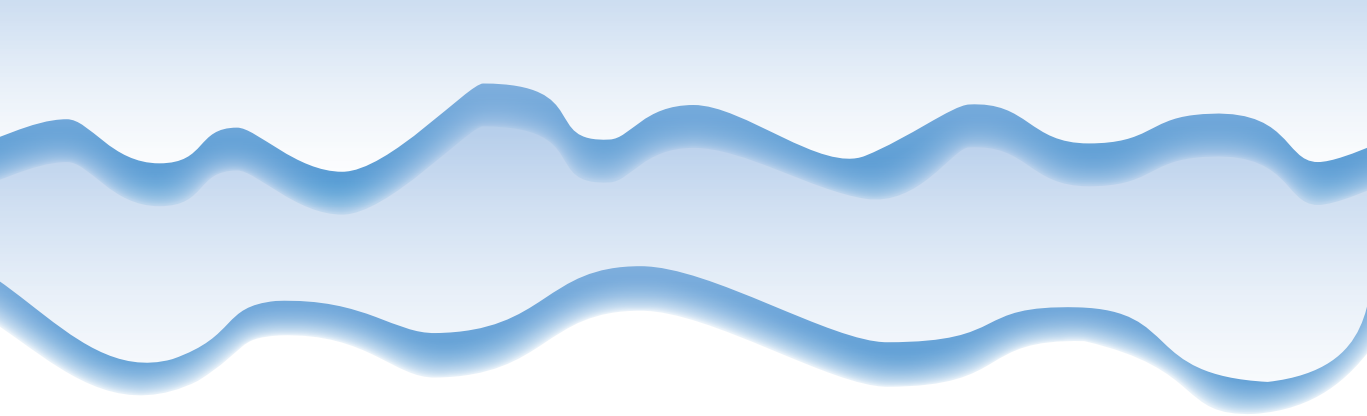
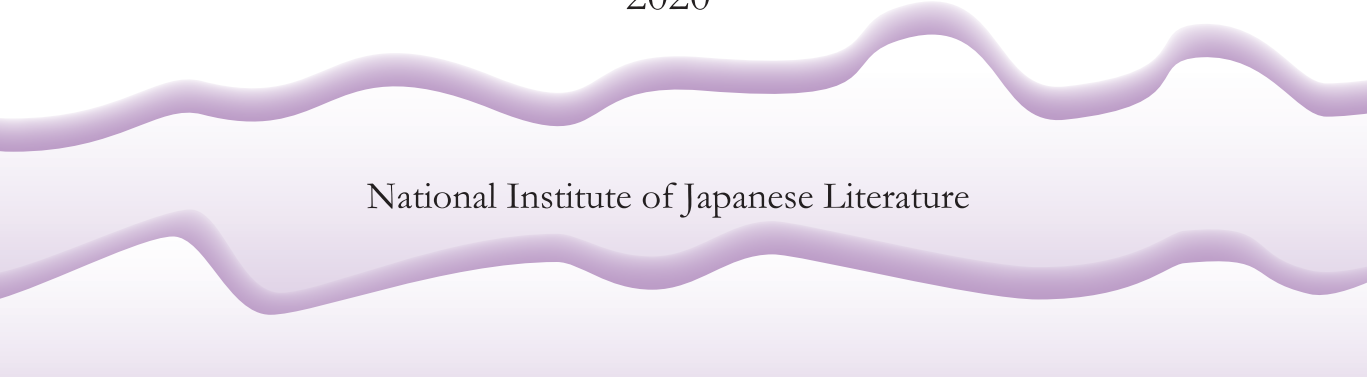




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CONTENTS

Article

Dōgen's Religious Discourse and *Hieroglossia*

Jean-Noël ROBERT

Professor at the Collège de France 1

Article

A Forgotten Aesop:

Shiba Kōkan, European Emblems, and Aesopian Fable Reception in Late Edo Japan

Ivo SMITS

Professor at Leiden University 23

Article

From “Pointing Straight to the Human Mind” to “Pointing Round to the Human Mind”

YOSHIZAWA Katsuhiko

Professor at Hanazono University
Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT 51

Article

The *kōan* in Japanese Society at the Beginning of the Early Modern Period: *Kana hōgo* and *kanna-zen*

Didier DAVIN

Associate Professor at the National Institute
of Japanese Literature 67

Column

The March of Dancing Skeletons: Zen Vernacular-sermon Picture Scrolls and Their Development

KOIDA Tomoko

Associate Professor at the National Institute
of Japanese Literature
Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT 85

Article

Language and Representation with *ōgi* and *uchima* Fans:
Considering “Applied Knowledge” in the Early Modern
Period

SUZUKI Ken’ichi

Professor at Gakushuin University

Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT 91

Article

Medieval Buddhism and Music: Musical Notation and
the Recordability of the Voice

INOSE Chihiro

Research Fellow at Nagoya University

Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT 113

CONTRIBUTORS

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Dōgen's Religious Discourse and *Hieroglossia*

Jean-Noël ROBERT

Introduction

There are at least two difficulties for a correct understanding of this article.¹ The first one, clearly, is the precise meaning of the cryptic word “*hieroglossia*,”² a term surely opaque to anybody who comes across it for the first time. It is a word that I partially coined myself,³ and my only hope is that the pedantic temerity of this neologism will not obscure the fact that the underlying reality it tries to evoke is sufficiently interesting for such a coinage to be not only forgiven, but also used as a workable concept.

The second difficulty is the choice I made to focus on the writings of Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253). I do realize how impudent it is for someone who has mainly studied the teachings of Tendai 天台 Buddhism, Japanese Buddhist poetry (particularly on the *Lotus Sutra*), and scholastic Buddhist debates (*ronji* 論義) to address as towering a figure of Japanese Buddhism as Dōgen-zenji, who cannot be approached without a life of study. He who perpetrates such a deed will embody perfectly a famous line from an old French movie: “You can know a fool by the fact that he would dare anything.”

Therefore, before entering upon the main topic, I deem it to be both a courtesy and a duty to explain these two points.

1. *Hieroglossia*

a. Attempt at a Definition

I shall start with an explanation of “*hieroglossia*.” A literal analysis of the word's

¹ But first of all, I would like to express my warmest thanks to my colleagues at the National Institute of Japanese Literature—an institution to which I have been very much indebted for a long time—for giving me so kindly a unique opportunity to express my views before an audience of specialists far more knowledgeable than I am in matters concerning Dōgen.

² I proposed two possible Japanese translations: *seigo-ron* 聖語論 or *seigo-sei* 聖語制, either of which should also be viable in Chinese. The former translation is perhaps clearer.

³ It derives directly from an adjective in Ancient Greek. The substantive *hieroglossia* has been already used, in 1975, by a scholar in sociolinguistics, Conrad M. B. Brann (1925–2014), albeit in quite a different sense. See my *La hiéroglossie japonaise* (Paris: Collège de France/Fayard, 2012), p. 61, n.1.

Greek roots would give something like “a (theory) of sacred language”—a Sino-Japanese translation like *seigo-ron* 聖語論 would make this sense even more explicit—but to avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary to point out, from the start, that I do not intend by any means to assert that there exists anything that could be called a “sacred tongue” in its very essence. Rather, in coining this new word, I hoped to describe a remarkable phenomenon in linguistic and cultural history that has taken place in various cultures, starting in Mesopotamia more than four thousand years ago and spreading to both ends of Eurasia. It is simply a useful term that had previously been missing in philological studies,⁴ and it certainly does not purport to assert that some languages—for instance Sanskrit, Latin, Tibetan, etc.—are superior to others (which could be called “vulgar” or “vernacular” as compared to the former).

In other words, what I call *hieroglossia* is similar in many ways to the “cosmopolitan language” (world language, supranational language) proposed by the American Indianist Sheldon Pollock.⁵ But in spite of this surface similarity, there is a fundamental difference in that Prof. Pollock seems to limit the developmental logic of supranational languages to the political and economic dimensions. I would like, on the other hand, to emphasize that within the framework of *hieroglossia*, the main dynamic force is religion itself. Here “religion” is to be taken not, in a strict sense, as referring to a set of beliefs and practices formally transmitted, but rather as indicating some broader dimension, beyond the scope of human activity, to which is attributed the origin and development of the language that will be at the center of a given *hieroglossia*.

b. Some Examples

In order not to sound too abstract, I will give here two concrete and contrasting examples of *hieroglossia*.

I will start with Arabic as an almost ideal example of a set of linguistic relationships centered on one language. A quick search on the internet shows that there are currently in total 26 countries that recognize Arabic as their official language. From that point of view, the role of Arabic as a tool for exchange between modern nations fits perfectly with the concept of a “cosmopolitan language.” Yet if we take into account those regions of Eurasia from Albania to Indonesia to which Islam and the Arabic Koran have spread over the centuries, it far exceeds the number of countries where Arabic is an official language. Across Turkey and Iran, Central Asia, all the way to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia, Arabic is a sacred language studied in religious schools and used in daily rituals. It has also been the basis for most of the abstract lexicon of theology,

⁴ By “philology” here, I mean what in Japanese would be called *gengo bunka shi* 言語文化史, a term for which I can find no satisfying equivalent in English or French.

⁵ See Sheldon Pollock’s master-work *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

philosophy, art, and literature—that is, for culture in its broadest meaning—in all the accompanying vernaculars of those parts of the world, which have now themselves become national languages. If we take the example of Moghul India, Arabic was the sacred language, and Persian the cosmopolitan language. Persian was moreover imbued with Arabic vocabulary, which through it spread to Urdu. Between Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, we thus have an exemplary case of a hieroglossic relationship.

On the other hand, another look at the internet will show that there are as many as 29 countries in the world that use French as an official language, more even than the number of Arabic-speaking countries, yet as far as I know, there is no place in the world where French would be considered a sacred language—at least outside the heads of a few members of the *Académie française*. Latin instead held this role until recently.

It is to be emphasized also, and this will be my second example, that in contrast to a “cosmopolitan language,” *hieroglossia* occurs not necessarily only between a number of different languages, but can be shown to exist as well within a single language over the course of its historical development. A typical example of such “internal *hieroglossia*” is Armenian.

Classical Armenian (*Grabar*), which was born in the fifth century A.D. with the Armenian translation of the Bible, was used as a written literary language not only in the liturgy of the Armenian Church, but also in writings by Armenian theologians, philosophers, and poets up to the end of the nineteenth century. Around the beginning of the eighteenth century, a large movement to modernize (i.e. Europeanize) Armenian culture was started by the monks of the Mekhitarist Order in Venice and Vienna, who over almost two centuries of tremendous industry developed a corpus of translations from European languages and linguistic tools for the expression of a modernized worldview, all of which paved the way for the development of the Modern Armenian language in its western and eastern forms.

Here we cannot speak of a “cosmopolitan language,” as the hieroglossic relationship that developed within Armenian culture was one between the revived classical language and the modern vernaculars, and it was centered on the prestige of the Grabar translation of the Bible.⁶

It would not be incongruous to compare the literary status of Grabar Armenian to that of Classical Japanese within Japanese cultural history, all the more so because the replacement of the classical language by the modern one took place at around the same time.

So let us insist again on the fact that the “sacred language” implied by the word *hieroglossia* does not mean that there exists a language intrinsically, essentially, or ontologically sacred—i.e. one superior when compared against others. It simply

⁶ See for instance Karekin Sarkissian, *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Christian Literature* (Bergenfield: Michael Barour Publications, 1960).

aims at describing the multi-layered relationship existing between a set of several languages that may or may not belong to the same cultural area, or even such a relationship within a given language. In a hieroglossic relationship, a number of vernacular (or “vulgar”⁷) languages are gathered around a linguistic center and model, a model language which can be called sacred, sapiential, or referential, and which supplies “true” meanings to its surrounding “vulgar” languages. Although I will avoid as far as possible the use of these words here, within the frame of *hieroglossia* I call the “sacred” or “referential” language *hierogloss* and the related “vulgar” language *laogloss* or “language of the people” (nothing to do with Laotian, as some readers have misunderstood the word).

But the process does not stop here. It is indeed a phenomenon common to most hieroglossic complexes that the vulgar language will strive to gradually ascend to the level of the sacred language over the course of history.⁸ The vernaculars, originally established as written languages for purposes of commentary and preaching on those texts and teachings transmitted in the referential languages, gradually acquire for themselves or adorn themselves with a part of the latter’s sacredness, falling into what we may call a kind of competitive relationship with the *hieroglosses*. To give a short and simple example I have often quoted before, one taken from the Japanese-Chinese *sprachbund*, which I will deal with below: through the regular rendering of the Chinese compound *myōhō* 妙法 (“sublime law”) by the Japanese locution *minori* 御法 in Japanese Buddhist poems (*shakkyōka* 釈教歌), a semantic link was created in Japanese (but not in Chinese) with the word *minori* 実り, meaning “fruit” or “harvest,” but also signifying “reality” or “truth,” given the use of the character *jitsu* with that sense in Buddhist dogmatics, especially in Tendai teachings where it refers to the reality of the *Lotus Sutra*’s teaching—as opposed to the provisional nature (*gon* 権) of those teachings found in previous sutras. Thus the Japanese-language rendering adds to the Chinese original an important shade of meaning it did not possess before, though that very addition, albeit in Japanese, is itself fully understandable only by reference to Chinese.

Thus to consider only the “laoglossic” expressions—whether in a religious context or not—without reference to the *hierogloss* they derive from, is to expose oneself to many misunderstandings, or at least to only partial understandings.

As, I hope, the previous examples have shown, the foundations of the hieroglossic relationship are mostly religious at the start, or in some cultural areas philosophical (as in the Greek-Latin case), most often beginning with the translation of sacred scriptures.

⁷ “Vulgar” being taken in the old sense of “vernacular,” with the nuance of “distinct from the Latin language” that was the higher religious and literary means of expression in medieval and Renaissance Europe.

⁸ A part of this process is analyzed in Victor Mair’s seminal article, “Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages,” in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53:3 (Aug. 1994), pp. 707–751.

Having now very briefly outlined what I mean by *hieroglossia*, we must naturally come to ask ourselves how far it applies to the language situation in Japan.

c. *Hieroglossia* in Japan

Needless to say, the hieroglossic system of Japan is expressed by the relationship between written classical Chinese (*kanbun* 漢文) and written Classical Japanese (*wabun* 和文/*bungo* 文語), the dyad known from very early times as *wa-kan* 和漢.⁹ The dual-language structure implied by this locution must be recognized as the most productive and active force in Japanese cultural history. Yet it must be said that the religious element underpinning this hieroglossic relationship has not been sufficiently acknowledged or analyzed amid the growing academic interest in this phenomenon. If we compare it to closely similar cultural situations in what I call the *Sinoglossic* sphere,¹⁰ mainly Korea and Vietnam—although there are many more such cases among what are now called Chinese “cultural minorities”—the main characteristic of the Japanese situation is that at a very early stage it developed a sophisticated literary process intent on bringing the Japanese language to the same level of prestige as the Chinese model language, long before the influence of Western “modernity” exported to Asia its ideas on “national languages.” Throughout this process, Buddhism played a central role, and not Buddhism in general but specifically that current within Japanese Buddhism characterized in modern terms as “assimilation of *kami* and buddhas” (*shinbutsu-shūgō* 神仏習合), and in ancient times encapsulated by the locution *bonji-suijaku* 本地垂迹, or “vestigial manifestations of fundamental states.” We can almost follow step by step how closely the process of assimilating Japanese deities to Buddhist entities corresponds to the growing parity of the regional language (*kokugo* 国語) with the referential language.

In that long and elaborate linguistic process, a decisive part was played by what was over the centuries built up through the efforts of literati as the most Japanese of literary genres. This was the “Japanese poem” or *waka* 和歌, and within *waka*, the subgenre that came to be known as *shakkyōka*, or “Japanese Buddhist poetry,” which mediated as an exegetical tool (let us not forget that *shaku* 釈 is not only the first character of Śākyamuni’s name in Chinese, but also itself means “explain” or “comment”) between the Chinese-language Scriptures and the integration into Japanese of Buddhist teachings.

⁹ See for instance of late from Ivo Smits, “La dynamique sino-japonaise (*wakan*) à l’époque de Heian,” trans. Alban Gautier, *Médiévales* 72 (Spring 2017). Available on: journals.openedition.org.

¹⁰ Within the general category of *hieroglossia*, what I call *Sinoglossia* corresponds to the Japanese locution “cultural area of written Siniticity,” *kanbun bunka ken* 漢文文化圏, the corresponding adjective being *Sinoglossic*.

2. Dōgen and the Japanese Language

This lengthy preamble about *hieroglossia* was no doubt necessary. And now we must come to the reason why, as little versed as I am in Dōgen lore and Zen studies in general, I was bold enough to make him the subject of one of my courses at the Collège de France under the title “Zen Between Two Tongues.”

My prime motivation was the research I did when I had to prepare my inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in February 2012. This very ritualized first lecture is a rare chance, given to a newly appointed faculty member, to introduce to a large audience a comprehensive *aperçu* of his aims and method. I was looking a little haphazardly through a variety of materials that would be both to the point and also not too recondite when I remembered Kawabata Yasunari’s 川端康成 famous Nobel Lecture of December 1968: “Utsukushii Nihon no watashi” 美しい日本の私, translated by Edward Seidensticker as “Japan the Beautiful and Myself.”¹¹ It was actually a mention made by Didier Davin in his dissertation on Ikkyū 一休, referring to the importance Kawabata had attributed to the monk in his acceptance speech, that had inspired me to read it again after many years. And there, so to speak, the scales fell from my eyes when I discovered the close links that the Japanese modern novelist had drawn between Buddhism and the aesthetics of the Japanese language. Kawabata’s concrete demonstration starts very abruptly with a direct quotation—absent any commentary—of Dōgen-*zenji*’s famous poem:

春は花夏ほととぎす秋は月冬雪さえてすずしかりけり

Flowers in the spring, the cuckoo in summer, the moon in autumn,
and in winter the snow, so clear and cold.¹²

To make matters more difficult, Kawabata simply gives the mysterious title *Honrai no menmoku* 本来の面目 (for which I use the translation “The Original Face”) without any explanation. It must have been quite a challenge for Seidensticker to translate it, as he seems to vacillate between two alternatives: “Innate Spirit” (p.74) and “Innate Reality” (p.41). For the fact is that Kawabata, in his carefully structured speech, both begins and just as abruptly also ends on the same Dōgen poem, with the laconic conclusion: “Dōgen’s poem on the four seasons is also entitled “The Original Face,” but while he sings the beauty of the four seasons, it is actually imbued with Zen.”¹³

There are many quotations from Zen sources in Kawabata’s rich and dense oration, but what can be seen as the apex of an actually quite elaborate

¹¹ Both versions can be found in *Utsukushii Nihon no watashi: sono josetsu* 美しい日本の私：その序説 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1969).

¹² In the main I follow Seidensticker’s translation, with some changes. Ibid., p. 6.

¹³ 道元の四季の歌も「本来の面目」と題されてをりますが、四季の美を歌ひながら、実は強く禅に通じたものでせう。Ibid., p. 36.

demonstration comes, towards the end, in a passage from the *Life of Myōe* (Myōe-den 明恵伝), written by that monk's disciple Kikai 喜海 (1178–1251), relating an extraordinary dialogue between Myōe 明恵 (1173–1252) and the great poet Saigyō (1118–1190) in which the latter reveals the profound meaning of his poetry. After enumerating as signs of the four seasons the same words that will later be used in Dōgen's own poem, Saigyō goes on to say: "Are not all the words and sentences ever pronounced indeed 'words-of-truth' [*shingon* 真言, i.e. "mantra"]? . . . And those poems are the true form of the 'Thus Come One'."¹⁴

In other words *waka* (Japanese poetry) are effectively *shingon*, or *mantra*—an idea that will later come to be expressed in the well-known formulation *waka soku darani* 和歌即陀羅尼. And obviously, for Kawabata, the term "true form of the 'Thus Come One'" (*nyorai no shin no gyōtai* 如来の真の形体) in Kikai's work is equivalent to Dōgen's "The Original Face" (*honrai no menmoku*). Kawabata takes Esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教) and Zen together as the ontological basis of *waka* poetry.

Going a step further, the "beautiful Japan" that Kawabata endeavors to explain to the world is not the beauty of the Japanese landscape and nature, but the beauty of traditional Japanese culture. For him, however, this culture is not centered formally on the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語), although he duly considers it to be "the highest pinnacle of Japanese literature," but on the Japanese language itself, the *yamato-kotoba* as displayed in *waka* poetry.

In my eyes, Kawabata achieved a very convincing demonstration, appealing not only to Dōgen and Zen Buddhism, but also to Myōe-*shōnin*, Kegan 華嚴, and Esoteric teachings, and showed it to be in the Japanese language that the basis of Japanese beauty resides. Yet very few people, inside or outside of Japan, seem to have understood his ideas. For myself at least, it was a decisive inspiration for coming back to Dōgen, on whom I had lectured for one or two years long ago.

3. Dōgen and *Hieroglossia*

How are we to think about the relationship between Dōgen-*zenji* and *hieroglossia*? And what need is there, one could ask more shrewdly, to attempt such a reflection? The answer to this question is apparent from the structure of Dōgen's work and from his linguistic universe, which revolutionized Japanese *hieroglossia*.¹⁵ Up to Dōgen's time, we can regard the *wa-kan* relationship as being bi-dimensional. The hieroglossic network was limited to written classical Chinese (*kanbun*, corresponding to Chinese *wenyan* 文言) for the *kan* part, and classical

¹⁴ 読み出すところの言句は皆これ真言にあらずや (中略) この歌即ち如来の真の形体なり. Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁵ One should evoke here Terada Tōru 寺田透 and his book, *Dōgen no gengo-uchū* 道元の言語宇宙 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), which offers a unique approach to Dōgen from the standpoint of taking language to be a central element of his *oeuvre*. "Linguistic universe" or "language world" here is my translation of Terada's *gengo-uchū*.

Japanese (*wabun* 和文) for the *wa* part. For Japan as well as for the continent, *kanbun* was exclusively a written language, and within Japan, even its oral realization was purely in classical Japanese. Transmitted by means of education, it was never used as a spoken language. This literary education was based on a relatively limited corpus, mainly consisting of the Five Classics, the *Literary Anthology* (*Wen xuan* 文選), the *Historical Memoirs* (*Shiji* 史記), etc., a corpus that had become the common heritage of the whole Sinoglossic sphere. It would not be an overstatement to say that there is as much distance between classical written Chinese and the many varieties of spoken Chinese (*zokugo* 俗語 or *hakuma* 白話) as between *kanbun* and Japanese itself.

In such a bi-dimensional linguistic—or stylistic—context, if we compare him to his predecessor Eisai 榮西 (1141–1215), who had transmitted Rinzaï 臨濟 Buddhism to Japan a generation earlier, the linguistic innovation that Dōgen brought about is remarkable indeed. While Eisai's classical Chinese style is quite orthodox, Dōgen introduces a revolutionary element into Sino-Japanese, by making use in his own “writings” of the sort of colloquial or semi-colloquial Chinese (*zokugo*) so conspicuous in Chinese Chan sources and materials from the Tang dynasty on, especially those of the Song dynasty.

To be sure, a form of colloquial Chinese had been used already in translations of Indic Buddhist texts from earliest times, creating thus a kind of Chinese Buddhist idiolect, as Professor Stefano Zacchetti recently stated,¹⁶ one clearly distinct from classical Chinese, and duly utilized also in Buddhist texts written in Chinese by Japanese clerics. This “Buddhist” Chinese, however, is in no way to be compared to the wholly alien style of the *goroku* 語録 literature, where both grammar and vocabulary are quite different from classical literary style, making the genre thus almost unintelligible without special study to a reader trained only in *kanbun*. One is therefore reasonably led to ask oneself what kind of reader Dōgen had in mind when he introduced to Japan such an exotic style. Or was his intent rather to use it only as an idiolect? Yet in that case, why use it in his teachings?

Here I would risk a comparison with Dōgen's illustrious Buddhist predecessors. Ever since Saichō 最澄 (767–822) and Kūkai's 空海 (774–835) time at the beginning of the ninth century, Japanese monks going to China in search of the Dharma had often brought back home many religious and cultural rarities that would enhance their prestige in their own country (*shoraimotsu* 将来物). Such objects—be they books, Buddhist images, liturgical tools, etc.—were moreover tokens to help establish in Japan the new Buddhist schools whose doctrines these monks were also bringing back.

The case of Kūkai is especially interesting, as he brought back not only teachings and rituals, but also, so to speak, a new philological legitimacy—which he

¹⁶ At the Paris Symposium “Hiéroglossie IV: La sinoglossie” (held in June 2019), to be published in the future.

displayed in great literary works such as his *Bunkyo hifu ron* 文鏡秘府論, which he used for teaching Japanese literati the more subtle aspects of Chinese poetics. He thus established his place in Japanese cultural history as a master not only of Esoteric Buddhist teachings but also of the Chinese language, a position that was considerably enhanced by his theoretical works in what we may call language philosophy. It should be emphasized, too, that Kūkai's vast religious and literary output was exclusively in Chinese and that he never took any account of the Japanese language in his deep reflections on mystical language, though his later Heian and Kamakura commentators would do that for him.

In a sense, though this is a connection rarely made from this point of view, Dōgen can be seen as an emulator of Kūkai in his role as linguistic innovator, the difference between them being that Dōgen was much more radical in his impact. We can illustrate this by a telling example: the Sōtō 曹洞 Zen that he transmitted to Japan from Song China has been characterized by the practice of "sitting meditation," or *zazen*, in opposition to Rinzai as the bastion of *koan*. But *zazen* is by no means an exclusively Zen technical term, appearing already in the *Lotus Sutra* several times.¹⁷ What is, however, distinctive is that Dōgen exhorts people to this practice with the slogan *shikan taza* 只管打坐 ("single-mindedly just sitting"), which has a distinctive Chinese colloquial flavor and cannot be understood from a knowledge of *kanbun* alone. The fact is that Dōgen added a new dimension to the bi-dimensional *wa-kan* relationship by giving to colloquial (or pseudo-colloquial) Chinese, or *zokugo*, a religious status previously unknown to it, developing thereby a three-tiered hieroglossic network.

Before him, Japanese monks able to speak Chinese fluently were few. We may mention among these Saichō's disciple and successor Gishin 義真 (781–833), who acted as his interpreter in China; or Ennin 円仁 (794–864), who having stayed almost ten years in China, acquired a working knowledge of the colloquial that allowed him to describe the continental society of his time, though language at that level does not appear in his memoirs. In contrast to the high renown that Kūkai acquired through his unique knowledge of literary Chinese, a mastery of the Chinese colloquial was not appreciated in erudite Japanese circles, where it was considered merely an artisanal skill.

Dōgen's attitude to the Chinese vernacular was radically different: he chose it as a tool for practicing and teaching. We must first emphasize that together with his use of Chinese colloquial speech, Dōgen was also an innovator for his time in his promotion of the Japanese language as a tool for explicating Buddhism. One could say that he was preceded in that movement by the Tendai scholiast and hierarch Jien 慈円 (1155–1225), especially with his best-known work, *An Essay on History* (*Gukanshō* 愚管抄). Nonetheless it is clear, if we read the reasons given by Jien for choosing to write in Japanese rather than in *kanbun*, that he did thus in

¹⁷ Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 et al., eds., *Taishō shinshū daijōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932), vol. 9, pp. 37b, 45c, 49b.

order to be understood by less sophisticated people—possibly the newly-emergent rulers of Japan at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Jien was undoubtedly a master of the Japanese language, but for him its ontological value was to be found in *waka* poetry, not in expository prose.

In contrast to Jien, Dōgen, although he never wrote specifically about his views regarding the Japanese language, made full use of the vernacular (of course in its classical form—contemporary Japanese as actually spoken was not put into writing until the sixteenth century) for the purpose of propagating his teachings, though he did not use it exclusively. Unlike Jien's *Gukanshō*, or even the *Tannishō* 歎異抄 by Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262)—which can be seen as the third main Buddhist work written in Japanese during this period—Dōgen's masterwork, the *Shōbō genzō* 正法眼藏 (collected sermons from 1231 to 1253), presents the sort of stylistic novelty that marks it as an epoch-making monument, which I can only compare in linguistic importance, albeit in a totally different genre and with a totally different literary afterlife, to the *Tale of Genji*. While Jien was aware of the novelty of his attempt to write in Japanese about Buddhist matters and history, we do not find any statement by Dōgen regarding his style, though he was no doubt conscious of his own audacity in introducing into the Japanese language a new form of Chinese.

Coming back to Japan after four years of study and practice in Song China (1223–1227), Dōgen around 1233 began preaching the sermons that would be collected in the *Shōbō genzō*, throughout which he employed a unique blend of Japanese together with words and expressions drawn from spoken Chinese, or from the pseudo-colloquial that had become the characteristic style of Chan sources. This was merely ten years after Jien's *An Essay on History*. Dōgen made use of this new Chinese style in his sermons, in the same way that Japanese clerics preceding him, Jien very much included, had themselves made use of *kanbun* locutions. And in the same way that familiar *kanbun* locutions when employed within Japanese texts had been tokens or symbols of a scriptural authority, linking Jien's new reflections to orthodox Tendai dogmatics, so too did Dōgen's liberal and theretofore unheard-of sprinkling of Chinese vernacular and pseudo-vernacular (*zokugo*) Chinese locutions serve themselves as linguistic markers of the new teachings he hoped to bring to Japan—and of his own legitimacy as their bearer. At first glance, there seems to be no connection between the language worlds of these two Buddhist clerics and thinkers, but was there really no link between them?

I would venture to advance that there was indeed a connection, and that this was none other than Tendai doctrine itself. Although the matter has practically never been investigated from the standpoint of language, I would like to make such an attempt here. After entering religious life at the foot of Mount Hiei under the influence of his uncle Ryōkan 良観, who was a Tendai monk, Dōgen received the tonsure at the age of thirteen after some years of practice at Yokawa 横川 under Kōen 公円 (1168–1235), who was then patriarch (*zasu* 座主) of the Tendai School—precisely in the very year (1213) during which Dōgen's own

distant Kujō-clan 九条 relative, Jien, was also appointed twice to that same ecclesiastical post. Such a rapid turnover of abbots at Enryaku-ji Temple 延暦寺 is tellingly indicative of the various internal disturbances caused by the political turmoil of the time. However, it would be very hard to deny the possibility, and even the high probability, that Dōgen received direct guidance in *waka* poetry from Jien, who in Buddhist poetry (*shakkyōka*) was the luminary of his time.

This could be viewed at first as a flight of speculative imagination, but these were decisively formative years for Dōgen, who underwent training with both the “Mountain Gate” (*sanmon* 山門) and “Temple Gate” (*jimon* 寺門) branches of the Tendai school—rivals at the time. From the second of these, another of his relatives, the Monastic Prefect Kōin 公胤僧都 (1145–1216), redirected him toward Kennin-ji Temple 建仁寺, and to the Zen of Eisai. Although Dōgen's time spent studying Tendai Buddhist doctrine and practice was relatively short, it must have left a deep imprint on the young boy's mind. It should therefore not be presumed a baseless pursuit to look for any possible influence Jien may have had on Dōgen, especially in the matter of language.

The best thing would be to take up a concrete example of this possible impact. A well-known locution describes in four words the characteristics of Mount Hiei 比叡, the center of the Tendai school, and its main monastery Enryaku-ji: *kan-shitsu ron-bin* 寒湿論貧—“cold and wet, debate and poverty.” This emblematic proverb points to the practice of scholastic debate, or *rongi* 論義, as being the religious exercise *par excellence* of the Tendai school, as natural and innate of an attribute as the monastery's own climate and social penury. To be an apprentice in the School was to receive training from an early age in the practice of debate, which allowed students to deepen their understanding of the most abstruse tenets of Tendai teachings. Young Dōgen could not have remained unaffected by such a fundamental training. It is therefore interesting to find in the sixty-fifth “case” (*kosoku* 古則) among the ninety collected in volume 9 of *Eihei kōroku* 永平広録, the following famous Chinese “enigma” (*kōan* 公案):

An earthworm is cut into two parts, and the two heads writhe together; yet it is unclear within which of the heads the Buddha-nature is found.¹⁸

After a quatrain by the ninth-century Chan master Changsha Jingcen 長沙景岑, the *Kōroku* gives a poem by Dōgen of which we need only quote the first line here:

Trying to debate the Buddha-nature, the two heads are writhing.¹⁹

Impossible to ignore here is the light satiric touch in the comparison between the squirming parts of the earthworm and the bald heads of Tendai scholiasts engaged in heated debate about one of the most important topics (*rondai* 論題)

¹⁸ 蚯蚓斬為兩段，兩頭俱動，未審，仏性在阿那箇頭。Text in Kagamishima Genryū 鏡島元隆 et al., eds., *Dōgen Zenji zenshu* 道元禪師全集 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1999–2013), vol. 12, p. 303.

¹⁹ 欲論仏性兩頭動。Ibid.

in their school's disputation repertory, the Buddha-nature; yet equally salient here is the impression that such debates seem to have made on a youthful Dōgen's memory. It is probable that only in Japan could this allusion have been understood in its full range. There are other traces besides of the influence of such *ronji* in Dōgen's work, but we must leave them now for another occasion.

Two other fundamental Tendai doctrines must here be presented before going any further into Dōgen's poetry.

The first is that of *kyōsō hanjaku* 教相判釈 (usually abbreviated into *kyōhan* 教判 or *hangyō* 判教) the principle of "critical classification of doctrines," which consists in dividing up the teachings preached by the Buddha over the course of his lifetime into five periods and eight doctrines (*goji hakkyō* 五時八教), at the apex of which is the final, or almost final, revelation of the *Lotus Sutra*. This first tenet secures the supreme place of that sutra in Tendai dogmatics. The second tenet pertains to the exegetical method of the School and is closely linked to the first: it is the doctrine of "four-fold exegesis" (*shishaku-hō* 四釈法), which postulates that any Buddhist scripture, and more specifically the *Lotus Sutra*, should be understood according to four ascending levels of reading.²⁰ We shall only consider here the fourth level, that of *kanjin-shaku* 觀心釈, or "exegesis by contemplating the mind," which consists of observing within one's own mind the effect induced by a reading of scripture. I have shown elsewhere that, especially in Jien's explicative poetry on the *Lotus Sutra*, the notion of *kanjin-shaku* is the underlying *raison d'être* of the subgenre known as *hōmonka* 法文歌 or "scriptural poetry."

The predominant position of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japanese culture, independent of any sectarian divisions, meant that, unlike in the Chinese Chan tradition, the Rinzaï and Sōtō schools never stopped studying it. This is most conspicuous in Dōgen's *Shōbō genzō*, which can be said to be suffused with quotations from the *Lotus Sutra*.

4. The *Lotus Sutra* in Dōgen's Poetry

Here, however, I would like to examine some examples of the influence of the *Lotus Sutra* and its traditional Tendai exegesis on Dōgen, from that collection of sixty-nine *waka* poems attributed to him known as the *Sanshō-dōei* 傘松道詠, or "Sanshō Poems on the Way" (*Sanshō* being a name for the site of Dōgen's Eihei-ji 永平寺 Temple). The collection itself was published only in the eighteenth century, but an important number of the poems therein were already included in a fifteenth-century biographical work on Dōgen, the *Kenzeiki* 建掇記, albeit with slight textual divergences. It is difficult to vouch for the authenticity of all its poems, which are reported to have been composed by the Master between 1245

²⁰ These are: (a) *innen-jaku* 因縁釈, (b) *yakkyō-shaku* 約教釈, (c) *bonjaku-shaku* 本迹釈, and (d) *kanjin-shaku* 觀心釈.

and 1253, the year of his death. Nonetheless, as we will see, some of them are so surprising from the brush of a Zen monk, yet so typical of a Tendai scholiast, that their very doctrinal discrepancy may be seen as some token of their authenticity. It is particularly worthwhile to pay attention to a short series of five poems put together under the heading “Praise of the Lotus Sutra” (*Ei-Hokekyō* 詠法華經), as they are surprisingly close, coming from a Zen master, to the most basic Tendai dogmatics. For instance, here is poem 30:

四つの馬三つの車にのらぬひとまことの道をいかで知らまし

Those who have never ridden the four horses or the three carts,
How would they ever know the way of reality?²¹

This verse is typical of the *shakkyōka* genre and is built entirely on the “doctrinal classification” principle of the Tendai school: the “four horses” is a metaphor coming from the *Agon-gyō* 阿含經 (*Āgama* corpus) and refers to the “teaching of the Three Baskets” (*sanzyōkyō* 三藏教) as the first and lowest of the Four Teachings, at the time a synonym for the Lesser Vehicle 小乘 (and the verb *noru* 乗る, “ride,” as currently written with the same character *jō* 乗 of course strengthens the allusion). The reference is equally obvious in the case of the “three carts,” which refers, needless to say, to the famous parable in chapter 3 (*Hiyu-bon* 譬喻品) of the *Lotus Sutra* about the Three Vehicles being superseded by the transcendental *Lotus* teaching. This latter is the teaching here called “a teaching of reality,” or *makoto*, currently written in that sense with the character *jitsu* 実, or *minori*, as we have seen already. It is therefore the *Lotus Sutra* itself. The locution *makoto no michi* had already been used by Jien frequently in his own Buddhist poetry with the same meaning.²² Thus, in this simply-worded *shakkyōka* that Jien himself might well have written, Dōgen reiterates the Tendai dogma of the four teachings ascending from the “teaching of the Three Baskets” (三藏 蔵)—here represented by the *Āgama* corpus—to the ultimate truth (*en* 円) of the *Lotus Sutra*, in conformity with Tendai doctrinal summaries. The poem is much more a Tendai than a Zen verse.

It is indeed a piece so imbued with Tendai teachings that one would be entitled to suppose Dōgen had composed it well before the year 1245 (to which ostensibly the earliest poems in the collection are dated), and that here we might well possess some trace of his more youthful, and ingenuous years as a poet. This, were it not for the fact that the ninth book of his *Shōbō genzō* has the very locution “Four Horses” (*shime* 四馬) as its title, making it difficult to dismiss out of hand the possibility of a later date, and the intriguing vista such a date would open on a mature Dōgen's real position regarding Tendai teachings.

²¹ Poem 30. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al., eds., *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* 釈教歌詠全集 (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 1978), vol. 2, p. 170.

²² See my *La Centurie du Lotus* (Paris: Collège de France - Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2008), particularly the glossary, s.v. “*makoto*” and “*makoto no michi*.”

The same deep and uncomplicated devotion felt by Dōgen toward the *Lotus Sutra* is expressed in poem 26, the first of the five:

夜もすがら終日になすのりのみちみなこの經のこゑとこゝろと

All night long, and all day practicing the way of the Law,
everything becomes the sound and the meaning of this sutra.²³

We will find the same idea below in two other poems in this series, thus establishing a coherence in the presentation of the *Lotus Sutra* within Dōgen's Japanese poetry, in which the presence of the true Law (*shōbō* 正法) within the sutra is strongly emphasized. It would be natural to think that such poems were composed by Dōgen when he was still a teenage apprentice on Mount Hiei, but we have in volume 10 of the *Eihei kōroku* a series of fifteen poems on solitary life in the mountains (*sankyō jūgoshū* 山居十五首) which likewise reflects a very close devotion to the sutra:

幾悦山居尤寂寞 因斯常讀法花經 專精樹下何憎愛 妬矣秋深夜雨聲

How I enjoy the solitude of my mountain dwelling!
It allows me to read ceaselessly the *Lotus Sutra*.
Single-mindedly under the trees, what then of love or hate?
How I envy the sound of nightly rain in the deep of autumn!²⁴

The beginning of the third line, “single-mindedly under the trees” is a quotation mixing together two sentences from chapter 19 of the *Lotus Sutra*, where the locution *zazen* occurs as well,²⁵ as was noted previously, though linked there to the practice of reciting the sutra and not to the practice of Sōtō Zen. And the last line means that the poet would like to read the scripture with as persistent a regularity as the rain in autumn. It is thus obvious that Dōgen's devotion was not limited to his younger years and that it appears in his Chinese-language writings as well.

Another *waka* (poem 28) displays the idea of the universality of the *Lotus* teaching within the profane world:

此經のこゝろを得れば世の中のうりかふ声ものりを説くなり

For those who have acquired the meaning of that Scripture,
even the world's voices of buying and selling actually preach the Law.²⁶

All mundane activities are to be seen as preachings of the Dharma in the eyes of those who have attained a real understanding of the *Lotus Sutra*. Two further poems in the series directly allude to the important Tendai dogma of “preaching of the Law by the inanimate” (*mujo-seppō* 無情說法). The first of these (poem 27)

²³ Poem 26. *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 199.

²⁴ Text in *Dōgen Zenji zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 13, p. 215.

²⁵ 及読誦經法，或在林樹下，專精而坐禪。 *Taishō shinsū daijōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 9, p. 49b.

²⁶ Poem 28. *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 169.

puts animals and inanimate nature together in such preachings of the *Lotus Sutra*:

溪のひゞき嶺に鳴くましらたえだえにたゞこの経をと説くところそきけ

The echo in the valley, the monkey crying on the peak—though haltingly,
as I hear them, they do but preach this Scripture.²⁷

Occurring after this, a second verse (poem 29) suppresses the animate half to concentrate on the inanimate:

みねの色たにのひゞきもみななから我が釈迦牟尼のこゑと姿と

Figures of the mountains, echoes in the valleys, all as they are
are but the voice and aspect of our lord Śākyamuni.²⁸

The relationship between this poem and the one about the “Original Face” (*honrai no menmoku*) is obvious, as is also the link with Jien's *shakkyōka*, where the words *koe* 声 and *kotoba* 言葉 (or *koto no ha*) occur together.²⁹ This link with Jien's poetry is moreover an important preliminary to pieces by Dōgen on *mujō-seppō*, one that helps us understand Dōgen's own relationship to Tendai dogmatics.

It is thus all the more surprising, from such a point of view, to find in sermon 46 of the *Shōbō genzō* the following words about the preaching of the Law by the inanimate: “To understand, as simpletons do, the rustling of trees or the falling of leaves as the preaching of the Law by the inanimate, is unworthy of a student of Buddhism [. . .] Thus to understand plants and stones as the inanimate shows imperfect doctrine.”³⁰

From such a passage it would seem clear that Dōgen must have held Jien's poetry, where such an understanding of the *mujō-seppō* dogma is abundantly illustrated, to be simplistic. But what about his own *waka* poetry, where we note the same doctrine's presence with our own eyes, unless we choose to disregard that poetry as spurious? Yet there is no need to impute to him such a contradiction in poetical statements. We can simply infer that Dōgen as a *waka* poet did not feel obliged to follow the same path of thought as in his sermons, and that he was only yielding to the prevailing poetical discourse as delineated by Jien.

5. Dōgen and Jien

And it is in the light of that Tendai poetic discourse that we must pay attention to the importance of the term for “word”—*kotoba* or *koto no ha*—within the

²⁷ Poem 27. Ibid.

²⁸ Poem 29. Ibid.

²⁹ Cf. for instance poem 40 in *La Centurie du Lotus* (op. cit.), p. 61.

³⁰ 愚人おもはくは、樹林の鳴条する、葉花の開落するを無情説法と認ずるは、学仏法の漢にあらず（中略）しかあるを、草木瓦礫を認じて無情とするは不遍学なり。 Mizuno Yaoko 水野弥穗子, ed., *Shōbō genzō* 正法眼蔵 (Iwanami Bunko, 1999), vol. 3, pp. 58–59.

poems of the *Sanshō dōei*. That importance is made explicit from the first poem in the collection:

なが月の紅葉の上にゆきふりぬ見るひとたれか言の葉のなき

In the Ninth Month the snow fell on the maple leaves—
of those who contemplate it, who would lack for words?³¹

It must be noted that here the *Kenzeiki* version presents a slight divergence, the last line reading instead: “who would not compose poetry?” (*uta wo yomasaran*).³² The existence of such a variant only emphasizes the near synonymy between *uta* (poem) and *kotoba* (word/language), as the Japanese poem is considered to be the mode of expression *par excellence* of the *kotoba*, which is also none other than the Japanese language itself, an idea already visible in the Japanese preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905) and with greater force later reiterated by Jien. Moreover, this relationship between *uta* and *kotoba* on one side, and the snow (*yuki* 雪) on the other, as the condition for the former’s very production, perfectly illustrates the meaning of the poem “*Honrai no menmoku*” or “Original Face.”

The same idea is latent in poem 53 of the *Sanshō dōei* collection, together there with the idea of the preaching of the inanimate:

はるかぜに我が言の葉のちりけるを花の歌とや人のみるらん

Dispersed are my words in the spring breeze,
will people see them as poems of flowers?³³

Here too, the language points clearly to the link between poetry, the contemplation of nature, and meditation on the Buddha’s words. Irresistibly this idea makes us think of a poem by Jien written under the heading “*Nyōze gamon*” 如是我聞, the initial sentence of the *Lotus Sutra* (and of all other sutras as well):

いはし水は今いふ人のことの葉のさなからうかふなかれなりけり

Mute waters of Iwashimizu, the words of the One now speaking
are indeed but leaves that float thus down the stream.³⁴

In the light of his predecessor Jien’s Buddhist poetry, Dōgen’s own use of *kotoba* takes on an importance fully concordant with the kind of complex linguistic process we can perceive in the stylistic and linguistic circumvolutions of his *magnum opus*, the *Shōbō genzō*. It is true that a number of Dōgen scholars have cast doubt on the authenticity of the *Sanshō dōei*, but any recognition of

³¹ *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 161.

³² 長月ノ紅葉ノ上ニ雪フリヌ見ン人誰カ歌ヲヨマサラン. Kawamura Kōdō 河村孝道, ed., *Shōbon taikō: Eihei kaizan Dōgen Zenji gyōjō, Kenzeiki* 諸本対校: 永平開山道元禪師行状・建掇記 (Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1975), p. 87.

³³ *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 175.

³⁴ See *Centurie* (op. cit.), p. 6.

the work's spuriousness would only displace the problem further into the Japanese Sōtō tradition and its perceptions of the role of *kotoba* in the Master's thought.

We can, moreover, find evidence of the importance of *kotoba* for Dōgen himself, encrypted into his Chinese language poetry. Let us quote here the entirety of the verse about the earthworm:

欲論仏性兩頭動 風火散時全体寒 生死從來無定主 等閑莫說此言端

Trying to debate the Buddha-nature, the two heads are writhing.
When wind and fire disperse, the whole body is cold.
There has never been a subject to experience birth or death,
So do not prattle idly about these words.³⁵

The last two characters of the original poem, forming together a Sino-Japanese compound read *gontan* 言端 by “phonetic reading” or *ondoku* 音読, can also be read *kotoba* by “explicative reading” or *kundoku* 訓読. Yet the rules for reading *kanshi* 漢詩, or Sino-Japanese poetry, would require the word to be here orally pronounced as *gontan*, or even as *gentan*, but surely not as *kotoba*. It can only be in the poet's mind that this Japanese reading was carefully hidden, though by comparing this line with Dōgen's poetry in Japanese, we may safely assume that such was indeed what he had in mind.

6. A Reexamination of “*shinjin datsuraku*”

Such a trans-linguistic overlaying of *gontan* and *kotoba* may provide a hint for explaining another famously cryptic utterance of the Master, and for detecting, so to speak, *hieroglossia* in the making. In principle, the direction of hieroglossic influence would mainly be from the “sacred tongue” to the “vulgar tongue,” from the “*hierogloss*” to the “*laogloss*.” Yet it may happen that an idea or concept born within the “vulgar language” needs to be transposed into the realm of the “sacred language” in order to gain authority and circulation. If this sounds too abstract, let us give Dōgen's most famous saying as an example.

As is well-known, Dōgen-*zenji* entered Song China in 1225, attained *satori* 悟り (enlightenment) under the guidance of Rujing 如浄, abbot of the Jingde Temple 景德寺, and then returned to Japan, bringing back with him what he presented as a new practice founded on that enlightenment, which was also proof of his legitimacy as bearer to Japan of the lineage of the Sōtō school. This legitimacy was emphasized by his second-generation disciple Keizan 瑩山 (1268–1325) in his *Denkōroku* 伝光録, a history of the transmission of Zen teaching from India to Japan. The saying that triggered Dōgen's *satori*, needless to say, was Rujing's utterance: “casting off body and mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落). According to Keizan's narration, Dōgen suddenly achieved “great enlightenment” (*daigo* 大悟)

³⁵ *Dōgen Zenji zenshu* (op. cit.), vol. 12, p. 303.

immediately upon hearing Rujing's words during a sermon. This utterance is considered to be a *kōan*, an enigma which not only led Dōgen to his own *satori* but also legitimated his place as the fifty-first master of the Sōtō lineage, which went back to the Buddha Śākyamuni, and as moreover the first Japanese patriarch of that lineage.

There have been not a few discussions about not only the meaning, but indeed even the factuality of Rujing's words, as it has been pointed out that such an expression in its entirety can be found nowhere in that master's works, nor indeed in Chinese texts more generally. This conspicuous absence has led some scholars to suppose that Dōgen simply misunderstood Rujing's Chinese, interpreting in his own way a slightly different sentence. Although it has been said of late that a Chinese source has at last been found, I would like to suggest here a completely different possibility for the origin of what is still an enigma indeed.

Some years before Dōgen's lifetime the famous wandering hermit (*hijiri* 聖) and poet Saigyō, who besides leaving behind a considerable poetical corpus (collected in the *Sankashū* 山家集) came to feature also as protagonist in a number of deeply interesting Buddhist narrative collections of the thirteenth century, *inter alia* the *Saigyō monogatari* 西行物語 and the *Senjūshō* 撰集抄, wherein a number of his own poems and teachings are inserted between tales of the religious and the supernatural. We find in these a surprisingly frequent use of the Japanese expression "discard the body"—*mi wo sutsu* 身を捨つ³⁶—for instance in the *Sankashū*:

惜しからぬ身を捨てやらで経る程に長き闇にや又迷ひなん

As long as I go on unable to discard fully a body I care nothing for,
shall I wander ever further in perpetual dark?³⁷

There are other poems as well, but I will quote the following, not from Saigyō's own poetry collection but from the *Saigyō monogatari*:

世[身]を捨つる人はまことに捨つるかは捨てぬひとをぞ捨つるなりけれ

He who discards the world (var.: the body), in truth is that what he discards?
Rather, what is discarded is he who would not discard.³⁸

But especially worthy of note in this context is an episode in book 1 of the *Senjūshō*, where a Tendai monk by the name of Zōga 僧賀, harboring doubts about the efficacy of Tendai practice, goes in pilgrimage to the Ise shrine, where a deity blesses him with a revelation (*jigen* 示現) in these words:

³⁶ It is to be noted that although this is a straightforward Japanese reading (*kundoku*) of the Chinese locution *shashin* 捨身 found frequently in Buddhist texts, as in the episode of the Bodhisattva offering his body to feed the tigress (e.g., 捨身飼虎), in Japanese the locution is mainly used in a figurative sense.

³⁷ *Sankashū* 山家集 738 (Iwanami Bunko, 1983), p. 115.

³⁸ Poem 137. Kubota Jun 久保田淳 and Yoshino Tomomi 吉野朋美, eds., *Saigyō zenkashū* 西行全歌集 (Iwanami Bunko, 2013), p. 409. For the variant 身を捨つる, see p. 462.

道心を発さんと思はば、此身を身とな思そ。

If you want to produce the Bodhi-mind, do not think of this body as a body.³⁹

The interesting part, that directly relating to our main subject, is how Zōga reacts upon hearing this revelation: he takes off all his clothes and goes out naked into a new life. Here it is evident that the expression “to discard the body” refers not to the physical body of the flesh, but rather to the status expressed by the clothes, and that therefore this “body” is a synonym of *myōri* 名利—wealth and social reputation.

There is an echo of this moral in book 6 of the *Senjūshō*, where in this case it is a noble courtier (*kuge* 公家) receiving a revelation, from the deity Kasuga *myōjin* 春日明神:

この文の詮には、たゞ心をも心とてなとめそといへる趣とやらん。

The point of this text is the idea that you should not fixate on your mind as mind.⁴⁰

Both utterances put together reflect an idea current from Saigyō onward: “the discarding of body and mind.” Yet these examples, to which we could add many others taken from the same texts, demonstrate that the expression was taken in a very typically Japanese sense, wherein “body” refers more to one’s social status than to one’s physical body.

And we find in the commentary by Keizan in the *Denkōroku* two very interesting glosses, separated by a few pages, on the same locution *shinjin-datsuraku*: the second of these two is a regular *kundoku* reading: “*shinjin mo nuke-otsu*” 身心モヌケオツ⁴¹ (even the body and mind slip and fall away), but the first is an adaptation, based on the locutions we have seen to be current in use in poetry and narrative from Saigyō onward: “*mi wo sute kokoro wo hanaru beshi*” 身ヲステ心ヲハナルベシ⁴² (one is to discard body and withdraw from mind).

This brings us to an unexpected conclusion: the search for the source of that foundational formulation *shinjin datsuraku*, instead of taking us ever deeper into an elusive quest through Chinese texts, leads us rather to the contemporary language of Japanese vernacular Buddhism and to *kotoba*, to the expressive mode of *waka* poetry. Dōgen has simply endowed the vernacular with the more respectable-seeming syntax and vocabulary of Chinese, in order to reimport it into Japanese Buddhism, adorned now with a new hieroglossic respectability.

³⁹ Kojima Takayuki 小島孝之 and Asami Kazuhiko 浅見和彦, eds., *Senjūshō* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1985), p. 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 177.

⁴¹ *Taishō shinshū daijōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 82, p. 408c.

⁴² Ibid., vol. 82, p. 408a.

Conclusion

I have several times witnessed during the year I spent delving into Dōgen's language-world at the Collège de France a most gratifying reaction from several students and listeners who had had for the first time a direct encounter with Dōgen's texts. They told me that they had actually felt they were dealing with an exceptional personality, and truly extraordinary thought. Such feelings are doubtless not evidence for the objective existence of such qualities, but they also cannot be simply dismissed. Judging from further exchanges of views with those students, it seems clear that the main cause of this attraction is none other than Dōgen's language itself, an unclassifiable literary phenomenon that was not to be imitated for centuries, although the Chinese Chan vulgar style he relied upon has been in continuous use up to the present day in China and can, for example, be found in Xuyun's 虛雲 sermons in the twentieth century. The greatest originality in Dōgen's masterly handling of this Chinese *zokugo* is that he succeeded in inverting, so to speak, the telltale signs of that Chinese style: while in China it was intended to be close to the colloquial and thus distinguish itself from the artificial flavor of a literary Chinese Buddhist style, when transferred into Japanese text, it became a true *hierogloss*, that is, a language marking the religious character of its enunciations. One can even say it became a cryptoelect insulating Sōtō Zen from the rest of the Buddhist world in Japan. While classical Chinese had already possessed a high hieroglossic status in the *wa-kan* relationship, the Chinese *zokugo* as cleverly handled by Dōgen added a new dimension from the Chinese language to the Japanese language-world. By doing this, Dōgen went farther than Jien in achieving the sacralization of Japanese as a Buddhist language. Jien concentrated all his literary power on the *waka* as a language-act parallel to the Chinese poem (*kanshi*), but did not seem to think too much of Japanese writing in prose. Dōgen heightened Japanese prose to the level of a religious language in its own right, through the introduction to Japan of a theretofore unknown aspect of the Chinese language. His Japanese style is immediately identifiable, if not readily understandable, and we may rightfully ask ourselves who among his listeners and disciples could have understood his oral utterances. Similarly with the wholly Chinese-language sermons of the *Eihei-kōroku*, we may wonder whether they were read aloud in Japanese or in Chinese, and, if the latter was the case, whether his Japanese disciples were able to understand him, and whether his Chinese followers could have understood his Japanese accent. Nor do we know whether the *zokugo* in the sermons of the *Shōbō genzō* were pronounced in Japanese or in Chinese, in phonetic or in explicative reading. What is certain is the role that he conferred upon Chinese *zokugo* within Japanese, in order to bring his own language to the religiously expressive level of Chinese Chan literature. And we can see in his poetic compositions in Japanese, all imbued with Jien's influence when it comes to *shakkyōka* about the *Lotus Sutra*, that he was also fully aware of the importance of *kotoba* as the basis of religious experience and

religious expression. It is therefore a fascinating study to investigate in detail the hieroglossic triangle delineated by Dōgen between classical Chinese, Chinese *zokuugo*, and Japanese. None of the vertices of that triangle can be understood without considering the other two.⁴³

⁴³ All my thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Knott for correcting my poor English and checking the quotations and the translations, and also my most heartfelt gratitude to my young colleague Dr. Didier Davin, for endeavouring to make out of my hasty draft a text that would somewhat better bear the reading of more exigent readers.

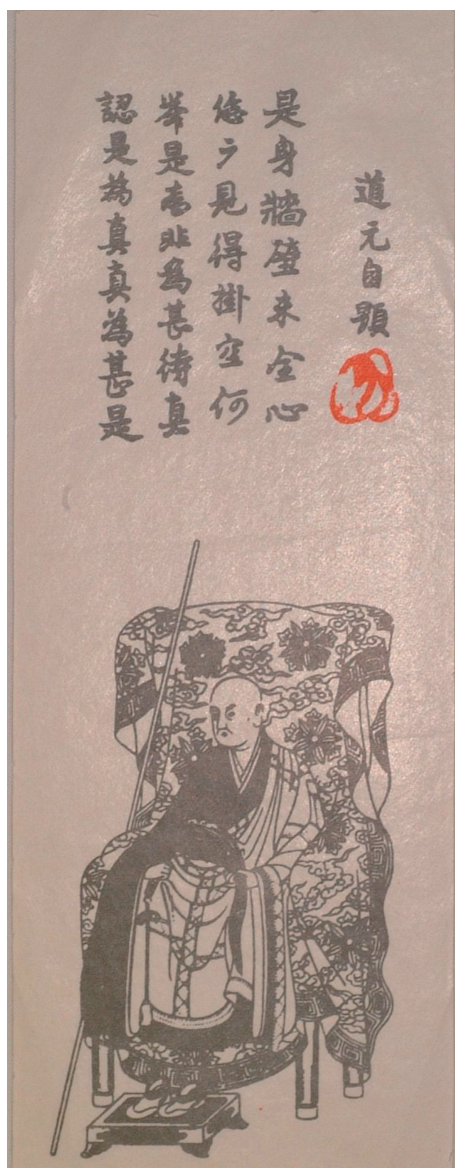


Figure 1. An *ofuda* お札 picturing Dōgen.
(Collège de France, Bernard Frank Col-
lection).

<http://ofuda.crcao.fr/ofuda/F-13-09>

A Forgotten Aesop: Shiba Kōkan, European Emblems, and Aesopian Fable Reception in Late Edo Japan¹

Ivo SMITS

By Way of Introduction

When Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century entered a period of rapid modernization and orientation towards the West, Aesopian fables became a prominent presence in didactic literature of the modern age, with several translations into Japanese from 1873 onwards. When Jesuit missionaries and the Portuguese were expelled from Japan in 1639, this marked the beginning of the suppression of European books in that country. The only title introduced by the Jesuits to survive in Japan was a collection of Aesop's fables.² Its contents were not seen as Christian by the authorities and therefore they were not potentially dangerous. Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, a number of Japanese editions of the fables were published. However, after the middle of the century, Aesop appeared to have faded from sight in Japan. In a sense, Aesop's fables bookend early modern Japan's image of a "closed country," and their appearance, disappearance, and subsequent reappearance seem to symbolize the bracketing of its isolation from European literature.

Between 1639 and 1854, Japan's contacts with the Western world, especially Europe, were limited to its contacts with its sole European trade partner, Holland, and to a lesser extent through mediation by Chinese traders. Bleak views of these contacts paint a history of missed opportunities. In such narratives both parties learned little from each other; or, worse, if they tried to learn, they misunderstood. This misunderstanding arose largely from the inability of both parties to frame *outside* of prevailing worldviews whatever was learned; no one was capable of "thinking outside the box." For Japan, this translates as the view that the study of Europe was framed within templates for studying Chinese classics, neo-Confucianism (or perhaps better "Zhu Xi learning," Jp. *shushigaku* 朱子学),

¹ This article is part of preparatory research for a monograph on mid- to late-Edo reception of European emblems in Japan, with the working title *Emblem as Episteme*.

² Elisonas, J.S.A., "Fables and Imitations: Kirishitan Literature in the Forest of Simple Letters," *Bulletin of Portuguese Japanese Studies* 4 (2002), pp. 9–36, esp. p. 12.

“national learning” (*kokugaku* 国学), martial studies (*heigaku* 兵学), et cetera; Europe could make sense only in East Asian terms, necessarily explained with existing concepts and terminology, and within institutional settings modeled after traditional fields of scholarship, the so-called “academies” (*juku* 塾).

More positive presentations of knowledge contacts between Japan and Europe in the Edo period, when Japan in the period 1639–1854 supposedly was a “closed country” (*sakoku* 鎖国) to the rest of the world and to Europe in particular, focus on a Japanese curiosity that embraced almost all things European. The larger narrative of this Japanese interest is that initially Japanese were primarily attracted to objects from Europe for their curiosity value, and that only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century did certain circles of Japanese intellectuals start to focus more systematically on what Japan might learn from Europe. ‘Europe’ in this period was represented by Holland, Japan’s sole Western trading partner, and the later eighteenth century saw the rise of a scholarly field termed “Dutch studies,” or “Hollandology” (*rangaku* 蘭学). One form the contacts between Europe and Japan took was through books, and European books, whether in the original or in Chinese translations, became the prime means through which Japanese would learn about the West. In 1720, in the context of what became known as the first wave of the Kyōhō 享保 Reforms of 1716–1722, shōgun Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗 (1684–1751) lifted the ban on the import of certain European books, in the expectation that Japan could access learning with practical applications. Histories of this field of “Hollandology” stress an emphasis on empirical studies, such as medicine, astronomy, natural sciences, and principles of perspective and techniques of copper etchings in the arts.

Aesop’s fables present a good model for rethinking these two dominant narratives. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Aesop was never completely absent from Japan. The fables both constitute a link between the Portuguese-Jesuit heritage and Dutch studies, and also demonstrate that there was an early modern Japanese interest in European discursive practices, however problematic its understanding may have been. A point of entry will be the painter and popular writer Shiba Kōkan 司馬江漢 (1747–1818).

Beginnings

When in the very first year of the Meiji period Toyama Masakazu 外山正一 (1848–1900) returned from his studies in England, he brought with him a copy of a modern version of *Aesop’s Fables*, written by the reverend Thomas James and first published in London by John Murray in 1848. This was translated into Japanese by the English scholar and entrepreneur Watanabe On 渡部温 (1837–1898). Watanabe’s *Tsūzoku Isoppu monogatari* 通俗伊蘇普物語 (A Popularized Aesop’s Tales) was published in 1872 in a woodblock edition. Its illustrations were re-workings of the original illustrations by John Tenniel by, among others, the well-known painter Kawanabe Kyōsai 河鍋曉斎 (1831–1889). Inspired by Watanabe’s

translation, Kyōsai in 1873 began publishing a lavishly colored *nishiki-e* 錦絵 print series on the theme of “Among the tales of Aesop” (*Isoppu monogatari no uchi* 伊蘇普物語之内).³ Watanabe’s book quickly became a bestseller, with reprints set in type, and was used as a textbook in the new primary school system that was established in that very same year. Several versions of Aesop’s fables were to follow, creating an ‘Aesop boom’ and establishing the tales as one of the earliest Meiji absorptions of European literature. It is fairly safe to claim that Meiji’s interest in Western literature began large-scale with Aesop’s fables.

Few in Japan at the time realized that by 1872 Aesop’s fables had already been present in Japan for nearly three centuries. Today, it is fairly common knowledge that as part of their enterprise in Japan, the Jesuits established a printing center with a press that was brought to Kazusa 加津佐, Kyushu, in 1590, and which from 1592 onwards was located on the island of Amakusa 天草, not too far from Nagasaki, where the printing operation was conducted under the protection of its Christian daimyō.⁴ In 1593, the Jesuit mission press printed a Japanese translation of Aesop’s fables, type-set with Roman letters in a transcription system that the Jesuits had developed, titled *ESOPONO FABULAS*, “translated from the Latin to Japanese speech” (*Latinuo vaxite Nippon no cuchi to nasu mono nari*).⁵ In addition to its professed aim to introduce European moral ideas, an important goal of this publication seems to have been to help Europeans learn the Japanese language: “Not only is this [book] truly dependable when learning the Japanese language, but it can also be an instrument in teaching people the right way.” (*Core macotoni Nipponno cotoba qeicono tameni tayorito naru nominarazu, yoki michiyo fitoni voxie cataru tayoritomo narubeqi mono nari*).⁶ What this targeting of non-Japanese readers meant for the circulation of this early Japanese translation of the fables is an open question; in any case, the fables ultimately did reach a Japanese readership.

The Jesuit edition of Aesop’s fables was followed by a number of so-called *kana-zōshi* 仮名草子 editions in the first half of the seventeenth century, that is,

³ Sadamura Koto 定村来人, “Kawanabe Kyōsai ‘Isoppu monogatari no uchi’ no seisakunen ni tsuite: Isuraeru Gōrudoman korekushon-zō no jūyōzu kara wakaruru koto” 河鍋晩斎《伊蘇普物語之内》の制作年について：イスラエル・ゴールドマン・コレクション蔵の一四図から分かること, *Kyōsai: Kawanabe Kyōsai kenkyūshi* 晩斎：河鍋晩斎研究誌 115 (2015), pp. 226–230.

⁴ For this and more information treating the so-called Amakusa edition (*Amakusa-bon*) of 1593 and the 1659 illustrated Manji edition of early Japanese translations of Aesop’s fables, see Michael Watson, “A Slave’s Wit: Early Japanese Translations of the Life of Aesop,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (4th series) 20 (2006), pp. 1–22; and Endō Jun’ichi 遠藤潤一, *Hōyaku nishu Isobo monogatari no gententeiki kenkyū (seihen)* 邦訳二種伊曾保物語の原典的研究 (正編) (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1983), pp. 113–470. On specifically the Jesuit edition, see also Pack Carnes, “‘Esopo no fabulas’: More Notes on Aesop in Sixteenth-Century Japan,” *Reinardus* 14 (2001), pp. 99–113.

⁵ Shima Shōzō 島正三, *Amakusa-bon Isobo monogatari nado no koto (boteiban)* 天草本伊曾保物語などのこと (補訂版) (Tokyo: Bunka Shobō Hakubunsha, 1984), p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

early Edo books printed mostly in *kana*, with limited use of *kanji*, targeting a non-specialist readership. However, these Japanese editions did not derive directly from the Jesuit translation. Rather, there seems to have been a Japanese proto-Aesop (*gen-Isobo monogatari* 原・伊曾保物語, assumed, 1580s) on which both the Jesuit edition and the Japanese editions based themselves. There are telling differences between the Jesuit translation and the Japanese popularizing editions, the most glaring of which is that the Jesuit version is written in colloquial speech (*kōgotai* 口語体) and usually has an explicit moral (“*xitagocoro*,” *shitagokoro* 下心) at the end of a fable, while the *kanazōshi* (or so-called *kokuji* 国字, that is, printed with *kana* and *kanji*) editions adhere to a literary style of Japanese (*bungotai* 文語体). One assumption is that the *kanazōshi* editions more faithfully follow the proto-Aesop, which would have been written in *kana*.⁷ The best known of these editions, of which eleven different ones are extant, is what is presumably the last one, published in 1659 (Manji 万治 2) by a certain Itō San’emon 伊藤三右衛門, usually referred to as the *Manji e-iri-bon Isobo monogatari* 万治絵入本伊曾保物語, “Illustrated Edition of Aesop’s Tales from the Manji Period.” It would be this illustrated edition in particular that was to catch the attention of later Edo-period readers, among them Shiba Kōkan.

Since the fifteenth century, the Japanese had seen an increase in stories featuring animals rather than people. These stories, often in the form of *otogi-zōshi* 御伽草子 (“companion booklets”), songs, or comic plays, but also sometimes Buddhist parables, are nowadays referred to as *iruimono* 異類物, “pieces about other species.” These stories may have helped to pave the way for the success of Aesop’s animal fables.

It is important to realize that roughly half of *ESOPONO FABULAS* and *Isobo monogatari* is indeed “the tale of Aesop,” rather than “tales by Aesop,” in the sense that it deals with Aesop’s life. This was a standard feature of classical and medieval European editions of Aesop’s fables. In this way, Japanese readers were from the very first page confronted with a world outside Asia, filled with such enigmatic place names as Hirija (Phrygia) and Toroya (Troy), or such curious personal names as Shanto (Xanto).

How many readers interacted with Aesop is, as always, difficult to say. Back in 1978, Nakagawa Yoshio was quite sober about the possible success of the early seventeenth-century editions: he believed that they were little read and that the fables’ didactic form failed to reach an audience beyond a more elite readership. This may have had to do with the niche position that *kirishitan* (‘Christian,’ that is: European) texts occupied anyway.⁸ However, despite his activities in a near-mythical Europe, the figure of Aesop may very well have been a recognizable

⁷ Kōbori Kei’ichirō 小堀桂一郎, *Isoppu gūwa: sono denshō to ben’yō* イソップ寓話：その伝承と変容 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1978), pp. 159–163.

⁸ Nakagawa Yoshio 中川芳雄, “Kaidai” 解題, in *Kokatsujī-ban Isobo monogatari* 古活字版伊曾保物語 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1976), pp. 235–253.

character to Japanese readers of the early seventeenth century. As Komine Kazuaki has pointed out, Aesop's quick wit and subservient position resonated with the image of the late medieval *otogishū* 御伽衆, or personal entertainer or conversationalist to a daimyō, not unlike the legendary sixteenth-century *rakugo* artist Sorori Shinzaemon 曾呂利新左衛門, who allegedly was an *otogishū* to the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598).⁹ There are physical signs of reader interaction with the fables: Aesop is described as exceedingly ugly; this seems to have been a feature that some readers picked up on. The National Institute of Japanese Literature owns a copy of the 1659 illustrated edition in which a reader has consistently by hand in all illustrations added pock marks to Aesop's face to underline his ugliness, for example in a scene in which he is seated before the pharaoh of Egypt, who is visually rendered as a Chinese-style emperor (**Figure 1**).¹⁰

Late Edo Sightings of the Fables

After 1659, Aesop disappears from the Japanese radar, or so it seems, only to resurface in 1872 with Watanabe On's translation of Thomas James' version of the fables. This change appears to coincide with a drop, after the seventeenth century, in the popularity of the *kana-ζōshi* genre in general. However, there is proof that belies such an apparent oversight of Aesop in the intervening two centuries. Aesop was not totally unread in mid- to late Edo Japan.

The best proof of Aesop's vitality throughout the early modern period is probably a curiously little-studied printed edition by what is surely one of late Edo's better-known popular authors. The successful *gesaku* 戯作 author Tamenaga Shunsui 為永春水 (1790–1844) reworked sixteen fables from the Aesopian repertoire in his *E-iri kyōkun chikamichi* 絵入教訓ちかみち (var. 絵入教訓近道, An Illustrated Shortcut to Moral Teaching) of 1844 (Tenpō 天保 15).¹¹ The book came with illustrations by Utagawa Kunitaru 歌川国輝 I, drawing under the name of Sadashige 貞重 (dates unknown, active 1818–1860), and was published by the Edo-based publisher Chōjiya Heibei 丁子屋平兵衛 (dates unknown), who in the 1830s had been co-publisher of Kyokutei Bakin's 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848) immensely popular *gesaku* series *Nansō satomi bakenden* 南総里見八犬伝 (Biographies of Eight Dogs, 1814–1842). Shunsui's use of the fables raises the thorny issue of how in the early nineteenth century one could get her or his hands on *kana-ζōshi* published some two centuries before, a point I will return to shortly. Of course, there existed lending libraries (*kashibon'ya* 貸本屋) that presumably

⁹ Komine Kazuaki 小峯和明, "Seiyō kara kita setsuwa: Isoppu to seijaden" 西洋から来た説話: イソップと聖者伝, in *Setsuwa no mori: tengu, tōzoku, igyō no doke* 説話の森: 天狗・盗賊・異形の道化 (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1991), pp. 256–280.

¹⁰ *Isobo monogatari* 伊曾保物語 2.2 ([Place unknown:] Itō San'emon 伊藤三右衛門, Manji 2/1659). In the collections of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, call no. ナ4-985.

¹¹ Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, "Kaisetsu" 解説, in *Isobo monogatari: Manji e-iri-bon* 伊曾保物語: 万治絵入本 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2000), pp. 323–325.



Figure 1. Left: Aesop before the Pharaoh of Egypt. Illustration from *Isobo monogatari* 伊曾保物語 2.2, pub. Itō San’emon 伊藤三右衛門, Manji 2/1659. (National Institute of Japanese Literature).
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200021086>

Figure 1a. Upper right: Aesop before the Pharaoh of Egypt. Detail from Figure 1. Note the added pockmarks on Aesop’s face.

Figure 1b. Lower right: Another copy of the same edition, showing the originally unmarked design. (National Diet Library).
<https://doi.org/10.11501/2532213>

also dealt in old titles, but one has to wonder how great of a chance there was that through such a channel one could read a two-hundred-year-old book that may not have been that widely read in the first half of the seventeenth century to begin with. Be that as it may, Shunsui obviously had access to a version of Aesop’s fables. Among others, he selected a fable that resonated throughout the Edo period (**Figure 2**):

The Parable of the Wolf and the Crane

Once, a wolf got a bone stuck in his throat, and while he was in pain a crane came flying to him. “Why are you in such pain?” he asked. The wolf shed tears and howled, “I have gotten a bone stuck in my throat, and it causes me great pain.



Figure 2. The wolf and the crane. Illustration by Utagawa Kunitaru 歌川国輝 I, in Tamenaga Shunsui 為永春水, *E-iri kyōkun chikamichi* 絵入教訓ちかみち, pub. Chōjiya Heibei 丁子屋平兵衛, Tenpō 15/1844. From Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, *E-iri Isobo monogatari wo yomu* 絵入伊曾保物語を読む, p. 81 (see note 12).

There is no one who can help me but you. So, please pull out this bone!” Thus he begged, and the crane, feeling sorry for him, opened the wolf’s mouth and with his long beak pulled out the bone, and saved the wolf’s life. The crane said to the wolf, “From now on, we have a special bond and should be friends.” The wolf scowled, “How much of a favor have you done me, to say something like that? I was thinking of chewing off your head, but now I feel only sorry for you and am inclined to let you go. Be thankful for that!” The crane was in shock and flew away.

If you do a bad person a good deed, it can happen that he turns on you. However, to do good by people is your duty to the Lord of Heaven.¹²

¹² *E-iri kyōkun chikamichi* 5, in Mutō Sadao, *E-iri isobo monogatari wo yomu* 絵入伊曾保物語を読む (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1997), pp. 81–82; and Mutō, *Isobo monogatari: Manji e-iri-bon* (op. cit.), pp. 210–212. This is a reworking of *Isobo monogatari* 2.16, for which see *Kana-zōshi shū* 仮名草子集, vol. 90 of *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系, eds. Morita Takeshi 森田武, et al. (Iwanami Shoten, 1965), pp. 407–408. “Parable” here translates *tatōe* たとへ.

Shunsui adapted the seventeenth-century *kana-zōshi* text to more contemporary Japanese, omitting for example such early-Edo appellations as *goben* 御辺 for “you.” Intriguing are Utagawa Kunitaru’s anthropomorphic illustrations that furnish the emblematic animals with human bodies, which are a deviation from the more or less standardized iconography of the so-called *iruimono* illustrated tales.

Incidentally, further indication that the illustrated *kana-zōshi* edition of 1659 did have an afterlife is provided by Lawrence E. Marceau’s identification of an Edo-period illustrated scroll that goes by the descriptive name *E-iri kansubon Isobo monogatari* 絵入卷子本伊曾保物語 (Illustrated scroll of Aesop’s tales, ca. 1670). The scroll contains scenes that undeniably trace back to illustrations of the Manji-period illustrated *kana-zōshi* edition of 1659.¹³

Based on references in his *Honkyō gaihen* 本教外篇 (Outer Chapters of Our Doctrine, 1806), a work that among others explores the Christian worldview with references to Matteo Ricci’s (1552–1610) writings, there are strong indications that Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) a few decades earlier had read a Sinitic version of the fables. Presumably he picked them up through Matteo Ricci’s *Jiren shipian* 畸人十篇 (Ten Chapters on Extraordinary Men, 1608), a collection of dialogues between the Jesuit Ricci and nine of his literati friends, held in the Chinese capital between 1595 and 1601, and published in early 1608. This compilation work reflects an interest by contemporary literati in Christian views on such issues as death, and was read in Japan as well, serving as an important source of information for Hirata’s *Honkyō gaihen*.¹⁴

Such examples ultimately all trace back to the Jesuit legacy, especially that of the Amakusa press. Yet, the European Aesopian legacy was emphatically not an exclusively southern European affair.

Edo Confrontations with the Emblematic Aesopian World

From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, animal fables from the Aesopian tradition increasingly reached European readers in the template of the emblem book. As a specific image-text combination, the emblem (Latin *emblema*) has its origins in a work by the Paris-based lawyer Andrea Alciato (1492–1550), who in 1531 published the first edition of his *Emblematum liber* (aka *Emblemata*, “A book of emblems”). Alciato’s emblems may be thought of as highly intellectual

¹³ One eagerly awaits Lawrence Marceau’s forthcoming edition of this illustrated scroll (publication expected through Rinsen Shoten), on which he has given numerous lectures. See for example, Lawrence E. Marceau, “Reconsidering the *Isopo monogatari* Scrolls,” unpublished conference presentation, Meiji University, October 23, 2015.

¹⁴ Mutō Sadao, “Kaisetsu,” in *Isopo monogatari: Manji e-iri-bon* (op. cit.), p. 340; Devine, Richard, “Hirata Atsutane and Christian Sources,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 36:1 (1981), pp. 37–54. On Jesuit reworkings of Aesopian fables in China, see Sher-shiueh Li, “The Art of Misreading: An Analysis of the Jesuit ‘Fables’ in Late Ming China,” in Luo Xuanmin and He Yuanjin, eds., *Translating China* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), pp. 71–94.

association games, in which the central image (*pictura*), as a rule accompanied by a heading (*inscriptio*, or *motto*), as well as an epigrammatic poem underneath (the *subscriptio*), functioned as a coded visualization of the moral message of the emblem as a whole. In Alciato's template, the combination of *motto* and *pictura* presented an enigma, for which the epigrammatic *subscriptio* pointed towards the solution. In the narrow, historical sense, an emblem is a specific combination of epigram and image that has been rightly called one of the most influential creations of the late Renaissance.¹⁵ The emblem quickly became quite a hit with readers and the template for many other emblem books. Between the mid-sixteenth century and the early eighteenth century, Europe was awash with the emblem genre. Estimates calculate that over two thousand titles, possibly representing over a million copies, of emblem books circulated in Europe.¹⁶ While Alciato wrote in Latin, quite soon, already later in the sixteenth century, Europe saw the rise of emblem books in vernacular languages. Aesopian animal fables became staple fare for the vernacular version of the genre. By the early eighteenth century, the emblem book had developed into a widely used didactic format, one that also propagated explicitly Christian values.

One highly attractive feature of the emblem was its use of images. Especially in the Low Countries, production was abundant and the books came with copper etchings of often unmatched quality. The pervasive presence of the emblem book and its high-quality images will have played a role in Dutch traders bringing the emblem to Japan. The first attested recognition of the genre by a Japanese that I can find is datable to 1779. In the second month of that year, shogun Tokugawa Ieharu 徳川家治 (1737–1786) received a translation of the captions (*subscriptio*es) of a set of copper-plate etchings that the delegation of the Dutch trading post at Dejima, Nagasaki, had presented him with on a previous occasion. The translator in question was the Edo-based Maeno Ryōtaku 前野良沢 (1723–1803), a samurai scholar from the Fukuoka domain in Kyushu, trained in medicine and above all in the budding field of Hollandology. He had spent time in Nagasaki to learn Dutch and to gain first-hand knowledge of Western sciences, especially medicine, an academic rite of passage known as a 'Nagasaki study sojourn' (*Nagasaki yūgaku* 長崎遊学). He was so dedicated to his

¹⁵ Ashworth, William B., Jr., "Natural History and the Emblematic Worldview," in David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman, eds., *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 303–333, esp. p. 310. See also Hessel Miedema, "The Term *Emblema* in Alciato," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1968), pp. 234–250.

¹⁶ Porteman, K., *Inleiding tot de Nederlandse emblemateliteratuur* [Introduction to Dutch Emblem Literature] (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1977), p. 7; Manning, John, *The Emblem* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 16. Porteman refers to individual copies, not titles, when he mentions numbers possibly "in the seven digits." Estimates depend a great deal on what is, and is not, included in the genre definition of an emblem book.

Dutch studies that his lord supposed he “had gone Dutch” (*ranka* 蘭化).¹⁷ One result was Ryōtaku’s heavy involvement in the translation project that led to *Kaitai shinsbo* 解体新書 (A New Book of Anatomy, 1774), which had appeared five years earlier and would become the first major landmark of Hollandology.¹⁸ Quite likely it was Ryōtaku’s involvement in precisely this medical translation project that had put him on the shogunal radar in 1779. It is assumed that shogunal physician Katsuragawa Hoshū 桂川甫周 (1751–1809) had alerted the shogun to Ryōtaku’s prowess in reading “the horizontal script” (*yokomoji* 横文字), that is, the Dutch language.¹⁹ What exactly triggered the shogunal command is not quite clear; Ieharu’s reputation was one of a total lack of intellectual interests.²⁰

Ryōtaku was deeply unhappy with the shogun’s request. He felt not up to the translation assignment, but one could not refuse such a command. His unhappiness was more than simply the standard deprecation of one’s own talents. In this case it is not difficult to imagine the agony that he must have felt. Ryōtaku had noticed that the etchings’ captions were not in Dutch, but in Latin. Dutch scholars were trained in Dutch, and hardly knew the first thing about Latin. In the introduction to the translation that he eventually did produce, Ryōtaku elaborated on the difficulties presented by Latin as a language.²¹

¹⁷ Numata Jirō, *Western Learning: A Short History of the Study of Western Science in Early Modern Japan* (Tokyo: The Japan-Netherlands Institute, 1992), p. 82. Maeno seems to have agreed with his daimyō Okudaira Masaka, as he later adopted Ranka as his pen name.

¹⁸ For a treatment of the translation process of *Kaitai shinsbo*, see e.g. Numata, *Western Learning* (v.s.), pp. 51–79; Goodman, Grant K., *Japan: The Dutch Experience* (London: Athlone, 1986), pp. 82–85.

¹⁹ Torii Yumiko 鳥井裕美子, *Maeno Ryōtaku: shōgai ichijitsutsu no gotoku* 前野良沢：生涯一日のごとく (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2015), p. 139.

²⁰ For negative assessments by both Japanese and Dutch contemporaries of Ieharu’s intellectual, administrative, or other qualities, see Timon Screech, *The Shogun’s Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States, 1760–1829* (Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 93.

²¹ For text, see *Seiyō gasan yakubun kō* 西洋画賛訳文稿 [A Translation of Captions to Images from the West], in *Maeno Ryōtaku shiryōshū* 前野良沢資料集, ed. Ōita Kenritsu Sentetsu Shiryōkan 大分県立先哲史料館, vol. 2 (Ōita-ken Kyōiku Inkai, 2009), pp. 70–71. This is a transcription of the Seikadō 静嘉堂 (or Ōtsuki 大槻) manuscript in Maeno’s hand. Ryōtaku wrote the “Introduction” (*daigen* 題言) to his manuscript in Sinitic (*kanbun*); for a ‘Japanized’ (*kekikudashū*) version of Ryōtaku’s *kanbun* text, see Harada Hiroshi 原田裕司, “Maeno Ryōtaku *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* no ratengo genten” 前野良沢『西洋画賛訳文稿』のラテン語原典, (*Ōsaka Daigaku Gengo Bunkabu, Gengo Bunka Kenkyūka-ben*) *Gengo bunka kenkyū* (大阪大学言語文化部・言語文化研究科編) 言語文化研究 26 (2000), pp. 152–153. Donald Keene also alludes to Ryōtaku’s frustration over Latin; Keene, Donald, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720–1830* (Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 78.

For *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* generally, see also Harada Hiroshi “Maeno Ryōtaku *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* no ratengo genten,” pp. 149–178; Harada Hiroshi, “Maeno Ryōtaku *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* no ratengo genten (hoi)” 前野良沢『西洋画賛訳文稿』のラテン語原典 (補遺), (*Ōsaka Daigaku Gengo Bunkabu, Gengo Bunka Kenkyūka-ben*) *Gengo bunka kenkyū* (大阪大学言語文化部・言語文化研究科編) 言語文化研究 27 (2001), pp. 255–259; Isozaki Yasuhiko 磯崎康彦, *Edo jidai no ranga to ransho: kinsei nichiran hikaku bijutsushi (jōkan)* 江戸時代の蘭画と蘭書：近世日蘭比較美術史 (上巻) (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2004), pp. 366–367.

Our Lord ordered me,²² his servant, to translate the images with inscriptions from the West. I respectfully looked through them and found that they were made in France and that their texts make use of Latin. (I will explain about ‘France’ and ‘Latin’ below.)

Certainly, Latin is that from which the French language is derived. It is sophisticated and concise, yet its meaning is profound. This is why even people from France or Holland have no knowledge of it, unless they are learned men—not to mention us in Nagasaki! I have yet to hear of someone who understands it well. If I read through a normal Dutch book and I come across passages in this language, I always skip them because I cannot read them properly. Since there is no one who really understands this, I can only make sense of Latin books through Dutch translations and from time to time by this means I seek out their meaning. But even as I resent this and study alone, I am unable to properly probe its abstruseness.

Now one cannot refuse a command of one’s lord and so I made an effort to inquire after glosses and at last search for the meaning, but it comes as from a great distance and all of it is difficult to communicate.²³

For all his laments Ryōtaku managed to do quite a fair job. Given the circumstances, it is quite incredible that he got as much right as he did. He was aware of the existence of a Latin school in Batavia, and in fact managed to consult Latin dictionaries.²⁴

We know which text it was that the shogun ordered Ryōtaku to translate. A copy (although probably not the copy that Ryōtaku had access to) is in the Tokugawa Bijutsukan in Nagoya, labeled *Orandajin sesshō no zu* 阿蘭陀人殺生図 (Images of Dutchmen Slaughtering Living Beings). It is a book published two centuries earlier by the Flemish Jan Van der Straet, who operated under his Latinized name Stradanus (1523–1605). His *Venationes: ferarum, avium, piscium* (Hunts: Wild Beasts, Birds, and Fish, 1578) was reprinted several times and presumably it was a later edition that the Dutch delegation offered as a gift to the shogun. Given the success with Japanese audiences of European books with meticulous copper etchings, we may assume that the copper etchings were a major motivation for the Dutch in offering this particular set.

For all his groaning, Ryōtaku proved once again to be an admirable champion of textual analysis. He was very accurate in his assessment of the category of book to which *Hunts: Wild Beasts, Birds, and Fish* belonged:

²² Maeno Ryōtaku refers to himself here by his proper name (*na* 名), which was Yomisu 熹. As Harada Hiroshi points out, the manuscript mistakenly gives his name as Yorokobi 喜. Harada, “Maeno Ryōtaku *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* no ratengo genten” (op. cit.), p. 152.

²³ *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* (op. cit.), p. 70.

²⁴ For the existence in Japan of Latin dictionaries, see *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō*, pp. 89–91; Harada Hiroshi 原田裕司, “Maeno Ryōtaku no ratengo jiten to kinsei Nihon yunyū ratengogaku shoshi” 前野良沢のラテン語辞典と近世日本輸入ラテン語学書誌, *Nichiran gakkai kaishi* 日蘭学会会誌 26:1, no. 48 (2001), pp. 37–59; Torii, *Maeno Ryōtaku: shogai ichijitsu no gotoku* (op. cit.), pp. 143–144.

窃按此画大抵因羅甸所伝之譬喻寓言等以設之図者也 蓋将使童蒙因画図而自解文辞也 故其所攬撫在目前近小之事耶 彼方之画類類于此者多矣

I conclude that these pictures take their cue from parables and fables and the like that were transmitted in Latin and made into images. Essentially these things are aimed at children and youngsters and attempt to explain by themselves the words of the texts through pictures. Must its salient points therefore be something minute right in front of one's eyes? Of this type of picture from over there, there are many.²⁵

What is especially interesting is that Ryōtaku claimed that there were many texts from Europe that were firmly intertwined with images and which were supposed to somehow “by themselves” convey meaning. The message of this gift from the Dutch delegation, even if it may have been an unconscious one, was that emblematic images were a pivotal medium of European culture. It was also irritatingly clear to him that the proper way to decode these images was “right in front of one's eyes.” But, of course, you needed to know the key. Maeno Ryōtaku was well aware that this particular type of image-text relationship had a name:

羅甸之言名曰^{エムブレマ}奄弗烈瑪

In Latin these are called *emblema* (Jp. *emuburema*).²⁶

In other words, the Dutch had given the Shogun a book of emblems. At the end of his translation of Van der Straet's *Hunts: Wild Beasts, Birds, and Fish*, Ryōtaku explains in somewhat more detail what an *emblema* is.

奄弗烈瑪 是仏朗察ニテ称スル所ノ名ナリ コレヲ和蘭ノ語ニ翻訳スルハ「シンネベ^ユルド」ト云フナリ 私ニ按スルニ シンネ」トハ此ニ云意識ナリ「ベ^ユルド」トハ 此ニ云形ヲ図ニ造ルコトナリ 是則意趣ヲ形容スルト云フコトニシテ 無声ノ詩ト云フノ類ナリ

‘Emblem’: This is what one calls it in French. If one translates it into Dutch, it is called a ‘*zjinnebeeld*’ (Jp. *shinneberudo*). As I understand it, ‘*zjin*’ is awareness, and ‘*beeld*’ is to put an outward form into an image. Thus, it is to give visible form to an intention and [as such] it is a kind of silent poem.²⁷

Ryōtaku accurately identified the Dutch copper prints as allegorical pictures (*gūiizu* 寓意図) and assessed correctly that the Latin text accompanying these images had a didactic meaning.²⁸ It is also clear that for Ryōtaku, an ‘emblem’ hinged primarily, if not exclusively, on the image.

²⁵ *Seiyō gasan yakubunkō* (op. cit.), p. 71.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 88. This last designation, of emblems as a category (*tagui* 類) of “silent poem” (*musei no shi* 無声ノ詩), taps into a rhetoric of long standing in China.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 70–71.

A Dutch Aesop in Kanagawa

One intriguing case is presented by the existence of hand-copied pages from an early seventeenth-century Dutch reworking of a selection of Aesopian animal fables. *Vorstelijcke warande der dieren* (Royal Display of Animals, 1617) was the product of an entrepreneurial publisher, Dirck Pietersz. Pers (1581–1659), and the young poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679). Pers had managed to get his hands on the copper etching plates of an earlier Flemish edition of a set of animal fables presented in the emblem template, which itself had been grafted onto an even earlier emblem book in French. One of the first European books to combine animal fables and emblems was *Les fables du très-ancien Ésope* (The Fables of the Very Ancient Aesop, 1542) published in Paris by the humanist Gilles Corrozet and based on Latin, humanist reworkings of Aesopian fables. This French book has the format that would become standard practice, elaborating on the Alciato template: each fable occupies two facing pages. On one page is an illustration with a caption on top and a *subscriptio* at the bottom, on the other page is the fable itself, with the moral, creating the subgenre of what has been called the ‘emblem fable.’²⁹

The Flemish artist Marcus Gheeraerts (*ca.* 1520–*ca.* 1590) used this French fable book for his own *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (The Truthful Fables of the Animals, 1567), published in Antwerp with his own copper etchings and with texts by Eduard de Dene. The pictures by Gheeraerts proved an incredible success. The Flemish painter and early art historian Karel van Mander (1548–1606) wrote of Gheeraerts’ book: “When in the year 1566 the Arts were at an impasse, he [Gheeraerts] made and etched the Book of Fables *Esopi*, which is a beautiful thing and well executed.”³⁰ Gheeraerts’ copper engravings were used again and again with different accompanying texts, starting with the *Esbatement moral des animaux* (Moral Entertainment by Animals, 1578). Eventually, the copper plates made their way to the northern Netherlands. Importantly, Gheeraerts’ book for the first time introduced a so-called ‘emblematic’ way of presenting (and reading) fable literature in Dutch. The method was, of course, borrowed from France, but it was new for a Flemish and Dutch public.

It was the complete set of Gheeraerts’ 118 copper etching plates that Pers got hold of, and would expand to a total of 125. This was a new era, when publishers began to play an important role in the literary field. They were the ones to start book projects and attract authors to work out their ideas. Pers contracted Vondel

²⁹ Geirnaert, Dirk, and Paul J. Smith, “The Sources of the Emblematic Fable Book *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (1567),” in John Manning, Karel Porteman, and Marc van Vaeck, eds., *The Emblem Tradition in the Low Countries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 23–38.

³⁰ Van Mander, Karel, *Het Schilder-boeck* (Haarlem, 1604), fol. 258a; Molkenboer, B. H., *De jonge Vondel* (Amsterdam: Parnassus, 1950), p. 356. Pers quotes this passage in the introduction to his 1617 *Warande der dieren*.



Veel ongelukkiger als dese last-dragenden Ezel, is geweest die ellendige gevangen Keyser *Valerianus*. Want als hij van den Koning van Perſen (*Sapor* geheeten) bekriegt gevangen, met ſtricken gebonden, ende in ſlavernije gebracht was, ſoo heeft hij als een arme Ezel zeer ſwaren arbeyt doen moeten, ende hem oock voor een voetſchamel laten gebruycken, als de Koning te peerd wilde zittens; is oock noch ellendigh geſlagen, ende armelijck geſpijſt, tot dat hij in ſulcken Ezels arbeyt zijn leven ellendighlijck eyndighde. *SABELLICUS.*

Hier, hier, ghij Vreken hier, ſchout d' Ezel overladen
Met bouten, hoenders, taert, gefoden, en gebraden.
Saucijſſen, Haſen, Wijn, Capoenen, en Paſtey,
En hij eet dijtlen ſelf op ſchraele en dorre wey.
„ Zoo gaet het oock met u, verſchroockte gierge ſlaven:
„ In rijkdom zij dij arm, bekommert gaet ghij draven:
„ Hebt ſtadelijcken ſorgh, beſwaert met druck en klagh,
„ Vint geen geruſt gemoet, en woelt ſchier nagt en dagh:
„ Slurpt wey en water in, ſchroomt uwen buyck te vallen:
„ Een ander heeft u haef, derf leckerlijcken ſmullen. (braet.
„ Die 't goetd heeft, ſuygt de poot; die 't niet heeft, eet ge-
„ Dees loert op woeckers winlt, en d' ander op verraet:
„ En altijd heeft hij vrees, verſmoort in ijdlle ſorgen: (gen:
„ Komt ſtadigh broodt te kort, bekommert voor den mor-
„ Onthout zijn luſt het goet, en ſpaert 'er uyt zijn mont;
„ Dat in het eynd verbract wort door de Kart' of Hondt.

Hh

Figure 3. Donkey carrying nourishment (Spijsedraghende Ezel), emblem page with accompanying poem. Illustration by Marcus Gheeraerts, in Joost van den Vondel, *Vorstelijcke warande der dieren* (Amsterdam: Sander Wybrantsz., 1682), p. 116. [openlibrary.org. https://archive.org/details/vorstelijckewara00vond/page/n245](https://archive.org/details/vorstelijckewara00vond/page/n245)

for the publication of the *Royal Display of Animals* in 1617, for which Vondel wrote new texts for the independent facing pages that retold each fable in the form of a page-long poem. This particular emblem book of Aesopian animal fables would go through a number of reprints, especially in the eighteenth century (**Figure 3**).

Somehow, Vondel's book with Gheeraerts' etchings made its way to Japan. We do not know when it reached Japan, nor which edition it was. An assumption—but nothing more—is that a Dutch trader took a copy, or perhaps even loose printed sheets from this book, with him to Japan when, in the eighteenth century, Vondel's *Royal Display of Animals* became popular again. In that case, there would not be a particularly large time gap between the moment that the Dutch original was brought to Japan and the moment that a Japanese samurai patrician took notice of it.

A hand-copied set of six sheets (twelve pages) from the *Royal Display of Animals* was made by order of Maeda Naotada 前田直方 (1748–1823), the sixth daimyō in that line of the Kaga 加賀 domain, in 1791 (Kansei 寛政 3), eight years before Maeno Ryōtaku submitted his translations of the captions for Van der Straet's emblem series to the shogun. It now rests in the Maeda Tosanokami-ke Shiryōkan 前田土佐守家資料館 in Kanazawa, but its existence was not made public until



Figure 4. Donkey carrying nourishment (Spijsedraghende Ezel). Hand-copied illustration by Yata Shijoken 矢田四如軒, text copied by Yamaguchi Tamenori 山口為範, after Joost van den Vondel, *Vorstelijcke warande der dieren*. (Maeda Tosanokami-ke Shiryōkan).

Shinmura Izuru 新村出 (1876–1967) wrote about it in 1929.³¹ At the time, Shinmura identified the pages as “pages from a Dutch Aesop” (*ranbun Isobo monogatari dankan* 蘭文伊曾保物語断簡), but it is not certain that the Kaga samurai recognized the animal fable emblems as explicitly Aesopian. It is a curious set, apparently an attempt to create hand-produced facsimiles of pages from a printed European book, in which, somewhat uncharacteristically for Japan, both sides of the paper were used (more commonly one would use only one side of a sheet that was then folded in two).

The Vondel edition gives the emblem proper (that is, *motto/pictura/subscriptio*) under Arab numbering on the left-hand page, with Vondel’s accompanying poem on the facing right-hand page under Roman numbering. Individual sheets

³¹ Shinmura Izuru 新村出, “Eimo ranbun kohan e-iri Isoho monogatari no dankan” 影模蘭文古版絵入伊曾保物語の断簡, in *Bibliophila/Shomotsu no shumi* 書物の趣味 4 (1929).

contain the emblem proper on one side, whereas the reverse side of that same page will show Vondel's poem for the *previous* emblem, which is unconnected to the image-text set on that same sheet of paper. An effort was made to reproduce the Dutch octavo size, resulting in a decidedly unusual format for Japanese books. The Kaga copy consists of the following six recto-verso sets: XVIII [Wolf and sheep]/19 [Shepherd and idol]; L [Fox and grapes]/51 [Monkey and cat]; LXI [Hedgehog and snake]/62 [Chameleon]; LXII [Chameleon]/63 [Bull and ram]; LXXIII [Lion and traveler]/74 [Lion, donkey, and fox]; and CXV [Tortoise and hare]/116 [Donkey carrying nourishment]. The Dutch printed texts were hand-copied by one Yamaguchi Tamenori 山口為範, about whom nothing is known. It has been suggested by Sugano Yō that he could have been a *rangaku* scholar or a doctor trained in Western medicine.³² The Gheeraerts' copper etchings were redrawn by hand by Yata Shijoken 矢田四如軒 ('real name' Yata Hirotsuma 矢田広貫, or Rokurōbei 六郎兵衛, 1718–1794), who had been the senior house councilor (*karō* 家老) to the Maeda family and had trained in the Hasegawa 長谷川 school of painting (Figure 4).³³

Perhaps on occasion only separate sheets of Dutch books reached Japan. The Kaga copy of the *Royal Display of Animals* would suggest that, in Europe, it was standard practice to go to a bookseller, choose the best quality sheets available and have the total bound as a complete set. In other words, books were not sold as bound copies, but as loose sheets that were bound after the sale.³⁴ This practice resulted in left-over sheets at the book sellers' workplace. It is indeed very possible that someone bought such left-overs for sale in Japan. If that were the case, it would help explain why the set ordered by the Maeda lord of the Kaga domain is such a disconnected collection: we would be dealing with hand-drawn copies of six loose sheets, possibly originally printed together on a single larger sheet (as part of a quire), not a selection made from a bound copy.

Kōkan, Tairō, Saisuke

Sugano Yō has speculated that either the Kaga copy or the original *Royal Display of Animals* may have been seen outside the Kaga domain, specifically by the painter, science popularizer, and fringe Hollandologist Shiba Kōkan, but speculates

³² Sugano Yō, "Kansei san-nen ni mosha saretā ransho dōbutsu gūwashū no dōbanga" 寛政三年に模写された蘭書動物寓話集の銅版画, *Yamato bunka* 大和文化 77 (1986), p. 15.

³³ On the Kanagawa copy of *Warande der dieren*, see Shinmura Izuru, "Eimo ranbun kohan e-iri Isoho monogatari no dankan" (op. cit.), pp. 1–18; Sugano Yō 菅野陽, "Shiba Kōkan to Isoho monogatari" 司馬江漢と伊曾保物語, *Rangaku Shiryō Kenkyūkai kenkyū hōkoku* 蘭学資料研究会研究報告 308 (1976), pp. 1–12; Sugano Yō, "Edo-ki denrai no bijutsu kankei ransho nishu (ge)" 江戸期伝来の美術関係蘭書二種 (下), *Kobijutsu* 古美術 54 (1977), pp. 78–86; Sugano Yō, "Kansei san-nen ni mosha saretā ransho dōbutsu gūwashū no dōbanga" (op. cit.), pp. 13–27.

³⁴ Gaskell, Philip, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 146–147.

that *if* that was the case, one would have to wonder whether he would have recognized the emblems as explicitly Aesopian, or indeed been able to truly understand Vondel's poems.³⁵ It is nonetheless certain that by the early nineteenth century Kōkan had developed a special interest in Aesopian fable literature from Europe.

That Kōkan may indeed have seen the original *Royal Display of Animals* is not impossible. As Katsumori Noriko points out, the painter Ishikawa Tairō 石川大浪 (1762?–1817) had a great interest in European books, and among these his special predilection was for Dutch emblem books.³⁶ Several respected amateur painters with a samurai background had since the later eighteenth century developed a keen interest in producing “Dutch paintings” (*ranga* 蘭画).³⁷ Two such artists were the brothers Ishikawa Tairō and Mōkō 孟高 (1763?–1828?), members of a *batamoto* 旗本 family. Tairō had first studied with the Kanō school, but then turned to European book illustrations and copper etchings. These illustrations in European books became the major source for the two brothers’ “Dutch paintings.” One of Tairō’s paintings of a lion, signed “Tafelberg,”³⁸ is unmistakably copied from Vondel’s *Royal Display of Animals*.³⁹ Emblem fable no. 10, “The Lion and the Mouse,” comes with a copper etching by Marcus Gheeraerts that depicts a roaring lion caught in a net, about to be freed by a mouse. Tairō mirrored the lion and removed the net (and got rid of the mouse), but otherwise his animal is the spitting image of Gheeraerts’ version. It is less likely that someone had also imported the Antwerp 1567 edition of *The Truthful Fables of the Animals*, in addition to the 1617 edition (or early eighteenth-century reprint) of Vondel’s *Royal Display of Animals* with the very same illustration. Tairō’s model lion is not included in the Kaga copy, so it may well be that the entire Dutch edition (or yet a separate unbound sheet) was imported to Japan as well. Incidentally, we know that Tairō was in possession of a French edition of Aesop’s fables as well, which presumably came with illustrations.⁴⁰ Be that as it may, the point is that a version of *Royal Display of Animals* circulated in Japan, outside the Kaga domain. This means that Kōkan, too, may have had access to a copy of *Royal Display of Animals*, as he moved in the same circles as did Tairō.

³⁵ Sugano, “Kansei san-nen ni mosha saretā ranshō dōbutsu gūwashū no dōbanga” (op. cit.), p. 15.

³⁶ Katsumori Noriko 勝盛典子, *Kinsei ikoku shumi bijutsu no shiteki kenkyū* 近世異国趣味美術の史的研究 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2011), pp. 118–119.

³⁷ See e.g. Hiroko Johnson, *Western Influences on Japanese Art: The Akita Ranga Art School and Foreign Books* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005).

³⁸ Tairō, whose art name literally translates as “Big Wave,” styled himself “Tafelberg,” after Table Mountain on South Africa’s cape, then a Dutch trading post, a mountain that in Sino-Japanese was called Tairōzan 大浪山, or “Mount Big Wave.” His younger brother Mōkō, who also painted in the Dutch style, termed himself “Leeuwenberg” (Mount Lion), after the adjacent mountain on the South Africa cape. For Tairō in general, see Screech, *The Shogun’s Painted Culture* (op. cit.), p. 46; Katsumori, *Kinsei ikoku shumi bijutsu no shiteki kenkyū* (op. cit.), pp. 87–207.

³⁹ “Shishi no zu” 獅子図. In the collections of Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 神戸市立博物館. See Katsumori, *Kinsei ikoku shumi bijutsu no shiteki kenkyū* (op. cit.), p. 48, ill. 2-3, ill. 12.

⁴⁰ Sugano, “Edo-ki denrai no bijutsu kankei ranshō nishu (ge)” (op. cit.), p. 84.

For Tairō, an important point of access to European book illustrations and copper etchings was his association with Yamamura Saisuke 山村才助 (1770–1807), a rising star at the Shirandō 芝蘭堂 academy of Hollandology in Edo.⁴¹ From a young age, Saisuke, a samurai from the Tsuchiura 土浦 domain, had been interested in geography. Through his maternal uncle Ichikawa Kansai 市河寛斎 (1749–1820), a Confucian scholar with a special interest in Sinitic poetry who had instructed him in Chinese studies, he was introduced in 1789 to the renowned Hollandologist Ōtsuki Gentaku 大槻玄沢 (1757–1827) at the latter's newly established *rangaku* Shirandō academy in Edo. Ōtsuki in turn initiated Saisuke into the world of Hollandology and specifically the study of world geography. Saisuke turned out to be a prodigious student, and earned the nickname of being one of “the four heavenly kings” (*shitenno* 四天王, *i.e.* outstanding scholars) of Gentaku's academy. His status within the Shirandō group is underscored by one of the trappings of its academic community-building events. Ever since late 1794 (Kansei 6), the Shirandō academy had celebrated “Dutch New Year” (*Oranda shōgatsu* おらんだ正月) on the first day of the solar calendar (January 1st). For a number of these celebrations, tongue-in-cheek “analogy ranking-lists” (*mitate banzuke*) were made that listed participants in the form of a playbill, etc. On the “Dutch scholars’ *sumō* wrestlers’ ranking list” (*rangakusha sumō mitate banzuke* 蘭学者相撲見立番付) made for the Shirandō's “Dutch New Year” gathering of January 1, 1799 (Kansei 10, 1798), Saisuke is listed among the principal participants as *sekinake* 関脇 (runner-up champion) for the west side. Listed as one of the *maegashira* 前頭 (Junior wrestler) for the same west side is Shiba Kōkan.⁴²

Among other texts, Saisuke compiled a fascinating but largely overlooked text-book that resulted from communal readings in the Shirandō academy, the *Seiyō zakkai* 西洋雑記 (Miscellaneous Notes on the West, 1801). It is a repository of information on ancient European history and world geography that reflects the collective knowledge of this Hollandology academy. Saisuke's work on *Miscellaneous Notes on the West* and its 1804 sequel reflects both an acute awareness of the emblem genre and a foundational knowledge of Aesop's fables. His entry “How Western pictures contain analogies” remarks that:

⁴¹ Katsumori, *Kinsei ikoku shumi bijutsu no shiteki kenkyū* (op. cit.), pp. 145–184.

⁴² The Shirandō academy started celebrating “Dutch New Year” on Kansei 6 (1794).¹¹ (intercalary).¹¹ (January 1, 1795). Gentaku quite likely picked up this habit from the Nagasaki interpreter Yoshio Kōgyū 吉雄耕牛 (1724–1800), whose 1785 New Year's banquet he had attended in Nagasaki. Some forty-four celebrations are known. For an elaborate analysis of the first celebration, see Reinier H. Hesselink, “A Dutch New Year at the Shirandō Academy: 1 January 1795,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 50:2 (1995), pp. 189–234. For Yamamura Saisuke as *nishi no sekinake* and Shiba Kōkan as sixth *maegashira* for the same west side, see e.g. the copy of the *sumō mitate banzuke* collected by Matsudaira Naritami 松平斉民 (1814–1891) in volume 10 of his 17-volume scrapbook *Geikai yoha* 芸海余波. In the collections of Waseda University Library (call. no. i 05 01646). The mock bill was designed by *gesaku* author and amateur Hollandologist Morishima Chūryō 森島中良 (1754?–1810).

Western pictures are extremely exact and their utmost precision is well known to the world. Very often they create analogies in their pictures. For example, at the head of a book they draw a picture of the author; to the side they depict an “engel” [angel] (a heavenly creature with wings). The image of the angel playing a flute is as if you can hear from afar the sound of the flute played by this angel flying far-off, and implies that one can hear from afar the worth of the author’s voice.⁴³

Here, Saisuke puts the finger on a phenomenon that earlier Morishima Chūryō had identified as well: that a great number of European pictures were not ‘realistic,’ but in fact culturally coded, symbolic images that required an understanding of a European worldview in order to decode them. The example he refers to involves winged creatures. He knew well that an author’s portrait above which hovered putti indicated the eminence of the person depicted.⁴⁴

In 1804, Saisuke compiled a sequel (“Part 2”, or *niben* 二編) to *Miscellaneous Notes on the West*. This sequel exists only in a single manuscript copy and has never been made available in any textual edition. In its first volume, Saisuke has written up an entry that deals with the figure of Aesop, mentioning how he is known for his fables:

*About “Aesop’s Fables”*⁴⁵

There is a book in three volumes called *Aesop’s Fables* (*Isobo monogatari*). This is a translation of what originally was a Western book; it is not known who wrote it.

⁴³ “Seiyō zuga ni hiyu wo mōkuru setsu” 西洋図画に譬喩を設くる説, in *Seiyō zakkai* 西洋雑記 (Nihonbashi Kitajikkendana, Bun’enkaku, 1848), vol. 2, pp. 26r–28v. This *hanpon* edition of Yamamura Saisuke’s 1801 manuscript is accessible through Waseda University’s library website: http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/bunko08/bunko08_c0309/

⁴⁴ One example of such an author’s portrait that was well known to *rangaku* scholars of the time was a portrait of the physician Lorenz Heister (1683–1758) on the frontispiece of his *Heelkundige ondermyzingen* (Medical Instructions, trans. 1776; original *Chirurgie*, 1718). Interestingly the frontispiece also features a cartouche with the portrait of the Dutch translator and editor, the physician Hendrik Ulhoorn (ca. 1692–1746). Heister’s and Ulhoorn’s portraits, including the angels, were copied by Maki Bokusen 牧墨仙 (1775–1824) in a copper etching for the frontispiece (*tobira-e* 扉絵) of the Japanese translation of Heister’s book, *Yōka seisen zukai* 瘍科精選図解, by Shirandō scholar Koshimura Tokuki 越邑德基 (1784–1826). See Hashimoto Hiroko 橋本寛子, “Kitayama Kangan-hitsu ‘Heisteru-zō’ wo megutte” 北山寒巖筆《ヘイステル像》をめぐって, *Bijutsushi* 美術史 60:2 (2011), pp. 246–262, esp. p. 247 (ill. 2). In 1788, Shiba Kōkan painted a portrait of his Nagasaki host Yoshio Kōgyū 吉雄耕牛 (1724–1800) with putti above his head, actively applying his knowledge of this particular instance of European iconography.

⁴⁵ “Isobo monogatari no setsu” 伊曾保物語の説, in *Seiyō zakkai niben* 西洋雑記二編, vol. 1, pp. 3r–6v (unnumbered pages). This *Part Two* was never printed. The only copy of volume 1 that I know of is in the collection of the Seikadō Bunko 静嘉堂文庫, Tokyo (call no.: *hako* 97, *ka* 25 *ki*), containing volumes 1 and 2. Ayusawa Shintarō mentions that only two manuscript copies of *Seiyō zakkai niben* exist; Ayusawa Shintarō 鮎沢信太郎, *Yamamura Saisuke* 山村才助 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1959), pp. 107–108. Kagoshima University’s Tamasato Bunko 玉里文庫 has a copy that contains volumes 2 through 4 (call. no. *ten-no-bu* 181–1181).

At the end [of the book], it says that it was published in the third year of Manji [1660].⁴⁶ However, [the original] must have been written much earlier than that.

Aesop (Jp. *Isobo*) was a person born in a village called *Amonia* in *Troy* in the land of *Phrygia*. No one in the world was uglier than he, yet his wisdom was unchallenged. Then war broke out and his village was invaded by soldiers and he was taken captive and sold to a man called *Xanto* [Xanctus] in the place *Athens* (Jp. *Araerusu*).⁴⁷ [The book] records how he stayed in *Xanto*'s household and later travelled to such countries as *Egypt*, *Babylonia*, and *Greece* (Jp. *Gereshia*), an account of his life, and several tens of his didactic fables. This reminds me that there is a short biography of *Esope* in Buys' *Complete Book of Scholarship and Arts*.⁴⁸ "Esope" is in fact Aesop. (In the West, people are known by different names depending on the country. For example, someone who in France is called 'Louis' is called 'Ludovicus' in Latin and 'Lodenwijk' in Dutch.)

His ugliness is also described in the *Fables of Aesop*, as well as the fact that he was a person from *Amorio* in the land of *Phrygië*.⁴⁹ (*Phrygië* is another name for *Phrygia*; see below for details. *Amorio* is another name for *Amonia*.) This reminds me that Matteo Ricci states: "Esope was an enlightened man from the past who unhappily was cut off from his homeland, taken prisoner, and enslaved in the house of Xanto."⁵⁰

Also, [the story that] when this *Xanto* came upon his [ugly] countenance, he ended up buying his ready wit, is also the same as in *Aesop's Fables* (*Isobo monogatari*).⁵¹

However, none of the three books [of the Japanese *Isobo monogatari*] mention where he came from,⁵² nor is he mentioned in *The Complete History of the West* (Jp. *Seiyō zenshi* 西洋全史).⁵³ If you check this in an atlas, *Phrygia* and *Phrygië* are called *Phrygiën* (Jp. *Fureijiin*) in Dutch. (In Chinese this is *Hiriga* 非里雅 [Ch. Feiliya].) This

⁴⁶ Saisuke must be referring to the so-called "illustrated Manji edition" (*manji e-iri-bon*) of 1659 (Manji 2).

⁴⁷ *Isobo monogatari* (1.1) states that Aesop was first sold to "a man called Arishitesu in Ateeresu" (a corruption of "Athens"; Yamamura Saisuke gives "Araerusu"). Xanto (Jp. Shan[to]) is someone who visits the household, interrogates Aesop, and ends up buying him. *Isobo monogatari*, in vol. 90 of *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (op. cit.), pp. 361–363 (see note 12).

⁴⁸ Saisuke refers to Egbert Buys (?–1769), *Gakugei zensho* 学芸全書 (The Complete Book of Scholarship and Arts), that is, the ten-volume encyclopedia *Nieuw en volkomen woordenboek van konsten en wetenschappen* (New and Complete Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences, 1769–1778). For the entry "Esopus," see volume 3 (1771), pp. 705–706.

⁴⁹ Here, Saisuke is following the Dutch text in Buys' *New and Complete Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences*.

⁵⁰ 厄璜伯氏は上古明士不幸本国被伐身為俘虜囿于藏德氏之家と. Saisuke quotes in Chinese from a text by, or ascribed to, Matteo Ricci (Jp. Ri Matō, Ch. Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610), presumably his *Jiren shipian* (Ten Stories of Extraordinary Men, 1608), which contains references to Aesop's fables; see above.

⁵¹ Saisuke writes that Xanto "bought [Aesop's] tongue" (*shita wo kau* 舌を買ふ), which I take to be an elliptical way of saying that Xanto was intrigued by Aesop's wit, which in turn was the main reason for procuring Aesop as his slave.

⁵² This is an odd statement. The very first story in *Isobo monogatari* opens by emphatically placing Aesop's origins in Phrygia.

⁵³ Saisuke had read a *Seiyō zenshi* 西洋全史 (Complete History of the West) by "the Dutchman Gottfried" (*Oranda goddoriido*). This is the Dutch translation of *Historische chronica* (Historical Chronicle, 1660) by the German Johan Ludwig Gottfried.

is the name of a country from the past; it lies in Asia Minor. This region is divided into two parts, Great and Little. These days, Great *Phrygië* is called G*** (Jp. *Zeruman*), and Little *Phrygië* is called S*** (Jp. *Sarukyumu*).⁵⁴ In the past, in this region there was a celebrated castle town called *Troy*. This was Priam's royal capital.

However, since the time of the 1870th year since the creation of the West (this coincides with [unidentifiable character] of the *mizunoto*-boar year, the first year of the reign of King Kang of the Zhou in China⁵⁵), they sent soldiers from Greece (Jp. *Gereshia*) and laid siege to it for ten years, and eventually took the castle town of *Troy* and destroyed it completely. Later, the great king Alexander united all countries and as *Troy* had been a famous castle town since antiquity, he ordered to have it rebuilt. This battle of *Troy* is most famous in the world; in several books from the West there are a great number of records saying “before the battle of *Troy*” and “after the battle.”

Also, this *Ateerusu* where Aesop was held captive is also known by the name *Ateenen* (Athens) or *Atona* 亜徳那 (Ch. *Yadena*)⁵⁶ which lies in Greece. If you consider all these points taken together, then we can assume that Aesop was someone [living] at the time of the battle for *Troy*, and that when *Troy* was destroyed, he was taken captive and imprisoned in *Athens*.

So, were these *Fables* something recorded by dictation from a Portuguese during the foundation of our country [that is, at the beginning of Tokugawa rule], or can it be that they were translated into our language by someone from that country who had been living in our country for a long time?

In the *Fables* there is a story of how two *samurai* tell Aesop about a dream. One says that in his dream he went up to heaven; the other tells how he went down to *inferno* (Jp. *inheruno*).⁵⁷ “*Inferno*” is a Portuguese word and means “hell.” In Latin it is *inferna* (Jp. *inheruna*); in Dutch it is *hel* (Jp. *heru*). This may serve as proof [that Aesop's fables reached Japan through Portuguese, not Dutch].

Also, in Dutch, fables (Jp. *hiyu gūgen* 譬諭寓言) are called *fabel*; if you look up “*fabel*” in the dictionary compiled by Halma, you can see that it says that the *fabels* by Esope were translated by a *Phaedrus* (someone's name);⁵⁸ this goes to

⁵⁴ I have not yet been able to identify *zeruman* and *sarukyumu*. The names might be a distortion of respectively Gordium (Phrygia's capital) and Sakarya [River].

⁵⁵ King Kang (*Kang wang* 康王) was a mythical ruler of the Zhou dynasty, supposedly reigning 1020–996 BCE.

⁵⁶ This transcription of the place name Athens appears in Matteo Ricci's *Jiren shipian*, as does its variant *Yadena* 亜得納. Compare Li, “The Art of Misreading: An Analysis of the Jesuit ‘Fables’ in Late Ming China” (op. cit.), p. 76.

⁵⁷ Yamamura Saisuke is referring to story 1.16 in *Isobo monogatari*, which indeed gives “*inheruno*” んへる野 (in opposition to *tenchō* 天朝, “[court, or kingdom, of] heaven”). See *Isobo monogatari* 1.16, in vol. 90 of *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (op. cit.), p. 384. One wonders whether seventeenth-century Japanese readers would have readily understood this term. Saisuke also provides the entire text of *Isobo monogatari* 1.16 at the end of his section on Aesop.

⁵⁸ Indeed, both François Halma's Dutch-French dictionary and the Japanese ‘Haruma’ based on it give the example sentence, under the entry “*Fabel*”: “The fables of Aesop were translated by Phaedrus (Du. Fedrus)” (Jp. *esōpyusu no toraetaru shōsetsu mono wa hederyusu ga yaku-seri* エソーピュスの捕へたる小説物はヘデリユスが訳せり). See François Halma, *Woordenboek der Nederduitscheen Fransche taalen*, 2nd edn. (Amsterdam: W. van de Water, 1729), p. 710.

show that they have a good reputation in that country. (I have heard that a few years ago a Dutchman brought with him a biography of Aesop that was printed in the West. Someone got hold of it and said that all the images in the book were the same as recorded in *Isobo monogatari*. Where this book is now, I do not know.)

In a headnote, Yamamura Saisuke gives the complete text of *Isobo monogatari* 1.16, “How Aesop and two *samurai* discuss dreams” (*Isobo to ninin no saburai yume-monogatari no koto* いそほと二人の侍夢物語の事).

Among other things, this entry makes clear that within Hollandologists’ circles in Edo, not only were some of the early seventeenth-century *kana- ζ shi* editions somehow available, but that these scholars fully realized that these Japanese translations were based on a ‘Portuguese’ version that likely predated the Dutch presence in Japan. In the case of scholars, academies constructed libraries of some form and such collections provided not only access to, but also awareness of, older texts.⁵⁹ Aesop’s tales, also in their early seventeenth-century Japanese incarnation as popular literature, were recognized to be a link between ‘Dutch’ knowledge and the access to European culture provided two centuries previously by Portuguese traders and the Jesuits. This was an insight shared by the so-called “Dutch interpreters” (*Oranda tsūji* 阿蘭陀通詞) in Nagasaki. The interpreters, whose primary function was to facilitate and help control interactions with the Dutch trading post on Dejima, came to represent an important knowledge hub for the different subfields of Hollandology; Nagasaki provided an essential training ground for anyone serious about ‘Dutch studies.’ When in 1799 the Mito scholar Tachihara Suiken 立原翠軒 (1744–1823) had a chance to debrief the interpreter Narabayashi Jūbei 榎林重兵衛 (1750–1801) on all sorts of information pertaining to Europe, he noted, “The book *Aesop’s Fables* (*Isobo monogatari*) is the Japanese translation of a book from the past called *Esopi* (Jp. *Isonohisu*). It is an old book.”⁶⁰

The observation that Aesop’s fables represented a very early presence of European literature in Japan was echoed by Shiba Kōkan. In his *Shunparō hikki* 春波樓筆記 (Shunparō’s Jottings) of 1811, Kōkan related how several years earlier he had come across a copy of Aesop’s fables in the library of the lord of the Kishū 紀州 (aka Kii 紀伊) domain. Presumably the daimyō in question was Tokugawa Harutomi 徳川治宝 (1771–1853), the tenth lord of the Kishū domain during the period 1789–1824, who enjoyed a wide reputation for his interests in

⁵⁹ Kornicki, Peter, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 389. The size of such very specialized libraries is difficult to ascertain. For example, when it comes to books in Dutch, the Mitsukuri, a family of Western scholars, by 1866 appears to have had collected no more than fifty titles. Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, p. 303.

⁶⁰ イソホものがたりと云書は、昔イソヲヒスと云書の和解なり、古書なり. *Narabayashi zatsuma* 榎林雑話, in *Kaihyō sosho* 海表叢書, vol. 2, in *Nanban komō shiryō* 南蛮紅毛史料, vol. 1, ed. Shinmura Izuru 新村出 (Kyoto: Kōseikaku, 1930), p. 32.

scholarship and painting. In the same *Shunparō's Jottings*, Kōkan notes that he was invited to lecture to this lord on astronomy, presumably at the daimyō's residence in Edo, which is where he must have seen Aesop's fables.⁶¹ His renown as a popularizer of Western knowledge, including astronomy, a field in which he had published a number of books, will have brought him to Harutomi's attention. Besides this, there was a family connection tying Kōkan to this particular domain; one of Kōkan's forefathers came from Kishū.⁶²

The encounter with this early version of Aesop's fables made a lasting impression on Kōkan, and would have a major impact on his ideas about the applicability in Japan of European didactic techniques and the echoes between Western and Japanese morality.

Aesop's Fables (Isobo monogatari) is the translation of a Western book. The original is [in the library] of the lord of the Kishū domain. I had a look at it myself: all [the stories in it] use analogies to teach morality. Here I will give one or two examples.⁶³

Kōkan proceeds to recount respectively the fable of the wolf and the crane (*Isobo monogatari* 2.16), the fable of the monkey and the man (2.39), and the fable of the preaching bird (3.31). Then he remarks, "This book is two hundred years old and it is all written in *kana* [=the Japanese syllabic script]," which strongly suggests he was looking at the *kana-ŷōshi* edition. After a digression, of the kind rather typical for him, which deals with the differences between the language of the early seventeenth century and that of late Edo, especially in forms of address, Kōkan considers the nature of the European original of the Aesopian fables.

This book is a Western book; [its genre] is called *ŷinnebeeld* (Jp. *shinnebēru* シンネベール, or emblem), that is, an analogy. It contains words that nowadays are difficult to understand for someone studying Dutch books. But we must realize that two hundred years ago there [already] were people occupied with Western Studies.

Animal Fables in a Japanese Emblem Book

Like Maeno Ryōtaku before him, Kōkan used the Dutch term *ŷinnebeeld*, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch term for emblem. Kōkan had hit

⁶¹ *Shunparō bikki* 春波楼筆記, in Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦 et al., eds., *Shiba Kōkan ŷenshū* 司馬江漢全集 (Tokyo: Yasaka Shobō, 1992–1994), vol. 2, p. 94. See also Calvin L. French, *Shiba Kōkan: Artist, Innovator and Pioneer in the Westernization of Japan* (New York: Weatherhill, 1974), pp. 142–143. This particular copy of Aesop's fables in the collection of the Kii domain has yet to be identified.

⁶² This was why Shiba styled himself 'Kō-Kan' 江漢, after the two main rivers of that domain. See *Shunparō bikki*, in *Shiba Kōkan ŷenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 2, pp. 50–51.

⁶³ For this and the following quotations, see *Shunparō bikki*, *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 90–91.

upon the notion of emblem minimally as early as 1798, when he wrote his *Oranda zokumwa* おらんだ俗話 (Anecdotes about Holland).⁶⁴ And like Ryōtaku, he did see a pivotal role for images that through analogy helped to convey a moral message. Nevertheless, Aesop's fables struck him immediately as 'emblematic,' or a form of *zinnebeeld*. That is to say, the emblematic was not exclusively visual. The combination of animal fables and their apparent connection with culturally coded images will have helped late-Edo Japanese to some extent to merge the concept of the European emblematic image and the moral analogies provided by Aesop's stories into the idea of *zinnebeeld* as analogy (Jp. *hiyu, tatoe*), with usually a visual element,⁶⁵ and to understand this as a dominant template in European discourse.

Around that same year 1811, when Kōkan was reminiscing about his encounter with Aesop's fables in the library of the daimyō of Kii, he painted a 132cm-long hanging scroll depicting a traveler, quoting the fable of the preaching bird from the early seventeenth-century *Isobo monogatari* (3.31) that he had also invoked in his *Shunparō's Jottings*.⁶⁶ Assuming that this scroll, like just about any other painting that Kōkan executed, was intended for sale, it goes to show that Kōkan was busy pushing his interests in Aesopian fables beyond a merely private fascination and was intent on extending the moral message-system Aesopian fables represented to help it reach a broader audience.

A long-time prolific publicist, by 1810 Kōkan had given up on commercial publication projects, deeming his Japanese readers too lethargic to bother with: "We Japanese do not like to investigate things."⁶⁷ He did not stop writing, however, but rather decided to no longer publish. Nonetheless, Aesop's fables eventually seduced him into reconsidering this position. While he seems to have been sharing his enthusiasm for Aesopian-style morality with his direct patrons in the later Bunka 文化 period (1804–1818), Kōkan embarked upon a book project that would become the active application in a Japanese context of his understanding of the dynamics of the European emblem, and the appeal of the Aesopian fable. At some point in the early 1810s, he began to collect, write, and edit an anthology of moral anecdotes culled from ancient Chinese sources as well as from the Aesopian tradition, and augmented these with fables of his own making, all of which he completed by the seventh month of 1814 (Bunka 11). This

⁶⁴ *Oranda zokumwa* おらんだ俗話, in *Shiba Kōkan zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 3, pp. 122–123.

⁶⁵ "Many [emblems] clarify [their message] through images." (*ōku wa gazu wo motte satosashimu* 多くハ画図を以て曉さしむ). In other words, not *all* 'emblems' do so. Ibid., p. 122.

⁶⁶ "*Isobo monogatari iwaku*" 伊曾保物語曰 (ca. 1811 [Bunka 8]). Private collection. See Naruse Fujio 成瀬不二雄, *Shiba Kōkan: shōgai to gogyō (sakubin ben)* 司馬江漢：生涯と画業 (作品篇) (Yasaka Shobō, 1995), p. 303, no. 258. The *kakemono* 掛物 quotes *Isobo monogatari* 3.31, "A bird preaching to man" (*tori, hito ni kyōke wo suru koto*).

⁶⁷ *Waga Nihon no hito, kyūri wo konomazu* わが日本の人、究理を好まず. *Shunparō hikki*, in *Shiba Kōkan zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 2, p. 38.

was a manuscript that he carefully prepared for a return to the commercial print market.

In an undated letter, probably written somewhere between late 1812 and early 1814, and presumably addressed to one of his favorite correspondents, Yamarō (var. Yamane) Shume (var. Kazuma) 山領主馬 (aka Toshimasa 利昌, 1756–1823), Kōkan discusses his publication plans for the manuscript of what would become his *Kunmō gakaishū* 訓蒙画解集 (A Primer Explained with Pictures). This work is an illustrated collection of moral tales, many of them involving animals, in which Kōkan provides a broad array of didactic messages. In his letter, Kōkan hints at one of the salient features of his manuscript: that all tales are given in two versions, one in Sinitic, and one in Japanese. Basically, of such doubling in *A Primer Explained with Pictures* there exist two varieties. In one type of doubling, as hinted in the letter, the Japanese (or ‘*kana*’) version recaps the *kanbun* text; occasionally, Kōkan will add an explicit moral in Japanese. In a variant of this, Kōkan’s Japanese text is rather a commentary on, or at times even a reflection inspired by, the Sinitic text. For example, in reaction to the Sinitic “In *Huainanzi* it says: In the forest one should not sell brushwood; on the lake one should not vend fish. These are places where there is enough already,” the Japanese text fantasizes about a more active Japanese policy for international trade: “For our Japanese rice there are no routes to other countries. If we loaded it onto big ships and sold it to China, India, and Holland, we could make a fortune. The things we would bring back from those countries would be sugar, drugs, and the rest, all things absent in our own country. Japanese rice is the best in the world.”⁶⁸

In the undated letter Kōkan makes suitable use of this trove of didacticism that he was putting together. Assuming the addressee was indeed Yamarō Shume, the letter was on its way to the Saga domain in Kyushu, while Kōkan had just returned to Edo from a trip to Kyoto. The distance between these two points on the map justified some praise of letter writing.

後漢書蔡邕ノ伝 相見無期唯是書疏可以当面 国程路を隔て逢フ事かたし。
只書状を見れば、対面したるころぞする。

此様な事を六十七集^メ、下に画をなし傍^ヲ国字^ヲ以解し、訓蒙画解集と
名、初^ニ自序^ヲ以^テし写^シ申候て上度候。後々^ハ京へ遣、板行^ニもなるべし。

In Cai Yong’s biography in *The Book of the Later Han* [it says]: *To see each other, there is no given moment. Only with a letter can one see face to face.* It is difficult to meet when long roads lie between. Only a letter gives the feeling that one is meeting face to face.⁶⁹

Of this type of thing [adage] I have collected sixty or seventy; beneath them I have drawn pictures, and to the side I have explained them in our country’s own

⁶⁸ *Kunmō gakaishū* 訓蒙画解集 12, in *Shiba Kōkan zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 2, pp. 182, 301.

⁶⁹ This is an abbreviated version of *Kunmō gakaishū* 41. Cai Yong (132–192) was a talented scholar and advisor to the emperor under the Later Han dynasty.

script [*kana*, that is, in Japanese]. I have named this *A Primer Explained with Pictures* (*Kunmō gakaishū*). At the beginning I have copied out my own preface. In the near future I will send it to the capital [Kyoto] and must have it printed.⁷⁰

Indeed, the existing manuscript of this didactic tale collection, with its preface dated 1814, is a clean copy ready to be sent off to a publisher.⁷¹ Why Kōkan in the end never published his manuscript we do not know, but Kōkan died in 1818, and *Kunmō gakaishū*, his last book manuscript readied for the printer's, would not be published during his lifetime. Possibly, when Kōkan finished his preface, he decided he was not yet done, pressed on, and created yet more fables once his preface was written. In the end, Kōkan would collect 117 fables in his *A Primer Explained with Pictures*. Many of them were culled and adapted from ancient Chinese sources, for example twenty-six among them from the sixth-century *Wenxuan* 文選 (Selections of Refined Literature), and another six from the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (second century BCE). In addition, Kōkan wrote quite a number of new fables himself. Five tales he took from Aesop's fables. Among them was the fable that three decades later would appeal so much to Tamenaga Shunsui as well (Figure 5):

[*Sinitic*] A wolf ate a man and got a bone stuck in his throat. He could no longer drink or eat. It so happened that there was a crane who crossed the wolf's path. The wolf called out to him and said, "There is a bone stuck in my throat. You, with your long beak, get it out for me!" The crane, cowed into obedience, proceeded to remove the bone. Upon which the wolf said, "I haven't had anything to eat for seven days. I'm starved. So, I guess I'll eat you."

[*Japanese*] A wolf had a bone stuck in his throat and could not eat for seven days. At that time, a crane came along. With your long beak get this bone out, he said. The crane was afraid and got the bone out. The wolf said, First I'll have to eat you. *This is what we call repaying kindness with contempt.*⁷²

Importantly, all Kōkan's moral tales come with an illustration. The reason is clear: this manuscript was to be a Japanese emblem book, and without images, the rhetorical force of the emblems would not be palpable. In his preface to *A Primer Explained with Pictures*, Kōkan frames his didactic ploy in the context of what he regards as the overwhelming scientific superiority of Europe. He returns to what is by then a worn trope of his, namely that people in Japan are stuck in an out-of-date and largely irrelevant understanding of the world and its

⁷⁰ Kanzaki Jun'ichi 神崎順一, "Shiba Kōkan *Kunmō gakaishū* wo meguru jihitsu shokan ni tsuite: Tenri toshokan shozō Nichi-Ō kōshō shiryō (5)" 司馬江漢『訓蒙画家集』をめぐる自筆書簡について：天理図書館所蔵日欧交渉資料 (五), *Biburia (Biblia)* ビブリア 112 (1999), pp. 2–46, esp. pp. 34, 40. Kanzaki transcribes the text of the letter. Shume was a samurai of the Nabeshima 鍋島 clan of the Saga domain, Kyushu, whom Kōkan seems to have befriended when both lived in Edo.

⁷¹ Kōkan's manuscript is in the possession of the National Diet Library (call no.: WA21-23).

⁷² *Kunmō gakaishū* 106 (*fu* 14), in *Shiba Kōkan zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 2, pp. 283, 327.

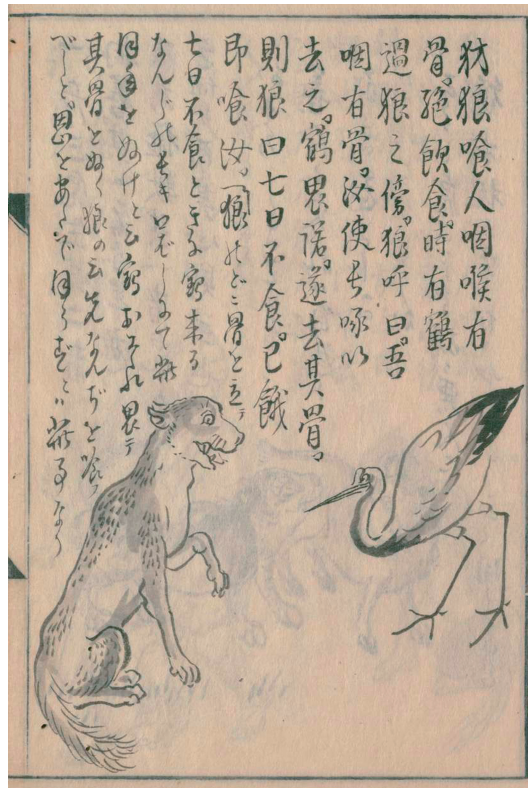


Figure 5. The wolf and the crane. Illustration by Shiba Kōkan 司馬江漢, in his *Kunmō gakaishū* 訓蒙画解集 (no. 106), MS dated Bunka 11/1814. (National Diet Library).

<https://doi.org/10.11501/2532348>

place in the universe, and that they are held back by their reluctance to engage with European learning. Then he comes to the point:

In the language of that country they talk about *zinnebeeld* (Jp. *shinnebēru*), which use analogy (*tatōe*) as a form of instruction; it is the same as the admonitions on virtue by wise men. For this reason, I now [have collected] here several tens of stories left to us by people from the past and I have unobtrusively added several stories at the end. Underneath I have made drawings and next to them I have explained them in Japanese (lit. “in *kana*”). As title I have chosen *A Primer, Explained with Pictures*.⁷³ Thinking that it might open the eyes of uninformed youth, I mention it here.⁷⁴

⁷³ Kōkan himself glosses 訓蒙 as “*kunmō*,” not “*kinmō*.”

⁷⁴ *Kunmō gakaishū*, “Preface,” in *Shiba Kōkan zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 2, p. 170.

For Kōkan, the Dutch language not merely provided access to the sciences; rather, it connected science to deeper insights. In that sense, Aesopian fables were part and parcel of a Western knowledge system.

Conclusion

Aesop's fables were not completely forgotten in Japan between the mid-seventeenth century and the dawn of the Meiji era. However, it was especially in relation to a more sustained early modern interest in Europe that, after the late eighteenth century, the story of Aesop and his fables took on a new life as a form of image-centered literature capable of hinting that there was more of value to Europe than the hard sciences.

From “Pointing Straight to the Human Mind” to “Pointing Round to the Human Mind”

YOSHIZAWA Katsuhiro

Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT

Introduction: Surpassing Language to “Point Straight to the Human Mind”

Today the Zen school is thought of as having been founded, in China, through the efforts of Bodhidharma. Later generations of Zen practitioners, however, going back far beyond the First Patriarch Bodhidharma, sought the sect’s deeper origins in the Buddha himself. According to a legend found in various texts,¹ at the end of his life the Buddha, giving up on teaching by means of words, presented his disciples instead with the sight of a single flower taken to hand. None of them could understand what this signified, but there was one, Mahākāśyapa, who alone understood and smiled subtly. This “subtle smile at the plucked flower” (*nenge-mishō* 拈華微笑) was taken to be the origin of Zen. Its essence was in “mind-to-mind transmission” (*ishin-denshin* 以心伝心)—transmission beyond the bounds of words—and in “non-elevation of writing” (*furyū-monji* 不立文字)—the refusal to invest any text with ultimate authority. The foundational teachings of Bodhidharma in turn were encapsulated in the Buddhist slogan “pointing straight to the human mind, one sees its nature and becomes a Buddha” (*jikishi ninshin, kenshō jobutsu* 直指人心, 見性成佛), meaning essentially that, through a direct demonstration of the human mind’s identity with the Buddha’s Mind, one comes to see one’s own buddha-nature, realizing thereby that one is, already, a buddha oneself.

Stories resembling the above can be found in several different sutras. For instance, in the *Ru bu’er famen ben* 入不二法門品 (“Grasping the Teaching of Non-Duality”) chapter of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sutra* (Ch. *Weimo-jing* 維摩經, Jp.

¹ Cf., for example, case 6 in *Wumenguan* 無門関. Regarding the origins of this legend, see Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, “Nenge-mishō no hanashi no seiritsu wo megutte” 拈華微笑の話の成立をめぐって, in *Sanron kyōgaku to bukkyō sho-shisō: Hirai Shun’ei-bakase koki kinen ronshū* 三論教学と仏教諸思想: 平井俊栄博士古稀記念論集 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2000), pp. 411-430.

Yuima-kyō) we find a story like the following. Vimalakīrti asked thirty-one bodhisattvas in what exactly the teaching of non-duality (Skt. *advayā*, Ch. *bu'er famen* 不二法門, Jp. *funi hōmon*) consisted. All of them, however, went on to explain what non-duality was in different ways, saying that the teaching of non-duality signified awakening and confusion, or subjectivity and objectivity, or the I and the You, and so on. Last of all the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī explained that: "It is, to my understanding, in all aspects of the Law, the principle of leaving behind all language and speech, all demonstration and interpretation, all manner of teaching dialogues. This is what it means to grasp the teaching of non-duality."² Thereupon he asked Vimalakīrti for his understanding of the teaching of non-duality. In response, however, Vimalakīrti was only silent, speaking not a word. To this Mañjuśrī said, with words of praise, "Very good! Very good! Indeed there is no writing or language for it. This, truly, is what it means to grasp the teaching of non-duality."³

Or again, we find stories like the following.⁴ On a certain occasion, Emperor Wu 武 of the Liang 梁 dynasty asked Fu Dashi 傅大士 (Jp. Fu-daishi; also Shanhui Dashi 善慧大士, Jp. Zen'e-daishi) to give a lecture on the *Diamond Sutra*. In response, Fu Dashi sat himself upon the high seat, and proceeded to shake its desk violently, after which, without saying anything, he again descended. Emperor Wu of Liang, being well-versed himself in Buddhist studies, had fully expected to receive a detailed explanation of the *Diamond Sutra* down to individual words and verses, yet Fu Dashi had simply descended silently, without expounding upon one single character. In the event Lord Zhi 志公, who was at the Emperor's side, said, "Does Your Majesty perhaps understand . . . ?" "Not at all," was Emperor Wu's reply. To this, Lord Zhi said, "[Fu] Dashi just completed a sermon on the *Diamond Sutra*."

Afterwards, there thus developed in Chinese Chan a practice of communicating the essence of "non-elevation of writing" through slogans like *wuyan wushuo* 無言無說 ("without language or speech") or *wushuo wushi* 無說無示 ("without speech or demonstration")—in other words, through the "action" of "each moment, each situation" (*yiji yijing* 一機一境, Jp. *ikkei ikekyō*).

This can be seen from answers given to the representative question: "What was the purpose of Bodhidharma coming from the West (i.e. from India to China)?"—this being equivalent to asking, "What is Chan?" In documents of Chan school history, there are over 200 examples of this question being posed, but the answers given by Chan monks of the Tang period are not all the same.

² In the original text: 文殊師利曰：如我意者，於一切法無言無說，無示無識，離諸問答，是為入不二法門。In *Taishō shinsū daijōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-1932), vol. 14, p. 551c.

³ In the original text: 善哉！善哉！乃至無有文字，語言，是真入不二法門。Ibid., vol. 14, p. 551c.

⁴ See, for example, case 67 in *Bijian lu* 碧巖錄, ibid., vol. 48, p. 197a. In the original text: 拳。梁武帝請傅大士講金剛經。大士便於座上。揮案一下。便下座。武帝愕然。誌公問。陛下還會麼。帝云。不會。誌公云。大士講經竟。

One monk gave nothing in reply, merely exhibiting in his hand a fly-whisk made to stand on end.⁵ Another plunged a hand into the breast of his robe, drawing out again a fist, which he opened in display.⁶

These are ways of responding by means of action, without using language. Even among answers recorded as given in words, however, we find things like: “the cypress tree in the garden”,⁷ “Plant an apple tree at the bottom of a well!”⁸ “Ask the round pillar out there!”⁹ “I’ll answer when the stone turtle speaks”,¹⁰ “The mountains are cold, the waters chill”,¹¹ “Every three years there is a leap year”,¹² “If there was any purpose in coming from the West, then cut my head off”,¹³ “blue mountains, green waters”,¹⁴ “Chang’an is in the East, Luoyang in the West”,¹⁵ and so on in the same vein.

Using Language to “Point Round to the Human Mind”

There are plentiful examples of Chan formation (*sekke* 接化) being conducted along such lines, either by abstaining from all use of language, or by using language in a deliberately odd way to convey the sense that understanding is not obtainable from the surface of words alone. At the same time, the fundamental Chan principle of “non-elevation of writing” has also regularly been given expression by making use of that very writing. An exemplary masterpiece on these lines

⁵ *Linji lu* 臨濟錄, *ibid.*, vol. 47, p. 496c. In the original text: 上堂, 僧問: “如何是佛法大意?” 師豎起拄子, 僧便喝, 師便打。

⁶ *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, vol. 11, *ibid.*, vol. 51, p. 284b. In the original text: “問, 如何是西來意。師以手入懷出拳展開與之” (香巖智閑禪師章)。

⁷ *Wumenguan*, *ibid.*, vol. 48, p. 297c. In the original text: 趙州因僧問。如何是祖師西來意。州云。庭前柏樹子。

⁸ *Jingde chuandeng lu*, vol. 11, *ibid.*, vol. 51, p. 285c. In the original text: 靈雲志勤禪師章, “問, 如何是西來意。師曰, 井底種林檎。”

⁹ *Jingde chuandeng lu*, vol. 14, *ibid.*, vol. 51, p. 384a. In the original text: “問。如何是祖師西來意。師曰。問取露柱看” (石頭希遷大師章)。

¹⁰ *Jingde chuandeng lu*, vol. 17, *ibid.*, vol. 51, p. 337c. In the original text: 問如何是祖師西來意。師曰。待石鳥龜解語即向汝道。

¹¹ *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元, vol. 14, in *Shinsan Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō* 新纂大日本統藏經, eds. Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照 et al. (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975-89), vol. 80, p. 287c. In the original text: 舒州四面山津禪師 僧問。如何是仏。師曰。王字不著点。曰。学人不会。師曰。点。問。如何是祖師西來意。師曰。山寒水冷。師有挂杖頌曰。四面一条杖。当機驗龍象。頭角稍低昂。電光臨背上。

¹² *Wudeng huiyuan*, vol. 15, *ibid.*, vol. 80, p. 318a. In the original text: 天睦山慧滿禪師章, “問, 如何是祖師西來意。師曰, 三年逢一閏。”

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 80, p. 319c. In the original text: 磁州桃園山曦朗禪師 僧問。如何是祖師西來意。師曰。西來若有意。斬下老僧頭。曰。為甚却如此。師曰。不見道。為法喪軀。

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 80, p. 323a. In the original text: 韶州南華寶慈濟禪師 僧問。如何是祖師西來意。師曰。青山綠水。曰。未來時還有意也無。師曰。高者高。低者低。

¹⁵ *Wudeng huiyuan*, vol. 16, *ibid.*, vol. 80, p. 331b. In the original text: 僧問。如何是祖師西來意。師曰。長安東。洛陽西。問。如何是仏。師曰。福州橄欖兩頭尖。問。仏未出世時如何。師曰。隈巖傍壑。曰。出世後如何。師曰。前山後山。

is the *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Jp. *Sugyōroku*; 961). Produced by the monk Yongming Yanshou 永明延寿 (Jp. Eimei Enju; 904–976), this work undertook to excerpt important passages from the records of Chan masters' sayings and the Buddhist sutras, and by then comparing side-by-side with one another the interpretations of the various schools, attempted to achieve thereby some final synthesis from all of them, under the single formulation "Chan is the Sect of the Buddha's Mind." Essentially the *Zongjing lu* was a masterwork of Chan philosophy, the overarching theme of its massive hundred-volume span being the one question "What is the Buddha's Mind?"¹⁶ A story found within this *Zongjing lu* explains the transmission of the Law from Bodhidharma to the Second Chan Patriarch Huike 慧可 (Jp. Eka) in the following way (vol. 43, beginning):

When Bodhidharma came from India, it was with the sole purpose of conveying the "One Mind" (*yixin* 一心, Jp. *isshin*). The Second Patriarch was told by Bodhidharma to "go find and then bring back the thing called Mind." Time and again he sought to find what this Mind might be, until he had the realization that Mind, ultimately, was not something possible to find by seeking. Instantly then the realization came to him that the one and only, the perfect and the flawless True Mind was fully omnipresent in the *dharmadhātu* "realm of the Law" (*fajie* 法界, Jp. *hokkai*). As a result, he received Bodhidharma's recognition, and thus it is that Chan—the teaching of the One Mind—has been transmitted even to the present day.¹⁷

In the Tang period, Chan dialogues such as these were recorded mainly in what were called *yulu* 語錄 (Jp. *goroku*, "records of sayings"), a genre of texts that preserved the words and deeds of individual Chan monks. Over time, several of the episodes in such works gradually took on an independent life of their own, being treated, for example, in religious sermons and the like as testimonials of achieving awakening. Eventually, these came to be known collectively as "cases" or *gong'an* 公案 (Jp. *kōan*)—in its origin a technical term from the field of law, signifying the record of a given legal question and its attendant judgment. By the Song period in China, Chan masters were using *gong'an* in the formation of disciples. This era saw the publication of the *Bijian lu* 碧巖錄 (Jp. *Hekiganroku*), which collected 100 representative cases from the larger *gong'an* corpus.¹⁸ Among the *gong'an* there collected are the two cases examined just above, the story of the "subtle smile at the plucked flower" and that of "Fu Dashi lecturing on the sutras." The *Bijian lu* has a three-layered structure. The first consists of the "core cases" (*benze* 本則, Jp. *honsoku*) themselves, those *gong'an* excerpted from the

¹⁶ Regarding the *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄, see Yanagi Mikiyasu 柳幹康, *Eimei Enju to Sugyōroku no kenkyū: isshin ni yoru Chugoku bukkyō no saihen* 永明延寿と『宗鏡錄』の研究：一心による中国仏教の再編 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2014).

¹⁷ In the original text: 夫初祖西来。唯伝一心之法。二祖求縁慮不安之心不得。即知唯一真心円成周遍。当下言思道断。達磨印可。In *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 48, p. 667a.

¹⁸ According to the preface by Fuzhao 普照, in 1128.

dialogues of older masters. On top of these was a layer of poetry, a treatment of each and every one of these hundred core cases in the Sinophone Buddhist verse-style known as *song* 頌 (Jp. *ju*), appended by the monk Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 (Jp. Secchō Jūken; 980–1052). This is the work *Xuedou songgu* 雪竇頌古 (Jp. *Secchō juko*).¹⁹ Together with their song-verses, these hundred cases were in turn used by the monk Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (Jp. Engo Kokugon; 1063–1135) as subjects for his preaching and lecturing throughout the land. The title *Biyan lu* refers to the amalgamated work that resulted from yet further addition of content from Yuanwu’s own preaching, which took three literary forms: summary introductions known as *chuishhi* 垂示 (Jp. *suiji*), short commentary annotations known as *zhuayu* 著語 (Jp. *jakugo*), and passages of general commentary known as *pingchang* 評唱 (Jp. *hyōshō*). The summary *chuishhi* preceded each of the separate cases, while *zhuayu* consisted of short commentary on individual words and passages within not only the core cases themselves but also their accompanying verses. Many of these annotations, moreover, employed phrases and vocabulary taken from the (Chinese) colloquial. Finally the *pingchang* supplied Yuanwu’s analyses, again both on cases and their verses.

Yuanwu’s act of recording his lectures in such a way, however, attracted criticism from another monk of the same sect, Fojian Huiqin 仏鑑慧勤 (Jp. Bukkan Egon; 1059–1117). This latter wrote a letter to Yuanwu, registering his criticism that such a manner of teaching was bound to lead students into error.²⁰ On another occasion Fojian Huiqin is to have said: “The meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West lay in the principle that by ‘pointing straight to the human mind, one sees its nature and becomes a Buddha.’ In spite of this, today a great number of teachers seem to operate on the principle that by ‘pointing round to the human mind, one speaks its nature and becomes a Buddha’ (Jp. *kyōkushi ninshin, sesshō jōbutsu* 曲指人心, 說性成佛).”²¹ This latter phrase was intended as a criticism of those who believed in using writing for the explanation of Chan. Inspired by Fojian Huiqin’s critique, Yuanwu’s own disciple Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (Jp. Daie Sōkō; 1089–1163) actually had the master woodblocks used to print the *Biyan lu* text destroyed by fire. According to a postface to the *Biyan lu* by Xugu Xiling 虛谷希陵 (Jp. Kyokoku Keryō; 1247–1322), it seems that at the time, there were those who tended to borrow phrases learned from the *Biyan lu* when it came to describing their own experiences, and Dahui had sent the book to the fire in order to extirpate this lamentable habit of, as he put it, “venerating language above all, trying to become masters of speech.”²²

¹⁹ In Tiansheng 天聖 4/1026, edited by disciple Yuanchen 遠塵, with a preface at the work’s beginning added by Tanyu 曇玉.

²⁰ See the letter from Huiqin to Yuanwu (仏鑑和尚与仏果勤和尚書) in *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓. Text in *Taishō shinshū daijōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 48, p. 1085c.

²¹ See *Dahui wuku* 大慧武庫, *ibid.*, vol. 47, p. 956c.

²² *Ibid.*, vol. 48, p. 224c.

Notwithstanding, the *Bijian lu*, its separately extant fragments strung together, came eventually to be republished (1300). A preface to this republished edition of *Bijian lu*, by one Sanjiao Laoren 三教老人 (Jp. Sankyō Rōjin), contains the following anecdote: “Somebody once asked, ‘Yuanwu made the *Bijian lu*, but his own disciple Dahui had it destroyed by fire. Which of them was right?’ To which it was replied, ‘Both of them were.’”²³ Chan was thus a movement fraught with something of a paradox, championing “pointing straight to the human mind” on the one hand even as it practiced “pointing round to the human mind” on the other. As it entered the Song period, Chan would even make use of previous ages’ literary works, for explaining information at least adjacent to the inexplicability at its core. This sort of Chan came at length to be brought to Japan. Zen, as such, was also a movement seeking to discover how to express, in language, what it was beyond language to express.

“Mind-Pointing” in Medieval Japanese Zen

In the *Seizan yawa* 西山夜話 of Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351), one finds the following exchange. A certain monk had asked, “If writing and language are an impediment for the student, why is it that from ancient times our founding teachers have made so much use of writing and language, in works like *daigo* 代語 (substitute words), *betsugo* 別語 (alternative words), *nenko* 拈古 (*kōan* commentary), and *juko* 頌古 (*ju*-style verses on *kōan*)?” In answer to this, Musō Soseki said, “Masters of the sect have made various explanations by means of words, and different masters have said different things. Yet all of these are nothing but the feint of “Calling Little Yu” (Xiao Yu 小玉, Jp. Shō Gyoku). If a truly gifted student is able to grasp that the core of the sect’s teachings lie beyond words, then the teachers’ writings and language will pose no impediment.”²⁴ Here reference is made to the series of events from Yuanwu’s composition of *Bijian lu*, to Fojian Huiqin’s criticism of that text, Dahui’s burning of it, and its eventual republication.

The feint of “Calling Little Yu” alludes to a passage from a love poem once presented for the consideration of Yuanwu by his teacher, Wuzu Fayan 五祖法演 (Jp. Goso Hōen): “Vain from the beginning were her frequent calls for “Little Yu”; she wanted only that her beau might thereby know her voice.”²⁵ The meaning is this: the noble daughter of deeply sheltered upbringing often calls out within her mansion for her maidservant “Little Yu! Oh Little Yu!”—only not, however, because she needs anything in particular from the servant, but rather

²³ Ibid., vol. 48, p. 139a.

²⁴ In the original text: 僧又問云。文字言句若於學者為害。何故古來尊宿各有代語別語拈古頌古而行于世耶。師曰。明眼宗師東語西話以接學者。所示雖異皆是呼小玉之手段也。若有吾家種草言外領旨。則宗師言句何害之有乎。 Ibid., vol. 80, p. 495b.

²⁵ In the original text: 頻呼小玉元無事只要檀郎認得聲。 Ibid., vol. 47, p. 768a.

because she wants the young man in her thoughts to notice her voice, as he walks past her mansion in the outer street. Writing and language are not, in other words, goals to be achieved in themselves, but serve rather as mere expedients for other goals’ indication.

Both *Bìyan lu* and *Zongjing lu* were brought to Japan, and both frequently featured as subjects of lecturing and preaching. Having been imported to Japan, this type of “literary Zen” (*wenzì chan* 文字禪, Jp. *monji-zen*)—a type that put interpretations of *kōan* into various literary styles, and produced Zen-school texts—underwent further independent development locally. There appeared an expansive body of Zen literary works, penned in a complex and recondite rhetorical style that not only drew upon Zen record texts, starting with the *Bìyan lu*, but also drew upon non-Buddhist Chinese classics, particularly on Chinese poetry, mixing into these moreover the kind of (Chinese) vernacular phrases and vocabulary that appeared so frequently in Zen records. This was the Five-Mountains literature,²⁶ a “literary Zen”, and a paradigmatic example of “pointing round to the human mind.”

Among the various achievements of these Muromachi-period Zen monks, there is one particularly worthy of notice (**Figure 1**). This is the appearance of the work *Hyōnen-zu* 瓢鮎図 (“Gourd and Catfish”; completed before 1415). Painted by the monk Josetsu 如雪 (dates unknown) under orders from the Muromachi shogun Ashikaga Yoshimochi 足利義持 (1386–1428), it represented the paint-form rendering of the new *kōan*: “Can a slippery gourd capture a wet catfish?” On the topic of this new *kōan*, thirty-one Five-Mountains Zen monks, led by Daigaku Shūsū 大岳周崇 (1345–1423), expressed their interpretations in the form of Chinese poems, which were then inscribed into the painting itself.²⁷ In the world of art history this *Hyōnen-zu* has long received attention as a pioneering work of Japanese ink-painting, but the thirty-one Chinese poems inscribed within the painting have gathered decidedly less interest. If, however, one examines each of these Chinese poems carefully alongside the painting, it becomes clear that what the work represents is a new form of Zen expression. The man depicted in the painting’s lower center, trying to capture the catfish, as well as the catfish itself, gliding at ease through the water, are both drawn almost as caricatures. Finally, in the painting’s background a traditional *sansui* 山水 (lit. “mountains-and-waters”) motif is depicted, though

²⁶ Literature composed by monks in Zen temples belonging to the Five-Mountains system. For more on the Five-Mountains system, see Martin Colcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 1996). For more on Five-Mountains literature, see Tamamura Takeji 玉村竹二, *Gozan bungaku* 五山文学 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1955); also Marian Ury, *Poems of the Five Mountains: An Introduction to the Literature of the Zen Monasteries* (Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, University of Michigan Center For Japanese Studies, 1992).

²⁷ For details, see Yoshizawa Katsuhiko 芳澤勝弘, “*Hyōnen-zu*” no nazō: *kokubō saidoku hyōtan namazu wo megutte* 「瓢鮎図」の謎: 国宝再読ひょうたんなまずをめぐって (Tokyo: Wedge, 2012).



Figure 1. *Hyōnen-zu* 瓢鮎図 (“Gourd and Catfish”). Painting by the monk Josetsu 如雪. Completed by 1415. Lower half: In a visualized *kōan* 公案, a man attempts to catch a catfish by means of a hollowed-out gourd. Upper half: Chinese poems treating the pictured *kōan* by thirty-one monks. (Myōshin-ji Temple, Taizō-in).

using a “water-and-sky in single color” (*suiten isshoku* 水天一色) palette such that no clear line divides the water from the sky above. The third poem in the series, by Unrin Myōchū 雲林妙冲 (dates unknown) runs as follows:

一瓢因甚 欲捺鮎魚 江湖水闊 道術有餘

Why now with a single gourd
Would you hope to catch the catfish?
Broad the waters of river and lake,
Yet no less the Way and its workings!

The third and fourth verses of the quatrain refer to a passage in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 that runs: 魚相忘於江湖 人相忘於道術 (“The fish forgets that it lives in rivers and lakes; man forgets that he lives in the Way and its workings”).²⁸ Accordingly the poem’s meaning is something like:

Why now would you disturb what sits at rest, and with a gourd try to catch the catfish? For just as the fish is surrounded unconscious by the water’s broad expanse, no less is man himself swimming deep in the limitless Way (*Dao* 道)!”

It is worth noting what this expresses: that the *sansui* scenery—the “river and lake” (*gōko* 江湖)—depicted here in the background is, in and of itself, none other than the “Mind” at Zen’s very core. Such a collaboration between image and language being used to express the truth of the Way (*Dō* 道, Ch. *Dao*) or of “Thusness” (*Nyō* 如, Ch. *Ru*, orig. from Skt. *Tathatā*) had probably never been known in China. This manner in which the man and catfish, cast thus as caricatures, are able to express the question “Can one grasp the Buddha’s Mind with the Mind’s own cognitive functions?” thus represents a new genre of “*kōan* in painting”—one invented by Muromachi-period Zen monks. In Chinese history, the most that might be found by this date consisted in what are called “Chan (awakening-)occasion paintings” (*Chan ji-hua* 禪機画, Jp. *Zen ki-ga*) that depicted, almost as illustrations, the story of a particular *gong’an*, or perhaps also in works like the “Ten Bulls” painting series (*Shiniu tu* 十牛圖, Jp. *Jūgyū-zu*). This “Ten Bulls” series depicted the ten steps to awakening with a separate picture and poem for each, throughout which the bull represented the “true self” while the cowherd represented the self seeking that true self.

Unfortunately, however, expressive experiments with “*kōan* in painting” like the “Gourd and Catfish” would not continue to be produced thereafter. One reason for this probably lies in the fact that painter-monks of the Zen sect grew now ever more specialized, with the various different painting skills no longer united in single artists.

“Mind-Pointing” in Early-modern Japanese Zen

With the advent of the Edo period, and the emergence of a society in which understanding of writing extended even to the common people, Japanese Zen underwent fundamental changes. It was in such a period that the figure of Hakuin Ekaku 白隱慧鶴 (1685–1768) came to the fore. During the Muromachi period, the constituency for interest in Zen had tended to consist of the Emperor, the nobility, or the shogun and other members of the warrior class—people, in short, of the upper classes who had received a high level of education. With the change in era, however, there were now new potential targets for spreading the message of Zen on a far wider scale.

²⁸ See *Sōji* 莊子, ed. Kanaya Osamu 金谷治 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), vol. 1, p. 205.



Figure 2. The Bodhisattva Kannon 観音, assuming here the form of a woman in ancient Chinese dress, sits before a writing desk with a standing screen behind her, painted and inscribed. Painting by Hakuin 白隠. (Private collection).

Figure 2a. Detail of inscription on screen painting in Figure 2 (upper background).

As the famous poem had it, “What kind of thing, what meaning does it have, this word called “Mind”? The sound of the wind in the pines, painted on paper with ink.”²⁹ Hakuin’s achievement lay in the innovative ways he used to communicate this “sound of the wind in the pines, painted on paper with ink,” and not by means of writing alone, but through its use in tandem with the *technē* of painting. His marriage of the pictorial with the verbal succeeded, it can be said, in bringing the expedient means of “pointing round” (*kyōkushū*) to new unreach heights.

One name by which Zen has been known is that of the Buddha’s Mind sect—i.e., the sect that preaches the Buddha’s Mind, the awakened Mind. The question “What is the Mind?” is also the consistent theme of Hakuin’s Zen paintings. And while indeed the fundamental position of Zen denies the possibility of fully capturing in expressions of any sort definitive truths like “The Mind is . . .,” it remains the case that Hakuin succeeds in sketching out, aided by words and pictures both, something like the Mind’s own pattern. As one such example, let us examine a painting by Hakuin of Kannon 観音 (**Figure 2**).

²⁹ 心とはいかなるものを言うならん墨絵に描きし松風の音.

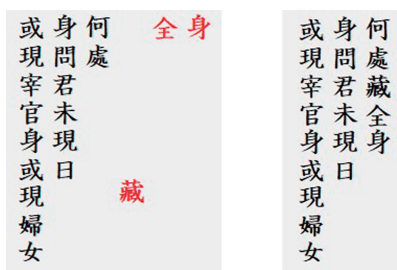


Figure 3a. (Left) Transcription of inscription visible on screen in background, Figure 2. Here the characters are arranged as they appear on the painting-within-a-painting, the final three being deliberately scattered. (Prepared by author).

Figure 3b. (Right) Transcription of inscription visible on screen in background, Figure 2. For comparison, the same transcription as in Figure 3a, without the scattering of final characters. (Prepared by author).

The woman in the painting’s center is a form assumed by the Bodhisattva Kannon. The imagery used has its roots in China, and the woman wears the robes of an ancient Chinese noblewoman. Seated in a chair, the Bodhisattva Kannon is facing a writing desk. Three volumes of sutra text sit atop the desk, while another is being held in Kannon’s hand. Behind Kannon stands a paneled screen, which has been painted with a *sansui* motif, and which is also inscribed, in thin ink, with a Chinese poem.

The twenty characters of the poem’s full length have been arranged across the painted screen in the manner indicated by **Figure 3a**. The meaning of the poem itself is something like the following: “Sometimes the Bodhisattva Kannon appears in the form of a court minister. At others he appears in the form of a woman. A question for you, then: when he appears in no form at all, where exactly does it hide, Kannon’s full body?” From inside his own picture, Hakuin is posing those of us viewing it from the outside this question: *Where, exactly, is Kannon in all his fullness hiding?*

The inscribed poem draws upon the following passage from the *Lotus Sutra*:

應以宰官身得度者 即現宰官身而為說法
 應以婦女身得度者 即現婦女身而為說法³⁰

Should one there be whom a court minister’s guise could help awaken,
 For him [Kannon] will become even court minister to preach the Law;
 Should one there be whom a woman’s own guise could help awaken,
 For him [Kannon] will become even a woman to preach the Law.

³⁰ For text see: *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 9, p. 57b.

But what about the way the poem is inscribed? A careful comparison of the inscription as painted (**Figure 2a**) with the poem's transcription in Figure 3a will show that those characters marked red in the latter do not follow the rest of the poem, but have instead been scattered and placed at a distance. What prompted Hakuin to write them this way? In particular, the two characters meaning "full body" (*zenshin* 全身) have been placed considerably apart from the rest. If written the usual way, the poem would have appeared as in **Figure 3b**, with the character "hide" 藏 and the other two after it following in the same line, but here instead all three characters—藏 ("hide") and 全身 ("full body")—have been scattered and placed in extremely unnatural locations. Yet it is not by chance that they ended up written like this. Rather, by inscribing them in such a deliberately scattered manner, Hakuin is trying to direct our attention to the meaning of the *sansui* scenery itself. He is trying, in other words, to show us: Look carefully at the screen's *sansui* motif—it is there, in the midst of this "scenery true to life," precisely there that in all its fullness the full body of the Bodhisattva Kannon appears.

What, after all, are *sansui* paintings? A great number of *sansui* motifs have been drawn in Zen-derived art over the years, yet what exactly do they signify? For *sansui* is no mere representation of scenery—it indicates the place where the hermit goes to live. Moreover, though the motif does, quite literally, refer to the mountains and waters it encompasses, this realm it refers to can also be designated by the word *gōko* 江湖 ("rivers and lakes"). The origin of this usage goes back ultimately to the *Zhuangzi*, where the term appears in this passage:

The fish forgets that it lives in rivers and lakes;
Man forgets that he lives in the Way and its workings

The fish lives in the waters of rivers and lakes, yet he still forgets that water's very existence. In the same spirit, man himself is fully sunk in the world of the Way (the Truth) without ever being conscious of it. The rivers and lakes, in other words, are a metaphor for this Truth, which always surrounds us though we cannot see it.

About *sansui* paintings, the leading Japanese literary critic of the 20th century, Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902–1983) had the following to say:

The key thing to understand is this: nothing much would ever have happened with [the ink painters] if they had not believed, firmly, that *sansui* is not something existing trivially in the world outside, but resides rather within the heart of man. For beyond their skills with the brush, they also had the benefits of that sight endowed by training in Zen. And there exists, completely unnamable yet present unchangeably, a certain something utterly surrounding us. So intimately does it surround that it brushes our skin, pulses with our lifeblood, and decidedly it is not a mere question of so-and-so mountain glimpsed far off, or so-and-so river watched through the distance.

What *sansui* paintings do is make visible the existence of these greater things surrounding us. The *sansui* scene Hakuin has drawn here points likewise to such



Figure 4. *Jūō-zu* 十王図 (“Ten Kings”). From a painting series depicting the Ten Judges of the Underworld. Here pictured is Emma 閻魔, seated before a writing desk, with a painted screen behind him—a visual composition mirrored by Hakuin’s painting in Figure 2. (Eigen-ji Temple)

“greater things.” For it is none other than Kannon himself that appears in the background *sansui*, he whose ultimate form is beyond all shape.

There is also another feature that makes this painting unique. Kannon here is shown sitting busily at a writing desk, yet no other portrayals of Kannon in such an attitude are known, making it original to Hakuin himself. In summary, the two distinguishing characteristics of this painting are that Kannon (in female form) is facing a writing desk, and that behind her stands a screen, bearing a painting in the *sansui* style.

There does, however, exist a work with precisely the same visual composition, in the “Ten Kings” (*Jūō-zu* 十王図) series of paintings (**Figure 4**). Being judges for the underworld, all ten of these kings, starting with Emma 閻魔 himself, are portrayed as sitting at their writing desks. On the writing desk in front of each lie documents for use in trials, and behind each of them stands a screen, which always displays a *sansui* painting. Yet what, indeed, is the significance of Hakuin’s

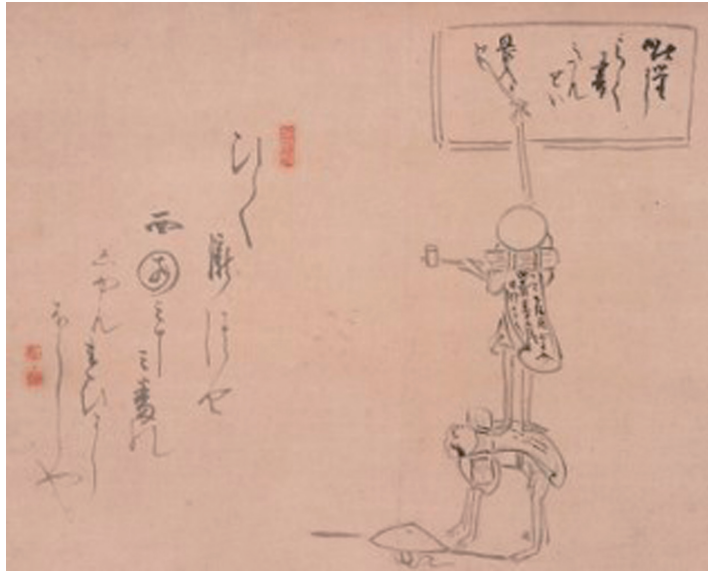


Figure 5. *Junrei rakugaki zu* 巡礼落書図 (“Pilgrim’s Graffiti”). Painting by Hakuin. Right: Two pilgrims cooperate to leave graffiti on a temple frame. Left: An inscription whose beginning *hibiku taki-tsu-se* ひびく瀧つせ associates the scene with Seiganto-ji Temple 青岸渡寺 at Mt. Nachi 那智, first stop on a famous pilgrimage route threading thirty-three shrines devoted to Kannon. (Private collection).

painting of Kannon having used the same visual composition as the “Ten Kings” paintings? What it expresses, even in the Kannon painting here, is that both Kannon and Emma are emanations equally of the universal One Mind.

There is another painting by Hakuin entitled “Pilgrim’s Graffiti” (*Junrei rakugaki zu* 巡礼落書図), wherein he uses quite a different way of expressing the questions: *Where is Kannon? And where is Kannon’s essence?* (Figure 5).

We see in the painting that there are two pilgrims. With one man crouched on all fours, the other man stands on his back, trying to write something or other on a hanging temple frame. The scene is that of a pair of pilgrims traveling together, and here indeed working together, to leave their graffiti at some temple along their way. The words already written out read: 此堂にらく書きんぜい畏入り候— “In this Hall graffiti is forbidden, and so with great humility it is . . .” (i.e. that I offer up my words).

We see that the inscription on Hakuin’s painting contains the phrase *hibiku taki-tsu-se* ひびく瀧つせ (“the waterfall resounding”). While not immediately apparent to the modern viewer, this quotes the final verse of the poem associated³¹

³¹ In full: 補陀洛や岸うつ波は三熊野の那智のお山にひびく瀧つせ.

with Seiganto-ji Temple 青岸渡寺 at Mt. Nachi 那智, the first stop on the famous West-Country circuit of thirty-three Kannon shrines. Separately the Nachi Great Shrine 那智大社, one of Kumano’s 熊野 three principal shrine mountains, had a long and ancient history as a holy place in Kumano devotional. The godhead worshipped at the Nachi Great Shrine was none other than the Nachi Waterfall itself, but due to Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, a temple (Seiganto-ji) was also built on the spot, whose enshrined image was that of the Bodhisattva Kanze’on 観世音 (Kannon). Seen from a Buddhist perspective, the godhead of the Nachi Waterfall was simply a manifestation of the Bodhisattva Kannon in any case.

Hibiku taki-tsu-se—to people in the past, for whom pilgrimages to holy places associated with Kannon were a popular practice, hearing the short phrase alone would have sufficed to recognize it as a line from the poem for Mt. Nachi’s Seiganto-ji, first stop on the famous pilgrimage route that wound its way through thirty-three locations held holy to Kannon. The location of the two pilgrims’ graffiti is therefore Seiganto-ji Temple.

At first glance, this picture reminds one of that famous image by the surrealist painter René Magritte (1898–1967), wherein under a picture of a pipe it is written: “This is not a pipe.”³² Likewise, a graffiti that reads “In this Hall graffiti is forbidden” bears some resemblance to the paradox of self-reference associated in the West with the phrase “A man from Crete said ‘All Cretans are liars.’” The pilgrims writing graffiti to the effect of “graffiti forbidden here” thus find themselves in “the world wherein self-reference becomes self-denial.” In terms of the *Hyōnen-zu* painting, too, the actions of the pilgrims correspond to those of the man trying to catch the catfish in his gourd.

The paradoxicality into which they have fallen, however, is obvious only because we ourselves view this scene from outside of the picture. Escaping the two-dimensional flatness of the painting, we view it from a world of three dimensions—we see it, namely, from a higher dimensional level. And if we are able, beyond mere appreciation, to understand also the meaning of the inscriptional *hibiku taki-tsu-se*? To understand the meaning, in other words, of the associated temple poem it alludes to?—*The sound of the waves as they break on the shore of the island of Mt. Fudaraku, that holy place in the South Sea where Kannon the Bodhisattva appears—now it echoes through the valleys and mountains of Kumano, in Mt. Nachi’s waterfall resounding. For this, without doubt, is the true body of the Bodhisattva Kannon!*—If we can understand this, then we notice: as regards this painting, we stand in the same dimension as the Bodhisattva Kannon himself, looking down at the picture’s two pilgrims with his same merciful eyes. This, too, would be a new kind of “pointing round to the human mind” that had developed in Japan.

³² For original image, see: <https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/magritte-and-contemporary-art-treachery-images>

While we as humans live as a point of fact within a world of only three dimensions, the world of the Bodhisattva Kannon sits in a higher dimension above this one. Trapped as we are in a three-dimensional world, for us the world of that dimension beyond is impossible to visualize. However, through the ingenuity here of Hakuin's Zen painting technique, as displayed in this picture, we are made aware of a certain breach leading up to that further-dimensional world. If the plane, therefore, within which the two pilgrims find themselves is in fact a world of virtual three-dimensionality, then we who view the picture from outside must find ourselves somewhere higher, somewhere, so to speak, in a virtual fourth-dimensional world.

Zen, precisely because of its “non-elevation of writing”—precisely because, in other words, it refused to invest any text with ultimate authority—was not a school that could afford to remain silent. The matter was not one for simple resolution by some decisive “single muteness” (*ichimoku* 一黙). There was no choice but to explain, again, and yet again.

The *kōan* in Japanese Society at the Beginning of the Early Modern Period: *Kana hōgo* and *kanna-zen*

Didier DAVIN

Introduction

The teaching of the Japanese Rinzai school is, in its principles, relatively simple: the practitioner focuses on a *kōan* 公案, grasps its real meaning—that is, the one beyond the trivial meaning of the words—and then receives another *kōan* on which he focuses in turn, this process being repeated until there is attainment of complete awakening. The fundamental difference between the Japanese Rinzai school and the other Chan or Sōn branches, in China and Korea, is that in Japan a series of *kōan* is seen as necessary to reach awakening, while in China and Korea going through one *gong'an* is considered the equivalent of awakening itself. Leaving aside this difference—despite its importance—such use of *kōan* by the Japanese Rinzai school is based on a practice originating in the Song dynasty, that of *kanhua-chan* 看話禪 (Jp. *kanna-zen*). From its introduction to Japan at the beginning of the 13th century and up to the present era, this *kanna-zen*—though in fact only one mode of *kōan* Zen and not (as often imagined) its totality—has been the Rinzai school's very core, as indeed it is for the vast majority of all Chan or Sōn practice in the world today.¹

During the Edo period, from its very beginning, the teaching of Zen was spread to Japanese society at large, notably through texts written in vernacular Japanese that explained the principles of the Zen school easily and comprehensibly. Yet herein lies what can be seen as a paradox: how is it that such a school, whose stated teachings preach above all the need to go beyond words' mere meaning, can produce texts like *kana hōgo* 仮名法語, specifically designed to be easily understood? Certainly one of the most common answers to this question would be that there are different levels to the presentation the school makes of itself: a profounder one, leading to awakening, suitable for monks or lay practitioners, and a more superficial one—the one seen in *kana hōgo*—that explains only the teaching's main principles. In a sense, this answer would be correct, but

¹ From this point of view, the modern Japanese Sōtō school, which rejects *kanna-zen*, constitutes an exception.

it only sidesteps the problem. With the practice of *kanna-zen* being at the very core of Rinzai school teaching, even in a superficial explanation of the school's main principles, the subject seems a difficult one to avoid. In this paper, we will consider several issues raised by this question and examine how this problem appears in *kana hōgo* at the beginning of the Edo period.

1. The Origins and Diversity of *kana hōgo*

From its introduction at the end of the 13th century, up until the end of the medieval period, around the end of the 16th century, contacts between the Japanese Zen school and Japan's laypeople were rare and took place almost exclusively among the higher classes of society. Moreover, during this period, rather than the school's teaching of a new form of Buddhism, more often what was valued was the newest knowledge in literature, philosophy, science, etc., that its monks brought back from the continent. Beyond such renewed erudition in classical Chinese literature, particularly in poetry, some monks were used as diplomats, accountants, administrators, and so on. In other words, during the medieval period, to be useful—and therefore patronized—it was almost sufficient for the monks, and for the school as a whole, to be able to compose Chinese poetry and explain recent literary texts or new intellectual currents. It would be a mild exaggeration, yet not so far from the truth, to say that, from the point of view of lay society, it was on the basis of its cultural contributions, rather than its religious ones, that the Zen school was integrated into the larger cultural and religious landscape.

However, this does not mean that the teachings of the Zen school were completely unknown to laypeople, and several examples show how monks explained the school's doctrine in a comprehensible way. One of the most famous texts produced for this purpose is undoubtedly the *Record of Dialogues in a Dream* (*Muchū mondōshū* 夢中問答集), which records the questions of Ashikaga Tadayoshi 足利直義 (1306–1352) and the answers of Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351).² Musō explains the teaching of Zen as well as Buddhism in general from a Zen monk's perspective. In addition to being what can be considered one of the masterpieces of Japanese Zen literature, the *Muchū mondōshū* has two particularities that should be highlighted. The first is that the text is in Japanese, which was far from the norm at the time, particularly in the Sinocentric milieu of Five Mountains culture. The second is that it was published, and this during the lifetime of its author. This second point is very uncommon, with only one other known example, but the pattern of a Zen monk explaining the teaching of his school for a layperson, and doing this through a text in vernacular Japanese (often in the form

² For an English translation of this text, see Thomas Yuho Kirchner, *Dialogues in a Dream: The Life and Zen Teaching of Musō Soseki* (Kyoto: Tenryū-ji Institute for Philosophy and Religion, 2010).

of a letter), while not frequent, can be seen several times over the course of the medieval period. Needless to say, the recipients of such teachings were all, at least without any known exceptions, from the higher classes of society.

For the most part, the texts thus produced are very close to what is called, in the Chinese Chan school, “instructions on the Law” (*fayū* 法語): that is to say a text, generally short, in which a master summarizes his teachings or a part thereof. For example, among the records of the sayings of the famous Song-period Chan master Yuanwu Keqin 円悟克勤 (1063–1135), there exists a large section, divided in three parts, devoted to all the *fayū* written by the master on various occasions. One of these, found in *Records of Yuanwu's Sayings* (*Yuanwu fōguo chanshi yulu* 円悟仏果禪師語録) with the title “To the librarian [Shao]long” (示隆知藏), is addressed to his disciple and successor Huqiu Shaolong 虎丘紹隆 (1077–1136).³ In Japan, this *fayū* is one of the most renowned extant calligraphic texts produced by the Chan or Zen school, which are often used in the tea ceremony, and known as *bokuseki* 墨跡. The *fayū* addressed to Huqiu Shaolong with calligraphy by Yuanwu is now in Japan, and has a long history. It is said to have been discovered floating in a paulownia-wood canister and is for that reason called “flowing Yuanwu” (*nagare Engo* 流れ円悟). Because such “instructions on the Law” were made to be given to a disciple, either lay or monastic, it is not surprising that they constitute a large part of extant calligraphic works by Chan monks.

If the *Muchū mondōshū* can be considered separately, the texts produced by Japanese Zen monks for laypeople are very close, in their purpose as well as in their form, to the “instructions on the Law” of their Chinese counterparts, and were thus quite naturally also called *fayū*, which became *hōgo* in Japanese pronunciation. As we will see, most of these *hōgo* were published after the medieval period, making it imprudent to speak about what they were like in their original versions, but there exists an exception that allows us to affirm that the genre was already present earlier. The *Gettan kana hōgo* 月菴仮名法語 was a compilation of “instructions on the Law” by Gettan Sōkō 月菴宗光 (1326–1389; also pronounced Getsuan), addressed to twenty-four people, men and women, secular and religious. Such a structure is not in itself so rare; what makes this text special is the fact that it was published—in 1402 (Ōei 応永 9). The title itself used already a formulation that will be repeated frequently—“*kana hōgo*”—and thus the expression can be dated to at least this time. The fact that these “instructions on the Law” are in *kana*, or to put it more simply, in Japanese, is obviously a Japanese specificity, but in its principle one can call it faithful to its Chinese models. Chinese *fayū* were designed to explain things as clearly as possible, and to that end they used a language understandable to their recipients. When a Japanese monk wanted to explain the Law to a Japanese speaker, he did it—as was only natural—in Japanese.

³ *Taishō shinshū daijōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932), vol. 47, p. 776c.

Other instructions texts addressed to religious disciples might be written in classical Chinese, but the Japanese language was a very understandable choice for laypeople.

Kana hōgo constitute thus a corpus of texts whose production began around the 14th century, and continued until the end of the Edo period. Many of them explain Zen teachings, but not all of them, and before examining the question of the *kanna-zen* found in *kana hōgo*, a presentation and delineation of the corpus we are considering is necessary.

Different Types of *kana hōgo*

In modern Japanese, the term *kana hōgo* can refer to a wide spectrum of Buddhist texts, from various schools, written in vernacular Japanese, and the Zen school produced only a part of this corpus. Moreover, the definition of what can be called a Buddhist text is far from being clear, and an examination of the characteristics of all the various texts today considered to be *kana hōgo* would easily be enough for a whole article on its own. Depending on what is meant by *kana* (a text fully written in Japanese from the beginning? a Japanese reading—*yomi-kudashi* 読み下し—of a text written in classical Chinese? etc.), and of course depending on what is meant by *hōgo* (the Japanese reading of *fayū*? any text concerning Buddhist teaching? a sermon addressed specifically to laypeople? etc.), the number of texts potentially considered *kana hōgo* will be quite different. The oldest *kana hōgo* is said to be the *Ichimai kishōmon* 一枚起請文 by Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212) during the Kamakura period, but many other texts considered *kana hōgo* were also produced during the same period.⁴ One collection of Japanese classical literature, the *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* edited by Iwanami, includes a volume titled “Collection of *kana hōgo*.”⁵ Herein are compiled texts from various schools such as Tendai, Jōdo, Shingon, Kego, etc., with the Rinzai school being only one among others.

Furthermore, the term *kana hōgo* sometimes designated texts that used literary style—mostly narrative and poetry—to present Buddhist teachings. These are, to give only examples related to Zen teachings, texts such as the *Boroboro no sōshi* ぼろぼろの草子,⁶ the *Nezumi no sōshi* 鼠のさうし, the *Ikkyū gaikotsu* 一休骸骨,⁷

⁴ See Sanae Kensei 早苗憲生, “Hōsa bunko-bon *Shōichi kana hōgo* no kenkyū (1): honmon hen” 蓬左文庫本『聖一仮名法語』の研究 (一) 本文篇, *Zenbunka kenkyūjo kiryō* 禅文化研究所紀要 6 (1974), pp. 265–294.

⁵ *Kana hōgo-shū* 仮名法語集, vol. 83 of *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964).

⁶ See Koida Tomoko 恋田知子, “*Boroboro no sōshi kō*” 『ぼろぼろの草子』考, *Chūsei bungaku* 中世文学 49 (2004), pp. 99–109.

⁷ Despite the mention of a specific Zen monk, Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純, this text is a literary *kana hōgo*. All specialists agree that it is not a text by Ikkyū. See Koida Tomoko, “*Gaikotsu no monogatari-zōshi: Genchū sōda-ga saikō*” 骸骨の物語草子: 『幻中草打画』再考, in *Zen kara mita Nihon chūsei no bunka to shakai* 禅からみた日本中世の文化と社会, ed. Amano Fumio 天野文雄 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2016), pp. 98–114.

etc.⁸ Thus, the term *kana hōgo* can refer to many different kinds of texts, and for this reason, rather than trying to propose here a precise definition, we will limit ourselves to indicating the scope of our inquiry, as well as the reasons for this limitation.

In the first, and perhaps most important specification, we will deal only with *kana hōgo* from the two Zen schools, and of these two, mainly from the Rinzai school. Among this group, moreover, we will not consider literary *kana hōgo*, concentrating our inquiry instead solely on texts presenting the teachings of specific—and explicitly named—Zen monks, a group of texts that for the sake of convenience we will call accordingly “Zen-monk *kana hōgo*.”

These “Zen-monk *kana hōgo*” can be divided into three large groups, according to the eras of the monks whose teachings they are said to represent. As we will see below, the mention by name of a monk does not necessarily mean that the given text is reliably attributable to him (i.e. directly written by him or a transcription from his oral teachings, sermons, or dialogues), and there are several cases of texts being, without a doubt, impossible to associate with the monk whose teachings they supposedly present. This question set aside, the corpus of *kana hōgo* can be divided into: (1) those texts produced (i.e. written and established as texts that circulated in print or manuscript) during the medieval period; (2) those texts attributable to medieval-period monks but compiled later (by, for example, editing letters that had not circulated as texts previously); and (3) those texts actually produced during the Edo period. Below we will consider concrete examples in each category. We will limit ourselves to texts that were published, leaving out of our scope those texts that circulated only as manuscripts.

(a) Medieval-period *kana hōgo*

Kana hōgo are often associated with the Edo period, and it is in fact mainly during this period that most of them were produced and published, though a few are older. The most famous is certainly the *Muchū mondōshū*, by Musō Soseki, published during the lifetime of the monk in 1342. The question of whether or not this text can be called a *kana hōgo* is worth discussion, but as it is a transcription of a dialogue between a Zen monk explaining to a layperson (Ashikaga Tadayoshi, as we saw above) the principles of Buddhism and Zen in vernacular Japanese, we will consider it to be such. Another example is the *Gettan kana hōgo* that recorded the teaching of Gettan Sōkō, and which was published as a so-called *gozan-ban* 五山版 (“Five-Mountains Edition”) in 1402.

(b) Medieval-period *kana hōgo* Published Post-Medievally

Looking at the beginning of the Edo period, the most numerous type of

⁸ See Koida Tomoko, “Kana hōgo no kyōju to bungei” 仮名法語の享受と文芸, in *Chūsei no zuibutsu: seiritsu, tenkai to buntai* 中世の随筆: 成立・展開と文体, ed. Araki Hiroshi 荒木浩, vol. 10 of *Chūsei bungaku to rinsetsu shogaku* 中世文学と隣接諸学 (Tokyo: Chikurinsha, 2004), pp. 435–455.

Zen-monk *kana hōgo* are, by far, those texts compiling materials from the medieval period (often from letters). Their dating and the details of their production are difficult to determine,⁹ and above all, the reliability of their attributions needs to be carefully examined. Several *kana hōgo* are, indeed, clearly not documents of the teaching of the monk they pretend to be from. For example, all the *kana hōgo* attributed to Ikkyū, without a single exception, starting with the *Ikkyū kana hōgo* 一休仮名法語, are acknowledged by specialists to be pseudepigraphical. This does not mean that they should be rejected—on the contrary, they remain important texts, as much for their contents as for the significant influence they had. Nonetheless, they should be considered in a context apart from Ikkyū himself, from his thought, or even from his era.¹⁰

(c) *Kana hōgo* by Edo-period Monks

Lastly, there are the *kana hōgo* produced during the Edo period, in the same era as the given monk himself, or soon after his passing. In these cases, naturally, the content is more likely to reflect the teaching of the monk accurately, though also to echo various contemporary preoccupations. The clearest example of this is certainly the *Ha-kirishitan* 破吉利支丹 by Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579–1655), an attack against Christians from the standpoint of Zen. This is, of course, a very particular example, but looking closely at other *kana hōgo*, one can see that their teachings, and the ways they are presented, are also largely reflective of their age, and in this way different on several points from what can be seen in medieval-period *kana hōgo*.

2. The Place of *Kanna-zen* in Zen-monk *kana hōgo*

As can be seen, the chronological origins of a given *kana hōgo* are not easy to grasp, and a text attributed to a medieval-period monk may in fact have been written during the Edo period. Even if its material is ultimately authentic, the possibility that such a text has been somehow modified, or recompiled in a way that changes substantially the purpose of the composition's original context, cannot be excluded. For these reasons, especially when studying the beginning of the Edo period, the *kana hōgo* corpus must be treated with caution, and the different contexts of production need to be examined with care in order to

⁹ For example, the *Daiō kokushi hōgo* 大応国師法語 was first published during the Edo period, but a manuscript of the text discovered in the Reiu-in 霊雲院 of Tōfuku-ji Temple 東福寺 is thought to have been produced at the end of the medieval period. See Sanae Kensei, “Zenshū kana hōgo-shū no kenkyū (shiryō hen): Reiu-in-bon *Daiō kokushi hōgo* kaidai, honkoku” 禅宗仮名法語集の研究 (資料編): 霊雲院本『大応国師法語』解題・翻刻, *Zenbunka kenkyūjo kiryō* 禅文化研究所紀要 13 (1980), pp. 173–200.

¹⁰ For a study of the several *kana hōgo* attributed to Ikkyū, see Iizuka Hironobu 飯塚大展, “Ikkyū ni giserareru kana hōgo ni tsuite” (1) 一休に擬せられる仮名法語について (一), *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō bungaku kenkyū* 駒澤大学仏教文学研究 1 (1998), pp. 185–212.

understand the characteristics of each individual text. Yet, for the common reader of the early modern period, all of these texts were seen as authentic teachings by Zen monks, and it was mainly through them that the image of Zen teaching would spread throughout Japanese society. In other words, even if the individual examination of each *kana hōgo* text constitutes a necessary task, consideration strictly of the teachings they contain, regardless of other characteristics—authenticity, period of production, etc.—remains, from a certain perspective, a valid approach. Very roughly speaking, such an approach allows us to take the viewpoint of a reader at the time, and thereby to gain a glimpse of how the teaching of Zen was perceived during the Edo period.

The expression *kanna-zen* 看話禪 (Ch. *kanhua-chan*) describes a method that consists of concentrating on (lit. “looking at”, *kan* 看) an offered *wato* 話頭 (Ch. *huatou*)—the latter term being synonymous with *kōan* (Ch. *gong'an*).¹¹ This approach was finalized by Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) in the Song period and became the basis of almost all forms of Chan in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. While this is somewhat simplifying things, one can say that, from the end of the 12th century, *kanhua-chan* was no less than the very core of Chan teaching everywhere the school had spread. For this reason, looking at the way *kanna-zen* is explained in Japanese *kana hōgo* is far from being the examination of a minor point of detail: rather it is a way to see how accessible the fundamental basis of Zen teaching was, during this very period when the Zen school, like most Buddhist schools in Japan, began being expounded to social classes previously almost ignored. In a word, we are looking at the core teaching of Zen in the core Buddhist medium of the time.

A Few Examples

Among other important evolutions that radically changed the face of Japanese society, the spectacular progress of printing technology at the beginning of the 17th century played a fundamental role in the tendency, within the world of Japanese Buddhism, to spread the teachings of one's school to a much wider audience. Many books introduced—in various ways and at various levels—the doctrines of the several sects, ranging from sūtra commentaries to beginners' texts, and including, naturally, Zen-monk *kana hōgo*. A complete examination of the place of *kanna-zen* in all *kana hōgo* would exceed the scope of this article, but we will look at a few representative texts.

¹¹ In the English-speaking academic world, *huatou* is generally understood to mean something like “head of speech,” being most often translated by expressions such as “key phrase,” “critical phrase,” or “key word.” To resolve the question would need a more thorough examination, but here we follow the position of most Japanese specialists, considering the term to be fully synonymous with *gong'an*. The character 頭 should be understood not as “head of” but rather as a particle expressing “the whole,” as in the word *mantou* 饅頭, which is of course not the head of a bun, but rather the bun in its totality.

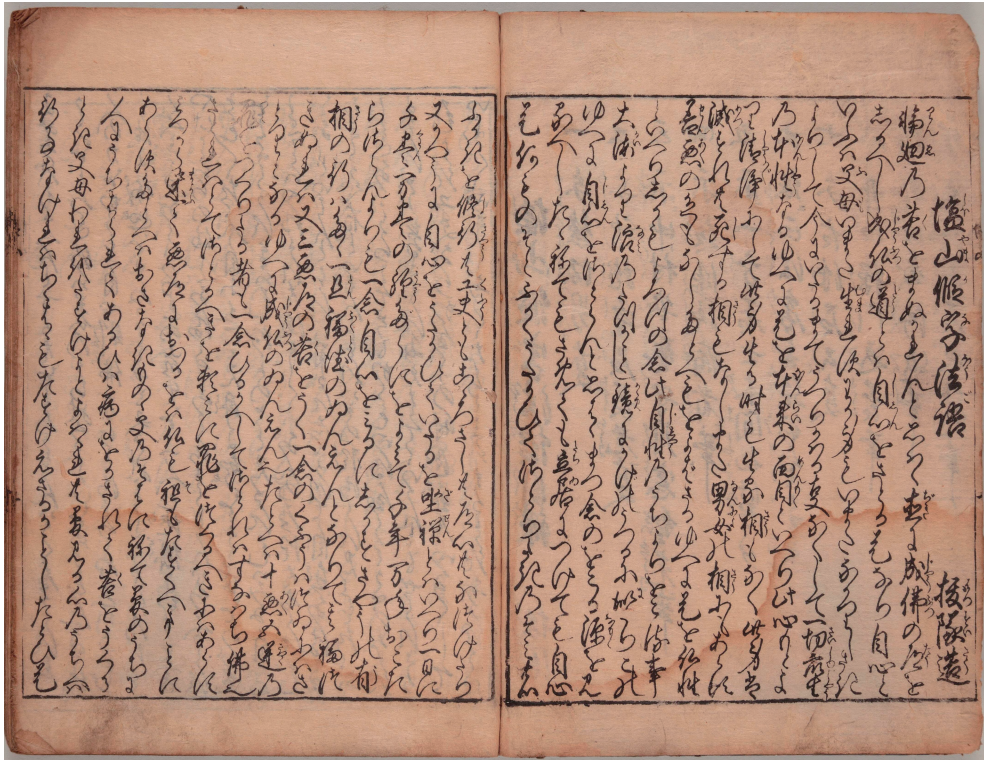


Figure 1. Opening of the *Bassui kana bōgo* 抜隊仮名法語 (National Institute of Japanese Literature). <https://doi.org/10.20730/200013619>

(a) *The Bassui bōgo*

The *Bassui bōgo* 抜隊法語 (**Figure 1**) begins with the following:

If you want to escape the suffering of the cycle of birth and death, you must know directly the way to Buddhahood. The way to Buddhahood consists in realizing the [nature of] your own mind. The [nature of] your own mind is unchanged, from the time before your own parents were born, from the time before your body itself even existed, and down to the present day. Because it is thus the fundamental nature of all beings, it is what is called the “original face.”

輪廻の苦を免れんと思はゞ、直に成仏の道を知るべし。成仏の道とは、自心をさとり是なり。自心と云ふは、父母もいまだ生まれず、わが身もいまだなかりしさきよりして、今に至るまで移り変ることなくして、一切衆生の本性なる故に、是を本来の面目と云へり。¹²

¹² *Zenmon hōgoshū* 禅門法語集, eds. Yamada Kōdō 山田孝道 et al. (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1996), vol. 1, p. 43.

In other words, for the one who wants to escape from the cycle of rebirth, which is the very purpose of Buddhism, the attainment of the Zen awakening is necessary. To attain this awakening, one has to realize the true nature of one's own mind. That is to say, to understand that this mind is already, and was always, awakened. The reference to the time “before your own parents were born” is a clear reference to the famous *kōan*, “your original face before the birth of your parents” (父母未生以前の本来面目), yet more than just an allusion, the passage is also a clear explanation of it.

Later in the text, one can read:

If this is the way you wish to be [i.e. awakened], you have to consider this: “A monk asked Zhaozhou, ‘What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?’ [Zhaozhou] answered: ‘the cypress tree in the front garden.’”

若しかくの如くならんとき、是を挙て見るべし、僧趙州に問う。如何是祖師西來意。答曰庭前柏樹子。¹³

The one who wishes to be delivered from the cycle of eternal rebirth must focus on a *kōan* until arriving at awakening. Thus, from the reader's point of view, the path to deliverance runs through the practice of the *kōan*, or *kanna-zen*. The *Bassui kana hōgo* was printed in 1643, which makes it one of the earlier Zen-monk *kana hōgo* printed in the Edo period. According to the *Catalog of Zen Texts* (*Zenseki mokuroku* 禅籍目録) edited by Komazawa University,¹⁴ it was published also in 1649, 1727, and at yet another point during the course of the Edo period (year unknown). The number of copies still surviving today allows us to deduce that the text had a good circulation and therefore a large number of readers.

(b) The *Daitō-kokushi kana hōgo*

In 1645, two years after the first publication of the *Bassui hōgo*, the *Daitō-kokushi kana hōgo* 大灯国師仮名法語 (**Figure 2**) was published. Here *Daitō kokushi* (“National Master Daitō”) refers to Shūhō Myōchō 宗峰妙超 (1292–1337), the founder of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺 Temple, but the *Daitō kokushi kana hōgo* also contains a *kana hōgo* of Tettō Gikō 徹翁義亨 (1295–1369). In this text, one can find a letter titled: “Addressed to the Empress of the retired emperor Hagiwara” (*Hagimura hō no kisaki ni shimesu* 萩原法皇の后に示す). Hagiwara refers here to the Emperor Hanazono 花園 (1297–1348; r. 1308–1318), who was himself close to Daitō. The letter starts as follows:

All the brethren engaged in practicing the way of Zen, while they still have a beginner's mind, should practice only the sitting meditation. For this sitting meditation, having first assumed the full lotus position, or the half-lotus position, open your eyes only halfway, and look to the original face, to the time before

¹³ Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁴ Now accessible online: <https://zenseki.komazawa-u.ac.jp/>

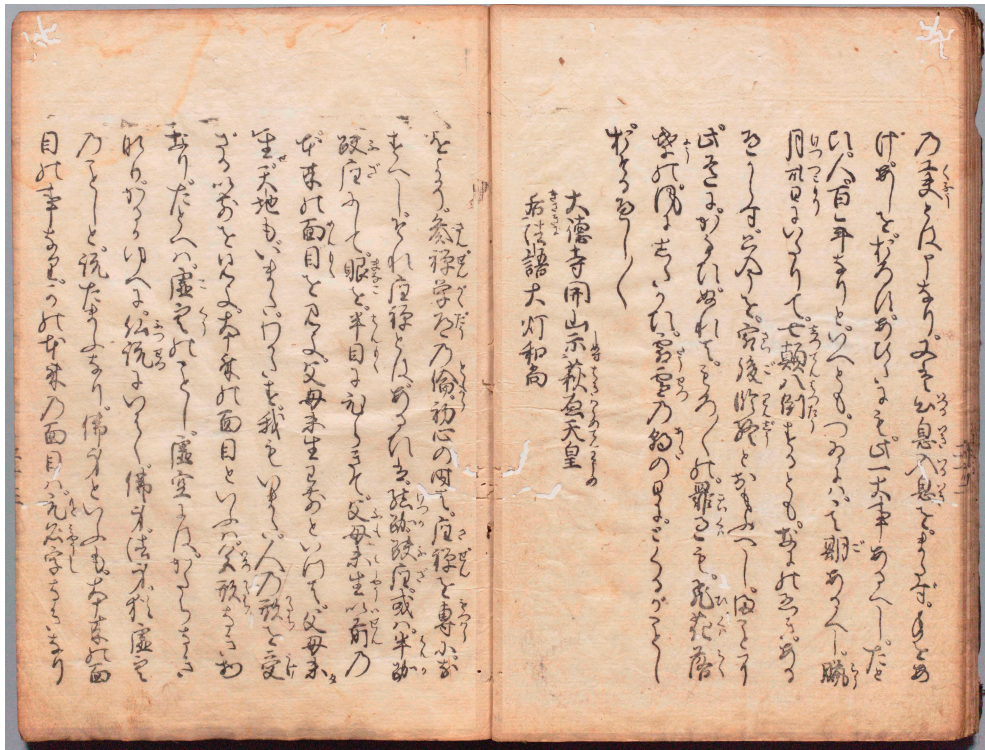


Figure 2. *Daitō kokushi kana hōgo*. Inner title: *Daitokuji no kaizan Daito kokushi no hōgo* 大徳寺開山大灯國師法語. (Nagoya University, Okaya Bunko). <https://doi.org/10.20730/100260708>

your own parents were born. By “the time before your own parents were born” is meant: look to the time before even earth and sky were separated, before even the “I” had received any human form.

凡そ参禅学道の倫、初心の時^{とも}は、坐禅を専にすべし。夫れ坐禅とは、或は結跏趺坐、或は半跏趺坐にして、眼を半目に開きて、父母未生以前の本来の面目を看よ。父母未生以前と云ふは、父母未だ生せず、天地も未だ分かれず、我も未だ人の形を受けざる以前を見よ。¹⁵

Here too, in a text aimed at a lay practitioner, the practice of *kanna-zen* is presented as the way to awakening, even for a beginner. Later in the text one can read:

This “original face” had at the beginning no appellation. Since long ago it has been called “the original face,” or “the master,” or “the Buddha nature,” or again “the true Buddha.” It is just as when someone is born, he has no name, but afterwards acquires various names over time. Likewise the subjects of a thousand and seven hundred *kōan* may be a thousand and seven hundred in number, but they all of them serve to make the same “original face” be seen.

¹⁵ *Zenmon hōgoshū*, vol. 2, p. 512.

彼の本来の面目は、元名字なきなり。本来の面目とも、或は主人公とも、或は仏性とも、或は真仏とも、こなたより名けたり。譬えは人生まれたる時、名は無けれども、以後色々の名を付るが如し。一千七百則の公案とて、話頭の数千七百あれども、皆彼の本来の面目を見せしめん為なり。¹⁶

To see his true self, the self that was always awakened—that is, to reach the Buddhist awakening—one must use the *kōan*, or to come at it from the opposite point of view, all *kōan* have the same goal: allowing the practitioner to see this “original face.” If Daitō develops this point at some length it is because, for him, this is the one and only approach, which even a layperson has to follow—as clearly stated in the text.

Bodhidharma has explained that if you cannot see your nature (*kenshō*), even the recitation of the Buddha’s name [for rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha] and the reading of *sūtras*, or indeed your keeping to the precepts—all these acts are in vain. If you cannot see your nature, you must find a friend of virtue [a master], and come to understand the basic principles of [the cycle of] life and death. If you cannot see your nature, even should you read to their end the *sūtras* of all twelve parts [of the Buddhist canon], you would not be able to escape the cycle of birth and death, and would still endure suffering in the Three Worlds.

若し見性せずんば、念仏誦經して戒体を持つとも閑事なりと達磨大師説き給うなり。見性せざる人は、善知識に逢ひ奉りて、生死の根本を明むべし。見性せずんば、縦ひ、十二部經を読み得りと雖も、又生死輪廻を免れずして、三界に苦を受くべし。¹⁷

As we can see, for the *Daitō kokushi kana hōgo*, as was the case for the *Bassui hōgo*, the practice of *kanna-zen* is the one and only path to salvation offered to the practitioner. Any other Buddhist approaches, such as would have been considered easier and for that reason more appropriate for the laypeople, are rejected without any ambiguity.

(c) The *Ikeyū kana hōgo*

The *Bassui hōgo* and Daitō’s letter to the empress are two examples of *kana hōgo* that invite—at the very beginning of the text—the practitioner to focus on *kōan*, and by this, they allow us to see clearly the preeminent place of *kanna-zen* in their presentations of Zen teaching. The *Ikeyū kana hōgo*, another widely-read text in the *kana hōgo* corpus,¹⁸ does not start directly with an exhortation to practice on a *kōan*, but instead with an explanation about the necessary motivations for entering upon the way of the Buddha, and about the fundamental structure of the mind, *kokoro* 心.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 513.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 515.

¹⁸ It was published no fewer than nine times in the premodern period, the first of these being in a year unknown during the first half of the 17th century. See *Zenseki mokuroku* 禅籍目録, p. 8 (note 14 above).

First of all, what I mean by “disposition of the mind” is to be without any negligence of the Law from dawn to dusk. If you but understand that, from antiquity to the present day, all this floating world is like unto a dream, then your mind will no longer stop to linger over anything.

先ず御こゝろもちと申すは、朝夕仏法に御油断なき事にて候。古へ今にいたり、浮世のあり様、夢のごとくにさへ思召され候へは、なに事も御こゝろのとまる事御座候まじく候。¹⁹

Waking up from a dream is a common metaphor within Buddhism as a whole, and descriptions of awakening as understanding the vacuity of this world are an explanation that is far from being specific to Zen teachings. Indeed, mentions of sūtras, such as the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Heart Sūtra*, are made in the *Ikkyū kana hōgo* to explain the need for reaching awakening, and the text’s first part can be seen as an introduction to Buddhism, rather than to Zen specifically. But when it comes to practice, it is practice on *kōan*, the *kanna-zen*, that is prescribed:

In your practice, their words are vain who say you can dispense with [the practice of] doubt regarding the old cases and stories [i.e. the *kōan*]. As a consolation for idle hours, I have taken some of [the *kōan*] that monks of the past have collected and roughly rewritten them for you here in *kana* [i.e. Japanese].

御工夫にも、古則話頭、御不審はなれ候よし仰せられ候、無に候。むかしの御僧たちあつめ給ふなぞへを、あらあらかなにて御なくさみにしるしまゐらせ候。²⁰

Following this a series of *kōan* are explained, the first of them being that of “your original face before the birth of your parents.”

As mentioned above, this text is, almost undoubtedly, not from Ikkyū’s hand, and an analysis of its doctrinal basis remains yet to be done, but what must be noticed here is the fact that the solution offered to the practitioner is, again, the *kanna-zen*.

We can see, in the three examples above, that in texts presented as being, and—in all likelihood—also in fact received by readers as being, introductions to the teachings of the Zen school, the main (not to say the only) practice presented as valid was that of concentrating on *kōan*, i.e. that of *kanna-zen*. The examples above were chosen because of the clarity with which they expressed this superiority of *kanna-zen*. But such a superiority, or more precisely such an exclusivity, can be found in almost all the Zen-monk *kana hōgo* produced during the first half of the Edo period.

To a modern reader, and perhaps even more so to a Western one, the significance of such evidence may seem trivial, unworthy of any particular attention: what wonder is there, after all, in Zen texts explicating Zen teaching? What else should they preach? But what appears an obvious point is not, in fact, as straightforward as it might seem.

¹⁹ *Zenmon hōgoshū*, vol. 1, p. 213.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

3. The Alternatives

Thus, to briefly summarize the situation, when the Zen school started to spread widely throughout Japanese society, around the beginning of the 17th century, most of the texts available to the average reader would have made the claim that the school's teachings, and therefore the path to salvation, were based on a practice using *kōan*, namely *kanna-zen*. To appreciate the uniqueness of this situation, we need to make some comparisons. In premodern times the Chan school spread to Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Here, however, we will not examine the case of Vietnam for lack of competence, nor take up the case of Korea, where Buddhism was, at this time, in far too weak of a position to provide a relevant point of comparison.

(a) In China

Admittedly, in China too, *kanhua-chan* was the doctrinal basis for the practice of the Chan school, which it still is today. This does not mean, however, that it was the only recognized path to salvation. Indeed, after the end of the Song period, the global tendency in Chinese Buddhism was instead to unify the several schools, or at least those schools then still active. The Chan school, notably, came gradually to integrate even the recitation of the name of the Buddha Amitābha into its practices. This inclusion was not universally accepted, and its history remains somewhat confused,²¹ yet one can say that, in the end, reciting the name of the Buddha Amitābha to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land became an acceptable alternative to the practice of *kanhua-chan* alone.

The global idea behind this attitude is that all the teachings of the Buddha lead ultimately to the same awakening,²² and that if some believers were able to obtain awakening through difficult practices like the use of *gong'an*, for those who lacked such capacity an easier practice, even one based on the sūtras—far from an obvious option given Chan teachings—came to be seen at first as tolerable, then as acceptable, and in the end as normal. Therefore, even if the practice of *kanhua-chan* persisted, it was not thought of as granting access to salvation exclusively.

Beyond all this, the status of Chan teachings and their influence within Chinese society decreased substantially after the rise of the neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Consequently—such institutional setbacks having only further weakened Chan's already less doctrinally demanding character—a contemporary Chinese layperson who undertook to question a Chan monk about the teachings of his school might well be answered any number of ways,

²¹ See Noguchi Zenkei 野口善敬, *Gendai zenshū-shi kenkyū* 元代禪宗史研究 (Kyoto: Zenbunka Kenkyūjo, 2005).

²² The conceptions of the monk Yongming Yanshou 永明延寿 (904–975) played a fundamental role in this process. See Yanagi Mikiyasu 柳幹康, *Eimei Enju to Sugyōroku* 永明延寿と『宗鏡錄』 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2015).

kanhua-chan being only one of them. The insistence upon practices focused exclusively around *kōan* as the teaching of the Zen school is thus a Japanese peculiarity. Or, to put it more precisely, this presentation to a lay public of *kanna-zen* as the main—and often only—path to obtaining awakening was an approach uniquely characteristic not only of the Japanese school of Zen, but also of that school's ways of interacting with lay society.

(b) Sōtō and Esotericism

The doctrinal contents of *kana hōgo* allow us to see also an important evolution within Japanese Zen itself. It is certainly true that at the time Chan teachings were being introduced to Japan, the practice of *kanna-zen* was common in China, and therefore naturally became the basis of Zen in Japan. However, this does not mean that all the teachings of the Japanese school of Zen were limited to it. To understand why the almost hegemonic place of *kanna-zen* in the *kana hōgo* corpus is a phenomenon worthy of notice, let us briefly review those practices within the various Zen teachings of Japan that were not *kanna-zen*, and how these were represented within *kana hōgo*.

First, there is the case of the Sōtō sect, and more particularly that of Dōgen. As is well-known, soon after the passing of its founder, the Sōtō school turned away from Dōgen in its teachings, such that throughout the first half of the pre-modern period, up to the “movement for restoring the school's ancient lineage” (*shūtō fukko undō* 宗統復古運動), while Dōgen was respected, in terms of doctrine he was almost ignored. To say that the teachings of the Sōtō and Rinzai sects were the same during the medieval period would be going much too far, but *kanna-zen*'s place at the core of medieval Sōtō teaching is something hard to dispute. We should note, however, that there is a *kana hōgo* attributed to Dōgen, the *Eihei kana hōgo* 永平仮名法語.²³ Its content, being clearly Rinzai-oriented, shows without ambiguity that the text does not come from Dōgen.²⁴ At the same time, broadly speaking, we can say that for the average reader in the first half of the Edo period, the teachings of Dōgen were almost unknown. Equally unknown were the doctrinal principles of the Sōtō school as we know it today, which holds rather (to simplify things) that sitting meditation is in itself an awakening, and that thus there is no need to obtain, through the practice of *kanna-zen*, awakening as the Rinzai branch understands it.

Recent studies²⁵ have shown that during the Kamakura period, what is called the Shōichi 聖一 branch was so important that it would not be an exaggeration

²³ *Zenmon hōgoshū*, vol. 2, pp. 377–408.

²⁴ See Sakurai Hideo 桜井秀雄, “Kyōke ni okeru sezokuka no mondai: Eihei kaizan no na wo kanshita gisho wo megutte” 教化における世俗化の問題: 永平開山の名を冠した偽書をめぐって, *Kyōke kenkyū* 教化研究 14 (1971), pp. 13–18.

²⁵ See Sueki Fumihiko 末本文美士, “Chūsei zenseki sōkan to chūsei zenkenkyū no shomondai” 『中世禅籍叢刊』と中世禅研究の諸問題, in *Chūsei zen e no shinshikaku* 中世禅への新視角, eds. Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎 et al. (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2019), pp. 7–30.

to call it then the mainstream of Japanese Zen. This branch's founder, Enni 円爾 (1202–1280), went to China and received the transmission of the Law from the famous monk Wuzhun Shifan 無準師範 (1178–1249), but his teachings also incorporated a large amount of esoteric Buddhism. The relationship between esoteric Buddhism and Zen is a problem far beyond the frame of the Shōichi branch alone, and it would be impossible to understand early Japanese Zen without taking it in account. However, in the later age during which the Zen school was to spread throughout Japanese society, from the doctrinal point of view, any such esoteric aspect had long been almost completely absent.

From the standpoint adopted in this paper, that of an average reader in the first half of the Edo period, neither the Zen of Dōgen that claimed the inefficacy of *kanna-zen*, nor the hybrid practice of an esoteric-oriented Zen, would have appeared in any *kana hōgo*. There is, however, in the history of Japanese Zen a third alternative, one that could in fact be found in early-modern *kana hōgo*.

(c) Musō Soseki

If the esoteric-oriented Shōichi branch was influential at the beginning of Japanese Zen history, one can say that the subsequent period was marked by what is often called the Five Mountains branch, or *Gozan-ha* 五山派. This appellation itself raises several problems, the fact that it was not, doctrinally speaking, a homogeneous group being only one among many. For our average reader of the Edo-period, the most representative monk was without a doubt Musō Soseki. We have already mentioned here his most famous text, the *Muchū mondōshū*, published several times during the Edo period,²⁶ within which it is explained how he combined Zen practice, or in other words *kanna-zen*, with the other teachings of Buddhism. The thought of Musō is complex, and we will not try to summarize it here²⁷; the point that interests us in this article is his acceptance of other approaches for the attainment of awakening. This appears of course in the *Muchū mondōshū*, but also in *kana hōgo* attributed to him. Among these is the *Nijūsan mondō* 二十三問答,²⁸ a *kana hōgo* composed of twenty-three dialogues, each of which consists in fact of a single question and its answer. The questions are about issues such as “The necessity of raising the mind towards the Way” (*dōshin okosu beki koto* 道心おこすべき事, dialogue #1), “The origin of good and evil” (*yoshiashi no minamoto no koto* よしあしの源の事, in #4), “The desire for the Pure Land” (*jōdo wo negau koto* 浄土をねかふ事, in #12), but also others like “The absence of mind itself is being a Buddha” (*kokoro no naki wo hotoke ni suru koto* 心のなきを仏にする事, in #21). The text is one whose authenticity should

²⁶ More than eight times in all, according to the *Zenseki mokuroku*.

²⁷ We have not yet had the opportunity to read it, but let us note here the recently published work of Molly Valor, *Not Seeing Snow: Musō Soseki and Medieval Japanese Zen*, Brill's Japanese Studies Library, vol. 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

²⁸ *Zenmon hōgoshū*, vol. 1, pp. 15–40.

be questioned, yet nonetheless, it can be observed here that neither the questions nor the answers presume *kanna-zen* to be the only valid approach. Indeed, the final dialogue bears the superscription “These are not anyone’s personal sayings, but are all of them found in the sūtras” (*watakushi no kotoba ni arazu mina kyōmon naru koto* 私のことばにあらす皆経文なる事, in #23). The text of its question is as follows:

Question: “These various things I hear you say, are they all the teachings of the Buddha? Or have you added in anything personal? Becoming a Buddha requires difficult and painful asceticism, as well as the accumulation of merit—that is how one becomes a Buddha. All this talk about us being Buddhas already, easily and without any raising of the mind, or about there being no Buddha outside the mind—it seems very suspicious. Are these things really in the sūtras?

問ふて曰く、かやうにさまざま承るは、仏のをしへのまゝにて候や。又私のことをばそへられ候や。仏になるは難行苦行し、功德をつみかさねてこそ仏とはなるべきに、やすく何の心もおこさず、わが身仏に候、心の外に仏なしなど、ばかりは、不審に覚え候、確かに経文にて候や。²⁹

The question seems quite natural, and despite its apparent simplicity it reflects one of the main critiques made of the Zen school by other Buddhist sects: how can Zen pretend to be a path to Buddhist awakening if it does not rely on the teachings of the Buddha? The answer, for the Musō of the *Nijūsan mondo*, is quite clear:

All that I have said is, entirely and without doubt, the text of the sūtras and the treatises. If you suspect it all of being only one man’s personal sayings, I ought to write out the sūtras and treatises for you in the original! I wrote them in *kana* [i.e. Japanese] to soften them, to make them as easy to understand as possible for your ears.

かやうに申すは、悉く慥なり、経論の文どもにて候。私の言かと御疑ひ候は、本の如くに経論の文をかきて参らすべし。いかにも耳ちかく心得やはらぎて仮名にかきなしたるにて候。³⁰

The position expressed here is notably different from the one seen in the preceding *kana hōgo* we quoted above. Here, the practice of *kanna-zen* is not explicitly recommended. True, it can be deduced, for example from explanations about the necessity of not seeking the Buddha outside, which is a way of saying that the practitioner himself is already awakened. In addition, to realize that one’s own mind is equal to that of the Buddha requires, for the Zen school, the practice of the *kōan*. Yet these are deductions, and not easily made by someone unfamiliar with the teachings of the school, or with how far apart these injunctions are from those of the preceding examples. Moreover, other kinds of Buddhist

²⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 40.

practice are not rejected, with even the recitation of the Buddha's name being considered a perfectly acceptable alternative. Thus, the *Nijūsan mondō*, like other *kana hōgo* attributed to Musō, present an important counterpoint to the other tendency so often encountered. The text prevents us from claiming too categorically that all Zen-monk *kana hōgo* were conveying fundamentally the same message. The *kanna-zen* was, surely enough, widely considered to be the core of Zen teachings, but there remain some nuances, and important ones, that need to be added.

Conclusion

It goes without saying that this article is only an introduction to some of the questions raised by a first reading of what we have called the Zen-monk *kana hōgo*. The importance of *kanna-zen* in the way Zen teachings were spread to lay society has, we hope, been sufficiently demonstrated by the few examples given above. But of course this is not enough for a full understanding of all the different issues such questions involve. As we have noted, a more complete examination of the characteristics of various types of *kana hōgo* remains to be done. Among other tasks, a classification from the point of view of the doctrinal contents of each seems to be an essential step. For now, however, let us simply say a few words about two of the questions implied by the above considerations.

The first question is that of the origin of this situation. If, as we have said, the insistence on *kanna-zen* in books read by common laypeople was something unique to Japan, where did this come from? The answer, we believe, is to be sought in the doctrinal history of the Rinzai branch, and in the way that Japanese Zen came to evolve, particularly at the end of the Muromachi period. In a nutshell, the emergence of the Daitō branch—which claimed that Zen teachings could not tolerate other practices, and that the Zen approach (in concrete terms, *kanna-zen*) must be the only one pursued³¹—ended up modifying progressively yet radically the landscape of the Rinzai branch. Because, moreover, the temples of Daitoku-ji and Myōshin-ji acquired a great influence during the Edo period, the very period that saw this spread of *kana hōgo*, a very large part—though not all—of the Zen monks in Japan were affiliated with the Daitō branch. Someone asking a monk or reading a *kana hōgo* would encounter with a high probability the answer that the only way to practice was that of *kanna-zen*.

The second question raised is that concerning the implications of such a situation. This question is a very difficult one, and we will not try to answer it here, but the fact that for a large part of society the teachings of Zen were considered through the lens of *kanna-zen* had, certainly, many consequences. Though it

³¹ See Didier Davin, “Datsu Kamakura Zen?: Junsuizen to Daitō-ha nitsuite no ichi kōsatsu” 脱鎌倉禅?: 純粹禅と大燈派についての一考察, in *Chūsei zen e no shinshikaku*, eds. Abe Yasurō et al. (Rinsen Shoten, 2019), pp. 459-478.

would be naïve to think that thanks to *kana hōgo*, all Japanese people knew about the fundamental principles of the Zen school, it is nonetheless undeniable that, in some milieus, Zen conceptions were in fact received. Understanding all the ways in which they influenced literary theories, aesthetic discourses, etc., remains a task for the future. For a long time, the relationship between “Zen” and “Japanese culture” has been a monolithic and polemical topic, often centering around Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙. The idea that this relationship was an invention of the 20th century, in the context of nationalism, has become now a common one. However, looking more closely at these Edo-period texts should lead us to adopt a different point of view. The wide diffusion that *kanna-zen* achieved through *kana hōgo* implies different types of receptions—likely including also some misunderstandings and unexpected connections—that deserve, we believe, to be examined more carefully.

The March of Dancing Skeletons: Zen Vernacular-sermon Picture Scrolls and Their Development

KOIDA Tomoko

Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT

Today, the iconography of skeleton or skull motifs enjoys a broad popularity, found everywhere from T-shirts and rings to characters appearing in Japanese *anime*. That the charm of such motifs is one felt by people across different eras is clear from Edo-period *ukiyo-e*, where one finds frequent examples of skeleton pictures rendered with realistic detail, as in the *Sōma no furu-dairi* 相馬の古内裏 of Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳, or the *Hajō bakkotsu zazen-zu* 波上白骨座禅図 of Maruyama Ōkyo 円山応挙. And while skeletons have always been symbols of death, impermanence, or even evil, there is also no shortage of pictures showing skeletons up and about, moving in the manner of the living, with something of a comical or humorous air. Yet when, and how, did such skeleton imagery, in its many guises from the loveable to the heroic, first come into usage?

Stories featuring skeletons have existed in significant numbers from ancient times. In the early Heian-period Buddhist tale collection *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記, for example, one story has a skull taking vengeance upon the man who had killed him. Yet for all its universal character, found beyond Japan in narratives from every corner of the world, by and large it is a motif whose dominant elements are negative. In Japanese texts, skeletons of a more cheerful aspect begin to appear only with the advent of the Muromachi period. One such example is found in a work of *otogi-zōshi* (a Muromachi-period tale genre) bearing the title *Genchū sōda-ga* 幻中草打画.

In this work we find depicted a lively dinner party populated entirely by skeletons, whom we see beating drums, playing the flute, and dancing with abandon. The scene occurs within the story-in-a-story of *Genchū sōda-ga*, the narrative frame of which involves a travelling monk who falls asleep one day inside a temple, only to dream of long conversation with the skeleton of a woman who has come out of her grave to meet him. The conversation narrates the woman's life, portrayed throughout by accompanying pictures as the life of a skeleton—all

characters being drawn as skeletons—from her embraces with her husband, to that husband's death, to his removal to the cremation fields, to the woman's own taking of religious vows and, at last, to the subsequent Buddhist dialogues she pursues. It is a playful visual expression of the principle of *shōji ichinyō* 生死一如 (“life and death, one and the same”)—the idea that beneath the skin, human beings are all nothing but skeletons, showing no difference between male and female, indeed no difference between life and death. The sense of the Zen phrase used in the title, *genchū sōda* (“amid illusion, hit with grass [i.e. to make one wake up]”), is that the skeleton dream-figures of the text enlighten the reader about reality's own true “emptiness” (*kū* 空). From this, as well as from the substance of the Buddhist dialogue in the work's latter half, the picture scroll appears to be a vernacular sermon, designed to convey the teachings of the Zen school.

One of the four known extant textual witnesses of the *Genchū sōda-ga* allows it to be dated as far back as the Muromachi period: a valuable medieval picture-scroll manuscript (now in codex form) surviving in the collections of Kakuman-ji Temple 鶴満寺 in Osaka. This is the text previously introduced by Okami Masao 岡見正雄, bearing a transcribed colophon dated to Kōryaku 康暦 2 (1380).¹ The work also appears in *Kanmon nikki* 看聞日記, the diary of imperial prince Go-sukō-in Sadafusa 後崇光院貞成 (1372–1456), under a “Catalog of Various Tales” (*shō-monogatari mokuroku* 諸物語目録) found in a verso-side entry dated to Ōei 応永 27 (1420)—a corroborating indication that the work existed at least by the early Muromachi period, and was read then among the nobility.

At a later period, this work was split in half and adapted, gaining an association with the name of the famous Rinzai monk Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481). The two resulting works were published, respectively, under the titles *Ikkyū gaikotsu* 一休骸骨 (Ikkyū and the Skeleton) (**Figure 1**) and *Ikkyū mizukagami* 一休水鏡 (Ikkyū's Water Mirror). In these versions, however, the emphasis was less on the teachings of Zen, and more on the abundant comic potential of the skeleton figures themselves.

These anthropomorphized skeletons seem to have charmed people, and helped along by the popularity of Ikkyū, the texts became popular enough to see several printings over the course of the Edo period. Yet even as such reception though printed books with illustrations steadily increased, new copies of picture scrolls continued to be produced as late as the Bakumatsu period, as in the case of the picture-scroll manuscript of *Ikkyū gaikotsu*, copied in Kōka 弘化 4 (1847), that survives in the Ryūkoku University Library. Probably this continued long life in picture-scroll format is accounted for by the underlying Buddhist dialogue-text having taken as its subject something as fantastic, and as given to striking visuals, as an animated human skeleton.

In addition to the text's artistic presentation of skeleton pictures, another aspect

¹ See Okami Masao, “‘Genchū sōdaga’ honkoku” 『幻中草打画』 翻刻, ed. Nakamura Yukihiro hakase kanreki kinen ronbunshū kankōkai 中村幸彦博士還暦記念論文集刊行会, in *Kinsei bungaku: sakka to sakubin* 近世文学：作家と作品 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1973).



Figure 1. Scene of a skeleton banquet. From *Ikkyū gaikotsu* 一休骸骨, Pub. Edo period. (Imanishi Yūichirō 今西祐一郎, Private Collection).
<https://doi.org/10.20730/100249806>

of the *Genchū sōda-ga* worth noting is the depiction of a Buddhist dialogue between two nuns that occurs in the work's latter half, valuable as a reflection of actual discourse among contemporary Zen-sect nuns. This, considered alongside the work's fulsome use of both Muromachi-period didactic verse sermons and terminology taken from Zen *goroku* 語録 texts, has led the *Genchū sōda-ga* to be classified as a *bōgo-emaki* 法語絵巻 (a genre of vernacular-sermon picture scrolls), and one designed, moreover, for a female readership. Later in the Edo period, this female Buddhist dialogue was not only adapted, becoming the work *Ikkyū mizukagami*, but also had an influence itself on the *kana-zōshi* work *Ninin bikuni* 二人比丘尼 (**Figure 2**), penned by the Sōtō monk Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579–1655).

In *Ninin bikuni*, the wife of Suda Yahei 須田弥兵衛, after the death of a certain beautiful widow, goes every seven days to see with her own eyes how the widow's body, left exposed in the fields, decomposes to become gradually nothing but white bones. This leads to her enlightenment on the principle of impermanence, and to herself becoming a nun, one who eventually, as the story portrays it, achieves rebirth in paradise as the fruit of her devotions. Setting aside its clear



Figure 2. Scene of a woman in dialogue with a skeleton. From *Ninin bikuni* 二人比丘尼 [“Two Nuns”], Pub. early Edo period. (National Institute of Japanese Literature).

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200004107>

relationship to Su Dongpo’s 蘇東坡 (1036–1101) poem on decomposition, *Nine Phases* (*Jiuxiang shi* 九相詩, J. *Kusō shi*), *Ninin bikuni* also betrays the influence of *Genchū soda-ga*, not only in its structuring concept—coming to enlightenment about impermanence though dialogue with a skeleton—but also in its own opening’s direct allusion to that of the earlier work. A similar process can often be seen at work in *kana-zōshi* of the early Edo period, with several texts being based on such Muromachi vernacular-sermon picture scrolls, whose content they selectively modified and adapted, in a very concrete manifestation of contemporary “interactions of knowledge” (*chi no kōtsū* 知の交通).

To turn, then, the question around: what was it about the Muromachi era that felt a need for such skeleton story-illustrations? In the background to their production there are various influences that might be adduced, in particular Song-period skeleton illustrations from China, and the popularity of those *otogi-zōshi* works now called *iruimono* 異類物 (“non-human” pieces)—stories centered on anthropomorphized flora and fauna. These story illustrations were of course an expedient, used to expound Zen’s difficult teachings in ways people could more readily understand. Nonetheless skeletons, simply through their

association with such pictures, came to acquire a new image among people. And so it is to the skeletons of these story illustrations, first appearing in the Muromachi period, that we trace the roots of the modern, more humorous, more loveable skeleton type, which continues to dance on in our own day and age.

Language and Representation with *ōgi* and *uchiwa* Fans: Considering “Applied Knowledge” in the Early Modern Period

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Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT

1. Introduction

The arrival of spring is heralded by the aroma of the plum blossom, or perhaps by the call of the warbler, or the wind that melts the ice. The river Asukagawa serves as symbol for the transience of things. Thus it is that elements of the natural world, and when enshrined as stock “poem-pillows” (*utamakura*) also many place-names, are found to bear particular standardized meanings. In some cases, such a phenomenon can also be observed with regards to items of human manufacture. Let mention of a certain class of item come to recall associations with some concrete event in particular—with repetition of the association, over time it finds itself a fixed feature on mental maps of “knowledge” shared by large numbers of people. In this paper I will explore the nature of this process through the example of two kinds of traditional Japanese fan: the accordion-folding *ōgi* 扇 fan, and the flat, round-shaped *uchiwa* 団扇 fan.

First, I will summarize in brief the general understanding as regards *ōgi* and *uchiwa* fans. The *ōgi* is a type of fan original to Japan, one developed during the Heian period. At the end of the Heian period it spread to China, where in the Song era the *zhedieshan* 摺疊扇 (or *tangshan* 唐扇) appeared. There are two kinds of *ōgi* fan, the *hi-ōgi* 檜扇 (“cypress-fan”) made with slats of wood, and the *kōmori-ōgi* 蝙蝠扇 (“bat-fan”; also *kawabori-ōgi*) made with paper. By the early modern period, it had spread in use to the population at large, giving rise to travelling peddlers of *ōgi* fans and their backing paper.

In contrast, the *uchiwa* fan can be traced back to ancient China, where indeed the very character for “fan” designated one of the *uchiwa* type. What today we would call an *uchiwa* is also described in the Han-dynasty “Poem on a Bamboo Fan” (*Zhusan-shi* 竹扇詩) by Ban Gu 班固 (32–82). The *uchiwa* type further spread to the Korean peninsula, where it was known as a “pine-fan” (*songseon* 松扇).

It arrived in Japan, however, from mainland China. In the early modern period, a variation known as the “Edo *uchima*” became popular, and some people even made their living as *uchima*-peddlers.

Such an account can also be found in *Katei kidan* 過庭紀談 (pub. Tenpō 天保 5/1834) by Hara Sōkei 原雙桂 (1718–1767):

凡ソ扇ト云ヒ、扇子ト云ハ、皆団扇ノコトナリ。今本邦ニテ扇ト云モノハ、本邦ニテ造リ始メシモノニテ、中国ニハ元来無キモノナリ。中国ヘハ宋ノ時始メテ本邦ヨリ渡リシト云フ、明ノ永樂以後ハ本邦ヨリ渡リシコト、毎度タシカニ見ユ。本邦ニテ今云フ扇ノコトハ、アノ方ニテ摺疊扇トモ、帖扇トモ、撒扇トモ云。団扇ハアノ方ニ古来ヨリ有リシ物ニテ、簾トモ、便面トモ云フハ、皆団扇ノコトナリ。

As a rule, when it comes to fans, the word *sensu* 扇子 always refers to the *uchima* type. What today in Japan we call an *ōgi* was first made in this country, and did not originally exist in China. It is said to have first crossed over from Japan to China during the Song period, and from the Yongle 永樂 era [1403–24] of the Ming period onwards, we certainly see it crossing over from Japan again and again. What we now call *ōgi* here in Japan, is over there called *zhedieshan* 摺疊扇 or *tieshan* 帖扇 or *sashan* 撒扇. *Uchima*, on the other hand, have been present over there since ancient times, so that words such as *sha* 簾 or *bianmian* 便面 all refer to *uchima*.¹

Furthermore, in the “Clothing and Other Handheld Items” (*fuku gangu* 服玩具) section found in vol. 26 of the encyclopedic *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会 (preface pub. date: Shōtoku 正徳 2/1712) the image under the entry for *ōgi* shows a *kōmori-ōgi* (Figure 1), with *hi-ōgi* and *uchima* appearing under separate entries (Figure 2).

What both *ōgi* and *uchima* can be said to have in common is the property of artificially producing a small space of coolness, and thereby manifesting a bit of the natural world in the midst of daily life. This property moreover shares something fundamental in common with what I have argued² is a certain “nature-in-daily life” function, uniquely characteristic of the early modern period, to be found in items such as insect cages (*mushiko* 虫籠), firefly baskets (*hotaru kago* 螢籠), flower vases (*kabin* 花瓶), and goldfish bowls (*kingyo-bachi* 金魚鉢).

What, then, is the difference between these two types of fan? If forced to compare, the *ōgi* would likely be found the more elegant, and the *uchima* the more commonplace of the two. One might also note the *ōgi* fan’s broader range of usage, brandished now to cries of “*appare*” (“Bravo!”), serving now as tray to pass someone an item, and so on. By folding in various ways, *ōgi* can also change their shape. But this is a matter I will return to in the conclusion.

2. Various Artistic Expansions

Before heading into the main argument, however, let us look at two examples

¹ Text in *Katei kidan*, *Ōo hitsugo*, *Kagai manroku* 過庭紀談・嚶々筆語・花街漫録, *dai 1-ki*, vol. 5 of *Nihon zuihitsu taisei* 日本随筆大成 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), p. 30.

² Suzuki Ken’ichi 鈴木健一, *Edo shiika no kukan* 江戸詩歌の空間 (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 1998).



Figure 1. The *ōgi* 扇. Illustration from *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会, comp. Terashima Ryōan 寺島良安, vol. 26, pub. Shōtoku 2/1712. (National Institute of Japanese Literature, Ukai Bunko).
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200018257>

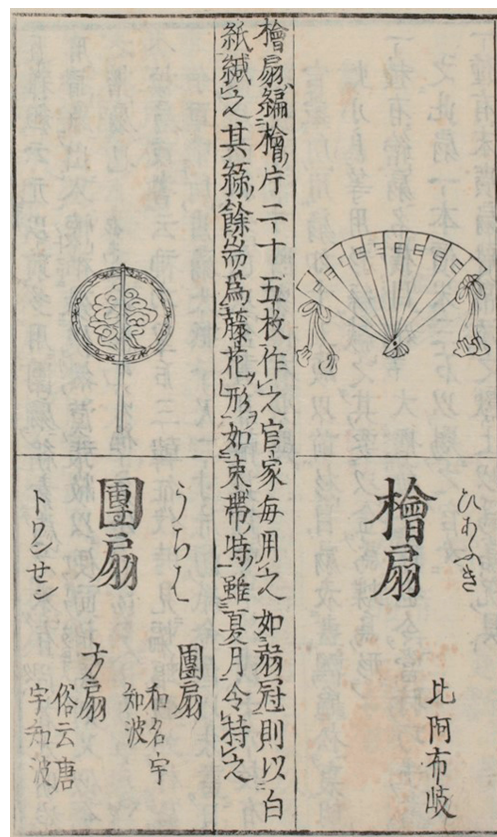


Figure 2. Ibid. Two types of fan, side-by-side: (L) *uchinwa* 團扇 and (R) *bi-ōgi* 檜扇.
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200018257>

of literary works that make mention of *ōgi* and *uchinwa* both.

First, a seven-character quatrain by Ishikawa Jōzan 石川丈山 (1583–1672) on the topic of “Mt. Fuji” 富士山:

仙客来遊雲外巔	Sage guests come to visit on peaks beyond the clouds;
神龍棲老洞中淵	Blue dragons dwell and grow old in pools within the caves;
雲如紈素煙如柄	Clouds spread a sheet of silk, smoke stands for a handle;
白扇倒懸東海天	A white fan hung upside-down, skies of the East Sea.

— Ishikawa Jōzan 石川丈山, *Fushōshū* 覆醬集 (pub. Kanbun 寛文 11/1671)³

³ Facsimile edition: *Shishū Nihon kanshi* 詩集日本漢詩, eds. Fujikawa Hideo 富士川英郎 et al. (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1985), vol. 1, p. 9.

Here the first (“opening” *ki* 起) and second (“developing” *shō* 承) verses depict a mystery-laden natural world, while the third (“turning” *ten* 転) and fourth (“concluding” *ketsu* 結) verses compare that scene to everyday objects like the *ōgi* and *uchinwa* fans. The “handle” of the “turning” verse indicates the *uchinwa*, while the mountain-shape resemblance of the “concluding” verse suggests the *ōgi*. Some have seen in this a contradiction,⁴ but it is equally possible to view it as simply a witty way of describing Mt. Fuji that made free use of properties found in commonplace objects, such as *ōgi* and *uchinwa* fans.

I will also quote the *haibun* 俳文 piece “In Praise of the Nara *uchinwa*” (*Nara uchinwa san* 奈良团扇賛), by Yokoi Yayū 横井也有 (1702–1783), in full:

青によしならの帝の御時、いかなる叡慮にあづかりてか、此地の名産とはなれりけむ。世はたゞ其道の芸くはしからば、多能はなくてもあらまし。かれよ、かしこくも風を生ずる外は、たえて無能にして、一曲一かなでの間にもあはざれば、腰にたゞまれて公界にへつらふねぢけ心もなし。たゞ木の端と思ひすてたる雲水の生涯ならむ。さるは桐の箱の家をも求ず。ひさがもとの夕すゞみ、昼ねの枕に宿直して、人の心に秋風たてば、また来る夏をたのむとも見えず。物置の片隅に紙屑籠と相住して、鼠の足にけがさるれども、地紙をまくられて野ざらしとなる扇にはまさりなむ。我汝に心をゆるす。汝我に馴れて、はだか身の寝姿を、あなかしこ、人にかたる事なかれ。

Nara, glad of verdant earth!—it was in the reign of that Emperor also so named, it seems, that by some royal wisdom [the *uchinwa*] became a local specialty. In this world, know the art of your own trade through and through, and even a jack of very few trades gets by fine enough. That’s an *uchinwa* for you—for the wind that it makes all gratitude duly granted, its lack of talent otherwise is absolute, yet if not quite suitable for song or dance, it also doesn’t go out folded up at the waist, with a penchant for public flattery. People despise it as a mere slip of wood, with all the lifespan of a drifting cloud or water flowing by. But it never demands a housing case of fine paulownia! It cools you at night by the gourd-flowers, and stands pillow-vigil for your daytime nap. Yet even when people’s interest chills with autumn, it places not a single hope in the summer to come. It bunks in the back corner of the shelf with the wastebasket, and suffers the filth of treading rats. Yet for all that, it’s better than the *ōgi*, with its backing paper all peeled up, so painfully exposed. I open my heart to you, and you grow close to me, even naked and asleep . . . but no more!—it is not something to tell others about.

—Yokoi Yayū 横井也有, *Uzura-goromo* 鶉衣, vol. 1 (pub. Tenmei 天明 7/1787)⁵

Contrasting the *ōgi*-fan’s air of luxury with the down-to-earth Nara *uchinwa*, he characterizes the former as *naka*-like and refined, the latter as *haikai*-like and common, expressing for the latter the greater affinity.

⁴ Suzuki Ken’ichi, “Ishikawa Jōzan no Fuji-san shi wo yomu” 石川丈山の富士山詩を読む, *Tōkaidō 53-tsugi wo yomu* 東海道五十三次を読む (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, forthcoming).

⁵ Text in *Uzura-goromo* 鶉衣, ed. Horikiri Minoru 堀切実, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2011), p. 21.

3. The *ōgi* as Representing Japanese (*wa*) Literary “Knowledge”: Three Cases

[A] *The Tale of Genji*, “Evening Faces” Chapter: A Maidservant Offers a Perfumed *ōgi*-Fan

The fantastical love story that develops between Hikaru Genji and Yūgao—lit. “Evening Faces,” named after the *yūgao* 夕顔 flower (moonflower)—begins in the following way:

A pretty little girl in long, unlined yellow trousers of raw silk came out through a sliding door that seemed too good for the surroundings. Beckoning to the man [sent by Genji to pluck a moonflower, unknowingly, from her mistress’ gate], she handed him a heavily scented white fan.

“Put it on this. It isn’t much of a fan, but then it isn’t much of a flower either.”

Koremitsu, coming out of the gate [next door], passed it on [from the other man] to Genji.

—*The Tale of Genji*, “Evening Faces” (Yūgao 夕顔)⁶

The appearance in this scene of the *ōgi*-fan is a literary fact of quite considerable fame.

For widespread recognition of the *ōgi*-fan as a token signifying Hikaru Genji and Yūgao’s love affair, however, the literary “knowledge” necessary to that recognition had to first widely circulate. Towards this end of broader circulation—and creative application—there was need for a variety of channels beyond reading the above original text alone. There was need also for commentaries and digests, for manuals of *haikai* poetic associations—*tsukeaisho* 付合書 after the technical term for such associations, *tsukeai* 付合—and other written genres, as well as for treatments in painting and other forms of art. With repetition of this circulation and application, moreover, such literary “knowledge” gained in generic breadth, spanning a range of registers from the popular to the refined, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in poetry and *ukiyo-e*. Nor was this a one-way movement, going first from circulation to application later, for creative application of literary “knowledge” was itself an aid to the latter’s circulation, leading to a bi-directional dynamic in which both efforts mutually would reinforce each other.

To name a number of such circulation channels concretely, outside all printing and hand-copying of the original text, for commentaries, it goes without saying that Kitamura Kigin’s 北村季吟 (1624–1705) *Kogetsushō* 湖月抄 (pub. Enpō 延宝 1/1673) circulated particularly extensively. Among digests there was the *Osana Genji* おさな源氏 (pub. Kanbun 6/1666) of Hinaya Ryūho 雛屋立圃 (1595–1669), wherein the above scene, for example, is succinctly explained: “[Genji] was presented with a white, perfumed fan with a flower resting on it.”⁷

⁶ *The Tale of Genji*, tr. Edward G. Seidensticker (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 58.

⁷ 白きあふぎのこがしたるに花ををきて参らせたり. Facsimile edition: *Osana Genji, Genji monogatari taii* おさな源氏・源氏物語大意, vol. 10 of *Genji monogatari shiryō ein shusei* 源氏物語資料影印集成, ed. Nakano Kōichi 中野幸一 (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1990), p. 29.

As for *tsukeaisho*, we find in the collection *Haikai ruisenshū* 俳諧類船集 (preface pub. date: Enpō 5/1677)⁸ record of an association between “ōgi-fan” and “plucked *yūgao*”—in this case referring to the “evening faces” flower, and not Hikaru Genji’s lady whose name is taken from it. Among the educational genre of *teikinmono* 庭訓物 texts, the *Onna teikin Go-sho bunko* 女庭訓御所文庫 (pub. Meiwa 明和 4/1767) contains a diagram titled “Chart of *Genji* Perfumes” (*Genji-kō no zu* 源氏香乃図), within which an *ōgi*-fan is pictured with a *yūgao* flower upon it. One can also find the same visual composition in any of the series of illustrated *Genji* texts (introduced by Prof. Komachiya Teruhiko 小町谷照彦) whose pictures are said to be by Keisai Eisen 溪斎英泉 (1790–1848): *Genji monogatari 54-jō ezukushi* 源氏物語五十四帖絵尽 (pub. Bunka 文化 9/1812), *Gunka hyakunin isshu waka-en* 群花百人一首和歌蘭 (pub. Tenpō 7/1836), *Shūgyoku hyakunin isshu Ogura shiori* 秀玉百人一首小倉栗 (pub. Tenpō 7/1836), or *Genji monogatari ezukushi taiishō* 源氏物語絵尽大意抄 (pub. Tenpō 8/1837; **Figure 3**). By contrast, in the section on “Lady Yūgao” (*Yūgao no ue* 夕顔上) in Kurosawa Okinamaro’s 黒沢翁満 (1795–1859) work *Genji hyakunin isshu* 源氏百人一首 (pub. Tenpō 10/1839), her pose is instead that of using an *ōgi*-fan to hide her face (**Figure 4**). Through all these various conduits, the close relationship between Yūgao’s love story and the *ōgi*-fan came to be one that more and more people recognized.

Yet how was this link put to use in application? In poetry (Japanese and Chinese) we see the following:

夕顔

- (1) 風のうへに咲くかとみえて涼しきは扇にのせしゆふがほのはな

Topic: Evening Faces

Out of the wind it almost seems to blossom—Ah, the coolness
Served up in the fan-borne face of an evening flower!

—Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571–1653),
Shōyūshū 逍遊集 (pub. Enpō 5/1677)

源氏物語の夕貌巻のさまをかきたるに

- (2) タがほの露かけそめしことのはぞつひにあふぎのつまとなりぬる

Topic: Writing on the *Tale of Genji*’s “Evening Faces” Chapter

The evening flower’s words, that once did drop like dew-stains catching on the leaf—
At last alighting, married, be it but to the edge of a fan.

—Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), *Suzunoya-shū* 鈴屋集
(pub. Kansei 寛政 10/1798)

⁸ Facsimile edition: *Haikai ruisenshū* 俳諧類船集, vol. 1 of *Kinsei Bungei Sōkan* 近世文藝叢刊 (Osaka: Han’an Noma Kōshin-Sensei Kakō Kinenkai, 1969), p. 400.

⁹ Komachiya Teruhiko 小町谷照彦, *E to arasuji de yomu Genji monogatari: Keisai Eisen Genji monogatari ezukushi taiishō* 絵とあらすじで読む源氏物語：溪斎英泉『源氏物語絵尽大意抄』(Tokyo: Shintensha, 2007).



Figure 3. Yūgao 夕顔, depicted holding an *ōgi*-fan bearing the eponymous “evening faces” (*yūgao*) flower. Illustration from *Genji monogatari ezukushi taiishō* 源氏物語絵尽大意抄, illus. attr. Keisai Eisen 溪斎英泉, pub. Tenpō 8/1837. (National Institute of Japanese Literature, Hatsukari Bunko). <https://doi.org/10.20730/200003499>

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| (3) 瓠花深巷見嬋娟 | Through a gourd-flower deep in the alleys I met a maiden fair; |
| 一扇相思兩世緣 | A single fan, love mutual, the bond between two lives. |
| 香燼芳空根不斷 | Smoked with perfume, though scent be vain, the root itself breaks not; |
| 又抽柔蔓故纏綿 | But putting forth another vine soft, tighter it winds ever still. |



Figure 4. Lady Yūgao 夕顔上, here portrayed using a fan to hide her face. Illustration from *Genji hyakumin isshu* 源氏百人一首, Kurosawa Okinamaro 黒沢翁満, pub. Tenpō 10/1839. (Nara Women's University Academic Information Center). <https://doi.org/10.20730/100241606>

—Ema Saikō 江馬細香 (1787–1861), “On Reading the *Genji*”
(*Gengo wo yomu* 読源語)¹⁰

(4) 黄昏や扇をのする白ぼたん

The hour of dusk—when the fan is the one borne, by a white peony.

—Sonome 園女 (1664–1726), *Soga monogatari* 曾我物語
(pub. Kyōhō 享保 15/1730)

¹⁰ Composed in Bunsei 文政 12/1829. Text in *Shōmu ikō* 湘夢遺稿, vol. 2 (pub. Meiji 4/1871). Facsimile edition: *Shishū Nihon kanshi* (op. cit.), vol. 15, p. 162. Annotated edition: *Ema Saikō shishū: 'Shōmu ikō' (ge)* 江馬細香詩集『湘夢遺稿』下, ed. Kado Reiko 門玲子 (Kyūko Shoin, 1992), pp. 257–258. See also *Breeze through Bamboo: Kanshi of Ema Saikō*, tr. Hiroaki Sato (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 117, 215–216.

夕兒

- (5) タがほの花に扇をあてぬるはたそかれ時の垣のぞきかな

Topic: Evening Faces

Why did Yūgao have her fan there exactly where the flowers were?

Could it be that at twilight, she was having a hedge-peek herself?

—Ishida Mitoku 石田未得 (1587?–1669), *Gogin nagashū* 吾吟我集
(pub. c. Keian 慶安 2/1649?)

白扇子にかきつけ侍ける

- (6) しのびてもそれとやしろきさしあふぎこれ見つらめとゆふがほの花

Topic: Written on a White Fan

Furtive as you please, obvious as daylight a white fan held out like that;

How could Koremitsu—of course he would see her “evening flower.”

—Nakai Bokuyō 半井卜養 (1607–1678), *Bokuyō kyōka shūi* 卜養狂歌拾遺
(pub. Kanbun 9/1669)

And these are but a sample of the various works produced.¹¹

The examples begin with two pieces of *waka*, the second of which contains a play on words around the homonyms “wife” (*tsuma* 妻) and “edge” (*tsuma* 棲) for a double-entendre difficult to translate (reproduced here in part with “married, be it but to the edge of a fan”). The third example, a poem in Chinese, draws more broadly upon the story of the *Tale of Genji*. The “single fan” is a sign of the marital bond, and even if that “perfume” proves to “be vain,” still “the root itself breaks not,” and yet “another vine” will be “put[] forth,” all of which is to convey that though Yūgao herself quickly dies, Hikaru Genji will later care for her orphaned child Tamakazura 玉鬘 (partially homophonous with *kazura* “vine”)—and in time feel romantically for her as well. The shorter fourth poem, in contrast, is a *haikai*-sequence *hokku* 発句 (“starting verse” of a linked-verse sequence), in which the *yūgao* flower has become a white peony. The fifth and sixth poems are both *kyōka* 狂歌, the latter of which contains an additional pun relevant to the story, playing on the phrase *kore mitsurame*, which means both literally “he [=Hikaru Genji’s servant Koremitsu] must have seen it [=Yūgao’s flower],” while also containing concealed that servant’s own name: *kore mitsu(rame)*. To summarize in more generic terms, the “refined” (*ga* 雅) register of the first three examples—traditional *waka* and a poem in Chinese—is thus matched by the more “common” (*zoku* 俗) register of the latter three—*haikai* and *kyōka*, signaling the literary breadth of the link’s reception.

¹¹ Suzuki Ken’ichi, “Edo shūka ni okeru ‘Yūgao’ no maki sesshu” 江戸詩歌における「夕顔」巻撰取, in *Genji monogatari to sono kyōju kenkyū to shiryō* 源氏物語とその享受研究と資料, ed. Murasaki Shikibu Gakkai 紫式部学会 (Tokyo: Musashino Shoin, 2005).

This breadth extends even beyond the written word. In the field of painting, Suzuki Harunobu's 鈴木春信 (1725?–1770) *ukiyo-e* rendering of the scene is well-known, and in the collections of Tokyo National Museum there survives an Edo-period kimono treating the motif: an ornate *karaori* 唐織 robe bearing the images of Lady Yūgao and her fan.¹² Even in the fictional *Hyakka-chō mitate bonzō: fudetsu mushikoe no toridori* 百化帖準擬本草：筆津虫音禽 (pub. Kansei 10/1798), a *kibyōshi* work by Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816) with illustrations by Kitao Shigemasa 北尾重政 (1739–1820), one can find a phrase like the following: “*Hi-ōgi* fans go with the *yūgao* flowers over on Fifth Avenue.”¹³ As such examples make clear, reception of the original association, as found in other forms of art and different styles of writing, was as varied as it was broad.

[B] *The Tale of the Heike*, “The Death of Atsumori”: Kumagai Naozane Taunts Atsumori with an *ōgi*

Found in volume 9 of *The Tale of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari* 平家物語), the moment in the “The Death of Atsumori” episode where Kumagai Naozane 熊谷直実 taunts his enemy, Taira no Atsumori 平敦盛, to halt his seaward flight and instead turn and fight him—“[Naozane] beckoned to [Atsumori] with his fan. . . . The warrior came back”¹⁴—is a justly famous literary scene of *ōgi* usage.

Alongside readings of the passage itself, through visual arts like painting and various other such channels, the single action of Naozane taunting Atsumori with an *ōgi*-fan came to be accepted as symbolizing the “Death of Atsumori” scene as a whole. Based on that common understanding it was taken up as material, as much in poetic allusions as in the playful punning of humor collections.

In painting, among the oldest treatments of the scene, as introduced by Prof. Kitamura Masayuki 北村昌幸,¹⁵ are (1) the late-Muromachi illustrated scroll *Ko-Atsumori emaki* 小敦盛絵巻 in the Waseda University Library,¹⁶ and (2) the early modern-period Tosa-school 土佐派 folding screen *Ichinotani kassen-zu byōbu* 一の谷合戦図屏風 at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum.¹⁷ Both works are agreed

¹² Known under the title: 赤緑茶段青海波扇夕顔模様唐織. See *Genji no isho* 源氏の意匠, eds. Akiyama Ken 秋山虔 et al. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1998), p. 116.

¹³ 檜扇は五条あたりの夕顔の花に類し.

¹⁴ *The Tale of the Heike*, tr. Helen McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 316.

¹⁵ Kitamura Masayuki 北村昌幸, “*Heike monogatari* no teisho” 『平家物語』の汀渚, in *Hamabe no bungakushi* 浜辺の文学史, ed. Suzuki Ken'ichi (Miyai Shoten, 2017).

¹⁶ *Ko-Atsumori emaki* 小敦盛絵巻, 2 rolls (Waseda University Library). Images made publically available: https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/chi04/chi04_02084/index.html. Also. 360°, 3D images available: <https://www.waseda.jp/library/news/2016/08/31/1890/>.

¹⁷ *Ichinotani kassen-zu byōbu* 一の谷合戦図屏風, pair of screens, 6 panels each (Tokyo Fuji Art Museum). Images made publically available: https://www.fujibi.or.jp/our-collection/profile-of-works.html?work_id=3559.

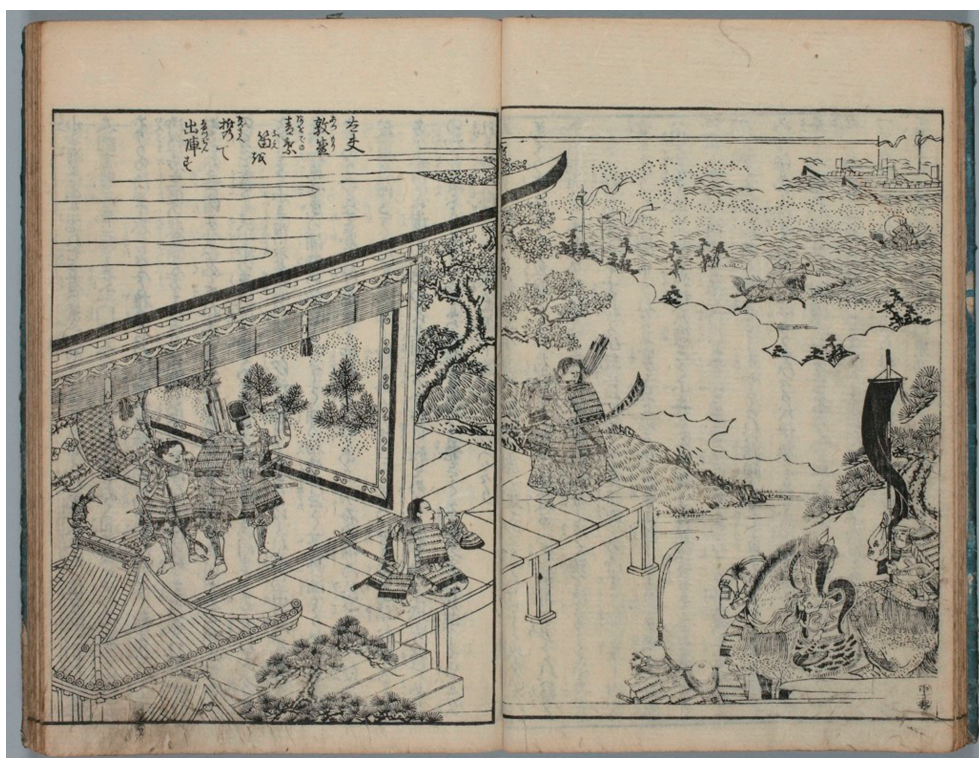


Figure 5. Right, background: Kumagai Naozane 熊谷直実 raises an *ōgi*-fan in challenge. Illustration from *Genpei seisuiiki zue* 源平盛衰記図会, Akisato Ritō 秋里籬島, pub. Kansei 6/1794, vol. 5, “Kumagai Atsumori wo utsu narabi ni Heike no kindachi uchi-jini” 熊谷討敦盛并平家公達討死. (National Institute of Japanese Literature). <https://doi.org/10.20730/200016986>

in depicting Naozane on the shore, a fan in one hand, and Atsumori on horseback in the midst of the surf. The same is the case with the corresponding section in volume 5 (“Kumagai Atsumori wo utsu narabi ni Heike no kindachi uchi-jini” 熊谷討敦盛并平家公達討死) of the *Genpei seisuiiki zue* 源平盛衰記図会 (pub. Kansei 6/1794), by Akisato Ritō 秋里籬島, with illustrations by Nishimura Chūwa 西村中和 and Oku Sadaakira 奥貞章 (?–1813) (**Figure 5**). In *ukiyo-e*, there exist at least three treatments of the scene, in works by Suzuki Harunobu, Utagawa Sadahide 歌川貞秀 (1807–1879), and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi 月岡芳年 (1839–1892), among which Yoshitoshi’s stands out in particular, for its boldness in visual composition. From an early-modern standpoint, works such as *Ko-Atsumori emaki* and *Ichinotani kassen-zu byōbu* are examples of literary “knowledge” as circulated, while the *Genpei seisuiiki zue*, or paintings in the *ukiyo-e* genre, constitute examples of knowledge applied. Yet as discussed above, applications of “knowledge” also themselves circulate, and ultimately feed back into the new wave of applications to follow.

Let us look now at a late early-modern humor collection, the *Fukukitaru* 富久喜多留 (preface pub. date: Bunka 11/1814) by Tachikawa Ginba 立川銀馬, where under a section on puns (*jiguchi* 地口), he recounts a case of word-play involving the Genpei War being used to hawk soba noodles. Here I quote only the first half, underlining the puns:

摂津の国一の谷は、いにしへ、元暦の頃、源平戦場の跡とて、平家の公達、無官の大夫敦盛の墓とて、何人が建てけん、五輪の石碑残れり。今はその前並木の方に、海の面を見晴らしたる所に、蕎麦を商ふ者ありて、往来の旅人を日の丸の扇にて呼びかけ、「そばのあつもり、あがらんか、あんばひ義経」といふ。地口好きの江戸もの、これを聞きて喜び、「代銭いかほど」といへば、「あつもり十六才の時」といふ。

In Ichinotani in Settsu one finds a five-step stone pagoda, built by who knows who, some say in memory of the ancient battlefield there from the Genpei War in the Genryaku 元暦 era [1184–85], some say as a grave for the fallen lords of the Taira clan, or for the Rankless Official Atsumori. Nowadays, by the line of trees fronting that marker, at a spot with a good view on the sea, there is a man who sells soba noodles. As people pass by, this fellow beckons them with a rising-sun fan, shouting, “Atsumori soba! Come and get it! Specially cooked Yoshitsune-style!” People from Edo—great lovers of such puns—are just delighted to hear this, and when they ask how much it costs, the man replies, “When Atsumori was only sixteen...”

As we can see from this, the *ōgi* was itself a token used to recall the scene, even when that purpose was as fodder for humor.

For examples in poetry, from the collection *Haifū yanagidaru* 誹風柳多留 we have the *senryū* 川柳: “With the very fan that taunted, Kumagai now catches his falling hair” (*maneida ōgi Kumagai wa ke-uke ni shi*).¹⁸ And from a Bakumatsu-period *kanshi* collection we have the following by Arai Gyōmin 荒井堯民, in his *Honchō jinbutsu hyakuei* 本朝人物百咏 (preface pub. date: Ansei 安政 2/1855):

淡粧公子は平家	Lightly made-up, a lord's son, he was of the Taira clan;
単騎加鞭馳海涯	A lone rider, wielding the whip, he galloped into the surf.
開扇喚帰猛勇士	The fan opened, calling him back, that of the brave warrior;
可憐風力散春花	Mourn, have pity, when tempest's might scatters the flowers of spring!

—Arai Gyōmin 荒井堯民, “Taira no Atsumori” 平敦盛

Here the warrior Naozane is represented by “tempest’s might,” and Atsumori himself by “flowers of spring.” By putting the fan at its expressive center, however, the poem acts nonetheless to further that token’s development in reception of the Naozane/Atsumori episode as literary “knowledge.”

¹⁸ 招だ扇熊谷は毛請にし。 *Haifū yanagidaru* 誹風柳多留, vol. 97 (preface pub. date: Bunsei 10/1827). Text in *Haifū yanagidaru zenshū* 誹風柳多留全集, ed. Okada Hajime 岡田甫 (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1976–1984), vol. 7, p. 282.

[C] *The Tale of the Heike*, “Nasu no Yoichi”: Wherein Yoichi Shoots the Target on an *ōgi*-Fan

There is one more scene in *The Tale of the Heike* for which a fan serves as an important token. The episode in question:

... there emerged from the cabin an elegant beautiful lady eighteen or nineteen years old, attired in a red divided skirt and five willow-combination white robes with green linings. She produced a pole surmounted by a red fan with a golden sun design, wedged it between the prow and the planking, and beckoned, facing the land. ...

... [Yoichi] closed his eyes in silent prayer. “Hail, Great Bodhisattva Hachiman and ye gods of my province of Nikkō, Utsu-no-miya and Nasu Yuzen! Vouch-safe that I may hit the center of that fan. ...” When he opened his eyes, the wind seemed somewhat gentler, and the fan looked easier to hit.

—*The Tale of the Heike*, vol. 11, “Nasu no Yoichi” (那須与一)¹⁹

This is the scene where (the Minamoto warrior) Nasu no Yoichi shoots and hits the target on an *ōgi*-fan.

Beyond reading the original text, recognition of the fan as a token signifying the “Nasu no Yoichi” episode was spread through a variety of channels, including commentaries and *haikai tsukeaisho*, as well as other forms of art like painting. Based on this shared understanding, it became material for writing poetry, in Chinese and in Japanese.

For commentaries, Nonomiya Sadamoto 野宮定基 (1669–1711) in his *Heike monogatari kōshō* 平家物語考証 (vol. 11) had this to say on the scene: “A ‘bat-fan’ with vermillion coloring added. This corresponds to the red of the rising sun. Nonetheless, depicting an image of the sun rising was doubtless not their purpose.”²⁰ *Haikai ruisenshū* also draws a connection between the “*ōgi*-fan” and the “boats of the Taira clan” (*Heike no fune* 平家の舟).²¹

There are many visual representations of the scene as well. In addition to an illustration from the *Heike monogatari* text published in Meireki 明暦 2/1656 (**Figure 6**), there is another in the *Ehon kojidan* 絵本故事談 (pub. Shōtoku 4/1714) illustrated by Tachibana Morikuni 橘守国 (1679–1748), and also a picture in the *Genpei seisuiiki zue*. Among *ukiyo-e* paintings there exists a *mitate* presentation of the scene by Suzuki Harunobu.

How does the scene fare in poetry? The Bakumatsu-period collection *Yamato nishiki* やまとにしき by Takahashi Zanmu 高橋残夢 (1775–1851) contains the following verse:

射たりけむ扇のまとにかくる日のかげのまばゆき業にも有かな

¹⁹ *The Tale of the Heike* (op. cit.), pp. 366, 368.

²⁰ Text in *Heike monogatari hyōchū*, *Heike monogatari kōshō* 平家物語標註・平家物語考証, *Nihon bungaku kochūshaku taisei*, *Heike monogatari kochūshaku taisei* 日本文学古註釈大成・平家物語古註釈大成 (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1978), p. 680.

²¹ *Haikai ruisenshū* (op. cit.), p. 400.

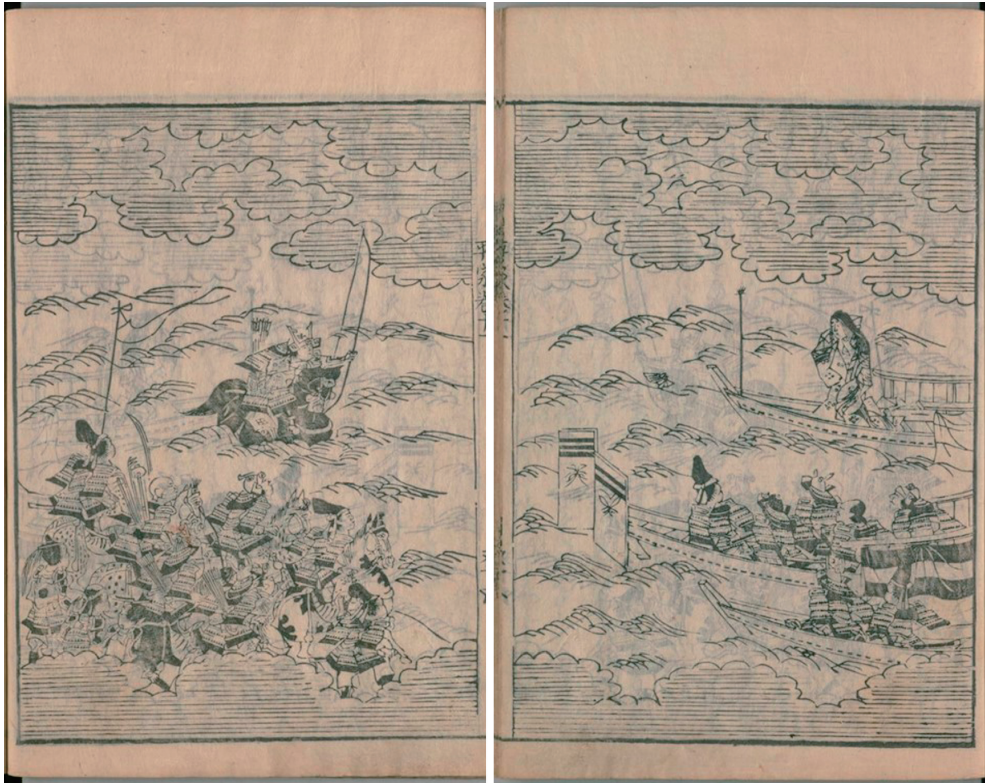


Figure 6. After (L) Nasu no Yoichi's shot, (R) the fan tumbles into the waves. Illustration from *Heike monogatari* 平家物語, vol. 11, "Nasu no Yoichi no koto" なすの与一の事, pub. Meireki 2/1656. (National Institute of Japanese Literature). <https://doi.org/10.11501/2567341>

The truly-shot fan-target marked by the sun—how blinding-bright
The shadow that was cast by the glory of that deed!

—Takahashi Zanmu 高橋残夢, *Yamato nishiki* やまとにしき
(preface pub. date: Kaei 嘉永 2/1849)

The poem seeks to commemorate Yoichi's feat, praising his skill as something that shines, indeed with the light of that very sun painted to be the fan's target. Likewise in his *Honchō jinbutsu hyakuei*, Arai Gyōmin writes:

軍船官女遙如華	On the war-boat, court maidservant, far off a blossom she seemed.
辱敵計謀却相差	Enemy mocking, their plans and ploys turned now themselves to hinder,
一箭鳴弦飄扇的	A single shot the bowstring shrieked, and the fan's target tumbled;
源家勇士武人花	Minamoto in clan the hero, flower among men of war.

—Arai Gyōmin, "Nasu no Munetaka" 那須宗高

I end this section in quoting a famous passage from the *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史 (orig. preface date: Bunsei 文政 10/1827) of Rai Sanyō 頼山陽 (1781–1832), which can be said to have contributed to the episode’s circulation as a work of history, and to its literary application by expressing that same history in such exquisite language:

敵以一舟載美姫、挿扇于竿、植之舳、去陸五十歩、麾而請射。(中略) 宗高一発断扇轂、扇翻而墮。

The enemy bore a comely maiden midships and she, setting atop a rod a fan full-splayed, planted this now in the bow, and with the ship fifty paces offshore, issued a challenge to shoot it. . . . Munetaka rent the fan’s very hub with a single shot, and the fan tumbled and fell.²²

[D] Other Representations Connected to *ōgi*

Above, examining one case from the *Tale of Genji*, and two cases from *The Tale of the Heike*, we saw the *ōgi*-fan functioning as token within Japanese literary works of the highest rank, observing many examples also of it being circulated and creatively put to use as an item of Japanese (*wa*) literary “knowledge.” From these, it can be concluded that the *ōgi*-fan has in general a character of elevated refinement. As an aside, I briefly note below two further examples of *ōgi* thus functioning as a literary token.

First, in the work *Shingaku hayaōmegusa* 心学早染草 (pub. Kansei 2/1790), by Santō Kyōden with illustrations by Kitao Masayoshi 北尾政美, there is a scene portraying a battle between the proverbial “good side” (*zendama* 善玉) and “bad side” (*akudama* 悪玉), wherein it is figures on the “bad side” who are seen brandishing the *ōgi*-fan, with the purpose of rousing evil thoughts. This iconography of the “bad side” wielding the *ōgi* was moreover passed down afterwards as something of a stock portrayal.²³

Another example is a pictorial representation featuring Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 using the *ōgi*-fan to beckon the very sunset to stop, for construction purposes related to Itsukushima Shrine 厳島神社—an image which begins to appear more frequently from the later early-modern period onward.

[E] The *ōgi*-Fan in Early-Modern Life

As discussed above, the basis upon which all representations of literary “knowledge” linked to the *ōgi*-fan rested was the universal quotidian use of that object in early-modern domestic environments.

Already early on in the early modern period, with this *haikai*—

²² Text in Rai Sanyō 頼山陽, *Kōkoku Nihon gaishi* 校刻日本外史 (preface pub. date: Tenpō 15/1844), vol. 3.

²³ Sekihara Aya 関原彩, “*Shingaku hayaōmegusa zendama/akudama no eikyō*: Kansei kara Bunka/Bunsei made” 『心学早染草』 善玉悪玉の影響：寛政から文化・文政まで, *Gakushūin daigaku Kokugo kokubun gakkaiishi* 学習院大学国語国文学会誌 58 (2015).

涼しさも末ひろごりの扇かな

Coolness—another thing that unfolds round and outwards, just like its fan.

—Matsunaga Teitoku, *Enoko shū* 犬子集 (pub. Kan'ei 寛永 10/1633)

being the earliest example, the *ōgi*-fan begins to feature as a very frequent subject of early-modern poetry, both in Japanese and in Chinese. Combining eclectically as it did the more vulgar aspects of a presence always close to hand, together with its own more refined and elegant aspects, the fan was thus not merely a simple class of object, but a cultural entity unto itself.

4. The *uchiwa* as Representing Chinese (*kan*) Literary “Knowledge”: Two Cases

Next, I want to expand this examination to consider also the *uchiwa*-fan. I have not been able to discover for the *uchiwa* any examples of associated Japanese literary “knowledge” like those found with the *ōgi*-fan. What stands out instead are Chinese literary associations, of which the story of Lady Ban’s autumn fan can serve as a paradigmatic case. We begin by reviewing its details.

[A] Lady Ban’s Autumn Fan

In the Former Han period, during the reign of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (51–7 B.C.), a female poet known as Ban Jieyu 班婕妤 (c. 48–c. 6 B.C.) (Jp. Han Shōyo) composed the poem “Yuange xing” 怨歌行 (Song of Regret), later collected in volume 27 of the *Wen xuan* 文選:

新裂齊紈素 鮮潔如霜雪
裁成合歡扇 团团似明月
出入君懷袖 動搖微風發
常恐秋節至 涼飈奪炎熱
棄捐篋笥中 恩情中道絕²⁴

If newly sheared, silk from the land of Qi
Is purest fresh, no less than frost or the snow.
Cut it to fit the pair-matched sides of a fan,
And round as round, it mirrors the full-bright moon.
Always in and out of my lord’s own garments’ arms,
It moves and sways to send up the slightest breeze.
Yet ever it fears, when days of autumn arrive,
Should the chill gales steal off all its heat and warmth,
Abandonment, in some box to lie away,
With tender love’s cord at midpoint for all time snapped.

Above all, she expresses here her fear of losing the emperor’s favor, comparing it to a fan being cast away into some box with the arrival of autumn. This truly

²⁴ Text in *Monzen* 文選 (pub. Kan’ei 2/1625), vol. 27. Annotated edition: *Monzen shihen* 文選詩篇, eds. Kawai Kōzō 川合康三 et al. (Iwanami Shoten, 2018), vol. 4, pp. 370–373.

famous story came to be widely recognized, not only through readings of the original text, but also through various other channels such as *haikai tsukeaisho*. Based on this shared understanding, it became material for writing poetry in Chinese and Japanese, or even prose *gesaku* 戯作.

Already in this poem from the *kanshi* collection *Chūka jakuboku shishō* 中華若木詩抄—

巧製齊紈宮様新	Expert cut, the silk of Qi renews the palace prospect;
高堂六月主恩頻	Tall towers in the Sixth Month, my lord's kindnesses frequent.
一朝秋至寵還断	Then one morning autumn comes, and his favor stops cold;
恨在西風不在人	Still my anger is with the west wind, and not with the man himself.

—Sa'in 西胤 (1358–1422), “Autumn Fan” (*Shūsen* 秋扇)²⁵

we see reception of the trope, here moreover with a new interpretation, attributing the lady's loss of the emperor's love to the appearance of a new beauty.

Entering the early modern period, the association between “*ōgi*-fan” and “Lady Ban” (Hanjo) is recorded in the *Haikai ruisenshū*. To take a specific example in *haikai* poetry:

秋とならん契宇治茶の後むかし
をけるあふぎのしばしおなさけ

In autumn things fade, yesterday's fresh-cut promise today's Uji tea: *Seasons Past*—
As of a fan cast aside, kindness, just for a while!

—Sōin 宗因 (1605–1682), *Sōin dokugin koi haikai hyakuin* 宗因独吟恋俳諧百韻,
“Hana de sōrō” 花で候²⁶

Here the connection is used to convey: “Being like a fan cast aside in autumn myself, give me at least a little while's kindness!”²⁷ There are also poems such as —

つくづくと絵を見る秋の扇哉

How much more closely one looks over the painting of an autumn fan!
—Shōshun 小春, *Arano* 阿羅野 (preface pub. date: Genroku 元禄 2/1689)

among many others, attesting to the frequency with which cases of this autumn fan concept are encountered.

²⁵ Text in 中華若木詩抄 *Chūka jakuboku shishō* (pub. Kan'ei 10/1633), vol. 1. Annotated edition: *Chūka jakuboku shishō, Yunoyama renkushō* 中華若木詩抄・湯山聯句鈔, vol. 53 of *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 (Iwanami Shoten, 1995), pp. 4–5.

²⁶ For text see: Fukasawa Shinji 深沢真二 and Fukasawa Noriko 深沢了子, “Sōin dokugin koi haikai hyakuin ‘Hana de sōrō’ no maki chūshaku” 宗因独吟恋俳諧百韻「花で候」巻注釈, *Kamigata bungei kenkyū* 上方文藝研究 15 (2018).

²⁷ This interpretation follows the commentary in Fukasawa and Fukasawa 2018 (v. s.).

A picture under the title “Lady Ban’s Fan” (Hanjo no ōgi はん女の扇) is included in *Kyōbun takara-awase no ki* 狂文宝合記 (pub. Tenmei 3/1783). The fan as depicted there, however, is clearly an *ōgi*, betraying an interpretation in Japanese terms. Indeed, quite likely in the story’s *haikai* reception as well, it was not the *uchwa* being envisioned, but again the *ōgi*—a reflection, in a sense, of just how far the story itself had been “Japanified.”

[B] “Little Fan Swats Firefly”

To better understand such representations of *uchwa*-borne Chinese literary “knowledge,” let us look at one more example, this time one considerably less famous than Lady Ban’s fan in autumn. We will consider the development of the poetic tag “Little Fan Swats Firefly” (Ch. *xiaoshan pu ying* 小扇撲螢). (Having already discussed this case in depth elsewhere,²⁸ here I will limit myself to the argument’s main points).

We begin with a quatrain-stanza “Palace Poem” (Ch. *gongci* 宮詞) by Wang Jian 王建 (847–918), anthologized in *Santaishi* 三体詩 (Jp. *Santaishi* or *Santeishi*):

銀燭秋光冷画屏	Silver candle, autumn light, cold against the painted screens;
輕羅小扇撲流螢	Lightly silk-paned, her little fan swats a passing firefly.
玉階夜色涼如水	Stairs of cut jade, night’s tableau, like the water’s touch icy-chill;
臥看牽牛織女星	Lying she looks at Cowherd above, and at Weaver, always waiting. ²⁹

The explanation here for the little fan’s firefly-swatting would seem to lie in the palace maiden taking out on the firefly her own anger at failing to gain the emperor’s favor (the interpretation of the commentary *Santaishi Soin shō* 三体詩素隱抄³⁰). As a poetic tag, recognition of “Little Fan Swats Firefly” gradually expanded, not only through readings of this original text, but also thus through vernacular commentaries (*shōmono* 抄物), or through collections of verse in Chinese such as *Lianzhu shige* 聯珠詩格 and *Shiren yuxie* 詩人玉屑, among a number of other channels. By the middle of the early modern period, in non-court-style *waka* the tag saw itself reframed to fit a type of scene far closer to actual life in Japan: the popular pastime of “firefly hunting.” Such reframing is an excellent example of what this article means by “application” of literary “knowledge.”

²⁸ Suzuki Ken’ichi, *Kinsei tōshō kadan no kenkyū* 近世堂上歌壇の研究 (Kyūko Shoin, 1996), pp. 211–215.

²⁹ Text in *Zōchū Token zekku santaishibō* 増註唐賢絶句三体詩法 (pub. Meireki 3/1657), part 1 (*jō*) of vol. 1.

³⁰ Facsimile edition: *Santaishi Soin shō* 三体詩素隱抄, 2 vols., ed. Nakada Norio 中田祝夫 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1977).

To illustrate I quote below *waka* by the poets Ozawa Roan 小沢蘆庵 (1723–1801), Ban Kōkei 伴蒿蹊 (1733–1806), and Kamo no Suetaka 賀茂季鷹 (1754–1841):

小扇撲螢

うなゐらがきそふ扇を打ちやめてあがるほたるを悔しとぞみる

Topic: Little Fan Swats Firefly

All the children, trying to outswat each other, stopped and held their fans—

Watching now with bitterness as the firefly escaped.

—Ozawa Roan 小沢蘆庵, *Rokujo eisō* 六帖詠草 (pub. Bunka 8/1811)³¹

螢

うなゐ子がまねく扇にはかられて空ゆく螢袖にとまれり

Topic: Fireflies

The child had him—persuaded down with her fan—so thoroughly tricked,

The sky-going firefly parked himself right on her sleeve.

—Ban Kōkei 伴蒿蹊, *Kanden eisō* 閑田詠草 (pub. Bunsei 1/1818)

たをや女の扇もて螢をおふ所

少女子が扇の風に靡きつゝなか／＼高く行くほたるかな

Topic: Maiden Chasing Firefly with an *ōgi*-Fan

The little maiden with her fan sends up a wind that quite entices,

Yet how remarkably high the firefly steers his course!

—Kamo no Suetaka 賀茂季鷹, *Unkin'ō kashū* 雲錦翁家集
(pub. Tenpō 2/1831)

Here we have examined two cases of Chinese literary “knowledge,” this time revolving instead around the *uchwa*-fan. To put the matter differently, as regards Japanese literary “knowledge” the *uchwa* seems not to possess any function. In such a light, compared to the *ōgi*-fan, the *uchwa* can be characterized more clearly as low and “vulgar.”

By artistic practices of the medieval period, stereotype painting-topics of Chinese (*kan*) association were to be painted on *uchwa*-shaped fan-paper. In this sense too, the *uchwa* is, culturally-speaking, “Chinese.” This Chinese character in turn connects the *uchwa* to the sphere of *kyō* (i.e. as of *kyōka*, or “mad” poetry). This then leads back again to the “vulgar” realm, the world to which it seems, ultimately, the *uchwa* firmly belongs.

[C] The Acceptance of Chinese Elements within Elements Japanese

The everyday familiarity providing the necessary basis for such a reception of

³¹ Poem 477. Annotated edition: *Rokujo eisō* 六帖詠草, ed. Suzuki Jun 鈴木淳, in vol. 70 of *Waka bungaku taikai* 和歌文学大系 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 2013), p. 99.

the *uchina* along Chinese lines was derived, without doubt, from the place of the *uchina* fan in quotidian usage. In summertime scenes of enjoying a moment's cool, the figures depicted are shown holding *uchina* in their hands. The image of the fan-seller in Suzuki Harunobu's "Kasamori O-sen to uchiwa-uri" 笠森お仙と団扇売り, for instance, is particularly well-known. Poems such as the following—

涼しさを進上申すあふぎかな

Ah, for the fan, so humbly does it offer up the gift of coolness!

—Ryūho 立圃, *Sora-tsubute* 空つぶて (pub. Keian 2/1649)

寝て居ても団扇のうごく親心

Sleeping or awake, the fan never fails to move—a parent's love.

—*Haifu yanagidaru* 誹風柳多留³²

うちは

をりをりにあふぐも夢のうちはかな身に来る風も知らぬうたたね

Topic: *uchina*-fan

From time to time, looking up the fan finds me in dreamland again—

Its breeze hitting the body like a sudden gust of nap.

—Ōkuma Kotomichi 大隈言道 (1798–1868),

Sōkeishū 草徑集 (pub. Bunkiyū 文久 4/1864)

also give evidence of this.

This is not to say, however, that cases of *uchina* alluding to “knowledge” of a “Japanese” pedigree are entirely lacking. Let us note a few such examples.

First, there is the case of the battle-*uchina* used in the wars of medieval Japan. One particularly famous episode involving such a fan took place at the Battle of Kawanakajima 川中島, where Takeda Shingen 武田信玄 (1521–1573) used his battle-fan to stop the blade of Uesugi Kenshin 上杉謙信 (1530–1578). This scene was among those included in the collection *Ehon kojidan*, illustrated by Tachibana Morikuni. As *Nihon gaishi* records it, “[Kenshin] raised his sword and struck. Shingen, with no time to draw his own sword, blocked this using the signal fan (*kisen* 麾扇) he had been holding. The fan broke.”³³ Nonetheless, such battle-use *uchina* should probably be distinguished from the *uchina* used in everyday life.

Also, in novels of the early modern period, the *uchina* was famously what the God of Poverty (*Binbōgami* 貧乏神) held in his hand. Being a god of the winds, perhaps the *uchina* was for stirring up the air. **Figure 7** is an illustration from Ihara Saikaku's 井原西鶴 (1642–1693) *Nippon eitaigura* 日本永代蔵 (pub. Jōkyō 貞享 5/1688), chapter 1 of volume 4, captioned “Tray from the Gods as a Sign of Prayer” (*inoru shirusbi no kami no oshiki* 祈る印の神の折敷).

³² *Haifu yanagidaru*, vol. 1 (pub. Meiwa 2/1765). Text in *Haifu yanagidaru zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 1, p. 18.

³³ 拳刀撃之信玄不暇拔刀以所持麾扇扞之扇折. *Kokoku Nihon gaishi* (op. cit.), vol. 11.

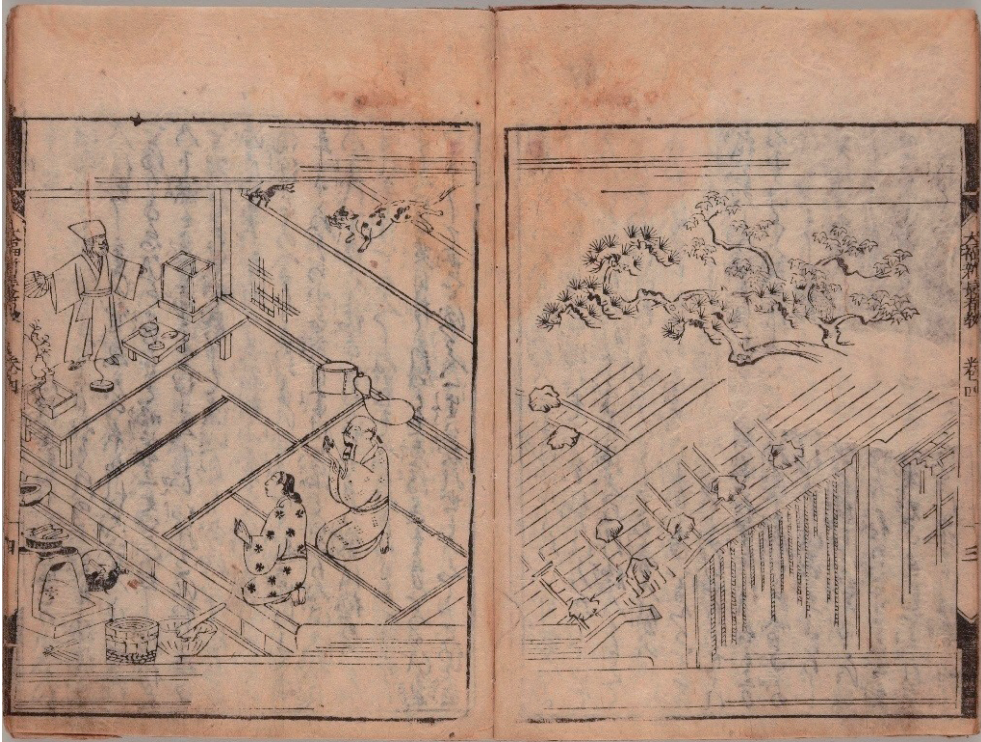


Figure 7. Upper Left: The God of Poverty holds an *uchiva* in the right hand. Illustration from Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴, *Nippon eitaigura* 日本永代蔵, pub. Jōkyō 5/1688, ch. 1 of vol. 4, “Inoru shirushi no kami no oshiki” 祈る印の神の折敷. (National Institute of Japanese Literature, Kōjō Isao Bunko). <https://doi.org/10.20730/200015843>

All the same, such connections between the *uchiva*-fan and the God of Poverty or Tengu Demons are admittedly somewhat insubstantial as story-frames when compared to other examples like Yūgao's *ōgi*, or the *ōgi* used by Naozane to taunt Atsumori, or the *ōgi* bullseye of Nasu no Yoichi, or Lady Ban seeing herself in the discarded fan of autumn.

5. Conclusion

As I explained at the beginning, not limited to an aesthetics of nature and named landscapes alone, unique literary resonances could also attach themselves to specific categories of object. Through the structure inherent to such literary “knowledge,” moreover, as these resonances circulated and spread in society, they became available for creative application.

By the early modern period, the conduits for such a process had attained a dazzling variety. Through the triumph of print culture, for example, not only could such “knowledge” be circulated more easily and widely than ever before, it was

also simply encountered more frequently. And with the rise also of a mass culture, one can observe a broadening in the traditional dyad-values of “refinement” (*ga*) and “vulgarity” (*zoku*). In contrast, ages up through the medieval period knew only a limited circulation based on manuscripts, and conduits for knowledge were far less dazzling in their variety. The refined and the vulgar, too, were as concepts more narrowly defined.

In this article, I have explored such phenomena through a concrete focus on specific objects: *ōgi* and *uchinwa* fans. Here at the end, I want to consider the issue more broadly from the standpoint of Sino-Japanese comparison.

As we have seen, despite the *ōgi*’s Japanese origins, and the contrastingly greater authority we expect the *uchinwa* to derive from its origins in China, we find that while resonances with Japanese literary “knowledge” exist for the *ōgi*, for the *uchinwa* such associations are rare. As a result, within Japan it is the *ōgi* that enjoys the greater air of refinement and luxury. The *uchinwa*, in contrast, is the more vulgar and commonplace. Yet what is responsible for causing this inversion of the usual hierarchy?

To begin with, the *ōgi* is found actually used in works like the *Tale of Genji*, acquiring thus a connection of historical depth to courtly aesthetics. And indeed, some reason for the inversion may lie merely in this: that before the *uchinwa* had a chance to make inroads aesthetically, the beauty of the *ōgi* had already taken root as a fixed idea.

It is also the case that as a matter of sheer functionality, the *ōgi* outdid the *uchinwa*. Not limited to mere unfolding and fanning, the *ōgi* also had a number of potential uses when folded up. The impression of freedom this gave, it is not unreasonable to imagine, might well have contributed to its association with the beautiful.³⁴

One might also see it this way: Alongside the traditional Japanese habit of imputing greater value to productions of Chinese origin, there has also existed among Japanese people a contrary impulse, attaching as much value to things from Japan as from China—if not indeed greater value—precisely because of their Japanese origin, attempting thereby to feel their own country superior.³⁵ Perhaps it is for this that people came to say that, compared to the *uchinwa*, the *ōgi* had the greater grace.

The reasons are in any case surely multiple, with no single one standing out. Because it is more than possible, moreover, to discover ample grace in the *uchinwa* as well, no clear-cut decisive difference between the two exists to be found. Indeed, especially as the people of early modern Japan steadily incorporated both types of fans into their everyday lives, the border between the two itself lost clarity.

As something, then, that characterizes the *ōgi* and the *uchinwa* both, one might say that the sense of an item for creating coolness in summer has ultimately prevailed all around.

³⁴ I am indebted to Prof. Matthias Hayek for this suggestion.

³⁵ Suzuki Ken’ichi, *Edo shūka-shi no kōzō* 江戸詩歌史の構想 (Iwanami Shoten, 2004), pp. 9–29.

Medieval Buddhism and Music: Musical Notation and the Recordability of the Voice

INOSE Chihiro

Translated by Jeffrey KNOTT

Music, which in the very moment of its making must vanish, is ultimately a poignant pursuit. The singing voices of people in ancient times, and the sounds of their instruments, are themselves forever beyond our ability to hear. In the latter 12th century, retired emperor Go-Shirakawa-in 後白河院 (1127–1192; r. 1155–1158), himself a passionate devotee of the musical art known as *imayō* 今様, left the following famous saying in his collection of *imayō* musical lore, the *Ryōjin hishō kudenshū* 梁塵秘抄口伝集:

こゑわざの悲しきことは、我が身隠れぬるのち、とどまることのなきなり。¹

Tragic are the works of the voice, for after the body itself perishes, nothing of them remains behind.

He laments here that after he himself has passed away “the works of the voice”—in this particular instance the sounds and melodies of *imayō*—will not be able to survive. Yet in fact there were those working actively, and in the same period, to pass on this intangible inheritance of music to later generations, through various methods such as musical notation, or the written records of oral teachings known as *kuden* 口伝.

In this article, I examine the attempts made by such figures to thus record and express the human voice, with a particular focus on the Buddhist chanting genre

¹ For text see: *Kaguranta, Saibara, Ryōjin hishō, Kanginshū* 神楽歌・催馬楽・梁塵秘抄・閑吟集, vol. 42 of *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2000), p. 380.

Note: In quotations from original sources here and below, where voicing marks and punctuation marks were lacking in the cited text, I have undertaken to supply them.

known as *shōmyō* 声明 and its notation in writing, tracing the course of these efforts from the latter 12th to the early 14th century.²

1. Collections of the Voice: Fujiwara no Moronaga

The first of these figures to examine for his achievements in making such written records of the intangible voice is Fujiwara no Moronaga 藤原師長 (1138–1192). As explained below, Moronaga is credited for his attempts to preserve the human voice and the sound of instruments in the form of musical notation.³

太政大臣師長、琵琶の譜にて作らむとてありしほどに、のちには習ひて、大曲の様はみなうたはれにき。⁴

When the Chancellor Moronaga would make transcripts [of *imayō*] in *biva*-notation, people later followed these, and the great songs (*taikyōku* 大曲) could be sung in all their fullness.

—*Ryōjin hishō kudenshū*

妙音院殿はかゝるいみじき御跡をうけ給はらせ給ひて、しかも又孝博候ひければ、道の御ふそくはなかりけれども、なを諸道の奥をあまねくさぐり、ひろくもとめさせ給ふ。絃管のたぐひは申すにをよばず、うち物・音曲・催馬楽・風俗・らうゑい・ざうげい・声明などまでも、ながれ／＼家々の説をつくしもとめさせ給ふ。⁵

Lord Myōon-in 妙音院 [=Moronaga] was heir to these august [*biva*] traditions. And because [his teacher] was [Fujiwara no] Takahiro 孝博, he was in that art without defect. Yet he also explored various other arts broadly and deeply, seeking instruction far and wide. To say nothing of music on string or wind instruments, he made exhaustive study of many traditions and lineages concerning, for example, instruments of percussion, *ongyōku* 音曲 song, *saibara* 催馬楽 song, *fuzōku* 風俗 song, *roei* [朗詠] chanting, *zōgei* [雑芸] song, *shōmyō* 声明 chanting, and so on.

—*Bunkidan* 文机談, vol. 2

Moronaga is known as the author of the *biva*-notation collection *Sango yōroku* 三五要録 (12 vols., with also a supplemental volume—sometimes counted as the 13th—of notation for *fuzōku* 風俗 songs), as well as of the *Jinchi yōroku* 仁智要録

² This article draws heavily on the following research of Shimizu Masumi 清水眞澄, who has already considered the question of the *Lotus Sutra* hymns, noted connections with the Kanazawa Bunko-bon 金沢文庫本 manuscript, and so on. See Shimizu Masumi, “Hōe to ka’ei: Minamoto no Tsunenobu kara Fujiwara no Toshinari e” 法会と歌詠：源経信から藤原俊成へ, in *Sei naru koe: waka ni hisomu chikara* 聖なる声：和歌にひそむ力 (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2011).

³ Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎, *Seija no suisan: chūsei no koe to woko naru mono* 聖者の推参：中世の声とヲコなるもの (Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2001), pp. 14–16. Okimoto Yukiko 沖本幸子, *Imayō no jidai* 今様の時代 (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006), pp. 189–193.

⁴ *Kaguranta*, *Saibara*, *Ryōjin hishō*, *Kanginsbū* (op. cit.), p. 380.

⁵ For text see: *Bunkidan: zenchūshaku* 文机談：全注釈, ed. Iwasa Miyoko 岩佐美代子 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2007), p. 114.

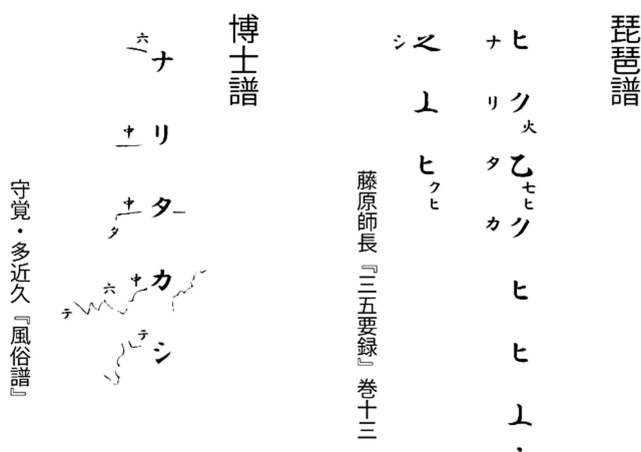


Figure 1. A comparison of notation systems. While in (left) *hakase*-notation 博士譜 the *fuzoku*-song lyric “*nari takashi*” ナリタカシ is centered with interlinear notation, in (right) *bima*-notation 琵琶譜 the lyric itself is interlinear and instead the notation is centered. (Prepared by author).

(12 vols.), a collection of musical notation for the *sō* 箏. Yet the research of recent years has shown that various examples of musical notation found in texts like *Bunkidan* 文机談 were also scored by Moronaga originally.

Moronaga’s scoring method made use of *bima*-notation (*bima-fu* 琵琶譜). At the time, the two main systems of notation used to record the voice were *bima*-notation and what is called “academic” or *hakase*-notation (*hakase-fu* 博士譜, after *hakase*, or “academician”). The *bima* system was based on a set of specialized characters for indicating notation, with these being centered in the line while the music’s lyrics themselves were written to their left and right. Each character in this set pointed to a specific arpeggio, and given a sequence of such characters, taking in succession the highest note of each arpeggio thus indicated would produce the underlying melody. In contrast to this, in the case of *hakase*-notation, as seen in **Figure 1**, the lyrics themselves were centered, with instead the notation being written to either side. Here the notation consisted of lines, whose starting points and angles served to indicate the melody. One feature of the *hakase* system is that embellishing these notational lines with oscillations or other curves allowed them to additionally express pitch-changes of a more subtle nature. As a general rule, *bima*-notation was used in scores prepared by the nobility, while *hakase*-notation was used in scores prepared by monks, though this was not always the case.

A list of the various scores Moronaga transcribed into *bima*-notation would include the following:

<i>saibara</i> 催馬楽	<i>Sango yōroku</i> 三五要録 (<i>hwa</i> scores),
	<i>Jinchi yōroku</i> 仁智要録 (<i>sō</i> scores)
<i>fuzoku</i> 風俗	<i>Sango yōroku</i> , supplemental volume (also as vol. 13)
<i>waka</i> 和歌 (<i>kami-uta</i> 神歌)	<i>Koma-kyoku nado no fu</i> 高麗曲等譜 ⁶
<i>imayō</i> 今様	<i>Sho-chōshi bon kakianase no fu</i> 諸調子品撥合譜 ⁷
<i>shōmyō</i> 声明	<i>Shōmyō-fu</i> 声明譜 ⁸

In this grouping, *waka* signifies something like the following:

神歌

ヤ アラタマノ トシタチカヘル アシタヨリ
ヤ アシタヨリ マタルルモノハ ウゲキスノコエ

Song to the Gods (*kami-uta*)

Oh! When rough gem-renewed / yet again the year turns round, /
from the break of dawn—
Oh! From the break of dawn / one waits, in longing already, /
for the warbler's song.

This is based on Monk Sosei's 素性法師 poem, found in the imperial anthology *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 as:

あらたまの年たちかへるあしたより待たるものは鶯の声⁹

When rough gem-renewed
yet again the year turns round,
from the break of dawn
one waits, in longing already,
for the warbler's song.

In this context, however, it was not as *waka* that it was included in Moronaga's collection, but rather as *kami-uta*, or "song to the gods." Accordingly, *kami-uta* being as a rule composed of an even number of verses, the poem has been modified from its original *waka* structure in five verses to produce a structure of six. In other words, by repeating the third verse *ashita yori* ("from the break of dawn"), the

⁶ *Koma-kyoku nado no fu* 高麗曲等譜 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-978. From the colophon: 文永七年 [1270] 十一月三十日書写之／同十二月十二日付拍子写点畢／此本孝頼所献孝時自筆也／但空神歌者妙音院太政大臣 [=Fujiwara no Moronaga] 自／筆也、依為最秘物為不及外／見不交他筆自書写之。

⁷ *Sho-chōshi bon kakianase no fu* 諸調子品撥合譜 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-1083.

⁸ *Shōmyō-fu* 声明譜 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-980. From the colophon: 建暦元年 [1211] 四月十二日書写了／右京權大夫藤原光俊／一校了。In other words, the manuscript was copied out by someone unidentified in Kenryaku 建暦 1/1211, then later collated by Hamuro Mitsutoshi 葉室光俊 (1203–1276). Fujiwara no Moronaga's original authorship of the text is inferred solely on the basis of an outer title (*gedai* 外題) inscribed directly on a front cover itself of later date, which reads: "*Shōmyō-fu* (by Myōon-in)" 声明譜 〈妙音院御作〉. Nonetheless, the attribution is a reasonable one, and not inconsistent with Moronaga's other work as a whole.

⁹ *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集, vol. 7 of *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), poem 5.

whole has been reformatted to fit a six-verse rhythm. Coming next in the list above, the *imayō* pieces in *biwa*-notation are a discovery of recent years, and consist of three *ashigara* 足柄 pieces identified as “great songs” (*taikyoku* 大曲)—the most secret and venerated rank of song—and one *imayō* piece identified as being of the *mono-no-yō* 物様 genre.¹⁰

Having thus briefly summarized *biwa*-notation scores by Moronaga in other genres, below I turn to consider his collection the *Shōmyō-fu* 声明譜 in greater depth. Starting with a group of pieces in the *bai* 唄 genre, the *Shōmyō-fu* comprises *biwa*-notation scores across ten genres all told, several pieces within which betray later additions by Saionji Sanekane 西園寺実兼 (1249–1322). The collection’s scores are atypical for pieces of *biwa*-notation in various ways, e.g. with some lyrics being recorded in Chinese characters, but in this article I want to highlight three of its songs in particular. The first of these is what can be called a “hymn to Mañjuśrī” 文殊讃,¹¹ having the following lyrics:

文殊讃

文殊菩薩出^テツ化清凉ウ神通力応現他方ウ
身座金毛獅子微放珠光
衆ウ生イ仰ウ待宝蓋絶名香ウ
我今発願虔誠イ帰命不求富貴不恋榮イ花
願当来世イ生 浄土法王家
願当来世イ生 浄土法王家¹²

Hymn to Mañjuśrī

Mañjuśrī comes forth, pure, his godly power answers the call;
Riding gold-coated lion, jewel-radiant, he casts his glow.
Living souls his canopy attend, with incenses sublime.
Now I pray, sincere on life, to seek not wealth, to love not fame—
Longing for future birth in the Pure Land, in Dharma-King’s home,
Longing for future birth in the Pure Land, in Dharma-King’s home.

The poem itself is said to be the work of Bai Juyi 白居易. According to Kien’s 喜淵 (b. 1254) work *Ongyoku sōjō shidai* 音曲相承次第,¹³ having earlier been brought

¹⁰ See Inose Chihiro 猪瀬千尋, “Shinshutsu imayō biwa-fu ashigara san-shu mononoyō isshu: *Seki no kami, Taki no mizu, Koiseba*, oyobi *Gongen ni tsuite*” 新出今様琵琶譜 足柄三首 物様一首: 「関神」「瀧水」「恋者」および「権現」について, *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 国語と国文学 96-10 (2019).

¹¹ For research on such hymns to Mañjuśrī, see the following: Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎, *Tokushi sōkō* 讀詞叢考 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1998; 1st ed. 1949); Kawaguchi Hisao 川口久雄, “Tonkō henbun ni okeru shōfu to ongyoku e no tenkai: Nihon bungaku to no kakawari ni oite” 敦煌変文における唱符と音曲への展開: 日本文学とのかかわりにおいて, *Chūgoku koten kenkyū* 中国古典研究 13 (1965).

¹² *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

¹³ Text from *Hōgi* (1): *Shōmyō hyōhyaku ruijū* 法儀 1: 声明表白類聚, in *Zoku Tendai-shū zensho* 続天台宗全書 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1996).

over from Wutai Mountain 五台山 in China by the Tendai 天台 monk Kaien 快円, the poem was transmitted in the year Kyūan 久安 4/1148 to Gyōunbō Rairyū 堯雲房頼隆. The line-breaks in the above excerpt, it is worth noting, follow punctuation marks given in the manuscript, yet these are not the breaks one would expect from the poem's actual rhyme scheme.¹⁴ This indicates that, despite being based upon a Chinese poem, it was ultimately as a piece of *shōmyō* chant that it was performed.

The second song involves what is called a “firewood hymn” (*takigi-san* 薪讃):

法華経讃歎 〈光明皇后作／風香調〉

法華経ヲ ワガエシコトハ
タキギコリ ナツミミヅクミ
ツカエテゾエシ
ツカエテゾエシ¹⁵

Hymn on the *Lotus Sutra* (by Empress Kōmyō 光明, in *fūgōchō* 風香調 key)

The *Lotus Sutra* / I came to receive only /
by cutting firewood, / by gathering herbs and water—
only by serving I received,
only by serving I received.

The genre of “firewood hymns” or “firewood verses” (*takigi-ku* 薪句) represented by this poem were chanted primarily in the course of a *Hokke hakkō* 法華八講—a performance of the canonical “Eight Lectures of the *Lotus* [Sutra].” These “Eight Lectures” events involved holding, over four days, a series of eight meetings for lectures on the *Lotus Sutra*'s eight volumes (comprising twenty-eight chapters). Of particular importance was the “fifth-volume day” on which the lecture sequence reached the “Devadatta” chapter (Jp. *Daibadatta-bon* 提婆達多品), contained within the sutra's fifth volume. It was on this day that such “firewood” hymns and verses were chanted, as commemorations of the story told in that chapter, of how in a previous life Śākyamuni had served Devadatta's own previous incarnation, the seer Asita (*Ashi-sen* 阿私仙), performing various menial tasks for the sage, among them the gathering of firewood. As a poem, the above verse is included in the imperial anthology *Shūi nakashū*, yet through credited there to Gyōki 行基 (668–749), a tradition attributing its authorship to Empress Kōmyō 光明 (701–760) gained widespread currency in the medieval period, as can be seen in the excerpt from Moronaga's *Shōmyō-fu* above.¹⁶ Here too, a five-verse

¹⁴ Cf. Nakata 1998 (note 11 above).

¹⁵ *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

¹⁶ E.g., in *Sanbō-e* 三宝絵, “This poem is said by some to have been composed by Empress Kōmyō, while others say it was transmitted by Gyōki Bodhisattva 行基菩薩.” See *Sanbō-e, Chūkōsen* 三宝絵・注好選, vol. 31 of *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系 (Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p. 130.

waka poem has been given a six-verse structure through repetition, this time of the original fifth and final verse. Similar to the case of Chinese poetry above, its shape as assumed here is not that of a *waka* poem, but rather that of a *shōmyō* chant.

Thus could the borrowed lyrics of *waka* and Chinese poetry be repurposed, through musical performance, to function as paeans to Buddhism. In the third example to be considered, the following *ge* 偈 verse, music is used to demonstrate the Buddhistic merits of music itself.

簫笛琴箏篴 琵琶鏡銅 []
如是衆妙音 尽持以供養¹⁷

Reed-pipe and flute, the *kin* then and harp, /
the *bina*, the gong, and the cym[bal]:
Thus shall myriad marvels of sound /
all serve as offerings sacred.

This *ge* versicle is based on the *ge* of the “Expedients” (Skt. *upāya*) chapter (Jp. *Hōben-bon* 方便品) in the *Lotus Sutra* that runs: 簫笛琴箏篴 琵琶鏡銅 如是衆妙音 尽持以供養. The reed-pipe (*shō* 簫, Ch. *xiao*) and the flute are wind instruments, while the *kin* 琴 (Ch. *qin*), the harp (*kugo* 箏篴, Ch. *konghou*), and the *bina* are string instruments, and the gong (*nyō* 鏡, Ch. *nao*) and cymbal (*dōbatsu* 銅鈸, Ch. *tongbo*) instruments of percussion. In other words, all the musical instruments used to make instrumental music can, the *ge* shows, become sources themselves of Buddhistic merit. Moreover, as a verse arguing the merits of musical *hōraku* 法樂 offerings, this *ge* would have broad ripple effects, its influence spanning across many different fields of art.¹⁸

As we have seen above, therefore, whether in the domains of Chinese poetry, *waka*, or string and wind music—three central elements in the tapestry of court culture—there were, within each genre, works for which hymnal *shōmyō* chants on Buddhism both existed, and were later also scored by Moronaga using musical notation. As to the ultimate reason for his attempts using *bina*-notation to record all these various pieces, the explanation may lie in some uniqueness of their melodies, or it may lie, alternatively, in the frequent chanting of these *shōmyō* at many scenes of Buddhist ceremonial.

2. Inheriting and Rearranging the Voice: Saionji Sanekane and Enjubō Kien

In the previous section I examined Moronaga’s attempts to record voice in musical notation, with a particular focus on scores for the genre of *shōmyō* chant.

¹⁷ *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

¹⁸ Cf. Inose Chihiro, *Chūsei ōken no ongaku to girei* 中世王権の音楽と儀礼 (Kasama Shoin, 2018), Ch. 13.

Here I will consider how notation was used to record the voice in periods after Moronaga, focusing on two individuals: Saionji Sanekane and Kien.

Consideration of Saionji Sanekane begins with reference to the post-Moronaga inheritance of *biwa* musical expertise itself. The three major schools of *biwa* lore that inherited Moronaga's own *biwa* lineage were (1) that of the imperial household, (2) that of the Saionji clan, and (3) the Nishi school (*Nishi-ryū* 西流) of the Fujiwara clan. Among these it was the Saionji clan that continued the practice begun by Moronaga himself of ceremonially transmitting certain "secret" songs (*hikyoku* 秘曲). Moronaga, who had made his dwelling at Myōon-in Temple 妙音院, had a great hall constructed there and installed therein an image of Myōonten 妙音天 (Benzaiten 弁財天), using that same room as the setting for transmissions of those secret songs. Following suit, the Saionji clan erected their own Myōon Hall at the mansion in Kitayama 北山 where they themselves resided, thereby inheriting the practice of conducting such ceremonies before an image of Myōonten.

Among his clan, Saionji Sanekane worked more than any other towards the prosperity of his house, attempting rearrangements of music and the production of manuals of ceremony. There are several musical scores that were either supplemented by him, or which he himself had composed anew. Of these, the *Sango chūroku* 三五中録 deserves attention as a score collection Sanekane copied out personally.¹⁹ Though originally a collection of musical notation by Fujiwara no Takatoki 藤原孝時, from the Fujiwara Nishi school mentioned above, throughout Sanekane's copying of the *Sango chūroku*, he made notational additions of his own. The following song is one of those thought to belong among such added material:

琵琶平調 〈笛盤渉調〉

敬礼諸仏及法宝 菩薩独覺声聞衆
次礼妙音并諸天 悉可至誠慇懃敬²⁰

biwa in *hyōjō* 平調 key (flute in *banshikichō* 盤渉調 key)

Honor and reverence for all buddhas and the Law's treasure,
To bodhisattvas, lone buddhas, and disciple buddhas;
Honor too for Myōon[ten] and all the many devas,
Worthy all of showing heartfelt esteem and piled honors

A *ge*-verse based on the *Most Victorious Kings Sutra* (*Saishōō-kyō* 最勝王經), it is also the concluding generalized paean to the ceremonial manual *Myōon kōshiki* 妙音講式. As mentioned, the Saionji clan had constructed a Myōon Hall at the Kitayama mansion where they themselves lived. In that Myōon Hall, a Myōonten

¹⁹ *Sango chūroku* 三五中録 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-2009.

²⁰ Ibid.

vation was held the 18th of every month in commemoration of Moronaga's death anniversary, as a manual for which the *Myōon kōshiki* had been composed. From this it can be understood that Sanekane also made use of *bima*-notation to record the music of ceremonies important to his clan.

Here I will move on to discuss the figure of Kien, who was a monk of the Ōhara 大原 branch of the Tendai sect. In the late 12th century, the monk Ryōnin 良忍 (1073–1132) established the school of chant known as Ōhara *shōmyō* 大原声明, or Gyozan 魚山 *shōmyō*. After failing for a period, the school was revived in the Kamakura era by the monk Sōkai 宗快. Kien was the student of this Sōkai. He moreover, partly with the purpose of increasing exchanges with monks at Mt. Kōya, was active in copying and producing large numbers of *shōmyō* texts. Regarding Kien's own origins, the late 14th-century text *Shōketsusho* 声決書 by the monk Jikyō 慈鏡 records him as being “the child of Lord Kitayama” (*Kitayama-dono* [no] *on-ko* 北山殿御子). This “Lord Kitayama” has been identified with Saionji Kinsuke 西園寺公相 (1223–1267), which if accurate would make Sanekane and Kien brothers by different mothers. The following *kada* 伽陀-verse is one of Sanekane's additions to the *Shōmyō-fu* text discussed in the article's previous section:

七言 〈円珠房声明作之〉

願我生生見諸仏 仏世世恒聞法花
恒修不退菩薩行 疾証無上大菩提²¹

seven-character meter (composed as *shōmyō* by Enjubō 円珠房 [=Kien])

Life after life may I meet all the many buddhas,
In buddhic world after world ever hear the Law's flower;
Practice ever without fail the bodhisattva's way,
With quickness to realize the great awakening supreme.

As one can see, this *ge*, a verse read on occasions of “ten-kind offerings” (*jissshu kuyō* 十種供養) for the *Lotus Sutra*, had been adapted for *shōmyō* chant by Kien himself. In other words, after Kien (=Enjubō) had composed the music, Sanekane must have gone back and set it into *bima*-notation.

Another aspect of Kien's activity can be seen in his *Gokuraku shōka* 極楽声歌. In this work, Kien extracted all sung passages from Shōshinbō Shingen's 勝深房真源 ceremonial manual *Junji ōjō kōshiki* 順次往生講式 (manual for a “Subsequent Rebirth in the Pure Land” ceremony), and scored them using *hakase*-notation. The songs found in the *Junji ōjō kōshiki* had essentially taken *shōka* 唱歌-chanted versions of *saibara* pieces and supplied them with lyrics on Buddhist themes. Regarding the fate of these songs, in Fujiwara no Takamichi's 藤原孝道 work of music lore *Chikoku hishō* 知国秘鈔 (late 13th century), we read:

²¹ *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

なかごろ、山崎に浄土谷に、たうとき聖人をはしけり。名は勝□聖人（真源）と申ける人、やうこつなき道心者の笛吹、すべて管絃あいしすき人にをはしけり。順次往生講試とて、七段の試に、樂の唱歌に法文をつくり、催馬樂ことくなどをつくりをき給へる。このごろもする人やあるらむ、ちかごろまでは、天王寺住僧なども、その唱歌しけるとかや。いまはいとする人なし。²²

In the not-too-distant past, in Yamazaki 山崎, in Jōdo-dani 浄土谷, there lived a venerable sage. Called Shō[] the Sage 勝□聖人 [=Shingen], he was a great adept at the art of the flute, and a lover of string and wind music of all kinds. In a work called *Junji ōjō kōshiki*, in a seven-stage ceremony, he made Buddhist lyrics for *shōka*-chant versions of [court] music, producing pieces like *saibara* songs. Is there anyone today who does such things? Until even recently one heard rumors that monks around Tennō-ji Temple 天王寺 were also doing such *shōka* chanting. Now, however, there is no one who does.

It was a genre that had, as we see, faded already by the early 13th century.

Scoring these songs with *hakase*-notation, and recording them in his *Gokuraku shōka*, in other words, was Kien's attempt at retrieving their music from just such an oblivion.

3. Development of the Voice: The Shōmyō-ji Religious Documents

Thus it is that the sounds captured in *bina*-notation by Moronaga would come to be reutilized, in the latter part of the 13th century, in a number of different ways. Representing part of this legacy, one of the larger accumulations of late-Kamakura musical-notation materials is to be found within the Shōmyō-ji Temple 称名寺 archives of “religious documents” (*shōgyō* 聖教), currently stored at Kanazawa Bunko 金沢文庫. Among the Shōmyō-ji religious documents are various *shōmyō* chanting texts, a collection centered on manuscripts personally used by Kenna 劔阿, the second abbot of Shōmyō-ji Temple.

Kenna is notable for his industry as a copyist, his output in complete works alone consisting of the following:

- Sango yōroku gaku mokuroku* 三五要録楽目録 (location unknown)
- Inritsu rasshō* 韻律雜抄 (location unknown)
- Ōgaku kongen shō* 音楽根源抄 (Tenri Central Library)
- Kangen ongi* 管絃音義 (ibid.)
- Bugaku yōroku* 舞樂要録 (Sonkeikaku Bunko)
- Onritsu gōkyōku shō* 音律合曲抄 (ibid.)
- Inritsu kanjin shū* 韻律肝心集 (Imperial Household Archives)

Eclectic as a group, the documents span both exoteric and esoteric traditions, and with the inclusion of texts like *Sango yōroku gaku mokuroku*—a work of

²² For text see: *Fushiminomiya kyūzō gaku shūsei* 伏見宮旧蔵楽書集成, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Toshoryō Sōkan, 1998), p. 116.

Moronaga's own selection—they demonstrate that music catalogues compiled by court nobles were sometimes copied by monks.

This following document, too—copied by a monk belonging to Shōmyō-ji Temple, though not Kenna—is particularly valuable for considering the relationship between secular and sacred music:

倍〈秘〉又薪樂云々、(中略)

法華經ヲ ワガエシコトハ タキギコリ ナツミミヅクミ ツカヘテゾエシ
ツカヘテゾエシ

To the tune of *bai[ro]* 倍[臚] (secret), also a song used in “firewood” music (*takigi-gaku* 薪樂) . . .

The *Lotus Sutra* / I came to receive only / by cutting firewood, /
by gathering herbs and water— / only by serving I received, /
only by serving I received.

—“Secret of secrets” (*hichūbi* 秘中秘), Shōmyō-ji Religious Documents
(*Lotus* hymns/“firewood verses”)²³

This is the hymnal verse on the *Lotus Sutra* we saw in our discussion of the *Shōmyō-fu* above. Here, as in the *Shōmyō-fu*, the originally final verse *tsukaete zo eshi* has been repeated, showing that this was sung not as a five-verse *waka* poem, but as a six-verse *shōmyō* chant. Of interest is the superscription “*bai[ro]* 倍[臚] (secret)”, which indicates that the string- and wind-music mode of *bairo* 倍臚 could be used for the chanting of hymns to the *Lotus Sutra* such as this one. The *bairo*, a string- and wind-music piece in the *hyōjō* 平調 key,²⁴ was also included in various collections of scores like the *Sango yōroku*. However, the melody of the *bairo* as indicated in these, and the melody found for it in the *Shōmyō-fu* collection we discussed in this article's first section, do not in fact match one another.

On this subject, the comment found in Saien's 宰円 work *Dangi hōshin shō* 彈偽褒真抄 (Kenji 建治 1/1275) is perfectly correct: “Also, it is said that within the traditions of the *Rengai* 蓮界 school, there are “firewood”-verses that have been adapted to the *bairo* tune. This too requires further study.” One must conclude that a new *Lotus Sutra* hymnal piece had been created, based on the music of the *bairo* mode.

The following document is also one of particular interest, not least with respect to its visual imagery:

²³ Text from *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho* 金沢文庫資料全書 (Yokohama: Kanazawa-kenritsu Kanazawa Bunko), vol. 7, p. 179.

²⁴ *Bairo* 陪臚 was originally a piece of dance music (*bugaku* 舞樂), but in the medieval period came largely to be performed as a string- and wind-music piece. Cf. in the court diary *Gyokuyō* 玉葉 the example of the “small [string and wind] music gathering” (*ko gyo-yū* 小御遊) in the entry for Angen 安元 2/1176.2.14; or in the diary *Sanemi-kyō ki* 実躬卿記, the example of Amida veneration (*Amida-kō* 阿弥陀講) in the entry of Kengen 建元 1/1302.3.8.



Figure 2. Myōon Benzaiten as a woman playing the *biwa*. *Seiryū Myōon Benzaiten gazō* 青龍妙音弁財天画像 (Demachi Myōondō Temple 出町妙音堂).



Figure 3. Wang Zhaojun playing the *biwa* on horseback. *Ō Shōkun zu* 王昭君図, Kusumi Morikage 久隈守景, 17c. (Tokyo National Museum).
<https://webarchives.tnm.jp/imgsearch/show/C0042808>

曩莫三曼多沒馱喃 蘇羅蘇婆帝曳 娑婆歌

此歌名馬上船中曲

– “Hymn to Myōonten” 妙音天讚, Shōmyō-ji Religious Documents²⁵

This is a phonetic realization in Chinese characters of a Sanskrit hymnal versicle to Myōonten, read out in Japanese as: *nōmakū-sanmanda-bodanan sorasobatei-ei sonaka* (ultimately reflecting Skt. *nāmaḥ samanta-buddhānām, Sarasvatī aiṃ, svāhā*). The sequence *sorasobatei-ei* 蘇羅蘇婆帝曳 renders the name of the goddess Sarasvatī, in other words Myōonten 妙音天/Benzaiten 弁才天. Here, however, I want to focus on the annotation beneath, which would translate as:

²⁵ Text from *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho*, vol. 8, p. 177.

The title of this piece is: “Song on Horseback aboard a Boat” (*bajō senchū kyōku* 馬上船中曲).

Given a lack of parallel examples, this title likely represents a miscopying of 馬上胡中曲 (*bajō kochū kyōku*). Meaning “Song on Horseback in Barbarian Lands,” it would be a song sung on horseback by Wang Zhaojun 王昭君, while being sent on her way from Han China to the barbarian country—by tradition the first song ever composed for the *biwa*.²⁶

This, then, would represent a convergence of the image of Myōonten with that of Wang Zhaojun. And indeed, while Myōonten can be found depicted in the Boddhisatva manner, she can also be found depicted much along the lines of modern images of Benzaiten, in the guise of a woman strumming her *biwa*. As is clear from the above side-by-side comparison between images of (Figure 2) a two-armed female Myōonten and (Figure 3) Wang Zhaojun, by the time of the Kamakura period, at least on an iconographic level, the two had already become linked.

Conclusion

In the latter 12th century, what Fujiwara no Moronaga did with *biwa*-notation was to make the formlessness of the voice recordable. In his work we also recognize the music-mediated expression of court music and court poetry’s intrinsically Buddhist character. With the beginning of the Kamakura period, Moronaga’s *biwa* music was inherited by the Saionji clan, among whom Saionji Sanekane also made use of *biwa*-notation, to record the voice of court ceremonial after Moronaga’s time. Later Kien—likely Sanekane’s brother by a different mother—used *hakase*-notation for both the composition of new music and for the recension of ceremonial then in danger of being lost. After various such attempts to record the voice in writing, we find in the Shōmyō-ji collection of religious documents something like the pinnacle these developments eventually reached.

In addition to their function in capturing the fleeting formlessness of the voice, however, *biwa*-notation and *hakase*-notation should also be seen as a conduit for knowledge: shuttling back and forth, between the sacred and the secular, as they sought to convey forth music. Moreover, even as ceremonial and imagery were conveyed by means of such a conduit, they came also to be shaped by it themselves.

²⁶ See, e.g., Yamamoto Toshio 山本敏雄, “Ō Shōkun setsuwa to biwa” 王昭君説話と琵琶, *Aichi kyōiku daigaku kenkyū hōkokū: jinbun, shakai-ka* 愛知教育大学研究報告：人文・社会科 53 (2004).

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