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Intertextuality and Corporality in Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s *Shutendōji makurakotoba*

Bonaventura RUPERTI
Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia

The Development of the Shutendōji Legend

The Shutendōji 酒呑童子 legend prototype is believed to have taken shape during the Nanbokuchō 南北朝 period (1336–1392). The oldest known surviving text containing the legend is the *Ōeyama emaki* 大江山絵巻 (Illustrated Scroll of Ōeyama), produced in the latter half of the fourteenth century and now held at the Itsuō Museum of Art 逸翁美術館. The legend was thereafter widely disseminated through numerous other later *emaki* versions (e.g., *Ōeyama emaki*, *Ōeyama ki* 大江山記, and *Shutendōji ezōshi* 酒呑童子絵草子).¹ It was also presented in formats ranging from Muromachi *monogatari*² 室町物語 (i.e., *otogi-zōshi* 御伽草子) to illustrated manuscripts among the group of texts known as *Nara ebon* 奈良絵本 (e.g., *Ōeyama* 大江山). It is also one of the twenty-three short works collected in the famous *Otogi bunko* 御伽文庫 series by Shibukawa Seiemon 渋川清右衛門, published in illustrated woodblock-print editions during the early modern period.³

However, the Shutendōji story, which was reworked into various depictions in illustrated scrolls and books, did not take only visual forms. It was also brought to three-dimensional life through the performing arts, including noh, puppet

¹For primary sources listed in the notes, the holding institution is the National Institute of Japanese Literature if none other is specified.

Shutendōji ekotoba, Kuchinashi Bunko 支子文庫, Kyushu University. Full-color images available on the Kyushu University Library website. See **fig. 1** below.

Shutendōji ezōshi, Shizuoka Prefectural Central Library 静岡県立中央図書館: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100065412>.

Shutendōji emaki, *Oeyama kotoba*, Osaka Otani University Library 大阪大谷大学図書館. Full-color images available at NIJL’s “Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works.” See **figs. 2a and 2b** below.

²For example, *Shutendōji*: <https://doi.org/10.20730/200006787>.

³Satake, *Shutendōji ibun*, pp. 1–246; Takahashi, *Shutendōji no tanjō*, pp. 1–234; Komatsu, *Ikai to Nihonjin*, pp. 31–44.

theater (*ningyō jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃), and kabuki. In the latter, the image of the dark world created by the medieval imagination eclipsed a number of the story's earlier aspects, such as demon (*yōkai* 妖怪) exterminations, hero adventures, and fantastic tales with main characters carrying out heroic exploits; light was to be shed now also on the existence of various subversive characters. The drama of the protagonist himself became more attractive material for these staged works, in which engaging drama was combined with themes of power, cruelty, and grief. As part of this trend, by way of noh dramas (particularly *Ōeyama*) and various old puppet dramas (*kojōruri* 古浄瑠璃, “old” *jōruri*, i.e., texts that predate the era of the playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon), the Shutendōji legend—which had by then incorporated elements of the Rashōmon 羅生門 legend as told in noh and *otogi-zōshi*—came at length to be adapted as *Shutendōji makurakotoba* 酒吞童子枕言葉 by the *jōruri* and kabuki playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653–1724).⁴

Chikamatsu wrote more than one hundred *jōruri* plays, two of which feature the Shutendōji legend as their main theme:

- *Shutendōji makura no koto no ha* (*Shutendōji makurakotoba*), which premiered at the Osaka theater Takemoto-za 竹本座 in 1709⁵
- *Keisei Shutendōji* 傾城酒吞童子, which premiered at the Osaka Takemoto-za in 1718.

Shutendōji makurakotoba is a dramatic work that presents a story from the complex and unique imaginary world developed by Chikamatsu, while also referencing earlier works focused on the Shutendōji legend. *Keisei Shutendōji*, the latter work, is a partial modification of the first. Based on the true story of Ibarakiya Kōsai 茨木屋幸齋, the manager of a house of courtesans in Osaka's Shinmachi 新町 area who was punished in 1718 for his luxurious life, the play compares this real person and contemporaneous events to the Shutendōji legend.⁶

In this article, I would like to focus on the puppet drama *Shutendōji makurakotoba*, narrated at its first performance by Takemoto Gidayū 竹本義太夫 (Chikugonōjō 筑後掾; 1651–1714) as main narrator. I would like to examine the relationship of Chikamatsu's work to earlier works and to other literary sources that interpret the Shutendōji legend—focusing in particular on the noh *Ōeyama* and the key themes and narrative elements which that work introduced. Finally, I would like to analyze the distinctive characteristics of Chikamatsu's *Shutendōji makurakotoba* itself, especially its depiction of the protagonist, and consider the role of corporality in the work's narrative and staging.

⁴ Uchiyama, “Shutendōji makurakotoba: kaisetsu,” pp. 112–113; “Shutendōji makurakotoba Onigajō taimen no dan,” pp. 101–115.

⁵ Uchiyama, “Shutendōji makurakotoba Onigajō taimen no dan,” pp. 101–115.

⁶ Ōhashi, “Ibarakiya Kōsai ikken to Kaion, Chikamatsu,” pp. 17–30.

The Components of the Shutendōji Story in Previous Works and in the Noh *Ōeyama*

There are many texts containing some version of the Shutendōji story, which was widely disseminated during the Muromachi period (1392–1573). These works can be grouped roughly into two lines of transmission, depending on where the protagonist Shutendōji is said to live: (A) the Ōeyama 大江山 line (after a mountain in the Tanba 丹波 region) and (B) the Ibukiyama 伊吹山 line (after a mountain in the Ōmi 近江 region), which originated later. A famous Ibukiyama-line work is Kanō Motonobu's 狩野元信 (1476–1559) *Shutendōji emaki* 酒吞童子絵巻, in the collection of the Suntory Museum of Art.

Several noh dramas also feature the Shutendōji story. These generally fall into the “living noh” (*genzai nō* 現在能) and “dream and apparition noh” (*mugen nō* 夢幻能) categories. The work that seems to have the deepest relationship with Chikamatsu's work, however, is the still-currently performed noh *Ōeyama*.⁷ Said to have been written by Miyamasu 宮増 (dates unknown), *Ōeyama* seems to be close to the Ōeyama line, especially the Katori-bon 香取本 manuscript of *Ōeyama ekotoba* 大江山絵詞 (Itsuō Museum of Art).⁸

Amano Fumio 天野文雄 has summarized the basic elements of the *Ōeyama* play's overall plot as follows:

1. Minamoto no Raikō 源頼光 (or Yorimitsu, 948–1021), having received an order from the Emperor to exterminate the Mt. Ōe demon, heads with his more than fifty vassals to Mt. Ōe, all of them disguised as mountain ascetics, or *yamabushi* 山伏.
2. The group encounters a woman washing clothes in a mountain river, and with her guidance, they find Shutendōji.
3. Shutendōji recounts his personal history to Raikō and his men, including: (a) the origin of his name, (b) his pursuit by the Buddhist monk Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師 (Saichō 最澄, 767–822) and subsequent flight from Mt. Hiei 比叡, and (c) his wandering through the mountains of various provinces.
4. Raikō and Shutendōji's banquet, including the episodes of: (d) “child first, Sannō second” (*ichi chigo, ni Sannō* 一稚児二山王), (e) the “enumeration of grasses and flowers,” and (f) the poem “red (complexion) is the work of the sake, not my sin” (*akaki wa sake no toga zo* 赤きは酒の咎ぞ).

⁷ Various texts of this play (under various titles) can be consulted online:

Shutendōji (nō no hon 能の本), Yamanouchi Bunko 山内文庫, Kōchi Castle Museum of History 高知城歴史博物館: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100104625>.

Shutendōji (nō no hon), Yamanouchi Bunko, Kōchi Castle Museum of History: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100078305>.

Ōeyama (nō no hon): <https://doi.org/10.20730/200001192>; <https://doi.org/10.20730/200002472>.

Ōeyama (nō no hon), Ukai Bunko 鵜飼文庫, National Institute of Japanese Literature: <https://doi.org/10.20730/200017937>.

⁸ Amano, “‘Shutendōji’ kō,” pp. 16–17.

5. Shutendōji becomes drunk and falls asleep. (This is followed by an intermission, or *nakairi* 中入).
6. Raikō and his vassals, with the help of the women being held captive by Shutendōji, enter the demon's sleeping alcove and defeat him.⁹

Within this general plot scheme, the focus of the play is on elements 3 and 4. It omits episodes found in other versions, such as the divination by Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 (921–1005), which occurs between elements 1 and 2, as well as Raikō's propitiatory visits to the Hachiman 八幡 and Sumiyoshi 住吉 Shrines, and the assistance given to Raikō by various gods in the mountains. It also excludes the second half of the narrative as told in the Muromachi *monogatari* version, with episodes such as Raikō's triumphant return to the Capital, which takes place after element 6 in the plot outline above.

Regarding the noh *Ōeyama*'s theme, Nogami Toyochirō 野上豊一郎 has stated, "It is a tale of heroic military exploits whose protagonist is Minamoto no Raikō and which deals with the demon extermination on Mt. Ōe; but this piece's distinctive feature is that it places greater emphasis on the humanity of the main character (*shite* シテ) rather than on making that character a demon."¹⁰

Ōeyama focuses on these main scenes: Raikō (the secondary character role, or *waki* ワキ) and his companions, the "Four Heavenly Kings" (Shitennō 四天王)—including Hōshō 保昌 (or Yasumasa, in the role of *waki* attendant, or *wakiszure* ワキツレ)—enter the scene, all disguised as *yamabushi*, and leave for Mt. Ōe, traveling through an autumn landscape (as presented in the journey scene, or *michiyuki* 道行). Along the way, they meet the aforementioned woman washing bloodied clothes. They meet Shutendōji (the *shite* role), in the form of a human child, and Raikō begins to converse with the demon. Their conversation unfolds over several climactic high-tension moments (a, b, c; then d, e, f): Shutendōji tells Raikō the origin of his name, but having revealed his background, nature, and place of refuge, he feels afraid that he will lose his power and asks Raikō not to reveal his refuge to others. In trusting Raikō and the others with his secrets, Shutendōji relies on the belief that *yamabushi*, like monks, treasure "boy first, the god of the mountain [Sannō] second" 一稚児二山王 (a saying based on a legend that when Saichō first climbed Mt. Hiei, where he founded a Buddhist temple (Enryaku-ji 延暦寺), he encountered there a boy before he met Sannō Gongen 山王権現). Shutendōji therefore believes that the apparent "religious visitors or pilgrims" will venerate and respect him, an apparent boy (*chigo*). Finally, Shutendōji, with the words "red (complexion) is the work of the *sake*, not my sin," confides that his redness is due to a passion for *sake* and not because he is a demon. When the banquet gets lively, Shutendōji starts to dance, with uncertain steps, but then the effect of the *sake* makes itself felt and he retires to his sleeping alcove.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 16–17.

¹⁰ Nogami, *Yōkyoku zenshū*, p. 499.

During the *nakairi*, while the actor playing Shutendōji is offstage (or hidden in the alcove on stage), Raikō and his vassals, wearing armor, prepare for the assault. Meanwhile, in the interlude (*aikyōgen* 間狂言), a certain low-ranking vassal (the primary *kyōgen* role, or *omoai* オモアイ) courts the woman who guided them (the secondary *kyōgen* role, or *adoai* アドアイ)—whom he already knows—and the two flee and return together to the Capital.

In the second part of the play, Raikō and his vassals enter the sleeping alcove and attack Shutendōji, who during his sleep has assumed the appearance of a demon, showing his true nature. They then strike the demon down, aided by the power of Sannō Gongen.

Looking back over the above synopsis, we can emphasize the following points: (1) Raikō and his vassals disguise themselves as *yamabushi* and enter “another world.” (2) They meet a woman (the one later appearing in the *aikyōgen*) washing bloody clothes, who then guides them to the abode of a child/demon (aside from the depiction of washing bloody clothes, *Ōeyama* does not include any scenes of cruel violence). (3) Shutendōji does not show hostility toward the *yamabushi* and welcomes them without resistance. (4) Even though he possesses a special power, he talks about himself and his fears of losing that power. (5) He explains that he was exiled from Mt. Hiei after Saichō established Enryaku-ji Temple. (6) He recounts how he subsequently wandered through the mountains and took refuge in many places. (7) He expresses his worries and his sadness that revealing his true nature and weaknesses will cause him to lose his strength. (8) However, because Enryaku-ji monks consider children to be more important than the god of Mt. Hiei (“child first, Sannō second”), he trusts that the *yamabushi*, as “religious men,” will have consideration and pity for him. (9) There is a pronounced contrast between Shutendōji’s appearance in the first part of the play, when he appears as a child (the actor wears one of the *doji* 童子, *daidoji* 大童子, or *jido* 児童 masks, used for boy roles, along with a black-haired, *kurogashira* 黒頭 wig), and in the second part, when he appears as a demon (the actor wearing one of the *shikami* 鬘 or *shishiguchi* 獅子口 masks used for demon or deity roles, together with a red-haired, *akagashira* 赤頭 wig). (10) He feels betrayed by the deceitful *yamabushi*, in whom he had trusted and confided, and he succumbs to their attack.

Shutendōji is a creature that must be defeated and conquered as a dangerous demon, but he resists conquest by the central government. Despite his demon-like nature, he is eternally a young boy (*dōgyō* 童形, literally “child shape”) who does not age. Shutendōji is a land-protecting deity (*jinushi no kami* 地主神), like the territorial guardians and gods who had settled on Mt. Hiei before Saichō constructed Enryaku-ji Temple, and perhaps now he also represents something like an outcast (*senmin* 賤民) who lives in the mountains, an outsider who lives outside of civilization, feared or despised by the people of the Capital.¹¹ Such

¹¹ Kanai, *Nō no kenkyū*, pp. 348–352.

figures are manifestations of a “different world,” and everything that is different and hostile must be exterminated—all opponents are evil. Even disorder in governance is regarded as the work of some demon-god, in the eyes of central powers and rulers (in this case, the Kyoto imperial court).¹² Therefore, many primordial land gods, earth spirits, or other fallen deities who have become troublesome suffer discrimination, exclusion, and conquest: “Since both the earth and the trees are our Great Lord’s land, wherever there could be refuge for demons.”¹³

In the *noh* drama, however, Shutendōji is depicted as a human being, rather than as a demon or a villain. He is portrayed as a creature that makes others feel his sincerity. Shutendōji is not an evil monster but a good and sincere “demon”: he confesses his fate of continuous exile and discrimination, showing resistance against oppression. The final aspect of his depiction that would have impressed the audience is Shutendōji’s indignant and enraged verbal counterattack against Raikō and his men, in whom he had confided his heart and by whom he feels betrayed.

It can be said that even sacrificed animals (the most emblematic example being in Zeami’s *Nue* 鶴) and demons destined to be subdued could become the main characters in *noh* drama: placed at the center of the drama as its protagonists, they have the opportunity to express their deep suffering and sorrow, as creatures whose hearts are full of sadness.

Shutendōji in the Early Modern Period

In the Edo period (1603–1867), the legend of Shutendōji’s demon extermination—a story well known from illustrated scrolls and *otogi-zōshi* since the Muromachi period, although set in the Heian era—came to be depicted in numerous formats, such as illustrated books¹⁴ and *nishiki-e* 錦絵 woodblock prints, gaining wide popularity, in particular through the genre of popular illustrated fiction known as *kusa-zōshi* 草双紙.¹⁵ The mysteriously charming legend spread also to early modern theater, specifically to *jōruri* (starting with the narrator Satsuma Jōun 薩摩浄雲, 1595–1672) and kabuki, where the plot developed greater breadth and complexity.

¹² Ibid., pp. 350–351.

¹³ Nogami, *Yōkyoku zenshū*, p. 517.

¹⁴ For example, *Ōyama Shutendōji* (*ebon* 絵本). Images available at NIJL’s “Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works.” See **fig. 3** below.

Shutendōji (Muromachi *monogatari*), Ukai Bunko, National Institute of Japanese Literature. Full-color images available at NIJL’s “Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works.” See **figs. 4a and 4b** below.

Shutendōji yuraiki: <https://doi.org/10.20730/200020048>.

¹⁵ Arakawa, “Kusa-zōshi ni okeru Shutendōji setsuwa no riyō,” pp. 47–82. For example, there is the work *Raikō Ōyama iri* 頼光大江山入 by Chikuyōsha Kinpei 竹葉舎金瓶, images of which are available at NIJL’s “Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works.” See **fig. 5** below.

Here I list just a few examples of *kojōruri* plays based on the legend:¹⁶ (1) *Shutendōji wakashakari* 酒典童子若壯 by Edo Satsumadayū 江戸薩摩太夫 (1660) tells the story of Shutendōji's childhood and upbringing; (2) *Shutendōji* (in five sections, or *dan* 段), narrated in 1676 by Yamamoto Kakutayū 山本角太夫 (later Tosanojō 土佐掾), contains texts and chapters that are almost identical to those of another *kojōruri* play; and (3) *Shutendōji tsuketari Raikō yamairi* 酒顛童子付頼光山入 by Itō Dewanojō 伊藤出羽掾 (dates unknown, active around the years 1658–1681). Tosanojō's *Shutendōji* text also corresponds to this same genealogy and to the *e-iri jōruri Raikō yamairi* 頼光山いり (in six *dan*, published in 1721) by Satsumadayū.¹⁷

The story in (2) the Yamamoto Kakutayū text is as follows:

In the first *dan*, Watanabe no Tsuna 渡辺綱, Raikō's vassal, cuts off one of the demon's arms at Rashōmon Gate, but the demon disguises himself as Tsuna's aunt and returns to take back his severed arm.

In the second *dan*, Shutendōji's ally, the demon Ishikumadōji 石くま童子, taking advantage of the conflict between Ikeda Chūnagon 池田中納言 and the Fujiwara 藤原 clan, disguises himself as a messenger of the rival Nijō 二条 family and kidnaps Ikeda Chūnagon's princess daughter.

In the third *dan*, on the emperor's orders, Raikō and his five friends (Hirai Yasumasa/Hōshō 平井保昌, Usui Sadamitsu 碓氷貞光, Urabe Suetake 卜部季武, Watanabe no Tsuna, Sakata no Kintoki 坂田公時)—known as the Five Heroes—disguise themselves as *yamabushi* and head off to exterminate the Mt. Ōe demon.

In the fourth *dan*, Raikō and his companions arrive at Shutendōji's fortress and are greeted with a big banquet where, in order to dispel the demon's suspicions of them, the men drink the blood of human women and eat their flesh.

In the fifth *dan*, Raikō and his colleagues rescue the women and brilliantly exterminate Shutendōji with help from three deities.

In this manner, as a further evolution of the plot, the Ōeyama legend was merged with the Rashōmon legend (first *dan*), beginning around the Kanbun 寛文 era (1661–1673).¹⁸ Furthermore, in *kojōruri* plays, the fourth act involves a large banquet where both the demon and the heroes drink blood and eat women's

¹⁶ *Shutendōji (jōruri)*, Hirosaki City Public Library 弘前市弘前図書館: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100193239>.

Shutendōji (jōruri), Tōkyō Daigaku Kokubungaku Kenkyūshitsu 東京大学国文学研究室: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100018424>.

Shutendōji (jōruri), Ninchōji Bunko 忍頂寺文庫, Osaka University Library 大阪大学附属図書館: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100080782>.

Shutendōji (jōruri), Okimori Bunko 沖森文庫, Hiroshima Bunkyo University Library 広島文教大学図書館: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100048675>.

Shutendōji 酒顛童子 (*jōruri*), by Tosanoshōjō 土佐少掾, Okimori Bunko, Hiroshima Bunkyo University Library: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100048677>.

¹⁷ Torii, “Tosa jōruri no kyakushokuhō,” pp. 115–119; “Kojōruri ni okeru yōkai henge taiji mono,” pp. 23–38.

¹⁸ Sakaguchi, “Shutendōji,” p. 298.

flesh. Such a spectacle of cruelty and horror is not found in *noh*, but it became one of the highlights in puppet theater works.

We see a similar plot in the *otogi-zōshi* version of the legend: Raikō, ordered to defeat Shutendōji, disguises himself as a *yamabushi* and infiltrates the Onigajō 鬼が城 (Fortress of the Demons) on Mt. Ōe. He gives the demon poisoned *sake* and kills him. He then rescues the princesses whom Shutendōji had kidnapped, including the daughter of Ikeda Chūnagon, and returns to the Capital in great triumph.

Kabuki was another popular genre for dramatic renditions of the Shutendōji legend. For example, *Shutendōji* was among the ceremonial performances (*waki kyōgen* 脇狂言) performed by the Nakamura-za 中村座 theater in Edo. The works selected to be presented as *waki kyōgen*—which were performed early in the morning on the day of each kabuki performance—were those popular at the time of a theater’s establishment, that is, old plays from kabuki’s earliest days. Furthermore, the “world” (*sekai* 世界) of tales centered on Minamoto no Raikō was established as a *kaomise* (“face-revealing”) *kyōgen* 顔見世狂言. Shows of this type were used to introduce a new acting troupe after they had been contracted by a playhouse for the coming year, and were staged in a production beginning in the eleventh month of the lunar calendar. Regarding, however, the story of Shutendōji itself—i.e., the core of the drama—a shift in focus seems to have occurred in order to highlight the adventures of the Four Heavenly Kings because of their popularity.¹⁹

The abovementioned works and sources of imagery constitute the varied foundations on which Chikamatsu built his play.

Chikamatsu’s *Shutendōji makurakotoba*: The Plot

In Chikamatsu’s play, Taira no Yasumori 平保盛, assistant governor of Hitachi Province, recommends Chūnagon Takafusa’s 中納言高房 daughter, San no Kimi 三の君, as consort to the retired emperor Kazan 花山, who is in mourning for the death of his beloved consort Kokiden 弘徽殿. Yasumori hopes to attain the position of *chinjufu shōgun* 鎮守府将軍 (commander-in-chief) as a reward for arranging this match. Yet San no Kimi, who hopes rather to marry Torikai no Shōshō 鳥飼少将, escapes. She seeks refuge at the residence of Watanabe no Tsuna, her go-between (*nakōdo* 仲人), but is subsequently kidnapped by demons.

This case of San no kimi, however, occurs against a series of similar incidents in which many young women have disappeared from the city, leading to investigations and trials conducted under Minamoto no Raikō’s supervision. From the words of Kokiden’s ghost, Raikō learns that the disappearances are the work of a demon called Shutendōji, who lives on Mt. Ōe. Raikō and his vassals set out to annihilate the dangerous being.

¹⁹ Art Research Center Virtual Museum, “Kabuki no Shutendōji.”

Thus while the rivalry between the Minamoto clan and the Taira clan may provide the setting for Chikamatsu's drama, its main plot revolves around Raikō's killing of the demon Shutendōji.

The plot unfolds as follows:

In the first *dan*, Watanabe no Tsuna cuts the arm off of a demon he meets at the Rashōmon Gate in the Capital. The demon, however, manages to retrieve his arm (cf. the Ibarakidōji legend, the *Zen Taiheiki*, the noh *Rashōmon*, and the "Tsurugi no maki" episode in *Heike monogatari*, also in the *Taiheiki*, vol. 23).

In the second *dan*, the climax is the appearance of Kokiden's ghost, in the hermitage where Kazan has retired due to the pain of the loss of San no Kimi. Kokiden holds a grudge against the lady-in-waiting Ukon 右近—who has taken San no Kimi's place as Kazan's consort—because of certain unfounded accusations about Kokiden communicated by her to the retired emperor (on Taira no Yasumori's instigation). From the words of the ghost of Kokiden, whose spirit speaks by taking possession of Ukon's body, we learn that San no Kimi has been kidnapped by Shutendōji. (This *dan* also incorporates scenes from the 1673 *kojōruri* play *Kazan-no-in kisaki araso* 花山院后諍 (Quarrel Between Imperial Consorts of the Retired Emperor Kazan)).

In the third *dan*, we see unfold the tragedy involving the poor widower Katō Hyōe 加藤兵衛 and the masterless samurai (*rōnin*) Hirobumi/Hirobun 広文, as well as their respective daughters, Yokobue 横笛 and Kotoji ことぢ. As young women in the Capital go missing one after another, and as complaints and investigations continue under Raikō's supervision, it turns out that a man named Hirobumi, in need of money, took advantage of the confusion ensuing from the kidnappings and has sold Katō Hyōe's daughter Yokobue to a house of prostitution. Even as Katō is accusing Hirobumi, however, the latter's daughter, Kotoji, decides to sacrifice herself: she offers to take Yokobue's place to save her father, who only committed such a crime out of poverty. Yet when Kotoji, her mother, and the two fathers rush to the house of prostitution, they find Yokobue near death, having just completed her suicide attempt. To make atonement, Hirobumi tries to commit suicide himself along with Kotoji, but Yokobue, before dying, begs her father to save Kotoji's life: a deeply moved Katō changes Kotoji's name to Yokobue and makes her his own daughter. Hirobumi, immensely grateful, thanks Katō and then kills himself, but only after revealing that he was formerly a vassal punished by Taira no Yasumori, and also bequeathing to Katō the treasure sword used in the demon extermination at Mt. Togakushi 戸隠 (cf. the noh *Momijigari* 紅葉狩), inherited by the Taira family generations ago. (This act introduces the legend of the demon extermination at Mt. Togakushi.)

In the fourth and fifth *dan*, Raikō and his vassals, who have headed to Mt. Ōe to exterminate Shutendōji, enter the mountains there ("Raikō yamairi" 頼光山入). They pretend to be *yamabushi* who have lost their way, and guided by a woman whom they encounter washing blood-stained clothes, they enter the demon's fortress. Shutendōji confides in Raikō and the others and reveals his origin story:

he has been changed from a human being into a demon. He expresses sadness at having committed terrible deeds and grieves that he cannot stop himself from committing the sin of killing people. After drinking the poisoned *sake* that Raikō has offered him (this *sake*, which Abe no Seimei prepared for Raikō, is poisonous only to the demon), Shutendōji falls into a deep sleep. Later in the night, Raikō and his vassals, with the help of a child messenger of the Iwashimizu Hachiman 石清水八幡 god, defeat the demon and rescue the captured women, including San no Kimi.

The Overall Composition and Subject of Chikamatsu's Work

[This is a] work of the period when *jōruri* had lost the temporal and spatial unities and presented dramatic scenes in each *dan* that were almost independent of one another. The first and fifth *dan* present the main plot of the story and the play's conflicting beginning and end: it is a manner of composition that concentrates dramatic scenes in the second, third, and fourth *dan* in the middle, and all of these *dan* display a pattern of focusing on stories of familial love, such as between husband and wife, father and daughter, or mother and child.²⁰

Among Chikamatsu's works, however, as Uchiyama Mikiko 内山美樹子 points out,²¹ *Shutendōji makurakotoba* is in fact well-organized, with consistent through-lines and connections visible in the dramatic scenes of each *dan*.

As mentioned above, Chikamatsu's work incorporates various legends about Minamoto no Raikō and the Four Heavenly Kings, based on other demon extermination stories which feature Raikō and the Five Heroes as the main characters and which come to form the prototype of a hero-adventure series.

In the first *dan*, the confrontation and debate between Watanabe no Tsuna and Hirai Yasumasa shows affinities with previous *kojōruri*, in particular the genealogy of works known as *Kinpira jōruri* 金平浄瑠璃 (a sub-genre of puppet dramas named after a popular protagonist called Sakata no Kinpira 坂田金平) originally popularized by the narrators Izumidayū 和泉太夫 (dates unknown) in Edo and Inoue Harimanojō 井上播磨掾 (d. 1685) in Osaka (such as the play *Raikō atomeron* 頼光跡目論 written by Oka Seibee 岡清兵衛 (dates unknown) and others). And it is works such as these, together with the noh *Rashōmon*, that seem to be the main sources of inspiration for *Shutendōji makurakotoba*. In addition, the first and second *dan* of Chikamatsu's work incorporate scenes from *Kazari-no-in kisaki araso*, especially the gripping scene in which Kokiden's ghost, in her resentment against her rival Ukon, comes to life out of an image.²² This ghost, moreover, reveals Taira no Yasumori's conspiracy—to attain the position of *chinjufu shōgun* (commander-in-chief)—and the real nature of the spate of kidnappings, of which San no Kimi was also a victim.

²⁰ Aoki, "Shutendōji makura no koto no ha," p. 298.

²¹ Uchiyama, "Shutendōji makura kotoba Onigajō taimen no dan," pp. 101–102.

²² Suwa, "Chikamatsu seinenki no jussaku," pp. 133–137, 142–143.

The third *dan* combines the story of a disgraced and impoverished *bushi* father and his daughter involved in the sale of humans with the legend of the noh *Momijigari*, in which the protagonist Taira no Koremochi 平維茂 (early eleventh century) is granted a magic sword by the divinity Takeuchi no Kami 武内の神.

In the fourth and fifth *dan*, Chikamatsu resumes and rewrites the tale of the heroic feats accomplished by Minamoto no Raikō and the Four Heavenly Kings—along with the noh *Ōeyama*—intertwining his lyrics with an abundance of intertextual references and images. Combining earlier works of fiction and noh and *jōruri* plays, Chikamatsu weaves his web of intertextual quotations into a well-crafted new story.

In particular, in the fourth and fifth *dan*, the story has been rewritten, and endowed richly with allusions to other works, along the lines of the noh *Ōeyama*. Following the prototype's story and *Ōeyama*'s plot-structure, Raikō and his vassals are transformed into *yamabushi*. A beautiful kind of *michiyuki* (which was very popular in Chikamatsu's time)²³ then unfolds: while the journey scene depicts nature, painting the landscape in autumn, it leads to a different world. Elements of the natural world gradually take on an air of danger suffused with images of power: rocks and metals—especially iron—appear in the form of a bastion, with rock ramparts, a fortress, and castle portals, all of which are juxtaposed with the familiar and natural world.

Accessing the world of demons, however, requires the presence of intermediary figures. Raikō and his vassals meet an old man, an inhabitant of the mountains, who gives them information about the path leading to the mountain where the demons' fortress is. They are then guided by a certain woman to Shutendōji's refuge, as in *Ōeyama*. In the end, the men are helped by divine powers in opening the iron-rock door that guards access to Shutendōji's alcove. Indeed, during the final assault on Shutendōji, the gods of the three shrines (gods and buddhas appearing in various forms), to whom they address their prayers, manifest themselves in the guise of a boy messenger of the divinity Shōhachiman 正八幡, patron and divine protector of warriors and the Minamoto 源 family, who ultimately helps Minamoto no Raikō and the heroes.

This is the context in which Raikō's encounter with Shutendōji takes place, after a perilous journey. In the given scene, even the dialogue between the two protagonists is comprised of material reweoven by Chikamatsu from different sources. It alternates between, on one hand, a feeling and attitude of hospitality suffused with welcome trust and confidence and, on the other, an undercurrent of suspicions and doubts, which are gradually dispelled by Raikō's rhetorical skills in cunning and deception. Shutendōji, in his child form, questions Raikō about how he and his company arrived at his home, what drove them there, and so on. Raikō replies that they had become lost while on pilgrimage and busied with performing austerities, demonstrating that he can always find a suitable answer.

²³ Uchiyama, “Shutendōji makura kotoba Onigajō taimen no dan,” pp. 103, 112.

This scene then develops like a thriller, oscillating between tension and surprise, suspenseful horror and pathos—yet it is also a drama of deception. When the reception banquet begins, a description of the most cruel and atrocious, violent and bloody scenes is given. When the *yamabushi* manage to remain impassive even in the face of these brutalities and indeed accept the blood *sake* they are offered, Shutendōji's surprise is tremendous. Once again faced with Shutendōji's skepticism, Raikō explains their reaction and behavior through Buddhist philosophy.

However, the “child,” in the face of the justifications with which Raikō explains their participation in the bloody banquet, drinking human blood as if that were perfectly normal behavior, reacts with words full of surprise, astonishment, and sadness, and warns them against the sort of escalating violence that once weighed down upon, and ultimately overwhelmed, his own destiny. And so begins Shutendōji's story, the reenactment of his life up to that point—thus it is that the “child,” in the grip of alcohol, pours out his heart to Raikō and talks about his past. As in *Ōeyama*, he recounts having been on Mt. Hiei, which had been his home for generations, when Saichō founded Enryaku-ji Temple. Although he resisted the invasion with all his strength, he was at length forced to leave, wandering from place to place among many vicissitudes: the fact that he was a human being, that he once served as a *chigo* at a Buddhist temple in the Echigo 越後 region (as in earlier *jōruri*), how he came at length to be a demon, etc.

Although Shutendōji has been convinced to confide in Raikō, doubt again arises when San no Kimi enters the scene and he sees the way Raikō's eyes light up upon the princess' appearance. However, Raikō once again succeeds in deceiving him through skillful words.

In the fifth *dan*'s finale, the warriors, along with the women who hope to be freed, address their prayers to the gods. Their prayers are answered, with divine protection being granted to the warrior-heroes sent by the central government. At last the heroic deed, and the killing of the demon “child,” with the sacred magic sword given by Hirobumi to Katō and by Katō then to Raikō, is accomplished.

This drama represents a dramatic shift, transition, and epochal change in the relationship between various divinities. A new order is created, with the rise and establishment of some gods who, possessing new powers and offering potent help and protection, become the new reigning deities, and with the downfall—indeed the extermination—of other ancient/primordial gods who become demons or monsters.

It can also be said, however, that Chikamatsu's work at the same time highlights the drama of Shutendōji, who has, in spite of himself, become now a demon, a monster, but who began life likewise as a fellow *human being*.

The Portrait of Shutendōji

In *Shutendōji makurakotoba*, a demon inherited from an earlier source-work appears as the protagonist, but different aspects taken from other earlier works can also be recognized. A fearsome and dangerous demon, Shutendōji is defeated by Raikō, but Chikamatsu goes beyond Ōeyama in developing a sense of sympathy for the demon. He digs deep into the sadness of Shutendōji, who as a man fell, against his will, into the abyss of having become a demon/monster.²⁴

From the standpoint of folklore, as hypothesized by Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男, *yōkai* (demons/monsters) are “fallen gods.” According to this theory, “Many of the gods are deities whose cults have been lost and have decayed and declined”²⁵ but have also since developed and deepened.²⁶ By this same theory, Shutendōji can be recognized as having once been a primeval divinity on Mt. Hiei before Saichō settled there and built Enryaku-ji Temple.

Looking at it this way, we can see some similarities between the Shutendōji legend and the ancient Greek myth of Polyphemus, son of the sea god Poseidon and the sea nymph Thoosa. He is a one-eyed giant of a lower god-clan, the Cyclopes, who being hated by their father Uranus, the primordial deity personifying the sky, were cast by him into the abyss of Tartarus. But Polyphemus is a particularly famous figure in the voyage taken by Odysseus in Homer’s epic the *Odyssey*, where the Cyclopes are described as uncivilized shepherds who live in caves, and Polyphemus as a violent monster that eats travelers. In the Ninth Book of that work, Odysseus stops at the Cyclopes’ island on his way home from the Trojan War, where he and his twelve men enter Polyphemus’s cave only to become trapped inside. In fright, as two of his subordinates are eaten, Odysseus gives Polyphemus the wine he had brought with him. When Polyphemus becomes drunk and falls asleep, Odysseus and his men together crush the giant’s eye. Then, hiding themselves under the bellies of Polyphemus’s sheep, they escape the cave and return to the ship to leave the island. On the point of doing so, however, a crowing Odysseus ridicules Polyphemus and reveals his true name, which he had cunningly concealed until then. Polyphemus prays to his father to punish Odysseus, and Poseidon subsequently hinders Odysseus’s return home. In this case, as in the Shutendōji story, Odysseus uses intelligence, cunning, and rhetoric to gain advantage over the brute strength of Polyphemus, who violates every rule of welcoming and hospitality toward travelers and foreigners and every ideal of humanity known to Greek civilization. In other words, both Polyphemus and Shutendōji are not only fallen divinities but also negative (barbaric) manifestations of the concepts of humanity held by, respectively, the ancient Greeks and Japanese: that is, they are presented as antisocial and antimoral “human beings.”

²⁴ Kamakura, “Chikamatsu Monzaemon no oni,” p. 24.

²⁵ Yanagita, *Minzokugaku jiten; Yōkai dangi*, pp. 105–106.

²⁶ For example, Komatsu, *Yōkaigaku shinkō*, pp. 184–187, 193.

In the world of opera, the Polyphemus myth is frequently rewritten and combined with a myth narrated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the giant, whose love is unrequited by the sea-nymph (Nereid) Galatea, kills the shepherd Acis, Galatea's beloved. Particularly famous are the following works: in French, *Acis et Galathée* (Acis and Galatea, 1686), by Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687), libretto by Jean Galbert de Campistron (1656–1723), and in Italian, *Gli amori di Polifemo* (The Loves of Polyphemus, 1702) by Giovanni Bononcini (1670–1747), libretto by Attilio Ariosti (1666–1729?), who incorporates also the unfortunate love story of Scylla for Glaucus. One magnificent version is *Polifemo* (1735) by Nicola Porpora (1686–1768), libretto by Paolo A. Rolli (1687–1765), which combines the myth of Odysseus with myths of the tragic loves between Acis and Galatea and between Odysseus and Calypso. The serenade *Acis, Galatea, and Polifemo* (1708), libretto by Nicola Giuvo (1680?–1749?), set to music by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759), focuses in contrast only on the Polyphemus-Galatea-Acis triangle: an angry Polyphemus, having suffered Galatea's repeated refusals, tears away a piece of mountain and throws it at Acis, killing him. Galatea appeals to her father, Nereus, who turns the blood flowing from Acis's body into a river so it will forever rejoin the sea, thereby making the lovers' bond eternal. The traces of Polyphemus's horrible crime remain as the rock stacks in the bay of Aci Trezza, where the nine villages there bearing Acis's name stand guard over the relics of his body now torn to pieces. Handel followed this serenade with a very famous expanded version in English: *Acis and Galatea* (1718, 1731).

In these musical works based on the Polyphemus myth, the origin story of a place is joined to the theme of love, as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This, in some ways, attenuates and softens (sometimes with comic results) the brutality and coarseness of Polyphemus, making him a more multifaceted dramatic character in the boundless pains of his love.

By contrast, Mt. Ōe, where Shutendōji and his demons have settled, is a place that is neither fully part of, nor subject to control by, the human world—it is a world altogether different. The existence of such another world is seen as a danger to the central powers and rulers (the imperial court in Kyoto), one that must be exorcised and eliminated. The central government, which is trying to expand its political and religious control over the territory, does everything it can to depict as evil any entity that might constitute a hostile opposition. And the turmoils in the Capital, which can no longer be governed, are regarded as the work of the demon-gods, rebels against the legitimate order of the sovereign.²⁷ Primordial land gods/earth spirits who originally dwelt in this land come to be seen as the most dangerous beings and were subjected to discrimination, exclusion, and conquest. Shutendōji, who was once the god of this land, becomes for those in power a villain, and must therefore be exterminated.²⁸

²⁷ Komatsu, "Shutendōji."

²⁸ Kanai, *Nō no kenkyū*, pp. 347–350.

However, it seems that the noh drama *Ōeyama*, and Chikamatsu's *jōruri* play *Shutendōji makurakotoba*, try to shed light not only from the central government's point of view, and not merely in celebration of its political domination of the people and lands around the Capital: apparently they try also to show things from the demon's point of view—through Shutendōji's eyes—to underscore his own personal tragedy and drama. The humanity that emerges, even in this demon-monster-former god, helps to create a dramatic character. The psychological recognition of the demon who was once a human being, of his horror and his sadness, impress the audience, giving life to the play itself. As a result, the play is no longer simply the story of a victim and a hero-protagonist of courageous exploits.

Changes in Mind, Changes in Body

Yet what stands out from the body language and the illustrations that we have seen in relation to these dramas?

In the dramas we have examined, the descriptions and illustrations of his body point to an important quality about Shutendōji: he is a double figure. He has two sides to his nature and appearance. As depicted in illustrated scrolls and other illustrated works of fiction, Shutendōji is at first beautiful and talented, but after he gets drunk and falls asleep, a different body is revealed: an enormous, ugly demon with fifteen eyes and five horns (figs. 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3, 4a, 4b, 5). The figure of Shutendōji has thus become the incarnation of a fearsome, ugly demon, with the terrifying attributes of superhuman strength, ruthlessness, and cruelty. Shutendōji has, in other words, two physical states: the incarnation of an eternal child-deity on the one hand, and, on the other, the degraded form of a demon, due to the evil that arises from his anger, fear, and jealousy. In the noh *Ōeyama*, the child figure—the *shite* in the first act (*mae-shite* 前シテ)—dramatically transforms while sleeping in an alcove into the figure of the demon—the *shite* in the second act (*nochi-shite* 後シテ). Despite, however, this extreme transformation in the noh drama—altering the child's appearance, with the resulting appearance of the demon—the perspective is not limited to the mere contours and confines typical of works in the “ending noh” (*kirinō* 切能) category—spectacular and impressive dramas of non-human creatures. The noh drama also conveys the human aspects of the “child” in the banquet scene, producing an extreme effect of contrast with the terrifying and imposing stage presence of the demon in the finale.

The demon extermination legends are at the core of each *dan* of Chikamatsu's play as a unifying element. Yet if we focus on the character of Shutendōji, another theme emerges: the substitution, replacement, exchange, and sale of human beings; the tragedy of human beings (namely women) who are kidnapped, replaced, or sacrificed, one in place of another.

Indeed, it can be said that the main theme of Chikamatsu's drama, along with the character-image of Shutendōji, is the fate of humans beings subject to substitution



Figure 1a. *Shuten-dōji ekotoba* 酒吞童子絵詞 (3 *kan* 卷), vol. 2 (*chū* 中). Kuchinashi Bunko 支子文庫, Kyushu University.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2324/1445911> (image 17).



Figure 1b. *Shuten-dōji ekotoba* (3 *kan*), vol. 3 (*ge* 下). Kuchinashi Bunko, Kyushu University.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2324/1445912> (image 8).



Figure 2a. *Shuten-dōji emaki* 酒吞童子絵巻 (3 *kan*), vol. 2 (*chū*). Osaka Otani University Library.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/100313935> (image 38).



Figure 2b. *Shutoji emaki* (3 kan), vol. 3 (ge). Osaka Otani University Library.
<https://doi.org/10.20730/100313935> (image 48).



Figure 3. *Oeyama Shutoji* 大江山酒吞童子 (*ebon* 絵本). National Institute of Japanese Literature.
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200007676> (image 8).

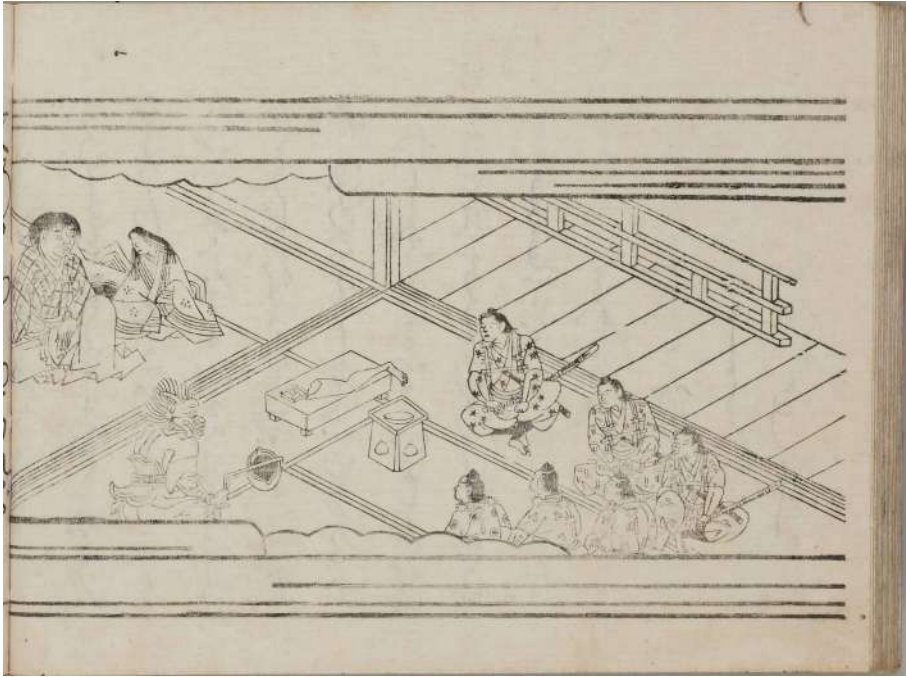


Figure 4a. *Shutendōji* しゆてん童子 (Muromachi *monogatari*). Ukai Bunko 鶺鴒文庫, National Institute of Japanese Literature.
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200019890> (image 29).

(*migawari* 身替り), also translatable as “self-other exchange” or “exchange of person/body”). In the drama, certain human figures are forced to take the place of other more important characters: this characterizes the tragedy of the women who are sold to human traffickers, who are kidnapped, killed, and forced to sacrifice themselves, and who ultimately die. We can see this in Ukon, the lady-in-waiting who comes to Kazan’s hermitage to replace San no Kimi (kidnapped by Shutendōji’s vassals), and who is thereupon tormented by the spirit of Kokiden. We also observe this pattern in Katō’s daughter, Yokobue, who is sold to a house of prostitution by Hirobumi, and who, pessimistic about the future, ultimately commits suicide. It is even observable in Hirobumi’s own daughter, Kotoji, who decides herself to become a prostitute—taking Yokobue’s place—in order to save that same father. Yet the two fathers themselves also become tragic victims as a consequence: Hirobumi dies by *seppuku*, and Katō loses his daughter, although he finds another in Kotoji. In other words, Chikamatsu’s play is both the perpetrator’s drama and the drama of his victims.

The *migawari* theme or motif is a very important element in the historical development of puppet theater. It became a decisive and recurrent device

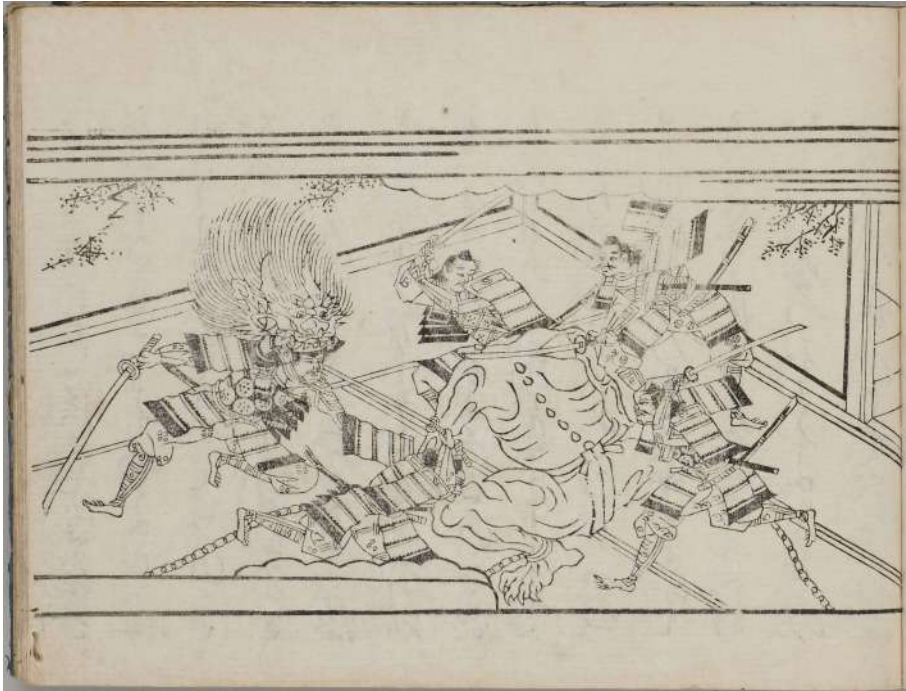


Figure 4b. *Shutendōji* (Muromachi *monogatari*). Ukai Bunko, National Institute of Japanese Literature.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200019890> (image 40).

in Chikamatsu's theater²⁹ and grew increasingly more varied up until the dramatist Namiki Sōsuke 並木宗輔/Senryū 千柳 (1695–1751), whose works made it vain and useless, something without efficacy as a solution on the dramatic level, so that deaths and sacrifices are almost emptied of meaning, becoming charged instead with pessimism.

If the leading theme of the play is a series of *migawari*, the theme of corporality, of the person and his body, is together entwined with the *migawari* theme and appears even at its roots. Noh and *ningyō jōruri* may equally be genres among the performing arts. However, the scenes of cruel violence and depictions of atrocities and horrible actions that find no expression in noh are seen to powerfully conquer the stage in the puppet plays, and have a strong impact in the Edo period.

In the banquet scene where some kidnapped girls are victims of acts of quartering, laceration, live limb-dismemberment, and full-body compression, bloody violence is presented three-dimensionally on the stage. The physicality and the

²⁹ See, for example, Mukai, *Chikamatsu no hōbō*, pp. 7–22; Uchiyama, *Jōruri no jūhasseiki*, pp. 60–65.



Figure 5. *Raikō Ōeyama iri* 頼光大江山入. National Institute of Japanese Literature.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200016651> (image 4).

brutality of people being killed, their bodies eaten, their blood drunken—all of it is shown to the audience. Performed by the puppets, such scenes become almost a Grand Guignol, or even a grotesque, but their impact remains for all that no less striking or intense.

However, in Chikamatsu's play, these violent and grotesque scenes are not just spectacles or freak shows (*misemono* 見世物). The atrocious actions taken by Shutendōji and his demons are the result of the sadness and loneliness of a child who, since birth, has fallen ever deeper into certain physical sensations driving him increasingly to excess, in greedy crescendo towards a corporality pervaded by sensuality and cruelty. This escalation and growing perversion from an early age are highlighted in Shutendōji's account of his background and upbringing. He is nursed for years with his mother's milk, and excessive maternal doting and adoring affection result in an addiction that gradually pushes him to tragedy, even after he is accepted by a Buddhist temple. His preference for his mother's milk evolves into one for blood—human blood.

It is worth noting that Chikamatsu's interpretation also sharply highlights the dark side of *eros*, which manifests as terrible behavior and relentlessly, increasingly gruesome "habits." Chikamatsu mines the deepest, most painful, and hidden folds of Shutendōji's character and the other characters involved in this

drama. He portrays Shutendōji as possessing a tender and helpless humanity and fragility. The demon forms thus a stark contrast with Raikō, who demonstrates a shrewd, ruthless, and calculated cunning in his deception and refined argumentation, and who can immediately grasp the weaknesses in the strange creature.

Shutendōji's terrifying behavior, which causes him to feel miserable, is manifested in his condition and appearance: it has changed his very nature and modified his feelings, indeed thereby causing the demon's despair and "ugliness." It leads to his "perverted" sensations and to actions not condoned by society. Shutendōji sadly warns the false *yamabushi* (Raikō and his vassals) not to fall into the dark abyss that he himself has plummeted into.

Mediation and Representation by Puppets

Chikamatsu's dramas are conceived and written to be represented by puppets. In such a setting, the corporality of the puppet, which is made of wood and cloth and is not a human actor in the flesh, is foregrounded: it becomes the element that supports and enables the staged drama. With the recognition of the puppet-body's unique characteristics, it is possible to portray fantastic, magical, and otherwise unreal narrative elements, situations, and actions, including those involving the body.

A puppet represents a human figure, a human body—or possibly the body of a non-human (such as an animal, a monster, or a ghost) or some other fictional creature. But unlike humans, puppets are manipulated by puppeteers, and they are not limited by human corporality. In the context of a puppet play, their actions, their bodily movements and body parts, their appearance and transformations of appearance, indeed all of the actions exerted on the body (such as cutting off the head or an arm and so on) seem to have almost no limits. This creates almost endless narrative possibilities. A figure can freely transform and fly into the sky to express a mysterious world that exceeds the bounds of physical laws. A variety of illusions, conflicts, transformations, and metamorphoses can be portrayed, and every scene-setting and situation can be changed quickly and relatively easily.

During Chikamatsu's time, as is well known, the puppets used on the stage were still simple in their structure, operated by a single puppeteer. The stage, however, even while centered on single-person puppets, also made abundant and skillful use of mechanized puppets (*karakuri* からくり), which, thanks to various mechanisms and tricks, were able to entertain, amaze, and generate astonishment and emotional participation in the audience.³⁰ In addition, just as in *kojōruri*, plays produced during this period extensively and actively incorporated strange wonders, fantastic scenes, and multiple characters of different natures (such as animals and fictional creatures)—all of these being elements best portrayed

³⁰ Yamada, *Takeda karakuri no kenkyū*.

by puppets. These can, moreover, be represented and portrayed in an almost palpable manner, in a way at once grotesque yet also moving.

As a device for staging stories involving humans, puppets—as a form of doll—bring additional connotations to the drama. Such dolls have a primitive and primary ancestral meaning as “substitute forms or representations of a sacred object” (*katashiro* 形代). They can be worshipped in place of deities and can be used as substitutes for people undergoing purification. As images of gods and humans, dolls can easily become substitutes for people or living beings—they can serve as amulets that provide protection, or as objects capable of attracting spirits, of offering spirits and deities a natural lodging place (*yorishiro* 依り代). Dolls can thus replace the actions and roles of human beings, deities, animals, and spirits, including plant spirits.

Furthermore, in the world of a puppet drama and on its stage, each part of the human body can “act” even if it becomes separated from the whole. Even if body parts (in particular, the head and arms) are cut off, disassembled, or dispersed, the nature of puppets allows those separated parts to perform dramatic actions and other various functions as part of the character. And it is this fantastic and imaginative dimension, this theatrical world, that Chikamatsu seeks and pursues: a dramatic world that makes the most of the physicality and potential of puppets.

In the Chikamatsu repertoire, there are many works in which a severed head bounces up and soars into the sky and then plays an active role in the narrative—something only made possible by the corporality of puppets. The indigenous belief that the head of a being with superhuman power is animated by spiritual strength and energy—a belief that goes back to the legend of Taira no Masakado’s 平将門 (?–940) head—emerges in many of Chikamatsu’s plays. For example, we see it in the second *dan* of *Tenji tennō* 天智天皇 (Emperor Tenji, 1689) and in the second or fifth *dan* of *Taishōkan* 大職冠 (1712). It seems that this motif—a belief in the magical force of a fearsome being’s head—runs through all these sources. As Komatsu Kazuhiko 小松和彦 has pointed out, “The head of Shutendōji, the head of Ōtakemaru 大嶽丸³¹ . . . were symbols of the ‘outside’ that threatened the power of the sovereign” and the worship directed towards these heads, venerated and exorcised in special tombs, was a sign of contemporary recognition of the magical, powerful, and violent energy of the spirit/vital nucleus that animated them—to the point that they were even kept as precious treasures, becoming “one of the sources of the vitality of the power of the sovereign.”³² This can also be seen in the legend of Shutendōji.

Yet in Chikamatsu’s play, as we have tried to explain, this world of ancient, medieval, and then early-modern imagery becomes a vital source and soil for the

³¹ A demon who is said to have lived in Suzukayama 鈴鹿山.

³² Komatsu, *Shutendōji no kubi*, pp. 47–53.

realization of a dramatic show in which the itinerary of the heroic deeds of Raikō, and the destiny of the character Shutendōji, give life to a masterpiece, one transfigured by the powerful tragic potential of the protagonist (Shutendōji) and his victims.

And it is precisely the representation of humans, animal- and plant-spirits, gods and buddhas, monsters (*yōkai*), and other beings *through puppets* that enables Chikamatsu's dramas to be embodied, that makes possible their extraordinary imaginative world, the dramatic and human situations found therein, their scenic solutions and representations—in short, all their complex evolution on the stage as living things.³³

³³The demon extermination scene in this Chikamatsu *jōruri* (fourth and fifth *dan*) was revived and performed in 1961. In 2005, thanks to the efforts of Professor Uchiyama Mikiko, the scene “Onigajō taimen no dan” 鬼が城対面の段 (The Face-to-face Encounter at the Fortress of the Demons) was reenacted in the form of a “pure narration” (*sjōruri* 素浄瑠璃) in the COE (Center of Excellence) for classical theater research course (Ningyō Jōruri Bunraku) at Waseda University's Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum. Here I would also like to express my thanks to Professor Uchiyama and the bunraku artists for the wonderful opportunity granted to all of us then.

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The Water Mirror Motif in the Noh Play *Izutsu*: Continuation and Variation of a Classical Theme

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1. From *Ise monogatari* to Zeami's Noh Play *Izutsu*

The celebrated noh play *Izutsu* 井筒 (The Well Curb) is widely considered to be one of Zeami's 世阿弥 (1363?–1443?) masterpieces. In general its underlying story is based on Episode 23 of the *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (The Ise Stories, late ninth–mid-tenth century), yet scholars have long recognized that the play also departs significantly from the original. For example, the play's setting in Isonokami 石上 in Yamato 大和 Province, as well as the identification of the main character (*shite* シテ) as Ki no Arisune's 紀有常 (815–877) daughter, are both derived from medieval commentaries on the *Ise monogatari*, and not the *Ise monogatari* itself. Also, the play cuts Episode 23's last scene, which focused on the figure known as “the woman in Takayasu” (*Takayasu no onna* 高安の女), the secret lover of the male protagonist.

Furthermore, the plot of the play reverses the narrative's time axis, ending with a scene focused on the *shite*'s childhood. In Act 1, as the main female character reminisces about the past, it is revealed that her husband, Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825–880), had desisted from further visits to his lover after clandestinely overhearing his wife's poem. The *Ise monogatari* gives the poem as follows:

<i>kaze fukeba</i>	風吹けば
<i>okitsu shiranami</i>	沖つしら浪
<i>Tatsuta yama</i>	たつた山
<i>yowa ni ya kimi ga</i>	夜半にや君が
<i>hitori koyuramu</i>	ひとりこゆらむ ¹

¹ *Ise monogatari*, p. 137. In the noh play, the wording of the last line of this poem is slightly different (*hitori yukuran* 独り行くらん) but without significant change in sense. Zeami, *Izutsu*, p. 291.

When the wind rises
 the white waves from the offing
 Mount Tatsuta's Pass,
 In the deepest midnight dark,
 Do you cross there all alone?²

The scene then returns to the couple's childhood, and the time spent together around their neighborhood well, where they became engaged through an exchange of poems.

In Act 2, after the *shite* has identified herself as “the woman who waits” (*hito matsu onna* 人待つ女), she proceeds, while clad in her husband's gown, to relive the couple's childhood play. As she does, she sees her beloved reflected in her own reflection in the well. With this, the play reaches its climax. Upon her entry in Act 1, the *shite*'s worldly passions and yearning for deliverance had been expressed, but here the play's climax eventually finds her led, not to salvation from earthly attachments, but rather to immersion in memories of a happier past.

The narrative device through which this effect is achieved—the water mirror—is not found in the *Ise monogatari* episode but is original to Zeami's play. The *shite*'s embodied presence, as reflected in the water over which she leans peering, creates a dramatic effect.

Already in Act 1, the *shite*'s reminiscences refer to the “wooden well, around which the young children played, conspiring in friendly ways, peering at their reflections in the water mirror, heads together, sleeves o'erlaid, bosom friends, hearts fathomless as the water.”³

Act 2 then overlays the movements of the *shite*, peering into the well, with the following words:

<i>sanagara mimieshi</i>	さながら見見えし
<i>mukashi otoko no</i>	昔男の
<i>kamuri naoshi wa</i>	冠直衣は
<i>onna to mo miezu</i>	女とも見えず
<i>otoko narikeri</i>	男なりけり
<i>Naribira no omokage</i>	業平の面影
<i>mireba natsukashi ya</i>	見ればなつかしや
<i>ware nagara natsukashi ya</i>	われながらなつかしや ⁴

CHORUS:

Thus we saw each other, he,
 the man of old,

² Yasuda, *Masterworks of the Nō Theater*, p. 215.

³ *izutsu ni yorite unaiko no / tomodachi kataraitte / tagai ni kage o mizukagami / omote o narabe sode o kake / kokoro no mizu mo soko ni naku* 井筒によりてうなゐ子の友だち語りひて互ひに影を水鏡面を並べ袖をかけ心の水もそこひなく. Brazell, “Izutsu,” p. 151; Zeami, *Izutsu*, p. 291.

⁴ Zeami, *Izutsu*, p. 296.

his court cap and gown
 now conceal the woman,
 it is indeed a man—
 the image of Narihira

SHITE:
 seeing it, I yearn,

CHORUS:
 'tis my own self, yet I yearn.⁵

The woman's ghost, by reenacting her childhood play with her beloved, causes his reflection to appear. She becomes absorbed in his image, even as she realizes that the reflection is but her own.

The noh play *Matsukaze* 松風 (Pine Wind) features a similar scene in which a male actor playing a woman puts on a man's cloak and cap, as if possessed. In *Izutsu*, however, this motif is intensified by the additional layer of the *shite* recognizing her lover in the image reflected on the water mirror. A male actor playing the role of a woman dresses as a man, only to create the illusion of a woman thinking of her reflection in a mirror as that of a man. Multiple layers of gender-switching are piled up, one on top of the other, to produce a moment that yields the play's most impressive scene.

However, as we have seen, this water mirror motif, while playing a pivotal role in *Izutsu*, is not found in Episode 23 of the *Ise monogatari*. This invites the question of whether this motif can be attributed to another source.

2. The Water Mirror Motif in Japanese Medieval Literary Tradition

The water mirror motif as such has a long history. The *Baishi wenji* 白氏文集 (Jp. *Hakushi bunshū*; Collected Writings of Bai Juyi, 845), a widely popular work in Heian (794–1185) Japan that left a profound mark on its literature, contains multiple poems in which such a water mirror motif appears. The poem “An Evening in Early Autumn” (新秋夕, vol. 9) includes the line “The autumn pond shining brightly with the harvest moon” (秋池明月水). Likewise, the poem “Farewell Banquet in a Pavilion by the Yangzi River” (江樓宴別, vol. 16) includes the line “The cold stream, floating the moon on its surface, lay clear as a mirror” (寒流帶月澄如鏡). And the poem “A Night by the Pond” (池上夜境, vol. 52) includes “The clear sky's stars and moon fell onto the pond and its banks” (晴空星月落池塘).⁶ Among collections of Chinese poetry composed by Japanese authors, one encounters other titles with similar motifs. These include “Suichū no kage” 水中影 (Reflections in the Water) in the *Bunka shūreishū* 文華秀麗集 (Anthology of Splendid Literary Flowerings, 818) and “Suichū no tsuki” 水中月 (Moon in the

⁵ Brazell, “Izutsu,” p. 156.

⁶ *Baishi wenji*, vols. 9, 16, 52. These can be found, respectively, in *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* 117, 99, 105.

Water) in the *Kanke bunsō* 菅家文章 (The Literary Works of Sugawara [no Michizane], 900).⁷

However, in all these cases, the objects whose images are reflected by the water are natural features, primarily the moon, or flowers and grass. The “reflections in the water” addressed by the aforementioned poem of the same title are of flowers, leaves, a bird, and a shrub, in addition to celestial bodies.⁸

Such an association with natural elements holds true also for Japanese *waka* 和歌 composed around the same time. The *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905), in Book 1 (Spring 1), contains a poem by Lady Ise 伊勢 (c. 877–c. 939) in which flowers are reflected in the water:

<i>toshi o hete</i>	年をへて
<i>hana no kagami to</i>	花の鏡と
<i>naruru mizu wa</i>	なる水は
<i>chiri kakaru o ya</i>	ちりかかるをや
<i>kumoru to iuran</i>	くもるといふらん ⁹

Are we to call them
clouded—stream waters where for
many years we saw
the blossoms mirrored—now are
hidden by fallen petals.¹⁰

Another poem, by Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (d. 945), describes the reflection of autumn leaves:¹¹

<i>minasoko ni</i>	水底に
<i>kage shi utsureba</i>	影しうつれば
<i>momijiba no</i>	紅葉葉の
<i>iro mo fukaku ya</i>	色も深くや
<i>narimasaruran</i>	成まさるらん

Turned autumn leaves
reflected into the depths
of a water's ground—
their scarlet hue must then too
be cast in still deeper tone.¹²

Yet further poems by Tsurayuki employ, among others, images of wisteria, or kerria, as natural features reflected in water.

⁷ *Bunka shūreiishū* 2:125; Sugawara no Michizane, *Kanke bunsō* 2:116.

⁸ For an English translation of this poem, see Rabinovitch and Bradstock, *No Moonlight in My Cup*, p. 125.

⁹ *Kokin wakashū* 44.

¹⁰ Rodd and Henkenius, *Kokinshū*, p. 61.

¹¹ *Tsurayuki shū* 26.

¹² Here and elsewhere, unless otherwise indicated, all translations of original sources are by Michael Burtscher.

However, in the *Tosa nikki* 土佐日記 (Tosa Diary, c. 935), Tsurayuki includes the following verse in which the water reflects an image different from those found in the poems described above:

<i>kage mireba</i>	かげ見れば
<i>nami no soko naru</i>	波の底なる
<i>hisakata no</i>	ひさかたの
<i>sora kogi wataru</i>	空漕ぎわたる
<i>ware zo wabishiki</i>	われぞわびしき ¹³

With a forlorn heart
I gaze into the moonlight
where beneath the waves
stretches a limitless sky
to be traversed by this boat.¹⁴

This *waka* is one of a number of rarer poems in which the reflection in the water is the poet's own. It responds to the Chinese couplet below, which the *Tosa nikki* quotes immediately before as follows:

<i>Sao wa ugatsu nami no ue no tsuki o</i>	棹は穿つ波の上の月を
<i>fune wa osou umi no uchi no sora o</i>	舟は圧ふ海の中の空を ¹⁵

The oar strikes through the moon on the waves;
The boat presses against the sky in the sea.¹⁶

In the few cases where a reflection produced by a water mirror is portrayed as the poet's own, the image conveyed is usually negative. An example is Episode 155 of the *Yamato monogatari* 大和物語 (Tales of Yamato, mid-tenth century). The Dainagon's 大納言 (Major Counselor) daughter, who has been confined to a small hut on Mt. Asaka 安積 in Mutsu 陸奥 Province after being kidnapped by a certain man, sees her reflection in a mountain spring, only to realize that her erstwhile beauty is now gone. Overcome by shame about her dreadful appearance, she recites the following poem and dies:

<i>Asakayama</i>	あさか山
<i>kage sae miyuru</i>	影さへ見ゆる
<i>yama no i no</i>	山の井の
<i>asaku wa hito o</i>	あさくは人を
<i>omou mono ka wa</i>	思ふものかは ¹⁷

¹³ *Tosa nikki*, p. 31.

¹⁴ The English translation, with "sea" in the fourth line corrected to "sky" (*sora* 空), by McCullough, *Kokin Wakashū*, p. 275.

¹⁵ *Tosa nikki*, p. 31.

¹⁶ McCullough, *Kokin Wakashū*, p. 275. On Jia Dao's 賈島 (779–843) Chinese poem, see also Hasebe, "Ka Tō."

¹⁷ *Yamato monogatari*, p. 390.

Asaka Mountain—
 In a shallow mountain spring
 a clear reflection
 not so shallow are my thoughts
 as I long and think of him.¹⁸

This poem is clearly a variation on poem 3807 in the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves, completed after 759):

<i>Asakayama</i>	安積山
<i>kege sae miyuru</i>	影さへ見ゆる
<i>yama no i no</i>	山の井の
<i>asaki kokoro o</i>	浅き心を
<i>wa ga omowanaku ni</i>	我が思はなくに ¹⁹

Asaka Mountain—
 In a shallow mountain spring
 a clear reflection
 not so shallow in the heart
 where my thoughts have mirrored you.²⁰

The motif of a poet's persona suddenly realizing, upon seeing their reflection in a water mirror, that she or he has aged follows a long tradition of poetic expression in which a mirror impresses on its beholder the inescapable reality of old age. As discussed below, Zeami himself also employed this motif to express a feeling of impermanence.

The motif of a water mirror showing a loved one's reflection has precedents as well, even if not many. An early example appears in poem 4322 of the *Man'yōshū*, one of the songs of the *sakimori* 防人 soldiers:

<i>wa ga tsuma wa</i>	我が妻は
<i>itaku koi rashi</i>	いたく恋ひらし
<i>nomu mizu ni</i>	飲む水に
<i>kego sae miete</i>	影さへ見えて
<i>yo ni wasurarezu</i>	よに忘れず ²¹

My wife misses me—
 See, with how sore a yearning:
 in the very water
 that I drink her face appears;
 I can never forget her.²²

¹⁸ In the English translation, the first three lines are taken from Cranston's translation of *Man'yōshū* 3807 in *A Waka Anthology, Volume 1*, p. 752, while the fourth and fifth lines are translated by Michael Burtscher. For an English translation of the *Yamato monogatari*, see Tahara, *Tales of Yamato*, p. 109.

¹⁹ *Man'yōshū* 3807, p. 102.

²⁰ Cranston, *A Waka Anthology, Volume 1*, p. 752 (capitalizations changed).

²¹ *Man'yōshū* 4322, p. 384.

²² Cranston, *A Waka Anthology, Volume 1*, p. 630.

This motif derives from the folk belief that seeing one's beloved reflected in water was proof that the latter was thinking of oneself. In Heian poetry, however, we occasionally also encounter love poems where the poet's persona actively searches for a beloved's reflection. Take, for example, poem 189 from the *Kanpyō no ōntoki kisai no miya no utaawase* 寛平御時后宮歌合 (Poetry Contest Held at the Residence of the Consort in the Kanpyō Era, between the years of 889 and 893):

<i>bito shirezu</i>	人知れず
<i>shita ni nagaruru</i>	下に流るる
<i>namidagawa</i>	涙川
<i>seki todomenamu</i>	せきとどめなむ
<i>kage ya miyuru to</i>	影や見ゆると ²³

Unbeknownst to her
streaming with no end beneath,
a river of tears.
Its rushing flow I must halt
to see her countenance clear.

In the poem above, the medium producing the reflection is not actual water but the imaginary water of a river of tears. The image of such a lachrymal river becoming a water mirror is also found in the “Winter Poems” (*fuyu no uta* 冬歌) section of the same poetry contest (poem 139). Both poems were later selected for inclusion in the first volume of the *Shinsen Man'yōshū* 新撰万葉集 (Newly Compiled *Man'yōshū*, 893–913), where they were paired with poems in Chinese.²⁴ The image of a river of tears as a water mirror is not derived from Chinese poetry, however, but is original to Japanese literature.

A further example featuring this motif is the following poem from the *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 (Collection of *Waka* Gleanings, c. 1005–1007):

<i>namidagawa</i>	涙河
<i>nodoka ni dani mo</i>	のどかにだにも
<i>nagarenan</i>	流れ南 <small>なみ</small>
<i>koishiki hito no</i>	恋しき人の
<i>kage ya miyuru to</i>	影や見ゆると ²⁵

My river of tears,
oh, how I wish for its flow
to slow to a calm!
The image of my beloved
will find its reflection here.

²³ *Kanpyō no ōntoki kisai no miya no utaawase* 189, p. 480.

²⁴ As poem-pairs 189–190 and 227–228. See *Shinsen Man'yōshū*, vol. 1:2, pp. 381–387 and 510–514.

²⁵ *Shūi wakashū* 875, p. 252.

In this next poem, also from *Kanpyō no ōtoki kīsai no miya no utaawase*, in particular its “Love Poems” (*koi no uta* 恋歌) section, the water mirror likewise consists of tears, but here the beloved’s reflected image has already appeared:

<i>shiratama no</i>	白玉の
<i>kiede namida to</i>	消えて涙と
<i>narinureba</i>	なりぬれば
<i>koishiki kage o</i>	恋しき影を
<i>soko ni koso mire</i>	そこにこそ見れ ²⁶

Glistening white pearls
clinging to my forlorn sleeve
as but trailing tears.
My beloved’s countenance
casting forth an image here.

The water mirror motif in Zeami’s play had thus a long literary tradition behind it. But Zeami’s motivation for introducing that motif into the *Izutsu* story from the *Ise monogatari*, where it is not found, cannot be sufficiently explained by literary tradition alone. As is frequently pointed out, noh plays on stories from classical literature were often based less on the original work itself than on contemporaneous commentaries explaining that work. In the case of *Izutsu*, Ōtani Setsuko 大谷節子 has remarked that the *Waka chikenshū* 和歌知顯集 (Collection of Manifest Knowledge about Poetry, eleventh century) contains commentary according to which the two children playing by the well “observed with envy how grown-up men and women could peer into the well and see its bottom.” They began measuring their heights against the well because “they were desperately awaiting the time when they would be grown up” themselves. Ōtani further discusses the subtlety with which the *shite*’s act of peering into the well in Act 2, by alluding to the children’s ardent desire to glimpse into the well in days gone by, connects back through time to their childhood play and thus assumes multiple layers of meaning.²⁷

Another possible influence on the water mirror motif in Zeami’s play was contemporaneous illustrations of this story. The *Bonjikyō-zuri bakubyō Ise monogatari emaki* 梵字経刷白描伊勢物語絵巻 (Plain-Ink *Ise Stories* Illustrated Scrolls Imprinted with Sanskrit Letters, early Kamakura period),²⁸ the oldest extant set of *Ise monogatari* illustrated scrolls, depicts from behind two children leaning on adjacent sides of the well curb. The left figure appears to be peering into the well, while the other appears to be looking at the first. The *Ihon Ise monogatari emaki* 異本伊勢物語絵巻 (Variant *Ise Stories* Illustrated Scrolls)²⁹—a late Tokugawa-period copy of a picture scroll from the Kamakura era which is thought to preserve and

²⁶ *Kanpyō no ōtoki kīsai no miya no utaawase* 158, p. 474.

²⁷ Ōtani, *Zeami no chūsei*, pp. 67–71.

²⁸ *Ise monogatari emaki ehon taisei: Shiryōhen*, pp. 16–17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63.

convey the earlier style—again depicts the two children leaning on adjacent sides of the well curb, with the figure to the left peering into the well, while the figure to the right again looks towards the other. Unfortunately, other early illustrations are not available, therefore this vector of influence must remain within the realm of speculation.

Ise monogatari, Episode 27, sometimes known as “Tarai no kage” たらひの影 (The Reflection in the Wash Basin), offers an especially interesting comparative case for the superimposition, in water, of a man’s reflection onto the reflection of a woman. In that episode, a certain woman, lamenting that a man who visited for one night has never returned, recites the following poem upon seeing her reflection in her washbasin:

<i>ware bakari</i>	わればかり
<i>mono omou hito wa</i>	もの思ふ人は
<i>mata mo araji</i>	またもあらじ
<i>to omoeba mizu no</i>	と思へば水の
<i>shita ni mo arikeri</i>	下にもありけり ³⁰

No one, anywhere,
could be as miserable
as unhappy me,
I assure myself, yet spy,
beneath the water, one more.³¹

The man, who happens to be standing nearby, overhears this and answers with the following poem:

<i>minakuchi ni</i>	みなくちに
<i>ware ya miyuramu</i>	われや見ゆらむ
<i>kawazu sae</i>	かはづさへ
<i>mizu no shita ni te</i>	水の下にて
<i>morogoe ni naku</i>	もろ声に鳴く ³²

I must be the one
you have glimpsed there by the spout,
for even a frog
may, from beneath the water,
join in when another cries.³³

In his own poem, the man assumes that the woman has seen *his* reflection in the water, not her own. By switching the reflected subject, he turns the woman’s grudge against him back against herself. The situation differs entirely from that

³⁰ *Ise monogatari*, p. 141.

³¹ Mostow and Tyler, *The Ise Stories*, p. 77.

³² *Ise monogatari*, p. 141.

³³ Mostow and Tyler, *The Ise Stories*, p. 78.

found in Zeami's play, but there is some similarity in the subtle effect achieved by overlaying the reflections of a woman and a man in a water mirror.

3. The Water Mirror Motif in Zeami's Other Works

It bears mention that Zeami employs the water mirror motif quite frequently in his other works. The play *Yōrō* 養老 (Fostering Long Life), for example, quotes the lines “In a shallow mountain spring / a clear reflection” from the “Asaka Mountain” *Man'yōshū* poem mentioned above, alluding simultaneously to a line from a Ki no Tsurayuki poem in the *Kokin wakashū* (Book 1)—*sode bichite / musubishi mizu* 袖ひちてむすびし水 (waters in which we once dipped / cupped hands drenching summer robes)³⁴—in a scene where the *shite* sees himself reflected in the mountain spring: “My aged figure seems to me as young as this rejuvenating water” (*oi no sugata mo wakamizu to miru* 老いの姿も若水と見る).³⁵

In the play *Nomori* 野守 (The Watchman's Mirror), the pool of water in which the Kasuga Plain 春日野 watchman (the *shite*) sees his reflection day-in and day-out is called “the watchman's water mirror” (*nomori no mizukagami* 野守の水鏡) in the course of the following lament:

<i>ge ni mo nomori no mizukagami</i>	げにも野守の水鏡
<i>kage o utsushite itodo nao</i>	影を映していとどなほ
<i>oi no nami wa mashimizu no</i>	老いの波は真清水の
<i>awarege ni mishi mama no</i>	あはれげに見しままの
<i>mukashi no ware zo koishiki</i>	昔の我ぞ恋しき ³⁶

The watchman's water mirror
throws back his reflection, ah, so much older now,
creased by such wrinkling waves!
The unerring surface makes plain the sad truth:
O how I miss those looks, once mine when I was young!³⁷

In the play *Higaki* 檜垣 (The Cypress Fence), a former *shirabyōshi* 白拍子 dancer seeing a reflection of her aged self in a well is accompanied by the following chorus:

<i>kōgan no yosooi</i>	紅顔のよそほひ
<i>bujo no homare mo ito semete</i>	舞女の誉れもいと迫めて
<i>samo utsukushiki kōgan no</i>	さも美しき紅顔の
<i>hisui no kazura hana shiore</i>	翡翠の鬘花萎れ
<i>katsura no mayu mo shimo furite</i>	桂の眉も霜降りて
<i>mizu ni utsuru omokage</i>	水に映る面影
<i>rōsui kage shizunde</i>	老衰影沈んで

³⁴ *Kokin wakashū* 2; Rodd and Henkenius, *Kokinshū*, p. 49.

³⁵ Zeami, *Yōrō*, p. 231.

³⁶ Zeami, *Nomori*, p. 314.

³⁷ Tyler, *To Hallow Genji*, p. 152.

<i>midori ni mieshi kurokami wa</i>	緑に見えし黒髪は
<i>dosui no mokuzu chiriakuta</i>	土水の藻屑塵芥
<i>kawarikeru</i>	変はりける
<i>mi no arisama zo kanashiki</i>	身の有様ぞ悲しき ³⁸

Fair and rosy cheeked, bright in costumes,
 as a dancer highly praised at the least is she;
 so superbly beautiful, fair and rosy cheeked
 with the long kingfisher's wig, but as flowers wilt
 so her crescent eyebrows too whiten with the frost;
 on the water mirror old and feeble
 is her form reflected, sunken deeply,
 and her hair that once appeared flowing raven-black
 looks like the weeds and rubbish in the muddy pool.
 Altered, indeed, are
 all her old appearances sorrowfully.³⁹

A work that is especially remarkable for a character lamenting his feeble, old appearance, while remembering the dashing young figure he once cut, is the play *Sanekata* 実方, about the poet Fujiwara no Sanekata 藤原実方 (d. 998). He reminisces how, as a young man, he had enjoyed the emperor's favor and once danced at a special festival on imperial command; captivated by the beauty of his own reflection in a nearby basin, he unwittingly halted his dance. But now, seeing his completely changed appearance reflected in water again, he laments:

<i>waga mi nagara mo</i>	我が身ながらも
<i>utsukushikarishi yosooi no ima wa</i>	美しかりし粧いの今は
<i>mukashi ni kawaru rōsui no kage</i>	昔に変わる老衰の影
<i>yosuru wa oinami</i>	寄するは老波
<i>midaruru bakubatsu</i>	乱るゝ白髪
<i>kamuri wa take no ha</i>	冠は竹の葉
<i>mayubige wa sanagara</i>	眉鬚はさながら
<i>shimo no okina no keshiki wa tada</i>	霜の翁の気色はたゞ
<i>odoro ni yuki no furu ka to miete</i>	おどろに雪の降るかと見えて ⁴⁰

Even as it was myself
 I was beautiful to see thus artfully made up.
 But now the image of a feeble old man has replaced what was.
 Creases of old age like pressing waves,
 white hair in tangles,
 a cap made of bamboo leaves,
 brows and beard as so much frost
 on an old man, like a landscape
 covered in a snowstorm.

³⁸ Zeami, *Higaki*, p. 285.

³⁹ Yasuda, *Masterworks of the Nō Theater*, p. 321.

⁴⁰ Zeami, *Sanekata*, p. 704.

In the noh play *Sanemori* 実盛, by contrast, it is not the *shite* himself who peers into the water. When Sanemori's ghost appears as the *nochi-jite* 後シテ, the priest Taami 他阿弥—in the supporting character role (*waki* ワキ)—sees an old warrior dressed in armor on the surface of a pond.⁴¹

In all of the above-mentioned plays, the person seeing their reflection in a water mirror is someone already old. And with the exception of the auspicious play *Yōrō*, these characters are confronted with an image of decay, one so overflowing with a sense of life's impermanence that it awakens in them the desire to be delivered from it.

The play *Izutsu*, however, is distinct in this regard. In the water mirror scene in Act 2, the climax of the play, the *shite* becomes absorbed in the illusion that her reflection is an image of her lover of bygone days. She thus denies the reality of impermanence for the time being, and her behavior is not linked to a yearning for salvation. Here the water mirror, which in the other plays discussed above confronted its beholders with the reality of their aging, causes instead a nonexistent object of longing to appear. The water mirror, in this case, serves as a conduit for the display of an illusionary other world, a transcendent dimension of ardent desire. Yet the *shite* also remains conscious of the fact that the image in the water mirror is but a mirage, as attested by the lines “’tis my own self / yet I yearn”. Nonetheless, the figure of a woman immersed in nostalgic memories conveys a sense not so much of impermanence and yearning for salvation as of a past that lingers on, creating a sensation of deeply felt pathos. Even as Zeami carries forward an existing tradition, in other words, he succeeds in imbuing that tradition with an altered emotional charge by skillfully shifting the basic idea at its core.

4. The Influence of Zeami's Play on Tokugawa-Era *Ise Monogatari* Illustrations

While various factors, such as an existing literary tradition, medieval commentaries, illustrations—and also Zeami's own literary tastes—together formed *Izutsu*'s background, the altered structure of his play, produced by its superimposition of a woman's real image with a man's illusionary one, had a profound impact also on the subsequent reception of the original *Ise monogatari* story. This is clearly evidenced by representations of the *Ise monogatari* in illustrated scrolls and books. Such texts of the late-Muromachi (sixteenth century) and early-Tokugawa periods (seventeenth century) that show the scene of the two children playing by the well almost always depict them as peering into it. In the Saga-bon 嵯峨本 edition, the earliest printed version of the *Ise monogatari*, published in Keichō 慶長 13 (1608; **fig. 1**), the two figures are depicted opposite each other, looking into the well. This composition, which shows a dwelling in the back, a barrel on top of the well curb, and a stream to the lower right, in addition to props such as a well bucket, was widely taken as a visual model from that time on.

⁴¹ For an English translation of this play, see Smethurst, “Sanemori,” pp. 147–168.



Figure 1. *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (Saga-bon 嵯峨本), Keichō 13 (1608). Tesshinsai Bunko 鉄心斎文庫, National Institute of Japanese Literature.
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200024817> (image 37).

The *Ise monogatari* edition printed about two decades later, in Kan'ei 寛永 6 (1629; **fig. 2**), appears to have been especially widely disseminated. This is suggested by the fact that the *kana-zōshi* 仮名草子 parody *Nise monogatari* 仁勢物語 (Fake Stories), published during the Kan'ei era (1624–1644), was based on that edition's text. Its illustration of the well curb scene closely follows that of the Saga-bon.

As far as I can see, other illustrated editions evince slight differences in how they depict the dwelling in the background, the tree next to the well, the barrel, and the well bucket. The well's form and composition (with or without the curb) are also subject to variation, as is the positioning of the two figures, either side by side or opposite one another. Moreover, the clothing and hairstyles of the two figures frequently make them appear more like adults than children, with their styles perhaps also reflecting contemporary fashions (**fig. 3**).



Figure 2. *Ise monogatari*, Kan'ei 6 (1629). National Institute of Japanese Literature.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200024958> (image 27).

Such variations notwithstanding, the two figures are almost always depicted as peering into the well, their hands placed on the curb. In the original story, however, they are described only as having played by the well. Furthermore, the nature of their play is not specified beyond the man's reminiscence in his courting poem that they used to measure their heights against the well curb when they were children. That it became standard to depict the two figures peering into the well most likely stems, therefore, from the lines "peering at their reflections in the water mirror, heads together, sleeves o'erlaid" in Zeami's play.



Figure 3. *Kaisei Ise monogatari* 改正伊勢物語, vol. 1 (*jō* 上), Hōreki 宝曆 6 (1756). Publisher: Minoya Heibee 美濃屋平兵衛. National Institute of Japanese Literature. <https://doi.org/10.20730/200007225> (image 17).

Especially interesting in this regard is the “black book” (*kurobon* 黒本), *Utagaruta* うたがるた, published in Hōreki 6 (1756; **fig. 4**).⁴² The illustration of Episode 23 of the *Ise monogatari* in this work does not depict the male and female figures peering into the well. But in this work’s commentary on the love poems that lead to the pair’s engagement, the female figure is identified as “Ki no Arisune’s daughter.” Furthermore, even though the illustration does not show the figures in a peering posture, the commentary quotes the line “peering at their reflections in the water mirror” from Zeami’s play. By this point in the history of the *Ise*

⁴² For an English translation and detailed analysis of this work, see Moretti, *Recasting the Past*.



Figure 4. *Utagaruta no bajimari* 続松紀原, Hōreki 6 (1756). National Institute of Japanese Literature. <https://doi.org/10.20730/200012536> (image 15).

monogatari story, its interpretation appears to have become based entirely on its reworking by Zeami.

In other words, these illustrations suggest a process by which Zeami's *Izutsu*, which had been informed less by the original story in the *Ise monogatari* than by later medieval commentaries on the work, had itself come to serve as a reference point for interpretations of the original text.

This article has discussed continuations of and variations on the water mirror motif in an attempt to trace the reception and transformation of a classical text. The water mirror motif is found in still other works as well. One example is the famous scene in Chapter 12 of Kyokutei Bakin's 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848) *Nansō Satomi bakkenden* 南総里見八犬伝 (The Lives of the Eight Dogs of the Satomi of Southern Fusa, also the Eight Dogs Chronicles, 1814–1842). Therein, Princess

Fuse 伏姫 sees her reflection in water only to realize that her head has turned into the head of a dog, suggesting her impregnation by the *qi* 氣 of the dog Yatsufusa 八房. This motif—of a woman and a man (or male dog, in this case) ensconced deep in the mountains; of a woman seeing her reflection in water and being suddenly faced with the reality of her changed appearance, causing her and, in turn, the man's death—distantly recalls, moreover, the scene from Episode 155 of the *Yamato monogatari*, described above. A classic text thus sets into motion a dynamic process in which it is continuously reproduced through a sequence of creative rewritings.

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Physical Imitations of the Deva King Statue: Performances of Kabuki in the Seventeenth Century

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Introduction

Noh and *kyōgen* 狂言, which developed in the fifteenth century, alongside kabuki and the *ningyō jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃 puppet theater (known also as *bunraku*), which developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are generally taken to be the representative traditional performance arts of Japan. In addition, numerous street performing arts (*daidō-gei* 大道芸) and parlor performance traditions (*zashiki-gei* 座敷芸) also existed. Both of these latter arts drew upon and inspired by turns the four representative genres, and both have moreover maintained performance traditions that continue up to the present day.

This article investigates one instance of *kyōgen*'s influence on kabuki. Specifically, it discusses how the physical acting involved in the mime act “Deva King” (Niō 仁王) was incorporated into the kabuki repertoire by the specialist comedic actor Yūnan Saburobee ゆうなん三郎兵衛. This article also explores the act's relationship to the medieval *kyōgen* play of the same name, as well as its relationship to various other performance genres.

The *Kyōgen* Play *Deva King*

The *kyōgen* play *Deva King* is depicted in one of the illustrations found in the document *Kyōgen-e* 狂言絵 (*Kyōgen* Pictures; **fig. 1**). What is happening in this scene can be explained by consulting the script for the *kyōgen* play *Deva King* as it is performed today.

A small-time thug, the stock *kyōgen* character known as Suppa すっぱ, who has here lost his money gambling, pretends to be a statue of the Deva King in order to steal alms and offerings from visitors to a certain temple. The play is based on



Figure 1. Scene from the *kyōgen* play *Deva King* (Niō 仁王). From *Kyōgen-e* (*Kyōgen Pictures*), a collection of such generic illustrations. National Institute of Japanese Literature. <https://doi.org/10.20730/200017952> (image 12).

the Japanese belief that sick people can be healed by touching, on the statues of gods and deities, that particular part of the body corresponding to the site of their own illness. In the play, a man who has hurt his leg thus touches the leg of the false Deva King statue, who jumps in surprise. The man becomes suspicious and begins to feel his way up the length of this Deva King statue, moving up the leg until he reaches the crotch, which he tickles. At this point, Suppa cannot contain himself and breaks out laughing. His deceit being discovered, he is chased off the temple premises by an enraged crowd.

Figure 1 shows Suppa mimicking the Deva King with a bared upper body. Two temple-goers are tickling him with their fans, and Suppa is doing all he can not to burst out laughing. This act is the highlight of the play.

It is unclear exactly when this act was created and first performed. The program for the actor Shichidayū's 七太夫 performance in 1620 (Genna 元和 6) is preserved in the document collection Edo Shoki Nō Bangumi Hikae 江戸初期能番組控 (Collection of Early Modern Noh Programs, no. 6/25) at the Nogami Memorial Noh Theater Research Institute of Hōsei University. Because *kyōgen* pieces were performed as interludes to noh plays, this collection also includes *kyōgen* programs. Among these, we find *Deva King*. This shows that the play was clearly in the *kyōgen* repertoire by at least the early seventeenth century.

In addition, we can read the lines of the two temple-goers mentioned above in a number of seventeenth-century *kyōgen* scripts. In Ōkura Toraakira's 大蔵虎明 (1597–1662) *kyōgen* script book, included in the published script collection *Ōkura kaden no sho kobon nō kyōgen* 大蔵家伝之書古本能狂言 (Old Kyōgen Scripts of the Ōkura School), one of the temple-goers has the following line:

The eyes of this Deva King statue move! Very suspicious . . . I think I will try to tickle it.¹

From the pictorial evidence, in combination with the programs and script books, we can know to some extent how this act was performed in the seventeenth century, and deduce that the tickling part was indeed the highlight of the act.

The Enactment of *Deva King* in Kabuki

The *kyōgen* play *Deva King* migrated to the kabuki repertoire early on. In 1667 (Kanbun 寛文 7), the diary of Matsudaira Naonori 松平直矩 (also called Yamato no kami 大和守, 1642–1695), the kabuki-loving lord of Echigo 越後 domain (present-day Niigata Prefecture), notes in its entry for the second day of the fifth month that a banquet was held at Naonori's mansion in Edo, at which he had invited *ningyō jōruri* puppeteers to perform.

During this period, short skits performed by kabuki actors were often inserted between the acts of a puppet play, and, on the occasion of Naonori's banquet, an interval play called *Tickled Deva King* (Kosokuri Niō こそくり仁王) was performed as an interlude between the *jōruri*'s second and third acts. This record of a puppet play performance shows us that the *kyōgen* play *Deva King* had been assimilated into the kabuki repertoire already by this time.

Yūnan Saburobee and His Imitation Acts

Yūnan Saburobee was a popular comic actor, active during the second half of the seventeenth century, who was famous for his imitations. He appears more than ten times in various documents between 1657 (Meireki 明暦 3) and 1701 (Genroku 元禄 14).

According to the *ukiyo-zōshi* 浮世草子 novel *Kōshoku shiki banashi* 好色四季咄 (Amorous Rumors of the Four Seasons, Genroku 2 [1689]), “Yūnan was famous for his art of imitation, being known for his skills not only in Kyoto and Osaka, but even as far away as Edo.” In the *ukiyo-zōshi* novel *Kōshoku yurai zōroe* 好色由来揃 (Selection of Amorous Legends, c. Genroku 5 [1692]), Yūnan Saburobee is listed under “Famous Imitators,” where he is placed before Umenoka Jiroemon 梅香次郎右衛門, Kiyari Rokurobee 木やり六郎兵衛, and other celebrated performers.

Generally speaking, there are two major types of imitation. One is vocal imitation; the other is physical imitation. The art of imitation as practiced by Yūnan

¹ Ōkura, *Ōkura kaden no sho kobon nō kyōgen*, vol. 3, p. 106.

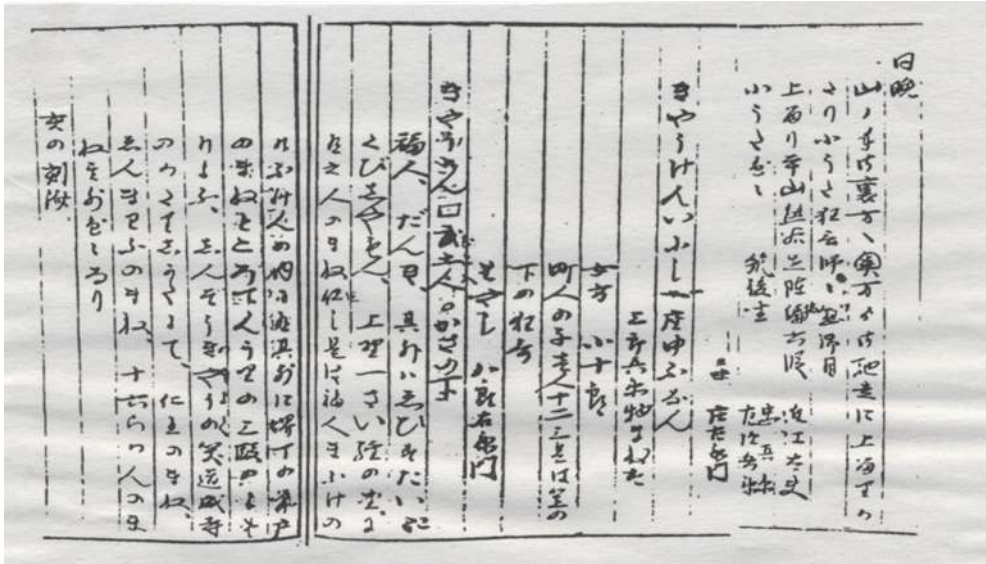


Figure 2. *Yamato no kami nikki* 大和守日記 (Diary of Yamato no kami). Northern Culture Museum, Niigata Prefecture. Photograph by author.

Saburobee is also depicted in Matsudaira Naonori's diary, in the entry for the twentieth day of the eighth month, 1662 (Kanbun 2). On this day, several actors and entertainers had been called by Naonori to his Edo mansion.

Here, let us take a closer look at the entry itself. The diary's original manuscript is presumed lost to fire, but **figure 2** shows the relevant diary page from the copy closest to the original, a late nineteenth-century manuscript housed at the Northern Culture Museum.

Here we first see the name Yūnan Saburobee, and five lines later, we learn the content of his imitations: "He imitates the calling of the barkers in front of the mouseholes of the Sakai-chō 堺丁 quarters." The Sakai-chō entertainment quarter was an area with many theaters. "Mouseholes" here refers to these theatres' small entrances, in front of which barkers would stand on small stages, advertising the contents of the various plays with small skits and boisterous calling. From this description we know that Yūnan Saburobee performed an imitation that was a vocal art. He also performed acts like "The Three Changes of the *Tokoroten* Seller's Voice" (*Tokoroten-uri no sandan ni henka suru urigoe* ところてん売りの三段に変化する売り声). *Tokoroten* 心太 is a kind of thin noodle dish eaten cold in summer, whose street peddlers would use a particular "sales jingle" in which they changed their vocal tone three times.

"The Laughter of the Newly-wed Woman" (*Nūzuma no iroiro na waraikata* 新妻の色々な笑い方) was another one of Yūnan's acts. Here it seems it was the laughter that "changed": one imagines the woman reacting to someone asking impertinently about her wedding night, to which she laughs now with embar-

rassment, now sensually, now vulgarly, all in quick sequence. This act is probably connected to the stock figure of the bordello matron feigning embarrassment, which frequently appears in early seventeenth-century kabuki skits.²

All of the above acts are vocal imitations, and indeed Yūnan Saburobee even imitated birds and the sounds of various animals. Yet he was also skilled at physical imitation, with contemporary documents describing him as a master of “all kinds of imitations.”

In the diary entry above, towards the end, we find the skits “Deva King Imitation,” “King Enma Imitation,” and “The Sixteen Arhats,” all of which involved the imitation of Buddhist statues. Yūnan Saburobee would physically imitate the poses and posture of these statues, which were frequently seen at popular temples. They were therefore familiar to spectators, who would visit such temples both as a part of their religious practice and for leisure.

Soroma Shichirobee’s “Deva King” Imitation

Pictorial evidence of how seventeenth-century kabuki actors performed “Deva King” can be found in Ihara Saikaku’s 井原西鶴 (1642–1693) *Shoen Ōkagami* 諸艶大鑑 (The Great Mirror of Beauties, Jōkyō 貞享 1 [1684]; fig. 3).

This picture shows a banquet at a bordello in the licensed pleasure quarters. Courtesans entertain the customers. In addition, male performers called *taiko-mochi* 太鼓持 (also called *bōkan* 幫間) who specialize in comic skits have been hired for the occasion. At this particular banquet, Ihara Saikaku recounts, a popular puppet-play narrator named Geki 外記 narrated the traveling section (*michiyuki* 道行) of the play *Heianjō* 平安城 (The Imperial Capital), while the puppeteer Oyama Jinzaemon おやま甚左衛門 manipulated a female puppet. This scene is depicted on the right-hand side of the picture below; the narrator Geki is the man holding a fan, and Oyama Jinzaemon is the seated man with a puppet. The puppet wears a traveling hat and a staff, indicating that it is indeed the traveling scene being performed.

Saikaku also tells us that a performer called Soroma Shichirobee そろま七郎兵衛 regaled the guests with his “Deva King” imitation; this is depicted on the left-hand side. Shichirobee is shown with a naked upper body, extending one leg forward and flexing one arm upwards. If we look closely, we see that Shichirobee has his mouth closed, while the spectators’ mouths are open. This depiction suggests the respective postures of the paired Deva King statues commonly found flanking temple entrances, the one with mouth closed, the other with mouth open. These postures are usually described with reference to the syllables *a* 阿 and *un* 吽. The “*a*” Deva King stands with an open mouth and spreads his fingers and toes wide, symbolizing outgoing energy, whereas the “*un*” Deva King presents a mouth tightly shut, with closed fists and curled toes, symbolizing incoming energy.

²Takei, *Kabuki to wa ikanaru engeki ka*, pp. 28–29.

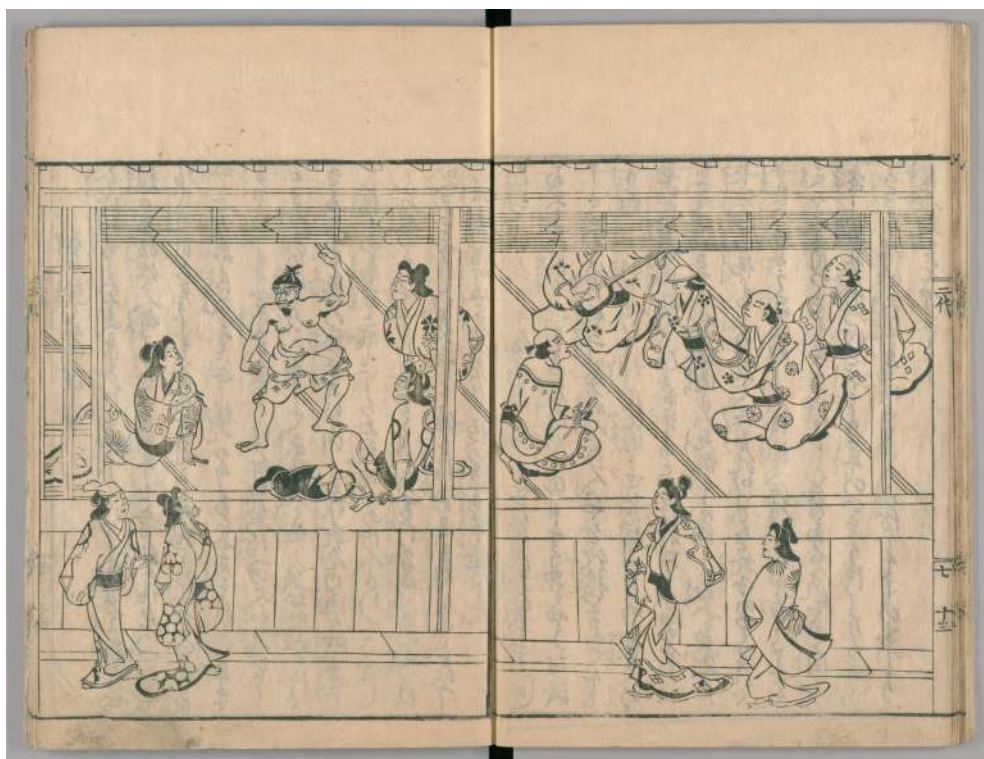


Figure 3. *Shoen Okagami* 諸艶大鑑 (The Great Mirror of Beauties, Jōkyō 1 [1684]). National Diet Library.

<https://doi.org/10.11501/2544910> (image 15).

Soroma Shichirobee appears in the document collection *Nakamura zakki* 中村雑記 (Nakamura’s Miscellaneous Notes, Genroku 16 [1703]). He is therefore clearly a historical figure and not a figment of Ihara Saikaku’s imagination. If we look closely at **figure 3**, we can observe that the fingers on Shichirobee’s left hand are missing. The many various implications of a handicapped actor imitating a Buddhist deity cannot be discussed here in detail, but let it suffice to say that this illustration can be an entry point for reevaluating how the body has been perceived in the history of Japanese performance arts.

Soroma Shichirobee performed in the parlors of the pleasure quarters, but just like Yūnan Saburobee, he was also often invited to the mansions of various domain lords; and as seen in the documents presented above, both actors included “Deva King” in their repertoire. It is likely that Shichirobee was Saburobee’s student, or that they otherwise had a reason to work closely together. In any case, male performers such as these, specializing in performances for private venues, may be considered the forerunners of the male *taiko-mochi* professional party entertainers in the pleasure quarters.

A few *taiko mochi* entertainers are still active today, and “Deva King” is still

performed by them. Therefore, we can also see in photographs how the act is performed (fig. 4).

The Deva King statue imitations performed by Yūnan Saburobee and Soroma Shichirobee were adopted into various kabuki performances in the late seventeenth century, and we can see their legacy still in plays of the kabuki repertoire today. Take, for example, *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑 (Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy, 1746), one of the most famous plays in both the puppet theater and kabuki repertoires. The names of the two main protagonists are Matsuō 松王 (“Pine King”) and Umeō 梅王 (“Plum King”), which may represent a play on the Japanese name for the Deva King: Niō (literally “two kings”).

There are numerous pictures of the enactment of “Deva King,” but I will close this



Figure 4. Tomimoto Hanpei 富本半平 II performing the “Deva King” imitation. From Fujii Sōtetsu 藤井宗哲, *Taiko mochi (hōkan) no seikatsu* たいこもち(幫間)の生活 (Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1982), frontispiece, p. ii.



Figure 5. “Naniwamaru’s Deva King Imitation” (Naniwamaru Niō no mane なには丸仁王のまね). From the illustrated *kyōgen* play book *Yamato* (provisional title). Imanishi Yūichirō, private collection.

investigation into the physical imitation of this Buddhist deity's statue by presenting a late-seventeenth century document discovered by Imanishi Yūichirō 今西祐一郎 (fig. 5).

I have previously argued that such imitations of the Deva King statue led eventually to the development of the famous stylized poses in kabuki known as *mie* 見得.³ Since then, several counter-arguments have been raised, notably in the publication *Geinō-shi kenkyū* 芸能史研究 (History of the Performing Arts) in the special issue “Kabuki no mie” 歌舞伎の見得 (Mie Poses in Kabuki), no. 223, October 2018. For those further interested in the topic, I recommend reading both publications and forming your own opinion.

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³Takei, “Kyōgen no Niō.”

Textual Heritage Embodied: Entanglements of Tangible and Intangible in the *Aoi no ue utaibon* of the Hōshō school of Noh

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1. “Missing Heritage”: Literature, UNESCO, and Heritage Studies

The word *heritage* has been the object in recent decades of growing interest both from the general public as well as from policy makers and local and national institutions. Specifically, the concept of cultural heritage has assumed an implicitly positive meaning among the public. This positive view has been furthered by the popularity of UNESCO’s World Heritage List, instituted in 1972 with the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.¹ Attracted by the possibility of reinforcing their symbolic capital and soft power, a growing number of countries have ratified the convention, investing a remarkable amount of funding and other resources into heritage safeguarding. Nonetheless, because the parameters for inscribing a site on the UNESCO World Heritage List are based overwhelmingly on European and Western values and principles, the struggle to have one’s items inscribed therein has always been biased in favor of Western countries. As of this writing, more than half of all World Heritage List sites are located in Europe or North America. This imbalance and unfairness in the UNESCO rules has been criticized by non-Western countries, as well as by postcolonial scholars, especially since the mid-1980s.² Partly as a consequence of this criticism and largely as a result of non-Western countries’ demands for a fairer and more inclusive definition of heritage, UNESCO promoted the new category of intangible cultural heritage through the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter the ICH Convention) in 2003.³ With the

¹ Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

² One of the earliest and more influential critics of the UNESCO model was David Lowenthal, in his *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, a revised version of which was published in 2015.

³ Available at: https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-2018_version-EN.pdf.

establishment of two new lists—(1) the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and (2) the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding—followed in 2009 by a Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, the Convention aimed to safeguard the various practices, representations, skills, knowledges, and associated objects and spaces that communities (or sometimes individuals) identify as their cultural heritage.

Japan played an important role in promoting this convention. In 1994, it had hosted the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention⁴—usually considered as a sort of prelude to the 2003 ICH Convention—which recognized the importance of intangible forms of cultural heritage alongside long-recognized tangible forms: “All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected” (Art. 7).

The new category of ICH helped to counterbalance the hegemonic position some Western countries such as France or Italy had held in the original World Heritage List. Today, nearly two decades after the ICH Convention, the countries with the greatest number of recognized ICH—China, Japan, and Korea—are all non-Western. As early as 2008, Japan succeeded in having three of its most important theatrical forms—*noh*, *kabuki*, and *bunraku* puppet theater—inscribed into the ICH Representative List. Since these early inscriptions, new entries for Japan have followed almost annually, leading to twenty-two items today.

Increasingly, the ICH List has come to include a wide array of cultural practices, from festivals to food, from traditional and modern dances to horse riding, agricultural techniques, falconry, and so on, making the category of ICH even more flexible and rather dazzling in its diversity. Curiously, however, cultural practices connected with writing and the creation of literary works or written documents have remained thus far underrepresented. The inscription of traditional calligraphy, for example, has been pursued only by China (“Chinese calligraphy,” 2009) and Mongolia (“Mongolian calligraphy,” 2013), and most recently by Turkey (“Hüsn-i Hat: traditional calligraphy in Islamic art in Turkey,” 2021) and by a consortium of countries in the Islamic cultural sphere (“Arabic calligraphy: knowledge, skills and practices,” 2021)¹. This lack of attention toward the literary and toward written culture in general may be due to the ICH Convention itself, which clearly defines intangible heritage as being, above all, “oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage” (Art. 2.2). Since its focus is the living and performative aspects of culture, as well as the safeguarding of endangered and fragile oral cultural practices (e.g.,

⁴The Nara Document on Authenticity (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 1994), Article 7: <https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf> (accessed 3.30.2021).

¹2021 is also the year in which Iran added its “National Programme to Safeguard the Traditional Art of Calligraphy in Iran” to the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, a separate list instituted in 2009.

endangered languages), it seems logical that written texts have—at least to the present—received less attention.

On the other hand, the UNESCO ICH Convention does not completely exclude objects. Its official definition of intangible cultural heritage is as follows (emphasis added):

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the *instruments, objects, artefacts* and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (Art. 2.1).

The problem therefore seems to be that literature and texts are usually not regarded as “instruments, objects, artefacts” produced and associated with “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills.”

The majority of items currently inscribed on the UNESCO lists were, or are, produced by “communities” or “groups”—examples include historical cities and buildings, as well as traditional festivals and dances—rather than by a single individual, as is often the case for literary works. This long-standing practice is not, however, sufficient reason for excluding single literary works—or even literary genres or practices—from the UNESCO ICH lists. Indeed, the UNESCO ICH Convention itself recognizes heritage creation to be not just the act of producing culture but rather the long-span process by which a community or group—or even a set of individuals!—recognizes some specific cultural expression or item “as part of their cultural heritage.”

It is evident that literary works like the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語), the *Divine Comedy*, or *Faust* are much more than just three cultural products composed by their authors at a given time: they are acknowledged by three well-defined national communities—the Japanese, the Italians, and the Germans—as part of their cultural and linguistic identity. In light of this, there is no doubt that we can consider them *literary* heritage, as indeed these works are often called. In 1990 Edward Said strongly stressed the association between heritage and literature, with reference to the role of literary texts in the ex-colonies: “Literature has played a crucial role in the re-establishment of a *national cultural heritage*, in the re-instatement of native idioms, in the re-imagining and re-figuring of local histories, geographies, communities” (emphasis added).⁵

Even so, literary (cultural) heritage has, thus far, been almost completely missing from the UNESCO heritage lists. Investigating the reasons for this missing heritage, therefore, is a necessary prelude to any discourse about literature *as* heritage.

One can argue that literature—and texts in general—have been omitted because they do not fit into either of the two categories of heritage defined so far: tangible and intangible. I will show in this article how this problem is connected

⁵ Said, “Figures, Configurations, Transfigurations,” p. 1.

with the sheer intimate nature of literary sources, and with what exactly we mean by the word *text*. Let us consider, for example, the *Tale of Genji*. We can agree that it is undoubtedly a literary heritage of Japan and the world, but which version of the *Tale of Genji* should be indicated if it is ever someday inscribed on the list? A selected and verified set of scrolls, manuscripts, or prints of particular value related to the literary work? Since the original copy of the *Genji* supposedly written by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (late tenth–early eleventh century) is now long-lost, which manuscripts and which version of the text are we talking about? Should we consider any copy of the *Genji* as part of the literary heritage? And to what extent? Should we include also translations, parodies, or other adaptations like manga and movies? In this case, what could possibly be the meaning of “listing” it?

The UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme, started in 1992 to support the preservation of, and access to, documentary sources that are vital for people’s collective memory, seems to offer a solution for this impasse. Scanning the MoW Register’s more than 430 items, submitted by (cumulatively) more than 520 countries (52 percent from Europe and North America), we find manuscripts, printed books, photos, films, paintings, musical scores, woodblocks for printing, inscribed stones, and historical records as well as entire archives and collections that are explicitly described as the “documentary heritage” of humanity. We also find therein items identifiable as literary works, but the list largely comprises documents and records of historical value: registers, letters, maps, diaries, and so on. The focus of the MoW Programme has been on access to and digitization of these resources⁶ rather than on representing the world’s cultural and *literary* diversity.

Moreover, even if a central criterion for the acceptance of a submission is a document’s “authenticity,” this requirement does not necessarily indicate an “original work” but rather the integrity of a specific material item. For example, “The Wizard of Oz” was inscribed on the MoW Register in 2007. However, this entry does not indicate Frank Baum’s original 1900 novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* but rather “the original Technicolor 3-strip nitrate negatives and the black and white sequences preservation negatives and soundtrack” of the movie produced in 1939 by Metro Goldwyn Mayer and now owned by Warner Bros. Pictures.⁷ In other words, what the MoW Programme recognizes as humanity’s documentary heritage, and therefore as worthy of preservation, is not the literary *work* itself, nor its “expressions” or “representations”—as these terms are defined in the *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (hereafter *FRBR*) by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.⁸ What is recognized

⁶ Prodan, “The Memory of the World,” p. 142.

⁷ See: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-8/the-wizard-of-oz-victor-fleming-1939-produced-by-metro-goldwyn-mayer/>.

⁸ The report is available at: <https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/811>.

rather are specific *items* that embody a work: physical copies, manuscripts, and documents in their authentic and material form.⁹ This is the most noticeable difference between texts included in the MoW Register and literary works included in anthologies and textbooks of literature.

Japan offers a very clear example of how the authenticity criterion can be controversial. In 2013, Japan succeeded in having inscribed on the MoW Register the *Midō kanpakuki* 御堂関白記, the diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1027), the most influential political figure of eleventh-century Japan. In the very same year, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO decided to abandon the candidacy of the *Tale of Genji*, Japanese literature's most famous and canonized work. Written around the same years as *Midō kanpakuki*, the *Tale of Genji* is, notably, one of the first works of Japanese premodern literature to be canonized in world literature anthologies. Yet even if its cultural and historical value is undisputed, the committee's submission of the work was rejected because Murasaki Shikibu's original handwritten copy has been lost. By contrast, the *Midō kanpakuki*'s fourteen scrolls are recognized as the authentic manuscripts of Fujiwara no Michinaga.

The *Tale of Genji* is therefore a perfect example of a firmly canonized work of world literature that cannot be consecrated by UNESCO as an example of “heritage of humanity” because of the absence of an “original” and authentic text, namely Murasaki's autograph manuscript—despite the fact that many valuable handwritten copies produced since the late Heian period (794–1192) are today registered as official National Treasures in museums and libraries across Japan.

Authenticity is actually one of the most debated problems among heritage scholars¹⁰ because many submissions to the UNESCO lists do in fact mobilize this concept to reinforce the connection between antiquity and a territorially-rooted community, with the aim of distinguishing between “real” heritage practices and “inauthentic” revivals, or practices that have merely been restored.¹¹ In any case, even when a literary work's original copy does exist, it is unlikely that any literary masterpiece would be inscribed on the MoW Register simply because its literary qualities were acknowledged by scholars of literature. Anne Frank's diary and the Gutenberg Bible—if we accept the Bible *also* as a piece of literature—have been selected primarily for their symbolic or historical value: the first, as a dramatic account of one of the darkest pages of human history and the second, as proof of a revolution in printing technology and the spread of books in Europe.

It is therefore clear that the criteria followed by literature scholars when designating—through its inclusion in anthologies and textbooks—a particular literary

⁹ UNESCO is putting efforts in including also documents in digital format, as in the project of “Software Heritage,” but this has led to a number of contradictions I will not discuss in this paper.

¹⁰ See, for example, Akagawa, “Rethinking the Global Heritage Discourse”; Labadi, “World Heritage, Authenticity and Post-Authenticity.”

¹¹ Bortolotto, “Authenticity,” p. 76.

work as worth reading and teaching are quite different from the criteria followed by UNESCO. In other words, a text may be recognized as an important piece of literature, without necessarily being nominated as “heritage,” and vice versa. In more technical terms, we can say that the canonization of a literary work does not necessarily correspond to its heritagization.

The case of noh theater is quite interesting. Japanese literature scholars often consider noh to be *also* a literary genre. However, the presentation we find on the UNESCO website¹² scarcely mentions noh’s literary or textual aspects, such as the transmission of libretto texts. Nor does it emphasize the artform’s connection with classical works of literature, such as the *Tale of Genji*. Even Zeami 世阿弥 (1363?–mid-fifteenth century), usually credited as the author of about ninety plays in the noh repertoire, remains unmentioned. These peculiarities may be seen as a way of accommodating the ICH Convention’s own criteria, which emphasize the oral aspect of heritage. However, as I show in the second part of this article, it is also possible that the conservation of texts is not considered a priority in the logic of noh practitioners, which emphasizes the transmission of oral and intangible teachings.

In this article, I analyze the relationship between the contemporary practice of noh and the textual sources that inform it, in order to shed new light on the meaning of heritage and the possibilities offered by the new paradigm of “textual heritage” as applied to traditional performing arts.

The Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach: Literary Heritage Studies

If it is true that texts in general and literature in particular do not perfectly fit present definitions of heritage per the UNESCO conventions, it is also important to underline the fact that UNESCO’s is not the only available definition of heritage, which remains a very controversial and elusive concept. Even if under different names, cultural assets from the past have been protected and evaluated since long before modern nation-states began regulating and administrating the management of the past through institutions like national museums, libraries, and archives. In recent times, the term *heritage* has been increasingly mobilized to question the relationships that social groups and communities imagine and create with “their” pasts, and to understand how those knowledges and practices are transmitted to subsequent generations as a core asset of the cultural identity of groups and individuals.

At least since the mid-1980s, and increasingly since the 1990s, the interdisciplinary field known as heritage studies has gradually developed, drawing from a wide range of disciplines, including archeology, history, law, sociology, anthropology, geography, economics, and management. Especially since the first decades of the twenty-first century, the tendency to abandon the Eurocentric and universalist idea that defines heritage as something of “outstanding universal value”—

¹² See: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ngaku-theatre-00012>.

as first stated in the 1972 Convention, which established the World Heritage List—has led to a redefinition of heritage as a social practice, rather than as an object, in a framework that emphasizes its intrinsic intangible nature. Some of the contributors to this new approach, which goes generally under the name “critical heritage studies,” have defined heritage as follows:

This book explores the idea of heritage not so much as a “thing,” but as a cultural and social process, which engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present.¹³

Heritage is not a passive process of simply preserving things from the past that remain, but an active process of assembling a series of objects, places and practices that we choose to hold up as a mirror to the present, associated with a particular set of values that we wish to take with us into the future.¹⁴

Starting from a position of seeing “heritage” as a mental construct that attributes “significance” to certain places, artifacts, and forms of behavior from the past through processes that are essentially political, we see heritage conservation not merely as a technical or managerial matter but as cultural practice, a form of cultural politics.¹⁵

Increasingly, the view has been that, alongside any intrinsic value heritage may have, ultimately meaning resides in the “intangible” relationships it provides between people and things.¹⁶

This emphasis on the implicitly intangible side of heritage that informs the work of many heritage scholars may be one reason that literature scholars in general have been discouraged from engaging with heritage as a topic of study. This is especially true for those committed to particularly conservative disciplines like philology—defined by Edward Said as “the least with-it, the least sexy, and most unmodern of any of the branches of learning associated with humanism.”¹⁷ As such, key terms such as *literary heritage* and *textual heritage* remain at present mostly undertheorized and undefined, owing to text and literature experts’ lack of engagement with the challenge that heritage studies presents.

Even if indeed, as Rodney Harrison reminds us, “heritage as a concept is constantly evolving and the way in which the term is understood is always ambiguous and never certain,”¹⁸ the contributions of literary criticism, literary theory, and philology are still missing in this puzzle. How can it be possible to trace a “history of heritage,”¹⁹ namely the history of heritage discourse in premodern times, without considering the contributions of the history of literature? How

¹³ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Harrison, *Heritage*, p. 4.

¹⁵ Logan, Kockel, and Craith, “The New Heritage Studies,” p. 1.

¹⁶ Akagawa, “Intangible Heritage and Embodiment,” p. 81.

¹⁷ Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, p. 57.

¹⁸ Harrison, *Heritage*, p. 6.

¹⁹ Harvey, “Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents,” p. 320; “The History of Heritage,” p. 19.

can we understand the processes of heritage-making and textual re-creation without the eye of the philologist, one specifically trained to follow the slender thread of intertextuality?²⁰ There is a good chance that the contributions of literature scholars—and textual experts in general—to the heritage debate would benefit all of those working in this interdisciplinary field. They could offer new case studies and evidence to validate the theoretical bases of heritage studies, and help extend the range of its discourse analysis to longer time-spans and different cultural and linguistic contexts.

On the other hand, literature scholars, especially those interested in premodern texts or the so-called classics, should take advantage of the very timely and flexible theoretical category of heritage. The never-ending debate about why the classics should still be read today, about their claimed—or rejected—effectiveness in fostering and cultivating critical thought and civic values, could surely gain new visibility and develop in unexpected ways if connected to questions about the uses and safeguarding of heritage. During a keynote lecture at a recent symposium,²¹ Wiebke Denecke expressed her disappointment at Japanese scholars' fatalistic uninterest in the progressive and relentless decline of literacy in Sinitic letters, or literary Chinese (*kanbun* 漢文), among not only contemporary Japanese people at large but also among Japanese experts of literature. One reason for this trend may be that, independent of their professional interest, many Japanese today see *kanbun* as a cultural heritage that is not really (or completely) Japanese, unlike kabuki or Japanese cuisine (*washoku* 和食). Rethinking literacy—even in an old and “dead” language—and the ability to read premodern texts, and moreover reinterpreting both skills as forms of cultural heritage at risk of extinction, might well shake the consciousness of many in the literary field.

An interdisciplinary dialogue about texts, literature, and heritage is also essential today to call into question the fallacious promises of digital technology enthusiasts, who avow that everything can be saved and archived. Even if we grant that one day, every text ever written by humankind will be digitized and made accessible on the internet, there will remain a need to distinguish which texts really matter and are worthy of knowing, and which not.

Reflecting on what a text is, and on what textual heritage might mean today, has also the potential to foster a global rethinking of fundamental assumptions in the theorization of heritage, among them the rigid divide between tangible and intangible.

²⁰ Two initial attempts in this regard related to Japanese literature are Gerlini, “The Awareness of Past and Present” and “The Legitimation and Heritagization of Vernacular.”

²¹ Denecke, “‘Textual Heritage’: Déjà-vu or Catalyst for History Making and Writing?”

The Limits of the Tangible/Intangible Divide and a Rethinking of Embodiment Processes

Critical heritage studies begins with the premise that “all heritage is intangible.”²² This critical posture has the declared intent of “deprivileging and denaturalizing it [the tangible] as the self-evident form and essence of heritage.”²³ In other words, “What makes these things valuable and meaningful—what makes them ‘heritage’, or what makes the collection of rocks in a field ‘Stonehenge’—are the present-day cultural processes and activities that are undertaken at and around them, and of which they become a part.”²⁴ This position has become increasingly mainstream in the academic discourse on heritage over the last fifteen years, even if it is still not universally accepted.

Many heritage scholars and professionals still “believe” in the intrinsic and universal value of old masterpieces that are recognized and appreciated as heritage. Those who espouse such “heritage belief,” according to Christoph Brumann, may be “tacitly or explicitly committed to cultural heritage in general or to specific heritage items of whose intrinsic value they are convinced and whose conservation they endorse.”²⁵ In contrast to this position, “heritage atheism” is the “fundamental doubt about the value of specific heritage items or heritage as such. In this view, heritage is not a naturally positive force and instead serves all kinds of dubious or outright objectionable purposes that, however, are not immediately obvious.”²⁶

As an alternative to these oppositional positions, Brumann proposes a middle path of “heritage agnosticism”:

[This position] does not posit a priori that heritage is an empty signifier, an entirely arbitrary and socially determined ascription, but takes people’s heritage experience and beliefs seriously. It also accepts the idea that some of the qualities employed for the ascription of heritage value may be based on verifiable facts, such as age, provenance, or rarity, or may rest on universal human tendencies (such as possible commonalities in the perception of beauty). And while it rejects the idea that heritage value is intrinsic to the objects and practices so labelled, it still considers the possibility that the latter’s materiality constrains their social interpretations and uses.²⁷

This heritage agnosticism offers a way to rethink the importance of the materiality of heritage while eliding the question about where precisely its “value” resides. The solution proposed by Brumann is useful in defining textual heritage, and not least because with the application of sociocentric approaches to the field

²² Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Brumann, “Heritage Agnosticism,” pp. 173–175.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 180.

of literary production—from Pierre Bourdieu onward—some long-standing assumptions about the universal value of literary “masterpieces” have come under challenge. Moreover, it is especially useful when we try to rebalance our understanding of the role texts play as *things* and not only as intangible cultural practices.

The *a priori* exclusion of *things* from the analysis of heritage processes—or a significant reduction of their role therein—seems inappropriate also because, as the archaeologist Ian Hodder explains, “there are very few dependencies between humans that do not involve things in some way. For example, power relations in which one human dominates another are often concerned with the control of property or rights to property in some form. . . . Many of these HH [human-human] relations in which things are involved lead to entanglements.”²⁸

This concept of human-thing entanglement elaborated by Hodder offers new insights into how heritage, as both practice and as thing, regularly informs and interacts with humans. In particular, the idea that humans and things do not just influence each other but are indeed “dependent on each other in ways that are entrapping and asymmetrical”²⁹ may inform our understanding of traditional performing arts such as *noh*.

Hodder’s rethinking of “things,” in fact, goes even further and in an unexpected direction. He understands things, not as stable and permanent, but rather as fluid and mutable:

But in reality the things are themselves just flows of matter, energy or information. Things are unstable and unruly. Material things decay and erode, institutions crumble, ideas and thoughts pass fleetingly. Some appear to stay, to have duration, but looked at from sub-atomic or long-term perspectives, all is in flux. There are physical, biological, chemical, informational, social, ideological processes that occur at different rates and rhythms, jumbled up and tumbling over each other.³⁰

This theoretical rethinking of the complex relationship between human society and the environment is, of course, very timely now, when environmental issues have become a twenty-first-century global priority. For the purpose of this article, however, it helps also to introduce a very similar topic which is already being questioned by heritage studies, namely the embodiment of heritage.

Although the broader category of heritage has been described as an “embodied cultural performance of meaning-making,”³¹ the term *embodiment* has specifically been used to define ICH: “heritage that is embodied in people rather than in inanimate objects.”³² Embodiment itself has been explained as an intangible

²⁸ Hodder, *Studies in Human-Thing Entanglement*, p. 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Smith and Campbell, “The Elephant in the Room,” p. 443.

³² Logan, “Closing Pandora’s Box,” p. 33.

process,³³ but the same has been said about tangible heritage. As suggested by Henry Jatti Bredekamp, “Museum objects are not ends in themselves. Even though they may have intrinsic value, they are manifestations of intangible relationships between people and things. They are *tangible embodiments of intangible ideas and practices*”³⁴ (emphasis added).

In this article, I adopt a middle way that is close to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s understanding of intangible heritage as “not only embodied, but also inseparable from the material and social worlds of persons.”³⁵ That is, I suggest that both people and objects may equally be embodiments of intangible practices and values, being reciprocally entangled in human-thing relationships. Moreover, to reconsider tangible objects as embodiments of intangible cultural practices may also suggest an answer to the key question of this article: “What kind of heritage is textual heritage?”

Attempting a Definition of Textual Heritage

As I noted in an earlier section, texts and literature do not perfectly fit current definitions of heritage, especially those made official by the UNESCO conventions. If the principal reason that heritage lacks proper theorization is literature scholars’ limited engagement with the topic, a more concrete reason might be that (literary) texts are fundamentally different from other genres of heritage.

A clue to this difference is the fact that, unlike ancient buildings or endangered languages, the majority of literary works produced by humankind—“work” here meaning the contents of a given book—are today rarely considered at risk, and do not need official institutions to offer a particular endorsement for their safeguarding. Even before the advent of digital technologies, the growth of the publishing industry and the proliferation of libraries and archives around the world provided books—even in the case of less canonized works—with a high chance of being widely distributed and preserved in different copies and locations. Consequently, accidents and natural disasters—fires, floods, earthquakes—that might well destroy a single archive or library, are unlikely to lead to the definitive loss of any specific literary work.

This is all the more true in today’s digital world. Not only can a new book live completely in the digital dimension—going from a text file on the author’s computer to the digital copy edited by the publisher and then to an e-book downloaded by the reader—but even rare printed books and manuscripts are being continually digitized, which grants to them—or, to be more precise, to the digital copies of their pages—an even higher probability of surviving any risk of loss or destruction. Barring a disaster of massive scale that compromised the survival

³³ Taylor, “Embodiment Unbound,” p. 73.

³⁴ Bredekamp, “Transforming Representations,” p. 79.

³⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production,” p. 59.

of humanity itself, it would be almost impossible for the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, or Murasaki to be lost in the future.

At the same time, in the case of old books and manuscripts, even the most high-quality digital copy will never completely replace the original document. These books and manuscripts often contain a great deal of extratextual information—like the quality of the paper or ink, the kind of bookbinding, hidden or excised parts, or other physical and material characteristics. Such information, which is often crucial to new discoveries by philologists and librarians, cannot be properly digitized. This is why a program like UNESCO's MoW is fundamental to preserving rare and fragile documents even if it does not take into account literary works *per se*.

Historical documents like manuscripts always combine both material (the pages, the physical medium) and information (the contents, the text); but in the case of a modern book published exclusively in digital format, all we have is the text. In the case of digital texts, the problem of authenticity I discussed earlier carries a totally different meaning. This is true also in the pre-digital world of mass printing: Which of a best seller's thousands of copies is the authentic original? Is a hardcover copy more authentic than a paperback edition? Or is the text file saved on the author's computer the most authentic version? It is obvious that these questions, as well as the problem of authenticity itself, have lost much of their meaning ever since the publishing industry and digital technologies freed a book's content from its material embodiment.

Therefore, if we want to define textual heritage, we must first redefine *text*. A text—meaning the contents inscribed on a page, a wooden tablet, or a stele—is nothing more than an aggregate of pure information, a chain of signifiers—the characters—assembled according to a language's specific and preexisting lexicon, syntax, and rules of grammar. The result is a unique, recognizable, and readable code, ready to be “executed” (i.e., read).

It is precisely here that we find another, deeper reason for why a text might seem essentially poorly-suited to current definitions of heritage. We may say that a text is intangible because it is not tied to a unique and specific object in the material world. Indeed, the same text can be copied an infinite number of times on a wide array of “surfaces”—woodblocks, paper, papyrus, SMS, e-books—potentially without any loss of information or integrity. At the same time, the text can be considered something tangible in the sense that, as a set chain of letters and words, it is unique, fixed, and recognizable. In such cases, the text's “authenticity” may endure for as long as the material embodiment itself survives. There is no need for a continuous process of reiteration and transmission of the accompanying cultural practice as is the case (for the most part) with examples of intangible heritage. If we exclude a text's more artistic and analog aspects—in the case of Japanese writings, calligraphy is the obvious example—we can say that, in most cases, a written text is just a code of letters that is infinitely replicable. As long as I can recognize the characters, I can copy

any text—even those written in a language I do not know!—without any loss of information.

Because of this replicability, access to textual products and other similar cultural goods differs in nature from access to heritage sites or even intangible performances. The ways in which a text can come to fruition are physically unlimited, thanks to the unlimited number of copies that can be created, especially in the digital age. Therefore, texts are not affected by problems of overexploitation of the sort that plague the historical centers of tourist cities. Regardless of how many copies of a text have been produced or how many people are reading it at the very same moment, no one will ever be deprived of the possibility of enjoying that same text simultaneously.

Of course, texts, especially the most important and widely canonized ones, undergo a continual process of reconstruction and modification. This results in different versions of the “same” text—or to be more precise, of the same *work*—aimed at satisfying the needs of new readers, much as pagan temples of ancient Rome were converted into Christian churches during the Middle Ages. But unlike with buildings, texts and literary works may be reconstructed, updated, and translated without destroying or modifying their originals. We can make “backup copies” of each variation or edition a given literary work has undergone over the course of its “life,” and read any of these again whenever we want. By contrast, we cannot have different “editions” of the same building at the same place and time, once it has been modified or destroyed. To give just one example, we cannot visit the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris in its medieval shape prior to Eugène Viollet-le-Duc’s restoration of 1864, nor visit it again with the same roof that was lost forever to fire in 2019. We can, however, have a copy of every version of the Bible authorized by the Roman Catholic Church across the centuries, all on the same bookshelf.

I want to underline the semiotic nature of text, which I consider a “natively digital” cultural product, and to stress its contrast with the “analog” qualities of tangible artifacts, such as a painting made with canvas and paint. The natively digital quality I have in mind is not necessarily linked to digital technologies and computers—but is rather a quality of any text, even the oldest manuscripts or inscriptions. A recent article in Japanese by Inaga Shigemi 稲賀繁美 explains this quality. He reminds us that the original meaning of *text* was tied to *textile*, a fabric. He states, “The loom is the very first digital device invented by humans.”³⁶ No matter who operates the loom, as long as the individual follows the pattern provided, the result will be the same, exactly like executing a computer program. This same relationship exists between the text—the immaterial code—and its various embodiments—written, inscribed, printed, engraved.

One might argue that storytelling, music, dance, and even some figurative arts could, to some extent, also be considered “texts,” as definitions of text and textuality

³⁶ Inaga, “Ko no sōshitsu.”

may vary considerably.³⁷ In this article, I limit my analysis to *written* texts, by which I mean sequences of characters and words inscribed on any kind of surface, material or immaterial. I do so because the intimate nature of texts vis-à-vis other kinds of cultural products is one of the reasons why texts are not easily included in modern definitions of heritage and in preservation programs like those of UNESCO.

The definition of textual heritage that I propose here is based on the fact that texts are digital cultural products, in the sense that they are both intangible—or to be more precise, immaterial—as well as tangible, in the sense that they are constituted by fixed and measurable chains of signifiers (characters and words). Applying to texts the idea that heritage sites and artifacts are the “tangible embodiments of intangible ideas and practices,”³⁸ we can therefore state that texts are *embodiments* of the cultural practice of *writing* and its derivations like copying, editing, translating, correcting, abridging, and so on. A literary work’s various different manuscript versions are just the many embodiments of the “original text.” And indeed, such ur-texts have often, especially in the case of premodern works and the so-called “classics”—from the *Odyssey* to the *Analects*, from the *Tale of Genji* to the *Divine Comedy*—not managed to survive in those “original” and physical forms that their “authors” themselves touched and produced.³⁹ This is perfectly consistent with the hierarchy of work-expression-manifestation-item given in the FRBR I mentioned before, which indeed defines *manifestation* as “the physical embodiment of an expression of a work,” and *expression* as “the intellectual or artistic realization of a work.”

The point I want to stress here is that textual heritage does not dwell in things but in the re-creative, reproductive process itself. To re-create and transmit a text implicitly means adding (new) value to that text. Texts are never produced or reproduced by chance but are always the result of a voluntary effort; this was especially true in premodern times. And in many cases, especially when a text is reproduced, that process itself may be seen as a form of heritage. When a medieval copyist of the Bible or a Chinese translator of a Buddhist sutra produced their own copy of the text, they implicitly contributed to its heritagization, that is, to the conservation of textual contents charged with a new social and symbolic value.

³⁷ I explored the possible extension of *text* and *textual heritage* in the curated session “Defining ‘Textual Heritage’: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Heritagization of Texts, with a Focus on Japan,” presented at the 5th Association of Critical Heritage Studies Biennial Conference (University College London, August 26–30, 2020) with the contributions of scholars of musicology, ethnography, architecture, urban planning, history, comparative literature, and digital humanities.

³⁸ Bredekamp, “Transforming Representations,” p. 79.

³⁹ The problem of authorship in classical or premodern texts is another complex issue, especially when related to cultural heritage. I tried to foster a discussion about authorship, as well as ownership and authenticity, in the workshop “Textual Heritage: Uses and Re-creations: Ownership, Authorship and Authenticity in Premodern Japanese Literature” (Waseda University, July 18, 2020). The results of this workshop have since been published: see Gerlini and Kōno, *Koten wa isan ka*.

On the other hand, these “productive” practices of writing the text could not exist without a preexisting set of “receptive” or “performative” practices accompanying them, such as reading, understanding, or performing—in a word, not without various ways of *using* the text. When a jester performed a troubadour’s *canço* in medieval southern France, he contributed to the heritagization—namely the survival—of that text, fostering and stimulating further practices of writing: for example, the vernacular *canzone* in Italy. When a Confucian scholar in medieval Japan lectured upper-class samurai with a self-annotated copy of a Sinitic primer containing Chinese historical anecdotes, he contributed to the conservation of those texts and the Chinese stories narrated within them, making them part of the shared memory of the Japanese upper classes. Using a text, commenting on it, teaching it, but also criticizing it, are all part of textual heritagization. This process may seem very close to what literary scholars call canonization. However, I argue that heritagization has a wider—and sometimes even contradictory—meaning because it may occur also independently of the will of political and cultural elites, and at different levels of society.

In this sense, the embodiment of textual heritage, or more precisely, textual heritage intended primarily as a process of embodiment, may happen in both directions. It can be embodied into text, namely through the inscription of living practices and knowledges—but also feelings and memories—in physical or digital media. It can also be embodied from text into people, as in the case of the reenactment of an old theatrical piece, as sometimes happens with less famous *noh* plays, or in modern performances based on the reconstruction of ancient musical scores, as in the case of Japanese *gagaku* 雅樂 music.⁴⁰

The *production* of a text is a cultural practice, but a text *per se* is not a *practice*. This is why inscribing a traditional performing art, such as *noh*, on the ICH list can omit any reference to the librettos or the textual tradition. Librettos are fixed textual records of the play as performed on the stage; and one could even compare them to video recordings of a play. In this kind of theater, the intangible heritage is not the written text itself but the practice of performing—and continuing to perform—that text.

What I propose in this article is a new, non-oppositional configuration of tangible and intangible that reflects the relationship between object and practice, thing and human. A tentative definition of literary or textual heritage should focus not only on the performative side of writing but also on the tangible presence of the text. Indeed, there cannot be any cultural practice related to text without the text itself. A simple example: the religious practice of copying out a sutra (*shakyo* 写経), frequently performed in many Buddhist temples, cannot be carried out without the tangible existence of the sutra itself; and at the same time, such a practice also generates a new physical embodiment (copy) of that text.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Giolai, “Hearing the Past, Sounding the Text” and Terauchi, “Beyond the Court.”

Defining textual heritage, or even merely trying to do so, has therefore the merit of fostering reflection about material culture and the preservation of documentary sources. It also invites us to question the deeper meaning of why and how we conduct efforts to create digital copies and representations of culture and texts, and how these digital embodiments will affect—whether enriching or impoverishing—the cultural and social life of people in the twenty-first century.

A tentative definition of textual heritage—one that does not claim to be definitive—may be the following:

Textual heritage indicates both the texts of the past and also the various cultural practices involving the use and re-creation of those texts. “Texts” here is meant to include the immaterial contents as well as the material medium. “Practices” likewise is meant to include the receptive, the performative, and the creative: for example reading, copying, collecting, rewriting, quoting, translating, annotating, commenting, teaching, correcting, performing, collating, restoring, and so on. The ultimate significance of textual heritage lies in the transmission both of the text and of the knowledge associated with that text, in order to make it meaningful in the present through the accumulation of new values, meanings, and interpretations.

The study of textual heritage necessarily has a different aim from that of philology, at least in the latter’s more conservative approach, which considers a classical text *a priori* a subject worth studying. Philology’s ultimate goal is the reconstruction of a version of the text that is as close as possible to the lost archetype. By contrast, the goal of textual heritage studies should be instead to understand the various processes that historically took place around a text, how its reception and understanding, its interpretations (and misinterpretations!), and the conscious or unconscious process of adding, subtracting, or changing values associated with that text—how all of these had particular meanings for a certain group or community in a certain period. Such studies can be oriented toward understanding the past—by, e.g., writing the history of a specific textual heritage, but also toward the present or future, by inquiring into contemporary practices of managing, understanding, and reproducing the texts of the past, as well as into questions of how to transmit those texts to future generations. The study of textual heritage may adopt approaches typical of heritage studies, like discourse analysis within or around a specific text, and should address many of the questions with which heritage scholars are usually engaged: Who is the owner of that heritage, and how do they demonstrate that ownership? What political meaning does the heritagization of this text carry? How might the safeguarding of this textual heritage contribute to social well-being and the promotion of human rights or, on the contrary, be aimed at reinforcing nationalism and populism?

The texts suited to analysis in textual heritage studies are therefore not necessarily those usually studied by philologists, nor are they necessarily the most widely canonized. Moreover, the focus of this analysis remains on the cultural processes taking place around a text, rather than the meaning of the text itself.

The analysis of an annotated noh libretto (*utaibon* 謡本) that I present in the second part of this article is intended to be explanatory in this sense.

This tentative definition of textual heritage is undoubtedly close to the idea of intangible heritage as something constantly “re-created”—a form of continual replacement of the heritage itself, as stated by the ICH Convention:

This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (Art. 2).

Although I do not aim in this article to develop successful strategies for inscribing a textual cultural asset onto the UNESCO lists, I suggest that the paradigm of textual heritage could become an effective tool for promoting a particular textual practice as an intangible heritage. The recent efforts, promoted by a consortium of Japanese associations, to inscribe haiku poetry on the ICH list is a good example.⁴¹ Haiku is both a tangible corpus of texts—the poems composed by poets like Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) since the sixteenth century up to modern times—and also a lively creative practice that survives today. Regarding the latter, schools, clubs, and associations of amateur and professional poets in Japan and around the world are engaged in producing new embodiments (i.e., new poems) of the aesthetic ideals that characterize this poetic genre and have produced numerous publications in Japanese and other languages. As a corpus of texts, haiku is the object of scholarly practices (reading, understanding, analyzing, translating). It is also the indispensable basis for contemporary poets’ practices of active production—the composition of new poems—which in many cases appear to inherit this centuries-old and unbroken literary tradition, even if unconsciously. From this point of view, the initiative to inscribe haiku on the UNESCO list has a reasonable chance of success. Another interesting initiative aimed at the UNESCO ICH list is the “Appeal on Behalf of the Latin and Greek Intangible Heritage of Humanity,” promoted by a group of classical studies institutes in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.⁴² The most interesting aspect of this initiative is that it proposes reconceiving of classical and literary languages of the past as endangered languages and knowledges, worthy of institutional and political safeguarding.

If one of these attempts to receive official UNESCO recognition succeeds, literature will have gained its place within the realm of authorized heritage. Yet even if this does not happen, the paradigm of textual heritage may challenge present assumptions and understandings of heritage among the heritage studies community.

⁴¹ A description of these efforts is available at: https://www.haiku-hia.com/special/unesco_en/.

⁴² The appeal is available at: <https://vivariumnovum.net/it/unesco/appello.pdf>.

2. Embodiment of Heritage and Personification of Texts in Traditional Performing Arts

The Hōshō School of Noh and the Textual Heritage of *Aoi no ue*

As I discussed in the previous section, it is somewhat curious that noh theater—which is often understood as a literary genre, just as Shakespeare’s plays are considered literary works—has been accepted into the UNESCO ICH list, whereas other literary products have not. Even if the production and development of noh scripts (*nōbon* 能本) is strictly tied to the development of the performing art itself,⁴³ the official documentation about noh’s inscription as ICH usually does not stress its ties with Japanese literature or the existence of written and canonized texts—the lyrics—that are sung during the play. For example, as noted earlier, the UNESCO ICH official website’s page on noh⁴⁴ does not contain the name of Zeami, recognized as the author of an important part of the repertoire. This separation between written texts and their enacted performance reflects a slightly rigid distinction between literary production and the performing arts. On the contrary, Japanese literature scholars are well aware of the fact that many Japanese literary products are the result of collaborative endeavors in a public or semi-public space, like poetic competitions (*utaawase* 歌合) or linked verse (*renga* 連歌) poetry gatherings, often regulated by a hierarchical relationship between master and disciples. This master-disciple hierarchy is, of course, at work also in traditional performing arts such as noh, where the leading role is usually passed down through a family’s succession of firstborn sons.

In the following pages, I describe the textual embodiments of a specific noh play, *Aoi no ue* 葵上 (Lady Aoi), in the repertoire of a specific noh school—the Hōshō 宝生 school—with the aim of analyzing the relationship between this kind of traditional performing art and its own textual heritage. The body that emerges from this analysis is both that of the actor, which embodies the characters described in the text, and that of the text itself—particularly the annotations relating to *kata* 型 (movement patterns) and dance—which embodies in written and tangible form the experience accumulated through generations of performance practice.

Among the many plays in the Hōshō noh repertoire, *Aoi no ue* is a well-known one in the genre of “vengeful spirits stories” (*shūnenmono* 執念物), which is included in the canonical “fourth category” of “miscellaneous plays” (*zatsunō* 雑能). The story draws upon the plot of one of the *Tale of Genji*’s most dramatic and thrilling chapters, titled “Aoi” 葵. In this chapter, Lady Aoi, wife of the protagonist Hikaru Genji 光源氏, is possessed and tormented by the living spirit (*mononoke* 物怪) of Lady Rokujō (Rokujō no Miyasudokoro 六条御息所). One of Genji’s lovers, the latter woman is also the widow of a crown prince and is humiliated by Genji’s growing lack of interest in her. The noh play enriches the

⁴³ Yokomichi, Nishino, and Hata, *Nō no sakusha to sakubin*.

⁴⁴ See note 12 above.

story with a bitter fight between Lady Rokujō's vengeful spirit and a Shugendō 修驗道 priest, summoned to appease her wrath. The climax is represented by the prayer (*inori* 祈) dance that the priest performs to bring rest to the defeated Lady Rokujō's tormented soul.

In the following pages, I analyze two copies of the *utaibon* for *Aoi no ue*, or more precisely two particular items (to follow the FRBR terminology): (1) an undated manuscript titled *Hōshō-ryū nō-zuke* 宝生流能附,⁴⁵ housed in the archives of the National Institute of Japanese Literature and digitized in the Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works; and (2) a modern edition of the *utaibon*, titled *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: "Aoi no ue,"* 宝生流謡本 葵上, in particular a copy personally owned and annotated by the twentieth Hōshō school head (*iemoto* 家元), Hōshō Kazufusa 宝生和英. The analysis focuses almost exclusively on the annotations in these two documents and their re-creations, namely the copying of some of these annotations by disciples and heirs.

Annotations in the *Hōshō-ryū nō-zuke* Manuscript

The *Hōshō-ryū nō-zuke* is a four-volume manuscript contained in the National Institute of Japanese Literature's general collection. The same institution's database does not present detailed records of the manuscript's provenance or dating. In each of its volumes, the only information given in what may be considered a colophon (*okugaki* 奥書) is the name Kenmochi Kurō Sadanushi 靱持九郎治主, allegedly the author of the manuscript's extensive interlinear and header annotations in vermillion (*shu* 朱) ink. The identity of this individual is not clear, as this name does not appear in reference books on noh and *kyōgen* 狂言. Without such information, it is hard to date these manuscripts, which are in good condition (apart from some insect damage) and do not appear to be particularly old.

What is interesting to underline here is the massive presence of annotations in vermillion ink on almost every page, indicating the choreography (*katayuke* 型付) and movements of the dance. Especially meaningful for our discourse is how many of these annotations have been deleted and modified at many points (**fig. 1**). Even at a superficial glance, it is clear that the owner of this *utaibon* used it as a private memo-book for training and performance. Furthermore, it was probably not intended to be read primarily by others—except perhaps the author's heir or disciples.

Aoi no ue is the fourth play in the first volume of *Hōshō-ryū nō-zuke* and occupies three full folios, in addition to two “pasted slips” (*barigami* 貼紙). A detailed transcription of this manuscript and its annotations is not within the scope of this article. However, from even a general perusal of these pages, we can imagine the creative process as it relates to the vermillion inscriptions. These indications relating to dance and movements reflect an iterative process of corrections vis-à-vis the

⁴⁵ Full-color images available at NIJL's Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works. See **fig. 1** below.

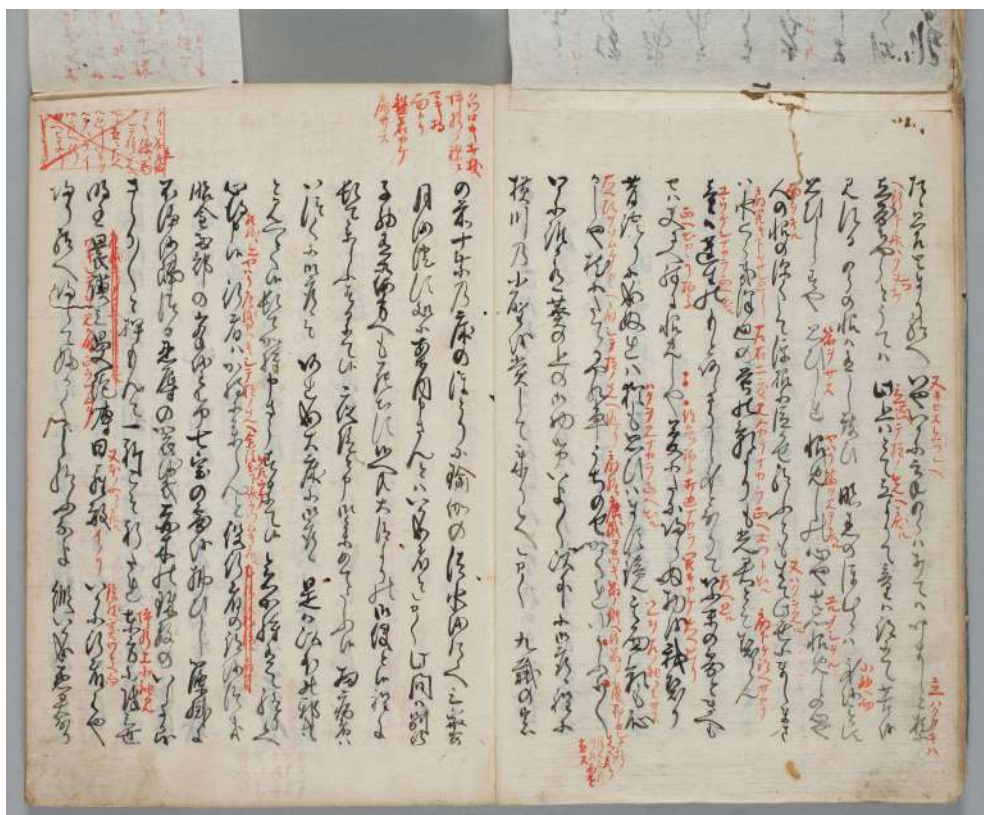


Figure 1. *Hosoboryū nozuke* 宝生流能附. National Institute of Japanese Literature.
<https://doi.org/10.20730/200012481> (image 14).

performance. This text is thus evidently not simply an accurate copy—a new *item*—of a previous text. It is also the embodiment of the work into a new *representation*, with original solutions adopted later, probably through direct experience of onstage performance. We can thus see this manuscript as a specific embodiment of continually changing representations and performing choices.

The first of the two pasted slips is dedicated entirely to the *inori* dance (fig. 2). It is also notable that instructions for the *inori*, one of the most important parts of the entire play, were added on such a separate slip, probably because of their length. There was not enough space to inscribe the instructions in the margins of the original page, alongside the lyrics.

The other added slip is a copy of the original page to which it is attached, reproducing the original text underneath it, running from the middle of the fourth column, *urameshi no kokoro ya* 恨めしの心や, up to the tenth column, *uchinose kakureyukō ni* うちのせかくれゆかふに (figs. 1 and 2). Here, the reason for the slip's addition is clear, as we can see that its own interlinear annotations differ slightly from the original ones.

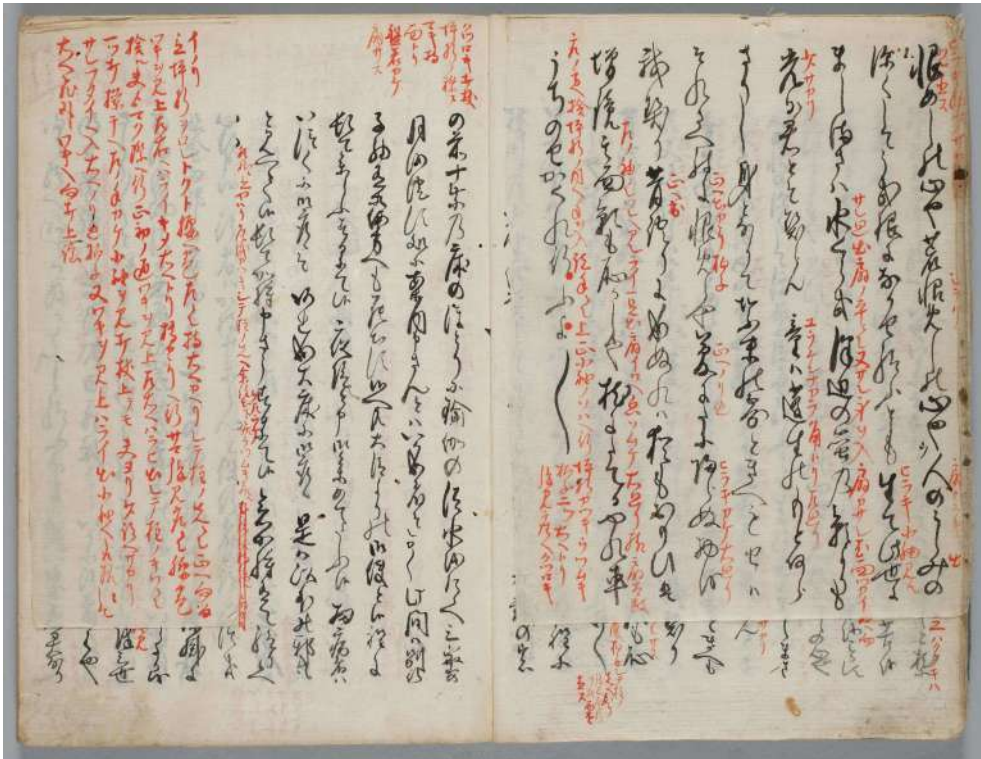


Figure 2. Here one can see the “pasted slips” (*barigami* 貼紙) bearing later annotations. *Hōshōryū nōzuke*. National Institute of Japanese Literature. <https://doi.org/10.20730/200012481> (image 13).

It is therefore clear, as is typical of *utaibon*, that the inscriptions in black ink indicating the lyrics—which are a fixed, highly canonized, and almost unchangeable part of the play—were copied entirely into this manuscript before the owner started to add his annotations in vermillion. During the copying of the lyrics, no consideration was given to leaving space for future annotations, as the need for the addition of the *inori* slip demonstrates. We can also observe that the annotations were modified two or more times, making it necessary to recopy a part of the lyrics altogether and then attach this to the original folio. Moreover, since the style of the handwriting is exactly the same in both the pasted slips and in the original manuscript, we can also conclude that the amendments and additions, as well as the copied lyrics and the annotations, are all the work of the same hand. This reinforces the hypothesis that this manuscript was a self-produced copy for an exclusively personal use.

A detailed analysis of these annotations could reveal how this specific *noh* practitioner performed movements and dances in *Aoi no ue*, thus allowing comparison with the styles of *noh* performers of different periods; but again, this is not the aim of this article. What is important to underline here is the conspicuous

presence of a layer of text (the vermillion annotations) that is easily added, modified, or deleted. Though the practice of annotating and glossing a text is also common to other—if not all—Japanese traditional performing arts, this manuscript is material proof of the active practice of interpreting and performing the noh libretto’s “original” text: a play originally *written* by Zeami was performed and re-elaborated in a very flexible and creative way, while maintaining the integrity of the creator’s lyrics. We may consider this annotated manuscript a sort of *recording* of that specific representation of *Aoi no ue*, a textual embodiment of the work that at the same time is also an embodiment of this specific actor’s stage performance.

Hōshō Kazufusa’s Handwritten Annotations in *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*

The same process of reciprocal embodiment between text and actor, thing and human, may be found with contemporary noh practitioners and their *utaibon*, with the difference that since the twentieth century, we can also watch video recordings of the performance. Moreover, we have the chance to directly question and interview noh practitioners and the “legitimate” heirs of this tradition. I did so for this research with Hōshō Kazufusa, the Hōshō school *iemoto*, whom I interviewed at the Hōshō Noh Theater (Hōshō Nōgakudō 宝生能楽堂) on November 25, 2019.

As in many Japanese traditional arts, the transmission of knowledge in noh from master to disciple was a strictly controlled process that mixed oral teachings with written materials.⁴⁶ The transmission of written sources was often accomplished by manually copying out one’s master’s books and annotations—in some cases even imitating the calligraphic style—and this practice continued to be predominant long after printing technologies had been introduced to and developed in Japan. The *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* manuscript (supposedly an early-modern copy) seems to follow this trend, and a more accurate study of this manuscript’s dating may shed light on how long these copying practices have continued to be mandatory in the Hōshō school.

According to Hōshō Kazufusa, the continual production of handwritten *utaibon* copies is a practice that today has been almost completely abandoned, at least in the Hōshō school. The *utaibon* personally owned by Kazufusa and used during his training for *Aoi no ue* is not a manuscript, but a printed edition published in 2005 by Wan’ya Shoten わんや書店—the *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*. In the colophon, Hōshō Kurō 宝生九郎 is indicated as the author (*chosakusha* 著作者). Kurō, the traditional name passed down by members of the Hōshō family, refers in this instance to the seventeenth Hōshō school grandmaster (*sōke* 宗家), Hōshō Shigefusa 宝生重英 (1900–1974)—as Kazufusa himself confirmed during our

⁴⁶ See, for example, the transmission of secret commentaries on the *Kokinshū* as explained in Unno, *Waka o yomitoku*, pp. 131–227.

interview.

As noh practitioners know well, even if the *utaibon* used today are, in most cases, printed versions, the main text reproduces a calligraphic text, one using historical *kana* orthography (*rekishibiteki kanazukai* 歴史的仮名遣い) and written moreover in cursive (*kuzushiji* 崩し字), with its many alternative forms of *kana* and *kanji*. According to Hōshō Kazufusa, the use of this complex style of writing—hardly readable without a certain amount of practice, even for Japanese readers—is an integral part of noh performance, and it is perceived by beginners as a fascinating aspect of the art.⁴⁷ Reading an *utaibon* transcribed in modern typographic characters (*katsuji* 活字) would, rather, confuse anyone accustomed to the traditional calligraphic style. This is certainly another interesting aspect of the text’s use and reproduction that, as I explained in the first part of this article, may be labeled “textual heritage.”

According to Hōshō Kazufusa, the calligraphic original reproduced in the mass-printed version is neither particularly old nor in Shigefusa’s handwriting. Rather, it is a photographic reproduction of a Shōwa-period (1926–1989) handwritten copy made by a disciple of the school. The custom of copying *utaibon* with ink and brush had continued throughout the Edo period (1603–1867) but ceased in the modern era for many complex reasons, not least of which was the fact that noh became an art that anyone, independent of birthplace and status, could learn and practice at will. Thereafter, once noh teaching had been extended and opened to everybody, it probably became impossible to produce a handwritten copy of every text for each new disciple. Printing a photographic reproduction of the handwritten text was supposedly the only reasonable solution from an economic and practical point of view.

Even if modern *utaibon* editions are no longer handwritten copies, the choice to exactly reproduce a handwritten text, instead of creating a typographic transcription, is proof that the connection with the textual tradition is still considered important by practitioners. The same may be said about the historical *kana* orthography and grammar used in the headnotes of each page (fig. 3). These notes are basically the modern version of the interlinear annotations in vermilion ink that we saw in the *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* manuscript itself. The identity of the author of these printed headnotes is uncertain, as these *utaibon* lack the bibliographical and philological details of a critical edition. A possible candidate may be Hōshō Shigefusa, who is indicated as the text’s “author” in the colophon, even though the original text is—obviously—attributable to Zeami. Identifying the author of these annotations is an almost unsolvable puzzle.

⁴⁷In concluding a keynote lecture discussing the necessity of *kuzushiji* education (“Naze ‘kuzushiji kyōiku’ ga hitsuyō na no ka” なぜ「くずし字教育」が必要なのか) at the conference *Koten kyōzai kaibatsu no kadai to kanōsei* 古典教材開発の課題と可能性 (Ritsumeikan University, March 28, 2021), Iikura Yōichi 飯倉洋一 suggested that *kuzushiji* literacy itself is a kind of textual heritage and may be tied to the future of historical texts in Japan and their use.

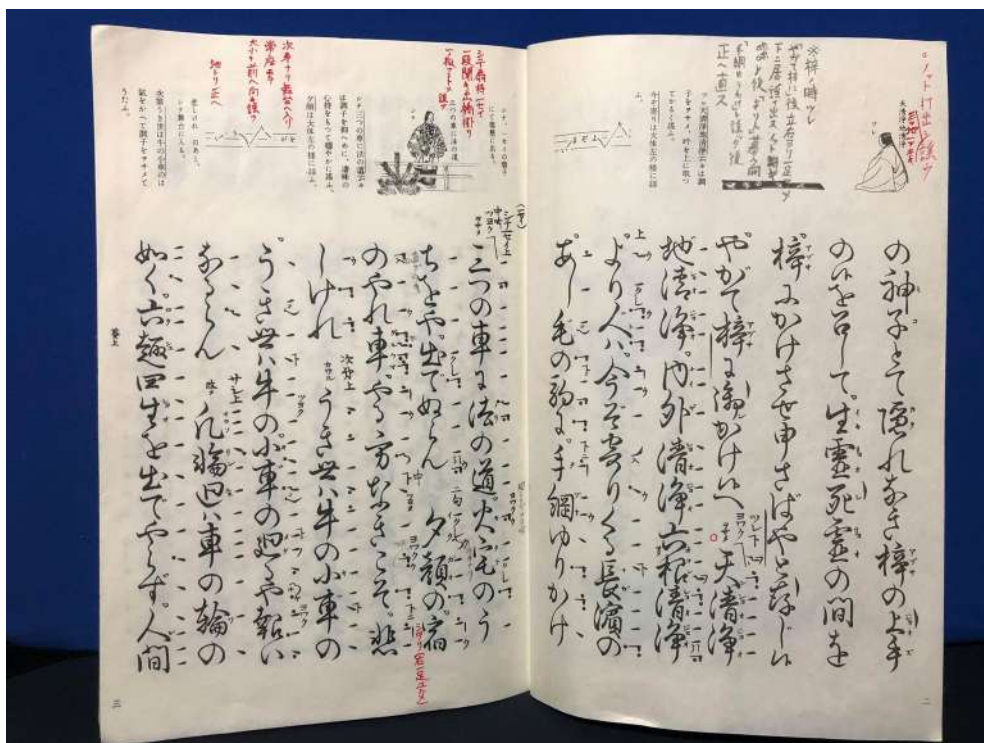


Figure 3. *Hōshō-ryū utaibon* 謡本の play *Aoi no ue* 葵上, with handwritten annotations. Hōshō Kazufusa 宝生和英, private collection.

Moreover, what is important for the practitioners is not exactly which master first wrote those notes, but rather that they are clear and coherent with the rest of the *utaibon*. If the use of specific terms to indicate the various movements (*kata* 型) is indeed obvious and necessary, the use of a simplified and codified form of classical Japanese may be understood more as a stylistic choice, designed to make the annotations consistent with the language—one might even say with the *mood*—of the *noh*, making the annotations also implicitly more authoritative.

For example, the language of the last headnote on page 3 (fig. 3, upper left) has a clear “classical” flavor:

次第うき世は牛の小車のは氣をかへて調子をヲサメてうたふ
*shidai ukijo ha ushi no oguruma no ha ki wo kabete chōshi wo wosamete utabu*⁴⁸

[*shidai*] “*ukijo wa ushi no oguruma no*”: when singing this phrase, change the intensity and reduce the tone.

⁴⁸ In order to emphasize the use of historical *kana* orthography, I have exceptionally adopted here a more mechanical one-to-one transcription (e.g., *kabete* for かへて, rather than *kaete*).

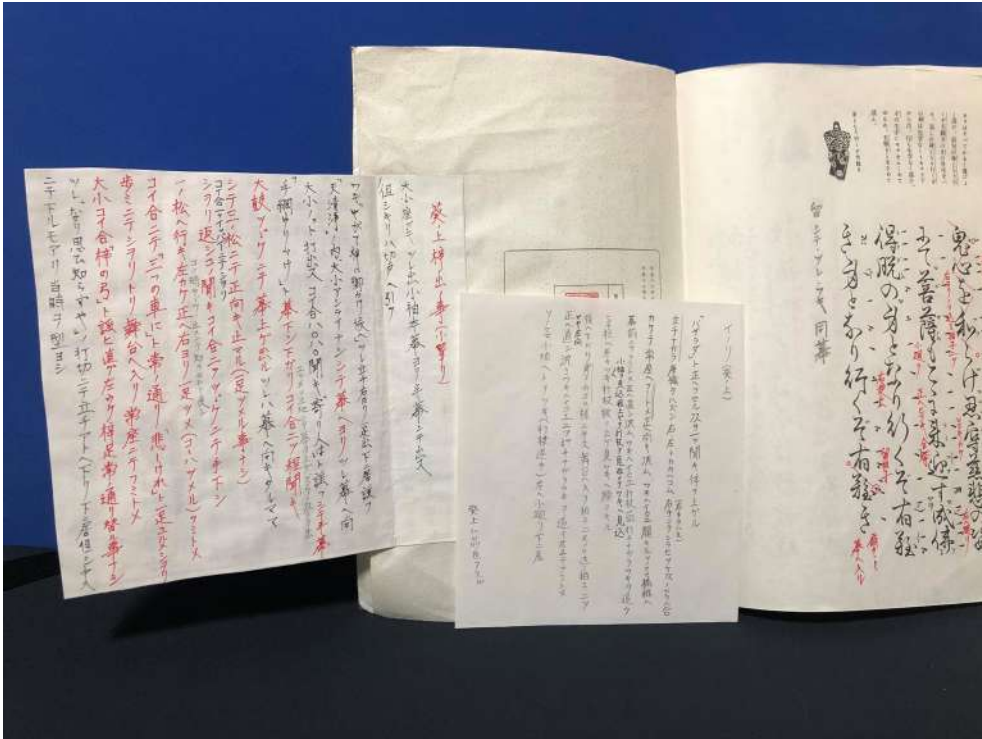


Figure 4. *Hōshōryū utaibon* of the play *Aoi no ue*, with handwritten annotations. Hōshō Kazufusa, private collection.

The use in a book published in 2005 of “old form” *kanji* (*kyūjitai* 旧字体), such as 氣 instead of 気, which are now officially deprecated in modern writing, is another example of how a conservative approach to the tradition also involves the transmission of its paratextual apparatus. The character 氣 probably felt more traditional and “authentic” here than 気.

Such attention to the formal rules of *noh* language can also be witnessed (and is indeed inherited) in the annotations of the most recent Hōshō family heir, Hōshō Kazufusa. Looking at his personal copy of *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*, we can see three kinds of handwritten annotations (figs. 3 and 4), all in Kazufusa’s own hand. The vermilion notations were already present in the *utaibon* of Kazufusa’s teacher, Sano Hajime 佐野萌 (1928–2009), and Kazufusa transcribed these exactly. The annotations in black represent further indications *transmitted orally* to Kazufusa during his training, which he wrote into the *utaibon*. The annotations in pencil are mostly Kazufusa’s own original additions and reminders.

Therefore, in this specific item—Hōshō Kazufusa’s individual copy of the *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*—we can find at least five layers of overlapping texts, in large part copied or reproduced from previous manifestations of the work

Aoi no ue: (1) the “original” text with the lyrics by Zeami (the main part in *kuzushiji*); (2) annotations instructing about how to modulate the singing and about which *kata* to perform for the dances, supposedly by Hōshō Kurō Shigefusa (both as handwritten annotations and typewritten text in the headnotes); (3) annotations hand-written in vermillion ink by Kazufusa, exactly reproducing those found in Sano Hajime’s *utaibon*; (4) annotations in black ink that inscribe (i.e., embody), for the first time, instructions and indications of the sort passed on orally to Kazufusa; and (5) Kazufusa’s original annotations and considerations, written in pencil.

We can see a sort of hierarchy between these strata of text. The original text of the lyrics is, of course, the most canonized and unchangeable part. The annotations, however, on how to intone those lyrics—that is, the very thing that characterizes the Hōshō school’s style of singing—are also not subject to major changes. Indeed, these latter are visually incorporated—using traditional cursive script—into the lyrics themselves. To change this part of the text—the vocal execution—might eventually undermine the performance’s sense of authenticity, and possibly even the school’s and its current master’s authority and legitimacy. For a very clear and exhaustive reflection about the strain between renovation and conservation in Japanese traditional arts, see Sano, “Bunka wa dare no mono ni sareyō to shite iru no ka.” In contrast, annotations indicating certain details of the dance or movement are more easily subjected to change and amendment. Even a quick and superficial comparison between the vermillion annotations in the *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* manuscript and the annotations in Kazufusa’s personal copy of the text shows clear discrepancies in the contents of their annotations and in their choices of which parts of the song (*utai* 謡) to annotate. It is noticeable that, even within the same school, two *utaibon* annotated about (supposedly) 100–150 years apart can attest to totally different executions of the same play.

Here it becomes clear how *utaibon* are not aimed at preserving a historically accurate record of the various versions of the same play, as it is almost impossible to discern if the vermillion annotations Kazufusa accurately copied from Sano Hajime’s text were Hajime’s original notes or were themselves copies of previous texts. By the same token, Kazufusa’s “original” annotations in pencil, written in the same style (i.e., using historical grammar and *kana* orthography), will eventually become indistinguishable from the previous ones, once they are copied again, in the future, by Kazufusa’s disciples or by the next *iemoto*.

We can therefore conclude that the approach to textual sources in modern *noh* practice follows rules quite different from those of modern philological practices. While the philologist tries to reconstruct the oldest archetype supposedly closer to the original work, *utaibon* preserve only a play’s most recent version, usually the one taught and practiced by the current master. There is no need—and no space—for a more detailed and philologically-informed edition of the *utaibon*. This does not mean that older textual sources are entirely ignored or dismissed. According to Hōshō Kazufusa, since not all plays in the repertoire were

performed by the preceding generation, if one decides to stage an older play, it is necessary to read older *utaibon* to find indications about the *kata* and other aspects of the noh performance.

Whether to include more or less information on an *utaibon* page is, in the end, decided by the owner of that specific copy of the *utaibon*, based on that individual's judgment and needs. In the case of Kazufusa's *Aoi no ue*, a detailed description of the *inori* was added on a detached page. As he explained, he did so the first time he interpreted the piece because he felt the need to accurately record in the *utaibon* all the movements he had learned.

In theory, all knowledge about noh techniques should be transmitted only orally—but, of course, this may result in unintended loss of information. For example, song lyrics transmitted in a solely oral manner would eventually lead to small modifications that would be cumulatively significant after decades or centuries. Therefore, knowledge transmission through textual copies, annotations, and reproductions—or in other words, through the practices of textual heritage—is performed as a useful support to the transmission of the art as a whole. At the same time, given the way ancient manuscripts are handled and preserved within noh schools and institutions, it is possible to conclude that texts as physical items are charged with a relatively less symbolic importance and value in noh when compared to the preservation and transmission of other elements, whether tangible—the masks, etc.—or intangible—the various oral teachings.

Given this, it is unsurprising that the *utaibon* used every day for trainings and performances, even by the Hōshō school *iemoto* himself, are not manuscripts of particular value but are rather printed editions, with annotations written using a common pen or pencil. It is clear that a more conservative approach to the use and production of those texts—for example, requiring that annotations be made using a brush and ink, or that an *utaibon* text be copied entirely by hand—is considered superfluous, and not fundamental for guaranteeing the school's aura of legitimacy and authenticity in the eyes of both members and outsiders.

Conclusions

In the first section of this article, I proposed the idea that processes of heritage embodiment can be understood in a double and reciprocal way: from intangible practices and ideas into tangible objects, and from tangible objects into living performances and people.

The example of *utaibon* and their relationship with the living practice of noh in the Hōshō school confirms this theory. A play's performance is informed and regulated by the (tangible) presence of a specific canon of texts, whose contents—the story, the characters, the dialogue, the songs, the dances, and so on—are embodied by the actors onstage. At the same time, the living and intangible experience that comes from the everyday practice of performing the plays may be eventually embodied in new annotations that, in turn, will inform again the

next generation of actors and their performances, in a sort of spiral between text and actors, an entanglement of things and humans.

This does not mean that this relationship between performances and texts is free from breaks, which arise of course in any kind of entanglement. According to Ian Hodder, it is always possible to “disentangle” something through the act of creativity.⁴⁹ It is thus also possible to imagine a future for *noh* that does not involve a relationship with and the use of written texts but rather involves only oral transmission, even if this option is quite unrealistic.

The custom of copying *utaibon* by hand has faded, and one day, the use of *kuḡushiji* for the printed versions of *utaibon* may also be abandoned. Even if it seems now only a remote possibility, it is always possible that textual heritage (defined in this paper as the sum of cultural practices that operate on texts and the material media of texts) will be abandoned. It is true, after all, that any kind of cultural practice or cultural product may eventually perish. Already during the twentieth century, the Japanese have experienced a general loss of literacy in Sinitic (*kanbun*), which for more than a millennium had been a powerful tool for shaping, transmitting, and transforming thoughts, knowledge, and culture from both Asia and the world at large. Yet it is also possible to revert this tendency through the rediscovery of new and old values associated with texts, for example through the use and knowledge of *kuḡushiji*. In the end, heritage is something people create and perform in the present to answer present needs. The study of textual heritage has as its goal the facilitation of a deeper understanding of these social, cultural, and historical processes.

The paradigm of textual heritage proposed in this article has the potential to enable a wider view on a complex set of cultural practices, like the transmission and preservation of a traditional performing art such as *noh*. In so doing, it stresses the role and the interdependencies—the entanglements—that texts, here understood as things and as practices, have with people.⁵⁰

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⁴⁹ Hodder, *Studies in Human-Thing Entanglement*, p. 92.

⁵⁰ I would like to express my gratitude to Master Hōshō Kazufusa of the Hōshō school, who graciously accorded me the permission to publish part of his annotated copies of *Aoi no ue* and kindly answered all my questions both in person and through digital channels.

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Sakura Sōgorō between Kabuki and *Kōdan*: A Cross-Genre Genealogy

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Introduction

The playbill for the Zenshin-za 前進座 Company’s annual performance at the National Theater in May 2019 features the actor Arashi Yoshisaburō 嵐芳三郎 VII (b. 1965) against a snowy background, dressed in travel attire and a snow-covered *sandogasa* 三度笠 sedge hat.¹ His portrait here alludes to an iconic scene in the kabuki play being staged, *Sakura giminden* 佐倉義民伝 (Tale of the Peasant Martyr of Sakura). In the scene in question, the protagonist, Kiuchi Sōgorō 木内宗五郎,² having resolved to appeal directly to the shogun on behalf of his fellow peasants—an act regarded as insubordination and punishable by death—is making his way back from Edo to his village in the Narita 成田 area (modern Chiba Prefecture) to bid a final farewell to his family. The *sandogasa* hat, which conceals the wearer’s face, betokens the covert nature of the hero’s return. Pursued on the one hand by the authorities of the local Sakura 佐倉 domain, who wish to prevent him from such a direct shogunal appeal, Sōgorō also intends to divorce his wife and disown his children, in the hope that at least their lives will be spared the fate that awaits him—a hope that will be dashed at the end of the play.

As the image selected for the playbill confirms, the scenes depicting the hero’s homecoming—which unfold over the second and third acts—are considered especially representative of the play and are featured also in other performance genres, such as *jōruri* 浄瑠璃, *kōdan* 講談, and *rōkyōken* 浪曲.³ While the storyline is

¹The playbill can be accessed through the Zenshin-za website at the following address: http://www.zenshinza.com/stage_guide4/2019kokuritu/index.html (accessed 2.22.2022).

²The name Sōgorō is sometimes written 惣五郎.

³*Jōruri*, also known as *bunraku* 文楽, is a form of puppet theater in which the narrative and dialogic sections are interpreted by reciters (*gidayū* 義太夫) to the accompaniment of a shamisen, a stringed musical instrument. I introduce the genre of *kōdan* below, which involves the recitation of war chronicles, heroic episodes, and revenge tales by storytellers. *Rōkyōken*, also known as *nanivabushi* 浪花節, is another genre of storytelling that developed at the end of the Edo period and which capitalized on the *kōdan* repertoire; its performers not only recite stories but also perform sung sections of the narratives, again to shamisen accompaniment.

based on the account of a seventeenth-century “peasant martyr” (*gimin* 義民)⁴—as passed down in the chronicle genre known as “veritable records” (*jitsuroku* 実録)—the homecoming subplot is not actually part of the source material. It could therefore represent a later addition for which the kabuki play is the first textual evidence. The influence of this subplot on later retellings of the Sōgorō story has been substantial, however, to the point that it was not only included in later “veritable records,” but even came to serve as the main theme of the performance, as it also did in the *rōkyōku* narratives.

In this article, I survey dramatizations of the *Sakura giminden* story across performance genres, focusing in particular on kabuki and *kōdan* storytelling, in whose repertoires the story appeared around the middle of the eighteenth century. By examining the relationship between those genres and the *jitsuroku* narratives, I establish a genealogy for these texts. Given their significance as innovations with respect to the original chronicles, I focus my analysis on two episodes in particular—the scene at the ferry crossing (*watashiba* 渡し場) and the scene of the hero’s farewell to his family (*konakare* 子別れ, literally “farewell to children”), both of which featured in kabuki drama and *kōdan*. Together, these episodes represent a watershed moment in the transmission of the tale of Sakura Sōgorō.

1. The Story of Kiuchi Sōgorō in the *Jitsuroku* Narratives

Transmitted in several *jitsuroku* texts, whose lineages I consider below, the folkloric tale of “Sakura Sōgorō” is set in the seventeenth century and centers on a peasant uprising led by the eponymous character. Sōgorō is the headman, or *nanushi* 名主, of the village Kōzu 公津 in Inba 印旛 County, a region of Shimōsa 下総 Province then within the Sakura domain. The peasants are rebelling against the rule of the domain lord, Hotta Masanobu 堀田正信 (1631–1680), who is often referred to by his court title, Kōzuke no suke 上野介. The main story, which has some variations, is as follows.

Burdened by the heavy taxes levied within the domain, and after several failed attempts to negotiate with administrators, more than three hundred *nanushi* have gathered in Edo to petition Hotta at his residence, but to no avail. Sōgorō—who originally was unable to accompany his fellow village leaders because of illness—later joins them, and they resolve to petition Lord Kuze Yamato no kami 久世大和守, a member of the shogunal council, which they do by tossing a document into his palanquin as he passes by on his way to Edo Castle.⁵ Yamato

⁴ For a critical discussion of the cultural significance of the *gimin* image, see Walthall, “Japanese Gimin.”

⁵ This practice, known as “petition to the palanquin” (*kagoso* 駕籠訴), was a last-chance means of placing a matter before high-ranking government officials or domain lords, access to whom was tightly restricted.

seems to accept the petition, and the headmen, pleased with the result, return to their villages, leaving Sōgorō and five other representatives in Edo. However, when Yamato summons them to his residence sometime later, he returns the petition, leaving their complaints unacknowledged.

Left now with abandoning his effort to help the peasants as his only other real option, Sōgorō resolves to appeal directly to the shogun, Tokugawa Ietsuna 徳川家綱 (1641–1680, in office 1651–1680), even though doing so will cost him his life. And indeed the decision is a grave one: such an act of “direct appeal” (*jikiso* 直訴) to the highest authority—i.e., without following the prescribed administrative procedures—was treated as insurrection, and was punishable with crucifixion. Knowing that the shogun is planning to visit Kan’ei-ji 寛永寺 Temple (his ancestral funeral temple in the Ueno 上野 area) on a specific day, Sōgorō hides himself under a bridge at the temple’s front gate on the night before Ietsuna arrives. The next day, as the shogun crosses the bridge, Sōgorō emerges and, using a long bamboo pole, manages to deliver the petition to Ietsuna’s palanquin. The shogun’s entourage receives the document, and Sōgorō withdraws. Returning to the other five delegates, he tells them that the petition has apparently reached the shogun, and they drink together in celebration.

The shogun, in fact, refuses to read the petition, but he has another vassal, Inoue Kawachi no kami 井上河内守, deliver it to Hotta. Having thus lost face before the other daimyo as a result, Hotta is furious but compelled by the shogun’s action to lower the peasants’ taxes. As feared, he commands that Sōgorō and his wife be crucified and their four male children beheaded. The execution takes place on the eleventh day of the second month of the first year of the Meireki 明暦 era (1655). Tied to the crosses on which they will die, Sōgorō and his wife watch in horror and anger as their children are killed, and they swear vengeance. Soon they make good on their threat, returning as evil spirits (*tatari* 祟り) to terrify and bring about the deaths of Lord Hotta and his pregnant wife.

While most of the veritable records present this basic story, the dates, details, subplots, ending, and, in particular, the narrative structure differ to some extent across the various versions.⁶ Kodama Kōta 児玉幸多, in a seminal essay, provides evidence that *Sakura giminden* was not entirely fictional. He demonstrates that a wealthy peasant named Sōgorō was, indeed, executed together with his children, albeit in the eighth month of the second year of the Jōō 承応 era (1653).

Kodama also distinguishes three different categories among the texts that narrate the tale of Sōgorō.⁷ The first includes *Jizōdō tsuya monogatari* 地藏堂通夜物語

⁶The two existing English translations—one by A. B. Mitford in his *Tales of Old Japan* (1871) and another by Anne Walthall in her *Peasant Uprisings in Japan* (University of Chicago Press, 1991)—are clearly based on two different chronicles. Mitford did not specify his source text, but Walthall’s translation is based on a text discovered in Aizu-Wakamatsu by the scholar Hosaka Satoru 保坂智.

⁷Kodama, *Sakura Sōgorō*.

(The Story of a Vigil at the Jizō Hall, mid-eighteenth century) and various similar texts. These texts all use the literary technique of a frame-story. In some versions, the keeper of the Jizō Hall at Shōin-ji 勝胤寺 Temple, located at Ōzakura 大佐倉 in Inba County, narrates the tale of Sōgorō to an itinerant monk who has stopped there for the night. In other versions, a pair of visitors, a husband and wife, take the place of the keeper, sometimes revealing themselves to be the spirits of Sōgorō and his wife. The second of Kodama's categories includes texts based on *Hotta sōdōki* 堀田騷動記 (Chronicles of the Hotta Strife, second half of the eighteenth century), and similar manuscripts that diverge from the *Jizōdō tsuya* narratives both in their lack of a frame-story device and in their focus on the Hotta family after Sōgorō's death. Kodama notes that the texts in this group are quite inconsistent in terms of dating. The third and final category includes texts with titles referring, more or less explicitly, to *Sakura giminden*, most of them printed after the beginning of the Meiji period (1868–1912).

Japanese scholars have long debated the genealogical relationship between the *Jizōdō* and *Hotta sōdōki* texts without reaching any consensus. Despite the difficulty of establishing the origins of the extant manuscripts, Kodama affirmed, through correlations with historical records, that both texts emerged after the Hōreki 宝曆 era (1751–1764).⁸ Furthermore, he proposed that the subplot of the vengeful ghosts, since it appears in both sets of texts, had taken shape earlier, being propagated as a folk tale before its incorporation into the *jitsuroku* narratives.⁹ On the other hand, Aoyagi Yoshitada 青柳嘉忠 has proposed that *Jizōdō* represents a dramatization of *Hotta sōdōki*, with the latter being thus the original narrative.¹⁰ More recently, Ogihara Daichi 荻原大地 has introduced into the discussion a previously unconsidered text called *Sakura kajitsu monogatari* 佐倉花実物語 (Tale of Glory in Sakura, mid-nineteenth century) and proposed a textual genealogy of Sakura Sōgorō tales, one essentially confirming the parallel lineages proposed earlier by Kodama.¹¹

A detailed discussion of these genealogies is beyond the scope of the present article, but it is noteworthy that most of the texts in Kodama's third category are similar in narrative structure to the *Hotta sōdōki*. Kodama's third category

⁸ According to *Kokusbo sōmokuroku* 国書総目録 (General Catalog of Japanese Books, 1989) published by Iwanami Shoten, the earliest *Jizōdō tsuya monogatari* narrative dates to the tenth year of the Bunsei 文政 era (1829) and the earliest *Hotta sōdōki* narrative to the third year of the Kōka 弘化 era (1846). The manuscript titled *Sakura sōdōki* (Chronicles of the Sakura Strife), housed in the Chiba Prefectural Library 千葉県立図書館, is dated in *Kokusbo sōmokuroku*, to the Keian 慶安 era (1648–1652), making it, apparently, the earliest among extant manuscripts. However, as an example of the interchangeable nature of titles, the title on the manuscript's original cover, according to the library's catalog, is *Jizōdō miyagomori monogatari* 地藏堂宮籠物語 (The Story of a Fervent Prayer at the Jizō Hall), while the title given inside the book is *Hotta sōdōki*.

⁹ Kodama, *Sakura Sōgorō*, pp. 58–66.

¹⁰ Aoyagi, *Kenkyūshi Sakura Sōgorō*.

¹¹ Ogihara, “‘Sakura Sōgorō mono’ jitsuroku no keifu.”

also includes the subplot with Sōgorō returning to his village and saying farewell to his family before his petition to the shogun; this does not feature in either the *Hotta sōdōki* or the *Jizōdō* text. This subplot represents an innovation that seems to have passed from the kabuki play into other narratives of Sōgorō's story.

2. Kabuki and *Jōruri* Dramatizations

Sōgorō's story was first staged as a kabuki drama in the eighth month of 1851 at the Nakamura-za 中村座 Theater in Edo, and featured the famous kabuki actor Ichikawa Kodanji 市川小團次 IV (1812–1866) in the leading role. The playwright, Segawa Jokō 瀬川如臯 III (1806–1881), gave his work the ambiguous title of *Higashiyama sakura Sōshi* 東山桜莊子 (Zhuangzi and the Cherry Trees in Higashiyama).¹² While in fact basing his play on the Sōgorō story, to avoid censorship from the shogunal authorities, Segawa had changed the setting to the second half of the fifteenth century, placing it in the Higashiyama 東山 period of the Muromachi era (1336–1573). To further weaken the connection with the original tale, he also renamed the main character Asakura Tōgo 朝倉当吾 and added elements taken from Ryūtei Tanehiko's 柳亭種彦 (1783–1842) work of parodic fiction *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* 倭紫田舎源氏 (The False Murasaki and the Rustic Genji, 1829–1842).¹³ The result was a play in seven acts and twenty-eight scenes that—despite its uncommon peasant hero and the misgivings of the theater owners, who had scorned the work as a “rustic drama” (*momen shibai* 木綿芝居)—enjoyed enormous success, running for three months.¹⁴

Success followed in Osaka as well. Having heard of the play's long run in Edo and of its particularly effective scenes—those showing the hero's farewell to his family (*kowakare* 子別れ), his torture (*semeba* 責め場), and the appearance of the ghosts—the actor Arashi Rikaku 嵐璃瑠 II (1812–1864) had it rewritten and staged at a small local theater called Kado no Shibai 角の芝居 in the third month of 1852.¹⁵ Titled *Hana no kumo Sakura no akebono* 花雲佐倉曙 (Clouds of Cherry-Tree Flowers: Dawn in Sakura) and featuring Rikaku in the leading role of

¹²The title plays on the fact that the word *sakura* 桜 (cherry tree) is a homophone for Sakura, the domain in which the original story is set. Similarly, Sōshi 莊子—the name of a Chinese philosopher of the fourth century BCE with no connection with the play—is a homophone for both 壯士 (“brave and heroic man”) and 草子 or 草紙 (a type of story written in the *kana* syllabary). Segawa's title therefore has the sense of “The Story of the Brave Man of Sakura in Higashiyama,” which is descriptive of the Sōgorō's story.

¹³*Inaka Genji* was a literary parody of Murasaki Shikibu's 紫式部 (late tenth–early eleventh century) *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, early eleventh century). Ryūtei transposed the original story, set in the Heian period (794–1185), to the Muromachi period. This work, spanning thirty-eight chapters (152 vols.), remained incomplete at the author's death in 1842, but it became a bestseller and was still popular ten years later when Segawa wrote his play.

¹⁴Kokuritsu Gekijō Geinō Chōsashitsu, *Kokuritsu gekijō jōen daibonshū*, p. 120.

¹⁵Atsumi, *Isbin kyōgenshū*, p. 300.

Sakura “Tōgo” 佐倉藤五, the play proved successful yet again, as shown by the fact that it was restaged three times in the following eight years.¹⁶

Furthermore, some months after *Hana no kumo Sakura no akebono* was staged as a kabuki play, a *jōruri* version was produced under the same title. This work was the combined effort of the playwrights Sakuma Shōchōken 佐久間松長軒 (1800–1864)—who also performed as a reciter (*gidayū* 義太夫) under the name of Takemoto Nagatodayū 竹本長門太夫 III—and Toyoshima Gyokuwaken 登与島玉和軒 (dates unknown). Shōchōken staged it himself in the ninth month of 1852 at the Takeda Shibai 竹田芝居 Theater, and once again, the production enjoyed great success.

The following year, in the ninth month of 1853, a printed libretto (*shōbon* 正本) was issued by publishers in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka under the title *Hana no kumo Sakura no akebono: shinrei kaidan* 花雲佐倉曙：神靈怪談 (Clouds of Cherry-Tree Flowers, Dawn in Sakura: A Ghost Story about the Soul of the Deceased), and featured images by the ukiyo-e artist Hasegawa Sadanobu 長谷川貞信 I (1809–1879). In addition, a number of color woodcuts featuring Ichikawa Kodanji IV, Arashi Rikaku II, and other actors in the role of Sōgorō/Tōgo were produced between 1851 and 1880, proof that the play continued to enjoy popularity in the three decades after its debut. Even later still, the celebrated artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi 月岡芳年 (1839–1892) would choose the scene of Sōgorō’s farewell to his family as the subject of a woodcut in the series *Shinsen azuma nishiki-e* 新撰東錦絵 (A New Selection of Eastern Brocade Pictures) printed in 1885.¹⁷

After Segawa’s *Higashiyama sakura Sōshi* premiered, ten years passed before the story was again staged in Edo. This time, the actor Kodanji relied on the playwright Kawatake Shinshichi 河竹新七 II (later known as Mokuami 黙阿弥, 1816–1893) to revise the original play. The resulting narrative eliminated the parts related to *Inaka Genji* and added new scenes, giving a greater consistency to the peasant hero’s story.¹⁸ Titled *Sakura Sōshi gonichi no bundan* 桜莊子後日文談 (A Literary Discussion of the Aftermath of the Brave Man of Sakura Incident) and staged at the Morita-za 守田座 Theater from the eighth through to the tenth

¹⁶The three restagings occurred in the fifth month of 1853 at the Takeda Shibai 竹田芝居 Theater, in the ninth month of 1856 at the Chikugo Shibai 筑後芝居 Theater, and in the sixth month of 1860 at the Minami Shibai 南芝居 Theater in nearby Sakai 堺. See Kokuritsu Gekijō Geinō Chōsashitsu, *Tōshi kyōgen Sakura giminden*, p. 3.

¹⁷Some of these woodcuts can be viewed on the websites of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

¹⁸In particular, Kawatake wrote a subplot about Kōzen 光然, Tōgo’s uncle and abbot of Bukkō-ji 仏光寺 Temple. After praying for leniency for thirty-seven days and receiving news of the merciless execution of his nephew and the latter’s family, Kōzen drowns himself in the Inba Marsh and becomes a vengeful ghost who haunts the Hotta family along with the spirits of Tōgo and his wife. Despite the prominence of its author, this scene has only rarely been included in contemporary stagings of the play.

month of 1861, this play, also in seven acts and twenty-eight scenes, would form the basis for stagings of the Sōgorō story from the Meiji period onwards.¹⁹

3. The Hero's Encounter with the Ferryman and His Farewell to His Family

While the structure and staging of these plays about Sōgorō varied over time, performances almost always included a core set of scenes: the petitioning of Lord Hotta at the gate of his Edo mansion (*monso no ba* 門訴の場), the hero's return to his village across Inba Marsh with the help of the ferryman (*watashimori* 渡し守) Jinbei 甚兵衛 (*watashi no ba* 渡しの場), the hero's visit to his home and farewell to his children (*kowakare no ba* 子別れの場), the hero's petitioning of the shogun (*jikiso no ba* 直訴の場), and, less frequently, the haunting of the Hotta mansion (*kaiai no ba* 怪異の場). Since these scenes mark the turning points in Sōgorō's story, their continual inclusion in performances of the play was only natural.²⁰ Among these, the ferry scene and the scene with the hero's family have been, by far, the play's most popular, as reflected in surviving woodblock prints, which depict them more than any of the other episodes in the story.

In the first of these two scenes, Sōgorō (or "Tōgo"),²¹ having resolved to appeal directly to the shogun, and aware that doing so will bring about his own death, is worried that this punishment will extend to his family, as we have seen. On the advice of his comrades, he returns in disguise to his village, bringing some money and a divorce letter (*rienjō* 離縁状) for his wife, Osan おさん. On the snowy night represented in the 2019 playbill cited at the beginning of this article, he reaches the ferryman's hut and calls for him, asking to be taken across the marsh. From within the hut, the ferryman refuses, citing recent orders from the domain authorities that say crossing is not to be permitted between dusk and dawn. Sōgorō recognizes the voice as that of Jinbei, an old peasant, and the two finally meet face to face. Sōgorō enters the hut, and in the secrecy that it affords, Jinbei brings him up-to-date about the situation then in the village: most of his fellows have been arrested, and the authorities are watching his family closely so that they can arrest him too when he returns. Indeed it is precisely to prevent Sōgorō from crossing the marsh unnoticed that they have ordered the ferry to remain idle during the night.

Sōgorō seems to have no choice but to return to Edo without achieving his purpose. Nevertheless, he reveals to Jinbei his plan to make a direct appeal to the

¹⁹ Part of the play has been translated into English by Anne Phillips as "The Tale of the Martyr of Sakura."

²⁰ The number of acts varied over the years from two to ten. Occasionally, the story has been staged in its entirety, in which case the performance is described as a "full-play" performance (*toshi kyōgen* 通し狂言), one recent example being the 2019 Zenshin-za production.

²¹ In the plot summaries, I have referred to the characters as they are named in the play. Here, however, for the sake of clarity, I use Sōgorō instead of the actual Tōgo. The names of the supporting characters also vary to some extent across the various plays.

shogun and asks him to deliver the divorce letter and money to his wife. The old man is deeply moved by Sōgorō's selflessness and declares that he cannot deny him a final farewell with his family, especially since he is sacrificing his life for the peasants of the domain. Although Sōgorō protests, fearing for the ferryman's own safety, Jinbei takes a hatchet (*nata* 鉋) and breaks the chains shackling the ferry to its berth, and then conveys the hero across the marsh.

The following scene is set in Sōgorō's house, where the hero's wife welcomes his return, as do his sons, Hikoshichi 彦七 and Tokumatsu 徳松, and his daughter, Otō おとう. Osan also presents to Sōgorō their infant boy, to whom she has given birth during his absence. She also has him don a cotton kimono that she has sewn for him. While talking to his family, Sōgorō realizes how destitute the village has become, his own household included. He calls for a cup of *sake*, pretending that he intends to celebrate his homecoming, while knowing that this will in fact be his parting toast. There is, however, no *sake* in the house to be had—the nearby seller having moved away because of the village's difficulties—so they instead share cups of tea.

Then, while the other characters are otherwise occupied, Sōgorō furtively tucks the money, the divorce letter, and a parting message to his wife into the newborn's bedclothes. But Osan finds and reads the message before Sōgorō can depart and angrily confronts him. Eventually she grasps the purpose of the divorce but refuses to accept it, declaring that her duty as wife is to follow him even to the underworld. She implores him to tear up the letter, which he does.²² Their children then surround Sōgorō and cling to him in an effort to prevent him from leaving. When the bell for the hour of the ox (1 to 3 a.m.) tolls, however, he reluctantly leaves the house—as Osan watches from a window, holding the newborn in her arms.

From a narrative point of view, the homecoming subplot is particularly effective, emphasizing as it does the themes of abnegation and loyalty to show precisely what Sōgorō is losing by continuing to advance the peasants' interests. Moreover, since the story—at least after the play's first staging—was widely known, audiences, when taking in the familial scenes, were already aware of the fates of Sōgorō and his family, and therefore able to empathize with the defeated hero.

4. The Kabuki Play and “Veritable Records”

The *Fujiokaya nikki* 藤岡屋日記 (Fujiokaya Diaries, 1804–1868), a major source for Edo history and culture of the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, relates that, when Ichikawa Kodanji and Segawa Jokō were planning to stage a play about Sōgorō at the Nakamura-za Theater, they went to Sakura to visit various temples and ruins there and to inquire into the origins of Sōgorō's story.²³ In the

²² In *Sakura no akebono*, it is Osan who tears up the letter.

²³ The *Fujiokaya nikki* is a massive diary kept from 1804 to 1868 by a merchant and bookseller named Sudō Yoshizō 須藤由蔵 (b. 1793) under the pseudonym Fujiokaya. It is a major source of information about life in Edo at the time, covering topics as varied as crime, scandals, cultural events, and even military affairs. See *Fujiokaya nikki*, pp. 437–439.

opinion of scholar Ōno Masaharu 大野政治, when Kodanji visited the Mt. Narita area three years before the play was staged, he managed to locate a copy of *Jizōdō*, which he brought back to Edo.²⁴ It is, therefore, likely that *Higashiyama sakura Sōshi* derives from the *jitsuroku* narratives.

Nonetheless, as Ogihara has shown, the episodes of the hero's encounter with the ferryman and his farewell to his family do not appear in any text from either the *Jizōdō* or the *Hotta sōdōki* lineages prior to the kabuki play. To be sure, some *jitsuroku* contain a farewell scene between Sōgorō and his family, but only as an interlude and, crucially, at a different point in the narrative—before he departs to join the other headmen in Edo. In these brief scenes, the hero reads his will, shares a cup of *sake*, and departs. The parting drink is the only detail shared with the kabuki play. In the *jitsuroku*, however, the scene is a restrained one, while in the kabuki play the emotions are overwhelming. Moreover, in the former, there is no divorce letter since Sōgorō leaves his family before making the petition even to Hotta, and thus before he has any inkling that he will later feel compelled to sacrifice his life to ensure that the petition is read by the shogun.

Segawa appears to have reworked the parting scene, moving it to the center of the play and adding elements and dialogue to increase its dramatic force. The addition of the ferryman scene highlights this subplot's liminal nature. This reworking of the original storyline seems to have been at least partly responsible for the play's remarkable success. My analysis has already touched on the staging of a similar play in Osaka and the story's dramatization in a *jōruri* play. The *Fujiokaya nikki* makes it clear that Segawa's achievement in this respect was such that even the *koishaku* 講釈 [*kōdan*] storytellers in Edo were moved to include the Sakura Sōgorō story in their performances.²⁵

Before I analyze Sōgorō's story in the *kōdan* genre, it is worth noting that only *jitsuroku* texts published after the staging of the *Higashiyama sakura Sōshi* kabuki play include the homecoming subplot. This inflection point is especially evident in "reading books" (*yomihon* 読本) derived from *jitsuroku*, which included illustrations (*sashi-e* 挿し絵) that, along with their storytelling, had become the preferred medium for the popular consumption of historical narratives. Ogihara has contrasted the *Jizōdō* and *Hotta sōdōki* texts with *Chūyū Asakura nikki* 忠勇阿佐倉日記 (The Diary of the Brave and Loyal Asakura), a *yomihon* in three parts published between 1852 and 1855, which includes both the ferry and the farewell episodes.²⁶ The *Asakura nikki* is also by no means an isolated case. Thus, for instance, the entire homecoming subplot is included in *Asakura Tōgo ichidaiki* 朝倉当吾一代記 (The Life of Asakura Tōgo, 1855), a book by the renowned popular fiction (*gesaku* 戯作) writer Donteï Robun 鈍亭魯文 (also Kanagaki Robun

²⁴ Arashi, Koike, and Takahashi, *Teidan Sakura giminden no sekai*, p. 27.

²⁵ *Fujiokaya nikki*, p. 438.

²⁶ Ogihara, "'Sakura Sōgorō mono' jitsuroku no keifu," pp. 36–39.



Figure 1. Scene of Sōgorō's meeting with his family, from *Asakura Tōgo ichidaiki* 朝倉当吾一代記. Through the window, the reader catches a glimpse of the ferryman Jinbei. National Institute of Japanese Literature.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200014718> (image 15).

仮名垣魯文, 1829–1894).²⁷ The episodes were also illustrated by Ochiai (or Utagawa 歌川) Yoshiiku 落合芳幾 (1833–1904), who not only skillfully merged the two scenes (**fig. 1**) but also alluded to the kabuki play in their visual composition. Furthermore, upon close examination, the illustration of the parting scene in *Tōgo ichidaiki* (**fig. 2**) closely resembles a woodblock print by Ichiyūsai (or Utagawa) Kuniyoshi 一勇斎国芳 (1798–1861), in which he represents the same scene enacted by Kodanji in *Higashiyama sakura Sōshi*.²⁸

²⁷ The National Institute of Japanese Literature's copy of this work is available in its "Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works."

²⁸ The print can be viewed in the database of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston: <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/463408/actors-ichikawa-kodanji-iv-as-asakura-murashoya-to-go-foregr> (accession no. 11.38079).

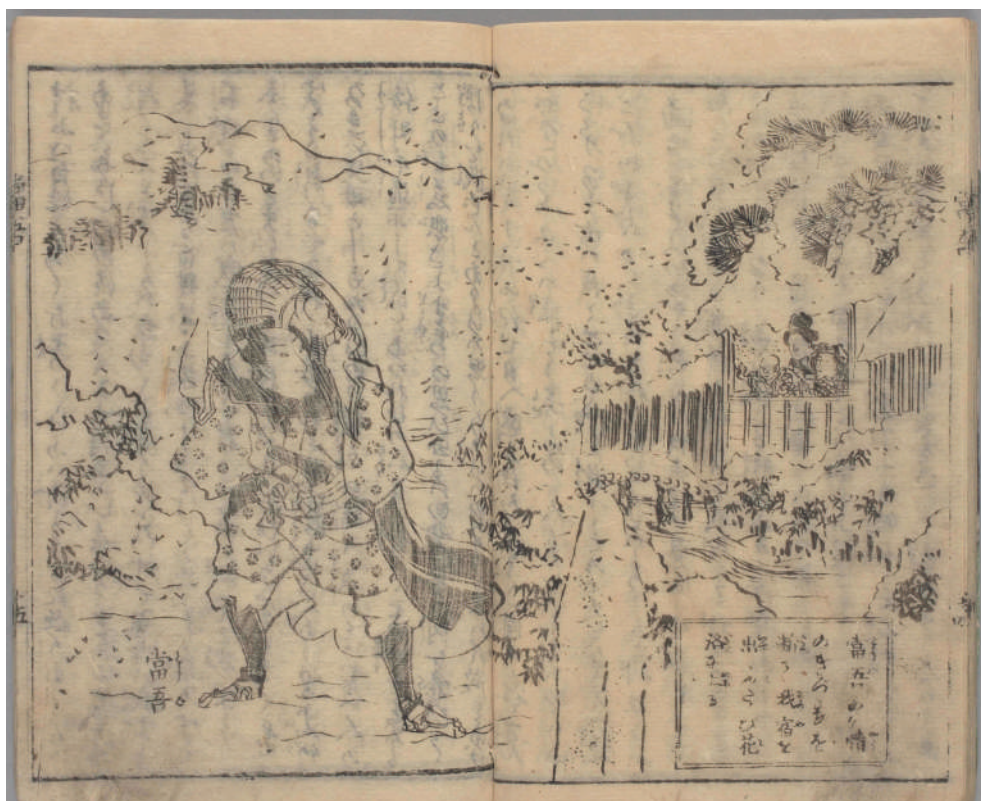


Figure 2. Scene of Sōgorō's farewell to his family, from *Asakura Togo ichidaiki*. National Institute of Japanese Literature.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200014718> (image 17).

Yomibon printed from the Meiji era onward incorporate into the Sōgorō narrative either the ferry, the farewell scenes, or both.²⁹ The same can be said of *jitsuroku*-like works, which contain fewer images and more detailed narrative text (usually printed using a non-cursive script). One example is the fifth title in the series

²⁹ Specifically, the following works include only the farewell scene: *Sakura Sōgorō ichidaiki* 佐倉宗五郎一代記 (The Life of Sakura Sōgorō, 1877) by Ōnishi Shōnosuke 大西庄之助 (dates unknown), *Sakura Sōgo ichidaiki* 佐倉宗五一代記 (The Life of Sakura Sōgo, 1879) by Takeshita Rokutarō 竹下六太郎 (dates unknown), and *Sōgo jikki* 宗吾実紀 (The Veritable Records of Sōgo, 1882) by Iida Kōtarō 飯田孝太郎 (dates unknown). Both scenes are included in *Sakura Sōgo den* 佐倉宗吾伝 (The Legend of Sakura Sōgo, 1878) by Shōmonsha Fukurai 笑門舎福来 (dates unknown), *Sakura Sōgo jitsuroku* 佐倉宗吾実説録 (The Veritable Records of Sakura Sōgo, 1879) by Takeuchi Eikyū 竹内栄久 (1848–1920), *Sakura Sōgorō ichidaiki* 佐倉宗吾朗一代記 (1881) by Miyata Kōsuke 宮田孝助 (dates unknown), and *Sakura Sōgorō ichidaiki* 佐倉宗五郎一代記 (1882) by Yamamura Seisuke 山村清助 (1847–1899). All these texts are available in the online digital collections of the National Diet Library.

Kinko jitsuroku 今古実録 (Veritable Records of Past and Present Times)—*Sakura giminden* 佐倉義民伝 (The Tale of the Peasant Martyr of Sakura, 1882), which was reprinted in the following years under various titles.³⁰ There is, however, a slight difference between the *yomibon*-style and the *jitsuroku*-style texts: in the latter, the ferryman is called Tahei 太平; in the former, he has the same name as in the kabuki play, Jinbei. Arguably, then, two different lines of publications developed after the staging of the kabuki play. On the one hand, the *yomibon*-style books recast Sōgorō's story for a broader audience, usually in the form of a booklet consisting of a few pages of text and numerous images. With few exceptions, such books presented the story in a manner similar to that of the kabuki play, narrating only the key episodes. *Jitsuroku*-style books, on the other hand, emphasized the text rather than the images, with the narratives following the tradition of the chronicles predating the kabuki play; they included numerous well-known episodes and subplots as well as the new scenes that the play had introduced. Books derived from *kōdan* oral performances follow the latter pattern in terms of presenting detailed descriptions, but differ in the greater emphasis they place on the dialogue.

5. *Sakura giminden* in *Kōdan* Storytelling

Tracing the emergence of the Sōgorō story in the context of *kōdan* storytelling—which until the Meiji period was known by the name *kōshaku*—is problematic because of the medium's intrinsically oral nature. Originating in spoken comments about, and interpretations of, canonical Buddhist texts as a kind of public performance, *kōshaku* (literally “lectures”) depended on both oral and written texts. Thus, as Matilde Mastrangelo has observed, while *kōshaku* developed as a form of public recitation rather than as a form of storytelling,³¹ in its evolution as a performance genre, the source narrative came to be hidden from the audience's view. A script (*daibon* 台本) remained, but it was kept private for the exclusive use of the performer. Even the transmission of stories (*hanashi* 噺) from masters to disciples was accomplished orally, with written notes being employed merely as an aide-mémoire.

This tradition was partially—but drastically—altered in the Meiji period with the introduction of phonetic shorthand, which made it possible to transcribe

³⁰The kabuki play has been staged repeatedly under various titles up to recent times. The first known occurrence of the term *gimin* was in 1887, when the play *Giminden Sakura kikigaki* 義民伝 佐倉聞書 (Things Heard and Written about the Story of the Peasant Martyr of Sakura) was staged at the Kado no Shibai Theater in Osaka. As discussed below, this was at a time when the term *gimin* had been appropriated by the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. In 1891, the play was staged in Tokyo under the title *Sakura gimin bimei no homare* 佐倉義民美名誉 (Honor to the Good Name of the Peasant Martyr of Sakura), which was often used for subsequent productions.

³¹Mastrangelo, “Japanese Storytelling,” pp. 207–208.

such performances on paper and, consequently, to disseminate in printed form stories which had previously been accessible only orally.³² The popularity in the 1890s of books with edited phonetic transcriptions of actual performances (*sokkibon* 速記本) prepared the way, beginning at the end of the Meiji era, for the print production and circulation of *kōdan* that were not derived from existing performances (*kaki-kōdan* 書き講談). Drawing on the *kōdan* repertoire of historical narratives, the publisher Tatsukawa Kumajirō 立川熊次郎 (1878–1932) launched the Tatsukawa Library (Tatsukawa Bunko 立川文庫), a series of 197 *kakikōdan* volumes published from 1911 to 1924. Likewise, the publisher Kōdansha 講談社 launched the magazine *Kōdan kurabu* 講談倶楽部 in 1911 to present *kōdan* transcriptions and, soon thereafter, also *kakikōdan*. Together the magazine and the library series catalyzed the emergence of the new historical novel (*jidai shōsetsu* 時代小説) genre and the establishment of the so-called popular literature (*taishū bungaku* 大衆文学) genre.

The foregoing discussion has provided necessary context for tracing the evolution of the Sōgorō story within the *kōdan* genre. Several scholars, beginning with Kodama, have suggested that it was indeed *kōdan* performances, and not only *jitsuroku*, that helped to spread such narratives. However, the earliest extant text of a *kōdan* performance dates to 1896, when the magazine *Meika dansō* 名家談叢 (Compelling Stories by Accomplished Masters) began to serialize transcriptions of Momokawa Joen's 桃川如燕 (1832–1898) version of the story under the title *Sakura gimindan* 佐倉義民談 (The Story of the Peasant Martyr of Sakura).

According to Nakamura Yukihiro 中村幸彦, *kōdan* performers might well have contributed to the development of *Sakura giminden* during the Bunsei 文政 (1818–1830) and Tenpō 天保 (1830–1844) eras.³³ In his informative essay on *kōdan* history, Sano Takashi 佐野孝 observes that *Sakura giminden* was the specialty of Ishikawa Ichimu 石川一夢 (1804–1854), whose narration was so popular that, reportedly, at one point when he was experiencing financial difficulties, he pawned his brief (twenty-page) original script for a hundred *ryō* 両, a significant amount of money demonstrating the marketability of his performances.³⁴ The only extant text of Ichimu's *Sakura Sōgorō* is a woodblock-printed book (*banpon* 版本) titled *Sakura giminden*, the preface to which bears a date of 1858. However, not only is this date four years after Ichimu's death—with his name in fact being preceded by the term *kojin* 故人, i.e., “the deceased”—but moreover its text, in terms of content, resembles rather a *jitsuroku* narrative than a *kōdan* script. Nobuhiro Shinji 延広真治 has suggested, accordingly, that *Sakura giminden*

³²This practice began in 1884 with the publication of the ghost story *Botan dorō* 牡丹灯籠 (The Peony Lantern), based on the performances of the *rakugo* 落語 master San'yūtei Enchō 三遊亭円朝 (1839–1900). For an innovative discussion of the introduction of phonetic shorthand in Japan and its application to storytelling, see Jacobowitz, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan*.

³³Nakamura, “Sakura giminden,” p. 49.

³⁴Sano, *Kōdan gohyakumen*, pp. 66–67.



Figure 3. Scene of Sōgorō's parting from his family in *Sakura giminden* 佐倉義民伝 (woodblock edition) by Ishikawa Ichimu 石川一夢. Author's personal collection.

was not actually authored by Ichimu.³⁵ While the scene of the hero's farewell to his family is included in the narrative and represented in an illustration (fig. 3), the fact of the book being dated to seven years after the kabuki play's premiere renders the connection between the two opaque. Furthermore, the book's *sashi-e* is similar to many other illustrations and prints based on kabuki staging, and therefore hints at the latter's influence on the former rather than vice-versa.

However, an episode reported by the performing arts critic Nomura Mumeian 野村無名庵 (1888–1945) helps to clarify this point. In the miscellany titled *Honchō wajinden* 本朝話人伝 (Lives of Storytellers of Our Country, 1944), Nomura mentions that three *kōdan* masters—Ishikawa Ichimu and two contemporaries, Shōrin Hakuen 松林白円 (1812–1855) and Shōryūsai Nangyoku 正流齋南玉 (1770–1846)—engaged in a casual competition at the end of a performance by

³⁵ Nobuhiro, "Ishikawa Ichimu," p. 128.

Takarai Bakin 宝井馬琴 II (dates unknown) at a theater near Kyōbashi 京橋 Bridge. Asked to narrate a scene of parents and children parting to determine which of the three could generate the most emotion, Hakuen chose the parting between Sanada Nobuyuki 真田信之 and Yukimura 幸村 from their father Masayuki 昌幸, from the *kōdan* titled *Sanada sandaiki* 真田三代記 (The Lives of the Three Sanada). Ichimu chose the parting of Sōgorō from his children from his *Sakura giminden*. According to Nomura, that scene

... moves [audiences] to tears irrespective of who performs [it], but the performance by Ichimu was unrivaled; it was just like seeing the scene before one's eyes, except that there was no one whose eyes were not full of tears. He descended from the stage to thunderous applause.³⁶

Nangyoku, however, won the contest by narrating the parting of Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 and his son Masatsura 正行 at Sakurai 桜井 Station from the *Taiheiki* 太平記 (Chronicle of Great Peace, fourteenth century).

Nomura provides no date for the contest, which he could not have witnessed since it took place before his birth. If we take him at his word, however, the event must have occurred before Nangyoku died (thus making 1847 a *terminus ante quem*), which is at least five years before the premiere of the kabuki play. There is, therefore, reason to conclude that the *kōdan* narratives were well established before 1851 and could indeed have influenced the kabuki play, at least with respect to the scene of Sōgorō's farewell to his family. The ferryman episode, on the other hand, might be an original addition by the playwright.

To be sure, the *kōdan* transcriptions published in the mid-Meiji period present both scenes. There are at least four transcriptions of performances by Meiji-era storytellers: the aforementioned *Sakura giminden* (1896) serialized in *Meika dansō* and a different version published as a standalone book under the title *Sakura Sōgorō* (1897), both by Momokawa Joen; *Sakura giminroku* 佐倉義民録 (Records of the Peasant Martyr of Sakura, 1896) by Murai Hajime 邑井一 (1841–1910); and *Kōdan Sakura Sōgorō* (1902) by Kyokudō Nanryō 旭堂南陵 (1858–1911). These books testify to the popularity of Sōgorō in both the Tokyo area and in Kansai.³⁷

Among the story's three versions, Joen's is probably the earliest since he was older than Hajime and Nanryō. Furthermore, Joen trained in the Itō 伊東 school under Itō Enshin 伊東燕晋 II (1801–1855) before a quarrel with Itō Chōka 伊東潮花 (1810–1880) prompted him to found his own Momokawa school. The Itō school was renowned for warrior tales (*gundan* 軍談), under which *Sakura giminden* was included. Nomura quotes from a rankings billboard (*banzuke* 番付) of *gundan* stories printed in the summer of the fifth year of the Ansei 安政 era (1858) in which *Sakura giminden* is linked to the narrator Itō Enryō 伊東燕凌 (dates

³⁶ Nomura, *Honchō wajinden*, p. 87. The English translation is my own.

³⁷ The Kyokudō school was based in Osaka and performed *kamigata* 上方-style *kōdan*.

unknown).³⁸ Joen's version of that *kōdan* could, therefore, have been derived from the Itō school, though there exists no definitive proof that this was indeed the case.³⁹

In 1894, Momokawa Enrin 桃川燕林 (1846–1905), who in 1899 took the name Momokawa Minoru 桃川実, published a book titled *Tōyō gimin Sakura Sōgorō* 東洋義民佐倉宗五郎 (Sakura Sōgorō the Peasant Martyr of the East). Enrin's version of the story is not a transcription but rather bears the label of “notes” (*shuki* 手記). As a matter of fact, it is closer to *jitsuroku*-style books than to *kōdan*, with its text recalling the style and wording of the aforementioned *Sakura gimin* as included in the *Kinko jitsuroku* series, though its dialogic portion is conspicuous. In this respect, *Tōyō gimin Sakura Sōgorō* seems to resemble the book attributed to Ichimu, inasmuch as either or both could have provided the plot outline on which later storytellers would build their narratives.

Interestingly, the inclusion of the words *Tōyō gimin* in Enrin's title alludes to the appropriation of the Sōgorō character by the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (*Jiyū Minken Undō* 自由民権運動) in the 1880s. A comprehensive discussion of this appropriation is beyond the scope of the present study, but, in short, at a time when many disenfranchised Japanese were demanding recognition of their civil rights, Sōgorō came to be seen as an archetypal self-sacrificing righteous man (*gimin*), a development that shed new light on the hero and gave new meaning to his abnegation.⁴⁰ Thus, the Meiji intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901) praised Sōgorō in his *An Encouragement of Learning* (*Gakumon no susume* 学問のすすめ, 1872–1876),⁴¹ and the activist Komuro Shinsuke 小室信介 (1852–1885) described him in the introduction to *Tōyō minken hyakkaden* 東洋民権百家伝 (One Hundred Biographies of Eastern Advocates of People's Rights, 1883–1884) as follows:

Those are people who, for the sake of their society, or their country, or for others, or for a principle, considering their life less than dust, do not bend, and do not break in the face of oppression; they are firm as a rock, careless of their glory, profit, wealth, or offspring. . . . Perhaps the number of persons who sacrifice themselves for the sake of the people and who have been hidden from history is not very large. Maybe Sakura Sōgorō was the only one. However, I

³⁸ A *banzuke* is a billboard-size document listing rankings, such as of artists or sumo wrestlers; see Nomura, *Honchō wajinden*, p. 89.

³⁹ The identity of the Enryō mentioned by Nomura is unclear since the latter did not specify his source materials. The first Itō Enryō passed away in 1830, while Enryō II (a disciple of the former who took his name after his master's death) died in 1856. The *banzuke* could, therefore, refer to an Enryō III, records of whom have been otherwise lost.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the transformation of the Sōgorō story within the context of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, see Ōkubo, “Gimin denshō to Meiji-ki.” For an insightful account of nationalism and political issues in the context of performance during the Meiji period, see Hyōdō, *Enjirareta kindai*.

⁴¹ Walthall, “Japanese Gimin,” pp. 1088–1089.

have searched the traces and the names of those hidden persons, which I make public. . . . These are people who will not be inferior to the Sakura Sōgorō of the plays.⁴²

In the conclusion to his own book, Momokawa Enrin mentions the temple in Narita dedicated to the hero, there deified as Sakura Sōgo Daimyōjin 佐倉宗五大明神:

Being an advocate for the people's rights in the east, when members of the party or, needless to say, people like Count Itagaki 板垣, come to stay, they hold big celebrations and, probably, Sōgo himself jumps for joy under the ground.⁴³

These narratives are more or less consistent, except when it comes to the ferryman and farewell scenes, in which some striking differences are apparent. To begin with, most *kōdan* provide an account of the ferryman Jinbei's death: as Sōgorō proceeds from his house back to the ferry, he is assaulted by a gangster (usually but not always named Maboroshi no Chōkichi 幻の長吉), who has recognized him and wants to claim a reward by turning him in to the domain authorities. The gangster succeeds in tying up Sōgorō and asks Jinbei to help, but the latter kills him (fittingly, with an oar). Aware that he faces prosecution for violating the ban on operating the ferry—and for murder—Jinbei proceeds to kill himself once Sōgorō leaves. In the *jitsuroku*-style texts, such as *Kinko jitsuroku*, the ferryman hangs himself, while in all of the *kōdan* that include the scene, he drowns himself. In the Nanryō *kōdan*, the suicide is alluded to but not dramatized. In two of the texts (the *Meika dansō* text by Joen and the one by Murai), however, the scene concludes with the parting between Sōgorō and Jinbei, offering no hint that the latter will commit suicide.

Another interesting detail relates to the divorce letter that Sōgorō delivers to his wife. As mentioned, in the kabuki play, Osan tears up the letter, refusing to accept the divorce. Such is the fate of the letter in most *kōdan* texts, but there are some exceptions, beginning with Enrin's *Tōyō gimin Sakura Sōgorō*: there his Osan accepts the divorce gratefully, reassuring Sōgorō that their bond will bring them together in the next life. Similarly, in Murai's text, Osan accepts the letter and reassures Sōgorō that she will take care of their family.

The *kōdan* by Nanryō, on the other hand, has two unique distinguishing details. First, it makes no mention of the snow that visually characterizes the ferryman and the farewell scenes. Moreover, in his text, Sōgorō's farewell to his family is much reduced, while a prominent role is given to his mother-in-law: waking to find him in the house, she berates and drives him out with a broomstick because

⁴² Komuro, *Tōyō minken hyakkaden*, pp. 3–4. The English translation is my own.

⁴³ Momokawa, *Tōyō Gimin Sakura Sōgorō*, p. 241. Itagaki Taisuke 板垣退助 (1837–1919) was a statesman who led the Freedom and People's Rights Movement and the Liberal Party. He received the title of count in 1884, making that year the *terminus post quem* for Enrin's composition of this text.

his return to the village, where the domain authorities are waiting for him, is too risky. Since the fate of a great number of people depends on his delivering the petition, she insists, he is foolish to risk his life only for the few members of his family. After she chases Sōgorō from the house, she confesses to her daughter that she acted out of concern for him, and in order to encourage him to act as he, in fact, does, and she expresses regret for her harsh manner toward him.

Conclusions

The passage of *kōdan* from an intangible medium (performance) to a tangible medium (books), then, marked their evolution into a textual genre that eventually merged with the novel. Sakura Sōgorō's story was part of this trend: in 1912, it was published as the twenty-seventh volume in the Tatsukawa Library under the title *Gimin Sakura Sōgorō*.⁴⁴ Further *kōdan*-style texts appeared in the 1910s and 1920s, such as *Chōhen kōdan Sakura Sōgorō* 長編講談佐倉宗五郎 (Sakura Sōgorō: A Full-Length *Kōdan*, 1916) by Momokawa Minoru, and *Sakura Sōgorō* by Takarai Kinsō 宝井琴窓 (1898–1972), which was included in the sixth volume of the *Kōdan zenshū* 講談全集 (*Kōdan* Collection) published in 1929 by Kōdansha.⁴⁵ A parallel evolution took place in *rokyoku*, with performance scripts (or similar texts) being published as books in the 1910s and actual performances recorded and marketed as record albums as well.

I have limited the scope of my analysis here to the relationships between the kabuki and *kōdan* versions of Sōgorō's story and the preexisting *jitsuroku* narratives. In particular, my focus has been on the episodes of the hero's ferry-crossing of Inba Marsh and his farewell to his family, which have become hallmarks of the story. The inclusion of these two episodes marked a watershed moment, in that the texts produced after the kabuki play almost invariably featured either or both of them. As a consequence, scholars have regarded this storyline as an innovation introduced by the kabuki playwright, whose success led to its incorporation in *kōdan* narratives, as *Fujiokaya nikki* reports.

Extant *kōdan* texts related to Sakura Sōgorō's story prior to 1896 are absent because of the oral nature of the medium. Thus no direct evidence is available that might either support or disprove the scholarly consensus in this regard. However, the episode reported by Nomura Mumeian suggests that at least the farewell scene was already being narrated by *kōdan* performers before the kabuki play was staged. While far from constituting definitive proof, this finding nevertheless sheds some light on a matter that is complicated by the absence of primary

⁴⁴ A certain Sekka Sanjin 雪花散人 is credited with composing most of the titles in the series, but this is probably a pseudonym representing several different authors.

⁴⁵ The latter text became the standard edition and was included in the 1954 reprint, the 1971 revised edition *Teihon kōdan meisaku zenshū* 定本講談名作全集 (Masterpieces of *Kōdan*, the Standard Edition)—albeit erroneously there attributed to Momokawa En'yū 桃川燕友—and the 1976 pocket edition of the latter, *Kōdan meisaku bunko* 講談名作文庫.

sources (i.e., *kōdan* texts) prior to the mid-Meiji period. As the cases of *kōdan* and kabuki make clear, the evolution of the transmission of Sōgorō's story occurred through a combination of different media. Further research is needed to unravel the relationships among the various genres, including their political nuances and social implications. The tale of Sakura Sōgorō, I suggest, constitutes a starting point for the exploration of these issues. It is, therefore, my hope that this article will contribute to our understanding of how these complex and intertwined textual and performance traditions developed.

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The Sound, the Body, the Classics: Nagai Kafū and Traditional Theater

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Introduction

As the preamble to a study on the place of traditional theater in Nagai Kafū’s 永井荷風 (1879–1959) work and poetics, Takahashi Toshio’s 高橋俊夫 comment about having to write on Kafū and the arts of Edo—above all ukiyo-e—is particularly fitting: “It is a difficult task. Many things I want to write about. And that I should write about. An entire book, maybe. What can I do?”¹ To be sure, Takahashi’s worries were exaggerated: the contribution of his ongoing research on Kafū and the traditional arts ranks among the most fruitful and influential in the field. Nonetheless, Takahashi’s stature makes his despair no less relatable. Among those literary figures who tackled the issue of tradition in their work, Nagai Kafū is indeed one of the most complex. Whoever sets out to unpack the meanings associated specifically with the notion of “Edo” in Kafū’s oeuvre will most likely feel discouraged by the vastness and density of his commitment to this segment of Japanese tradition and cultural history. Often labeled a “nostalgic” because of his interest in the recent past, he was nonetheless modern, and quintessentially so, in his approach to tradition and in his overarching meditations on the relationship between past and present.

More recently, however, as scholars have conceptualized—in increasingly complex ways—Kafū’s uses of the past in his writing, the nature and the quality of his ideas about Edo have moved closer to the center of scholarly interest. Tada Kurahito 多田蔵人 has stressed how, in *Edo geijutsuron* 江戸芸術論 (Essays on the Arts of Edo, 1920), Kafū’s speculations about the arts of the former capital city look at Tokugawa society through a present-day lens, that is, through the concerns and assumptions of his own time.² Shindō Masahiro 真銅正宏, writing about *Hiyori geta* 日和下駄 (Fair-Weather Clogs, 1915), another essay collection that Kafū published just a few years before *Edo geijutsuron*, has pointed out that when Kafū, as a flaneur, strolled through the traditional *shitamachi* 下町 (low-city)

¹Takahashi, “Nagai Kafū to kaiga,” p. 37.

²Tada, *Nagai Kafū*, p. 3.

neighborhoods of mid-1910s Tokyo, he was not so much searching for the vestiges of Edo as he was trying to look at his hometown from a closer distance, in an attempt to fully comprehend it.³

Endorsing Tada's, Shindō's, and other recent scholars' research on the subject, I reexamine in this article the corpus of work that Kafū devoted to traditional theater, and which he wrote in the late years of the Meiji period (1868–1912) and throughout the Taishō period (1912–1926). I hope this endeavor will add a new dimension to how scholars understand, on the one hand, Kafū's appreciation of modernity and, on the other, the diverse contexts in which the idea of the theater itself was being negotiated and reformulated during these crucial decades. As I try to show, his idea of kabuki in particular can be used as a lens, allowing speculation on the nature of modernity and the place of the classics in modern times—as well as on what in many ways can be considered Kafū's attempt to re-canonize certain works and practices holding only marginal significance in contemporary discourses and theories. Building on Takahashi's argument that *Edo geijutsuron* is sustained primarily by Kafū's keen sensitivity to sound and color and by his sense of place,⁴ I try to demonstrate the extent to which the most exterior aspects of theatrical performance embodied, in Kafū's conceptualization of the arts' social function, a discernible marker of the artistic experience's highest value.

My working assumption is that Kafū's meditation on kabuki was perfectly consonant with what I consider his trademark modernity—that is, the tendency to interrogate and manipulate the past rather than rejecting it altogether. For example, the emphasis he places on space, color, and sound foregrounds the materiality of the performative act and downplays its literariness. In doing so, he ultimately opens theater up to the multiple allegiances and possibilities of the modern. Furthermore, by focusing in particular on the audience, he stresses the need both for a communal mode of artistic reception and for an idea of the theater—whether conceived to be a cultural tradition or a corpus of works—as an environment and a community unto itself. He rejects the principles of Meiji-era theater modernization and instead calls for separate standards to be used when evaluating Western and Japanese theater, arguing moreover for a social function for art—for its ability to provide the audience with a mental break, a distraction from daily preoccupations, an escape from everyday life. I therefore address, first, Kafū's personal experience of theater—on and offstage, both at home and abroad. After this, I touch upon Meiji-period theater reform, highlighting a set of issues that Kafū tackled, either directly or implicitly, in his various writings. I then proceed with a textual analysis of three particular works, the abovementioned *Edo geijutsuron* and the hitherto understudied early pieces *Hyōshigi monogatari* 拍子木物語 (Clapper Stories, 1900) and *Gakuya jūnitoki* 楽屋十二時 (A Day in the

³ Shindō, “Sansakuki to iu bungaku janru,” p. 89.

⁴ Takahashi, “Nagai Kafū to kaiga,” p. 42.

Dressing Room, 1901), occasionally digressing into Kafū's other works and experiences.

Nagai Kafū and Theater

Theater always held a special place in Kafū's life. It is well-known that his fascination with the arts of Edo was most likely due to his mother's influence when he was a child. Kondō Tomie 近藤富枝 has stressed also how Kafū's early appreciation of kabuki's sounds and rhythms may have had to do with his intimate acquaintance with the koto and the shamisen, which his maternal grandmother used to play.⁵ Yet kabuki took on a whole new meaning for Kafū in 1900, when Enomoto Torahiko 榎本虎彦 (1866–1916) introduced him to Fukuchi Ōchi 福地桜痴 (1841–1906) at the Kabuki-za 歌舞伎座, giving the young man reason enough to believe that a career in theater was possible for him. Up to that point, he had already toyed with the idea of becoming a painter, and had then associated with novelist Hirotsu Ryūrō 広津柳浪 (1861–1928). He had even debuted as a *rakugo* 落語 storyteller with Asanebō Muraku 朝寝坊むらく VI (1859–1907) under the pseudonym San'yūtei Yumenosuke 三遊亭夢之助, before his father found out and forbade him from performing again. In fact, his father had never allowed him to pursue any artistic ambitions, convinced that a governmental position or a career in finance would be a safer choice for his eldest son.

At the Kabuki-za, Kafū gained first-hand experience of the world of the theater and actors, but his primary goal was to become an author. His first job, however, had less to do with writing than one might expect: his apprenticeship began with wooden clappers (*hyōshigi* 拍子木). He put a great deal of effort into learning how to strike the clappers properly, and his writings on the subject reveal that he acknowledged their importance as signals, as well as this particular training's relevance for his desired career as a kabuki playwright.

Despite his determination to achieve this dream, he quit the Kabuki-za only ten months after joining. He made this decision out of loyalty to Fukuchi—apparently, the latter did not appreciate Ichikawa Danjūrō 市川團十郎 IX's (1838–1903) experiments with realist drama (*katsureki* 活歴).⁶ Kafū followed Fukuchi to *Yamato shinbun* 大和新聞 to work as a journalist. When *Yamato shinbun* dismissed him a few months later, Kafū tried to return to the Kabuki-za; but having published works that broke an extremely important rule in the world of kabuki—that one must not reveal publicly what happens behind the scenes—he was not allowed to do so. This, incidentally, was probably the main event that drove him to the novel, ultimately leading to his career as writer. The works that cost Kafū his return to kabuki were in particular his *Hyōshigi monogatari* and *Gakuya jūnitoki*.

⁵ Kondō, *Kafū to Sadanji*, pp. 22–24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Kafū's disappointment, however, did not keep him away from kabuki. He would always associate with kabuki playwrights and actors, always trying to enlarge his circle of acquaintances in that milieu. For instance, in 1909, after becoming friends with Osanai Kaoru 小山内薫 (1881–1928), he was introduced by the same playwright to Ichikawa Sadanji 市川左團次 II (1880–1940), just around the time Osanai and Sadanji founded the Jiyū Gekijō 自由劇場 (Freedom Theater).⁷

Kafū's interest in theater went far beyond kabuki, however, as he proved during his sojourn abroad between 1903 and 1908. While in the United States and France, and especially when he was in New York, he visited many theaters. We know from his travel diary, *Saiyū nissishō* 西遊日誌抄 (Journal of a Journey to the West, 1919), that he attended Broadway performances almost every day, staying up late to read librettos in restaurants and coffee shops when performances were sold out—or after he had attended a play, to linger on the emotions it had aroused.⁸ Minami Asuka 南明日香 has distinguished several patterns in Kafū's strolls around New York, one of which revolved around theaters and concert halls.⁹ Most of his evenings were spent in theaters. He became a veritable habitué, who would watch the same show more than once, as he did with *Carmen*,¹⁰ and who managed to see Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) on the stage three times in less than ten days. He wrote in his journal that a great part of his fascination with Western countries was rooted in his desire to know about their theater,¹¹ and indeed, during his sojourn in New York, he appears to have been eager to watch as many plays as possible. I have argued elsewhere that a note written on March 24, 1906, after a show that moved him deeply, testifies to a radical change in his life and especially in his attitude toward art. He wrote: “I can no longer watch plays with the detached eye of the critic, as I used to do when I was in my country. Did America entirely transform me into a lachrymose poet?”¹² This statement can be considered an acknowledgment of his artistic maturation, the transition from a more derivative approach, inspired by the “tragic novel” (*hisan shōsetsu* 悲慘小説) and by French naturalism, among other influences, to adopt a more personal and more original attitude.¹³

Kafū's interest in theater—especially opera—never flagged during and after his time abroad. It acquired moreover an additional dimension during the last part of his travels when, according to Mitsuko Iriye, he felt, as intensely as never before, a “preoccupation with the question of how to try to disentangle and

⁷ Akiba, *Kōshō Nagai Kafū*, p. 168.

⁸ Nagai, *Saiyū nissishō*, p. 316.

⁹ Minami, *Nagai Kafū no Nyū Yoku, Pari, Tōkyō*, p. 95.

¹⁰ Nagai, *Saiyū nissishō*, pp. 314, 335–336.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 319.

¹³ Follaco, *A Sense of the City*, p. 78.

reconcile two different cultures which [were] both true and dear to him but which [could not] be artificially fused or superimposed upon one another.”¹⁴

At the time, Kafū was pessimistic about the possibility of expressing his feelings, as a Japanese, through music in Western European style. Just a few years earlier, however, he had held a different view. In 1904, when he was living in Tacoma, Washington, he had written to his friend Ikuta Kizan 生田葵山 (1876–1945) that he wished to introduce musical drama to Japan, and not by translating Western works, but by creating original Japanese pieces.¹⁵ Yet he was not to pursue this project immediately after his return to Tokyo. Indeed, at the time he purposely avoided the opera performed in Japanese at the Asakusa Opera House, which experimented with musical drama during the mid-Taishō period, seeking forms of expression that could reach a broader audience and thereby dislodge the rather elitist image associated with Western European opera. Kafū opted instead for the Imperial Theater’s presentation of traditional opera sung in European languages.¹⁶ Nearly three decades later, however, he had come to feel that “perhaps the time was ripe for doing opera in Japan,”¹⁷ and wrote his only opera piece, *Katsushika jōwa* 葛飾情話 (Romance in Katsushika, 1938), which was performed in the late spring of 1938—at the Asakusa Opera House.

Meiji-Era Theater Reform

The three early Kafū works that I examine in this article are of interest because they were published at two different moments in the history of Japanese theatrical culture: *Hyōshigi monogatari* and *Gakuya jūnitoki* are based on the juvenile Kafū’s experiences at the Kabuki-za and were written soon after his theater apprenticeship ended, while *Edo geijutsuron* is a more complex work, published when he was already a renowned writer and a respected intellectual. Despite this difference in the state of the author’s career, however, both of these works’ respective composition dates—the turn of the century and the mid-Taishō period—proved to be times of transition in the history of Japanese theater.

In 1893, Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 (1859–1935) published his essay “Waga kuni no shigeki” 我が邦の史劇 (The Historical Drama of Our Nation). In it, he praises the emotional abundance and intensity that he considered typical of Japanese traditional theater as well as the charisma of its actors. Yet he also argued that real modernization in theater could be achieved only by a “new” kind of drama whose works focused on a single core idea and realistic characters rather than on the narrative element.¹⁸ In the same year, Kitamura Tōkoku 北村透谷

¹⁴ Iriye, “Quest for Literary Resonance,” pp. 106–107.

¹⁵ Nagai, *Danchōtei sekītoku*, pp. 7–8.

¹⁶ Shindō, *Nagai Kafū*, pp. 194–196.

¹⁷ Akiyama, *Shōwa no sakekyōkukatachi*, p. 437.

¹⁸ Tsubouchi, “Wagakuni no shigeki,” pp. 33–42.

(1868–1894) wrote “Gekishi no zento ikan” 劇詩の前途如何 (What Lies Ahead for Dramatic Poetry?)¹⁹ for the literary magazine *Bungakukai* 文學界, in which he stressed “symmetrical harmony” as traditional Japanese drama’s most distinctive characteristic:

In music, sound effects, speeches, movements and behavior, dance, chanting, and in many other things, harmony is the core. Song is accompanied by movements of the legs and gestures by the hands, followed by various complicated demands. One part cannot be the whole, and the whole cannot be expressed by one part. Thus, our plays are in the service of symmetrical harmony. . . . I have come to realize that there is no way to eliminate the defective convention of symmetrical harmony in Japanese drama. [Therefore,] Japanese drama will have much difficulty in the future.²⁰

Kitamura lamented how both the actors and the public failed to appreciate a play’s real essence because they were far more absorbed in its conventional and unchanging form.

At the center of these authors’ preoccupation lay their ambition and desire to locate drama within the realm of literature—hence their concern with elements of the play that fell outside the realm of performance. M. Cody Poulton associates this attitude with the Meiji period’s radical transformation in literary and aesthetic standards. He identifies this shift’s most remarkable feature as “the rise of the notion that all literary forms should be devoted to the portrayal of a modern, privatized self,” which brought with it “an essentially *anti-theatrical* element.” Poulton singles out two main devices used for the expression of modernity in the Meiji period: confession (in the realm of fiction) and dialogue (in the realm of drama). “The eventual victory of the monologic expression over the dialogic imagination is an important reason for the literary precedence of fiction over drama,” he states, concluding that “as a consequence, fiction (*shōsetsu* 小説) began to replace the play (*shibai* 芝居) as the paradigm of cultural expression.”²¹

These two ideas, a privatized self and realistic representation, are the grain against which Kafū seems to be adjusting his own theory of drama in the 1920s. In what follows, I demonstrate that his position was firmly grounded in his own experience of kabuki at the Kabuki-za, and that it drew in equal measure upon that theatrical practice’s most material elements and upon these elements’ emotional and intellectual reverberations. At the same time, one should not underestimate modern drama’s didactic tendency, which, according to Poulton, “became even greater as theater became politicized in the 1920s and 1930s, as if

¹⁹ M. Cody Poulton stresses the fact that Kitamura used the word *gekishi* 劇詩 (dramatic poetry) rather than *gikyoku* 戯曲, whose use was then more customary for “drama.” See Poulton, *A Beggar’s Art*, p. 241n43.

²⁰ Mori, “Introduction,” p. 11.

²¹ Poulton, *A Beggar’s Art*, p. xi.

to regain by ideological means the sociality theater had naturally lost in its march to modernization.”²² Indeed, theater’s sociality is at the core of Kafū’s meditation, and it comes as no surprise that this meditation took place during the Taishō period, a time of change, during which many new theater companies and halls emerged, many new magazines were founded, and theater’s influence came to reach far beyond its own performance venues and the play-going public: it was “a time when modern theater and drama became major players in the rising bourgeois culture.”²³

In his own work, Kafū advocates an utterly different approach to theater. He believed that excessive concern with the social dimension of drama could undermine its ability to provide a space—both physical and imaginary—for people to momentarily disengage from their everyday preoccupations. He believed, in other words, in art—and especially in drama—as a mental break, as an opportunity to explore life at its fullest or to face larger-than-life projections of human emotions, before returning to reality.

***Edo geijutsuron*: The Value of “Exteriority” (and a Digression into Opera)**

Edo geijutsuron is a collection of ten essays published in a single volume by the Nihonbashi 日本橋-based publisher Shun’yōdō 春陽堂 in 1920. Kafū was forty-one years old at the time. He had experienced by this point an early fascination with French literature (especially naturalism and especially Émile Zola among the naturalists), long sojourns in both the United States and France, and then a so-called “returnee” period (*keicho jidai* 帰朝時代), during which he overtly criticized Japan’s uneven path toward national modernization. After this, he entered a phase that mainstream scholarship has often called his “return to Edo” (*Edo kaiki* 江戸回帰), a term which, although effective in evoking his love for Edo-period arts, I nonetheless find rather misleading because it fails to highlight sufficiently the critical perspective that Kafū brought to his narrative elaborations and aesthetic considerations.²⁴

Even though *Edo geijutsuron* was published in 1920, Kafū had begun to write some of the essays it contains in 1913, seven years earlier, making the volume effectively contemporaneous with another non-fiction work, the above-mentioned *Hiyori geta*. These two collections deal with distinct aspects of late-Meiji and early-Taishō life—traditional arts and urban spaces, respectively—but they also both reveal their author’s acquaintance and fascination with woodblock prints, albeit in very different ways. Kafū’s interest in the topic is more obvious in the case of *Edo geijutsuron*, which is mainly a work on ukiyo-e, whereas in *Hiyori geta*

²² Ibid., p. xii.

²³ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁴ This critical perspective is at the core of Evelyn Schulz’s work on the urban dimension of Kafū’s “returnee” works. See Schulz, *Nagai Kafū*.

the same interest is revealed through Kafū's multifaceted use of "famous places" (*meisho* 名所) in the text, whose main references are to pre-Meiji woodblock prints and to old maps of the kind he mentions in the work's opening section.²⁵ This familiarity with *meisho* is certainly also due to his knowledge of ukiyo-e, which he had expanded throughout the 1910s.

Only one essay in *Edo geijutsuron* deals specifically with theater: "Edo engeki no tokuchō" 江戸演劇の特徴 (Main Features of Edo Theater), written in 1914. The fact that his essay collection on ukiyo-e also includes an essay on theater indicates just how closely the two art forms, for Kafū, were related to each other.

In "Edo engeki no tokuchō," he goes through the most salient moments in the process of theater modernization. He begins with the contributions of Tsubouchi Shōyō and Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862–1922) in 1896, listing the names of those whom he considered to be the main figures of the modernization process: Yoda Gakkai 依田学海 (1833–1909), Fukuchi Ōchi, Morita Shiken 森田思軒 (1861–1897), Ishibashi Ningetsu 石橋忍月 (1865–1926), and Okano Shisui 岡野紫水 (dates unknown).²⁶ Here the opening paragraph sets the mood of the entire text by juxtaposing the words "today" (*konnichi* 今日) and "old drama" (*kyūgeki* 旧劇), foregrounding the main opposition with which he grapples in the essay. Kafū explores the meaning of traditional theater, focusing on its presumed obsolescence, its being "old." He compares past and present, old and new dramatic forms, and puts forward his idea that as long as the audience is entertained and is not bored, as long as they feel a connection with the play—that "affection for the theater" (*kōgekishin* 好劇心) which he saw as providing the critical nexus between spectator and performance²⁷—then there was hardly any reason for traditional theater to be sacrificed for the sake of modernity.

The most interesting aspect of Kafū's approach to the problem of theater modernization is his apparent determination to view *kyūgeki* not as something opposed to the "new," Western-inspired drama of his age, but rather as something radically different and, as such, hardly comparable. He calls for separate standards in drama criticism. He challenges the dominant paradigm established by his forerunners in drama theory in Japan who, eager to find analogies between Eastern and Western cultural traditions, situated the entire discourse around drama within the broader redefinition of culture that took place in the wake of the Meiji Restoration. "As of today, I wish for Edo drama to remain the way it is rather than to be radically modernized," he writes, deeming it "unnecessary to dissect the theater of Edo to evaluate it according to Western aesthetic principles."²⁸ In other words, Edo theater should be judged according to its own standards, rather than in comparison with the drama of the West.

²⁵ Nagai, *Hiyori geta*, p. 109.

²⁶ Kafū, *Edo geijutsuron*, p. 258.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

Edo theater's most striking and distinctive characteristic, as noted by Kafū's predecessors, was the preponderance of sound and music in the performance, to the point that these often overshadowed the script. A play's rhythmic patterns, its particular sounds and noises, were far more important than its plot, and by the same token, the meaning of the words the actors pronounced were far less significant than their voices. To be sure, Kafū does not fail to stress the importance of visuality, nor to mention the physical presence of the actor himself and his ability to captivate his audience, body and soul—to stir their *kōgekishin*. Yet sound seems to hold a special place in Kafū's understanding of drama, and this clearly has to do with his first-hand experience striking wooden clappers at the Kabuki-za.

It should be noted, however, that the aural and visual dimensions of a play are the most straightforward markers of its materiality, although Kafū does not use this term. He speaks instead of “exteriority.” Yet it is quite clear from his words that he believes an act's value should be measured above all by the feelings it inspires through the *things* and the *bodies* onstage, which can be seen and heard. He emphasizes sound and color in particular. Early in the essay, he claims that his “interest in Edo theater lies entirely in its exterior form,” that is, in its “music and sound,” “its unique colors and tone,” and in “the actor's style of recitation, based on traditional schemes, and the costumes he wears”—these ultimately conjure the “musical harmony” of the play.²⁹ Although he refrains from using the adjective “symmetrical,” it is clear that Kafū's fascination with traditional theater lies in that very feature which Tōkoku considered to be the main obstacle in modernizing the Japanese theatrical arts. Stressing repeatedly in his essay that a distinction ought to be made between Japanese and Western drama, Kafū eschews addressing the material, or exterior, dimension of the play as something that might influence the transformation and modernization of national drama. Not admitting of comparison with Western theater, Japanese traditional theater should not be judged by the same standards. Its tendency toward harmony, therefore, should not be seen as necessarily hampering its advancement as a form of art.

This attitude should not lead us to conclude that Kafū's stance toward theater was merely nostalgic, nor that his fascination with Western theater had waned as soon as his interest in the Edo arts began to deepen after he returned to Japan. This observation necessarily draws us into a digression on the author's idea of opera and his later, one-time-only experience as an opera playwright. As I noted earlier, when he returned to Japan after five years in the United States and France, Kafū was convinced that something similar to the European operatic

²⁹ Kafū, *Edo geijutsuron*, pp. 259–260. It is worth mentioning that the Japanese term he uses for “exterior form,” *gaikai* 外形, is the same one that Tsubouchi Shōyō applies in his discussion of traditional theater in “Wagakuni no shigeki” (pp. 40–41).

tradition could never exist in Meiji Japan. He lamented this through the voice of one of the I-narrators in *Furansu monogatari* ふらんす物語 (French Stories, 1909): “I belonged to a nation that had no music to express swelling emotions and agonized feelings. . . . Meiji civilization has given us endless anguish but no song to convey it. Our emotions are already too far removed from the feudal past to cling to its music, yet we find, however partial our attachment to the West, that differences of climate and manners cannot be easily overcome.”³⁰

This pessimism about Japanese music’s ability to express emotions explains, at least in part, Kafū’s contrasting positions regarding the possibility of an original Japanese opera, views that he expressed during and after his sojourn abroad. However, when he came to write his own opera in 1938, it fulfilled a twofold objective: to convey emotions common during the era of the 1930s and to generate a linguistic realism that might yield a work the public would consider familiar.

This last point is particularly noteworthy. In *Katsushika jōwa*, Kafū made a number of lexical choices that enhanced the symbolic meanings of the text, such as the profusion of terms of foreign origin, like *sutā* スター (star) or *basu* バス (bus). These choices reproduced the living language of the time, but also highlighted the need to create a new language for the late 1930s’ new reality.

Kafū’s interest in living speech was not limited to word-choice. He also made sure that the *recitativo*’s sonorous quality faithfully reproduced the language actually spoken in Tokyo, which was then a destination for many from the provinces. Ono Shōko 小野祥子 has noted that in 1940, only two years after he wrote his opera, Kafū observed in his journal that more than half of Tokyo’s population came from other regions of the country. He was aware of the linguistic diversity of Japan’s capital, and engaging performers born elsewhere was yet another strategy to ensure his piece’s realism and familiarity.³¹ Thus *Katsushika jōwa* expresses a topophilic sense of belonging, being a work whose associations relate to both the imagined space of the Tokyo suburbs where the story takes place and the real, lived space of the very district where the piece was itself performed.

Many critics and commentators who watched the show also stressed the fact that it was performed in Asakusa, drawing a parallel between the story’s mood and the audience’s taste in performance. Drama critic Ozaki Hirotsugu 尾崎宏次 (1914–1999) described the work’s scenario as immature but praised it for being “perfect for Asakusa”; he added that the words and music worked well together, producing the agreeable impression of a natural “sung Japanese.”³² In his positive statement, Ozaki does not fail to notice what Akiyama Kuniharu 秋山邦晴 has considered *Katsushika jōwa*’s greatest merit: its being an experiment, the first opera written in a flowing, native-sounding Japanese, with Japanese commoners

³⁰ As quoted in Iriye, “Cultural Uprootedness,” p. 169.

³¹ Ono, “Opera ‘Katsushika jōwa’ to iu dekgoto,” p. 52.

³² *Ongaku shinbun* 音楽新聞, 6.5.1938.

as its characters, being moreover a work targeted to a specifically localized audience.³³ This originality was noticed also by music critic Ashihara Eiryō 蘆原英了 (1907–1981), who praised *Katsushika jōwa* as an outstanding piece of “popular art” (*shomin geijutsu* 庶民芸術) firmly placed in a local context: Tokyo. This quality, according to Ashihara, set it apart from previous works of opera excessively derivative of European models; and that quality, he surmised, would exert influence on later Japanese opera.³⁴ More recently, Suenobu Yoshiharu 末延芳晴 has observed that Kafū’s short piece incorporates traditional European operatic themes, such as estrangement from one’s original community, ambition, betrayal, and self-sacrifice, while nonetheless stirring a strong sense of familiarity among Japanese viewers.³⁵

This familiarity can also be seen as reflecting a deep sense of belonging, one which both Kafū and Sugahara Meirō 菅原明朗 (1897–1988)—who wrote the music for *Katsushika jōwa*—sought, in their different ways, to achieve while working on the piece. Sugawara did this, for instance, by experimenting with rhythm and using a 6/8 metrical pattern perceived as “of the people” because of its similarity to the nostalgic tempo of traditional folk songs (*min’yō* 民謡).³⁶ Furthermore, he advised Kafū about the differences between written and sung words. He guided the writer toward a form of verbal expression that, on the one hand, was less complex and elusive but that, on the other, could better fit the music and serve the function Kafū himself had felt to be crucial at the beginning of his career: that of creating a “Japanese song” able to express the “present sentiment” of the Japanese individual.

Kafū, for his part, managed to inscribe a quintessential early Shōwa (1926–1989) popular narrative into the thematic repertoire of traditional European opera. *Katsushika jōwa* recounts the heroine Yoshiko’s ambition and disillusionment; her departure from the “nest,” represented by the suburbs; her subsequent estrangement from the community to which she belongs; and her ultimate tragic fate. It further details her reencounter with a former lover, now married to someone else; and her act of self-sacrifice, through which community bonds are reestablished and order somehow restored. These elements strongly resemble those of many operatic works, most notably *Cavalleria Rusticana*, one of Kafū’s favorite works ever since his years abroad.

Yet despite Ashihara’s enthusiasm for it, *Katsushika jōwa* did not represent a turning point in the history of Japanese opera. It did, however, successfully portray an alternative narrative of early-Shōwa Tokyo popular history and represented a

³³ Akiyama, *Shōwa no sakekyokukatachi*, p. 461.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

³⁵ Suenobu Yoshiharu 末延芳晴, “‘Maboroshi’ no Kafū saku opera saien: nakaseru kahin ‘Katsushika jōwa’” 「幻」の荷風作オペラ再演：泣かせる佳品「葛飾情話」, *Asabi shinbun* 朝日新聞, 8.19.1999.

³⁶ Akiyama, *Shōwa no sakekyokukatachi*, pp. 452–453.

first attempt to put into music the diverse, fascinating array of emotions that characterized people's everyday life in wartime urban Japan. Consistent with Kafū's poetics, and timely in its deeper implications, this operatic work weaves together narratives of urban transformation, class difference, and cultural stratification, trying moreover to provide this tapestry with a poetic framework composed of traditional themes, diction, images, and topographies through which to engage in dialogue with the present time.

Kafū's experience as opera writer, and especially the contemporary public reception of his piece, demonstrate that, by the late 1930s, he had at length found a way to unravel the East-West conundrum behind his own operatic aspirations. Yet what is of particular interest is the fact that he had found the key to this unraveling in these same "exterior" and "material" features of drama that he considered most distinctive and valuable in traditional theater. The linguistic realism that he strove to achieve in *Katsushika jōwa* aimed to create for the public a sense of familiarity that was supposed to be attained not through the meaning of the words but through their intonation. In other words, Kafū had addressed the dilemma which had confronted him at the end of his sojourn abroad, the question of how to devise a strategy to express new and changing emotions through a semiotic system as effective as Western musical drama had been for Europeans and North Americans. He found his solution in the very principle upon which Japanese traditional drama was founded: sonorous harmony.

Thus the strategy he adopted in the 1938 opera can be considered the outcome of a long reflection on the value of drama that embraced both a play's material and abstract features but assigned the highest significance to the former. For Kafū, performance was what mattered most. Yet if it does not come as a surprise that he held such a view in 1900, when he was still a young aspiring kabuki author at the Kabuki-za, it might seem more unexpected from him in later decades, when his literary activity had grown more and more removed from his juvenile fascination with the theater and his voice as novelist had become more and more influential.

Such a perspective had indeed been foretold in "Edo engeki no tokuchō," in which he describes what he finds most appealing in a play:

That feeling I get when I hear the sound of the clappers, and the music accompanying the beginning of the play, as the curtains undulate and finally open and a solo anticipates the performer's appearance on the *hanamichi* 花道 [a projection from the main stage extending out into the audience]; or when I watch the stage revolving until it disappears from sight while listening to the various instruments: all these features give me a pleasant feeling that can hardly be experienced elsewhere and that I do not find in anything but in Edo theater. The same applies to silent scenes [*danmari* だんまり], trap doors [*seridashi* 迫出], and fight scenes [*tachimawari* 立廻り].³⁷

³⁷ Nagai, *Edo geijutsuron*, p. 259.

This passage clarifies the nature of Kafū's fascination with kabuki, which is rooted in admittedly "exterior" features, all appealing to either sight or hearing. His idea of Edo theater is foregrounded in his appreciation of its most exciting elements and is centered upon the emotional response that he *as audience* directs toward the performance. The performance, in other words, should be valued for its material dimension and for the emotions it elicits in the audience. Such a connection between the performance's materiality and the emotional sphere of its reception is the cornerstone of Kafū's theory of theater.

His emphasis on these exterior elements does not, however, imply any lack of insight or depth. On the contrary, he assigns to kabuki's aesthetic experience a significance that extends far beyond the spectator's mere viewing of the play's story. In "Edo engeki no tokuchō," he names two plays from the kabuki repertoire that he finds especially effective and fascinating, mainly for their exterior features: *Honchō nijūshi kō* 本朝廿四孝 (Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety of Our Country, 1766; **figs. 1 and 1a**) and *Kiichi Hōgen sanryaku no maki* 鬼一法眼三略卷 (Kiichi Hōgen's Book of Strategy, 1731). He praises in particular the "Jisshukō" 十種香 (Ten Varieties of Incense) scene from the former and the "Kikubatake" 菊畑 (Chrysanthemum Garden) scene from the latter. In both cases, Kafū emphasizes visual and aural features that, from his point of view, affect the spectator's experience of the performance. With respect to "Jisshukō,"³⁸ he praises the elegance of Katsuyori's 勝頼 costume ("In *Honchō [nijūshi] kō*, at the beginning of the 'Jisshukō' scene, the beautiful sight of Katsuyori's long *hakama* 袴 trousers spreading over the palace stairs is simply unforgettable").³⁹ And in the case of "Kikubatake," he praises the beauty of the play's accompanying music, the way it effectively arouses all kinds of feelings ("In 'Kikubatake,' that moment when Torazō 虎蔵 tries to hide in the inner garden and the music accompanies his movements—one truly realizes then the importance of the musicians.")⁴⁰ This last scene, in particular, persuades him of the value of Edo theater even when set against the European operatic tradition. He observes that "just beating on the big drum will give you the illusion of hearing the sound of water, or of the wind, a simplicity of technique unattainable in the far more complex Western operas."⁴¹

³⁸ Unfortunately, it is not easy to determine precisely which performance it was that Kafū attended, nor the precise costumes (and performers) to which he was referring when he mentioned these plays. For instance, as regards *Honchō nijūshi kō*, it should be noted that the work is a very important play in the kabuki repertoire, and that it was performed repeatedly during Kafū's lifetime. There was, however, a performance that he may have found particularly impressive because it featured his good friend and mentor Fukuchi Ōchi, alongside Nakamura Shikan 中村芝翫 V (1866–1940). This performance was held at the Kabuki-za on January 9, 1902, and Shikan played Katsuyori. Ōchi, together with Enomoto Torahiko and others, was responsible for writing the script. See Utei and Yoshida, *Kabuki nendaiki*, pp. 97–98.

³⁹ Nagai, *Edo geijutsuron*, p. 260.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 260–261.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 261.



Figure 1. The “Jisshukō” 十種香 scene from *Honchō nijūshi kō* 本朝廿四孝. National Institute of Japanese Literature.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/100017824> (image 8).



Figure 1a. Detail of Figure 1 (upper left), showing Katsuyori 勝頼 in his long *hakama* 袴 trousers.

For him, Edo kabuki's most distinctive feature is this simplicity, alongside the principle of musical harmony that undergirds the entire performance, and which includes not only musical elements but also staged sounds and clappers. These qualities are achieved by the play only as a whole and demand a long apprenticeship from all those involved in the performance. His overall aim, in comparing this tradition with that of European (or "Western," as he terms it)⁴² opera, was not to determine which was more valuable but to substantiate his claim that the two were not comparable, that they were based on different principles. He also sought to assert that the latter's complexity did not establish it as the more sophisticated of the two, but was instead only one of its characteristics, placing it at a pole apart from the apparent simplicity of the former.

To sum up, in "Edo engeki no tokuchō," Kafū stresses the importance of theater as performance, as a composite product whose ultimate aim should be to produce feelings, to provide aural and visual impulses powerful enough that the viewer feels emotions, possibly together with the rest of the audience. His work as an opera librettist more than two decades later shows that, even when he embraced a mode of composition which he regarded as based on other, different principles, he still relied on the same "external" features that he considered distinctive of Edo theater. From this perspective, the problem of how to reconcile the difference between Japanese and Western forms seems solved. This view explains why he finally thought the time was "ripe" for writing Japanese opera.

Kafū developed this conceptualization of theater, however, much earlier than the publication of his essays on Edo-period arts. Indeed, in writing about kabuki in his early twenties, when the category of Edo was far from the center of his horizon and when traditional theater was a much closer reality for him, he introduced a number of topics and perspectives that shed further light on his relationship to the performing arts, and which anticipate the critical positions he would take later in his career.

Hyōshigi monogatari

Less than a decade after the publication of Tsubouchi Shōyō's and Kitamura Tōkoku's writings, Kafū began his apprenticeship at the Kabuki-za and wrote the essay that would cost him his (potential) career in theater: *Hyōshigi monogatari*.

⁴²I do not consider Kafū's use of the term *Western* (*seiyō* 西洋) rather than *European* for opera as a symptom of self-orientalization, or "occidentalization." Although he was aware of the fact that the plays he enjoyed watching had been composed in Europe, his personal acquaintance with performed opera took place mostly in the United States, more precisely in New York City; just like the consideration mentioned above, that "America" had turned him "into a lachrymose poet," his referring to opera simply as "Western" further clarifies how important the performed text rather than the libretto itself was for him. Some of his French stories show that, once in Europe, he strove to associate the spaces he saw with the information he had gained from opera scripts (and obviously from literature), but overall opera would always be a broader concept comprising text and performance, being therefore European *and* American. In a word: Western.

This text, which appeared in the December 10, 1900 issue of the literary magazine *Bungei kurabu* 文藝俱樂部 (Literary Club), is a brief (just about three pages) but straightforward account of his experience behind the curtain, thoroughly imbued with the desire to highlight the features of kabuki that he found most appealing and meaningful.

The essay can be roughly divided into three sections. In the first, Kafū explains why he considers clappers so important and lists a number of notable kabuki playwrights of the past, stressing the fact that each had played the *hyōshigi* when they were young.

In the second section, he compares the past with the present, complaining about the scant enthusiasm among people of his age for *hyōshigi*. He defines his present day as a “time when the way things are done no longer matters.” He then juxtaposes this present to a past when clapper-beating “had become a form of art,” corroborating this opinion by providing many examples of famous *hyōshigi* players, praising their styles, and describing their most distinctive characteristics.⁴³

In the third section, he relates several anecdotes from his time at the Kabuki-za and touches upon the relationship between clapper-beating and acting. He suggests that the *hyōshigi* player may not be as important (or as popular) as the actor, but he is nonetheless expected to discipline himself, and especially his body, to “feel” like the latter.

From the start, it is clear what Kafū aims to bring to the fore. Adopting in his writing the same structure as a play, he entrusts the clappers with the task of opening the text and setting the mood for what follows:

In theater, clappers play a role that is somehow similar, let us say, to that played by the trumpet for the armed forces: if the clappers do not sound, the curtain will not open, therefore no play will take place, just as the props onstage always wait for the clappers to sound before they move or stop. In short, if the clappers do not sound, there will be no theater at all. The audience may see the clapper-beater as a trivial, even a vulgar role, but it is nothing like that. Those who play the clappers are called *kyōgen kata* 狂言方, and they are on their way to becoming playwrights.⁴⁴

This opening paragraph shows that Kafū took pride in his duties as a *kyōgen kata*, and that he was determined to emphasize the importance of clappers; it also very clearly demonstrates that he considered the play’s aural dimension to be as significant as the script. He explicitly addresses the public and wants them to notice a part of the performance often too easily overlooked. He challenges the (presumed) assumption that clappers are useless, pointless, and unrefined, something somehow disconnected from the rest of the play, in the course of

⁴³ Nagai, *Hyōshigi monogatari*, pp. 373–374.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

which objection he interestingly resorts to what was then regarded as the play's most important feature: the script. In other words, he acknowledges the recent and still ongoing debates about theater reform and, by arguing for a connection between *hyōshigi* and writing, he invites his readers to question the notion of theater as a performance based mainly on texts—a notion recently established at the time Kafū was writing. Although he does not deny the script's importance, he draws a direct parallel between a playwright (*sakusha* 作者) and a *kyōgen kata*, suggesting that whoever aspires to become a kabuki playwright (as he did then) cannot avoid playing the clappers first.

Kafū continues stressing how noises and sounds, alongside tools, costumes, and other material elements of the scene, all contribute not only to the beauty but to the very existence of the play. The work's value, he seems to imply, is inscribed in its long, tangible history, and therefore does not need to be renewed or reformed according to the changing sensibilities of the time.

While rough and mostly anecdotal, this short essay anticipates to a great extent Kafū's stance on theater in the 1920s and 1930s. By the time he wrote "Edo engeki no tokuchō" in 1914, the theatrical field had long overcome the opposition between script and performance. A play's literary character, and thus the script's artistic dignity, was now essentially unquestioned. The focus of Kafū, therefore, is on the polarities of new and old, the realistic and the anti-realistic (or more precisely, the not necessarily realistic), and the abstract and the material—in the course of setting forth his argument that traditional forms should be judged for their intensity and power as performance, and for their effectiveness in captivating the audience, rather than for the literary quality of their scripts. Conversely, *Hyōshigi monogatari*, written in 1900, belongs to a time when such opposition was still in effect. These circumstances explain Kafū's emphasis on the relationship between the play's ultimate material element—the clappers—and the imaginative act of writing.

The anecdotes which Kafū included in his essay were the main reason for the Kabuki-za not welcoming him back. Yet he did not include only episodes that he had experienced himself during his short apprenticeship. He also recounted stories he had read about or heard during that time, some of which had been circulating in the theatrical milieu for decades. He mentioned, in particular, a text that he clearly considered compulsory reading for anyone interested in traditional theater: *Hyōshiki* 拍子記 (Records of Wooden Clappers, date unknown), written by Sakurada Jisuke 桜田治助 III (1802–1877). Kawajiri Seitan 川尻清潭 is one of the very few scholars who have examined this book, and he has described it as something in the way of a written audio recording, an "album" that performers could consult when preparing for a role.⁴⁵ It is, in other words, a text focused on the soundscape of kabuki theater, devoting considerable attention not only to

⁴⁵ Kawajiri, *Shibai oboechō*; quoted in Maeshima, "Edo chūki Kamigata kabuki," p. 15.

voices and musical instruments but also and especially to wooden clappers, which explains Kafū's interest in it. He describes *Hyōshiki* as “a book that offers detailed descriptions of different ways of clapper-beating” and notes that it includes lists of “famous clapper-beaters.”⁴⁶

In this essay, Kafū attempts to reassess the role of *hyōshigi* in two ways, delving deeply into its history to do so. In the first place, he draws connections between clapper-beating, writing, and acting, removing the *kyōgen kata* from the background and placing him closer to the core of the performance. Far from considering clapper-beating as a mere step along the way to the more prestigious activity of writing, or as an activity that stands poles apart from acting, he asserts that the occupation possesses a prestige of its own. In other words, he does not view wooden clappers (or their sound) as a mere function or mere tool of the performance: rather, in addition to measuring duration and providing the play's rhythm, *hyōshigi* are an essential part of life for those involved in theater. Clappers marked rules, modes, and times related to performances and to performers' own daily lives. Thus, they contributed actively to those community-building processes that Kafū would praise as crucial components of the art of the theater.

Kafū introduces clappers as an essential element of the play, comparing them to the trumpet that indicates and accompanies particular moments of military life. This comparison further clarifies his idea of *hyōshigi* as a signal that is shared among the people who work in a theater, and also between them and the audience. In other words, it is a signal shared within a community, one that acts even as a binding agent. By the same token, he implicitly introduces the notion of theater as a community in which feelings of belonging and sharing are evoked for all by the beating of clappers. When he writes, “If the clappers do not sound, there will be no theater at all,” he does not mean merely that the act will not take place, but that the clappers as signal are a key feature of, an indispensable precondition for, the fulfillment of the theater's social function.

Although he touches upon the few theater companies, based in Osaka, that perform “clapper-less acts” (*ki nashi no maku* 木なしの幕),⁴⁷ and whose playwrights do not begin their careers as *kyōgen kata*, he praises companies from Tokyo and stresses the fact that renowned artists such as Tsuruya Nanboku 鶴屋南北 IV (1755–1829) and Kawatake Mokuami 河竹黙阿弥 (1816–1893) used to beat clappers when they were young (which, he seemingly suggests, contributed to their excellence).⁴⁸ Of course, this emphasis on *hyōshigi* and on illustrious figures like Nanboku and Mokuami also reveals the young Kafū's desire to dignify the work with which he was entrusted at the Kabuki-za, and to chart a path that would hopefully lead eventually to a playwright position.

⁴⁶ Nagai, *Hyōshigi monogatari*, p. 373.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

His desire to reconsider *hyōshigi*'s status within the performance manifests in various ways throughout the text—for instance, when he recounts a story involving Mokuami. Asked by a *kyōgen kata* for advice, the eminent artist is said to have responded that the reason the young clapper-beater could not perform up to expectations was due to “just standing there, looking at the actors” instead of “rehearsing the script in your belly” and “measuring your breathing before you beat the clappers.”⁴⁹ In this episode, Kafū juxtaposes acting with clapper-beating, shortening the distance between the two. Rather than watching the actor, the *kyōgen kata* must become the actor, and he must do this, not in his mind, but in his belly, carefully measuring his breathing—in short, with his entire body. Such a pairing of breathing and clapper-beating invites a metaphorical reading that establishes the *hyōshigi*'s clap (*chon* チヨン) as one of the vital, and arguably most basic, functions of the theater world.

Gakuya jūnitoki

Every work revolving around Kafū's experience at the Kabuki-za subsumes his fascination with theater as community and his aspiration to actively participate in that community. The text where these feelings emerge most strikingly is probably *Gakuya jūnitoki*, published in the April 1901 issue of the literary magazine *Shinshōsetsu* 新小説. *Gakuya jūnitoki* is a composite narrative consisting of a set of micronarratives, mainly in dialogic form, structured as an hour-by-hour account of a day behind the curtain. The overall atmosphere, marked by a sense of camaraderie between the people involved in the text's various episodes, is carefree and upbeat.

The dialogic flow is often interrupted by onomatopoeia that imitate the distinctive sounds of the *hyōshigi* and other musical instruments. These provide the narration with rhythm and enhance the realism of the scenes described. Most sections, each one corresponding to a given moment of the day, end either with sound-words, such as *doron doron* ドロンドロン, *pata pata* パタパタ,⁵⁰ and (of course) the *chon* of the wooden clappers, or alternatively with direct speech. This configuration enables the reader to engage with the text on at least two levels. First, she can follow the narrative as if she were herself a character: placed *within* the scene, she listens to the conversations going on, sees with her own eyes what happens in front of her, is startled, taken aback, relieved, agitated by the many different sounds she hears. Second, she watches the scene as if the spectator of an actual play: sounds, dialogue, and movements conjure a veritable representation of a day behind the scenes, fulfilling a fantasy that many theater-goers most likely nurtured. Both these modes of reception are based on the assumption that the reader is familiar with the semantic codes of the theater, which enable her to interpret and understand not only what happens onstage but also what happens

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 374.

⁵⁰ Nagai, *Gakuya no jūnitoki*, p. 391.

offstage. It is assumed that she can grasp immediately the meaning of a specific *chon* resounding at a particular moment, that she is able to decode the (mainly aural) signals disseminated in the text because she is part of the greater community that is the theater writ large, and that, as such, she can share moods and emotions with the other subjects involved. All this is possible, in short, because she is attuned to them.

The *kyōgen kata* and his aural marker, the onomatopoeia *chon*, appear repeatedly in these pages both to measure time in the “dressing room”⁵¹ and to stress specific actions and habits. Kafū’s enthusiasm for being part of such a circle pervades the text, whose main interest lies in representing theater as an authentic expression of humanity inspired by a sincere respect for both the arts and the audience. The stories he narrates and the characters he describes converge in a common theme of theater as a community, whose life, in its most sophisticated as well as in its most mundane practices, is based on a set of rules and rituals that revolve around the audience and their pleasure.

Gakuya jūnitoki lends further support to the idea that traditional theater, for Kafū, should not be assessed against new and mostly foreign standards of art criticism. Moreover, he does not seem concerned at all with the problem of determining traditional theater’s artistic value. He does not look at kabuki through the lens of art or of literary criticism, nor does he concentrate upon the script, but rather encourages the reader to focus on an emotional response to the performance—to measure its worth by the pleasure gained. For Kafū, in other words, traditional theater is neither “art” nor “literature.” It is instead a form of artistry that is grounded in age-old conventions and practices, one whose ultimate aim is not the achievement of some abstract standard of aesthetic beauty or the realistic representation of some subject or idea, but lies rather in an alternative creation of life, one that remains based nonetheless on a re-elaboration of life itself. This “alternative creation of life” is indeed the imaginative space where the audience can escape momentarily from their real life. Yet in a seeming paradox, this escape from reality is attained through live interaction and involvement with the play—above all with those features of the play that are most material (and thus most grounded in reality). This explains Kafū’s insistence on the ordinary in *Gakuya jūnitoki*: by claiming his own place in the everyday life of the dressing room, he was trying to secure *his own place* in society at a time of uncertainty, when he was very young and still torn between his family’s expectations and a genuine desire to pursue an artistic path.

Conclusion

Sound as a constitutive feature of narrative occupies a firm position in Kafū’s literature. In the nomenclature of soundscape studies, the term *signal* indicates

⁵¹ Kafū uses the word *gakuya* 楽屋 (dressing room) as a sort of umbrella term for the entire range of offstage spaces and activities.

“acoustic warning devices,” sounds that must be listened to and which are often “organized into quite elaborate codes permitting messages of considerable complexity to be transmitted to those who can interpret them.”⁵² Those who “can” interpret signals are members of the community that generates them. This is true in the theatrical community, which is composed of performers and spectators and which shares a system of codes and symbols enabling each individual to interpret the *chon* of the wooden clappers and all the other characteristic sounds. And it is indeed through their response to these signals that a community can identify itself as such.

Gakuya jūnitoki shows how Kafū seeks his own place in the space of the everyday life of kabuki playwrights and performers. By contrast, in *Hyōshigi monogatari*, he attempts to dignify the most basic “signal” of traditional theater by setting it firmly in the material dimension of the performance, and also by evoking a bodily metaphor—the image of clappers as a play’s respiratory system. This intertwining of materiality and communality underscores the notion of traditional theater that he displays in “Edo engeki no tokuchō,” where kabuki is seen as an art-form whose value lies in its ability to stir a sense of belonging in the audience and to help them escape their everyday lives by entering alternative realities.

Kafū’s keen sensitivity to sound and to the most exterior features of theater is thus rooted in his conviction that traditional arts can bring people together and generate spaces and patterns of communality. Through the most immediate, spontaneous modes of interaction and sharing between those who perform and those who attend their performance, modern subjects can put aside for a moment their individualism, their “privatized” self, and *feel together* for a while. This, for Kafū, is the ultimate goal of theater and its most fascinating quality, the one that established kabuki and the other arts of Edo as classics. Indeed, this is the 1914 essay’s titular “main feature of Edo theater” that he intended to celebrate with his writing.

⁵² Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, p. 10.

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Sōgi's *Problem Passages*: Exegetical Method and the Idea of the Text

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Introduction

Problem Passages in the Tale of Genji (*Genji monogatari fushin shōshutsu* 源氏物語不審抄出, 1494?–1500, **fig. 1**) represents the latest extant work¹ of commentary on the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語) left to posterity by the commoner-origin *renga* master Sōgi 宗祇 (1421–1502), universally recognized as one of the most important figures in that tale's thousand-year exegetical history.² Despite

¹ Of nine extant MSS, all but one end with the following colophon by the nobleman Tomino-kōji Toshimichi 富小路俊通 (d. 1513) (punctuation added):

此一冊宗祇法師抄出之所也。命可一覽由、其後下向關東、於相模国卒去。尤可歎而已。
かたみともその世にはぬ心までふかくかなしき筆のあとかな
富小路俊通 在判

This volume of passages was selected and excerpted by Monk Sōgi. Having allowed that I should peruse it, he then left on a journey for the Kantō, and in Sagami Province expired. One can only deeply mourn.

katami to mo sono yo ni iwanu kokoro made / fukaku kanashiki fude no ato ka na
For a keepsake, then, to trace in sadness a pen unfathomable
as those thoughts left forever unsaid to the world beyond.

Tominokōji Toshimichi [signature here]

Notably, the base-text here quoted (see note 5) additionally provides its colophon with an exceptional—and exhaustive—set of glosses (fol. [80r], **fig. 1b**), all of which I have omitted above.

² As a cultural figure writ large, Sōgi 宗祇 himself is the subject of a truly extensive literature, beginning with a steady stream of biographies going back almost a century, the most recent of which in Japanese is by Hiroki Kazuhito 廣木一人 (see Hiroki, *Muromachi no kenryōku*) and the most accessible of which is probably still that by Okuda Isao 奥田勲 (see Okuda, *Sōgi*). A very useful survey in English of Sōgi's cultural position (above all in *renga* context) is given by Steven D. Carter in his recent study and translation of one of Sōgi's most important *renga* treatises, *A Solace in Old Age* (*Oi no susami* 老のすさみ, see Carter, “Readings from the Bamboo Grove”). Passing over what might be cited in connection with Sōgi's work in *renga*, *waka*, or even studies

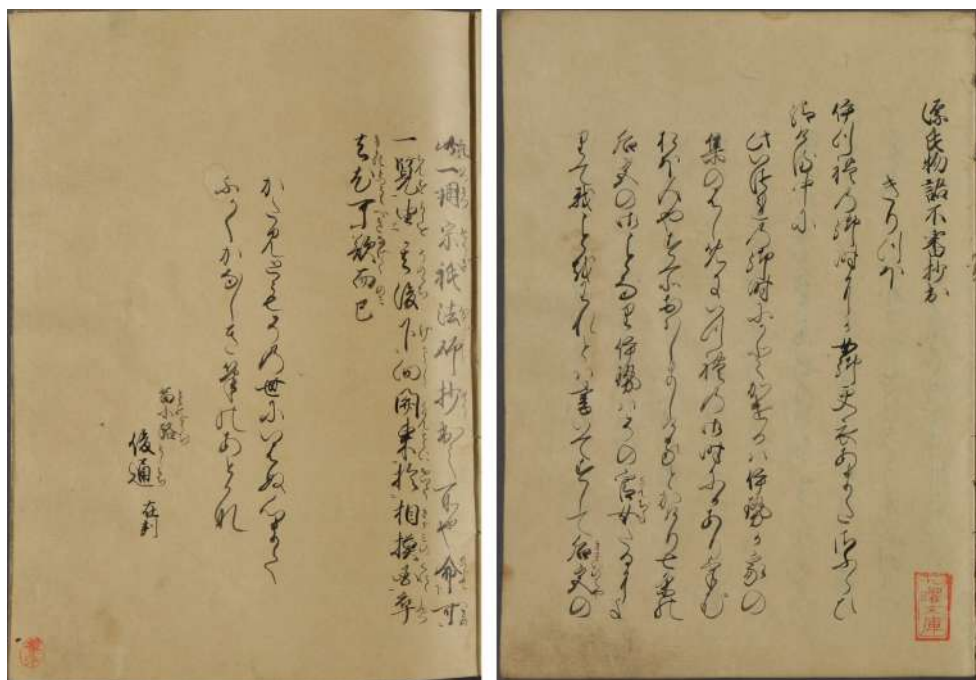


Figure 1a (right) and 1b (left). Kuyō Bunko 九曜文庫 MS^{kō} (“kō-hon” 甲本) of Sōgi’s 宗祇 commentary *Problem Passages in the Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari fusbin shōshutsu* 源氏物語不審抄出). Used in this article as base-text. Waseda University Library.

Figure 1a: Inner title, Entry #001 (from “The Paulownia Pavilion”), fol. [2r]. See p. 141.

Figure 1b: Colophon, fol. [80r]. See p. 131n1.

the great strides made in recent decades by scholars of that history, however, even among Sōgi’s own body of philological work, his *Problem Passages* (as abbreviated hereafter) stands out as a text distinctly understudied.³

There are several reasons why this might be surprising. On the most superficial level, *Problem Passages* is not only the longest of Sōgi’s three *Genji* commentaries,⁴

of *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語), with respect to his *Genji* studies, the starting point must be with Ii Haruki’s 伊井春樹 groundbreaking volume on the history of *Genji* commentary (see Ii, *Chūshakushi*, pp. 243-338), though Ii’s helpful and more recent précis of his thinking on Sōgi should also be mentioned (see Ii, “Sōgi no kotengaku”). Much about Sōgi’s activity as a teacher and scholar of the *Genji* in high literati circles can be gleaned from Miyakawa Yōko’s 宮川葉子 study of his great aristocratic disciple, Sanjōnishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (see Miyakawa, *Sanjōnishi Sanetaka*). A recent summary of Sōgi’s career can also be found in Knott, “Medieval Commentaries,” pp. 118–123.

³ It is the only of Sōgi’s *Genji* works not to appear, for example, in Musashino Shoin’s multivolume commentary collection *Genji monogatari kochūshaku sōkan* 源氏物語古註積叢刊.

⁴ At roughly 30,000 characters, longer than his substantial (and far more well-known) commentary on the *Genji*’s second chapter, *Habakigi betchū* 帯木別注, by about 25%.

but the most wide-ranging, covering 42 of the tale's 54 canonical chapters.⁵ More uniquely still, as faithfully indicated in the work's customary title (not necessarily Sōgi's own), by and large its 124 entries (**table 1**) address passages of particular interpretive difficulty: its selective principle is the textual crux, or in commentary argot, the text's *fushin* 不審. As such it embodies a judgment of what constituted—for either Sōgi himself or his students—textual questions both difficult and worthy of consideration, recording additionally the efforts made towards answering these by one of the *Genji*'s most celebrated interpreters to date.

It is true that the text *per se* does not appear to have circulated widely. And if *Problem Passages* has seemed to invite far less attention than it looks to reward in both scope and content, the vagaries of transmission go some distance towards explaining the fact. Against the twenty-seven extant and often divergent textual witnesses to Sōgi's more famous commentary on the *Genji*'s “Broom Tree” chapter,⁶ his *Problem Passages* has been found to survive in no more than nine copies, all but one of which are reported to belong to the same narrow textual line.⁷ Indeed throughout the Edo period, to which by far the lion's share of extant manuscripts belong, Sōgi's influence as a whole—while hardly forgotten—tended to be felt indirectly, experienced rather through the work of disciples and the succes-

⁵No full-work *Genji* commentary by Sōgi is known to have existed. However many the students who may have heard from him extensive lectures on every chapter, by his own hand only three works of very partial commentary are known. Preceding the *Problem Passages* are:

- (1) *Shugyoku's Reordering* (*Shugyoku henjishō* 種玉編次抄, 1475–1481): a consideration of the complex ordering (*henji* 編次) of the overlapping timelines of the Uji 宇治 chapters (broadly conceived here to include the full last 13). Shugyokuan 種玉庵 was the name of Sōgi's residence in the Capital.
- (2) *The Broom Tree Commentary* (*Habakigi betchu* 帚木別注, 1485): an unusual commentary dedicated exclusively to the second chapter of the *Tale of Genji*, containing extensive remarks by Sōgi reflecting his conceptions of the tale, its significance, and its proper interpretation.

For a brief review of all three commentaries' textual contents and history, see Knott, “Medieval Commentaries,” pp. 123–135.

⁶As confirmed by the author to date as part of a study in preparation.

⁷This article is deeply indebted to Korenaga Yoshimi 伊永好見 for her survey—the fullest to date—of the work's nine extant MSS (see Korenaga, “Sōgi-chū”, pp. 2–3). I follow her organization (and nomenclature) here. Her division of the nine MSS by their distinctive colophons (*okugaki* 奥書) into two groups is as follows:

Group A: Toshimichi 俊通 Colophon MSS (8)—see colophon in note 1 above

(1) **Waseda U. Library, Kuyō Bunko 九曜文庫 MS^{ko} (“kō-hon” 甲本)** [Bunko 30/A0114]

This is the base-text from which all examples are transcribed. See table 1 for summary of contents.

- (2) Shimabara Library, Hizen Shimabara Matsudaira 肥前島原松平 Bunko MS [104–6]
- (3) Tokyo Central Library, Kaga 加賀 Bunko MS [913–M–16]
- (4) Tōkai 東海 University Library, Tōen 桃園 Bunko MS [桃 9 109]
- (5) Waseda U. Library, Kuyō Bunko MS^{otsu} (“otsu-hon” 乙本) [Bunko 30/A0113]
- (6) Nishio City, Iwase 岩瀬 Bunko Library MS [Bunko 512.1]
- (7) Tohoku U. Library, Kanō 狩野 Bunko MS [4–11423–1]
- (8) Tenri Central Library MS [913.36–1 281]

sors of disciples. And while Sōgi's unique position at a watershed moment in the *Tale of Genji's* history—the post-Ōnin boom in classical scholarship—makes a more detailed account of his contributions a pressing desideratum, it is certainly unsurprising if in modern research priorities the textual environment of more recent premodernity has played the more determinative role.

Just as certain, however, is *Problem Passages's* long-neglected promise as an object of study. Above all it has this value as Sōgi's most fulsome—and final—statement on one of the prime occupations of his literary life, yet the commentary also has particular value by virtue of its own chosen research subject. For an important condition of fulfilling said pressing desideratum is the elucidation of exactly that to which *Problem Passages* most directly speaks: Sōgi's exegetical method. Over the course of its hundred-strong entries, whose knotty *fushin* the master himself felt challenged his interpretive powers, the commentary offers us an unparalleled glimpse of the method by which those powers were exercised. Precisely because, moreover, Sōgi's influence on later *Genji* scholarship—and thereby ultimately on *Genji* readership—is often so sublimated, an understanding of his developed method is all the more critical. It is this understanding that the author, by examining a judicious selection of these entries, hopes here to advance.⁸

Group B: Myōyū 明融 Colophon MS (1)

(9) Notre Dame Seishin 清心 Women's U., Kurokawa 黒川 Bunko MS [H-196]

This is the only manuscript to contain instead the following colophon by Myōyū (d. 1582):

此抄出宗祇法師註也。

桑門明融

This book of excerpted passages is a commentary by Monk Sōgi.

Monk Myōyū

Seemingly an autograph copy by Myōyū himself, while its colophon gives no date, Korenaga has demonstrated that the Kurokawa Bunko MS reflects an earlier stage of the commentary's composition than the text underlying the MSS of Group A.

⁸ As the base-text for this article I have adopted the **Kuyō Bunko MS^{ko}**, influenced by Korenaga's evaluation of it as relatively complete and undamaged in its text among manuscripts of Group A (Korenaga, "Sōgi-chū," p. 2), but also by its accessibility. Of the total nine MSS extant (see previous note for numbering), the following four can be consulted either online or in published transcriptions:

- (1) Downloadable from Waseda's *Kotenseki sōgō databēsu* 古典籍総合データベース at: https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko30/bunko30_a0114/index.html.
- (5) Downloadable from Waseda's *Kotenseki sōgō databēsu* at: https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko30/bunko30_a0113/index.html.
- (6) Transcription by Yoshizawa Yoshinori 吉澤義則 available: see Iwase Bunko Library MS, pp. 347–382.
- (9) Viewable on NIJL's *Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works (Shin Nihon kotenseki sōgō databēsu)* 新日本古典籍総合データベース at: <https://doi.org/10.20730/100214107>. There are also a transcription by Korenaga (Kurokawa Bunko MS, pp. 28–44 (pt. 1) and pp. 38–52 (pt. 2), and a facsimile edition from Shirai Tatsuko 白井たつ子 (Shirai, *Genji fushin shōshutsu*).

1. Modern Research on *Problem Passages* and Sōgi's Place in Commentary History

While current understanding of the textual history of Sōgi's *Problem Passages* is increasingly clear,⁹ understandings of its textual substance remain, by contrast, much more imprecise. It is probably easiest to illustrate this by consideration of an example entry from the commentary itself.

Tamakazura 玉鬘, the daughter of Hikaru Genji's 光源氏 friend Tō no Chūjō 頭中将 and the ill-starred late Yūgao 夕顔, has quietly spent her childhood far away in Kyushu, raised in the family of Yūgao's old nurse. Now at twenty, however, and in headlong flight from a demanding local suitor, she finds herself suddenly brought back by said nurse to the Capital of her birth. Joining Tamakazura and her nurse are the latter's eldest son—the Bungo Deputy (Bungo no Suke 豊後介)—and youngest daughter. The group's situation upon arriving, however, is fairly desperate, and they turn to a higher plane for succor. After a pilgrimage to nearby Yawata 八幡 Shrine is completed, the Deputy decides (“Next . . .”) that they should visit the famous Kannon 観音 of Hasedera 長谷寺 Temple in Hatsuse 初瀬, quite a bit further removed to the East in Nara—and on foot. Here he tries to reassure his companions (as it will turn out, correctly), that the journey will be worth it (**fig. 2**):

*“Next there are the buddhas, among whom Hatsuse is famous even in Cathay for vouchsafing the mightiest boons in all Japan. Hatsuse will certainly be quick to confer blessings on our lady, since for all these years she has lived in our own land, however far away.” He had her set out again.*¹⁰

⁹ See, above all, Korenaga, “Sōgi-chū.” Also the *kaidai* 解題 in Shirai, *Genji fushin shōshutsu*, pp. 1–8, and tangentially in Izume Yasuyuki's 井爪康之 edition of *Ichijōshō*, pp. 522–536.

¹⁰ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 414; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 104.

Throughout this article, for quotations from the *Genji* text—above all in the lemmata that head each of Sōgi's commentary entries—I have relied on the easily-consultable translation of Royall Tyler, whose faithfulness to the original language makes it by far the most suitable among existing (English) translations for close work. (Translations of the comments are my own). At times, Sōgi's quotations of the text—albeit reflecting the same Aobyōshi-bon 青表紙本 recension—do differ on minor points from the various modern editions used by Tyler (cf. his note on “Manuscripts and Texts,” p. xviii), though of course these latter also differ on minor points from one another. In passing it is worth noting that this closeness is a hidden witness to Sōgi's continuing influence today: while medieval commentators before him had largely used the alternative Kawachi-bon 河内本 recension, Sōgi—and after him his students and ourselves—adopted the Aobyōshi-bon line (i.e., the text of Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家, though modern research has complicated this identification, see e.g., Sasaki, *Shoshigakuron*, pp. 284–315).

As at the beginning of this note, though I have not given quotes from the *Genji* text here in the original, I have footnoted references to the corresponding SNKZ text.

In those cases where Tyler's distance from the text on an important point seemed too great, I have modified his phrasing and noted the change in the footnotes. One such case occurs here: for “since for all these years she has lived” Tyler has “since she has always lived,” eliding the sense of year upon year in obscurity that Sōgi found so poignant.

此こと葉のうち、「まして我国のうちにこそ」とは、日本の心也。「とをき国のさかひととも」、おなし日のもとにおはしませは、「わか君おはしましてめぐみ給てん」¹¹といへり。「としへ給つれば」といふうちに、かなしひをつくすやうの心あるへきか。又、そのあいたにくはんをんをたのみたてまつる心もあるへし。されは、「我君をはましてめぐみ給はん」といふにや。『河海』に、はつせは房前卿のちからにてこんりうあれはといへり。それならでも、ことはり侍るへきにや。¹²

In this passage, “in our own land” is a reference to Japan.¹³ “[H]owever far away” it may have been, because [Tamakazura] has always lived in the same Japan, [the Bungo Deputy] says that [Hatsuse] “will certainly be quick to confer blessings on our lady.” Perhaps in the phrase “since for all these years” lies a sense of the extremes of [Tamakazura’s] sadness. There is likely also some sense of her beseeching Kannon for aid throughout the same period. Perhaps this is the reason he says “will certainly be quick to confer blessings on our lady.” In the *River and Sea* [commentary], [Yotsutsuji Yoshinari] says that the reason is because [the temple at] Hatsuse was founded through the efforts of Lord [Fujiwara no] Fusasaki. Yet even without this, [the passage] seems to make sense on its own.

—*Problem Passages* #033 (from “The Tendril Wreath”)

Sōgi’s entries follow the usual commentary format: each entry begins with its lemma (a quotation from the *Genji* text of the passage to be discussed, here given in *italics*), then continues at a vertical indent (usually 1–2 characters) with the text of the comment corresponding to that lemma. This division is not perfectly imporous: bits of quoted *Genji*-text (here marked in **gothic type**) may also

¹¹ Here わか君おはしまして is likely an error (which I have not reproduced in my translation) for わか君をはまして, the reading reflected in the (here suppressed) lemma and also below in Sōgi’s in-comment second quote of the same phrase. The error is not unique to the Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, however, appearing also in the Kanō Bunko MS (fol. [21v]), though there it has been afterwards amended. Cf. **fig. 2a**, line 2 from right, and **fig. 2b**, line 7 from right.

¹² Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fols. [30v–31r].

As explained above in note 8, I have adopted what Korenaga Yoshimi has named the Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō} as a base-text throughout. My transcription differs from the manuscript page in the following points: (1) I have ignored line and page breaks; (2) I have normalized all now non-standard *kana*-character variants (*jibo* 字母), but otherwise preserved the original orthography; (3) I have normalized most Sinitic characters (e.g., 部 not 𠂔) while retaining customary exceptions (e.g., *uta* 哥 is left as such, not transposed to 歌); (4) for ease of reading I have (indeed quite liberally) added punctuation marks (though not vocalization marks—any found here are original to the text); and (5) where the body of a comment re-quotes the *Genji* text to make a point (quite frequent in Sōgi), this text is set off by means of gothic type.

¹³ It will be noted that the rearrangement of phrases and clauses necessary for a fluid translation has here made it difficult to find exact equivalents for Sōgi’s snippet-quotes in Tyler’s English (e.g., “in our own land” does not entirely render まして我国のうちにこそ, and “certainly” is not equivalent to まして). In such cases, I have done my best to balance the demands of translation with my sense of the drift of each commentator’s remarks.

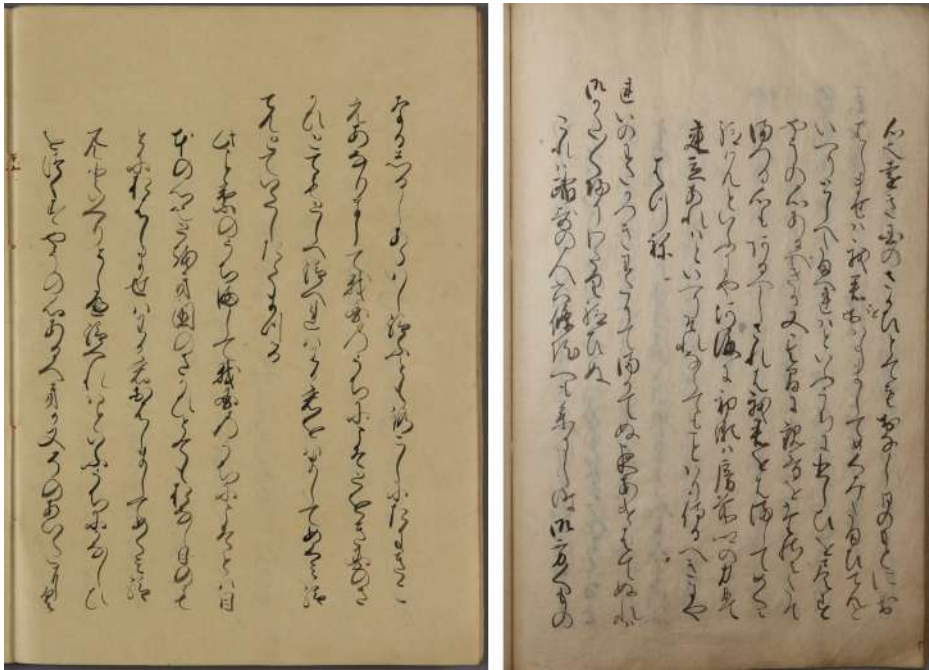


Figure 2a (right) and 2b (left). Comparison of two different MSS of *Problem Passages* at entry #033 (from “The Tendril Wreath”). See p. 136.

Figure 2a: Kanō Bunko 狩野文庫 MS, fol. [21v]. Tohoku University Library. Photo by author.

Figure 2b: Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fol. [30v]. Waseda University Library.

come up for mention within the body of the comment itself. The degree to which such a format was already standardized can be glimpsed in **figs. 3 and 4**. With some exceptions—occasional non-lemmatic excursions, diagrams, etc.—by and large a *Genji* commentary text is simply a long chain of such lemma-comment dyads from start to finish. The format is not, of course, unique to commentaries on the *Genji*. Nonetheless the degree of standardization even within the subfield is some index of the already developed stage of *Genji* studies which formed the context from, and against which, Sōgi’s own contributions emerged.¹⁴

Two works of commentary in particular—for their contemporary influence, for their enduring centrality to the tradition in after-ages, for Sōgi’s deep engagement with them¹⁵—dominate this context, representing the backdrop against

¹⁴ It must be remembered, however, that the Edo provenance of most surviving manuscripts can often produce an illusion of more standardization than actually obtained at earlier periods.

¹⁵ Sōgi himself produced an abridgement of the two for student use that survives in multiple manuscripts today.

which scholars have evaluated what makes Sōgi's own approach unique. The first, from the previous century, is (1) the *River and Sea* commentary (*Kakaishō* 河海抄, 1367) of Yotsutsuji Yoshinari 四辻善成 (1326–1402), the great-grandson of an emperor though himself a “common” nobleman (of a newly-minted yet at length ill-fated line).¹⁶ The second, completed during Sōgi's own lifetime, is (2) the *Lingering Florescence* commentary (*Kachō yosei* 花鳥余情, 1472–1478) of Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良 (1402–1481), a nobleman of far loftier status, who ascended the heights of court office even as he held sway as one of the great cultural figures of his generation.¹⁷ The social gap between men such as these and the commoner Sōgi—whose origin is obscure enough at least that no attempts to clarify it have yet succeeded—hardly needs emphasis, but this can be misleading. In part this is because the gap proved to be no barrier: not only was Sōgi able to associate, even collaborate with Kaneyoshi a generation above, but a generation below he himself became teacher to the nobleman Sanjōnishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (1455–1537). More importantly, however, the distinction simply lacks explanatory power: while not uninfluenced by their stations in life, the respective commentary approaches of Yoshinari and Kaneyoshi are neither reducible to personal station, nor predictable from it, and it is against their approaches—not against their biographies—that Sōgi's own work is judged.

The crux of the above *fushin* seems to be why, precisely, the Bungo Deputy is so very confident that “Hatsuse will certainly be quick to confer blessings on our lady [Tamakazura].” According to Sōgi, the *River and Sea* commentary “says that the reason is because [the temple at] Hatsuse was founded through the efforts of Lord [Fujiwara no] Fusasaki.” This is in fact incomplete. More precisely Yoshinari's explanation is that the foundation of said temple was in part to ensure the prosperity of the Fujiwara clan, and that “The present Tamakazura is a member of the Fujiwara clan—this is why [the Deputy] says ‘will certainly [be quick to confer blessings].’”¹⁸ Nothing further is added, though preceding this Yoshinari offers a great deal about the phrase “Hatsuse is famous even in Cathay for vouchsafing the mightiest boons in all Japan.” Beyond historical information about Hasedera itself, he even mentions (in brief) two stories that might fulfill this condition of “even in Cathay.”

In *Lingering Florescence*, there are two lemmata for this passage. The comment to the first considers the reason for which Kannon, “though really a bodhisattva, is here called a buddha.”¹⁹ The comment to the second lemma begins by more or less rehearsing Yoshinari's theory about the Fujiwara connection, but then offers

¹⁶ For detail on Yotsutsuji Yoshinari's 四辻善成 life, see Ogawa, *Nijō Yoshimoto*, pp. 556–581.

¹⁷ For Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良, a full biography exists in English (Carter, *Regent Redux*); especially for his role as a scholar in contemporary context, see Tamura, *Ichijō Kaneyoshi*.

¹⁸ 今ノ玉鬘君、藤氏なれば、「まして」といふなり。 *Kakaishō*, pp. 387b–388a.

¹⁹ 「仏」といふは、神に対して「神ほとけ」といひならはしたれば、まことは菩薩なれともほとけといへるにや。 *Kachō yosei*, p. 151b.

another: “If they only pray fervently, [Hatsuse] works miracles even for the people in China. This means there is no doubt that favor ‘will certainly’ be shown to our lady, who was born in Japan and makes a pilgrimage to Hatsuse even now.”²⁰ Substantially this agrees with the thrust of Sōgi’s “[H]owever far away’ it may have been, because [Tamakazura] has always lived in the same Japan, [the Bungo Deputy] says that [Hatsuse] ‘will certainly be quick to confer blessings on our lady.’”

The differences in Sōgi’s analysis are easy to inventory: (1) he pauses to weigh the implications latent in the Bungo Deputy’s phrasing (“since for all these years she has lived in our own land, however far away”)—“perhaps,” Sōgi muses, in this passing remark “lies a sense of the extremes of [Tamakazura’s] sadness”; (2) he posits a backstory of particular devotion to Kannon on Tamakazura’s part to justify the Deputy’s certainty of divine intervention—“There is likely also some sense of her beseeching Kannon for aid throughout the same period”; finally (3) while not challenging the historical angle brought to bear by Yoshinari (and echoed in part by Kaneyoshi a century later), he questions, if not precisely its relevance, at least its necessity here in clearing up the *fushin*—“even without this, [the passage] seems to make sense on its own.”

In the light of such differences, the way modern scholars have characterized the *Problem Passages* is easy to understand. In an early, brief summary of the text, in 1938 Yamagishi Tokuhei 山岸徳平 described its approach to the 120-odd lemmata as “above all dealing with the meaning of the language.”²¹ In 1961, in the course of a longer account discussing it together with Sōgi’s other commentary works, Shigematsu Nobuhiro 重松信弘 echoes the assessment, judging that “In the passages it deals with, the analysis is above all about phrases, the meaning of the language, and context, with past precedents, court lore, and questions of models featuring only seldom, making it, like his *Broom Tree Commentary*, a very detailed, explanatory work of commentary.”²² More recently in 1980, in again similar terms, Ii Haruki 伊井春樹 described *Problem Passages* as essentially sharing the approach of Sōgi’s *Broom Tree Commentary*,²³ for which he provides the summary: “Kaneyoshi’s systematic method of interpreting the tale was taken to an even deeper level by Sōgi, who tried to make clear even the subtle movements of its characters’ psychology and the structure of its literary expression,”²⁴ noting

²⁰ もろこしの人たに、祈請渴仰すれば、そのしるしをあらはし給ふ。「まして」わか君は、わか日の本にむまれ給て、しかもはつせへまうて給へは、利生にあつかり給はん事、うたかひなきといふ心なり。Ibid., p. 152a.

²¹ 文義を主として取扱つて居る。Yamagishi, “Kenkyū,” p. 249. The collection containing it dates to 1970, but as made clear in the collection’s afterword, the substance of the piece itself dates to an earlier incarnation published in 1938 (see p. 430).

²² 取扱つた所は故実・有職・準拠等は少なく、語句・文意・文脈の解説が主となつてをり、帯木別註同様の精しい解説的註解である。Shigematsu, *Kenkyūshi*, p. 213.

²³ Ii, *Chushakushi*, p. 289.

²⁴ 兼良の体系化した物語の読みの方法は、宗祇によってさらに深められ、人物の微細な心理の推移や、文章表現の構造などまでも明らかにしていこうとした。Ibid., p. 285.

also Sōgi's attention to passages of authorial intervention (*sakusha kainyū no kotoba* 作者介入の詞). The marked accord of the three assessments across three generations is indeed striking.

At first sight, at least as a descriptive characterization of the above entry, there is little in this mutual agreement to disagree with. Even where Sōgi's interpretation overlaps with Kaneyoshi's, the way he walks the reader (or more likely, listener at lecture) through the passage step-by-quoted-step truly is remarkably "explanatory." Sōgi does in fact show keen interest in character psychology, and only weak interest in Yoshinari's historical gloss—though he did take the trouble to reference it. And rather than the background to the temple's construction, he prefers the context of Tamakazura's personal religious devotion. All told, while a bit abstract in their formulations, the impressions of scholars to date seem to be reasonable enough.

Yet here we should pause: is there such a context of childhood devotion to Kannon to be found? Certainly Tamakazura's nurse is frequently shown praying in this chapter, and before flight from Kyushu came to seem the only option, her first line of defense against unwanted suitors had been, in fact, to declare that she intended to make the girl a nun. Moreover, directly after the *fushin* passage, making her way on foot to Hatsuse, Tamakazura herself is shown praying in-text: ". . . she did as she was told and walked on in a daze, calling out to the buddha, What sins burden me, that I should wander this way through the world? If you have pity on me, take me to where my mother is, even if she is no longer on earth, and if she still lives, show me her face!"²⁵ That as a young girl under such a devout nurse Tamakazura would have prayed to Kannon habitually is not an absurd idea to entertain. It is, however, not a find from Murasaki Shikibu's own text, but one of Sōgi's imagination.

Nor does it quite do justice to Yoshinari and Kaneyoshi to dismiss their references to the temple's Fujiwara connection as something not directly concerned with text and context. Later in the same chapter, Ukon 右近 (once in Yūgao's service), after rediscovering Tamakazura, engages a priest at Hasedera to pray for the young woman—under the name of "Fujiwara no Ruri-gimi" 藤原の瑠璃君.²⁶ *River and Sea* is not particularly "explanatory" in its style, to be sure, but it is probably mistaken to confuse methods and goals. While the relevance of the Fujiwara connection might be debated, the notion at least has clear grounding in the *Genji* text, Sōgi's musings about Tamakazura's childhood, not. The "meaning of the language"—*bun'i* 文意 or *bunji* 文義, in the formulations of Yamagishi or Shigematsu—can plausibly be seen as the concern of many different methods, the under-explained mere citation of relevant historical background certainly among them.

²⁵ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 414; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 104.

²⁶ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 418 (without the genitive *no*); *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 112. Kaneyoshi in fact makes this connection explicit, see *Kachō yosei*, p. 152a.

It is also possible to overlook our own assumptions. Ii Haruki has characterized the method of *Problem Passages* as one which, transmitted from Sōgi to his disciple Sanetaka, thereafter eventually “led to the development of a more modern type of commentary.”²⁷ This has the ring of truth, yet if it is not a concern with the text’s meaning *per se* that unites us with Sōgi against earlier commentators, what does? We should entertain the question: does the passage above truly “even without this” (i.e. historical context), “make sense on its own”? It is argued here that the answer depends, not upon the presence (or absence) of one’s concern to explain the text’s meaning—which all commentators presumably share—but rather upon one’s working theory of textual meaning. Where does meaning lie? Understanding Sōgi’s method in *Problem Passages* requires us to observe with this question in mind.

To thus reformulate the problem: scholars have described Sōgi’s method empirically, defining it by those elements of the *Genji* text that it can be observed to highlight. In other words, Sōgi’s method has been defined by the targets of its application. But just as, e.g., the dry forensic report is every bit as proper a comment on the “lemma” of a crime scene as the moving eye-witness account, (most) targets of explanation are open to any number of very different commentary methods. Yet if we do eschew empirical definitions, by what motivating principle can Sōgi’s method then be explained? Can we identify in Sōgi’s commentary any consistent theory of meaning? This is the question we will seek to probe below, while reexamining in particular those elements of Murasaki Shikibu’s work towards which Sōgi has been deemed uniquely attentive: (1) authorial intervention in the text; (2) character psychology; and finally, (3) “the meaning of the language.”

2. Authorial Intervention

The presence in the *Tale of Genji* of a voice more active than the omniscient third-person of the folk tale is not everywhere subtle. From the initial line of the opening chapter (also the first entry in *Problem Passages*), at times it emerges as a brute fact of the work with which all readers and commentators must reckon. Previous scholarship is not wrong to see Sōgi as sensitive to these manifestations. To begin at the beginning:

*In a certain reign (whose can it have been?) someone of no very great rank, among all His Majesty’s Consorts and Intimates . . .*²⁸

此「いつれの御時にか」とかけるは、伊勢か家の集のはしめに「いつれの御時にかありけむ、おほみやす所おはしましける」とかけり。七条の後宮の御ことなり。伊勢は、そのくほん官ぢよ女たるによりて、我ことをわれとは書いてすして、きさいのみや后宮の御ことをまつかけり。わか身のことも、むかしのやうにかきなせり。

²⁷ 近代的な注釈の確立へと繋がったのである。Ii, *Chishakushi*, p. 296.

²⁸ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 3; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, p. 17.

その心をむらさき式部思ひけるなるへし。そうして此物語をは、我かきたりとみえぬやうに作なしたる物なり。寔につくり物語の本意なるへし。²⁹

Regarding this expression “In a certain reign (whose can it have been?)”: at the beginning of [Lady] Ise’s personal [poetry] collection, she wrote “In a certain reign (whose can it have been?), there was a certain Imperial Haven.”³⁰ This refers to the Shichijō Imperial Consort. Ise, being a woman in her service, did not use “I” to begin her personal account, but wrote first about the Imperial Consort. Even when writing about herself, she wrote as if about someone long ago. No doubt this is the idea Murasaki Shikibu had in mind. Generally speaking, this tale has been written so as not to reveal that she herself wrote it. Truly this is the essence of what a tale is.

—*Problem Passages* #001 (from “The Paulownia Pavilion”)

There is much that might be said about this rich analysis,³¹ and indeed, Ii’s mention of “authorial intervention” reflects one of the most developed lines of inquiry into Sōgi’s philology to date, centering around the technical term *sōshiji* 草子地 (*lit.* “story texture”), which Sōgi seems to have been the first in *Genji* scholarship to employ (in his *Broom Tree Commentary*).³² The term is often taken to refer to a “narrative interjection” distinct from the baseline of impersonal narrative description, but this is an understanding of the term that postdates Sōgi, or at least seems not to be the sense intended in his one recorded use of it.³³ In any case the term does not appear here or anywhere else in *Problem Passages*. To the contrary, as we see here, Sōgi does not identify an independent narrative voice in the text at all: the voice is that of Murasaki Shikibu, merely masked, whose “tale has been written so as not to reveal that she herself wrote it.” This reading of Sōgi’s intent is quickly supported two entries further into the commentary, within his comment on the famous beginning of the subsequent *Broom Tree* chapter, where the tale almost seems to reset itself, jumping over *Genji*’s

²⁹ Kuyō Bunko MS^{k6}, fols. [2r–2v]. This is one of the few passages in the manuscript presenting examples of phonetic glossing. In most entries that follow, the copyist opted rather for a somewhat sparing use of *kanji*, often writing in flowing *kana* even unambiguously Sinitic vocabulary like *tenno* 天皇, *emon* 衛門, *saigu* 齋宮, and once (#017) even *Genji* 源氏, thereby heightening—perhaps intentionally?—the graphic resemblance between Sōgi’s own commentary and lemmatic quotations from the *Genji* itself. See **figs. 2 and 5** for comparison with other *Problem Passages* MSS.

³⁰ “Haven” is Tyler’s translation of *miyasu(n)dokoro* 御息所, an honorary appellation reserved for the recognized mothers of children born to the imperial family.

³¹ Discussed at length in Knott, “Medieval Commentaries,” pp. 144–152.

³² The (single) occasion of this usage can be found at *Amayo danshō*, p. 619a.

³³ This is the conclusion of Izume Yasuyuki’s thorough survey of the term’s use-history in *Genji* studies (see Izume, *Chushakushi*, pp. 399–408; 467–487). It must be noted, however, that this is not Ii Haruki’s understanding: in his more recent “Sōgi no kotengaku,” he even raises (in passing) the putative use-distinction between *sōshiji* and “Murasaki Shikibu’s words” as one of Sōgi’s most significant contributions to *Genji* studies (pp. 50–51).

half-orphaned childhood to rejoin him as a very young man with certain very “deplorable” habits³⁴:

*Shining Genji: the name was imposing, but not so its bearer's many deplorable lapses, and considering how quiet he kept his wanton ways, lest in reaching the ears of posterity they earn him unwelcome fame, whoever broadcast his secrets to all the world was a terrible gossip.*³⁵

〔前略〕「いとくかゝるすきこと」ゝは、かうしよくのこと也。「すゑの世にきゝつたへて、かろひたる名をやなかさん」とは、源氏のかゝるかたのなを忍ひ給ふことなから、されとなを其名きこゆることをいはんとて、「かくろへことを語つたへけん人の物いひさかなさよ」と紫式部かいへること葉也。〔後略〕³⁶

... “His wanton ways” refers to [Genji's] amorous behavior. And while “lest in reaching the ears of posterity they earn him unwelcome fame” refers to how Genji would nonetheless keep such affairs of his quiet, “whoever broadcast his secrets to all the world was a terrible gossip” represents Murasaki Shikibu's own words, with the sense that in spite [of all those efforts] such a fame has indeed endured to the present. . . .

—*Problem Passages* #003 (from “The Broom Tree”)

Here Sōgi does not even mention the mask: this disapproval of a “terrible gossip,” though putatively put into the mouth of (following Lady Ise) some nominal “someone long ago,” is unambiguously characterized as “Murasaki Shikibu's own words.” Such a focus also suggests a possible purpose to this section of entry #003. At least in part, the *fushin* to be unknotted seems to involve not only identification of the author's presence here (obvious enough), but also the import—the function? the motivation?—of her words, which bear “the sense that in spite [of all those efforts] such a fame has indeed endured to the present.”

Indeed, it is not impossible to see entry #001 in this same light: the opening's debt to (the after all quite well-known) Lady Ise's collection was noted already in the *River and Sea* commentary over a century earlier,³⁷ and upon reflection, identification alone of the link does not seem to be in that entry either the *fushin*'s sole concern. Again, at least in part, the purpose of such an authorial pose is also deemed to be of significance. One entertains the doubt: is authorial intervention as a phenomenon itself the subject of Sōgi's interest—more concretely, the kernel of the *fushin*—or is it the technique's purpose that occupies him? Let us

³⁴ The end of this entry directs the reader to Sōgi's earlier *Broom Tree Commentary*, an internal index of *Problem Passages*' later composition (Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fol. [5r]): 此まきは、始終ともに、其心をえかたし。しかる間、一冊、別註之ものあり。Incidentally, the language of this reference, *bechi ni kore o chusuru mono ari*, weights somewhat in favor of calling that work (as I do here) *Habakijō betchū* 帯木別注, as opposed to its alternative name of *Amayo danshō* 兩夜談抄.

³⁵ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 21; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, p. 53.

³⁶ Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fols. [4r–4v].

³⁷ Yoshinari is clear on the allusion: “. . . Or in Ise's [poetry] collection, where it has ‘In a certain reign (whose can it have been?), there was one known as an Imperial Haven.’ Cases like these seem to be the precedents.” 〔前略〕伊勢集始云、「いつれの御時にかありけむ大宮すところときこえける」と云々。是等の例歟。 *Kakaishō*, p. 189a.

examine a further entry considering this technique from the “Twilight Beauty” chapter, here not a beginning but an ending. At length, the vices mentioned at the beginning of the *Broom Tree* chapter with a deceptively lighthearted disapproval have shown themselves to be quite serious, after an amorous excursion with Yūgao, the eponymous twilight beauty herself, ends with only one of them alive and Tamakazura a child orphan bound for Kyushu: “No doubt he understood by now how painful a secret love can be.” Directly after this summation, the intervening voice continues more openly, closing the chapter (fig. 3):

*I had passed over Genji's trials and tribulations in silence, out of respect for his determined efforts to conceal them, and I have written of them now only because certain lords and ladies criticized my story for resembling fiction, wishing to know why even those who knew Genji best should have thought him perfect, just because he was an Emperor's son. No doubt I must now beg everyone's indulgence for my effrontery in painting so wicked a portrait of him.*³⁸

「かやうのくたノしきこと」は、源氏の君のかうしよくの道のいろ／＼のことなり。あまりにはいかでともらせは、また「物ほめかちなり」と世人のいへは、かきとむるよしをいへり。世中の人々の心のわりなきをいへり。これも大かたこゝろえかたければ、しるしをけるはかりなり。³⁹

Here “trials and tribulations” refers to various episodes connected with Genji’s amorous pursuits. It is an explanation of why she recorded [such things]: were she to leave them out as going too far, then people would say she “ha[d] thought him perfect.” She is speaking of the senselessness of people’s hearts in general. Here, too, I make note of this only because the sense [of the passage] is as a whole difficult to understand.

—*Problem Passages* #007 (from “The Twilight Beauty”)

Absence of an evidenced interest is only weak evidence of its absence, especially in a commentary of only 124 entries, but the note that this entry exists “only because the sense [of the passage] is as a whole difficult to understand” is striking. At the least it weakens the argument for narratological issues *per se* being the target of Sōgi’s attention to such moments of reader-directed speech. We notice the same pattern as in entries #001 and #003: identification is here, too, accompanied by explanation of the discourse’s purpose. It is interesting to contrast articulation of “the senselessness of people’s hearts” with Kaneyoshi’s near-contemporary and quite different sense of the passage:

此一段は、物語の作者の詞也。御門の御子なりとも、よき事はよき事、あしき事はあしき事にてあるへきを、一かうにかきもらせは、わたくしあるやうなれば、ありのまゝにしるしをきたるとなり。〔後略〕⁴⁰

³⁸ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 80; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, pp. 195–196.

³⁹ Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fols. [7v–8r].

⁴⁰ *Kachō yosei*, p. 45b. Kaneyoshi continues here with an interesting consideration of a significant end-chapter variant characteristic of the Kawachi-bon recension of the *Genji* text (cf. Katō, *Kōi shūsei*, p. 45). Though the variant is not unknown in texts of the Aobyōshi-bon recension (cf. Ikeda, *Kōi-ben*, 0146:5–6n), it is not quoted in Sōgi’s lemma here (which, as seen above, is lengthy

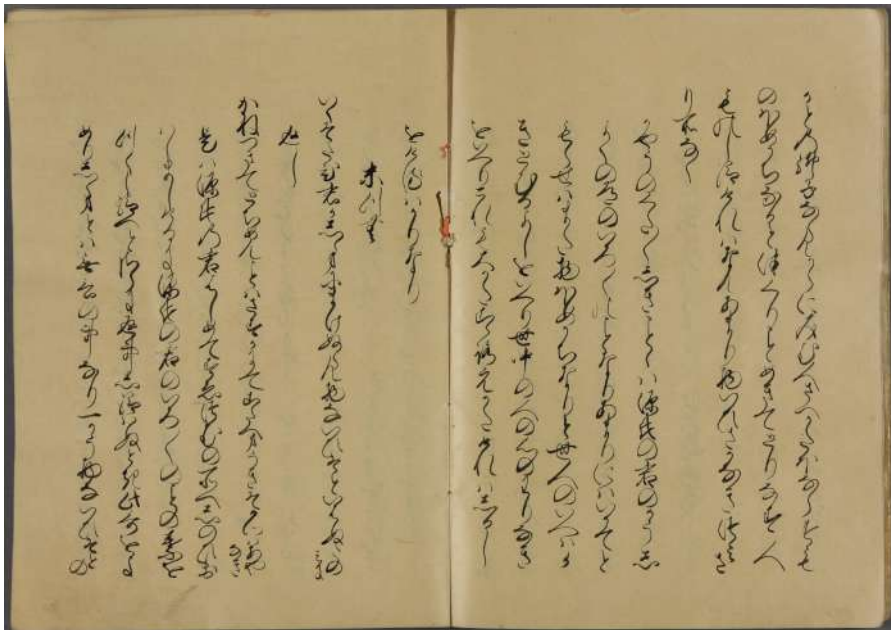
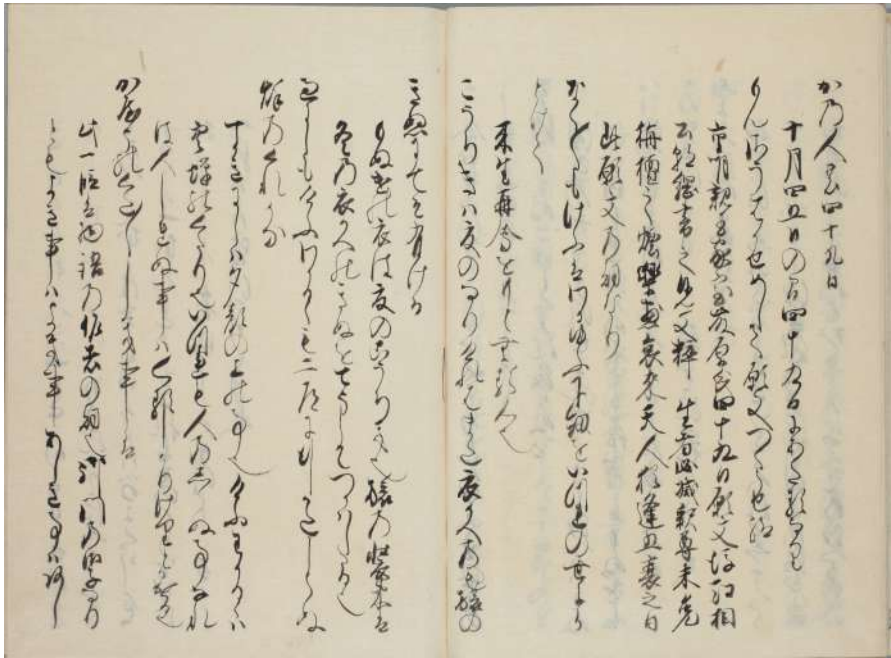


Figure 3a (above) and 3b (below). Comparison of *Problem Passages* #007 (from “The Twilight Beauty”) with the corresponding entry in Ichijō Kaneyoshi’s 一条兼良 commentary *Lingering Florescence* (*Kachō yosei* 花鳥余情). See p. 144.

Figure 3a: *Lingering Florescence*, vol. 3, fols. [18v–19r]. National Institute of Japanese Literature. From line 9, left.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200016469> (image 93).

Figure 3b: *Problem Passages* (Kuyō Bunko MS^{ko}), fols. [7v–8r]. Waseda University Library. From line 1, right.

This whole passage is the author of the tale speaking. It says that she recorded things just as they were, because even in the case of an emperor's son, right is right and wrong is wrong, and to consistently leave things out of her account would give the impression of partiality. . . .

—*Lingering Florescence*, vol. 3 (from “The Twilight Beauty”)

Noting in passing the reminder that such authorial effusions are a basic feature of the text and hardly the concern or discovery of Sōgi alone, on this passage Kaneyoshi's comment has quite a different take. It is tempting to dismiss this as moralizing—which undoubtedly it is—but it should not go unremarked that in Kaneyoshi's analysis this is presented as the author's internal reasoning. Nor is his reading of an “interlinear” message here as something intended by the author without its arguments. Was not “No doubt he understood by now how painful a secret love can be” plausibly such a case of message? Nonetheless it is a reading very much between the lines: “because . . . right is right and wrong is wrong” does not surface in the text. In contrast the sequence “I had passed over . . . out of respect . . . I have written . . . now only because certain lords and ladies criticized . . . No doubt now I must beg everyone's indulgence for . . . such a wicked portrait” can very reasonably be described as the plaint of one feeling (even if without justification) plagued by the inconstant “senselessness” of public opinion: the theme is clearly present in the text. The readings are even compatible, but the exegetical methods they represent are regardless distinct.

Problem Passages contains one final consideration of such a technique, at the beginning of the “Bamboo River” chapter, long after Yūgao's death and Tamakazura's successful return to the Capital—indeed, the “successor Chancellor” here mentioned is her husband. Hikaru Genji too has passed, Genji's tale becoming now that of his descendants:

*[This is gossip volunteered by certain sharp-tongued old women, once of the successor Chancellor's household, who lingered on after him. It is nothing like the stories about Lady Murasaki, but] they held that some things told of Genji's descendants were wrong, and hinted that this might be because women older and more muddled than they had been spreading lies. One wonders which side to believe.*⁴¹

「あやしかりける」といふは、いまの「わるこたち」かあやしかりけるなるへし。「いつれかまことならん」とかける、むらさき式部か心なり。此まきはしめ、こゝまでさらにふしんをはるけかたき也。これまでは、紫式部かわか身はよからぬことにしるせる詞ともなり。⁴²

and spans in full the characteristic Aobyōshi-bon ending). With no direct comparison possible, I have here omitted it, though as Sōgi was undoubtedly aware of the variant, and indeed makes explicit reference to (more minor) variants elsewhere in *Problem Passages* (e.g., #060/fol. [44v], #113/fol. [72r]), his silence here is intriguing.

⁴¹ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 805; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 59. For this entry Sōgi's lemma begins only after the bracket: making an exception, I have here quoted the preceding sentences for clarity.

⁴² Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fols. [58r–58v].

In “hinted at” here, the ones doing the hinting are the just-mentioned “certain sharp-tongued old women.” The one writing “One wonders which side to believe” is Murasaki Shikibu. When the beginning of this chapter reaches this point, the confusion only gets harder to clear up. Up to this, the passage has consisted of Murasaki Shikibu making herself out to be someone bad.

—*Problem Passages* #086 (from “Bamboo River”)

此巻のはしめより今の詞にいたるまで、いたく何の故ともきこえざるにや。さためて意趣ある歟。若、此物語の時代、人の准拠など、其人とはみゆれとも、一篇ならざる事おほし。仍、其難をのかれんために、如此書之歟。⁴³

From the beginning of this chapter up to this passage, it seems to make no sense at all. Yet there is likely some intent behind it. Maybe it was that, for the era of this tale, when it came to characters, etc., being based after various models, accurate as they might be, there were still many points on which that was not the case. Perhaps it was to avoid such criticisms that [Murasaki Shikibu] wrote like this.

—*River and Sea*, vol. 16 (from “Bamboo River”)

〔前略〕さりなから、たしかに人のしらぬ事なれば、人のひかおほえにやなとおほめきてかきなせり。この一たんのことは、心詞あひかねて、凡慮およひかたし。『〈◦河〉海』の説、あやまれりといひつへし。⁴⁴

... All [those family secrets] notwithstanding, since certainly people would have no way of actually knowing [the truth], [Murasaki Shikibu] wrote here in such a way as to hint that it might all be groundless suspicion. This paragraph as a whole, in its meaning as much as in its language, is beyond the reach of the average mind. The theory of the *River and Sea* [commentary] is to be rejected as wrong.

—*Lingering Florescence*, vol. 24 (from “Bamboo River”)

Truly a passage worthy of the word *fushin*, it seems to have roused all three of our commentators to fall back on methods broadly considered typical of each. Famous for his reading heuristic of seeing historical models (*junkyo* 准拠) sublimated beneath the era, events, and characters of the *Genji* surface, Yoshinari wonders in the *River and Sea* if this narrative voice represents, straightforwardly, a mid-compositional authorial response to (anticipation of?) criticisms of model inaccuracy. The abbreviated beginning of the *Lingering Florescence* comment omits a lengthy consideration by Kaneyoshi of precisely which “things told of *Genji*’s

⁴³ *Kakaishō*, p. 539a.

⁴⁴ *Kachō yosei*, p. 279a-b, whose transcription has: 凡慮およひかたし◦海の説あやまれり. The above notation 〈◦河〉 represents a compromise between punctuation-assisted readability (see note 12) and text-faithful transcription. At issue is a case of textual repair. Ii Haruki’s transcription reveals that at this point in his base-text, we find a brief interlinear suppletion (河), whose point of insertion into the main column-line of text is indicated there by a small circle (◦)—an extremely common method of manuscript correction. While adopting this emendation into my punctuated text above, I have retained the circle to indicate the suppletion’s existence, and added brackets 〈〉 to mark its precise extent.

descendants were wrong,” which he takes quite literally to refer to incorrect public perceptions about descent—e.g., the belief that Kaoru is Genji’s son (though actually Kashiwagi’s), that Reizei is the Kiritsubo Emperor’s son (though actually Genji’s), etc. All in all, he sees the author as “wr[iting] in such a way as to hint” (*obomekite kakinaseri* おほめきてかきなせり). There is something similar in this to his “interlinear” reading of entry #007 above, though here the intended message is of a higher order, “beyond the reach of the average mind (*bonryo oyobigatashi* 凡慮およひかたし).” If he explicitly rejects Yoshinari’s theory, he does not reject the latter’s principle: “Yet there is likely some intent behind it” (*sadamete ishu aru ka* さためて意趣ある歟).

Most importantly, while neither earlier commentator mentions Murasaki Shikibu by name, it is nonetheless clear that they understand this intervention in the story as her own voice. Sōgi cannot be distinguished from them on this point. Indeed, Sōgi’s comment here is somewhat difficult to parse, and harbors an important variant.⁴⁵ It seems to mean that up until “One wonders which side to believe,” Shikibu wrote in the persona of “someone bad” (as in entry #001 in the persona of “someone long ago”), but that in this final line “The one writing . . . is Murasaki Shikibu” (*kakeru, Murasaki Shikibu ga kokoro nari* かける、紫式部か心也). This much can be concluded: Sōgi does not depart from the text in his explanations, a point on which one clearly can distinguish him from his interlocutors.

This, and not a particular interest in narrator voice, is the clear thread running through the four examples examined here. Accepting Sōgi’s judgment that all constitute *fushin*, while four out of 124 entries does mark a high visibility for the technique of direct narrative voice in his commentary, the concentration just as plausibly represents simply the particular difficulty of such passages for his students (cf. Kaneyoshi’s “beyond the reach of the average mind”), rather than a characteristic of Sōgi’s method itself. The most consistent and unique characteristic in his method seems to lie rather in its closeness to the text.

3. Character Psychology

How does this closeness to the text in Sōgi’s method—as Sōgi’s method?—connect with the concern for character psychology and context which earlier scholarship has discovered in his work? Unlike the case of authorial interven-

⁴⁵ The Kurokawa Bunko MS has here: これまでは、紫式部か我身はかゝぬ事にしなせる詞共也 (Korenaga’s transcription, part 2, p. 42, has 詞の也, which I have corrected against the facsimile edition; see Shirai, *Genji fushin shōbutsu*, fol. 50r). Instead of “making herself out to be someone bad,” this would yield “making it seem as if she is not the one writing [the tale].” Such a reading would echo entry #001 above, though is perhaps suspect for just that reason. The Iwase Bunko Library MS transcription by Yoshizawa (p. 373a) has ふかゝらぬことに, which is hard to make sense of (“making herself out to be someone shallow?”), but further investigation will have to await confirmation of the Iwase Bunko Library MS itself, and beyond that a collation of all extant manuscripts.

tion, such a concern does seem more characteristic of Sōgi in comparison to other commentators. An illustrative example is the *fushin* about the color of Hikaru Genji's mourning robes when the great love of his life, Lady Murasaki, dies (fig. 4):

*He wore a rather darker shade than when he had spoken of "light gray."*⁴⁶

これは、あふひの上、その巻にうせ給ひし時、源氏の君の御ふくの時の哥に、「かきりあれはうすゝみ衣あさけれと涙そ袖をふちとなしける」。「かきりあれは」とは、はつとのこと也。いま、紫上のうせ給ふときに、「うすゝみ」なるへけれと、心さしのせつなるにより「こまやかに」そめ給へり。さるにより、「うすゝみとの給ひしかと」ゝはかけり。⁴⁷

This [is] in the “Heart-to-Heart” chapter, after Lady Aoi dies, in the poem Lord Genji composes when donning robes of mourning: “I may do no more, and the mourning I now wear is a shallow gray, / but my tears upon my sleeves have gathered in deep pools.”⁴⁸ “I may do no more” is a reference to the law (i.e. prescribing the mourning garb appropriate for, e.g., a father, a wife, etc.). Here on the occasion of Lady Murasaki's death, while it should be, again, “a shallow gray,” [Genji,] given the depth of his feelings for her, has dyed [his mourning garb] “a rather darker shade.” This is why [the author] wrote, “than when he had spoken of ‘light gray.’”

—*Problem Passages* #073 (from “The Law”)

〔前略〕葵巻に葵上うせてのち、六条院、「われさきたゝましかはふかくそゝめ給はまし」とありし此事也。哥に、「かきりあれはうすゝみ衣あさけれと」ゝあり。⁴⁹

... [This] is that occasion in the “Heart-to-Heart” chapter, after Lady Aoi's death, where Rokujō-in (i.e. Genji) [thinks] “her gray would have been still darker if she had outlived him” (i.e. Aoi's, as a wife in mourning for a husband).⁵⁰ In the poem there: “I may do no more, and the mourning I now wear is a shallow gray[, / but my tears upon my sleeves have gathered in deep pools.]”

—*River and Sea*, vol. 15 (from “The Law”)

In the broadest sense, there is complete agreement about the interpretation: “when he had spoken of . . .” refers to Genji's poem on the occasion of the death of his first wife, Lady Aoi 葵. On closer inspection, however, while the *River and Sea* commentary seems interested to give the prose context for the poem referenced from the “Heart-to-Heart” chapter—possibly merely as an in-

⁴⁶ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 762; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 516. As can be gleaned from its re-quote in the following comment text, Sōgi's lemma has not “than when he had spoken of” (の給ひしよりは, as in the SNKZ text) but “though he had spoken of” (の給ひしかと, see fig. 4b, from the right, line 5). I have kept to Tyler's translation here despite the discrepancy it produces.

⁴⁷ Kuyō Bunko MS^{hō}, fols. [50v–51r].

⁴⁸ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 178; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, p. 49.

⁴⁹ *Kakaisshō*, p. 522a.

⁵⁰ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 178; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, p. 49.

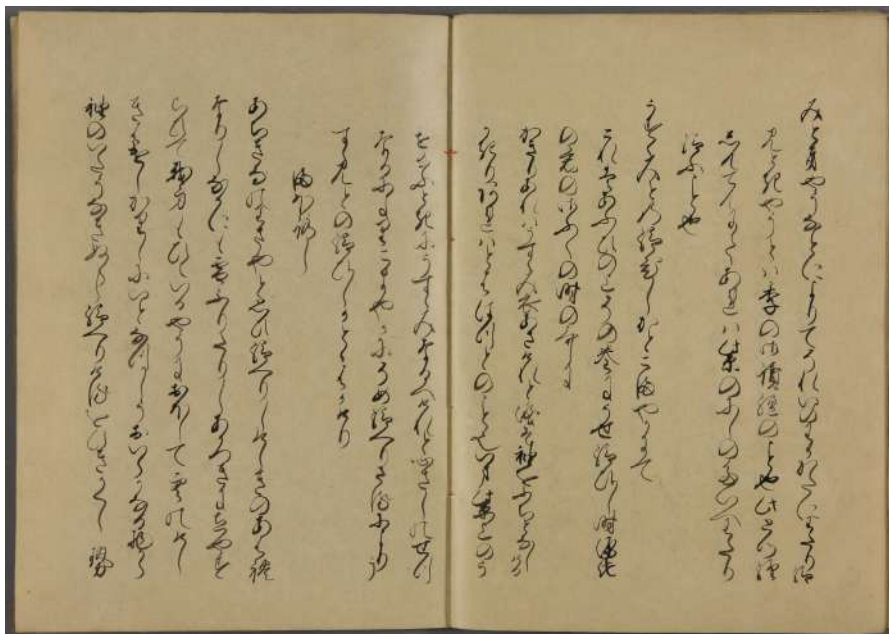
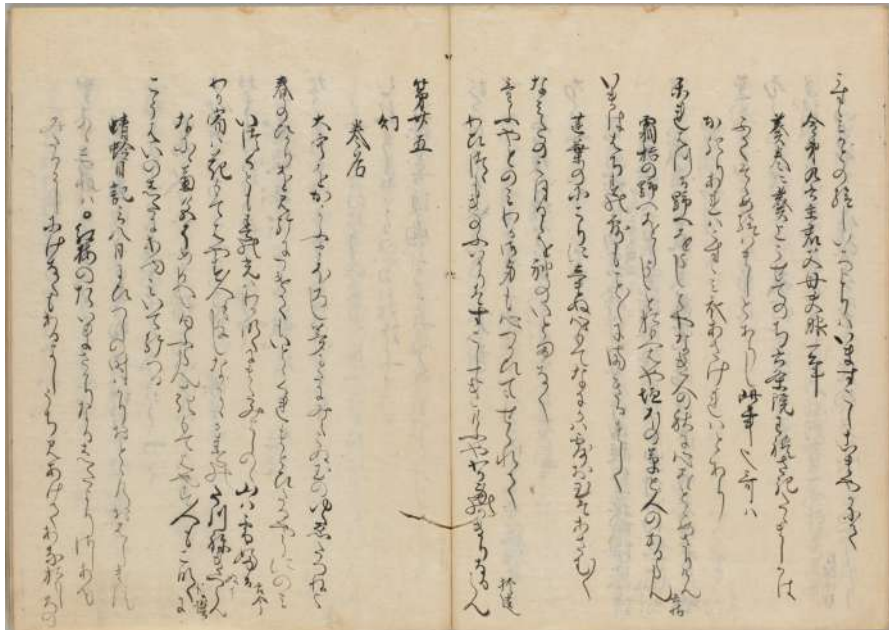


Figure 4a (above) and **4b** (below). Comparison of *Problem Passages* #073 (from “The Law”) with the corresponding entry in Yotsutsuji Yoshinari’s 四辻善成 commentary *River and Sea* (*Kakaishō* 河海抄). See p. 149.

Figure 4a: *River and Sea*, vol. 15, fols. [19v–20r]. National Institute of Japanese Literature. From line 1, right.

<https://doi.org/10.20730/200003419> (image 585).

Figure 4b: *Problem Passages* (Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}), fols. [50v–51r]. Waseda University Library. From line 5, right.

dex to its location, possibly as an aid to interpretation (an explanation of the reason for Genji's musing "I can do no more")—Sōgi's method takes an altogether different turn. The difference is highlighted further by what I have omitted: Yoshinari begins here with a *kanbun* 漢文 citation of mourning codes entirely missing from Sōgi's considerations. The *Lingering Florescence* commentary's statement here consists entirely of such a quotation (albeit one different from Yoshinari's).⁵¹ Nor should this be dismissed as a merely ancillary concern. However laconically, a bare citation of mourning customs remains an implicit comment on Genji's refusal to here follow them. It represents neither disinterest in his actions, nor disinterest in character. Nonetheless, it stands as a method dependent on the leverage of extra-textual sources.

Sōgi in fact notes these sources ("this is a reference to the law"). Yet just as in his explanations of the authorial voice, here he shifts to the implication of linking these two scenes of mourning: "given the depth of his feelings." Genji "has dyed [his mourning garb] 'a rather darker shade.'" Where his earlier poem's "I may do no more" had protested a deeper feeling lamentably restrained by the law, here his actions stand as witness. In fact, to convey such a difference "is why [the author] wrote" thus. There is every reason to believe that earlier interpreters were sensible to the meaning of Genji's defiant "darker shade" of mourning, and the argument might well be made that citation of the substance of the law to which Sōgi only gestures is the better, more helpful explanation. Yet his method remains here entirely within the text. Such contrasts with his predecessors are precisely why his discussion of character emotions has seemed so characteristic of his work—where others cite, Sōgi seems to give attention to the personages on stage.

There is a difficulty in this for us: unlike with clearly extra-textual documents like these mourning codes, when an interpretive question turns entirely on elements internal to the text, the motivation for a given reading is not always easy to distinguish: does it lie in the exegete's concept of a given character, or in the turn of a given phrase? Yet there are examples where the distinction can be made. One *fushin* in particular, on its face seemingly concerned entirely with the "subtle movements" of psychology, may serve as demonstration. It involves nothing but the shadow-play of a moment's vacillation. In the wake of a frightful typhoon, Yūgiri 夕霧 accompanies his father Genji on a round of visits to check in on the latter's various ladies in the aftermath, all the while himself delayed in writing an inquiring letter to his own beloved Kumoinokari 雲井の雁, whose father's opposition makes a visit impossible. With the day well past he finds himself at the chambers of his little half-sister the Akashi Princess. Chatting with her women, impatience prompts him to ask suddenly for writing paper and an inkstone:

⁵¹ *Kachō yosei*, p. 267a.

*One went to a cabinet and took out a roll of paper that she gave him in the inkstone box lid. “Oh, no,” he said, “I would not presume.” Still, he felt a little better when he considered where the lady in the northwest stood, and he proceeded with his letter.*⁵²

これは、野わきのあした、明石のひめ君のかたに夕きりの君おはしたるつゐてに、ふみかき給てむとてこひ給へるに、とりいてたるを、「いな、これはかたはらいたし」とは、ひけの心也。されと、明石のうへの是をきゝて、いたしたるかみにかき給はずは、ふみやり給かたの人、させる人にもなきやとおほさん、とおほす心也。「北のおとゝ」は、あかしのうへのおはするかたなり。又いはく、「かたはらいたし」とは、すこしれいきの心也。されとも、あかしのうへのほとおほすに、「なめ」におもひなしてあそはしけるにや。⁵³

This is the morning after the typhoon when Yūgiri, while paying a visit to the chambers of the Akashi Princess (i.e. Genji's daughter by Lady Akashi), takes the occasion to ask [for paper and ink], to write, he says, a letter then and there. The sense of his “Oh no” “I would not presume” when these are brought out to him is [a gesture of] self-effacement. Should, however, [the mother] Lady Akashi hear of this, and he himself forgo using the paper brought out to him to write, then she will think, he thinks, that the letter's addressee must not be anyone particularly important. That is the sense here. “[I] he lady in the northwest” refers to where Lady Akashi lives. Others say that his “I would not presume” is a bit of politeness, but that he decided he “felt a little better” when he considered Lady Akashi's position.

—*Problem Passages* #040 (from “The Typhoon”)

The paper comes directly from his half-sister's own cabinet (*mizūshi* 御厨子): should he refrain? “[H]e considered where the lady in the northwest stood, and he proceeded with his letter.” The *River and Sea* commentary does not even have an entry on the passage. Kaneyoshi offers only: “He says this comparing Kumoinokari with the standing of Lady Akashi.”⁵⁴ This aligns with Sōgi's final, tentative, but probably also correct interpretation.

The root of the first, much more involved interpretation seems to lie in what underlies Tyler's “considered where the lady in the northwest stood”: *keita no otodo no oboe o omou ni* 北の大臣のおほえを思ふに. The *fushin* seems to stem from the question of how to construe *no oboe*, whether as a subjective genitive (the Lady Akashi's thoughts of . . .) or objective genitive (people's thoughts of Lady Akashi). Translations like Tyler's “standing” remove the syntactic ambiguity, but in the original it remains, and this longer interpretation flows from adopting the former construal. It is a valiant attempt to consider what “[Yūgiri] thinking about what [Lady Akashi] is thinking about . . .” might mean, and why considering this might make Yūgiri “feel better” (*nanome naru kokochi* なのめなる心地, lit. “feel slack”, i.e. be at ease) about writing. Sōgi's solution involves Yūgiri thinking that his reticence to use the stationery offered will give the Lady Akashi the

⁵² Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 494; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 283.

⁵³ Kuyō Bunko MS^{k6}, fol. [34v–35r].

⁵⁴ 雲井の雁をあかしのうへのおほえになすらへての給ふなり。 *Kachō yosei*, p. 196a.

wrong idea about his correspondent: “she will think, he thinks, that the letter’s addressee must not be anyone particularly important.” If nothing else, precisely Lady Akashi’s lack of exalted status makes such a supercilious view seem unlikely on her part, but while the explanation may misfire, the direction of the miss is only thereby all the more revealing: Sōgi’s “she will think, he thinks, that” (*obosan to obosu*) tracks extremely closely the original (*oboe o omou ni*). The driving motivation for his elaborate reading of Yūgiri’s hesitation is above all to make the text itself make sense. That his imagination turned to character psychology in a pinch is no doubt a reflection of his interest in, and comfort with, that aspect of the tale (perhaps a natural predilection for an interpreter inclined to stay within the text), but Sōgi’s exegetical point of departure lay elsewhere.

One final such example, another case of mourning: here Kaoru 薫 effectively locks himself away to brood over the death of his great unrequited love, Princess Ōigimi 大君. The crux of the *fushin* lies in a close combination of two poetic allusions in a single phrase, one Chinese, one Japanese (fig. 5):

... at last a twelfth-month moon, the one they always call so dreary, shone forth in cloudless splendor, and he rolled up the blinds to look out. A temple bell yonder rang out faintly, as when one lay with pillow raised and heard it announce the close of another day.⁵⁵

〔前略〕「遺愛寺鐘敲枕聴」といふ詩のことはと、「いりあひのかねのごゑごとにけふもくれぬ」といふ哥とをもつてかけり。「むかひの寺のかねのごゑ」に月さし出たる時分、「けふもくれぬ」とくはんし給ふ心なるへし。宇治のひめきみのうせ給ふて後、つれ／＼とこもり給ふ、そのあはれを思ひつゝけ給ふおりなり。まへのことはに「ひねもすになかめくらして」とあり。⁵⁶

... Here what [the author] wrote uses both words from the Chinese poem “Propping up my pillow, I listen to the bell of Yiaisi Temple . . .”⁵⁷ and also the *waka* poem “At each and every cry of the bell tolling dusk . . .”⁵⁸ The sense is that, with the moon shining down as “[the] temple bell yonder r[ings] out,” [Kaoru] ruminates over “the close of another day.” This is when, after the Uji Princess’ (i.e. Ōigimi’s) death, he is hiding himself away in melancholy, brooding ceaselessly on the tragedy. In the passage just before this it says, “all day while he gazed and dreamed.”⁵⁹

—*Problem Passages* #102 (from “Trefoil Knots”)

⁵⁵ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 910; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, pp. 332-333. Tyler has simply “the close of day” for the underlying 今日も暮れぬ, to which I have restored the elided も (i.e., “another day”).

⁵⁶ Kuyō Bunko MS⁶⁵, fol. [67r].

⁵⁷ The first half of a couplet taken from a poem by Bai Juyi 白居易, anthologized in the *Wakan roeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (554): 遺愛寺鐘敲枕聴 香鑪峰雪卷簾看 (*Wakan roeishū*, p. 292). The translation is Helen McCullough’s: “Propping up my pillow, I listen to the bell of Yiaisi Temple; / Rolling up the blind, I gaze at the snow on Incease Burner Peak” (McCullough, *Classical Japanese Reader*, p. 424n27).

⁵⁸ A partial quote of *Shūi makashū* 1329, found also (like the *kanshi* just referenced) in the *Wakan roeishū* (585): 山寺の入相の鐘のごゑごとに今日もくれぬときぞかなしき (*Wakan roeishū*, p. 307). “At each and every cry of the bell tolling dusk for the mountain temple, / “The close of another day . . .” —the very sound brings sadness” (translation by author).

⁵⁹ Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 910; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 332.

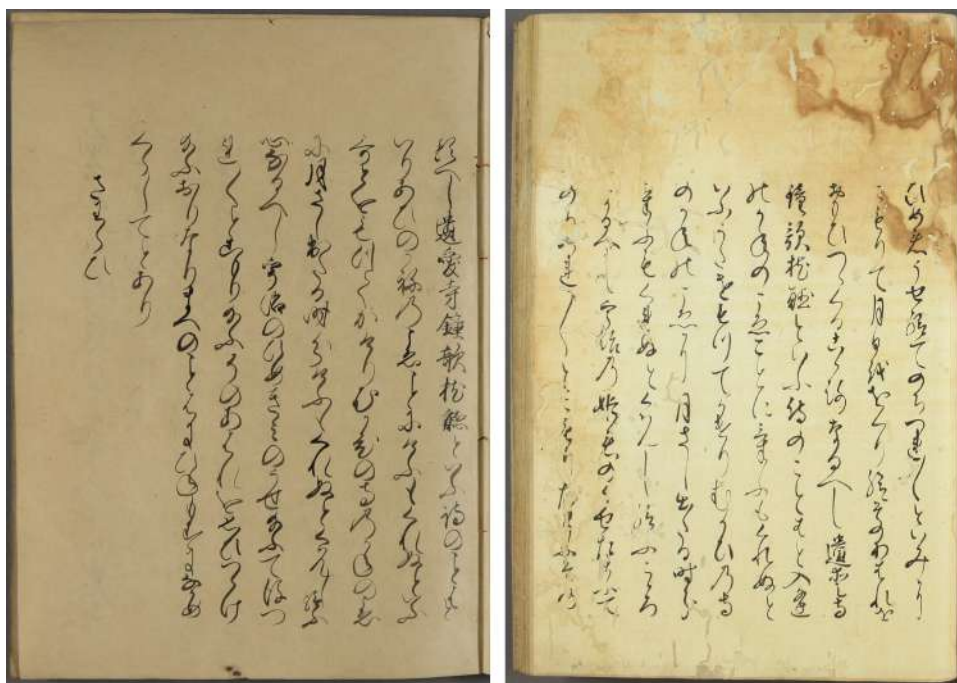


Figure 5a (right) and **5b** (left). Comparison of two different MSS of *Problem Passages* at entry #102 (from “Trefoil Knots”). See p. 153.

Figure 5a: Kuyō Bunko MS^{otsu} (“otsu-hon” 乙本), fol. [72r]. Waseda University Library.

Figure 5b: Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fol. [67r]. Waseda University Library.

At first glance, the focus of this entry seems to be Kaoru’s mournful emotions themselves, but this is not the case. The *fushin* centers around a question of time, in whose resolution Kaoru’s feelings have been marshalled as supportive evidence. Said question involves a contradiction between one of the poetic allusions identified and the time-setting of the story. This is a nighttime scene, as is clear enough from Tyler’s translation, but clearer still in the original, which has not “a twelfth-month moon,” but “a twelfth-month moonlit night” (*shiwasa no tsukuyo* 師走の月夜). In contrast, the poem to which “the close of another day” is said to allude is clearly a twilight verse, ringing out “the bell tolling dusk” (*iriai no kane* 入相の鐘). Indeed, even the “close” of the day is etymologically here its hour of *kure*, or “darkening.” In an age of endless electric light the sense is perhaps difficult to recover, but here in merely moonlit full darkness, Kaoru seems to think of a poem to the effect of “and so the sun sets on another day.”

The difficulty is not insuperable, and Sōgi uses Kaoru’s emotional state to clamber over it. The bell makes Kaoru “reflect” or “ruminate” (*kanzu* 観ず) over the day spent. This spending of it involved him “brooding ceaselessly on the tragedy,” as “all day . . . he gazed and dreamed.” “Day” here is not day by the shifting sundial, but a counting measure of mourning time. This subjective sense

of a “day” appears in the commentaries of Sōgi's disciples in an even more developed form. The younger *renga* master Shōhaku's 肖柏 (1443–1527) *Triflings with Flowers* commentary (*Rōkashō* 弄花抄, 1510) has “He thinks of the sense of the old poem in the bell of nighttime.”⁶⁰ Sanjōnishi Sanetaka in his commentary work *Rivulet* (*Sairyūshō* 細流抄, 1510–1520?) takes it even further: “To say this after it is nighttime is interesting. It has the sense of him thinking both ‘today too is [now] darkness’ and ‘today too has [now] passed.’”⁶¹ The vector of development is more-over clear: outward from questions first of text to questions of then character.

Character psychology is clearly a *forté* of Sōgi's interpretive practice—many more entries in *Problem Passages* replicate the pattern above of Sōgi discussing character subjectivity where previous commentaries are silent. Yet as we have observed, while these discussions may feature in the course of his arguments: they do not motivate. This was the case even in our first entry here (#073). Sōgi is not struggling to determine what Genji's mourning attire says about his feelings—that is not the *fushin* in question. Those feelings serve, rather, to explain the significance of an oblique color reference involving an earlier chapter. It is more than a heuristic of *closeness* to the text. The text *leads*.

4. “Meaning of Language”

Yet what can it mean for the text to “lead” in the case of questions specifically on the significance of the text's own language? Paradoxically this may be the easiest distinction to make. Let us consider a passage of (*waka*-discourse mediated) natural description of the Uji 宇治 Bridge. Kaoru and Ukifune 浮舟 view it together from the veranda, each alone in their darkening thoughts: Kaoru frustrated in the progress of his replacement-affair for the still-mourned Ōigimi, Ukifune at a loss in cross-pressured despair between Kaoru and Niou 匂.

*The hills were veiled in mist, and magpies stood on a sandspit, giving the scene a perfect touch . . .*⁶²

「かささき」とは、からすのこと也。いま、こゝにかけるは、つねのさきの事なりとみゆ。かきたかふる事にや。また、「さき」といふへけれど、何となく「かささき」といへはこと葉のおもしろきこゆれば、なすらへて物かたりのさくしやかきけるにやとみゆ。いかん。⁶³

⁶⁰ 古哥の心を、夜の鐘に思給也。 *Rōkashō*, p. 271a.

⁶¹ 夜になりていへる、おもしろし。けふもくれ、又けふもくれぬ、とおもふ心あるへし。 *Sairyūshō*, p. 381a. Alternatively, taking both instances of *kyū* verbally, the double meaning here proposed by Sanetaka might involve instead a perfective distinction: “today too is [now] passing” (*lit.* “darkening”) vs. “today too has [now] passed.”

⁶² Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 1023; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 6, p. 145. Tyler has “crested herons” here, perhaps because—there is no explanatory note—he takes the underlying *かささき* (usually understood as 鶺鴒, or “magpie”) to mean instead *kasa-sagi* 笠鶺鴒. I have amended to reflect Sōgi's understanding, but it is worth noting in passing that some manuscripts (outside the Kawachi-bon and Aobyōshi-bon recensions) do in fact have the reading *sagi* 鶺鴒 (heron) here (see Ikeda, *Kōi-ben*, 1887:12*n*).

⁶³ Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fol. [74r].

The word *kasasagi* means *karasu* (i.e. “crow,” a relative of the magpie). What is described here on this occasion seems to be the common heron. Perhaps this is a mistake by the writer. Alternatively, though it really should have *sagi* (heron) here, it seems that the tale’s author might have—for the somehow appealing effect, perhaps, of the word itself?—[merely] written (i.e. of herons) in the guise of *kasasagi*. Uncertain.

—*Problem Passages* #116 (from “A Drifting Boat”)

The *fushin* in question is one of birds—magpies (or crows) on a sandspit where herons should be. Prior commentators essentially reject this. The *River and Sea* commentary mentions a text that solves the problem by simply having the reading *sagi* instead: “There are texts that have ‘and herons stood on a sandspit.’ If one were to truly go by the sense of this sentence, this would probably be the most appropriate [reading] If there happens to be a text that reads *sagi*, perhaps that is the one to use.”⁶⁴ *Lingering Florescence*, while not reaching for alternative texts entirely, argues instead that while *kasasagi* clearly does mean “crow,” “[n]onetheless, in this tale, *sagi* are called *kasasagi*” For this he offers no evidence, but does then offer the example of a *waka* where *kasasagi* are, he opines, described as white (i.e. like herons).⁶⁵ In either case, one perceives a rebellion against something so discordant with artistic conventions (and observed nature?) that the text cannot be taken at face value. Either the text is itself to be deprecated, or it must not mean what it seems to mean.

At face value, however, is exactly how Sōgi tries to take this passage. He does admit the possibility of mistake—by Murasaki Shikibu herself, no less—but also forwards a reading to salvage the reading *kasasagi*. Alluding to what might be called the poetic heft of the word (in *waka*), he suggests that a metaphoric use might be involved: it is not that herons are actually called *kasasagi*, as per Kaneyoshi, merely that they are here “written in the guise of” (*nazuraete* . . . *kakitaru*) magpies. The “appealing effect” here referenced is uncertain, but the motivation for Sōgi’s reading is not: to make sense of the text as-is, come what may. This goes beyond “faithfulness” to a text, which frequently, even in terms very similar to Yoshinari’s and Kaneyoshi’s solutions here, might sacrifice a word, a phrase, a line to reasoned arguments from a principle of text-wide coherence, or coherence even with other contemporary texts. Sōgi’s approach here is far more stubbornly text-committed.

It is not an approach without benefits to recommend it. Emendation of the “more difficult reading” (*lectio difficilior*) runs the risk of arbitrariness, and no doubt many of Sōgi’s explanations of the “meaning of language” that have so impressed scholars going back a century stem precisely from the focused attention

⁶⁴「すさきにたてるさき」とかける本もあり。誠に此句の心によらは、尤可然歎。〔中略〕たま／＼「さき」とある本あれば、可用之歎。 *Kakaisbō*, pp. 583b-584a.

⁶⁵「かさゝき」といふは、先は鶺鴒のからすなり。しかれども、この物語には、鶺鴒をかさゝきといへり。〔後略〕。 *Kachō yosei*, p. 326b.

such “text-firstism” promotes. In some cases, a reading proposed by Sōgi—based on nothing but a talented will to make the text make sense—has been so compelling that it can be found in a commentary of the present day without the slightest sustaining evidence.⁶⁶ Here Ukifune, having survived the suicide to which scenes like that of the previous entry had driven her, finds the peace of her new anonymous life at the mountain retreat of Ono 小野 disturbed, again, by unwanted pursuit. Fleeing the attentions of a certain “Captain,” she takes desperate shelter in the old nuns’ room, only to find unreasoning terror there as well:

*The terrified young woman wondered whether tonight was the night when they would eat her; not that she much valued her life, but, as timid as ever, she felt as forlorn as the one who was too afraid to cross the log bridge and had to turn back.*⁶⁷

是は、手ならひの君、小野にて、大あまのふしたる所に、ね給へる時、としよりのをそろしけなるか、あまたゐて、此君をみやりたるなどを、おそろしくおほす時、このことを思ひ出給へり。「一橋^{はし}あやうかりて帰る」とは、むかし身をなけんとするもの、川をわたるにひとつはしのありけるを、わたるかあやうければ、立かへりしことあり、となり。それを我身によそへおほす心なり。此ふることしるせる物などはみえず。此物語に侍るうへは、うたかひなき事にこそ。此手ならひの君は、うち川に身をなけし人のおほえすなからへておはする人也。一たひ身をなけし人の、いま「此ものにやくはれむ」とおそろしくおほす時、一はしの事おほしいてたる也。⁶⁸

As for this, this is something Lady Writing-Practice (i.e. Ukifune) remembers when, in Ono, as she lays herself down where the old nun is sleeping, she finds herself in the midst of so many terrifying old women, whose glances alone fill the young woman with fear. What “the one who was too afraid to cross the log bridge and had to turn back” [refers to] is [the story] where once upon a time, there was someone on his way to throw himself in the river, but when he came to a certain log bridge crossing the river, he decided instead to turn back, because the crossing seemed too dangerous. The sense here is her thinking of the parallel [in the story] to herself. Nothing can be found that records this old story. Yet given that it appears here in this tale, there seems no reason to have doubts about it. This Lady Writing-Practice is one who did throw herself in the Uji river, but to her surprise ended up surviving and living on. When she thinks of how she, someone who has already thrown herself in a river once, now felt “terrified . . . they would eat her,” she remembers the story about the log bridge.

—*Problem Passages* #123 (from “Writing Practice”)

“Nothing can be found that records this old story,” Sōgi admits. Yet because it is “in this tale,” he feels there is no room for doubt. Strictly speaking, all that the

⁶⁶The interpretation below can be found in SNKZ 25, p. 329n29, where the lack of any evidence is granted, though there the source quoted is that of Sōgi’s disciple Shōhaku, from the commentary *Trifling with Flowers* (see *Rokashō*, p. 324a). Shōhaku duly identifies it as *shisetsu* 師説 (“my master’s theory”).

⁶⁷Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 1096; *Genji monogatari*, vol. 6, p. 329.

⁶⁸Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō}, fols. [78r–79r].

tale contains is the phrase “forlorn as the one who was too afraid to cross the log bridge and had to turn back”—no mention of the wish of that one to commit suicide, much less in a river, without which crucial point Ukifune has no reason to “remember” it as a parallel to her current situation. It also seems difficult to see this as a tradition, as a story Sōgi brought to the tale from some other source: his reasoning against doubt is, again, explicitly “that it appears here in this tale.” There is moreover no discernible precedent in previous *Genji* scholarship—both Yoshinari and Kaneyoshi mention it only as a problem for further research, offering no theories of their own. The only source seems to be Sōgi’s will to interpretation.

And indeed the reading is an arresting one. A former suicide here ironically afraid of death recalls another proverbial figure. To imagine in this unidentified proverbial an equivalent combination of suicidal intent with physical timidity, whose own proposed method of suicide moreover coincided with Ukifune’s own—for her to recall such a figure here, now, would introduce to this scene an element of critical self-awareness that wholly alters its import. Yet even if we call it genius, we may not call it careful philology. We cannot even call it an interpretation of the “meaning of the language,” which requires the evidence of a substantial textual support. It is simply Sōgi’s method: the mining from within the text of meaning it is assumed to contain—a close-reading textual maximalism.

Conclusion

The textual record of commentary dedicated to elucidating the *Tale of Genji* is characterized above all by its surprising continuity over many centuries of otherwise insistently dramatic social, political, and cultural upheaval. This continuity is all the more remarkable for its antiquity, the earliest extant example of the tradition, Sesonji Koreyuki’s 世尊寺伊行 (d.1175?) work *Genji Explanations* (*Genji shaku* 源氏釈) dating back to at least the mid-twelfth century, when the youngest grandchildren of Murasaki’s own generation were still on the edge of living memory. Nor does the tradition display the pronounced foreshortening so familiar from cultural histories of the West, where—reasonably or not—intellectual genealogies often skip through the millennium from “ancient” to “modern,” from Greco-Roman antiquity to the Renaissance, in a few brisk steps. Quite the opposite: across the woodblock-printed pages of the grand, synthesizing *Moonlit Lake* (*Kogetsusho* 湖月抄, 1673) commentary of Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1624–1705), which remained standard well into the Meiji period (1868–1912), exegetes of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries remain central voices in a voluble debate, one audible still in the footnotes of annotated editions today.

Among the most influential voices in that dialogue is Sōgi, though he is not often cited—indeed has not left behind enough material to be much cited—in the *Moonlit Lake* by name. Throughout this article he has been frequently compared with the voices of Yotsutsuji Yoshinari and Ichijō Kaneyoshi, for several reasons

explained above. Yet here one further reason might be raised: because *Genji* studies in Sōgi's aftermath were so dominated in commentary record by his students (and by their students and students' students in ever-lengthening chains), these two predecessor commentaries remain the better comparanda until the emergence—well into the Edo period—of newer schools. That *Genji* studies was able to continue on so serenely while accommodating such a change, and why it proved willing to do so—or perhaps, why its core constituents, interested educated *Genji* students, *willed* it to do so—is a mystery that remains unsolved. That Sōgi, and other *renga* masters from whom even less commentary material survives, are yet so incompletely understood, is a major reason for this unsolvability.

This article has tried, through examination of roughly 8% of the *Problem Passages* corpus (see **table 1**)—as it survives in one of nine extant manuscripts—to better understand the exegetical method by which Sōgi was led to such different results from previous commentators. As a provisional conclusion, he appears to have had a very different concept of the *Genji* as a work, combining a maximalist commitment to the letter of its text with a maximalist idea of that text's meaningfulness. Because no interpretive stance exists in a vacuum, this cannot be taken too categorically—Sōgi was restrained above all by the *intertextual* nature of the *Genji* text itself, and secondarily by its hoary exegetical history, of which he was no dismissive rebel. Nonetheless this conclusion seems to this author to have some explanatory power. On the one hand it identifies a common thread uniting what have been, empirically speaking, taken for discrete hallmarks of the Sōgi approach, and not only by those scholars herein cited: attention to the work's narrativity, concern for psychology, dedication to fine-grained explanation. All such elements come plausibly more fully into coherence in the light of a maximal fixation on details of the *Genji* text itself. On the other hand, and in broader view, it does not seem impossible that such a novel approach, with its axiomatic insistence on the text's inexhaustibility, might indeed prove to be so attractive—and so productive—a critical practice for so many for so long. At the very least, even Sōgi's own few, partial commentaries remain themselves a resource far from exhausted, and for yet greater clarity on the *Genji* studies transformation whose aftermath remains with us still, the prospects of future research seem hopeful.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Note: This article represents in part the results of research supported through a Grant-in-Aid (21K12939) for Early-Career Scientists from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), for the project *Sengoku-ki kotengakushi no kisoteki kenkyū: rengashi no Genjigaku o chushin ni* 戦国期古典学史の基礎的研究：連歌師の源氏学を中心に (“Basic Research on the History of Classical Studies in the Warring-States Period: The *Genji* Studies of *Renga* Masters in Particular”).

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- Note: Per custom, references to this standard variorum edition of the Genji base-text cite, not only page numbers (as they increase across volumes, which are accordingly omitted), but also (vertical) line numbers, e.g., 112:3, 1786:13, etc.*
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Table 1

Contents of *Problem Passages in the Tale of Genji* (Kuyō Bunko MS^{kō})

“*Taisei* Number” refers to the corresponding location (page:column) of each entry's lemma within Ikeda's variorum edition, *Genji monogatari taisei: kōi-ben* 源氏物語大成：校異篇.

<i>Tale of Genji</i> Chapter (N° of Entries)	Entry	Folio	<i>Taisei</i> Number
1. The Paulownia Pavilion 桐壺 (2)	#001	02r	0005:01
" "	#002	02v	0023:11
2. The Broom Tree 帚木 (1)	#003	03v	0035:01
3. The Cicada Shell 空蟬			
4. The Twilight Beauty 夕顔 (4)	#004	05r	0120:14
" "	#005	06r	0132:08
" "	#006	06v	0140:05
" "	#007	07r	0146:02
5. Young Murasaki 若紫			
6. The Safflower 末摘花 (2)	#008	08r	0213:09
" "	#009	09r	0226:13
7. Beneath the Autumn Leaves 紅葉賀 (1)	#010	10v	0251:08
8. Under the Cherry Blossoms 花宴			
9. Heart-to-Heart 葵 (5)	#011	11r	0292:05
" "	#012	12v	0309:08
" "	#013	13v	0309:06
" "	#014	14r	0311:09
" "	#015	15r	0311:14
10. The Green Branch 賢木 (3)	#016	16v	0336:04
" "	#017	17r	0340:03
" "	#018	18r	0369:01
11. Falling Flowers 花散里 (1)	#019	18v	0388:07
12. Suma 須磨 (3)	#020	20r	0426:11
" "	#021	20v	0428:14
" "	#022	21r	0433:11
13. Akashi 明石 (3)	#023	21v	0447:11
" "	#024	23r	0460:03
" "	#025	24r	0477:07
14. The Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi 滯標			
15. A Waste of Weeds 蓬生			
16. At the Pass 関屋			
17. The Picture Contest 絵合 (1)	#026	24v	0564:10
18. Wind in the Pines 松風 (2)	#027	25v	0585:12
" "	#028	26v	0594:03
19. Wisps of Cloud 薄雲 (1)	#029	27v	0629:13

20. The Bluebell 朝顔 (1)	#030	28 <i>v</i>	0649:05
21. The Maidens 乙女			
22. The Tendril Wreath 玉鬢 (3)	#031	29 <i>r</i>	0726:10
" "	#032	29 <i>v</i>	0726:14
" "	#033	30 <i>r</i>	0731:03
23. The Warbler's First Song 初音 (2)	#034	31 <i>r</i>	0775:11
" "	#035	31 <i>v</i>	0776:06
24. Butterflies 胡蝶 (3)	#036	32 <i>r</i>	0781:01
" "	#037	32 <i>v</i>	0782:12
" "	#038	33 <i>r</i>	0785:04
25. The Fireflies 螢			
26. The Pink 常夏			
27. The Cressets 篝火 (1)	#039	33 <i>v</i>	0857:12
28. The Typhoon 野分 (2)	#040	34 <i>r</i>	0877:06
" "	#041	35 <i>r</i>	0877:13
29. The Imperial Progress 行幸			
30. Thoroughwort Flowers 藤袴 (4)	#042	36 <i>r</i>	0920:10
" "	#043	36 <i>v</i>	0920:13
" "	#044	37 <i>r</i>	0923:11
" "	#045	37 <i>v</i>	0923:13
31. The Handsome Pillar 真木柱 (2)	#046	38 <i>r</i>	0935:08
" "	#047	39 <i>r</i>	0938:14
32. The Plum Tree Branch 梅枝 (3)	#048	39 <i>v</i>	0977:06
" "	#049	40 <i>r</i>	0981:09
" "	#050	40 <i>v</i>	0983:05
33. New Wisteria Leaves 藤裏葉 (3)	#051	41 <i>r</i>	1002:09
" "	#052	41 <i>v</i>	1003:05
" "	#053	41 <i>v</i>	1004:06
34. Spring Shoots I 若菜上 (4)	#054	42 <i>v</i>	1038:10
" "	#055	42 <i>v</i>	1109:02
" "	#056	43 <i>r</i>	1109:04
" "	#057	43 <i>v</i>	1109:07
35. Spring Shoots II 若菜下 (9)	#058	44 <i>r</i>	1139:10
" "	#059	44 <i>r</i>	1140:03
" "	#060	44 <i>v</i>	1150:08
" "	#061	45 <i>r</i>	1156:01
" "	#062	45 <i>v</i>	1160:06
" "	#063	45 <i>v</i>	1160:07
" "	#064	45 <i>v</i>	1163:08
" "	#065	46 <i>r</i>	1180:09
" "	#066	46 <i>v</i>	1189:01

36. The Oak Tree 柏木 (2)	#067	47r	1264:03
" "	#068	48r	1252:07
37. The Flute 横笛			
38. The Bell Cricket 鈴虫			
39. Evening Mist 夕霧 (2)	#069	48v	1359:08
" "	#070	49r	1359:10
40. The Law 御法 (3)	#071	49v	1386:10
" "	#072	50v	1387:09
" "	#073	50v	1396:13
41. The Seer 幻 (6)	#074	51r	1404:14
" "	#075	52r	1408:04
" "	#076	52v	1414:06
" "	#077	53v	1415:09
" "	#078	54v	1416:05
" "	#079	55r	1414:12
42. The Perfumed Prince 匂兵部卿 (2)	#080	55v	1432:05
" "	#081	56r	1437:14
43. Red Plum Blossoms 紅梅 (2)	#082	56r	1447:01
" "	#083	56v	1458:08
44. Bamboo River 竹河 (10)	#084	57r	1463:01
" "	#085	57v	1463:02
" "	#086	58r	1463:03
" "	#087	58v	1466:04
" "	#088	58v	1490:12
" "	#089	59v	1497:06
" "	#090	59v	1497:07
" "	#091	60r	1499:09
" "	#092	60v	1500:10
" "	#093	60v	1501:06
45. The Maiden of the Bridge 橋姫 (2)	#094	61r	1516:05
" "	#095	61v	1519:14
46. Beneath the Oak 椎本 (3)	#096	62r	1573:12
" "	#097	63r	1574:01
" "	#098	63v	1574:04
47. Trefoil Knots 総角 (4)	#099	64v	1611:10
" "	#100	65r	1612:03
" "	#101	65v	1625:13
" "	#102	66r	1664:07
48. Bracken Shoots 早蕨 (2)	#103	67v	1682:09
" "	#104	67v	1685:08

49. The Ivy 宿木 (7)	#105	<i>68r</i>	1701:01
" "	#106	<i>69r</i>	1702:03
" "	#107	<i>69r</i>	1704:04
" "	#108	<i>69v</i>	1708:02
" "	#109	<i>69v</i>	1718:07
" "	#110	<i>70r</i>	1726:09
" "	#111	<i>70v</i>	1778:12
50. The Eastern Cottage 東屋 (2)	#112	<i>71r</i>	1825:06
" "	#113	<i>71v</i>	1839:13
51. A Drifting Boat 浮舟 (3)	#114	<i>72v</i>	1864:04
" "	#115	<i>73v</i>	1869:11
" "	#116	<i>74r</i>	1887:11
52. The Mayfly 蜻蛉 (6)	#117	<i>74v</i>	1946:10
" "	#118	<i>75r</i>	1977:14
" "	#119	<i>75r</i>	1978:02
" "	#120	<i>75v</i>	1978:03
" "	#121	<i>76r</i>	1978:06
" "	#122	<i>76v</i>	1981:04
53. Writing Practice 手習 (1)	#123	<i>78r</i>	2023:13
54. The Floating Bridge of Dreams 夢浮橋 (1)	#124	<i>79r</i>	2057:02

The Reception and Reworking of *Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations*: Chinese Works in Japan as Mediated through Printed Buddhist Texts

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Introduction

The early modern period in Japan (approximately the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century) was an era during which a lively publishing culture flourished, and books produced then enjoyed an avid readership. Texts introduced from China and Korea also came to be re-printed in Japan, first in old moveable-type editions (*kokatsuji-ban* 古活字版) and later in woodblock-printed editions (*seiban* 整版) with glosses added.

A notable standout among all this mass of publications is the morality book *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzensho* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書 (The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations, hereafter called *Book of Exhortations*), which was originally published in China in 1407, during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). This twenty-volume Chinese work opens with a collection of edifying passages (*kagen* 嘉言) selected from Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist scriptures; these are then followed by a number of illustrative stories featuring various characters, adventures, and experiences.

Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫¹ was the first scholar to write about the appreciation of *Book of Exhortations* in Japan. Since then, Hwang Soyeon 黃昭淵 and Hanada Fujio 花田富二夫 have also published comprehensive discussions relating to *Book of Exhortations*. Hwang pointed out that the original Chinese version of *Book of Exhortations* influenced the development of ghost stories in Japan, as can be seen in *Otogi-bōko* 伽婢子 (1666). However, he states that it is doubtful whether the Japanese reproductions of *Book of Exhortations* had such a direct impact themselves:

¹ Sakai, *Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū*, p. 19.

From what Sakai has demonstrated regarding those locations where copies of it were held, it seems that the Chinese original was indeed available to a limited circle of people; nonetheless it is difficult to accurately judge whether the reception of *Book of Exhortations* was based on Japanese reproductions, on the Chinese original itself, or on some other text(s).²

For his part, Hanada states that he believes *Book of Exhortations* had only a tangential influence on early modern Japanese Buddhist stories about fate and karma.³

It should be stressed that both Hanada and Hwang, as commentators, consider *Book of Exhortations* to have been disseminated in Japan mostly through Chinese-language versions of the book, but nonetheless believe that its reception was also positively affected by other Chinese texts on morality. Furthermore, it should be noted that Hanada, Sakai, and Hwang all make mention of the fact that a domestic woodblock-printed re-production of *Book of Exhortations* was published in 1663 (Kanbun 寛文 3). As Sakai says, “A Kanbun 3 [1663] woodblock-print reproduction of *Excerpts from the Book of Exhortations* was being circulated among the public.”⁴ He seems to overlook, however, the fact that this text had been preceded by an earlier moveable-type edition of the Kan’ei 寛永 era (1624–1645).

The 1663 work discussed by Hanada, Sakai, and Hwang is not an edition of the original *Empress Renxiao’s Book of Exhortations*, but rather a domestic reproduction, with glossing points (*kunten* 訓点), of excerpts from that original in five volumes. Titled *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzen sho bassui* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書拔萃 (*Excerpts from the Ming Empress Renxiao’s Book of Exhortations*, hereafter referred to as *Excerpts*), this shorter work was published in Japan during the Kan’ei era as a woodblock-printed edition. One copy of *Excerpts* can be found in Waseda University Library.⁵ The edition represented by this Waseda copy, which was printed with the name of its publisher, reveals that the text was first published in 1663 by Nishida Shōbee 西田勝兵衛 in Kyoto. Another copy—of an edition without the publisher’s name—is found in Ryukoku University Library’s Shajidai Bunko 写字台文庫 collection.⁶ A further copy still is owned by Taisho University Library,⁷ though the full details of its publication remain unknown because the final fifth volume is missing.

The Kan’ei-era moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* is referenced only in Kawase Kazuma’s 川瀬一馬 evaluation below:

² 漢籍は酒井氏が所蔵されている所を示しているように限定された範囲の人達が受容したようであるが、『勸善書』の受容が和刻本、漢籍、またはその他の書物によるものか正確に判断するのは容易なことではない。Hwang, “Chūgoku zensho no juyō to kaidan,” pp. 188–190.

³ Hanada, “Kinsei shoki sangyō shisō no ichi-shiryō,” p. 123.

⁴ 巷間には寛文三年の翻刻本『勸善書抜萃』が流布している。Sakai, *Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū*, p. 19.

⁵ Call number: 口09 03328 1-5.

⁶ Call number: 354-33-W-5.

⁷ Call number: 109/210/1-4.

Though the [underlying] work itself is one compiled in that land (=China), because this [text] represents a collection of extracts selected from that work—and then annotated—by one of our own countrymen, I include it here. The text in question is an (excerpted) *Book of Exhortations*. It was probably printed in Kan'ei 1 [1624], seeing that it makes use of the same moveable typeset used to print *Denpō shōshūki*, *Hon'yaku myōgishū*, and other works published in Kan'ei 7 [1630]. . . . According to its afterword, dated to the fall of Eiroku 永禄 1 [1558], [the text] was put together by Master Yōgyō 要行 (Ichiu Nittō 一卯日統), a monk of Kenjitsu-ji 顕実寺 Temple at Hōjō-shō Matsuzaki 北条庄松崎 in Shimōsa 下総 Province, during a period of temporary residence in Izumi 和泉 Province at Chōgen-ji 頂源寺 Temple in Sakai 堺, and using selections from *Book of Exhortations* upon which he had given lectures.⁸

From Kawase's research, the following two points become clear. First, the moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* has long been overlooked. Second, this edition contains a postscript written by the text's editor, Nittō, which is not to be found in any of the woodblock-printed editions.

In this article, I discuss the following points regarding the reception and reworking of *Book of Exhortations* in Japan. First, I begin by pointing out the strong likelihood that the moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* was created as a result of significant interventions by the Nichiren 日蓮 sect. Second, I show why *Excerpts* did not influence the reception of *Book of Exhortations* in Japan, and also why in contrast the later compilation *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzensho kinrinshō* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書錦鱗鈔 (The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales, Kyōhō 享保 15 (1730)) is an example of a text that may indeed have had such an impact. With these points in mind, I reconsider *Book of Exhortations*' reception by introducing a new aspect of its Japanese publication history.

1. Background and Contents of the Moveable-Type Edition of *Book of Exhortations*

There are two known copies of the Kan'ei-era moveable-type edition of *Excerpts*, which has been overlooked in previous research. I have confirmed one copy in the Nagasawa 長澤 Bunko collection of Kansai University Library (hereafter referred to as the Kansai University copy)⁹ and another in the library of Taisho University.

The Kansai University copy is a complete text. It contains, moreover, a postscript by Nittō, the editor of the *Excerpts* collection, one which is not found in

⁸ なほこれは彼の地の編著をわが国人が抄出して注記を添へたものであるから、ここに附載する。それは「勸善書(抜書)」である。寛永七年刊伝法正宗記・翻訳名義集その他と同種活字印本で寛永初年の印行であらう。〔中略〕永禄元年仲秋の跋文に拠れば、下総国北条庄松崎顕実寺の住侶、要行律師(一卯日統)が泉州堺の頂源寺在住の際抜書きして講じたものを纏めたといふ。Kawase, *Zobo kokatsujiban no kenkyū*, pp. 834–835.

⁹ The Kansai University copy (call number: L23**C*3048–50) bears a slightly different title: *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzensho nukigaki* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書抜書。

the Kanbun 3 (1663) reproduction or other editions afterwards. The postscript reads:

余、和泉堺の頂源寺在津の砌、春より秋に至るまで、勸善書二十卷、時時管見を加へ、節節之を披閱す。漸次周覽し畢はり、全部書写せんとすれば、且つは広博にして為に遅筆に堪へ難く、且つは緩漫にして為に博覽に及び難し。愚意の思ふ所、短慮の及ぶ所、抜書する所の者五冊なり。近年、都鄙の間、学者翫ぶ所の章疏伝記数多有りと雖も、[1] 此の書未だ流布せず。尤も珍敷物語等、之有るか。暫く之を秘蔵し、[2] 聊かも他見に及ぶこと莫れ。仮令秘密深法と為すと雖も、漏れ散じて多く人口に有るは頗る無念なる者なり。秘する所は唯だ此に在るのみ。豈に永禄元年稔（戊午）仲秋中旬終なり。下総州北条庄松崎郷顕実寺住侶要行律師一卯日統誌す。

When I was staying at Chōgen-ji Temple in Sakai in Izumi Province, from spring to autumn, I would often pore over the twenty volumes of *Book of Exhortations*, occasionally adding my own observations [to the text]. Once I had finally finished my reading, I attempted to copy the whole thing, but it was an onerous task with my slow writing skills because of [the text's] sheer size, a difficult task with so much [text] to cover given my own slothful character. In the end, to the best of my limited understanding and bounded wisdom, I made a collection of excerpts in five volumes. Even though in recent years, both in the Capital and in the Provinces there are many commentaries and biographies indeed for scholars to amuse themselves with, [1] this text (= *Book of Exhortations*) has not yet been widely disseminated. Still, can there be any stories even more unusual [than the ones in this book]? For the time being, it is something to keep hidden, [2] and we should certainly not show it to anyone on the outside. However cryptic and esoteric it might well be, [this text] is still something it would be extremely regrettable to see leak out, and be bruited about by the masses at large. This (= the temple) is the only place where it can be kept secure.

As written by Master Yōgyō Ichū Nittō, a monk of Kenjitsu-ji Temple at Hōjō-shō Matsuzaki-gō 北条庄松崎郷, Shimōsa Province, at the end of mid-autumn in Eiroku 永禄 1 [1558].

From this postscript—especially the clauses “[I]his text has not yet been widely disseminated” and “We should certainly not show it to anyone on the outside”—it is clear that *Book of Exhortations* had indeed already been introduced to Japan by Eiroku 1 (1558), but had also not yet been widely disseminated, being kept in secret in the Nichiren-sect Chōgen-ji Temple. In other words, it is clear that the original text of which Nittō speaks here was not easily available to anyone outside of a restricted circle. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine that even potential readers at that time who enjoyed such access could have actually browsed the original text as needed and according to their interests, given that the text in this form was a large twenty-volume manuscript with a dauntingly vast amount of content. *Book of Exhortations* would probably therefore have been enjoyed through *Excerpts*, or through other morality books that it inspired.

Simply put, it should be presumed that the Japanese reproduction of *Excerpts*, being the most easily available version of the original work, played a central role

in that work's dissemination. In spite of this, as Hwang has pointed out, the influence of *Excerpts* on later generations seems to have long been underappreciated by scholars. This is no doubt owed to the fact that, while there are many examples of *Book of Exhortations* itself being used in publications of the early modern period, the same cannot be said in the case of *Excerpts*.

One reason for this lack of recognition afforded to *Excerpts* derives from the circumstances surrounding its compilation. In the postscript to *Excerpts*, we are told that its editor, Nittō, compiled it from a copy of *Book of Exhortations* that was held at Chōgen-ji Temple in Izumi Province (currently the city of Sakai, Osaka Prefecture). At the time, Nittō was a well-known Nichiren-sect priest, while Chōgen-ji Temple—where *Book of Exhortations* was held—had been constructed by the Nichiren priest Nisshū 日祝 (1427–1513) in 1533, and functioned also as a school for the sect. According to the *Nichirensbū jiten* 日蓮宗事典 (Nichiren-Sect Encyclopedia), Nittō, after studying at Mt. Hiei 比叡 during the Genki 元龜 (1570–1572) era, was assigned to Chōgen-ji Temple, where he edited the work *Nichiren shōnin ibun* 日蓮聖人遺文 (Documents on the Venerable Nichiren) together with monks Nichikō 日珖 (1532–1598) and Nichikō 日航 (dates unknown).¹⁰ It seems, in other words, that while in residence at that temple, Nittō was both working on compiling *Book of Exhortations* and editing *Nichiren shōnin ibun* at the same time.

Even from the postscript alone, therefore, it becomes quite apparent that *Excerpts* is a text closely associated with the Nichiren sect. The text's relationship with the Nichiren sect can also be inferred by analyzing the details of its compilation. To begin with, *Excerpts* was not assembled from *Book of Exhortations* in any mechanical fashion. This is clear from the fact that there are significant differences in the number of stories that *Excerpts* selected from each volume of *Book of Exhortations* (table 1).

Since Nittō advises in *Excerpts*, “We should certainly not show it to anyone on the outside,” it is not likely that the stories were selected with the intention of making them widely available. The selection appears, instead, to have been determined by the degree to which Nittō found the stories of personal interest or of utility in promoting the values of his sect.

The editing process that produced *Excerpts* therefore reflected both Nittō's own interests and his Nichiren sectarian purposes. This is made clear by differences in the number of selections taken per volume from the *Book of Exhortations* source text.

The most eye-catching numbers here can be found in connection with the eighth and twelfth volumes. *Excerpts* selected thirty-six stories from the twelfth volume of *Book of Exhortations* but only one story from the eighth volume. Why did such an imbalance occur?

¹⁰ *Nichirensbū jiten*, p. 683.

Table 1. The Selection Policy of *Excerpts from the Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations*: Breakdown per Volume

<i>Excerpts</i> Volume	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> (original)	
	Source Volume	Number of Stories Selected
1	1	9
	2	25
	3	16
	4	19
2	5	24
	6	4
	7	10
	8	1
3	9	14
	10	5
	11	30
	12	36
4	13	11
	14	16
	15	16
	16	25
	17	7
5	18	13
	19	20
	20	8

When I reviewed volume 8 of *Book of Exhortations* to determine the reason for such a disparity, I found that 108 of the 130 stories there included were related to the *Diamond Sutra* (*Kongōkyō* 金剛經). Significantly, the only story from volume 8 that was selected for *Excerpts*—Episode 103—contains the words “In front of the Buddhist altars, [the monk] burned incense and read the whole *Lotus Sutra* as well as the whole of the *Diamond Sutra*.”¹¹ Clearly, in order to be chosen for inclusion in *Excerpts*, the selected story required, at the very least, some mention of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Indeed, the focus Nittō places on the *Lotus Sutra* overall is striking. For example, seven of the ten episodes chosen for *Excerpts* from volume 7 of *Book of Exhortations* have their ultimate source in the *Lotus Sutra*. Moreover, if we compare the number of selections made from volumes 7 and 8 of *Book of Exhortations*, Nittō’s degree of preference for the *Lotus Sutra* is stark. This is in line with the predilections

¹¹ 就仏前焚香持誦蓮華經一部金剛經一七卷。Vol. 8, Episode 103. Though here the original has 一七卷 for the one-volume *Diamond Sutra*, I have translated above as if it read 一卷.

of the Nichiren sect—also known as the Hokke 法華 (or Lotus) sect—which favored the *Lotus Sutra* over all others. We can therefore conclude, quite correctly in my opinion, that Nittō was actively biased in his selections to the extent that he downgraded episodes taken from the *Diamond Sutra* out of his preference for those relating to the *Lotus Sutra*.

I believe it would also be fair to say that Nittō's selections from *Book of Exhortations* were motivated above all by his desire to reflect the interests of the Nichiren sect, to which he belonged, rather than reflecting any overwhelming desire on his own part to make *Excerpts* available to a wider public.

One reason for the confusion that has developed around this work can be traced back to the facts of its publication, which was undertaken without the permission of its editor. It remains unknown how the manuscript itself was spirited out of the temple and thereafter commercially printed; however, it can be presumed that this first edition—what is known as the moveable-type version—still had Nittō's postscript accompanying it, allowing its background to be inferred by anyone who might read it. This postscript, however, was omitted from the woodblock-version reprint of Kanbun 3. My presumption is that this happened because the new edition's publisher, Nishida Shōbee, hoped thereby to resolve the contradiction that would arise from his publication of *Excerpts* with a postscript that essentially said, "Do not show this to outsiders." And indeed, as a result of that postscript's deletion, most readers of *Excerpts*, even to this day, remain unaware of the work's deep connections to the Nichiren sect.

Previous studies have posed the question of why early-modern Japanese *ruisho* 類書—encyclopedia-style books in the Chinese tradition that classify and collate, by topic, information taken from a variety of sources—do not often use the moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* as a direct source. Per the results of my investigation, however, as noted previously, it would have been clear that this Japanese reproduction of the work, compiled by a Nichiren Buddhist monk, had certainly not been even-handed in its stance toward the "Three Religions" (*sangyō* 三教): Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Consequently, it is unlikely that intellectuals at the time, who preferred to use Chinese books in their original form from the continent, would have enjoyed a text with such a skewed background. As a result, it is rare to find references to *Excerpts* in early-modern *ruisho*.

2. *Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales: The Translation*

In the previous section, it was made clear that *Book of Exhortations* had found favor in early modern Japan without having to rely on *Excerpts*. More important was the 1730 reworking of *Excerpts* into another domestically-produced edition—a translation—in seven volumes, entitled *The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales* (hereafter *Brocade Scales*).

By referencing the catalogue of the Kansai University Library Nakamura Yukihiro Bunko 中村幸彦 collection, I was able to confirm that the copy of *Brocade Scales*

they possess contains all seven of the work's volumes, but lacks the original title on the cover.¹² Conversely, the Bukkyo University Library copy, though indeed lacking volume 4, includes—according to the library's bibliographic information—the cover title *Kange innen kanzen kinrinsbō* 勸化因縁勸善錦鱗鈔 (Karmic Admonitions: Exhortations in Brocade Scales).¹³

The preface to *Brocade Scales* indicates its year, place of completion, and author: “In the middle of the ninth month of Kyōhō 15 [1730], by Hōzui at the Raigidō in Kyoto.”¹⁴ The beginning of the text also bears the attribution “Hōzui of Raigidō, Kyoto” 神洛 来儀堂 鳳瑞, so there can be no mistaking the authorship. The edition provides, moreover, the details of its publication: “Co-published by Namikawa Jinzaburō, Kuriyama Uhee, Arakawa Genbee, Yagi Hachirobee, and Hirai Goroemon on the fifth day of the ninth month, Kyōhō 15 [1730], in the Imperial City.”¹⁵

Furthermore, it should be noted that *Brocade Scales* was listed in a book catalog (*shojaku mokuroku* 書籍目録) published in Hōreki 宝曆 4 (1754), under the section containing texts relating to the Pure Land sect (Jōdoshū 浄土宗; **fig. 1**). In the modern *Kokusho sōmokuoku* 国書総目録 (General Catalogue of Japanese Writings), it is also listed as a text of the True Pure Land (Jōdo shinshū 浄土真宗) sect, and likewise in the database built upon that catalogue text, the “Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books.”¹⁶

This wealth of data can be considered strong evidence of a heretofore unimagined aspect of *Brocade Scales*: namely that the work should, perhaps surprisingly, yet nevertheless unequivocally, be regarded as an example of a *kangebon* 勸化本 text—i.e., as belonging to that category of popular Buddhist books aimed at proselytization, which represented an important source of income for religious orders.

Ushiroshōji Kaoru 後小路薫 was the first scholar to identify *kangebon* as a distinct type of popular Buddhist text that appeared in the early modern period. Ushiroshōji went on to compile *Abbreviated Chronology of Kangebon Publications of the Early Modern Era* (rev. and exp. ed.) 増訂 近世勸化本刊行略年表.¹⁷ In the process of doing so, he concluded that the first *kangebon* was *Shūmon kōkaku* 宗門綱格 (1602), and that it was written by Nichiken 日乾 (1560–1635).

¹² Call number: ナ2-98-1.

¹³ Call number: 旧247.4 124. Details on the text can be viewed at: https://bukkyo.userservices.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=81BU_INST&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon&rft_dat=ie%3D21301624100006201,language%3Dja&svc_dat=CTO&u.ignore_date_coverage=true&vid=81BU_INST:Services&Force_direct=false.

¹⁴ 時に享保十五年九月中瀬神洛来儀堂において鳳瑞自叙。

¹⁵ 昔享保十五庚戌稔九月五日／皇都書舗／并河甚三郎／栗山宇兵衛／荒川源兵衛／八木八郎兵衛／平井五郎右衛門／同刊。

¹⁶ Given there as *Kange kinrinsbō* 勸化錦鱗鈔. See: http://dbrec.nijl.ac.jp/KTG_W_4352072.

¹⁷ Ushiroshōji, *Kangebon no kenkyū*, p. 607.

一	五	一	六	一	三	五	一	五	三	七	一
專	文	大	勸	和	阿	說	願	勸	圓	勸	香
雜	覺	經	化	字	彌	法	文	化	光	化	月
甄	行	略	富	二	陀	語	纂	演	大	錦	示
陶	畧	箋	樓	心	和	園	纂	能	師	鱗	示
篇	鈔	附	那	要	讚	鈔	註	鈔	祕	鈔	諸
		錄	那	集	集				傳		遺
			辨	集	註						事
			圓	誦	誦						
			隱	忍	忍						
文	南	是	圓	辨	誦	盤	一	不	隆	鳳	見
雄	真	湛	隱	阿	忍	潭	音	著	寬	凰	阿

Figure 1. Page from a 1754 (Hōreki 4) *shojaku mokuroku* 書籍目録 (book catalogue) listing Hōzui's 鳳瑞 compilation *The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales* (Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzensho kinrinshō 大明仁孝皇后勸善書錦鱗鈔). Here the text appears in the second column from the right, where its title is given as *Kange kinrinsho* 勸化錦鱗鈔. National Diet Library (call number: 856-35). <https://doi.org/10.11501/2539882> (image 19).

However, the full count of *kangebon* as Ushiroshōji defines them gives, I believe, an inflated total. In reality, most writers of *kangebon* were Pure Land-sect or True Pure Land-sect priests. A representative example is Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (d. 1691), who also worked on popular Buddhist commentary texts (*kusuimono* 鼓吹物) such as *Zen'aku inga kyō jikige* 善悪因果経直解, published in 1666. It is appropriate, therefore, to regard *kangebon*—in general—as a type of text closely connected with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sects. As I have discovered from my own research, as a general rule, *kangebon* usually actually include the word *kange* 勸化 in the title.

In the case of *Brocade Scales*, the Bukkyo University Library copy was titled *Kange innen kanzen kinrinshō* on its cover. It can therefore be regarded as a *kangebon* in the narrow sense, by which I mean literally having the term *kange* in its title. The preface states the book's purpose as follows (emphasis added; **fig. 2**):

然に永楽二年垂簾の余、三教の嘉言・勸懲の典故を輯略し、『勸善書』廿卷を撰で修身齊家の金鏡に備玉ふ。予、平日この編を閲毎に、一唱三嘆すといへども、黄口の児、其の理味を嘗めざるを憾み、平俗勸化の一助に充るの精要を撮り、五件の標題を立、聊か俚諺を備ひ、卷を七に分て『錦鱗鈔』と名け、一、二の童蒙に与んと筆を馳の刻み、書肆来て梓に登んと乞ふ。頻りに三辞すといへども、肯ぜず。敢て以て其の需に応ず。



Figure 2. Preface to *Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales*. Nakamura Yukihiko Bunko 中村幸彦文庫 Collection, Kansai University Library (call number: Na 2-98-1). <https://doi.org/10.20730/100060984> (images 3–4).

Thus it was that in the curtained leisure of Yongle 永樂 2 [1404], [Empress Renxiao] made her selection of edifying passages and stories to exhort and chastise from [the writings of] the Three Religions, compiling the twenty volumes of *Book of Exhortations* to fashion a “golden mirror of morals,” as an aid to man in preparing himself and his family for life. Whenever I read this book myself, at every recited passage I sigh three times, and have yet felt deep regret that the youth still green in experience remained unable to taste and savor its wonders. I undertook, then, to extract its essence, that it might serve **as teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners**. I set up five broad topics, employing the vulgar parlance here and there, and divided the whole into seven volumes and named it *Brocade Scales*, intending to give it to one or two young men still wet behind the ears. Yet just as my pen was thus speeding along, a publisher came and asked me if he might publish the thing. Three times I declined again and again, but he would not give up. I ultimately had no choice but to acquiesce to the request.

Per the underlined text, which states that the work is “teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners,” the author, Hōzui, makes it clear that the book’s purpose is *kange*—that is, to proselytize—but also to provide funding for the sect itself. Because these details suggest that *Brocade Scales* can be considered a *kangebon*, i.e., a type of text associated with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sects, it has been widely thought that Hōzui too was closely connected to one of these sects himself.

3. The Contents and Publishers of *Brocade Scales*

Even if *Brocade Scales* is a *kangebon*, however, it should not be immediately regarded as a work associated exclusively with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sect. In fact, the original text and sources for this work, together with the details of its publication, suggest quite the opposite: to wit, that we should view it, in fact, as a text closely related to the Nichiren sect of Buddhism.

Let us consider, then, the sources for *Brocade Scales*.

First, I would like to describe the original text of *Brocade Scales*. Unlike *Excerpts*, on which it was based, *Brocade Scales* does not make use of selections from *Book of Exhortations* strictly in their order of appearance in that source text, beginning with volume 1. What is more, it makes an effort to ensure that its sources are clearly indicated, including references for each story. For example, the end of one volume notes, “See volume 4 of *Book of Exhortations*.”¹⁸ Additionally, as we can locate a full 106 of *Brocade Scales*’ total 110 episodes in *Excerpts*, there can be no doubt that the former owes the majority of its lifeblood to the latter.

The problem, and some of the confusion around *Brocade Scales*’ provenance, arose because of that very feature of source-indication, whose details are often incorrect. As is clear from **table 2**, which shows cases of erroneous attribution in listed sources, such mistakes can be found in eight different stories. Among these, only Episode 32 in the “Karma” section (hereafter *Brocade Scales* episodes are cited in the format “Karma 32,” etc.)—described as “A story about being gored by a cow because of a lodging fee not paid” and found in volume 2—was listed correctly as coming from volume 19 of *Book of Exhortations*. Since the errors delineated here involve not only *Book of Exhortations* but also *Excerpts*, it seems that the author of *Brocade Scales* did not actually see the originals of either text. We might speculate that he quite possibly received *Excerpts* in an incorrectly copied manuscript form. Furthermore, the notes putatively accompanying such a manuscript probably contained an account to the effect that the various stories were recorded only in *Book of Exhortations*; leading him to write his own manuscript in reference to that information.

I would like to emphasize that it has been said that the reception of *Book of Exhortations* in the early modern period did not depend on the availability of the Japanese reproduction in *Excerpts*. Moreover, it is also puzzling that *Brocade Scales* has been considered a *kangebon* connected only to the Pure Land or True Pure Land sect because, as I have already pointed out, *Excerpts* was a Nichiren-sect text.

Next, I take a closer look at the contents of *Brocade Scales*.

It should be noted that even the ten episodes mentioned as being supplied with incorrect references in **table 2** include at least three episodes relating to merit or beneficence in connection with the *Lotus Sutra*. Were it the case that

¹⁸ 勸善書卷之四ニ見タリ。Vol. 1, Episode 10.

Table 2. Attribution Errors in *The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales*

Brocade Scales Episode (volume, category: <i>heading</i>)	Source as Listed in <i>Brocade Scales</i>	Actual Source in <i>Book of Exhortations</i>	Presence in <i>Excerpts</i>
Vol. 1, Karma 9: <i>A story about money saved by a wife that became a bug and flew away because of stinginess</i>	“ <i>Keishinroku</i> ” 稽神録	(not included, source unknown)	—
Vol. 1, Karma 10: <i>A story about a wife who became a large snake because she despised her husband</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 4	Vol. 15	—
Vol. 1, Karma 11: <i>A story about a family being eradicated because they cut down a sacred tree</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 4	Vol. 15	2–5
Vol. 2, Karma 31: <i>A story about a mother and child dying because they killed a sheep and cooked it on their birthday</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 19	Vol. 20	—
Vol. 2, Karma 32: <i>A story about being gored by a cow because of a lodging fee not paid</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 19	Vol. 19	—
Vol. 3, Miracles 9: <i>A story about a pheasant being reborn as a human being thanks to listening to the Lotus Sutra</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 9	1–7
Vol. 3, Miracles 10: <i>A story about lotus flowers emerging from a skeleton after death, thanks to the Lotus Sutra having been read</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 9	1–8
Vol. 3, Miracles 11: <i>A story about a woman who read the Lotus Sutra being saved from a boat accident</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 9	1–9
Vol. 4, Miracles 21: <i>A story in which problems all over the country were mysteriously resolved thanks to a profound sense of compassion</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 11	2–3
Vol. 4, Miracles 26: <i>A story about a poor woman who lived in a place without spring water being supplied with it through the Grace of Heaven</i>	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> , vol. 13	Vol. 12	3–23

Brocade Scales and its author, Hōzui, had a close relationship to either the Pure Land or the True Pure Land sect, this would be unusual, given that the *Lotus Sutra* is not associated with those sects. The basic Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect scriptures are rather the three major Pure Land sutras (*Jōdo sanbukyō* 浄土三部経): the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* (*Muryōjukyō* 無量寿経), the *Shorter Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* (*Amidakyō* 阿弥陀経), and the *Amitayurdhyāna Sutra* (*Kanmuryōjukyō* 観無量寿経). In both Pure Land and True Pure Land Buddhism, devotion to Amitabha (Amida 阿弥陀) is the first priority, and accordingly, in *kangebon* the main focus is

generally on the merits of Amitabha. However, none of the stories in *Brocade Scales* mentions Amitabha, providing yet further indication that its affinities with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sects are extremely slight. On the contrary, the content of *Brocade Scales* plainly indicates its deep affinities with the Nichiren sect. It is clear, therefore, that it cannot be regarded as a book connected with either the Pure Land or the True Pure Land sect.

Finally, I note the publishers of *Brocade Scales*. If we consider the character of *kangebon* in general, it seems natural to imagine that publishers who had already produced Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect *kangebon* in the past would have been engaged to work on *Brocade Scales* should it, too, have been a book associated with either of those sects. However, none of *Brocade Scales*'s five publishers had worked on *kangebon* before. Nor is this all: Namikawa Jinzaburō, a publisher well known to be connected with the Nichiren sect, is described as the publisher¹⁹ of *Brocade Scales* in 1730, in publication records of the time in Edo (i.e., the *wari-inchō* 割印張). Not only, then, is the leading publisher of *Brocade Scales* positively identified, but so too, by association, is the work's connection to the Nichiren sect. A survey of Namikawa Jinzaburō's publications is shown in **table 3**.

Of Namikawa's eight publications, five of which were clearly published before *Brocade Scales*, all were written by Nichiren Buddhist monks. In addition, the 1699 publication *Hokke gisho*, which is considered to be the earliest of his publications, was actually a commentary by the Chinese monk Ji Zang 吉藏 (549–623), and one dedicated moreover to the Nichiren sect's fundamental scripture, the *Lotus Sutra*, as the title clearly indicates. Six of the remaining titles can also be regarded as related to the Nichiren sect. This alone makes the depth of Namikawa's relationship with the Nichiren sect unmistakable.

Another clue is to be found in the titles in the list attributed to Nichidatsu 日達 (1674–1747), who was a well-known scholar of the Nichiren sect at the time. He was appointed head of Honkoku-ji 本国寺 Temple in Kyoto in 1720, and even after retiring in 1728, he pursued vigorous disputes in print not merely against the Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Kegon 華嚴 sects but also in opposition to Shinto and Confucianism. As one of the printers who helped publish Nichidatsu's texts, Namikawa Jinzaburō's cooperation in these attacks means that his relationship with their author was hardly a superficial one.

In addition, of Namikawa's publications, three were co-published with Yagi Hachirobee 八木八郎兵衛, who also co-published *Brocade Scales*. It is moreover known that another of the work's printers, Kuriyama Uhee 栗山宇兵衛, was likewise himself a publisher for the Nichiren sect.

In summary, therefore, I believe that *Excerpts* was used as the foundation for *Brocade Scales*. This seems reasonable because *Brocade Scales* employs stories from *Excerpts* that focus on merit; these stories are themselves derived from the *Lotus*

¹⁹ Asakura and Yamato, *Kyōbō igo Edo shuppan shomoku shinteiban*, p. 18.

Table 3. Namikawa Jinzaburō's Publication History and Collaborators

Year	Title	Author	Co-publishers
1699	<i>Hokke gisbo</i> 法華義疏	Ji Zang 吉藏	Yagi Hachirobee 八木八郎兵衛
1710	<i>Jippu nimon shiyōshō shukō</i> 十二門指要鈔集考	Nichikan 日觀	Katsura Jinshirō 桂甚四郎 Yamato Shōjirō 山戸勝次郎 Yoshida Kichibee 吉田吉兵衛
1712	<i>Min'yu keshuroku</i> 愍諭繫珠錄	Nichidatsu 日達	
1716	<i>San'in zatsuroku</i> 山陰雜錄	Nichidatsu	Hasegawa Chōemon 長谷川長右衛門
1720	<i>Shogaku shinanshō</i> 初学指南鈔	Mōri Teisai 毛利貞斎	Yagi Hachirobee
1720	<i>Shinbutsu myōron</i> 神仏冥応論	Nichidatsu	Yagi Hachirobee
1723	<i>Yobō guntan</i> 鷹峰群譚	Nichidatsu	Yagi Hachirobee
1729	<i>Zōshi</i> 象志		Kimura Ichirobee 木村市郎兵衛 Uemura Tōzaburō 植村藤三郎 Yasui Kahee 安井嘉兵衛
1730	<i>Kanzensho kinrinsbō</i> 勸善書錦鱗鈔	Hōzui 鳳瑞	Yagi Hachirobee Kuriyama Uhee 栗山宇兵衛 Hirai Goroemon 平井五郎右衛門 Arakawa Genbee 荒川源兵衛
1732	<i>Shugen koji binran</i> 修験故事便覽	Nichiei 日栄	
1733	<i>Ken'yō shōriron</i> 顕揚正理論	Nichidatsu	
1736	<i>Ketsumaku myōgenron</i> 決膜明眼論	Nichidatsu	
1738	<i>Ju fujū ketsugishō</i> 受不受決疑鈔	Nichidatsu	
1743	<i>Hokeke bonjaku setsubō</i> 法華本迹雪謗	Nichidatsu	Hinoya Rokubee 日野屋六兵衛
1746	<i>Kashaku bōbōshō</i> 呵責謗法鈔	Nippō 日芳	Hinoya Rokubee
1750	<i>Goshaku shōbōshō</i> 護惜正法鈔	Nichiken 日顯	Yao Seibee 八尾清兵衛
1794	<i>Kōyōgi</i> 光揚義	Nichiken	

Sutra, which, conversely, does not mention Amitabha. There is also the fact that *Brocade Scales* was printed by publishers known to be deeply involved with the Nichiren sect. There can be no doubt, therefore, that *Brocade Scales* is a Nichiren-sect publication and thus cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect *kangebon*.

4. *Brocade Scales* as an Example of Buddhist Syncretism

Although *Brocade Scales* uses the term *kange* in its title and preface, there is an almost overwhelming body of evidence proving the work's strong Nichiren-sect character, both in its publication background and in the nature of its content.

I consider this book to be an example of what we might call a syncretism between different sects, which occurred as a result of early modern publications. But what is syncretism? As I pointed out in another article,²⁰ the second principal of the True Pure Land-sect Nishi Hongan-ji 西本願寺 School, Chikū 知空 (1634–1718), for example, wrote a manuscript titled *Jōdo wakumon kōin* 浄土或問鉤隱 (1657), a commentary on an earlier work, *Jōdo wakumon* 浄土或問 (established in the fourteenth century), itself a commentary by the Ming-dynasty Chan priest Zhu Hong 祿宏 (1535–1615). However, *Jōdo wakumon kōin* was probably used and referenced, published, and propagated as a so-called headnote book (i.e., with annotations at the top of the text) without Chikū's permission.

The problem of correct sect attribution thus lies in the publication history of *Jōdo wakumon*. At the time of its printing, the publisher had the Pure Land-sect priest Taizen 諦全 (dates unknown) write a supplement to this work. Since Chikū's name and his True Pure Land-sect connections and annotations are not specified as such, the book was—incorrectly—received as a commentary with a strong Pure Land-sect character. This can, therefore, be regarded as a case of syncretism between Pure Land- and True Pure Land-sect teachings that arose in the course of publication.

Publishing, which can be considered a major characteristic of modern culture, thus not only freed the original text and its attributes from being restricted to the sole domain of its traditional recipients, but also played a role in propagating the text to a completely different community. Books that had been viewed as documents unique to each denomination or sect up through the medieval period were no exception to this trend. Once such a property had been caught up in the tide of the wider world of mainstream publishing, books quickly became the property of other readers.

It is in this manner that formerly sectarian doctrines, for a while, realized a degree of syncretism. The fact that, for example, *Brocade Scales*, a Nichiren text authored by a Nichiren priest, was put on the market as an ostensibly Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect text—coupled with the appellation of *kange*—meant that it was

²⁰ Kimura, “Kinsei zenki no batten chūyaku,” pp. 74–79.

consequently broadly accepted by an audience that otherwise would have been hesitant to have been seen reading it. This can surely be considered a *prima facie* example of syncretism.

With this theme of syncretism in mind, I would like to follow, as far as possible, the actual path that the publication of *Brocade Scales* took.

It seems likely that the publication process was influenced by that of other *kangebon*. The earliest early modern example of *kangebon* in the narrow sense of the term—that is, publications with *kange* or *kangebon* in the title—is *Jōdo kange hyōmokushō* 浄土勸化標目章, written by the Pure Land-sect monk Shinkai 真海 (dates unknown) in 1683. As I have pointed out in a separate article,²¹ it seems that Shinkai's work was originally published as *Jōdo kange kōin* 浄土勸化鈎引 during the Kanbun era (1661–1673). We thus have in this work an example of a Pure Land-sect publication with *kange* in its title from as early as the 1660s.

Following this publication, other *kangebon* appeared one after another in rapid profusion. In 1685, the True Pure Land-sect monk Gentei 玄貞 (dates unknown) produced *Jōdo shūyō bentaishō* 浄土宗要弁対鈔, having added the appellation *Seppō innen jōdo kange bentaishō* 説法因縁浄土勸化弁対抄 to the cover. The following year, *Jōdo kange shūjinsō* 浄土勸化衆人鈔 was published, although its author remains unknown. The year after that, the same Gentei wrote *Ōjō ronchū kange kōshaku* 往生論註勸化講釈. Thereafter, this work was serially published in 1689 as *Jōdo kange sangoku ōjōden* 浄土勸化三国往生伝, in 1691 as *Goden kangeshō* 御伝勸化鈔, then in 1692 as *Kange innen kannon kyō kusui* 勸化因縁観音経鼓吹, and again in 1693 as *Anrakushū kange kōshaku* 安楽集勸化講釈. After that, *kangebon* were published annually, to the point that notably in 1695 and 1700, three such books per year were published. The proliferation of *kangebon* in the twenty years from the end of the Tenna 天和 era (1681–1684) to the end of the Genroku 元禄 era (1688–1704) is tremendous, with even a cursory count revealing at least twenty-one such publications. By 1730, when *Brocade Scales* was published, at least thirty-eight texts of this category had made their appearance.

Thus, after appearing at the end of the seventeenth century, *kangebon* had become established as a major genre within the space of half a century. The reason that publishers actively solicited *kangebon* was because these books were anticipated to become best sellers. This is clear from the fact that all of the then newly-emerging publishers, who would have still been few in number, had begun publishing these religious texts. It is no wonder, then, that publishers from other denominations took notice. Indeed, publishers related to the Nichiren sect, such as Namikawa Jinzaburō, even became thriving participants within this expanding field.

Yet in the early days of this new venture, it would surely have been appropriate to anticipate risks. In the first place, this was because the main customers for Nichiren-sect publishers would mainly have been people associated with that

²¹ Kimura, “Genshin haha, kangen no waka,” p. 146.

sect. Moreover, since *kangebon* were originally connected with the Pure Land and True Pure Land sects, Nichiren monks did not initially view these works in a positive light. There would have been every reason to believe that, at first, even the term *kange* would lead to readers' rejection of a text. Even so, the trend toward *kangebon* was so strong that *Brocade Scales* was eventually successfully published.

It does seem, however, that publishers were thorough in their risk management. *Brocade Scales* was thus shouldered not by one printer alone but was co-produced by five publishers. Standard practice would rarely see as many as five different publishers jointly produce a *kangebon*. Co-publishing was not often used as a means of risk-management for such religious texts, which were expected, at the time, to sell quite reliably. Thus it seems that *Brocade Scales* was considered a possible money loser. And this riskiness was because it was a *kangebon* published by Nichiren-sect publishers.

Risk-mitigation also seems to have extended to its reputed author, Hōzui. I believe it can be reasonably assumed that he was connected with the Nichiren sect. We may assume so, first of all, because, as mentioned above, if Hōzui had been a Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect monk, it would have been uncharacteristic not to include references to Amitabha in the text. In addition to this, the circumstances surrounding *Brocade Scales*' publication offer another clue to its pedigree. Of course, it is well known that publishers of texts for one religious denomination often asked monks of another denomination to produce books for them.²² There was, therefore, no fundamental aversion to having texts written by Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect monks being printed by Nichiren-sect publishers. At the same time, however, insofar as the preface makes clear, the Nichiren monk Hōzui seems to have drawn up plans to have the book published prior to any request from the publishers to produce it.

Furthermore, the text that was used as source material for *Brocade Scales* was Nittō's *Excerpts*. While this latter work may not have been widely available at the time, we can presume that its manuscript may have been in the possession of Nichiren-sect officials who were prepared to use it.

Another detail worth noting is that, in its preface, the term *kange* is explicitly used, such as in *heizōken kange no ichijo ni ateru* 平俗勸化の一助に充る (“as teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners”). Even if I do find the preponderance of evidence to be such that we should assume Hōzui was a Nichiren Buddhist priest, we must nevertheless recognize that it would have been uncomfortable for a priest of that sect to use the term *kange* in the title, given its association with other sects. Therefore, I believe we would be correct in

²² For example, the famous *kana-zōshi* writer Asai Ryōi was a priest of the Ōtani 大谷 school of the True Pure Land sect, yet he wrote *Mitsugon shōnin gyōjōki* 密嚴上人行狀記 (1672), a biography of Kakuban 覚鑊 (1095–1143), the founder of the Shingi 新義 school of the Shingon 真言 sect. He moreover went on to see this published by the Shingon-sect publisher Maekawa Moemon 前川茂右衛門. See Kimura, “Asai Ryōi.”

considering the given author's name as appended to the title—Raigidō Hōzui—to be a pseudonym. Hōzui is not unusual as a name for a monk. However, the names Raigi and Hōzui in combination are reminiscent of the phrase *bō raigi* 鳳凰来儀 (“the advent of the phoenix,” i.e. of peace and stability), which is drawn from the *Classic of Documents* (*Shujing* 書經, Jp. *Shokyo*). It seems that the intention was to avoid risk for the actual author by making use of an ingenious pseudonym.

In combination, these facts make it apparent that the publisher was meticulous in his arrangements for the successful production of the very first Nichiren-sect *kangebon*: *Brocade Scales*. It was, at the time, an unprecedented publication for the sect, which was attended no doubt by a mixture of both apprehension and high hopes. At the same time, *Brocade Scales* is also, I believe, important as an example of the contemporary syncretism of Buddhist denominations, which came to be a frequent characteristic of early modern Buddhist books.

5. Identifying *Brocade Scales* in *Book of Exhortations*

Earlier in this article, I looked at how *Book of Exhortations* was reworked and how its views were disseminated through interactions with, and through the intervention of, the Nichiren sect.

The subsequent phase in the effort to expand the audience for morality texts came with the creation of *Excerpts*, which resulted from the editorial work of the Nichiren priest Nittō at Chōgen-ji Temple. *Brocade Scales* emerged next and reflected a syncretism of Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Nichiren preferences, with the exception that in the case of the Pure Land and True Pure Land sects, it was an unwitting collaboration. With *Brocade Scales*' publication and introduction to an audience wider than that of just its monkish adherents, *Book of Exhortations* took on a new, more influential dimension than it had ever been able to through *Excerpts*. Furthermore, the appreciation for *Brocade Scales* is also considered to have been accelerated by the dissemination and reception in Japan of *Book of Exhortations* itself.

In the *Brocade Scales* preface, Hōzui describes *Book of Exhortations* as encapsulating the “Three Religions” and states that the stories collected in *Brocade Scales* are a celebration of the essential values revered in *Book of Exhortations*: “edifying passages . . . from the Three Religions” (*sangyō no kagen* 三教の嘉言) and “stories to exhort and chastise” (*kanchō no tenko* 勧懲の典故). In light of this, Hōzui's full awareness of the existence of *Book of Exhortations* is no mere matter of conjecture. However, when Hōzui edited *Brocade Scales*, he divided the seven volumes into the five parts of: Karma, Miracles, Familial Unfaithfulness, Filial Duty, and Selflessness. In other words, he did not adopt the scheme used in *Book of Exhortations* (and *Excerpts*), which classified episodes according to the Three Religions. Thus, as a result of the publication of *Brocade Scales*, which presented the contents of *Book of Exhortations* in such an easier-to-understand format, the values contained within that original work become obfuscated.

In light of this, it becomes clear that *Brocade Scales*, which was a collection of extracts stemming from *Book of Exhortations*, was able to gain widespread acceptance, despite the ideological bias of the Nichiren sect, which oversaw its publication. It can be said that this acceptance was achieved also because *Brocade Scales* was intended to be a text for proselytization: as the preface clearly states, the work could be used as “teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners.”

We now need to consider views on morality. *Brocade Scales* is an interesting example in that the reception history of texts on morality would come to take a very different course following its release. This is because prior to *Brocade Scales*, the Three Religions had been recognized as the basis for discussion of morality in early modern Japan. As Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏 has noted, “[The Three Religions] were the sources for the precepts of the common people throughout the Edo era [1603–1867].”²³

In fact, the reception of a Chinese book in a Japanese reproduction that deviated from the original text was not limited to *Brocade Scales*. And indeed, in books of every Buddhist sect, when making proselytizing arguments, it was quite common to draw on Chinese texts for novel topics to illustrate their doctrines. Such books allowed for a direct appeal to the common people and had no need, therefore, for any interfering intellectual filter as had previously been the case.

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed how *Book of Exhortations* was received, and reworked, by monks of the Nichiren sect. In this vein I have presented *Brocade Scales* as the premier example of how the original work was adapted in order to achieve its popularization. The resulting latter work can be seen not only as an outstanding example of syncretism within early modern Buddhism, but also as an example of the kind of text that served to encourage the reception of works from China. We need to fully understand the acceptance and reception of a wide variety of Chinese books in the early modern period in order to better appreciate the impact they had on society and on Japanese literature. Further elucidating this process, and achieving a deeper understanding of its workings, will be the tasks of future research.²⁴

²³ 江戸期を通じてその通俗教訓の主意となる所であった。Nakano, “Edo jugaku-shi saikō,” p. 55.

²⁴ This article is based on a presentation delivered at the 44th International Conference on Japanese Literature on May 8, 2021. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Iriguchi Atsushi and Dong Hang for their comments then. I would also like to thank the Kansai University Library for allowing me to view and use their books in preparing this article.

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