Masahiro, Kibyōshi sōran 2, p. 236.
In that sense, this work is important to the history of professional authorship in Japan. In fact, it may even be more valuable as an example of ghostwriting than if this were merely another work by Kyōden.

It is well known in Japanese studies that many, if not most, of the greatest professional woodblock artists illustrated various forms of popular literature like the _kibyōshi_. The Harvard-Yenching collection includes a respectable representative sampling: 3 or so works by Hokusai (1760-1849) (1 under the pseudonym Shunrō 春朗, 1 under Kakō 可考, and possibly 1 under Hokushū 北周); 3 works by Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊国 (1769-1825); and 4 works by Kitao Shigemasa 北尾重政 (1739-1820), the head of the ukiyoe school bearing his name and one of the most prolific _kibyōshi_ illustrators. (Actually, one work the catalogue identifies as having been illustrated by Shigemasa—_Tsukiji Zenkō’s Mathematical Manual for Merchants_—bears Toyokuni’s name on the title slip. If true, there would be 4 works by Toyokuni and only 3 works by Shigemasa in the collection.) Eishōsai Chōki 稲松斎長喜 (fl. ca. 1780 to the early 1800s), Katsukawa Shun’ei 勝川春英 (1762-1819), and Kenkō 健好 (dates unknown) are represented by 1 work each.

In the case of the two works that bear no name of an artist, the author himself—Kyōden and Ikku—can be presumed to have provided the pictures. Kyōden’s piece (or at least the facsimile of it), _Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice_, is discussed below in greater detail. Ikku’s piece, _A Book of Revenge in Reverse (Tatukiuchi henjutsu no maki 『謝討変術巻』, 1796)_ is worth mentioning, comically inverts the standard vendetta story by having the avengers, the brothers Suikakunosuke 笛角之助 and Mōtarō 鳴太郎, frantically avoid avenging their father’s death, while the “avenger,” one Ishinoue Sanpei 石上三平, desperately tries to get assassinated.

One work notable for its curious illustrations, _The Back-Alley Palm Reader (Urayasan mitōshi zashiki 『狸家算通坐敷』, 1803)_ written by Kyōden, illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa, represents a relatively late _kibyōshi_, since the genre is customarily said to have petered out in 1806. Drawing on physiognomy, palmistry, and fortune-telling (_hakke_ 八卦), this “satirical parody book” ( _kojitsu ken ga mitate monzo 『事付穿つ滑稽見立物』_ ) lampoons a variety of people’s deportment as contrasted with their characters ( _Fig 6_).

Figure 6 Physiognomy charts from _The Back-Alley Palm Reader (Urayasan mitōshi zashiki, 1803)_.

Another captivating work is the little-known _Field Guide to the Monsters of Japan (Bakemono Yamato honzō 『化物和本草』, 1798_, written by Santō Kyōden, illustrated by Hokusai under the pseudonym Kakō). This title playfully alludes to _Field Guide to Japan (Yamato honzō 『大和本草』, 1709)_, Kaibara Ekken’s 貝原益軒 renowned compendium of _materia medica_. _Field Guide to the Monsters of Japan_ is part of a trilogy of _kibyōshi_ that transforms images of plants and trees, various implements (_dōgu_ 道具), and assorted phenomena (_jishō_ 事項), into some kind of amusing “visual pun” (_mitate_ 見立) on shape-changing monsters (_bakemono_ 化物). Hokusai’s illustrations are superb—imaginative, surprising, engrossing—and include renderings of the famed money tree (_kane no naruki 金のなる木_), a two-headed brush (_ryōtō fude 両頭筆_), and a monster that is comprised of a love letter, a cobweb, and spectacles, among other disparate objects that speak to the richness of the contemporary popular imagination ( _Fig 7_).

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30 The other two are _Hyakka chō mitate honzō 『百化帖準擬本草』_ and _Fudetsu mushikoe no toridori 『筆津虫音禽』_. In Tanahashi, _Kibyōshi sōran 2_, p. 599.

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Storied Collection

Several of the stories are quite compelling unto themselves. One that might interest English readers, since its two base texts have been translated (unlike almost all other kibyōshi mentioned in this article), is Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice (Ryōtō hitsu zen’aku nikki 「両頭筆善悪日記」, 1799, written and presumably illustrated by Santō Kyōden—though, again, this particular specimen is probably a later reprinting). The base texts are: Kyōden’s celebrated Fast-Dyeing Mind Study (Shingaku hayasomegusa 「学ncpy棨思考」, 1790), about a man, named Ritarō 理太郎, pulled this way and that by tiny creatures whose faces are represented by circles containing the Chinese characters for “virtue” (zen 善) and “vice” (aku 悪); and Kyōden’s less well-known Unseamly Silverpiped Swingers (Sogitsugi giniseru 「扮接銀管」, 1788), about the life, loves, and vicissitudes of a pair of one-bodied two-headed twins.

In Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice, the wife of Yamakawa Momoemon 山川屋桃右衛門 (in a scene more textually than visually reminiscent of the Peach Boy legend) finds a pair of peaches floating down a river. Well after she and her husband have eaten one peach each, she gives birth to two-headed offspring (Fig 8).

As the twins grow, it becomes clear that one head is meek, honest, and hard working, whereas the other is aggressive, deceitful, and lazy (Fig 9).

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32 A transcribed version can be found in Mizuno, Santō Kyōden zenshū 4 (Perikansha, 2004), pp. 311-331.
34 Translated in Kern, Manga from the Floating World, pp. 427-506.

35 Written and presumably illustrated by Kyōden. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
36 ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
The conflict between the two comes to a head, so to speak, afflicting even their dreams (Fig 10). Eventually an exorcist uses a mallet to pound Vice into a lump, leaving Virtue in tact, an artificially contrived happy ending that could only have been received by contemporary readers, in an age of increasingly enforced sumptuary regulations, as unrealistic to the point of sharp irony. In fact, it is said that Two-Headed Brush influenced subsequent works in this respect, most notably Shikitei Sanba’s kibyōshi titled A Plug for the Miraculously Healing Bodywarmer (Wataonjaku kikō no hikifuda 「綿温し奇効報条」).37

Figure 10 Two-headed twins dreaming a common dream. From a reprinting of Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice (Ryōtō hitsu zen’aku nikki, 1799).38

One of the only “Golden Age” pieces in the collection is Tōrai Sanna’s Beyond the Pale-ings of the Billion Worlds (Daisen sekai kakine no soto 「大千世界箇外」, 1784, illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa).39 Published only a year after Sanna’s début in any genre of playful fiction—the fashionbook titled The Three Creeds on Passion (Sankyōshi 「三教色」, 1783)—this is the first kibyōshi bearing Sanna’s name, though it has been suggested that Sanna had previously served as a ghostwriter to author Shimizu Enjū 志水燕十. Be that as it may, Sanna’s piece has a brilliant conception: it treats the creation of the cosmos in the classic Chronicles of Japan (Nihon shōki 「日本書紀」, 720) as though it were the result of a contemporary gathering of kabuki playwrights at the beginning of the year to determine the “worlds” of plots and characters to be staged. Thus, the “world setting” (sekai sadame 世界定め) of the kabuki theater is taken literally, reinserted into the cosmogony sequence of one of Japan’s most sacred texts. Set in the mythical age of the gods, Sanna’s story retraces the transition from prehistoric chaos and non-differentiation, to the creation of all things (banbutsu 万物) and the arising of the various deities themselves (Fig 11). The story was so well received, Shikitei Sanba hailed it as one of the two dozen greatest masterpieces of the genre. Certainly the story sparked the imagination of other authors as well as readers, for several kibyōshi borrowed its comic premise. Aside from Kyōden’s Fast-Dyeing Mind Study, there was Hōseidō Kisanji’s 朋誠堂喜三二 The Celestial Path’s Account Book (Tendō daifuku chō 「天道大福帳」, 1786).

Figure 11 Beginning of the cosmos according to Beyond the Pale-ings of the Billion Worlds (Daisen sekai kakine no soto, 1784).40

Tōrai Sanna 唐来參和 (1744-1810) himself is one of the more colorful figures in the history of Edo’s playful fiction, having renounced his samurai

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37 In Tanahashi, Kibyōshi sōran 2, p. 676.
38 ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
40 Kibyōshi written by Tōrai Sanna and illustrated probably by Kitao Shigemasa. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
status to become an urban townsman (chōnin 町人) merchant and take up writing professionally. He was a member of Ōta Nanpo’s leading coterie of madcap poetry (kyōka 狂歌), wrote a smattering of fashion-books and multivolume comicbooks as well, and became one of the “Six Kibyōshi Immortals” (kibyōshi rokkasen 黃表紙六歌仙), though he penned only about twenty kibyōshi, including the palindromatically titled Chop Not The Roots of The Money Tree (Kiruna no ne kara kane no naruki 「切自根金生木」, 1785). Sanba, who had been one of Kyōden’s protégés, is said to have integrated the “San” of Sanna’s name into his own. Moreover, Sanna actually became the proprietor of a brothel. According to Bakin, Sanna was “[o]riginally a retainer for a highly-placed family, during the Tenmei era, he had reason to become a chōnin. He married into the family that ran the brothel Izumiya in Honjo Matsui-chō. He took over the business and came to be called [by the merchant appellation] Izumiya Genzō.”

Another work in the collection, Shitchin Manpō’s The About-Face Bestowal of Abundant Beauty (Sono henpō hōnen no mitsugi「其返贈豐年貢」, 1790, illustrated by Katsushika Shun’ei—or at least in his style), is significant as one of the kibyōshi that partook in genuine political satire through the technique of reductio ad absurdum. Published during the Kansei Reforms (and reprinted two years later under the title Haru wa hanasaku sakusha no yaezaki 「新春花作者再咏」), this piece couched its criticism of the government’s sumptuary regulations by poking fun at similar measures half a millennium earlier, during the reign of the sagacious ruler Hōjō Tokiyori 北条時賴 (1227-1263), who famously disguised himself to mix with commoners. In Manpō’s story, the populace takes Tokiyori’s exhortations to their extreme, mistaking frugality for stinginess, the result being that restaurants, tea houses, and candy shops go out of business. Watermelon merchants discount the cost of their rinds, even (Fig 12). Tokiyori realizes that the populace has taken his words too literally when, in disguise, visiting the house of a certain Sano Genzaemon 佐野源左衛門, the latter chops down his potted tree for firewood to keep his visitor warm.


42 Kibyōshi written by Shitchin Manpō and illustrated probably by Katsushika Shun’ei. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
is poisoned; for Gennosuke is afraid that word would leak that he had not settled the score himself. The story concludes when one of Kenzō’s disciples, Makino Manpei まきの万平, suspicious about his master’s death, extracts the truth from the local doctor about the poison and proceeds to take his own revenge upon Gennosuke. Needless to say, this is not the sort of lighthearted romp that for a quarter century had epitomized the kibyōshi genre (Fig 13).

Figure 13 Heads roll in Twice-Flowering Eightfold Vengeance (Kaerizaki yae no adauchi, 1805).  

Finally, there is Sakuragawa Jihinari’s 桜川慈悲成 (b. 1762) A Tale of Virtue in the First Degree (Daiichi ontokuyō monogatari 『第一御德用物語』, 1794). In spite of having been illustrated by the great Utagawa Toyokuni, the story probably outshines the charming pictures. The piece is an imaginative installment in the long line of kibyōshi (and other stories, for that matter) about dreams, dream pillows, and the confusion of dream with reality. A certain man by the name of Fukukurō 福九郎, who sleeps by night and naps all day, strikes upon the idea of starting a business peddling people’s naps. His neighbor Mune’e’mon むね右衛門 erects the “Sleep Inclined Hut” (Nemukean 寝向庵) to attract prospective nap sellers. Eventually, the Seven Gods of Fortune (Shichifukujin 七福神), worried about the adverse effects of nap mongering upon humankind, force Fukukurō to give up his sack of naps wherein he has been storing the world’s supply of “sleep essence” (minki 眠気). In a satirical gesture against the utopian vision espoused by Confucians of a hardworking populace, Daikokuten, along with the other gods on their fabled treasure boat, casts the nap sack to the Western Seas, whereupon naps are supposedly dispelled forever from the face of the earth (Fig 14).

Figure 14 The god Daikokuten dispelling naps. From A Tale of Virtue in the First Degree (Daiichi ontokuyō monogatari, 1794).  

Concluding Remarks
And so does our guided tour of the Harvard-Yenching collection of kibyōshi draw to a close in the short span of a dream during an afternoon snooze. Although small, slightly lopsided, and in less than ideal shape, the collection is nonetheless fascinating if wonderfully quirky. If I am correct in reckoning that the 16 titles listed in the catalogue Early Japanese Books at Harvard-Yenching Library should be revised to 25 titles, then the collection is also larger than previously believed.

This number depends on my definition of the kibyōshi, which is not simply any book with yellow covers. Rather, in the foregoing I have effectively defined the kibyōshi as a sophisticated comicbook, combining words and pictures in complex fashion, intended primarily for adults. Although the kibyōshi usually bears yellow covers, sometimes its covers can be blue. The kibyōshi usually comes in three fascicles of 10 pages measuring approximately 5 x 7 inches, though there are examples of one, two, and,

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44 Kibyōshi written by Sakuragawa Jihinari and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
in some rare cases, five fascicles in this size, but never four (the Japanese word for which being infe-
lictously homophonous with “death”), and never
more than five. Furthermore, the kibyōshi was only
published from 1775 to 1806 (though there are a few
exceptions), so later reprints—particularly those in a
different format—would hardly qualify as a kibyōshi.
Finally, most kibyōshi in Japan are listed in Tanaha-
shi’s Kibyōshi Overview, though one might quibble
with Tanahashi on some minor points.

According to this criteria, then, it would seem
that the official catalogue of the Harvard-Yenching
Library lists some works as kibyōshi that really are
something else and conversely lists as something
else works that really are kibyōshi. If so, then one
naturally wonders if a similar situation obtains in
other collections outside of Japan. One imagines,
perhaps, that lurking in such collections are some as-
yet undiscovered hidden gems.

Appendix I: Selective List of Works,
Authors, Illustrators, and Publishers

NB HYL numbers derive from the catalogue Early
Japanese Books at Harvard-Yenching Library.

Bakemono Yamato honzō 「 代太和本草 」
(Field Guide to the Monsters of Japan, 1798).
Kibyōshi written by Santō Kyōden, illustrated by
Kakō (Hokusai), and published by Yamaguchiya.
HYL #350

Bunkeidō 文溪堂

Daiichi ontokuyō monogatari 「 第一御徳用物
語」 (A Tale of Virtue in the First Degree, 1794).
Kibyōshi written by Sakuragawa Jihinari, illustrated
by Utagawa Toyokuni, and published by Izumiya
Ichibe. HYL #361

Daisekai seki kine no soto 「 大千世界の
外」 (Beyond the Pale-ings of the Billion Worlds,
1784). Kibyōshi written by Tōrai Sanna, illustrated
probably by Kitao Shigemasa, and published by
Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #357

Edo sunago musume katakiuchi 「 江戸砂子娘
敵討 」 (Revenge of Edo’s Golden Nuggets Girl,
1804). Kibyōshi written by Santō Kyōden, thought to
have been illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa, and pub-
lished by Tsuruya. HYL #354

Eishōsai Chōki 栄松斎長喜

Enokimotoya 桂本屋

Enju hangōtan 「 延寿反魂談 」(The Salutary
Story of a Soul Restored, 1789). Kibyōshi (miscata-
logued as a bluebook) written and illustrated by
Santō Kyōden. HYL #343

Fukujukai murō no shinadama 「 福寿海無量
品玉 」(The Unfathomable Ocean of Fortune and
Longevity, 1794). Kibyōshi written by Kyokutei
Bakin, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunrō, and pub-
lished by Tsutuya. HYL #363

Goningiri suika no tachiuri 「 五人切西瓜斬
売 」 (Quintuple Cut-Down at the Watermelon
Stand, 1804). Kibyōshi written by Santō Kyōden,
illustrated by Eishōsai Chōki, and published by
Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #353

Gozonji no shōbaimono 「 御存知商売物 」
(Those Familiar Bestsellers, 1782). Kibyōshi written
and illustrated by Kitao Masanobu.

Hatsuyaku kogane no eboshi uo 「 春役金兜
子魚 」 (Début of the Black-Capped Golden Carp,
1794). Illustrated book written by Santō Kyōden,
illustrated by Jippensha Ikku, and published by
Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #341

Hokusai 北斎 (a.k.a. Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾
北斎, Hokusū, Kakō, Shunrō)

Hokusū 北周 (a.k.a. Hokusai)

Hōseidō Kissanji 朋誠堂喜三二

Ichiba Tsūshō 市場通笑

Iba Kashō 伊庭可笑

Iseji 伊勢治

Iwatoya 岩戸屋

Izumiya Ichibe 和泉屋市兵衛
Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九

Jitsugokyō osana kōshaku 「実語教幼稚講読」 (The Guide to Morality for Dummies, 1792). Kibyōshi supposedly written by Santō Kyōden—but ghostwritten by Bakin—illustrated by Shunrō (Hokusai). Published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #348

Kaerizaki yae no adauchi 「返咲八重之仇討」 (Twice-Flowering Eightfold Vengeance, 1805). Kibyōshi written by Kanwatei Onitake, illustrated by Hokushū (Hokusai), and published by Iwatoya. HYL #356

Kanwatei Onitake 感和亭鬼武

Kakō 可換 (a.k.a. Hokusai)

Katakiuchi Kurama tengu 「敵討駿馬天狗」 (The Kurama Goblin Vendetta, 1779). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) written by Bunkidō, illustrated by Torii Kiyotsune, and published by Iwatoya. HYL #339

Katsukawa Shun'ei 柴山春英

Kenkō 嫤好

Kingin sensei zōka no yume 「金々先生造化夢」 (Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream, 1794). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) written by Santō Kyōden, illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa, and published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #340

Kinkin sensei eiga no yume 「金々先生栄華夢」 (Master Flashgold’s Splendiferous Dream, 1779). Kibyōshi written by Koikawa Harumachi and illustrated by Hōsein Kisanji.

Kiruna no ne kara kane no naruki 「莫切自根金生木」(Chop Not The Roots of The Money Tree, 1785). Kibyōshi written by Tōrai Sanna and illustrated by Kitagawa Chiyoyo.

Kitagawa Chiyoyo 喜多川千代女

Kitao Masanobu 北尾政演 (a.k.a. Santō Kyōden)

Kitao Masayoshi 北尾政美

Kitao Shigemasa 北尾重政

Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町

Kore otohime 「是男度比女」 (Otohime, Princess of the Sea, 1784). Kibyōshi in two fascicles written and illustrated by Kenkō and published by Murataya. HYL #360

Kotowaza Nonomiya mōde 「謳野々宮儲」 (Nonomiya’s Proverbially Profitable Gambol, 1784). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) illustrated and presumably written by Kitao Masayoshi, and published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #334

Kusunoki ichidaiki 「楠一代記」 (The Life of Kusunoki Masashige, 1794). Some kind of picturebook written and presumably illustrated by Rakugetsudō Sōshi. Published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō. HYL #324

Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (a.k.a. Takizawa Bakin)

Mongaku kanjincho 「文覚進帳」 (Mongaku’s Subscription List, 1793). Kibyōshi written by Nansenshō Somahito, illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni, and published by Enokimotoya. HYL #349

Murataya 村田屋

Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑楚滿人

Natori no kiku kōhaku chōja 「名取菊白長者」(The Flowery Tale of Masters Gold and Silver, 1779). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) probably written and illustrated by Santō Kyōden. HYL #342

Nishimiya Shinroku 西宮新六

Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝

Ōtsu no meibutsu 「大津名物」 (Ōtsu’s Specialty Products, 1781). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) written by Iba Kashō, illustrated by Kitao Masanobu, and published by Iwatoya. HYL #332

Rakugetsudō Sōshi 落月堂操扈
Ryōtō hitsu zen‘aku nikki 「兩頭筆善惡日記」 (Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice, 1799). Kibyōshi written and presumably illustrated by Santō Kyöden—though the HYL copy is a later reprinting. HYL #351

Sakuragawa Jihinari 桜川慈成

Sanbukutsui murasaki Soga 「参幡對紫曾我」 (Trilaterial Intrigue of the Soga Brothers, 1778). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) illustrated and presumably written by Koikawa Harumachi and published by Urokogataya. HYL #333

Santō Kyöden 山東京傳

Shiba Zenkō 芝全交

Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬

Shimizu Enjū 志水燕十

Shin kakurezato 「暗金久連里」 (The Invisible City Revisited, 1788). Bluebook illustrated and presumably written by Torii Kiyoshige. HYL #335

Shina Banshō 森羅万象

Shitchin Manpō 七珍萬宝

Shunrō 春朗 (a.k.a. Hokusai)

Shunsetsu monogatari 「春雪物語」 (Tale of Spring Snow, 1804). A.k.a. A Mother and Daughter Laid to Rest, Part Two: A Tale of Spring Snow ((Oyakozuka kōhen) Shunsetsu monogatari 「春雪物語」). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) written by Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑楚済人 and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. HYL #345


Sono henpō hōnen no mitsugi 「其返報豐年貢」 (The About-Face Bestowal of Abundant Beauty, 1790). Kibyōshi written by Shitchin Manpō, illustrated probably by Katsushika Shun‘ei, and published by Iseji. HYL #359

Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴 (a.k.a. Kyokutei Bakin)

Tamenaga Shunsui 為永春水

Tatatsuchi henjutsu no maki 「揺討変術巻」 (A Book of Revenge in Reverse, 1796). Kibyōshi written—and presumably illustrated—by Jippensha Ikku and published by Izumiya Ichibei. HYL #362

Tatsunomiya konamagusa hachinoki 「龜宮麝釈」 (The Stinky Potted Plant at the Dragon King’s Palace, 1793). Kibyōshi supposedly written by Santō Kyöden—but ghostwritten by Bakin—and published by Tsuruya.

Tendō daifuku chō 「天道大福帳」 (The Celestial Path’s Account Book, 1786). Kibyōshi written by Hōseidō Kisanji and illustrated by Kitao Masayoshi.

Tōrai Sanna 唐来參和

Torii Kiyoshige 鳥居清重

Torii Kiyotsune 鳥居清経

Tōsetsu monogatari 「冬雪物語」 (A Tale of Winter Snow, 1804). A.k.a. A Mother and Daughter Laid to Rest, Part One: A Tale of Winter Snow ((Oyakozuka zenpen) Tōsetsu monogatari 「冬雪物語」). Kibyōshi (miscatalogued as a bluebook) written by Nansenshō Somahito and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. HYL #345

Tsukiji no Zenkō 通気智之銭光記 (Tsukiji Zenkō’s Mathematical Manual for Merchants, 1802). Kibyōshi written by Santō Kyöden, illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa, and published by Tsuruya. HYL #355

Tsuruya Kiemon 鶴屋喜右衛門

Tsutaya Jūzaburō 萬屋重三郎

Urayasan mitōshi zashiki 「裡家算見通坐敷」 (The Back-Alley Palm Reader, 1803). Kibyōshi written by Santō Kyöden, illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa, and published by Tsuruya. HYL #352
Appendix II: List of Figures

Fig 1 Scene from Master Flashgold’s Abiding Dream (Kingen sensei zōka no yume, 1794). Kibyōshi written by Santō Kyōden and illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 2 Frontispiece to Ōtsu’s Specialty Products (Ōtsu no meibutsu, 1781). Kibyōshi written by Iha Kashō and illustrated by Kitao Masanobu. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 3 A reader’s sketch of a character from Mongaku’s Subscription List (Mongaku kanjincho, 1793). Kibyōshi written by Nansenshō Somahito and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.


Fig 5 Scene from The Guide to Morality for Dummies (Jitsugokyō osana kōshaku, 1792). Kibyōshi supposedly written by Santō Kyōden—but really ghostwritten by Bakin—and illustrated by Shunrō (Hokusai). ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 6 Physiognomy charts from The Back-Alley Palm Reader (Urayasan mitōshi zashiki, 1803). Kibyōshi written by Kyōden and illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 7 Imaginatively concocted creature from Field Guide to the Monsters of Japan (Bakemono Yamato honzō, 1798). Kibyōshi written by Kyōden and illustrated by Kakō (Hokusai). ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 8 Two-headed twins suckling at their mother’s breasts. From a reprinting of the kibyōshi titled Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice (Ryōtsu hitsu zen’aku nikki, 1799). Written and presumably illustrated by Kyōden. © 2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 9 Virtue is industrious, working an abacus as he keeps the books, while Vice is indolent, making rude remarks as he enjoys a smoke. From a reprinting of Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice (Ryōtsu hitsu zen’aku nikki, 1799). © 2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 10 Two-headed twins dreaming a common dream. From a reprinting of Diary Penned by a Two-Headed Brush with Virtue and Vice (Ryōtsu hitsu zen’aku nikki, 1799). © 2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 11 Beginning of the cosmos according to Beyond the Pale-ings of the Billion Worlds (Daisei sekai kakine no soto, 1784). Kibyōshi written by Tōrai Sanna and illustrated probably by Kitao Shigemasa. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 12 Watermelon stand from The About-Face Bestowal of Abundant Beauty (Sono henpō hōnen no mitsugi, 1790). Kibyōshi written by Shitchin Manpō and illustrated probably by Katsushika Shun’ei. © 2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 13 Heads roll in Twice-Flowering Eightfold Vengeance (Kaerizaki yae no adauchi, 1805). Kibyōshi written by Kanwatei Onitake and illustrated by Hokushū (Hokusai). ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.

Fig 14 The god Daikokuten dispelling naps. From A Tale of Virtue in the First Degree (Daiichi ontokuyō monogatari, 1794). Kibyōshi written by Sakuragawa Jihinari and illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. ©2007 Harvard-Yenching Library.
Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck and Arthur E. Tiedemann

Sources of Japanese Tradition, vol. 2: 1600 to 2000
Columbia University Press, New York, 2005

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This is a gargantuan work, almost impossible to review because of the scope of collected materials and the diversity of appended commentaries. The revised edition of volume 1 of Sources of Japanese Tradition, which came out in 2001, covered roughly 1,000 years of Japanese historical sources in 524 pages, making it only slightly longer than the original edition. Volume 2, on the other hand, covers only a slightly longer period than the original, with sources ranging from the early seventeenth to the late twentieth century, yet requires 1,399 pages to do so. It is worth asking if the benefits of this “more is more” approach outweigh the disadvantages. I will therefore focus in this review on the degree to which the book fulfills its goals, on the related issue of the volume’s projected usefulness for readers, and lastly, on what the constitution of the book reveals about the state of Japanese history as a field.

The preface explains that while the original edition of Sources of Japanese Tradition consisted of a single volume that was later divided into two paperback volumes along the modern/premodern line, this revised edition “reflects the increasing recognition in both the West and Asia that major factors in the modernization process stemmed from indigenous, pre-nineteenth-century developments” (xxxv). This claim surprised me. First, it seems like an inaccurate characterization of the original edition, which divided the volumes not at the Meiji Restoration but in the eighteenth century, hardly a conservative separation between traditional and modern Japan. Second, the desire to decouple modernization from Westernization, particularly in undergraduate education, is now almost a given in the field, illustrated by the fact that most textbooks devoted to modern Japan begin their narratives in the sixteenth century.

The preface also explains that “educational works have been given particular attention” in the revised edition, which implies a move away from the top-down, great-men-of-history approach that characterized the original edition (and, of course, the very field of historical studies in the period of its compilation). This implication is belied, however, by the “Chronology,” which for the most part focuses (as did the timeline in the original edition) entirely on the accomplishments of Very Important People in early modern and modern Japanese history. Why did the authors include the death of “Kaiho Seiryô (1755-1817), a rationalist thinker,” but exclude every uprising from the early nineteenth century? No one expects radical epistemology in a volume titled Sources of Japanese Tradition, but in some ways the framing of the book seems disconnected from recent developments in Japanese historical scholarship.

The translation and exegesis of primary texts, on the other hand, is superlative, and for researchers and advanced undergraduates, at least, this will make the revised edition a vital resource. A few examples from the early modern period should suffice to illustrate the changes. Willem Boot, who has written elsewhere about Tokugawa Ieyasu’s deification, greatly expands on the handful of Ieyasu-related texts in the original edition by including relevant excerpts from Mikawa monogatari and Tokugawa jikki, as well as letters by a Tokugawa vassal, an enemy, and a religious advisor, all of which are here translated into English for the first time. Every section of the book has been expanded and improved in similar fashion, with longer entries and more texts, and in some cases, entirely new contributions. J. S. A. Elisonas’s “The Evangelic Furnace: Japan’s First Encounter with the West,” for example, devotes forty pages to translations of European and Japanese documents and their historical context, while the original edition devoted only a few pages to Nobunaga’s and Hideyoshi’s reactions to Christianity. Elisonas’s erudite explanations and translations in “A Christian Critique of Shinto” and “A Buddhist Refutation of Christianity” will, I think, prove exceedingly useful as handouts in many college classrooms. Another interesting new section focuses on intellectual, official, and dramatic responses to the Akō Vendetta, which is likewise likely to be popular with undergraduates and to help deconstruct some of the assumptions students bring to the classroom about “the way of the warrior” in premodern Japan.

The sections devoted to modern Japan in the prewar, wartime, and postwar eras also contain reams of newly translated materials that will be of great use in introductory courses, such as the survey I am teaching as I write, titled “Modern Japan.” (The publication of a two-part abridged paperback version makes this a particularly convenient text.) All in all, the coverage of the 268 years of the Tokugawa period in the first half of the book (known in the confusing series parlance as “Part Four,” a designation that seems to emerge from the assumption that all readers
will own both volumes), takes up 664 pages. By my calculations, that means that the book averages about 2.5 pages per year of the early modern period. The second section (“Part Five”) of the book, on the other hand, takes 355 pages to examine the period from 1868 to 1945, which averages out at about 4.5 pages per year. Postwar Japan, which is the subject of the third section (“Part Six”) of the book, merits only 94 pages, or about 1.7 pages per year, though if we add the somewhat incongruous 195 pages of the fourth section (“Part Seven”), “Aspects of the Modern Experience,” postwar Japan receives about 5.3 pages per year. Just for fun, compare these numbers to those of the first volume in the revised series, which, as mentioned above, narrates approximately a millennium of Japanese history in a mere 524 pages, giving us approximately 1/2 page devoted to each year of “premodern” Japan.

It would be easy to explain these discrepancies in terms of the availability and interest of primary sources. My interpretation, however, is that they instead reveal the collision of two potent hierarchies in the field of Japanese history today. First, sources for the study of intellectual history are by far the most common documents in the collection. Why is more than half of the Tokugawa section focused exclusively on Confucianism, National Learning, or other topics in intellectual history, a field that has already been well documented and translated in the previous Sources, in monographs and articles, and in other anthologies such as Haruo Shirane’s recent Early Modern Japanese Literature? One might also ask why topics such as visual culture, sexuality, and the status system, which have been explored in compelling fashion in recent years in the English literature, are lacking? Second, historiographical and political texts are surprisingly prominent in the sections on the twentieth century considering the huge range of materials that are available for translation. Why are 85 pages devoted to a comprehensive litany of modern history writing in Japan, a fascinating subject, to be sure, but one that perhaps deserves its own standalone collection? Any translation of and commentary on historical sources is of course welcome in a field in which such resources are few and far between, but I can’t help but wonder if the heft of this book is partly due to editors who couldn’t cut back on texts from their own specialized areas of interest.

Editing an anthology is a thankless job, but in the case of Sources of Japanese Tradition, the resulting book has an unusually large impact on the field. If the lifetime of the original edition is any indication, I may still be referring to these translations when I retire from teaching in the 2030s, if not beyond. This inspires me to offer a few suggestions that I hope could be implemented in future printings. First, authorship should be indicated for every text in the book, including the preface and numerous transitional essays. Undergraduates who are struggling to master citation systems are deeply confused by passages like “The Tokugawa Peace” (1-6) that bear no attribution. Second, clear typographical distinction should be made between the translated primary texts and the comments of the scholars who worked so hard to produce this book. I cannot count the number of times I did a double-take upon suddenly realizing that the “voice” I was reading was not that of a historical figure but a contemporary scholar, or vice versa. Usage of the same typeface produces unnecessary confusion among undergraduates, who are fighting to keep up with unfamiliar names and dates and thus may mistake the explanations of Albert Craig for the writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi.

Despite some minor flaws, this book contains a wealth of primary sources that have been expertly translated and framed. The divided and abridged paperback version, in particular, will prove useful in the classroom.
Mary Elizabeth Berry
Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period

©Allen Hockley, Dartmouth College

Japan in Print is a provocative book, made all the more so with a clever introduction spread over two chapters. In the first, Berry asks us to adopt the persona of a late seventeenth-century Kyoto silk merchant about to embark on a trip to Edo. We follow his preparation as he consults a remarkable variety of publications including maps, atlases, encyclopedias, dictionaries, calendars, almanacs, rural gazetteers, urban directories, travel accounts, personnel rosters, biographical compendia, manuals of work, manuals of play, guides to shopping and local products, and school primers. The second chapter provides Berry with the opportunity to describe and characterize this vast and varied assemblage of reference works which she refers to as the library of public information. The library does not constitute an archive per se but was “a metaphorical place” where texts “fit together because of their common purpose: to examine and order the verifiable facts of contemporary experience for an open audience of consumers” (p. 15). While holdings in library are disparate in the subjects they cover, they are related in significant ways. Because they were commercially published for a highly entrepreneurial market, they overlap, repeat, and mimic each other as authors and publishers attempted to supersede their predecessors and one-up the competition. Claims to direct observation, aspirations to timeliness, a focus on quotidian matters, and emphases on nomenclature and classification characterize the primary concerns of those who contributed their knowledge and talents to the library. The rationale for this book rests on this interconnectedness: “[T]he strongest link between the texts is attitude. And it is here that the merit of thinking about them collectively comes clear; for the information library discloses pervasive habits of mind” (p. 16).

Reading examples from the information library against the background of state sponsored cadastral and cartographic surveys, socio-political structures, urbanization, travel, and the developments of commercial publishing and a reading public, Berry documents these mentalités, noting especially the emergence of a nascent sense of “nation”—a term not often associated with seventeenth-century Japan. In the chapters that follow, Berry walks us through the information library as she attempts to stretch reposition nationhood in the early Tokugawa era.

Berry compares examples from the information library with similar material from the medieval period to great effect throughout the book but especially in her discussion of maps in chapter three. Few pre Tokugawa maps survive (225 according to one census) whereas thousands of examples were in circulation by 1700 (p. 58). She characterizes medieval maps as localized and insular, not because of deficient cartographic skills, but rather that medieval mapmakers “confronted a landscape so fissured by local practice and knowledge that common denominators indispensable to cartography were difficult to stretch beyond a few square kilometers” (p. 76). This contrasts sharply with maps produced after 1600 when particularity disappeared in favor of more general classifications of space. Berry attributes this to late sixteenth-early seventeenth-century sociopolitical developments including civil wars in the Muromachi era that “broke familiar tenurial relations and the erased the tortured geography of medieval politics” (p. 78), deracination of warriors from the land, new forms of domainal management, an escalation from local to regional and eventually to national conflicts during the unification period, 280 domainal transfers in the first fifty years of the Tokugawa era, and the presence of foreign maps in Japan. Hideyo-

shi is accorded a prominent role in the development of early modern cartography because of the cadastral and cartographic surveys he initiated in 1591. He required that maps be focused on districts, a holdover from the Heian era, as opposed to villages (the basic unit of medieval maps) or daimyo domains, the borders of which were still being contested. District maps were, in turn, collated into provincial maps, another remnant of classical-era cartography. Berry argues that this return to imperial conceptions of space was consistent with Hideyoshi’s political ambitions. He accrued the authority to rule by acquiring court titles. His efforts to rebuild Kyoto provide further evidence of his classical/imperial mindset. Berry demonstrates how the focus on districts and provinces deflected anxiety over domainal boundaries while facilitating nascent national sensibilities. The cumulative effect of these changes induced re-conceptualization of locale, region and nation, with the later gradually taking on more significance in the seventeenth century as Tokugawa maps overlaid Hideyoshi’s province-based cartography with symbols of national political authority such as castle
Thus, for Berry the conceptual shift from the medieval to reduce space to generic attributes” (p. 60). This new way of thinking was based on the general public when the Tokugawa regime released its national maps to commercial publishers in the 1630s. Government prototypes were quickly revised to suit the market by adding (and sometimes illustrating) meisho, which suggested the existence of a common national culture.

Chapter four explores military and bureaucratic mirrors. Military mirrors, organized according to domain size, documented essential information about the daimyo including hereditary and personal names, court rank, domainal location and productivity. Heraldic regalia, in the form of crests and insignia, added a visual component necissitated by a need for urban dwellers to be able to recognize their superiors and peers. Officeholder mirrors listed official positions in the shogunal bureaucracy and were organized geographically (beginning with Edo and extending to the provinces) and hierarchically (in descending order of prestige). Commoners in service to the shogun appeared at the end of these lists. Berry’s explication focuses on the essential differences between these two types of documentation. In an effort to reify Tokugawa authority, military mirrors fixated on hereditary bloodlines, often using extensive genealogies reaching back to the classical era. Officeholder mirrors present the shogunal administration as a meritocracy in which men of lower status were often appointed to positions of authority over those with higher rank. The former relegated political authority to an iconic realm while the latter made government appear accessible. Both contributed to the nascent sense of nation by exposing the structure and operating principles of the Tokugawa regime to public view.

Chapter five takes up the subject of urban compendia, multivolume surveys that explored cities and urban life in a comprehensive manner. Berry notes that their content and arrangement could vary substantially but “their coverage tends towards convergence, as if some combination of mimicry, inertia, and commonsense had produced an agreement about essential urban properties” (p. 143). She lists physical layout, history, hereditary honor (meaning imperial and shogunal authority), work (broadly defined to include scholars, connoisseurs, craftsmen, and merchants), shrines and temples, and ritual life as the organizational categories common to most urban surveys. Reader constituencies and subjectivities were constructed out of personal interest in one or many of the topics addressed in these compendia.

Urban surveys provided a utilitarian alternative to maps, one that facilitated navigation through words as opposed to the codes and abstractions of cartography. Cities were envisioned as systems of wards and streets. Wards demarcated a fundamental unit of social organization and self-governance, effectively defining a person’s place in both the city and its social structure. Lists of major avenues, organized north to south then east to west provided another means of spatial orientation. The practice of narrating streets from one end to the other highlighted important institutional structures (shrines, temples, historic sites) while conveying the unique character of each ward abutting the main thoroughfares. Relying on imperial and military genealogies, foundation tales (engi), academic studies of historical geography, and the legends, myths and folklore of meisho, urban surveys were layered with references to the past. “Historical recall saturates their texts, not as some pedantic labor but as an almost instinctive, and exhilarating, mode of orientation.” Berry suggests that a populist tendency motivated authors “to project a shared urban space through a shared history” (p. 145). The effect was “kaleidoscopic” as “multiplying categories break metahistory into disparate parts freely available to the curious” (p. 149) and encourage possession of the city through knowledge, even for those with no material, ancestral or proprietary claim to its physical spaces. Following the organizational protocols of mirrors, urban surveys also listed court aristocrats (in Kyoto examples), daimyo, appointees to the shogunal bureaucracy, and commoners employed the administration. But they depart radically from their prototypes by also listing specialists (in a variety of subjects such as tea, Confucian scholarship, sword connoisseurship, etc.), well-known artists, famous craftsmen, and prominent merchants. In effect, urban surveys combine mirrors with commercial directories. Berry sees this as a form of social leveling—a dissolution of class in favor of a self-legitimizing public realm of work that consigns aristocrats and martial lords to
a remote domain of blood honor” (p. 169).

Urban surveys also facilitated access to the ritual life of cities with lists and brief descriptions of annual festivals, religious observances and secular commemorations. These lists were egalitarian in their treatment of sectarian differences, comprehensive in the manner in which they take in the entire city, and long—too long in fact for any individual to attend all the events. Berry notes that descriptions of ritual events tend to focus on their practice as opposed to their underlying beliefs, as if to invite participation and membership in the communities served by each observance.

Berry uses a guidebook and an all-purpose family encyclopedia in chapter six to explore audiences and cultural literacy. With prefaces purporting that these publications were “for ordinary people” or “for everyone,” they suggested a community of readers undifferentiated by social status or occupation. Compared to mirrors and urban compendia, these publications tended to be compact. They assume, therefore, considerable knowledge on the part of their readers. Guidebooks spare no effort to communicate in the simplest possible terms. They use straightforward grammar and provide phonetic readings for kanji. Routes are organized spatially and descriptions of individual sites are entirely oriented toward the visual. But this effort to accommodate a wide constituency of readers also demands of them extensive foreknowledge on a varied array of topics. In Berry’s estimation, “cultural custody of the landscape is exchanged for cultural literacy” (p. 194) and this exchange requires readers to take on the responsibility for knowing the shared history and cultural heritage of “our country” (waga hi no moto) (p. 195).

Family encyclopedias offered information commonly available in other texts but often repackaged it in an ad hoc manner. Possessing no overarching narrative and presenting no agenda, they were “depositor[ies] of facts, rich but random, for curious seekers of knowledge” (pp. 199-200). Like guidebooks they presume a readership familiar with and invested in broader conceptualizations of Nihon and honchō. On matters of geography, for example, encyclopedias followed standard provincial divisions but often included national totals for such things as the number of villages, shrines, temples, and fields under cultivation (pp. 200-201). National histories in encyclopedias utilized imperial and shogunal genealogies as organizational tropes but presented them in a way that exposed the ruptures, breaks, and upheavals official genealogies typically obfuscate. For Berry, encyclopedias make “succession an ongoing achievement of will, fraught with violence and negotiation, which enters into a national life … Succession emerges, in effect, as a continuing story of the “us” who constitute not just a target of genealogical edification but a party to consequential struggles” (p. 203).

In chapter seven, provocatively titled “Nation,” Berry reiterates the major themes of the book from two new perspectives. Using Saikaku’s 1688 The Eternal Storehouse of Japan (Nihon eitaigura), she notes how popular fiction utilized material and tropes from the library of public information. Like the sources on which it was often based, fiction also “presumes cultural literacy—a framework of references that orient readers in a recognizable and shared world” (p. 217). The eclectic nature of the knowledge presented in fiction, however, “poists mixed audiences … ready to comprehend experience across boundaries,” forcing Berry to ask: “do these mixed audiences and crossed boundaries signify a nation” (pp. 217-218). Evidence suggests an affirmative response. Saikaku’s omniscient gaze as narrator provides a vantage point from which to view the territorial integrity of Japan. Persistent references to “Nihon” in his writing enhance this effect. Linking the language and tropes of the information library through travel and an encyclopedic knowledge of regional products, the nation in Saikaku’s fiction became “not just a commonly accessible mental ground but a practically intertwined space of exchange” (p. 222). As with readers of urban compendia, Saikaku’s characters move through space and across class lines quickly and with such relative ease that social divisions recede and collectivity emerges. Saikaku also takes collective knowledge for granted, much like the authors of guidebooks. His humor assumed that readers were culturally literate enough to be in on the joke.

Berry’s second perspective is perhaps more controversial but not as well argued. The library of public information challenges the commonly held notion that the shift from early modernity to modernity occurred in the Meiji era. She attempts to demonstrate this by drawing comparisons between the information library and Meiji ideological constructs concerning territory, state, culture, and public. While interesting, these comparisons are less useful that those made with the medieval era. History is always more convincing when narrated chronologically across immediately sequential periods.Berry’s Meiji comparisons span a gap of 150 years spanning the genesis of the information library in the late seventeenth-century and the formation of the Meiji state in
the late eighteenth. Apart from a few illustrations, which she does not analyze and were, in any event, produced well after the seventeenth century, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century ideological developments are not discussed in depth. As a result many of her observations seem somewhat anticlimactic. Some examples: Constructions of territorial integrity differed greatly because Tokugawa Nihon was self contained and virtually impenetrable to foreigners while Meiji Japan was defined through its intercourse with foreign nations. Whereas ideological construction of political authority in the Tokugawa era was directed mostly at a small peer group of daimyo as opposed to the general masses, Meiji political authority was outlined explicitly in the constitution and inculcated through the education system, military conscription, national taxation, and national holidays. Treatments of history in the information library were atomized, diffused, and voluntary—it was just one part of a multilayered experience of place and time. History in the Meiji period was unified around an imperial theme and made mandatory in schools. It was present in every aspect of being modern. Observations like these diminish what was up to this point an innovative concept coupled with a well-crafted historical analysis.

The cultural comparisons she explores, however, command more attention as they are more in keeping with what was argued in preceding chapters. The Tokugawa era possessed no regime-driven national identity like that in the Meiji period. Nonetheless, contributors to the information library projected a unifying discourse: “Staking out common ground that audiences could enter freely in mind or body, they appropriated both the human and physical terrain of Nihon as knowable, shared space. Describing the common ground in common tropes, they established the formal linkages that made the human and physical terrain intelligible as a whole” (pp. 242-43). Stressing that the information library was largely the product of commercial publishers and therefore driven to some extent by the market it served, Berry asserts that choice implies a public, one that was perhaps a predecessor to Meiji notions of public without the ideological rhetoric. She sums up her observations (and the book) with: “The profound change across the Meiji divide seems nonetheless to have been enabled by a prior public consciousness that had already overridden the status order with presumptions of a collective stake in Nihon. Without it, the tenacity of a society facing spectacular political crisis defies understanding” (p. 251).

*Japan in Print* has much to offer to a wide constituency of readers. Berry has made accessible an array of publications that heretofore have not received serious scholarly consideration. Her tangential discussions of everything from map theory to *meibutsu* are interesting and informative. Her methodology also deserves our admiration and emulation. Extracting habits of thought and mind from historical documents invariably presents scholars with a difficult task, particularly when the sources are so many and so rich but the audience remains, for the most part, undocumented. Berry rightly takes a cautious approach to this problem. She judiciously avoids over-reading the evidence while meticulously questioning her assumptions and observations in every argument she makes. As a result, the book’s central proposition—stretching the “temporal dimension of nationhood” (p. 212) to the early Tokugawa era—is realized gradually and in small increments as we follow the author’s path through her sources. We acquire a “sense of the nation” in much the same manner as seventeenth-century users of the library public information. The author’s self-examination helps us retain our critical distance as the habits of thought and mind of her subjects become our own. Can we ask anything more from historical scholarship?

If one had two words to describe Anthony Chamber's translation of Ueda Akinari’s classic *Ugetsu monogatari* (Tales of Moonlight and Rain, 1776), they would be: “accurate” and “accessible.” In contrast to the older translations of the work, Chambers does a graceful job of letting “the text speak for itself as directly as possible, rather than embroidering it with interpretations and explanations (34).” His translation is elegant without being ornamental, and his streamlining of the footnotes and grammatical style make this translation a highly accessible text for a variety of readers.

As the subtitle suggests, this translation also includes a short yet informative study of *Ugetsu* in the introduction. Each story also begins with some background information to help contextualize the text. Specifically, Chambers focuses on the origin of the Japanese titles, characters, place names, time period, affinities, and “other observations,” which include information about modern authors and films who were influenced by Akinari’s work. I will first comment on the content of the study, then discuss the translation itself. Since various translations of *Ugetsu* already exist, the most famous one being Leon Zolbrod’s, this review will compare the two translations in order to highlight Chambers’ new approaches and contributions.

The introduction offers succinct summaries of Akinari’s life and the historical background of the composition of the *yomihon*. Unlike Zolbrod, who focused on Akinari’s two most famous works, *Ugetsu monogatari* and *Harusame monogatari* (Tales of the Spring Rain, 1809), Chambers also brings in his lesser-known works like *Tandai shōshinroku* (A Record of Daring and Prudence, 1808) and *Shodô kikimimi sekenzaru* (A Worldly Monkey Who Hears About Everything, 1766). He reveals how *Ugetsu* represents the culmination of Akinari’s goal as a writer to go beyond the vulgar (*zoku*) and attain elegance/refinement (*ga*), and he also shows how this “ghost story” cannot be understood without studying its ties to nativism, when he states: “While Akinari rejected Norinaga’s uncritical embrace of ancient mythology, he did share the National Learning scholars’ propensity to ‘celebrate the mysterious wonders of life,’ which takes an especially vivid form in *Moonlight and Rain* (10).” Chambers thus successfully captures Akinari’s multiple faces as a doctor, a *bunjin*, a *kokugaku* scholar, and a *haikai* poet.

Similarly, Chambers also emphasizes the unique, hybrid nature of *Ugetsu*. He claims that the two elements of *Ugetsu* that were considered to be new in his era were “the adaptation of Chinese stories and the strange or anomalous (13),” and he goes on to summarize the various narrative techniques Akinari deploys in the text—mixture of allusions to Chinese sources and to Japanese classics, structures resembling no plays, method of poetic *honkadori* (allusive variation). He carefully lists the original Chinese sources that inspired the *yomihon*, but he also argues that Akinari succeeded in creating a psychological complexity nonexistent in the Chinese vernacular tales:

As Robert Ford Campany has pointed out, the authors of Chinese anomaly accounts were not concerned with “the ‘inner’ nature toward perfection through self-cultivation, (*xing*) of intellectual and emotional disposition, nor the structure of the self’s ascent but precisely humankind’s taxonomic place among other kinds of beings, the nature of its relationships to other kinds.” In *Moonlight and Rain*, by contrast, it is precisely the characters’ inner natures... that concerned Akinari (15-16, italics in the original).

As evident from above, Chambers’ understanding of “the strange or anomalous” is informed by scholarship on Asian ghost stories, and he is careful not to call *Ugetsu* simply a “supernatural” or a “fantastic” piece, which would place it within the Western rubric of fantastic fiction. He aptly argues that such terms should not be equated to the concept of Japanese ghost stories or *kaidan*, for each culture has different definitions of what falls under the category of unnatural or marvelous.

One of the most informative parts in his intro-
duction is the section on *Ugetsu*’s settings and structure, both of the story and of the compilation as a whole. He offers a comprehensive chart of the settings and the dates of each story, observing that all stories except “The Owl of the Three Jewels” take place in pre-Tokugawa era, and none are set in the three great cities. He sees this as a method of “distanting,” where the specificity of the places (provinces) “has the effect of grounding the strange beings and events in the real world, thus lending plausibility to the stories (20).” It is also a technique for purposefully avoiding censorship, for “anomalies, even when they occur in distant provinces, represent disorder (21).”

For the structure of the stories, Chambers bases his analysis on Campany’s work on the structure of Chinese anomalous accounts. These accounts follow a certain order, beginning with place settings, foreshadowing or hints, pivot, climax, outcome, and impact (an additional commentator appears at the end and offers his viewpoint). Chambers also compares *Ugetsu* to the structure of nō plays, where the *shite* often encounters the *waki* in a ghostly form. This kind of narratological analysis provides an interesting tool for understanding the stories. He also lists various theories on the structure of the entire compilation, such as Takada Mamoru’s analysis, which has revealed various links between the stories like Confucianism, notion of loyalty/fidelity, image of water, animal imagery, cruel man/woman, jealous women, lust, Chinese verse, and philosophical dialogue between the dead and the living. Other connecting themes include the varying danger of the anomalous beings and the kind of characters, who are often steadfast or undependable.

It is only because the translator’s readings are so engaging that the study would have benefited from an elaboration on his thoughts. One place where Chambers could have expanded on his thoughts was in the “Other Observations” section, preceding each chapter. These observations vary from story to story, and they are somewhat unbalanced. In fact, he omits them for “The Kibitsu Cauldron” and “On Poverty and Wealth.” Specifically, I wanted to hear more about the ambiguities he encountered in the text, both grammatically and content-wise. For example, Chambers ultimately reads *Ugetsu* as a complicit text that “indirectly draws attention to the orderliness of the Tokugawa era and reinforces the normality of the center, the big city (21).” However, scholars such as Moriyama Shigeo have suggested otherwise, reading “Shiramine” as a subversive work, for it revolved around the ghost of Emperor Sutoku, whom the Tokugawa *bakufu* feared. Also, the ending poem that reads, “one hundred families will return to the house,” has often been read by scholars like Takada Mamoru as containing a double entendre, one celebrating the regime, the other criticizing it. The notion and the Chinese character for *kaeru* (return) is often an ironic one in *Ugetsu*, in which characters often do not return in time (“The Reed-Choked House”) or come back in ghostly forms (“Chrysanthemum Vow”). Also, in his commentaries for *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, Takada also raises interesting questions about the “morals” of the story at the end, such as the one in “The Chrysanthemum Vow”—“Truly, one must not form bonds of friendship with a shallow man (88)—is of highly ambiguous nature, for it does not seem to point directly to the villain Akana Tanji, and the identity of this “shallow man” remains mysterious.

As astute as Chambers’ observations may be, his analysis occasionally offers too clear a reading for this hybrid, ambiguous text, and this clarity causes some conflict with his goal of letting the text “speak for itself.”

Regarding the translation itself, three points of comparison between Zolbrod’s version and Chambers’ should be highlighted. The first point deals with how accurately the translation reflects the original in terms of its structure and narrative voice. This is probably the biggest difference between the two translations, and Chambers deserves praise for accomplishing this difficult task. Whereas Zolbrod attempted to transform the language of *Ugetsu* into “common English” and hence changed the original format of the work and added his own interpretations, Chambers, for the most part, does not touch the formatting; his English sentences directly reflect the position of their Japanese counterparts. Consider the difference in this passage from “Asaji ga yado”:

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"Miyagi is not here! Where could she have gone?" he thought, upon finding that she no longer lay with him. "Have I been bewitched by a fox?" (Zolbrod, quotations in the original, 128)

And where, come to think of it, had his wife gone, who had been lying with him? She was nowhere in sight. Perhaps this was the doing of a fox? (Chambers 100)

Zolbrod often inserts quotation marks and other indicators, including clear subject pronouns in order to allow the reader to read Ugetsu like an English novel. However, Chambers remains more true to the original by returning the multiple, distinctive voices to the single narrator. In the first story, "Shiramine," this is also evident. Zolbrod uses first-person narration for this story, in contrast to Chambers, who carefully chooses to use third-person ("he"). His maneuver also makes more sense when considering the fact that the name of Saigyô appears in the text at one point, turning it into what English speakers would associate with a third-person narrative voice. It is impressive how close his translation comes to capturing the uniqueness of the original narrative voice that encapsulates all of its characters’ voices while having a voice of its own.

Second, the two translators’ styles contrast significantly. Zolbrod’s tends to be more ornamental and loaded, while Chamber’s style flows more smoothly, for his writing is succinct and direct. Readers who are familiar with Zolbrod’s translation will find his writing is wordy and overdramatic. However, Chambers’ uses of “shallow” or “sincerity” also sounds strange and lacking, especially when the latter is supposed to capture Sôemon’s devotion to come back to his brother/lover figure Samon. In moments like these, Chambers could have applied more complicated or loaded words.

The third main difference lies in the use of footnotes. Chambers greatly reduces the number of footnotes in his translation, compared to Zolbrod, who meticulously and almost obsessively notes each difficult phrase and historical note. Both scholars base their footnotes on the annotations made by two great scholars of Akinari’s works: Uzuki Hiroshi (Ugetsu monogatari hyôshaku) and Nakamura Yukihiko (annotator for both Nihon koten bungaku zen-shû and Nihon koten bungaku taiseki versions of Ugetsu). Overall, Chambers skillfully reduces the number of footnotes, making the collection much more accessible for a wider readership. However, I must confess that the use of endnotes and footnotes in his translation was the most confusing editorial factor in the book. As stated earlier, Chambers begins each story with a short introduction, which
includes information about the title, historical background, etc. Sometimes he refrains from mentioning these by footnoting them in the text. There are also footnotes (at the bottom of the page) and endnotes (at the end of each chapter). The footnotes are organized by line numbers, but since there are no line numbers on the actual pages, the corresponding phrases are extremely difficult to find. The endnotes are informative and are much more streamlined than Zolbrod’s. The result, then, is that the reader must search for information in three different places—the introductions, footnotes, and endnotes—which could be a very frustrating process. Even though the introductions are helpful, one wonders if he could not have compiled at least the footnotes and the endnotes together. At the end of the day though, Chambers’ collection will strongly appeal to educators who want to teach Ugetsu, for students will not be bogged down with unnecessary notes and descriptions.

Overall, Chamber’s new translation is an impressive accomplishment that beautifully captures the strange world of Ugetsu. His rendering and study should prove engaging for scholars wanting to re-read the classic, and instructors and students will benefit from both the translation and the informative and convenient introductory notes, along with the bibliography, which lists all previous English translations of Akinari’s work. Chambers, in the opening, admits that it is impossible to fully reproduce the unique, hybrid language of Ugetsu, but out of all existent translations, this one comes the closest to accomplishing that daunting task.
Watanabe Kazan was persecuted as a traitor and died a martyr in exile, his failure to perform his duties as a samurai finally driving him to ritual suicide. An accomplished Confucian scholar, painter, and rangaku (Dutch Studies) enthusiast, Kazan was a conservative whose moral sensibilities exemplified the socio-intellectual standards of the Tokugawa order. He was also a free thinker, however, who did not hesitate to develop adversarial political views and artistic styles that incorporated controversial Western ideas. In the end, his eclectic talents caused him to fall victim to the paranoia and moral ambivalence of his age, for though he was admired and trusted by his colleagues, few would step forward to expose the fraudulence of his persecution.

Donald Keene’s *Frog in the Well* is both a biography of Kazan and a commentary on this troubled time in Japanese history. Keene’s is a familiar, fatherly voice for most of us. His narrative style here is fluid, comfortable, and asks the reader for a certain complacency that one would expect from a Penguin publication but less so from the Columbia University Press. (The book’s striking, dark green print also prepares us to expect something distinct from this publisher’s usual fare.) Readers may balk at Keene’s undisguised fondness for Kazan and his generous use of sensationalistic descriptors like “brilliant” and “unprecedented.” They may find suspicious his tendency to interpret Kazan’s inconsistencies—his anguish, failings, and even transgressions—as hallmarks of Confucian virtue and to highlight episodes that will reaffirm Kazan’s admirable qualities. A lengthy account of his search for O-gin, mother of Miyake Tomonobu, the illegitimate and “retired” son of the Tahara daimyo, for example, appears to offer less historical relevance than it does an appropriate context to recount Kazan’s gentleness, generosity, open-heartedness, and magnanimity. If one, as a reader, does not submit to Keene’s anecdotal style and goes looking for theoretical complexity, in other words, the narrative is in peril of coming across as facile. The research is not facile, however, substantiated as it is by diaries, letters, depositions, essays, poems, and paintings, but merely camouflaged by Keene’s skill in delivering an enjoyable reading experience.

The book’s first two chapters form the historical backdrop for Kazan’s story. The first revisits fundamental information familiar to anyone who knows Japan: China’s impact on Japanese culture, the arrival of the Europeans, the Tokugawa social order, and the emergence of rangaku, amounting to little more than a thin digest of Keene’s wonderful *The Japanese Discovery of Europe: 1720-1830* (Stanford, 1969). Titled “Japan in 1793,” Chapter Two is intended to historicize Kazan’s age but does so by jumping altogether too easily between disparate topics: from Matsudaira Sadanobu, to the imperial institution, to Kazan’s painting, for instance. This overly loose organization afflicts much of the book and often succeeds in rendering only a disorienting pastiche of Kazan’s world. Surely in a biographical study of Watanabe Kazan it is puzzling to conclude a three-page discussion of Emperor Kôkaku by stating merely that Kazan never had any reason to be concerned with him (p. 39).

Through the third and fourth chapters the reader becomes increasingly appreciative of Kazan’s importance as an innovative thinker and artist. These sections make extensive use of Kazan’s early paintings and diaries to illustrate the development of a classic internal conflict between devotion to duty (giri) and human emotion (ninjô)—in his case the clash between energies required to perform domainal obligations and his passion to excel as a painter. But it is to uncertain effect that Keene mixes discussions of art, politics, and rangaku so readily, as doing so casts Kazan’s art as unduly political, and at times causes these middle chapters to lose narrative coherence. Art, rangaku, and politics pulled Kazan in opposing directions, causing him anguish and eventually triggering his persecution and death, but the quick transitions between them—as the shift from an interview with Dutch trading director Johannes Niemann directly into an analysis of the iconography in Kazan’s paintings (p. 138)—produces an abrupt, disorienting effect. Nonetheless, Keene is to be credited for injecting interdisciplinarity into biography, interpreting art history through political history in this case, and one hopes that his efforts to tie together the multiple threads of Kazan’s life will lay the groundwork for future cross-disciplinary approaches to the field.
In spite of their oddly loose organization, the book’s middle and later chapters are engaging and effectively consolidate the various dimensions of Kazan’s persona. Considering that Kazan has received more attention as a political figure than as an artist, the experience of discovering his artistic innovations proves especially fascinating. Keene culls from Kazan’s writings the seminal events of the latter’s life, and his practiced, elegant prose weaves them into absorbing plots that are handsomely complemented by thirty-eight illustrations, all but a few in color. Though it is regrettably tempting to find fault with this narrative style, ultimately it compromises the book’s reliability only at the rare instances when it sacrifices complexity, as when it inhibits Keene from exploring the intriguing contradictions that float to the surface of Kazan’s writings. The fact that Kazan was both a staunch Confucian and an artist attracted to a bunjin ethos rooted in heretical schools of thought, for instance, poses an interesting paradox that is left unexplored.

In a letter to his disciple Tsubaki Chinzan (1801-1854), Kazan outlines his preference for realism in landscape painting and decries the abstractions popular among contemporary works of that genre, which he compares to the “heresy” (itan) of Laozi and Zhuangzi (p. 207). This otherwise unremarkable statement in support of aesthetic orthodoxy stands in interesting contrast to Kazan’s explicit and implicit reverential allusions to Zhuangzi in his letters (p. 205), paintings (p. 215), and poems (p. 218). Allowing this inconsistency to pass without comment conveys a misleading view of Kazan’s intellectual loyalties and a false impression about the reception of Daoism in the Tokugawa period, and within the bunjin arts in particular. Keene’s explanation of the bunjin tradition in East Asia (pp. 199-202)—a discussion that would have been helpful early in the book rather than near the end—also overlooks Daoist influences entirely.

Minor qualms aside, the book is substantive and its strengths outshine its deficiencies. Particularly welcome is its analysis of Kazan’s extraordinary paintings, which have not received due attention outside the field of art history. Keene brings Kazan’s art within reach of non-specialists, for whom a two-paragraph analysis of a given work’s stylistic and historical significance is enough. Here he relies predominantly on Japanese scholarship, which is comprehensive but has been hindered by a compulsion to interpret and explain history in terms of a modernization that unfolds in a linear pattern through causal events. Traces of this are detectable in Keene’s diction: words like “individualist” and “reformer” suggesting interpretations that view Kazan as driving Japanese history toward modernization. Though a recurring subtext throughout the book, the notion of Kazan as a modernizer and prophet of kaikoku is not openly articulated until the final pages, and Keene is careful to do so only through the voices of other Kazan scholars. Wisely refusing to add his own voice to this fray, Keene’s purpose remains refreshingly simple: to recover the life and art of an extraordinary man misunderstood by his contemporaries and persecuted for his foresight.

Frog in the Well is a narrative hagiography with a storybook style that will soar or suffer depending on how the reader receives it. Critical readers will find Keene’s devotion to an overly tidy, seamless storyline uncomfortably conjectural. More forgiving audiences will be content to discover and be moved by Kazan’s accomplishments and failures. In the end, nearly all will share an appreciation of the project as an excavation of a compelling historical figure. Kazan’s independence and curiosity in Dutch Studies enabled him to make important innovations in painting, to see his world in ways that were incomprehensible to his contemporaries, and to become one of the singular competent voices within his domain’s leadership. The conflict between his loyalties, judgments, and personal convictions also makes him a fine lens through which to view the contradictions of late Tokugawa society and politics. It is gratifying to see that academic publishing still has a place for narrative biographical studies that deliver a lively, memorable reading experience to a broad audience, for while this charming book will not change our view of late Tokugawa history, it will certainly bring that history to life.
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