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Basic Style Guidelines for Final Manuscript Submissions to EMJ
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 Glynne Walley, Review Editor, Early Modern Japan, 2661 Portland St. #6, Eugene, OR 97405. E-mail correspondence may be sent to tgwalley at gmail.com. Readers wishing to review books are encouraged to specify their interests in an e-mail to the Book Review Editor, Glynne Walley.
From the Editor:
編纂者のメッセージ

In Spring, 2000, *EMJ*, with support from the East Asian Studies Center and the Center for Japanese Studies at The Ohio State University, sponsored a conference on the state of the field of Early Modern Japanese Studies. Participants assembled in Columbus, Ohio, to explore developments in the field, primarily since it began to occupy considerable interest in the 1970s and 1980s. Essays and bibliographies from that conference were published in *EMJ* over three issues in the Spring and Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 issues. At the time, *EMJ* was a strictly print journal, but each of these issues sold very well – about 700 copies each. (Digital copies of the essays and bibliographies are available online along with all *EMJ* back issues at https://kb.osu.edu/dspace/handle/1811/583

Ten years have elapsed since that time, and a number of colleagues have expressed interest in seeing updates to those essays. *EMJ* would be pleased to receive proposals for essays to review the State of the Field from interested authors. While broadly conceived essays on the order of the original collection would be ideal (religion and thought, art history, literature and the performing arts, socioeconomic history, political history, and foreign affairs), proposals for somewhat more narrowly focused essays are also welcome. Interested authors, please contact *EMJ* editor Philip Brown at brown.113@osu.edu.

2) Some reminders for other potential submissions:

a) *EMJ* has a long-standing interest in proposals for thematically linked essays and welcomes thematically linked submissions of multiple manuscripts. Note, however, that each manuscript will be individually evaluated by referees.

b) As always, we welcome submission of individual scholarly articles, but in addition, we are also interested in translations, discussions of teaching, and other professionally oriented materials that do not normally appear in scholarly journals. Authors should feel free to contact the editor at brown.113@osu.edu with inquiries.

3) EMJNet at the AAS. The Early Modern Japan Network was first formed to support the presence of panels and papers on early modern Japan at the Association for Asian Studies. To that end, we act as sponsors for panel proposals submitted to the AAS Annual Meeting Program Committee as well as sponsoring our own meeting in conjunction with the AAS Annual Meeting. People interested in having EMJNet support for proposals submitted to the AAS or proposing panels at the EMJnet meeting held in conjunction with the AAS should contact Philip Brown (brown.113@osu.edu) early in the process of developing the panel proposal. For our own meeting we have typically sponsored one or two panels, but we have had as many as four or five in the past.

This year’s program focuses on “time” in the early modern context. The panel will be held on Wednesday afternoon (March 30), from 2:00 to 5:30 p.m. in the Hilton Hotel (not in the Convention Center), Honolulu Suite 1. PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE. Like all "meetings in conjunction" this panel will not be listed in the formal AAS Program (announcements listing the panel will be available at registration).

Given that AAS panels begin bright and early on Thursday morning, we hope that those who fly in to make those sessions will join us for this intriguing panel!

**Time in Early Modern Japan**

Organizer: Yulia Frumer (Princeton University)

Time is, and always has been one of the basic elements of human existence. Its omnipresent character and its unavoidable influence on every aspect of life has troubled the human mind since the dawn of history. There is no doubt that time-related practices and the very perception of time constitute an important facet of the cultural identity of any given society. In this sense, Edo society was no exception.

This panel explores the ways time and time-related practices were treated, manipulated and conceptualized in the Edo period. Each speaker focuses on a different element of Edo period cul-
ture. Regan Murphy examines Buddhist discourse and explore the ways writing came to be seen as means to thwart time; Matthias Hayek analyzes time calculations and predictions, focusing specifically on hemerological elements found in various genres of Edo-period literature; Yulia Frumer discusses underlying temporal assumptions embedded in various shapes of mechanical clock-dials; and Dylan McGee looks at the role of clocks in Edo period literature through analysis of Santō Kyōden’s use of clocks as a literary device.

Exiting, Transcending, Recording: Thoughts on Time in Early Modern Japan

Presenter: Regan Murphy (University of California, Berkley)

I explore early modern Buddhist discussions of writing as a means of thwarting time. In particular, one piece written by a nineteenth century nun envisions the act of recording historical events as a way of both transmitting ideas over time and as pointing toward an exit from temporal cycles. A close examination of this text sheds light not only on early modern Buddhist conceptions of time and historical writing, but also suggests multiple valances of Buddhist historical and temporal thinking. These conceptions have also been seen in the recent anthropological study of Nepalese Buddhists by Robert Desjarais (Sensory Biographies 2003). The vision of writing as providing a trace of a teaching can further be seen in the works of Jiun Sonja (1718-1804), a contemporary Buddhist monk, who imagined various forms of recording, whether in calligraphy, sculpture or poetry, as playing a critical role in the continuance of the Buddhist teaching. The issue of whether writing functioned as vehicle for ideas despite vast spans of time between the writer and the reader was central to contemporary Buddhist and non-Buddhist philological studies of ancient texts. This presentation explores Buddhist ideas of temporal passing and the recording of human acts and provides a fresh look at one answer to this question in the late nineteenth century.

Calendar Time and Daily Life: the Diffusion of Hemerological Lore through Books in Edo Japan

Presenter: Matthias Hayek (Université Paris Diderot)

I look into how several calendar-related beliefs played an important role in commoner culture during the Edo Period. The importance of calendars at that time is a well established fact. Following the establishment of Tokugawa rule, calendar calculation and production was soon unified under the Bakufu’s control. As a time-measuring device, calendars enable their users to schedule their lives: when a tax should be paid/collected, when some merchandise should arrive and be paid for, when should one accomplish religious rituals etc. However, this is by no means the only purpose of a calendar in Tokugawa Japan. As one can see in the various ukiyo-e depicting ladies peering gleefully into a folded calendar, there was something more in there than just days and dates. Edo calendars were indeed not mere day lists, but provided their reader with various annotations regarding the auspicious character of the day. Far from being anecdotic, these hemerological elements were not only to be found in calendars, but were also at the core of another genre of printed material e.g. almanacs, commonly known as Ōzassho. Although these are quite well known facts, one may find it puzzling to come across this same kind of knowledge in books of largely unrelated genres, like dictionaries and historical chronicles. I will examine what kind of hemerological elements can be found in both these non-calendar, non-almanacs books, and try to determine why they were included in such materials. By doing so, I shed light on the way Japanese people of the Edo period perceived time and history.

The Face of Time: Temporal Assumptions in Edo-period Clock Dials

Presenter: Yulia Frumer (Princeton University)

What does time look like? Its unavoidable influence is seen everywhere, and yet, in itself, it is
abstract and evasive. There is no way to recognize time but through its imprint on the world around us; and there is no other way to perceive this abstract notion but through its manifestation in the material realm.

The history of Edo-period horology suggests that one of the material aspects that often shape human perception of the flow of time are the very devices people use to measure it. A line stretching from the etymology of the word “tokei” to the peculiar shapes of Edo-period timepieces, such as clepsydras, sundials and incense boards, demonstrates how close this association was between the perception of passage of time and the materiality of its manifestation.

Especially revealing are the faces of mechanical clocks of Edo period. Although usually discussed only in the context of their function, the appearance of Japanese clocks illuminates characteristics of contemporaneous images of time. Mechanical clocks were initially imported from Europe in the sixteenth century, but in Japan they went through a metamorphosis and consequently turned into devices that only vaguely resembled Western timepieces. The materiality of these clocks and the unique shape of their dials can be regarded as a crystallized form of collective expectation of Edo period consumers. Therefore, a material “reading” of these devices can provide us with a glimpse into series of assumptions about time that guided their creators.

Luxury, Leisure and Technological Voyeurism: Mechanical Clocks in the Kibyōshi and Sharebon of Santō Kyōden

Presenter: Dylan McGee (SUNY New Paltz/ Nagoya University)

During the seventeenth century, custom-made mechanical clocks became fixtures in the homes of political and commercial elite throughout the city of Edo. For the vast majority of the populace, however, the prohibitive costs of clocks made them an inaccessible luxury. Within this context, popular literature responded by offering vicarious—indeed, it might even be said voyeuristic—access to the high technology of time-keeping, especially in its depictions of the stately yagura-dokei and its elegant, free hanging counterpart, the kake-dokei.

As part of a larger project documenting the cultural inscription of mechanical clocks during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, I focus on the depictions of clocks in the fiction of Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), noting how their narrative functions and representational values change from early kibyōshi like Yone manjū no hajimari (The Origins of Yone Dumplings, 1780) and Edo no haru ichiya senryō (A Thousand Ryō on a Spring Night in Edo, 1786) to later works in the genre, like Kyōden-shu no jūroku rikan (Master Kyōden’s Sixteen Money Grubbers, 1799) written after Kyōden’s arrest in 1791. I also document Kyōden’s attempts to experiment with the clock as a narrative device — culminating, I would argue, in the Sharebon seiro hiru no sekai: nishiki no ura (The World of the Cerulean Towers: Behind the Brocade, 1791), in which the temporal settings of scenes are indicated by clocks inserted between lines of text.

4) This Issue

This issue opens with four articles which comprised a symposium on the theme of “Death and Dying in Early Modern Japan,” at the National University of Singapore September 2009. The workshop was generously funded by the Japan Foundation and the Department of Japanese Studies. We hope to publish further work from this meeting in the next issue of EMJ. (Similar thematic collections of essays are welcome!) The pieces span the experiences of commoners, including outcastes and samurai as the confronted illness and the experience, indeed, expectation of death. The sequence begins with Timothy Amos’s discussion and analysis of the role of outcastes in Tokugawa medical practice, a role for outcastes only hinted at elsewhere. While medicine aimed to prolong life, Takeshi Moriyama takes up a case study of one man’s efforts to assure his legacy for his son and future generations, confronting the inevitable loss of control over his household that comes with age and retirement. Scot Hislop looks at the household transition and death from the perspective of those left behind. How did they make sense of the death of a parent? Finally, Olivier Ansart explores the meaning of death in the lives of samu-
rai by exploring one of the most enigmatic of samurai texts, *Hagakure*. Although not part of the University of Singapore symposium, Marlien A. Ehlers’ essay also deals with the issue of death and outcastes’ relationship to it through her examination of outcastes as executioners.

The last three articles all focus on literature and the performing arts. W. Puck Brecher takes readers into lighter territory, exploring and translating a work of light-hearted commoner literature from the late eighteenth century. Scott Alexander Lineberger’s article analyzes the influence of class on literary style during the early seventeenth century. Even at this time there were both samurai and commoner participants in poetry salons, and, says Lineberger, class did make a difference, even among practitioners who often associated with each other. Finally, but continuing a focus on aesthetics, Dylan McGee explores *chaban*, a dynamic and popular form of theatrical performance in Early Modern Japan. Taken together, these three articles provide multi-faceted perspectives on popular culture in Tokugawa Japan.
Outcasts and Medical Practices in Tokugawa Japan
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Introduction

Documentary evidence from the early modern period linking outcasts (senmin or hisabetsumin) to medical practices is scarce. Extant contemporaneous sources and more recent oral historical accounts, however, suggest a substantive association meriting further research and analysis. In 1765, for example, an entire village in eastern Japan requested that a resident eta be permitted to have his official status designation changed in order to function more effectively as the local doctor. The medical practitioner in question was “highly valued” (chōhō) by the local community but his legal eta status apparently hampered his activities. Sugita Genpaku, too, mentioned in his famous Rantō Kotohajime (Dawn of Western Science) that an aged male of eta status expertly performed an autopsy (fuwake) in front of him. He noted that this elderly person was actually a last minute replacement for his ill son of identical status who was also reputed to be “skilled” (kōsha). Postwar anecdotal evidence, moreover, suggests the possibility that some modern burakumin households engaged in hereditary medical practices. These and other examples of early modern outcaste (and burakumin) participation in medical practices in Japan deserve further investigation: What precisely was the link between outcastes and medical practices during the early modern period? How did the connection arise? What was its historical significance?

This paper, drawing on a variety of Japanese sources including legal documents, city magistrate records, merchant diaries, literary texts, family histories, writings of intellectuals, and contemporaneous Western accounts, offers an account of outcaste engagement in localized medical practices in early modern Japan. Members of outcaste groups vari-

1 I would like to gratefully acknowledge the numerous helpful suggestions I received on this manuscript from Tsukada Takashi, Ōtō Osamu, Scot Hislop, Philip Brown, and three anonymous reviewers.


3 Eta 稔多/ゑた/江田/問多 (literally “abundant filth”) was the derogatory title given to groups of social outcasts in Japan during the latter half of the Tokugawa period. For a recent in-depth study of life in a Tokugawa outcaste village in eastern Japan, as well as a basic outline of differences between eta and hinin groups, see my “Portrait of a Tokugawa Outcaste Village,” East Asian History 32/33 (June 2006/December 2007): 83-108.


5 Saitō Yōichi discusses cases in Shiga prefecture and Osaka based on accounts by Hirai Kiyotaki and Teraki Nobuaki in “Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyō/saikō,” Buraku kaihō kyō vol. 155 (2003): 7, 12.

6 The question of how to define “medical” in early modern Japan is a difficult one. I use the term here both as a direct translation of the Japanese i (医), which proliferates throughout early modern texts, as well as to refer to practices associated with healing and health, usually expressed contemporaneously through terms such as kaihō (介抱), ryōyō (療養), and yōjō (養生). I am conceptualizing here a kind of hybridized state between two practices usually carefully distinguished in modernity – “medicine” (understanding the human body, restoring or promoting health, preventing or alleviating abnormalities or illness) and “healing” (achieving or maintaining health by whatever means). See Paul U. Unschuld for a useful discussion on both of these terms in What is Medicine?: Western and Eastern Approaches to Healing. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 6. Roy Porter has offered a different perspective on the meaning of (and rela-

The word kawata first appears in primary records in 1430. 皮田/革田/革多 are some of the numerous character combinations used for kawata. In the Sengoku period, kawata was also sometimes written simply as かわた. This word is argued to have become discriminatory after it was written in the land cadastral records to distinguish between agricultural and non-agricultural producers. Takeuchi Rizō and Takayanagi Mitsutoshi, Kadokawa nihonshi jiten. (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1994), 224. Minegishi Kentarō has basically argued that there is essentially little difference between kawata and eta. Minegishi Kentarō, Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 1996), 138, 144, 148. Hinin 非人 (literally “not human”) were social outcastes who predominantly engaged in begging, but also participated in executions, guard duties, animal carcass disposal, and the burial of vagrants. See my “Portrait of a Tokugawa Outcaste Village” for an English introduction to an eta settlement with a hinin community in eastern Japan. For an easy-to-read introduction to hinin in Osaka consult Tsukada Takashi, Toshi Ōsaka to hinin. (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2001).Chasen 茶筅, also written as 茶筌 were groups that lived primarily in the Chigoku region and engaged in farming, bamboo-ware production, and certain religious purification rites. An interesting discussion of these groups in Japanese is found in Yanagita Kunio, Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū, vol. 9. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1962), 372, 377. For an English language discussion of onbō see Andrew Bernstein, Modern Passings: Death Rites, Politics, and Social Change in Imperial Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 30-31.

uous labeled eta, kawata, hinin, and chasen worked as physicians (ishi), herbalists (kusushi), and veterinarians (bakuro) within their local and wider communities. They also engaged in the nursing to health (kaihō/ryōyō) of fellow outcastes or other persons of marginalized status, were involved in the inspection of the bodies of dead wayfarers and homicide victims (yukidoarenin/henshimonon kenbun), performed burials and mortuary rites for the dead (shitai torikatazukete/sōsō), and undertook post-mortem examinations of the human body (fuwake). On occasion, too, members of groups with high social and legal status, including professional doctors engaged in Rangaku (Western Learning) and Tokugawa shogunate officials, actively sought out knowledge from these communities in order to better facilitate the development of their own medical expertise.

I argue that three concurrent seventeenth-century historical processes created the necessary conditions for outcaste engagement in medical activities, encouraging a strong conceptual association between them which informed social practices, but sustained involvement in medical activities was the result of many outcaste communities’ decision to exploit the considerable economic and social potential generated by such practices. Outcastes were first integrated into early modern society as official status groups (in David Howell’s words, a “taxonomic revolution”) made to undertake duties closely associated with death. Outcaste groups then became concentrated targets of social stigmatization as an infusion of political discourses concerning the sanctity of life, the hazardous effects of death pollution, and the normative features of the ideal Tokugawa subject from the last quarter of the seventeenth century worked to both order, marginalize, and mystify these communities in the popular “hierarchizing imaginary.” Lastly, outcastes became conceptually invested with curative potential as early modern society became increasingly concerned with matters pertaining to the preservation of life through the widespread proliferation of the Neo-Confucian medical discourse of “health cultivation” (yōjō)。“Taxonomic revolution” is taken from David Howell’s Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan, 33; the idea of the medicalization of Tokugawa society is found in Susan L. Burns, “The Body as Text: Confucianism, Reproduction, and Gender in Tokugawa Japan,” in Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, edited by Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan and Herman Ooms, Los Angeles: UCLA Asia Pacific Monograph Series, 2002, 178-219; and the concept of the imaginary attempts to build on the idea of “fundamental hierarchizing ‘imaginary’” is found in Herman Ooms, Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law. (Berkeley: Univer-
Many early modern outcaste communities, negotiating the historical conditions shaped by an intersection of these three processes, began to develop a degree of expertise in certain medical practices from the late seventeenth century, systematically exploiting the considerable economic and social potential derivable from participation in these activities.

Japanese scholars usually respond to evidence indicating outcaste engagement in early modern medical practices in two distinct ways. First, those with strong contemporary activist ties tend to embrace it as clear confirmation of the impressive civilizational level of premodern burakumin culture. Outcaste involvement in healing arts is usually explained from this perspective as the natural result of a negatively constructed and largely static premodern Japanese cosmological orientation towards death and illness. Other scholars, however, usually opposed to this first view, are inclined to characterize outcaste engagement in certain medical pursuits as largely unexceptional. Early modern ‘status groups’ (mibunteki shūdan) were allegedly constituted through an elaborate array of discriminatory policies and practices which affected almost everyone. Therefore, many, if not all, status groups in early modern Japanese society developed a basic body of medical knowledge and practices. The expectation is that all status groups (existing in ‘layers’ and ‘pockets’ throughout early modern Japanese society) would develop a degree of localized medical knowledge and practices.

This paper contends that the real significance of outcaste involvement in early modern medical practices probably lies somewhere between the two interpretative positions adopted by concerned Japanese scholars. The hagiographical impulse common in many postwar early modern buraku histories should doubtless be resisted when examining available evidence on outcaste medical practices. De-emphasizing hierarchical concerns in early modern ‘status theory’ (mibunron), however, is also problematic (an ‘interpretative overcorrection’). As Daniel Botsman reminds us in his important study, early modern outcastes were not necessarily treated the same as other social groups. Therefore the question of how outcastes in a given historical period came to be treated differently to other groups in early modern Japanese society and the kinds of treatment they received must inform any study of their particular practices. Outcastes did experiment in certain medical practices, perhaps occasionally even contributing to developments in early modern medical practices. Understanding the precise nature of their engagement in these activities reveals important information about the nature of early modern Japanese society.

The first section of this paper provides a brief background discussion of the state of medical practice in early Tokugawa Japan. The paper then moves on to demonstrate how the three aforementioned seventeenth-century processes of social taxonomy, discursive political reordering of the dominant hier-

9 See, for example, Saitō, “Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyō/saikō,” 2-21; Fujisawa Yōsuke, “Iyakugyō, Takeosa-zukuri nado to no kankei,” Buraku kaikō vol. 611 (2009): 114-123.
10 Tsukada Takashi (Osaka City University) and Ōtō Osamu (Tohoku University) both emphasized this point in response to an earlier version of this paper presented at the workshop Death and Dying in Early Modern Japan, held at the National University of Singapore in September, 2009.
12 Tsukada Takashi, Kinsei mibunsei to shūen shakai (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1997), 349.
13 For an introduction to Tsukada’s groundbreaking work on “social status groups” see Tsukada Takashi, Kinsei nihon mibunsei no kenkyū (Kobe: Hyōgo Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1987), 34; also Tsukada, Mibunron kara rekishigaku wo kangaeru, 153-171. I have relied on Daniel Botsman’s work for a translation of Tsukada’s key notions of jūsō and fukugō. See Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan, 69, 71, 84.
14 Botsman, ibid., 55.
archical imaginary, and the promotion of health cultivation medical discourse worked together to facilitate a linkage between outcastes and medical practices. The paper next offers a detailed description of outcaste engagement in medical practices from the end of the seventeenth century through to the early nineteenth century, followed by a brief discussion of the possible historical significance of these developments.

Background

Early Tokugawa medical practices were to some extent informed by residual beliefs rooted in what Amino Yoshihiko once called a fundamental distinction between the ‘human’ and ‘supernatural’ realms, but there were also informed by new developments in discourse and practice. Healing in the late medieval world was not restricted to medical practitioners: Buddhist curing arts, as well as an assortment of other religious practices, continued to influence medical practices. Death and illness remained sources of great anxiety and consternation, religious practitioners continued to be relied upon during medical crises, and the social status of persons professionally engaged in ‘medical practices’ (igaku/idō) retained its ambiguity. Neo-Confucianism, however, gradually became the new orthodoxy in official remedial discourse during this period. Social concerns about how improvements to personal and collective health could increase life stability and longevity also strengthened at this time, and the question of how best to manage the burgeoning numbers of urban poor, sick, and homeless emerged as a key concern among authorities.

Illness and disease in the early seventeenth century were not popularly understood as the sole preserve of medical professionals: they were phenomena about which religious practitioners could also speak with authority. Educated European visitors’ observations reinforce this point. João Rodrigues (1558-1633), for example, wrote of “three principal sorts of judicial astrology” in Japan: “natural magic” involving “the celestial influence received at...conception”; “practical judicial astrology” related to “predictions and prognostications in accordance with the conjunctions and aspects of the planets and stars”; and “soothsayers of Earth” who divine what is a “good or bad site on which to build, the quality of the place in which to dwell, and the respect shown towards the good and bad directions of Earth, or the world.” Rodrigues noted that these forms of early Tokugawa cosmology commonly addressed concerns about “the fate or destiny that each person must have,” “the good or bad hour” to “bury the dead,” future incidents of “epidemics, deaths, and calamities,” and the “sites for the tombs of their dead” where “each and every misfortune or disaster” was attributed to them.

Buddhist healing arts, as well as an assortment of other religious practices, also continued to influence medicine in the early Tokugawa world. Duncan Ryūken Williams has noted, for example, that “the Zen priest’s main activities...typically were praying for rain, healing the sick, or performing exorcistic and funerary rights.” He observes that “Most Japanese even in the latter half of the nineteenth century, relied on Buddhist priests and healers other than physicians in times of illness.” Barbara Ambros has likewise noted the way the oshi (religious specialists who popularized mountain cults and pilgrimage sites) “combined their role as proselytizer and that of healer.” Hartmut O. Rotermund has similarly demonstrated that healing powers, whether in the religious, magical, or medical therapeutic realms (distinctions elaborated upon in a later section), also fell into the province of lay monks such as yamabushi. Medicines which claimed universal efficacy (manbyōyaku), moreover,


...
were often “tied to the miraculous powers of Buddhist, Taoist, or Shintō deities and saints.”

Religious practitioners who straddled the epistemological divide between science and religion during the seventeenth century were often consulted because of their alleged ‘special abilities.’ The intimate relationship between late medieval/early modern medicine and religion was clearly related to a basic fear of death that most illnesses inspired along with a lack of knowledge concerning the causes behind their materialization. Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), writing about Japan late in the century, noted with interest the engagement by the aforementioned Yamabushi (in his words “religious …hermits who disdain worldly pleasures to reach the everlasting”) in certain healing practices. They proclaimed, he wrote, that “certain ceremonies and words enable[d] them to use the power of foreign and local gods to conjure and chase away evil spirits, search out hidden matter, and bring to pass other supernatural events.” According to Kaempfer, Yamabushi used these skills “for finding thieves and stolen goods, predicting uncertain events, interpreting dreams, healing incurable illnesses, finding wrongdoers, or revealing the guilt or innocence of an accused” [italics mine].

Close association between religious and medical practices throughout the seventeenth century kept the social status of persons professionally engaged in ‘medical practices’ (Iyakugyō) ambiguous. Some physicians could have relatively high social status: those appointed to serve the shogun in the early seventeenth century were obviously well-respected. Persons with considerable power and social standing also wanted doctors in their employ; a direct edict from the shogun to his six appointed aides in 1634, for example, clearly listed among their duties the procurement of a physician (ishikata goyō no koto). At a more general level, however, the medical profession also appeared to experience considerable stigmatization. Some of this stigma undoubtedly arose due to widespread quackery. In the Kashōki (Records to Make You Laugh), a collection of humorous tales authored by Nyoraishi (1603?-1674) in 1642, the unscrupulous physician who baselessly purported to have profound medical knowledge was lampooned. But fraudulent medical practices were not the only source of this stigmatization. Some village reports (meisaichō), particularly in western Japan, listed doctors at the end using a particular form of indentation commonly reserved for outcasts. Even as late as 1708, physicians, day labourers, samurai attendants, hinin, and beggars could be listed together and summarily cautioned in town circulars. Recent research also indicates that there could be considerable status differences among doctors depending on their area of specialization.

At the same time, however, many important changes were also underway in seventeenth century medical practice. Intellectuals and governing authorities became increasingly concerned with improving personal and collective health to enable life stability and longevity as the Tokugawa peace en-
sued.29 Such issues were increasingly understood in Neo-Confucian terms, as this school of thought came to occupy a position of orthodoxy in remedial discourse taught at the Tokugawa medical school and in numerous domains. 30 Neo-Confucian thought in China was rooted in a particular understanding of nature and the rational in which “knowing was an activity in which the rational operations of the intellect were not sharply disconnected from what we would call tuition, imagination, illumination, ecstasy, aesthetic perception, ethical commitment, or sensuous experience.”31 Medical interpretations rooted in a closely related epistemology also became increasingly commonplace in Japan: Wai-ming Ng notes, for example, that “until the mid-Tokugawa period, most medical books in Japan included chapters on divination, cosmology, possession, and similar topics.”32

Managing the burgeoning numbers of poor, sick, and homeless in large urban cities also emerged as a critical issue for Tokugawa authorities. Available evidence suggests that shogunate officials in major cities like Edo and Osaka began establishing distinct settlements for the poor, sick, homeless, and socially despised.33 In Edo, a large enclosure about 200 meters in length was built in Bakuromachi and many beggars (komokaburi: literally ‘straw hat wearers’) were given shelter there after a flood and famine in the early 1640s. The Kawagoe merchant Emoto Yazaemon estimated that there were about 10,000 beggars in Edo at the time; the city’s rivers also apparently brimmed with dead bodies. In the second quarter of the seventeenth century, semiformal settlements for the sick and impoverished with a degree of internal hierarchy became increasingly common in Edo with considerable encouragement from the shogunate. In a later diary entry, Emoto further described the head of this beggar community as a ‘general’ (taishō) of the poor.34 By the latter half of the century, as will be discussed in the following section, beggar settlements had transformed into the headquarters of a quite formalized network of hinin guilds with distinct hierarchies. These guilds incorporated a number of hinin huts (hinin goya) governed by leaders with hereditary titles and played a pivotal role in the later establishment and maintenance of beggar camps and prison infirmaries. Extant materials reveal that these outcastes became an important part of Tokugawa shogunate social policy aimed at dealing with issues such as disease, poverty, and homelessness.

**Taxonomic Revolution**

Outcaste communities, mobilized by the Tokugawa shogunate and local officials to manage poverty, disease, and death, had developed a strong degree of institutional cohesion by the end of the seventeenth century, becoming ‘status-group’-like entities through a process David Howell has labelled “taxonomic revolution.” Late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century Japan experienced a detailed clarifying of the “functions of individual status groups” which over time “necessarily led to the clarification of other groups’ functions as well.” Hinin groups were mobilized in times of natural disasters like the Great Meireki Fire as part of an official strategy to both directly manage widespread impoverishment as well as deal with the many side issues related to urban poverty such as the disposal of dead bodies and refuse disposal. Eta, too, were organized into independent communities in order to guarantee a steady supply of leather for authorities, as well as to subcontract forms of labor like execution duties increasingly disdained by the samurai class. Clarification of these groups’ functions basically entailed entering into legally-binding contracts (goyō kankei) with authorities and receiving eco-

33 Minegishi, *Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū*, 32.
34 Ibid., 38.
nomic privileges in return for accepting officially prescribed (but usually socially despised) duties primarily pertaining to certain ‘death industries’ (tanning, execution duties, burial, etc). These outcasts, according to Howell, were mobilized “to regulate and contain social order and pollution,” but in return they found “plenty of space in which to see to their own interests beyond the fulfillment of tax obligations or other feudal duties.” As will be seen in the following section, one of these spaces was the more socially accepted and financially lucrative realm of medical practices.

When the head of the eta community in eastern Japan, Danzaemon, achieved his monopoly on leather production, built and came to reside in a large settlement in Edo, and became known by this epithet is unclear. Edo authorities do appear, however, to have forced certain punitive powers relating to the torture and execution of non-warrior subjects on Danzaemon by about the mid-seventeenth-century. Tokugawa authorities probably first ordered a number of specific tanners (kawazukuri) to procure and supply them with a specified amount of leather before Danzaemon achieved a monopoly on these activities in the greater Kantō area. He was ordered around mid-century to engage in certain socially despised tasks (such as the torture of Christians in 1642 and the building of an embankment to be used in the beheading of criminals in 1657) and probably acquiesced only after attempts at resistance proved unsuccessful.

Little can be said with certainty about hinin communities in Edo during the mid-seventeenth century without relying on records written at much later dates. Later records assert that after a fire in 1654 the two hinin leaders Kuruma Zenshichi and Matsuenmon were ordered to take care of the dead bodies, and then, after the Great Meireki Fire of 1657, they were again mobilized to dispose of the 100,000-plus dead bodies scattered throughout the city. In the latter tragedy it is said that a plot of land in Honjō was set aside where the hinin carried the corpses on boats, built a mound, and then constructed a temple which was given the name Ekōin. Another nineteenth century record states that Kuruma Zenshichi was summoned to the Edo Town Magistrate’s office in 1666 – the same year that the community which he presided over was apparently moved to the Shinyoshiwara area. In one 1854 document, the hinin leader Matsuenmon also claimed that his forebears came to live in Shina-gawa in 1635 and that they became the Shibakata hinin leaders during the Kanbun period (1661-1673). Whether or not one should take all of the above statements at face value is debatable, but it does seem safe to assume that the earliest hinin communities in Edo were also beginning to stabilize from around the mid-seventeenth century.

Outcaste groups around the Japanese archipelago, albeit with some important exceptions, probably emerged at the same time and in a similar fashion. Flocking to populated centres to escape impoverishment and death, large numbers of people were mobilized by authorities to live communally and carry out official duties related to socially shunned tasks essential to ensure smooth warrior rule. Many of these tasks were crucial for the maintenance of these burgeoning settlements, straining under the demographic weight being placed on their feeble infrastructures. A 1771 document from Kanazawa fief, for example, reveals that the resident outcaste group there known as tōnai also identified themselves as the descendants of people who had flocked to the city during the period of great natural disasters of the 1660s. Their ancestors, they claimed, were housed in special huts and nursed back to

35 David Howell, Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan, 21-22, 33.
37 Minegishi, Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū, 28-29, 33-35.
The idea of creating collectives located outside an ideal status order of the ‘four peoples’ (shimin) which needed to be organized and administered according to their individual group statuses is strongly evident in the writings of the intellectual Yamaga Sokō (1622-1685) at this time. Sokō, initially a pupil of Hayashi Razan, wrote very specifically about status and how to best manage social groups which fell outside of the ‘four peoples.’ In Yamaga gorui, for example, Sokō argued that “yamabushi, bikuni, miko, and kannaki” should not be permitted to live in townships because they were indolents who caused great social instability. He also argued that “kanjin bözu, zatō, goze, monoyomi, biwahōshi, umakata, ushitsukai, funegashira, ryōshi, gyōshi, hinin-kojiki, and eta” should be administered and governed in highly specialized ways. Sokō argued, for example, that people below the status of umakata (horse handlers) should be made to form ‘guild groups’ (nakama) through which they should be governed. Lepers and those with disabilities, according to Sokō, should also be made to live in the one place. The places where these people should live, he argued, should be well away from the thoroughfares of respected people. “Hinin-kojiki,” he declared, should be made to clean up the townships, forced to live a healthy distance from the city, and made to wear clothes which distinguished them from others.44

43 Tsukada, Toshi Ōsaka to hinin, 5-11.
44 Asao Naohiro notes that Sokō’s discourse was rooted in his observance of processes that were already underway. At another level, however, his remonstrations in many respects probably predated the actual changes themselves, perhaps even exerting some influence over shogunate policy. Asao Naohiro, ed. Mibun to kakushiki. Vol. 7, Nihon no kinsei. (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), 24.

The processes Sokō prescribed can be evidenced in town circulars from the 1670s. Official documents make mention of the mass emergence of ‘new hinin’ (shinhinin), an expression clearly dependent on the idea of a pre-existing and relatively fixed group of people. This original group of hinin apparently had their claim to a livelihood through mendicancy officially sanctioned as a legitimate activity with strong religious connections (that needed to be strictly regulated and policed rather than outlawed) because of their performance of official duties for the Tokugawa shogunate. Importantly, however, some circulars of the same period also caution hinin not to upset commoners, indicating a conceptual firming at the political level of what was believed to constitute the average political subject. This had considerable ramifications for hinin who were operating in official guilds. It meant, as Tsukada Takashi has put it, that a firm status distinction had emerged whereby “no matter how poor a townsmen who rented accommodation was, he was not a hinin.”45

Re-imagined Hierarchies

The increased association between early modern outcaste groups and medicine during the late seventeenth century must also be understood within the context of attempts by ruling authorities to more clearly delineate the Tokugawa subject who would be the object of rule – a process best categorized as a late seventeenth-century reimagining of hierarchy. The status-group-based division of labor outlined above saw outcaste groups enter into legally-binding contracts with authorities, receiving economic privileges in return for accepting officially prescribed, historically stigmatized, socially devalued, and economically unrewarding duties pertaining to certain ‘death industries’ (tanning, execution duties, burial, etc). At the same time, however, a proliferation of discourses concerning the sanctity of life, the hazardous effects of death pollution, and the normative features of the ideal Tokugawa subject led to a reimagining of hierarchy during this period not only along a horizontal axis but also a vertical one. Through a conceptual firming of the idea of the outcaste as one who engaged in danger-

45 Tsukada, Kinsei nihon mibunsei no kenkyū, 211.
ous ‘death industries’, members of these groups were also conceptually invested with a curative potential, as possible sources of healing or medical knowledge.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, and particularly after Tokugawa Tsunayoshi’s investiture as shogun (1681), a significant political rearrangement of the central ordering mechanism of the “fundamental hierarchizing imaginary” (in Herman Ooms’s words) took place through the infusion of discourses concerning the sanctity of life, the hazardous effects of death pollution, and the normative features of the ideal Tokugawa subject. Ooms, drawing on Cornelius Castoriadis’s work, has argued that a “fundamental hierarchizing ‘imaginary’” was in operation during the early modern period. That is to say that an ‘imaginary’ (an “unquestioned social metaphor that functions as a template for common sense”) which privileged hierarchization (a “military model”) functioned as the “central social imaginary” of the Tokugawa period. Ooms also notes, however, that there existed a distinct mechanism for infusing hierarchical differences between commoners and outcastes (i.e., the ‘vertical axis’). Pollution, he argues, was the flexible idiom by which outcaste groups were made to take on their particular form: “Activated and propelled by social, economic, or political forces, it was appropriated and applied in some situations but not others.”

Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709) was a devout Confucianist who considered ritual purity in social relationships to be of extreme importance and was fixated on issues pertaining to mortality. Tsunayoshi issued many pieces of legislation which specifically addressed the issues of respect for life and a fear of death. He promulgated, for example, Regulations for Mourning (Bukkirei) in 1684, a code that was revised three times before 1736 when it was put into its final form by the eighth shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune. His edicts also included the infamous law forbidding cruelty to all living things (shōrui awa-remi no rei) which Kate Wildman Nakai has evaluated as “an unprecedented and highly unpopular intrusion of shogunal authority into the jurisdiction of the daimyo.” Beatrice Bodart Bailey has noted that through these laws “The shogun wished to foster the spirit of benevolence in the hearts of his people and he hoped to achieve this goal by ordering them to treat all animate creation with care and gentleness.”

During and immediately after Tsunayoshi’s period of rule, there was also a shift in ideas of rule away from the attributes of the ruler to effective ways of controlling the population, and ruling authorities and intellectuals began to increasingly deliberate on the distinctive characteristics of the normal subject (heinin). In his work Seidan, for example, Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) spoke freely of ‘outcastes’ (iyashikimono) which included both prostitutes and eta; and it is in relation to these groups that he discusses the notion of the ‘commoner’ (heinin). For Sorai, the outcaste was base and immoral, but the commoner was morally upright

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46 Ooms, Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law, 60, 338-339.
47 Ibid., 275.
48 The principle of respecting all life forms and avoiding death was not merely a political discourse informed by Buddhist concerns. It was also a central concern in Neo-Confucian discourse, clearly evident in Kibara Ekken’s Shōgaku-kun, and had links to the “health cultivation” discourse discussed at length later in the essay. William Theodore De Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann, Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2nd ed. vol. 2, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 109.
51 Actually, the term he uses is not eta but kawaramono. Kawaramono has historically been considered an alternative name for eta but Hatanaka Toshiyuki has recently that it is a separate “status.” Hatanaka Toshiyuki, “Eta ‘hinin’ towa dare no koto nanoka,” in Datsujo-shiki no buraku mondai, eds. Asaji Takeshi, et al. (Kyoto: Kamogawa Shuppan, 1998), 211-219.
and civilised (refined) with a proper bloodline.\textsuperscript{52} Sorai’s discourses of the outcaste and the commoner were located, moreover, within the context of a \textit{Nihonkoku} or ‘Japanese state’ – a notion scattered throughout his work. \textit{Nihonkoku} was a place being violently tugged apart at the seams by rapid and disturbing changes against which Sorai was desperately attempting to prescribe various countermeasures. Within this context, outcastes were dangerous entities.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{Eta} and \textit{hinin} groups had become closely linked together in the public and political imagination through a series of well-known lawsuits between Danzaemon and some of Edo’s other marginalized status group leaders allegedly beginning in the last decades of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{54} The most famous of these battles was undoubtedly with the \textit{hinin} leaders. Danzaemon was accused by them of treating \textit{hinin} as his own private labor force. The shogunate eventually ruled that \textit{hinin} were in fact subject to Danzaemon’s rule although there were limits to the extent he was permitted to mobilize them for his own purposes. This legal battle was not, however, simply a jostle for political power between two competing groups engaged in similarly socially-suspect activities. It also represented a point of conceptual merger when socially marginalized groups came together to constitute an entity which could be termed ‘outcaste.’

A gradual hardening of the notion of a ‘commoner’ (\textit{heinin}) who constituted membership of a geographical and conceptual body called ‘Japan’ (\textit{nihonkoku}) helped delineate more clearly the types of people who did not conform to this increasingly conventionalized understanding of the subject of rule. ‘Commoner’ (\textit{heinin}), along with ‘people’ (\textit{tami}), was by far the most common language of governance used in late seventeenth century/early eighteenth-century Japan to refer to political subjects, utilized by both intellectuals and rulers alike. Often the expression \textit{eta-hinin-nado} (\textit{eta}, \textit{hinin}, etc.) was used in a binary relationship with the word \textit{heinin}, demonstrating the emergence of a new eighteenth century hierarchized imaginary’ of rule which was being superimposed on top of the earlier seventeenth century status-group-base model. From the late seventeenth century/early eighteenth century, people were increasingly defined in the popular and political imagination according to this narrowing definition of the field of rule and the binary existence of ‘common’ and ‘outcaste’ subjects. As the use of the character \textit{he}平 in \textit{heinin} illustrates, moreover, there was an increasing desire on the part of warrior elites to document and dominate subjects within their territorial reach based on an idea of normality.

\textbf{Health Cultivation}

Matters pertaining to life, death, and illness were reinterpreted through the dominant medical discourse of “health cultivation” (yōjō) in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. This discourse reaffirmed as given the mutual relationship between medical, cosmological, and ethical practices, providing conceptual space for the exceptional within medical practice. Health cultivation discourse had a long history in East Asian medicine; the warrior class in the late sixteenth century took a philosophical interest in it because it linked better health to successful military service.\textsuperscript{55} It was only popularized, however, through the writings of scholars such as Kaibara Ekken (1630-1714), significantly informing shogunate policy from the 1670s and 1680s. A growing number of edicts targeted medical practices from around this time and \textit{hinin} groups were officially assigned duties as care providers and guards for sick prisoners.

“Health cultivation” (yōjō), in its seventeenth century incarnation, as Susan Burns argues, clearly signified the “intersection of medicine, cosmology, and ethics.”\textsuperscript{56} Physical wellbeing was not merely a physiological problem, but was intimately connected to notions of spiritual equilibrium and ethical normality. Something as banal as abnormal dietary

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{52} For an abbreviated and annotated version of the relevant section of this work with notes, see Okiura Kazuteru, \textit{Suisei: hito no yo ni hikari are} (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1991), 16.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Groemer, “The Creation of the Edo Outcaste Order,” 276-280.
\textsuperscript{56} Burns, “The Body as Text: Confucianism, Reproduction, and Gender in Tokugawa Japan,” 185.}
habits was linked to a deviant human nature: “When we think of the eating and drinking habits of people, it is the usual characteristic of human nature to like sweet things and dislike bitter things. However, among a vast number of people there are a few who will like bitter things and dislike sweet things. We should not regard these people as normal.”

Health cultivation discourse’s reaffirmation as given the mutual relationship between medical, cosmological, and ethical practices also provided conceptual space for, and awarded explanatory power to, the role of the mystical in the healing process. Mary Evelyn Tucker notes, for example, that Ekken’s health cultivation discourse not only involved the physical but also the “psychic-spiritual” wellbeing of the individual. Ekken also clearly understood evil (health-destroying influences) in the context of Yin-Yan and spiritual forces: “Desires are affiliated with yin, and it is easy to drown them as just as water drowns a person. Many evils are frequently generated from anger and desire. Among the seven emotions these two are the most harmful. We may harm ourselves and others and should thus be careful. Furthermore, anger and desire do great harm to our practice of caring for our health.”

Ekken’s conception of health cultivation – which was technically speaking the effective circulation of ki (or “material force”) throughout the entire body – proved popular. His understanding of ki was rooted in a worldview which attempted to “articulate a dynamic philosophy of material force...as the unifying basis for the interaction of self, society, and nature.” Material force to Ekken was something that needed to be meticulously nurtured, because it was what linked human beings to all other living things. Within his conception of health cultivation, death could be interpreted as the result of negligent human action, which in turn constituted an unfilial act. In Shōgaku-kun (Elementary Learning for Children), for example, Ekken issued the following caution to his readers: “Likewise, living as we do in nature’s embrace, we must serve nature and manifest to the full our humaneness. For a human being to be aware of this important duty, to let the days and years pass idly by and let his life be wasted, is to make himself unworthy of being a human being. Indeed, how can anyone who would be a human being ignore this fact? It is in this that the way of humanity lies. Any way other than this cannot be the true way.”

Late seventeenth-century Tokugawa health cultivation discourse, however, including the famous treatise on the subject Yōjōkun (Precepts for Health) authored by Ekken, did not consist of academic texts intended to advance knowledge, but rather practical treatises designed to discuss, treat, and prevent illness and injury. The increased attention paid by Tokugawa authorities to what might be best termed public health issues from the 1670s and 1680s was both a response and further impetus to these late seventeenth century intellectual reflections on health cultivation. Shogunate health initiatives did not emerge in a vacuum but were rooted in an understanding of this increasingly dominant view of human life where the medical, cosmological, and ethical practices were coterminous. Legislation dealing with issues as diverse as infanticide, child abandonment, pharmaceuticals, prison conditions, and care for the homeless was enacted at an impressive rate during this period. This legislation consistently defined proper health practice as the responsibility of all subjects regardless of background and status. Probably the best evidence of this mindset is the liberalization of the pharmaceutical industry:

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59 Ibid., 195.


62 Ibid., 13.

63 De Bary et al., Sources of Japanese Tradition, 108.

Williams notes that “during the Genroku period (1688-1703), the Tokugawa bakufu issued new laws that took away exclusive rights to the production and distribution of medicine from clan and bakufu doctors. This resulted in a diffusion of the power to produce and distribute medicine, enabling pharmacies like Dōshōan [a Kyoto-based pharmacy] to take full advantage of the new laws.”

Available seventeenth century records reveal an embryonic association between Japan’s hinin communities and various medical treatment facilities, both for sick prisoners (in places known as tame or ‘enclosures’) and later for the poor (in facilities known as yōjōsho or ‘hospices’). Hinin were ascribed official roles and duties with a remedial capacity from around this time, presumably because of their earlier institutional experiences in disaster relief. In 1675, for example, sixty ‘temporary huts’ (karigoya) for beggars were built at Yanagihara, but these were quickly abolished a few months later with the former residents either being dismissed or placed under the leadership of official hinin communities. In 1680, too, the two hinin leaders Kuruwa Zenshichi and Matsuemon were brought before the magistrate and informed that it would their responsibility to look after urban vagrants. While this law had practically little effect, it did signal that hinin leaders had become more than conceptually implicated in attending to the urban poor and displaced. In 1687, this association strengthened: Edo hinin were marshaled to build and maintain enclosures intending to care for (and maintain surveillance over) sick prisoners in places known as tame. Later, during Tokugawa Yoshimune’s period of rule (1716-1745), Tokugawa Japan’s most famous hospice, the Koishikawa Yōjōsho (literally the “Koishikawa-Health-Cultivation-Place”), was established to combat the awful living conditions of the impoverished sick residing in Edo. The hospice was guarded by lower class samurai, and its internal medicine specialist, external medicine specialist, eye specialist, and administering official (kimoiri) who were not outcasts. Records indicate, however, that in the event of a fire those who could not walk were to be taken to neighboring hinin huts, revealing a clear conceptual linkage to their earlier association as care providers/guards for sick prisoners in the tame. Outcaste duties related to the care of prisoners and the sick were clearly not restricted to Edo or just hinin, however. In a 1708 document related to the death of the kawata leader in Kyoto, for example, clear reference is made to their duties in prisons, and several details are included such as the costs incurred for the boiling of medicines.

Outcasts and Medical Practices

The ideological and material developments discussed above worked to empower outcaste groups as they strove to secure their place (and livelihood) within the Tokugawa social order. Outcasts were certainly not the sole beneficiaries of these developments; as Williams points out in his study of Buddhist institutions, the perceived possession of aesculapian powers had the potential to profoundly affect the social image of other groups as well: “one of the most popular benefits offered by Sōtō Zen was the prevention and healing of illnesses.” While no uniform or universal development of a body of outcaste medical knowledge and practices emerged in the Japanese archipelago during the eighteenth century, numerous outcaste communities did involve themselves in a range of therapeutic activities, making excellent use of the opportunities provided by a social vision of wellbeing where the realms of the medical, the religious, and the magical were routinely coterminous.

Persistent subsequent attempts by authorities to strengthen earlier status-based systems of rule during the eighteenth century served only to pro-
mote their further development. Official shogunate and domain policies, intended to encourage the increased social segregation of outcastes from ‘commoners’ (heinmin), worked to further mystify these communities in the public imagination and therein their ability to develop emerging medical practices. As Botsman has noted, however, state-endorsed policies of social segregation during the Tokugawa period could also work to empower: “Those outcaste communities and leaders to whom the warrior state assigned responsibility for key tasks were able to claim special privileges for themselves and, with the backing of the warriors, assert their authority over others.” 72

The remarkable diversity of outcaste medical practices outlined below is best comprehended by making reference to studies which have examined the tremendous productive potential of monopolies in niche markets like healing arts which straddled the fuzzy edges between the epistemological cousins of religion and medicine. As Williams notes, Paul Demiéville’s schema for classifying Buddhist healing practices is useful for the Japanese context: “(1) religious therapeutics (good works, practices of worship, expiation, and meditation), (2) magical therapeutics (mantras, incantations, and esoteric worship, expiation, and meditation), (3) medical therapeutics proper (dietetics, pharmacy, and surgery).” 73 Following Demiéville, Williams argues that the lines between these three fields are ambiguous, unable to be clearly differentiated. It was precisely this ambiguity that provided conceptual space and market opportunities to outcaste groups attempting to constantly renegotiate and secure their position within the eighteenth century social order. The popularity of their labours, however, was not merely related to a perceived efficacy: it was also about availability and affordability. Williams argues that medicines produced by religious institutions or institutions affiliated with them “appealed to the vast majority of Japanese villagers who did not have access to the expensive doctors of the major cities.” 74 A similar case can be made for the world of outcastes.

Early eighteenth century records suggest that some groups of outcaste status were already beginning to profit from their association with medicine. One 1714 record from Shinano, for instance, mentions a great typhoon and earthquake striking a particular community in quick succession, knocking down a stone wall which in turn crushed a hut housing a hinin who was making a living selling medicines to induce abortions. 75 ‘Death duties’ performed by etaka/kawata, such as the flaying of dead animal carcasses, also seemed to provide opportunities to delve in and make money out of medical potions. In the Mie region, an official memorandum produced in 1722 related to the extraction of bezoars when flaying cattle carcasses, instructed outcaste communities as follows: “When you are disposing of dead cattle (i.e., cutting them up for parts), you may find cows with bezoars. Some people might not know how to extract these, so I will issue another document explaining how to do so. You are to inform us if you find a bezoar.” The separate document elaborated on this: there was, apparently, a certain domain lord who was interested in bezoars, and although it was not the ‘official duty’ (goyô) of outcastes to extract them, these were in fact very “precious things” (taiseitsu nuru mono). The exact way to identify bezoars was then recorded in minute detail: “A bezoar is located between the liver and the gallbladder. The liver is folded over three times and beneath that lies the gallbladder; if you dissect that you will find them in the gap which is about 3 sun (about 10 centimetres) long.” 76

Although evidence indicating the extent to which side businesses in medical potions in outcaste communities mushroomed in the early eighteenth century is scarce, postwar oral historical accounts clearly link several eastern Japanese outcaste communities with the production and sale of medicines. References to the well-reputed pharmaceutical pursuits of outcaste communities in Toyama and Suruga can be found in Kikuchi San’ya’s Chôri to Tokushū Buraku and Nihon Tokushū Buraku. 77 Wakao Masaki, however, has demonstrated through source material that outcastes were sought out during the

72 Botsman, Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan, 55.
73 Williams, The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan, 88.
74 Ibid.
75 Harada, ed., Hennen sabetsushi shiryô shûsei, vol. 8, 223.
76 Ibid., 380-381.
77 This point is made in Saitô, “Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyô/ saikô,” 3-4.
early eighteenth century for their knowledge of herbs and other compounds used to concoct various curative treatments. In 1726, for example, the Bakufu official Uemura Masakatsu sent an enquiry to an outcaste community in Uji (south of Kyoto) requesting that they send information immediately about bezoars (ushi no namatama/shinidama). The outcaste community in Uji responded that they had no knowledge regarding this important ingredient. Other evidence suggests, however, that such an assumption on the part of the Bakufu was not entirely misplaced. Several documents in the Suzukike monjo (Documents of the House of Suzuki), for instance, either strictly forbade or severely restricted the permissible routes for the sale of cow horns, hair, horse nails, and leather, indicating the real possibility that side industries had developed as a result of the official duties of flaying animal carcasses. The same family, moreover, as will be shown below, derived considerable wealth through the development of their own healing potions.

Evidence does suggest that certain outcaste communities managed to develop their side business in medicines into viable commercial operations in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In Naniwa Village in Settsu, for example, in a 1728 record related to a family feud amongst the leadership stratum of a village of people whose primary occupation was burial, the head of the village is clearly referred to as a hijiri kusurishi (‘holy-man-herbal-doctor’). Although little else is mentioned about this position, the main protagonist in the legal case, Tora-no-suken, noted that he took over the hereditary position of head of the cemetery and local physician, with an important part of the latter position involving the sale of medicines (baiyaku).

Several references to children’s medicines are also found in later records related to an outcaste village in Ōmi Province. The Kōsasangunroku, written in 1765, mentions a certain Hanatsuki household, apparently employed as doctors in a local kawata village. This record states that “In Fugenji Village, there is an outcaste village, which is basically its [Fugenji’s] branch village. They sell ‘Fifth Month medicine’ (satsuki-gusuri), packeted drugs used in healing various ailments of children, which are said to be remarkably effective (kikō).” Ōmi komazarae, written several decades later in 1792, also goes into considerable detail about this medicine produced by the Hanatsuki household.

This steady growth of outcaste involvement in medical practices during the eighteenth century needs to be properly contextualized and understood within the framework of contested paradigms. Wai-Ming Ng has argued that “Neo-Confucian medicine” “was challenged by the kohōha [school of ancient medicine] and ranpō-igaku [school of Dutch medicine] in the eighteenth century.” As a result, the “map of the medical world changed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” with the three schools of goseiha, kohōha, and ranpō-igaku co-existing but with goseiha experiencing significant “material and ideological” deterioration. Susan Burns, too, has written about “the medicalization of birth” in eighteenth century Japan which eventually “freed” it from cosmology” but in turn “gave rise to the gender asymmetry of reproduction.” Clearly important medical developments arose out of this challenge to goseiha orthodoxy. Aya Homei has observed, for example, that “Obstetrics in Japan, or sanka, developed in the mid-eighteenth century as a medically enlightened specialization. During this period, new Confucian scholarship emerged, and physicians within the context set up in opposition to the Goseiho School of Medicine. The latter were accused of relying too heavily on metaphysics.”

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81 References to these documents are found in Saitō, “Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyō/saikō,” 11.

82 Ng, The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture, 151, 155.


84 Aya Homei, “Birth Attendants in Meiji Japan: The Rise of a Medical Birth Model and the
Outcaste involvement in certain medical practices was also spurred on by subsequent shogunate policy which projected negative popular perceptions of them while ascribing them new official duties. Legal documents published during the eighteenth century reveal a striking tendency for *eta* and *hinin* to be included in criminal case studies designed as resources for future legal rulings on criminal suits (laws were also increasingly codified for other status groups during this period too). Eighteenth-century shogunate law also increased the ideological intensity of discourses related to *eta* and *hinin* ‘pollution’. Legislation also tended to amplify the public profile of the *eta* and *hinin* as social policing agents, and detailed elaborate roles for these same groups in the solemn theatrics of public execution.

New official duties (*goyō*) prescribed from the early eighteenth century also sometimes required a degree of medical knowledge. *Hinin* in eastern Japan, as social policing agents, usually had to report cases where travelers collapsed or died on the side of the road near their village to their *eta* superiors. Together they would then make a joint inspection of the corpse, carefully observing the approximate age, sex, and state of the body including any external injuries before reporting the matter to the appropriate officials. This was also the case to some extent in Western Japan as well, where low status groups were also sometimes responsible for the inspection of corpses. One interesting early case of this relates to the *bosho hijiri* (grave-diggers) who were asked to bury a retired religious lay monk at Tokuseiji in 1731. They refused, however, claiming there was evidence of ‘rope burn’ around the corpse’s neck. Several lower class samurai (*dōshin*) were sent to investigate, and they too concluded the same, commanding the *hijiri* to put the body in a guarded crematory hut and to write and hand deliver an official letter to the township where the lay priest had lived.

Another important function of eastern Japanese *hinin* was the policing of vagrants through the operation of watch houses known as *hinin goya* or ‘hinin huts.’ *Hinin* huts, however, did not merely function as a premodern kind of police box (which, of course, they did as well), but also as a kind of welfare center for people of *hinin* or other ambiguous statuses. A 1733 document from Lower Wana Village in Musashi, for example, reveals that rural *hinin* huts were at times used to care for the homeless. The local hut leader at the time, Kakubē, took in a 64-year-old vagrant (‘wandering *hinin*’) who was complaining of abdominal pain and needed respite from sleeping in the open fields. Kakubē received permission to take the man in for a night, and when the illness worsened, the hut leader began administering medicine to his patient.

Outcastes also worked closely with horse handlers (*bakuro*) from the first half of the eighteenth century, either identifying and delivering ailing horses to these animal doctors or working at these professions themselves. In the aforementioned Lower Wana Village, the village elders Jin’emon and Sebē recorded in 1759 that the outcaste leader Danzaemon had been notified nineteen years earlier that twelve local villages in their regional communities had set up a specialist group of horse handlers (*nakama bakuro*). The outcaste authorities in Asakusa appeared to have been in agreement with the

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decision and a set of laws (hatto) were summarily drawn up. Two horse handlers located in the villages of Takō and Yatsubayashi were eventually approved by the twelve villages in the greater Wana area and local outcaste residents identified and delivered sick horses to these two men. The 1759 document, however, is effectively a complaint by the Lower Wana residents to Danzaemon, questioning that local residents were not following the stipulated rules and thereby denying local outcasts from a valuable source of extra income.91

Members of outcaste communities also begin to appear as medical doctors in extant records from around this time. One of the earliest examples of an outcaste engaging in medical practices in a local community to date (mentioned at the beginning of this paper) comes from Musashi Province (present day Saitama Prefecture) and relates to a member of an eta community. The 1765 document begins as follows:

In the second year of Meiwa, the year of the Cock, an eta with good abilities in medicine from Arai Village, Hanzawa County, Musashino-kuni, was highly valued by the surrounding villages, but because he was an eta, had difficulty in performing medical treatments. Therefore, the village elders, after first notifying the surrounding villages, petitioned to the local shogunate magistrate that the eta wished to become a doctor of ordinary status.92

It is clear from other, later examples, that this was not simply an isolated case. Among a collection of documents related to a village in southwest Hyōgo Prefecture, for example, reference is made in the 1830s to a member of a chasen community by the name of Tatchū who had “been involved in medicine [igyo] from long ago.” When resident villagers (murakata) or members of surrounding communities (kingō-domo) became sick, they apparently called upon him for treatment” (yobimukai ryōyō).93 Both of the above documents refer to people of low social status in early modern Tokugawa society (eta and chasen) as highly skilled as physicians and widely consulted by considerable numbers of people even from non-outcaste communities. The second document, although dated in the 1830s, through the use of the phrase “from long ago” suggests an earlier—perhaps early eighteenth-century—origin for outcaste village medical practices in that area. It is also clear, however, through the very use of the labels eta and chasen to describe these practitioners, that both individuals mentioned were targets of considerable social discrimination (a point the 1765 document makes far more explicitly).

Sugita Genpaku’s well-known early nineteenth-century text Rantō kotohajime (The Beginning of Western Learning) undoubtedly contains the most famous example of outcasts engaging in medically-related activities. The text contains a vivid description of the moment when Genpaku, Maeno Ryōtaku, Nakagawa Jun’an and other physicians and scholars of the time confirmed with their own eyes the internal organization of the human body.94 Genpaku describes how he and other members of his group traveled to the Kotsugahara execution grounds one day in 1771 and witnessed the autopsy of a female criminal known colloquially as “green tea lady” (about whom, unfortunately, nothing more is known). Genpaku’s own passage relating to the events that transpired that day are detailed:

From here, we all went to the place where the autopsy was going to be performed at Kotsugahara. The autopsy was to be performed by an eta called Toramatsu, who was also highly skilled at explaining what he was doing. On this day, Toramatsu was going to perform the autopsy but because of an apparent illness, his father, an old man [literally: ‘old butcher’] of 90 years of age, came as his replacement. He was a healthy old man. He had performed autopsies numerous times since his youth, saying “I have opened up several people.” Autopsies, until that day, were left to

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eta. While cutting open the body they would point out different places informing us that “These are lungs. This is a liver. These are kidneys.” All the while the observing doctors would simply come to watch and then return home. All they could say was “We actually viewed the inside of the body.” No labels were actually attached to the different body parts so all they could do was watch the butcher point things out and nod. This day, too, the old butcher pointed out this and that: the heart, the kidneys, the gallbladder, the stomach. He pointed to something and said “I don’t know the name, but I have performed this procedure on several people since I was a youth and I am positive that this was inside all of them.”

Numerous points of interest can be extracted from this passage but the statements relating to the persons of eta status known as Toramatsu and his unnamed elderly father who actually performed the autopsy are of most relevance to this study. First, it can be noted that Toramatsu was “highly skilled” at performing autopsies and “highly skilled at explaining what he was doing” (a point which is also clearly made in the earlier two documents referred to above). Second, Toramatsu, unable to perform the operation, was replaced by his ninety-year-old father, who was also obviously skilled at the task, stating that he had performed many autopsies over the course of his life in front of doctors and officials in the employ of the shogunate. Genpaku’s text even hints at a system of heredity amongst what might be termed ‘outcaste medical practitioners’ engaged in autopsy in Edo. This assumption is further supported by the observation of Ann Jannetta that the “transmission of medical knowledge in Japan was almost entirely a private matter.” These points, moreover, when taken alongside Nakao Kenji’s example of a hinin by the name of Ichibē performing an autopsy in front of a group of 80 students in 1861, lend credence to the idea that autopsy in Edo may have been the special preserve of people from outcaste statuses during the latter half of the Tokugawa period.

Outcaste engagement with medicine in certain regions reached significant levels by the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The eta head Jin’emon in charge of Lower Wana Village, for example, developed a successful side business involving the sale of medical cures for illnesses including venereal diseases like syphilis. Amongst the Suzuki household records related to medicine is a ‘secret family document’ which lists a medical cure for syphilis. On the document is listed “4.5 monme of ‘arrow-root’ (kuzu) from Kyūsuke in Kii Province,” suggesting among other things that Jin’emon may have had links to herbal suppliers in the Kansai region.

There is little doubt, moreover, that Jin’emon’s potion was popular. Clients who purchased Jin’emon’s cures came from as far as Edo and Shinshū. Minegishi Kentarō surmises that it was partly from the profits from his sale of cures that Jin’emon was able to accumulate a considerable amount of land and wealth during this period. Interestingly, the aforementioned document containing the prescription also contains a clause issuing curses on all descendants who broke the strict rule of only handing down knowledge of the remedy from father to son.

95 Ibid., 490-491.
96 Anders Hansson has noted the following: “In China, human hair, nails, blood, and other excreta have been used as medicine.” There is no visible evidence for this kind of practice on the Japanese archipelago in relation to autopsy. Anders Hansson, Chinese Outcasts: Discrimination and Emancipation in Late Imperial China (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 13.
98 Nakao Kenji and Midori Kurokawa. Zoku Jinbutsu de tsuzuru hisabetsumin no rekishi. (Osaka: Buraku Kaihō Jinken Kenkyūjo, 2006), 48-53. As Ishide Takeshi cautions, however, autopsy was certainly not the sole preserve of outcasts throughout the entire archipelago during the early modern period. An autopsy recorded in Chōshū domain in 1759, for example, was performed by a fief-appointed doctor. Ishide Takeshi, “Edo no fuwake to Kozukahara no shiokiba,” Chiba Igaku 84 (2008): 10.
100 Ibid., 431-447.
101 Minegishi, Kinsei hisabetsuminshī no kenkyū, 80.
Outcaste groups continued to use the popular distaste for their involvement in certain ‘death industries’ to considerable advantage well into the nineteenth century. In a document dated 1832, for example, hinin helpers (teka) were strictly forbidden by the local eta leader Jin’emon in Lower Wana Village from going amongst the peasants posing as doctors and handing out medicine.\(^{103}\) Tsukada Takashi’s research also demonstrates that groups of hinin doctors also sprang up in Osaka to deal with the medical issues of members of that status group.\(^{104}\) Ellen Nakamura’s reference, moreover, to one of the famous medical practitioners of the late Tokugawa period, Takano Chōei’s accomplice, Eizo, being of hinin status also indicates that engaging in medical practice was not restricted to people of eta status.\(^{105}\) Early modern outcaste communities were also beginning to test the boundaries of religious, magical, and medical therapeutics from the early nineteenth century. The Suzukike monjo contains letters written by a person of eta status from Lower Wana Village who traveled to Nagasaki to study medicine (idō) in the early nineteenth century, suggesting the likelihood of further examples of outcastes developing more specialized and westernized bodies of medical knowledge.\(^{106}\) In 1859, too, an eta by the name of Shūsai from Chōshū domain is recorded as having had a great desire from youth to study medicine (igyō no kokorozashi). He first studied medicine under the “eta doctor Kawano Sukezaemon” in Aki Province before moving to Nakatsu and Nagasaki to further his studies.\(^{107}\)

The Meiji Restoration, and the subsequent boom in support for ideas of civilization and enlightenment, did not immediately result in a conceptual segregation of outcastes from medical practice. The new government quickly replaced the old hinin-administered hospices (tame) used to house sick and dying prisoners during the Tokugawa period with new “care facilities” (kyūikusho) built in the areas of Kōjimachi and Takanawa. Takanawa was specifically designed for people of low social status and was mooted as a direct replacement for the former hinin hospice. Tellingly, the task of looking after vagrants and the sick in this facility was also initially given to Danzaemon and hinin under his charge.\(^{108}\) Although the Takanawa facility was officially closed after the promulgation of the so-called Emancipation Edict in 1871, this apparently did not alter the fact that the sick and elderly continued to assemble in the building. Eventually the Meiji state decided to rent the facility out to a private ‘non-outcaste’ citizen named Fukushima Kahē who it appears continued to employ ‘former outcasts’ to look after the patients.\(^{109}\)

**Historical Significance of Medical Practices Among Outcasts**

Health cultivation discourse, in reaffirming as given the mutual relationship between medical, cosmological, and ethical practices, also provided conceptual space and explanatory power to more numerous healing practices. Political discourses drawing on a panoply of ideas linked to the supreme sanctity of life, polluting effects of death, and the traits of an ideal subject, simultaneously worked from the late seventeenth century to reinforce both the stigma surrounding outcaste groups engaged in death industries as well as the perceived likelihood of their capacity to explain as well as alleviate pain, suffering, and the reality of death itself. Discourses pertaining to the sanctity of all living things and the importance of pollution avoidance worked to both tighten the conceptual *cordon sanitaire* surrounding

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\(^{103}\) Saitama-ken Dōwa Kyōiku Kenkyū Kyōgikai, ed., *Suzukike monjo: saitama-ken buraku mondai kankei shiryōshū*, vol. 1., 106.

\(^{104}\) Tsukada, *Toshi Ōsaka to hinin*, 19.


\(^{107}\) Saitō, “Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyō/saikō,” 11-12.


\(^{109}\) Ibid., 127.
outcaste communities as well as enhance their credentials as possible purveyors of life.

Marginalized communities within this context were often despised for their association with death; confirmed as rebels against a natural order which had given them life and could only be properly perpetuated through ethical human behavior. To some extent they obviously became ideationally linked to a supernatural realm through their involvement in death industries. This linkage, however, did not necessarily involve a complete rendering of outcastes as potentially capable of extraordinary feats of knowing and action in a myriad of matters related to mortality (though this probably occurred sometimes). More often than not it relied on the subtle logic of suspicion and distrust. This idea emerges most strongly in the writings of Sokō: *eta*, he argued, should be ordered to carry out public executions, butchery, carcass disposal, and cleaning duties but without trust. Never should one trust them in commercial dealings or enter their settlements; external markers such as crested clothing were also essential in helping distinguish them from the rest of the population.110

Outcastes were thereafter re-imagined as entities with probable insider knowledge not only in matters pertaining to death but also physical wellbeing. The strong centripetal propensity to conceptually associate outcaste groups with illness, healing, and life emerged particularly strongly from the late seventeenth century, not infrequently resulting in the experimental incursion by outcaste groups into particular medical practices. As shown in the previous section, Tokugawa authorities even began to ascribe outcaste groups with official roles and duties based on this presumed remedial capability rooted in specialized knowledge obtained through work in death industries.

Scholars of *buraku* history commonly conclude that the link between outcastes and medical practices during the early modern period is best explained through reference to a largely static and negatively constructed cosmological orientation towards life, death, and illness. Saitō Yōichi, for example, has argued that the relatively low social status of doctors and alchemists in premodern times, and the prominent occupational and official role outcastes had in activities associated with life, death, and illness (such as the flaying of dead animal carcases and midwifery) most probably account for the relatively high number of outcastes engaged in early modern medical practices. Fujisawa Yōsuke has more recently argued that early modern Japan outcaste occupations and duties were basically two-fold—“generic” and “specialized.” Outcaste medical activities such as alchemy, he argues, resist neat classification, but it was clearly no historical accident that outcastes engaged in these activities, because it is natural that pariahs would engage in practices conceived of in superstitious terms and subjected to strong social stigmatization.111

Criticism of these kinds of perspectives is certainly understandable, but potentially misleading. In one important respect, there is nothing exceptional about outcastes engaging in medical pursuits. Many, if not all, status groups in early modern Japanese society presumably developed some basic body of medical knowledge and practices. And as the burgeoning body of Japanese language work on early modern status theory quite correctly points out, status groups were constituted through an elaborate array of discriminatory policies and practices which affected almost everyone. This means that the development of a degree of medical knowledge and practices would quite naturally occur within all status groups as a cause and effect of status-group-based rule. Therefore, emphasizing the common or universal aspects of status-based experience in early modern Japan is an important step in eliminating the considerable distortion of mainstream images of the period which have arisen out of an excessive privileging of the ‘outcaste condition’ (i.e., *Buraku* history).

These points do not negate the fact, however, that status groups also existed within a distinct hierarchy with real social effects. Any practices they engaged in need to be interpreted though this lens. And while the considerable linkage between early modern outcaste groups and medical practices gradually became obscured from view in the post-Meiji world, early modern historical records nonetheless reveal that members of outcaste groups not

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111 Saitō, “*Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyō/saikō,*” 15-16; Fujisawa, “*Iyakugyō, Takeosazukuri nado to no kankei,*” 119-120.
only developed bodies of medical knowledge and practices at the level of the individual during the early modern period, but that this knowledge and associated practices were also often preserved at the level of the household. This body of knowledge, moreover, clearly transcended geographical boundaries, for outcaste groups throughout Japan, regardless of whether they were labeled eta, kawata, hinin, or chasen, engaged in a form of medicine with markedly similar characteristics. Political elites of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also clearly considered outcaste groups to be an important potential source of medical knowledge and practices.

The reasons behind this linkage are complex. Historically speaking, uncertainty as to the precise causal relationship between illness and death in premodern times undoubtedly played a role in their popular conceptualization as something more than mere physiological struggle. They entailed spiritual warfare where the use of magic and sorcery would ultimately be required. Yet these were not the seventeenth century processes which enabled a firming of this association. A taxonomic revolution leading to the initial formation and definition of status groups, a profusion of politicized discourses concerning the sanctity of life, the hazardous effects of death pollution, and the normative features of the ideal Tokugawa subject, and the medicalization of late seventeenth society through ideas of health promoting strong conceptual linkages between medicine, cosmology, and ethics all worked together to create conceptual space for an outcaste involvement in medical activities. Outcastes involved themselves in these activities because they promised another, perhaps more lucrative, way to secure a livelihood. Entry into these industries, however, also required in part an admission of abnormality, and acceptance of the strong stigmatism that could often ensnare outcaste healing arts.

Outcaste engagement with medicine is also part of a larger global early modern history related to the normalization and standardization of healing arts. Early modern outcaste engagement with medicine around the world tends to be, as Gideon Sjoberg argued long ago somewhat echoing Paul Demi-éville’s classification, “preventive, restorative, and predictive” in nature. Sjoberg also noted in his ground-breaking study that “All the evidence – for Chinese, Korean, Indian, Tibetan, Middle Eastern, and medieval European cities – points to a differentiation between ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ medicine, whose practitioners are drawn from the urban upper and lower strata (including outcastes).” While not specifically mentioning Japan, Sjoberg emphasized that in a variety of early modern contexts lower class and outcaste medical practitioners lacked “a standardized body of knowledge and scholarly orientation” with the more literate upper classes tending to eschew dissection and surgery – in short, “anything that involves contact with ‘blood and guts.’” Such an argument does seem more or less applicable to the Japanese case. The great Japanese modern medical pioneer, Fujikawa Yū revealingly mentioned in his early twentieth-century classic, for example, that ‘surgery’ (gekka) was historically considered a “dirty” (iyashimu koto) trade reserved for the “uneducated and illiterate” (mugaku monmō). Japan’s early modern medical history, therefore, would appear to conform to a larger global process of coming to terms with what constituted the desirable form of healing power.

The relative absence of information relating to the role these outcastes played in the medical events of their day is undoubtedly rooted in the prevalent view of modern society about what has positively contributed to the fuller development of human life. While the bodies of medical knowledge and practices developed by outcaste groups substantially differed from what might be considered medical knowledge in the modern world, the temptation to immediately discount their value by raising doubts about substance, accuracy, and efficacy should be

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113 Ibid., 313.
114 Ibid., 316.
115 Quoted in Saitō, “Kinsei no hisabetsumin to iyakugyō/saikō,” 5.
resisted. To only view Japanese medical history in terms of progress – as a story about a body of knowledge and practices that, through the efforts of Rangaku scholars like Sugita Genpaku, led people out of epistemological darkness into light – hinders a clearer understanding of the particular healing arts developed by marginalised communities in Tokugawa Japan. They were, as I demonstrated in this paper, involved in numerous practices at both a local community and countrywide level that can be broadly termed ‘medical.’ Outcastes, in fact, even provided a platform for scholars involved in Western Learning to build on in their pursuit of scientific knowledge about the body and their activities are in need of closer examination. This problem also relates to a common bias in viewing source materials. Clearly oral history accounts need to be utilized to supplement the kinds of contemporaneous materials presented in this paper. Failure to do so will probably mean that the relationship between early modern outcaste groups and medicine remains a story which continues to elude historians into the future.

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Daniel Botsman, instructively, makes a similar point in relation to the history of punishment in Japan, which he notes is often interpreted as undergoing a significant shift from the Tokugawa through to the Meiji periods signifying a transition from barbarity to modernity. Botsman convincingly argues that there is a need to understand how the idea of progress is “intimately connected with the global project of empire.” Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan*, 13.

Wolfgang Michel, in a similar vein, has noted that the “Needham Question” – “why the scientific revolution did not occur in China” – has been a primary focus in scholarship on medical practices in East Asia including Japanese Studies. “Medicine and Allied Sciences in the Cultural Exchange between Japan and Europe in the Seventeenth Century,” 286.
Unhappiness in Retirement: “Isho” of Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842), a Rural Elite Commoner
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FIGURE 1: “Isho” written by Suzuki Bokushi in 1839. Cover page (left) and first page (right) of the first volume “Ten.” Courtesy of Minoru Takahashi (photographed 1983).

Introduction

Standard images of early modern life in Japan suggest that individuals in Tokugawa society were subordinated to the group, especially the ie (house, household). However, as suggested in works such as those by Herman Ooms, Anne Walthall and Edward E. Pratt, individual relationships within groups were far more complex and sticky than such stereotypes indicate.1 The dominant image stems partly from the nature of the documentation left for historians to explore, a record that, unlike European writing of the same era, typically leaves out personal reflections and detail.2 There are, however, rare documents that show us just how complex relationships could be between individuals and the groups to which they belonged. The final testament (“Isho”) of Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842) (see Figure 1) shows us this dynamic in a particularly compelling way.3

Bokushi (real name, Gisōji) is now best known as the author (or co-author with Santō Kyōzan, 1770?-1858) of Hokuetsu seppu (North-Etsu snow album), an ethnographic account of his native snow country of Echigo.4 He was a figure of the early modern rural elite or gōnō, actively engaged in commercial activities, local politics, and artistic pursuits.5 Despite his justifiable pride in his own

Foundation of the Gōnō (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999).

See, for example, Harold Bolitho, Bereavement and Consolation: Testimonies from Tokugawa Japan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 10, 27-29.


Many studies have discussed Bokushi’s life from various perspectives. Comprehensive works

1 Herman Ooms, Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law (Berkeley: University California Press, 1996) reveals tensions within the village structure, while Anne Walthall, The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) provides an insight into women’s participation in intellectual circles. In addition, class tensions between the wealthy farmer-merchants and peasants in rural areas are discussed in Edward E. Pratt, Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite: The Economic
achievements in these areas, Bokushi was unhappy in the last years of his life. He began his “Isho”, written in 1839, with a complaint directed at his son-in-law, recalling an unpleasant incident in the recent past:

Late in the first month this year, when I said just a little about family business as I always do, you dared to tell me “If you come out and try to help us, you just make trouble in our business (tosai no samatage).” Since I had a stroke, I have always been in the upstairs part of the house. I don’t do any more than a half or a third of what I want to do for my family. … I can do some jobs on my own if they are just in front of me. If I can’t do something, I tell our servants to do it. The reason is that I can’t leave anything undone once I have noticed it. But you call all my help of this kind just “trouble making”! And you don’t even turn around to look at me seven or eight times out of ten when I talk to you about some necessary thing. You even ignore my greetings.

“Isho” is full of such raw emotions, and thus it vividly exposes the existence of tensions and conflict between Bokushi and other members of his family. The text was unedited, carelessly written, added to bit by bit over a period of half a year, presumably when something came to Bokushi’s mind. The result is a rare record of the real voice of an elderly commoner in the Tokugawa period.

Bokushi’s “Isho” is very different from what we normally conceive of as the will of a dying person in modern times. The length of the document is extraordinary: it consists of a massive number of words, around 66,000 ji, contained in 142 pages of three volumes of hand-made notebooks. Presumably this was one of the longest final testaments produced by a Japanese person prior to the modern age or possibly in all of Japanese history. Also astonishing are the contents of the document. Unlike a normal will from the modern day, it contains few notes about family assets and property, but a great many personal comments, expressed in a mixture of recollections of Bokushi’s life, advice on the family business and, very conspicuously, complaints against his son-in-law, then the head of the Suzuki family. As I discuss below, these features relating to length and content are probably largely due to the author’s idiosyncrasies, especially his particular abilities, his physical disability, and the emotions he was feeling at that time: he was fond of writing, but hard of hearing, found speech difficult, and he was isolated from other family members.

Focusing on this document, the present essay takes part in an ongoing debate on the interaction between the ie and its members in early modern Japan. The Tokugawa period is often regarded as the time when “ie society” became established in Japan. Scholars have highlighted political and cultural mechanisms within the ie that enabled it to function as “the matrix of each individual’s subordination to the collective,” in areas such as village administration, family registration and marriage. Studies suggest that commoners’ growing acceptance of the notion of the ie is evident in the spread of such practices as building family graves and establishing


7 “Kaidai,” SBZ2, 418.
9 Bokushi’s “Isho” has been considered as “the world’s longest will” in Takada, “Sekaiichi nagai yuigon.”
house names (kamei, yagō) often together with specific family businesses (kagyō). On top of those practices, many members of the rural elite tried to reinforce the value of their ie by producing family documents including family trees (kakeizu), lists of family precepts (kakun) and house chronicles (nen-daiki), which had earlier been the preserve of aristocrats, samurai and wealthy merchants in the cities. Focus on these practices together with Confucian principles such as filial piety and ancestor-worship promotes the impression that ie norms were assuming increasing authority over the individual lives of family members in Tokugawa society.

On the other hand, scholars have also identified examples of people’s resistance to ie-centered norms, and instances of deviant behavior, in events such as divorces, illicit affairs, and engagement in intellectual pursuits or political movements.13

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12 Kinshū, a collection of Japanese house codes compiled by Yamamoto Shinkō (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001), provides good evidence of the spread of the notion of the ie from aristocrats, to daimyo families, to wealthy urban merchants, to provincial merchants and farmers.

13 For example, in English, Anne Walthall, The Weak Body of a Useless Woman, and Bettina Gramlich-Oka, Thinking Like a Man: Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825) (Leiden: Brill, 2006) provides good examples of women’s intellectual pursuit far beyond the normal expectation given to housewives in those days. Laurence E.Marceau, Takebe Ayatar: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2004) shows a samurai poet’s flight from home possibly after his illicit affairs with his sister-in-law. In Japanese, a number of cases of divorce initiated by wives’ departures are revealed in Takagi Tadashi, Mikudarihan: Edo no rikon to joseitachi (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1987) and Ōtō Osamu, “Fūfugenka, rikon to sonraku shakai,” in Kinsei Nihon no seikatsu bunka to chikik shakai, edited by Watanabe Nobuo (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1995), 177-206. Iwabuchi Ryōji, these examples do suggest that relations between the ie and individuals in the Tokugawa period could be more complicated than is usually imagined, but the available evidence is so far scattered and limited, in a sign of the general scarcity of ‘private’ views in Tokugawa-era documents. Moreover, the majority of family documents consist of a single voice, offering no perspectives other than that of the author, usually the head of the household. It is much more difficult to dig up views of family members other than the head because wives, children and servants usually do not have their own voices in family documents. In this context, Bokushi’s “Ishō” stands out because it consists of highly private notes written by a retiree who disagreed strongly with the behavior and attitudes of members of his family.

Bokushi’s “Ishō” confirms the view that the ie from the late Tokugawa period is to be primarily understood as a corporate body rather than a kinship unit.15 It does so, I argue, not by showing that the ie was a purpose-driven unit of people characterized by selfless devotion to the collective, but by revealing that the ie, like business enterprises and other types of human organization, was subject to conflict, disagreement and power struggles among members. I suggest that the overarching reason for such a complex relation between ie and individuals is that commoners’ increasing interest in establishing the ie as a norm was intrinsically linked with their si-

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multaneous focus on their own individual lives. The growth of interest in the two areas at the same time was often problematic when individuals had different views from each other. Bokushi’s “Isho” clearly exposes the human feelings among members of an early modern Japanese family.

Bokushi, the Head of the Suzuki Family

In the trend towards establishing the ‘household’ as a norm, many members of the rural elite produced their own family documents, as noted above. Bokushi’s own major works include “Eisei kirokushū” (Perpetual record), a family chronicle written from 1817 to 1828; “Yonabegusa” (Notes while burning the midnight oil) in 1824, a kind of autobiographical and Confucian essay to edify his descendants; and “Isho” in 1839. These three works are particularly important because they show different faces and voices of Bokushi in different stages of his life and in different contexts. “Eisei kirokushū” contains much objective information about what happened to the family year by year. “Yonabegusa”, on the other hand, presents a kind of formal discourse typically accepted among the rural elite with emphasis on diligence, frugality, filial piety and the importance of the ie as a basic social unit. The latter two works were produced when Bokushi was around fifty years old, in his heyday as a household head. What we can see in the texts is his pride in his family lineage and in his own achievement in business, community services and the arts, which can be summarized as follows.

The Suzuki family derived from a vassal of the Uesugi, a powerful daimyo house based in Echigo in the sixteenth century. However, the family was deprived of samurai status during the political turmoil after the Uesugi corps had been defeated by the Tokugawa-led forces. Bokushi’s ancestor subsequently settled as a farmer in Shiozawa village in the sixteenth century. Bokushi’s own major works include “Eisei kirokushū,” 27; “Yonabegusa,” 476. A similar history of a rural elite family is introduced in Pratt, Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite, 113-14.

Bokushi took charge of the family business from the age of twenty and he earnestly worked to grow the family assets and status. The family landholdings reached eighty koku in 1820 when he was fifty-one, and apparently reached 150 koku in another fifteen years, more than thirty times larger than the average in his village. Politically, in 1824 Bokushi was promoted to “elder” of Shiozawa by Aizu han authorities which had long governed the region on the Bakufu’s behalf (azukari). As was typical of status promotion among the rural elite around this period, his new political status was largely a result of his contribution of fifty ryō to a bond loan (goyōkin) to Aizu han in 1820. Bokushi had also received a number of commendations from the Aizu han authority for his contributions to the community

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18 See ibid., 17; “Yonabegusa,” SBZ1, 475-78.
19 “Eisei kirokushū,” 27; “Yonabegusa,” 476. A similar history of a rural elite family is introduced in Pratt, Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite, 113-14.
20 “Yonabegusa,” 476.
21 A letter from Bokushi to a friend dated 1837/1/19. “Shokan,” SBZ1, 971.
23 Bokushi was granted provisional status of “elder” (toshiyori-kaku) in 1822, and after two-year service, he received the full status of “elder.” See “Eisei kirokushū,” 82, 87. From 1724 the Bakufu entrusted the administration of most of the Uonuma area to Aizu han under the system of “trust land” (azukarichi), where the han authority took responsibility for taxation and judicial functions on behalf of the Bakufu. See Niigataken ed., Niigata-kenshi tsūshihen (Niigata: Niigataken, 1987), vol. 3, 208-09, 274-78; vol. 4, 18-21, 24-35.
24 See “Eisei kirokushū,” 72, 73, 82, 87; also “Eitai koshinchō,” SBZZ, 111. For the practice of commoners’ status promotion in relation to their financial contribution to their domain authorities, see, for example, Pratt, Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite, 139-40; Fukaya Katsumi, Edojidai no mibun ganbō: miagari to ueshita nashi (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2006), 136-42.
welfare in the years of bad harvests.25

In the area of cultural activities, Bokushi was much more active than a typical gōnō was. He organized large-scaled haikai contests in 1797 and 1800, establishing himself as a young leader in the local poetry circle. Throughout his life, he produced a great many pictures and poems, and collected a large number of artworks and letters from like-minded people from many places and from various social clusters including famous writers and artists.26 His keen interest in communicating with urban literati resulted in his name appearing several times in novels and essays by Kyokutei Bakin, Santō Kyōzan and Jippensha Ikku from 1819,27 and eventually led him to an extraordinary achievement in publishing Hokuetsu seppu in Edo in 1837.

Bokushi is a clear example of very successful members of the late Tokugawa rural elite who achieved by equally promoting activities in all areas of economy, politics and the arts.28 For years, Bokushi had repeatedly articulated the principles to which he cleaved: always giving absolute priority to the family business (“keizai daitichi”), obeying the ruler and laws (“ue o uyamai, hatto o tsutsushimi”), and enjoying literature and the arts to enrich his humanity but within limits so as not to affect any worldly business (“yoryoku ni fūga no moteasobi”).29

With such self-pride and fondness for writing, Bokushi wanted to set up a family practice of documenting what happened to the Suzuki household. As its title shows, “Eisei kirokushō” was intended to be a ‘perpetual record’ of the activities of the Suzuki family, “whether happy, infuriating, sad or pleasant.”30 Bokushi clearly states in the Foreword that this record was and should continue to be written to provide future members of the household with useful information about their ancestors’ lives. Without this kind of record, he writes, descendants would only understand their ancestors’ names from the death register roll, and would soon forget other information, or never even know the interesting stories and experiences of their ancestors. He thus presented his work as a model intended to be the beginning of a continuing Suzuki family chronicle. He instructed his successors on how to maintain this journal in everyday life, and urged other descendants to “read this book once a year.”31 As Anne Walthall has already suggested, Bokushi’s “Eisei kirokushō” as well as family documents produced by other gōnō represent the family head’s overt effort to establish a certain “house style (kaufu).”32 For

25 Bokushi produced a scroll entitled “Kikan” which contains many commendations letters from the Aizu-han authority. See Suzuki Bokushi, kiken kan kaikan jigyō gizai to zaison bunka: gijutsu to shótō shōkanshō, 2004), 61.
26 He had 400-600 correspondents nationwide, from famous authors and kabuki actors to rural intellectuals as well as samurai officials. See Takeshi Moriyma, “Communicating Provincial: The Correspondence Network of Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842),” Japanese Studies, 29:1 (May 2009): 47-63.
27 Bokushi compiled collections of letters from Bakin to him and Kyōzan to him, entitled “Takizawa Bakin shokanshō,” and “Santō Kyōzan shokanshō,” which are contained in SBZ2. According to these letters, in his books Bakin acknowledged Bokushi as his friend in Echigo, someone who had sent him a variety of information with useful information about their ancestors’ lives.
28 See, for example, Sugi Hitoshi, Kinsei no chiki to zaison bunka: gijutsu to shōhin to fūga no kōryū (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001), 36-46.
29 “Yonabegusa,” 470, 478, and “Yonabegusa beppon,” SBZ1, 504. Similar expressions are all over in “Yonabegusa.”
31 Ibid.
her, this “house style” comprises “household history, its culture, and occupation” as well as “certain sets of values and standards of behavior” to be imposed on family members. Walthall is right to emphasize that family documents express “a desire on the part of their authors to develop and maintain a family tradition, to distinguish their families …, and to perpetuate not merely the family lands and lineage, but the family customs and the house style.” In reality, however, the Suzuki ie after Bokushi’s retirement from its headship did not necessarily run the way he desired, that “Isho” revealed.

**Bokushi, a Retiree, in 1839**

The domestic problems that Bokushi faced after his retirement were due to a large extent to the complexity of the Suzuki family structure. As shown in Figure 2, in 1839, Bokushi, aged seventy, had a young spouse, his sixth wife Rita, probably forty-seven years old. Bokushi’s marital life was not ordinary, although historians established that divorce and remarriage was not rare among Tokugawa commoners. His first and second wives were divorced within a few years although they gave birth to a son, Jōtarō, and a daughter, Kuwa, respectively. His marriage to the third wife, Uta, went very well over twenty-three years, although they didn’t have their own children. The son, Jōtarō, died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-one, leaving his young wife and baby daughter. So Bokushi and Uta arranged their daughter Kuwa’s marriage to Kan’emon, who was Uta’s relative. Uta died at forty-eight, probably of dysentery. Bokushi, then fifty-two, remarried quite quickly, but his fourth wife ran away in five months; his fifth wife eloped with a former lover two months after the wedding. After facing great humiliation, Bokushi married Rita in 1823. But the divorced fourth wife brought a two-year-old boy to Bokushi, claiming the boy was from her marriage with Bokushi. The Suzukis accepted the boy and named him Yahachi. Accordingly, at the time when Bokushi was writing “Isho”, the head of household was Kan’emon, forty-two years old, and the main housewife (shufu) was Kuwa, forty-four years of age. Their son and heir was Eizaemon, twenty, who had married two years earlier. Kuwa and Kan’emon also had four other small children. Yahachi was eighteen years old, still living with Bokushi. Several years earlier, Bokushi had established a branch family for his deceased son’s daughter, Suwa.

**Figure 2: The Suzuki Family in 1839**

In stark contrast to his reasons for writing “Eisei kirokushū” and “Yonabegusa”, the production of “Isho” was motivated by Bokushi’s unhappiness and frustration in retirement. In his mind, the roots...
of his unhappiness lay in a complex blend of several factors: first, his sickness and physical disability; second, his disagreement with Kan’emon over business and household management; third, individual differences between Kan’emon and him in personality and lifestyle; and fourth, a generational power struggle in the household in relation to the complex family structure. All these things contributed to Bokushi’s sense of frustration at the gap between ideal and reality at the end of his life.

Sickness and physical disability naturally affect elderly people’s minds and their interaction with their family. Bokushi had been a very healthy, energetic man, although he had been hard of hearing since he was young. In 1836, however, he had a stroke while he was hosting Sōtō Kyōzan, who had travelled to Echigo from Edo for the first time, bringing a proof copy of Hokuetsu seppu for Bokushi in preparation for its scheduled appearance in bookshops in Edo and Osaka in the following year. These days were really a dream come true for Bokushi until the disease finished the celebration. He narrowly escaped death after treatment in a hot spring, but the stroke left him partly paralyzed, mildly impaired of speech and harder of hearing, all of which caused communication problems between Bokushi and his family. Bokushi expressed his frustration: “This old body can’t say what I want to say, so I would appreciate it if you elicit what I want to say or you tell me so when you can’t understand my words.”

Bokushi’s disagreement with Kan’emon over business and household management was due to generational and personality difference between the two men as the household navigated the changing rural economy. It is probably correct to say that the Suzuki household, like other wealthy farmer-mERCHANTS of this time, reached a turning point in Suzuki household, like other wealthy farmer-rural economy. It is probably correct to say that the two men as the household navigated the changing generational and personality difference between the business and household management was due to sickness and physical disability; second, his disagreement with Kan’emon over business and household management; third, individual differences between Kan’emon and him in personality and lifestyle; and fourth, a generational power struggle in the household in relation to the complex family structure. All these things contributed to Bokushi’s sense of frustration at the gap between ideal and reality at the end of his life.

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Bokushi’s disagreement with Kan’emon over business and household management was due to generational and personality difference between the two men as the household navigated the changing rural economy. It is probably correct to say that the Suzuki household, like other wealthy farmer-merchants of this time, reached a turning point in terms of economic growth. A study of the development of landlords in Echigo points to three distinct periods in the emergence of great landlords in this province: first, the 1750s-80s, in which gōnō grew based on commodity trade along with the development of a money economy in rural areas; second, the 1830s-50s, characterized by gōnō’s large scale land acquisition as a result of their money-lending to ordinary farmers; and third, the 1870s onwards, which witnessed the further growth of landlords under the new status quo of Meiji. In reference to this timeline, Bokushi’s father’s headship corresponds to the first period, Bokushi’s is placed between the first and the second, and Kan’emon’s relates to the second. Bokushi’s father was a second son so he did not inherit much property, but succeeded in commerce by marketing the local textile specialty, Echigo chijimi. He then changed the family business to pawn-broking and land management. From about 1790 Bokushi faithfully followed in his father’s footsteps over four decades, achieving a great deal of success. He had been very cautious, conservative and meticulous in everything in business. However, coinciding with Kan’emon’s succession to the headship in 1830, a highly unstable time began in terms of both economy and politics. As with many other regions, Echigo province experienced famine, riots, natural disasters and political reforms at this time. Bokushi’s description of the era, “a time without security” (yudan naranu jisetsu), well represents his concern about the economic and social situation of those days. Yet such instability prompted the emergence of larger landlords as a result of financial problems among the population at large.

As the head of a gōnō family, Kan’emon was not only much younger than Bokushi but he was a more ambitious and bolder entrepreneur. Bokushi’s intense devotion to the pawn-broking business was not continued by Kan’emon, who pursued more.

40 Bokushi’s letter to a literary friend on 1837/1/19. “Shokan,” 971-73.
41 “Isho,” 947.
42 Niigataken, ed., Niigataken shi tsūshihen, vol. 5 (Niigata: Niigata, 1987), 163-201. Because of the existence of great landlords, Niigata Prefecture was called “landlords kingdom” (jinushi ōoku) in the Meiji and Taishō periods. According to a survey in 1924, the prefecture had five landlords out of the nation’s nine who owned more than 1,000 chōbu (approx. 2500 acres) of land (Hokkaidō was excluded from the survey). Tanaka Keiichi, et al, Niigataken no rekishi (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1998), 280.
43 See, for example, Niigataken, ed., Niigataken shi tsūshihen, vol. 5, 17-148.
44 “Isho,” 940.
45 For other gōnō’s experiences during the 1830s-40s, see, for example, Pratt, Japan’s Proto-industrial Elite, 150-51.
profitable lines of business, and sought higher status among rural merchants. Kan’emon paid two hundred ryō for a license and equipment for sake-brewing, and also expanded the money-lending business to a much larger scale than ever before. Kan’emon wanted to discontinue the pawnshop, the management of which required meticulous attention to numerous small loans and goods to take in as pawn or to sell. However, Kan’emon’s active business management struck Bokushi as risky and careless.

In addition, Bokushi’s conservatism and uprightness seem to have inclined him towards safer ways. “Yonabegusa” contains many episodes that display this aspect of his nature. One describes his very earnest study habits in his temple-school days. Another says he had never gambled since he lost some money in his late teenage days, and one more self-critically confesses his one and apparently only experience of visiting a brothel after being lured there by friends. Such a personality exacerbated Bokushi’s real concern about the vulnerability of the household, although the expression of such concern was to an extent formulaic: similar sentiments were often expressed in didactic essays and family precepts of other wealthy households in the Tokugawa period. Early examples of awareness of wealthy households’ vulnerability are seen in Sagawa Masachika’s Shison kagami (Handbook for descendants), published in 1667, and Nishikawa Joken’s Chōnin bukuro (Words for townsmen), published in 1719. Both refer to a popular saying, “there is no second generation in millionaire families.” Bokushi similarly states in “Yonabegusa” that “very few house-holds of farmers or commoners in this rural place continue to prosper for more than a hundred years.” Like other authors of family precepts and didactic essays, he strongly emphasizes the importance both of abstaining from “extravagant behavior and haughtiness” (ogori) and of putting “frugality” (ken’yaku) into everyday practice.

Bokushi also follows Confucian scholars in establishing a distinction between “frugality” and “stinginess” (rinshoku). However, in practice, his strict observance of “frugality” in everyday housekeeping provoked tension between him and other family members. Bokushi was proud of his habit of not wasting anything, whether time, paper or pieces of rope. For example, “Isho” records that he had collected all sorts of timber, including odds and ends, and put all of them in order. Kan’emon, however, split them for firewood. Nevertheless, Bokushi took some of them back, and used them to make many boxes, name-plates for the pawnshop, and the like. Even Bokushi’s last wife, Rita, sometimes could not stand such habits. She once threw away all the wooden sandals that Bokushi had repaired himself. Servants and peasants who worked for the Suzukiya were, of course, sensitive to the difference between Bokushi’s and Kan’emon’s sense of “frugality.” After retirement Bokushi learned, for example, that they praised the new head of the Su-

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46 See “Isho,” 901, 935.  
47 A gōnō family’s shift from pawn business to large scale money-lending in the 1830s is also discussed in Pratt, *Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite*, 149-50.  
48 “Yonabegusa,” 441-42, 446, 471.  
49 “Yonabegusa,” 438.  
51 Ibid., 439, 451, 457, 467.  
54 “Isho,” 957-78.  
55 Ibid., 933.
zukiya for his “generous” attitude toward household economy.56 Differences between Bokushi’s and Kan’emon’s personal attributes, economic views and generations threw into sharp relief the two men’s different behavior in daily life. Bokushi’s disapproval of Kan’emon’s everyday activities extended to many things. In family discipline, he felt that Kan’emon was slipshod at greeting others, half-hearted in ancestor worship, and did not discipline children. As for lifestyle, Bokushi chafed at Kan’emon’s habit of late rising, taking a nap and sitting at a kotatsu-heater; Kan’emon loved luxury, wearing good kimono, travelling on horseback or by palanquin, and purchasing folding screens. Bokushi complained that he was bad at housekeeping: he left shelves, drawers and boxes untidy, or knives and tools rusty. More importantly Bokushi felt Kan’emon had poor business habits: neglecting bookkeeping, careless handling of small change and so on.57 Kan’emon’s shortcomings actually suggest a list of dos and don’ts for the head of a household from Bokushi’s point of view.

Generational power struggles between a retiree and the current head of family existed in many households. An 1873 testament by a gōnō in Shimotsuke province, for example, includes a section which advises “how to behave after retirement” (inkyo no shikata). The author recommended that after retirement people not reserve “retiree’s assets” (inkyo ryō), nor “keep any money,” but curb “personal desire” (shiyoku). By doing these things, he wrote, the elderly could be a “happy-go-lucky retiree” (go-kuraku inkyo), fully looked after by the current head of the family.58 This actually reveals the custom, in the author’s region and day at least, that retirees might have reserved part of the family assets to support their life separately. But he opposed this custom because separate finances within one household tended to “bring the parent and child to a difficult relationship, which often ends up with mediation by relatives or the community.”59 There is no clue as to whether or not Bokushi reserved part of the family assets for his retirement; however, it is clear that he continued to exercise his freedom in spending money on his cultural activities and communication with other literati across great distances. Letters from Santō Kyōzan to Bokushi, for example, show that Bokushi regularly sent Kyōzan season’s greetings including a New Year’s gift (toshidama) of one or two shu, and also money requesting Kyōzan buy books and prints for him.60

It is likely that the complexity of Suzuki family structure complicated the generational power struggle between the retiree and the current head. Bokushi’s position was weakened by the death of Uta, his longstanding wife, and also by his subsequent unsuccessful remarriages. Moreover, although his marriage to Rita lasted until his death, this young spouse — more than twenty years younger than he and just a few years older than Kan’emon and Kuwa — could hardly maintain Uta’s position of domestic power. For Kan’emon, Uta was not only his mother-in-law but also his own relative, who had probably initiated the connection between him and the Suzukis in the first place.61 Bokushi writes that “especially since Uta died, [Kan’emon] has treated me as a nuisance, and he also has become foppish. … I have been the only one who bars his path.”62

56 Ibid., 940.
57 Ibid., 908-09, 917-19, 923-24, 956. These points are discussed in Takahashi, “Isho ni miru bannen no Bokushi zō,” 133-37; Ujiie, Edojin no o, 41-46.
59 Ibid., 231-32.
60 “Santō Kyōzan shokanshū,” 305, 343. (One shu, a sixteenth ryō, was worth around 400 mon in those days.) Only after Bokushi paid five ryō to Kyōzan for his editing work for Bokushi’s draft of Hokuetsu seppu, a letter from Kyōzan mentioned Kan’emon’s name, suggesting that the payment of this substantial sum was made under the name of the current head not the retiree. Ibid., 317-18.
61 See Takahashi, Zayū no Suzuki Bokushi, 153. Married women’s active involvement in their natal family affairs is seen in case of Matsuo Taseko, among others (Walthall, The Weak Body of a Useless Woman, 64).
62 “Isho,” 937.
Domestic Quarrels

Recent studies such as those by Ōtō Osamu reveal many kinds of problems between family members: parents vs. children, husbands vs. wives, and so on.63 Bokushi’s “Isho” is not merely testimony to the existence of such problems but also an important text in showing actual scenes of domestic quarrels in the Tokugawa period. One example is an 1836 incident that Bokushi wrote about bitterly.64 The quarrel started with an exchange of words between Bokushi and Kan’emon about work habits. When Kan’emon said “I am working!,” Bokushi answered sarcastically, “Yes, work is work however small or big, isn’t it?” These words infuriated Kan’emon, who then went upstairs, abusing Bokushi violently. Kan’emon dragged Bokushi’s painting tools down from the retiree’s room, shouting, “From now on, I’ll be a retiree. You, be the head of the household. Do whatever you like!” Kan’emon also smacked his son’s head in a temper, telling him not to learn painting any more from Bokushi. Having seen his son-in-law raging so violently, Bokushi apologized repeatedly, but Kan’emon’s yelling did not stop until the head of their stem family came to intervene.

This domestic dispute continued that night. While having dinner, Kan’emon announced, “I have decided to appeal to the Office (oyakusho) [of Aizu han].” Bokushi did not reply, thinking it was just Kan’emon’s usual big talk. After midnight, however, the family realized that Kan’emon truly had gone out. Bokushi and other members of the family searched for Kan’emon, “asking at house after house all over the town.” Bokushi describes that night search as a “once-in-a-lifetime humiliation.” Finally, Kan’emon returned home, accompanied by Bokushi’s nephew from a neighboring town. Bokushi “just coaxed [Kan’emon] into settling down,” according to “Isho.”

This incident seems to have been a turning-point in the domestic feud between the father and son-in-law. Their antagonism towards each other intensified. Bokushi writes:

I have been on good terms with my family, relatives and all other people throughout my entire life. Not to mention the fact that my parents and sisters all praised me until they died. But this [relationship with Kan’emon] is due to evil destiny from a previous life. It can’t be remedied by human will.65

Thereafter, Kan’emon no longer hesitated to reject Bokushi’s advice on household matters. Bokushi angrily recorded Kan’emon’s words: “My mind and yours are as different as black and white,” and, “When you appear and get involved in something, it always obstructs our family business.”66

This particular dispute highlights the complex social frameworks that surrounded the notion of the ie in Bokushi’s day. Firstly, from a legal point of view, Bokushi was not necessarily in a weak position even after retirement. As noted in Ōtō’s study of parent-child disputes in the Tokugawa period, the Confucianist Bakufu law gave clear superiority to parents over their children. Parents could sue their children or renounce them; but a child’s lawsuit over a parent’s action was itself a crime against filial piety. Only if a child had suffered through “injustice” perpetrated by a parent was he or she allowed to submit a request for special consideration.67 Bokushi did not, of course, commit any “injustice” in this sense. On the contrary, he had every reason to be respected by others because of his economic success and community contributions. Bokushi was also in a much stronger position than Kan’emon in terms of biological relation to the Suzuki bloodline. A popular textbook for commoners, _Hyakushō bunryōki_ (The farmers’ role, pub. 1726), acknowledges potential difficulty in living with a son-in-law as compared to living with a daughter-in-law, and advises “not to hesitate to kick out [the son-in-law] if your initial expectation of him turns out to be wrong.”68
Despite this strong legal and social position, however, Bokushi gave in to Kan’emon. His surrender probably reflected his sense of vulnerability due to increasing signs of aging – illness and disabilities – and because of his weakened power in the family after Uta’s death. Further, Bokushi feared possible forcible intervention by relatives or the community to remove a troublesome retiree. Ōtō’s study describes several cases of this kind of intervention, showing that Tokugawa village communities had power to retire trouble-making heads of families, or even to confine them to separate rooms or cottages (oshikome). This was because, Ōtō explains, village communities often decided to give priority to the continuity of an individual household as a corporate member of their village, even if it meant overriding the Bakufu moral code emphasizing filial piety. In practice, interventions by village elders, relatives or neighbors in intergenerational disputes tended to be aimed at retiring the parents rather than advising parents to renounce sons or reject sons-in-law.\footnote{Ōtō, Kinsei nōmin no ie, mura, kokka, 406-13.}

Bokushi’s “Isho” gives voice to real fear of such community intervention in his disputes with his son-in-law. He writes, for example, that “I can now see [Kan’emon’s] intention to organize a meeting of the relatives in order to kick me out to a retiree’s cottage.”\footnote{“Isho,” 927.} He mentions the threat of being “kicked out” (oidashi) or “turned out” (tsukamidashi) by Kan’emon, or of becoming “a retiree in confinement” (oshikome inkyo).\footnote{Ibid., 889, 916, 927, 953, 959. Kasaya Kazuhiko’s studies first revealed many cases of forcible action by a daimyo’s senior vassals to hold their lord in confinement for the sake of the daimyo house. See Kasaya Kazuhiko, Shukan oshikome no kōzō: Kinsei daimyō to kashindan (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2006, originally published in 1988).} Bokushi’s relatives were also worried about the possibility of such a worsening of Bokushi and Kan’emon’s confrontation. The head of the Suzuki stem family particularly suggested to Bokushi that he should pre-empt such a fate by coming to live with them or with Bokushi’s granddaughter Suwa instead.\footnote{“Isho,” 927.} Bokushi, however, refused to move out of the house for the following reasons: first, he believed he had done nothing wrong; second, he was strongly attached to the house that he had built at the expense of a great deal of effort and money; and third, he could not stand the embarrassment of being removed from home, which would inevitably have attracted a good deal of public attention.\footnote{Ibid., 927, 930-31.}

Community perception was undoubtedly a very important influence on Bokushi. The domestic disputes of the Suzuki family became a subject of gossip in the community after relatives became involved and neighbors heard violent shouting and children crying. Apparently Bokushi, rather than Kan’emon, felt deeply regretful about the spread of gossip, as he was then, on the one hand, very conscious of his fame as a man of high caliber in business and the arts, and on the other hand, still worried about the ill-repute occasioned by his marriage breakdowns. In fact, he was even told by Kan’emon, “You’d better not do anything more because you have built your reputation as high as it can get.”\footnote{Ibid., 892.} In this respect, the possibility that Kan’emon would appeal to the Aizu-han administration must have been Bokushi’s greatest concern. It is actually uncertain whether Kan’emon really intended to bring a lawsuit or simply said so in an effort to intimidate Bokushi. Nonetheless, the possibility of a lawsuit must surely have had a great impact on Bokushi, who generally was careful to respect the status quo. He was proud of his numerous official commendations, and very conscious of never having been involved in any lawsuits so far.\footnote{Ibid., 916.} For him, Kan’emon’s midnight disappearance after the quarrel, possibly to launch a lawsuit, “overwhelmed [his] body and soul” with concern about “losing face with the ruler” (okami).\footnote{Ibid., 904.}

**Bokushi’s Frame of Mind and Action**

The text of “Isho” embodies Bokushi’s desperate negotiation with the fact that his household was changing under his successor’s headship. Bokushi was a sick old retiree full of resentment about the growing gap between what he wished to happen and the reality of life in his household. The manner of
dying represented another gap. What Bokushi wished for was probably to die in the way his father had shown him three decades earlier.

According to Bokushi’s texts, his father Kōemon died peacefully aged seventy-one in 1807. Kōemon had been reasonably sound until a few weeks before his death, although a stroke had prevented him from taking long walks for a year or so. When he became ill, he said to the family “now it’s time for the finale of my life” (waga inochi no shin’uchi). So people like his daughters who had married into families in neighboring towns came and looked after him by turns for a while. At the final exchange of words between Bokushi and Kōemon, Bokushi said “Please tell us anything you wish for. I will make it happen after you go to heaven.” Kōemon replied, “I had this son, therefore I have no further wish in this world.” Bokushi then in tears asked Kōemon for his death poem (jisei; Kōemon had also been a keen poet well known in regional haikai circles). Bokushi later recorded his father’s last haikai in several documents for his descendants:

\[
\begin{align*}
Kari no yo no & \quad \text{A little cuckoo} \\
yume mata oboezu & \quad \text{I cannot remember} \\
Hototogisu & \quad \text{my dream again,} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Kari no yo no [woke me up],
yume mata oboezu [I cannot remember my dream again],
Hototogisu [a dream in this transient world].

Bokushi arranged a large funeral for Kōemon, attended by around 230 people. According to Bokushi, two and a half ryō 1750 mon were paid to the priests and their assistants, in addition to his donation of ten ryō to the family temple.

Bokushi’s respect and care for his father’s soul continued long after. In 1821, fourteen years after Kōemon’s death, Bokushi compiled two books of poetry which he offered for the repose of his father’s soul: first, a collection of verses by eighty-seven poets, both from the region and far away; and, second, a selection of Kōemon’s poetry, containing around 1,400 verses, all fair-copied by Bokushi over 125 pages. In the preface to the latter book, Bokushi wrote a brief account of his father’s life as follows:

My father was a great man who had revitalized (chūkō) the household economy and spirit. When he was young, his business talent stood out. Nothing he did failed to make profits. From thirty years of age, he exclusively devoted himself to the family business. Only when he had spare time did he learn poetry and art (fūga). … From [his fifties], he just enjoyed himself in the arts, communicating with various people near and far, urban and rural. … Here I have compiled this book, hoping that someday we can print it (azusa ni kizami) and send copies to like-minded friends in the cities and the provinces.

These sections of “Isho” and “Yonabegusa” provide fine examples of the happy end of a person’s life in an early modern context. Bokushi obviously wished that his son-in-law and other family members would treat him as he had treated his own father. It is likely that Bokushi believed that he had even stronger reasons than his father to be respected as an ancestor, one descendants could be proud of, admired for his knowledge and talent in the arts, and appreciated because of the household assets built under his headship. Yet, what the sick and old Bokushi detected from the behavior and words of Kan’emon and other family members was only their propensity to wish for Bokushi’s early death. He wrote, “I suspect the whole family now wishes that I was going to die tomorrow if not today.” However, Bokushi did not quietly accept the situation. He wrote as a measure to negotiate the troubled relationship with his son-in-law. In fact, “Isho” was not his first attempt. A few years before it, Bokushi wrote a letter criticizing Kan’emon’s household management and treatment of Bokushi, pointing out “dozens of items amounting to fourteen

\begin{itemize}
\item[77] “Eisei kirokushū,” 41.
\item[78] “Yonabegusa,” 461-62. Also see “Isho,” 901.
\item[79] In Bokushi’s introduction to “Shūgetsuan hokkushū,” SBZ2, 125.
\item[80] “Eisei kirokushū,” 41-42.
\item[81] See “Shūgetsuan hokkushū,” 125-83; “Shūgetsuan rōkissen Bokusui tsuizen shū,” SBZ2, 187-90.
\item[82] “Shūgetsuan hokkushū,” 125.
\item[83] “Isho,” 958. Similar comments are also noted 894, 899.
\end{itemize}
or fifteen pages.” The letter was sent to a relative’s house while Kan’emon was staying there, and was addressed to Kan’emon as well as to the head of the relative’s family as a witness and mediator. Bokushi even required Kan’emon to answer in writing. In practice, however, Kan’emon simply ignored Bokushi. He offered no written reply, but verbally criticized Bokushi for exaggerating family problems by his actions.84 In fact, Kan’emon also (to a far lesser extent) used the power of documents in attempts to settle the repeated confrontations with his father-in-law. According to “Isho”, in a quarrel before Bokushi’s stroke, Kan’emon demanded and received Bokushi’s promise in writing that Bokushi would no longer interfere with Kan’emon’s headship of the family business.85

Bokushi wrote “Isho” as a last resort in his troublesome communication with Kan’emon, an effort filled with much resentment and feelings of resignation. Bokushi wrote that “there is no chance for me to fight against you in this world, but I hope this ‘Isho’ speaks to you clearly.”86 Bokushi’s tactics were also noteworthy. “Isho” was addressed to Kan’emon and three families of relatives. Bokushi stated that “Isho” should be kept not in the Suzukiya but in a relative’s house.87 He also wrote:

If you kindly have a look at this will once a year after my death, it would please my soul much more than thousands chants would do. My soul will rest in peace. Please never ever show the will to anyone other than the addressees. If you dispose of this, my soul deep in the grave will bear a grudge against you forever and without fail.88

“Isho” represents the strong ego of Bokushi; however, it also contains Bokushi’s final hopes for his reconciliation with Kan’emon. For example, in the middle of “Isho” he wrote, “I should apologize that I have been picking up all the bad points of [Kan’emon] but not mentioning any good points.” Bokushi then wrote about Kan’emon’s courageous intervention in certain peasant meetings which otherwise might have developed into a riot, saying “I was really relieved and proud of you then. In heaven, I’ll be looking forward to seeing you serving the community even more.”89 In another place, while writing a series of criticisms of Kan’emon, Bokushi abruptly inserted words of appreciation about Kan’emon’s kindness in buying bags of flour to cook udon-noodles for Bokushi. “[Flour] is as expensive as one ryō per hyō, but you bought it for me more than twice because I love udon … You did not allow any other people to use [the flour].” Bokushi wrote. He continued “I should not forget that you gave me such a treat (kōyō) too.”90 After this sentence, however, Bokushi returned to his criticism of Kan’emon’s household management. Bokushi clearly expressed an unstable mix of indignation at Kan’emon’s deeds and regret about his focus solely on the negative side of his successor’s business and personality.

Perhaps Bokushi’s composition of “Isho” even worsened his relationship with Kan’emon in the end. Although the details are unknown, it is believed that Bokushi finally moved, at least temporarily, from the Suzukiya to the Iwakiya to live with his granddaughter Suwa and her husband.91 Bokushi lived for another two years after producing “Isho.” Despite his sickness and troublesome situation, he managed to work together with Kyōzan in Edo in writing Hokuetsu seppu Part II. In his very last letter to a friend in 1842, Bokushi said that he had just received from the publisher the first two fascicles of Part II, and that authorship of the remaining third and fourth fascicles were underway. He was very proud of the publication, considering it “a last flourish” of his life (shinibana).92 Bokushi’s worries and criticism notwithstanding, Kan’emon proved to be a talented businessman, bringing further prosperity to the Suzuki household. The Suzukiya became known as a leading sake-brewer and landlord in the region in the Meiji period.93 Bokushi died on 1842/5/15.

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84 Ibid., 956.  
85 Ibid., 916.  
86 Ibid., 889.  
87 Ibid., 960-61.  
88 Ibid., 960.  
89 Ibid., 897.  
90 Ibid., 924.  
91 Takahashi, “Isho ni miru bannen no Bokushi zō,” 128.  
93 A tax document in 1876 shows that the Suzukiya was the highest payer of tax on sake-
The details of his death are unknown. Still, his posthumous name in Buddhist tradition may give us a hint how his life was perceived in the end by people close to him, particularly by the priest of his family temple. It reads “Konyo shigō seion koji,” literally meaning “a man with gold, honor, strong will, gentle personality.”

His “Isho” survived, thanks to his “strong will,” owing particularly to two of the instructions Bokushi gave to his descendants. One was his clear demand not to dispose of the document, and the other was his instruction that “Isho” should be held not in the Suzukiya but either by the stem family or the branch family, the Iwakiya. As a result, “Isho” was privately kept in the Iwakiya for about 130 years brewing among fifty brewers in the district. The family also grew further as a great landlord. According to surveys of land owned by large landholders in 1892 and 1909, the Suzuki family ranked sixth and tenth, respectively, in Minami Uonuma County. In Shiozawa Village, the family was first in 1892 and second in 1909. Shiozawamachi, ed., Shiozawashi shiryōhen, vol. 2 (Shiozawa, Niigata: Shiozawamachi, 2000), 443-44, 470-73.

Figure 3: The grave of Bokushi and the Suzuki family, Chōonji temple, Shiozawa. Niigata. Author’s photograph, October 2000.

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Conclusion

Bokushi’s “Isho” brings to light the troubled family life of this rural elite commoner, notwithstanding his eager participation in promotion of the norms of the ie which centered on pride in the family lineage and established status in the community and the importance of continued devotion to the family business. Bokushi’s values and lifestyle were not always accepted by other members of the household. People acted differently due to their personal attributes, their relationships and the things that happened to them. “Isho” shows such the dynamics of an early modern family, testifying to the existence of different views and emotional tensions among members.

“Isho” clearly embodies Bokushi’s simultaneous interest in both the ie and the ‘self.’ For Bokushi, the ie was not necessarily what he had to sacrifice himself for, nor was it a collective that completely subjugated his desire. It was rather an arena within which he could craft his identity by playing certain roles given to him. While in his previous role as family head his dual focus on ie and self worked well or at least was manageable, it became problematic in his later role as a retiree. For the sake of the ie it would have been better if Bokushi had just quietly played the standard role of the retiree, but this proved impossible in view of his large ego. Unfortunately his insistence on engaging fully in family activities and decisions no longer suited the household interest under Kan’emon’s headship. The


two men had different views in many areas even though both aimed at the further growth of the household economically and in social status.

The complexity of the psychology of a retiree is also exhibited in “Isho.” Bokushi wished to establish himself as a great ancestor in the history of the Suzuki family. His autobiographical essay and family chronicle were earlier endeavors when he was a confident and proud head of the family. Unlike the previous works, however, “Isho” was produced out of his frustration at his isolation in the family, and out of his desperation to regain people’s respect. Due to his pride and self-belief on the one hand, and to illness and community perception on the other, his mind wavered over whether to keep fighting against or to surrender to current circumstances of the household and his own situation.

“Isho” probably represents to some extent a typical mentality of a former household head at the end of his life in the context of the changing society of early nineteenth-century Japan. Or more generally, Bokushi’s emotions can be regarded as a classic example of human feelings when people get old, sick and frustrated with new developments. But while there may have been many unhappy retirees, the great majority of them did not leave traces of their voices in documents. Even if more of them than we realize did so, their comments in wills, letters or diaries have not survived in most cases. The production and survival of Bokushi’s “Isho” is the result of special circumstances. Bokushi’s domestic problems were probably greater than usual. His considerable intellectual and physical abilities also contributed to his decision to produce a written document: he was very capable in writing but disabled in terms of speaking. Moreover, as “Isho” itself proves, there had developed a custom at least among educated people that documents were exchanged not only between households but also now between family members, with the aim of forestalling future or further domestic problems. The compiling of written materials as a means to settle domestic disputes can be regarded as a result of the spreading practice of documentation in Tokugawa society. Finally, Bokushi’s large ego helped preserve the document, since he desired to perpetuate his ‘house style’ as part of his expression of ‘self.’

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The Death of Kobayashi Yagobei
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Introduction

It is an accident of literary history that we know anything about Kobayashi Yagobei. His death, on the twentieth day of the 5th month of 1801 (Kyōwa 1) in Kashiwabara village, Shinano Province, was important to his family. But Yagobei was not John F. Kennedy, Matsuo Bashō, or even Woman Wang. Yagobei’s death was the quotidian demise of someone of no historical importance. However his eldest son, Yatarō, became Kobayashi Issa. In the years following his father’s death, Issa became one of the two or three most famous haikai (haiku) poets of his generation and his renown has not diminished since. At some point before he had reached the pinnacle of haikai rankings, Issa wrote an account, now called Chichi no shūen Nikki (父の終焉日記: A Diary of my Father’s Final Days), of his father’s illness, death, and the first seven days of the family’s mourning.

Chichi no shūen Nikki, as it has come down to us, is a complex text. Some parts of it have been discussed in English language scholarship at least since Max Bickerton’s 1932 introduction to Issa and it is often treated as a work of literature or a diary. This approach to Chichi no shūen Nikki owes a great deal to the work of Kokubungaku (Japanese National Literature) scholars. However, in order to read Chichi no shūen Nikki as a book within the canon of Japanese National Literature (Kokubungaku), it must be significantly transformed in various ways and a large portion of it is

1 The part of Shinano Town closest to Kurohime train station in Nagano Prefecture.
2 Who, besides being a famous poet, was commemorated after his death in Bashō-ō shūen-ki by Bashō’s disciple Takarai Kikaku (See, for instance, Kira Sueo, Yamashita Kazumi, Maruyama Kazuhiko, and Matsuo Yasuaki, editors and annotators, Kinsei haiku haibun-shū (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2001) 457-467. Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū #72). There is also a similar text called Issa-ō shūen-ki by Issa’s disciple Nishihara Bunko (Kobayashi Keiichirō, Maruyama Kazuhiko, and Yaba Katsuyuki, editors and annotators, Issa zenshū volume 9 (bekkan) shiryō, hoi (Nagano: Shinano Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 1978) 52-56) although it is more an exercise in elegance in honor of Issa than a description of his final days or death.
4 Also known as Nobuyuki in his youth. I will refer to him as Issa in this essay even though he was known throughout his life as Yatarō in legal documents and by other names in other situations.
5 While there have been ups and downs in Issa’s popularity, he has remained well-known among haikai/haiku poets and scholars in the years since his death. Yaba Katsuyuki discusses the popularity of Issa during his life in Yaba Katsuyuki, Shinano no Issa (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1994) 197-202. For a concise account of the history of the critical reception of Issa after his death, see Yaba Katsuyuki, Issa daijiten (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten, 1993) 550-557.
7 Bickerton treats his translated segments as diary entries. Harold Bolitho calls Chichi no shūen Nikki “literary” but is uncomfortable with that classification (see, for example, page 167 where literary is in quotation marks). Bolitho’s reading of the text straddles the modern disciplinary boundary between history and literature and he treats it as a “thatanotologue.” (Harold Bolitho. Bereavement and Consolation: Testimonies from Tokugawa Japan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)). Ueda Makoto, however, clearly treats Chichi no shūen Nikki as literature (Ueda Makoto. Dew on the Grass: the Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa (Leiden: Brill, 2004), especially pages 42 to 45).
usually elided.\textsuperscript{9} As an example, Robert N. Huey problematizes the status of \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} as a diary and he never classifies it as “literature” but he does not discuss the structure or content of the text as a whole.\textsuperscript{10}

The parts of \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} that are commonly elided, however, provide important clues as to how Issa constructed Yagobei’s death in language. In this essay I will examine Issa’s description of Yagobei’s death in the “literary” part \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} together with some of the citations of the classical past that give the work its power while positioning my reading within the full text. I will show that it is the classical past, interpolated in the text via citation, which enabled Issa to narrate his father’s death in an emotionally moving way. Further, I will suggest that there is evidence which indicates that some of the “citations” in the text may not be there as the result of a conscious choice on the part of Issa.\textsuperscript{11}

My emphasis on text is not intended to deny the importance of the material or to suggest that these two are somehow separable. In fact, where we can follow the traces of the material effects of Yagobei’s death on Issa’s life, they seem to be profound.

\textsuperscript{9} An important exception which reprints the whole text is Yaba Katsuyuki. \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haruta ippen} (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992). Yaba also discusses the structure of the text on pages 307-313.

\textsuperscript{10} Huey, “Journal of My Father’s Last Days,” 25-54. Huey’s problematization of what I will later call “Nikki honbun” text as a diary is on pages 28 to 30. Huey would have strengthened his arguments by positioning “Nikki honbun” within the complete text.

\textsuperscript{11} While the word citation carries strong connotations of an agent making conscious choices, I will, in this essay, extend the word to cover situations where it seems probable that Issa is unconsciously borrowing from the classical past as well.

\textsuperscript{13} According to the document settling the division of the estate, Issa received the “southern half” of the house. It also outlines which fields Issa got as well as the fact that his step-brother was to provide him with household goods and bedding (Kobayashi, Maruyama, and Yaba, editors and annotators, \textit{Issa zenshū} volume 9 (bekkan) shiryou, hoi, 70-71).

Yagobei’s death started a twelve-year dispute between Issa and his stepbrother Senroku over the division of their father’s estate, the eventual settlement of which allowed Issa to return from Edo to (half of) the family house.\textsuperscript{12} Nevertheless the only way that Issa can communicate aspects of his father’s death to us today is via the mediation of written language. The relationship between the material and the written is, of course, not simple in any culture nor is the perceived relationship the same today as it was in early modern Japan. \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} is an excellent place to begin to understand the possibilities and the limitations on the expression of death and dying in language in early modern Japan precisely because the text, taken as a whole, exposes certain aspects of Issa’s techniques of narration. These can cause us to question our own readings of the text as a work of literature, a diary, or perhaps even a thanatologue.

I begin with a description of what is known about Issa’s father and family in order to set the stage for understanding \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki}. Then I examine the structure of the text and comment on the most important inter-text Issa used in preparation for a potential revision of \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki}, the \textit{Hōbutsu-shū}. The relationship between these two texts is fundamental to my argument because it seems likely that Issa unconsciously cited the \textit{Hōbutsu-shū} in his narration of Yagobei’s death in the portion of \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} which is commonly read as literature. The linkages between \textit{Hōbutsu-shū} and \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} thus expose some of the techniques that enabled Issa to narrate his father’s death in a way that continues to move readers today. Next, through a translation and analysis of the passage from \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki} in which Issa relates the death of his father, I examine the way that Issa used multiple types of citation, perhaps not always consciously, to make his father’s death both moving and comprehensible in language, and I show the importance of intertextuality as a step toward understanding the representation of death and dying in \textit{Chichi no shūen nikki}.

\textbf{Kobayashi Yagobei}

When Issa was born in 1763 (Hōreki 13), Yagobei was a middle class farmer, aged 31;\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} Yaba Katsuyuki, \textit{Issa daijiten}, 3. I have fol-
however, the age of his mother, Kuni, is unknown. Yagobei’s total holdings of 6.05 koku put him in the upper portion of the middle class farmers in his village. His property was divided between 3.41 koku of paddy and 2.64 koku of non-paddy field which, according to Kobayashi Keichirō, placed Yagobei’s holdings as the 47th largest out of the 138 honbyakushō households. In addition, Yagobei owned a post-horse and earned money by transporting goods along the Hokkoku Kaidō thoroughfare that ran through Kashiwabara. Kuni was the daughter of the headman of one of Kashiwabara’s branch villages, suggesting the social and economic status that Yagobei had achieved. 

These are the limited facts we can glean about Yagobei from historical documents. While they indicate that he was hard working and dependable, they say little about his personality, desires, and hopes. Although there are reasons to doubt the veracity of portions of Chichi no shūen nikki, as long as we realize that the text is not necessarily objective in ways that its genre markers suggest, it tells us things about Yagobei that historical documents cannot reveal. For instance, while it is a historical

lowed Yaba in giving ages throughout this essay. 


16 Koku is a measure of volume of grain equal to 180 liters. 

17 Yaba, Issa daijiten, 3. 

18 Honbyakushō households were fully fledged members of the village. They paid taxes and owned fields and houses. 

19 Kobayashi, Kobayashi Issa, 18. Family registers in most regions of Japan were updated yearly in the early modern period but in Kashiwabara they were produced biennially. All entries for the period from 1788 to 1805, when Senroku (Yagobei’s second son and Issa’s step-brother) is listed as the family head, show the family owning a horse. The entry for 1815 specifically mentions that there is no horse (Kobayashi, Maruyama, and Yaba, Issa zenshū volume 9 (bekkan) shiryō, hoi, 75-81, especially 75-76). 

20 Yaba, Issa daijiten, 3. 

Another more difficult problem is the question of how accurately “events” have been portrayed in the text. As Kobayashi Keichirō points out, it is highly unlikely that Issa was in Kashiwabara when his father fell ill as the text portrays. It is more probable that Issa was called from Edo by Senroku (Kobayashi, Kobayashi Issa, 86). Ueda Makoto notes, however, that there is an extant haikai linked verse sequence composed with local poets soon after Issa arrived. He suggests that this shows Issa was already in the village when his father fell ill—had he been called from Edo because of his father’s illness, he would not have been composing linked verse with other poets (Ueda, Dew on the Grass, 42). Even so the text of Chichi no shūen nikki shows that Issa was not fully aware of the severity of his father’s illness when it began. Issa wrote “… I did not realize until later that this was a foreshadowing of death” on the first day of his father’s illness (Yaba, Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen, 9). It is possible that he was called back to the village after his father fell ill but initially felt that the situation was not severe enough to require him to refrain from poetry. 

21 I will return to this problem later but, for example, the text characterizes Issa as extremely filial while his step-brother and step-mother are shown as greedily awaiting Yagobei’s death. Another more

fact that most villagers in Kashiwabara were parishioners of Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land) Buddhism, it is still touching to read about Yagobei gargling, facing the Buddha, and reading scriptures aloud on the sixth day of his illness. This passage also shows that Yagobei was literate. Another example is on the 13th day of the fifth month when Yagobei drank 5 gō (900 milliliters) of sake over
the objections of Issa.25 Coupled with the historical documents, then, Chichi no shūen nikki provides a fuller understanding of who Yagobei was: a hard working, literate, religious, sake-loving middle class farmer in Shinano Province in the late eighteenth century.

Yagobei’s family situation is central to both the drama and narrative of Chichi no shūen nikki. Kuni died in 1765, when Issa was a little over two years old by western count. After her death, Issa was raised by his grandmother.26 Sometime around 1763 (the year of Issa’s birth) and then declined to 7.09 koku in 1772. Furthermore, it had been between 3.91 koku to 3.98 koku from 1742 to 1760. So whether this was a “decline” or a “return” to norms requires investigation.

It is clear that Hatsu, Senroku, and Issa did not get along and this is probably the reason, rather than economic necessity, why Issa was sent to Edo to work in the spring of 1777.

The personal difficulties among the three were compounded by the fact that while Issa was in Edo, the family fortunes in Kashiwabara improved greatly. By 1789, the holdings of Yagobei were 10.86 koku. While they declined afterward (to 7.09 koku in 1801, the year of Yagobei’s death), the family was much better off economically without Issa and his grandmother and Hatsu and Senroku working alongside Yagobei.29 According to Chichi no shūen nikki the dying Yagobei wanted to split this property evenly between Senroku and Issa. Given that the increase in wealth had taken place largely during Issa’s absence, neither Senroku nor Hatsu are portrayed as being happy with Yagobei’s choice even though equal division of estates was common in Shinano.30 Yagobei’s will set in motion a long feud which was finally resolved in 1808 when Issa and Senroku came to an agreement which paved the way for Issa to return to Kashiwabara permanently in 1810.31

These facts help us understand who the mortally ill Yagobei was as well as the family drama that his illness and death set off. Let us now examine how Issa constructed Yagobei’s death in language, and in particular how he used important citations from the Hōbutsu-shū to do so.

Chichi no shūen nikki and Hōbutsu-shū

Chichi no shūen nikki was written on the reverse side of a collection of hokku (haiku) called Gasen saitanchō which was published in 1800 (Kansei 12) by the haikai poet Gasen. Issa had published hokku in Gasen’s saitanchō32 as early as 1791 (Kansei 3) and he had some in the 1800 collection as well.33 The manuscript is untitled and was known by various names such as “Kanbyō nikki” (A Nurse’s Diary) and “Mitori nikki” (Diary of the Vigil at my Father’s Deathbed) until Tsuka-

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25 Because sake had been prohibited by the doctors. Yaba, Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen, 37.
26 “Sobo sanjū-san nenki” in Yaba, Issa daijiten, 398-399.
27 Kobayashi, Kobayashi Issa, 18. Kobayashi’s graph on page 19 shows that the wealth of the family spiked from 3.92 koku in 1670 to 6.05 koku in 1763 (the year of Issa’s birth) and then declined to 3.71 koku by 1772. Furthermore, it had been between 3.91 koku to 3.98 koku from 1742 to 1760. So whether this was a “decline” or a “return” to norms requires investigation.
28 Also known as Satsu. Following Yaba, Issa daijiten, 3 and other sources, I will refer to her as Hatsu.
29 Kobayashi, Kobayashi Issa, 19.
30 Muramatsu Tomotsugu suggests that the Senroku’s argument with Yagobei’s decision was not over the division of the estate but over which child received which fields (Muramatsu Tomotsugu, Issa no tegami (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1996) 36).
31 See Kobayashi, Maruyama, and Yaba Issa zenshū volume 9 (bekkan) shiryō, hoi, 70-71. Yaba suggests that Chichi no shūen nikki is important in Japanese literary history because it is the first text in which a family explicitly fights over a father’s will (Yaba Katsuyuki, Shinano no Issa (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1994) 13).
32 New Year’s compendia of hokku.
33 It was not unusual to use the back side of paper for notes or drafts in early modern period Japan. For example Issa used the back side of one of his own publications, Issa-en tsukinami, to jot down hokku. See Yaba Katsuyuki, Shinshū kōgenji Issa shinshiryō-shū (Nagano: Shinano Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 1986) 97-125.
matsumi Rokō named it *Chichi no shūen nikki.*

It was first published (in modern printed form) in 1922 from a text prepared by Tsukamatsu. The haiku poet Ogiwara Seisensui, however, maintained that Tsukamatsu made too many changes and he revised the text for Iwanami Shoten’s Iwanami Bunkō series.

Yaba did not finish writing *Chichi no shūen nikki* and it is undated. The main body of the text relates events which took place in 1801 (Kyōwa 1) and Yaba Katsuyuki argues that the latest possible date of composition is 1806 or 1807 (Bunka 3 or 4). While some scholars have maintained that it was written as evidence to be marshaled by Issa in his dispute with Senrokō, Yaba suggests that it is an early draft of a work of belles-lettres. Given Issa’s aptitude with various registers of early modern Japanese, it seems likely that Yaba is correct to conclude that Issa was working on a text that he intended to be aesthetically pleasing rather than legally persuasive.

The text, as a whole, can be divided into three main parts. The first is called “Nikki honbun.” This is a fairly well constructed “diary” that covers the period from the onset of Issa’s father’s illness on the 23rd day of the 4th month through the end of the first seven days of mourning on the 28th day of the 5th month. “Nikki honbun” is the part of *Chichi no shūen nikki* that is most commonly anthologized.

The second part of the text is called “Nikki kakiire.” Most of this section consists of notes appended after “Nikki bekki.” Yaba divides these into two categories. The first is made up of notes that he considers to be preparation for a re-writing of “Nikki honbun” and the second are those which both Huey and Bolitho have translated into English and in the next section of this paper, I will re-translate and analyze the day which contains the description of Yagobei’s death from “Nikki honbun.”

The second part of the text is called “Nikki bekki.” It covers the period of time from Issa’s early childhood to his fifteenth year when he was sent to Edo by his father to work. Yaba notes that this is an important source for information about Issa’s early years and because the style of the handwriting is the same as the “Nikki honbun” he believes that the two were written at about the same time. There are no direct thematic ties between “Nikki bekki” and “Nikki honbun” and “Nikki bekki” makes no mention of Yagobei’s death so I will not deal with it in this paper.

The third part of *Chichi no shūen nikki* is called “Nikki kakiire.” Most of this section consists of notes appended after “Nikki bekki.” Yaba divides these into two categories. The first is made up of notes that he considers to be preparation for a re-writing of “Nikki honbun” and the second are those

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35 Yaba, *Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen,* 307.
36 Ogiwara Seisensui, editor, *Issa ikō: chichi no shūen nikki* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1934) 72. Besides being a renowned haiku poet, Ogiwara was one of the most important editors and annotators of Issa’s texts in the twentieth century. His version of *Chichi no shūen nikki* was in print at least until 1982 so it is probably the most common way that it was read in the twentieth century.
37 Yaba, *Issa daijiten,* 487.
38 I will use Yaba’s names for the three parts (Yaba, *Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen,* 307-313).
39 See, for instance, the introduction to *Kokubungaku dokuhon* where it is suggested that the word *bungaku* had become common even if people did not know what, exactly, it meant. By 1890, people were not only theorizing about *bungaku* but more importantly they were also “practicing” it. (Haga Yaichi and Tachibana Senzaburō, compilers. Ueda Kazutoshi, editor, *Kokubungaku dokuhon* (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1890) pages “i” to “ro.”). The meaning of *bungaku* in *Kokubungaku dokuhon* is certainly closer to “literature” than is the use of the word in the early modern *Dai Nihon shi retsuden sansō* where the best English translation might be “belles-lettres.” See Asaka Tanpaku. “Dai Nihon shi Sansō.” In *Kinsei shiron-shū.* Matsumoto Sannosuke and Ogura Yoshihiko, editors and annotators (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), especially pages 214 and following.
40 Yaba, *Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen,* 310. Portions of it are translated in Bickerton, Huey, and Bolitho.
41 There is one exception to this, the poem by Lady Umetsubo that I discuss below. This segment is classified as part of the “Nikki kakiire” by Yaba and other scholars but it was written in the margin above the “Nikki honbun.” I presume they have based their judgments on an analysis of the handwriting in the two different segments of the text.
which he sees as having no relation to Chichi no shūen nikki.\textsuperscript{42} According to Yaba, the first category of notes can be further divided into two parts. One section consists of citations from the Hōbutsu-shū.\textsuperscript{43} The other is made up of notes taken from different sources or sentences written by Issa.\textsuperscript{44} Some of the citations from the Hōbutsu-shū are preceded by dates that correspond to entries in “Nikki honbun.” Yaba theorizes that Issa re-read the “Nikki honbun” after making extracts from the Hōbutsu-shū and added dates to those citations he planned to use when he rewrote the text.\textsuperscript{45}

Since these dated extracts provide insight into the way that Issa composed as well as the way he represented events in the material world in language, a few words about the Hōbutsu-shū are in order. It is attributed to Taira no Yasuyori (dates unknown, active in the late 12th century). According to Heike monogatari, Yasuyori was exiled to Kikaigashima in 1177 (Angen 3) because of his involvement in the Shishigatani plot against Taira no Kiyomori.\textsuperscript{46} He was allowed to return to the capital in 1179 (Jishō 3).\textsuperscript{47} The person listening to the discussions that are recorded in the Hōbutsu-shū has just returned from exile on Kikaigashima and this may be the basis of the attribution of the text to Yasuyori. Assuming that Yasuyori wrote the work, the initial version must have been composed between his return and the first mention of it in 1198 (Kenkyū 9).\textsuperscript{48}

In the narrative frame of the Hōbutsu-shū, the returnee visits a friend in the capital (Kyoto) and then sets out to see a statue of Shakyamuni at Seiryōji. He spends the night at the temple where he listens to the other pilgrims discussing what the greatest treasure in this world is. After hearing such answers as wealth, children, and health, a priest tells them that the correct answer is Buddhism. The remainder of the Hōbutsu-shū consists of questions posed by a young woman and the priest’s answers. The priest explains such Buddhist concepts as the rokudō, the six paths of existence for sentient beings,\textsuperscript{49} by using religious tales and Japanese and Chinese poetry for illustration. Nakajima Hidenori argues that the Hōbutsu-shū is meant to introduce Buddhist doctrine rather than to serve as a collection of religious and secular tales such Uji shīi monogatari or Konjakū monogatari-shū.\textsuperscript{50}

The title “Hōbutsu-shū” is applied to a diverse collection of related texts which vary greatly in their content. Nakajima lists 8 major varieties of the Hōbutsu-shū. His classification actually simplifies the diversity since he lists other versions that he does not categorize into the eight major varieties.\textsuperscript{51} In an article about the relationship between Hōbutsu-shū and Chichi no shūen nikki, Yaba Katsuyuki makes even finer distinctions within several of Nakajima’s categories.\textsuperscript{52} Like its near contemporary text, Heike monogatari, the Hōbutsu-shū is really a single name for multiple texts.

\textsuperscript{42} Yaba, Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen, 310. The notes that Yaba feels were not made in preparation for a revision of Chichi no shūen nikki consist mostly of the hokku by local poets, many of whom would become members of Issa’s poetry circle after Issa settled permanently in Kishiwabara.

\textsuperscript{43} Discussed below.

\textsuperscript{44} Yaba, Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen, 310. Yaba argues, from his analysis of Issa’s handwriting, that the notes copied from the Hōbutsu-shū were made over the period of a few years (Yaba Katsuyuki, “Issa no ‘Chichi no shūen nikki’ wa himerareta shinjitsu wo doko made katatte iru ka,” Kokubungaku (February 1993) 110-113. Page 113).

\textsuperscript{45} Yaba, “Issa no ‘Chichi no shūen nikki’ wa himerareta shinjitsu wo doko made katatte iru ka,” 113.

\textsuperscript{46} Mizuhara Hajime, editor and annotator, Heike monogatari jō (volume 1) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979) 175-188.

\textsuperscript{47} Mizuhara, Heike monogatari jō (volume 1), 207-217.


\textsuperscript{49} Heavenly deities, humans, ashura (war-riors), animals, hungry ghosts, and denizens of hell.


\textsuperscript{51} Nakajima, “Hōbutsu-shū,” 26.

\textsuperscript{52} See Yaba, “Issa no ‘Chichi no shūen nikki’ wa himerareta shinjitsu wo doko made katatte iru ka,” 110-113. Yaba distinguishes six varieties of “Hiragana Old-Printed Sankan-bon” for instance.
Yaba argues that Issa could have seen 19 different versions of the Hōbutsu-shū. By studying the waka that Issa cited, Yaba was able to narrow the possible texts to either the “Hiragana seiban sankanbon” or the “Genroku rokunen kanbon.” Yaba concludes that Issa in all likelihood used the “Hiragana seiban sankanbon” because he did not choose any of the waka that are only in the other text. Yaba’s investigation of the Chinese poetry that Issa extracted further backs up his argument.53

In this paper I work with the passages from the Hōbutsu-shū as Issa copied them. This approach is motivated both by fidelity to Issa and the unfortunate fact that the “Hiragana seiban sankanbon” is not readily available in either modern printed formats or facsimile reproductions.54 I have, where appropriate, referred to Koizumi Hiroshi and Yamada Shōzen’s extensive annotations in Hōbutsu-shū, kankyo no tomo, hirasan kojin reitaku.55

**Issa’s Narration of Yagobei’s Death**

The following is a translation of Chichi no shūen nikki on the day that Issa’s father died:

**The twentieth day, fifth month**

Father’s fever continued to worsen. In the morning he ate just a bowl of gruel. Around noon his face became pale. Eyes half closed, his mouth moved as if he were trying to say something. With each breath phlegm rattled around as though it were attacking his life and so he became weaker and weaker. As the sun streaming through the window approached the hour of the sheep, father could no longer make out the faces of people. The situation was hopeless. I would have gladly traded my life for his if I could but once more see him alive, strong, and eating. It was so desperate that even the most famous doctors in the world such Kiba and Hen Jaku58 would not have had the skill to save him. Without the intervention of the gods there was nothing left but to invoke Amida.

寐すがたの蠅追ふもけふかぎり哉

Today is my last chance to chase flies away from his sleeping body59

Thus the day ended. From the basin of water by his pillow, all I could do was wet his lips without hope. The moon of the twentieth night shone through the window. The neighbors had quieted down and gone to sleep. At about the time that the cock should start to crow, the sound of father’s breathing died down and the phlegm that rose from his heart sometimes blocked his throat. Even if I could not save from the starch of the dogtooth violet (片栗粉) (Kobayashi Keiichirō, Maruyama Kazuhiko, editors and annotators. Issa zenshū volume 5 kikō, nikki; haibun shū; jihitsu kushū; renku; haikaika, (Nagano: Shinano Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 1978) 103).

About 2 p.m.

I discuss these two doctors in the next section.

58 Flies and afternoon nap (hirune) are related haikai words. Although Yagobei is mortally ill rather than just resting, the flies and the sleeping body can be seen as linked here. See Takase Baisen. Ruisenshū, volumes 1 to 7. Kyoto: Terada Yoheiji, 1676. Volume 1, Leaf 29, obverse. Facsimile PDF reproduction from [http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/-kotenseki/html/Bunko20/Bunko20_00337/index-.html](http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/-kotenseki/html/Bunko20/Bunko20_00337/index-.html), accessed on 19 September 2010.
his life, I should have at least liked to have cleared the phlegm. But since I am not as great a doctor as Ka Da, I have no extraordinary skill as a healer.60 There was nothing left to do but wait, with deep sadness and pain, for the hour of my father’s death. The gods did not take pity on us and as the dawn began to break, just after the hour of the rabbit, father stopped breathing and seemed as if he were asleep.61

We surrounded the corpse. I prayed that this was but a dream from which I would soon awake. Be it dream or reality, it felt as though I were left without a candle in the darkness and that nothing remained in the world to rely on.

Beckoned by the wind, the fickle flowers of spring scatter. In this world of ceaseless change the autumn moon often hides behind clouds. Moreover, those who are born must certainly die and those who meet must assuredly part. It is the way of the world. It is the road that all must travel once. But not knowing whether my father would travel it today or tomorrow was foolish. Even though evening after evening I nursed my father in earnest, it all came to naught in an instant. Those who had been fighting with my father until yesterday surrounded the corpse and began to wail. The voices of those chanting the name of Amida were hoarse. Now they realized that the duties of those who grow old together and share the same grave had not been fulfilled.

Constructing a Moving Death in Language

To understand the role that intertextuality plays in Issa’s narration of the death of Yagobei, I examine three forms of citation in the above passage. The first two could be labeled “quotation” and “allusion.” However, in order to grasp the function of citation in the entire passage, I will use the terms “citation of textual sources” and “citation of cultural codes” instead.62 The third form of citation I take up is “citation of the cultural imagination.”63 By examining each of these forms of citation, we can appreciate the fundamental importance of the classical past not merely to embellish but to convey meaning and to create affect as well.

I will begin with the citations of textual sources since they are relatively easy to find and understand. Matsuo Yasuaki, in his annotations of Chichi no shūen nikki identifies three examples of citation of textual sources, all in the final paragraph. Each example intensifies emotional affect in the passage through citation of the classical past.64 Matsuo’s first example is from Heike monogatari and is translated as “Beckoned by the wind, the fickle flowers of spring scatter. In this world of ceaseless change the autumn moon often hides behind clouds.”65 This citation fits the mood and theme of the rest of the passage — the ephemerality of worldly matters. The tropes used here, the scattering of cherry blossoms and the fact that the most beautiful moon of the year is often hidden by clouds, place the passage within the authoritative tradition of Japanese poetry. By taking part in this tradition, the meaning of Issa’s text exceeds the literal meaning of the words themselves by calling a much larger web of intertextual play. This enables Issa to movingly express the depths of his despair in just a few words.

The second citation of a textual source is also said to be from Heike monogatari. It deals more
explicitly with death: “Moreover, those who are born must certainly die and those who meet must assuredly part.” Matsuo treats Heike monogatari as the immediate pre-text for this passage but Yaba goes further by noting that it is ultimately based on a line from the Nehan-gyō. In other words, the use of the phrase in Heike monogatari is already a citation of Buddhist sutras. To my knowledge, this passage occurs in full one time in the “Hyaku nijûbon” version of Heike monogatari in the section “Koremori jyusui.” It also appears in truncated form later in the section entitled “Ôidono saigo.”

However, this phrase and its evocation of ephemerality is part of a much larger web of intertextuality, one about which there are diverse assessments. Besides being used in Heike monogatari and Buddhist sutras, Mizuhara Hajime points out that the first half of the phrase was used in a written supplication by Ōe Asatsuna which is included in Honchô monzui. Mizuhara further indicates that the citation of the phrase in Heike monogatari is probably not directly from Honchô monzui but rather from Hôbutsu-shû. Although Issa’s source is unclear, it is fair to assume that it is not Honchô monzui since his citation is closer to that in the “Koremori jyusui.” The question, then, is whether Issa is citing Heike monogatari as Yaba and Matsuo suggest or whether he is working from the Hôbutsu-shû or possibly even the Buddhist sutras themselves.

What is important as far as constructing his feelings about his father’s death in words, though, is that the cited phrase takes part in an extensive web of intertextuality with classical sources. This increases the affective power of the passage, at least for the reader who knows the phrase since it allows the death of Yagobei to resonate with the death of Taira no Koremori and Buddhist sutras. Issa could have written in straightforward language that he was sad because he would never see his father again. This might have been more “accurate” or “objective” in terms of the situation but it would not have expressed his emotions as strongly nor would it have been as likely to move his readers.

The third citation identified by Matsuo is from the classical Japanese poetic tradition: “But not knowing whether my father would travel it today or tomorrow was foolish.” According to Matsuo, this passage cites a poem by Ariwara no Narihira:

病（やまひ）して弱くなりける時、
よめる 華平朝臣

づひにゆく道はかねて聞きしかど昨日今日とは思はぎりしを

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66 Yaba, Chichi no shûën Nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen, 51-52. The Nehan-gyō is also known as Daihatsu nehan-gyō.


68 Only the first four Chinese characters appear here. Mizuhara, Heike monogatari ge (volume 3) (Volume 3), 310.

69 Mizuhara Hajime, Heike monogatari ge (volume 3)), 310, note 3. Honchô monzui is a collection of writings in classical Chinese by writers from what is now considered Japan that was probably compiled in the years between 1058 and 1065 but which includes texts from the previous two hundred years. The use of the phrase can be found in Ôsone Shôsuke, Kinbara Tadashi, Gotô Akio, editors and annotators, Honchô monzui (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992) 372.

70 I have not been able to use Mizuhara’s citation to find the phrase there. Perhaps he is referring to one of the many variants which are not readily available.

71 Of course it is also possible that Issa remembered the phrase without being able to identify its source. However, there are other citations of Heike monogatari as a textual source in “Nikki honbun.”

72 1158- about 1184. Eldest son of Taira no Shigemori.

73 Yaba (Chichi no shûën Nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen) and Kawashima (in Teruoka and Kawashima, Buson-shû, Issa-shû) do not identify this citation. Yaba (in Issa daijiten, 387-388) and Kobayashi and Maruyama (Issa zenshû volume 5 kikô, nikki; haibun shû; jihitsu kushû; renku; haikaika, (pages 83 and 103)) do.
When I had weakened from illness, I, Lord Narihira, composed the following:

I had heard of the road that we must all travel in the end but yesterday I did not think it would be today that I would travel it.

Issa borrows heavily from it in terms of both language and feeling. It is, however, no longer the narrator who is going to die. Rather, Issa berates himself for not realizing that his father would soon be dead. The citation, once released into the new context of Chichi no shūen nikkii, changes in meaning but at the same time, it uses the authority of previous texts to increase the emotional power of Issa’s self-critical lament. In this passage, as well as the above two, Issa relies on the power of intertextual citation to indicate to the reader the depth of his feeling.

I will now move on to my second form of intertextuality, the citation of cultural codes. The reference to doctors in the first paragraph of Issa’s text translated above is an example. In order to intensify the feeling of helplessness in the face of death, Issa cites the names of two famous doctors: Giba (Sanskrit: Jīvaka) and Hen Jaku (Mandarin: Biān Què). Potential readers presumably knew that Issa was referring to doctors of the highest skill. If a medical case was beyond them, it was beyond hope. Issa could have indicated this by writing, “there was no hope” but the reference to the doctors allows him, via intertextuality, to intensify his feeling of despair. The later mention of Ka Da, another Chinese doctor, also works in this way. Such cultural codes provide a way to construct a description of an event, to provide it with poignancy without stating things directly.

There is another phrase in this text that is not identified by any of the editors but which might be considered as “citation of cultural codes.” It is the phrase which I have translated as “those who grow old together and share the same grave.” It is based on citations from two different poems in the Shī jīng 詩經, the first collection of poetry in Chinese. Issa attended lectures on the Shī jīng starting in 1803 (Kōya 3). However the phrase is also common enough (at least today) to be included in many Japanese dictionaries so it is also possible that Issa knew the phrase before attending the lectures. The first half of the phrase (偕老) is used in several poems including “Máng” (氓) in the “Wèi fēng” (衛風) section and “Jūnzǐ xiēlào” (君子偕老) in “Yōng fēng” (鄘風) section. The second half (同穴) is used only in the poem “Dà jū” (大車) in the “Wáng Fēng” (王風) section.

This phrase clearly shows the problem that lies in trying to draw strict boundaries between different forms of citation and it is one reason to posit a typology of citation in order to strategically read Chichi no shūen nikki rather than use the more trau-

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74 This is poem number 861 of the Kokin waka shū. It also appears in the final (125th) chapter of Ise monogatari where the preface to the poem is different.

75 They might have further known that Giba became a follower of the historical Buddha and was eventually successful in converting the regicide King Ajase (Sanskrit: Ajātāsatru) who later became a defender of the new religion or that Hen Jaku came from the state of Tei (Mandarin: Zhèng) during the Warring States period and learned several secret remedies which he applied to cure many famous people.

76 They might have further known that Giba became a follower of the historical Buddha and was eventually successful in converting the regicide King Ajase (Sanskrit: Ajātāsatru) who later became a defender of the new religion or that Hen Jaku came from the state of Tei (Mandarin: Zhèng) during the Warring States period and learned several secret remedies which he applied to cure many famous people.

77 He further intensifies this by citing two more examples from cultural codes— the heavenly deities and the good gods—who are unable to aid Yagobei.

78 Mandarin: Huà Tuó. He was a doctor in the last years of the Later Han and the early years of the Wei dynasties. He is reputed, among other things, to have developed anesthetic which he used to perform surgeries.

79 Shi kyō in Japanese. The text is reputed to have been redacted by Confucius and contains 305 poems (plus the titles of six others).

80 Note that the Kōjien 5th Edition mistakenly attributes this phrase solely to the poem “Dà jū” where the phrase 死則同穴 (after death, the same grave) occurs, not 偕老同穴.
ditional terms from Western rhetoric. It could be a citation drawn from Issa’s study of the Shi ji, in which case it would be a “citation of textual sources” or “quotation.” Or it could be just a general phrase that Issa knew, without having the Shi ji open in front of him. Then it might be considered “citation of cultural codes” or “allusion.” In either case, though, it is a citation of the classical past and it works on two levels. First, it intensifies the feeling in the passage, at least for readers who know a portion of the web of intertextuality for the phrase. Second, it is an appropriate phrase to use to describe the material reality of life in Kashiwabara because families there literally share a single grave. Whatever the type of citation this may be, it performs its work by intensifying feeling via the classical past while at the same time making reference to Issa’s material present.

My third category of citation is the trickiest to work with. Given its role in constructing the meaning of death and dying as well as problematizing the ways that material reality is represented in Chichi no shūen nikki, I feel that “citation of the cultural imagination” is the most important category, though. Unlike the previous two forms of citation, citation of the cultural imagination may be an “accident” of language and culture rather than a conscious choice by the writer. In this form of citation, the writer may not be aware that she or he is citing another author and readers. If that is indeed the case, then the way that a culture constructs “death” in texts is certainly dependent on forgotten texts which both enable and limit what can be said and thought. To give an example, Issa could not have written about death in the way that Yōrō Takeshi does. It is not merely that Issa lacks Yōrō’s modern scientific approach to the observation of death but also that his language did not contain many of the concepts upon which Yōrō’s observations are based. At the same time, it is likely that both Yōrō and his readers are not fully aware of the genealogy of the numerous “forgotten texts” which enable him to effectively communicate his observations to us.

Attempting to discover the Issa’s forgotten texts may sound like tilting at windmills; however, Chichi no shūen nikki is not a finished work and by reading “Nikki honbun” together with the “Nikki kakiire” at least one of Issa’s forgotten texts, the Hōbutsu-shū, becomes clear. Furthermore this forgotten text and its description of death casts doubt upon the “veracity” or “objectivity” of Issa’s description of Yagobei’s death. At the very least it suggests the importance of historicizing Chichi no shūen nikki and the way that it narrates Yagobei’s death.

“Nikki kakiire” contains three passages from the Hōbutsu-shū which are dated the twentieth, indicating perhaps that Issa considered them as material to use in a future revision of the text. I will only consider the first two in this paper. The first passage is a poem:

梅壷の女御、御病大事になりてよみ給ふ。

翌迄(あすまで)もあるべきものと思はねばけ日ぐらしの声ぞかなしき

The Lady Umetsubo composed this poem when her illness had reached a critical

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81 According to the Köjien, it was also used in other texts such as Heiji monogatari.
82 The grave marked “Kobayashi Issa’s grave” in the graveyard of Kashiwabara is, in fact, the Kobayashi family grave.
83 It cannot, thus, be considered as a form of allusion or quotation. I am not an expert on classical Western rhetoric but it seems that there is a strong emphasis on conscious recognition of devices by the author and readers. If that is indeed the case, then one of Barthes’s contributions to modern Western rhetoric is the recognition of a kind of “rhetorical unconscious” represented by forgotten texts.
84 Barthes, S/Z, 10-11. The first two forms of citation I have discussed show that Barthes may be engaging in a bit of hyperbole though. We do, in part, create texts from “remembered” texts as well. In contrast, the third segment is interesting because it cites classical Chinese sources and shows, to some extent, how a medieval text such as the Hōbutsu-shū created meaning via intertextuality. But it has a less obvious relationship to Issa’s narrative in Chichi no shūen nikki than the two segments that I consider here.
I do not think I shall last until tomorrow so today the song of the evening cicadas seems particularly sad. This appears in the “illness” section of the Hōbutsu-shū. It was written in the upper margin of the twentieth day’s entry in “Nikki honbun” so it seems that had he revised the text, Issa would have included this poem or a reference to it. The sense of ephemerality in the poem is heightened by the name of the type of the cicada: higurashi or “lives a single day.” The poem might have been used in parallel with or in place of the one ascribed to Narihira to further stress the fact that we do not know when a loved one will die. But there is a significant impediment. Seasonally the higurashi is associated in haikai poetry with the seventh month and Yagobei died in the fifth month. How a poet as attuned to seasonal references as Issa was might have worked through this is an interesting problem. Higurashi are not as good for representing Yagobei’s death as flies but the sentiments are close to what is already in the passage. Nonetheless, Lady Umetsubo’s poem shows the importance of the classical poetic tradition with its strong feelings of ephemerality as a part of Issa’s forgotten texts about death and dying. Still, the concept of the ephemerality of life is so common in Japanese texts that it is hard to suggest that this poem shows that the Hōbutsu-shū is one of Issa’s forgotten texts.

The second quote, however, shows this more clearly. It is from the “death” section of the Hōbutsu-shū and might well have served as a forgotten text for the narration of Yagobei’s death in Chichi no shūen Nikki.

The pain of death. Disease attacks the forty-four joints. The tongue draws back. The eyes roll back. Try to say something and you cannot. Try to see something and you cannot. The power of calling on Amida has limits, praying to kami provides no sign, and imploring the Buddha is fruitless. The medicines of Eiho and Masatada are ineffective. The Daoist divinations of Yasunori and Seimei are not even worth mentioning.

This passage is a description of death and dying from medieval Japan, describing the ways people try to stop its onslaught. First people turn to prayers to Amida, the kami, and the Buddha, then the medicines of famous doctors, but even Daoist practitioners, no matter how famous, cannot stop the inevitable.

Although this text is not quoted as a “citation of textual sources” in the “Nikki honbun” it is still “present.” As Yagobei approaches death, he looks as if he is trying to say things but cannot, his eyes
are half-closed. Both Amida and the kami are invoked and Issa notes that even the efforts of famous doctors would be for naught. It is likely that Issa copied this passage from the Hōbutsu-shū some time after he wrote “Nikki honbun” yet if it already seems to be cited, though probably not consciously, in “Nikki honbun.” There are several possible explanations for this. Perhaps Yagobei’s death actually resembled the description in Hōbutsu-shū. Maybe Issa read the Hōbutsu-shū just before or as he was writing “Nikki honbun.” But given that Issa does not directly cite Hōbutsu-shū in other parts of “Nikki honbun” this second possibility seems unlikely. If he had not read it recently, then the Hōbutsu-shū would have been one of Issa’s forgotten texts. If he had not read it at all, then it could be one of his forgotten texts in the sense that it had created part of the cultural imagining of death in early modern Japan. In other words, Issa may be citing the text while narrating Yagobei’s death, without being consciously aware of doing so, perhaps even without having read it if it had become part of the way that his culture imagined death. The Hōbutsu-shū would then be a forgotten text, forming a part of Issa’s cultural imagining of death.

If this is the case, then this passage raises questions about the relationship between the death of Kobayashi Yagobei portrayed by Issa in Chichi no shūen nikki and his death in the material world. In order to understand Issa’s construction of death in language, it is useful to first give up trying to fit it into our modern “truth/fiction” binary. I am not claiming that Issa lacked concepts akin or parallel to truth or fiction. Rather Issa and his contemporaries did not divide their truth/fiction binary in the same way that we do so some of the texts which are clearly fictional to us may have been seen as accurate reflections of reality in early nineteenth century Japan. Elsewhere I have developed a concept for understanding the poetics of Kobayashi Issa which I called aru ga mama. This is a written text, fictional or not, which presents a state of affairs perceived by Issa and his contemporaries as more real than material reality itself. In the case of the death of Yagobei, an aru ga mama description may not have been an accurate narration of events in material reality. Rather it was more likely created out of the “cultural imagination” of the haikai writer Issa. For Issa, the “aru ga mama reality” of Yagobei’s death was best expressed by conveying the emotions he felt, via the citation of the classical past, rather than “objectively” using language to portray events in the material world or using his own words. If this is the standard Issa was writing towards, then Yagobei’s death was portrayed in a realistic fashion for Issa and his potential contemporary readers precisely because of the way that it cites the classical past, both consciously and unconsciously, in order

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96 They do not roll back in his head.
97 Since it follows “Nikki honbun” and the texts copied into “Nikki kakiire” seem to be preparation for a revision of “Nikki honbun.”
98 Given the rather detailed medical diagnosis given by Jinseki on the 26th day of the 4th month (the fourth day of Yagobei’s illness) as well as the other clues provided, someone with a good knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine in early modern Japan might be able to reconstruct the course of Yagobei’s illness. Yagobei was diagnosed as having shōkan (傷寒) which is considered to be typhus.
99 There are many passages in Chichi no shūen nikki that make us doubt the veracity of the narrative. Another example is the “Search for a Pear” passage on the tenth day of the fifth month. Yaba argues that it is based on a passage in Saigyō’s Sankashū (Chichi no shūen nikki, ora ga haru, ta ippen, 28-32 and 272). Yaba suggests that it is a hon’an (an adaptation) of texts by the poet Saigyō (1118-1190) as well as the stories of the twenty-four Chinese paragons of filial piety. I have mentioned some of the other problems with Chichi no shūen nikki above. Issa, of course, was under no obligation to write the “truth” for us. It is primarily the genre markers associated with “diaries” that encourage us to read Chichi no shūen nikki as reflecting reality.
100 Other passages of Chichi no shūen nikki also fail to fit neatly into our truth/fiction binary.
101 I am also not claiming that any culture has ever had a monolithic “truth/fiction” binary despite my facile reference to “modernity” as a kind of “universal” in this sentence.
to re-create the material event in language. 103 As Fujiwara Shunzei (1114-1204) suggested in the preface to his treatise on poetics, the Koraifūteishō, without the canon of poetry we would not be able to smell the flowers of spring or see the crimson leaves of autumn. 104 Shunzei’s poetry is what enables people to appreciate the world—flowers and leaves have meaning only because of past poetic discourses. 105 Similarly death becomes comprehensible, and moving, in discourse only because of intertextuality with past discourses, many of them “forgotten.”

For some cultures, moments of deep emotion might be most “accurately” narrated by a turn to the authority of the “cultural imagination” and citation to convey feelings rather than by a straightforward description of events. But citation in modern Western European and American literature has been seen as a fault for several centuries because the fear of being unoriginal is strong. Walter Jackson Bate has trenchantly called this the “burden of the past” and this, coupled with genre markers which encourage us to read the text as a “diary,” may blind us to the importance of citation in Chichi no shūen nikki. 106

While the past might also be a burden for many modern Japanese writers, for Issa and his contemporaries it was what enabled them to convey their feelings with the highest degree of narrative and poetic precision. By intertextually mobilizing the classical past and by participating in the cultural imagination (consciously or not), Issa conveys to readers the depths of his sadness at the death of his father which comes to have meaning in language in part via citation, conscious or otherwise, of the classical past.

Conclusion

The intertextual nature of Chichi no shūen nikki, particularly the kind of “forgotten text” that is represented by “citation of the cultural imagination” forces us to think about how Yagobei’s death is narrated. If we wish to claim the Chichi no shūen nikki is a somehow valid representation of Issa’s observations of Yagobei’s death, we must first grasp the text in its historical specificity, starting with an understanding of what a “realistic” representation of dying would have been for Issa and his contemporaries. 107 In Chichi no shūen nikki this requires us to take into account the importance of citation of the classical past in the creation of “emotional realism.” Had we been in the Kobayashi house on the day of Yagobei’s death, we might have seen something quite different than what Issa portrayed, not only because Issa was writing a work of belles-lettres but also because of differences in cultural imagination of death and dying as well as different emphases on what makes a discourse “realistic.” 108

Discursive constructions, even documents such as clinical records or family registers, do not mimetically represent or reflect material reality even if a culture maintains the fiction that they do. 109 Rather, they must be grasped in their historical specificity: it is incumbent upon readers to construct a histori-

103 Few if any of Issa’s contemporaries had a chance to read Chichi no shūen nikki though so we have no contemporary comments on the text.


105 In fact one of Shunzei’s purposes was to make his addressee aware of these forgotten texts.


107 Of course we must not expect the same kind of “realism” in a work of belles-lettres as in a legal document which is why, in this essay, I am limiting my conclusions to Chichi no shūen nikki.

108 Bolitho captures this nicely: “All we have are the words, and these, as we are so often told, are inherently unreliable guides to human feelings, motivations, and behavior. To try to judge such things from the writings of men long dead, in another language and from a different cultural setting, and then to draw any definitive conclusion from them is—and there is no way around this—intrinsically impossible.” (Bolitho, Bereavement and Consolation, 168.) Of course just because we recognize something at intrinsically impossible, we do not cease to make the attempt. Close readings of texts can provide clues which allow us to see aspects of them in their particularity.

109 The cultural imagination of speakers of standard English encourages us to talk about artistic works “reflecting” reality.
cized poetics (or prosaics) of representation.

That said, death and dying have a more problematic relationship to discourse than most events that occur in the material reality of human life. No one has experienced death and then described it. In *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein wrote: “Death is not an event in life; we do not live to experience death.”\(^{110}\) Although I cannot, due to biological limitations, experience watching a 3-D movie or understand what it is like to see the world in three dimensions, the narratives of those who have such experience can and do (occasionally) help me to understand what this form of vision must be like. So while my knowledge of three-dimensional vision will always be limited by lack of direct experience, my observations about what it must be like have a firmer basis than my observations on death. And though some descriptions of death, such as those by Yōrō Takeshi in *Kami to hito no kaibōgaku*, are based on extensive observation, they still are not informed by those who have experienced death. Yōrō’s speculations on the dying process must also be constructed from the cultural imagination although in this case of modern science rather than medieval “literature.”\(^{111}\) To speak or write of death is to create a discursive construction which is marked by a different relationship to human material experience than most other events in our lives.\(^{112}\)

So, obviously, no one can tell us what Yagobei’s death was like. *Chichi no shūen Nikki* records Issa’s observations of it, enabled and limited by language and culture. This situation, though, is remarkably similar to many of the events that any good haikai poet became attuned to through poetic practice. Seasonal words (kigo) are cultural constructions. While they bear some form of relationship to material reality, they rely on their cultural construction to achieve their affect in poetry. As an example, the fall seasonal word *mimizu naku* (buzzing of the worms) must be a cultural construction because it is biologically impossible for worms to make such a sound. It is, however, based on the observation of a buzzing sound that appears in autumn. The cultural construction of it today is, however, quite different than it was in Issa’s time. In modern almanacs of seasonal words (saijiki), the word is treated as “poetic” after being explained as biologically impossible. But in an almanac of seasonal words published close to the period when Issa was working on *Chichi no shūen Nikki*, the word is taken as referring to a real phenomenon and is presented along with other knowledge about the “natural” world such as the “fact” that worms change into lilies.\(^{113}\) The significant differences between modernity and the Tokugawa period in this case show the importance of historicizing the usages of words and concepts. The modern cultural construction of *mimizu naku* is not useful reading Issa’s poetry which takes the phenomenon as “real.”

Of course no human being has ever experienced the buzzing of the worms from the standpoint of the worms so, as with death, that which is referred to by the word is not an event of human life. Meanings for these kinds of words can only be based on observation coupled with cultural imagination, not on material experience. Issa constructs Yagobei’s death so that it is “true” and “real” in the way that seasonal words in *hokku* poems are real: they both gain their “reality” and their power to create affect from a combination of observation and participation in the classical past via intertextuality.

Thus, to create an *aru ga mama* description of the death of Yagobei, Issa is dependent on the classical past and the cultural imagination. Part of this is via direct citation of classical sources such as *Heike monogatari* or the naming of famous doctors that readers recognize from cultural codes. Another


\(^{111}\) Yōrō, *Kami to hito no kaibōgaku*, especially pages 58 to 98.

\(^{112}\) This also makes “death” a particularly bad choice of words in the phrase “death of the author.” Even if “authors” cease to exist in some way, many of them have already described what it is to write. Since we can read their descriptions of the experience, it is a very different situation than death. Authorship has been an event of human life.

\(^{113}\) Bakin, *Haikai saiiki*, leaf 166, reverse. Uncharacteristically, Bakin has not provided the sources for his entry on *mimizu naku* but it appears to be based on a combination of folk knowledge and “Chinese science.” Issa composed at least seven *hokku* which used some form of *mimizu naku* as the seasonal word.
part is reliance on what I have called the “cultural imagination” which can, in this case, be linked to the classical work, the Hōbutsu-shū. The pedestrian death of Yagobei would have soon been forgotten had his eldest son not made it elegant with the classical past and powerful by use of the cultural imagination. The construction of the death of Yagobei, then, can be compared to the death of Issa’s daughter, Sato, which is recorded in Ora ga Haru. Like the death of Yagobei, Sato’s is also a quotidian death of a person of no historical importance. But the death of Sato is constructed in an exceedingly elegant manner, weaving together strands of the cultural imagination and the classical past, to create one of the most moving moments in world literature.
Embracing Death: Pure will in *Hagakure*
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Introduction

In the prestigious *Nihon shisō taikei* collection, *Hagakure* may seem an oddity among works of deep philosophical or literary significance.\(^1\) Authored in the early eighteenth century by a disgruntled retired samurai of a small domain of remote Kyūshū, composed of heteroclite aphorisms and rants, inspired in peaceful times by a fanatic nostalgia for blood and battle, rescued from oblivion in the early twentieth century to be used as propaganda material for a cause toward which its author did not show the slightest interest, it seems to be there only by virtue of some accident.\(^2\) In this article I shall justify this placement of *Hagakure* through an analysis of its diverse meanings. Without being exhaustive, I shall nevertheless try to grasp these meanings through three very different approaches most likely to uncover them – historical, sociological and philosophical.

In the standard approach of the history of ideas, concerned with the “what did it say?” question, I shall reconstruct the apparently incoherent argument of *Hagakure* around the unifying thread of the “pure will” (ichinen) – a will of no specific good, in fact a will of nothing or nothings, that is, of death. It will be shown that “pure will” allows non-moral principles to coherently reposition notions otherwise contradictory or divided within themselves, like honor and loyalty.

In the perspective of sociology of ideas, asking the “why did it say it?” question, I shall explain the social factors, as its author could apprehend them, that explain *Hagakure*’s focus on the will of death. Its author, convinced that the class of the samurai was on the verge of extinction, was imagining a desperate “identitary quest” organized around the flaunting of the core item of the cultural capital of the bushi – the act of death.

In a philosophical analysis lastly, I shall argue that the richest insight of *Hagakure* is, echoing a trope found in other authors of the period, a proto-existentialist pluralism in which there can exist several very different forms of life, all of equal validity as long as they are sustained by a pure will.

In various measure the insights I shall develop are indebted to the huge literature surrounding *Hagakure*. After all, not many years pass in Japan without a book or two being published on *Hagakure*, and it is one of the Japanese works most often – albeit partially – translated into English. The largest part of this literature is of little academic significance, being intended for what is today the main audience of *Hagakure*: the bushidō aficiona-

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1. Its companion in vol. 26 of the collection, the *Mikawa monogatari*, although no philosophical or literary masterpiece, can at least claim great historical value. In the following footnotes all the references to *Hagakure* are to this *Nihon shisō taikei* 26, *Mikawa monogatari*, *Hagakure* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974) edition. The page number is followed by the number of the part or book and by the number of the specific saying or anecdote in this part.

2. A certain Tashiro Tsuramoto (1678-1748) is said to have written down the words of the putative author, Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659-1719). A number of works have addressed the difficult problems of the authorship of the work. See especially Fujino Tamotsu, ed. *Zoku Saga han no sōgōkenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Köbunkan, 1987) 89-113, and Sagara Tōru, *Bushi no shisō* (Tokyo: Perikan sha) 1984, and “Hagakure no sekai”, *Mikawa monogatari*, *Hagakure* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. *Nihon shisō taikei*, 1974) 657-61. Tokyo. I cannot delve here in this debate and the exact role of Tsuramoto in the composition of the book (there is no extant manuscript in Tsuramoto’s hand, only a number of copies with many variations). Sagara concludes that even if there are reasons to believe that Tsuramoto directly wrote large parts of *Hagakure* himself, it is safe to see it as reflecting Tsunetomo’s thought.

Both Tsunetomo and Tsuramoto were samurai of the Saga domain, in northern Kyūshū, ruled by the Nabeshima family. Ironically, given *Hagakure*’s stress on loyalty, it was the site of what was arguably one of the most famous cases of usurpation of daimyō power in pre-modern Japan, when the ruling family of the Ryūzōji was displaced at the end of the sixteenth century by their vassals, the Nabeshima.
dos. Attracted by the “bushidō romance” or desiring to spread in today’s decadent world the moral values they believe to be extolled in the book, authors have let their enthusiasm and moral zeal take over analysis of the complexity of the work. Detached and scholarly approaches of the book are far less numerous. In fact a search through the well established journals on history of ideas, ethics, mentalities in Japan yields next to nothing on Hagakure. This is even truer of Western scholarship, which, in the words of Eiko Ikegami “tends to consider this fascinating book little more than an extremist presentation of the samurai ethic that does not speak for the majority of “true” samurai and therefore refuses to investigate it further.”

In the standard approach of history of ideas that this article will firstly borrow, one would think that the main challenge for scholarly analyses would have been to organize the bewildering variety of themes found in Hagakure and to solve their numerous, apparent or real, tensions. In fact many studies have preferred to deal with those themes separately. Furukawa Tetsushi, coming back to Hagakure some decades after his classic Bushidō no shisō to sono shūhen, examined ten main topics of Hagakure in his Hagakure no sekai. Mishima Yukio had earlier, in 1967, presented forty-eight essential principles of the book in his Hagakure nyūmon, a perceptive commentary in which the topics of loyalty, honor and martial spirits play, overall, a very subdued role. Takano Shinji (1997), while examining the polarity between autonomy and the urge of self-destruction, also stressed the variety of meanings and concepts of the work. When scholars did attempt to go beyond the diversity in search of some organizing principle(s), they often chose to disregard whatever fit poorly with their solution. Many of course have reduced the variety of ideas found in Hagakure to loyalty, honor, courage or even simply junshi, the ritual suicide upon the death of one’s master. Hurst (1990) offers a good English example with his analysis of the three threads of “loyalty, honor, death.” Some have been more original. The prolific Kasaya Kazuhiko revisited the bushido discourse to stress the aspirations for moral autonomy. In recent years a great deal has been made by Ujie (1995) and Nakamoto (2006) of the remarks of Hagakure on the sexual dimension of the relationships between lord and vassal, an interesting and previously often ignored dimension to be sure, but probably not the most comprehensive perspec-

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3 Some of this literature is certainly worth studying, for scholars of considerable knowledge and analytical skills have succumbed to this mystique. Inoue Tetsujirō (1855-1944) does so in his introductions to the anthologies of bushido literature (Bushidōsō sho, Tokyo: Hakubunkan 1905, and Bushidōshū, Tokyo: Shun Yōdō 1934). Probably the best example mixing sound scholarly knowledge with a nostalgia for something that never was is provided by Furukawa Tetsushi, Bushidō no shisō to sono shūhen (Tokyo :Fukumura Shoten, 1957) which set the tone for later bushidō fans.


5 Furukawa Tetsushi, Hagakure no sekai (Kyōto: Shimonkaku Shuppan, 1993).


8 I do not mean that contradictions do not exist and that a unifying thread or an organizing principle is always waiting to be discovered. But whenever we try to understand a text – like a conversation of everyday life – we need to start with the principle of charitable interpretation: with the assumption that it makes (one) sense. For a theoretical explanation of such need, see Donald Davidson on the principle of charity in Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 153. It is often the case that contradictions are more apparent than real, and that context and other remarks make sense of them. Only when we fail to produce a plausible unified meaning should we resort to the conclusion of inconsistencies.

9 Furukawa, Bushidō no shisō.


tive through which to approach the book. Much rarer have been the attempts to seriously reconstruct the variety of ideas and intuitions of the book around one or several organizing principles. The most remarkable is that of Sagara Tōru (1921-2000) who re-articulated Hagakure’s argument through the two concepts of bushidō and hook (service). Opposing for his part the concepts of bushi and hōkōnin, Yoshiaki Koike inherited, although in less systematic fashion, the approach of Sagara. My two categories of “loyalty of counsel” and “symbolic service” partially overlap with Sagara’s analysis. However, by not going beyond what I see as only a preliminary step in the ordering of the ideas of the Hagakure, Sagara is unable to produce a very coherent interpretation. In his reading, Hagakure remains irreconcilably torn between two unrelated ideals. The unresolved dichotomy also prevents him from effectively integrating many important features: Buddhism, aesthetics, silent love, identity, etc., concerns that can be part of my interpretation.

Given the difficulties of a hermeneutic of Hagakure, some scholars have preferred to treat it as a document of sociological interest, as a symptom of moral and social tensions more than a message. They have embarked on a sociology of ideas. Through its rich repertory of fights (kenka) Hagakure certainly could certainly be used to analyze private disputes, as did Taniguchi Shin'ko (2007). In the limited scholarly literature in English the outstanding example is that of Eiko Ikegami which treats primarily Hagakure as a document for an “ethno-mentality.” I shall comment on her approach and interpretation in my analysis of the text.

The third, philosophical, approach that I shall take up does not seem to have inspired much research – the apparently widely held perception that Hagakure is the product of a semi-deranged mind probably discouraged much goodwill toward the work. When such a philosophically alert mind as Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960) discovered the book, he was certainly fascinated (he co edited an important edition cum commentary of Hagakure with Furukawa Tetsushi), but he choose to read it as the times were suggesting, basing on this work his curious representation of the samurai’s loyalty to their master as unconditional and non-contractual. Another possible source of inspiration for a philosophical analysis is the influence of Buddhism on Hagakure, often ignored or dismissed in one sentence, but well stressed by an insightful amateur, Kamura Takashi. In fact, although Hagakure was not written by a philosophically literate scholar with great analytical skills, it abounds in sparks of philosophical interest. I hope to show that even though they are not so much the products of a deliberate analysis than the by-products of the encounter of the bushido discourse and of some Buddhist insights, these sparks, probably best explain the enduring fascina-

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15 Taniguchi Shin'ko, Bushidōkō – kenka, adauchi, buretachi – (Tokyo: Kadogawa Gakugei Shuppan, 2007). See also her remarks on the process through which Hagakure was lifted out oblivion, p. 9 seq.

16 Ikegami, Taming, 281.

17 The edition is Hagakure, ed. Watsuji Tetsurō and Furukawa Tetsushi (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 1940). For Watsuji’s view of loyalty, see also Watsuji Tetsurō, Nihon rinri shishōshi vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. 1952) 482 sq. It is of course on such interpretation that the book was lifted out of its relative obscurity during the peak of the ultranationalist fervor in Japan – somewhat paradoxically since its author had no concept of a loyalty to the Emperor. Bunrui chūyaku “Hagakure no shinzi”, ed. Kurihara Kōya (Tokyo: Hagakure Seishin Fuyūkai, 1930) and Kōchū Hagakure, ed. Kurihara Kōya (Tokyo: Naigai Shobō 1940) are other good examples of such exploitation of Hagakure.

Honor and loyalty.  What is *Hagakure* saying? The tensions running through the work certainly do not make for any easy answer. The most obvious of them is that between the notions of honor and loyalty (chū)/service (hōkō). Honor, sometimes referred to under the term *na* or reputation, but usually as the avoidance of shame, *haji*, appears as a purely individual concern driven by an obsessively competitive urge.  

It is acquired through the display of martial skills and valor – this is what *Hagakure* means by “bushidō” – and measured in a relentless competition with others. A samurai, claims the book, should never be said to be behind others. Indeed this is what he should fear above all. It is this competition that brings about the arrogant behavior so characteristic of *Hagakure's* brand of bushidō. Commenting on the common observation that one has to be aware of one’s defects, modest and unassuming, *Hagakure* stresses that in the way of the samurai things are very different: 

> The just middle is the supreme norm, but as far as martial concerns are involved, it won’t do if you are not someone who strives relentlessly to outdo (*norikoshitaru*) other people. 

If one does not think, in a very arrogant way (*kōman nite*), that one is a brave samurai without peer in Japan, it will be difficult to demonstrate this valor. It all depends on the intensity of the energy expressing martial valor.

But how are we to reconcile this egoistical quest for honor with the blind and selfless service also required from a good retainer? For good service is repeatedly claimed to entail the abandonment of all individuality and personality and the transformation of the retainer into a mere tool in one’s lord hands. The good retainer serves his master as if he was dead (*shinimi ni natte*), [...] leaving to him *all considerations of good and bad*, giving up his own body.

The author of *Hagakure* then pictures himself as a simple doll (*ningyō*) or a ghost (*yūrei*) at the service of his master, like Ignacius of Loyola is supposed to have portrayed himself – *perinde ac cadaver* – at the service of his god. All other virtues and considerations, and, first of all, the great rival of loyalty that was filial piety, disappear, as this blind obedience reigns over everything. Further indications of this radical erasure of the self are easy to spot.

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19 These Buddhist insights are quite different, I should stress immediately, from the usual bushidō-zen marriage that we find in works like Takuan Sōhō’s *Fudōchi shinmyōroku*, much celebrated by bushido aficionados, that is focused on martial technique.

20 For an instance of the use of *na*, see 557, XI.42.

21 Miyamoto Musashi’s *Gorin no sho*, where the term “bushidō” is nowhere to be found, puts it even more crudely: “the way in the strategy (*heihō*) of the *bushi* is to be superior to others.”

22 226, I.19; 260, I.162.

23 252, I.117.

24 245, I.83, also 256, I.137.

25 235, I.47, also 282, I.33.

26 It should be noted that *chū* in *Hagakure* is not so much the loyalty to a house – a common understanding in Tokugawa samurai society – than loyalty to an individual. There was, as I argue elsewhere (“Loyalty in samurai discourse”, *Japanese Studies* 27, No 2 (2007): 139-154), no universally accepted understanding of *chū*. The requirements of service, as well as its objects, were all open to negotiations and interpretations of interested parties. Frequent ethical dilemma would typically give rise to different answers. Manuals of casuistic even existed for this sort of contingency. Good examples are Asami Keisai, *Chūkō ruisetsu* (Tokyo: Sanshōdō Azusa, 1870) and Hayashi Razan, *Jumon shimonroku*, in *Zoku Nihon jurinshō*, vol. 2, ed. Seki Giichirō (Tokyo: Hō Shuppan, 1971). See also the discussions of Kumazawa Banzan, *ShūgiwaShoin Banzan Zenshū*, vol. 1, ed. Masamune Atsuo (Tokyo: Banzan zenshū kankōkai, 1940-42) 272-3. But authors had a considerable latitude to define *chū*, just like any other concept.

27 221, I.7; 223, I.9.

28 254, I.127 and 230, I.35.

29 226, I.19; 229, I.31.
Service is so blind that it should be gratuitous, that is, never a function of favors received. \(^{30}\) \emph{Hagakure} claims and repeats that any expectation of reward, any favor indeed, destroys true service.\(^{31}\) Suggesting that retainer service was in fact usually understood as being conditional on reward or favor, \emph{Hagakure} even urges samurai to forget any conscience of “being loyal”, and only to serve selflessly without the least expectation.\(^{32}\) Indeed serving a harsh, unreasonable and ungrateful master is a wonderful opportunity to prove true service.\(^{33}\) Lastly, the blind and unconditional or gratuitous service must be absolute: since service is not conditional upon the quantity of favor received, it cannot know any limit. It is thus best expressed in the ultimate gift a retainer may give to his lord – his life. All that \emph{Hagakure} seems to be telling us is that good service demands that the retainer’s life does not belong to him any longer, and that it should be sacrificed for the lord at just any moment. “One should give his life to

This contrast between a self-centered obsession to claim superiority over others and the selfless, blind, gratuitous and absolute service of the master is of course is well known to readers of \emph{Hagakure}. We should resist the temptation to solve it through some convenient interpretation of honor and loyalty – saying, for example, that the competition lies in service to the lord, and that if there is arrogance it is that of blind service; there is, after all, no textual evidence for such an \textit{ad hoc} reading. This contradiction is only the start of a series of tensions.

\textbf{The Tension within Loyal Service.} Inside the idea of service itself lies thus a tension between the blind and absolute service to the lord and repeated mentions of the necessity of thoughtful and critical counsel. \emph{Hagakure} stresses at times that the “great loyalty” is to offer critical advice to the lord for his sake or for that of the domain, and to correct his mistakes.\(^{35}\) Here, blind obedience and faithful entrusting of all considerations and reflection to the lord are nowhere to be seen; in their place, skillful counsel, planning, reflection, and ability to maintain harmonious relationships with other retainers are crucial.\(^{36}\) Wisdom, (\textit{chi}), the generic concept covering these qualities, is acquired through experience and lengthy consultation with others.\(^{37}\) Arguably,

\(^{30}\) There would indeed be some conceptual contradiction, or at least tension, in the notion of a blind obedience that would depend on reward. The ideal of unconditional, or gratuitous, service was of course frequently encountered in the moral discourses of the period – and was later often singled out as one striking difference between the feudal relationships in Japan and in Europe. However in practice, cases where harshness, ingratitude and shabby treatment of the retainers by their master all but dissolved the obligations they felt to his person or family were even more common. After all, absent a favor to be returned could there be an intelligible reason for good and loyal service? The \textit{Mikawa monogatari}, written by a poorly treated retainer of the Tokugawa, shows vividly through its repeated injunctions to resist the temptations of disloyalty that any perception that the lord was not observing his part of a tacit contract endangered the relationship.

\(^{31}\) 297, II.99; 300, II.110.

\(^{32}\) 573, XI.139.

\(^{33}\) 262, I. 175; 503, IX.24. However, because the idea of an obligation of loyalty would remain unintelligible if not for some favor received at some time, \emph{Hagakure} repeatedly justifies the obligation of good service by one original favor – an appointment, a gift, a stipend, etc. (for example, 248, I.94; 289, II.62).

\(^{34}\) 224, I.12.

\(^{35}\) 258, I.150. For the “great loyalty”, see 312-13, II.140; 554, XI.28.

\(^{36}\) 217, I.15; 233, I.44; 571, XI. 129.

\(^{37}\) 275, II.7. The thoughtful form of service, however, abounds in fakes, says \emph{Hagakure}. Many retainers, hoping to pass themselves off as loyal and courageous, publicly remonstrate with their lord, and make their advice known far and wide. Even when the counsel is sound, they risk antagonizing their master, forcing him to make humiliating retreat or to look like a fool. Their attitude is self-interested and does not belong to the category of good and loyal service (233, I.43). There is thus an art of giving advice, an art to which some of the most interesting and thoughtful pages of \emph{Hagakure} are devoted (256, I.136; 258-9, I.152-4). As its author remarks, advice is something that, despite their usual protestations to the contrary, people do not like to hear (see 224, I.14, and 233, I.43). The main point is to give advice or remonstrate in private and let the master take all the credit for sound decisions.
all this fits very poorly with blind loyalty and also with the obsessive self centered pursuit of fame. This is because the best service is discreet. It should be “service from the shadow” (kage no hokō). This obviously means that truly excellent retainers may remain unknown to outsiders (ibid.). And it also means that not only is fame forgotten, but that dishonor may be incurred: if, in spite of private counsel, their lord persist in evil ways, good retainers should try to hide them, and if need be, shoulder the public blame and shame.

The Frenzy to Die and Other Considerations.

Tensions continue in the state of mind that Hagakure calls shinigurui, the “frenzy to die”, a deeply irrational, self-destructive urge that ostensibly rejects all moral considerations, most notably those we have just seen. It is the attitude of the samurai who has given up reflection, calculations, planning, moral concerns and expectations (of victory especially) to throw himself furiously into a hopeless fight. While the term shinigurui makes its appearance well into Hagakure, the idea is explicitly expressed at the outset in the famous second aphorism: “The way of the warrior (bushidō) is to be found in death. It consists, whenever there is a choice, of settling for death. That is all there is to it. One has decided and moves forward.”

When the expression shinigurui appears, the author is even more explicit:

There is no need for loyalty or for filial piety; bushidō is about the frenzy to die.

As his choice of terms shows, the author wanted to stress the problematic dimension of this sort of behavior. Neither a suicide born out of despair, nor some sort of risk taking for the sake of an end – attitudes that may be meaningful –, the frenzy to die, as an aimless enthusiastic embrace of death, is certainly very puzzling.

Even when you stand no chance, attack. There is no need here for wisdom nor prowess. The hero (kusemono) gives no thought to victory or defeat. Without a moment’s hesitation he is possessed by the frenzy to die.

It is tempting to link the frantic urge to die to the notion of honor. Honor after all was acquired through the display of courage, that is, the willingness to unflinchingly confront death. Indeed, “The

At any rate, just go to the end, to the madness, throw your life away, and that is it.\textsuperscript{43}

The frenzy to die is certainly very puzzling. Even when you stand no chance, attack. There is no need here for wisdom nor prowess. The hero (kusemono) gives no thought to victory or defeat. Without a moment’s hesitation he is possessed by the frenzy to die.\textsuperscript{44}

It is tempting to link the frantic urge to die to the notion of honor. Honor after all was acquired through the display of courage, that is, the willingness to unflinchingly confront death.\textsuperscript{45} True, the expression shinigurui is difficult to translate. It has been made semi-popular by a semi-famous anime (Shigurui, 2007), but it has not entered everyday Japanese language. I take it as meaning a frenzy to die at the first opportunity, given the slightest motive, and regardless of the possible outcome.\textsuperscript{46}

38 Here again there would not be the slightest textual evidence for another tempting ad hoc interpretation that would consider that it is in offering counsel that the retainer should be like a doll! Such is the problem with Maruyama Masao’s interpretation of Hagakure in his classic study, Chisei to hangyaku (Tokyo: ChikumaShobō, 1992) cf. 19. Passages where the retainer is presented as standing up to his lord do not simply erase those where he is said just as clearly to have abandoned not only self interest but also all moral consideration and reflection. A good proof is in the fact that the two types of loyalty are explicitly opposed in Hagakure (see below).

39 574, XI.139
40 306, II.129
41 220, I.2.
42 Some commentators and translators try to weaken the import of the term shinigurui, suggesting that this refers merely to a bold decision to die (cf. the note of the Nihon shisōtaikei edition, p. 251, which explains shinigurui as “susunde shiji ni totsunyū suru koto”); but the dimension of irrationality and insanity is too explicitly suggested by the concurrent term of kichigai (occurrences of which are quite frequent, as in p. 251, I-113; 303, I.118), and by Tsunetomo’s constant rejection of rationality and calculation to make such interpretation plausible. True, the expression shinigurui is difficult to translate. It has been made semi-popular by a semi-famous anime (Shigurui, 2007), but it has not entered everyday Japanese language. I take it as meaning a frenzy to die at the first opportunity, given the slightest motive, and regardless of the possible outcome.

43 267, I.193.
44 251-52, I.113.
45 252, I.55.
46 The oldest signs – that we see in the Taiheiki for example, well before the appearance of the expression bushidō – of some awareness by warriors that theirs was a specific way, michi, refer to this
way not to be shamed is different (from victory or defeat); it merely consists in (fighting to) death.” Further, of the single-minded pursuit of death, Hagakure affirms that “It is madness, but there is no shame should one die without having achieved one’s goal.” However, the constant rejection of any concern for outcome, for victory – “Victory and defeat are matters of the temporary forces of circumstances.” – lends to this form of honor a very distinctive tonality, obsessed simply with the urge to die before the others. This frantic death, totally unconcerned with the outcome, is what contemporaries called *inujini*, the dog’s death, the utterly vain and useless death, the death that serves no purpose and helps no one. This also is claimed explicitly in the opening statement:

The idea that dying without achieving one’s goal is ‘to die a dog’s death’ comes from a sophisticated and delicate *bushido*. But whenever we face the choice (of life and death), there is no need to try to achieve our goal. [...] It is madness, but there is no shame should one die without having achieved one’s goal.

The “dog’s death” simply becomes the end in itself, the object of a furious impulse to death which seems to defy all logic and reason. Referring to words by Lord Naoshige, Hagakure says: “One should become insane (kichigai) and desperate to die (shinigurui).” Later its author claims that he resolved, having accepted this view, to go to the end of this madness. Of course in the common view “defeat” is awaiting, but, as he concludes, “The point is a quick and beautiful ‘defeat’.”

The Sexual Dimension, and Various Pleasures. All this does not seem to sit terribly well with the desire to overcome others, to triumph in honorific hubris, even less with thoughtful counsel, or selfless loyalty for the good of the master. However, as if the picture was not complex enough, another side of the retainer-master relationship enters, the sexual dimension of the servant/master relationship. One of the most notorious aspects of *Hagakure* today is that it abounds in mentions of the widespread homosexual practices among samurai. It is clear, further, that those relationships are necessarily also hierarchical relationships between partners of different ages. It is in fact often the case that these are relationships between a master and his retainer(s), strong enough to push the retainer to suicide upon the death of his lover. Even here however some internal tension appears, for the emotional attachment is also said to be best left secret way as being characterized by the absence of the fear of death. In *Hagakure* indeed it is exceptional to see observance of moral virtues become the criterion of honor. True the book seems to quote approvingly Kusunoki Masashige, the famous Emperor loyalist: “to surrender – whether as a trick or a ploy, or in the interest of the lord – is something a *bushi* simply does not do.” (259, I-158), because, presumably, such conduct would be unbecitting a samurai. These considerations however do not play any important role in the conception of honor in *Hagakure* which clearly inherits of an old tradition in samurai values which condones deception and lies as legitimate means in battle or quarrels (265, I.189; 555, XI.32). Its author would have been quite startled by the later, and deceptive, image of the noble and generous warrior.

47 237, I.55; also pp. 220, 225, 237.  
48 220, I.2.  
49 237, I.55.  
50 260, I. 162.  
51 220, I.2.  
52 251, I.113.  
53 303, II.118.  
54 300, II.108. Once a fight is started, however ill fated it may be, *Hagakure* leaves no room for calculations and tactical retreat. The first setback is irremediable for it cannot be integrated in long term planning: it is important never to be in a position of inferiority, never to be on the losing side, even if you can expect to win in the end, because if the fight is stopped then, it is your loss (245, I-84). The paradox is that one should refuse to retreat even if this is the way to insure victory, thus making death certain!  
55 264, I-181; 569, XI.115. While it was not unusual to compare the relationship between a retainer and his lord to that of a husband and his wife (cf. Izawa Banryū, *Bunshi kun*, in *Kinsei buke kyōiku shisō* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Nihon toshosentâ, 1979) 152), this was made for the purpose of expressing a social, hierarchical relationship, not a sexual one.  
56 263-4, I-180.  
57 290, II.64; 467, VIII.25; 563, XI.83.
and silent: “True love is silent love” (shinobu koi), the sort of love that you deny even when asked by the object of the attachment.58

Should the reader find those injunctions somewhat puzzling, what will s/he think of one last recommendation – since its author seems now to be saying that, after all, we should only do what we like, and that obviously we all have very different tastes?

A man’s life is really short. It is best he does what he likes. It would be silly to spend one life in this dream-like world doing things one does not like, looking at sufferings. But because this (observation), when one takes it improperly, may lead to harm, it should not be told to the likes of young people and kept for oneself. I like to sleep. And now, as is appropriate to my condition, I intend to spend more and more time inside to sleep.59

It is not necessary to stress how incoherent a picture all these traits form. Kamura rightly described Hagakure as a “bundle of contradictions” – mujun no katamari.60 What principle could order and tie together in some coherent way injunctions to be modest yet arrogant, thoughtful yet brash and impulsive, calculating yet disregarding outcome, blind yet discerning, desperate to overcome others yet happy to be defeated in a beautiful way, in love but silent or only willing to die, selflessly devoted, yet doing only what one likes? If, following a common intuition, we interpret honor as being fulfilled in loyal service, how do we explain the frenzy to die, the urge toward a meaningless death, or the two opposed types of service?61

Reconciling the Tensions

The Importance of Positions A first step toward reducing the contradictions is to look at the various positions of the samurai to whom these injunctions are addressed. As they appear to be addressed to different people in different positions, they, in fact, may not be in competition. Ultimately we shall see that not only can we order these injunctions as function of a hierarchy, but that we can also unify them more strongly as different but equally valid attitudes as long as they are willed by a pure will.

Positions appear, with explicit mentions of their role in solving the contradictions, in Hagakure’s discussions of the different forms of service or loyalty. There is, on the one hand a blind obedience, where the retainer is a ghost, a corpse or a puppet following the lord, right or wrong, and is always eager to embrace death; on the other, thoughtful advice, remonstrance, and consideration of the good of the lord. Typically this tension has been glossed over, authors choosing to look only at one side of service. Kasaya, for example, having quoted some of the passages pointing to blind loyalty, stresses others in favor of the loyalty of counsel to argue that here resides the true conception of loyalty articulated in Hagakure.62 Ikegami seems to be doing the same thing, and certainly does not explain the articulation between the two forms of service.63 But it is simply impossible to subsume all forms of loyalty under the loyalty of counsel. Firstly, the corpse of blind obedience is said to have given up all judgment.64 Secondly, irrationality and disregard for outcome are too often extolled. Lastly there exists a very convincing explanation for the existence of, and even the need for, two very different types of service. Hagakure says quite explicitly that service to one’s master should be expressed in different forms across the complex scale where samurai were outcome (in the frenzy), blind (in following one’s lord’s good or bad intentions) yet discerning (in trying to steer him toward better ways), etc., would help solve these difficulties. People do not change psychological structure that easily.

58 273, II.2; 289, II.62. On denial of love: 282, II.34. Even when no overt sexual dimension is present, the emotional bond, typically spurred by an insignificant favor of the lord, is repeatedly mentioned in Hagakure.
59 295, II.86.
60 Kamura 2001, 289.
61 The contradictions are such that it is very unlikely that taking into account of the situation when one has to be modest (in offering counsel) yet arrogant (in the quest for honor), thoughtful (of the good of the domain) yet brash and impulsive (in the constant competition of samurai life), calculating (the benefit expected for one lord) yet disregarding
63 Ikegami 1995, 292.
64 223, I.9
ranked. In the samurai’s military and bureaucratic organization attitudes and forms of service toward the lord, or toward each other, were minutely regulated and differentiated in function by hierarchical distance. Thus, contrary to appearances, Hagakure is not contradicting itself when, having claimed that the good samurai, like a ghost or a puppet, has entrusted to his lord all considerations of good and evil, it also says that the good samurai should think and consider the best course for his master, and should offer counsel. There is no contradiction simply because these bushi were different persons. It was not the job of a low ranking samurai to offer advice, to be concerned by the good of the domain, to express opinions on this matter, etc. That was the exclusive responsibility of the closest aides of a daimyō, a fact that Hagakure stresses explicitly and repeatedly.65 The two different forms of service are thus closely determined by difference in standing and proximity to the lord. I shall call these two forms of service “loyalty of counsel” on the one side, and “symbolic” or “virtual service” on the other.

The former notion is straightforward: the loyalty of counsel is basically the thoughtful loyalty mentioned above, owed by dignitaries and high placed confidants. It consists in sound but discreet and private advice, complemented by the willingness to hide the lord’s defects if he does not make amends and even to publicly shoulder the blame.

It is the latter type of service, owed by low ranking hōkōnin, which proves to be the most intriguing – for what sort of service could lower ranking samurai offer in peaceful Tokugawa times? Without particular ability or talents they were condemned to silence. Notoriously underemployed, they were often reduced to the condition of rōnin, as so many anecdotes make clear. If they were lucky they would have a job – in the kitchen, the stable, or in some obscure office. All they could do there was to perform as conscientiously as they could whatever task they had been assigned.

However, it is in the service of those disempowered retainers that many of the puzzling features we have observed above are at last reconciled. The blind obedience of the doll or the ghost, which has given up all considerations of right or wrong, is there allied firstly and most obviously to the intensely emotional attachment to the master. In fact only this emotional investment seems to be able to explain and justify the total absence of reward, and the unconditional and absolute character of the subordination. At the same time this very unbalance seems to demand that the emotional attachment is best kept silent. Often, at the death of the master, the souvenir of an insignificant favor, even comical in its insignificance, a favor unthinkingly given by the lord to a retainer whose existence he was barely aware of, becomes in the anecdotes of Hagakure the trigger of a resolution of junshi.66 Most importantly, I believe that to the symbolic service of the humble hōkōnin should also be attached the notions of honor and the frenzy to die, and their privileged expression, the private fights called kenka inspired by bravado, arrogance or revenge which occupy such a crucial place in Hagakure (the ninth book is largely a collection of kenka narratives). Why this is so may not be immediately obvious. Firstly, honor per se is an individualistic concern quite foreign to the master-retainer bond. Secondly, when responding to insults and frenetically engaging in kenka, low ranking samurai were exposing themselves to a swift condemnation to seppuku. They were thus making themselves unavailable for service. However, on the first point we should remember that this honor was the honor of samurai – etymologically of “servants” – and that probably it could not be conceived of outside the feudal relationship. On the second we need to realize that the seppuku of these over-numerous and underemployed individuals did not harm their lord – far from it. Their dispensability insured there was little conflict with the concrete and humble tasks they could offer! Hagakure in fact never attaches much credit to the mundane work of lowly retainers. For its author the service owed by lower ranking samurai was only fulfilled or proven in the gift of their life, but since the times were peaceful, this service was, in most cases, purely virtual. Samurai were waiting to be useful; they were waiting for the unlikely “great crisis” (daiji no ba) so often mentioned and hoped for, waiting, so to speak, to be samurai.67 Since this was not to be, humble hōkōnin, were reduced to jumping at the

65 233, I.43; 253, I.123; 313, II.140; 554, XI.28.
66 460, VIII.7; 475-6, VIII.46.
67 502, IX.21.
flimsiest opportunity to throw their life away. It is here that kenka, as parody of battle, enter symbolic service: the frenzy to die in private fights showed that the lord had very courageous retainers and he could take credit for this. Confirming the importance of the unthinking and honorific frenzy for humble retainers more than willing to engage in kenka, Hagakure constantly warns against the perils of learning (gakumon), reflexion (rikutsu, chie), penetration (mihesuguru), strategy (gumpō, heihō) and especially discrimination or discretion (bunbetsu). All that is required is an impetuous and ill-fated élan. "The way of the samurai is about dashing forward, without the slightest hesitation, even blindly." Unsurprisingly Hagakure intones in many passages a curious ode to "excess." It thus seems that what I called the symbolic service is entirely permeated by the violent, impetuous, sometimes sexual, honorific, unthinking, emotional, martial spirit of bushidō. Martial spirit is the only form that the symbolic service of the lower ranking samurai may take, and any form of violence, including private violence, is easily linked to retainer’s service and homage to the lord.

We can thus divide the various contradictory injunctions of Hagakure into two different clusters ordered by different forms of service. Hagakure sometimes indeed explicitly oppose the loyalty of counsel to the symbolic service. And its choice of terms to characterize them is revealing. I have not, by and large, talked of “loyalty” to refer to the service owed by lower ranking samurai, because Hagakure typically does not talk of chū in such instance. While chū is sometimes presented as a general requirement of samurai, the term is normally reserved for the loyalty of counsel. On the other hand, “bushidō”, the “frenzy to die”, “courage” are expressions that appear normally to characterize the service of lower ranking samurai. Around those central notions two small clusters of notions then appear: chū, advice (kangen), wisdom (chi) (preparation, planning, consultation, talent, etc.,) on the one hand; bushidō, bushi, courage, honor, silent love, frenzy on the other. (Hōkō is one term that may appear in characterizations of both type of service.) In Hagakure, those two clusters of notions usually appear in parallel manner without much contact, if any.

Honor and Loyalty. Having thus solved the apparent contradictions between two different forms of service, we can also see why in Hagakure there is no lasting conflict between honor and loyalty either. Of course, the conflict was possible. As has been so well documented by Ikegami, the controls and discipline had to be imposed on proud samurai likely to bring trouble to their lord, posed the two notions of honor and loyalty in stark and irreconcilable tension. Indeed samurai treatises themselves frequently recognized that protection of the lord’s interests and protection of one’s reputation could conflict. Exhortations to act one way or the other were even sometimes offered. In the Köyō gunkan there is a clear advice not to engage in quarrels of no significance for one’s lord as this would prevent one from fulfill-

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68 527, X.67. There a low ranking samurai who claims to have been of no use so far jumps into the flames of a burning residence, recovers an important document, opens his belly and insert the document inside so that flames cannot damage it.

69 510, X.1; 524, X.65. The link between bushidō and kenka is not unique to Hagakure. In the Köyō gunkan (Tokyo: Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1966) we see retainers oppose the kenka ryōseihai regulations, which made punishment of all parties involved in a kenka mandatory, under the argument than only soldiers rough and impetuous enough to engage in thoughtless kenka can make good samurai.

70 243, I.72; 265-66, I.189; 269, I.199; 253, I.121, 122; 288, II.61; 531, X.84; 554, XI.26. The distinction between bushidō and bunbetsu, like that of bu and bun is classic of course; Hagakure is quite remarkable in opposing these notions, clearly viewed as antagonistic to what I call symbolic loyalty. Positive, but rarefied, mentions of bunbetsu should obviously be attached to the loyalty of counsel (cf. 275, II.8).

71 554, XI.26; 560, XI.60.

72 265-66, I.189.

73 245, I.83; 265, I.188; 268, I.195.

74 One rare characteristic shared by the two types of loyalty would be the importance of etiquette, manners and careful preparation, as Koike (1999, pp.89-92) rightly stresses.

75 220, I.3; 554, XI.28.

76 230, I.35; 275, II.7 are instances where chū is used in a more general way.

77 Cf. the contrast between 571, XI.125 and 571, XI.126.
ing service to the lord. Izawa Banryū in his Bushikun argues more generally against wasting one’s life for nothing. The most drastic solution was that advanced by Ogyū Sorai who argued in his sweeping attack against bushido ethics, that whatever stupid people may think, samurai should flee from petty quarrels to stay useful to their superior. However, the concern for honor was simply too deeply entrenched to be swiftly dismissed. The same Kōyō gunkan that we have just seen warning samurai against petty quarrels admits some pages later that it is difficult for a samurai to ignore insults. Daidōji Yūzan’s Budō shoshinshū says exactly the same two contradictory things. Samurai literature did not offer clear-cut solutions to this conflict.

Hagakure, however, has a different take on this matter. We see in the rare stories where its author pits honor and loyalty against each other that far from being caught in a dilemma without solution, protagonists of Hagakure could very well order these moral concerns – because their position and ability to deliver great loyalty determined their choice. Typically highest ranking retainers, or those in a position to make valuable contributions, could squarely put their loyalty of counsel before any consideration of honor. One anecdote, for example, shows a talented samurai dismissing insults in order to stay useful and available for his lord. Most tellingly the great Sagara Kyūma deliberately disgraced himself for the sake of his master so that his impending seppuku could be justified. On the other hand we constantly see lower ranking samurai swiftly responding to the slightest insult, even when they are aware that this may create trouble for their lord – oie ni go nan. It appears thus that in the loyalty of counsel, honor is found in good counsel; in symbolic counsel, a very abstract and more often than not virtual service is easily subordinated to honor and the frenzy.

A First Ranking of Preferences. This distinction between two forms of service, the loyalty of counsel and symbolic service, represents a first step in ordering Hagakure’s chaotic stream of aphorisms. But we need to go further, for the differentiation of social positions is not the final principle ordering the different concerns in its moral landscape. It alone cannot erase the tension between the antagonist virtues and attitudes of the two forms of service. The distinction between those able to make a contribution through their talent and wisdom and those only able to throw their lives away was probably often quite obscure to contemporaries. It was even hopelessly blurred when young and lowly retainers were hoping to make a lasting contribution in some distant future, or when some lower ranking retainer hoped to influence policy by gaining the trust of high ranking officials. In fact Hagakure several times ranks the two sets of attitudes independently of political position, suggesting thus the existence of a superior principle that could more solidly structure its moral landscape. The problem is that those indications are often ambiguous. Some passages suggest that the loyalty of counsel is the ideal that samurai should aspire to. For example, Hagakure frequently affirms that “great loyalty” (daichisetsu) is the counsel offered by careful counselors who

78 Kōyō gunkan, 227.
79 Bushikun, 155.
81 Kōyō gunkan, 274.
82 502, IX.21.
83 221-22, I.7. True, there is one anecdote where a samurai in position to offer concrete and important service to his lord gives preference to his honor. It is the case of Kusunoki Masashige that I mentioned earlier (note 46). I will comment on this below (note 108).
84 469, VIII.34.
85 The kenka ryōseibai regulations of course stemmed from the awareness of the practical problems created by constant kenka. I am talking here of a possible moral conflict between the two forms of service. Ikegami (1995, 291) appears to see in the notion of secret love a “logical reconciliation” between the norms of honor and of loyalty “redefined as secret love”; under such redefinition of loyalty a simple act of obedience would become an inner virtue of honor. But Hagakure’s mentions of honor seem to me to exclude this: there is no place for the notion that inner virtue should be the source of pride. Na is never mentioned in connection with shinobu koi.
86 For the first case: 313-14, II.141; for the second: 258, I.150.
remonstrate discreetly with the lord and never stop thinking about the good of the domain. Its author, who never attained such position of counselor (karō), even frankly confesses in that this was his dream and that it was very difficult for him to accept that it was never to be. In one instance, comparing the loyalty of counsel to that of symbolic service he even claims that counsel is superior because the act of throwing his life only lasts a moment. Such passages, however, are more than counterbalanced by others which take the opposite position. In these instances the author discounts the contributions a retainer offers through his ability and wisdom. While still service (hōkō), it definitely is not in the same category as the blind gift of life: “To make oneself useful through wisdom or skills is one step lower.” The gift of lowly life is placed above the great loyalty of counsel. In another passage about his modest career as a retainer, the author claims that although he did not accomplish anything, he was nevertheless the best retainer his master had ever had! The idea of being at the same time without talent and the first retainer is offered in an earlier passage and justified likewise by the intensity of the emotional attachment and the constant virtual possibility of the ultimate sacrifice. However, this ordering of the two types of service which relies on varying personal preferences, is still rather weak. I believe that there is another principle which unifies much more strongly the two services and associated attitudes.

The Idea of the Pure Will, Ichinen. Consider the following, somewhat enigmatic, passage:

It is difficult to reject whatever goes against moral obligations (fugi) and to uphold these. However, should one think that the supreme principle consists in upholding moral principles, mistakes will in fact be many in one’s tireless attempt to act accordingly. There is a way (michi) superior to moral principles (gi). It is not clear what those principles (gi) refer to. One may think that they are obligations other than loyalty – obligations due to people other than one’s master. Such interpretation may find a measure of support in the fact that Hagakure sometimes claims that loyalty (michi in the above quote) transcends right and wrong (gi). However, in contemporary discourse as in the book itself, gi was normally used as a substitute for chū. Hagakure, besides, always refuses, contrary to what such reading would imply, to see any tension between loyalty and, say, filial piety. My interpretation, following the usual meaning of the term in samurai writings, is that gi refers in most general terms to moral obligations, including loyalty in all its meanings, and that Hagakure here voiced the idea that there was a principle superior to all the standard moral norms and obligations. What is this mysterious way? What might encompass and order all considerations? A tentative answer, to be refined, is that it is simply the frenzy to die without cause, without rhyme or reason. This is because Hagakure repeatedly places the frenzy above moral principles, as in this sentence, previously quoted: “There is no need for loyalty or for filial piety; bushidō is about the frenzy to die.” What could make the frenzy so valuable? The answer may be in the following remark: “It is very straightforward (shisainashi),” says Hagakure, “you just need to decide and do it (mune suwatte su-
The frenzy rests on an indomitable and all-powerful will to death.

While the will is not a concept or a category clearly identified in Hagakure, there is no mistaking its importance. Mention of having resolve (kakugo), decisiveness (hamaritaru, ketsujō), of marshalling intense will (ichinen, isshin), standing up (tachiagaru), having strength of mind (tsuyomi), displaying energy (ki, or kiryoku), pure intention (shōnen), strong disposition (kimochi, kimiai), as well as disposition kokoro, kokorogake, etc., regularly refer to some aspect of what we call “will” or “willpower.” The faith that Hagakure puts in “will” is striking. A strong will is irresistible and capable of absolutely anything. As for death, it is the contrast between the will to die a dog’s death for both. Most humans, says its author, should thus be the will of “nothing”, or of something without being enslaved by it and losing its autonomy as will: to preserve its autonomy the will must be steeled through the representation of oneself as already dead the will stays free and unbound. It becomes literally the will of the worldly goods. The will behind the frenzy to die, on the contrary, is not determined by anything else. It is neither demanded (as we shall see) by some hard fact or norms of nature or the cosmos, nor is it bound by some tangible good it seeks to acquire. It is the will of nothing, or of nothingness. It is free. Whether we accept or not that the author of Hagakure had an intuition of this paradox of the will, it is impossible not to be struck by the fascination or obsession that Hagakure displays toward the will, by the stress put on intensity of the will at the moment of its maximum tension. Here is what we have been looking for:

As a human being, what is the important thing to strive for and execute? – To have a pure will now (tadaima shōnen shiteiru yōnī).

There is indeed no concern for loyalty, honor or filial duty here. The idea that what matters is only the sheer intensity of the will in action is repeated in many passages, and suggests that the will is a principle even higher than symbolic service and frenzy. Life is lived “one will at a time” (ichinen ichinen), and there is nothing apart from this instantaneous will here and now (tanteki tadaima no ichi-

Footnotes:

97 220, I.2.
98 For kakugo, see 241, I.63, 246, I.86; 266, I.190; for ketsujō: 246, I.86; hamaritaru: 265, I.189; ichinen, isshin: 257, I.143; tachiagaru: 574, XI.141; tsuyomi: 245, I.85; ki: 436, VII.1; kiryoku: 279, II.23; shōnen: 240, I.61; kimochi: 462, VIII.31; kimiai: 472, VIII.42.
99 257, I.143.
100 220, I.2.
101 230, I.35.
102 251, I.111.
103 If the frenzy to die appears as a tremendous feat of the will, this effort must be sustained, and requires arduous discipline. Because the will may be tempted by goods, it must be steeled through the constant contemplation of the anti-good, death. Building on Buddhist meditation (some versions of which were called hakkotsu kan, “contemplation of white bones”, a practice strikingly similar to the “vanities” of XVIIth century Europe) and on the different stages (the kuso) of death and decay, but giving it a military twist, Hagakure enjoins us to meditate on the spectacle of our bodies burnt, cut open, speared, or crushed (572, XI-133). But the purpose of such meditation here is not purely Buddhist. It is an exercise (probably useless) of the will that should insure that through the representation of oneself as already dead the will stays free and unbound.
104 240, I.61.
105 27, II.17; 284, II.48; XI.141.
The ultimate criterion of approval and the unifying thread in *Hagakure* is thus neither loyalty, nor any other moral norm, and not even *bushidō per se*, but the intensity of purpose. Pure will does not displace honor or loyalty, which are largely determined by non-moral considerations associated with hierarchical positions, but it is clearly the transcending principle. It permits choice in the innumerable grey zones of life and goes beyond the samurai group and its ethos – “as a human being”, said the quote above. \(^{107}\) Whatever attitude is adopted by whoever, it will be approved if it is supported by this invincible pure will of the moment. This is why the author of *Hagakure* can openly admire behavior totally opposed to all the moral considerations he elsewhere accepts or professes. \(^{108}\) This is why there exists for him no moral dilemma: when one is caught between conflicting obligations, what matters is not the choice of one or the other – filial piety or loyalty – but the choice itself which must be done in an intensity than can only be *proved* in acceptance of death. As an earlier quote (cf. II.3) made it clear, whoever has a pure will is the *kusemono* – the elusive hero who lurks in so many passages of *Hagakure*.

**Hagakure’s Sociological Interest: Death as Cultural Capital.**

Having thus tried to provide a more unified interpretation of the moral message of *Hagakure*, I would now like to offer an assessment from two other perspectives, those of the sociology of ideas – where the answer to the question “why does it say what it says?” is extracted from the social circumstances of the message and views it as a symptom of these circumstances– and of philosophy – where the philosophical value of the work is questioned.

The sociological perspective should complement what has been said above, for it helps to explain the frantic dimension of the will to die, a dimension which can only be understood through a consideration of the social circumstances experienced by the author. One of the most striking features of those circumstances appears when we revisit the act the most intense variant of which is the frenzy – voluntary death – and question its social meanings. Death of course was a common concern of most of the books and treatises in the samurai discourse. \(^{109}\) But in the narratives of *Hagakure* we find a distinctive accent on the *act* of death, and find most of its different meanings richly illustrated. \(^{110}\)

\(^{106}\) 278, II.17

\(^{107}\) “In serious affairs in which you are concerned, the only way to settle things is to rely on one’s own judgment, and to go along without hesitation. In matters of importance, if conferring with other people, it will often be the case that they will not pay attention, or that they will not speak the truth. This is when you use your own judgment. At any rate, go to the end of your frenzy and throw your life away.” (267, I.193.) *Hagakure* many times stresses the importance of asking for advice and listening to other’s opinions – this is probably a component of the loyalty of counsel, but in the frenzy individuals rely solely on their own choice, decision and will.

\(^{108}\) Cf. in 120, VIII.56 the case of a man who robs and plunders his domain, examples of lies and dissimulation excused for the strong purpose they served in 541, X.124; 555, XI.32, or the case of Kusunoki Masashige who refrains from helping his master out of dislike for treachery. Of course, there cannot be any reason for the will itself. Here we reach the a-philosophical, the ungrounded aesthetic dimension that runs through *Hagakure* that explains its numerous remarks on the importance of beautiful form – a subject I cannot fully treat here.

\(^{109}\) Among the most important representatives of the genre, *Budō shoshin shū* (Daidōji Yūzan, *Budō shoshin shū*, in *Kinsei buke kyōiku shisō* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Nihon toshosentā, 1979), although of a very different tone from *Hagakure*, also starts with the topic of death, enjoining samurai to never forget for one moment, all year long, that they are about to die. Its author, Daidōji Yūzan (1639-1730), was also born well after Pax Tokugawa began. Cf. also *Mikagawa monogatari*, in *Mikawa monogatari, Hagakure*; the earlier (compiled early seventeenth century) *Kōyō gunkan* (p. 227); Yamaga Sokō’s *Yamaga gorui*, in *Yamaga Sokō zenshū*, vol 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1940), 35-36. But these works were mainly treating death as an event, consequences, to be accepted, of other actions.

\(^{110}\) Contemporary vocabulary sometimes classified various types of voluntary death (*jishi, jigai, jiketsu, jijin, jisai*) according to their objective; sui-
We see instances of samurai having to take responsibility for some trivial misconduct and ordered to commit seppuku.\textsuperscript{111} We see others die taking responsibility for a serious misdeed.\textsuperscript{112} We see retainers performing death to return a favor, or to express the exclusive relationship with the lord upon his death.\textsuperscript{113} We see some bushi affirming their readiness to disembowel themselves when about to give advice or to remonstrate, to threaten or to blackmail.\textsuperscript{114} We see warriors committing suicide because they were caught between conflicting obligations, a common occurrence in a cultural context where obligations were prescriptions of behavior toward specific individuals.\textsuperscript{115} We see samurai throwing their lives away in hopeless fights to take revenge, to defend their name, to restore their honor, or to engage in forced honorific rivalry.\textsuperscript{116} We even see suicide as a way of fulfilling “silent” or not so silent love in a homosexual relationship. And of course we see death ostensibly chosen under the name or the pretext of loyalty to one’s lord: “the first thing for a warrior is to give his life to his lord.”\textsuperscript{117}

Beyond the diversity of their purposes, all those forms of death were highly symbolic acts, existing in a social class for which its relationship to death helped to identify and justify its existence. Yamaga Sokō expressed the urgency of the justification problem when he asked what could explain the fact that bushi, while unproductive, were at the top of the social order.\textsuperscript{118} His answer – that they were providing the model of correct behavior – would have failed to impress. That only few samurai could be moral models would have been very clear. The needs of governance could not have explained either the large number of samurai or the incompetence of most. More than moral or administrative qualifications, it was some vague aura of authority that made warrior rule look like a part of the natural, normal state of things. Samurai authority came from many sources, but among them was certainly the constant affirmation we find in the bushidō literature of the readiness to die.\textsuperscript{119} The readiness (happily, for most samurai, a purely rhetorical readiness), or even the eagerness, to part with one’s life was what set the warrior class apart from the rest of the population. It was the always possible feat of self-inflicted death that could justify the special position of the bushi. It was a case of noblesse oblige, not in the sense that nobility would create obligations, but rather in the sense that obligations invested nobility on their bearers. It is in this sense that voluntary death was not merely a status symbol, but the core item of the bushi group’s cultural capital. In this sense the obsession of Hagakure with death makes it an eloquent testimony to the authority of this capital.

However, Hagakure does not merely tell us, with much pathos, how important voluntary death was in the cultural capital of the samurai; this alone would not explain the frenzy. This would only explain the stoeic attitude of the samurai who accepted that noblesse oblige. Hagakure also tells us that death had to be frantically pursued. Why that is becomes clear when we recognize that, for the author of the book, the samurai whose status rested on the act of death were, as true samurai, already dead: He repeatedly states that the bushi had lost their soul,

\textsuperscript{111} 256, I.136.
\textsuperscript{112} 268, I.198.
\textsuperscript{113} 527, X.67; 251, I.112.
\textsuperscript{114} For seppuku as remonstrance, see 244, I.76; for blackmail, XI.65; XI.91.
\textsuperscript{115} 505, IX.30. Arai Hakuseki states in his autobiography that only people culturally equipped with the suicide ethos could deal with such conflict when he comments on the case of commoner woman who had been caught in such situation (Arai Hakuseki, Oritakushiba no ki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), 200).
\textsuperscript{116} 475, VIII.45; 476, VIII.47; 485, VIII.62; 508, IX.39.
\textsuperscript{117} 230, I.35; 274, II.7.
\textsuperscript{118} In the introduction to his Bukyō shōgaku, in Nihon rinri ihen, vol 4, ed. Inoue Tetsujiro (Tokyo: Ikusei kai, 1902 ) 677.
\textsuperscript{119} On the notion of authority to explain obedience and conformity in Tokugawa society, see my “Rituals as Utopia”, Japanese Studies 29, No 1 (2009) 33-45.
their ethos, their raison d’être, their identity. Tamed into bureaucrats, they had been infected with the calculating lowly way of the commoners.\(^\text{120}\) Whereas their ancestors carefully avoided all contact with chōnin, contemporary “samurai” freely mixed with them, and unsurprisingly acquired their obsession with wealth, goods, or pleasures, their ways of thinking, evaluating and calculating.\(^\text{121}\) In fact, Hagakure insists on several occasions they had even been physically transformed into commoners – or, more exactly, and worse, into women, having acquired a feminine pulse!\(^\text{122}\) The despair and the urgency characteristic of the frenzy to die can then be understood as the despair and urgency of an “identitary quest”, of an attempt to salvage the identity of a class that was only a ghost of its former self, through the flaunting of the core item of its cultural capital. (Granted, the bushi class would in fact survive for another 150 years, but, the author of Hagakure would have said, only in name, as a collection of tamed bureaucrats, powerless, nostalgic and bitter.)

The Philosophical Interest

The Problem of Death and the Absence of Meaning. The philosophical interest of Hagakure may be much less obvious. After all, there is no denying that the work is haunted by a streak of insanity – in the sense of logical meaninglessness –, a streak most likely linked to the haunting presence of death.\(^\text{123}\) The problem is not that Hagakure reminds us of our mortal condition. This would not insure meaninglessness.\(^\text{124}\) For its author, death does not mark the limit (within which, in fact, meaning is possible), but is the necessary means to an end – the retrieving of samurai identity. This is why, drawing on Buddhist themes, he constantly introduces death into a worldly perspective, and why he can pretend that “only the end of things is important.”\(^\text{125}\) The problem is that this means prevents the realization of its ends. One cannot help wonder what point there is in regaining identity only to fall into oblivion. Another, closely related, reason for the feeling of the meaninglessness that runs through Hagakure is obsessive pursuit of something which, by conceptual necessity, cannot be achieved: the identity of someone else. Making the point that things and beings are only what they are, and cannot be something else without ceasing to be, Leibniz told someone who had expressed the wish to be the Emperor of China that this was akin to wishing to be dead: indeed there is some conceptual instability in any desire to change identity since it negates the agent indispensable to achieving this very wish. Hagakure is guilty of such sin because, while it fully recognized that changing social and political circumstances made the persona of the old samurai totally impossible and foreign, it nonetheless kept urging the new sanitized, feminine retainers to be that...
someone else. Its author seems to have hoped to achieve an end (the identity of other people) which destroys its agent through a means (death) which destroys everything.

Metaphysical Pluralism. This flirtation with meaninglessness does not mean that there are no philosophically interesting perspectives in Hagakure. Such perspectives are suggested by many remarks about the very fragile nature of the bushi ethos and on the identity the author was trying to retrieve. He affirms that the cultural capital that so urgently needed to be reasserted was also, from a detached perspective, perfectly illusory. The author of Hagakure was acutely aware that voluntary death and the whole bushidō ethos articulated around it were simply what we would call a social imaginary: a corpus of representations and values organizing interactions and guiding interpretations, judgments and actions in a certain group of human beings, but a corpus of representations without any absolute ground or justification, without reality, concreteness or truth, that just happened to be there as the product of circumstances and opportunities. Whenever they present themselves as absolutely valid, the discourses of the social imaginary are wrong; but what matters is that they are there as a way or a form of life. Indeed, for those whose existence they define, these forms are as demanding as any real fact. What leads me to this conclusion are passages like this one:

Listening to Buddhist teachings would be an extraordinary error for a young samurai. This is because things would appear in two perspectives. But nothing will ever be achieved if you don’t go in one direction only.127

What could this mean? Hagakure here places on the same level the perspective of Buddhism which denounces all worldly values as empty, and that of bushidō which affirms certain worldly values, and demands that one die for them. It does not imply that one outlook is right or valid, and the other false and invalid. It suggests rather that whoever learns to see things in the Buddhist way will not be able to see them in the way needed by Hagakure’s brand of bushidō. Each of these perspectives is valid, but incompatible with the other. A choice has to be made, but this choice is not the choice of the one and only right answer: here we see how the will is linked to this metaphysical thesis. This pluralism, not noticed in the literature surrounding Hagakure, is confirmed by countless other passages. Firstly, this idea that there are concurrent perspectives on the world, that “things appear under two aspects” (mono ga futatsu ni naru) – something samurai must avoid at all cost –, appears in several passages.128 The book starts also by claiming that even if Confucius or Buddha were to appear in Nabeshima family’s domain, they would not accept and adopt the local habits – that is the local brand of samurai ethos.129 There is here no affirmation of universal validity for the local brand of ethics. Hagakure only says that a samurai follows Nabeshima values simply because he was born there, while Confucius and Buddha were not. Elsewhere, going against both the common syncretism (all ways are the same) and dogmatism (only one way is valid), the work claims that there are different ways (michi) and that one should simply stick to one, and avoid mixing heterogeneous elements of different ways.130

126 Hagakure recognizes that however regrettable was the loss of the old world of bushidō, however lamentable was the transformation of loyal retainers into self interested effeminate chōnin, such movement was not reversible (278, II.18). Strangely enough, considering that it seems to be attempting just this, it even goes on denouncing people who spend their time lamenting the demise of this world as deeply mistaken (ibid.).

127 398, VI-21; a similar idea is expressed in 288, II.61; 465, VIII.22. While Hagakure would have been a very different work had not its author taken the Buddhist orders upon retirement, the role of Buddhism is often only cursorily acknowledged (Ikegami, p.287). The putative author of Hagakure, Yamamoto Tsunetomo, does not seem to have been an exclusive follower of one Buddhist sect: Zen, Amidist schools and even Nichiren appear in numerous references to Buddhism. The idea of ichinen, the pure instantaneous will has Zen overtones, but is found also in teaching about the invocations of Amida’s name.

128 257, I.139; 268, I.195, and passages quoted in the above note.

129 216, Introduction.

130 257, I.139. This is why I do not subscribe to Ikegami’s analysis of the “han nationalism” of
Even more significantly, a bushi is said to follow his master even if this should lead him to fall into hell or be a victim of divine retribution.\textsuperscript{131} Similarly the way of the samurai is said to be pursued even when it comes into conflict with the desires of the gods of Shinto.\textsuperscript{132} In such passages Shinto or Buddhist teachings are never dismissed as false. Gods and Buddhas are not claimed to be illusions. They are assumed to be real – just like hell is –, and the author of Hagakure even claims to respect them, but while real they are not relevant for bushi; they represent other systems of values, just as valid or even truer than bushidó, but not relevant for people who happened to be samurai. Lastly, confirming this reading, Hagakure never made any attempt to ground its brand of bushidó in some natural order of things, in metaphysics, like Yamaga Sokō for example. In fact its rare comments on the natural world point to a very secular, totally “disenchanted” view of the world, where the natural objects and phenomena are unable to support the universality of moral values. “Prosperity and decay belong to fate (tennen). The good and the bad belong to the way of humans. It is for the purpose of moral preachings that we talk about prosperity and decay.”\textsuperscript{133} By the same token natural phenomena are merely the products of mechanisms unrelated to human affairs: “Whenever events out of the ordinary happen, to talk of mysteries or of warnings of things to come is a stupid thing to do.”\textsuperscript{134} If all these indications confirm that a streak of pluralism runs deep in Hagakure’s outlook, an even more radical devaluation of all worldly values appears when the book takes a more decisively Buddhist perspective, and advances the idea that beings and phenomena in this world are without substance, that we are all puppets surrounded by illusions: sekai ha mina karakurin-nin-gyōnari.\textsuperscript{135} More generally, life is said in many instances to be only a meaningless dream.\textsuperscript{136}

One should note that such metaphysics – what in modern philosophical jargon is called “fictionalism”, the theory that states that certain normative or descriptive propositions about the world can be both untrue and valid – is not unique to Hagakure. While uncommon, this metaphysical configuration is found scattered through Japanese thought. The Buddhist preacher Shinran claimed that he would follow the teachings of his master even if they were proven to be false and cause his fall into hell.\textsuperscript{137} The Confucian thinker Yamazaki Ansai said that he believed in the correctness of Zhu Xi’s doctrine, even it was was wrong.\textsuperscript{138} Ogyū Sorai stressed that Shinto had to be followed even if its gods were

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\textit{Hagakure} (Ikegami 1995, 295–97). Ikegami believes that the rejection of other doctrines only expresses “han nationalism”. More interesting is the fact that the author of Hagakure does not dismiss the intrinsic validity of these other doctrines. The idea that many forms of life can be equally valid and equally without solid foundations in nature is not only philosophically more interesting than “han nationalism” but it makes more sense of the passages where the author puts side by side not only Nabeshima han and other han, but also and more frequently bushidó and Buddhism, Shinto or Confucianism, etc., without decrying the validity of any of those ethical messages.

\textsuperscript{131} 290-01, I.65.
\textsuperscript{132} 294, II.82.
\textsuperscript{133} 248, I.95.
\textsuperscript{134} 249, I.104. This refusal to rely on some universal justification, and this preference for local ethics and the concurrent acceptance of its circumstantial and limited value, seem to me to have been common in the samurai class: the great critics of naturalist and universal justification, Ogyū Sorai and Kaiho Seiryō, were of samurai origin. The insistence of samurai houses on their own code of ethics, their propensity to stress its differences with other warrior houses may have facilitated this perception of norms as locally – and thus weakly – grounded. More generally of course the presence in Japan of distinct traditions, from Buddhism and Confucianism to Shinto, could have encouraged the idea of competing but equally legitimate accounts, although, more often than not, syncretism or dogmatism was the answer. The fact that the putative author of Hagakure, Yamamoto Tsunetomo, himself had made the transition from a samurai retainer to Buddhist recluse is relevant too.

\textsuperscript{135} 231, I-42; 284, II.44.
\textsuperscript{136} 295, II-85; 574, XI.142.
lies. Conversely, he added that things proven to be real should be dismissed if there was no place for them in the teachings of the sages. Shinran, Ansai and Sorai thus all advanced a fictionalist position. While it is tempting to dismiss this a mere rhetoric I believe that in Hagakure the context of these utterances show clearly that they were not simply rhetorical and that its author had an intuition of a fictionalist theory.

The Triumph of the Will and the Existentialist Solution to Pluralism. This idea of modes of existence valid yet deprived of absolute grounding in reality allows us to complete the account of the will by fully displaying its extraordinary power. Hagakure repeatedly stresses that the power of the free will is invincible (Ichinen okoru to tenchi wo omohiogasu mono nari), but it is in the following passage, already partially, quoted, that the full extent of its power appears:

The hero (kusemono) gives no thought to victory or defeat. Without a moment’s hesitation he is possessed by the frenzy to die. This is when you understand. This is when you wake up from the dream. (Kore nite yume samuru nari)

Here the sheer tension of an undetermined and pure will has accomplished a miracle. Dying for nothing, the hero has shown through this extraordinary feat of will that he is, unlike most of his fellow humans, no puppet trapped in an illusory world. He has overcome the realm of illusions. When it is intense and pure will alone can create value and autonomy, claims the author of Hagakure who seems fortuitously to prefigure the sort of existentialism we can read in Nietzsche and Kierkegaard where it is the mere fact of the will in its full intensity – not its object – which insures freedom. The pure will of so different figures as the thief Horie San’emon, the just and noble warrior Kusunoki Masashige, the loyal retainer Sagara Kyūma willing to shame his name, and the innumerable low ranking samurai dying in kenka, or for their master or for their faults, lifts – if only for an instant – their being out of shadowy illusion and into existence.

Such a proto existentialist theme of the pure will is what organizes in the most coherent possible way the dislocated message of Hagakure, responds to the social circumstances of the work, and finally explains its enduring appeal.

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141 Just like, for example, the context of Dostoyevsky’s similar statements about following Jesus even if Jesus was wrong (in Selected letters of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Joseph Frank and D. Goldstein eds. (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1987) p. 68; repeated in The possessed (London: Heineman 1946) p. 225. shows that they should be treated seriously. In Japan the long debates between Confucian and Nativist scholars about the sense in which the descriptions of the Age of Gods in the ancient scriptures could be valid, albeit, in another sense, quite false would also have facilitated this proto fictionalism.

142 257, I.143.
143 237, I-55.
144 In the same spirit probably, in an explicit discussion of identity, Hagakure remarks of the Nichiren sect of Buddhism that it is simply by being obstinate, by refusing compromise that it succeeded in existing (235, I.49).
Executing Duty: Ōno Domain and the Employment of Hinin in the Bakumatsu Period

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In 1852, the governing officials of Ōno, a small domain of 40,000 koku in Echizen province, settled the problem of who would serve as executioners and who would supply auxiliary labor for the execution site. Both jobs ended up being entrusted to a group of local outcasts. Although it was common for outcasts during the Tokugawa period to be mobilized for executions and other penal tasks, the actual severing of the head (in the case of beheadings) was often assigned to low-ranking samurai or rōnin employed on a temporary basis. In Ōno, too, until 1852 executions had been carried out by the jail guard, or rōban, a hired commoner who was given samurai status for the duration of his tenure. The recruitment of outcasts for this position was not an inevitable outcome.

This discussion of executioners in Ōno focuses on the following three issues. First, why did the domain decide to change the traditional arrangement and begin to rely on outcaste executioners instead of the jail guard? Second, how did the domain persuade the outcasts to take on such an unpleasant and stigmatizing but, in the eyes of the administration, necessary task? And finally, what does the domain’s solution to the problem tell us about the nature of the status order in the Bakumatsu period, a time when this system is commonly perceived to have been rigid and outdated?

As research of the past two decades has shown, the Tokugawa status order was not a strictly hierarchical construction that neatly divided the population up into stable categories. Early modern Japan was filled with localized groups that competed for privileges and were constantly negotiating their social position both with the government and with each other. As the case of the Ōno executioners...

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3 The jail guard received a stipend (kirimai) of ten bales of rice and rations for two (niningeuchi) per year, and was placed under the command of the town magistrate (machibugyō). See the town magistrate’s precedent manual “Tsutomekata obogakai Tamura-hikae,” Tamura Kōsaburō-ke monjo i53 176, 1810, precedents for the fifth and twelfth months; and “Ōno-han bugenchō,” 1770s, Ōno-shi rekishi minzoku shiryōkan monjo 2, in Fukui-ken shi, Shiryō-hen 7, Chū/kinsei 5 (Fukui: Fukui-ken, 1992), pp. 81-100. For cases of jail guards marrying townswomen see “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1852 6/6+8/21, Saitō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 063, pp. 97, 120. Copies of the journals (machidoshiyori goyōdome) of the town elders of Ōno constitute the main source of this paper and are accessible in the Office for the Compilation of Ōno City History.

4 This paper locates the onset of the Bakumatsu era in the early 1840s, i.e. the time of the First Opium War, the Tenpō Reforms of the Shogunate, and the beginning of Ōno’s own reform efforts.

demonstrates, even the social roles of outcastes were defined only loosely and could undergo significant changes over time. Although the authorities were prevented by precedent from assigning new duties to their subjects at will, they could persuade status groups to cooperate by granting them privileges, while the groups themselves sometimes offered to undertake new duties to the government in order to obtain new rights. In this paper, I emphasize the flexibility of the status system, and its reliance on a set of rules that were easily bent but not easily broken.

Before entering into the details of the executioner case, I will provide some further background on two issues that will help situate the incident in its larger context: first, on the reforms in Ōno domain during the final decades of Tokugawa rule, and second, on the general topic of mobilization by status.

Reform in Ōno Domain

The year 1852 falls into what is usually considered as a part or at least the eve of the Bakumatsu era, and we have grown accustomed to seeing these decades as a time when many domains, including Ōno, engaged in reforms that challenged old hierarchies and institutions. In 1842, Ōno’s Lord Doi Toshitada formally announced his intention to embark on an ambitious reform program, following up on earlier reform attempts in the 1830s. The initial goal was the restoration of domain finances, which was achieved through a combination of austerity, promotion of domestic products, and the establishment of a domain-run trading company (Ōnoya, 1855) with branches in places such as Osaka, Hakodate, and Yokohama. In addition, Toshitada and his vassals placed great emphasis on the introduction of Western technical knowledge. They established a domain academy (1843) and an institute for Western learning (Yōgakukan, 1856), whose scholars had close ties with the Tekijuku academy in Osaka and translated and published a number of foreign books on language acquisition, military technology, and maritime navigation. The domain government also promoted medical innovations such as smallpox vaccinations (1850) and a hospital for the domain population (1859). Moreover, Ōno was one of the first domains in the Hokuriku region to experiment with Western weaponry (1845). It even secured permission from the Shogunate to start a colonial project on the southern end of the island Karafuto (Kita-Ezochi, 1859), and purchased a Western-style schooner (1858) to travel to its colony and ship trade goods to Hakodate.

Many of these reforms called traditional social distinctions into question. Samurai became directly involved in the management of a commercial enterprise; low-ranking vassals were promoted to high office; the new domain academy opened its doors to gifted students from non-warrior backgrounds; and children of outcastes received the same smallpox vaccinations as commoner children. Still, as far as the important issue of punishment and public order was concerned, the officials of Ōno domain chose solutions that carefully observed the conventions of the status order. On the one hand, this behavior serves as a reminder of the constraints that status imposed on domainal reforms. But at the same time it shows that while domain reformers might have ignored the status order in certain respects, they did not hesitate to actively rely on it in others.

Ōno’s search for an executioner was related to the context of domain reform. In the nineteenth century, and particularly during the Tenpō famine (1834-38), public safety in the interior of Echizen province had deteriorated considerably. The number of recorded burglaries reached an unprecedented

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8 See, for example, Iwaji Yūichi, Ōno-han no yōgaku (Ōno, 1984).
10 Fukui-ken shi, Tsūshi-hen 4, Kinsei 2, pp. 825-833, 841-860.
11 On outcaste vaccinations, see Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 1204, p. 862.
level, and there were a fair number of professional gamblers and thieves permanently entrenched in the area.\(^{12}\) If the government wanted to enrich its territory and avoid attracting criminals from domains with stricter law enforcement, it could not afford to let the matter rest. Moreover, like most reforms, Ōno’s domain reforms produced their share of discontent, and the death penalty could only serve its purpose of intimidation as long as it remained a credible threat. Thanks to its success in hiring executioners, the domain was able, in a decree of 1860, to use death as a deterrent against subjects who were “so lawless that they disturbed the politics of the government (on-seijisuji).”\(^{13}\)

### Mobilization by Status: The Wider Context

In the nineteenth century, first-time employments of outcastes as executioners may have been rare, but there was a broader trend of mobilizing outcastes for new duties more generally. From around the middle of the eighteenth century, beggar (hinin) associations began to take on new roles particularly in the field of criminal investigation and town patrols. In Osaka, for example, the authorities started to employ the local hinin guilds for a variety of patrolling and policing tasks. In Kyoto, too, the shogunal government intensified its reliance on hinin policemen during roughly the same period.\(^{14}\)

The beggar guild of Ōno did not remain unaffected by this development. In the 1740s the beggars of Ōno already contributed to public security as patrols and guards, but their responsibility was still for the most part limited to keeping the castle town and surroundings free of suspicious mendicants. In the decades that followed, however, they began to be employed for criminal investigations (tazunemono) on a broader scale to cope with a gradual rise in vagrancy and crime. By the 1830s, finally, they had turned into a busy police force that investigated under the direction of the domain’s criminal bureau (tōzokukata) and hunted criminals in collaboration with colleagues of other domains in Echizen province.\(^{15}\)

Although new duties such as these increased the hinin’s labor burden, they also came with certain benefits. The outcastes tended to prefer police work over their other duties because it allowed them to exercise authority in the government’s name, and because it was also practiced by more respected groups such as commoners and low-ranking samurai. Moreover, when administrations imposed new tasks on the hinin they typically rewarded them with privileges for their cooperation. Such privileges often worked towards raising the outcastes’ social prestige, and could be combined with material benefits. In Ōno, for example, in 1789, the hinin were granted the rights to wear short swords when going on searches with outcaste colleagues from other domains,\(^{16}\) and also received a small rice stipend for running a new type of undercover town patrol.\(^{17}\)

The tendency to mobilize outcastes for new

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\(^{12}\) Although officials had complained about rising criminality in the eighteenth century as well, the town elders’ journals from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century indicate that the number of burglaries rose sharply in the 1830s and remained relatively high even after the Tenpō famine. Many of the thieves arrested and interrogated were unregistered mushuku born in the region who stole on a habitual basis. See also Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 999, pp. 732-734.

\(^{13}\) Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 1152, p. 823f.


\(^{15}\) A comparison between the town elders’ journals of the 1740s and those of the 1830s graphically illustrates the guild’s transformation from a simple beggar patrol into an experienced police force. See, for example, MT goyōdome 1740, 1741. Satō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 026, i030 027; 1834, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1840, 1841. Ibid. i030 051, i030 052, i030 053, i030 054, i030 056, i030 057. On the policing functions of outcastes see also Ooms, pp. 257-261; Christian M. Hermansen, “The Hinin Associations in Osaka, 1600-1868,” The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies 15 (2001), pp. 47-80; Timothy Amos, “Portrait of a Tokugawa Outcaste Community,” East Asian History 32/33 (2006/7), pp. 93-97.

\(^{16}\) Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 377, pp. 276f.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., no. 376, p. 276.
tasks of public administration seamlessly continued into the era of Bakumatsu reforms. It even intensified as many domain governments were looking for ways to strengthen their territories both militarily and economically. In order to succeed in their reform projects, rulers needed to secure the active cooperation of at least a part of their subject population. One way of doing so was to appeal to the subjects’ sense of duty towards their lord, but there was an even more effective strategy: giving people a direct stake in particular reform measures through the conferment of rights, responsibilities, and titles.

For example, the initiative of local artisans and merchants was essential to the success of Ōno domain’s mercantilist program ( kokueki shihō ), which involved import controls and the promotion and improvement of domestic production. Like other nearby domains in the nineteenth century, Ōno granted protection and monopoly rights to individuals and guilds who launched new enterprises to profit from the reforms and to contribute to them in return. At its colony on Karafuto, Ōno’s domain government entrusted the entire operation of the fishery and control of the local Ainu population to an experienced guard from an Ezo fishery, granting him a share of the profits and the right to wear a surname. Ōno domain also gave stipends and privileges to local blacksmiths who had mastered the art of gun-making. It bestowed rewards, such as the right to wear swords, on town merchants for their efforts in funding a new vaccination clinic ( shutōkan ), and on local doctors for their help with the domain-wide vaccination program. While such privileging in itself was hardly new, it shows that Ōno’s domain government actively resorted to this time-tested method to engage particular individuals and groups of subjects in some of its most innovative reform ventures.

Ōno’s employment of outcasts as executioners can thus be seen both as part of a longer trend to rely on outcasts for public security, and as a product of the specific circumstances of the Bakumatsu era which made it more imperative than ever for domains to effectively utilize their human resources. The most ambitious, albeit unrealized, attempt to mobilize outcasts for the purpose of territorial strengthening was a group of proposals in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century to send outcasts as settlers to the island of Ezo in order to preempt Russian colonial ambitions. The Shogunate seriously considered the implementation of some of these projects, which usually involved the elevation of the new settlers to commoner status. After the Meiji Restoration, the idea of using outcasts for colonial ends had an interesting afterlife. Although the residents of former outcaste communities could no longer be mobilized through the unit of the status group, the authors of such plans saw emigration as an ideal way to reconcile economic aid and freedom from discrimination for outcasts with the need to give these “deviant” and “uncivilized” citizens a role in the Japanese national project (and rid local communities of their presence).22

By offering status privileges and material benefits to outcasts, Tokugawa governments skillfully

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20 In 1856, four blacksmiths, as well as a carpenter who had learned how to construct gun batteries, received stipends, and in one case also the right to wear swords; Ōno-shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 1092, p. 792.

21 According to entries in the town elders’ journals of 1860 and 1861; Ōno-shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 1146, pp. 820f., no. 1173, pp. 839f.; no. 1243, p. 879.

exploited these groups’ deep-rooted desire to escape their reviled status. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century the discriminatory treatment of outcasts, as well as their resistance against it, appeared to reach a new level of intensity. In 1843 and 1856, for example, Japan witnessed major incidents of outcaste unrest, and tracts such as Senjū Fujiatsu’s *Eta o osamuru gi* (before 1864) expressed an anxiety among government elites that outcasts might eventually rise up in discontent if treated as inferior and forced to undertake lowly lines of work. But alongside such violent outbursts, many outcaste groups also engaged in a less spectacular and largely peaceful struggle to obtain new privileges or to protest against the imposition of new discriminatory restrictions.

The developments described above constitute the wider context for the events taken up in this paper. While outcastes strove to better their position, governments looked for ways to mobilize their subjects for their policy goals. The hiring of executioners in Ōno, however, presents an especially intriguing case because it confronted the outcastes with a dilemma. Executions differed from police work in that they involved the taking of life, and thus threatened to reinforce the very stigmatization that the outcastes were hoping to overcome. Hence, the outcastes’ drive to improve their social standing and the domain’s desire to mobilize their labor were not easily reconciled.

Ōno’s case is also interesting because it reminds us that outcastes were not a monolithic category and did not jointly seek to escape from a uniform state of discrimination. As the following discussion will show, there were various groups of outcastes in and around the domain who suffered from different degrees of stigma, and who understood their own position relative to that of other groups in their immediate or extended neighborhood. In their negotiations with outcastes, Ōno’s domain officials needed to be mindful of these relative distinctions, and of the stigmatizing effects of different kinds of duty work, which were often beyond the government’s control.

**The Search for Reliable Executioners**

Let us now turn to the settlement of 1852 to discuss the circumstances of the employment of outcastes as both executioners and as execution assistants. The domain government was eager to eradicate crime, but felt that this could not be achieved without finding a reliable person to carry out the death penalty. As it turned out, the man who served as Ōno’s jail guard in the 1830s was completely unsuited to the task. In 1838 the town elder, the highest-ranking official among the townspeople, noted the following exchange:

Fifth month, ninth day:

A town corps messenger arrived from Yōkota-sama [the town magistrate, or *machi bugyō*], and when I reported right away the magistrate told me: “We need to talk about the jail guard. He abhors doing executions, and feigns illness, helps convicts commit suicide, and more. I am therefore considering replacing him, but because there is no one else to do it, I had no choice but to set the matter aside. Now I want you to ask whether there is someone among the Koshirō who would do it if we gave him a certain amount in reward for each person executed.” I replied that I believed that the Koshirō, too, were cowards altogether and would not do this, but that I would pass the magistrate’s suggestion on to them.

[...]

Fifth month, eleventh day:

I reported to the town magistrate that when I asked the Koshirō about the issue of the death convicts, they replied that no matter how much the authorities bestowed on them, all of them would, regrettably, be unable to serve in this capacity.

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23 See, for example, Amos, pp. 97-108.
24 Ooms, pp. 243-311;
26 Such petitions often employed quite sophisticated reasoning; see Ooms, pp. 264-270; *Ōno-shi shi*, Yōdome-hen, no. 599, pp. 422f.
27 *Ōno-shi shi*, Yōdome-hen, no. 773, p. 553.
Was the jail guard’s reluctance to conduct executions indicative of a larger trend critical of the death penalty? Throughout the Tokugawa period, society had certainly exhibited strong reservations toward capital punishment, or at least its excessive application, which ran counter to the government’s promise of benevolent rule.\textsuperscript{28} But at least until the 1830s, the domain officials of Ōno seem to have had no major problems finding commoners who were willing to fill the position of jail guard.

In 1838, as the above source shows, the town magistrate approached a group called the Koshirō with a proposal to hire one of its members for the newly created job of executioner.\textsuperscript{29} The Koshirō were a guild of professional beggars considered to be of hinin status. Until this point, the Koshirō community had been serving the domain in various public functions, for example as guards and policemen, managers of the local beggar hospice, torturers, and subordinate jail guards. As outcasts with experience in handling criminals, they seemed a convenient choice. But when the domain made its offer, the beggars refused categorically. The Koshirō had always been wary of duties that involved the taking of life because they wanted to avoid being confused with the kawaya, outcasts who engaged in the manufacture of leather. Twice, for example, they had (unsuccessfully) tried to resist domain orders to help kill stray dogs during rabies epidemics by arguing that the kawaya were the more appropriate group for this kind of undertaking.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Botsman, pp. 41-58, 89-97. In 1792, a town doctor of Ōno successfully pleaded to have the life of a burglar who had broken into his house spared, arguing that to see the man executed would contradict his professional mission of saving human life; Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 412, p. 291.

\textsuperscript{29} Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 773, p. 553.

\textsuperscript{30} In 1776 and 1815. In the 1815 case, the Koshirō openly voiced their concerns about the stigma they expected to face if mistaken for kawaya (here derogatorily referred to as eta), and remained unpersuaded by the town elders’ counter-argument that the kawaya only skinned animals and did not kill them. However, they were forced to comply after the domain officials located old records that proved that the Koshirō had been asked to kill dogs in the past. See Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 97, pp. 85ff; no. 599, pp. 422f.

There was a small community of kawaya in the domain, and one would indeed expect them to have qualified as candidates for the executioner assignment. After all, in most places outcasts who participated in executions were drawn not from people of hinin but of kawaya background. But it is unclear whether the domain officials considered asking them or not. They did, however, send a messenger to the nearby castle town of Fukui to advertise the job among the local outcaste-executioners, apparently to no avail.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1852, more than a decade later, the Koshirō finally gave up their resistance and agreed to carry out death sentences, which normally involved decapitation (kubikiri goyō) as practiced in Ōno.\textsuperscript{32} They did so after lengthy negotiations with Yoshikawa Magodayū, an officer of the domain’s criminal bureau (tōzokukata). As the town magistrate explained to the town elders:

“Actually, this is the only place that makes the jail guard do decapitations. For this reason it happens that major criminals who ought to be executed escape from who knows where, as we just experienced the other day. The Koshirō do not like [to do beheadings] either, but step by step we conducted confidential negotiations with them through Yoshikawa Magodayū of the criminal bureau (tōzokukata), and barely persuaded them to agree by granting them the three paragraphs.”

Obviously, the Koshirō needed to be compensated for their cooperation. Part of that compensation came in material form (six bales of rice per year), but what the Koshirō were far more interested

\textsuperscript{31} “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1838 5/15, 6/6, Saitō Suzuko-ke monjo i030 054, pp. 115, 135. The group contacted in Fukui were the so-called Seiganji-mono, a community of actors and teahouse operators who were in charge of commoner beheadings; see “Kujikata osadamegaki,” 1778, Matsudaira bunko 640, in Fukui-shi shi, Shiryō-hen 6, Kinsei 4-1 (Fukui-shi, 1997), pp. 711-753; “Seiganji to gekijō no yurai,” Fukui shinbun (May 17, 1913) (repr. in Mori Tsumenori, Fukui-han shiwa, vol. 1, Rekishi tosho-sha, 1975, pp. 42ff.).

\textsuperscript{32} Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 999, pp. 732-734.
in were the so-called “three paragraphs”: a) the appointment of the three executioners as informers (meakashi, see below), b) permission to carry a short sword while on duty as informer within Ōno domain, c) permission to enter the premises of commoner houses up until the threshold while on duty as informer. The Koshirō themselves confirmed that the informer appointment had been the only reason for their compliance, and they successfully protested against a draft of the acceptance letter that called their nomination “temporary” (tō-bun).

In many places in early modern Japan, particularly in the east, meakashi was used as a term for gangsters who cooperated in the arrest of criminals. In the eyes of the Koshirō, the meakashi designation was a status marker. For many decades, they had been engaging in the same kind of police work as the informers of eastern Japan, and because the latter enjoyed commoner status, the new title carried the promise of upgrading the Koshirō's position and helping them offset the stigma attached to the executioner job. In 1782, Ōno's neighbor domain Katsuyama had also hired its local hinin bosses as executioners by appointing them as informers. Most likely the officials and the hinin of Ōno were imitating this example, a convergence that was typical for regions with many small interlocking domains.

The town officials (the town elders and neighborhood headmen) were notified of the new appointments only after the negotiations were over, but they reacted to them with fierce opposition. Their main concern was that the Koshirō would infringe on their own privileges, for example by wearing short swords when lower-ranking townspeople were not allowed to do so. But the town officials were also able to bolster their case with a more practical argument: they pointed out that openly turning the Koshirō into informers could in fact be counterproductive to the goal of improving public security. After all, meakashi were effective as informants precisely because of their connections to the world of outlaws, and the town elders were aware of a number of recent cases in which the Koshirō had given shelter to dangerous gangsters.

While the domain officials did not deny this problem, they seem to have believed that the benefits of having reliable executioners outweighed the dangers of having unreliable policemen, especially since the Koshirō had been active as de facto informers for quite a long time. The town magistrate carefully listened to the town elders’ concerns but overrode them in the end. A few months later, the three men who had volunteered - Jin’emon, Jinbei, and San’emon - were given their first assignment: beheading three notorious thieves who had been caught over the preceding year.

Perhaps the townspeople's case would have been more persuasive if they had been able to suggest an alternative candidate for the position of executioner. The domain officials, too, could have easily solved the dilemma by appointing a member of their own retainer band, but for reasons that remain obscure, they must have found it inappropriate to do so. The retainer band of the Doi house of Ōno is known to have been unusually small in relation to domain size. As executions were not a time-consuming task, the domain leadership should technically have been able to nominate a candidate, especially as samurai were often put in charge of beheadings elsewhere. But it is possible that the lord was reluctant to risk the reputation of one of his retainers by making him engage in a potentially

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35 Matsumura monjo 9, 1782; Matsui monjo 677-13, 1782. Copies of these documents can be accessed in the Office for the Compilation of Katsuyama City History (Katsuyama-shi Shi Hensanshitsu).
36 See, for example, the case of small domains in rural Harima in the late Tokugawa period: Kusayama Iwao, “Sonraku keisatsu-ri hininban ni tsuite (1) (2) – Ōsaka shikasho to Setsu/Ban ryōgoku murakata no kinchō kankei o jiku to shite – ,” Chikishon kenkyū 19/3 (1990), pp. 1-33; 20/1 (1990), pp. 1-25.
37 Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 999, pp. 732-734.
stigmatizing activity. Many of the hereditary vassals had to be promoted to various positions over the course of their careers to maintain a workable administration. It is also worth noting that none among Ōno’s immediate neighbor domains employed hereditary samurai for decapitations.

Why was the executioner assignment limited to three of the beggar bosses and not extended to the entire group, which numbered at least five members at the time? Conversely, one might wonder why the job was not given to a single outcaste individual. This question is important because it forces us to think about whether the executioner employment was really an issue that affected the Koshirō as a group. Unfortunately, the town elders’ journals, the only sources containing information on the case, are silent on this point. There is also very little evidence on the internal order of the Koshirō guild in general. It is clear, though, that the group did not have a single leader, but consisted of a small and fluctuating number (four to eight) of full members who were allowed to form hereditary households. This does not necessarily mean that there were no hierarchical distinctions, but none of these members ever took the lead in dealing with the town elders, not even on a rotating basis.

There is, however, room for some speculation. Perhaps some of the household heads were unsuitable because of physical weakness or age. Or the authorities may have wanted to appoint a specific individual to avoid ambiguity, whereas the Koshirō preferred a higher number of appointees in order to spread the burden, extract higher compensations, or give more members the chance to take the title of meakashi.40 In their negotiations with the domain officials over the executioner question, the Koshirō always acted as a guild and bargained collectively. But it is still noteworthy that the authorities conferred this duty on particular members, and not on the entire group as was the case with most of the beggar bosses’ other official obligations.

Kanazuka Village and the Duty of Penal Assistance

Thanks to the Koshirō’s cooperation, the domain was now able to crack down on criminals with a heavier hand. But before any executions could actually be carried out, another problem needed to be resolved: the question of who would serve as penal assistant (gōmon ninsoku). Penal assistants were responsible for removing the bodies of executed criminals.41 Traditionally, these auxiliaries, of whom there were four, had been supplied by a group of cormorant fishermen and bird catchers from the village of Kanazuka. In the late sixteenth century the Kanazuka villagers had been privileged as a hunting community by the early lords of Ōno.42 In addition to the duty of supplying execution assistants, they paid a bird tax and a fish tax and also delivered catches of sweetfish (ayu) to the domain, which were then offered as gifts to the Shogunate.43

The Kanazuka villagers intermarried with commoners, meaning that they did not face the same degree of discrimination as the beggars. In fact, there is no evidence aside from vague rumors that they were somehow excluded from the society of commoners. But there were other settlements of cormorant fishermen in Tokugawa Japan that were subject to customary forms of discrimination, and the Kanazuka people, too, may have faced a latent

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40 The matter is further complicated by the fact that a journal entry from the following year (1853) mentions a set of names for the executioners appointed in 1852 that differs from that of the initial appointment letter: Jinzaemon, Jinbei, and Chōemon; see “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1853, 5/21, Adachi Hiromichi-ke monjo i139 004, p. 12. While the switch from “Jin’emon” to “Jinzaemon” could be an orthographic mistake or a result of the town elder’s eccentric handwriting, it is less easy to explain the substitution of “Chōemon” for “San’emon.” All four also appear as names of established Koshirō households in other sources.

43 “Tsutomekata oboegaki Tamura-hika,” precedents on seasonal gifts (toki no kenjō); and Ōno-shi shi, Yōdome-hen, no. 913, p. 676.
danger of falling into disrepute. During the medieval period cormorant fishermen, and many other types of fishermen and hunters, had been part of a wider circle of base people whose livelihood breached Buddhist commandments against the taking of life. The belief that hunting and fishing were sinful pursuits gave rise to discrimination in everyday life that persisted into the Tokugawa era, albeit in weakened form. Reminders of this medieval legacy can be seen, for example, in the hunting and fishing bans that were imposed on villages such as Kanazuka when a member of the imperial or shogunal family passed away and the country was in a state of mourning.

At some point before 1841, the Koshirō had started to fill in for Kanazuka as execution assistants in return for a yearly fee. This was a temporary agreement, and the fishermen needed to renew it from time to time. Most likely they had entered into this compact to rid themselves of a stigmatized duty. But in 1841, around the end of the Tenpō famine, the villagers of Kanazuka made a petition to the domain government stating that they were too impoverished to pay the fee to the beggars any longer and asking the domain to exempt them from the duty altogether. The authorities declined the request, but promised to temporarily pay the money in the villagers’ stead if the fishermen agreed to supply ayu fish to the lord free of charge. In other words, the domain began to pay money to the Koshirō to release the Kanazuka people from a duty that the domain itself had been imposing on them in the first place.

In 1852, the contract between Kanazuka and the Koshirō came to the domain’s attention once again. As the town elders’ journal tells us, this was because the agreement had expired and needed to be renegotiated, but obviously it was also because in that year the Koshirō had finally accepted the job of executioner, making it necessary to settle the assistant question as well. Although the Koshirō were not eager to continue substituting for Kanazuka, they again tried to sell their cooperation for the highest possible price.

Yet Kanazuka was a poor village and unable to make an offer that was sufficiently attractive to the Koshirō. Fearful they would have to serve as execution assistants again, the Kanazuka villagers turned to the domain government for help. The officials promised to cooperate and make an offer to the Koshirō in their stead. Why is unclear, but there must have been a very good reason for the domain to help Kanazuka; perhaps the domain wanted to prevent the village from further impoverishing itself, or there may have been concerns about having people who supplied fish for the Shogunate engaging in a pollutating activity.

The Koshirō were now in a position to negotiate directly with the domain government, and they used this opportunity to request a privilege they had been craving for a long time: an extension of their beg-
ging territory. There were a number of remote villages in the domain that did not give alms to the Koshirō but had customary relationships with other outcasts. The Koshirō had been trying to bring these villages and their outcaste village guards under their influence, and they perceived the 1852 negotiations as a chance to persuade the government to back up their demands. The domain officials, eager as they were to finally conduct executions, complied with this request.

Promising the Koshirō access to the outlying villages was one thing; but in reality, the domain did not have the authority to make good on this promise. Although the villages in question all belonged to Ōno’s territory and the domain leadership was strong, the officials were unwilling, and ultimately unable, to force these communities to give up their traditional relationships with other outcasts. Nevertheless, there was a way of working around the problem: the domain offered to pay the Koshirō the sum of 2.04 koku (97.2 gallons, or 368 liters) of rice every year, which corresponded to the amount of alms the guild would theoretically have collected from these villages had they been allowed access to them. From 1852 onwards, the domain continued to pay these substitute alms to the Koshirō every year for their willingness to fill in as execution assistants for Kanazuka. And the Koshirō made sure that the agreement remained temporary: that is, it would be up for renegotiation every ten years. Most likely, they were hoping to retract or sell their cooperation at an even higher price on future occasions.

Despite all of these incentives, the Koshirō seem to have been uncomfortable with their new role. Less than a year after the nominations, in 1853, they requested that the domain cancel the arrangement and allow their three members to resign from the position of executioner-informer. But it was already too late: once the Koshirō had accepted the deal, the tables had turned, and the domain was not inclined to let them get away again easily. The guild thus continued to supply both executioners and assistants until an unknown point in the early Meiji period. It is impossible to know how many persons the Koshirō ended up executing between

50 “Doi Noto no kami yōdome-chō,” Kitano Sōbei-ke monjo no. 41, in Ota-chō shi, Shiryō-hen 2 (Ota-chō, 1996), p. 356; “Bannin sashidashi-jō,” ibid. no. 2, p. 273; “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1837 8/25, Saitō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 057, p. 208. According to these sources, the villages in Nishikata (Niu district) were the territory of San’emon, the guard of Ota village (Ōno domain). Although the Koshirō succeeded in bringing San’emon under their control in or before 1817, the watchman seems to have committed himself to little more than a yearly payment of eight monme of silver, and made an attempt in the 1830s to withdraw from their influence once again. So far, I have not been able to locate information on the affiliation of village guards in the valleys of Anama and Nishitani (the second region that was not included in the Koshirō’s begging territory).

51 The town magistrate argued that the domain could not intervene because the villages in question were already employing other outcasts as guards (banta); see “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1852 intercal. 2/16, Saitō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 063, pp. 34f.

52 “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1855 12/16, Saitō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 064, p. 89; 1856 12/16, Adachi Hiromichi-ke monjo i139 005, p. 147; 1860 7/11, Saitō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 065, p. 90; 1865 1/11, ibid. i030 068, p. 4. Both substitute alms and executioner allowances were due at the end of the year, but in 1853 the Koshirō began to receive half of them as advance loans around the time of obon in the seventh month; see “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1853 7/13, Adachi Hiromichi-ke monjo i139 004, p. 33.

53 The Koshirō also insisted on having the Kanazuka villagers confirm the deal by exchanging a written guarantee with them, a condition the fishermen were reluctant to accept and only fulfilled after being pressured to do so by the town elders; see, for example, “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1852, 6/4, Saitō Suzuki-ke monjo i030 063, p. 91. “Machidoshiyori goyōdome,” 1853 5/21, Adachi Hiromichi-ke monjo i139 004, p. 12. The entry does not give the reason for their petition.

54 In 1871, the former territory of Ōno domain became part of Fukui, and later Asuwa, Tsuruga, and Ishikawa prefectures. From 1871 onwards executions were conducted in Fukui, for example in the aftermath of a large uprising in Ōno and its surroundings in 1873. See Sakata Tamako, Echizen Ōno ikki (Fukui-ken Ōno-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1972), pp. 91, 149.
1852 and the early years of Meiji, but a reasonable guess might put the number at an average of one or two convicts per year.

Conclusion

When the Tokugawa period ended, outcastes were serving as executioners in Ōno, but there was nothing self-evident or traditional about this arrangement. For most of the early modern period, the Koshirō guild did not have anything at all to do with capital punishment, and it was only during the reform years of the Bakumatsu era that the domain decided to hire members of the local beggar organization for these purposes. The goal was to reestablish the death penalty as an effective punishment, to eliminate crime, and to make the domain strong, prosperous, and ready for a new and modern age.

But in their search for executioners, the domain officials confronted two groups of people who had very different ideas of their roles in Ōno’s future society. The Kanazuka villagers were trying to distance themselves from the outcastes, and the Koshirō were striving to reinvent themselves as a kind of domain police. If the domain wanted these people, or any of its other subjects, to cooperate with its reforms, it needed to take their concerns with status (compounded in this case by the problem of impurity) seriously. Even a strong and innovative government such as Ōno’s did not have the power to completely override the carefully balanced system of precedent and privilege that was so characteristic of the status order, and that gave its subjects a voice and leverage vis-à-vis the government. The result was a string of highly convoluted and makeshift agreements.

Seen from this angle, rule by status seems to have been a serious obstacle to the domain’s achievement of meaningful reform. But one should not overlook that in the end, the domain did succeed in motivating people to accept a job that, at this time and place, appears to have been extremely stigmatized. Money alone could not have achieved this: it seems rather unlikely, given social aversion to the position, that the domain would have found a candidate simply by relying on the local labor market. In the absence of, for example, a national ideology or the promise of political representation to mobilize its subjects for its goals, it seems natural that the domain should have relied on the time-tested mechanism of imposing duties in return for privileges. From temporary agreements and the conferral of titles to alms substitutions and free sweetfish offerings, the system offered the government a considerable degree of leeway to pursue its own goals while satisfying the various, and often conflicting, interests of the status groups within its borders. For Ōno domain, the most productive way to conduct reform was not to work against the status order, but to work with it, by applying its rules in a creative way. The executioner case thus underlines what Daniel Botsman has pointed out in his discussion of the prison in nineteenth-century Japan: that seemingly modern developments in the late Tokugawa period cannot be understood without considering them in the context of the status order.56

How did Ōno’s case relate to the way the Shogunate in Edo dealt with status in the final decades of the Tokugawa period? On the one hand, the Shogunate made a famous attempt during the Tenpō Reforms (1841-43) to remedy some of the complexities and inefficiencies of the status system by improving registration procedures for residents of the shogunal capital, and by resettling parts of Edo’s population to reestablish unity between status and place of residence. On the other hand, these reforms did not keep the Shogunate from mobilizing and controlling social groups through the conferral of status privileges, thus continuing the very practice that had been responsible for complicating the system in the first place. The culmination of this development can be seen in 1868, when the failing Tokugawa house elevated Danzaemon, the outcaste boss of Edo, to commoner status in exchange for his military cooperation.

This contradictory approach to status in the Bakumatsu period was possible because, as Yokoyama Yuriko has argued, the Shogunate had begun to make a distinction between status as a system of registering and classifying the resident population, and status as a mode to mobilize and govern occupational groups.57 Although these two aspects of

56 Botsman, pp. 85-114.
status had initially tended to overlap, they became disjointed over time, and the resulting complexities made it increasingly difficult for the shogunal government to keep track of its subjects. When the Shogunate tried to reform the status order in the Bakumatsu era, however, it touched only upon the aspect of registration and classification, and continued to mobilize social groups through status privileges in a way that was similar to what we have observed for Ōno domain.

The impasses of the old order and the innovations of the new have been a topic of continuing interest among historians of nineteenth-century Japan, and for good reason. Yet, even in the Bakumatsu period the abolition of the status order was by no means a foregone conclusion. It will be an important task to further explore the workings of this order in the last decades of shogunal rule, and to draw attention to both its potential and its limitations.
In Appreciation of Buffoonery, Egotism, and the Shōmon School: Koikawa Harumachi’s Kachō kakurenbō (1776)

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Buffoonery and egotism were two aspects of mainstream haikai practice that Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) and his Shōmon school sought to eradicate. For imbuing haikai with the technical and aesthetic refinement of a serious literary form, he and his constituents, particularly his “ten great disciples” (Shōmon no jittetsu), emerged as haikai royalty whose companionship and instruction were coveted by eager patrons. Following the master’s death, and for much of the eighteenth century, some school affiliates struggled to defend Shōmon haikai’s studied elegance against the vulgar commercialism that so often accompanied celebrity. For others, celebrity was an end in itself, a modus operandi that invited popular appreciation. Such is the perspective advanced in itself, a modus operandi that invited popular appreciation. Though not intended as a serious literary work, Kachō offers a perspective that complicates our view of the school’s public image. First, it advances a view of Shōmon affiliates as arrogant elites whose profligacy lowered rather than elevated haikai practice. Having lost its cultural prestige, it suggests, the school is rightfully appreciated as a source of laughter. Second, it appeals to an existing taste for buffoonery by both lampooning and rejoicing together with a local readership hungry for glimpses of Edo’s pleasure quarters, kabuki actors, and haikai poets.

The commentary below introduces the bizarre figure of Yamazaki Hokka and discusses him within the context of the Shōmon school’s poetics of eccentricity: fūkyō (or kyō) and muyō. It then describes the process by which later Shōmon affiliates replaced Bashō’s poetics of eccentricity with buffoonery and egotistical identities like Hokka’s. The commentary is followed by a translation of the work.

Master Depravity

A gesaku writer, kyōka poet, and ukiyoe artist, Koikawa Harumachi acquired particular recognition around Edo in 1775 for his Kinkin sensei eiga no yume (Master Flashgold’s Splendiferous Dream), the prototype for a genre of comic works to be called kibyōshi. Illustrated booklets with

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1 A full treatment of the Shōmon school’s various factions is beyond the scope of these prefatory remarks. For a comprehensive discussion of the Shōmon school, as well as the commercial aspects of tentori (point garnering) haikai, see Cheryl A. Crowley, Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006).

2 The work was published by Urokogataya Magobei, who had printed Harumachi’s first kibyōshi, Kinkin sensei eiga no yume (Master Flashgold’s Splendiferous Dream), the previous year.

3 Harumachi was born to a retainer of the Matsudaira house in Shizuoka and adopted by Kurahashi Katsumasa, also a high-ranking Matsudaira samurai. He moved to Edo and lived in the Edo suburb of Koishikawa Kasugachō (小石川春日町) from which he devised the name Koikawa Harumachi (恋川春町). In 1789 his Ōmugaeshi bunbu no futamichi (Parroting the two paths: literary and military) was censored for satirizing the samurai class and the Kansei Reforms (1789-93). He died soon thereafter. (Note: In principle this article will not include kanji for names and titles. Here, and in other select instances, the author opts to provide kanji for clarification.) Kibyōshi were popular in the 1770s and 1780s but, due largely to censorship imposed during the Kansei Reforms, declined by the first decade of
yellow covers, these publications capitalized on popular fascination with current events and fashion trends, delivering satire and humor to adult readers through colloquial language written in hiragana. For the last quarter of the eighteenth century, kibyōshi fed growing appetites for popular culture among middle-class townspeople, who, in contrast to the more elite patrons of Genroku era (1688-1704) popular culture, leaned more toward the vulgar/modern (zoku) and took particular glee in spoofing the arrogance of the refined/traditional (ga). Harumachi capitalized on this new market for comic fiction by producing several dozen kibyōshi between 1775 and 1789.

In part, this new market crystallized in response to a perceived decline in the shogun’s political authority. Tokugawa Ieharu (1737-1786) was a tragic-comic figure popularly viewed, according to one Dutch observer, as “a lazy, lustful, stupid man.” Described by Timon Screech as one who slept late, ate much, and accomplished little, Ieharu was a laughing stock throughout his rule. The reign began in 1760 with the worst of portents—a major fire that destroyed much of Edo, and would later witness natural disasters, famines, and a culture of excess that weakened the bakufu and incited civil unrest. At this time, Shogunal chief councilor Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829) reported widespread public convictions that the bakufu had succumbed to corruption, lost the ability to rule, and was close to collapse. This political weakening corresponded to a popularization of plebian cultural forms that took pleasure in satirizing elites.

The new market also found comic potential in the now-antiquated airs of Shōmon poets who proudly clung to the master’s prestige. Perhaps sensing that this sort of idolatry would be condemned by Bashō, who had cautioned that poets must never be content to “licking the dribbling” of past masters, Harumachi did not hesitate to exploit this irony. He could hope for no better subject to embody this phenomenon than Yamazaki Hokka, who, as an eccentric legend in his own right, bore exquisite comic potential.

A samurai retainer temperamentally ill-suited to official service, Hokka retired at age thirty-eight and proceeded to reinvent himself as both an independent literatus (bunjin) and a comic spectacle. He published a number of essays, most notably Fūzoku bunshū: mukashi no hanko (A miscellany of manners: scraps from antiquity, 1744), Chō no asobi (Frolic of the butterfly, 1746), and Rōshikyō (Laboring over four follies, 1747), each of which earned praise as important examples of mid-eighteenth century comic writing. But he was also an inveterate buffoon and wastrel, and this composite identity brought him celebrity in Edo for the next century. Better known by his penname Jidaraku sensei (Master Flashgold) and a comprehensive discussion of kibyōshi, see Adam L. Kern, Manga of the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2006).

Admiration for Hokka rested upon a reputation built as much on legend as literary accomplishment, however. Hokka wasted no opportunity to capitalize on Edo’s appetite for spectacle or to advance himself as a cultured playboy. His writings, appropriately, focus on himself. In his autobiographical collection of essays Fūzoku bunshū, Hokka devotes considerable space to fashioning himself as a Zhuangzi-like muyōsha (useless person), free of ambition and socially irrelevant. On the love of sleeping that Haru-

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6 Screech 2000, pp. 93, 95, 97.
machic would later mock in Kachō, Hokka proudly affirms:

Since retiring I have made sleep my profession. I doze with the moon, snore with the blossoms, share a pillow with the cuckoos, and pile up the quilts on snowy days. When morning arrives I do not wake, and when I do arise it is only until I finish breakfast. When I tire of dozing, when my head becomes heavy and my bones ache, I rise to enjoy a smoke and then recline all over again. At twilight I take up my sake cup, get drunk, and collapse face down. I slumber evening, noon, and morning.

Hokka also intentionally called himself and his dwellings by perversely humorous names that would invite comment. His house (ken) was called Furyōken 不量軒 (a homonym for Evil Dwelling); his hermitage (an) was Mushian 無思庵 (a homonym for Thoughtless Hut and Bug-infested Hut); his meditation room (sai) was Sharakusai 捨楽斋 (a homonym for Impudent Room); and his Buddhist name (bō) was Kaku-renbō 確蓮坊 (Hide-and-Seek, or one who hides away).

Besides names, Hokka exploited a second definitive identity marker: physical appearance. In his travel journal Cho no asobi, Hokka confesses to perfuming his clothing, growing a long beard, wearing his hair in a bun, and dying his teeth, all noteworthy markers of strangeness. But he is also quick to deny ulterior motives for his eccentric appearance: “I haven’t shaved my forehead because I have trouble using a razor. I let my beard grow for the fun of it. I have dyed my teeth black because they are decayed.” Such statements clearly suggest that Hokka took pains to assume the appearance of a Chinese literatus, however. His self-portrait shows him with a long beard, hair balled in the back, and dressed in garb reminiscent of iconic Chinese scholars and recluses so admired by Japanese bunjin. To most observers Hokka’s manifestations of Sinophilic eccentricity would be unmistakable, but in case anyone had missed them Hokka purposefully draws attention to his madness in Fūzoku bunshū: “Some people ask me why my usual manner of speaking and acting is so different from the norm. Others tell me that I am mad. To them I reply: ‘Yes, I truly am mad.’” Then, when they who called me mad agree with me on that point, I grab a pillow and lie down.”

Cho no asobi is also called Zoku-oku no hosomichi (Sequel to the Narrow Road to the Deep North) because it is a record of Hokka’s two-month trip to Nikkō, Matsushima, and other points along Bashō’s 1689 pilgrimage through the northern provinces. The travelogue copies Bashō’s work in form and tone, yet Hokka takes glee in revealing a degenerate underside to his journey. In addition to numerous references to alcohol and tobacco, he recounts being awakened one night by a villager who had entered the inn and was attempting to violate the innkeeper, a young widow. The journal culminates by recounting that Hokka, having reached Matsushima, fell asleep and dreamed that he encountered and

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10 The moon, blossoms, cuckoo, and snow symbolize the four seasons: fall, spring, summer, and winter respectively. These images are also classical signifiers for poetry and beauty in Japan’s literary tradition.


14 Cheng Hao (1032-1085) was a Neo-Confucian scholar noted for his moral virtue and piety. Guan Yu (d. 219) was a general famous for his long beard. These comparisons are absurd and therefore humorous.
conversed with an old priest. The priest is revealed to be Bashō, who then confirms that Hokka and his haikai exemplify the authentic spirit of the Shōmon school.\footnote{Keene 1999, pp. 351-53.} Chō no asobi thus establishes the pilgrimage as a tribute to Bashō and validates Hokka as a Shōmon poet. For Hokka, the dream was sufficient justification to claim himself a haikai master.

Hokka’s most celebrated antic, and that which established him as an urban legend, was fabricating his own funeral. According Ōta Nanpo (1749-1823), who describes the mock funeral in Kana sesetsu (Anonymous rumors, 1825), on New Year’s Eve, 1739 Hokka’s coffin was paraded through the streets to Yōfuku-ji temple in Yanaka. “Just as the resident priest began to chant the prayer that precedes touching fire to the coffin, Hokka broke open the coffin and jumped out. His friends, who had followed the cortège to the temple, had brought along food and drink. They enjoyed themselves singing and dancing, to the astonishment of everyone.”\footnote{Translated in Keene 1999, p. 347.} The prominent grave stone erected for this event remains Hokka’s only existing tomb and dates his death as 1739. We know of his actual death in 1746 only from records at Hongō Sannenji temple in Ochano-mizu.\footnote{Given the dearth of verifiable documentary information about Hokka, it is likely that Harumachi and others knew of him only what they read in Hokka’s own writings. Kachō’s full account of the tombstone and its epitaph, as well as the virtual absence of information about Hokka’s actual death, suggests that Harumachi understood the funeral as legitimate. Kachō reveals no knowledge of it as fake, and one imagines that Harumachi could hardly have resisted mentioning this outrageous hoax if he had known it as such. Instead, finding no historical explanation for Hokka’s sudden demise, Harumachi seizes it as an opportunity for mirth: “With no shortage of pleasures during each of the four seasons, he seemed destined to enjoy longevity. But then he was suddenly beset with a slight cold and passed away.” Harumachi’s apparent disinterest in distinguishing between Hokka’s accounts and historical fact also explains his mistaken assertion that Hokka had studied with Bashō. After all, such was the ruse that Hokka had manufactured in Chō no asobi.\footnote{Nakano 2004, pp. 7-8.} Noting that he had never witnessed such a jocular event as this fake funeral and that he would certainly have wanted to meet the man, Ōta Nanpo seems quite taken with Hokka. But Nanpo also calls Hokka a phony madman (yōkyō) for the latter’s propensity for self-promotion, averring that his objectives were directed outward for the amusement of others.\footnote{Ueda Masaaki, et al., Konsaisu Nihon jinmei jiten, 5th edition, (Sanseido, 2009), p. 333.} The funeral, certainly, was contrived and carried out for this purpose. Nakano Mitsutoshi sees hypocrisy in Hokka, as well, positing that Hokka’s eccentricities actually followed examples set by his acquaintance and fellow Shōmon poet Kagami Shikō (1665-1731), perhaps the most talented of Bashō’s close disciples. In a series of initiatives redolent of Hokka, Shikō deployed Bashō’s name to gild his own reputation, and used provocative aliases—Hakkyō 白狂 (White Wildness) and Watanabe no kyō 渡辺ノ狂 (Wacky Watanabe), for example—to embellish his public image. In order to gauge public reaction to his death, Shikō had earlier (1711) fraudulently publicized his own demise and then proceeded to circulate laudatory commentaries on his own writings under his students’ names.\footnote{Andrew Lawrence Markus, The Willow in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1992), p. 219. Kanashi imitated the five}
It appears, then, that Hokka may have recycled several of the strategies used by Shikō to establish his reputation as a Shōmon poet and an eccentric. For Nanpo and Nakano, at least, evidence of close connections between the two poets adequately indicates that Hokka’s wildness was a consciously manufactured façade. Yet, for Hokka, buffoonery may also have been a veneer camouflaging a darker, more fatalistic disposition. While young he had endured a series of family deaths—his father at age nine, his mother at nineteen, and his older brother at twenty-three. His subsequent series of failed appointments, early retirement, and degenerate lifestyle reveal a rebellious temperament and a conspicuous distaste for mainstream society. The morbid nature of Hokka’s funeral prank, moreover, suggests a preoccupation with death that is later elucidated through his exegesis on life and death in Rōshi-kyō. Here, Hokka intones the suffering of life, which, he avers, consists of hardship and madness alternately generating each other and that are transcended only through death. If selfishness was a symptom of personal misfortunes and social alienation, therefore, buffoonery became the façade by which it took shape. The mock funeral made a mockery of death; it was a confrontation that allowed him to face mortality and emerge reborn.

Kachō kakurenbō and the Shōmon school

Bashō patterned himself on celebrated hermits from China and Japan—the iconic Zhuangzi (4th c. BCE), Tāo Qian (365-427), Kamo no Chōmei (1155-1216), and Yoshida Kenkō (1283-1352)—whose eremitism allowed them to remain unfettered by mundane encumbrances. Zhuangzi’s notions of uselessness (muyō) and madness (kyō) were especially important to Bashō, who styled himself a muyōsha, “a hermit and socially useless soul who had forgotten the world.” In the linked verse collection Fuyu no hi (Winter days, 1684), Bashō writes:

My bamboo hat had worn out in the rains of the long journey, and my paper jacket had become crumpled in the storms. A poor man utterly destitute, even I felt pity for myself. Suddenly I remembered that a gifted man of eccentric poetry had visited this province in the past, and I uttered:

With a crazy verse
and the wintry winds—I must look
much like Chikusai.

Bashō’s self-comparison to Chikusai, a fictional character from Tomiyama Dōya’s (1585-1634) Chikusai monogatari with a crazed love of kyōka, confesses his own devotion to haikai to be a comparable form of madness. By emulating the reclusive, eccentric lifestyles of iconic archetypes, Bashō both weds haikai to tropes of madness and uselessness, and raises it to a technically and aesthetically superior form unsullied by commercialism.

Prior to this, kyō had consisted of comic aberration, vulgarity, or wildness that used existing literary genres—comic tanka (kyōka), comic prose (kyōbun), and comic drama (kyōgen)—to deliver humor. “In order to transform haikai into poetry of profound meaning,” Peipei Qiu asserts, “Bashō and his followers reinvented the kyō of haikai by creating the personae of unworldly recluse and carefree wanderer. Through this effort, Bashō transformed the nature of kyō in haikai poetics fundamentally, making it a cornerstone of Shōmon (Bashō School) poetics.” The same can be claimed of muyō. Emulating his master’s self-described uselessness, Shōmon disciple Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707) followed Bashō in relinquishing samurai status to become a

26 Qiu 2005, p. 74.
27 Qiu 2008, p. 84.

and seven character lines of kanshi (Chinese poems) but used kana and rhyming Japanese words.

wandering poet, and would later be described as a *muyōsha* in *Haika kijinden* (Accounts of eccentric *haikai* poets, 1816). 28

Bashō’s poetics of eccentricity elevated the tenor of *haikai*, but in the hands of his later disciples it became particularistic, whimsical, and ultimately contradictory to Bashō’s vision. Shōmon school affiliation had required no direct interaction with the master. As a nationwide collective of self-designated followers, affiliation signified more of a vague admiration for him than a mastery of his poetics. His closest disciples, perhaps feeling unable to attain the master’s level of literary achievement, either concentrated on compiling and transmitting his teachings—and, like Shikō, paying tribute to themselves as his poetic heirs—or took *haikai* in directions more consistent with their personal inclinations. Though many retained Bashō’s fondness for travel, his heirs variously interpreted signature aesthetics like *fūkyō* and *muyō* as justification for self-indulgence. Hokka, for example, invokes the same classical archetypes of aestheticism and eremitism—he writes at length in *Rōshikyō*, a parody of Laozi’s *Dao de jing* (J.: *Rōshikyō*), of his fondness for reclusion—but in his hands the practice is replaced by silliness, with *fūkyō* and *muyō* eroding into pretense and spectacle.

Bashō’s close disciple Hirose Izen (d. 1711) offers a second example. 29 Trading wealth, status, family, and possessions for the simple, unencumbered life of a beggar, Izen wandered directionless throughout the provinces, an erratic existence that brought the master’s aesthetics of *fūkyō* closer to a lifestyle of *kyō*. Izen was especially known for what he called his *Fūra nenbutsu* (Bashō-esque Prayer), refrains cobbled together from Bashō’s poems:

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mazu tanomu mazu tanomu shii no ki
mo arī natsu kodachi
oto ya arare no hinokigasa
namu amida namu amida. 30
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For now, for now, I will turn to the
Large oak tree—a grove in summer
How harsh it sounds! [The hail] on my travelling hat
Praise Amida, praise Amida

This verse combines the *nenbutsu* with two of Bashō’s *haikai*, and although it carries a certain logic—both the large oak and the traveling hat provide shelter from the elements, the same protection asked of Amida—it was heretical to standard *nenbutsu* recitation. 31 It similarly sullied the integrity of Bashō’s originals. As a poet, then, Izen departed radically from the studied subtlety characterizing the poetic principles—e.g. *karumi* (lightness) or *sabi* (objective loneliness)—advanced by Bashō. As a public personality, his reckless demeanor transposed Bashō’s aesthetics of eccentricity from art to behavior, perhaps diverting attention from insecurities over inadequate poetic prowess.

The Shōmon eccentric Teramachi Hyakuan (1695–1781), a final example, was a bakufu official demoted for coveting his *renga* teacher’s position. Hyakuan (one hundred hermitages—so named for his desire to move one hundred times before dying) was a self-indulgent youth. Spending much of his time in the pleasure quarters, he earned a reputation around Edo as both a playboy and a poet. Until his marriage at age thirty-three, Hyakuan continued what he describes in *Gō no aki* (Autumn hair, 1735) as an astonishingly irresponsible lifestyle—carousing through the nights and napping through the days. If we are to take him at his word, his early life appears identical to how *Kachō kakurenbō* describes Hokka’s. Hyakuan’s associates also document his unpredictability and “scandalous behav-

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28 Karaki 1960, p. 72.
29 Izen (惟然) is also read Inen.
ior” (hōitsu muzan naru furumai). Tsuno moji (Horn letters, 1739) notes that at a public Setsubun festival, during which one purifies and invokes good luck into an establishment by throwing beans, instead of beans Hyakuan filled his square box with coins and proceeded to fling them about. 32 While this seems far from “scandalous,” Hyakuan’s inclusion in Zoku haika kijindan (More accounts of eccentric haikai poets, 1833) and Kijin hyakunin isshu (One hundred verses from one hundred eccentrics, 1852) be-speaks his reputation as an oddball.

Later in life Hyakuan counted himself among a contingent intent on advancing Edo haikai. Not content merely to condemn the vulgarity and superficiality of contemporary Shōmon verse, Hyakuan actively sought a fresh vision for what Nakano calls “mature” Edo haikai. As an Edo poet, Hyakuan felt a kinship with Bashō, and while retaining his conviction that humor and play should remain the roots of haikai, in important ways the literary freedom he sought returned him to the spirit of independence so central to Bashō’s poetics. 33 Neither his treatises nor his own poetry proved widely inspirational, however, and he is memorialized in works like Kijin hyakunin isshu more for his singular personality than his literary talents. 34

Thus represented by the likes of Hokka, Izen, and Hyakuan, the Shōmon school became inconsistent and diffuse, a decline that for Ueda Akinari (1734-1809) suggested the corruption of Bashō himself. From about the time that Harumachi produced Kachō, Akinari wrote critically of Bashō. In Tandai shōshin roku (Courage and caution, 1808) he calls Bashō a fraud, 35 and in Kyonen no edaori (Last year’s broken boughs, 1779) he rails that Bashō “lived in no determined place and, like Saigyō [1118-1190] and Sōgi [1421-1502] of long ago, traipsed throughout the land with his sedge hat and bamboo staff without understanding anything… Neither a priest nor a layman, he wandered about as if crazed [kurui], expounding on all sorts of things without learning a thing.”36

Despite detractors like Akinari and ineffectual heirs like Hokka, Izen, and Hyakuan, Bashō’s reputation suffered little. For while his successors converted kyō and muyō into aesthetic signifiers connoting bawdiness and superficiality, Bashō’s own accomplishments continued to garner admiration. Contemporaries, perhaps in response to the sort of ridicule fostered by Kachō, endeavored to resurrect the quality and status of Shōmon poetry. Yosa Buson (1716-1783) stood at the leading edge of this haikai revival. The same year that Harumachi published Kachō, Buson and his followers erected a hall, the Bashōan (Bashō hut), in which to congregate, compose haikai, and write commentaries on Bashō. 37 For Harumachi, however, such idolatry constituted pomposity. Hokka, Bashō’s antithesis, was more interesting.

Superficially, Kachō kakurenbō can be read as a biographical tribute to Hokka. Consistent with much Edo period biography, it relies on several short anecdotes to memorialize its subject. Most episodes showcase Hokka’s strangeness, though Hokka crystallizes as more egocentric than eccentric. Others highlight his interactions with Edo’s cultural celebrities. Though Harumachi falsely claims Hokka to be a contemporary of Bashō, other details regarding the chronology of Hokka’s posts, his pseudonyms, and the nature of his post-retirement lifestyle are generally accurate.

Despite its biographical disguise, the work is better read as a tribute to Edo’s cultural vitality and as a parody of the Shōmon school. Hokka, together with Kachō’s cast of minor characters, accomplishes both objectives. Harumachi begins with Hokka, who as a child chides his teachers and then betters his elders at swordsmanship; as an adult he outwits a group of bandits and cavorts with Edo’s most imminent cultural celebri-

33 Nakano 2007, p. 67.
34 Gazoku no kai 2005, pp. 56-7.
36 Nakaniishi Susumu, Kyō no seishinshi (Kōdansha, 1978), p. 156.
37 For a full treatment of Buson and his excavation of Bashō, see Crowley 2006.
ties. But he is also a degenerate showoff whose sloth and disreputable comportment humorously conflict with his presumed cultural sophistication. Harumachi then directs his focus to Edo haikai, signaling his intention to place the Shōmon school on center stage alongside Hokka. In a two-page snapshot of backroom interactions between prominent kabuki actors and Shōmon poets, he reveals how haikai intersected with kabuki within Edo’s leisure culture. Here Harumachi is playing to the obsessions of his readers, for whom glimpses of the offstage lives of stars like kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō (1660-1704) and his onnagata stage partner Ogino Sawanojō (1656-1704) would add a titillating dimension to his tale of a comical but otherwise obscure figure. Kachō then proceeds to connect Hokka with a cavalcade of Shōmon royalty who likewise become sources of amusement. Takarai Kikaku (1661-1707) and Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707)—two of the Shōmon no jittetsu—are mentioned, Kikaku cavorting with Hokka in the Yoshiwara and Yanagibashi pleasure quarters. Ichikawa Danjūrō is similarly depicted, and collectively they form a laughable trio of boors content to revel in base pleasures, perhaps to compensate for their lack of poetic talent. Hokka also encounters kabuki actors Nakamura Denkurō (1662-1713) and Nakamura Shichizaburō (1662-1708), as well as the two noted female Shōmon masters Shūshiki (1662-1725) and Shiba Sonome (1664-1726). Thus surrounded by Edo’s cultural elite, Hokka becomes an elite himself, but his interactions with these individuals occur within the context of decadent behavior. And while the text includes a number of haikai, all but one are composed by his drinking companions. Hokka’s own poetic voice is nearly unheard, adding an additional layer of suspicion regarding his literary talents. All of Harumachi’s minor characters are known devotees of Shōmon school haikai, and many of the verses attributed to them in Kachō are cited correctly. And given that Ichikawa Danjūrō and other actors around him did study Shōmon haikai it is likely that they associated with local masters like Kikaku and Ransetsu. Yet elsewhere Harumachi takes liberties, and Kachō’s conversations and episodes must be considered apocryphal. Harumachi wrote kyōka (under the name Sakanoue Furachi) but was not known for composing haikai, and he likely had no close ties to intimate knowledge of Shōmon affiliates. Neither can we assume that Shūshiki and Sonome interacted freely with this cohort. Harumachi’s embellishments and name-dropping serve merely to boost marketability and generate humor.

Kachō’s delivery of this humor is unpolished, however, for as a kibyōshi the text consists primarily of captions coupled to illustrations. This format yields an abbreviated and occasionally disjointed narrative. Description is sparse. The illustrations tend to be crowded, but in each case Hokka (Jidaraku sensei) is conspicuous by the character for self (自: ji; mizukara) displayed prominently like a crest on his robe. This is not merely the first character in Jidaraku, but visual testimony to the egotism elaborated in the text. By literally wearing his selfishness on his sleeve Hokka offers a visible marker of eccentricity that celebrates self over all else. Recognizable also by his distinctive physical attributes—his balled hair and long beard—in each illustration he becomes the point of interest. Even as they depict his selfishness and alienation, the illustrations clearly portray him as a local hero. It is evident, therefore, that Harumachi’s is not a critical satire of Hokka. By parodying him, Harumachi pays tribute to the very sort of absurd public image that Hokka sought to create for himself. The mockery is not a condemnation but rather an appreciative excavation of the buffoonery advanced by Hokka’s own antics and writings, which by the 1770s were surely fading from public memory.

Harumachi thus appeals to his local readership in two ways. The first is comic satire of Hokka and his constellation of Shōmon companions. Snooty, elitist, and serving no socially useful purpose, Harumachi implies, their hedonism belies any actual sophistication. Spoiled and undisciplined as children, as adults they lol-

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38 Shūshiki studied under Kikaku. Kachō kakurenbō includes one of her haikai. Sonome, a celebrated female haikai poet of the Genroku period, studied with Bashō and Kikaku.

39 Hokka’s alleged association with such figures is anachronistic, of course, for he was but an infant when most of them were active. This error is consistent with Harumachi’s mistaken belief that Hokka was Bashō’s contemporary.
lygag about the city frequenting the pleasure quarters and cavorting with kabuki actors. When they take to wandering the countryside, their dandyish, cosmopolitan appearance makes them laughable and easy prey for bandits. For Harumachi, contemporary Shōmon affiliates embodied attitudes that degraded Bashō’s poetics of eccentricity to buffoonery and selfishness. The work’s second layer of public appeal is its proximity to and affection for contemporary Edo culture. Its Edo-centrism is clear both from Harumachi’s preface, which repeatedly and explicitly extols the city as an important hub of national culture, and from his reminders that Bashō and the Shōmon school are rightful monuments of Edo. Indeed, the text derives much of its appeal in inviting a local readership to enjoy the irony of both celebrating and lampooning local celebrities. Such an agenda was enabled only by a readership that recognized and embraced buffoonery as a standing cultural theme. Had the flamboyant lifestyles of individuals like Hokka not been popularly valued, Harumachi could not have produced such works. Through Kachō, Harumachi’s readers laugh with rather than at Hokka, for they understand that, as consumers of the buffoonery at issue, they incur some of the mockery themselves.

This translation is based on the unannotated reprint in Gazoku no kai (ed.), with Nakano Mitsutoshi, Gazoku bunsō: Nakano Mitsutoshi sensei koki kinen shiryō shū (Kyūko shoin, 2005), pp. 162-173, which notes that the only known copy of the original publication is held by Daitokyu Memorial Library in Tokyo.

Kachō kakurenbō (Hide and Seek among Flowers and Birds)

Preface

Though the joruri writer Chikamatsu [Monzaemon] is often believed to hail from Kyoto or Osaka, originally he was a child of Edo. Similarly, while it is thought that Jiroemon-bina dolls came from the capital, they were also originally from Nakabashi [in Edo]. Takarai Kikaku, moreover, now so celebrated for his haikai, studied under Old Man Tōsei [here in Edo].

An interesting gravestone stands at a temple in Nippori, [Edo]. Seeing sketches of it reminds one of Tō Byōhe and Heisuke as flamboyant youths. Here I relate the remarkable life of Kakurenbō [memorialized by this stone], offering it as a source of amusement for contemporary readers.

New Year, An’ei 5 [1776]

40 Referring to Jirozaemon-bina dolls, Harumachi mistakenly writes Jiroemon-bina. Harumachi’s claim of their Edo origin is false. The dolls were developed in Kyoto in the early eighteenth century by the celebrated doll maker Jirozaemon and later popularized in Edo. Takarai Kikaku was one of Bashō’s central disciples and also hailed from Edo. Tōsei was one of Matsuo Bashō’s earlier pennames.

41 Byōhe is one of Hattori Ransetsu’s names. See note 45. Heisuke is a nickname for Takarai Kikaku.

42 Kakurenbō, one of Yamazaki Hokka’s sobriquets, is an ateji meaning one who hides away like a hermit.
Master Depravity was from Musashi in Edo and born the son of a virtuous samurai at the start of the Genroku period [1688-1704]. As a child he was called Yosaburō. His was a selfish disposition and from his youth he fussed over doing his studies. He was rather self-centered and argumentative, so his parents eventually had him study with a teacher.

This teacher once asked Yosaburō to pour him some wine, but the child made no effort to comply. Asked why he refused to pour, Yosaburō replied that he feared treading upon the teacher’s shadow cast upon the floor between them, and that the teacher should request another child to do it. In the evening the teacher asked Yosaburō to fetch a wooden pillow, but as he cautiously reached out for it he saw that, instead of a pillow, a cup of water had been perilously set atop his folding screen. What a strangely clever ploy!

News of Yosaburō’s mischief reached the local lord, who decided that the boy should be learning swordsmanship. At the dōjō, Yosaburō squared off against his opponents, aggressively showering them with blows, and not a single challenger could beat him. As he won bout after bout, he suddenly claimed a chronic ailment and begged to be excused. Thereafter he enjoyed the life of a rōnin.

When Yosaburō reached adulthood he was called Miyazaki Kinzaemon. At age sixteen he began working and by age thirty-eight had served five different lords. Despising serving others, he always ranted around, trying to show that there were none more worthy than he.

Once he dropped in on his childhood friends, where he proceeded to fill a bowl with water, place it atop a sheet of paper, and then yank out the paper without upsetting the water. He challenged them to replicate this feat, but all proved unworthy.

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43 Master Depravity: The name given here is Jidaraku sensei. Harumachi uses the term bukō (Musashi), seemingly invoking Bashō’s use of the term in Oku no hosomichi. This origin is inaccurate, for Hokka was born in 1700. Either Harumachi used unreliable sources to date Hokka, or he intentionally alters Hokka’s birth date to make him contemporaneous with Bashō, thereby enabling him to claim (below) that Hokka studied with Bashō.

44 As Yosaburō had not yet come of age he is not literally a rōnin. Harumachi’s use of the term suggests that Yosaburō’s parents hereafter left the boy to his own devices.
From the Tenna [1681-84] and Jōkyō [1684-88] eras, haikai had become extremely popular in Edo. Oaki, the daughter of Sahyōe from Koami village, was eleven at that time and enjoyed composing haikai. [Takarai] Kikaku and [Hattori] Ransetu, two disciples of the imminent poet Old Man Bashō, were celebrated and admired poets at this time. Kikaku’s hokku (opening verse) on the ten oxen was especially admired.45

Once Oaki saw the beautiful Daihannya cherry tree by the well at Kiyomizu Kannon at Tōeizan temple, whereupon she composed this hokku:

\[
\begin{align*}
i \text{ no moto no} \\
sakura abunashi \\
sake no yoi
\end{align*}
\]

so close to the well
a cherry tree in danger
intoxicated by wine

When this verse reached the lord’s ears he sent her a token of his appreciation. This was the girl who would later become the famous haikai poet Shūshiki.47

[Hagino Sawanojō] Kikaku was the [haikai] instructor of Ichikawa Hakuen.48 Once, during the hottest season, Nakamura Denkurō entered his dressing room and intoned:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Asahina no} \\
gakuya e irishi \\
atsusa kana
\end{align*}
\]

like entering
Asahina’s dressing room
what heat!50

45 Like Kikaku (see note 41), Hattori Ransetu was one of Bashō’s central disciples. He emulated Bashō by producing records of his travels around the country. “Ten oxen” refers to the Ten Ox-Herding Pictures from the Northern Song period representing the ten stages of Zen enlightenment.

46 The Daihannya cherry takes its name from the Great Wisdom Sutra (Daihannya-kyō).

47 Shūshiki studied under Kikaku and became one of the celebrated female haikai poets of this period. She composed this verse at age thirteen, and thereafter the tree was named Shūshikizakura.

48 Names in brackets identify the figures (from right to left) in the illustration. Here Harumachi mistakenly writes Hagino, though clearly referring to the onnagata kabuki actor Ogino Sawanojō who moved to Edo in 1692 and earned fame performing alongside Ichikawa Danjūrō. Hakuen was the haikai name of Ichikawa Danjūrō.

49 Nakamura Denkurō is another kabuki actor.

50 Here Nakamura refers to the warrior Asahina Yoshihide (b. 1176) who, in the kyōgen play Asahina, is lured into hell by the demon king Enma. The poem compares the dressing room to the fires of hell.
Shichisaburō composed the following as a farewell gift upon departing for the capital:\(^{51}\)

* * * * * *

the mountain bird
envious of people
sleeping far from home

When Ichikawa Kyūzō took the stage name Danjūrō, he rejoiced:

* * * * * *

three theater box seats
all are unfrozen
this river of viewers

[Hisamatsu Tazata] There is nothing as entertaining as haikai. Kikaku met and instructed kabuki actors each and every day, [and his conversations went something like this:]

“What does it mean to become wiser?”
“It is to loudly boast about oneself.”
“What does it mean to fall flat?”
“It is to be very surprised.”
“What is it to have died?”
“It is something so funny it makes one faint.”
“What is it to gaze at the ceiling?”
“It means to fail.”

Hattori Ransetsu’s true name was Fuji Byōhe. The given name of Sakaya (Takarai) Kikaku, a dye wholesaler, was Heisuke.\(^{54}\)

[ Nakajima Kanzaemon\(^{55}\) ]

Once Yosaburō became a haikai poet, people came to recognize his name and face wherever he went. It was his habit to doze past noon, rousing himself only when his friends brought in saké and fish. Those around him subsequently dubbed him Master Depravity. (One of them composed:)

* * * * * *

there with your mackerel and sauce
half-drunken mountain, please
please wake up

Master Depravity was a completely selfish person, but once he became a haikai master he

\(^{51}\) Nakamura Shichisaburō was also a kabuki actor and affiliated with Danjūrō and Denkurō.

\(^{52}\) Mitsumasu, in addition to meaning three theater box seats, also refers to Ichikawa Danjūrō’s crest, which consists of three concentric squares.

\(^{53}\) Nakagawa Hanzaburō (active late Genroku period) is also a kabuki actor.

\(^{54}\) Having more fun with names, Harumachi uses the words Fuji and sakaya here to invoke a well-known poem attributed to Kikaku:

* * * * * *

snow on Fuji
while in the tavern
flies remain

\(^{55}\) Nakajima Kanzaemon (1662-1716) was a kabuki actor who moved to Edo in 1686 and performed with the others.
was loaded with money. He became the disciple of Old Man Bashō, from which time his name became Sanjunmei, and he changed his sobriquet to Kan and then took the moniker Furyōken. He named his hut Fushian and his penname was Sharakusai. His priestly name was Kakurenbō but he called himself Master Depravity.

Once, as evening approached, bandits suddenly appeared from all sides. After stripping him naked, they then demanded that he hand over his beard, as well. “What are you going to do with my beard?” has asked. “Make a broom,” they replied.

The Master got it into his head to go to the Yoshiwara, but once there he could think of nothing but writing haikai. He visited the Kari-ganeya tea house, where he saw Takarai Kikaku, no doubt thinking of the ten oxen poem. At that moment, just before sunrise, Kikaku put the cuckoo’s cry into verse. The Master overheard him recite:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{waga tame no} \\
\text{hōki no hige wa} \\
\text{yurusekashi} \\
\text{kari no ukiyo wo} \\
\text{sude hatsuru made}
\end{align*}
\]

making a broom
of my beard
I will allow
if it helps me sweep away
this weary world

The bandits were so enchanted by this verse that they returned his clothing.

The Master was drawn to elegant things. He grew his beard long and scented his clothing with incense, and this fragrance followed him as he wandered through various provinces practicing austerities. He was just like the Chinese scholars Cheng Hao and Guan Yu. Penetrating the provinces to the north (michinoku), he once pushed as far as Matsushima. As for his appearance, his hair was bound up in a ball on his head, his beard was long, and he carried tooth dye to blacken his teeth.

56 See note 43.
57 Harumachi again uses names to deliver humor. Furyōken, Fushian, and Sharakusai are all homophones for “bad idea,” “thoughtless,” and “impudent” respectively.
58 Cheng Hao (1032-1085) was a Neo-Confucian scholar noted for his moral virtue and piety. Guan Yu (d. 219) was a general famous for his long beard. Drawing comparisons with such eminent historical figures would be considered absurd and therefore humorous.
59 In the Edo period scenting one’s clothing with incense, wearing one’s hair in a ball (kawara), and blackening one’s teeth were women’s practices that for a man would be prominent markers of eccentricity.
kawasekeri

the cuckoo’s call
at daybreak I am made to buy
a reddish umbrella

From the second floor he called “Master Takarai, Master Takarai!” They ordered saké from one of the maids and sat down to drink. Presently they left together and boarded a boat, arriving at Yanagibashi just as the morning gongs were ringing.

The famous female haikai master of long ago whose name was Sonome became extremely popular. At a fish shop in Shinba Honzaimokuchō …[illegible]…

A man Kurō Byōhei became intimate with Ukon from the Shinchō Daikokuya teahouse and when her contract expired on the eighth day of the fourth month he moved her to his place. They called Hakuen and celebrated their wedding. Hakuen composed the opening verse:

yo ga tsuu ya
koto ni yakushi no

hikiawase

getting fish and
getting married are really
all Yakushi’s doing

Happily, at this time Depravity was also invited and partook of the festivities throughout the night.

This elegant man Depravity always enjoyed eating fish and fowl, and he knew the taste of saké better than Li Bai and Tao Qian. With no shortage of pleasures during each of the four seasons, he seemed destined to enjoy longevity. But then he was suddenly beset with a slight cold and passed away. The temple commemorates this contemporary poet as follows.

The tombstone of Master Depravity: height: one jō (1.7 meters)
Bushū Higurashi no Sato [in Nippori]; Fuda San-yōfukuji temple, currently called Yanaka Nippori

The inscription consoles his spirit, declaring:

60 The kanji used for the name of the cuckoo also means “I’d better to return.” Therefore the verse suggests that it is just before daybreak and Kikaku is thinking of returning home. As rain begins to fall, forcing Kikaku to buy an umbrella, a cuckoo cries.

61 Shiba Sonome was a prominent female Shōmon poet. She studied with Matsuo Bashō and Takarai Kikaku.

62 Unidentified.

63 Ichikawa Danjūrō.

64 Yakushi Nyōrai is the Buddha of medicine and healing. It is thanks to him, Hakuen claims, that he is able to eat fresh bonito and that Byōhei and Ukon are able to marry.

65 Li Bai (701-762) and Tao Qian (365-427) are famous Chinese poets. Comparing historical figures of their importance with the protagonist is comically absurd.
His long beard is now decomposed beneath the ground.
But, as gods dwell even within this stone, The existence of body and heart is a vulgar thing.
Let moonlight shine off the snow-covered landscape.
Let birds sing when the flowers bloom, for The death of body and heart is the true purity.

Master Depravity was fond of saying that if one’s body is alive but his heart is dead the death is eternal; if one’s heart is alive but his body is dead the death is temporary. To sleep amidst the moonlight and flowers is the most elegant of all elegances. To extinguish one’s heart in tranquility is to become a hermit above all hermits. At age forty this month of this year he lays in deep sleep, and this tombstone is erected to console his spirit.

Illustrations by Torii Kiyotsune (fl. 1757-79)  

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66 Torii Kiyotsune was a *kokkeibon* illustrator from a family of noted ukiyoe artists active in Edo throughout the eighteenth century.
The Politics of Poetics: Socio-economic Tensions in Kyoto Waka Salons and Matsunaga Teitoku’s Critique of Kinoshita Chōshōshi

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The poetic salons in Kyoto during the early Tokugawa period were vivified by the simmering tension between the factions of Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571-1654) and Kinoshita Chōshōshi 木下長嘯子 (1569-1649). These two poets hailed from fundamentally different socio-economic backgrounds, displayed contrasting personalities, developed diametrically opposed views on the proper decorum for composing waka, and competed against each other at poetry contests. They were also surprisingly fast friends.

Chōshōshi, the nephew of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1534-1610), held various distinguished military positions until his faction’s resounding defeat at the Battle of Sekigahara, after which he retired to luxurious seclusion just outside Kyoto. Teitoku, on the other hand, was born as the second son of a minor renga poet in the commoner district of Kyoto and through diligent effort overcame his relatively modest social standing to create vast intellectual and artistic networks. Although both men studied the art of poetic composition under the prominent daimyo-poet Hosokawa Yūsai 細川幽斎 (1534-1610), they responded to his version of the Nijō-lineage orthodoxy in fundamentally contrasting ways. Teitoku revered Yūsai with nearly religious devotion, zealously preserving and transmitting his teachings. Chōshōshi, on the other hand, adopted highly iconoclastic approaches to scholarship and composition, brusquely flouting literary precedents and social conventions as he saw fit.

Despite these fundamental differences, Teitoku and Chōshōshi remained on friendly terms for over five decades until Chōshōshi’s death in 1649. Abundant personal records detail intense but affable disagreements at poetry gatherings as well as frequent poetic exchanges between the two poets throughout their long acquaintance. They also were active in the same social circles which included such luminaries as Neo-Confucian scholars Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561-1619) and Hanabishi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657); courtier-poet Nakano Michikatsu 中院通勝 (1556-1610); Shinto scholar Yoshida Bonshun 吉田梵舜 (1553-1632); comic writer Anrakuan Sakuden 安楽庵策伝 (1554-1642); chanoyu practitioner and garden designer Kobori Enshū 小堀遠州 (1579-1647); raconteur Ōmura Yūko 大村由己 (1536-1596); Tokugawa governmental officials Itakura Katsushige 板倉勝重 (1545-1624) and his son Shigemune 重宗 (1586-1657); and affluent merchants such as Suminokura Soan 角倉素庵 (1571-1631). 1

Immediately after Chōshōshi’s death, however, a quarrel erupted in the normally placid world of Kyoto’s waka salons that suggested profound resentment and discontent was festering between the poetic factions headed by Teitoku and Chōshōshi. The incident was sparked by the publication of Chōshōshi’s personal poetry and prose collection, Kyohakushū 挙白集 (Collection of Offered Cups of Sake, 1649), which was compiled by Uda Kin’nori 打它公軌 (?-1647) and his son Kagenori 景軌 (dates uncertain) along with Yamamoto Shunshō 山本春正 (1610-1682). 2 Within months of the publication of the anthology, a scathing critique of its content and the compilers, titled Nan-kyohakushū 難挙白集 (Critique of Kyohakushū), was published under the pseudonym Jinkyūbō 尋旧坊. Many scholars assume that Critique of Kyohakushū actually was composed by either Teitoku or a close disciple in part because Kin’nori, Kagenori, and Shunshō had all defected from Teitoku’s school to study under Chōshōshi. Viewed from Teitoku’s point of view, Chōshōshi’s experimental poetic style was problematical, but because Chōshōshi operated on the fringes of the Kyoto poetic circles he did not pose a major threat until Kin’nori, Kagenori, and Shunshō published his collected works. Thus, it is the text of Kyohakushū and the three disciples who compiled it, not Chōshōshi himself, who received

1 For information about the intellectual and artistic groups in Kyoto during this period see Odaka Toshio, Kinset shoki bundan no kenkyū (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1964) and Kamakura Isao, Kan’ei bunka no kenkyū (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Köbunkan, 1988).
2 The collection’s title references Kyō-hakudō挙白堂, the name of Chōshōshi’s residence.
the brunt of the attack in Critique of Kyohakushū. This confrontation left an indelible mark on how the relationship between Teitoku and Chōshōshi has been interpreted, highlighting the latent socioeconomic tensions between them.

Through a close reading of Critique of Kyohakushū and Taionki 戴恩記 (Records of Favors Received), a memoir and poetic treatise that Teitoku completed in 1644, this article will examine Teitoku’s complicated relationship with Chōshōshi, focusing on the two poets’ contrasting approaches to interpreting the classical canon, their distinct poetic styles, and the complex changes in literary practice that transpired in the first few decades of the Tokugawa period. Although based on starkly different methodologies, Teitoku and Chōshōshi both played vital roles in the shift from the medieval tradition of oral transmission (kokin denju 古今伝授) of the canon to the kind of positivistic philological scholarship based on objective evidence developed by early Kokugakusha 国学者 such as Keichū 契沖 (1640-1701). Likewise, their innovations in poetics and poetic practice provided the underpinnings for the startling literary revolution of the Genroku period (1688-1704). Particular attention will be given to the shifting social dynamics in Kyoto’s poetic salons engendered by the gradual infiltration of the merchant and artisan classes into these previously exclusively aristocratic circles and the resultant transformation of poetic taste that paved the way for the rise of the popular genres of haikai 俳諧 and kyōka 狂歌.

**Biographies**

Chōshōshi took a rather circuitous route to becoming one of the most acclaimed and infamous poets of the early Tokugawa period. He was born in Owari province (Aichi Prefecture) as the first son of Kinoshita Iesada 木下家定 (1543-1608), a powerful warlord of the Azuchi-Momoyama period. About the time of Chōshōshi’s birth, Iesada’s sister, O-Nene, became the principal wife of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. This marriage later provided critical opportunities for Chōshōshi because he served Hideyoshi from an early age and quickly rose through the ranks of the hegemon’s army. In 1587, at the age of nineteen, Chōshōshi was given charge of Tatsuno castle in Harima (Hyōgo Prefecture) and the next year he converted to Christianity, taking the name Pierre. Then, in 1590 he participated in Hideyoshi’s massive siege of the Hōjō clan at Odawara, which he documented in the journal Azuma no michi no ki あづまのみちの記 (Record of a Journey to Azuma). In 1592 he led a force of 1500 men in Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea, an experience that he detailed in the poetic dairy Journey to Kyūshū no michi no ki 九州の道の記 (Record of a Journey to Kyūshū). In this text Chōshōshi records episodes such as a day in Kashima when he entertained the locals with a display of his kemari skills—this relaxed, almost flippant, attitude both mirrors Hideyoshi’s casual bearing on campaigns and presages Chōshōshi’s later approach to poetry. As a reward for his faithful military service, in 1594 Hideyoshi put Chōshōshi in charge of Obama castle in Wakasa province (Fukui Prefecture), which entailed a 80,000 koku income. During these years Chōshōshi began to seriously study poetry composition. For example, in 1587 he participated with Hideyoshi in a poetic gathering in honor of the memory of Emperor Antoku 安徳天皇 (1178-1185) at Amida Temple in Shimoneseki, so it is clear that he had begun his poetic career by this time. Records also indicate that during the Korean campaign Chōshōshi began to study waka with...
Yūsai.

As was the case for so many men of his generation, Chōshōshi’s fortunes took a sudden turn in 1600 at the Battle of Sekigahara. In the days leading up to the battle, Chōshōshi was placed in a difficult position as he had familial ties to both the Toyotomi and the Tokugawa, the two principal combatants. At the time, Chōshōshi was serving under Torii Mototada 烏居元忠 (1539-1600) in defense of Fushima Castle. When Ishida Mitsunari’s 石田三成 (1560-1600) forces approached, however, Chōshōshi abandoned his post and fled to Kyoto, forsaking his duty. In the aftermath of the war the Tokugawa stripped him of his domain, but spared his life and allowed him to retain much of his fortune. Still only thirty-two years old, Chōshōshi divorced his wife and retired to a villa at Higashiyama 霊山, which with the support of aunt Kita no mandokoro, he was able to expand and remodel.

According to Sanka no ki 山家の記 (Record of My Mountain Hut), Chōshōshi’s account of his eremitic life that is included in Kyohakushū, he lived at this villa for the next four decades in seeming peace and tranquility. Chōshōshi refused to accept payment for correcting students’ verses (a key source of income for most poetry teachers of the time); this act attests to his material comfort during these years. In 1641, however, Chōshōshi moved from Higashiyama to Oshioyama 小塩山 in western Kyoto. At the time, Teitoku and Chōshōshi exchanged the following verses:

たかき名を世にのこしつゝほとゝぎすふ
かき山路にいりにけるかな

Cuckoo,
leaving behind a grand reputation in this world,
you have ascended
deep along the mountain path.    Teitoku

Chōshōshi responded:

み山いでゝ里なれぬけれど時鳥きかぬは人の
またぬなるべし

miyama idete
sato narenuredo
hototogisu
kikanu wa hito no
matanu narubeshi

The cuckoo
departs from the deep mountains
and frequents the village.
People do not hear its song
only because they do not wait.    Chōshōshi

Texts such as Kinsei kijinden 近世畸人伝 (Biographies of Eccentric People of Recent Times, 1790) speculate that Chōshōshi had to move because he could no longer afford to maintain the residence at Higashiyama. Considering his wealth at the time of his retirement and close connections to key military and political leaders, this interpretation might appear somewhat implausible. As Odaka Toshio points out, however, in the decades after his retirement the Toyotomi family had been destroyed and he had lost family support, so it is entirely possible that he had fallen on hard economic times.

This view is supported by the following poem by Chōshōshi:

Upon leaving Higashiyama with no place to go.

いけける日の宿のけふりそ先たゆるつひのた
きぎの身はのこれども

As the day passes the smoke rising from the lodging tapers off first
though the last log

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7 Odaka Toshio, Matsunaga Teitoku no kenkyū (Tokyo: Shibundo, 1956), 272.
8 Ibid., 274.
of firewood remains.9

The poem creates a general sense of wistful nostalgia, whereas the foretext generates the specific impression that Chōshōshi left his Higashiyama hermitage in dire straits. Critique of Kyohakushū picks up on the apparent contradiction between the foretext and the poem:

This is a very moving poem but, the manner in which it is presented here is dubious. In a letter addressed to Anrakuan that included this poem, Chōshōshi wrote “Please lend me money.” I saw the poem written in his own hand. Based on that letter, the sense of the poem is very clear and becomes all the more moving. The phrase “with no place to go” in the foretext are the words of the compilers. They changed the foretext when they put this poem in the anthology. There is no sense that he is leaving without a place to go in the poem. Why would they change it? If they did so because they thought it sounded improper that he was borrowing money, then that conversely would be rather unsympathetic on their part. (Nan-kyohakushū, 77-78)

The author of Critique of Kyohakushū clearly takes great pleasure in exposing Chōshōshi’s embarrassing situation. Although Critique of Kyohakushū endeavors to portray Chōshōshi and his disciples in as unflattering a light as possible, it is difficult to believe that its author would fabricate this story. The claims presented in Critique of Kyohakushū cannot be corroborated by other sources, but Chōshōshi’s last years apparently were not particularly happy. He was separated from his family and his once powerful political connections had been totally eradicated in the new era. In his last years Chōshōshi must have looked back longingly on the sanguine days of his youth.

Teitoku was born in 1571, just two years after Chōshōshi. He was the second son of Matsunaga Eishū 松永永種 (1538-1598), a man of samurai heritage, who due to the chaos of the times was reduced to working as a professional renga poet. After Teitoku’s older brother Otokuma took the tonsure and became a Nichiren monk, Eishū selected Teitoku to follow in his professional footsteps and become a poet. Thus, from a young age Teitoku studied all of the fields requisite for a professional renga teacher, often from the leading practitioners in their respective fields. Teitoku’s career later evolved along an unexpected vector, so his education continued far beyond that necessary for a renga poet as he developed into one of the foremost literary scholars of his time. He began studying classical literature at age ten and received a proprietary oral transmission of the Tale of Genji from Kujō Tanemichi 九条稙通 (1506-1594), heir to the scholarly traditions of Sanjonishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (1455-1537). By the age of fifteen he was practicing linked verse intently with Satomura Jōka 里村紹巴 (1527-1602), a friend of his father and the foremost renga poet of the day. Later Teitoku studied a variety of arts, particularly waka composition, from Yūsai. Teitoku also studied kyōka, kanshi 漢詩, and wakan rengu 和漢連句 (linked verse combining Japanese and Chinese verses) from Eiho Eiyū 英甫永雄 (1547-1602, also commonly known as Yūchōrō 雄長老), a Renzai Zen priest affiliated with Ken'nenji Temple. In fact, Teitoku’s cultural and literary education was so extensive that Taionki 藏恩記 (Records of Favors Received, 1644) lists more than fifty prominent scholars, poets, aristocrats, and intellectuals who mentored him.

Throughout his childhood and most of his adult life Teitoku lived at the intersection of Sanjō Avenue and Koromonotana Street 三条衣棚 in Shimogyō 下京区 (Lower Capital), the so-called commoner section of Kyoto.10 His affection for this area of the city often appears in his haikai verses.

春たつは衣の棚のかすみかな
haru tatsu wa
koromo no tana no


10 Koromonotana Street did not exist in the original layout of the city during the Heian period. It was created during Hideyoshi’s reforms of the city during the Tenshō period (1573-93). In the Edo period there were many haberdashers located on this street and the adjacent Muromachi-dori.
Although Teitoku is remembered today mainly for his haikai poetry, most of his scholarly, pedagogical, and creative energy was focused on preserving the traditions of waka. *Shōyūshū* (Shōyu’s Collected Poems), a collection of Teitoku’s waka published in 1677 by his disciple Wada Ietsu (1596-1679) to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Teitoku’s death, contains over 2750 poems, demonstrating the extent of Teitoku’s devotion to the art. Teitoku taught about waka and the poetic canon in an array of contexts, both public and private. He wrote numerous commentaries on classical texts, some of which were transmitted exclusively to select disciples via autograph manuscripts while others were published and widely disseminated. Teitoku was also a pioneer in publicly teaching the classics. In 1603, at the request of the Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan, he famously gave lectures on *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness) and *Hyakunin isshu* (A Hundred Poets, One Poem Each). Based on these efforts and the transmission of oral teachings from Yūsai, Teitoku came to lead the so-called *jige* (commoner) lineage of literary scholarship in the Edo period, which included his disciples such as Wada Ietsu, Kitamura Kigin (1625-1705), Katō Bansai (1621-1674), and Mochizuki Chōkō (1619-1681). Late in life his philological inclination took the form of a scholarly project aimed at systematically classifying poetic words in lexicons including: *Waka hōju* (The Jeweled Trees of Waka, date uncertain), and *Wakuge* (Explanations of Japanese Terms, early 1620s).12 Teitoku also ran a private academy for the children of townsmen that educated many of the next generation of cultural luminaries in diverse fields such as Confucian studies, poetry, and medicine, including Itō Jinsai (1627-1705) and Kinoshita Jun’an (1621-1699). Teitoku even composed a textbook for primary-school students titled *Teitoku bunshū* (Teitoku’s Collection of Letters, 1650), which provides a treasure-trove of information about the daily lives of Kyoto townsmen during the early Edo period.13

When Teitoku turned sixty-four, his life went through a radical transformation. As a devout Buddhist, Teitoku made a practice of purchasing fish and birds at the markets and releasing them. One night after having freed some loach into a river he dreamt about the fish speaking to him. He interpreted this dream to mean that he had exhausted his allotted lifespan and continued to live on thanks only to these good deeds. He thereafter claimed to be reborn, took the childish name Chōzumaro (長頭丸), began wearing young boy’s clothing, and counting his age from one. He turned over his school to his son, Matsuei Sekigo (1592-1657), and retired to a hermitage on the grounds of the Hanasaku Inari Shrine at Gojō Avenue. Around this time Teitoku began to more actively compose haikai poetry. In particular, Teitoku came to the forefront of the world of haikai in 1633 with the publication of the *Enokoshū* (Puppy Collection), an anthology of the haikai poetry of his school. In his later years, despite intermittent eye ailments, Teitoku oversaw the compilation of several major haikai anthologies.

**11** Abe Kimio and Asō Isoji, eds., *Kinsei haiku haibunshū* NKBT 92 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 36. This poem is constructed around two complex puns. The term “tatsu” can mean: 1. for spring to begin, 2. cutting fabric, and 3. for mist to rise. “Tana” means: 1. a type of furnishing, 2. a description of trailing mist (kasumi no tana), and 3. a place name.


**13** This text is an example of an *ōraimon* 往来物, a common form of premodern textbook consisting of a group of letters listed chronologically.

with his disciples: *Takatsukubashū 鷹筑波集* (Hawk of Tsukuba Collection, 1638), *Konzashū 昆山集* (Kunlun Mountain Collection, 1651), and *Gyokkaishū 玉海集* (Jeweled Sea Collection, 1656). Additionally, Teitoku composed several handbooks and manuals for haikai composition including *Shinzōku iatzukubu-shū 新増犬筑波集* (New Supplemented Doggerel Tsukuba Collection, 1643), *Tensuishō 天水抄* (Notes of Collected Rain, 1644), and *Haikai gosan 俳諧御傘* (Haikai Umbrella, 1651).

In contrast to the decidedly bleak ending to Chōshōshi’s life, Teitoku’s last years were filled with joy and satisfaction. He lived in material comfort as he had done quite well for himself financially and his family-life appears to have been quite content. Teitoku must have been particularly proud of his son Sekigo, who had constructed a prominent Confucian academy named Kōshūdō 講習堂 on Horikawa Street across from Nijō Castle with patronage of the Kyoto shoshidai. Also, in his last years Teitoku was able to build a remarkable residence called Kakisono 柿園 (Permission Curti-lage) just to the southwest of the Great Buddha Hall at Hokōji 方広寺 on land granted to him by Cloistered Prince Gyōen 報恩法親王 (1602-1661). He originally hoped to construct an elaborate compound including a ward for sick and orphaned children, but due to funding issues had to settle for a slightly more modest design centered on a hall for poetry called Ashi-no-Maruya, which became an important center of poetic activity in the city. Even the fervent Nichiren Buddhist, Teitoku continued to carry out the practice of releasing sparrows and swallows so often that the site came to be nicknamed Hōjōen 放生園 (Garden of Emancipation).

By all accounts, Teitoku contentedly passed his last years in this urban sanctuary surrounded and supported by his family as well as numerous students and disciples. The jovial tone of this period in Teitoku’s life is aptly captured in a verse from a linked poem included in the Bashō school collection *Fuyu no hi 冬の日* (Winter Sun, 1684).

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桃花をたをる貞徳の富

正平

tōka wo taoru

Teitoku no tomi

taking a peach blossom in his hand

the wealth of Teitoku

Shōhei

Teitoku died in 1653 at the age of eighty-three and was laid to rest at Jisōji 実相寺 in southern Kyoto.

**The Controversy Surrounding Kyohakushū**

Throughout most of their lives Teitoku and Chōshōshi were close associates and friendly rivals, participating together in poetry gatherings and exchanging verses on various ceremonial occasions. As both men studied waka under Yūsai, their poet-ies were ostensibly built upon the same foundation of the traditional Nijō style. Moreover, both men were keenly aware that they lived in an age of radical social change and this understanding is clearly reflected in their poetic practice. Teitoku resolved to embrace the conservative and orthodox aspects of Nijō waka, choosing to use the genres of kyōka and haikai to explore new avenues of expression. On the other hand, after Chōshōshi became an eremite in Higashiyama he decided to break from the Nijō tradition and develop an unconventional style of waka. Despite these differences Teitoku and Chōshōshi attended poetry meetings together until their later years with no signs of discord and Teitoku even composed a eulogistic poem after Chōshōshi’s death in 1649, so on the surface at least Teitoku and Chōshōshi appear to have remained on friendly terms.

Within months of Chōshōshi’s death, his personal poetry and prose collection, *Kyohakushū 難挙白集* was compiled by his disciples Kin’norī, Kageroni, and Shunshō. In the second month of the next year a text titled *Nan-Kyohakushū 難挙白集* (Critique of Kyohakushū) was published under the fictional name Jinkyūbō 尋旧坊. Jinkyūbō was keenly aware and quite piqued by the popularity of
Chōshōshi’s style among all classes of people, stating: “Chōshōshi was a renowned poet, so poems he composed one day could be heard recited on street corners in the merchant’s market the very next day and the words he composed in the morning would be sung in the fields by peasant women in the evening. His poetry was even more popular among the discerning nobility” (Nan-kyohakushū, 4). The contemptuous tone of Critique of Kyohakushū is summed up elegantly and callously in the following statement from the afterword: “This collection breaks the rules of our ancestors, pillers both old and new phrases already established by previous masters and contains poems of heretical form and vulgar diction, so it should be called the Collection of Broken Laws and Stolen Words or the Demon’s Profane Style Collection” (Nan-kyohakushū, 100).

The dispute continued to fester with the publication of Kyohaku shinhyō 桃源心評 (A Considered Evaluation of Kyohakushū, 1650), in which another anonymous author evaluates both factions from a more objective point-of-view, concluding that both sides are “biased.” This dispute caused such a stir in the capital that it is jokingly referenced in the introduction of Tōgenshū 桃源集 (A Guide to Peaches), a 1655 guidebook to the Shimabara pleasure quarter:

In our country Tsunenobu wrote Criticism of the Goshūshū to critique the Goshūshū. Tale of Gion was composed as a response to Tale of Kiyomizu. Crushing Evil and Revealing Virtue was mocked in Remonstration of Superstitions. Blown Fur Grass is ridiculed in Icehouse Guard. After Critique of Kyohakushū was composed to criticize Kyohakushū, A Considered Evaluation of Kyohakushū appeared. Based on these precedents it is only a matter of time until Criticism of a Guide to Peaches appears. My defense will be withering.

Considerable scholarship has been conducted in an attempt to ascertain the identity of the author of Critique of Kyohakushū because solving that mystery would provide valuable insight into the relationship between Teitoku and Chōshōshi as well as the workings of the contemporary poetic society. This scholarship has resulted in four main theories concerning the identity of the author.19 The oldest theory holds that the text was written by a member of the aristocracy who opposed Chōshōshi’s radical innovations on the grounds that they were an affront to traditional decorum. In contrast, Yamamoto Kashō and Tsuda Shūzō have posited that the text represents a factional struggle among non-aristocratic groups, arguing that Teitoku composed the text himself out of his long-standing resentment of Chōshōshi’s social privilege and flippant attitude toward the traditions of the art of waka. Odaka Toshio and Yoshida Kōichi have speculated that while Teitoku was not directly involved, someone from Teitoku’s group composed the text in order to give voice to feelings of umbrage their temperate master was reticent to express. The final theory, forwarded in recent years by Okamoto Satoshi, presents a radical new interpretation by proposing that the text was composed by a poet from Chōshōshi’s own group, probably a long-standing disciple who resented being overlooked for the duty of compiling the master’s anthology.

The only solid information about the identity of the author is provided in the preface of Critique of Kyohakushū, where the author states that he came to the capital about twenty years earlier (around 1630), but was not involved in poetry circles (Nan-kyohakushū, 4). The statement about when the author arrived in the capital is corroborated by internal textual evidence, particularly references to various poetic ceremonies in Kyoto from 1633 to 1649. The claim about the author not being involved in poetic circles, however, is highly dubious. The evaluations of Chōshōshi’s poetry in the text are clearly based on Nijō poetics and in the commentary on the very first poem in the collection the author uses the phrase “honored theory of our lineage” 当流の御説 (Nan-kyohakushū, 7). This term is closely associated with the Nijō lineage and the fact that it is used in a discussion concerning the proper pronunciation of a poem from A Hundred Poets, One Poem Each, a favorite text in the Nijō

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lineage, only adds to the impression that this text was composed by someone with close ties to the Nijō faction. All of this evidence also points to the possibility that Teitoku, a devoted adherent of the Nijō school, was either directly or indirectly involved in the creation of the text.

There are other compelling reasons to believe that Teitoku could have been involved in the creation of Critique of Kyohakushū. Chōshōshi’s privileged upbringing, advantageous social connections, and impertinent attitude toward the Nijō traditions certainly could have provided Teitoku ample motive for such an attack. Moreover, Kin’nori, Kagenori, and Shunshō—the three men who compiled and published Kyohakushū—are all said to have defected from Teitoku’s school to study under Chōshōshi in the late 1630’s or early 1640’s. These kinds of defections would be painful in any case, but Kin’nori and Kagenori were prosperous merchants and Shunshō was a renowned lacquer artist, so their defections could have had a serious economic impact on Teitoku’s group. Another factor that points to Teitoku possibly being involved is the numerous references in the text to the kind of inside information that only someone in Teitoku’s position could have known, such as the dates certain private poetry meetings were held, the poets who attended, and even the weather on those days.

There are, however, equally compelling reasons to believe that Teitoku was not involved in composing Critique of Kyohakushū. As mentioned previously, the dateable entries in Critique of Kyohakushū range from 1633 to Chōshōshi’s death in 1649. Teitoku knew Chōshōshi for some sixty years, so it would be rather odd for him to limit himself to discussing only this limited period. Also, while the author clearly has some inside information about the goings-on of various poetic gatherings, he seems unaware of other key facts Teitoku clearly would have known. Moreover, key passages in Critique of Kyohakushū explicitly praise Teitoku and his poetry. As Odaka points out, the intended audience of the text was the members of the tightly-knit world of the Kyoto poetic salons, many of whom may very well have known the real identity of the author, so it is all but impossible to believe that Teitoku would do something as tactless as praise his own poems.20 Also, Okamoto argues that although the students of Teitoku and Chōshōshi are often depicted as being at odds, there was actually considerable collaboration between the two groups even after the publication of Critique of Kyohakushū.21 They included each other’s poems in collections and participated together in poetry meetings. Finally, Teitoku specifically mentions the attacks on Goshūiwaakashū 後拾遺和歌集 (Collection of Later Gleanings 1086), which are often cited as a precedent for Critique of Kyohakushū, as an example of unseemly behavior that should never be emulated. Thus, based on Teitoku’s restrained personality and the impassioned statements he made about the importance of maintaining harmonious personal relations, it is very difficult to believe that he could have been responsible for a text like Critique of Kyohakushū.

Barring the discovery of new evidence, determining with any certainty whether or not Teitoku was involved in composing Critique of Kyohakushū does not appear to be possible. All that we know for certain is that Critique of Kyohakushū was composed by an author, or perhaps a group of authors, in order to attack the work of Kin’nori, Kagenori, and Shunshō in compiling Kyohakushū. In other words, there is little textual evidence to support the traditional perception that Teitoku and Chōshōshi were personally involved in a fierce rivalry. This incident, however, generates intriguing interpretive possibilities for Teitoku’s memoirs and poetic treatises. When read in a contextual vacuum Teitoku’s writings on poetics, particularly the last section of Record of Favors Received, can appear like an inventory of trivial personal anecdotes and a hackneyed rehashing of issues already thoroughly debated in medieval texts. When read in the cross-lighting of the latent conflict with Chōshōshi, however, these passages suddenly come to life with complex personal dynamics that resonate with the socioeconomic issues rife in the poetic salons of Kyoto during this period of dramatic political transformation. The second half of this paper will explore such a reading.

**Opposed Poetics**

Dairies and records of poetic contests indicate that Teitoku and Chōshōshi often disagreed about

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20 Odaka, Matsunaga Teitoku, 314-319.
21 Okamoto, Kinoshita Chōshōshi, 64-65.
fundamental poetic issues. While their debates normally were carried out in a civil manner befitting the high tradition of waka and never stooped to the kind of derisive taunts witnessed in the debates inspired by Kyohakušū, there were clearly major disagreements. The source of these disagreements about poetic style between Teitoku and Chōshōshi can be traced back to the two men’s early years of training. Teitoku and Chōshōshi both studied waka from Yūsai and they could not have hoped for a better teacher. Using his connections in both military and aristocratic circles, Yūsai had been amassing and collating many of the lineages of private transmissions. This process had reached the point that when he was besieged in Tanabe Castle in Tango during the fighting leading up to the Battle of Sekigahara, Emperor Goyozei (1571–1617), fearing that priceless teachings would be lost if Yūsai were killed, interceded to have the siege lifted long enough that Yūsai could at least pass his documents to the court. Teitoku and Chōshōshi’s reactions to his training, however, were radically different.

In Record of Favors Received Teitoku admiringly details numerous stories of Yūsai’s exploits in fields beyond poetry, such as martial arts, equestrian arts, kemari, and Noh drumming. Most importantly for Teitoku, Yūsai was the guardian of the oral transmissions on the classics. Teitoku states that “the secret teachings have been orally conveyed from Teika to Yūsai like water poured from vessel to vessel.”22 Teitoku was honored to be taught by a man he considered “the reincarnation of Teika” (Taionki, 57) and accordingly closely followed his teachings. Chōshōshi on the other hand was more independent. A Considered Evaluation of Kyohakušū quotes Chōshōshi as describing his approach to waka in the following terms: “I compose without regard to form and without regard to classical precedent” (Kyohaku, 109). Again, “I do not understand the Way of Poetry, so I just say what is in my own heart for my own amusement. I do not bother to record my poems and I do not try to determine which are good and which are poor compositions” (Kyohaku, 107-8). Unsurprisingly, these two attitudes led to numerous disputes. There are several passages in Record of Favors Received in which Teitoku openly criticizes Chōshōshi. In the following episode, for example, Teitoku disparages Chōshōshi’s decorum based on the manner in which he and his guests behaved at a poetry meeting at Higashiyama.

One time, upon reception of an invitation from Chōshōshi to a waka contest at Ryōzan, in which the participants would also act as the judges, Michikatsu accepted saying that it was a unique idea. It was the thirteenth day of the Ninth Month of 1601. The topics, which had been given in advance, were: chrysanthemums illuminated by the moon, famous sites in moonlight, and love under the moon. I record below Michikatsu’s poems, except his first which has slipped from my memory.

名にしあふ秋の二よのちせやまのちせかはらず月もすまなむ

na ni shi au
aki no futayo no
nochise yama
nochise kawarazu
tsuki mo suma namu

befitting their names
these two autumn nights:
Mt. Latter Rapids
even on the night of the Latter Moon
the moon will be clear.

くもるらん月さへうとくなりにけりこぬ
人つらき袖のなみだに

kumoru ran
tsuki sae utoku
nari ni keri
konu hito tsuraki
sode no namida ni

has even the moon
clouded over?
It has grown distant.
Bitterly I wait for he who comes not

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Michikatsu secretly sent these waka to be recopied by a calligrapher. He took his seat at the gathering populated by attendants. Expecting to find nobles, he found the other participants ill-mannered with graceless speech and rough voices. These people slandered his waka imprudently. They did not understand the ancient Way of Poetry, so did not realize that his poems were based on expressions with precedent in classical poems. Since they did not even know the basic proscriptions of poetry, such as the rule that two words with the same meaning should not be used in a poem, the same word should not be repeated, the fourth line of the poem should not start with the same syllable as the first line nor should the last line end with the same syllable as the second line. Therefore, they could not identify such faults. They believed that they should critique all of the waka not composed by Chōshōshi. They did not realize that by mentioning Mt. Nochise Michikatsu was praising the host. One guest said that the author of this waka must be a neophyte because this mountain has become so clichéd. Another guest speculated that it was not the poem of a beginner but rather the work of a well-studied but unskillful poet. I usually do not hastily give my views at these meetings and I wish to avoid repeating the opinions of others, so I pretend to not even listen to the poems and follow the opinions of others. In this case, however, I was so taken aback that I suggested that the other guests consider the poems more deeply and realize that waka should not be judged so rashly. Nobody paid me any heed over the merchant-like din of the crowd. All three of Michikatsu’s waka ended up being slandered.

Generally, at all waka competitions members of each team criticize the other side’s poems and praise their team’s poems. At these kinds of events each waka should be seriously analyzed to note such faults as outdated diction. In this way, participants will learn from both praise and criticism. The guests at Chōshōshi’s gathering, however, were vulgar men who did not even understand the rules of renga, much less waka. They secretly contacted the scribes and found out which poems were composed by Chōshōshi and praised only these poems regardless of quality (Taionki, 37-9).23

Passages such as this from Record of Favors Received are extremely valuable for understanding the dynamics of the rivalry between Teitoku and Chōshōshi. Sadly, because Chōshōshi never commented on these issues, we can only analyze the situation from Teitoku’s viewpoint. Based on Teitoku’s accounts of this and other poetry meetings, however, a picture of Chōshōshi’s role in the two men’s rivalry does emerge. Chōshōshi’s samurai background and family connections that guaranteed material security allowed him a degree of freedom from the norms and conventions of the world of the Kyoto waka salons that would have been unimaginable to Teitoku. For the most part Chōshōshi appears to have wielded the freedom this marginal position allowed him simply to explore his own unique poetic vision. However, it appears that occasionally he was not above using his social standing to create situations that a more traditional poet like Teitoku would find humiliating.

While these passages are interesting in their own right and it is telling that Chōshōshi is the only person mentioned in Record of Favors Received about whom Teitoku made exclusively negative comments, the more fascinating possibilities lay in the sections where Chōshōshi is not mentioned by name. Considering the latent tension between the two men and the striking similarities between key passages from Record of Favors Received and Critique of Kyohakushū, one of Teitoku’s main goals in writing Record of Favors Received appears to have been to discredit Chōshōshi and his poetics. In order to discredit Chōshōshi, Teitoku formulates an unusual history of waka and creates a bold new understanding of waka’s place in society, which in turn reveals his own insecurities and anxieties.

First, let us examine a few representative passages from Critique of Kyohakushū in order to gain a sense of the interpretive stance of this text. The

23 This passage is typical of Teitoku’s attention to the social, rather than the artistic, aspects of poetry. Time and again Teitoku emphasizes that “poets must have excellent manners at waka gatherings” (Taionki, 32).
criticisms of Chôshôshi’s poetry in Critique of Kyohakushû focus predominantly on questions of diction, particularly use of words and phrases unprecedented in classical waka. This objection appears to have been quite prevalent at the time as Takuan Sôhô 沢庵宗彭 (1573-1645) among others also criticizes Chôshôshi’s use of eccentric vocabulary.24 A number of passages in Critique of Kyohakushû focus on a single word or phrase in one of Chôshôshi’s poems and point out that there is no precedent for it. Take for example the following poem from the spring section:

さほ姫のかたなもふれすかさは先かすみの
衣いかて立らん

Untouched by the sword of Princess Sao
first the sedge hat
then the robe of mist
how will they rise?

The author of Critique of Kyohakushû complains, “is there some explanation for the phrase ‘sword of Princess Sao’? This is doubtful.” He then cites Shûiwakashû 拾遺和歌集 (Collection of Gleanings, 1007) poem 708 as a possible source poem.

から衣われはかたなのふれなくに先かすみの
衣いかて立らん

kara koromowasakatana no furenaku ni
mono koromowasakumono no
ikade tataran

From this morning things have been out of sorts and I am forlorn. Has it arrived? The autumnal season which saddens the hearts of men.

Karoromoware wa katana no
furenaku ni
mazu tatsu mono wa
naki na narikeri

Although I haven’t touched the knife
to cut the Chinese robe
already what has begun are unfounded rumors

The author then states, “one normally should not use the phrase ‘Princess Sao’s sword’. Also, the poem’s form is not elegant” (Nan-kyohakushû, 9). This passage is emblematic of the critical stance taken throughout Critique of Kyohakushû as primary attention is focused on Chôshôshi’s use of unconventional diction. This poem is compared with the classical canon, and as no satisfactory precedent can be found, readers are warned not to copy his example. Then, attention is turned to the overall quality of the poem and it is found to be inelegant. These factors are characteristic of the Nijô lineage’s approach to appraising poetry that Teitoku learned from Yûsai.

In another case the author of Critique of Kyohakushû attacks a poem for sounding too much like a narrative.

けさよりは物あちきなく心ほそし人わひさ
する秋やきぬらん

kasa yori wa
mono achikinaku
kokorobososhi
hito wabi sasuru
aki ya kinuran

From this morning things have been out of sorts and I am forlorn. Has it arrived? The autumnal season which saddens the hearts of men.

The topic of this poem is “A poem in autumn.” The phrase “saddens the hearts of men” does not sound elegant. From the beginning to the fourth line sounds like a narrative. Although poems similar to this one appear in Teika’s Shûgusô that is a special form (Nan-kyohakushû, 34).

Here the syntax rather than the diction is singled out for censure. Although a possible model for this style can be found in Teika’s poetry, the author explains that this style is a special case which again should not be emulated. This position also appears in the evaluation of a poem that is compared to Shô-
tetsu’s 正徹 (1381-1459) famously eccentric style.

すきとをる 野原の雪の下みとりこゝにあり
とや若なつむらん

Sukitōru
nohara no yuki no
shita midori
koko ni ari toya
wakana tsumu ran

Under the translucent snow covering the moor glimmers an emerald hue. Might that be where they harvest young herbs?

The first line seems as though it would be used in poems and it sounds poetic. There are elegant words with the same meaning. This line, however, does not appear in classical poems. If this phrase has ever been used it would have been in the poems of Shōtetsu (Nan-kyohakushū, 11).

Although esteemed for his poetic innovations, Shōtetsu was a member of the Reizei lineage and so his style was considered heterodox by Nijō poets and thus an unfit model for poets to imitate. Numerous other examples could be listed. Critique of Kyohakushū mentions one poem’s use of the phrase “warbler’s nest in the plums” (鶯のぬくらの梅), stating, “warblers should not described as sleeping among the blossoms. Even if there happened to be a poetic precedent this should not be used” (Nan-kyohakushū, 13). Another poem is cited for referring to the Weaver Maiden in a Tanabata poem as “younger sister” (Nan-kyohakushū, 36). In all of these critiques the first question is always whether or not a particular word or phrase has a precedent in classical waka. Then attention turns to evaluating the elegance and decorum of the poem.

The kinds of criticisms seen in Critique of Kyohakushū resonate with both Teitoku’s poetics and his poetic practice. For example, he repeatedly points out that “for waka practitioners selecting poetic diction is of greatest importance” 歌よみは詞の吟味肝要なり (Taionki, 45). He also argues for maintaining strict limits on acceptable diction in waka.

In Eiga taigai Teika wrote, “your style should be modeled on the poetry before the Kanpyō era.” By that statement he is referring to the time around the Man’yōshū. There are secret teachings to this effect. When Teika taught that poets should imitate the Man’yōshū, he did not mean that one should compose without considering words as was the case in the Man’yōshū. He had already established that “diction should not extend beyond the Sandaishū.” By stating that poetic style should be based on the Kanpyō era he was emphasizing the need to avoid weakness in the poetic form (Taionki, 87).

By arguing that poets should compose using only diction found in the Sandaishū (三代集), the first three imperially commissioned anthologies, but with the emotional purity of the Man’yōshū, Teitoku is aligning himself squarely with the Nijō tradition. For centuries Nijō poets had quarreled with the Rokujō 六条 and Reizei 冷泉 lineages about the proper method for carving out “a margin of originality within the strictures of a closely bordered and strongly prescriptive tradition.”26 Following the example of Minamoto no Toshiyori 源俊頼 (1055-1129), the Rokujō and Reizei lineages stretched the bounds of poetic decorum and even transgressed them “by using words without clear precedent and conceits which impinged upon the borders of hai-kai.”27 Nijō poets conversely, following the examples of Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114-1204) and his son Teika, argued for maintaining strict adherence to the diction and decorum of classical verse and advocated for creating innovative verses.

25 The point here is that poets should not follow obscure poetic precedents, but rather compose based on the established and mainstream poetic ideals.


27 Ibid., 72.
by means of “poetic variation,” or honka-dori (本歌取, sometimes translated as “allusive variation”). To put the matter simply, Nijō poets advocated using only the diction and syntax of previous chokusenshū, particularly the Kokinshū, while urging poets to find fresh combinations of images by means of allusive variations of poems from canonical texts like the Tale of Genji. Thus, the confrontation between Teitoku and Chōshōshi was, at least in Teitoku’s eyes, the continuation of a struggle that had simmered for most of the history of waka. For Teitoku this was not a personal disagreement, but rather a matter of defending what he believed was the true Way of Poetry.

The similarities between the critical stance of Critique of Kyohakushū and Teitoku’s comments about Chōshōshi in Record of Favors Received are most striking in connection with the following poem.

雨になくさのゝ渡りのほとゝ
ぎすなれもやど
れるかげやなからん

Crying in the rain at Sano Ford
the cuckoo.
For you, my friend, there is no shelter from the storm.

In Critique of Kyohakushū this poem is followed by the following comment.

“The topic of this poem is “cuckoo in the rain.” This is a moving poem, but the conception of hototogisu at Sano Ford does not appear in classical waka. I heard that from the time this poem was composed Chōshōshi was not on good terms with Yūsai” (Nankyohakushū, 31-2).

The critique concerning the unprecedented combination of cuckoo and Sano Ford is in keeping with the general tone of the text, but the comment about a falling out between Chōshōshi and Yūsai is rather vague. This story is fleshed out in Records of Favors Received. Teitoku explains that this poem was presented at a waka gathering held by Yūsai at his residence at Jurakudai. Then he elaborates:

Yūsai said, “I wonder why Chōshōshi did not submit the poem he had already shown to me?” I replied, “Perhaps he mistakenly brought the wrong paper or he may have forgotten it.” Yūsai said, “No, that is not the case. I think that this poem is more interesting than the one that I judged for him, so he intentionally brought it. Although I see the superiority of this poem, one should not compose waka about famous places in other provinces for a gathering in the Capital. Also, there is no precedent for composing about a cuckoo at Sano Ford, so I did not give this poem a high mark.” These kinds of ancient practices are the treasure of poets. Their meaning cannot be known without a teacher (Taionki, 55-6).

The fact that such similar passages appear in both texts is strong evidence that Teitoku, or someone in his immediate circle, was the author of Critique of Kyohakushū. Also, the attention to whether or not a particular phrase has a poetic precedent is the key focus that links Critique of Kyohakushū with Teitoku’s writings. It is also revealing that both texts use this as an opportunity to drive a wedge between Chōshōshi and Yūsai. Teitoku’s reputation as a poetry teacher rested largely on his having received a direct oral transmission from Yūsai, thus it would be extremely advantageous for him to create the impression that his chief rival was not well liked by their shared master.

In his own waka Teitoku fastidiously abides by the rules of poetic diction that he learned from Yūsai.

雪と見えはこよひの月にうからましよしや
吉のゝ櫻なりとも

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In his own waka Teitoku fastidiously abides by the rules of poetic diction that he learned from Yūsai.
If they were confused with snow
bathed tonight in moonlight
they would not be so poignant,
even though they are the cherry blossoms
of beautiful Mt. Yoshino.  28

としをへて山路の菊をてらせばやおもがは
りせぬ秋のよの月

toshi wo hete
yamaji no kiku wo
teraseba ya
omogawari senu
aki no yo no tsuki

As the years pass
may it shine down on
the chrysanthemum on the mountain path.
The unchanging
moon of autumn nights. (Taionki, 62)

Poems such as the two quoted above reveal Tei-
toku’s deft and adept manipulation of the traditional
approaches to composition. There is nothing about
the diction, syntax, or imagery of these poems that
would be out of place in the Kokinshū. Teitoku’s
determined and deliberate effort to compose waka
entirely within the limits of established precedent
has been seen as a lack of originality by some mod-
ern scholars; however, his aim in composing waka
was to participate in and maintain what he believed
was a socially, politically, and even spiritually sig-
ificant tradition. He did not aim to frivolously dis-
play his individuality or originality. Teitoku even
goes so far as to relay the following words of praise
he received from Yūsai.

Yūsai, impressed by my love of poetry, said
to me, “If waka were better respected in Japan
you would be famous.” I replied, “I am glad
that waka is not popular. If it were popular
then many daimyō and court nobles would
rush to study with you. In that case, how
could a man like me hope to know you?”
(Taionki, 46).

The foregoing comparison of Teitoku and Chō-
shōshi’s waka should not be taken to mean that
Chōshōshi is an innovative poet while Teitoku was
conservative. While Teitoku advocated for a con-
servative style of waka, he is of course legendary
for his use of haikai as an outlet of his radical poeti-
cal innovations. Both men were innovators: Tei-
toku’s issue with Chōshōshi’s poetry was the way in
which it deviated from what he saw as the vitally
important decorum of waka. In this connection,
it is significant that in Critique of Kyohakushū a
poem is attacked for sounding like a haikai 談詠
歌, or haikai-style waka.

わがそうきつまとふねこもしはしふす目もい
とすちをわたる日影に

waga zo uki
tsuma tou neko mo
shibashi fusu
me mo ito suchi wo
wataru hikage ni

I am forlorn
and the cat prowling for a mate
repeatedly lies down
with its eyes hair thin
in the crossing sunlight.

The slit of the cat’s eyes becomes thin.
Even in the glare of daylight it probably
would not be “hair thin.” Also, the poem is
vulgar. Why was it not placed in the haikai
section? Even if he was joking with his stu-
dents this kind of poem should not be re-
corded for posterity (Nan-kyohakushū, 66).

Teitoku understood better than most poets that
haikai  had a place within the orthodox waka rep-
erertoire since the time that this form was included in
the Kokinshū. Like other Nijō poets, however, he
was deeply committed to confining the unconven-
tional topics and idiosyncratic tropes that typified
haikai  only to poems clearly designated as such.
Teitoku was not opposed to composing eccentric
poems. He composed hundreds of bizarre poems
himself, but he always clearly labeled them as kyōka
or haikaika.

椿姫の裳吹返しやはらかけしきをそそとみ
する春風

28 Odaka, Matsunaga Teitoku zokuhen, 82.
Princess Sao
her skirt billowing up:
a tranquil
vista for a moment
revealed by the vernal breeze

On the surface and in the translation this kyōka by Teitoku appears to describe a pleasant view of a spring breeze wafting through the foothills via the metaphor of the vernal goddess Sao. The term ‘sosoto’ (suddenly or momentarily), however, is a pun with ‘soso’ a vulgar term for the female genitalia, leading to a lewd depiction of the goddess Sao being exposed when her skirt is lifted by the wind. This conceit is of course far more radical and unprecedented than anything to be found in Chōshōshi’s waka, but Teitoku found it acceptable because it was clearly labeled as a kyōka. Teitoku criticizes Chōshōshi and his editors because they misrepresent Chōshōshi’s more radical experiments as standard waka.

The difference in Teitoku and Chōshōshi’s approaches to poetry is perhaps most apparent in the following poem, which is disapproved of in Critique of Kyohakushū for sounding like a Chinese poem:

雨にあらひ風にけつりて青柳の手ふれぬか
みもまかふ筋なし

has not a tangle.

It is unacceptable that the first and second line sound like a Chinese poem (Nankyohakushū, 14).

While allusion to Chinese texts was of course widespread in waka, Teitoku would never accept the use of language that actually mimicked Chinese syntax in waka, but he positively encouraged it in his students’ haikai. Take for example the following anonymous hokku that Teitoku included in Puppy Collection:

春雨にあらいてけづれ柳がみ
harusame ni
araite kezure
yanagi kana
in the spring rain
washing and combing
her hair—the willow.

This poem draws on the same conceit and nearly the exact same syntax that is condemned in Chōshōshi’s waka. This should not be at all surprising because Teitoku defined haikai as poetry that includes haigon 俳言, unprecedented diction that was banned from waka and renga.

The disagreement between Teitoku and Chōshōshi was not a matter of one poet experimenting with change and innovation while the other defended tradition and convention. Rather both men believed in poetic innovation, but disagreed about the proper venue for change. Chōshōshi supported change within waka and composed waka that clearly departed from established norms. Teitoku, on the other hand, believed that poets should continue to compose waka in the traditional manner with established diction and helped develop the genres of haikai and kyōka as outlets for his originality. Teitoku believed that each of the poetic forms had its own unique decorum.

**Relationship between Scholarship and Poetry**

In the closing section of *Record of Favors Received* Teitoku explains the foundations of his poetics in detail via the traditional extended flora metaphor for the process of poetic composition (seed 种 = heart, leaves 葉 = words, blossoms 花 = expression, and fruit 実 = essence) and a discussion of the meaning of the character wa 和 in the term yamato-uta 大和歌. While Chōshōshi is never mentioned by name, when this section is read in the context of Teitoku’s criticism of his poetic style Chōshōshi’s presence hangs over every word.

In this section of *Record of Favors Received* Teitoku discusses the various classification schemes for the styles of waka. He then summarizes:

Teika describes two styles: blossom and fruit. This is the teaching of ‘florid style and form of fruition’. The florid style gives bloom to both good and bad poems, but there is only one kind of form of fruition (*Taionki*, 80).

The blossom-fruit dichotomy is famously articulated in a passage from the Mana preface to the *Kokinshū* that provided the conceptual framework and much of the language for Teitoku’s poetics.

Then when the times shifted into decline and men revered the lustful, frivolous words arose like clouds, and a current of ostentatiousness bubbled up like a spring. The fruit had all fallen and only the flower bloomed. Later the licentious used poetry as the messenger of flowers and birds, beggarly guests used it as a means of existence. Because of this, it became half the handmaid of woman and was embarrassing to present before gentlemen.31

Fujiwara no Teika clarifies this metaphor in his poetic treatise *Maigetsushō* 毎月抄 (Monthly Notes, 1219): “the fruit is the spirit [kokoro], and the blossom is the language [kotoba] (いはゆる実と申すは心、花と申すは詞なり).32

Teitoku argues that a good poem must have a balance between “kokoro” and “kotoba,” but also points out that “inferior diction is preferable to a deficiency of feeling.” Teitoku, of course, claims that he composes in the form of fruition and he makes clear that he believes that Chōshōshi is a representative of the florid style. While repeatedly claiming that he is capable of composing both styles, Teitoku goes on to explain his reasons for preferring the form of fruition. Teitoku was well aware that this approach would not garner much popularity in contemporary poetic circles.

Someone said, “Teitoku, your poems are well constructed and reveal your training and contain nothing outdated. However, as they do not contain beautiful or tender words, people do not clamor to praise you. Trends change with the times, so you should adjust your thinking to elicit praise.” I replied, “You are a true friend for telling me what other people whisper in the shadows. Please tell me more about what people say about me.” After this conversation, I was thankful for the benevolence of my teachers. Had I not received their teachings these evil winds may have blown me down a false path. Therefore, it pleases me to think that by trying to write down the thoughts and words of my honored teachers, later generations will not fall into wicked ways and return to the true way of waka (*Taionki*, 77-8).

This description of a misguided poet matches perfectly with the depiction of Chōshōshi in *Critique of Kyohakushū*, so it is not difficult to guess who Teitoku thought was the poet who people “clamored to praise” for his “beautiful words.” Teitoku repeatedly states that his lack of popularity was of no concern to him. “The poems that people in the world like, I do not care for. The poems I like are disdained by the public” (*Taionki*, 88). He also warns his students:

Pay no mind to the opinions of people of the world concerning who is a skillful poet and


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who is inept. These opinions are arbitrary and impetuous. What they say is not indicative of the actual value of poems. This type of person, even if they have been instructed in detail by a teacher, can only discern the very best poems and the very worst, but cannot distinguish between poems of middling skill. Those without a teacher cannot make any judgments, so they base their opinions on the name of the poet. If my name was affixed to a poem by Teika, the poem would be disparaged. If, conversely, one of my poems was presented as having been written by Teika, then people would regard it with esteem. This situation is similar to determining pitch. Everyone can distinguish the highest tone from the lowest, but few people can perceive halftones (Taionki, 75-6).

Again, Chôshôshi lurks in the background as Teitoku’s account of judging poems based purely on the name of the author resonates with his description of how people behaved at Chôshôshi’s poetry gathering. Also, note that the comment about uninform ed poets who “have been instructed in detail by a teacher” is rather confusing if this text is not read in the context of the dispute between Teitoku and Chôshôshi. Teitoku goes on to explain the misguided attitudes of his contemporaries:

Poets without teachers who have practiced for many years and developed skills settle upon this conclusion: “the ideographs 大和歌 mean ‘to make very gentle’ and are read yamato-uta. These people also say that the qualities of sincerity すなを and vigor つよき are not admired, so poems with these qualities are not enjoyed and do not receive praise. Poets who compose in this style do not garner a high reputation. Rather than laboring on a path without reward, it is better to aim to be praised by the public. . . . No matter how things were in the past, nowadays our chief aim should be to write beautiful, ornate poems that people will praise.” This concept is worlds away from the correct path. How disgusting! (Taionki, 78).

In this passage Teitoku fleshes out the dichotomy of the florid style and the form of fruition. The florid style is characterized by ornate language which led to its popularity. Based on the earlier analysis of Chôshôshi’s waka, it is hard not to conclude that this passage is referring, at least in part, to Chôshôshi. In contrast to this “weak” style, the less popular form of fruition springs from sincere feelings and is expressed in powerful diction. Teitoku then explains the correct interpretation of the character wa.

The wa 和 of the word waka 中和. This character does not arbitrarily mean “tenderness.” The concept of chûwa is explained by Zisi, Confucius’ grandson, in The Doctrine of the Mean: “Equilibrium (chû) is the fundamental principle of the world. Harmony (wa) is the universal path. When equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, heaven and earth are ordered and all things will be nourished and flourish.” Only this meaning of wa can sate divine spirits and human hearts. How could poems that entertain the public with ingenuity and tenderness “affect the gods and demons?” (Taionki, 78).

This kind of belief in the combination of Confucian ethics and magical efficacy of waka is typical of the Nijô school. This passage reveals that Teitoku’s distaste for Chôshôshi’s style was not simply a matter of literary taste, but rather he felt that his rival’s clever compositions were at odds with the vital political and spiritual functions of waka. Subsequent passages make clear that in Teitoku’s view waka is not a weak, effeminate art.

The Way of Poetry would be incomplete without the florid style, however, the form of fruition should be the foundation and florid style should be used later. The indispensible florid style becomes harmful if it exceeds the ‘form of fruition’. After the Man’yôshû, people’s hearts soon lost their simple purity. Tsurayuki lamented the loss of the form of fruition by stating, “all of the fruit has fallen and only the blossoms remain.” While the florid style is valuable, it is conventionally feminine and thus tends to exhibit weakness.
Those who would make beauty the true essence of waka, even if it is weak, would have to replace Hitomoro with Komachi as the chief master. The preface to the *Kokinshū* states, “Ono no Komachi’s poems are moving but weak” and “they are weak because they are feminine poems.” Therefore, weakness should be fastidiously avoided in the poems composed by men. In general, no matter what topic you compose on if you string together thirty-one syllables and avoid vulgar terms it will naturally have the tenderness befitting the name Yamato-uta. If, however, you contrive to compose beautifully then you become disingenuous. Therefore, this approach is detested like a fox in the evening transforming itself into a beauty to trick people (*Taionki*, 80).

Again it is tempting to imagine that this tricky fox is none other than Chōshōshi: he contrived to compose beautifully and his poetry certainly at times borders on being disingenuous. One aspect of this passage that is easily overlooked is that it limns a very curious historical narrative. Teitoku claims that waka poetry went into decline not during his lifetime, not with the rise of the samurai, but before the compilation of the *Kokinshū*. This extraordinary claim makes one wonder how an art that has been in decline basically since its inception managed to not only survive but flourish century after century. Such intellectual contortions were necessary for Teitoku in order to explain the profound value of his unpopular style of waka.

While admitting that composing in the florid style will bring popularity, Teitoku claims that it is not the proper method.

Teitoku clearly makes the case that winning popularity is less important than following the true Way of Poetry. Always the teacher, Teitoku explains exactly how to go about composing the right kind of verse.

Beginners do not find the true path interesting. Even if it is not interesting, you should believe the teachings of your master, have tastefulness (*suki*) in your heart, and savor old poems day and night. Classical poems are devoid of any unusual contrivances and can appear like the words of children, but if you contemplate their spirit then the earnest simplicity of these poems will be revealed to you like the dawn of a day or like a drunk sobering and you will come to understand the sorridness of the florid style (*Taionki*, 81).

As we have already seen, Teitoku views the study of waka as a form of religious practice and in this passage he clearly spells out the steps in that practice. Students first must have faith in their teachers, then must cultivate the proper state of mind, and finally they must study classical poetic examples. According to Teitoku, Chōshōshi failed to master any of these steps.

Teitoku then elaborates on the importance of the concept of tastefulness (*suki*).

If you seek fame by composing contrived poems, you will be infamous. Pay no mind to people, put your heart into the straight path (*sugunaru michi*), constantly devote yourself to tastefulness and without fail you will have a dazzling legacy. In ancient times the word *suki* (tastefulness) was always connected to the art of poetry. The Tales of Heike contains the phrase, “Since Tadamori was a man of *suki* and had refined taste in poetry…” The term ‘elegant man’ (*kōshi*) refers to a poet. The term *suki* now calls to mind *chanoyū* because the Way of Poetry is in decline in the world. Do not think that I dislike the florid style because I cannot compose tender poems. I have written this text even though these ideas are important secrets (*Taionki*, 81).

In this passage, Teitoku imagines poetic and hermeneutic practice being controlled by an assemblage of

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34 This idea was, of course, first articulated in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*.
'elegant men' (好士) who would be selected by their skill and knowledge, not by their class. As we will see, this claim is central to Teitoku’s push to gain legitimacy in the Kyoto waka salons.

In his poetics, Teitoku describes the path of studying waka as a kind of religious practice with important political consequences. According to Teitoku, poets must first focus on proper diction, which can only be learned by scrutinizing classical poems. This study will lead to the proper state of mind (suki), which is learned from a teacher. A poet who has developed the proper mental and spiritual state will naturally exhibit proper behavior. When men’s hearts are true and their behavior is correct then there will be harmonious relations among people. Here we see the fundamental difference between Teitoku and Chôshôshi. Teitoku viewed waka as a kind of ritual practice while Chôshôshi saw it as just a literary form and as a means of personal expression.

Importance of Class in Poetic Circles

Considering the degree to which the relationship between Teitoku and Chôshôshi is inflected by the registers of class and socioeconomic status, studying these issues is crucial in order to understand the tension between the two poets. In the social circles and poetic salons of the early Edo period, status markers influenced every aspect of social discourse. Issues of class were particularly prevalent in Kyoto’s poetic salons during the late 1500’s and early 1600’s because the merchant and artisan classes, who had previously been entirely excluded from these groups, had begun to gain access. This dynamic is apparent throughout Critique of Kyohakusû and Considered Evaluation of Kyohakusû in derogatory remarks about poets’ class affiliations. For example, in the commentary about a poem included in the spring section of Kyohakusû, the author of Critique of Kyohakusû condemns Kin’nori for mentioning his own name in a foretext to the poem as his was the first name to appear in the text. This action is deemed disrespectful to the higher-ranking poets whose names appear later in the text, so the author derides Kin’nori as a “commoner” and “merchant” (Nan-kyohakusû, 9-10). Similarly, in Considered Evaluation of Kyohakusû Teitoku is described as “conducting himself in the manner of a vagrant” while Chôshôshi and Teitoku’s disciples are all described as “merchants without ancestors” (Kyohaku, 112).35

Access and control of texts have been an important symbol for the disparity in social status between Teitoku and Chôshôshi. For example, Donald Keene describes the kokin denju as “almost stupefying inconsequential bits of lore,” but speculates that “Teitoku undoubtedly would have given anything to be inducted into these secret traditions.”36 Keene then presents an incident Teitoku recorded in Teitoku no ki 貞德翁の記 (Record of Master Teitoku, 1605?), stating that this is the closest Teitoku came to viewing the texts of this tradition.

On the twenty-fourth of November, 1593, I went with my father to call on Hosokawa Yûsai. He took us to the back room of his house where he opened a box and showed us the contents, saying, “These are all the secret books of the Tradition. Look at them!” There were four books of different sizes with the words ‘transmitted text’ on the covers.

Keene adds that “Teitoku felt especially chagrined because he knew that in an earlier day, before kokin denju became the exclusive privilege of the nobility, he might have received instruction.”37 In a similar vein, Kendall H. Brown describes how a supposed inequality in financial resources influenced the access Teitoku and Chôshôshi had to texts.

Although he writes of genteel poverty in two four-and-one-half-mat rooms, Chôshôshi did not want for money. Much to the irritation of Matsunaga Teitoku, his rival in waka composition and teaching, Chôshôshi refused to accept money for his services and, even more to Teitoku’s chagrin, Chôshôshi assembled one

35 While this kind of pejorative language had been used against poets who were perceived to be exploiting poetic knowledge for commercial gain dates back to at least the medieval period, the rhetoric heated up after the Onin War because ever more courtiers received payment for their literary services.


37 Ibid., 76.
of the finest private libraries of the time—with more than 260 volumes in Japanese and fifteen hundred volumes in Chinese.\(^{38}\)

While not strictly incorrect, by ignoring the prevailing culture of the Kyoto renaissance and selectively neglecting salient details these two accounts paint a rather skewed view of Teitoku and Chōshōshi’s access to texts.

During Teitoku and Chōshōshi’s lifetimes there was an extraordinary range of texts. Printed books were beginning to appear in large numbers, but hand-copied manuscripts still dominated the field. Even within the narrow scope of texts related to the private literary transmissions, there was a wide range of texts. Keene’s interpretation imagines the kokin denju as a single unit, and thus envisions access to it as an all-or-nothing proposition. In reality, the received teachings on classical texts were constituted from numerous overlapping lineages each of which were divided and sub-divided into almost unimaginably byzantine gradations of confidentiality. The entire point of the enterprise was to restrict access to the uninitiated in order to maintain the value of the teachings. Far from living in an age when access was more restricted, due to his close ties to Yūsai who had worked to gather and collate the various lineages, Teitoku had a level of access to various texts that would have been unimaginable just a generation earlier. Record of Master Teitoku and Records of Favors Received are teeming with references to secret texts to which Teitoku had gained access.

As Keene and Brown point out, the ability to attain texts was closely tied to social status and economic wherewithal, but this situation was very complex because class and status were not fixed but rather changed over time. The shorthand terms of class designation can easily lead to misunderstandings and oversimplifications. This is certainly true of Teitoku as is apparent from a summary of his ancestry. Teitoku tends to be described as a commoner and Chōshōshi is thought of as a member of the upper echelon of the samurai class, but this situation is very relative. Teitoku’s paternal grandfather, Irie Masashige 入江政重, was the master of Takatsuki castle and his wife was from the lower Reizei family 下冷泉, an important poetic lineage. Teitoku’s father, Eishu, was orphaned at age six after his mother died and Masashige was killed during the fighting in 1541 around the capital. Eishu was adopted by his maternal grandmother and took her name (Matsunaga). Eishu was then placed in the care of Tōfukuji, one of the Zen gozan temples, which dominated medieval religious culture. Later he left Tōfukuji to become a Nichiren monk before eventually returning to lay life. Thus, Teitoku was just barely separated from both the heights of samurai and court culture. Chōshōshi conversely renounced samurai culture, so he and Teitoku were not really all that different. Chōshōshi found himself in a position not dissimilar to Teitoku’s father as a man born into the warrior class, but due to military defeat ended up taking the tonsure. Thus, the class difference between Teitoku and Chōshōshi was a matter of degrees and timing rather than a fixed absolute. The kinds of social connections the two men could call on illustrate this point. Teitoku’s father maintained close ties to the elites of the samurai class in Kyoto such as Yūsai. These acquaintances were vital to Teitoku’s education and his eventual ascent in the literary world. Chōshōshi, on the other hand, was able to use his connections to the Toyotomi to rise in the world, but with the decline of that clan he had ever fewer allies to rely on. Therefore, when general terms are used and Teitoku is described as a commoner and Chōshōshi a samurai, Chōshōshi would appear to have much greater access to texts, particularly those associated with secret poetic traditions. When their social standing is considered a bit more carefully, however, it becomes clear that since their status was not all that different they would have about the same opportunities to accrue texts.

For men of Teitoku and Chōshōshi’s social status there were a number of routes to acquire texts. First, financial resources were vital for amassing a personal library. As discussed previously Teitoku appears to have accrued considerable wealth during his lifetime while Chōshōshi’s fortunes steadily declined. Thus, over the course of their lifetimes they probably had about equal recourse to procure texts. Furthermore, Teitoku’s memoirs give numerous examples of the various other routes he was able to use to access texts. Teitoku was well-known for his calligraphic skill, so he was often called upon to

copy texts. For example, a letter from Seika to Razan states that Seika had requested that Teitoku copy some texts for him. In Records of Favors Received Teitoku relates a story about being asked to deliver a copy of the Mana Preface to the Kokin-shū owned by Tanemichi to Yūsai. Teitoku explains, “Taking advantage of the situation I transcribed it for my personal use as well” (Taioki, 45). Letters from Seika to Razan also indicate that Teitoku was a member of a group that included Seika, Razan, Chōshōshi, and Soan who all shared books. Furthermore, there is even a letter in which Teitoku requests that Chōshōshi return a copy of Wakanrōeishū and 漢俳詠集 (Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems for Singing, 1013) that he had borrowed. Thus, Teitoku appears to have had ample access to texts.

In summary, the relative ability to acquire texts turns out to be a useful index for measuring Teitoku and Chōshōshi’s comparative social status and fiscal wellbeing. The situation, however, was quite complex and changed overtime. It was not simply a matter of Teitoku being of relatively lower rank and possessing fewer resources and connections than Chōshōshi. In fact, while Chōshōshi was born into better circumstances than Teitoku, the situation was inverted in later years.

Teitoku was certainly not immune to issues of class. In fact, his writings show a high degree of concern and even anxiety about the issue. Teitoku tries to detach waka from the context of class and social status, questioning the legitimacy of the proprietary claims of aristocrats and samurai. As we have seen, Teitoku was criticized because he used his poetic knowledge to make a living and thus he is accused of acting like a merchant. Taking this into consideration, two stories Teitoku conveys about famed courtier-poet Sanjōnishi Kin’eda 三条西公 (1487-1563) refusing to teach students are very interesting.

Kin’eda noticed that Ito was wearing a Zen stole which laymen are not supposed to wear. Kin’eda wondered what the man could be thinking doing such a thing and decided not to teach him. This passage shows the important relationship between oral transmissions and class. Even in Teitoku’s lifetime the trade secret of poetic lineages could not simply be bought with money. This dynamic is at play in even more interesting ways in the following story.

Jōha did not receive a transmission on the Kokinshū from Lord Kin’eda. The reason for this can be found in Tsurayuki’s words, “beggarly guests use poetry as a means of existence.” Kin’eda said that he felt that Jōha planned to use the transmission to make his way in the world.

Here Teitoku tries to distance himself from the image of a professional poet by showing how he is different than Jōha, his own renga teacher. The message seems clear: Teitoku claims that he is different from a man like Jōha who made his living from teaching poetry. Teitoku wanted to be seen not as a merchant but rather as a ‘man of elegance,’ one of the guardians of the literary tradition who just happened to hail from the merchant class.

While Teitoku’s desire to distance himself from the merchant class is easily understandable, his comments regarding the relationship of waka to aristocrats and the samurai are more surprising.

There are those who despise waka as the tepid amusement of the nobility. This is not the case. People say this because the Way of Poetry has declined, there are no poems in the form of fruition, the florid style is enjoyed, and poetry is only seen as an intermediary in romantic affairs. Even before the reign of the samurai, as far back as just after the Engi era, poetry became florid and the Way of Poetry went into decline, so the Mana preface to the Kokinshū states, “it is difficult to present poetry in front of men” (Taioki, 83).

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39 Odaka, Matsunaga Teitoku, 144.
40 Ibid., 144.
42 Ibid., 17-8.
Teitoku once more is rehashing his strange history of waka in which the form was in decline since its very origin. Teitoku also takes the strange stance that waka is a vital art almost despite its deep connection to court culture. Furthermore, Teitoku clearly insinuates that “the reign of the samurai” has not been a positive change for waka practice. All of these concepts are built upon a foundation of Confucian ethics, both in the argument for position based on merit rather than birthright and its insistence that waka is not just a form of romance verse but that it has a vital political purpose. In other words, the court and the elite warrior class who are normally viewed as the custodians of classical culture are seen by Teitoku as a possible hindrance. Teitoku argues that waka is only tied to the court and samurai culture due to its long decline into the florid style when its only true practitioners are the “men of elegance” who can rise from any position in society. This argument nicely dovetails with Teitoku’s political philosophy, which he spells out even more clearly in Endamaru otoshi-bumi 延陀丸おとし文 (Endamaru’s Dropped Letter, 1635), 43 a socio-political treatise written at the bequest of his patron Shigemune. In this text Teitoku forcefully argues for the importance of maintaining foundations of feudal society particularly proper Confucian relations between ‘ruler and minister’ 君臣. 44

While defending the existing class structure Teitoku argues that men of ability regardless of their class must be recognized for society to function. At this point we begin to see how Teitoku weaves together the various threads of his poetics to fashion a noose for Chōshōshi.

The form of fruition is fitting for men. If you are born as a man, even if you are not of the bushi class, then you must have a heart that upholds justice and understands respect, so even if it were to cost you your life you would not shame your ancestors. How then could a man enjoy composing poems that are intentionally weak? (Taionki, 81).

If we accept the assumption that when Teitoku speaks about the florid style he is referring to Chōshōshi, then this passage resonates with multiple levels of meaning. Teitoku again asserts the didactic and political value of waka as essential to maintaining peace and stability in the realm. Building upon the discussion of the two styles of waka, Teitoku once more associates the florid style with women and the form of fruition with men. The passage then takes a radical turn when Teitoku states that all men, even those not born into the warrior class, should be willing to sacrifice their lives in order to uphold the honor of their family based upon the values of justice and respect. In light of the tension between Teitoku and Chōshōshi and Chōshōshi’s ignominious desertion during the battle of Sekigahara it is difficult to not read this passage as a thinly veiled attack on him. Teitoku then equates composing weak poems with a dishonorable spirit.

As the preface to the Kokinshū states, “Japanese poetry takes its seed in the heart of men,” so you can see a man’s hearts in his poems. A man who composes weak, effeminate poems must be a coward (Taionki, 82).

This last passage hits like one final hammer blow to Chōshōshi. Through a kind of intellectual jujitsu, Teitoku has managed to take the moral high ground away from Chōshōshi, who as a member of the warrior class taught poetry composition without the expectation of payment and would be viewed as morally superior to Teitoku who had to use his knowledge to make a living. Teitoku makes the argument that by composing in the florid style Chōshōshi revealed his true craven nature. By the same logic, Teitoku, though not a member of the samurai class, is upholding the core values of the class by composing in the form of fruition.

Conclusion

Scholars have had trouble explicating Teitoku’s literary oeuvre. The fundamental question that has perplexed them is: how could a poet so innovative and creative in his haikai and kyōka compose such
conventional waka and expose such conservative views in his poetic treatises? By examining Teitoku’s critique of Chōshōshi, the answer to this conundrum has become quite clear. At the beginning of the Edo period poets were keenly aware that the radical social changes that were transpiring would have to be reflected in poetic practice in order for these arts to remain relevant. Poets such as Chōshōshi, consequently, attempted to transform waka by employing innovative diction and unprecedented tropes. A major source of Teitoku’s prestige, however, was his access to and understanding of the traditional methods of waka composition. Therefore, any and all attempts to modify this genre would undercut his authority, so he steadfastly defended the traditional Nijō lineage’s conception of correct poetic decorum. This literary foundation led directly to Teitoku’s experimentations in kyōka and haikai, which were considered at the time to be lesser genres. In this way, Teitoku and Chōshōshi were continuing the age old debate about the place of haikai in poetic practice and the limits of acceptable decorum. Members of the Kyōgoku/Reizei factions typically did not include a haikaika section in the chokusenshū that they compiled, but included many haikaika-like poems in the standard sections of their anthologies. For example, the Gyokuyōwakashū 玉葉和歌集 (1312) compiled by Kyōgoku no Tamekane 京極為兼 (1254-1332) does not include a haikaika section, despite the fact that Tamekane was very interested in poetic experimentation and unorthodox styles like haikaika. This attitude is similar to Chōshōshi’s approach which eschewed labeling his more experimental poems as haikaika or kyoka. Conversely, the Shokusenzaiwakashū 続千載和歌集 (1320) compiled by Nijō Tameyo 二条為世 (1250-1338), the next chokusenshū after the Gyokuyōshū, includes a haikaika section, even though Tameyo was a very conservative poet. Thus, by promoting haikai Teitoku was actually following the traditional Nijō practice of using this genre to mark the limits of acceptable poetic composition and thus protect the propriety of waka.

Many elements of Teitoku’s poetics have been explained here by examining how they related to the socioeconomic tensions in Kyoto poetic circles during his lifetime. Having been born as the second son of a minor renga poet, Teitoku faced nearly insurmountable obstacles to achieving his dream of mastering the traditions of waka composition. Thus, it is natural that he would view with contempt a man of privileged status like Chōshōshi who flaunted tradition. By emphasizing the concept that “men of elegance” are the rightful and legitimate heirs to the tradition regardless of their class or background, Teitoku attempted to create an intellectual justification for his place in the exclusive waka salons of Kyoto. In this context, Chōshōshi’s experimental waka style served as the perfect foil for Teitoku. Only by recognizing that Teitoku implicitly places Chōshōshi in the role of antagonist in Records of Favors Received can the internal coherence of the text’s argument be understood.
The History and Performance Aesthetics of Early Modern Chaban Kyōgen
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During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the shogunal capital of Edo became, in the words of one scholar, a veritable “city of theatres.”¹ One testimonioy to the dynamism of performance culture during this time is that while the licensed theatre district continued to remain circumscribed within the ideo-spatial territory of akusho 惡所 (“place of vice”), a preponderant variety of performance entertainments, some emulative of kabuki and open to participation by amateur enthusiasts, began to proliferate throughout the city. Among the estimated hundreds of different performance entertainments that emerged during this time, perhaps none was more indicative of the vitality of amateur performance than chaban kyōgen 茶番狂言 (popularly known as chaban 茶番, for short).² In its earliest forms—initially as a green room pastime of professional kabuki actors during the Hōei period (1704-1711), and then as a salon entertainment of theatre aficionados, aspiring amateurs and various literary types in subsequent decades—chaban was more private than public in its staging. In this respect, chaban may be likened to zashiki kyōgen 座敷狂言 (sitting room performances) and other modes of emulative performance in which kabuki enthusiasts re-enacted famous lines, or meizerifu 名台詞 (booklets of famous lines, literally “parrot stones”) at home or in a salon setting. By the beginning of the Bunka period (1804-1818), however, new forms of outdoor, or okugai 屋外, chaban were being developed for general audiences, and staged at public sites like temple grounds, river banks and flowerviewing spots. Following popular tastes of the time, vendetta skits, many based loosely on famous kabuki plays, enjoyed the most acclaim, and enabled amateur performers to channel their stage heroes in lively acting sequences and choreographed swordplay.

This study aims to provide a detailed account of this dynamic performance art and its development between the early eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. One of the principal difficulties in taking up the subject of chaban, as may already be apparent, is that of defining its categorical purview. The various renditions of chaban in English language scholarship as “farce”, “theatrical farce”, “skit”,³ “kabuki-style skit”, “slapstick”,⁴ “amateur theatrical”,⁵ etc., limn at the inherent mutability of chaban over time. Closer examination reveals just how profound the changes in the conventions and aesthetics of chaban performance were. Indeed, the term chaban referred to something very different at the end of the Bunka (1804-1818) than it did thirty years earlier. Accordingly, this study will focus both on the history of chaban and on its changing aesthetics of performance.

Defining Chaban

Writing in Tenmei 8 (1788), on the eve of the Kansei Reforms, Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749-1823) observed that chaban performances were becoming all the rage in Edo’s literary salons. In describing this still evolving performance art, Nanpo rightly avoids narrow and historically static definitions. Indeed, one of the chief merits of his piece lies in the critical connection it makes between the early form of chaban, as it existed in the kabuki theater, and the later forms that were developed by amateur performers:

Chaban originates from the theaters of Edo. Initially, chaban was the name given to a type of performance in which actors, taking turns as chaban (茶番 tea attendants) on the third floor of the gakuya (楽屋 green room), would present kibutsu (器物 ceramic wares and other token gifts) through a combination of pre-planned and improvisational devices. Over time, chaban has developed from that earlier form to the diversion it is today. Chaban now refers to a presentation of kibutsu (景物 ‘seasonal delicacy or gift’) based on improvisation, incorporating the movements and gestures of solo performances. Nowadays, it is flourishing throughout the city.6

With his usual perspicacity, Nanpo identifies the two most salient aspects of chaban performance, both of which remained intact during chaban’s development from a private to a popular performance art. The first of these was the tension between pre-planning and improvisation in performance—that is to say, an actor’s capacity for interpreting a predetermined theme, or dai 题, with wit and dramatic flair. The second, not to undercut the importance of the first, was the subordination of performance to presentation, whereby all of the elements of a chaban skit—setting, costume, monologue, etc.—were contrived to stir up a sense of suspense about the identity of the kibutsu, a seasonal delicacy or object.7 Since the kibutsu was something that the members of the audience stood to receive, often in the form of tea, light refreshments, token gifts, or, in some cases, exotic curiosities like Ryûkyû potatoes, this sense of suspense was heightened by the very real anticipation of receiving something—and in some cases, the anticipation of receiving something delectable on an empty stomach.8 While later treatises on chaban performance affirm the primacy of keibutsu in performance, it is important to note that amidst the proliferation of different forms of chaban that emerged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, some dispensed with keibutsu entirely, and focused only on the elements of performance. In the main, however, keibutsu remained central to chaban, even as the manner of presentation grew more elaborate.

Nanpo himself was probably most familiar with chaban as an elaborately contrived game of semi-improvisational performance, which in its more ludic moments could be taken to the level of actor impersonation, replete with costumes, wigs, and make-up. It was in this form that chaban became a pastime of writers in the stable of Tsutaya Jûzaburô 萩屋重三郎 (1750-1797) during the An’ei (1772-1781) and early Tenmei (1781-1789) periods—a cultural scene which Nanpo knew well. Besides garnering a cache as a popular kibyôshi 黄衣紙 writer in his own right, thereby securing his access to the perks and entertainments enjoyed by the members of Tsutaya’s circle, Nanpo also played host to writers like Hôseidô Kisanji 朋誠堂喜三 (1735-1815), Shiba Zenkô 芝全交 (1750-1793), Hezutsu Tôsaku 平秩東作 (1726-1789) and Santô Kyôden 山東兼一 (1761-1816) in his kyôka poetry circle—not to mention Sakuragawa Tohô 桜川杜芳 (d. 1788), the kibyôshi writer who was, by all accounts, the most ardent aficionado of chaban in the group.9 Through these connections, Nanpo was well positioned to learn about the contemporary forms of chaban, if not second-hand, then through first-hand observation and direct participation in chaban performances. At the same time, Nanpo was also in a position to learn about the earlier and more clandestine form of chaban through Ichikawa Danjûrô V 五代市川団十郎 (1741-1806), the professional kabuki actor who participated in his kyôka

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7 During Edo period, the term keibutsu had broad application outside of the context of chaban. In haikai poetics, for example, keibutsu referred to the four major seasonal images: flowers, hototogisu, moon and snow. In the very different context of commercial advertising, it referred to promotional items produced in conjunction with the marketing of medicines, cosmetics, food, clothing, and other merchandise.

8 Shikitei Sanba, Chaban hayagatten (茶番早合点 Quick Guide to Understanding Chaban, 1821-1824), SNKBT, 82: 300.

9 Sanba, 368.
circle under the poetic alias Hakuen 白猿.

Yet for all its merits as one of the earliest authoritative descriptions of chaban, and moreover as one which describes both the early and later, popular forms, Nanpo’s piece only begins to scratch the surface in terms of uncovering the rich multitude of performance entertainments that were called, at one time or another during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, chaban. Indeed, by the time of Nanpo’s essay, the term had become something of a catchall for a multitude of performance entertainments, some with no discernable connection whatsoever to the early form of chaban described. To complicate matters further, the term had even come to be used interchangeably with shirōto kyōgen 素人狂言 (amateur performance), zashiki kyōgen 座敷狂言 (kabuki plays performed in private residences) and, in the writings of some, the Kamigata variant niwaka kyōgen 俄狂言 (spontaneous performance), three distinct forms of performance with their own conventions and constituencies of enthusiasts—all of which must have further obfuscated the categorical purview of chaban and created genuine confusion about what constituted chaban and what did not.10 To reconstruct a history of chaban’s development, then, is to grapple with the same dilemma that Nanpo must have faced many years ago, when chaban was still an evolving art form—namely, how to delimit the scope of inquiry to a set of performance types which share a number of defining traits, and not just the categorical label chaban, in common. To this end, comparative analysis of performance elements and a consideration of the aesthetics of chaban, such as they exist, help mitigate the task of taming a wild profusion of similarly named performance entertainments into a workable frame of reference.

A Brief History of Early Chaban

The corpus of texts documenting the history of chaban kyōgen is relatively small and limited in its scope, no doubt because chaban was regarded in its time as an ephemeral art whose traditions did not warrant conscientious custodianship. Moreover, it seems that chaban lacked the conventional mechanisms of internal knowledge transmission—that is to say, a closed discourse of “secret teachings”, or hidden 秘伝, whereby the recognized master of a school would impart practical training in the art, and historical knowledge about the school itself, to a select group of disciples. The relatively lax hierarchical structure that prevailed in chaban after it became a popular art suggests that the relationships between “masters” and “students” were not directly predicated on preservation of specialized knowledge about the art.11 The iemoto hierarchy that held forth

10 To provide an example that highlights the mutability of genre distinctions between chaban and

niwaka kyōgen: In Zokuji kusui, Nanpo describes niwaka as a performance art exclusive to Osaka (Naniwa), even though Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1729-1779), writing over four decades earlier, describes it as a type of farce performed every autumn by courtesans in the streets of the Yoshiwara, outside of Edo. Shikitei Sanba does not make any regional distinctions between chaban and niwaka, noting only that the logic of shukō and the presentation of keibutsu are important in chaban, whereas in niwaka, absurdity (okashimi) is most important.

11 Here I refer to Nishiyama Matsunosuke’s definition of “popular art” as one in which appreciation is predicated on participation in the processes of production or creation. See Nishiyama,
in formal schools of performing arts, serving to structure relationships between masters, protégés and lower-ranking pupils, was not present in any real form in chaban, nor was, for that matter, any collective sense among members of belonging to a particular school. Neighborhood proximity, rather than affiliation with a particular tradition or the lineage of a presiding master, appears to have been the main consideration for those who joined the informal troupes, or ren 连, that developed in districts like Nihonbashi, Fukagawa, Asakusa, Kanda and Yamanote during the early nineteenth century. 

While there is evidence of some performers attaining the distinction of chaban-shi 茶番師, or chaban masters, Gerstle points out that these figures would have acted in a semi-professional capacity at best. In general, a chaban-shi was much less a teacher than someone who simply was recognized for his proficiency in the art. Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1780-1840) addresses this point in Chaban hayagitten when he writes: “One says ‘chaban-shi’ when referring to someone accomplished in these techniques (of chaban performance)... Yet though one may be called ‘chaban-shi’, that does not mean he is someone who advises disciples.” This is not to say that there were no exceptions to the rule, however, for a number of a chaban-shi did take it upon themselves to promote chaban and provide some explication of its performance aesthetics, albeit outside the traditional framework of hiden instruction. A prime example is Kintsûya Eiga 琴通英賀 (1770-1844), the chaban and kyōka master who ran a clothing shop in Kanda. His Chaban no shôhon 茶番の正本 Chaban Primer, c. 1840), while written for a general audience of enthusiasts, provides cogent descriptions of the finer points of chaban performance, as well as one of the richest collections of performance texts available at the time. Even if the general lot of chaban-shi were not as invested in promotion of the art as Eiga, anecdotal accounts of the time suggest that, at very least, many performed ceremonial roles, such as participating in major convocations of chaban masters—playfully known as “gatherings of forty-eight falcons” 四十八鷹会合—as well as serving in capacities as hosts and arrangers of venue.

Augmenting the efforts of performers and chaban masters concerned with preserving chaban’s building cultural legacy were the contributions of some outside observers. Through the medium of print, these figures worked to document the history of chaban, cobbled together biographical information about its most important practitioners, record accounts of specific performances, explicate the aesthetics of performance and preserve individual performance texts. Since many of these outside sources are based on the direct testimony of the performers themselves, they offer a reliable basis for constructing a historical outline of chaban’s origins and development.

One of the earliest accounts of the history of chaban, predating even Nanpo’s essay, comes from the Edo section of Yakusha mikujibako 役者籤筥, Lot-Drawing Box of Actors, 1763), a yakusha hyōbanki attributed to Hakuro 白露 and Jishô 自笑. According to this text, an early, protoen form of chaban emerged out of the licensed kabuki theatres in Edo about fifty years before the composition of this work, or near the end of the Hô’ei period (1704-1711). This form of chaban took its name from the tea stewards, or chaban 茶番, who served tea and other refreshments to kabuki actors while they took breaks from rehearsals. In essence, this game-like entertainment originated in the practice of one actor serving as “tea steward” to the peers in his troupe, presumably as part of a playful hazing exercise. When some “tea stewards” began to embrace the task with exaggerated deference and dramatic flair, it developed into a unique form of performance entertainment, with its own emerging standards of appreciation and culture of competition.

Around the same time, another, more raucous form of entertainment called sakaban 酒番 took shape, one which—as its name makes quite clear—involved the consumption of wine and hearty revelry among actors. One of the hallmarks of sakaban

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15 Sanba, 381.
as a mode of performance was its formulation of set themes, which were written down on tickets and drawn randomly from a lot box by each participant or group of participants. Herein lay the forerunner of the dai, or set topics, that would become a hallmark of later chaban. Those who presented the most witty and entertaining variation, or shukō 趣向, on a given theme—all in conjunction with the presentation of a particular delicacy for the feast—were singled out for praise by their peers. With the ascension of the influential actor Sawamura Sōjūrō I 初代沢村宗十郎 (1684-1756) to head of the Nakamura-za in the Kyohō period (1716-1736), however, sakaban experienced a precipitous decline in popularity. Sōjūrō, who was of the mind that serious actors ought to abstain from drink, encouraged the members of his troupe to participate in an alternative form of sakaban, one which exchanged tea for sake and more austere confections for the seafood dishes and other luxurious delicacies that had become the norm in sakaban.17 Although different in some respects from the form of chaban that preceded it—most notably, in the formulation of set themes—the new form that developed under Sōjūrō, as an alternative to sakaban, became the dominant form of chaban. So much so, in fact, that popular lore attributes the coinage of the term chaban to Sōjūrō; despite the fact the term existed well before Sōjūrō’s tenure as head of the Nakamura-za.

Subsequent accounts of chaban, while corroborating the essential points offered in Yakusha mikujibako, also serve to confirm a general timeline of its development. Sanba’s Chaban haya gatten, by far the most extensive study of the subject, cites the earliest documented references to chaban to confirm its initial development during the Hōei period (1704-1711). By Sanba’s reckoning, chaban experienced a rise in popularity during the Kyōhō period (1716-1735), until ultimately reaching a peak during the Hōreki (1751-1764) and Meiwa (1764-1768) periods. It is important to note, however, that this timeline refers to chaban only as it developed in the social world of the kabuki theater, not amongst amateurs. There are no reliable bases for dating the emergence of amateur chaban, although most sources agree in citing the pseudonymous figure Kakushi 角至, a chaban aficionado, as being instrumental in promoting chaban as a popular art.18 And while it is not entirely clear under what circumstances chaban went from being a pastime of kabuki actors to an entertainment of amateur performers, some later sources indicate that aspiring amateur performers, including even some high-ranking samurai, may have received instruction in kabuki theatres.19 Once it took root in the cultural circles in the city, chaban began to develop into a profusion of loosely affiliated performance types, some little more than exercises in imitating one’s neighbors on visits through one’s home district.20 Yet even as it was transported from the green rooms of the kabuki theater to amateur salons throughout the city, chaban retained a firm connection to kabuki dramaturgy and performance. Among its canon of set themes, or dai, those involving mimicry of roles in kabuki adaptations of the Čuchingura (忠臣蔵) and Sōga monogatari (菅家物語) narratives ranked among the most popular. In its performance techniques as well, many of which were developed for chaban by figures like Rijū 里住, there is palpable evidence of kabuki’s influence. The hikinuki miburi 引抜身振 technique described and illustrated in Chaban sangai zue (茶番三階図絵 An Illustrated Guide to Chaban Performance on the Third Floor), for example, bears striking similarity to the technique of hikinuki in kabuki, whereby an actor removes his outer garment with a dramatic flourish at an important stage in a performance.21 Moreover, in its later instantiations as an imitative or emulative mode of performance, chaban also incorporated parodic mimicry of famous kabuki actors. A well-known example is that of Ryūtei Tanehiko 柳亭種彦 (1783-1842), whose putative physical likeness to the stage star Bandō Mitsugorō III 三世坂東三津五郎 (1775-1832) and uncanny ability to imitate the actor’s histrionics won him fame throughout the chaban circles of

17 Sanba, 363.
18 KHS, no. 2, vol. 7: 510.
19 See for example Shizu no odamaki (賊の小田巻 Bobbin Notes, 1802), cited in Ikari Akira, Ryūtei Tanehiko (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōunkan, 1989), pp.54-55.
20 Sanba, 364.
21 Chaban sangai zue
Tanehiko, 1783-1842


The Elements of Chaban Performance

Among the three main elements of chaban—engei (演技 acting), hane (ハネ wit), and keibutsu (景物 “seasonal delicacies or gifts”)—the dispensing of keibutsu was considered to carry the greatest importance. This privileging of keibutsu is reflected in Sanba’s succinct formula—“when it comes to chaban, keibutsu are the first consideration, matters of style (shukō 趣向) are secondary.” 24 Chaban texts can be seen to hew to this formula in their dramaturgical structure, which conventionally opens with an introduction of the dai, or topic, followed by an exposition in which certain words, phrases, or images are deployed to whet the audience’s curiosity about the keibutsu, and lastly, a climactic unveiling of the keibutsu itself. At their most elemental, chaban pieces could be little more than riddle-like skits, whose keibutsus could be little more than riddle-like addresses to the audience, with minimal basis for dramatic interpretation. Heso chaban (勝茶番 Chaban Boiled in the Belly Button, 1846) documents an example of such a skit, whose dai is Tōme-gane (遠目鏡 Telescope). According to the performance notes, the performer begins by describing the titular object and its wondrous power to enable the viewer to see distances of one and two-thousand ri. Then, midway through the monologue, the performer takes out a daikon radish, holding it up to his eye in the manner of a telescope as he delivers the following lines: “Here I see Ryūkyū, Satsuma, and Chōsen (Korea). Then, as I direct my telescope upwards, I can see various countries like Ezo (Hokkaidō), Oroshiya (Russia), and Tenjiku (India).” 25 Despite an instance of wordplay involving the old Japanese name for “Russia” (Oroshiya) and the popular con-

diment “grated daikon” (daikon oroshi), the humor of this piece appears to derive from the obvious visual mitate inherent in its main prop—that is, in the absurd replacement of a daikon radish for a telescope. According to the performance notes, after this piece was performed, the actor would withdraw from the stage, leaving the keibutsu behind. Then the recipient of the keibutsu would be determined by drawing lots. 26

Another example of how all the elements of the performance were subordinated to the presentation of the keibutsu can be found in Asobi no tomodachi (遊びの友達 Friends at Play), a short chaban piece attributed to Ryūkotei Hōsen 柳橋亭豊川:

My topic (dai) is “friends at play.” There are many forms of play. As luck would have it, today happens to be hatsune no hi, festival of the first child. Commencing with the first games of spring, I meet with all of you, my playmates. You come over to my house, and I say, “pull it out of the ground.” Now I present to you what we have pulled out of the ground, a thousand-generation pine sapping (chiyo no komatsu), as a gift. 27

According to the performance note and illustration at the end of this piece, the keibutsu was a stack of fifty tobacco pipes (kiseru), wrapped in pine-green gauze pouches. 28 The pouches had a sewn inseam which created separate pockets for the pipes and clumps of tobacco. Although there are no explicit references to pipes or tobacco in this performer’s delivery, the connection between this content and the appearance of the keibutsu would have been apparent to those who could decipher the underlying hane of this piece—the color association between chiyo no komatsu, the ceremonial pine sapping, and the pine green tobacco pouches.

Other keibutsu employed cultural references, verbal puns, or visual mitate to limn at the identity of the keibutsu. In a piece with the dai Koi (恋 Love), for example, a profusion of kerchiefs dyed in mottled patterns of red, yellow, black, and white—the colors of koi carp—are used as props throughout

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24 Sanba, 377.
26 Nakamura, 260.
27 Cited in Sanba, 362-363.
28 Sanba, 363.
the exposition, until, through a sudden climatic transition, they are revealed to be the *keibutsu*. Obviously the *hane* here would have been in the pun between *koi* (love) and *koi* (carp), with the alternative reading of *koi* as “carp” suggested through the colors of the kerchiefs.

As the examples of *daikon* radishes, tobacco pipes and dyed handkerchiefs suggest, *keibutsu* could be quite unconventional. For the audience, part of the surprise lies not only in the riddle-like presentation of the *keibutsu*, but the inherent curiosity of the article that one stood to receive. Sanba draws upon a preponderance of anecdotal accounts in *Chaban haya gatten* to provide some scope of the unusual, and at times quite lavish, variety of gifts that could be presented at the climatic end of a *chaban* performance. He notes, for example, a performance after which thirty wicker caskets were distributed to the audience, each of which contained a pearl-studded sake decanter. Potted cactuses were given out after another performance, and as is apparent from errata to the first volume of his work, Sanba went to great pains to get an accurate depiction of it. (figures of human anatomical models, cobbled together out of *daikon* radishes, carrots, and other vegetables.) While vegetable art appears to have been a rarity, seasonal delicacies and culinary curiosities, like Ryūkyū potatoes, were not. It should come as no surprise given the original provenance of *chaban* in the junketings of the *gakuya* that food and drink were commonly dispensed as *keibutsu*. Concomitant with this practice was a veritable pantry raiding of the popular canon of kabuki and *jōruri* plays for any scenes involving eating or drinking. Predictably, *Chūshingura* was a popular source of material, especially the famous scene in which Kudayū tests Yuranosuke by offering him octopus on the night before the anniversary of Enya’s death. In fact, a distinct subgenre of *chaban* known as *kui-chaban* 食茶番, or alternatively, *ta-bemono chaban* 食物茶番, arose out of the corpus of performance texts that aimed to appeal to the literary tastes of audiences on one hand, through ingenious textual references to eating, and on the other, to the gustatory senses through the presentation of comestible *keibutsu*. At the end of a *chaban* skit whose *dai* was *Chūshingura*, the performer invokes the subgenre of *kui-chaban*—which by this time appears to have signified a conventionalized set of dramaturgical and offertory conventions—as the determinative factor in choosing to offer food as the *keibutsu*:

> “Since this piece is a *kui-chaban*, and it would inappropriate if we did not offer some fare, we present you now with the *keibutsu*, with the hope that it suits your palate.”

As these references illustrate, *chaban* became a unique site of cultural consumption, located at intersections of theatrical performance, dining and merchandising of material wares. Returning for a moment to the performance note at the end of *Asobi no tomodachi*, we find detailed information about the source of the tobacco pipes and pouches—namely, that they were provided by the Nezumiya, a shop in Ningyō machi that specialized in the manufacture of stage props. Although more research is needed to

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29 Sanba, 378.
30 Sanba, 369.
31 Sanba, 378-379.
32 Cited in Sanba, 370.
33 Sanba, 363.
establish documented links between chaban performance and the merchandising of goods like stage props and textiles, this note offers some suggestion of the marketing possibilities of chaban, of using amateur performance as a front for distributing sample wares to potential customers. The term keibutsu, after all, was also used in advertising, referring to promotional items produced in conjunction with the marketing of medicines, cosmetics, food, clothing, and other merchandise.

Notwithstanding the strong emphasis on keibutsu in chaban, at least until the early nineteenth century, it is important to keep sight of the fact that the presentation of keibutsu was but the end result of an extensive process of preparing for, and delivering, a performance. Chaban may be called unique in the regard that even as it entailed elaborate preparations in the choice of costumes, wigs, make-up, and occasionally even stage backgrounds and props, it also remained, first and foremost, an improvisational mode of performance. Sanba writes to this point in Chaban hayagatten when describing the elements of chaban performance: “First, one puts on a wig and applies make-up, assuming the appearance of an actor. Then one performs in whatever way one sees fit. Lastly, one makes a presentation of keibutsu.”34 The first stage of the process may not have been as casual as Sanba makes it out to seem. Handbooks like Chaban sangai zue (An Illustrated Guide to Chaban Performance on the Third Floor) offer detailed technical advice on the selection of costumes, wigs and props, as well as on nearly every conceivable matter in dressing for a chaban performance—indeed, this seems to have constituted a veritable art unto itself. Sanba’s formulation also suggests that actor impersonation was much more common than the few extant anecdotes describing its practice would have us believe—indeed for Sanba, it seems to constitute an integral aspect of the performance. In order to enhance the mimetic quality of one’s actor impersonation, it would seem that study of the subject—either through viewing of performances, actor prints and other theatre-related ephemera, or rote memorization and rehearsal of meizerifu promptbooks—would have entailed additional preparations for the performer. Simply looking like the subject of one’s impersonation surely would not have been enough to deliver a compellingly irreverent performance.

Chaban al Fresco

No study of chaban, even one of this limited scope, would be complete without mention of the outdoor variants of chaban performance that developed during the Bunka (1804-1818) and Bunsei (1818-1830) periods. On this point, Hamada provides a useful basis for categorization of later chaban, determined by sites of performance. Under this schema, there are two main categories: zashiki chaban 座敷茶番, encompassing the various forms that developed within a salon setting, and yagai屋外, or outdoor, chaban, referring to a subset of performance modes that relied on more extensive use of costumes, props, stage backgrounds, and choreography of swordplay scenes, all in keeping with the outdoor setting.35 Of these, perhaps the best known, and most representative type of yagai chaban was hanami chaban 花見茶番, or “flower-viewing chaban”, which as its name indicates was customarily performed in conjunction with springtime flower viewing.

The differences between yagai and zashiki cha-

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34 Sanba, 367.

35 Hamada Keisuke, Chaban ni tsuite, in SNKBTK, pp.472-473.
ban extended well beyond matters of venue alone, and we might note, for example, that keibutsu, and its attendant aesthetics of presentation, played a diminished role in outdoor chaban performances. In some cases, keibutsu were even dispensed with entirely. The constitution of the audience was also very different for zashiki and yagai chaban. Whereas zashiki chaban, in its various forms, was performed and appreciated within a closed circle of peers, outdoor variants like hanami chaban were often performed for a general audience—all of which undoubtedly had a profound effect on the dynamics of interaction between actor and audience, and indeed, on the most basic matters of performance.

One of the best known sources on hanami chaban — and for that matter, yagai chaban — is not a theatrical handbook at all, but a work of fiction, Ryūtei Rijō's 滝亭鯉丈 (1777-1841) popular kokkeibon Hanagoyomi Hasshōjin (花暦八笑人 Eight Laughters: A Flower Calendar, 1820-1834). In Book Two, a group of diletantists, a few of whom are roaring drunk, attempt to stage a chaban performance at a popular flower-viewing spot on Mount Asuka, loosely basing their skit on kabuki vendetta plays like Katakuchi tsuzure no nishiki (敵討棧縵錦 Vendetta in Patched Brocade, 1736). As Sajirō, one of the characters, explains, the motive behind their skit is not such much to engage in serious acting, or even to entertain, as much as it is to show off their sword-playing prowess before a group of female audience members. Over the course of the story, their plans to stage the skit go awry. While Sajirō and his friend Demejū rehearse their parts, working out the choreography of the swordfight, Demejū accidentally pokes one of two passing samurai in the nose with his prop sword. The samurai fly into a rage, and threaten to execute both men on the spot. Only when they mistakenly come to believe that Sajirō and Demejū are actually two samurai disguised as beggars, seeking to exact revenge on the murderer of their lord, do they view the shabby pair as engaged in a noble crusade to uphold their family honor and let them go on their way unharmed. A second run-in with the samurai send Sajirō and Demejū into frantic escape, and the planned skit, despite all manner of preparations for stage, costumes and props, never comes to fruition.36

Conclusion

Chaban constituted an important cultural activity for actors, writers, poets and amateur enthusiasts from various social backgrounds in early modern Japan. Amidst the great variety of forms that developed between the latter half of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries, those that emphasized actor impersonation and presentation of a keibutsu enjoyed the most enduring popularity in salon settings. For writers and poets like those affiliated with the stable of Tsutaya Jūzaburō and the kyōka circle of Ōta Nanpo during the An’ei (1772-1781) and early Tenmei (1781-1789) periods, chaban served as a pretext for camaraderie and merrymaking, and as such, was tied into the social dynamics of circle affiliation. By the beginning of the Bunka period (1804-1818), new forms of outdoor (yagai) were being developed for general audiences, and staged at public sites like temple grounds, river banks and flower-viewing spots. Following popular tastes of the time, vendetta skits, many based loosely on famous kabuki plays, enjoyed the most acclaim, and enabled amateur performers to channel their stage heroes in lively acting sequences and choreographed swordplay. In general, the tenor of these later outdoor variations of chaban was less parodic than the earlier salon forms, even though salon chaban of the Bunke (1804-1818) and Bunsei (1818-1830) periods appears to have been heavily reliant on actor impersonation.

In closing, it seems appropriate to cite a chaban anecdote that highlights the very difficulty of defining this dynamic performance art in all of its variety. During a major assembly of chaban masters in the Tenmei period (1781-1789), Hōseidō Kisanji was called upon to perform a chaban skit. Much to the disbelief of those in attendance, the dai he drew from the lot box was “chaban”. Many must have thought, “how can one possibly represent chaban within the context of a chaban skit?” Kisanji, however, responded to the challenge. Changing into the garb of a servant, he loaded a wicker casket onto his back and reappeared before the group. Feigning physical strain under a heavy load, he lumbered into

the room, stumbling onto the floor before propping himself back up. In this ridiculous guise, he addressed the group, “Well now, everyone, I must beg your pardon. I drew the dai entitled “chaban”, and came here with the keibutsu loaded into my wicker casket. But now that I’ve upset the casket, I wonder if I haven’t done damage to them. Let’s have a look, shall we?” And with that, Kinsanji opened the lid to his casket to reveal a catty of tea pouches. “Please look here, everyone. Just like my wicker casket, the contents have been turned upside down and ‘chaban’ has turned into become ‘bancha’ 番茶!”

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37 Cited in Samba, 381.
Nam-lin Hur. Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System
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Nam-lin Hur’s Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System is full of interesting ironies and paradoxes concerning the Tokugawa state and its relationship to Buddhism. Just as an introductory example, he notes that Buddhism was not a state religion in the Edo period; indeed, the state took several measures to curb the influence of Buddhism in society. At the same time, however, the state, through its anti-Christian policy, was eminently responsible for allowing Buddhist temples to flourish and even went so far as to make it extremely difficult for a family to remove itself from the temple registries. These types of paradoxes are found throughout the book so that not only has Hur written a superb history of the Danka system in Edo Japan, he has also, as academics like to say, problematized the role of Buddhism within the Tokugawa state.

Hur recognizes that the term danka has traditionally been translated as “temple parish system,” but finds that translation unsatisfying. He suggests instead “funerary patronage,” largely to avoid the connotation that the relationship between temple and families was based on geography. In reality, the relationship was one that often crisscrossed a city or village, as each family chose which temple it patronized. Furthermore, the relationship was largely based on what Hur calls “familial death rituals and ancestral rites of oblation.” The relationship was very much based on the funerary rites as well as the subsequent rituals of commemoration that the temples provided to families. This had the interesting side effect of “creating” ancestors, rather than simply commemorating their deaths. These ancestors served the function of protecting the family and therefore the rituals became exceedingly important. This leads to yet another paradox: Although it was a Shinto cosmology that provided the framework for ancestral spirits protecting the household, it was largely the Buddhist temples that actually provided the rituals and services to create those ancestors.

The danka system really rose to prominence in society with the Tokugawa policy of temple certification. This policy forced every family to obtain a certification from a Buddhist temple stating that they were not Christian. This was part of the severe persecution of Christianity that began in the first half of the seventeenth century and continued, at least rhetorically, throughout the Tokugawa regime. Hur notes that even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, long after Christianity ceased to be a real issue in Tokugawa society, these temple certifications were required in order for individuals to be free from suspicion of being a Christian. It was this requirement, in conjunction with the funerary rites that were so important to Japanese families, that allowed the danka system to flourish and allowed Buddhist temples in the Edo period to be financially viable, even without explicit state support.

Hur spends a great deal of the book explaining in minute detail the workings of the temple certification system, the rituals used in the various funerary practices in Buddhist temples, the role of ancestors in promoting the household in Tokugawa society, and the legal ramifications of belonging to the danka system. For example, Hur notes that it was exceptionally difficult to leave the danka relationship with a temple once that relationship had been initiated. This was largely because the original temple had to agree to provide its assent when a family wanted to leave. Naturally, temples were not always entirely obliging. Furthermore, there were instances in which Shinto priests wanted to obtain permission to perform Shinto rituals rather than Buddhist ones, but this also proved difficult as only Buddhist priests were authorized to inspect and certify a death. Thus, as Hur notes, death was really only “legal” in the danka system! While this amount of detail is quite impressive and demonstrates an extraordinary amount of first-rate research, the depth of specificity can become tedious as one is treated to page after page of technical information. It is a credit to the author that despite this detail, he never allows his reader to lose sight of the main thesis of the book.

Perhaps the most important contribution that this book makes to the scholarship on early modern Japan is that it ties together seemingly disparate
aspects of Tokugawa society into a coherent narrative centered on the danka system. For example, the author connects the Tokugawa attempt to eradicate Christianity with the flourishing of Buddhist temples, even though Edo never actively declared Buddhism to have any official status in society. Hur also relates the structure of the Japanese household to the danka system through his discussion of “creating” the ancestors through the rituals provided by the Buddhist temples. In this respect, the Japanese notions of filial piety take on special significance, and are directed not simply to one’s own parents and grandparents, as in China and Korea, but to the household in general. In another case of paradox, Hur notes that it was possible for a son to remove his father from the head of the family, an eminently un-filial act in China, if it was for the good of the household. And finally, Hur is able to tie together institutional Buddhism, as represented by the local temples that performed funerary rites and religious certification, with social and religious control by the state. It is perhaps the ultimate irony that Buddhist temples, which were not officially recognized as state institutions, should come to be such agents of state power. Hur points out that through the temple certification system, Edo came to exercise a much greater amount of control in the various domains than has been previously recognized. In the end, despite the intricate and often mind-boggling amount of detail presented in this study, Nam-lin Hur has managed to write a fascinating and far-reaching study that does not simply relate the “history” of Tokugawa period funerary Buddhism, but rather explains why (and how) Buddhism in general, and the danka system in particular, was of such vital importance in perpetuating Tokugawa control for more than two hundred and fifty years.


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During a class discussion recently a student who had been in Japan during the summer raised a question. “Why,” he asked, “are Japanese television dramas so sentimental?” The disparaging tone he added to that final word led to an immediate attack by several other students—j-drama fans—who launched their own melodramatic defense of the genre. He eventually backed down, but the echoes of that exchange continue to haunt me, especially in the context of the nineteenth century.

What, from our current realism-craving culture, are we to make of all the excess, of all those swooning Victorian ladies and their resolute-yet-tearful suitors? Was it all an act, or an over-act, that somehow we, in our progressively restrained world, have (at long last) transcended? And, more to the point, what of their Japanese equivalents: those flushed, weeping maidens and their uniformed, sometimes-belligerent boyfriends?

This question is not mine alone. Peter Brooks raised it in 1976 in reference to Western literature of the nineteenth century, concluding that somehow the histrionic language of the stage found its way into the writing style of Balzac and Henry James. More recently Ken Ito has addressed it in a late-Meiji Japanese context, seeing the flux of melodrama as a mirror reflecting the anxieties of a changing world, touchstones for real social problems that emerged in family, gender, and hierarchical relationships. The book under review, Jonathan Zwicker’s *Practices of the Sentimental Imagination: Melodrama, the Novel, and the Social Imaginary in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, appeared two years before Professor Ito’s work, and in some respects anticipates and buttresses Ito’s conclusions even as it broaches new possibilities, including an answer to the puzzle of sentimentality in literature.

It is an impressive, eclectic work that seeks to reassess and reconfigure some of the major issues of literary modernity in Japan. Zwicker uses both close reading and broad surveys of literary success (in commercial terms) to challenge traditional notions of canon, tracing a genealogy of sentimental/melodramatic fiction across the “long nineteenth


century” (1770s-1910s). Along the way he not only challenges the answers to old questions but also comes up with new questions of his own.

Central to Zwicker’s study is a question that haunts all scholars of early modern Japanese literature: Who, exactly, were the “anonymous” readers? One key element that has eluded scholars is a detailed description of the Reader. The author provides a portrait that is revolutionary—if cubist—in its approach and scope. Zwicker’s choice to focus on tears as a lucrative commodity offers a refreshing, multi-faceted view of both readerly expectations and market dynamics, and is one of the work’s most important contributions.

Zwicker sets up the parameters of his project in the Introduction. In response to Karatani Kōjin’s “nearness of origins” that has so captivated literary historians recently, he chooses instead to locate the novel’s origins at the beginning of the Kansei era, starting his nineteenth century from the 1770s. He notes that, during the time period from then through the 1910s, over 7000 works of fiction were published in Japan. The very magnitude of numbers, which led him to his study in the first place, challenges us to come up with a methodology that will do more than simply reinforce canon, and that involves reading broadly in neglected works as well as examining the anecdotes provided by canonical texts. His approach thus uses close readings of particular texts along with “broader, more distant, explorations of the ways in which the texts circulated and lived out their social lives” (p. 9). He also identifies another motive for his approach: to remedy the New Historicist reliance upon anecdote. “The myth that underlines anecdotal work is that an anecdote chosen almost at random can stand for an entire age” (p. 10), effacing the intractability of the historical record. He chooses, instead, “the methodologies of cultural history” to tease out the inherent textures of that record.

Chapter 1, above all, poses the big questions, in big terms, using big names. Its core is an inquiry into (and questioning of) “reigning paradigms” (p. 70) such as the history of the book and a study of literary forms (and how to bridge them), the use of the term “novel” to describe early nineteenth century Japanese fiction, and the role of literature in Japan’s emerging “community with no visible presence” (p. 63). And the author displays a deep and comfortable familiarity with both Japanese and Western sources and thinkers who address these big questions from a dizzying variety of perspectives (Barthes, Darnton, Kenneth Burke, Jauss, Moretti, Maeda Ai, Peter Kornicki, Bakhtin, Gramsci, and Benedict Anderson, to name a few). The chapter is a tour de force, literally, as he focuses scholarship from diverse areas on the question at hand: How to redefine and rethink the complex, poorly understood relationship between literary, historical and social forces during the time from around 1770 to the 1910s. Zwicker suggests that reading the archives, rather than the authors or canons, will take us closer to that understanding, and identifies an important symbolic referent—tears—as a focal point for investigating the complex interactions between these three forces.

Chapter 2 examines the openings of the long nineteenth century and the “emergence of an aesthetic of sentiment” (p. 72) against the backdrop of a changing literary scene that includes a shift in focus from wit to plot, the birth of the culture of the novel, and the rise of the centrality of the book. Zwicker looks at bestsellers, as well as lending library data, to limn the tastes, needs, and desires of the reading public as he fleshes out both the social imaginary and the anonymous reader. He concentrates his attention on two blockbusters, Tanishi Kingyo’s Keiseikai tora no maki (1778) and Tame-naga Shunsui’s Shunshoku umeyoyomi (1832/33), highlighting within each the irreconcilability of romantic love and society that forms their necessary narrative tension. In this tension he also identifies the power of tears, and suggests that their abundance in nineteenth century fiction came from the way popular novels managed to feed “the hunger for redundancy”: in providing readers with the realizations of their expectations the tearful tomes satisfied ideological needs as “commodities of imagination” (p. 120) that both filled the purses of authors and made them targets of the bakufu, who sought a monopoly on ideology.

Zwicker undertakes an “archaeology of misplaced ideas” in Chapter 3, following Maeda Ai’s injunction to look at books as things. Using Ōba Osamu’s recent work indexing Chinese book trade data, Zwicker demonstrates that Chinese novels were not “insignificant” at all during the long nineteenth century but had a noteworthy presence. This is true not only of the great Ming novels, but also of mass literature as well (roughly 70% of Chinese
contemporary novels apparently found their way into Japan during the nineteenth century). Beginning with Robinson Crusoe, an early outlier in the history of Western translation into Japanese, Zwicker interrogates the assumption that Western fiction in translation played a hegemonic role in the late nineteenth century and finds it wanting. He sees it rather as “a basso continuo beneath Japanese novels” (p. 152) that follows domestic swings as the century turns. He argues for archeology—studying potboilers rather than ideological heavyweights—because of the many conflicting views of literature and translation in the nineteenth century, and concludes the chapter by illuminating the bifurcated, fractured nature of the history of Western translations. Through the 1890s British and French translations dominate; thereafter the pattern diversifies by genre and geography. This, Zwicker argues, bears out the long nineteenth century view, in that the British and French translations were “an almost seamless continuation of the market in ‘foreign’ books” (p. 166) that began with Chinese shōsetsu in the eighteenth century. From the 1890s onward a new type of reading emerges—or, perhaps, an older, eighteenth-century mode is revived—that eschews commercial literature in favor of “art for art’s sake.” He concludes the chapter arguing that it is precisely the literature of plot that constitutes the dominant literature of nineteenth century Japan, one that has essentially been written out of contemporary literary histories in favor of, in Karatani Kōjin’s words, “deepened interiority and its expression” that is the mark of Western novels written in Japanese.

In Chapter 4 Zwicker engages in a close reading of two novels that signal the end of the long nineteenth century: Ozaki Kōyō’s Konjiki yasha and Tokutomi Roka’s Hototogisu. Both began as serialized tearjerkers, both relied upon melodrama, and both were wildly popular among turn-of-the-century readers, in Japan and Korea. Zwicker uses each to different ends. Konjiki yasha, set within the world of Meiji capitalism where even the protagonists are corrupted by money, represents the melodramatic novel in the modern, industrialist age, being “torn between the endless present of accumulation and the narrative desire or impulse to construct a past” (p. 188). Underscoring the 1890s literary tension, Kōyō’s own life is torn between the necessity of earning through publishing sentimental novels and his desire to create pure art. Hototogisu, on the other hand, inscribes the notions of “beautiful death” (p. 200) and “the rhetoric of ‘too late’” (p. 201) into the world of Meiji politics with which Roka was becoming increasingly uncomfortable. “Hototogisu stands at the end of a series of tearjerkers that spans the long nineteenth century” (p. 202) but is part of a very different ideological moment. “Compromise and reconciliation were no longer as straightforward” as they had been throughout the nineteenth century. Zwicker concludes the chapter by identifying tears as the cathartic agent that brought the century to a close. “The tears that gripped Japan in the years around the opening of the twentieth century were a way both to acknowledge the sacrifices demanded of that idealism and to lay the idealism quietly to rest... in preparation for ‘the long journey ahead’” (p. 204).

The Epilogue is an exploration of some of the issues Zwicker has brought up in the main study. He begins with Gramsci’s notion of “cultural tendencies,” walks through the disorder of an 1891 lending library catalog, then explores the translation history of Hototogisu and the detailed, surprisingly cosmopolitan genealogy of Konjiki yasha. He then engages in a reflection upon the nature of stories, translation, and world literature, noting the worldwide commerce in sentimental novels at the turn of the nineteenth century. Benedict Anderson makes another appearance as well, when Zwicker suggests that the seemingly natural purview of a novel, the imagined community of a nation, easily transcends its boundaries through translation. “Nothing more clearly suggests this double life of the novel than the history of translations, which by their very nature are born of one literary tradition, only to quite literally ‘transcend’ the boundaries of the nation-state and the national language” (p. 216). He concludes the epilogue with a return to ideology, and the idea, via Freud and Althusser, that ideology is eternal. This, he argues, gives the novel its odd but universal “double life” (p. 219), and makes it imperative that we approach literary histories from both local and global perspectives.

The strengths of this work are in its daring to ask bold questions and contest assumptions. And in very many cases the author provides intriguing answers to those questions. He offers new ways to investigate the history of the novel and the book, not only in Japan but also from a global perspective. Zwicker’s masterful use of a variety of theoretical
and critical approaches is refreshing and invigorating. The overall scholarship is sound, and he cites an impressive array of sources, indicating that he has left few stones unturned in his interrogation of literary history. Aside from some small typos and several passages that tend to wax heavy in the use of critical jargon, the only fault I find with the work is its uneven focus. While arguing in the beginning for an extra-canonical, data-driven approach, Zwicker often buttresses his main arguments not with data but rather anecdotes or close readings of canonical works. And although the beginning and ending years of the long nineteenth century are well covered, the crucial period from the 1830s through the 1880s receives much less attention.

However, so many new and interesting insights are offered within the book that I think it unrealistic to expect them all to be significantly expounded upon in a single volume. I believe that the vast majority of readers, particularly those interested in the history of Japanese narrative, popular literature, and literary history, will be challenged and often satisfied by Zwicker’s thought-provoking reconsideration of many central theoretical issues. The work reads well (I particularly enjoyed several turns of phrase: Tamenaga Shunsui as the “sorcerer of sentiment” comes immediately to mind), and I believe that it will amply reward those who look to understand the sentimentality that prevailed in Japanese novels during the nineteenth century.

Perhaps it will even help them better comprehend the sentimentality of contemporary Japanese television dramas!

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So much of what scholars have been able to ascertain about the life and career of Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734-1809) is informed by a corpus of personal writings that he composed during the final years of his life—a substantial body of work which includes Chaka suigen 茶癡醉言 (Drunken words of a tea addict, c.1807), Fumihōgu 文反古 (Discarded letters, 1808), and Tandai shōshin roku 胆大小心録 (1808). Now, for the first time in English, readers have access to a complete, fully annotated translation of the work that is unquestionably the best source for understanding this complex figure and his views. William E. Clarke and Wendy E. Cobcroft’s translation of Tandai Shōshin Roku fills a longstanding void in the canon of early modern Japanese literature in English translation, and affords English language readers, some of whom will come to this after reading Anthony Chambers’s recent translation of Ugetsu monogatari 雨月物語 (Tales of Moonlight and Rain, 1776), an opportunity to learn more about one of the true “renaissance men” of early modern Japan.

To date, only a few excerpts of the work have been available in English translation, primarily through Susanna Fessler’s “Nature of the Kami: Ueda Akinari and Tandai Shōshin Roku,” which includes translations of seven sections (numbers 13 and 26-31) out of the total one hundred and sixty three. While Fessler’s article is valuable for its commentary on Akinari’s views of the supernatural, its publication, nearly fifteen years ago, has long highlighted the need for a faithful translation of the entire work. After all, Akinari holds forth on a great many more topics in Tandai shōshin roku than foxes, badgers and ghosts; true to the genre of zuihitsu 随筆, his meandering brush touches upon contemporary and historical events, social customs, and perhaps most famously, his relationships with contemporaries like Moto’ori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801). Akinari keenly sensed that he was nearing the end of his life while writing Tandai shōshin roku, and so it is not surprising that, no longer beholden to the consequences of his statements, he should offer very candid views throughout the work, not to mention a liberal dose of vitriol. All in all, it is a rich historical and literary document, and should be of interest to anyone studying early modern Japan, not simply the work of Akinari.

Fortunately for those who have longed to include this work in their teaching curriculum, the new translation of Tandai shōshin roku is worth the wait. In the hands of Clarke and Cobcroft, Akinari’s

prose is given a lively rendition, evincing a rare combination of playfulness and academic rigor. In the original, the prose style of *Tandai shōshin roku* exemplifies Akinari’s penchant for intermingling colloquial and literary registers. In many ways, this linguistic hybridity reflects the various facets of Akinari’s complex personality—a high-minded scholar, poet, and tea connoisseur who was wont to indulge in regional colloquialisms from time to time. As much as the tenor of the prose makes *Tandai shōshin roku* a pleasure to read in the original, it is easy to see how this mode of writing would pose challenges to the translator. Yet one of the hallmarks of this translation’s quality, and an indication of how thoroughly the translator has researched his subject, is the preponderance of footnotes that gloss every potentially obscure display of Akinari’s social knowledge and erudition, which is formidable.

Counterbalancing the academic rigor of the translation is its sensitivity to the richness of Akinari’s language, especially to his humor, irony, and wit. It is most heartening for this reader to see that Akinari’s wit loses none of its edge in translation, as the following passages illustrate:

Lately, with blindness and the onset of old age, I no longer bother about correct characters, or anything else for that matter, and allow my writing brush to skelter along as it pleases, so that some people say I am hard to read. I laughingly reply, “You are somewhat late in your accusation.” (P. 117)

I hear that they are even selling counterfeits of my bad hand. This is of no profit to me, but I deem it an honour. I should like to meet those people and express my thanks. (P. 121)

Invariably, even with the most carefully rendered translation, there are bound to be objections to certain word choices or renderings of passages. Some may balk at the use of British English colloquialisms like “flibbertigibbets” (p. 165), objecting that they are too obscure for most readers; but I would submit that they are apt approximations of Akinari’s own indulgences in Kamigata colloquialisms.

For this reader, the only truly disappointing translation choice in *Tandai shōshin roku* was that of leaving the title untranslated. The translator’s claims that the heading “defies meaningful translation” and that all earlier attempts at translating it “do not give any idea of its content” (p. 37) could just as easily be made about half of the works in Akinari’s oeuvre—especially those which, like *Kuse monogatari*, exhibit orthographic variations in their multiple manuscript versions. It would seem that there should have been no more satisfying task for the translator than that of translating the title, both to bring closure to this ambitious undertaking and to leave a mark on subsequent scholarship referencing the work. That he refrained from doing so is surely indicative of his modesty.

The translation is preceded by a substantial critical introduction, which endeavors to cover a vast territory of social, intellectual, and cultural history, presumably for the benefit of a general audience. Readers with a firm background in early modern Japanese history may want to skip to the detailed account of Akinari’s life and career, as well as to the final section detailing the textual provenance of *Tandai shōshin roku*. One of the truly commendable aspects of the introduction is its use of number citations, which refer the reader to sections of *Tandai shōshin roku* that correspond to topics given critical treatment. This affords the reader various points of entry into the main text, which does not demand a sequential reading, as well as guides for mapping out thematic readings of related sections. In the case of “The Life and Writings of Ueda Akinari” (pp. 1-12), for example, the citations enable one to read the sections pertaining to Akinari’s life, twenty-three in all, in conjunction with the biography offered in the introduction. Of course, a rewarding experience awaits the reader who begins reading with section one and follows Akinari’s meandering brush as it wends through the regions of his capacious intellect.

On a closing note, it seems fitting to mention the unusual circumstances of this translation’s posthumous publication, and what they may portend for the future of academic publishing. After the passing of William Clarke, preparation of the manuscript was undertaken by his widow, Wendy Cobcroft; final editing was overseen by Matthew Stavros, moderator of Premodern Japanese Studies (PMJS). The final product is available for download through the PMJS website and Google Books, and for pur-
chase through PMJS and major online retailers like Amazon. The availability of the translation in these multiple formats raises some interesting technical and ethical issues, from the aesthetics of reading of a text in PDF format versus bound copy, to our responsibility as scholars to support quality work in our field through purchase. In many ways, the decisions we make regarding format, purchase and hosting of the text will determine the future directions of academic publishing. Hopefully, scholars working in early modern Japanese studies will consider purchasing a bound copy of this high-quality translation for themselves and their academic libraries. While the very notion of buying books may seem antiquated today, in this case, it seems a fitting way to recognize the accomplishment of a dedicated translator and commemorate his legacy.
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