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From the Editor:
編纂者のメッセージ

1) In This Issue

This issue of EMJ presents three approaches to understanding elements of daily life and common entertainments in Tokugawa Japan. The first article is actually the concluding piece of a set of essays on the theme of “Death and Dying in Early Modern Japan,” which appeared in our last issue. Drawn from a workshop held at the National University of Singapore in September, 2009, these papers examined outcastes and medical practice, samurai attitudes toward death, and personal experiences of two literary figures with death in the family and their own approaching death. As a capstone to these earlier articles, eminent historian of religion Ōtō Osamu contributes a broad treatment of funeral and burial practices across the spectrum of Edo society, providing us with insights into ordinary folk as well as the elites and intellectuals. (N.B. EMJ has a long-standing interest in proposals for thematically linked essays and welcomes thematically linked submissions of multiple manuscripts. Each manuscript will be individually evaluated by referees, however.) Next, Charo D’Etche-verry provides a detailed analysis of audience involvement in the performance of kabuki theatrical performance. She posits a higher degree of sophisticated authorial initiative in actively engaging members of the audience than is often recognized. In our final research essay, Dylan McGee builds on his presentation at last year’s Early Modern Japan Network meeting in conjunction with the Association for Asian studies to analyze the introduction of clocks into Edo literature and its illustration. Finally, I should note our departure from ordinary book review format in Morgan Pitelka’s review essay. The essay not only reviews an exhibition catalogue, but also web-based reaction to the exhibition. Further, this review itself initially appeared on Pitelka’s blog and has been adapted from that format. In publishing this review we are experimenting with an unusual approach, and editors look forward to reader comments on this approach.

As always, EMJ welcomes 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.

2) 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.

Our program consists of a panel on conceptions of destructive forces in medieval and early modern Japan and brief business meeting.

Date: Thursday March 15, 12:30 - 15:00
Place: Oxford Room of the conference hotel

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 on Thursday evening, we hope that those who fly in to make those sessions will join us for this intriguing panel!

Earth, Wind, and Fire: Change and Continuity in Conceptions of Destructive Forces
Organizer and Chair: Gregory Smits

This panel examines early modern perceptions of destructive forces of nature These per-
ceptions contributed to, but were also conditioned by, literary and academic writings. Each paper explores relationships between the powerful forces themselves and the texts connected with them. Through the lens of urban fires, Haruko Wakabayashi examines the influence of medieval ideas and writings on early modern perceptions of disasters. She is thereby able to point out continuities and differences from the medieval past. Kristina Burhrman’s paper on windstorms also examines medieval ideas that continued to influence early modern thought. Similarly, Gregory Smits’ paper on earthquakes examines the influence of early modern lore on the emerging science of seismology in the Meiji era. Burhrman’s paper examines the productive interrelationships between folk culture and academic theories, a topic also explored by Smits. As a whole, these papers shed light on the interrelationships between society and nature, academic writings and folk culture, and the dominant ideas in different eras of Japanese history.


By the late Tokugawa period, an extensive body of lore concerning precursors of earthquakes had developed. Some elements of this lore, unseasonably warm weather for example, resulted from prevailing understandings of earthquakes as caused by trapped yang energy. Other items, catfish swimming vigorously at the surface for example, came from folklore. Writings in the wake of earthquakes in 1830 and 1855 held out the possibility of predicting earthquakes by understanding warning signs. This paper examines early modern views of earthquake precursors and argues that this accumulated lore influenced the development of seismology during the Meiji period and beyond.

Kristina Buhrman, University of Southern California. Dangerous Winds in and out of Season: The Calendrical Prediction of Storms Between Theory and Folk Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century

Aristotelian and Chinese yunqi theories of wind production and storm origin circulated during the 17th century. However, popular understanding of storms in diaries and observational writing tied the risk of such disasters primarily to the luni-solar calendar. This paper analyzes discussions of major storms during the early seventeenth century, focusing on the 1614 storm featured in Keichō kenbun-shū and elsewhere. Theoretical discussions influenced topics such as seasonality, memory, and precedent. However, experientially based folk knowledge that could not be reconciled with yunqi or Yijing theory such as predictions based on cloud formations, wind direction, and month/day combinations, survived to appear in later Edo-period almanacs.

Haruko Wakabayashi, Princeton University. From Hōjōki to Musashi abumi: A Comparison of Medieval and Tokugawa Perceptions of Fire

In 1657, a catastrophic fire burned Edo to ashes. In many ways, the fire is analogous to the great fire of 1177, which destroyed a third of the Heian capital. Historical and literary sources from the two periods reveal continuities and changes in the views of fire and the various meanings ascribed to it from medieval to Edo. The paper will focus particularly on Hōjōki, known for its stylistic influence on many of the disaster writings of Edo, and the presentation of fire in Musashi abumi to examine how medieval perceptions were adapted or modified for the Tokugawa audience.

Yoshiaki Shimizu, Princeton University. Discussant:
Life and Death, Funeral Rites and Burial Systems in Early Modern Japan
© Professor Ōtō Osamu, Tohoku University
Translated by Timothy D. Amos and Scot Hislop

Translators Introduction
© Dr. Timothy D. Amos, Dr. Scot Hislop, National University of Singapore

Introduction

The following paper by Osamu Ōtō was presented at the workshop Death and Dying in Early Modern Japan hosted in September 2009 at the National University of Singapore. Ōtō is a professor of Japanese early modern history specializing in social and family history at Tohoku University. He is scheduled to retire in March 2012. The workshop organizers invited Ōtō to give an introductory address (sōron) to a generalist audience and he spoke for about an hour from the manuscript we have translated. Ōtō chose to contextualize early modern attitudes towards death and dying within the larger story of burial customs in Japanese history. His talk summarized a considerable body of Japanese language secondary sources. It also filtered and condensed many of Ōtō’s observations collected through engagement with primary sources over a forty-year career into thought-provoking generalizations. The paper offers rich insight into early modern Japanese imaginations, experiences, and remembrances of death and deserves a wide audience.

Death and Dying in Early Modern Japan: English Language Literature

Ōtō’s work is well-suited to serve as a general introduction to life/death issues in the early modern period. It is concise, accurate, original, and impressive in scope, qualities which become especially clear when it is compared to the growing body of Anglophone scholarship on the subject. While emerging English language work is impressive there

1 Oto’s written works include Kinsei nōmin to ie, mura, kokka: seikatsu, shakaishi no shiza kara (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1996); Kinsei no mura to seikatsu bunka: sonraku kara uma reta chie to hōtoku shihō (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001); Kinsei murabito no raifu saikuru (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2003).


are few (if any) works that can match Ōtō’s succinct piece or emulate his particular socio-historical concerns and the breadth of his narrational brushstrokes. Much of the new work tends to focus exclusively on the early modern period, and within frameworks dominated by considerations of socio-political ordering, socio-religious and socio-economic practice, and Western theological constructs. Ōtō’s focuses tightly on social practices and displays a special concern for the lived experience of life/death issues in early modern Japan for a wide range of social actors but particularly for the historically marginalized.

Ōtō’s paper charts the development of various institutions related to life and death issues in early modern Japan in order to outline the wide range of social concerns implicated in this institutional history. This primary concern sets Ōtō’s work apart from the one other major Anglophone treatise recently published on this topic. In Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System, Nam-lin Hur analyses the development of the danka system in early modern Japan against the backdrop of the anti-Christian policies of the Tokugawa shoguns. This is the first English language treatise to examine the interstice between these problems and it deserves careful study by early modern specialists. Despite its many strengths, however, the book is not a general treatise on death and dying in early modern Japan like Ōtō’s piece below. Rather it is an argument about how attitudes and practices surrounding death came to be dominated by Buddhism and temples despite the caution the “public authorities” showed toward these institutions during the early modern period. While the book is original on many points, such as its complex reformulation of the distinction between “temple registers” (ninbetsuchō) and “census registers of sectarian inspection” (shūmon aratame), at the level of the particular there are important discussions of real social historical concern which are missing which can be found in Ōtō’s essay on topics such as kodakara, abortion, and infanticide.

Ōtō’s work distinguishes itself from recent Anglophone works on related subjects because its primary focus is placed on the social life of the Tokugawa subject. Duncan Ryūken Williams’s The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan also uses a wide range of primary sources in his study of socio-religious and socio-economic practices of Japanese Buddhist temples of the Sōtō Zen school from the seventeenth through to the early nineteenth centuries. The Other Side of Zen has been rightly praised for its innovative style and method. Ōtō’s essay complements this impressive work. At a general level, Ōtō’s essay deals with life/death issues in ways which resonate strongly with Williams’ study. At the same time Ōtō’s paper extends beyond an analysis rooted in the attempt to find the general within particular religious sectarian complexities. Ōtō develops a line of argumentation which, while acknowledging and detailing the socio-religious and socio-economic aspects of early modern religious rites and practices, ultimately sees them as arising out of social necessity (core human needs) and not necessarily due to religious expectations or developments. At the particular level, too, Ōtō’s work highlights important explanatory social factors such as the importance of changing kinship ideology in the management of death (such as in his discussion of cemetery arrangements for single laborers), which is a fresh insight in both Japanese and Anglophone literature.

Ōtō’s work also engages in a level of generalization that helps better contextualize some of the important Anglophone work on early modern Japanese literature dealing with emotion. In Bereavement and Consolation: Testimonies from Tokugawa Japan, Harold Bolitho analyzes expression of grief in three thanatologues. The first, by the Jōdo Shinshū priest Zenjō deals with the death of his young son in 1798. The second by the haikai poet Kobayashi Issa takes up the death of his father, Yagobei, in 1801. The third thanatologue describes the emotions of the scholar Hirose Kyokusō after the death of his wife in 1845. While the texts are, as Bolitho suggests, “extraordinary,” they are also, by his own admission, “rarities” because they are personal statements. It is the extraordinariness of the texts which attracted Bolitho’s attention and they are not emplaced in a larger discourse on death and dying in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Ōtō’s piece also offers a useful frame for understanding the development of mortuary practices in Japan over the longue durée which ties together the various concerns of Anglophone scholars working in the field. In addition to the above monographs a

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5 Bolitho, Bereavement and Consolation, 27-28.
special issue of the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies dedicated to mortuary practices in Japan was published in 2000. It was edited by Elizabeth Kenney and Edmund T. Gilday. Several articles dealt with the early modern period. Gilday’s “Bodies of Evidence” showed the importance of Chinese rites in the creation of a distinctively “Japanese” mortuary system by closely examining the funeral and memorial rites of the Kōmei emperor. His essay problematized the Buddhist/Shinto binary within which imperial mortuary practices have been examined. Mark L. Blum’s “Stand by Your Founder” analyzed the development of Jōdo Shinshū funeral practices paying close attention to the way that popular attitudes at odds with religious orthodoxy lead to rulings by early modern figures which attempted to reconcile the two. Kenney studied two specific instances of Shinto style burials in the early modern period in “Shinto Funerals in the Edo Period.” These, as well as the other essays included in the issue, serve as an introduction to the range of potential topics in the study of mortuary practices in Japan but Ōtō’s essay, translated below, provides a larger framework within which to situate such study.

Convictions and Concerns in Ōtō’s History

Ōtō’s approach to historical research is perhaps exemplified in the two pithy maxims recorded by Nakamura Masanori that appeared to be prevalent in the early days of their research careers: “there is no historical research without fieldwork” (chōsa naku-shite kenkyū nashi); and “the method of doing history is found in the documents themselves” (hōhō wa shiryō ni naizai suru). While Ōtō has very few explicit writings on the nature of the craft of history, his work reveals no major disagreement with such dictums. He is clearly committed to deep empiricism – the bottom up deductive approach to the study of history – and to the translators’ knowledge he has never hinted at the possibility that inductive research might also on occasion constitute good history. Neither does Ōtō ever seem to suggest that the analytical categories he employs for historical explanation are anything other than neat reflections of the empirical realities of the period he studies. In this schematic names (namae), family/household (ie) and community (kyōdōtai) are all commonsen-sical categories that embody a semi-universal timelessness, if not always for the human race as a whole then for most people living on the Japanese archipelago. Such positivism occasionally elicits the criticisms leveled at positivist historiography in Western academia over the last century or so. A healthy degree of self-criticism and critical assessment of axiomatic assumptions are every bit the hallmark of good scholarship as are sound logic and proper procedure. But it is often precisely at the point where criticism seems warranted that Ōtō’s work often takes a sudden and unexpected turn. In the essay below, this occurs in reference to the work of Yanagita Kunio, through whom Ōtō demonstrates that the need to ‘historicize’ the household is firmly present within the positivist historical tradition. Such a turn reminds us that if Ōtō is a positivist historian, he is an extremely thoughtful one. In fact, when pushed on the topic, Ōtō remarked in a personal communication that a good historian was one who had a “sharpness of thought” (atama ga kirezū). We believe this essay displays that.

But while espousing a bottom up approach to the study of history, it is also clear that Ōtō’s work is not free of commitments. His work shows that there is a way to care and to be political in one’s work that maintains a commitment to the acquisition of basic historiographical skills and time-tested exegetical principles. Ōtō has in fact lived his career as a scholar on the physical and conceptual periphery of early modern Japanese history, and while notorious for speaking his mind regardless of circum-

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stances, it is clearly with respect and care that he treats the elderly, the infant, the impoverished, and the outcaste. His commitment to experience-based models of knowledge reflects a wider commitment to the lived experiences of the people he has studied and the material legacies of the past in as much as they offer tantalizing fragments about these people, and teach us something about who they are and how they carried their various burdens. While such an understanding of history may at points seem utopian or perhaps even a little naïve, at the end of the day “deep empiricism” is the only soil in which good history grows. For Ōtō, good scholarship can certainly grow in other kinds of soil but good early modern Japanese history will only grow in this variety. And few people are as capable as he when working in this soil.

**Conclusion**

Ōtō’s work is well-suited to serve as a general introduction to life/death issues in the early modern period because it attempts to address the larger picture of those issues within the broader context of Japanese history. Ōtō’s paper is certainly at its clearest when it deals with his main area of specialty, Tokugawa social history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the paper does not flinch from trying to understand attitudes towards death and dying and relevant social practices within a much broader historical context.

Ōtō’s work is also committed to explaining this history with concepts and categories which have a broad analytical reach. Ōtō is an historian of people rather than ideas or religious practices. He is interested in people’s lived experiences (*seikatsushi*) and how they reproduce themselves over time. Consequently, Ōtō adopts analytical categories such as “lifecycles” and “naming” which have broad theoretical applicability. Classical analytical categories such as “the household” (*ie*) and “the community” (*kyōdōtai*) do feature in his work, but it is ultimately Ōtō’s desire to empirically reconstruct how Japanese people, particularly those on the socio-economic and geographical margins, create and recreate themselves over time that provides the main impetus for his research and sets it apart from other scholarship.
Life and Death, Funeral Rites and Burial Systems in Early Modern Japan
© Professor Ōtō Osamu, Tohoku University
Translated by Timothy D. Amos and Scot Hislop, National University of Singapore

I. Life and Death in Early Modern Japan

(1) Historical Transformation of Attitudes Towards Life and Death

With his 2008 publication, Shisha no yukue (Whereabouts of the Dead), the intellectual historian Satō Hiro’o generated considerable interest among scholars for his depiction of the historical transition of the attitudes toward life and death held by people who lived on the Japanese archipelago. His basic ideas can be summarized as follows:2

(1) In ancient Japanese society through to the eleventh century, human beings were thought of as comprised of two parts, namely, the soul/spirit (reikon) and the body (nikutai), and death was understood to be the separation of the soul/spirit from the physical body. The soul-less physical remains of a human body were carried to a burial site and abandoned without further reflection. Ruling elites and the wealthier strata of society buried the dead, constructing burial mounds or stone tombs, but there was no fixed practice of visiting graves. Popular interest lay in the cleansing of souls/spirits which, once purified, would travel to the land of the dead (mountains, caves, nearby islands, etc). Spirits/souls were entities which flew in the air, never resting in one place, and this world and the next were thought to overlap.

(2) In the twelfth century, with the spread of Buddhism and a belief in the ‘Pure Land’ (Jōdo), the image of the world of the dead as separated from the living proliferated, and the idea that one needed to become purified in order to enter the other world became firmly established. This signified the end of the ancient, one dimensional view of the world and the beginnings of a medieval world view based on the dual structure of the ‘this world’ (gense) – ‘other world’ (takai) divide. People regarded their highest goal after death as the journey to the realm of the Pure Land, and this world was conceived of as a temporary place where one achieved purification. The Buddha of the Pure Land was thought to frequently appear in this world as a manifest deity, acting as a guide to direct people to the Pure Land. Consequently, holy places where the manifest deities resided materialized throughout the country and those who desired to go to the Pure Land visited these sites or had their physical remains entrusted there. Subsequently, burial grounds were no longer places to dispose of corpses but were understood as sacred sites – paths to the Pure Land – where communal memorials for the souls of the dead such as five-storied stupas (gorintō) were erected. Souls, having left the bodies or ashes of the deceased, embarked upon the journey to the distant Pure Land and were believed to thenceforth refrain from revisiting this world. Accordingly, the ashes of the deceased kept at a sacred site did not become the object of sustained veneration. Worship at sacred sites, too, was primarily aimed at dispatching souls trapped amongst the physical remains to the Pure Land.

(3) This kind of early medieval world view began to be transformed from around the fourteenth century. People began to desire peace and happiness not only in the next world but also this one. Thus the image of the distant Pure Land as the final destination began to lose its luster. Thereafter, people were desirous that the deceased would remain in their graves after death where they could be worshipped by descendants and serve as protectors of future generations. This is ostensibly the advance of secularization. Considerations surrounding this world become most pronounced in shaping attitudes towards life and death; such attitudes came to permeate every corner of society during the Edo period and the
spread of Confucian teachings also began to privilege ideas of how one should live in the present age. The creation of *ie* (households) based on principles of ancestral succession even among the commoners from the late medieval into the early modern period provided an important condition for this development; late in the early modern era each household built a tombstone as a monument to the dead, continuously performing rites at these memorials, and many family temples (*bodaiji*) developed into communal temples within villages.

(4) The world of the dead shrank, becoming severely delimited with the onset of modernity. The other world was squeezed into the dark corners or confined spaces of this world like graveyards and mysterious places.

Satō’s explanation of the historical transformation of Japanese attitudes towards life and death, as well as the overall position of early modern understandings within that history are basically sound. Building on Satō’s framework, this paper, aims to further elucidate early modern Japanese aspects of life and death through a general survey of extant literature and historical sources related to the topic.

*2 Birth of the Ie and Lifecycles*

(a) The formation of a lifecycle view linking the temporal world and the afterlife

Satō supposes that the formation of *ie* among the commoner stratum from the late medieval to the early modern period is grounded in the development of a burial system and an early modern conception of life and death.

The *ie* is a perpetual organizational body with its own name, property, and occupation, and continues directly along a patrilineal line. There are numerous theories concerning when this *ie* developed among different social strata but most scholars seem to agree that considerable progress was made in its development at all levels of society by the latter half of the medieval period. In the first half of the medieval period, the managerial initiatives of ordinary commoners were fluid, whether in agriculture, commerce, or industry. From the fourteenth century, administrative practices greatly stabilized. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, fixed *ie* which continuously transmitted property and trades as family estates and occupations began to proliferate. Alongside this development came the formation of villages (*mura*) and townships (*chō*) – communities with a constant, shared territorial bond guaranteeing the continued existence of the *ie* – and these collectives became the basic units of society during the warring states period (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and later within the early modern political (*bukan*) system.

At the end of the period of civil war and during the first century of the Edo period, the development of new rice paddies was carried out on a nationwide and the average overall productivity of a tract of land increased. Based on this, *fudai genin* (house-servants) who had been subsumed into wealthier farming households, along with collateral relatives, were able to establish their own independent households. Despite numerous regional differences, modest-sized farms managed by small households of about five people became widespread from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. This created the possibility for many men and women to become household heads and overseers.

In the early modern period, not only farmers, merchants, and artisans, but all occupations came to form their own social groups. They were comprised of skilled groups of workers who carried out these occupations and were governed by the Bakufu and daimyo domains according to their particular status designations. People’s occupations and overall survival were basically guaranteed through the *ie* and these professional occupation groups; and in the

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peaceful world of the Tokugawa period the possibility of leading a stable life expanded greatly. As a result, people came to have a strong desire for longevity and numerous lifestyle guides (yōjōsho) dedicated to elaborating ways to live a long and healthy life were published and widely accepted. Rites of passage marking the end of certain phases of the lifecycle also began to stabilize at every societal level.

In ie directly linked to official state power, such as those of the shogun or daimyo, the coming-of-age ceremony (genpuku) was held during early childhood in order to enable boys to politically and socially quickly reach adulthood. Ordinary commoners’ lives, however, complied with the following lifecycle.6 A ‘child’ (chigo) before the age of seven (counting in the old customary fashion in which a person was age one at birth) was still considered to belong to the world of spirits (ancestral spirits) but after that was accepted as a fellow member of the human world as a ‘child’ (kodomo). Boys at around the age of fifteen moved from the realm of children to adults based on their ability to do the work of adults. Girls reached adulthood slightly earlier at around the age of thirteen, with their first menstruation taken as a sign of sexual reproductivity. After marrying and succeeding to the household headship, both sexes became male and female heads of an ie bearing the responsibility for the management of the household. After retiring from these statuses, men and women became ‘retirees’ (inkyo). Socially, people who passed the age of 61 (kanreki) were considered to have reached old age. The corvée labor dedicated to the domain lords or regional community was only shouldered by mature men between the ages of 15 and 60 and all elderly people were absolved from having to provide this service.

Men changed their names at the end of every phase of the lifecycle and each name represented their life stage and household rank / social status (mibun). Although some women serving the imperial court were awarded titles and ranks by the Emperor and were able to change their childhood names, the majority of women from around the fourteenth century continued to use their infant name (warawana) from the time of birth right through to adulthood. This suggests that society held that women were incapable of becoming mature.

Posthumous names were granted to people at their time of death. From the middle of the seventeenth through to the eighteenth century, even among commoners the dead received posthumous names from the temples where they were registered, and they built gravestones on which these names were engraved. Tablets and death registers (which also recorded posthumous names) were created and the descendants of each family venerated their dead individually. Death in the temporal world meant the birth of the spirit in the next life. The posthumous name was the name used in the next life and its consecration indicates the gradual recognition by people of the particularity of spirits. Accompanying the widespread development of the ie and the establishment of temple affiliation, the dead eventually overcame their anonymity, began to retain their individuality, and came to be remembered as such by descendants and society.7

During the Edo period, commoners were controlled by domain lords through the temple population registers. In one important sense these served as a kind of record of this world in contrast to death registers which were designed to order the affairs of the next. Death registers were kept not only at the affiliated temple but they were also placed inside the Buddhist altar in each home (kakuie) along with an ancestral tablet and becoming the object of memorial services.

Individual spirits, initially remembered through Buddhist services designed to memorialize the anniversary of their deaths, gradually lost their individuality, became purified, and eventually became

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7 According to Philippe Ariès, commoners in Europe from around the sixteenth century also escaped from anonymity; gravestones with engravings recording the memory of the departed became widely diffused. This was made possible by the formation of the early modern family. In Japan, the same situation developed through the widespread formation of a perpetuating ie. Firippu Ariësu, Zusetsu: shi no bunkashi, translated by Fukui Norihiko (Tokyo: Nihon Editaa Sukuru Shuppanbu, 1990), 69-74. Originally published as Phillipe Ariès, Images de l’homme devant la mort (Paris: Seuil, 1983).
indistinct, pure ancestral spirits which merged and sublimated into kami (god) after the thirty-third or the fiftieth anniversary after the burial ceremony (tomuraitage). Thereafter they were observed as ‘ancestors’ (gosenzo) in rituals at certain times of the year: New Year’s, Festival of the Dead, and the Autumn Equinox. Conversely, ancestors who became gods were thought to look after and protect the descendants of the household.

This view of life and death was famously explained by the folklorist Yanagita Kunio in his 1946 publication Senzo no hanashi (Talking about Ancestors). Yanagita authored this book at the end of the war because he was deeply concerned about the collapse of the ie. He believed the ie had supported traditional Japanese attitudes towards life and death and wished to emphasize the ancient nature of this Japanese institution. When looked at historically, however, the attitude towards life and death he portrayed only became widely disseminated during the Edo period after the appearance of the ie among the commoners.

Herman Ooms, following Yanagita’s work, has analyzed the corresponding relationship between the rites of passage of the living as well as those of the dead in the spirit world, positing that the world of the living and the dead comprised a contiguous, circular structure. Ooms’ theory suggests that a view of a lifecycle emerged which transcended the worlds of the living and the dead: people were born in this world from the realm of the gods (ancestral spirits), matured, married, became the heads and wives of households, and after death received the memorial rites of their descendants returning them back to the realm of the gods. This kind of lifecycle was established in regional communities which supported the continuation of the ie. As a consequence, the lifestyle norm of preserving family property inherited from ancestors, and working for the continuance and prosperity of the ie by applying oneself to one’s occupation, took firm root in the Edo period.

Spirits without ie or descendents became muenbotoke (dead without any connection). Even if an ie continued, however, not every person after death could become an ancestor (senzo). Conditional requirements to become ancestors included marriage (becoming a male or female leader of an ie) and bearing children. The unmarried, or those who divorced and died without remarrying, were treated as muenbotoke. This kind of custom has been widely discussed in folklore surveys studying oral traditions.

Women of no relation to the direct line but who for various reasons had to remain in the home of their birth were treated as ‘burdensome’ (yakkai); they were not considered to be fully-grown adults either at the level of society or the household and became designated after death as the ‘restless dead’ (muanbutsu) – that is, they became entities which strongly present today. As a result, the credentials needed to perform rites for the dead can only be held by a male descendant whose blood (or qi) connected them to the paternal line. When there is no direct male descendant and a son is adopted, he must be a male with the same surname (the symbol of paternal blood relations) as his paternal blood relatives; it is not permitted to adopt males with a different surname who do not have paternal blood relatives. Shiga Shūzō, Chūgoku kazoku-hō no genri (Tokyo: Sōunsha, 1967). The Chinese system of surnames entered Japan around the 5th century and from that time clans (ugij) – paternalistic blood-related groups where the names of people and kin groups are identical – emerged. In the medieval period we witness the birth of the ie and people’s lives become focused on maintaining the continuity of these organizational groups. Ancestors became the ancestors of households and the head of the household also became responsible for religious ceremonies. ie became patrilineal and in the event that there was no heir or when the heir was incompetent, a son with a different name and no blood connection was adopted and the ie was continued as if there was a blood relation between the two. Therefore, the generational ancestors of households in Japan are not necessarily connected by blood.
deviated from the circular lifecycle. While the divorce and remarriage rate was high in early modern Japan (as is often pointed out), it is clear that remarriage was also conceived of as a way of driving away trouble from the household and returning lifecycles to their ordinary state.

From the end of the seventeenth century, the amount of spare land in rural villages which could be divided up and transferred to branch households (bunke) became scarce, signaling a general shift to a system of single inheritance. With this development, the male offspring either entered another household and succeeded as an adopted heir or built his own household rooted in a new occupation. Failure to do so meant not conforming to the normative lifecycle. From the middle of the seventeenth century, for example, a number of intellectuals and doctors emerged from the households of elite villagers, indicating the proliferation of a system of single inheritance. Many young people also migrated to the city looking for a new life at this time, but were often unable to succeed an established household head or find someone to adopt them. Failure to build their own household, however, also had tragic consequences for the afterlife. Hiyōtori, single males with only their labor to sell, congregated in large cities like Edo. Their bodies were collected after their death by their guarantors, hitoyado (the people responsible for initially finding them work), and buried in the graveyards of temples affiliated with these groups. It was not, however, burial in the strict sense of the term; the corpse was basically thrown away with some dirt scattered over the body, and no gravestone was used to mark their burial ground. Their death was anonymous and these men transmogrified into muenbotoke who dwelt on the fringes of the great cities.

(3) Chosen Lives

(a) Conception of kodakara, abortion and infanticide

Whether in towns or villages, small managerial ie proliferated widely in the early modern period, becoming the subject of religious rites for the dead and ancestors, and embodying the desire for the eternal perpetuation of one’s descendants. This transformation also became the catalyst for the emergence of a strong conception that children were the fundamental entity that permitted the perpetuation of the ie. In this period, the idea of kodakara (children as a treasure) became universalized. As childbirth was strongly required of women as a duty, childlessness itself metamorphosed into a sin. This is evidenced in phenomena such as the emergence of umazume jigoku (Barren Women’s Hell) – a hell into which women who did not bear children descended.

On the other hand, the planned moderation of the number of household members in small managerial ie to maintain minimal levels for their sustainable existence became an indispensable part of ensuring ie continuity. This was done through late marriage, leaving only the heir at home and removing all other children from the household, as well as the adoption of direct birth-control techniques such as infanticide through abortion or mabiki (the discarding of newborn babies) – common practices in historical periods without well-developed contraceptive methods. Nishikawa Joken in his 1721 text Hyakushō bukuro (A Bagful [of Advice] for Peasants) recorded that the discarding of all infants born after the third child was a common village practice. The ideas that children were precious and something that could be readily aborted or discarded were obviously two sides of the same coin.

Nishikawa also made mention of a custom of discarding one twin. The burden of childcare which resulted from bearing twins was substantial, particularly as ie were ever decreasing in size. Legends exist, moreover, about mothers who bore twins being despised as having ‘beastly wombs’ (chikushō

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10 Nishiki Köichi, Edo no sōsō bosei (Tokyo: Tokyo-to Kōbunshōkan, 1999), 49-130.


13 Ōta, Kinsei nōmin to ie / mura/ kokka, 113-115; Ōta, Kinsei murabito no raifusaikuru, 21-24; Ōta, Kodakara to kogaeshi, 81-95, 161-257.
bara). It is quite conceivable that one twin was often discarded out of fear of social stigmatization. It is also recorded in a variety of written sources that infants were discarded immediately after birth when there was a conspicuous deformity or weakness. Those infants could not be relied on for their future labor and they were presumably discarded because of the burden they presented in terms of maintenance and nursing.

Life deemed unessential for the continuation of the ie was eliminated but no expense was spared in the raising of infants whose lives were sanctioned. The basic early modern view of childbirth and child-rearing was “make few children but raise them well.” Generally speaking, the temple registers, too, indicate that the number of children in commoner households ranged between one and three. In villages and towns, children were both the offspring of individual households and the community, and the latter also provided support for their birth and rearing.

(b) Birth management by the shogunate and feudal domains

At the end of the early modern period, the shogunate and feudal domains began efforts to manage and control the childbirth and child-rearing practices of peasants. From around the middle of the eighteenth century, poor harvests and famines struck repeatedly and often and large numbers of people either starved to death or died of illness. Moreover, with the permeation of a commodity-based monetary economy, stratification among peasants intensified and large numbers of landless peasants drifted into urban centers. As a result, the peasant population in rural villages declined, particularly in the northern Kantō and Tōhoku regions, the number of uncultivated fields increased, and the total amount of annual land taxes (nengu) lessened. Aware of these problems, the shogunate and feudal domains embarked upon policies to increase the rural population by prohibiting abortion and infanticide, establishing systems for reporting pregnancies and births, and instructing peasants in ways to secure the supply of sufficient funds to support newly-born babies.

Veneration of the souls of children and infants whose lives were ended through abortion and infanticide was not historically practiced but by the end of the early modern period, religious authorities commonly taught that abortion and infanticide were sinful actions contrary to human ethics. Almost as if signifying acceptance of these teachings, women’s groups (nyoninkō) began to build prayer mounds for this purpose. The management of childbirth and child-rearing by feudal lords was based on the logic of “children are public entities and not the private property of parents.” This logic is clearly linked to modern childbirth and child-bearing policies. Families had their parental rights stripped so that children became the offspring of the emperor and the property of the nation and motherhood came under the management of the state through the slogan “bear children and multiply” as a part of Japan’s “enriching of the nation and strengthening of the army” (fukkoku kyōhei) efforts. In modern legal discourse, abortion came to have its very own statute. Infanticide was subsumed under the category of murder. Despite these developments, however, abortion and infanticide continued to be practiced in modern Japan outside the watchful eye of the state. It is possible to read into this a basic conflict between the logic of ruling authorities and the general populace who resorted to any means at their disposal to control birth in order to maintain their daily lives.

II. Funerals and Graves in Early Modern Japan

(1) Funerals and Mourning


17 Takahashi, Kinsei sonraku seikatsu bunkashi josetsu, 110.


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14 Takahashi Satoshi, Kinsei sonraku seikatsu bunkashi josetsu (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1990), 95-124.
(a) The People who Took Care of the Corpse and Carried out the Funeral

Whether it was cremation or burial, the job of preparing the corpse was thought to be polluting so it was common for the families or for those considered to be of humble origin to carry out the tasks. As the concept of death as polluting weakened, these tasks began to be carried out by mutual financing associations (kō) and the “five-man group” (gonin-gumi). One possible reason for the waning of the idea that death was polluting was the spread of memorial services invoking Amida. Other reasons include knowledge from experience that nothing bad happened when coming into contact with the pollution of the dead as well as learning about the customs of other regions.

In the latter half of the 1870's the Ministry of Justice (Shihōshō) compiled Zenkoku minji kanrei ruishū (A national compendium of the customs of the people) to serve as a reference for the drafting of a civil code. It was based on an investigation of customs throughout the entire country. According to this source, funerals in the majority of places were carried out by mutual financing associations and “five family neighborhood units.”

Throughout the early modern period, however, there were specialist undertakers. The undertakers from the Kinki region (the area around Kyōto, Nara, and Osaka) are especially well-known. Called onbō, they were people of low status who managed cremations, burials, and grave sites. In some places in the Kinki region, hinin outcasts carried out the cremations and burials as well. At Ise Shrine, they were in charge of burials.

The disposition of the corpse as well as the pacification of the spirit of the deceased was important not only to the family of the deceased but also to those living in the same village or town. Zenkoku minji kanrei ruishū shows that villages and neighborhoods had systems to make sure that funerals were carried out. In many places the mutual financing association or the five family neighborhood units provided the labor and paid the expenses but there were other places where the village or the neighborhood as a whole supported the performance of the funeral. In some areas, the villagers or residents of a neighborhood were required to participate in the “send-off” for the corpse (miokuri) and in others it was the common practice to provide money or items for the funeral (kōden) as a whole neighborhood or village. There are also examples of wealthy members of a village or neighborhood providing for the funeral expenses of poorer members.

As mentioned earlier, those who died unmarried became a muen-botoke but they received memorial services from the ie to which they belonged. When an ie had no successors, the spirits of the muen-botoke received memorial services from the wider community. The community not only ensured the physical survival of its members, it also served to secure the peace of their souls after death.

(b) Differences in the Scale of Funerals and Alms for the Weak and Poor

The scale of a funeral depended on the social status of the deceased and the social standing and economic power of the deceased’s household as well as on the position of the deceased within the household and his or her age at the time of death.

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20 Aruga, “Fukō inshinchō kara mita mura no seikatsu,” 246.
22 Ōtō, Kinsei nōmin to ie/mura/kokka, 325-343 provides analysis.
24 Kinoshita, “Kinsei Nihon no sosō wo sasaeta hitobito,” 92.
26 Ōtō, Kinsei nōmin to ie / mura / kokka, 341.
For example in Tajihi Village the Yoshikawa family of wealthy peasants created a document called Kagyō-kō (Thoughts about the family business). This set of instructions to the family contains directions for large- and small-scale funerals. The scale was based on the relationship of the deceased to the current household head. Large-scale funerals were to be held for grand-parents, parents, and wives of the head. Small-scale funerals were to be held for siblings and children. Funerals for aunts and uncles were based on small-scale funerals with some adjustment for the age of the deceased. Compared to the funerals of direct ancestors and spouses, the funerals of lineal descendants and collateral family members were simpler and those of the young even more so. The scale of funeral reflected the social order within the ie. According to the document, alms in the Yoshida household were given to the blind for large- but not for small-scale funerals. In the status-based society of early modern Japan, alms were given to those deemed to be socially inferior such as members of the blind or hinin guilds and it became the practice to offer pious alms for the benefit of the deceased at memorial services. The Yoshida family gave out alms if the deceased had high status within the family, thus differentiating among the dead through the scale of the memorial service. According to Yoda kakun mimochi kagami (1730), the household precepts of the nouveau riche Yoda family, giving alms to outcastes when visiting the graves of parents was an act of ‘filial piety.’

(c) Disposition of Those who Died while Traveling

The environment for travel improved in the early modern period and people began to traverse the highways more frequently, for a wide variety of purposes. Particularly from the end of the seventeenth century, travel to temples and shrines and private excursions for pleasure burgeoned among commoners. As a cash economy developed, more people began to travel for business or to work in other regions. Many of these people became ill and died while on journeys, forcing both local groups as well as the shogunate and feudal domains to come up with measures to handle such situations.

The shogunate’s systematic approach to the problem of those who died while traveling began in 1688 as a part of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi’s edicts forbidding cruelty to living things (shōrui awaremi no rei). The system reached its full form by 1767. Before this, local social groups and feudal domains had diverse policies but in 1767 there was a unified national approach. First, the death was reported to the local authorities. If the deceased’s hometown was known, a message was sent there to find out whether the deceased should be buried at the place of death or if people from the hometown wanted to take over disposition of the remains. However if the deceased’s travel papers stated that he or she preferred to have his or her remains buried at the place of death, then the deceased was interred without contacting the hometown. If the money for the disposition of those who became ill or died while traveling was not forthcoming from the person’s village or family, then according to the shogunate, it would be paid for by the village or the town where the deceased had fallen ill or died.

Matsumoto Junko has investigated the disposition of the remains of those who died in the post town of Kōriyama. According to her research, several things are clear. First, the graves of those whose identities were known were placed close to the household graves of the families who had cared for them before death while those whose identities were unknown were buried around the periphery of the graveyard. Second, most of the deceased who had been identified were given posthumous Buddhist names while the unknown generally were not. Third, a mokari (also known as a mogari or sagiitcho) was built atop the graves of the unknown
deceased. A mokari was constructed by using a rope passed through the top of a fence made of branches or bamboo constructed around a grave to bundle it into a conical shape. The understanding of the purpose of the mokari differed depending on the region but in some places it was said to ward off wild animals and malign spirits or trap the soul of the deceased. They were sometimes built atop the graves of children or single adults—in other words, muenbotoke. It is not known why they were constructed on the graves of the deceased whose identities were unknown but perhaps it had to do with fear of the soul of the unknown deceased. The deceased who could be identified were often listed in the death registers of their family and the parish temple and were more likely to have mortuary tablets made and memorial services conducted for them. The unknown dead entered the afterlife with no name and no relatives to care for their souls.

The remains of those who died in Kōriyama while traveling were not taken care of by specifically designated members of outcaste groups but those who died in the castle town of Wakayama had their remains taken care of by members of kawata or hinin villages. They were ordered by the chief prison guard to prepare the remains, place them in a casket, and then pass them on to the onbō funerary specialists. There were relatively few people of outcaste status in the Tōhoku region so the disposition of the corpse was generally carried out by people of peasant or townsmen status. In addition, the “two grave system” (which I will discuss later) was rare in the Tōhoku region so it seems to me that the concept of kegare (pollution) was much weaker there than in the Kinai region.

(d) Laws Defining the Period of Mourning

Tokuwaga Tsunayoshi valued social status and formality highly and used them to maintain social order. He used the law to regulate order among families and relatives. The establishment in 1684 of Fukuki-ryō (Regulations for Mourning) is one example. It was based on systems used by the imperial court and shrines from the medieval period onward and determined the number of days of mourning and of absence from work (because of the pollution of death) based on the relationship between the mourner and the deceased. These regulations made clear in a legal sense the parameters of the family and attempted to regulate the organization of families and relatives. Tsunayoshi’s code was revised three times before 1736, when it was put into its final form by the eighth shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune. Samurai were originally trained to kill but by the middle years of the early modern period they were required to take leave from their work for the domains or the shogunate during the period of mourning. Even the samurai were now supposed to avoid the pollution of death.

Tsunayoshi was a devoted Confucianist and mourning was a chief ritual (rei) for him. Most important was the relationship between parents and children. According to the regulations of 1736, the period of mourning for a parent was to last 13 months and the mourner was excused from work for fifty days. This was the longest period of mourning in the code. In Japan ie were often passed to an adopted child in order to allow them to continue in perpetuity. According to the regulations for mourning, an adopted child who succeeded his adoptive father was supposed to carry out the same level of mourning for the adoptive parent as for a biological parent. In this way, the Chinese system of mourning was adapted to the system of Japanese ie and the filial piety of adopted children to adoptive parents was encouraged. The relations of biologically-related parents and children were also emphasized, however. Adoptees were still supposed to carry out formal mourning for their biological parents. And

35 Where Kōriyama is located.
36 We have followed Ōtō’s reading here. The more usual reading of the characters is Bukki-rei. Note that the source in the next note reads the same Chinese characters as "bukki-ryō."
38 Hayashi, Kinsei bukki-ryō no kenkyū, 135-147.
while women who married into other families were told by pedagogical manuals that to put their in-laws first was the highest form of filial piety, the codes of mourning put their biological parents first and their in-laws second. Furthermore, those under the age of seven were exempted from mourning and their deaths were also excluded from the codes of mourning. Young children were not forced into formal mourning but they were still required to be restrained (enryo) for fifty days upon the death of a parent. The mourning codes were also circulated among the Edo townsmen and their publication meant that they spread among the wider commoner population. By examining Zenkoku minji kanrei ruishū, it is clear that while the days of mourning may have been longer or shorter in places, the customs of mourning spread widely among the populace.

(c) Funeral Rites for Ruler and Authority Figures

Depending on the social status of the deceased, the meaning and effect of death was quite different. The deaths of rulers and authority figures are important matters of state and many countries have had national systems of mourning.

In Japan, from the medieval period onward, upon the death of an emperor, an imperial relative, or a politically powerful person, court rituals were postponed and other functions such as religious rituals, festivals, and the taking of animal life were regulated according to Tenka shokue (Pollutions Affecting the State). In contradistinction to this, the Tokugawa shogunate created rituals of mourning which included the temporarily prohibition of the use of musical instruments and cessation of construction work when a person of high status or great power within the shogunate died.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, the shogunate’s laws prohibiting the use of musical instruments were limited to Edo and there were no standardized rules which governed when they were applied. From the latter half of the seventeenth century, the regulations spread to other domains and the rules came to have the character of national mourning rituals. The regulations went into effect only for the shogun, the emperor and his or her family, the heads of the three branch houses of the Tokugawa family, and important figures in the shogunal government such as members of the Council of Elders (rōjū). By basing the number of days that music and construction were to be halted on the status of the deceased, the regulations acknowledged the power and status system of the Tokugawa state headed by the shogun. Many domains issued similar regulations prohibiting music after the death of the lord, his family, or an important government official. There are also examples of music being avoided after the death of a local resident in a town or village.

(2) Grave Systems

(a) From Collective Grave Markers to Individual Grave Markers

As belief in the Pure Land increased in the twelfth century, the practice by Buddhists and the nobility of erecting grave markers (shaped as stupas) where the body was buried began to spread widely. In eastern Japan, from the early thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth century, the practice of erecting a stone memorial marker in the shape of a slab (called an itabi) mushroomed among resident landlords and the upper levels of the commoners. These were created in order to plead for rebirth in
the Pure Land for either the person who erected it or for the deceased. The general populace began to inter their remains beneath *itabi* which served as community memorials. The places where they were erected came to be seen as sacred spaces that served as routes to the Pure Land.

With the middle of the fourteenth century as a dividing line, the erection of *itabi* decreased rapidly. In their place, a small five-storied stupa engraved with the name of the deceased made its appearance and the *itabi* which were erected also came to serve as gravestones. Until the mid-fourteenth century in the Kinki region, large five-storied stupas (*gorinto*) were used as mass memorial markers but from this time onward, small individual five-storied pagoda grave markers made their appearance. During the sixteenth century, the early modern square stone pillar marker also began to appear.

Satō Hiro’o argued that the mass memorial markers were a mechanism designed to help transport souls to the Pure Land and the places where corpses and cremated remains were interred were not places where memorial ceremonies were carried out. Individual stone grave markers, however, were premised on the idea that the soul lingered with the physical remains. They served as a way of remembering the dead and as a site of continued ceremonial ritual. However, where the memorial marker was erected in a different place than where the remains were interred (the dual grave system), the memorial marker was thought of as a place (*yorishiro*) the soul could inhabit for ceremonies. At any rate, the continuous implementation of regular ceremonies for the deceased resulted from the rise of *ie* which endured across generations.

(b) Simplification of and Disparity among Grave Markers

From the end of the medieval period until the beginning of the early modern period, only nobles, warriors, priests, and the upper strata of commoners erected grave markers. During this period, the main forms of grave markers were five-storied pagodas, *itabi*, and stupas (*hōkyō intō*). In the early modern period, the upper strata continued to use grave markers in the style of the medieval period. From the latter half of the seventeenth century, however, the formation of *ie* among the general commoner populace was underway and individual *ie* began to erect simplified grave markers for their dead. The styles of the markers depended on both time and place but included natural rocks as well as markers which took the form of mortuary tablets, ships, and square stone pillars.

Simplified memorial markers were used not only by commoners but by the eighteenth century for the graves of shoguns and feudal daimyo as well. Magnificent mausolea were erected for the first three lords of the Date house of the Sendai domain, but following the death of the fourth lord, Tsunamura in 1719, stone memorial markers in the shape of slabs forming a pagoda were raised instead. The need to spend large sums of money to construct magnificent mausolea in order to aggrandize the shogun and the feudal lords decreased as the bakuhan system became more firmly established. In addition, it seems likely that the financial problems which beset the shogunate and the domains from the middle of the early modern period led to simpler funerary arrangements.

However, in the early modern period, social standing and rank were used to maintain social order and this could be symbolized via grave markers. So although grave markers in general were simplified, they still reflected the social position of the deceased within and outside the *ie* as well as the status and economic power of the *ie* itself. These things were displayed in the style and size of the marker, the person chosen to make the marker, and the rank of the posthumous Buddhist appellation granted to the deceased. There are examples of people of low status such as *eta* and *hinin* who were granted posthumous Buddhist names that showed

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52 Ōtō, “Haka no kataru kinsei,” 5-8.
they had low rank in the afterlife as well. *Eta* and *hinin* were recorded in different temple registers from the other social classes not only when they were alive but after death as well. There are many examples of *eta* in particular becoming parishioners of special family temples. In other words, the lowly were discriminated against in this life as well as the world to come.

(c) The Emergence of Grave Markers for Children

It seems that it was uncommon to mourn or perform rituals for children who died before the age of seven in the medieval period. Instead, their corpses were placed in a bag and disposed of in the mountains or moors. But during the early modern period, family size became smaller and the fewer children who were born were raised more carefully. The death of a child became a source of deep grief for the family and simple funerals were performed. Grave markers were made, posthumous Buddhist names were granted, and the deceased children were memorialized individually.

In the early modern period, there are numerous grave markers with posthumous Buddhist names containing the words *dōji* (young boy) or *dōjo* (young girl) carved on them. Most of them have an image of Jizō Bosatsu carved on them as well. The youthful deceased were said to be on the banks of the River Sai in the land of the dead, trying to pile up pebbles into stupas for the religious benefit of their beloved fathers and mothers. However, whatever they managed to pile up was knocked over by devils. Jizō was said to rescue the children from this situation. This belief gave rise to the idea that Jizō was a Bodhisattva for young children. In fact the belief that the banks of the River Sai were a special region in hell for dead young children arose from folk religious beliefs at the end of the medieval period. In other words, as the flip side of the consciousness of children as precious (*kodakara*), a special region of hell specially reserved just for them arose. This seems to have been a warning to parents to be careful when raising children so that they would not fall into hell.

(d) The Dual Grave System

Graveyards for the interment of the deceased have been created since ancient times but from the end of the medieval period the custom of erecting grave markers spread and the single grave system became differentiated from the dual grave system. When the grave marker is erected where the remains are buried, this is the single grave system. When it is erected elsewhere, this is the dual grave system. Among believers in Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land Buddhism), there was also the custom of placing part of the cremated remains in the parish temple or the Ōtani Mausoleum (part of Nishi Honganji in Kyōto) and not erecting a stone grave marker.

The two grave system was widely practiced in the Kinki region as well as in parts of the Chūgoku (Western Honshū), Shikoku, Chūbu (Central Honshū), and Kantō regions. It was extremely rare in the Tōhoku (Northeastern Honshū) and Kyushu regions. In areas where it was practiced, the concept of death

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54 Kobayashi, ibid., 183-188.
57 Ōtō, *Kinsei nōmin to ie / mura / kokka*, 120.
58 The Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha.
as polluting was strong and the places of burial were distant from settlements, located in such areas as mountains, moors, riverbanks, and beaches. The memorial sites which the bereaved visited were often erected within the precincts of the settlement’s temple or in the environs of the settlement. In the Kinki region, the fact that the disposition of the corpses was handled by members of low status groups such as sanmai hijiri or hinin was linked to the power of the taboo of the pollution of death.

The taboo of impurity is thought to have developed among the aristocracy of ancient Kyôto. Regions far from the capital such as Tôhoku and Kyushu had a weaker conception of impurity. I have not studied the situation in Kyushu but in Tôhoku there were few people of outcaste status and it was usual for farmers and townsfolk to take care of corpses. Even dealing with dead horses and cows was not, in the Hirosaki domain, the special work of eta. The farmers skinned the dead animals themselves and the term eta was not used until after the middle of the eighteenth century; those who worked with leather were simply called leatherworkers. In the Sendai domain, those who worked with skins and leather were called eta after the fashion of the sho-gunate but this usage did not diffuse among the general populace where members of these professions were called “pelt and leather workers.” Perhaps this was because the sense of impurity was not as strong.

(c) Shifting Graves

In the early modern period, it was most common for each ie to have a demarcated grave site and for grave markers for couples or individuals to be erected there. For couples, individual grave markers were usually raised in pairs. Grave markers for couples who had served as heads of the ie through the generations stood in a row and around this were raised markers for deceased children or those who had died as single adults. In other words, the distribution of muenbotoke in early modern graveyards shows the creation of small families centered on the male and female heads of the ie. This is emblematic of the ie structures of the commoners as well as the average samurai families of the period.

However, creating a graveyard where each person has his or her own individual marker means that burial space will eventually become insufficient. So in the later years of the early modern period, graves inscribed “The Ancestral Grave of House X” or “House X’s Grave” began to appear. These were grave memorials for the ie as a collective. In 1884, the opening of new graveyards was forbidden and in 1897, in order to prevent the spread of disease, cremation spread rapidly throughout the country and the number of collective family graves quickly increased. There are examples of a single grave memorial being shared among the various groupings of the family in places where the ties were strong between main and branch houses of a family. This practice was especially prevalent in Tôhoku.

Today, family grave memorials are common. In cases where an only child from one family marries an only child from another, there have come to be memorials which commemorate the families of both spouses. Memorials engraved with words such as “love,” “rest,” “flight,” “thank you,” and “peace” have also appeared. Temples which guarantee eternal memorialization after death in communal grave sites for those who die single or for couples without children are a reflection of contemporary realities. As society changes, so do graves.

Translators Afterword

Today, we take Japanese mortuary practices for granted, but as Ôtô’s essay clearly shows, these practices have changed considerably over history. Mortuary practices shaped, and in turn were shaped by, cultural attitudes, geographical variation, state regulation, economic factors, as well as adoption and adaption of continental ideas and practices among other things. Ôtô’s work, however, far from resorting to a popular kind of ahistorical theory of

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62 Kujirai Chisato, Kyôkai no genba (Toride: Henkyôsha 2006), 144.
63 Ôtô, Kinsei nômin to ie / mura / kokka, 295-300. Ôtô, “Haka no kataru kinsei,” 11.
modern social constructivism, shows that an understanding of early modern social life is crucial for piecing together modernity. It also demonstrates that the only real way to generalize about death and dying in the long expanse of Japanese history is to identify and account for these changes and variations.

In a study that covers a broad range of topics including lifecycles, *ie*, and state management, as well as the various deviations and anomalies surrounding social practices implicated in life and death issues, Ōtō shows that there is both continuity and discontinuity into Japanese modernity. His essay reveals how practices pertaining to life and death were created and recreated again in the early modern period and that historians must deal with the empirical record carefully if they are to correctly identify and understand the possible linkages between that period and the modern era. Ōtō’s work suggests continuities in places where modern historians have perhaps not found them to date, such as in practices of infanticide and in the fate of the single urban laborer, but as can be seen in his discussion of the *ie*, he also finds and acknowledges historical discontinuities in ways which retain a strong degree of nuance. His work explicitly rejects the classical modernist essentialization of the institution by Yanagita who gazed upon it with modernity-fatigued eyes, but it also implicitly disavows the politically-driven modern historical constructivism exemplified in the works of scholar such as Ueno Chizuko. Perhaps most significantly, however, while Ōtō examines the institutions surrounding the state, community, and individual, it is clearly the last group that elicits most of his attention, and he demonstrates with clear evidence that early modern Japanese society was profoundly shaped by distinctive and dynamic attitudes towards mortality. The essay also suggests that while moderns are perhaps to some extent now limited in their choices for imaging their time in this world and the afterlife, they are nonetheless no less active in their attempts to create and recreate themselves through their evolving understandings of life and death issues.
Seducing the Mind: (Edo) Kabuki and the Ludic Performance

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What makes kabuki entertaining? According to a recent piece in Niponica, the quarterly publication from Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it starts with the eyes: kabuki’s costumes and make-up are said to comprise a visual “feast.” Critic Kawatake Toshio, who also stresses the importance of spectacle, adds the ears; appreciating a play means hearing and seeing it. Both comments mark kabuki’s appeal to the senses, like the label itself. As it is now written, kabuki’s last character can mean “prostitute.”

Yet it must be admitted that kabuki also relies on things that the viewer cannot see, hear, or otherwise sense—at least not completely. Consider one scene from a 2003 production of Sukeroku, in which the hero and his brother force a dandy to pass through their legs. Before submitting, the man takes a picture of himself and the hero with a camera phone and then spouts a stream of pop-cultural references: from Harry Potter and “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” to Tama-chan, the Arctic seal then swimming in a Tokyo river. All told, the scene takes nearly five and a half minutes—long enough for the hero himself to comment on it. While such moments present further spectacles for consumption, they also invoke absent bodies, splitting the viewer’s attention between the live show and the one “staged” in his head as he responds to each sensory prompt.

This face of kabuki is not limited to asides. Major conventions like mitate, the “match[ing]” of historical and contemporary subjects, and modoki, the “deliberate imitation of a prior play, act, or scene to allow the audience to draw comparisons,” also invite the audience to contemplate missing objects, sometimes at some length. Viewers of a mitate, for example, may enjoy the unfolding reference to contemporary events along with the period-guise through which these events are physically represented. Modoki similarly provide two shows in one, enabling the viewer to recall and, perhaps, reevaluate an earlier performance through its appropriation in a new physical context and (often) by a new cast. One can make the same point for kabuki’s use of sekai, “worlds” or backdrops that rely on the audience’s previous knowledge of a particular story or historical event.

I would like to thank Philip Brown and four anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. I am also grateful to Adam Kern for his assistance reading some of the kuzushiji discussed here. All errors remain my own, of course.

1 I would like to thank Philip Brown and four anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. I am also grateful to Adam Kern for his assistance reading some of the kuzushiji discussed here. All errors remain my own, of course.


3 Kabuki meibamen hyakusen (Akita Shoten, 1972), first page of the unnumbered preface.


9 In Sukeroku, for instance, the hero and his brothers are simultaneously Edo commoners and the famous Soga brothers, twelfth-century samurai on a quest to avenge their father’s death.
entertaining. To extend the Niponica writer’s metaphor, they convert the visual feast into a seemingly limitless, super-sensory banquet.

This said, the notion that kabuki exceeds the physical performance is of course well-acknowledged. For example, scholars note the engagement with ideas in analyses of the ways in which Chūshingura, whether performed by puppets or actors, considers the nature of loyalty. Similarly, they plumb the extent to which plays like Sukeroku redefine heroism for Edo townsfolk.

However, what I explore here is not the stage’s sensory efforts or engagements with social issues, but the ways in which even elements of the play often treated in the context of entertainment render theatergoers participants in the performance rather than observers of it. Based on my research into the cycle of plays about Narukami, the priest famously seduced by a court lady in order to end a drought, I believe that the theater has long marshalled the combination of live and recalled stimuli as a powerful tool for capturing the full attention of the audience. Here and elsewhere, the actors and playwrights used the stage partly as bait, piquing viewers’ senses in order to access their minds and exploit their stores of personalized enticements. Kabuki was thus both “total theater” avant la lettre, as Pronko and others have noted, and a shrewd interpreter of human desire, which the theater recognized as more self-involved than purely sensory accounts of the stage credit.

To advance this view, I will begin with a brief discussion of the role of allusion in kabuki drama—turgy, with particular reference to its use by Ichikawa Danjūrō I (1660-1704) in his creation of the aragoto or “rough,” bravura style of acting. This section also notes important contributions by Pronko, Brandon, and C. Andrew Gerstle to the theorization of what we might call ludic kabuki, the stage’s challenges to viewers to supplement the physical performance with their imaginations. My goal in this section is to convey the very great extent to which kabuki relies on viewers’ minds even outside of the Narukami plays, as well as the particular success of Danjūrō I—who created the role of Narukami for kabuki—in exploiting and expanding this technique. While theatergoers in the Edo period, like today, could certainly enjoy a play through its sensory aspect alone, this allusive dimension confirms kabuki’s place as part of a broader ludic culture visible in Edo’s mitate prints and “visual-verbal” comic books.

Having outlined the importance of allusion to kabuki generally and to Danjūrō’s view of the theater in particular, I turn to my main subject: three Genroku-era (1688-1704) plays on Narukami, two of them written by Danjūrō I. More precisely, I will discuss Gempei Narukami denki (The Genji and Heike Legend of Narukami, 1698), Isshin onna Narukami (A Single-Hearted Female Narukami, 1699), and Naritasan funjin Fudō (The Split Fudō of Naritasan, 1703) through the e-iri kyōgen bon or illustrated playbooks about them. As Keller Kimbrough and Satoko Shimazaki point out, traditionally kabuki scripts “were not supposed to leave the theater, a tendency that was particularly strong in Edo.”

Since the three plays in question were staged in Edo, the lack of complete records is therefore not surprising—nor is it necessarily a stumbling block for my argument.

As Francis Motofuji has already demonstrated in his dissertation on the sources of Narukami Fudō

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11 See, for example, Pronko, “Kabuki,” 240-41.

12 On the latter genre, see Adam L. Kern, Manga of the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006). For recent discussions of this dimension of both kibyōshi and mitate prints, respectively, see Yamashita Noriko’s and Kern’s contributions to Keller Kimbrough and Satoko Shimazaki, eds., Publishing the Stage: Print and Performance in Early Modern Japan (Boulder: Center for Asian Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder, 2011).

13 Kimbrough and Shimazaki, Publishing the Stage, 5.
Kitayamazakura (Narukami, Fudō, and Cherry Blossoms at Kitayama, 1742), the most famous play about the priest, these playbooks contain substantial information about the performances, including significant excerpts of dialogue and cast lists. Indeed, Danjūrō I wrote the books for his two plays, apparently typical for this playwright. This is not to say, however, that any of the playbooks simply rehash the stage. As I will discuss below, both the texts and the pictures demonstrate considerable playfulness with their subject matter. (For this reason, I prefer “playbook” to the more common “digest.”) Here, too, the authors take obvious delight in both show and suggestion. In this sense, kabuki’s playbooks offer one more performance of a story that undresses kabuki itself.

Allusion in Kabuki

As noted earlier, kabuki actively engages viewers’ imaginations in a number of ways. Some of these directly support the show on stage. The most elaborate set cannot depict the Gempei Wars (1181-1185) or other important sekai, even the scant details required by most plots. Rather than simply suspend disbelief, the spectator must will himself to believe in these cases: that is, to pretend that he sees and hears things that he cannot actually sense. While such allusions are in a sense necessary to the success of the physical performance, they support a habit of mind essential to the voluntary engagements that I am concerned with.

Mitate and modoki, mentioned earlier, come closer to my subject. Here kabuki uses allusion to create aesthetic pleasure beyond that generated by the physical performance at that moment. Members of the audience may recognize one or more lines, characters, or physical gestures from another play or an earlier scene in the same production. They may also observe parallel dramatic situations, again across shows or within one performance.

It is worth noting, then, that recognition is only part of the poetic convention exploited by these techniques. In the pre-modern period, honkadōri or allusive variation was “primarily an echoing of an older poem or poems, not just to borrow material or phrasing, but to raise the atmosphere—something of the situation, the tone, and the meaning—of the original.” In other words, readers of an allusive variation were expected to recall the first verse and compare it with the second, a mental movement that enabled them to revisit old favorites as well as appreciate departures from the same. This is of course the same response expected in mitate and modoki, although as noted earlier the performance can be enjoyed without recognition of its allusive backdrop.

To these practical and in some senses conventional forms of allusion, finally, kabuki dramaturgy adds a more specific invitation: the challenge to see the actor himself as two or more things at once. Kabuki actors are famous for the technique of the quick-change (hayagawari), in which the same actor plays different roles in one production. Like the asides noted earlier, these transformations showcase the actor. They also offer another game for the audience: to recognize the same man in new costume and makeup. For instance, in Kitayamazakura, mentioned earlier, Ichikawa Danjūrō II (1689-1758) played three different parts.

This technique also again evokes classical poetry, in particular its use of the pivot word or kakekotoba. Pivot-words challenge readers to recognize two meanings in the same line of poetry, depending on a homophone embedded in the line. Brandon notes that kabuki playwrights use kakekotoba and other poetic techniques in their scripts. The same method clearly also underpins quick-

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17 Brandon, Five Classic Plays, 96. Danjūrō was then called Ebizō II. Here and in most other cases, I rely for biographical information on Samuel L. Leiter, Kabuki Encyclopedia: An English-Language Adaptation of Kabuki jiten (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979) and, occasionally, http://www.kabuki21.com.

18 For examples of both in kabuki texts, see Brandon, Five Classic Plays, 39.
changes and double-casting more generally, to say nothing of the famously male-bodied onnagata or female role specialist. All three practices asks viewers to read one performer as multiple and even contradictory subjects. As Pronko says of the kabuki actor generally, he “is reality (actor), sign (character), and symbol (visual and aural resonances) all at once.”

Allusion in the Edo Theater

As this brief discussion suggests, allusion (and the active viewer participation it calls for) is clearly important to kabuki. This was especially true in the Edo period, when as Gerstle points out, many actors and other artistic practitioners (including amateurs) were themselves active poets. However, this technique played a particularly important role in the work of Danjūrō I and the aragoto style that came to be associated with Edo itself. Kawatake Toshio has noted the “blank spaces” (vohaku) that define aragoto-style acting, in which heroes assume the aura or identity of supernatural figures. Like haikai poetry, he asserts, such performances succeed through suggestion, in this case by evoking the ineffable as imagined in local spiritual beliefs. To return to the example offered in my introduction, viewers embrace the aragoto heroics of Sukeroku/Soga Gorō because he is more than a man. He is a kind of god-hero, one with an appropriate ceremonial role in kabuki’s own calendar of events.

This association of actors with the divine was no accident. As Laurence R. Kominz details, Danjūrō I and his heirs cultivated identification with the fierce guardian deity Fudō by emulating him on stage and publicly worshipping him in “private” life. In so doing, Kominz asserts, Danjūrō I “made the remarkable and supernatural real for his audiences.” Suwa Haruo theorizes that the identification of actors with their roles was so strong in the Edo period that whenever Danjūrō I played a villain, he had to reappear at the play’s end as a god to redeem his image. This further explains his son’s multiple roles in Kitayamazakura. Another way to say this, however, is to note that Danjūrō and his peers successfully trained audiences to recognize this particular allusion in performance, even where the character (like Sukeroku) is human himself.

In short, kabuki audiences might recognize three specific figures in the simplest aragoto role, even before recalling early versions of it: the actor, the character, and the divine presence of Fudō himself. Recognition of the final figure was deliberately triggered with an arresting visual performance: the fierce Fudō mie, a posture modeled on depictions of the literally “immovable” deity.

This recognition was further reinforced by another sensory convention: the kakugoe or set phrases cried out by savvy theatergoers at specific points in the performance. Audiences continue to call out Danjūrō’s yapō or “shop name” of Naritaya when they see him, a reference to Narita-san, the Fudō-centered temple where members of the family still worship. The success of the aragoto style thus offers one more example of the extent to which Edo-period kabuki depended on a fusion of the physical and the imaginary, a synthesis begun on stage but completed in the minds of the audience.

As noted earlier, other critics have stressed the importance of this ludic kabuki to the theater. These discussions largely focus on its utility in the early years of the theater’s development. Brandon, for example, writes that:

Because of the restricted social environment in which [early] kabuki artists worked, Japan’s isolation from outside contacts, and

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19 “Kabuki,” 241. For a succinct discussion of this layering of roles with particular reference to Sukeroku, see Barbara E. Thornbury, “Actor, Role, and Character: Their Multiple Interrelationships in Kabuki,” 232-37, in the same volume.

20 See, for example, “Creating Celebrity: Poetry in Osaka Actor Surimono and Prints,” in Kimbrough and Shimazaki, Publishing the Stage, 137-61.

21 Kawatake Toshio, Kabuki no sekai: kyozō to jitsuzō (Tokyo: Tankōsha, 1974), 203.

22 On kabuki’s seasonal calendar, and the role of the Soga brothers within it, see Thornbury, Sukeroku’s Double Identity, 3-15.

23 The Stars Who Created Kabuki, 81.


oppressive government restrictions, kabuki plays developed many characteristics of a game played by audience and performers. Like a game it had certain rules, such as mitate, yatsushi [“in disguise”], and jitsu wa [“in reality”], and playing according to the rules became in itself an important source of enjoyment and pleasure for an audience. Undoubtedly the game approach stimulated writers and actors to perfect kabuki’s artistic qualities and helped sustain the form’s delightful spirit of playfulness.\(^{26}\)

In other words, kabuki playwrights used suggestion to evade censorship and maximize the pleasure of a specific constituency, people constrained by the Edo period’s restrictive political and social order.

Gerstle makes a related point about the influence of kabuki’s early social milieu. Compared to rigid mainstream society, the theater’s “relatively democratic openness,” he writes, encouraged “creativity” and “fantasy” among spectators as well as actors and playwrights.\(^{27}\) One might consider the games that Brandon describes one example of this. As Gerstle points out, however, this creative impulse also took more concrete forms. Viewers impressed by a performance might go home to compose related haikai poetry, write play-guides, or paint portraits of favorite actors.

In some cases, including the playbooks noted earlier, these products appeared in advance of the related production, and served as a form of advertisement for it. This “culture of play” was thus both productive as well as escapist. One could watch a play with the intent to produce a tribute or consume a tribute as a means of envisioning (or recollecting) the performance.\(^{28}\)

As with the games that Brandon discusses, the theater encouraged this response for pragmatic reasons. By “foster[ing] a cult of the actor,” Gerstle observes, early kabuki created celebrities, subverting its official position as a world of outcasts.\(^{29}\) Both accounts credit the theater, and its ludic aspect in particular, with defusing external pressures on actors and audiences, pressures that the critics see as characteristic of the Edo period although not peculiar to it.

**Ludic Kabuki and Narukami**

While Brandon and Gerstle are surely right to link the rise of ludic kabuki to historical factors, both critics also suggest another explanation for its success: the sheer pleasure it generates in informed audiences. In the passage quoted earlier, Brandon notes the “enjoyment” prompted by “playing according to the rules,” which presumably include recognizing the prompts on stage. Gerstle’s list of keywords to his discussion of kabuki fan culture is still more suggestive: “memory, social interaction, participation, pleasure, play, and re-creation” all appear there, apparently with equal weight.\(^{30}\) None of these feelings or activities is exclusive to a particular genre or period, any more than the delight in “hieroglyphics” that Pronko identifies in both kabuki and French symbolist poetry.\(^{31}\) As Gerstle notes, one may observe some of the same processes on the internet.\(^{32}\)

What is fascinating, however, is the extent to which kabuki has made this technique and its effects on theatergoers the subject of its own performance. Nowhere is this more apparent than in plays about Narukami, which as noted earlier dramatize the seduction of the priest. This story, which comes to kabuki from Noh, setsuwa and, ultimately, Indian legend, depicts a court beauty named Taema employing both her wit and her physical charms to engage, disarm, and ultimately seduce the priest.\(^{33}\)

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\(^{26}\) *Five Classic Plays*, 5. Italics added.


\(^{28}\) Gerstle comes closest to making this loop explicit near the beginning of his article, with the general statement that “[i]n some genres the act of reading (or the watching of/listening to a performance) is primarily for the purpose of artistic creation or re-creation.” Ibid., 359.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 364.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 378.

\(^{31}\) “Kabuki,” 248-252.

\(^{32}\) “The Culture of Play,” 378.

\(^{33}\) See Motofuji, “A Study of Narukami,” 57-61, for a translation of the Chinese source of the original story. Motofuji also translates the relevant
More precisely, Taema pretends to be a widow, convinces Narukami that she seeks the tonsure, and then tricks him into physical contact. Every part of her story is an act.

Moreover, Taema asks Narukami to play-act as well, in many versions by asking him to remembering lines from old love poems. In the process, she habituates him to his new part in the play she is staging for his benefit. For the spectator, these scenes and others like them serve as mise-en-abymes of their own experience. Whether or not one completes the poems with Narukami, the longer one watches Taema—and listens to her verbal trickery—the easier it is to forget the actor behind the performance.

Karen Brazell captures this dimension of the play with her comment that the 1742 Kitayamazakura (again, the most famous Narukami-themed play in kabuki) is “about seduction on many levels, including the seduction of the audience to the belief boldly stated in the opening lines: ‘Saint Narukami is a great play!’”34 As I hope to discuss at another opportunity, Kitayamazakura does this even more cunningly than Brazell suggests; the entire play, not just the Narukami act, is replete with allusions to other plays and stories, many of them also on the subject of seduction.

In the following pages, however, I will argue a more limited point: that even kabuki’s earliest treatments of Narukami use the senses to engage the mind and further excite the attention. Moreover, like Kitayamazakura, they did it the same way that Taema does: by fixing viewers’ eyes on physical objects while simultaneously evoking something else.

Gempei Narukami denki 『源平雷傳記』 (The Genji and Heike Legend of Narukami, 1698); Nakamura-za, ninth month

Gempei Narukami denki (hereafter Denki) is not the first kabuki play about Narukami. It is not even the second. Danjūrō I wrote and starred in Kadomatsu shitennō (The Four Kings at New Year’s) in 1684, after which he seems to have been involved in several other treatments of the subject. These include Neko no Koneko (The Cat’s Kitten, 1696), the earliest-known “female Narukami.”36 This subset of the Narukami plays replaces the priest with a nun; the stage gender of her seducer can be either male or female depending on the plot. In Neko, audiences thus saw Danjūrō I play his earlier adversary, a reversal that must have provided considerable entertainment to theatergoers who recognized it. The staging of both Neko and Kadomatsu at the Nakamura-za, also home to Denki, suggests some overlap in the audience, despite the temporal gap between the first two productions.

Like Kadomatsu, Denki takes place in the world of the shitennō (Four Kings), Heian period courtiers associated with the warrior Minamoto no Yorimitsu (also known as Raikō, 948-1021).37 In Denki, this


36 On Neko’s casting, see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 152. One aficionado claims that Danjūrō also wrote the play; see www.kabuki21.com/danjuro1.php. While this certainly seems possible, standard lists of Danjūrō’s work as a playwright do not include this play.

37 For the names of these courtiers and the Buddhist figures (deva kings) who inspired their collective nickname, see Motofuji, “A Study of Narukami,” 75. Toita Yasuji argues that Denki’s
setting takes on special resonance. The opening word of the title, Gempei, usually refers in kabuki and earlier art and literature to the clash between the Minamoto (Genji) and Taira (Heike) in the civil wars that ended the Heian period. Indeed, as noted in my introduction, this event constitutes its own sekai in kabuki.

In Denki, however, Gempei also suggests a more local conflict: the struggle between two religious factions at court with patrons in these families. These factions compete to calm the fierce thunderstorms that form the subject of the play’s second act. Denki’s second word, Narukami, names both these thunderstorms and the seduction plot. The final mention of a denki, or (typically fictionalized) biography, narrows the focus to the priest himself.

To summarize, Denki’s title fuses both the civil wars and the priest’s downfall. At the same time, the reference to thunder-gods (narukami) obviously evokes the recent plays on the seduction plot. Since Yorimitsu and three of his generals have either Minamoto or Taira surnames, the title’s opening contraction may also refer to Kadomatsu in particular. Motofuji even surmises that Denki was a kind of sequel to that play, since “the four sons of the warriors also have important roles” in it. From the beginning, then Denki encouraged viewers to reflect on something else: in this case, an earlier version of the plot.

Denki also apparently played games with its cast. As noted earlier, Danjūrō played the priest, reprising his initial role in Kadomatsu and reverting back to the character he had seduced in Neko only two seasons earlier. Onnagata Ōgino Sawanojō (1656-1704), meanwhile, took the part of Taema—two years after playing the female Narukami in Neko. The cast list records further doublings, this time blurring art and life. In Denki, Taema is married to one of the four kings, Watanabe (elsewhere Minamoto) no Taketsuna. Their son, Watanabe no Ku-
nitsuna, was played by Danjūrō’s son Kuzō, who later starred in Kitayamazakura (and revived Kadomatsu twice). This casting, as a game, had Danjūrō and Sawanojō sharing a child, a correspondence that Denki exploited elsewhere in the plot. Not only does the priest “marry” Taema in the seduction scene, he also returns later in the play as a ghost to demand that Taketsuna divorce his wife. According to the playbook, the shadow family—Danjūrō, Sawanojō, and Kuzō—then left the stage together. Here, too, the viewer familiar with earlier plays could enjoy an extra dimension of the performance, one as dazzling as Taema’s act for the priest.

**Denki: the playbook (text)**

Denki’s playbook also piques the reader’s imagination. For instance, consider the surtitle that Danjūrō gives to the performance: Kumo no Taema nagori no tsuki, “Taema of the Clouds: The Waning Moon (or, alternatively, The Moon at Dawn).” The label begins by rehearsing a common sobriquet for Taema, one that contains several meanings itself. As Motofuji points out, this nickname literally re-

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[39] Ibid., 76

[40] In the playbook, at least, the personal name sometimes appears in the shortened form “Tsuna.”


[42] See Kawatake Shigetoshi, Kabuki mei-sakushū, 818-821. Here and elsewhere, the annotator (like Motofuji in his summary) gives provisional scene divisions but the author of the kyōgen bon does not formally divide the acts.

[43] I am not certain whether these surtitles were also displayed at the theater, or how prominently. Since contemporary records typically list only the play by its main title, here I will treat surtitles as peculiar to the playbooks. At the very least, it seems safe to the playbooks gave these supplementary labels greater importance by making them available for re- (and pre-) reading, and thus raising their profile relative to the more memorable aspects of the performance.
fers to “a break in the clouds.” The name perhaps suggests that Taema will lift the general gloom by ending the drought. The reference to clouds in this context is clearly also ironic, since Taema’s efforts cause the rain clouds to gather for this purpose. Finally, the clouds evoke her link to the palace, proverbially described as above the clouds and often illustrated accordingly.

The surtitle’s second half, by contrast, refers to a performer. Motofuji explains that the mention of “the waning moon” also refers to Sawanojō’s impending retirement as a female role specialist. The surtitle might therefore be rendered “Sawanojō, the bright moon among onnagata, played his last onnagata role as Kumo-no-no-taema.” According to the playbook, Danjūrō himself came on stage at the end of the play to announce the event. Sawanojō then appeared in male dress and performed a swaggering roppō walk, before a final celebratory dance by the entire cast.

Given Sawanojō’s considerable popularity, a number of spectators probably came to see this swan song. They would have looked for the performer, and recalled earlier performances, even as they watched “Taema” act. The playbook’s surtitle, in short, splits the attention between Taema and the actor who portrayed her from the very beginning. By so doing, it encourages the reader to see both figures at once, both while reading the playbook and presumably when attending the later live performance.

The playbook’s list of act titles, effectively a table of contents, serves a slightly different purpose. Danjūrō labels this act “Hagi no shiroki wa yuki no tennyo (Calves white as snow, a snow goddess).” Whether referring to the performance or simply to Danjūrō’s account of it, this title previews the initial catalyst for the seduction: Taema’s body. The first half of the line specifically refers to her white calves; the second half, pivoting on the phrase yuki (snow, suggesting her fair skin) echoes this assessment while evoking Taema’s generally superhuman good looks. Although the playbook does not specify this, the priest’s acolytes probably confused Taema with (or compared her to) a heavenly maiden or goddess, as in other versions of the seduction.

The playbook also contains what look like editorial comments on this point in its summary of the scene itself. After noting Taema’s arrival at the priest’s hermitage, with a robe that she intends to wash in the waterfall, Danjūrō writes: “Perhaps someone sees her white calves (hagi no shiroki o hito ya min)? They stare at Taema, looking as if they would like to speak to her. Truly, one/they can think only of old Kume the Transcendent from the past.”

This comment stands out for two reasons. First, it directs the reader’s attention to a particular allusion: the story of Kume the Transcendent (Kume no sennin), an ascetic who fell from his cloud in the sky at the sight of a woman’s calves, exposed as she washed her clothes in the river. Danjūrō points out the visual clue already referenced in the act’s title, and then names the particular story that he hopes to evoke with it. In other words, the playwright uses the playbook to tip his hand, admitting that readers—like the acolytes the text literally describes—are supposed to see both the characters on stage and something else else.

Second, the comment eschews any reference to Ikkaku the Transcendent (Ikkaku sennin), the Jap-
nese name for the Indian ascetic whose legend gives the Narukami story its shape. As noted earlier, that story was well known in Japan by the Edo period. Danjūrō II gave it pride of place in the priest’s famous speech denouncing Taema in Kitayamazakura fifty years later. Here and throughout Denki, Danjūrō I ignores the obvious reference for a playful allusion that surely left readers with two things to think about—again, like the confused (but delighted) acolytes.

Figure 1. Illustration of seduction scene from e-iri kyōgen bon of Gempei Narukami denki (from Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki kessakushū, vol. 1, pp. 136-137).

**Denki: the playbook (illustrations)**

The final aspect of Denki’s playbook that I will treat here is its illustration of the seduction scene (Figure 1). The picture is almost certainly not by Danjūrō. According to Richard Lane, because of the “complex[ity of] theatrical billboards and playbills,” which he relates to the political strictures noted earlier, “the Torii clan became the exclusive official artists of Edo Kabuki” in the last years of the seventeenth century. Since Danjūrō himself authored the playbook, one would assume that the artist is from this school—although, as Lane notes, this school dominated popular prints, too. Kominz, who briefly discusses the illustration, notes an attribution to Torii Kiyonobu (1664 - 1729).

Whoever he was, the artist clearly either shared Danjūrō’s views or followed his instructions. The illustration once again highlights the importance of distraction to Denki in performance. The picture is the second of four included in the playbook, one for each of the play’s four acts. It is divided down the middle in order to fit on facing pages, with clouds further separating the top and bottom into representations of different moments in the plot. According to Takano and Kurogi, Denki’s clouds comprise the earliest example of the so-called “Genji clouds” (Genji kumo) in an Edo play guide.

The top half of the picture, read from right to left, shows the first scene in Act II, with several courtiers worrying over the thunderstorms noted earlier. A small label to their upper right denotes only their different ranks (nobles and minister, respectively), although the crests on their robes and the slightly different hats may suggest more specifics on the actors and characters. The priest, labeled “Narukami the Superior—Danjūrō” (Narukami shōnin—Danjūrō), glowers at the thunder god he will shortly defeat, who is appropriately surrounded by black storm clouds and holding noisy drumsticks in the far left. The square crest on the priest’s robes, as well as his exaggerated nose and musculature, also proclaim that the actor is Danjūrō. He even strikes a characteristic aragoto pose with his left foot.

The emphasis on the priest, the central figure in this part of the picture, no doubt accurately represents both the plot and this part of the performance. However, the artist also takes pains to remind the viewer of the importance of the actor. Danjūrō, and only Danjūrō, gets the label and caricature. This emphasis mimics, if not dictates, the viewer’s experience of the play, another of Danjūrō’s star vehicles. Intriguingly, to convey this effect the artist chooses to disregard some of the details of the actual stage performance. According to the playbook,

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51 For a translation, see Motofuji, “A Study of Narukami,” 182-84.
53 Ibid., 77. The attribution and brief summary of the picture appears in the note to the picture itself.
54 Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 124.
55 As Motofuji explains, the term shōnin denotes a “superior person,” specifically a Buddhist monk of great learning and virtue. See “A Study of Narukami,” 137.
at this point in Denki the priest was called Kaizan; it was only after he defeated the thunder god that he received his famous title from the court. By giving the familiar label prematurely, the artist in a sense confirms that the viewer is looking at “Narukami”—that is, the protagonist of the already well-known seduction plot—from the start, whatever the specifics of the stage performance.

The bottom half of the illustration, which shows the beginning of the seduction scene, reveals the same tendencies. Again moving from right to left, this part of the picture begins with the dragon gods whom the priest has sealed in their own rock cave. Like the thunder god in the top half of the picture, with his apparently natural horns and monstrous toenails, these are “real” dragons, not actors in costume. They get no label, presumably because they were not actually seen in performance. Beneath them and slightly to the left appear two of the priest’s acolytes. Although they are not individually identified in the summary of the scene, here each is labeled with the character’s name, unlike the priests in the illustration from the previous act. Their clothing is free of crests, effacing the presence of the actors themselves.

Next to them appears, for a second time, the priest. Once again, the artist labels the picture with the name of the character and actor. The priest now sits in meditation, hands clasped in what is presumably a mudra, while he glowers at a new opponent: Taema, on the other side of the page break. Intriguingly, some of the details have disappeared from his robe, to be replaced by two large versions of the family crest noted earlier. Taema, too, is identified with the actor playing her, suggested by the crest on her robes. As before, a small label clarifies the actor’s role (Kumo no Taema) before adding the actor’s name itself (Sawanojō, as noted earlier). Unlike the priest, Taema wears a peaceful expression, bending over a notably realistic waterfall as she pretends to wash her bolt of cloth.

The illustration obviously complements the text of the playbook; its labels for the priests, for instance, clarify the summary by specifying which character appeared on stage in this part of the performance. However, the picture also re-imagines the stage. There could have been no real waterfall in the theater, and even if there were actors depicting the dragons and thunder god, they could not have looked this convincing. The lack of labels for these “characters” suggests that they were left entirely to the viewer’s imagination. Perhaps that is why the flooring, so clearly depicted in the top half of the illustration, fades there just before the picture of the thunder god and disappears completely in the bottom half. In a sense, the artist has fused the imaginary and “real” elements of the stage in his portrait.

Equally interesting is the evident choice not to depict Taema’s leg, the sight of which so inflames the priest. The billowing cloth and rushing water hides her lower limbs from view. The viewer of this picture must therefore imagine the one thing that the actor really sees, even though Taema here is for once facing us. Instead, the artist gives us the priest—Danjūrō’s muscular calf—twice. While the advance printing suggests that the playbook was intended to create interest in Denki, it seems clear that Danjūrō did this by employing the same techniques that he used on the stage: by showing one thing and suggesting another, in this case to humorous effect.

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56 The first label clearly reads “Unrai bōzumaro.” Judging from the cast-list, the second name (which also ends in “bōzumaro,” a dismissive reference to priests, is one of the following: Ittō kyōchi (bō), Zanmu (bō), Zansetsu (bō), or Tenryu (bō). For the illustration of Act I, which like Danjūrō’s prose account of the scene simply calls the priests “dōshuku,” see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 130. The priests and label appear in the lower right. Note that here the priests wear actors’ crests.

57 Taema’s hairstyle also seems to suggest the actor rather than the character, in this case by evoking the scarf used by onnagata to cover the traditionally shaved forelock. Certainly her coiffure does not resemble any of the wigs found in Leiter, Kabuki Encyclopedia, 424-26.
Isshin onna Narukami 『一心女雷師』 (A Single-Hearted Female Narukami, 1699); Yamamura-za, sixth month

With Isshin onna Narukami (hereafter Isshin onna), performed just nine months after Denki, we are back in the world of female Narukami, with all of its additional distractions. Unfortunately, we do not know the identity of either the playwright or the author of the playbook. Since the playbook provides most of the known information on the production itself, distinguishing between the stage and text is in this case particularly difficult. According to Takano and Kurogi, the play offered a particularly dazzling live show even without the gendered complications. It was reportedly the first five-act play staged in Edo and featured numerous spectacular set pieces, one of which was a cat dance.

While Neko’s shadow seems obvious (it also featured a female Narukami and a celebrated cat dance), Isshin onna did not play any obvious casting games. Judging from the cast-list, none of the actors named earlier appeared in this play. Instead, Isshin onna’s chief distraction from the stage show apparently involved in-character cross-dressing—by both protagonists.

Taema’s cross-dressing is in some ways the less interesting. As noted earlier, while female Narukami always transform the priest into a nun, they show more variation in their treatment of Taema. Some plays, like the 1854 Kumo no uwasaba: Onna Narukami 『雲のウワサ: 女雷師』 (Clouds of Gossip: A Female Narukami), make her a man. Isshin onna left Taema a woman. However, according to the playbook, this production did preserve the typical cross-gendered seduction. In this scene, Taema reportedly dressed as a man, then staged a lovers’ fight and reconciliation with her half-sister. It was this sight that inflamed the passions of the nun-priest. This instance of cross-dressing simply underscored Taema’s duplicity in the conventional seduction, discussed above.

The nun-priest’s transvestitism, however, adds a new and exciting element of confusion. According to the playbook, Isshin onna began with the premise that Taema’s victim had been staging her own play long before the pair met. In the first act of the production, the character reportedly appeared as the emperor Go Uda (1267-1324), historically male but here claimed to be a disguised princess. She eventually took holy orders and retreated to her hermitage because Taema’s (male) lover rejected her advances; he believed that the princess’s masquerade put the country at risk. Isshin onna thus again especially foregrounded the other use of deception in the seduction plot and kabuki generally: to entertain the audience.

To add further interest, Isshin onna seems to have offered at least two more distractions in performance. The first again involves historical cross-dressing. When the princess-emperor became the nun-priest, she apparently took the name of another historically male sovereign: Kazan (968-1008). The name is tantalizingly close to Kaizan, Narukami’s first moniker in Denki. Moreover, it supplies a very suggestive historical intertext. Like the character in Isshin onna, the historical Kazan was tricked into taking the tonsure but continued his romantic affairs. He was also considered to have been mentally unstable, which the play apparently also mimicked.

According to the playbook, when this Kazan saw Taema’s performance, she went mad with de-

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58 My discussion of Isshin onna relies on the text and images found in Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 151-191. For Motofuji’s summary and partial translation, see “A Study of Narukami,” 86-100.

59 For the other scenes, see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 152.

60 Isshin onna starred Osaka-born Matsumoto Hyōzō (1669-?) as Taema, and an actor called Daikichi as the nun-priest. The cast-list simply gives Hyōzō and Daikichi, but Takano and Kurogi further specify Hyōzō’s surname. See Genroku kabuki, 152-153. For details on Hyōzō, see Nojima Jusaburō, ed., Kabuki jinmei jiten, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 2002). Nojima lists two actors by the name Daikichi, but both lived too late to have performed in Isshin onna.

61 The character is there called Taemanosuke.

62 See Ivan Morris, The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan (New York: Knopf, 1964), 57, for an account of the notorious incident with Fujiwara no Korechika. Isshin onna also sends up this alteration, with the nun-priest demanding Taema of “his” lover (actually Taema’s sister).
sire, embracing both the pillars in her room and her two attendants. Later in the play she even tore off the head of an ox and put it over her own, symbolizing her descent into delusion. It is this seeming distraction, while delightful on its own terms, resonated with the theme of the play. Here, too, the informed viewer enjoyed an extra joke at the character’s expense.

Isshin onna’s unusual seduction scene also evoked the figure of Ikkaku the Transcendent, but for different reasons than one might expect. In the Taiheiki (Record of Great Peace, ca. 1372), Japan’s earliest account of the story, Ikkaku’s tale began with another priest aroused by an erotic display: in this case, the mating of two deer. When the priest relieved his excitement and ejaculated, some fluid splashed on a leaf later eaten by a doe, which gave birth to “one-horned” Ikkaku himself. One might reasonably link the two plots just on this point: the nun-priest, like Ikkaku’s father, sees two “lovers” and responds passionately to the sight.

However, Isshin onna apparently also conflated this scene with earlier versions of the seduction plot in performance. In the fake love scene, Taema reportedly first resisted her sister’s advances, objecting that the woman already has a husband. It was only after the sister explained that she had parted from her husband and was thus effectively a widow (yamome) that the pair embraced. To judge from the playbook, Isshin onna showed the nun-priest watching a modoki of the performances that ruined three of her precursors: the kabuki version of the priest, familiar from plays like Denki; Ikkaku’s father; and Ikkaku himself.

Nor was this wealth of imaginative stimuli limited to the plot. After all, what the viewer actually saw in the seduction scene on stage was one onnagata disguised as a man to seduce another onnagata, with the assistance of a third. Since several other characters also apparently cross-dressed (from male to female) or impersonated other characters of the same sex, the opportunities for getting lost in thought about the physical show here were extensive. The nun-priest’s sensory overload—and, more important, her delight—mimicked the mental experience of the audience.

Isshin onna: the playbook (text)

As with Denki, the playbook for Isshin onna makes some of the stage-based allusions more intelligible (although, since both the play and playbook appeared in the same month, it is difficult to determine which the average viewer would have seen first). First there is the setting of the seduction, reported by a hermitage in Ōbara (also pronounced Ohara). In pre-modern Japanese literature, this location is closely associated with Kenreimon’in (1155?-1213?), the mother of drowned emperor Antoku from the Gempei Wars. Heike monogatari (Tales of the Heike, ca. 1371) famously records how, after Antoku’s death and her own failed suicide, Kenreimon’in took the tonsure and retreated to Ōbara to weep.

In addition to spoofing the basic seduction plot, Isshin onna thus presumably presented the nun-priest-empress as an on-going mitate of the Heike empress-nun. The nun-priest’s two attendants, while clearly standing in for the priest’s acolytes in the standard seduction plot, even conveniently duplicated Kenreimon’in’s retinue. The playbook makes this mitate explicit. As the variant pronunciation suggests, Ōbara/Ohara can be written two different ways: 大原 (big plain) and 小原 (small plain). The author of the playbook con-

63 See Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 180. Demons with the heads of oxes (ushi) often appear in fictional and artistic depictions of hell, where the monsters herd and punish sinners. Kazan is similarly trying to pun Taema for her deception in this act.

64 For a translation of the Taiheiki account, see Motofuji, “A Study of Narukami,” 94. This source perhaps explains why Isshin onna, unlike the other plays treated here, does not have the nun-priest cause a drought. Ikkaku’s father may be the object of the mitate in this case.


sistent uses the first, standard transcription when referring to the location in his account of the action on stage. Only when he introduces the act, with the phrase “kore wa Ohara no tsuki (this is the moon of Ohara),” does he use the alternate kanji. The choice previews the act’s mitate of Heike by suggesting a “small” version of its famous subplot.

The playbook also highlights the Heike story a second time when introducing this act. As with Denki, the tribute to Isshin onna gives each act of the play its own title. Each heading corresponds in stylistic terms to a section of a poetic anthology. While this subdivision may reflect the stage performance, the author of the playbook is surely responsible for a related innovation: the list of three poetic phrases at the head of each act, just after the title. The act containing the seduction is thus labeled, “Jukkai no bu (the book of outbursts): oboro no shimizu (misty waters), sarashi nuno (bleached cloth), kamikiri yanagi (hair-cutting willows).”

This paratext, like those for each of the other acts, previews the highlights of this part of the performance. Here the title alludes to a number of emotional revelations: most relevant here, Kazan’s declaration of her passion for Taema after the latter’s performance. The first poetic phrase, an actual uta makura or codified turn of phrase, suggests the waterfall conventionally located near the nun-priest’s hermitage. However, this phrase also names the spring at Jakkō-in, Kenreimon’in’s hermitage in Ôhara. In short, the playbook not only makes the stage performance itself into an allusion, but it makes the mitate of Heike more explicit—in a manner as playful as the mitate itself.

The other two poetic phrases offer the same double view of Isshin onna’s seduction plot. At one level, they forecast other plot events. Sarashi nuno, a type of cloth known in poetry since the eighth-century, had to be washed numerous times before being set out in the sun or snow to bleach. The phrase evokes the moment when Taema’s sister allegedly washed cloth in the river near Kazan’s hermitage.

Kamikiri yanagi, meanwhile, points to Taema’s surprise tonsure of Kazan near the end of the act—and, since kamikiri is another name for a widow, the siblings’ seductive performance. Both phrases also, however, suggest outside referents relevant to Isshin onna’s theme and plot. In the Edo period, “bleaching” (sarashi, more literally “exposure”) also denoted a criminal punishment. Exposure, and punishment, are also recurring concerns in this plot. Finally, both “hair-cutting” and “willows” suggest the licensed quarters, closely related to the kabuki in real life and a frequent subject of performance. Here, too, the playbook seems to preview the performance and prompt further reflection on it. In the account of Taema’s mousetrap, the false lovers joke about spiders and so-called “spider-prostitutes.”

Like many noblewomen, “Kazan” had only taken the tonsure symbolically when she became a nun. Taema cuts off the emperor’s hair in the hopes of embarrassing her rival and thus ending her bid for Taema’s lover.

See the entry for sarashi in Iwanami kogo jiten, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), particularly the subheadings for sarashinuno and sarashimono.

Cutting off ones hair constituted one way that a prostitute could pledge her sincerity to her lover; see the entry for “kamikiri” in Köjien (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993). The sisters’ performance has the female lover slipping her hand into Taema’s robes under the pretense of pulling out a spider (kumo) and making suggestive references to the eponymous prostitutes (jorogumo) the prostitutes. The reference perhaps also puns on Taema’s famous association with Narukami sarashinuno (bleached cloth).
**Isshin onna: the playbook (illustrations)**

As with its *Denki* counterpart, *Isshin onna*’s playbook also offers visual tributes to the play, including another creative rendition of the seduction scene (Figure 2). This playbook illustrates only its first four acts, giving the picture a slightly higher profile than in the earlier book. Once again, we cannot be sure of the artist, although Takano and Kurogi, noting the resemblance to the play guides produced in the Kansai region, suggest a Torii-school adherent.74 If the attribution is correct, one would expect the illustrations to explore the ludic dimensions of the performance.

The illustration of the seduction scene richly answers this expectation. Like the picture from the earlier playbook, this one is split across two pages, with a narrow band (perhaps highly stylized clouds) separating the depiction of two different moments in performance. The top panel shows Taema’s bedroom (recognizable as such both from its ornamental screens and the plot summary in the text). This setting is itself noteworthy as a very literal nod to the famous seduction.

The treatment of the characters is still more interesting. The artist begins with Taema’s lover, labeled with his name (Yamatonosuke). Neither in this label nor any of the others does the artist identify the actor himself, although all of the costumes bear crests. The character seems to kneel, exposing one tabi-clad foot, as he holds a letter and weeps into his sleeve. His hair stands slightly on end, from shock. His gaze directs the viewer to the source of both the letter and his distress: the dead body of his brother (Wakasanosuke), shown with blood spurting out of the abdomen after his ritual self-disembowelment. The brother has killed himself in order to persuade Taema’s lover to restore order to the court by accepting the love of the empress. Taema’s evil stepmother (*keibo*) looks on from his upper left, staring with a worried look the other side of the room, directing our attention to the picture’s other half.

There, the first character we see is Taema’s father (presumably labeled Ō no zenji for his last formal post, although this part of the picture is difficult to see clearly). He seems to exchange glances with his wife. Below him sits Taema, actually furthest left; her name appears above her on the standing screen. She sits next to her sister (Yaegakihime), the dead man’s lover. Both weep. Again, all three characters wear robes emblazoned with the actors’ crests. However, this time Taema wears a new hairstyle, distinct from both the coiffure of her stepmother (similar to that Taema wears in the *Denki* playbook) and that of her sister.

As my description suggests, the artist does not supply the actor’s names directly, either here or in the bottom half of the portrait. The effect is to highlight the storyline rather than the performance, while still recording both. Everything is framed by a seeming representation of the fictional house, with the veranda on the far right (partially obscured by a sprig of cherry blossoms from the garden) and the wood flooring of an interior room on the far left.75

As in the picture of the scene from *Denki*, the bottom half of the illustration shows the seduction

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74 *Genroku kabuki*, 175.

75 I do not recognize the black object located on the boards. In the context of a noble household, it might be a lacquered box or box set.
itself. On the left, the nun-priest (labeled Kazan no ama, the nun Kazan) collapses from her veranda into what appears to be either a small waterfall or a particularly rough stretch of the river depicted in calmer curves on the inner edges of the page break. As in the earlier illustration of the scene, the water is depicted relatively realistically; while it is difficult to connect the two parts of the river and to imagine how the hermitage stands on top of it, they are clearly pictures of water rather than depictions of a stage set.

The portrait of Kazan also suggests the exercise of artistic license. The playbook’s summary of the seduction scene does not specify that the emperor fell into the water, nor does it mention anyone fishing her out of it. However, the writer does recount a relevant piece of alleged dialogue. In Taema’s play within a play, her sister compares her counterfeit passion to the river’s churning waters. Either the artist has captured a missing moment from the live performance, or he is alluding to this speech, perhaps both.

In short, the scene shows the nun-priest literally falling in love or, perhaps, lust, since water is an erotic element. (Kabuki’s love scenes are called nureba or “wet scenes.”) The illustration immerses the viewer in the world of the story, while highlighting an element only accessed in performance: that is, in the words from Taema’s sister’s speech. Kazan’s label, meanwhile, highlights the cross-gendering of the nun-priest in this variation on the (female) seduction plot. All of this gives the reader-viewer a lot to think about, even as she considers the picture itself.

The portrait of Kazan’s fall becomes even more interesting when one compares her figure to the other women in this half of the illustration. As the empress falls, caught in the act of fainting from her veranda, she reveals both of her feet and her hands. Conventional depictions typically conceal the woman’s body, as the portraits of the other female characters generally attest. Kazán’s free-fall allows the artist to show all four limbs (more precisely, her hands and feet). This exposure over water lends new meaning to the sarashi nuno discussed earlier, even as it suggests the character’s derangement.

The portraits on the other side of the page break (and river) display the same fascinating mixture of fictive and theatrical details. Taema and her sister, again labeled, stand back to back as they watch the nun fall. Atypically, each shows an artfully placed foot in its tabi. This contrived pose returns the viewer to the world of the stage. It is easy to imagine the dramatic moment on stage, the actors pausing to create the spectacular tableau. The sisters’ hairlines—almost reversed from the upper-half of the image and strikingly different from those of the women in the background—also underscore the theatricality of the moment.

Moreover, Taema is now dressed as a man. To her left, next to the anxious attendants, stand two more “men”: Kyōsuke, Taema’s retainer for this scene (standing next to the women and named in the text), and a comic servant, carrying a sword, crouching at the bottom left. Strikingly, none of the four minor figures are labeled (nor do the names of any appear in the cast-list).

While their robes bear the usual crests, the effect is to highlight the importance of the main characters and, again, of their particular actions in this part of the show. Perhaps that is why Yaegaki’s attendants wear “normal” hairstyles, although there may be a simpler explanation. Depicting them with the relative realism that marks the nun and water certainly highlights the performance within the performance. As before, it also presents the reader with new objects of interest, displacing both the performance and its “summary” in the text.

76 The text repeatedly refers to a takigawa or rough river/rapids, which conveniently combines the kanji for both options I list.

77 See Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 178; Motofuji, “A Study of Narukami,” 94. When she says this, Yaegaki also compares herself also notes that a hair from her head could leash a large elephant, another allusion to the story of Ikkaku the Transcendent.

78 I am not certain about this part of the picture. It is possible that the third standing figure is another of the sister’s attendants, which would make the crouching man Taema’s servant. Unfortunately, the cast-list does not name either character, which makes it difficult to check the roles against the identities of the actors. It makes sense that the standing character would be Taema’s servant, since (in addition to the visual cues discussed above), she is close enough to Taema to join in the masquerade.
Naritasan funjin Fudō 『成田山分身不動』 (The Split Fudō of Naritasan, 1703); Morita-za, fourth month

While the seduction plot inspired other plays immediately after Isshin onna—and some related playbooks—the last piece I will discuss here is Naritasan Funjin Fudō (hereafter Naritasan). It appeared four years after Isshin onna. However, in most ways Naritasan recalls Denki. Like Denki, Naritasan featured the standard priest with a grudge against the rain gods. As with Denki, Danjūrō I wrote and starred in it. He once again also wrote the playbook, which lists him under the penname Michiyoko Hyōgō.

Judging from this account, Naritasan fused the world of the seduction with (among other things) several Noh plays about Ono no Komachi, the famous Heian poet and beauty. It also revisited Noh’s treatment of Ikakku the Transcendent. Kominz thus calls Naritasan “an excellent example of a nō collage play.” As he notes, the five-act play became one of Danjūrō’s biggest hits, filled with “lust, ambition, betrayal, self-destruction, and redemption.”

In other words, Naritasan contained an especially arresting stage performance.

Nonetheless, Naritasan again seems to have enriched its show with ludic invitations, not least in the scene based on the seduction plot. First comes the title. As noted earlier, the phrase Naritasan names Danjūrō’s family temple, devoted to the worship of Fudō. The complete title thus both names the god and suggests the devotions of the man who both wrote the play and performed one of the two titular funjin (literally, split bodies) or facets of Fudō himself. By extension, the title also suggests Danjūrō’s yagō and his aragoto-style acting, both discussed earlier. The title even suggests a relevant plot event. In the fourth act of the play a disguised Kuronushi (that is, Danjūrō) apparently made a pilgrimage to Naritasan itself. Judging from the illustration of that scene, the only thing that revealed his identity was the actor’s own mimasu crest on his costume. Naritasan’s label thus previews both the stage show and suggests (or encourages) a playful response to it.

Naritasan also played casting games. The three leads all reprised roles or relationships from Denki. As noted, Danjūrō returned as the priest, here identified as Ōtomo no Kuronushi (fl. 885-987). Kuronushi was one of the Heian period’s so-called rokkasen (Six Poetic Immortals), like Komachi. Sawanojō returned as the priest-Kuronushi’s seducer, here Komachi herself. The viewer watching Naritasan could easily compare the scene on stage to memories (or second-hand accounts, including those found in playbooks) of Danjūrō and Sawanojō’s encounter in Denki and other productions.

Danjūrō’s son Kuzō reprised a different stage relationship. In Denki, as noted earlier, he had appeared as Taema’s (that is, Sawanojō’s) son. In Naritasan Kuzō appeared as both Kūkai (774-835), the Buddhist teacher and supposed inventor of the kana alphabet, and one half of the split Fudō of the title: the diamond-world avatar known for his wisdom. As suggested earlier, Danjūrō himself played Fudō’s other half; the avatar of the “womb world” that produces the diamond world. As a result, in Narita-

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80 See Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 570. It is not clear whether the book appeared in advance of the performance.
81 The Stars Who Created Kabuki, 88. All told, Kominz lists six Noh plays as sources. As his footnote details, the Komachi-themed plays were: Sōshi arai Komachi; Kayōi Komachi; and Sekidera Komachi. Motofuji also suggests a debt to Sotoba Komachi; see “A Study of Narukami,” 109.
82 The Stars Who Created Kabuki, 88.
83 See Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki kessakushū, 592. Kuronushi appears holding a sedge hat on the bottom right. Danjūrō’s crest of three concentric squares is clearly visible on his right knee. For Motofuji’s summary of the scene, see “A Study of Narukami,” 108.
84 To be consistent with my earlier renderings of sennin, here abbreviated to sen, I should perhaps call them the Six Poetic Transcendents.
85 Kūkai and the diamond world (kongōkai) Fudō were traditionally linked, as the numerous depictions of Kūkai holding a vajra (also kongō) and some of his religious titles attest. For the
san, Kuzō essentially portrayed the child of the character played by his father. While this particular casting game is hardly unique to plays on the seduction plot, it marks another kind of modoki of Denki, for any fans keeping count.

According to the playbook, Danjūrō performed similar magic with Naritasan’s staging of the seduction plot. Like Isshin onna, Naritasan presents the seduction scene in Act III, the structural heart of the performance. The scene apparently rehearsed several of the elements found in the productions discussed here. Komachi reportedly approached Kuronushi’s hermitage “looking like a female wood-seller” and leading an ox by a rope (a picture of this occurs in Figure 4, discussed below).

The disguise suggests an Oharame, the female peddlers from the Ohara region where Isshin onna’s seduction took place. The presence of the ox reinforces this association, since none of the other earlier plays on the seduction include the animal, and the play gives no reason for Komachi’s particular disguise or the ox’s presence. Naritasan also recycles more general elements from plays like Denki. The seduction features the conventional debates (again missing from Isshin onna) over “Taema”’s identity and the same avowals that the priest resembles her dead lover. While Takano and Kurogi note Naritasan’s marked influence on the later Narukami—including very similar pantomime and massage scenes—the original audience would inevitably have noted the play’s debts.

Finally, Naritasan seems to have offered a wealth of internal allusions to the seduction scene. According to the playbook, Komachi’s visit to Kuronushi’s hermitage appeared between what Motofuji calls “free adaptation[s]” of other stories about the female poet. The first, in Act II scene one, depicts Sōshi arai Komachi (Note-book Washing Komachi). The second, in Act III scene two, showcases Kayoi Komachi (best known in English as “Komachi and the Hundred Nights”). Both scenes contain leitmotifs related in different way to both the seduction plot in general and this particular staging of it.

A brief summary of the two sources suggests the general relationship. Sōshi arai Komachi famously has the poet wash a manuscript clean to rebut charges of plagiarism levied by Kuronushi. Kayoi Komachi shows her cruelly bringing a suitor to the breaking point. As my accounts of earlier plays attest, the seduction plot employs many similar images and plot points: washing (echoed in Denki’s playbook reference to Kume), accusations, avowals of honesty, and the on-going tension between desire and its satisfaction. By sandwiching the seduction between these stories, Naritasan previews and then underscores these crucial motifs. It also suggests, however, the extent to which Danjūrō encouraged viewers to recall other scenes at key points in the performance.

Within Naritasan itself, meanwhile, the juxtapositions with Komachi’s legend also apparently functioned ironically. The poet’s innocence of plagiarism, for example, served to counterpoint her guilt in the seduction scene—where she apparently did not wash anything, unlike in other versions of the seduction plot. Her vigorous seduction of the priest, meanwhile, contrasted sharply with her coolness to her suitor in Kayoi Komachi. Conversely, the pairing also stressed Taema’s deceptiveness. While Komachi and Shōshō appear to be on good terms in Naritasan, her cruelty is the legendary suitor’s chief whether Motofuji refers to the Noh plays noted earlier or other versions of the legend.


87 “A Study of Narukami,” 101. Motofuji refers here specifically to the treatment of Sōshi arai Komachi, but he characterizes Naritasan’s use of the other story in much the same way. It is unclear whether Motofuji refers to the Noh plays noted earlier or other versions of the legend.
complaint.

It hardly bears mentioning that the viewer’s sympathies must have vacillated accordingly. In this way, Naritasan accomplished one other apparent hallmark of performances on the seduction plot: forcing the viewer into an enjoyable variation of the position of the priest and his acolytes, who never quite know what to think, or where to look.

**Naritasan: the playbook (text)**

Like the playbook for Denki, one could consider Danjūrō’s written version of Naritasan a kind of primer on the play’s ludic backdrop. It appeared in the same month as the performance (like Isshin onna), bearing another striking surtitle: Shōshō moyo guruma Tōrō kayoi Komachi (“Shōshō and the Carriage of the Hundred Nights, The Praying-Mantis Visiting Komachi.”). The phrases again name one of the show’s highlights: its mitate of the Kayoi Komachi story, here linked both to Komachi’s faithful suitor Fukakusa no Shōshō and the praying mantis who visits her as part of that subplot. Since the insect is itself a manifestation of Kuronushi’s angry spirit, the surtitle gives the first preview of the titular “split bodies,” although the first-time reader or viewer will not necessarily know this.

This reference provides further material for the reader’s contemplation. For one thing, it replaces Isshin onna’s spiders with another insect, one associated with the poetic season of incipient death. The link is appropriate: Kuronushi commits suicide late in the play because of his unrequited love for Komachi. Perhaps, like the spiders in Isshin onna, the reference is also supposed to evoke linguistic echoes. The phrase tōrō no ono (the hatchet of the mantis) has been proverbial since Heike for futile resistance. This association again resurrects memories of Isshin onna, with its ongoing mitate of Kenreimon’in.

More striking is the surtitle’s lack of any reference to Narukami’s seduction. Presumably Danjūrō meant to emphasize Naritasan’s variation on Momoyo guruma, a Komachi-themed piece by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725) first performed in Kansai in 1684. Certainly early critics saw Naritasan through that prism. Several contemporary records list Naritasan by the title Komachi Kuronushi Momoyoguruma (“Komachi, Kuronushi, and the Carriage of the Hundred Nights”). The missing reference surely also, however, plays with the reader’s expectations. Most plays on the seduction plot foreground this element in their title, as do both of the playbooks considered here. By leaving it out, Danjūrō forces readers to imagine the entire seduction plot, literally recasting it as a distraction from the production’s main elements.

Danjūrō also makes shrewd use of his table of contents. Like the earlier playbooks, this text gives each act its own title. Each begins with the phrase Wakoku no (“Our country’s”) and then names the figure or object that purportedly inspired this part of the performance. Intriguingly, the structure here is the reverse of that suggested by the surtitle. None of the acts’ labels refers to Komachi or anyone associated with her. Instead, Act III, with the seduction scene, is called “Our Country’s Ikkaku.” Like Kuronushi in his denunciation speech, Danjūrō makes the debt to the Indian story explicit—this time in print. Beneath this title, like the others, he lists the act’s main character in smaller print. For this act, it is Kuronushi—the nominal protagonist.

The small print above the act’s title also repays attention. Here, in each case, Danjūrō gives four short phrases. The first and third are linked by grammar and puns to the indented second and fourth. The alternating phrases are also structurally parallel: one and three are comprised of verb clauses, while two and four give paired nouns. The small print above the title for Act III tentatively reads as fol-

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90 Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 570.
92 See Kōjien, under tōrō. The initial syllables of the phrase would then evoke Ono no Komachi, who triggers Kuronushi’s metamorphosis.
93 For the playbook of Momoyo Komachi, see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki kessakushū, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1925). The play apparently also featured Rokkasen poets.
94 For the alternate listings of Naritasan’s title, see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 570. They do not make the link to Chikamatsu’s play explicit.
Koi o suru
Pursuing his love,
Sugata Narihira
(In) appearance Narihira
Omoi o wakuru
Sharing his resolve,
Katachi Tsurayuki
(In) figure Tsurayuki

Like the playbook’s surtitle, these lines refer to a different aspect of the plot than that advertised in the larger print. Ariwara no Narihira (noted earlier in my discussion of Narukami) and Ki no Tsurayuki (ca. 872–945) are two more famous Heian poets. In Naritasan, they were apparently also the disgruntled lovers of two other male characters: Shōshō, Komachi’s legendary suitor; and Ono no Yoshitane, her brother. The poets reportedly accompanied these men to Komachi’s house in the second, Kayoi Komachi-themed half of the act. Danjūrō’s heading draws attention to an important and again spectacular part of the performance, the scene in which the four men—all played by leading actors—discover Kuronushi’s spirit in the guise of an insect. However, the lines’ repeated stress on appearance (sugata, katachi) and the reference to division (wakuru) again preview important elements of the seduction.

The stress on appearance and splitting resurfaces on the very next page, in the cast-list. Danjūrō naturally appears twice, for his roles as Kuronushi and the womb-world Fudō. However, under the large heading of “playwright” (kyōgen sakusha), we again find the familiar pairing of small and large print. The large print gives Danjūrō’s name for a third time. Its tiny preface reads Mimasuya Hyōgo, the penname noted earlier, confirming both the equivalence of the two parts in these labels and also the smaller script’s role as a gloss. This again suggests that the lines about Narihira and Tsurayuki are important to appreciating the “Ikkaku” act—and to the reader that Danjūrō alerts to this fact.

Figure 3. Cover illustration from e-iri kyōgen bon of Naritasan funjin Fudō (from Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki kessakushū, vol. 1, p. 569).

Naritasan: the playbook (illustrations)

Like the other two playbooks, Danjūrō’s written version of Naritasan includes some noteworthy illustrations. Kominz notes an attribution to Torii Kiyonobu, credited earlier for the pictures of Denki, and Torii Kiyomasu. The artwork again simulta-
neously depicts both the performance and its normally invisible allusive dimension.

This time, I begin my discussion with the playbook’s cover (Figure 3). While the texts for Denki and Isshin onna no longer have clear jacket illustrations, according to Takano and Kurogi, Naritasan’s first portrait of the stage is itself famous. Sawanojō (identifiable by his crest) appears as Monju (Skt. Manjusri), the bodhisattva of wisdom. He wears Monju’s crown and seems to sit or stand on his lion to the lower right. A delicate foot is just visible near the left side of the lion’s head. Danjūrō and Kuzō sit lower on either side as the two versions of Fudō; Danjūrō is on the right.

Once again, the costumes and iconography both educate the viewer and compete for his attention. The crests on the robes clearly identify both actors, while the two sets of flames, sword, and lasso (conventional attributes of the god) suggest the characters. One can also see both sets of feet. Danjūrō’s caricatured facial features, eyes crossed in his characteristic mie, here do double duty; they suggest both the god and Danjūrō’s own aragoto performance. Since the lion’s face resembles the caricature of Danjūrō, the artist may even suggest the actor’s other role as the villainous Kuronushi, here as at the end of the play (when he turns into the avatar of Fudō) effectively rendered prostrate.

This cover illustration serves several roles for the reader of the playbook (and the viewer of the performance). First, and pragmatically, it identifies the play’s three leads. Second, it shows at least two of them—Danjūrō and his son—in their most spectacular moments on stage. The puzzle here is Sawanojō. While the same triad appears in the playbook’s illustration for Act V, the text does not mention Komachi’s transformation into Monju. Perhaps this was an oversight, or a victim of the book’s abridgement of the performance; the table of contents seems to confirm that Komachi (and thus Sawanojō) was conflated with Monju at the end of the play. The effect, however, is to prompt an association that cannot be explained by the subsequent account of the performance. The link between Komachi and Monju is left to the reader’s imagination, just like a ludic prompt on the stage.

At the same time, the cover illustration is clearly humorous. First there is the suggestion that all of the actors, not just Danjūrō, are gods, whatever the official reputation of the theater. Second, the picture clearly associates Komachi (Sawanojō’s more prominent role in this piece) with Monju, known in the Edo period as the patron saint of same-sex love. As noted earlier, Narihira and Tsurayuki, "Our Country’s Monjū” and lists Komachi as the main character underneath.

99 On the cover’s fame, see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 570. The playbook for Denki reproduced in this volume has no cover, and it is possible that there was no such picture, although most of the books collected there have them. The image on Isshin onna’s cover (see 151) is damaged. It seems to show Taema in male costume in the lower left, suggesting that this cover, too, helped viewers to visualize the performance.

100 On this point it is instructive to compare the cover illustration with the picture for Act V, which depicts the trio and lion in slightly different postures. Sawanojō’s apparently full head of hair in the later picture constitutes another significant difference. For the picture, see Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 597.
the poets discussed earlier with respect to Act IV, grew angry with their lovers for fixating on Komachi. The cover picture ironically turns this character—or rather, the man who played her—into the very incarnation of their different preference.

Finally, there is the illustration of the seduction scene itself (as noted earlier, Figure 4). As in Denki, a scalloped line divides the top and bottom halves of the two pages. The seduction proper appears in the top half of the picture. In the top left, as Kominz notes, we see Kuronushi and Komachi.103 As in the pictures of Isshin onna, the labels give only the character’s names: “The Transcendent Ōtomo no Kuronushi” (sennin Ōtomo no Kuronushi) and “Ono no Komachi.”

Both actors are, however, identified by their crests (with Komachi wearing the hairstyle seen on Taema in the illustration from the Denki playbook). Kuronushi sits, fascinated, at the edge of his waterfall, once again realistically depicted, while Komachi looks alluringly up at him over her left shoulder. Only after noting this iconic scene does the eye travel left, to the priest’s two acolytes (Šarumaru Tayū and Kisen Hōshi, two more Heian poets) and another picture of Komachi, this time leading an ox carrying firewood on its back. A few cherry blossoms scattered on top of the firewood evoke a plot point from an earlier act.104 Once again, all three of these characters wear costumes emblazoned with the actor’s crest.

This half of the picture offers two intriguing variations on the performance it illustrates. The more obvious innovation is the presence of those two Komachis; in the pictures discussed earlier, the top and bottom halves of these illustrations only depict one moment of the performance. Here, however, the artist begins with the focal point of the seduction. Then, after depicting the on-stage audience, he returns to the scene’s opening moments. The repetition perhaps also humorously underscores a line from the playbook and thus (given Danjūrō’s authorship) probably the performance. When Kuronushi begins to suspect Komachi’s true identity, she defuses his suspicions by claiming that people often mistake her when she goes to the city to sell firewood; for that reason, she is known as Ono no Otō. By showing Komachi the wood-seller and Komachi the temptress, the artist playfully reproduces her excuse in his portrait of the scene itself.

At the same time, however, the artist makes sure to label Komachi clearly by repeating her full name in another label. The choice parallels his identification of Kuronushi’s acolytes. As noted earlier, these tags name two Heian poets (who also appear elsewhere in the plot). However, according to the playbook, at the beginning of this act those poets took religious names: respectively, Kōyō the Transcendent and Tsūfū the Transcendent (Kōyō sennin, Tsūfū sennin), respectively.105 By giving the supporting characters their “real” names, but specifying that Kuronushi is a transcendent, the artist foregrounds the mitate of Ikkaku’s story. Indeed, it privileges the mitate over the variation on earlier performances like Denki, which as noted earlier gave the priest a different title. Moreover, the picture highlights the range of deceptions practiced in this scene. While Komachi is the scene’s star performer in this sense, it bears noting that Kuronushi’s acolytes—like their counterparts in almost every version of the seduction found in kabuki—are not especially religious. In this play, they go to the mountains to keep Kuronushi company (and, on a practical level, to complete the mitate).

The bottom half of the illustration, which ostensibly depicts Naritasan’s variation on the Kayoi Komachi story, also highlights several important aspects of the seduction scene. It begins with Komachi (again marked with her full name) standing in the far right, apparently on the edge of the veranda of her house. Beside her crouch Kī no Tsurayuki and, to his lower left, Ono no Yoshitane (as noted

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103 The Stars Who Created Kabuki, 84.

105 See Takano and Kurogi, Genroku kabuki, 583. This part of the text comes immediately before the relevant illustration, at least as reproduced in the volume just noted.

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earlier, Komachi’s brother). They are caught in the moment of drawing their swords. All three figures gaze left, into the garden and across the page break. On the other side of the page break stands the object of their attention: the priest, here represented twice. The first version, a human figure simply labeled “Ōtomo no Kuronushi,” stands in a powerful mie, left leg extended, right hand clutching a branch of the cherry tree he stands beneath. His hair is in wild disarray, revealing him to be overmastered by his emotions, and his facial features—notably shorn of the facial hair of the top picture—create the standard caricature of Danjūrō himself.

Beneath him, unlabeled, stands the praying mantis discussed earlier. (Since the mantis is actually Kuronushi’s jealous spirit, it is possible that the label “Ōtomo no Kuronushi” instead refers to the man and the insect.) The blooming cherry tree, like the cherry blossoms on the ox in the top half of the picture, evokes Komachi’s victory in the poetry contest noted earlier. Finally, to their left, come Fukakusa no Shōshō and beneath him Ariwara no Narihira, both with hands on their swords and seemingly staring back at the other armed pair.

While these images repay attention both on their own terms (that is, as depictions of Naritasan’s Act III scene two in performance) and as part of the general composition, their view of the seduction is intriguing. By juxtaposing the two portraits of Kuronushi with the two portraits of Komachi, the artist does more than simply represent four moments in performance. He also conveys the degree to which both protagonists conflate multiple personas: the actors, the Heian poets, the originally Indian characters, and the roles each assumes (in some cases unwittingly) in “Komachi’s” seduction of the priest. The virtue of the illustration, and the playbook more generally, is that it can reveal all of these things at once—with time to untangle their interrelationships. On the other hand, the reader can lose himself looking, without further stimuli from a moving performance to recall him to the matter at hand: in this case, the rest of the physical playbook.

Conclusions

In the preceding pages, I have argued two related points: 1) that kabuki’s entertainment value depends on both physical and recollected stimuli; and 2) that Edo-period kabuki, in particular plays and playbooks about Narukami, combined these stimuli to unusually potent effect. By using the sensory dimensions of the stage and page to engage viewers’ minds in this playful fashion, Ichikawa Danjūrō I and his contemporaries tapped into details sure to excite knowledgeable theatergoers. Of course, not every reader or theatergoer could have recognized the wide set of stories and performances the plays discussed here both invoked and evoked. However, given the short time span in which these plays were performed, and their production for a relatively small audience within the same city, it seems likely that many theagogoers recognized many of the allusions and hidden jokes. Moreover, readers and viewers alike clearly enjoyed these ludic moments, even (perhaps especially) those that teased fans for their infatuations—in this case, by putting them in the position of the characters on stage and/or in the text. Danjūrō and his competitors would hardly have continued mounting these plays or investing performances and playbooks with extra ludic entertainments had this not been the case.

Such playfulness is hardly exclusive to kabuki, or to early modern Japan. While one thinks in this context of art-house cinema, with its frequent return to the plight of the actor and the seductions of theatrical entertainment, my favorite analogy for the movements discussed in this article comes in a more commercial series: Bridget Jones’s Diary (2001) and its sequel, Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (2004). Both films, based on books inspired by Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, play games with the audience, notably in the use of actor Colin Firth. In the books, the heroine fantasizes about Firth, famous for his real-life role as Mr. Darcy in an adaptation of Jane Austen’s novel. In the second book, Jones even gets to interview Firth about his experience with the part.

The films delighted fans of the books by casting Firth as Jones’s love interest, Mark Darcy. However, the interview scene—in which Jones, now involved with Mark Darcy, met her former-crush Firth—did not make it to movie theaters. This is presumably because no one unfamiliar with the books would have understood it. The scene did, however, survive for a smaller audience: the presumably more knowledgeable members of the fan-base who bought the DVD of the sequel. This was surely in part a marketing decision; judging from lay reviews, a number
of fans of the book hated the rest of the film. By including such a tempting extra, the company increased sales to this constituency at least.

This story seems to confirm my claim that ludic kabuki was more than a tactical response to Edo-period constraints. Rather, it tapped into a human desire for stimulation at all levels, particularly when offered in the form of a game, or self-portrait.

At least one contemporary actor seems to recognize this. As Kominz details, in 1985, when the current Ichikawa Danjūrō XII (1946-) assumed the hereditary name, he “led two chartered trains full of kabuki fans and Buddhist faithful on a pilgrimage to” the family temple at Naritasan; moreover, he subsequently continued to make semi-annual visits and other trips. One can easily see here an attempt to re-train audiences to recognize the stage’s allusive dimensions. Nor was this Danjūrō XII’s only return to the Edo-period. In 1992 he produced a revival of Naritasan junjin Fudō, based in part on the playbook. While I have not seen the play, it resurrected one of the casting games noted earlier: Danjūrō’s son played Kūkai and one half of Fudō, just as in the original production with Danjūrō I.

It is possible that other actors will follow the current Danjūrō’s lead and restore the holistic temptations of the Narukami plays and of Edo theater generally. For this to work, however, modern audiences will have to learn a lot more about current plays and actors, and the theater will perhaps have to accept more accessible (e.g., contemporary) plotlines and allusive content. If this happens, the mystery will not be what makes kabuki entertaining, it will be how the theater negotiated its new set of historical constraints to refocus our attention and recapture our hearts.

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106 See, for instance, the buyer comments on the Amazon page devoted to The Edge of Reason, or the page at “international movie database” www.imdb.com.

107 See The Stars Who Created Kabuki, 229. Since Kominz’s book was published, Danjūrō may have cut back on these visits. The actor endured tiring bouts with cancer in 2004 and 2005, and in a 2007 interview with The Japan Times he stressed that he is not particularly religious. Of course, as noted above, these visits are not solely spiritual in nature. For the interview, see http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fl20070902x1.html (accessed 1 August 2011).

Turrets of Time:
Clocks and Early Configurations of
Chronometric Time in Edo Fiction
(1780-1796)1

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The Edo period (1603-1868) witnessed a preponderance of technological advances in the areas of printing, textiles, construction, and mechanics, yet few were to impact the experience of everyday life as much as clockmaking. Over two hundred years before the abolition of the fujiteihō (variable hour time-keeping) system in Meiji 20 (1887), Japanese clockmakers realized their first successes at replicating and adapting Western chronometric technology for a society that ran on a variable, twelve-hour schedule of diurnal time. The consequences of these innovations, while not immediately manifest, would eventually prove far-reaching and profound. The introduction of the automated clock inaugurated a new regime of timekeeping in early modern Japan, one whose operation was directed by powerful political and economic forces. In the hands of the Tokugawa bakufu and the municipal authorities of Edo, automated clocks were used to instill punctuality in resident samurai and to synchronize the daily lives of the populace. Within the context of Japan’s incipient market economy, the automated clock represented the possibility of reifying time’s value with an unprecedented degree of mechanical accuracy. Notwithstanding the propensity of its escapement to trip and its springs to falter, the automated clock also captured the popular imagination with its complex and seemingly magical inner workings, which only the most practiced hand could calibrate. In eighteenth century print discourse, the clock emerged as a site of cultural inscription, as artists and writers imputed to this foreign technology connotative meaning, rendering it into a new emblem of the prevailing culture of play.

In this study, I chart an area of research which remains largely underexplored in literary and cultural histories of Edo Japan—namely, material practices of timekeeping in eighteenth-century Japan and their concurrence with chronometric configurations of temporality in fictional narrative. I argue that the introduction of the automated clock into early modern Japanese society, which had a profound influence on the way people perceived and imagined time, also informed writers’ approaches to representing time in their works of fiction. Accordingly, the greater part of this study is concerned with documenting early attempts by Japanese fiction writers to emplot, to call attention to Paul Ricoeur’s useful term,2 time in narrative. In its earliest instantiations, narrative time is indicated by an illustrated mechanical clock, a stylized cartouche that indicates the exact hour by name, or else by references in the text. Since there were no conventions for configuring chronometric time per se, writers arrived at different solutions to the problem of representing time’s passage in their works, and in many cases, their approaches appear to have been dictated by the narrative and pictorial possibilities of the genres in which they wrote. There was no single mode of configuration to which every writer adhered. Rather, the problem of how to represent hourly temporal progression inspired a variety of solutions, many of which are as revealing about the art of fiction as they are about perceptions of time.

Admittedly, fictional narrative is just one of many textual practices that could be studied in the context of early modern timekeeping, and separate examination of diaries, histories, compendia of local lore, kawaraban (broadsheets) and other forms of narrative may yield very different conclusions than are offered here. While this study does refer to similar experiments using structures of chronometric time in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century poetry and visual arts, its principal focus is on the mimetic representation of time in fictional narrative, and in particular, on a collection of works that were produced during a sixteen-year period between An’ei 9 (1780), when a cluster of references to me-

1 An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Early Modern Japan Network Annual Meeting in Honolulu, March 30, 2011. The author would like to express his appreciation for comments by Yulia Frumer, Regan Murphy, Anne Wathall, Phillip Brown, and the anonymous readers.

2 According to Ricoeur, “emplotment” is a mechanism of mimesis that mediates between time and narrative, between the preceding stage of practical experience and succeeding stage of represented experience. Ricoeur 1990, 52-88.
chanical clocks first appeared in the genre of *kibyō-shi* ("yellow cover novelettes"), and Kansei 8 (1796), incidentally the same year as the publication of Hosokawa Hanzō Yorinao’s (1741-1796) *Karakuri zui* (Illustrated Guide to Technical Devices, 1796), a work that played a key role in the dissemination of technical knowledge about clocks and karakuri mechanisms in general. These years constitute a formative period when, in the advent of widespread technical or even general knowledge about clocks, popular fictional narrative was positioned to influence newly emerging notions about chronometric technology and to project the ramifications of its importation into early modern society. Within the basic context of storytelling, however, I argue that the presence of the automated clock coincides with the implementation of new mechanisms of authorial control over the temporal setting and pace of temporal progression—if not also over the temporal dimensions of the reading experience itself. These innovations had applicability in other areas of cultural production, as evinced by similar experiments with representing time in poetry collections like Ishikawa Masamochi’s (1753-1830) *Yoshimura Jūnitoki* (Twelve Hours in the Yoshiwara c.1804) and series of *ukiyo-e* prints like Kitagawa Utamaro’s (1753-1806)—*Seirō Jūnitoki* (The Twelve Hours of the Cerulean Towers, c.1794) and *Musume hidokei* (Sundial of Maidens, c. 1795). In a broader literary historical context, these early experiments with configuring chronometric time also demand our attention because they enable us to locate an important continuity between Edo and Meiji narrative, one which, while not fully developed in the space of this essay, will surely be familiar to those working in either period.

A History of Mechanical Timepieces in the Edo Period

As early as Genroku 1 (1688), we find one of the first illustrations of a mechanical clock in a work of popular fiction, attributed to Yoshida Hanbei and included in Ihara Saikaku’s (1642-1693) *Nippon eitaigura* (The Japanese Eternal Storehouse, 1688). In the illustration, set in a trading house in Nagasaki, a Chinese trader presents his Japanese client with a *yagura-dokei* ("turret" clock) while discuss-

Figure 1. A Chinese trader and his Japanese client discuss business, while a *yagura-dokei* presides over the exchange from the edge of the veranda. Illustration from *Nippon Eitaigura*, in Noma Kōshin, ed., *Nippon eitaigura, Seken munesan’yō, Saikaku oritome, in iihon koten bungaku taikei*, Vol. 91 (Iwanami shoten, 969): 156.

3 In his footnote to this illustration, Noma Kōshin suggests that the clock is a gift offered by the Chinese trader. See Noma 1969, 156.

4 Noma 1969, 155.
sight in daily life. However, as its collocation with Chinese traders in this illustration indicates, the clock itself, as a material object, was still very much viewed as the exotic product of foreign technology, even though clockmaking itself had emerged as a recognized trade in Japan by this time. A senryū from the period similarly locates the clock in a site characterized as “Chinese”:

町内で時計の鳴るはからもの屋  

*In town, clocks sound  
From a Chinese goods shop*

In fact, the earliest automated clocks in Japan were not of Chinese provenance, but Western, and were brought to Japan by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries during the sixteenth century. The Jesuit missionary Fransisco de Xavier (1506-1552) presented what is believed to have been the first automated timepiece in Japan to Ouchi Yoshitaka (1507-1551), daimyō of Suo province, in Tenmon 20 (1551). In the decades that followed, missionaries presented clocks to Oda Nobunaga (1507-1551) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1507-1551), as well as to regional daimyō as a prelude to securing permission to preach Christianity in their domains; however, no clocks from this period are extant. Based on documented accounts, many of these clocks are thought to have been the *yagura-dokei*, or “turret” clock—so called because Torii Mototada (1539-1600), vassal of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), installed one on a turret of Fushimi Castle in Kyoto. Ieyasu himself was presented with multiple Western timepieces over the course of his reign as shōgun, including one from the missionary Rodrigues in Keichō 11 (1606), another from the Portuguese governor of Goa in Keichō 15 (1610), and yet another from García Guerra (c.1547-1612), archbishop of Mexico and viceroy of New Spain, in Keichō 16 (1611). Records indicate that this last clock was a *makura-dokei* 枕時計 (literally, “a pillow clock”), which resembled the *yagura-dokei* but was fitted with a chiming device. Incidentally, this particular clock also has the distinction of being the oldest datable mechanical timepiece in Japan.

While impressive in their own right as specimens of Western horological technology, these clocks held little practical use for their Japanese recipients. Aside from the fact that they ran on complex mechanisms that were prone to stalling, they were also built to calculate time according to the twenty-four hour model of diurnal time, not the variable twelve-hour model then prevalent in Japan. Prior to the demise of the *fujiteihō* system, day and night were apportioned into six hours each, and the counting of daytime hours began approximately at sunrise and ended approximately at sunset. While the practice of telling time by the signs of the Chinese zodiac continued, it became more common to refer to the hours by numbers, and to order time by the sequence of six o’clock, five o’clock, four o’clock, nine o’clock, eight o’clock and seven o’clock. At sunset, the counting of the nighttime hours would resume again at six o’clock and proceed in the same order. This meant, of course, that daytime hours were longer than nighttime hours in the summer, and shorter in the winter. If time did indeed fly like an arrow, to borrow one of the well-worn idioms of Edo fiction, then it might be said to have flown at dramatically different speeds during the day and night of the solstices.

Over time, mobilization of new manufacturing technologies resulted in the replication of imported models for a broader constituency of consumers, and custom-made mechanical clocks became fixtures in the homes of the political and commercial elite throughout Edo and other major cities. One of the figures at the center of this development was a metalsmith from Nagoya named Tsuda Sukezaemon I (d. 1638). After ably repairing a clock that had been presented to Tokugawa Ieyasu during a visit by Korean ambassadors, and producing a working replica of the damaged clock, Tsuda was invited to work in an official capacity as the maintainer of

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5 Quoted in Tatsukawa 1996, 160.
7 Tsukuda 1960, 28.
8 The very notion that one could be roused from a dream by the chiming of a clock led some writers to See, for example, Jippensha Ikku’s preface to *Shingaku tokeigusa*, reprinted in Tanahashi Masahiro, ed., *Jippensha Ikku shū* (Kokusho-kankōkai, 1997): 7, and discussed below.
clocks for the Tokugawa family in Owari, beginning in Genna 9 (1623). Tsuda and his descendants managed to parlay this hands-on familiarity with cogs, springs and weights into a productive capacity and create *yagura-dokei* for the Tokugawa. Within less than a century, a number of clockmakers had opened up shops in other major cities, primarily catering to daimyō and high ranking retainers, and clockmaking itself came to be recognized as a craft, as attested by its inclusion in *Jinrin kinmō zui* (*Illustrated Encyclopedia of Humanity*, 1690), which refers to several clockmakers by name, including Hirayama Musashi, a master clockmaker in Kyoto who was active during the Jōkyō (1684.2-1688.9) and early Genroku periods.9 For clockmakers, one of the main problems of adapting horological technology for the Japanese market was how to adjust the speed of the clock hand to hours of variable length. With remarkable ingenuity, Japanese clockmakers developed two solutions to the problem. The first was the invention of interchangeable clock faces for different seasons, reflecting the variable length of the hours. The second was an elaborate system of weights that enabled one to calibrate the speed at which the clock hand made its circuit at different times of the day.10 Neither were a perfect solution to the problem, and the latter entailed great attention to the adjustment of weights. Yet despite these complications, Japanese clocks became sought after by those who could afford them. The cost of custom work and the expensive accent details of many models—such as copper faces, silver numbers and pearl inlay in the wooden housing—explain why for the majority of the populace, the prohibitive costs of clocks made them an inaccessible luxury.11 In a well known anecdote, even Isaac Titsingh (1745-1812), senior official of the Dutch East India Company, lamented that he could not afford to bring one of the Japanese-made timepieces back to his native Holland.12

Once the main technical difficulties were overcome, Tokugawa Ieyasu and his successors embraced the technology with such enthusiasm that, by the middle of the seventeenth century, Edo Castle had become a veritable bastion of punctuality. Major functions of the castle, such as the opening of the gates at six o’clock in the morning, the call to the daimyō to enter the castle at four o’clock in the morning, and the closing of the gates at six in the evening, were conducted in time with a large clock housed in the *tokei no ma* 土圭の間, or the clock chamber. Accuracy was safeguarded through the marshaling of numerous auxiliary clocks throughout the castle and various back-up methods of keeping time like candles and incense. Of course, keeping time was one matter and notifying people of the

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10 Early *yagura-dokei* clocks had a single, horizontally mounted bar with two adjustable weights that were used to calibrate the speed of the clock hand. Later models were fitted with two bars, for a total of four adjustable weights. The first *kake-dokei* 掛時計 (mounted clock) with adjustable weights was produced in Hōreki 10 (1760) by Hirota Riemon 広田利右衛門, and the first *kake-dokei* with two bars of adjustable weights was produced in Bunka 10 (1813) by Kanematsu Masatō 兼末正当.

11 Sawada 1996, 32.

12 In *Illustrations from Japan* (1822), Titsingh writes: “I was desirous of bringing one with me from Japan, but the high price deprived me of the gratification.”
time was quite another. Within the castle, there developed a sophisticated—and indeed, labor-intensive—system of time notification whereby staff would sound drums at various points throughout the castle to notify inhabitants and daimyō living nearby of important times. All in all, the Tokugawa fascination with clocks may be characterized as a concerted effort to calibrate shōgunal rule, with mechanical precision, to the rhythms of the cosmos. This enthusiastic adoption of technology was not without its drawbacks, however. In fact, the costs of procuring and maintaining the clocks, not to mention employing qualified staff to attend to these matters, placed a great strain on bakufu resources. So much so that in Hōei 7 (1701), Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), advisor to Tokugawa Ienobu (1662-1712; r. 1709-1712), discharged over fifty members of staff who attended to the clocks in the tokei no ma in Edo Castle in an effort to reduce the operating budget of the bakufu.13

Beyond the periphery of the castle, clocks influenced the daily lives of samurai and commoners in similarly dramatic ways. By the early eighteenth century, an elaborate system of time notification developed whereby specially designated temples would toll the hours in time with a mechanical clock—a combination of old and new technology that became known as toki no kane 時の鐘, or “time bells”.14 The bakufu played an active role in regulating this system, issuing permits to the designated temples and centrally planning their distribution throughout the city. By bakufu order, the clocks in these temples were set to run early, so that daimyō required to be in attendance at Edo Castle would not arrive late.15 A survey conducted in Kan’en 3 (1750) enumerates ten different toki no kane temples throughout the city of Edo, while also estimating how far the tolling of the bell at each temple could be heard. If this survey data is reliable, then we can conclude that, by the middle of the eighteenth century, nearly every resident of Edo was within earshot of a toki no kane. Residents in four districts—Nihonbashī Ishi-machi, Ueno, Shibakiri-tōri and Honjo Yokokawa—even paid fees for this municipal service.16 Perhaps because of its potential for revenue generation, the city experienced a modest increase in the number of bakufu-designated toki no kane during the remainder of the century, as well as a reportedly more dramatic increase in the number of unlicensed bell tollers. Even roosters got into the act—or at least that is the scenario presented in a scene from Santō Kyōden’s (1761-1823) Mazu hiraku mume no akabon (First Flowering Plum Redbook, 1793), in which an enterprising rooster explains that he has invested in a clock because it is his business to provide accurate notification of when the sun rises.17 In any event, it can be imagined that the passing of the hours was signaled more audibly at the end of the eighteenth century than at the beginning. Even Ōta Nanpo (1749-1823), the self-proclaimed “Sleepyhead Sensei” (Neboke sensei),18 was not immune to the clanging, as he comments in a kyōka19 from Tenmei 8 (1788):

煩悩の眠りをますら失眠
きくやわたりに船橋の寺

Rousing me from pleasurable slumber,
I hear the toki no kane, tolling

13 Tsukuda 1960, 33-34.
14 The nine “time-bell” stations in Edo were: the Yotsuya Shinjuku bell at Tenryūji Temple, the Hon’ishi-chō bell in the Nihonbashi district, the Ueno bell, the Asakusa bell located in the environs of Sensōji Temple, the Hon’menji Temple bell, located in the Ota district, the Honshō bell, located in Tōenji Temple, the Akasaka Entsū-ji Temple bell, the Mejōri Shin Nagatanī bell, and the Shibakiri-tōshī bell. Of these ten, the first six bells are still extant. For additional background and images, see Tsuda 1960, 39.
15 Tsukuda 1960, 39.
At the temple in Funabashi

Diurnal time in Edo Fiction

While the tolling of toki no kane had become a commonplace of urban life during the latter half of the eighteenth century, its appearance as a literary motif—and later, as a device for structuring narrative time—is almost exclusively limited to stories set in the Yoshiwara, which was located within earshot of the toki no kane at Sensōji Temple in Asakusa. In the most common iteration, the sounding of the bell—usually at the wee hours of the tiger (about two to four in the morning) or the hare (about four to six in the morning)—signals a decisive end to a long night of revelry, and leads to tearful partings between courtesans and their patrons, as in the kyōka below:

刻限のとらに別るる花魁の袖も
涙の雨に濡らしつ

Even the sleeves of the oiran,
Parting from her lover at the hour of the tiger,
Are dampened by a shower of tears.

Notwithstanding her emotional response to the realization of time’s passage, the high-ranking oiran is conventionally depicted in fiction and ukiyo-e浮世絵 (“floating world prints”) of the period as having the ability to calibrate the complex mechanisms of the automated clock, and in a sense, to control time. This is in stark contrast to her male patron, who is often caught off guard by learning of time’s passage via the toki no kane, and exhibits no proficiency at, or even familiarity with, the technical aspects of adjusting and maintaining a clock. This binary reflects an important dimension in the complex power relationship between the oiran and her patron, wherein the oiran’s ability to manipulate the inner workings of a clock is projected as analogous to her ability to manipulate her customers—emotionally, sexually and economically. The oiran is able to tantalize clients by making them wait beyond their prearranged time for a chance to meet with her, or in the case of undesirable clients, postponing appointments indefinitely. Time may be the only means by which the oiran is able to exert her own agency vis-à-vis the desires of her male clients, and the emblem of this power, an object nearly as inaccessible as the oiran herself, is the automated clock, which is subject to her calibrations.

In Wakan sansai zue (Illustrated Encyclopedia of Japan and China, 1713), the automated clock is classified under the category of geiki芸器 (and instruments), along with other instruments of measurement like compasses and abacuses, and perhaps surprisingly, with materials for artistic pursuits, such as brushes and fine paper for calligraphy.23 While this is not to say that timekeeping was regarded in its own right as an aesthetic pursuit, its implied affiliation with calligraphy and other arts in Wakan sansai zue comports with characterizations in numerous stories about courtesans who excel at adjusting and maintaining clocks. In Saikaku’s Kōshoku ichidai otoko (Life of an Amorous Man, 1682), for example, the ability of the oiran Yoshino to adjust an automated clock, along with her proficiency in the arts of music, tea ceremony and flower arranging, convinces the skeptical parents of the protagonist, Yonosuke, that she is indeed a woman of high caliber and would make a suitable wife.24 In Jippensha Ikku’s (1765-1831) Shingaku tokeisō (Gleanings of Philosophical Clock Grass, 1795), discussed in detail below, one of the attributes that makes the oiran Kashiwade so successful is her adeptness at managing time—and the impossible expectations of her clients. A playful variation on the motif of the courtesan who controls time with her clock is Nishikawa Sukenobu’s (1674-1754) Hashira-dokei to bijin zu (Portrait of a Beautiful

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21 There is a play on words between the name of the district, Funabashi (literally, “boat bridge”), and the figurative expression watarifune (“life boat”, also “heaven-sent help”). Within the context of the poem, the temple bell may be interpreted as “saving” the speaker of the poem by awakening him from a samsara-like illusion of worldly attachments. Of course, the overall tone of the poem is comic, and the gratitude of the speaker is probably ironic.

22 Yoshiwara jūnitoku, reprinted in Ishikawa Masamochi shū (Yūmeidō shoten, 1915): 703.

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23 See the geiki section of Wakan sansai zue, in Shimada et al 1986, 5-127.

24 Teruoka 1971, 206.
Woman with Mounted Clock), in which a courtesan, ignoring the conventional mechanisms of calibrating the speed of the clock, ties the cords binding the weights into a knot—presumably, as Timon Screech has suggested in his convincing interpretation of this painting—to stop the advance of time and permit her more time with her lover.\(^\text{25}\)

Time—be it time indicated visually on the face of a clock or acoustically by the tolling of a toki no kane—features as a prominent motif in genres of popular fiction that were commonly set in the Yoshiwara, such as the kibyōshi and the sharebon (“fashionbooks”). It is in these same genres, I would argue, that we also see the first experiments with plotting chronometric time in narratives, often in those whose scope encompasses a full day and night. One of the earliest examples of this is Yūshi högen (A Playboy’s Dialect, 1770), generally regarded as the first sharebon, in which the entire narrative is plotted out over the span of about seven or eight koku. The general sweep of temporal progression is indicated by the titles of the five individual sections. After the long opening section entitled hottan (“Beginning”), which relates how the two main characters meet, take a boat to the Yoshiwara and settle in at the Odawara-ya teahouse, the remaining sections plot the narrative structured around clocktime, but which ultimately only focuses on exchanges between courtesans and patrons leading up to the daybreak hour of parting.\(^\text{27}\)

The first experiment with implementing chronometric narrative time in a sharebon comes much later, with Santō Kyōden’s Seiro hiru no sekai: nishiki no ura 青楼昼之世界錦之裏 (The Daytime World of the Cerulean Towers: Behind the Brocade, 1791), in which Kyōden uses the figure of the clock, an illustration deployed within lines of text, to mark the temporal settings of five different scenes in the story. While this innovative approach to marking out narrative time has received much attention in scholarship on Kyōden’s works and on the sharebon in general, singular focus on Nishiki no ura alone has obscured experiments with the use

\(^{25}\) Screech 2002, 83-84. See also Tatsukawa 1996, 158-160.

\(^{26}\) Mizuno ed. 1986, 290-291

\(^{27}\) Hayakawa 1915, 247-253.
The Figure of the Clock in Santō Kyōden’s Early Kibyōshi

Santō Kyōden’s earliest body of work as a writer and illustrator of kibyōshi evinces a sustained engagement with clocks. Four of the first five works of kibyōshi he is credited with writing and illustrating feature illustrations of hashira-dokei or yagura-dokei clocks. In An’ei 9 (1780), the same year that these four works were published, Kyōden also illustrated fifteen kibyōshi by other writers, under the artistic handle Kitao Masanobu. Of these, six include illustrations of clocks, such as Kuruwa no hanaogi no kanzemizu (Flowered Fan of the Bordello, Kanze Water, 1780) by Hōseidō Kisanji (1735-1813) and Yūjin sanbukutsui (Three Courtesans, 1780) by Shiba Zenkō (1750-1793). In the context of Kyōden’s career as an illustrator, this collection of early kibyōshi appears to constitute a series of études in the depiction of clocks, rendered from different angles and perspectives, and with seeming reliance on direct observation. Kibyōshi, especially those set in the Yoshiwara, demanded such attention to detail. In many ways, the authenticity of the work and the authority of the author were predicated upon accurate depiction of all manner of things in the pleasure quarters—be it clocks or the coiffure of an oiran—and the illustrator played a key role in this appeal to readers.

If Kitao Masanobu the illustrator was honing his craft in these renderings of the strange technology of time-keeping, as a form of “fan service” to readers, then we might imagine that Kyōden the writer was working at quite another task—rationalizing and contextualizing their appearance in his stories. While the inherent novelty of clocks as material objects may have been enough to pique the interest of readers, their placement in Kyōden’s works never seems random or gratuitous. Within certain pictorial contexts, they are collocated with other commodified signifiers of wealth and status—fine clothing, decorated tea caddies and incense burners, tobacco pipes, swords, musical instruments and the hired company of courtesans—to give readers a sense of scene or the largesse of a particular character. Well beyond their associations with material wealth, however, I would argue that the figure of the clock also functions as a foreshadowing device in some of these early works, directing readers to wait out the passage of time—both the diegetic time of the narrative and the time it takes to read the story—in order for complications to be resolved and the story to end with a satisfying conclusion. In this respect, these early experiments with clocks as markers of narrative time in Kyōden’s works seem to anticipate his more explicit use of yagura-dokei to mark out the hours in Nishiki no ura (1790). In the analyses that follow, I provide brief summaries of four early kibyōshi by Kyōden, focusing on the appearances of yagura-dokei and hashira-dokei clocks and their roles in the stories.

Figure 3. Shōjikiya Kōhee meets a matchmaker to finalize the details of his son’s marriage. Note the hashira-dokei clock on the wall in the top left corner. From Yone manjū no hajimari. Santō Kyōden zenshū, vol. 1 (Perikansha, 1992): 66.

In a scene from Yone manjū no hajimari (The Origins of the Rice Dumpling Woman, Yone, 1780), a hashira-dokei appears mounted on the wall of a wealthy chōnin named Shōjikiya Kōhee, whose son, Kōkichi, has fallen in love with a courtesan named O-Yone (See Figure 3). Kōhee, determined to end the relationship between his son and O-Yone, and marry him off to a more respectable woman of comparable social standing, invites a matchmaker
over to his home to finalize the details of a marriage to the daughter of a wealthy merchant living in the Ryūkoku district of Edo. Little does Kōhee know that at the very moment he is discussing the matter of betrothal money and exchanging a celebratory cup of sake with the matchmaker, the usually compliant Kōkichi is secretly plotting to run away with his beloved, even at risk of his own disinheri
tance. At this important juncture in the narrative, where Kōkichi is about to make a fateful decision regarding his future, choosing love over wealth, the clock presiding over the discussion between his father and the matchmaker seems to indicate that reconciliation—and indeed, resolution of the story—will only be possible with the passage of time. The importance of time is re-emphasized in the narration of the following scene, which describes the elopement of Kōkichi and O-Yone in the following terms:

“Kōkichi and O-Yone overheard the discussion between Kōkichi’s father and the matchmaker, and realized that there was no way his family would agree to their union. They eloped, determined to bide their time once they had left the house”—my emphasis here on the expression “bide their time” (jisetsu wo matan).28 Kōkichi enters into a much more modest way of life with O-Yone, working as an umbrella vendor while she hires herself out as a prostitute. Eventually Kōkichi’s father is moved to pity when he learns of how deeply his son has fallen into poverty, and gives him the money to buy O-Yone out of indenture so that they can enjoy a married life secured by his largesse and, ultimately, start a successful business as dumpling vendors. If the passage of time is the main device of resolution in this story, then it is the figure of the clock that foreshadows this resolution, alerting readers to bide their time, as Kōkichi and O-Yone do, in anticipation of a happy conclusion.

In Musume kataki-uchi kokyo no nishiki (A Young Girl’s Vendetta: Hometown Brocade), the figure of the clock—this time a yagura-dokei—appears at the intersection of two important plotlines in the story, one of which concerns the romance between the two main characters and the other a vendetta plot (see Figure 4). Its appearance in Musume kataki-uchi comes somewhat later than in Yone manju no hajimari—to be exact, in the fourteenth scene of the story, in which Shirōkurō, the son of a master swordsman, visits a young woman named Oyoshi to discuss their plans for marriage. Oyoshi’s guardian and Shirōkurō’s father have already agreed in principle to the match, but there remains one more important matter to be resolved before the two can wed—a vendetta. Several years before the setting of this scene, Oyoshi’s father, a daimyō named Ashimizu Sawanojō, is ordered to commit seppuku for allowing his retainer, Ashigaru Bansuke, to destroy a magical cherry tree. While the actual circumstances of this incident are not taken into consideration when Sawanojō is condemned to death, the reader is privy to the true story, and knows that the tree was really cut down by Bansuke in a fit of frustration after his advances on Sawanojō’s faithful wife, Shigarami, are rebuffed. Even after Sawanojō is dead, the treacherous Bansuke shows no remorse for his actions, and after mounting a second unsuccessful attempt on the chastity of widowed Shigarami, he murders her.

True to the title, this work follows some of the familiar maneuvers of vendetta narratives, but with a twist—the young Oyoshi, daughter of the late Sawanojō and Shigarami, is the one who takes up the sword and avenges her parents’ deaths. Customarily this would be the role of a loyal retainer, but in the

absence of an Ōboshi Yuranosuke, the responsibility falls to Oyoshi. Another matter hindering immediate resolution of the story is Oyoshi’s age. Oyoshi is still very young when she pledges, on the eve of her father’s suicide, to exact revenge on Bansuke—and so readers must wait, as they often must in vendetta stories of this kind, for various subplots to unfold before justice can be served. Justice is necessarily served cold in *Musume katagi-uchi*, for it is only after Oyoshi comes of age, and falls in love with Shirōkūrō, that revenge becomes a possibility. The appearance of the *yagura-dokei* amidst Oyoshi and Shirōkūrō’s discussions about their vendetta killing and their wedding plans seems to signal readers to wait out the passage of time—in this case, only a few more scenes—for the kind of satisfying resolution that they had come to expect from vendetta stories. It is difficult to say which outcome readers would have found more satisfying—seeing Oyoshi and Shirōkūrō exchange wedding vows or seeing Bansuke run through with a sword—but both make for a dramatic conclusion.

In other works by Kyōdōden, the appearance of the clock coincides with, rather than anticipating, the resolution of certain issues or complications in the story. In *Yakimochi hanashi* (*The Tale of a Rice Cake, Burnt with Jealousy*, 1780), for example, a *yagura-dokei* appears in the penultimate scene, when the well-meaning parents of Maruya Dangorō expose their ruse of pretending to divorce over his father’s infidelity (see figure 5). Dangorō, who at the tender age of twenty-five has already been married and divorced five times, desires nothing more than a jealous woman, and goes to great expense in the pleasure quarters trying to find one. At an utter loss to put an end to their son’s philandering, Dan-gorō’s parents come up with the idea of putting on a charade. Dangorō’s father follows him one evening to the Yoshiwara and pretends to become suddenly enamored of womanizing and revelry. His mother feigns jealousy at his father’s sudden transformation, and goes so far as to track him down one night in the Yoshiwara and voice her displeasure. An argument ensues, and the two decide to get a divorce, much to the shock of Dangorō. Once the dust clears, Dangorō tries to reason with his mother and to persuade her not to go through with the divorce, and it is in this very scene that his father appears from the adjoining room to reveal that they have been acting out a charade all along, in hopes of getting Dangorō to see the folly of his ways. In a somewhat hasty conclusion to the story, Dangorō foreswears his old habits of debauchery, and remarries his first wife.

Figure 5. Dangorō’s father, appearing from the sliding door to the left with a *yagura-dokei* in partial view, comes clean about his charade. Illustration from *Yakimochi hanashi*. *Santō Kyōden zenshū*, vol. 1 (Perikansha, 1992): 66.

Figure 6. Mochimaruya presents his son with the key to his storehouse, with a clock chiming in the background. Illustration from *Edo no haru ichiya senryō*. *Santō Kyōden zenshū*, vol. 1 (Perikansha, 1992): 265.

The *kihyōshi* *Edo no haru ichiya senryō* (*One Thousand Ryō, on a Spring Night in Edo*, 1786) represents Kyōdōden’s most effective joining of timekeeping to plot development. In this story, an automated clock serves as the functionary of a timed contest
devised by the wealthy merchant Mochimaruya Chōjaemon. The rules of the contest require that anyone who manages to spend a large amount of cash over the course of a single night will be rewarded with an exponential sum as a prize. The participants in the contest, who include the merchant’s wife, shop manager, clerk, apprentice, kitchen staff and son, receive different amounts of money, all in small denominations—ranging from seven ryō for the apprentice to one thousand ryō for the merchant’s son. The contest commences at the tolling of the toki no kane at six in the morning (represented in the text by the onomatopoetic expression chan), and is scheduled to end at six the following morning, giving each contestant exactly twelve hours to spend their purse. The task proves to be more difficult than it seems for most of the contestants, and ultimately, only the merchant’s son manages to spend all of the money in time, just as the clock in his father’s chamber strikes six (rendered onomatopoetically in the text as gii chan). For his prodigality in the pleasure quarters the night before, the son is rewarded with the sum of one million ryō, represented as the key to one of Mochimaruya’s storehouses, which Mochimaruya presents to his son just as the clock chimes to signal the end of the contest (see figure 6).

Narrative Time, Hour by Hour

Kyōden’s most sophisticated experiment with using the clock as a narrative device appears in Seiro hiru no sekai: nishiki no ura (1791), a sharebon.29 Nishiki no ura tells of the love affair between Yūgiri, a courtesan of the Kanzaki house in Sesshū, and Izaemon, a townsman. It was a narrative with a long pedigree in Edo literature, beginning with the staging of a theatrical adaptation of the real-life love affair between Izaemon and Yūgiri, an oiran at the Shinmachi licensed quarter in Osaka, only a month after the latter’s death in Enpō 6 (1678).30 In his version of the story, Kyōden marshals an impressive knowledge of even the most minute details of life and business in the pleasure quarter, such as only a true habitué of the quarter like himself could have managed, and renders each scene with lapidary description. While the authenticity and stylistic originality of this version serve Kyōden’s aim of resisting conventional depictions of the Yoshiwara, perhaps his most innovative choice is that of setting the story during the daytime and deploying an illustration of a yagura-dokei in five different sections of the text to indicate the passage of time. Following the established sequence of the hours, the clock strikes five (approximately eight o’clock in the morning) in its first appearance, four (ten) in its second, nine (noon) in its third, eight (two in the afternoon) in its fourth and finally seven (four o’clock) in its last appearance. Besides serving the practical function of marking out time in the text, the mechanical clock is also there to remind readers of the fundamental thematic premise of the piece—namely, that just as the hours of the day and the night are of differing length, so too is the Yoshiwara a different place, with different rhythms of activity, during the day and at night.

Figure 7. Illustration from Ukiyoburō, Vol.3. Waseda University Japanese & Chinese Classics Database.

Kyōden’s approach to plotting narrative time through the deployment of an illustrated clock within the body of the text was emulated by later sharebon writers. We find the very same device in Kanda Atsumaru’s (d. 1829) Seirō yoru no sekai: misoka no tsuki (The World of the Cerulean Towers at Night: Dark Secrets Brought to Light by the Moon, 1799), which opens with the tolling of the evening bell (cited with the onomatopoetic expression koon, koon, koon), followed by the sound of a

30 Kornicki 1977, 163.
yagura-dokei clock (represented with the sound giku giku giku). In total, the clock appears five times in this work, the same number of times as Nishiki no ura, and in each case its function appears to be not only to indicate the time, but to invoke the inner temporal world of the Yoshiwara. Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822), a sharebon turnedkokkeibon (“banter book”) writer, deploys an illustrated clock to the mark the time at the beginning and ending of certain sections of the third volume of his Ukiyoburō (Bathhouse of the Floating World, 1809-1813). The illustration of the clock in Sanba’s text is different from those in used in Kyōden’s or Kanda Atsumaru’s in that it indicates the time not only textually, through writing on the front panel of its base, but also by the position of the clock hand (see figure 7). The sound of the clock in Sanba’s text is also slightly different, rendered with the protracted onomatopoetic expression giri giri giri giri chan. Although adoption of illustrated clocks as markers of narrative time was not widespread enough to be characterized as a newly formed convention in narrative fiction, Mizuno Minoru notes that influence of Nishiki no ura was extensive. The tack of switching the temporal setting of stories set in the Yoshiwara from the nighttime to the daytime, for example, was adopted by a number of later sharebon writers, including Shinrotei (d. 1815) and Bisanjin (1790-1858).

Yet perhaps the first to follow Kyōden in marking out narrative time by the hours was Jippensha Ikku in his debut work, Shingaku tokeisō (Gleanings of Philosophical Clock Grass, 1795), a kibyōshi published four years after Nishiki no ura. The protagonist of the story is an oiran named Kashiwade, whose beauty and proficiency at arts like poetry and incense identification make her sought after by habitués of the quarter. Although it seems to be at odds with the very nature of her profession, Kashiwade also espouses her own brand of shingaku 心学 (“mind study”) philosophy, eschewing the material and carnal excesses of chōnin life, and even lecturing the lower-ranking jorō and kamuro on the practical ethics of being a courtesan. One of the tenets of her philosophy is that there are certain absolute truths which can be understood by observing phenomena in the natural and social world—the rising and setting of the sun, the blooming and withering of flowers, the birth and death of humans, and the uniform allotment of the hours. Everything else, according to Kashiwade, is based on falsehood—from Buddhist sermons to the pledges of love made by courtesans to their clients. Kashiwade’s ethical philosophy, and especially her belief in the absolute truth of time’s passage, become the focal point of the story when, one evening, twelve eager patrons descend upon her establishment at the same time, demanding to hire out her company. Kashiwade’s solution to this dilemma is to allot each one of the twelve customers an appointment of one hour (two by the modern reckoning), and have them take turns visiting her. To prove that no one customer will be allowed to go over time, or to be short shifted the full hour, she demonstrates that she will be relying on a clock in her chamber to keep time (see figure 8).

Figure 8. The courtesan Kashiwade adjusting her clock before patrons. Note the yagura-dokei clock on the right. From Shingaku tokeisō. Santō Jippensha Ikku shū (Kokushokankōkai 1997): 8-9

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32 Tanaka 1957, 193.
33 Mizuno 1974, 138-140; 145-146.
35 The shingaku philosophy of Ishida Baigan (1685-1744) and others provided a new ethics for urban commoners in response to the perceived material and carnal excesses of chōnin life, and attracted a popular following by the middle of the eighteenth century, amidst an economic recession in the Kyoto-Osaka region. For a creative treatment of shingaku philosophy and its relationship to the adoption of Western time-keeping technology, see Timon Screech 2002, 81-90.
What follows in the text is a series of twelve illustrated scenes, with a rectangular cartouche in the right corner of the frame identifying the hour. The story takes a strange turn when Kashiwade, who has promised to entertain her guests during twelve separate appointments, does not show up for any of them, leaving each one of them to bide their time with one weird character after the next—a hair pin dressed in a kimono, a talking frog with the name of the client inscribed on its back, and an anthropomorphic broom, to name a few. Naturally, Kawashide has purposely made it the basis for his debut work. Even after the publication of Shingaku tokeisō, however, Masamochi appears to have remained interested in the concept, because several years later he went on to arrange a massive collection of kyōka poetry arranged into twelve sections, according to the twelve hours, entitled Yoshiwara Jūnитoki 吉原十二時 (Twelve Hours in the Yoshiwara).37 Although of a very different genre, Masamochi’s collection exhibits close affiliations with Kyōden’s Nishiki no ura, especially in its attention to some of more quotidian details of life in the Yoshiwara at different times of the day and night. Taken together, these two works by Ikku and Masamochi can be seen to have expanded upon

the chronometric structure of Kyōden’s Nishiki no ura by enlarging the temporal scope of the narrative from five to twelve hours. Not many writers followed Ikku and Masamochi in implementing the same model of chronometric diurnal time; however, there were a few attempts at experimentation, such as the unpublished sharebon Jūnитoki (Twelve Hours), also appearing under the alternative title Nagamine Jūnитoki (Twelve Hours in Nagamine).38

While other sharebon, kokkeibon, and later, ninjōbon (“books of sentiment”), writers co-opted the device of using clocks to mark out time in the prose narrative, the influence of Kyōden’s Nishiki no ura is more evident in ukiyo-e prints of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Worthy of note are two series of prints by Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806)—Seirō jūnитoki (The Twelve Hours of the Cerulean Towers, c.1794) and Musume hidokei (Sundial of Maidens, c. 1795).39 In both series, Utamaro depicts scenes of courtesans and their attendants engaging in different activities at different types of the day—revealing, as Kyōden does in Nishiki no ura, what goes in the Yoshiwara during the off hours.40 In the case of the former work, cartouches decorated with flower patterns and shaped like kake-dokei adorn the top right or left corners of the illustrations, indicating the time of each activity. The effect, as one views one print after the next in succession, is one of temporal progression—a story related in pictures unfolds hour by hour.

Conclusion

While descriptive references to clocks appear in Japanese fiction as early as the Eihoji period, and illustrations of clocks about a decade later, their deployment as markers of narrative time cannot be seen until the late eighteenth century. During that intervening century, the institution of clock-regulated time, especially in major cities like Edo, may be said to have engendered a collective recognition of time’s hourly passage, and, consequently,

38 Mizuno 1988, 452-455. For a reprint of the work in its entirety, see Mizuno 1988, 294-298.
to have informed approaches to narrating time in works of popular fiction. The Meiwa period (1764.6-1772.11) was witness to several attempts to construct narratives around the model of diurnal time, including Yūshi hōgen. Construction of chronometric narrative reached a watershed in the work of Santō Kyōden, whose deployment of the figure of the automated clock in four kibyōshi published in An’ei 9 (1780) anticipated the novel approach to marking out narrative time, hour by hour, in Nishiki no ura (1791). Writers like Jippensha Ikuu and Ishikawa Masamochi developed similar approaches to structuring narratives around the unit of koku, in kibyōshi and kyōka, respectively. Within these and other works, the presence of the automated clock appears to coincide with the implementation of new mechanisms of authorial control over temporal setting and pace of temporal progression. While the scope of the present study does not allow for a more sustained consideration of other innovations in the representation of narrative time, from later Edo to early Meiji period literature, some of the theoretical issues introduced here may provide direction for future studies.

Works Cited


Review Article:
Should Museums Welcome Parody?
Lords of the Samurai: The Legacy of a Daimyo Family. San Francisco Museum of Asian Art, 2009 ©Morgan Pitelka, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

First is a short but compelling set of musings by the Japanese art historian Takeuchi Jun'ichi that helps to contextualize elite warrior appreciation for literature and poetry. Next is an extremely "by the books" overview of the samurai in Japanese history by Yoko Woodson, the main organizer of the exhibition and the head curator of Japanese art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The third and by far the longest piece in the book is Thomas Cleary's essay on bushidō or "the way of the warrior," which draws exclusively on his own translations of certain Japanese texts to elucidate the role of religion in samurai conduct and ethics; though Cleary is a respected translator of religious texts from a variety of traditions, his work is not scholarly and seems out of place here. This is also true, if to a lesser extent, of Deborah Clearwaters's "Introduction to the Catalogue," which leans toward the kind of crowd-friendly generalizations that would be more appropriate in an education pamphlet aimed at students than an exhibition catalog. ("The samurai of medieval Japan felt vulnerable to being characterized as class upstarts" is one example.) The catalog entries are generally informative and clear, though as is typical of this genre of writing, they assume a lot about their readers.

The book is a satisfying read, but it becomes even more edifying when read against information that is either entirely absent or visible only in the visual and discursive interstices of orthodox catalog structure. The prefacing comments, for example, which many readers would skip entirely, reveal the vital institutional relationship and funding source that helps to frame all that follows. Hosokawa Morihiro, Chairman of the Eisei-Bunko Museum, writes the following:

This is [the] first time that the Hosokawa family's heirloom arms and armor, paintings, and decorative and applied art objects have been shown in a comprehensive way in the United States. I am very grateful to the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and all the others who have collaborated in this project for providing us with this valuable opportunity. (P. viii)

He then goes on to present a highly edited version of his family history, a kind of marketing document for feudal lords in general and the Hosokawa in par-
perticular, noting at one point that "Japanese generals have always had a high regard for the arts" (p. viii). What is going on here?

It is not uncommon for American and European museums to collaborate with arts institutions in Japan, particularly when an exhibition requires borrowing objects that are regulated by Japanese laws about cultural heritage, a process that is sometimes facilitated by the Agency of Cultural Affairs (the Bunkachō). Or, as in this case, museums sometimes collaborate directly with a single institution in Japan. What is entirely effaced is the role of the Japanese institution in editing the selection of objects, making content and design decisions, and influencing the overall narrative of the exhibition and the catalog. (I was impressed to see an entry titled "Packing Samurai" on the blog of the museum about the process of preparing objects for shipping to the U.S. at the Eisei-Bunko Museum, which included pictures and a fairly detailed discussion of the role of staff from both museums.1)

Also hidden is the connection between this hefty, well-illustrated book and the actual physical exhibition that occupied the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco from June 12 to September 20, 2009. A single paragraph of text can be found in the front matter above the logo of the Society for Asian Art, noting that the book was published "on the occasion of" the exhibition. It is perhaps unfair to single out Lords of the Samurai for failing to adequately recognize and make sense of the powerful experience of walking through galleries that display the very same art that is collected in the catalog in a series of relatively flat and formal photographs. It is, after all, the convention of the museum world to view exhibitions and catalogs as mostly concurrent but ultimately separate forms of cultural production. These beautiful books do not include details on the layout of the exhibition, the design of the displays, summaries of accompanying educational talks and symposia, or particulars of the now abundant marketing materials that often reach a much wider audience than the exhibition itself.

In the case of this particular exhibition, the disconnect between the catalog and the exhibition itself is particularly unfortunate, because the exhibition opening inspired a series of interventions by artist-activists who objected to the premise, marketing, and educational programs of Lords of the Samurai. This group, led by an artist with the nom-de-plume Majime Sugiru (which means "Too Serious" in Japanese), created pamphlets and a website that adopted the images and designs of the exhibition's own marketing campaign and playfully used them to deconstruct Lords of the Samurai as a problematic product of Orientalism:

Enter the world of the samurai, where more than seven centuries of martial rule are reduced to a single Disney-like trope of gentleman-warrior myth. Military prowess meets cultural connoisseurship in an ideal of masculine perfection--selling militarism as beauty in a time of war.

Neither harmless nor innocent, it masks a real history of violence and domination that extends well into the 20th century.

Below are a just few examples of the context hidden behind the gentility of fine weaponry, paintings and ceramics.2

The deconstruction goes on to highlight aspects of Japanese history that the exhibition—and, it must be acknowledged, most samurai exhibitions inside and outside of Japan—fail to include: samurai violence and mutilation of prisoners as a counterpart to the aestheticization of swords and armor; human trafficking in Korean artisans perpetrated by samurai during the destructive Imjin War (1592-1598) as the dark side of the depoliticized display of Korean ceramics used by Japanese tea practitioners; samurai appreciation for male-male sexual relationships, usually between older men and young men or even boys; and the modern appropriation of the samurai image and rhetoric during Japan's imperialist expansion and brutal war in the Pacific.

In fact the black and dark blue suit of armor described in the first paragraph of this review makes an appearance in both the museum's marketing ma-

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The artist-activists distributed a high quality pamphlet version of these materials at some museum events, engaging in a kind of guerrilla counter-marketing campaign.

The activists' "Lord It's the Samurai" website itself also became the focus of considerable online attention, receiving reviews and comments from dozens of bloggers, journalists, and academics. The response to the intervention of course varied, with many anonymous commentators expressing confusion about what it was the intervention was meant to accomplish. But on the whole, the deconstruction united a diverse group of observers who felt the exhibition materials, and by extension many museum displays of Asian history and culture, were problematic. Asian American activists in the Bay Area and online cheered Majime Sugiru for challenging representations of Asian culture and history that lean toward "exotic Asiaphilic fantasies."5

Some scholars of Japanese art history responded positively as well, raising concerns about Orientalism in museum displays and the Asian Art Museum


of San Francisco in particular. One commented on a post that I wrote on a group blog devoted to East Asian history: "Given that the museum has been challenged on three prior occasions—the 'Geisha' and 'Tibet' exhibition and the installation of a Japanese painting that provoked protest from the Korean-American community—I do wonder what the 'learning curve' has been within the museum exhibition planning process." One major curator of Japanese art even responded to the exhibition, the intervention, and the ensuing discussion. She noted that museums are more concerned than ever with numbers of visitors and revenue generated from exhibitions (increasing "the gate" of a show), and that this impacts the work of curators in complicated ways:

As public museums, we have a dual duty to encourage our public, woefully underinformed in their education about Asia, to look at unfamiliar works of art from foreign cultures, and simultaneously to advance the field of art history. As you can imagine, these priorities sometimes clash. The Asian Art Museum’s marketing department apparently got the reins on promoting the gate, calling the exhibition, “Lords of the Samurai” (too close to “Lords of the Dance”), and putting a Darth Vader-like image on the poster. The promotional video was cute and silly, and fairly insulting to the whole idea of the samurai.

Many others have weighed in as well, particularly in the less formal contexts of blogs and discussion lists. This leads me to my final point: many of the issues raised by the Lords of the Samurai catalog, exhibit, intervention, and subsequent dialogue are born of the in-betweenness of museum exhibitions and catalogs, which are neither mainstream scholarship nor public performance. In an age of shrinking budgets, increased competition from other cultural institutions (not to mention online sources of information about art), and a more businesslike attitude toward museum administration, it must be difficult to strike the right balance between adopting a critical approach to race, gender, and other forms of identity, and mounting a simplistic blockbuster that sells well in a soundbite. Some museums have produced increasingly scholarly catalogs, with proper citation of sources, bibliographies, and attention paid to contextualization of art and culture as well as the biographies of objects in the exhibition, while others, as the Lords of the Samurai exhibit and catalog show, have not. This is not a new problem, to be sure, as controversies over the 1984 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern," made clear a quarter of a century ago. The possibility, however, that individuals in the community who take exception to museum practices will make sure that their complaints are heard—particularly through new media technologies—is very new indeed, and demands, I think, that we all collectively take notice of the power and responsibility of museums. Scholars of early modern Japan whose books might sell a few thousand copies if they are lucky should remember that exhibitions of Japanese art at major museums routinely attract tens of thousands of visitors, while blockbuster shows bring in hundreds of thousands of viewers.

As long as museum exhibitions and catalogs are not subject to the same processes of peer review and academic criticism as other forms of scholarship, they should be open to—and indeed welcome—informal and if needed anonymous critiques of the sort orchestrated by Majime Sugiru and his band of merry artist-activists. Because in the end, the complicated and at times heated conversation about history, identity, and representation that can be traced through the websites, interventions, blogs, and even radio shows related to the Lords of the Samurai exhibition adds up to one of the more significant and compelling English-language critiques—albeit in the form of online hypertext—of the politics of museum displays of Japanese culture.

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Robert Hellyer. *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868*  
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010  
© D. Colin Jaundrill, Providence College

Robert Hellyer’s *Defining Engagement* delivers a valuable re-appraisal of Japan’s foreign relations during the Tokugawa period. As the title indicates, Hellyer is less focused on revisiting the well-trodden paths of the early seventeenth century than deepening our understanding of the complexities of foreign relations in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In so doing, he has produced a multilayered history of foreign relations that also takes into account Tokugawa Japan’s place in the wider context of proto-globalization. As such, this book is a must-read for any scholars of early modern or modern Japan.

While *sakoku* has long since passed out of the historiographical mainstream, the notion that Tokugawa Japan adopted a seclusionist stance in the late eighteenth century has remained remarkably persistent. This study aims to dispel “the widely accepted wisdom that by the late eighteenth century, if not before, a single, powerful central government, the Tokugawa bakufu, acted reflexively based upon an ideology of seclusion to protect Japanese tradition in the face of Western modernity” (p. 11).

The central argument of *Defining Engagement* has two main parts. First, Hellyer critiques the notion that the Tokugawa shogunate exercised an effective monopoly in the conduct of foreign relations, arguing instead that the management of Japan’s foreign ties was decentralized, with domains like Satsuma and Tsushima playing a leading role in Japan’s interactions with the outside world. (While Hellyer does occasionally address the role of Matsumae domain, he acknowledges that it is not a central focus of this study.) Second, the study contends that “Japan’s foreign relations were not defined by an overriding ideology of seclusion... but rather by particular Tokugawa domestic agendas as well as political interchanges, shared goals and rivalries in trade, and disputes over defense between the bakufu and the two domains” (p. 4). By illustrating how shifting domestic exigencies led to significant changes in foreign relations, Hellyer puts to rest the notion that the dynamic arrangements of the early Tokugawa period lapsed into a traditional defense of national seclusion in the eighteenth century.

In arguing that shogunal and domainal leaders “consistently made pragmatic decisions, especially concerning foreign trade, in accordance with global commercial contexts” (p. 4), Hellyer situates his analysis of Tokugawa foreign relations within a larger body of scholarship on proto-globalization in the early modern world. At the same time, the author is also keenly attentive to the domestic context, as he argues that rising proto-industrial production in the late Tokugawa period had a significant effect on the way Tokugawa Japan interacted with its trading partners.

The book’s chapters proceed in chronological fashion, outlining the shifting approaches to foreign relations adopted by the shogunate, Satsuma, and Tsushima between the mid-seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. The first chapter addresses the history of the relationship between these two domains and the shogunate, with particular attention to how these “interdependent partners” (p. 25) shaped Japan’s foreign relations in the first decades of the Tokugawa period. While much of this discussion will be familiar to specialists in early modern Japanese history, it is a valuable, up-to-date overview of early Tokugawa foreign relations.

Chapter Two focuses on the period between 1640 and 1750, when Tokugawa leaders initiated what Hellyer calls a “reaction against globalization” (p. 49) that attempted to maximize the positive externalities of foreign trade while minimizing the detrimental side effects of unlimited interaction. During this process, Satsuma and Tsushima were able to use their status as intermediaries in the trade with other Asian states to shape the shogunate’s overall approach to foreign relations. The third chapter deals with the shogunate’s attempt to pursue a policy of “guarded engagement” (p. 73) in the late eighteenth century by pursuing an active but more controlled approach to trade while simultaneously reducing the frequency of diplomatic interactions—a set of policies that led to reduced trade and influence for Satsuma and Tsushima. In Chapter Four, Hellyer demonstrates how the rise of proto-industrial-ization changed the dynamics of both domestic commerce and foreign trade. While Satsuma was able to use these developments to establish itself as a major commercial force, the shogunate began to lose its control of exports, and Tsu-
shima foundered, unable to adapt to the shifting demands of the domestic market. The fifth chapter provides a fascinating exploration of how these three actors responded to the unsolicited overtures of Western nations in the 1840s and 1850s. Chapter Six follows a similar tack, tracing these developments into the final decade of the Tokugawa period, as trade with the West began to assume a greater economic significance. The conclusion, which deals with the years after the Meiji Restoration, chronicles the effective end of domain agency in foreign relations.

In seeking to re-appraise foreign relations over the broad sweep of the Tokugawa period, *Defining Engagement* has great ambitions; and for the most part, it delivers. Hellyer’s analysis is detailed, meticulous, and grounded solidly in a wide range of primary sources. While many of the incidents he recounts in detail—such as the abortive attempt of a Russian naval captain to forcibly establish a base on Tsushima in 1861—are fascinating, other sections are perhaps too detail-heavy for those who do not have a particular interest in the trading of specie. One section of the book, however—the concluding chapter’s coverage of the relations between Tsushima, Satsuma, and the fledgling Meiji government between 1868 and 1871—is tantalizing, and a fully fleshed-out treatment of this topic would only add to this book’s contribution. *Defining Engagement* is strongly recommended for any scholars in the field, and could potentially be used in upper-division undergraduate courses.
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Italicize Japanese words in the text. Do not italicize Japanese words that commonly appear in English language publications such as samurai, shogun, bakufu, haiku, noh/ nó, etc.

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