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## Inventing the New Through the Old: The Essence of *Haikai* and the *Zhuangzi*

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### Introduction

The latter half of the seventeenth century witnessed an innovative phenomenon in Japanese *haikai* 俳諧 (comic linked verse) circles. A group of *haikai* poets who called themselves the Danrin 談林 enthusiastically drew upon the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (The works of Master Zhuang), setting off a decade-long trend of using the *Zhuangzi* in *haikai* composition. In assessing the causes and significance of this phenomenon previous studies give much attention to the intellectual, philosophical and religious climates, noting two major factors that inspired the Danrin's interest in the *Zhuangzi*. One is the medieval *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The tale of Genji) scholars' commentaries, which compare the fictional story of Genji with the *gugen* 寓言 (parable)<sup>1</sup> of the *Zhuangzi*. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Gugen* (*yuyan* in Chinese) appears in the twenty-seventh chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. Its original

other is the Song scholar Lin Xiyi's 林希逸<sup>2</sup> annotations of the *Zhuangzi*, which stress that the entire *Zhuangzi* is a parable. While scholarly opinion differs on which factor or factors played a key role behind the phenomenon, they agree that the Danrin's enthusiasm for the *Zhuangzi* lies primarily in imitating the *gugen* in the work.<sup>3</sup>

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meaning, according to Burton Watson, is words put into the mouth of historical or fictional persons to make them more compelling. The *Zhuangzi* scholars have also used the term to refer to the general writing style of the text. Watson has rendered the meaning of the term into "imported words" in his translation of the *Zhuangzi*. The title of Konishi Jin'ichi's 小西甚一 study on Basho and *Zhuangzi*'s *gugen*, "Basho to *gugensetsu*" 芭蕉と寓言説 [*Nihon gakushiin kiyo* 日本学士院紀要 no. 18 (1960) 2 and 3] is translated into "Basho and Chuang-tsu's Parabolical Phraseology." The term in modern Japanese and Chinese is often translated as "fable," "apologue," or "parable," but these translations are not suitable to the present study. In the context of the Danrin *haikai*, *gugen* is used to imply both the theoretical frame of reference and the technical device for the metaphorical and fictional expression of *haikai*. Since the complex connotations of the term cannot be properly expressed by existing English words, this article uses *gugen* throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Lin Xiyi, whose dates of birth and death are unknown, was a scholar and official of Song China. According to *Song Yuan xue an* 宋元學案 (Brief biographies of the Song and Yuan scholars) 47, he became *Jinshi* (a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations) during the Duanping era (1234-37), and was once appointed a Vice Director of the Office of Personnel Evaluation. He was skilled at painting, calligraphy and poetry. Lin's literary name was Juanzhai 阮宅. His explanation of the *Zhuangzi*, (*Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi* 莊子? 齋口義, 1253), was reprinted in Japan during the seventeenth century and widely read by the *haikai* poets.

<sup>3</sup> For in-depth studies on the Danrin *haikai* and the *Zhuangzi*, see Yamamoto Heiichiro 山本平一郎, "Haikai to Soji ga *gugen*" 俳諧と莊子が寓言 (*Haikai* and *Zhuangzi*'s *gugen*), in *Kokugo to ko-*

Based on earlier investigations of the external factors that promoted the popularity of the *Zhuangzi* among the Danrin poets, this article explores the inner elements in the development of *haikai* that led to the Danrin's encounter with the *Zhuangzi*. Allusion to classical sources has been one of the oldest poetic "games" in the world, but none of other poetic genre has witnessed the important role classical sources played in the theorization and signification of *haikai*. This article reveals that the Danrin poets' interest in the Daoist classic is motivated not only by their impulse to defend comic linked verse, but, more significantly, also by an urgent need to reconstruct and regenerate the signifying systems of the comic poetry, especially its poetic essence (*hon'i* 本意). This latter need comes from the paradoxical nature of *haikai*. On one hand, as a newly rising commoners' art, comic linked verse must distinguish itself from classical linked verse by deconstructing the classical poetic diction, breaking the orthodox conventions, and parodying the aristocratic classics. On the other hand, *haikai* composition relies heavily on the classical past, because the dialogic nature of a *haikai* sequence requires a shared knowledge of instituted poetic signifiers

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*kubungaku*, 14 (1937) 1, pp. 60-87; 2, pp. 167-192; Kon Eizo 今栄蔵 "Danrin haikai oboegaki, Gugensetsu no genryu to bungaku-shiteki jittai" 談林俳諧覚書一寓言説の源流と文学史の実態 (Notes on Danrin *haikai*--The origin of gugen theories and its presence in Japanese literary history), in *Kokugo kokubun kenkyu* 国語国文研究, No 7 (1953), pp. 1-2; and Nonomura Katsuhide 野々村勝英, "Danrin haikai no gugenron wo megutte" 談林俳諧の寓言論をめぐって (On the *gugen* theories in Danrin *haikai*), *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 国語と国文学, 33, no. 11 (1956): 36-44. Konishi Jin'ichi's and Hirota Jiro's 広田二郎 works on the influence of the *Zhuangzi* in Basho's *haikai* also provide insightful discussions on the Danrin school's encounter with the *Zhuangzi*. See "Basho to gugen setsu," pp. 97-118; Hirota Jiro, *Basho no geijutsu--Sono tenkai to haikai* 芭蕉の芸術—その展開と背景 (Basho's art--its development and background. Tokyo: Yuseido, 1968), pp. 192-237.

to sustain the poetic conversation, and the extremely short form of each verse needs conventionalized mediating signs to clarify, translate, and expand the poetic essence through intertextual structures. Therefore *haikai*, while being a parodic, unconventional genre of popular culture, never completely breaks away from the classical tradition.

This contradiction is reflected clearly in the *haikai* poets' struggle to convey profound essence through *haikai* language (*haigon* 俳言), the vernacular and Chinese-origin words that lack the literary and cultural associations accumulated within the classical poetic diction. Attempting to invent a new poetic essence with *haikai* language, the Danrin poets found the *Zhuangzi* an ideal foundation text. Although the Danrin's understanding of the *Zhuangzi* had limitations, their effort inspired the later Shomon 蕉門 school, whose continued search for new poetic possibilities indicated by the Daoist classic brought *haikai*'s encounter with the *Zhuangzi* to meaningful fruition. Because a full discussion of the *haikai* poets' adaptation of the Daoist classic is beyond the scale of this paper, the examination in the following pages focuses on the Danrin's attempts to reinvent the essence of *haikai* with the *Zhuangzi*, and my discussion on the Shomon *haikai* is restricted to a few examples of how the *Zhuangzi* is used as mediating signs or texts to deepen the poetic essence.<sup>4</sup>

### The Essence of the Comic Poetry and the *Zhuangzi*

Around 1674, a conflict occurred between two major *haikai* schools. The Teimon 貞門 school, which tried hard to appropriate *haikai* according to orthodox poetic tradition, accused the Danrin 談林 school of being against the traditional principles. When Nishiyama Soin 西山宗因 (1605-1682), the leader of the Danrin school, published a hundred-verse sequence enti-

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<sup>4</sup> For comprehensive studies of Daoist influence on Basho, see Hirota Jiro, *Basho no geijutsu--Sono tenkai to haikai*, and Konishi Jin'ichi, "Basho to gugen setsu," cited in Note 2 above.

tled (*Nishiyama Soin*) *Kabashira hyakku* (西山宗因) 蚊柱百句 (Swarming Mosquitoes: One hundred verses), the Teimon responded with a criticism called *Shibuuchiwa* 渋団 (Astringent fan), whose metaphorical title means a powerful fan to beat off the mosquitoes of the Danrin. The work criticizes Soin's verses as "having lost the essence (*hon'i*) of poetry while simply spitting out whatever he wanted to say."<sup>5</sup> "Isn't *haikai* after all," the attacker says, "a form of *waka* 和歌? Poetry is a way to assist government and to edify people."<sup>6</sup> Defending their leader's work, Okanishi Ichu 岡西惟中 (1637-1711), a disciple of Soin and a vocal member of the Danrin, wrote *Shibuuchiwa hento* 渋団返答 (A response to "Astringent fan"), in which he made an intriguing statement concerning the origin and essence of *haikai*: "Among the books from China, I think the entire work of the *Zhuangzi* is the essence (*hon'i*) of *haikai*. Its use of words and its expression are all *haikai*. In our country, the essence (*hon'i*) of *The Tale of Genji* is *haikai*."<sup>7</sup> The emphasis on *hon'i*, or the poetic essence, in both the Teimon's and the Danrin's arguments reveals a unique tradition of Japanese poetry: poems must be composed according to the normative essence based on authoritative texts.

*Hon'i*, which literally means "the original meaning," was used widely in *waka*, *renga* and *haikai* theories. As early as the tenth century, the term already appeared in the judgments of poetry contests, referring to the original nature or way of an object treated in poetry. Through the Heian period, the essences of the images and topics em-

ployed in the major imperial *waka* anthologies became conventionalized. As a result, what a word or an image signifies in poetry was no longer the pure choice of an individual poet or the reader, but the normative essence defined by the celebrated poems in the *waka* tradition, especially those in the first eight imperial anthologies. The concept of *hon'i* was further elaborated and systematized by *renga* and *haikai* masters, who applied the term not only to the poetic topics and images, but also to the nature of poetry. As seen in the debate between the Teimon and Danrin, while the Teimon insisted that *haikai* was "a form of *waka*" and it should assist government and moral edification, the Danrin took the *Zhuangzi* as the *hon'i* of *haikai*, associating the Daoist classic with the essence of *haikai* at an ontological level.

It is well known that, in general, the Japanese perspective on poetry differs from that of Chinese in its emphasis on the expressive/lyrical nature instead of the pragmatic/didactic function defined by the Confucian scholars. When discussing the Chinese influence on the *Kokinshu* 古今集 prefaces to the first imperially commissioned anthology, the *Kokin wakashu* 古今和歌集 (905), John Timothy Wixted makes the following observation:

The backdrop to all Chinese consideration of literature, from earliest times until today, has been the primacy of its pragmatic ends. In contrast with this, the *Kokinshu* prefaces, especially the Japanese preface, while paying homage to pragmatic ends, pointed the direction to a more expressively oriented literature. These in turn became the classic earliest source for later Japanese views of poetry. With such a venerable authority as the Japanese preface behind them--its recondite Chinese reference misunderstood or ignored--later Japanese writers and theorists (unlike their Chinese counterparts) were spared having to concern themselves with justifying the expressive/lyrical function of

<sup>5</sup> *Shibuuchiwa* (Astringent fan, 1674). The work is attributed to Kyohoshi, but his identity is not clear. He might be a person from Nara. Some scholars suspect that the author might be Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟. See Iida Masakazu 飯田正一, Esaka Hironao 榎坂浩尚, and Inui Hiroyuki 乾裕幸, eds. *Koten haibungaku taikai* 古典俳文学大系 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1972) 4, p. 41. Henceforth abbreviated KHT.

<sup>6</sup> *Shibuuchiwa*, KHT, 4, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Shibuuchiwa hento*, KHT, 4, p. 59.

literature. This has had profound implication for the later course of Japanese literature.<sup>8</sup>

However, Edo period *haikai* poets' view of this critical history provides a different picture. As seen in the excerpt from *Shibuuchiwa* above, Teimon poets believe that "poetry is a way to assist government and to edify people." According to Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1624-1705), a major theoretician of the Teimon school and the suspected author of *Shibuuchiwa*, this concept finds its roots in the *Kokinshu* prefaces, which, in turn, draws upon the Six Principles (*liuyi* 六義 in Chinese, *rikugi* in Japanese) in the "Great Preface" to the oldest Chinese poetic anthology, the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經). Kigin summarizes this critical history in his *Haikai umoregi* 俳諧埋木 (The buried tree of *haikai*, 1673) as the following:

Regarding the Six Principles, in Japanese poetry, they were found in the *Kokinshu*. Kyogoku Komon 京極黄門<sup>9</sup> says that the essence of the Six Principles was enunciated by the *Classic of Poetry* and he recommends that people read it. Among *renga* poets, the venerable Shinkei 心敬 (1406-1475) once said that the fundamentals [of the Six Principles] should permeate each verse. Soyo 宗養 also discussed them. *Haikai* is no exception.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In Laurel Rasplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius, trans. and annot., *Kokinshu: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 399.

<sup>9</sup> Kyogoku Komon refers to the famous *waka* poet and critic, Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241).

<sup>10</sup> *Haikai umoregi* (The buried tree of *haikai*, compiled in 1655 and published in 1673), in Ogata Tsutomu 尾形侏 ed., *Kigin haironshu* 季吟俳論集 (Collection of Kigin's treatises on *haikai*), in *Koten bunko* 古典文庫 (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1960) Vol. 151, pp. 36-37.

To get a clear idea of the critical tradition which Kigin stresses by referring to the Six Principles, let's take a close look at Kigin's discussion of the first principle, *fu* 風 (the Suasive Poem).<sup>11</sup>

(1) *Fu*. The *Yakumo misho* 八雲御抄<sup>12</sup> says: "*Fu* is the Suasive Poem. It speaks of one thing by drawing upon another. It is to enlighten the listener's mind without spelling it out directly." According to Kyogoku Komon, the term *fu* means to reveal the truth of one thing covertly by drawing upon another. The *fu*-style poem has to be the same. A poem that does not put forth its intent directly but draws upon other things, whatever it speaks of, is called *fu*. According to Fujiwara Kiyosuke 清輔<sup>13</sup> the *Classic of Poetry* says: "Those above edify those below with *feng* 風 [*fu* in Japanese]; those below also criticize those above with *feng*." (Note: Both edification through *feng* and criticism through *feng* mean to use allegorical references, which is to avoid speaking overtly.)<sup>14</sup> I think *fu* in the work means using allegorical reference. It is read "*soe*" [in its Japanese pronunciation]. "*Soe*" means to reveal the meaning while not presenting the topic overtly. Therefore, *fu* is called the Suasive Poem. In his study of the *Kokinshu*, Sogi 宗祇 points out that there are different aspects

<sup>11</sup> I follow Laurel Rasplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius in translating *fu* here.

<sup>12</sup> *Yakumo misho* (Treatises on poetry by Retired Emperor Juntoku 順徳) is a six-volume work of *waka* poetics. The manuscript of the work was completed in 1234.

<sup>13</sup> Fujiwara Kiyosuke (1104-1177) was a late Heian poet and critic. His work referred to here is probably his *Ôgisho* 奥義抄 (Notes on the poetic profundities, 1124-1151). It is a representative work of *waka* poetics of the Heian period.

<sup>14</sup> This note was by the original author.

stressed by the Six Principles in the *Classic of Poetry*, which can be divided into the basic principles and the supporting methods, or the normative forms and the rhetorical modes, respectively. Also, some poems that belong to the category of *fu* use *ko* 興 (evocative songs)<sup>15</sup> at the same time. Some scholars say that the way *feng* is used [in China] is slightly different from that in this country, but the meaning is the same.<sup>16</sup>

The original Chinese term, *feng*, in the *Classic of Poetry* comes from a section title, “*Guofeng*” 國風, the “Airs of the States.” In later critical writings it is often used to describe poems that are like the *Guofeng*. The term sometimes is also interpreted as *feng* 風, which means to criticize. The translation of the term in the *Kokinshu* prefaces, *soeuta*, the Suasive Poem, seems to have followed the latter interpretation, designating the pragmatic function of poem. Kigin’s writings indicate that Japanese theorists were not “spared having to concern themselves with justifying the expressive/lyrical function of literature.” Instead, from representative works of *waka* poetics to treatises on *renga* and *haikai*, most important critical writings concerning the fundamentals of poetry include a discussion of the Six Principles to justify their own poems. Compared with the *Kokinshu* prefaces, these later Japanese theorists seem to have interpreted the six principles in a more didactic way.

Whether or not the Six Principles have truly permeated Japanese poetry is a debatable issue. As Wixted points out, Japanese poetry and Chinese poetry show different orientations from their emergence, and the way in which the *Kokinshu* prefaces cite the Six Principles is not much more than paying homage to the Chinese classic. However, what is of interest is just how strongly the Japanese writers felt the need to pay homage to the past, to seek the essence of poetry in the

classical texts. As seen in the following excerpts, the Teimon and the Danrin in fact draw upon the same classical sources to define the essence of *haikai*. In *Haikai umoregi*, Kigin writes:

Speaking of *haikai*, the *Ôgisho* says that “*haikai*” mentioned in the *Hanshu* 漢書 refers to “*huaji*” 滑稽. “*Hua*” 滑 means “wonderful meaning.” “*Ji*” 稽 means “endless words.” “The Origin of *Huaji*” in *Shiji* 史記 says: “*Huaji* was a type of vessel for wine. Later the word was used to describe effortless creativity and endless expression, like a *hauji* from which wine is poured out. . . . The two characters for *haikai* can be read as *wazagoto*. Therefore, people think that it is a kind of frivolous joke. But this is not necessarily true. As I mentioned earlier, although those who devoted themselves to *huaji* were not directly dealing with the Way (*Dao* 道, *do* in Japanese), they actually attained the Way. *Haikai* is different from the way of government, but it teaches wonderful meaning. Therefore, *haikai* is like *huaji*: its design seems to be oratorical and witty, and its language makes “fire” into “water,” or reveals wonderful meaning through comedy. Yet, *haikai* can convey what is deep in the heart through its words.<sup>17</sup>

In the passage above, Kigin first tries to justify *haikai* by tracing the origin of the term to the Chinese histories, the *Han shu* (The Han history) and the *Shi ji* (The record of history), both of which are considered to be authoritative classics. He then stresses that *haikai* can convey wonderful meaning, perfectly complying with the canonical concept of poetry, even though it is a comedy. A very similar definition of *haikai* is also found in the Danrin theorist Ichu’s treatise. He writes:

<sup>15</sup> One of the six principles. It is translated as *Tatoeuta*, evocative songs, in the Japanese preface to the *Kokinshu*.

<sup>16</sup> *Haikai umoregi*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>17</sup> *Haikai umoregi*, pp. 33-34.

About *haikai*, in *Haikai mogyu* 俳諧蒙求, I have traced its origins to the Japanese and Chinese classics. It has been said in Kiyosuke's *Ôgisho* that although *haikai* is not a way of government, it teaches wonderful meaning. Its effect seems to lie in oratory and wit. It makes fire into water, and reveals wonderful meaning through comedy. It is the oratory of heart and oratory of language, the wit of heart and the wit of language, the comedy of heart and the comedy of language.<sup>18</sup>

While it is true that the Danrin, as previous studies have pointed out, gives more attention to the oratorical and witty effect of *haikai*, the similar way in which the Teimon and the Danrin construct their theories is striking: both refer to the canonical texts to define *haikai* and emphasize that *haikai* teaches wonderful meaning through comedy.

However, the insistence on the didactic function and the authority of the canonical texts brought inevitable contradictions to comic linked verse, because *haikai* was a genre born through departing from the classical poetic tradition. *Haikai* grew out of *renga*, a linked verse form that emerged in the medieval period. It started as an entertaining poetic game in which the participants competed with each other in wit and humor by adding their own verse to the preceding ones, making linked verses of alternate seventeen- and fourteen-syllable lines. When *renga* became popular in the parlor gatherings of aristocrats, elite samurai and priests, the *renga* masters gradually polished the rules guiding *renga* composition and turned it into an elegant art form that was extendible to 100, 1,000, even 10,000 links. To elevate the status of *renga*, the *renga* masters denied its original entertaining purpose and humorous nature because the orthodox poetic theories identified poetry as a way to support the

government and to educate people; comic verse was thought to lack the qualities that could achieve this goal. Thus, the first collection of *renga*, *Tsukubashu* 筑波集 (The Tsukuba anthology, 1356), separated comic linked verses from the elegant *renga* by putting them in a *haikai* section. Another *renga* collection compiled when the verse form had matured, *Shinsen tsukubashu* 新選筑波集 (The newly selected Tsukuba anthology, 1495), contains no *haikai* verses at all. Subsequently, *haikai no renga* was always excluded from *renga* anthologies. This exclusion of *haikai* from classical poetry had a notable impact on the later development of *haikai* and contributed directly to *haikai*'s encounter with the *Zhuangzi*.

### The Essence of *Haikai* Language and the *Zhuangzi*

*Haikai* inherited the formalistic features of *renga*. It also followed most of the rules prescribed by the *renga* masters regarding the association and progression of a sequence. While taking the very same form of *renga*, *haikai* differed from classical *renga* in its comic approach and vernacular language. In order to distinguish *haikai* from *renga*, *haikai* masters declared that the use of *haigon*, or *haikai* language, was the hallmark of comic linked verse. Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571-1653), the founder of the Teimon school, writes about this when talking about *haikai* regulations:

At the beginning, there was no distinction between *haikai* and *renga*. Later, linked verses that used purely elegant language were called *renga* while those that have included vernacular words were called *haikai*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Okanishi Ichu, *Kinrai haikai futaisho* 近来俳諧躰抄 (Notes on recent *haikai* styles, 1679), Ogata Tsutomu, ed., *Danrin Hairon shu* 談林俳論集 (Tokyo: Koten bunko, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Fujii Otoo 藤井乙男, "Teimon haikaishi" 貞門俳諧史 (The history of the Teimon *haikai*), in Yamamoto Sansei, ed. *Haiku Koza* 俳句講座 (Tokyo: Kaizosha, 1933) I, p. 127.

As these words suggest, *haikai* kept both the form and the rules of *renga*. The use of *haigon*--vocabulary that was not included in the classical poetic diction of *waka* and *renga*, such as slang, colloquial expressions of commoners, and Chinese-origin words--became the primary distinction between *haikai* and the traditional *renga*. The emphasis on non-classical language in *haikai* reflected the interest of the rising commoner class, who had been deprived the right of literacy in the past. Through the *haikai* language, commoners now could take pleasure in laughing at the "high" classes and the authorities, parodying the aristocratic classics, and making fun of social conventions.

The creation of *haigon*, however, brought about a serious problem in *haikai*'s signifying systems. *Haigon* was created in opposition to *kago* 歌語, or classical poetic diction, conventionalized by the imperially commissioned *waka* anthologies (*chokusenshu* 勅選集), especially the first eight, from the *Kokinshu* to the *Shin Kokinshu* 新古今集 (The new collection of ancient and present poems). This body of diction became the standard language for poetic composition for centuries. Both *waka* and *renga* employed only this unitary language, and their topics were limited to the elegant ones collected in the classical anthologies, such as love and the four seasons. When comic linked verse arose, the existing standard diction was challenged for the first time.<sup>20</sup> In fact, challenging, parodying, and recontextualizing the classical tradition became the very nature of *haikai* when it began to flourish at the end of the medieval age. By going beyond the classic poetic diction, however, *haikai* created a void in its signifying system: the *haigon* that never appeared in poetry before lacked established poetic essence.

A conventional *kago* is not simply an elegant word. Defined by the canonical poetic anthologies, each *kago* embodies a complex intertextual structure that implies a cluster of conventionalized poetic essence, or *hon'i*. *Hon'i* not only de-

fines the meaning of specific seasonal images, but also prescribes how a particular image should be presented. For instance, by the normative essence, when the image of "winter rain" is used, it signifies specifically the *shigure* 時雨, a short shower in the early winter, even though there are different kinds of rain in winter. Similarly, the image of spring rain has to be a kind of quiet and misty drizzling. If a cuckoo needs to be present in the scene, it is not allowed to break the quietness with noisy calls, but it is permissible if the bird gives out a single lonely cry. In other words, in the traditional signifying system a poetic image or motif becomes a strictly codified and heavily charged sign that signifies more than a simple object in the external world or the speaker's internal feelings. Above all, such an image evokes the associations and significance conventionalized by the celebrated classical texts. Needless to say, conventionalized signifiers limit the creativity of an individual poet. However, as an extremely condensed poetic form and a product of group composition, *haikai* needs heavily charged signifiers in order to sustain its poetic expression.

The development of Japanese poetry shows a tendency towards brevity, and this tendency is at its extreme in *haikai*. Except for a limited number of *choka* 長歌, or long poems, collected in the oldest anthologies, shortness characterizes all remaining Japanese poetic forms. The thirty-one-syllable classical genre *waka* is already short, but an individual verse of a *renga* sequence is even shorter: *renga* breaks *waka*'s thirty-one syllable form into seventeen- and fourteen-syllable shorter verses, building a linked verse through the alternation of the two types of short links. When *haikai* was reaching its maturity during the seventeenth century, the seventeen-syllable opening verse of a linked verse sequence, *hokku*, became independent and self-standing, forming one of the shortest poetic genres, known as *haiku* today. Although earlier *renga* masters also tried their hands at composing a sole opening verse, this was not a regular practice in classical *renga*. But, by the 1670s, composing a single *hokku* was already very common among *haikai* poets.

Along with the independence of the opening verse, the movement toward brevity was also evident in the fragmentation of a linked verse sequence. In *haikai*, each seventeen or fourteen

<sup>20</sup> Some folk song genres in the medieval period didn't follow the classical poetic diction, but they never became major genres of Japanese poetry.



syllable link must represent an independent world. Teitoku once wrote: “There is a change from *waka* to *renga*. In *waka*, sometimes the meaning of the content of the first three lines in a poem can be given in the remaining two lines. But in *renga*, the three lines of a preceding verse and the two lines of the following verse must have their own meaning respectively. *Haikai* is even more strict in this requirement.”<sup>21</sup>

The independence of individual verses in a linked sequence led to the condensation of *haikai* in both form and content. In order to expand the poetic capacity of a seventeen- or fourteen-syllable verse, *haikai* poets have to rely on mediating signs to build an intertextual construction. In addition, since the creation of *haikai* requires a constant shifting between the roles of speaker and audience, participants are at once the speakers and the listeners. As speakers, they must compose in accordance with the expectation of the audience, while as listeners they are always expected to understand what the preceding poem is intended to say and to respond immediately with an appropriate poem. Therefore, a familiar set of codified signs communicating the poetic conventions and criteria to all the participants is essential. In other words, *haikai* needs a body of mediating signs to translate the surface meaning of the limited words and to explain the deeper significance the poem suggests.

A word with *hon'i* functions as a mediating sign that generates two or more texts as well as the associated significance(s) simultaneously within the poem, greatly increasing its significance-carrying capacity.<sup>22</sup> *Hon'i* also guides the reading of the poem, providing the necessary context or subcontext for the extemporaneous dialogue of a linked verse sequence. Therefore, not only did conservative Teimon poets such as

Kigin discuss the use of *hon'i* in lengthy handbooks, the Danrin also stresses *hon'i* in their *haikai* theories. However, when *haigon* is introduced, there is no convenient normative essence behind this important part of their poetic language. The lack of mediating power would directly affect the construction of the meaning of a brief *haikai* verse, either leaving it as a superficial parody or conveying only the surface value of the words. Apparently, this presented a serious problem to the *haikai* poets who firmly believed that comic linked verse must convey wonderful meaning.

To remedy this problem, the Danrin poets tried to include the *Zhuangzi* as a cardinal source of normative poetic essence. Ichu, the vocal Danrin theorist, repeatedly asserted that “the *Zhuangzi* embodies the *hon'i* of *haikai*,” and “nothing embodied in the *hon'i* of the *Zhuangzi* is not found in *haikai*.” This argument is not merely a defence strategy. It is also an effort to use the Daoist classic to supply *hon'i* to their new language, *haigon*. In order to prove that the *Zhuangzi* has been a source of *hon'i* of Japanese poetry since the classical age, Ichu quotes extensively from the *Zhuangzi* to interpret the essence of Japanese poetry, not only that of *haikai*, but also that of the *waka* and *renga*. He painstakingly shows how a personified cuckoo in a *Kokinshu* poem finds its *hon'i* in a *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*, which personifies a perch in a carriage rut. He also argues that a *haikai* verse which depicts the early *haikai* poet Sōkan as a *shogi* 将棋 player actually conveys the *hon'i* of the fictional figures in the *Zhuangzi*. By demonstrating that “even the poems in the ‘Haikai’ section of the *Kokinshu* take [*Zhuangzi*’s] *gugen* as *hon'i*,”<sup>23</sup> Ichu tries to demonstrate that what is articulated in the *Zhuangzi* has long been part of the accepted normative essence of Japanese poetry. The Danrin’s such effort can also be clearly seen in Ichu’s defence for *Kabashira hyakku*.

As mentioned earlier, Soin’s *Kabashira hyakku* is a work that intentionally breaks the conventions of the existing signifying systems. The Teimon school, therefore, criticized Soin for “having lost the *hon'i* and simply spitting out

<sup>21</sup> *Tensuisho* 天水抄 (Notes of Heavens and Waters, 1644), KHT 2, p. 399.

<sup>22</sup> The discussion on the *hon'i*, *honka* and *hon-zetsu* as mediating signs and texts is inspired by Michael Riffaterre’s discussion on intertextuality in *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> *Haikai mogyu*, p. 84.

whatever he wants to say.”<sup>24</sup> Refuting such criticism, Ichu provides evidence of how each of Soin’s verses has its *hon’i* derived from Japanese and Chinese classics. Among the classics, the *Zhuangzi* is a prime source. One of Soin’s poems in *Kabashira hyakku* deliberately changed the normative essence of *mushi* 虫 (insect):

*mama kuou to ya* “I want to eat a meal!”  
*mushi no naku ran* An insect is crying.

In the *waka* tradition, an insect’s cry typically signifies the autumn melancholy: an insect’s faint singing breaking the stillness at night evokes profound loneliness and an awareness of the passing of the season. In Soin’s verse, however, the insect cries hungrily for its meal, creating a humorous picture entirely different from the traditional essence. The first half of the verse uses vernacular language, “I want to eat a meal,” which has never been part of the normative essence associated with the image “*mushi*,” the insect. The writer of *Shibuuchiwa*, therefore, commented on the verse: “I never knew of an insect that eats meals or drinks wine. This must be an extraordinary bug. If the speaker never saw or heard of such insect either, I would say this is a total fabrication. It is merely the speaker’s fib.”<sup>25</sup> The Teimon’s criticism reflects the orthodox point of view that a poem is a means to convey the truth of things. Fabrication, therefore, is considered to be against the nature of poetry and harmful to its quality. To this criticism from the Teimon, Ichu writes:

In the “Autumn Floods” chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, there is the following passage: “The Kui<sup>26</sup> said to the millipede,

‘I have this one leg that I hop along on, though I make little progress. Now how in the world do you manage to work all those ten thousand legs of yours?’ The millipede said, ‘You don’t understand.’”<sup>27</sup> This is a conversation between Kui and a millipede. As I have mentioned in *Haikai mogyu*, the *Zhuangzi* also has birds and fish that can talk. . . . But some *haikai* masters believe that this kind of expression betrays *hon’i* and they wouldn’t describe anything that does not exist. It is the fortune of our time that we have a verse as the above which awakens those *haikai* masters from the sleep of their minds. Although in *renga* there was nothing like this kind of expression, *haikai* should take this as its own *hon’i*. From now on when one composes *haikai*, one should understand this point and create a verse like this.”<sup>28</sup>

Ichu’s reply revealed the purpose of the Danrin’s embracing the *Zhuangzi*. By finding the *hon’i* of the fictional depiction and wild images in the *Zhuangzi*, the Danrin poets tried to break the fossilized poetic associations and invent new poetic significance, which was otherwise prohibited by the conventional signifying system.

As a well-known classic, the *Zhuangzi* also equips the Danrin with a handy source of reference to attach poetic essence to the vernacular words, that is, to transform newly invented *haigon* into a mediating sign, which translates the surface meaning of the verse into the intended significance and provides the context of the poetic dialogue. A verse from Soin’s *Kabashira hyakku*, for example, uses a peculiar place name:

<sup>24</sup> *Shibuuchiwa*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> *Shibuuchiwa*, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Burton Watson in his translation of the *Zhuangzi* explains that Kui is a “being with only one leg. Sometimes it is described as a spirit or a strange beast, sometimes as a historical personage—the music Master Kui.” See his *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York and Lon-

don: Columbia University Press, 1968. Henceforth abbreviated CWC.), p. 183. The romanization of the translation has been altered.

<sup>27</sup> Watson, CWC, p. 183.

<sup>28</sup> *Shibuuchiwa hento*, p. 61.

*utsuke no yamaji*    The mountain path in  
Mount Emptiness,  
*kayoji no tsuyu*    And a drop of dew on  
the passing road.<sup>29</sup>

The use of famous place names, *meisho* 名所, together with *honka* 本歌 (classic verses that became the foundation of allusive variations) and *honzetsu* 本説 (classic texts used as foundation sources of allusive variations)<sup>30</sup>, is one of the frequently used intertextual devices which demonstrates the authority of the classic reference in Japanese poetry. In the traditional poetics, the “famous place” does not simply mean a famous site such as a tourist attraction. It refers to the places famous in literary history, places to which many poems have been dedicated; hence specific *hon'i* have been attached. The use of a place name, therefore, is limited to the famous places defined by the classical works and expected to embody certain *hon'i*. “Mount Emptiness” in Soin’s poem, however, is a fictional place name. From the conventional point of view, the use of

<sup>29</sup> Shibuuchiwa hento, IV, p. 69.

<sup>30</sup> The concept of *honzetsu* is closely related to *honka*. While *honka* refers to the classic texts of Japanese poetry, *honzetsu* includes almost all other types of canonical works, such as the early Japanese narratives, Chinese poems and classics, proverbs, etc.. If a word with *hon'i* functions as a mediating sign, *honka* and *honzetsu* are mediating texts, which, when quoted in a poem or alluded to, provide rich associations with another text or texts, setting an authoritative code of reading based on the normative tradition or convention. *Honka* and *honzetsu* are particularly helpful to the short forms of Japanese verses; it amplifies the poetic expression through an intertextual construction. While *honka* and *honzetsu* are commonly used by different *haikai*, the Danrin is particularly interested in using the *Zhuangzi* as a major source of mediating texts. The Danrin poets not only draw upon the *Zhuangzi* to generate *hon'i* of images and words, but also directly use the *Zhuangzi* as *honzetsu* to construct new poetic essence.

an unknown place name based on personal preference is a serious flaw. Annoyed by Soin’s liberal use of place name, the author of *Shibuuchiwa* says: “I have never heard of this ‘famous place.’ This, again, must have been made up according to the speaker’s own opinion.”<sup>31</sup>

Laughing at this accusation, Ichu replies:

You don’t even know what Mount Emptiness means by now? In the *Zhuangzi* there is ‘Not-Even-Anything Village 無何有之郷’ and ‘the Field of Broad-and-Boundless 広莫之野’ The *Zhuangzi* also writes about places like ‘north of the Red River and in the hills of Kunlun 赤水之北崑崙之丘’ but there are no such mountains or fields. ‘Mount Emptiness’ is the same kind of image. You should understand that the entire verse is to express what is meant by the word Emptiness.”<sup>32</sup>

Not-Even-Anything Village and the Field of Broad-and-Boundless are both fictional places depicted in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. Rather than the literal meaning of the names, these metaphorical images signify a boundless world that transcends all worldly existences. Ichu’s reply shows that metaphorical expressions like Not-Even-Anything Village and the Field of Broad-and-Boundless in the *Zhuangzi* has already become common knowledge among the Danrin school poets and this shared knowledge is the basis of their understanding of Soin’s verse. He ridicules the author of *Shibuuchiwa* for his not knowing these famous words of the *Zhuangzi*, pointing out that the essence of the entire poem lies in the place name mediating the two texts. Like the metaphorical images in the *Zhuangzi*, “Mount Emptiness” reveals the intended meaning of the verse--the existential emptiness and transcendence.

From the examples above we can see that the Danrin poets’ taking the *Zhuangzi* as the authori-

<sup>31</sup> Shibuuchiwa, p. 48.

<sup>32</sup> *Shibuuchiwa hento*, p. 69.

tative source of the *hon'i* of *haikai* is not an accidental choice. It first has to do with the Japanese poetic tradition that gives ultimate authority to classics. To the Danrin poets who sought a classic authority, the *Zhuangzi* is an appropriate choice: its free spirit, imaginative expressions, evocative images and deliberate reversal of meaning fit their needs perfectly. Moreover, the *Zhuangzi* asserts an aesthetic attitude that sees beautiful qualities in ordinary and even “low” beings. This attitude makes it immediately possible to provide the vernacular *haikai* language with “wonderful meaning,” or poetic essence. In addition, the *Zhuangzi* as a Chinese classic has been known in Japan since the Nara period. Though never so much emphasized as by the *haikai* poets, the *Zhuangzi* has the status of classic and popularity among educated people. These qualities readily make it a useful referential source for the group composition of comic linked verse. Thus, the *Zhuangzi* is chosen as an effective mediating source to fill up the void in *haikai*'s signifying system.

#### The Essence of *Haikai* Image and the *Zhuangzi*

Among many images that carry *hon'i* from the *Zhuangzi*, the butterfly is the most well-known and frequently used. Even before the Danrin's assertion, its association with the *Zhuangzi* had already been part of the normative essence of the image. When defining the *hon'i* of the seasonal words in *haikai*, Kigin writes the following under the entry “butterfly:”

Butterfly: The scene of a butterfly alighting on rape blossoms, napping among the flowers with no worries, or its appearance as it flutters its feathery wings, dancing like snowflakes whirling. Also, it is associated with Zhuang Zhou's dream, suggesting that one hundred years pass as a gleam in the butterfly's dream.<sup>33</sup>

A well-known *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*, “Zhuang Zhou's dream” relates the following story:

Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou.<sup>34</sup>

Comparing Kigin's entry and the passage from the *Zhuangzi*, it is clear that the essence of butterfly as a seasonal word is infused with the meaning of the *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*. To demonstrate the use of the image, Kigin provides some verses in the entry. One of them is as the following:

<i>chiru hana ya</i>	Scattering blossoms:
<i>kocho no yume</i>	The dream of a butterfly—
<i>hyakunenme</i>	A hundred years in a gleam.

An informed reader can easily recognize that the essence of the images, as well as that of the entire verse, are situated in the intertext of the *Zhuangzi*. The butterfly links to dream through the *gugen* on Zhuang Zhou's dream and these two images as mediating signs form the primary metaphor: the transient reality can hardly be distinguished from a brief dream. This essence derived from the *Zhuangzi* is favorably presented in the poetry of the Danrin as well. One of Soin's poems reads:

<i>chocho no yumeji ya</i>	The road in the dream of the butterfly--
<i>do ni mayou ran</i>	It must have lost its Way. <sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Teimon haikaishu* (Tokyo: Nihon Haisho Taikai Kankokai, 1926), p. 426.

<sup>34</sup> Watson, CWC, p. 49. The romanization of the name has been altered.

<sup>35</sup> *Monodaneshu* 物種集, KHT, III, p. 453.

As in the poem cited above, in this verse “butterfly” and “dream” are paired, pointing to the canonical text upon which the poem is constructed. Interestingly, Soin makes a parody of Zhuangzi’s *gugen* through the use of a pun in the poem. The word *do* in Japanese can signify both the “road” in the ordinary meaning and “the Way” as the universal principle in the Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian teachings, but the presence of the mediating sign, “butterfly,” suggests a reading of the word in the Daoist context. By using the pun combined with the butterfly’s dream, the poem casts a comic version of its model *gugen*: the butterfly--the transformed self of Zhuang Zhou (Zhuangzi)--has lost his Way, the *Do*, in his dream. Soin’s verse makes perfect sense either with or without the model text. Yet, only with the normative essence of the other text, Soin’s deceptive transfer of the butterfly’s dream creates a comedy, the *haikai* spirit the Danrin poets much valued.

### The Essence of *Haikai* Linking and the *Zhuangzi*

The Danrin poets not only uses the *Zhuangzi* as a cardinal source of *hon’i* to enrich their poetic expressions, but also to increase the possibilities of joining verses together in a linked sequence. In *renga* and *haikai*, how to relate a joined verse, *tsukeku* 付句 to its preceding verse, *maeku*, is a complicated art. There are many different types of linking, but the major ways of joining verses together, as described by the Shomon poets, are three types: connection by words (*kotoba-zuke* 詞付), connection by contents (*kokoro-zuke* 心付), and connection by scent (*nioi-zuke* 匂付).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Matsuo Basho has typically associated the Teimon *haikai* with the “word link” and the Danrin *haikai* with the “content link.” He characterizes the *haikai* of his own school, the Shomon, with “scent link.” “Scent link” relies neither on classical lexical associations nor on content connections. Instead, the joined verse is linked to the previous verse by shared mood or atmosphere. For an in-depth discussion on the methods of linking in *haikai*, see Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams, Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the*

The Danrin school favours the content link. The way of joining also has its *hon’i*, in which the conventionalized associations of words, images, and themes are the core.

The existence of *hon’i* in linking is very important to a group composition, because it forms the basis of the shared knowledge that helps to create an extemporaneous sequence. But, when a *haigon* is used as the central image or theme, the conventional association of words, images, and themes are no longer available to form the link. In order to bridge this gap in linking, the Danrin poets borrow the *asobi* 遊び--the non-pragmatic, carefree, and iconoclastic attitude--of the *Zhuangzi* to renew the principles regarding the link. After the verse about the hungry bug, Soin has a joined verse as the following:

<i>noasobi ni</i>	Outing to the fields --
<i>kakeri mawarit</i>	Running around
<i>matashitewa</i>	Once and again.

Teimon’s *Shibuuchiwa* considers this verse as an inappropriate *tsukeku*, arguing that since there are no established connection of either the words or the contents between this and the preceding poem. In other words, the linking of the two verses is not based on the traditional *hon’i*. To disprove the Teimon’s accusation, Ichu, again, refers to the *Zhuangzi*. He says: “Regarding the intended essence of joining, ‘Running around/Once and again’ is connected to ‘I want to eat my meal,’ and ‘Outing to the fields’ relates to ‘An insect is crying.’ Also, without changing anything, the combination of the two verses--the insect, at its outing to the fields, is running around and crying for a meal--reflects the *hon’i* of Zhuangzi’s *gugen* I have just mentioned. There is nothing inappropriate.”<sup>37</sup> As seen earlier, the *gugen* Ichu cites is full of wild imagination and free fabrication, and when citing the *gugen* Ichu asserts that “*haikai* should take this as its own normative essence.” Here Ichu applies this liberal spirit of creation to their method of linking. Ev-

*Poetry of Basho* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 82-115.

<sup>37</sup> *Shibuuchiwa hento*, p.62.

dently, by referring to the *Zhuangzi* the Danrin poets not only immensely expanded their signifying system but also enjoyed much greater freedom in creating novel links. Note that the significance of this new way of linking is not limited to its novelty. By associating their way of linking with the *Zhuangzi*, the Danrin introduced the *asobi* spirit into the essence of linking, adding philosophical overtone to the witty verse play.

However, the Danrin's use of the *Zhuangzi* had limitations. Their understanding of the *Zhuangzi* was limited mainly to its unrestrained expressions and a few notions from the famous *gugen* stories. As one might expect, the verses they produced with reference to the *Zhuangzi* did not have enduring appeal, although some of them left very novel impressions.

Nonetheless, the Danrin's attempt to use the *Zhuangzi* to regenerate the existing signifying system inspired later *haikai* poets. Matsuo Tosei 松尾桃青 (Matsuo Basho 芭蕉), who studied with both the Teimon and the Danrin masters and later founded his own group, the Shomon school, attained a deeper understanding of the poetic possibilities suggested by the Daoist classic through his observation of Chinese poetic tradition. In Basho's poetry the *Zhuangzi* as an intertext is organically integrated in the poet's lyrical depiction of his aesthetic experience, creating a world at once expressive and profound.

### The Essence of the *Haikai* Experience and the *Zhuangzi*

The Shomon school became prominent during a time when "Chinese style" became very popular among *haikai* poets. Different from the Teimon and the Danrin, who borrowed the *Zhuangzi* for didactic or rhetorical purpose, Basho and his followers found correspondences between the Daoist principles and the Chinese poetic tradition, particularly the relationship between the Daoist spirit and the recluse traits in Chinese poetry. From the beginning, Basho and his disciples drew upon a staggering body of Chinese sources in their works, and Basho's allusions and citations showed a salient inclination towards the reclusive taste that could be characteristically described with the key notions of the *Zhuangzi*, namely, the "free and easy wandering"

(*xiaoyaoyou* 逍遥遊, *shoyoyu* in Japanese) and "Natural and non-interference" (*ziran wuwei* 自然無為, *shizen mui* in Japanese).

The Shomon's early poems that draw on the *Zhuangzi* reflect Danrin tastes. A *hokku* contest entitled *Inaka no kuawase* 田舎の句合 (Hokku contest in the boondocks, 1680), for example, contains a number of poems that make explicit or implicit allusions to the *Zhuangzi*. One of them says:

<i>tobi ni notte</i>	Riding on a kite
<i>haru wo okuru ni</i>	To see the spring off-
<i>shirakumo ya</i>	The white clouds. <sup>38</sup>

While appearing to be an imaginary portrait of a late spring scene, this verse makes a hidden allusion to the "Free and Easy Wandering" chapter in the *Zhuangzi*, which creates an image of a *Peng* bird that soars in the vast sky with great freedom. Although the poem does not use any word directly from the *Zhuangzi*, Basho's comments on the poem reveal their connections: "Riding on a kite and wandering freely in the boundless infinity, the joy expressed in the verse of the right group is indeed boundless."<sup>39</sup>

In the *Zhuangzi*, "free and easy wandering" is a figurative description of the state of ultimate freedom, and to achieve this state is considered to be the culmination of joy. Apparently, Basho's criterion is based on this essence of the *Zhuangzi* and he praises the verse because it creates an atmosphere reminiscent of what is described in the "Free and Easy Wandering" chapter. As in the verses of the Danrin school discussed earlier, here the intended metaphor is established through its intertextual reference to the *Zhuangzi*. But instead of citing key images and words directly from the model text, the reference in this poem is concealed in an imaginary scene. To understand

<sup>38</sup> Komiya Toyotaka 小宮豊隆, et al, comp., *Kohon Basho zenshu* 校本芭蕉全集 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1962-69. Henceforth abbreviated KBZ), VII, p. 362.

<sup>39</sup> *Inaka no kuawase*, KBZ, VII, p. 362.

this kind of mediating sign, a good knowledge of the *Zhuangzi* is required. Indeed, at this time, the Shomon poets already knew the Daoist classic very well, as Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707), a major poet of the Shomon school, proudly wrote in his preface to the *Inaka no kuawase*: “Master Tosei’s comments encapsulated the quintessence of Zhuang Zhou’s thought. It could make the eloquent Lin Xiyi speechless.”<sup>40</sup> Yet, at this stage, the Shomon’s adoption of Daoist ideas was still on a conceptual level, not far beyond that of the preceding Danrin school. This tendency was changed by Basho’s observation of the spirit of free and easy wandering as the quintessence of Chinese poetic tradition; the great *haikai* master asserted this spirit with both his poetry and his life.

In the early winter of 1680, Basho moved from one area of Edo to a thatched hut on the less-developed east bank of the Sumida River in the Fukagawa district. Hirota calls this dwelling a “site for Basho to put free and easy wandering into practice.”<sup>41</sup> Although not in the exact sense of a believer’s practice of his religion, Basho’s move to Fukagawa was a sincere effort to pursue the poetic ideals of eccentricity and unconventionality (*fukyo* 風狂 and *furyu* 風流), which, as he saw, were embodied in the aesthete-recluse tradition of China and Japan and highlighted by the spirit of free and easy wandering.<sup>42</sup> The poems in *Minashiguri* 虚栗 (Empty chestnut, 1683), a collection of *haikai* published after Basho’s move to Fukagawa, clearly reflect this pursuit. The following poem from that collection is Basho’s portrayal of his hut life:

*kori nigaku*      Ice -- bitter-tasting--  
*enso ga nodo wo*      Just enough to moisten  
*uruoseri*      The throat of the  
                         mole.<sup>43</sup>

While the verse is easily comprehensible as a humorous sketch of the hardship of Basho’s life at the hut, the peculiar choice of the *haigon*, the mole, draws the reader’s attention and causes him feel unsatisfied with a mimetic reading. This peculiar image, in fact, is not a description of an animal that happened to be in the sight of the speaker. As has frequently been pointed out, it is an allusion to a *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*. According to the *gugen*, Yao, the legendary monarch, wants to cede the empire to recluse Xu You 許由. Xu says:

You govern the world and the world is already well governed. Now if I take your place, will I be doing it for a name? But name is only the guest of reality -- will I be doing it so I can play the part of a guest? When the tailorbird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch. When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful. Go home and forget the matter, my lord. I have no use for the rulership of the world.<sup>44</sup>

About this passage, Lin Xiyi’s annotation explains: “That Xu You does not want to play the part of a guest means he does not let outer things dominate him. The ‘tailorbird’ and the ‘mole’ are metaphors Xu You uses for himself, implying that he, like the mole, is contented with what he has.”<sup>45</sup> As indicated by Lin’s explanations, the

<sup>40</sup> *Inaka no kuawase*, p. 375.

<sup>41</sup> Hirota, *Basho no geijutsu*, p. 323.

<sup>42</sup> For a fuller discussion of the relationship of the Daoist idea and the reclusive traits in Chinese poetry, see Peipei Qiu, “Poetics of the Natural: A Study of Taoist Influence on Basho.” Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1994), pp. 83-109.

<sup>43</sup> KBZ, I, p. 72. The poem is a *hokku* in the collection.

<sup>44</sup> Watson, CWC, pp. 32-33.

<sup>45</sup> Lin Xiyi, *Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi* (J. Soji *Kensai kogi*, Kyoto edition, 1627. Henceforth abbreviated ZJK.), 1/8a & b. The work is reprinted in Nagasawa Kikuya, comp., *Wakokubon shoshi taisei* 和刻本諸子大成 (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 1976), IX and X. It has been noted by both

metaphor of the mole evokes a preference for simplicity and spiritual freedom, which carries the essence Basho seeks when using the word in his *hokku*. Thus, the “mole” functions not merely as an element in the picture or reality, but also as a mediating sign that signifies the specific *hon'i*. With this mediating sign, all the other details are translated, and the humour of the tableau takes on philosophical depth: the mole is in fact the eccentric self-image of the speaker, who, following the aesthete-recluse tradition, finds perfect happiness in the solitary and humble life.

Basho's allusion above demonstrates a fundamental difference from that of the Danrin school: while forming an intertextual construct that amplifies the poetic significance, it also expresses the speaker's emotive experience that resonates with the tradition represented by the model text. In this meaning, Basho's use of the classic is not only referential, but also lyrical. It restores lyricism to *haikai*, which, in the hands of the Danrin, had become a kind of intellectual game. This quality of Basho's poetry owes much to his unique way of life as a hut-dweller and a constant wayfarer. As a sincere artist he lived a life in the way he wanted to portray in his art.

Of course, not all of Basho's verses which refer to the *Zhuangzi* are expressive, but, in his mature works, whenever an intertextual reference is used, the poet skillfully fuses it with his own aesthetic experience so that the intertextual construct and the expressive/descriptive mode form a natural unity. Basho seems to have deliberately avoided using those “worn-out” expressions cited from the *Zhuangzi*, such as the butterfly in Zhuang Zhou's dream, perhaps because they make it more difficult to achieve natural unity. But when he does make an allusion to a well-known *gugen*, he shows his mastery in melting it naturally in his poetic world. The following poem is also from *Minashiguri*.

<i>kuwanomi ya</i>	The mulberries --
<i>hananaki cho no</i>	Without flowers, they are
	the butterfly's
<i>yosutezake</i>	Hermit wine.

In this poem, the familiar association between “butterfly” and “dream” is replaced with a novel combination: “butterfly” is combined with the “mulberries,” a seasonal word for summer and an image of the countryside, creating a close-up shot of a peaceful moment of rural life. At first glance the allusion seems to have completely faded in the rural scenery, but the occurrence of the last image, *yosutezake* 世捨て酒, or the hermit wine, alerts the reader to consider the meaning of the first lines in light of the recluse taste. *Yosutezake* is not a commonly used word. It is a compound made of two nouns: *yosute*, renouncing the world, and *sake*, wine. With a retroactive reading, the intertextual context surfaces and adds layers of significance to the seemingly simple poem. An informed reader will realize that each of the first two images is loaded with significance accumulated in previous texts. The image “mulberries” has long been used in Chinese poetry to signify rustic country life. Since the foremost Chinese recluse poet Tao Qian 陶潜 (365-427) uses the image in his famous poem “Returning to Gardens and Fields to Dwell” (*Gui yuantian ju* 歸園田居), the mulberry tree has been used as a typical image to signify the life and taste of a recluse. More specifically, it is a symbol of the setting in which a lofty recluse finds home. In *waka* tradition, too, the image is always associated with pastoral scenes. Since Basho's works often make direct quotations from Tao Qian's poetry, his depiction of the mulberries as the hermit wine here is apparently a careful choice that evokes the association between his immediate experience of the hut life and the long recluse tradition. The transfer of the significance of the first image leads to an intertextual reading of the second one, suggesting the possible interpretation of butterfly as a special sign from the *gugen* about Zhuang Zhou's dream. In this context, the butterfly becomes an agent of the philosophical perception of the fleeting nature of reality. It is to this butterfly that the retreat from the transient world is preferable, and the mulber-

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Nonomura and Hirota that Basho's allusion perhaps draws not only on the *Zhuangzi*, but also on Lin's explanations. See Nonomura's annotation to *Minashiguri*, KBZ, III, p. 232, and Hirota, *Basho no geijutsu*, pp. 311-313.



ries at a hermit's yard are tasty like delicious wine.

As seen above, the spirit of free and easy wandering had a remarkable impact on the thematic tendency of the Shomon school in the 1680s. Along with the maturity of his poetic style in the 1690s, Basho consciously applied the Daoist principles in his critical theories. His critical thought in this period placed much emphasis on naturalness, a tendency closely related to the Daoist hallmark of the Natural. Stressing naturalness in poetic expression, his *hokku* and linked verses tended to use fewer allusions and quotations. But his prose poems, the *haibun* 俳文 (*haikai* prose) and *kikobun* 紀行文 (travel accounts), still frequently make references to *hon-zetsu*, and the *Zhuangzi* was among the sources he draws upon the most. Perhaps one reason for this is because the intertextual signifier is essential to indicate the poetic quality of a *haibun*, since a *haibun* has no conventionally fixed form that sets it apart from ordinary narratives. One of Basho's famous travel accounts, *Oi no kobumi* 笈の小文 (Manuscript in my knapsack), for example, begins with the following paragraph:

In my body, which has one hundred bones and nine openings, exists something I have called *furabo* 風羅坊. I must have meant that my body resembles spun silk that is easily torn in the wind. From long ago, this *furabo* has loved the "eccentric poem," and at last, made this its life's task. Sometimes it has become tired and ready to abandon it; other times it has become so proud that it feels superior to others. Then, "right" and "wrong" would conflict inside it, leaving its body with no peace. At one time it wanted to establish itself through worldly pursuits, but its poetry stopped it; for a while it also wanted to devote itself to learning and become a scholar, but again its hope was shattered by its art. In the end, being incapable and talentless, it has been bound to a single line of poetry.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Oi no kobumi*, KBZ, VI, p. 75.

From the opening sentence, the *haibun* seems to resist deciphering according to the normal meaning of the words. The reader is forced to determine the implications either by guessing or by searching for references. If we agree that poetry is meant to express concepts and things by indirection, this paragraph is no doubt poetry, for its language deliberately avoids directness and clarity.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that Basho's peculiar description of his body at the beginning of the paragraph is inspired by the *Zhuangzi*. In the second chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, there is a similar description:

The hundred joints, the nine openings, the six organs, all come together and exist here (as my body). . . . It would seem as though there must be some True Lord among them. But whether I succeed in discovering his identity or not, it neither adds nor detracts from his Truth.<sup>47</sup>

Using the *Zhuangzi* as a reference, the reader realizes that the phrase, "the hundred bones and nine openings," though not the exact words of the *Zhuangzi*, serves as a mediating text that calls for a retroactive reading. In this context the reader can also realize that the *furabo* indicates the true identity of Basho, just like the "True Lord" in the body of *Zhuangzi*. *Furabo*, which has been translated differently into "wind-swept spirit,"<sup>48</sup> "Gauze-in-the-Wind-Priest,"<sup>49</sup> and

<sup>47</sup> Watson, CWC, p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> Nobuyuki Yuasa, trans., *Basho: The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1966), p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Donald Keene, *World Within Walls* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1976), p. 92.

“wind-blown-hermit,”<sup>50</sup> etc., is a creature that is easily broken, is devoid of worldly values and willingly submits itself to nature’s force, the wind. In Basho’s works there is another metaphorical image the poet likes to use as his self-portrait--the plantain tree. Plantain, the word in Japanese is *basho* 芭蕉, represents the same qualities as that of *Furabo*. In his prose poem “On Replanting the Plantain Tree,” Basho describes the plantain tree as the following:

Shaken by the wind, the leaves wave as a phoenix’s tail. Torn in the rain, they look like a green dragon’s ears. The new leaves grow rapidly each day, as what Zhang Hengqu has wished for his learning, and as if they are eager to unroll under master Huaisu’s writing brush. But I don’t follow these two models. I simply enjoy my leisure time in the shade; I love these plantain leaves for the ease with which they are torn in the wind and the rain.<sup>51</sup>

The attitude toward life as symbolized by the plantain leaves is clearly Daoist. Zhang Hengqu 張橫渠 (1022-1077), a celebrated Song Confucian scholar, and Huaisu 懷素 (634-707?), a famous priest and calligrapher, were both model scholars who achieved success through hard work. It is said that when seeing the rapid growth of the plantain leaves, Zhang wrote a poem to express his wish for his learning to grow as fast as the plantain tree. Huaisu’s name was related to the plantain because he used plantain leaves as paper to practice writing skills. But Basho declares that he will follow neither of them; what he prefers is the life of non-doing--to enjoy his leisure time in the shade of the plantain leaves. Noting the beautiful images Basho chooses to describe the appearance of the plantain leaves broken in the

wind and rain, we can see that vanishing along with nature’s course is not presented as a tragic experience in Basho’s world. Instead, he highlights the total acceptance of nature’s working and the ultimate peace of being one with nature. This spirit is the essence of free and easy wandering. It is also the *hon’i* the poet tries to convey in his poetic prose.

In the retrospective discourse that follows his depiction of *furabo*, the poet deliberately sets his eccentric way of life apart from that of a diligent scholar. The statement of “being incapable and talentless, he has been bound to a single line of poetry” may sound illogical to Western readers. This simultaneously self-depreciating and self-praising tone, however, is characteristic in traditional Chinese and Japanese writings, and the glorification of incapability and uselessness represents Daoist values. Thus, with the Daoist classic and the related literature as the intertextual reference, this seemingly ambiguous and gloomy narrative is turned into poetry, a lyrical portrait of the speaker’s poetic self.

As seen in the examples discussed above, the Edo period *haikai* poets’ interests in the *Zhuangzi* had much to do with the tradition of Japanese poetry that emphasized the authority of the classics. Following this classical tradition, the *haikai* poets borrowed the old to invent the new, and it was in this context that they used the *Zhuangzi* as an authoritative reference to justify comic linked verse and to regenerate its poetic essence. From the Danrin to the Shomon, the continuous efforts of the *haikai* poets achieved success, and the poetic essence invented through the intertextuality between *haikai* and the ancient Daoist classic helped turn the witty comic linked verse into a profound poetry.

<sup>50</sup> Richard B. Pilgrim, “The Religio-Aesthetic of Matsuo Basho,” in *The Eastern Buddhist*, 10 (1977) p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> *Basho o utsusu kotoba* 芭蕉を移す詞, KBZ, VI, pp. 504-505.

## At Wit's End: Satirical Verse Contra Formative Ideologies in *Bakumatsu* and Meiji Japan

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Rap on a half-cut head  
there is the sound of makeshift conserva-  
tism.

Rap on a full-cut head  
you hear the restoration of imperial rule.

Rap the close-cropped head  
there is the sound of civilization and  
enlightenment.

半髪頭をたたいて見れば、因循姑息の音  
がする。

総髪頭をたたいて見れば、王政復古の音  
がする。

ジャンギリ頭をたたいてみれば、文明開  
化の音がする。

### The Place of Satirical and Protest Verse Forms in *Bakumatsu* and Meiji Japan<sup>1</sup>

This paper examines the historical parameters for writing satirical verse during the late *bakumatsu* and early Meiji period.<sup>2</sup> Focusing spe-

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank William Sibley at the University of Chicago for his suggestions in numerous translations and regarding keys points made in this paper, Kano Masanao and Haru Shiro at Waseda University for introducing me to *rakusho* and sources, and to the anonymous reviewers who raised clarifying issues.

<sup>2</sup> *Bakumatsu* is the historiographical term for the period of the downfall of the Tokugawa Bakufu, the government and system that had unified the country since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its decline extends from the 1830s to 1868, the year the Meiji period begins and imperial rule is restored. I will treat verse as late as the 1890s.

cifically on *senryu* (“comic haiku”), *rakusho* (graffiti in verse), and *hayariuta* (popular songs), it explores correspondences of class and genre during this period of ideological transformation from last years of the Tokugawa Bakufu to the modern nation of Japan. Reading representative examples of these anonymous verses, it attempts to analyze these verse genres and subgenera in their historical contexts to identify their ideological positioning relative to current social issues. In increasing our understanding of the ideological uses associated with specific verse genres, forms and conventions, these verses, ostensibly rooted in protest and satire, provide detailed sketches of changes in the ideological contexts within which they were written. One can see most dramatically in *senryu* of the mid Meiji period a transformation from being protest verse to being mildly satirical verse in confluence with broader national policies and ideological tendencies.

One can see in these verses various struggles to make sense of the change from an officially isolated Tokugawa context and ideology to a multinational array of ideologies within which “Japan” resituates itself. One of the recurrent themes in satirical verses of this period is how to solve widespread problems and build a great nation in comparison with European nations. These verses demonstrate the range of debate in the process of this transformation, and are ideologically productive, not merely “reflective” of any tenuously established ideologies. These verses detail evidence of class-specific accommodations made as writers surmised broadly acceptable ideological bases for mutually tolerated beliefs and behaviors among the various existing and nascent classes.

From the mid 1850s through the crushing defeat of the last serious samurai rebellion in 1877, the country remained precariously balanced between reactionary samurai seeking a return to power, peasant protestors, and the new bureaucracy in Tokyo. The government stood on shaky ground not only in terms of the threat of a counter-revolution by the old guard of the warrior class; it was thought that a revolution from below could grow out of the People's Rights Movement, which had successfully built its movement in part by the “word of mouth” effect of disseminated

*hayariuta* (popular songs), some of which resemble *shintaiishi* more than songs. For instance, Ueki Emori's (1857-1892) "*Minken Inaka Uta*" (Rural Song of People's Rights, 1879), which, though published before the seminal *Shintaishisho* (1882), has elements of both *shintaiishi* and *hayariuta*:

Freedom, endowing the body of man  
from head to foot, surpasses  
the many fleeting things of the heart,  
merges mind and body – call it  
a realm of heaven and earth  
with oneself a person standing on one's own  
with nothing else lacking,  
declaring the liberation of man.  
freedom, freedom, man is free....

自由なるぞや人間のからだ  
頭も足も備はりて  
心の靈妙万物に越える  
心と身とが俱はるわ  
一の天地を伝ふもよし  
自分一人は一人で立つよ  
なにも不足はなひぞいの  
そこらで人間を自由と申す  
自由じや自由じや人間は自由<sup>3</sup>

Kubota Masafumi even recognizes it as the first original poem in a new style, beside translations by Nakajima Hiroteri (1792-1864) and Katsu Kaishu (1823-1899), translations of hymns (*sanbika*), very popular "crazy poems" (*kyoshi*) by Narushima Ryuhoku (1837-1884), and Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Sekai Kuni Tsukushi* and *Ansho Jushi*, all of which lack the rhetoric of rhapsodic integration found in both the "*Minken Inaka Uta*" and the translations and original poems of the *Shintaishisho*. Composed at the peak of the *jiyu-minken* movement, Kubota correctly sees Toyama Masakazu's (1848-1900) "*Battoutai*" as having been written in "strict opposition" to Ueki's "*Minken Inaka Uta*." "*Battoutai*" (抜刀隊, Sword-Drawing Brigade) opens:

We soldiers of the empire have our enemies,  
imperial enemies impermissible in the  
realm.  
Though the enemy general be great,  
a hero unsurpassed in any age,  
Though the warriors marching in his wake  
go together to their certain death,  
Courage to stand undaunted before fierce  
gods  
cannot justify rebellion against heaven.

吾は官軍我が敵は 天地容れざる朝敵ぞ  
敵の大將たる者は 古今無双の英雄で  
これに従うつわものは 共に慄悍決死の  
士  
鬼神に恥じぬ勇あるも 天の許さぬ反  
逆を  
起こせし者は昔より 栄えしためし有ら  
ざるぞ  
敵の亡ぶるそれ迄は 進めや進め諸共に  
玉散る劍抜きつれて 死する覚悟で進む  
べし<sup>4</sup>

In terms of style and ideology, "*Minken Inaka Uta*" used colloquial language (*zokugo*) and was in the "enlightenment style" (*keimochō*), which intended to empower the subjects of an envisioned democratic Japan, while "*Battoutai*" used a *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) style aligned with the samurai of the former Tokugawa ruling class, and was written in a "commanding style" (*meireicho*), which intended to inculcate in the reader a sense of patriotic mission. "*Battoutai*" sought to unify the country by rousing in unison the forces that had been opposed in the Seinan War, and depicted both government and rebels as patriotic, though Saigo's side as having been tragically misguided.<sup>5</sup>

This demonstrated power of song and poetry convinced the Meiji government and its allies of the ideological potential of verse, and it sponsored deployments of poetry that championed unity of purpose in its policies of nation-building

<sup>4</sup> Yamamiya 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> See 's Kubota Masafumi. *Nihon Gendaishi Jiten*, Hokujindo, 1955, 262-263.

<sup>3</sup> Ueki Emori. *Ueki Emori Zenshu*, v. 1. Iwanami, 1990, 30-34.

under the program of the Kaika (or Enlightenment, as in the slogan *Bunmei Kaika*, “Civilization and Enlightenment”).<sup>6</sup> The government’s influence on *shintaiishi* is discussed by Honma Hisao, who while calling Ueki’s poetry “no more than infantile, propagandistic literature,”<sup>7</sup> argues that the use of poetry and song by Ueki Emori and other participants in the *jiyuminken* movement to disseminate their ideals directly lead to the use of such forms for other propagandistic purposes, though with less ostensibly politico-ideological ends.<sup>8</sup> We must add, precedents for such uses of verse are found most notably in Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Sekai Kunizukushi* (Meiji 4), and others who found in the model of the versified textbooks of the *terakoya* (Tokugawa era schools especially for merchant children) an apt form for educating and influencing people ideologically. What was different in *shintaiishi*, as it drew on the *jiyuminken* movement’s use of poetry, was the emotional and patriotic investment in the voice, something virtually absent in the dry use of verse by earlier writers such as Fukuzawa, who had been trained in the writing of scholarly *kan-shi*, which tend to demonstrate restraint and a rhetoric of sound Confucian equanimity. Thus we

see in the *Shintaishisho* the use of verse to co-opt the rhapsodic, patriotic vision found in Ueki’s *jiyuminken hayariuta-shintaiishi*, so as to supplant the threat of unrest and focus on “freedom” the exaltation of discrete subjects with a more duty-bound patriotic fervor for an emperor-oriented nation.

It was in no small part this governmental effort to maintain power that engendered *shintaiishi*, the high-profile, “literary” verse form emerging after the Meiji Restoration and modeled mostly after English verse in the *Shintaisho*. In this way, the grass roots satirical verses and *hayariuta* stimulated ideological counter measures by the Meiji regime, which attempted to discredit them by offering literary *shintaiishi* as a superior alternative. The successful propagation of the *jiyuminken* movement by disseminating *hayariuta* (some of which have been called *shin-hayariuta* [new popular songs]<sup>9</sup> as well as *shintaiishi* [new-style poems]) lead the government itself to sponsor anthologies of *shoka* (school songs, songs for singing), which figure prominently in the history of *shintaiishi*.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, pro-government writers translated and wrote *shintaiishi*, aligning themselves with the government and viewing *hayariuta* as a destabilizing threat to it. As the government censored *hayariuta* of the people’s rights movement, in their

<sup>6</sup> “*Bunmei Kaika*” was a slogan to modernize on the model of advanced European countries and the United States. Thus the “Kaika” is the period from the 1870s through the 1880s when the government exacted policies, such as the support for translating Western publications, and changes in the legal codes so as to encourage the adoption of Western socio-political culture and expunge what was considered vulgar and not meeting Western standards of being “civilized” as they were understood at the time (military might, wealth, technology and industry figured prominently).

<sup>7</sup> Though the intertextual politics surrounding the uses of various *shintaiishi* styles (such as in “*Minken Inaka Uta*” and “*Battoutai*”) by different political and literary interests will be developed in a later work, a brief overview of pertinent issues is presented here. Honma Hisao. *Meiji Bungakushi [shimo]*. Tokyodo, 1949, 68.

<sup>8</sup> Honma 69.

<sup>9</sup> See Soeda’s discussion of the *jiyuminken* movement songs as “*shin-hayariuta*” in Soeda Toshimichi [Azenbo]. *Hayariuta Meiji Taisho Shi*. Tosui Shobo, 1983 [1933], 37. For poems or songs included in both *hayariuta* and *shintaiishi* collections and anthologies from the Meiji period to the present, see, for instance, Soeda, 26, 41ff; Fujizawa Morihiko. *Ryukoka Hyakunenshi*. Daiichi Shuppansha, 1951. 1951, 267, 233; and Yamamiya Makoto, ed. *Nihon Gendaishi Taikei*, v.I. Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1974, 88-89.

<sup>10</sup> On the government’s role and motives in the publication of *shoka* see Tadayoshi Keizo. *Kindai Nihon Ongaku Kyoikushi* (2 volumes), Gakubunsha, 1980; and Yamazumi Masumi. *Shoka Kyoiku Seiritsu Katei no Kenkyu*. Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1967.

place it encouraged verse reflecting the aim of unifying the populace and dissuading people from calling for human rights and democracy. Backers of the government sought to "enlighten" their audience with patriotic sentiments that appealed to a sense of national duty and beckoned all to emulate an aristocratic tone of valorous self-sacrifice and to extol the greatness of the national polity (implying subordination, not "liberation," of the subject).<sup>11</sup>

The examples presented below demonstrate how ironies and conflicts surrounding the socio-political and cultural upheavals that define the period were not lost on any of the classes, and how verse became a tool for shrewdly shaping and amending positions with regard to the nation's state of affairs as well as the symbolic characterizations of the "nation." From the crises of the 1860s through the changes of the Kaika, the social order was extremely unstable in terms of political leadership, economics, legal codes, accepted cultural practices, and foreign relations. Communities across Japan were shaken by inflation and shortages, prolonged terrorist attacks and fighting by samurai, humiliation at the hands of foreign powers wielding gunboat diplomacy and the threat of increased coercion (as they had seen happen in China). People witnessed the abolishment of the Shogun-centered *bakuhau* governing system, and a policy of Westernization under the emperor as restored monarch unifying and transforming the old Tokugawa coalition into a modern nation.

While there were internal economic and agricultural problems, a Darwinian sense of world history (within and without Japan) threatened and challenged Japan to compete in the "struggle of the fittest," so that a sense of national danger would become integral to an intoxicating patriotism that developed. Even while Japan was still vulnerable, pompous declarations of greatness and military might were common in Japan as in other modernizing nations during this age of imperialism. The gap between the precariousness of

the nation vis-à-vis foreign powers as well as internal issues and the language of grandeur became the wellspring of jokes and extended comparisons in satirical verse.

In this state of affairs, as in any society experiencing major disruptions and changes, current events and discursive aims dictated "style" as well as subject matter. For example, because of this matching of uses and style, waka, which were steeped in a tradition based on a strictly limited poetic lexicon and standardized range of topics, were incapable of treating current events involving so many changes on such a broad and material scale. Therefore, simply the attempt to engage new topics in waka (even in unorthodox or *haikai*) would necessitate lapsing into the "vulgar" or comic verse style such as is found in *kyōka* ("crazy poems") and *senryū*.<sup>12</sup> Yet waka composition and appreciation continued to be one of the most ideologically potent symbols of accomplished status and sovereignty for former samurai, scholars, the titular aristocracy of the court, and others. *Senryū*, *rakusho* and *hayariuta* on the other hand, formed the frontlines in the use of verse to garner political support or public sympathy at a grass-roots level. Comic, satirical and protest verses tentatively drew together diverse discourses (producing their comic effects) and tended to contribute to the potential establishment of political subjects contrary to the elitist and didactic polities of Meiji government offices.

Much satirical verse is "serious" at the same time as it elicits a raucous round of laughter in protest and leaves the problem of governing ultimately to others. The satirical and protest verses often do not imply assertions of sovereignty or even a will to rule. Indeed, even in the *yonaoshi*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Crazy poems" is the designation used by the late Andrew Marcus in research on *kyōka*. See Markus, Andrew Lawrence. *The Willow Tree in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842*. Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> Peasant *yonaoshi* "world renewal" protests were directed against rich merchants who had upset the precedence of peasants before mer-

<sup>11</sup> On the politics of "*Battotai*" and other poems in the *Shintaishisho*, as well as *shōka*, see Akatsuka Yukio. *Shintaishisho Zengo — Meiji no Shiika*. Gakugei Shorin, 1991, esp. 59-76.

and *Eejanaika*<sup>14</sup> songs, there is little that, strictly speaking, can be called utopian or revolutionary; it is restricted protest not preoccupied with an overarching vision. There is “renewal” in a cyclical, agricultural sense or as in a carnivalesque religious purification, but not a visionary “movement” toward wide-sweeping changes. While not underscoring grandiose treatises aiming to change the world (as one finds, for instance, in P. B. Shelley and Yoshida Shoin), protest and satirical verse at this time often evidences a shrewd critical apparatus. Remonstrative practices are highly compatible with Confucian ideas of socio-political order and expectations of benevolence on the part of the rulers, who the people appeal to with respect from below.<sup>15</sup>

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chants in the class hierarchy. “With a desire to level the accumulated wealth and landholdings that no longer coincided with the former status hierarchy, peasants felt it necessary to destroy the prevailing power structure that had brought village life to an impasse and to reinstitute the moral community in which their fathers used to live the life of ‘peasants.’ They petitioned for ‘the continuity of the peasantry.’ In world renewal movements (*yonaoshi*) they demanded lives suitable to their social status. Acting upon their expectations of world renewal, they destroyed houses, furniture, and goods, the concrete manifestations of insufficient benevolence and the private interest of the rich and powerful. Destruction was an expression of peasant’s indignation toward the actual world.” Hashimoto, Mitsuru. “The Social Background of Peasant Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan,” in Najita, Tetsuo and Koschmann, J. Victor. *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, 157.

<sup>14</sup> *Eejanaika* refers to specific instances of *yonaoshi*-like “spontaneous” religious and political protests that occurred on the eve of the restoration. See Norman in Dower, John W. *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E.H. Norman*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975, 343-349.

<sup>15</sup> In *kanshi* by Yoshida Shoin and imprisoned Mito Restorationists, the conventional Confucian

With the complexity of the relation of poetry and nation being compounded by issues of class and subject-position in Japan, poetry provides an opportunity for review of how we understand the origins of the modern Japanese nation and its early “working” ideologies. It is not an exaggeration to say that ideological testing of modes of integrative and centralizing enunciation took place in verse. Though *senryu* in the late 1890s displays a dramatic change in the correlation of this verse form with disputes leveled against prevalent government positions. With a growing capitulation to an ascendant nationalism, one finds that the uses of verse as a form of protest (limited primarily to *senryu* at this time) were attenuated on the left of the political spectrum.

*Hayariuta*, *senryu*, *kyōka* and *kyōshi* (crazy *kanshi* [Chinese poems]), as well as *rakusho* and variants of all these forms, were modes of expression that were readily adapted to and even thrived in the changing lexical and social terrains of the *bakumatsu* and early Meiji period. *Senryu* have the distinction of gracing the front pages of most major newspapers in Japan still today. However, most of the forms have disappeared, with the exception of *hayariuta*, which have evolved into *enka* and pop music (*poppusu*, *ka-yōkyoku*, or *ryūkyōka*), and *rakusho*, which have become simple, usually non-versified *rakugaki* (graffiti).

### ***Senryu in the Age of an "All-encompassing Truth": Discursive Images from the Bunmei Kaika to the Sino-Japanese War***

As documentation of the forces that impacted the fall of the Bakufu, *senryu* provide historical references by which we may glimpse the popular hubbub over issues of the day. *Senryu* probe the imagery of public discourse with witty associations that usually refer to unstated assumptions, so as to flesh out certain ideological values.

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use of the medium of poetry to critique rulers is especially notable in samurai class writing. See Moriya Hidekatsu. *Nihonshiseki kyōkai soshō*. Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 1974; and Saiko Hikoichi. *Yoshida Shoin Zenshu*, 7. Iwanami Shoten, 1939.

George Lakoff and Mark Turner provide a compelling analysis of how words are applied in the context of supporting arrays of metaphors and associations within linguistic communities. Their work has the virtue of not being bogged down in contentious meta-theories that construct abstract models for how metaphors mean. Rather, they show how words are used with intertextual dependency on hitherto formed contexts for their usage, which are open to deliberation. In this approach, it is a small step from discussing the metaphorical backdrop for idiomatically sound enunciations to discussing the formation of ideological expectations. Manipulating words in all their metaphorical potential (*vis-à-vis* other words) already assumes the potential for imbuing certain words with evaluative connotations and establishing discursive contexts by which classes jockeyed for influence.<sup>16</sup>

*Senryu* are ideological, in their condensed form, both in the sense of making a statement from a restricted historical point of view, and in the "spin" they put on the news, reflecting the relative importance not only of a point of view, but of one discourse over another (in terms of contending values, paradigms, and ways of speaking about the topic at hand). *Senryu* are a great genre for demythologizing the assumed priority of one discursive context or set of issues over another. The proliferation of puns derives from foregrounding such divisions of attention in *senryu*. Puns function as fulcrums for resituating ideological givens in terms of subtexts, "misunderstandings," and displaced reasons for the occurrence of observed events. The satire of current events in *senryu* involves staging and distorting words in ways that expose ideological tensions, often by recasting decisions and actions by the ruling class in terms of common, local points of reference.

Unlike the usually drier and always illegally circulated *kudoki* (underground printings of de-

nunciatory attacks on public policies or exposés of scandals) and other openly bitter graffiti, many *rakusho* (which can include *senryu*) and most *senryu* authors found value in a process of writing and distribution that characterized hardship, unfair treatment, and official scandal in *their* terms as commoners or disgruntled lower samurai. These songs of protest and verse tracts "from below" developed ironically from a position of subservience and dependency (on the good will of the sword-bearing warrior class) to speak out in spite of their lack of political position or representation. Such verse engendered a transgressive energy and means of enunciation that could be propagated, enjoyed, and potentially create bonds of solidarity. Though one would be hard pressed to claim that late Tokugawa verse cultures of the lower classes could have developed into a revolutionary discourse, they certainly created in their example the potential for all ideologically oppositional parties (in relation to the de facto Tokugawa ruling government) to draw on the idiom of these "voices" of protest, whether of sarcasm, dire urgency or righteousness. This point helps explain how *hayariuta* became such a potent tool in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (peaking in the early 1880s), which the government would censor while publishing its own verse to stage its own positions as it faced an increasing threat of revolution "from below."

In the process of unifying Japan as a modern nation, factions of former classes competed for legitimate voices and authority in printed texts of all types. Even during the *bakumatsu* period, fixed relationships between classes were no longer a given, as the official orthodoxy had been challenged with considerable cumulative success. Questions regarding Japan's relation to the world and history on a global scale now had been on everyone's mind since Perry's arrival in the 1850s, if not from the 1840s when news of the Opium War spread.<sup>17</sup> As a sense of shared stakes and

<sup>16</sup> See George Lakoff and Mark Turner's two books: *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, especially 1-26, 60-71; and *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, especially 3-105.

<sup>17</sup> Though uncertain of the degree to which the general populace was aware of the Opium War and the general threat of colonial powers wandering the globe in search of lucrative profits, recent research by Miura Tadashi suggests that there was a considerable exchange of information



responsibilities (a national consciousness) grew during the early decades of the Meiji period, there were diminished possibilities for relying on an authoritative and serious (deadpan) “other” against which parody and punning could be effortlessly sustained. Yet, *senryu* remain to this day a means of lampooning specific events in their historical contexts (indeed, they are often indecipherable without such knowledge); however, in periods of imperial expansion and increased censorship (enforced and voluntary) the parody of serious “national” plans made “above” would lose some of its force. For instance, *gunka* (military songs) and *shoka* (school songs) were published often as part of national and local government plans to propagate stability based on an emperor-centered and fundamentally Confucian mode for representing moral action in the new context of the modern Japanese state.

The gap between the Bakufu ideology and the tentative *Bunmei Kaika* ideology (of “civilizing” socio-economic Westernization) became the driving irony for many *senryu* and humorous writings of the *Bunmei Kaika* period. There was a tendency to juxtapose extreme differences between life in the former Edo period and in the new Kaika period. In this way, *senryu* can be seen as complicating how the literature of satire had been written in the *Bakumatsu* period, in a self-effacing, critically askew manner “from below.” *Senryu*, then a disenfranchised medium, came to participate reactively in the formation of the new order. The following *senryu* displays a commoner’s view of reapportioning work and leisure time allocations after the dismantling of classes. Former peasants and merchants now supposedly would have had time to write poetry

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between merchants even in the far north of Honshu and various ports around Japan. He shows how merchants in Hachinohe communicated information on the socio-political events of the day through channels in Edo, Osaka and Kyoto, suggesting that the exchange of news had the effect of strengthening merchants’ general awareness of events beyond their locale, and even contributing to an increasing sense of political independence. See Miura Tadashi. “*Kitaoku ni Okeru Shonin no Joho Katsudo.*” *Nihon Rekishi*, 1997(2), 64-82.

on a samurai tilling the fields, rather than only the reverse situation.

Rustic samurai: not so much poetasting  
as mucking in the paddies.

田舎武士、今は詩よりも田を作り<sup>18</sup>

Much of the satire and irony derives from the fact that a poem is being written by a newly empowered commoner. Moreover, the character for “poetry” (詩, *shi*) referred primarily to *kanshi*, which were composed almost solely by samurai and former samurai (or educated rich land-owning peasants and merchants who emulated them). The commoner now writes this *senryu* so that part of the irony (of depicted incongruity) derives from the reversal of their places as peasant and warrior and in this instance the ranking of their preferred forms of poetry: a vulgar form has supplanted the exalted *kanshi* of the old guard. This typical *senryu* of the Kaika (Enlightenment) period dryly illustrates an ironic reversal that delivers its satirical punch with a degree of historical complication that undermines its comic gesturing; there is less of a performance to chuckle at than a situation to examine ironically from a diachronic historical perspective.

Satire *depends* on a relationship of inferiority to those that the verse is satirizing (the samurai), even if it is only a rhetorical inferiority. Yet, the very act of writing in this instance suggests seri-

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<sup>18</sup> Yamamoto Seinosuke. *Senryu Meiji Seso-shi* (the history of the way things appeared in the Meiji period through *senryu*). Makino Shuppan, 1983, 17. (Japanese language materials are all published in Tokyo unless specified.) It should be noted that this book is more of a selection and arrangement of *senryu* by topic or current issue than a study of *senryu*. Yet, the limited amount of notes and commentary has proven essential to understanding these *senryu*, which are almost always context-specific. The interpretive work is mine unless otherwise noted. Dates of the appearance of given *senryu*, when available, are provided in these footnotes and are according to Yamamoto. All translations are mine unless noted.

ousness over levity, regardless of the form. There is an implied continued capitulation to the will of the samurai in beginning the poem with an address to the samurai, but it is a parody of the old system of names and ranks: "rustic warrior." While the former status quo has been discounted, it remains a point of reference in negotiating the current social order and conventional behaviors.

The irony in this case evokes a point of view that is *not* in a subordinate position in relationship to the prevailing thought of the day, but merely in terms of the past common sense, before the current age of the Enlightenment. The commoner stands level with, if not gazing with contempt at, the toiling samurai. Writing a poem about samurai no longer writing poems is a transitory event that merely underscores this aspect of ironic change, not hilarity amid alienation. The larger irony here is that the satirical bite is diminished to the degree the relationship is no longer "from below" but rather "from above" or at least on roughly level terms (rather than written in vain protestation). This combination of a satirical shadow and reflective, perhaps modern irony makes this *senryu* especially rich as a historical and literary record of ideological change.

Satire of this period played upon ironic juxtapositions within the confines of the increasingly influential place of historical consciousness in Japanese society. The fall of the Bakufu and the opening of the closed country created a context in which historical consciousness came to the fore in people's daily lives, and the juxtaposition of former and present class divisions in a way undercuts the superior position of the *senryu* poet by reminding the reader that the situation used to be different and that humorous instability is part of the present social situation. However, the primary tone here is one of quiet exuberance. Such diachronic references to change form the division by which the ironic gap is opened up.

*Senryu* are usually used to express grievances in a way that does not suggest aspirations to exact control within the socio-political context. As Linda Hutcheon has most recently pointed out in her study of parody, satire is characterized by a "moral and social" focus, which is "ameliorative

in its intention."<sup>19</sup> *Senryu* engage in such satire from the point of view of the cooperative commoner and is associated with non-revolutionary protest and commentary from below.

At the same time, the ironic reminders of the former Bakufu can be seen as transforming nostalgia into a weapon working to find pleasure in the rapid deterioration of faith in the "good old days" (which posed a threat of a counter-restoration, a return to the shogunal system). However, we should not overemphasize this delight in dismantling the old regime, since many people were irritated by all the changes, the way that small details of daily life were cursed as "evil customs" to be purged from the new society. *Senryu* written during the *Bunmei Kaika* period typically reflect mistrust of the status of the historical present as the government was framing it: as a great "enlightenment" and opening up to the world. People of all walks of life were called upon to make sacrifices in terms of the way they lived their lives then. Largely because of the complex minutiae of laws and customs that governed former hierarchical relations, the new Victorian codes of law and fashions superceding them created a comical situation. Thus *senryu*, *hayariuta*, *kyōka* and *kyōga* (humorous pictures) can be seen to boom during the *Bunmei Kaika*. Nowhere could lampooning find a better home than in the juxtaposition of the old and new.

The above example suggests the samurai of old were "nothing but" makers of poetry, and thus "good for nothing," a prevalent opinion in an age of internal peace and external threat that required bombs not swords. Other *senryu* comically represent them as formerly great lovers, suggesting that the practical concerns of the Meiji *shizoku* (former samurai) had deprived them of the luxuriating time they once had for satiating their sexual appetites. The once at least nominally sovereign class had had guaranteed income (*koku* stipends) as well as status, and would have attracted the attention of lovers and mistresses, but now the times had changed.

<sup>19</sup> Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Parody*. London and New York: Routledge, 1985, 16.

With their sweet memories of when  
they stood tall, old samurai.

槍立てた昔恋しき老士族<sup>20</sup>

“Standing tall” (*yaritateta*) combines the more literal “doing great things” with a secondary meaning, “having sex.” *Yari* can mean “to do,” “to have sex,” and be another name for the male organ. *Tateta* is the past tense from of *tateru*, “to erect.” The translation “old samurai” collapses “old” (*ro*) and “former samurai” (*shizoku*).

A minor theme that appears in the period between the new and the old regime is that of Buddhist karma and previous lives. One *senryu* simply states:

The old Bakufu, the past  
life of former samurai.  
旧幕の時が士族の前世界<sup>21</sup>

Implied is “what goes around comes around,” as it would have been understood that the times were now difficult for former samurai, as if they were paying dues for their past laziness. A pleasurable sense of avenged inequity and reversed privilege is implied.

Not all such *senryu* focused directly on the samurai’s reversal of fortunes. There are many examples of more obtuse (and historically specific) *senryu* that pun on names and words associated with current events. Because the famous and widely (but not universally, at this time) revered Saigo Takamori had died taking the lead in the failed Seinan War (1877), the final uprising by former samurai to threaten the integrity of the Meiji state, he was satirically immortalized in such verses as the following.

While the average potato passes as gas  
Saigo becomes a star.  
芋は、屁となり西郷は星となり<sup>22</sup>

This *senryu* assumes readers had a familiarity with the immediate association in popular usage of Satsuma and potatoes (inhabitants of the province were referred to as “potatoes”). The vanity of the grandiose ideology of the samurai in an age of practicality also seems to be an inspiration for this *senryu*.

In the wake of the Meiji Ishin, new Western and established Confucian abstractions and ideals appeared in *senryu*, reflecting their use by the government. They are often rearranged in creative combinations, providing much material for *senryu* in the parody of the rhetoric and pompous language of empire. Parody and satire in pre-Meiji literature included various figures, such as *modoki* (satirical mockery, especially of major figures or lead actors), *chakashi* (satirizing something serious), *ugachi* (a cutting comment or “dig”), *mitate* (in satirical works, enigmatically depicting the object of satire in terms of something else), and *mojiri* (changing lyrics in parts of a song, so as to make it humorous or allegorical). These satirical figures tend to remain indirect, mocking and parodying putative authorities.<sup>23</sup>

Another figure of interest is *keiku* (警句), a concise condemnation of the principles of some novel and exceptional idea. It emphasizes on the separation of the parodic composition from the world of what is being parodied.<sup>24</sup> We see this figure in much of the satire of the Bunmei Kaika, in all three senses of *keiku* mentioned by Yanagisawa: treating something as strange in condensed, penetrating expression; overturning social appearances through novel, unexpected phrasing; and paradoxical expression. Takahashi defines parody (*parodi*) in Japan in particular in terms of *modoki*, which he lists as having the following senses and functions, varying according to historical examples at hand: a “translation” imitating

<sup>23</sup> See “*Parodi*” by Takahashi Toru in Kokubungaku Henshubu (Japanese literature editorial department), *Koten Bungaku Retorikku Jiten* (Dictionary of Classical Literary Rhetoric), Gakuto-sha, 1993, 56-57.

<sup>24</sup> See “*keiku*” by Yanagisawa Ryoichi in *Koten Bungaku Retorikku Jiten*, 25.

<sup>20</sup> Yamamoto, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Yamamoto, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Yamamoto, 21.

an original, canonical text; a vulgarization of something sacred; criticism; and comic laughter.<sup>25</sup> In the Kaika world, which was already predicated on a severance from the immediate past of Tokugawa society, the allure of entering liminal world and compounding its duality with parody would have been hard to resist for a generation raised on the playful, popular Edo fiction (*gesaku shosetsu*) and *kyōka* and *senryū* verses.

The juxtaposition of the old and new not only extends to the Bakufu and the Meiji government, but to cross-references between ancient *Kojiki* myths and historical representations of the emperor, and European monarchies, histories and ancient civilizations (Judaic, Greek, and Roman). Some examples of how abstractions from the old regime were applied satirically to pending situations suggest the fine line between elevating grand absolutes from various literary and historical contexts in the name of making Japan into a great, modernized nation, and the collapse of such abstractions as seemingly hopeless dreams. Parody in *senryū* thus drew attention to the fragility of such feats of the imagination that underlie society at this time:

Dispense the medicine of benevolence  
and root out the country's ills.  
仁の施薬に国病のねを絶やし<sup>26</sup>

Here the lampooner questions how the Meiji government has played the “*tenno* card” in tandem with Confucian ideals. While not mentioning the emperor per se, the use of *jin* or “benevolence” (on the part of the emperor to his *loyal subjects*) in this sardonic manner clearly implies the imperial institution. Though the emperor was now an actual rather than titular ruler, the language of Confucian rule, applied to the new context, would still have been broadly seen as a strategic attempt to justify the right to govern with smooth words. Such political subtexts are what make *senryū* capable of being, in Arai Akira's

<sup>25</sup> See Takahashi Toru in *Koten Bungaku Reitorikku Jiten*, 56-57.

<sup>26</sup> Yamamoto, 23.

reading of *senryū*, cutting, sharp-witted, and “intuitive” (*chokkanteki*).<sup>27</sup> For Arai, *senryū* aim at “*ugachi*” or “opening a hole,” “digging up something not visible on the surface. In other words, it is that which renders an interior visible.” *Ugachi* (a “dig”) involves the exposing of weaknesses in a person, or contradictions in society. Without becoming completely “serious,” it is both ironic and satirical.<sup>28</sup> In short, by entertaining irony in evident multiple perspectives, *senryū* provide a means for closely examining ideologically contentious language in the process of defining the new nation.

*Senryū* from around the time of the *Bunmei Kaika* emphasize distinctions between the new and old, often with a critical eye on the coercion implicit in many of the new laws. Many *senryū* imply that the whole redefinition of a society as based on “civilization and enlightenment” is itself a sham, and that distinctions between the old and new are only superficial matters of parroting the jargon of the Kaika and aping the mannerisms perceived to be common to the people of the “Great Powers.”

The bad old ways lead the Way  
to enlightenment.  
旧弊は開化の道の教師なり<sup>29</sup>

The masters who wield the rod seem to take the form of constant prohibition and negation, so that all the new ways are a purging of the past ways, and to become “enlightened” one need only know the evil ways as those things one should eschew. Similar, self-explanatory examples include:

In perfume catch a whiff  
of enlightenment.  
香水で一寸開化を匂はせる<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Arai Akira. *Nihon Inbunshi*, Ofusha, 1979, 145.

<sup>28</sup> Arai, 149.

<sup>29</sup> Yamamoto, 86; Meiji 11 (1878).

<sup>30</sup> Yamamoto, 85; Meiji 10 (1877).

Newspaper vendors' mouths  
 get used to enlightenment and progress.  
 新聞屋、開化進歩が口に馴れ<sup>31</sup>  
 Even the parrots laugh!  
 mimicking the makeshift Enlightenment.  
 オウムも笑ふ口真似の生開化<sup>32</sup>

In the fledgling Enlightenment  
 even the tadpoles seem like fish.  
 生開化お玉約子も魚ぶり<sup>33</sup>

This last *senryu* interestingly associates the grandiose "Enlightenment" with being a fish, while emphasizing that it is a project "in the works" (*nama*) so that at present one must deceive oneself in order to see great beginnings as consummated dreams (tadpoles as fish). Similarly, the middle two *senryu* lampoon the rote mouthing of the buzzwords of the day, and the first one pokes fun at the minor contribution of wearing perfume (in Victorian fashion) in elevating the nation.

The following is based on an ironic discrepancy between the stated objectives of the *Bunmei Kaika* and how these aims appear to the broad spectrum of society.

In the world of Enlightenment  
 everything is worth looking up to.  
 開化の世、上見て及ぶ事ばかり<sup>34</sup>

How enjoyable this world of civilization  
 where we note all our own faults.  
 己が非を見る文明の世は楽し<sup>35</sup>

The punster in the latter *senryu* frames "civilization" (*bunmei*) as a humbling arena within which one learns to assimilate new critical concerns. One becomes hypercritical of one's own inadequacies, especially, it is implied, since adults would have been "above" such products of an age now held in disdain.

The dry irony is in part derived from pleasure taken in this process of developing a critical sensibility that conforms to the new order all the while expressing a degree of resistance. There is an awareness of an intrinsic masochism in participating in this "progress," and pleasure to be found in its lampooning. There is a paradoxical empowerment of a new, broadly disseminated critical consciousness and coercive framing of critical propositions in *senryu* discourse. What is being sounded out in such *senryu* includes both questions regarding the impossibility of following the proposed ideology and the difficulty in resisting it. The irresistible joy of empowerment, in the very act of composing these witty *senryu*, certainly overshadows their criticism of the proliferation of prohibitions.

More contextually specific *senryu* record various reactions to new laws issued in Tokyo and in rural areas in 1872 and 1873 (Meiji 5 and 6).<sup>36</sup> There were *senryu* on the prohibition against urination in public:

Wanting to pee on the roadside,  
 the feelings of the fallen samurai.  
 路傍へ小便、落武者の心持ち<sup>37</sup>  
 When you hear the squeak of leather shoes<sup>38</sup>  
 stop the water pump.  
 靴音を聞いてポンプの水を止め<sup>39</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Yamamoto, 86; Meiji 11 (1878).

<sup>32</sup> Yamamoto, 86; Meiji 12 (1879). Yamamoto includes obsolete characters for *omu* and furigana in katakana.

<sup>33</sup> Yamamoto, 86; Meiji 13 (1880).

<sup>34</sup> Yamamoto, 85; Meiji 8 (1875).

<sup>35</sup> Yamamoto, 85; Meiji 4 (1871).

<sup>36</sup> See examples of these laws in Ogi Shinzo et al, *Fuzoku Sei* [customs and sexuality], in *Nihon Kindai Shiso Taikei* 23. Iwanami Shoten, 1990, 3-26.

<sup>37</sup> Yamamoto, 49; Meiji 7 (1874).

<sup>38</sup> "The squeak of leather shoes" was the sound of a "modern" gentleman, who would have been known to regard public urination with disdain.

Five *sen* to relieve myself –  
a ticket for peeing.  
小便の料を五銭でべんしょうし<sup>40</sup>

With a furtive look, peeing  
I see the nightstick and shrink.  
見廻して小便、棒をみて縮じみ<sup>41</sup>

If we emphasize the discursive practices that were sustained beyond the *bakumatsu* context and into the Kaika, we recognize continuity in these lampooning practices. Yet, if we underscore the changes in the discursive context due to the new government and society, we find the relations between the punster poet, the government, and a broader general audience have been altered. The new controls over the actions and bodies of Meiji subjects stimulated a vigilant, continued use of *senryu*, which both contested the new laws and were a means of realizing some benefit from the dismal prohibitions, if only by generating fodder for an economy of laughter and pleasure as compensation. In this way *senryu* can be seen as part of the naturalization of new ideological expectations; they are a continued source of entertainment derived from converting increased social restraints into opportunities for disrupting the language of the new order.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Yamamoto, 49; Meiji 12 (1879). Cf. a verse from an *iroha-uta*: “Before the unblinking eyes of cops on the beat there will be incursions by urinators thieving a pee” (抜目なき巡査の眼折々は、盗み小便する人もあり). See *Yubin Hochi Shinbun*, Meiji 8.1.29. In *Meiji Jidai Bunka Kiroku Shusei*, 168.

<sup>40</sup> Yamamoto, 49; Meiji 13 (1880).

<sup>41</sup> Yamamoto, 49; Meiji 16 (1883).

<sup>42</sup> Among the *senryu* on similar themes, there are the following two on the new prohibition against public nudity: “Undress a shoulder and no sooner / will the police burn moxa on it” (*Katamugu to sugu ni junsu ga kyokau o sue*), Yamamoto, 49, Meiji 11 (1878); and “Though naked, there are no fines / for Mt. Fuji in the summer” (*Hadaka demo*

Inspired by the ideas of democracy and human rights, People’s Rights Movement *senryu* combine the sense of indignation found in peasant protest songs and *rakusho* of the *bakumatsu* period with the wit of the above *Bunmei Kaika senryu*. Furthermore, they are.

The bricks [of the Ginza] glisten with  
the oily sweat of the people.  
人民のあぶらで煉瓦よく光り<sup>43</sup>

Reaction to oppression —  
steam boiling the lid off.  
圧制の反動、蓋を似上がる湯<sup>44</sup>

Such *senryu* were written in reaction to government demands to make sacrifices of labor for grand projects, to increase production, to redefine established customs, and to establish a “blood tax” as military conscription was called by farmers. Many *senryu* employ the imagery of being “ready to explode,” and *senryu* beginning specifically with “oppression” (*assei*) are abundant and varied. Such *senryu* on government oppression often include representations of the public reaction to it as pushing the populace toward a great uprising. But by far the most common image is built around the pun of *ken* (rights or authority) and *ken* (sword). In songs calling for people’s rights, especially from Meiji 10 (1877), we find *senryu* such as:

Undo the sword from your *obi* and trade it in  
for the freewheeling force of rights.  
圧制の反動力は噴水器<sup>45</sup>

With the abolition of swords  
commoners hold the rights (*ken*).  
廃剣にしたで平民けん (剣・権) を持ち<sup>46</sup>

*bakkin ha nashi natsu no Fuji*, Yamamoto, 49, Meiji 13 (1880).

<sup>43</sup> Yamamoto, 35.

<sup>44</sup> Yamamoto, 36; Meiji 21(1888).

<sup>45</sup> Yamamoto, 39; Meiji 13 (1880).

In a world where hips have lost their swords  
(*ken*)

people sprout rights (*ken*).

腰に剣ない世で民に権が出来<sup>47</sup>

After the abolition of swords

they polish people's rights in Tosa.

廃剣の後、民権を士族で磨き<sup>48</sup>

A world under a despotic government  
puts rust on the sword of people's rights.

専制な世は民権にさびが付き<sup>49</sup>

These numerous *senryu* are playfully predicated on the fact that it was after the order abolishing the wearing of swords (*ken*) that the call for people's rights (*minken*) came to flourish.<sup>50</sup> Tosa, in the fourth verse, was a hotbed of People's Rights movement activities. Former samurai here, notably Ueki Emori and Itagaki Taisuke, became local and national leaders of the movement.<sup>51</sup> The most common motif in these *senryu* is the continued, somewhat parodic repetition of ritualistic actions associated with wearing and caring for swords (cleaning and polishing) here transferred onto a concern with human rights. In the *bakumatsu* period, the sword was not only a symbol of samurai sovereignty, but also of their laziness and uselessness (first as "warriors" during a time of peace, then in the face of the more advanced Western armories). Thus there was an underlying sense of justice in commoners gaining rights while doing the work by which society

<sup>46</sup> Yamamoto, 36; Meiji 10 (1877).

<sup>47</sup> Yamamoto, 36; Meiji 10 (1877).

<sup>48</sup> Yamamoto, 36; Meiji 11 (1878).

<sup>49</sup> Yamamoto, 37; Meiji 12 (1879).

<sup>50</sup> Yamamoto, 37.

<sup>51</sup> On the importance of former Tosa Domain samurai in the movement, see Bowen, Roger W. *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980, 108ff.

functions; this is the meaning of "With the abolition of swords / commoners hold rights." Furthermore, "In a world where hips have lost their swords (*ken*) / people sprout rights (*ken*)," suggests the power vacuum all people, samurai included, would fill as the privilege to bear swords was exchanged (in the ideology of the People's Rights movement) for inherent (natural) rights for all.

As if the fetishistic magic of the word "sword" in the former governing order were dispelled by the abstract word "rights," not by the actual abolishment of swords per se, these *senryu* lampoon the class tensions underlying the de facto samurai revolution and governing leadership in contrast to the oppositional People's Rights groups, which while being lead primarily by samurai were empowered by commoners (especially farmers). It is from the perspective of someone who became an impassioned activist that the author of the final *senryu* above writes: Not to take advantage of the new, still intangible sword/rights would expose Japan to the danger of being "A world under a despotic government / [that] puts rust on the sword of people's rights."

There were also *senryu* critical of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, often labeling it "wagamama" (selfish):

Freedom to follow your every whim  
will never amount to people's rights.

我儘の自由、民権にはならず<sup>52</sup>

Stretch out your limbs and go to work!

It's a free workaday world [now].

手も足も伸ばして稼ぐは自由<sup>53</sup>

Though the first example sides with the opposition to the Freedom and People's Rights movement, the second is less clear-cut. Its "dig" (*ugachi*) could be against laziness, celebrating the advent of a self-determined working world, but more ironically it cuts against the ideal of freedom, underscoring that it too is a call to work.

<sup>52</sup> Yamamoto, 39, Meiji 20 (1887).

<sup>53</sup> Yamamoto, 39; Meiji 21 (1888).

A decade after this movement had been crushed one finds a growing abundance of nationalist *senryu*. *Senryu* employing the phrase “*Yamato-damashii*” or “Japanese spirit (of old)” flourished in the periods of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars.<sup>54</sup> “*Yamato-damashii*” is an abstract word used to arouse patriotic emotions by associating it with its believed manifestation, often images of military prowess or national supremacy.<sup>55</sup> The *senryu* form is well equipped to lampoon the overuse of this jingoistic buzzword. Yet, as *senryu* are usually based on current events or discourse of the day, and depend upon resituating these in droll juxtapositions, it is not always easy to distinguish mere observations from witty associations without referring to historical details. In examples of *senryu* built around the patriotic jargon of “*Yamato-damashii*,” virtually anything in Japan can be included and identified as its manifestation. The humor in such convocations of images is obvious; part of their entertaining value in the Meiji period stemmed from expectations that yet another everyday, insignificant item would be ironically placed under the glorifying rubric of the *Yamato-damashii*. Some of these *senryu* seem to be mere citations or snapshots of uses of the word *Yamato-damashii*, and it is often unclear whether their humor or “amusement” is derived more from a critical mode or a celebratory nationalism. For example:

As pupils to eyeballs,  
the Japanese spirit to the globe.  
眼中の瞳、地球に大和魂<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See Yamamoto, 33.

<sup>55</sup> To understand how “*Yamato-damashii*” was used, consider the phrase “the American way.” It is virtually meaningless, yet in any given context conjures up vague associations, perhaps of “rugged individualism,” in the context of sports, invention, finance, and space exploration. “*Yamato-damashii*” is just such a metaphorical expression and very broad abstraction that is bound up with the rhetoric by which the nation is popularly defined.

<sup>56</sup> Yamamoto, 31; Meiji 19 (1886).

The imagery is outlandish, suggesting the Japanese spirit is the overseer and inspirational axis on which the earth finds its moral bearing. It presumably mimics the nationalism of contemporary chauvinists. It must be interpreted as both parodying the absurdity of such national megalomania, and of tacitly enjoying such chauvinist discourse as a source of entertainment.

The Japanese spirit bound up in two words:  
a rainbow of loyalty and righteousness.  
忠と義の二字に縛り合う大和魂<sup>57</sup>

Here “*Yamato-damashii*” is represented as the synthesizing entity by which Confucian values of the old regime are reified. One anachronism is shown being used to justify another. The following is more openly wary of such relations:

The righteousness of those united under the throne [like the sworn brothers of Ryubi, Kanu and Chohi, of the Three Warring States],  
and not to mention the dreary Japanese spirit of those united under [our] throne.  
桃下の義、愚か桐下の大和魂<sup>58</sup>

As this is a *senryu* and all puns are within the realm of possibility, we are compelled to read the *oroka* in both senses of “not to mention” and of “insipid.” Along with the allusion to the vows made by the brothers of the Three Warring States, it is a good example of an author drawing a fine line between eloquent praise and mockery.

From the time of the Sino-Japanese War, *Yamato-damashii* became a buzzword to express elation at having overcome the threat of colonization and embarking on an aggressive pursuit of Japan’s own empire. From being controlled by unequal treaties and necessarily reactive, living in the shadow of resentment and condescension, Japan was at a point at which it could now stage

<sup>57</sup> Yamamoto, 32; Meiji 27 (1894).

<sup>58</sup> Yamamoto, 32; Meiji 27 (1894). This translation incorporates Yamamoto’s note.



its own plans for seizing control of surrounding territories and markets. Even after the insult of the Triple Intervention, the language of patriotism and nationalism would increasingly compensate for the residual threat of the West. Examples of *senryu* in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War suggest how pliable “*Yamato-damashii*” was, applicable to anything with chauvinist or violent overtones vis-à-vis the foreign:

Cannons forward on the double –  
such is the Japanese spirit  
大砲の真 [っ] 先掛 (駈) けは大和魂<sup>59</sup>

What no one cannot replicate overseas –  
the Japanese spirit.  
外国で模造は出来ぬ大和魂<sup>60</sup>

Preserving national purity:  
the Japanese spirit of the troops.  
国粋の保存、兵士の大和魂<sup>61</sup>

These works may be read as braggadocio compensating for insults in foreign affairs and reflecting actual military battles; however they can also be read as parodying the figurative move that uses “*Yamato-damashii*” as a form of bound potentiality (in the sense that Nietzsche describes resentment and “priestly vengeance” in the first section of *The Genealogy of Morals*).<sup>62</sup> In this way, there is a continuation of the rhetorical pattern found in Freedom and People’s Rights period *senryu* on “oppression” (*assei*) above, whereby the language of threatening innuendo compensated for insufficient political power. Moreover, reproducing the political order of the *bakuhau*, *senryu* remained removed from the realm of

planning actions that could affect the direction of specific policies.

The following *senryu* illustrates the expanding range of the form. It employs irony of a sort made possible by the successful attainment of overseas territories after the first Sino-Japanese War. The black humor emerges from a mixture of the new national consciousness and traditional satirical humor, which was most often used to attack rulers and their policies or to lampoon scandals. Here the shrewd wit emboldens chauvinism in the subjects of the common Japanese state. The images of “strong country” and “real estate agency,” identifying strength and wealth, recall the earlier slogan “rich country, strong army,” employed at a time when Japan’s own sovereignty was being threatened by colonizing European nations. By presenting these as productive associations in “natural” juxtaposition, a Japanese upon reading it would have discovered the achievement of that slogan’s goal in the unified image of a strong nation that demonstrates its military and financial strength by its maintenance of control over Taiwan.

The real estate broker of a great power:  
the Japanese spirit.  
強国の不動産なり大和魂<sup>63</sup>

The following are of interest in that they recognize *gunka* as part of a plan to instill militarism in children. They are part of the preparation of weapons of revenge against their nemises Russia, Germany and France who, in the Triple Intervention, were seen as having robbed Japan of its victory in the field of empire-making and colonization by forcing it to return the Liaotung Peninsula to China.

Military songs even for the toddlers –  
the wrath of the Japanese spirit.  
小児も軍歌、敵がいの日本魂<sup>64</sup>

In lullabies as in martial songs,

<sup>59</sup> Yamamoto, 32; Meiji 29 (1896).

<sup>60</sup> Yamamoto, 32; Meiji 30 (1897).

<sup>61</sup> Yamamoto, 33; Meiji 31 (1898).

<sup>62</sup> Nietzsche’s discussion of *resentiment* and cultural expression describes the structure of “priestly vengeance.” See Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Genealogy of Morals*. Tr. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1969, 33.

<sup>63</sup> Yamamoto, 33; Meiji 31 (1898).

<sup>64</sup> Yamamoto, 32; Meiji 30 (1897).

the rousing beat of marching feet.  
 子守まで勇む軍歌の足拍子（アシビョウ  
 シ）<sup>65</sup>

There is a mocking of the shrewd if not thoroughly mean-spirited appropriation of young children as pawns in plans of colonial expansion. Such indoctrination is at the core of the ideological: entrusting to youth, who look up to their teachers for guidance, ideas that they themselves as adults may believe in or rebel against. But, the issues are firmly planted in their minds, becoming part of their ideological common sense by which they situate themselves ethically so that militarism rings true to them.

The *senryu* in this section illustrate how *senryu* evolved from the late Bakumatsu to the mid Meiji period, from forms of satire largely removed from voicing public policy to more discursively participatory forms. *Senryu* began to contribute to national ideological centralization and unity rather than remain a marginal “shaking fist.” A qualitative shift in the role of satirical verse is related to the identifications of the individual with the interests of the nation. Each citizen was to contribute to a central, focal agenda (symbolized by the emperor, but also by slogans such as “rich country, strong army” [*fukoku kyohei*] and “produce and industrialize” [*shokusan kogyo*]). That is to say, the ideological function of the nation had taken root in the subjects, who became increasingly assured of the stability of the new order after the quashing of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. Individual subjects would find their audience for oppositional rhetoric increasingly hard to find, being unable to rely on a rhetoric that parodies others without taking note of their own place in the picture, so that the humorous became easily engaged in “serious” and historically motivated issues, which dispels and attenuates what otherwise would have been humorous.

Also contributing to the blunting of the oppositional aspect of *senryu* was the influence of Western ideas of literature, nation, and history that became immensely popular and influential, even, to some extent, before the Meiji Ishin itself.

<sup>65</sup> Yamamoto, 72; Meiji 31 (1898).

The rhetoric of “civilization and enlightenment” meant the degradation of existing popular culture. In the realm of song and poetry, this policy meant supplanting comic poetry and song with a more “civilized” poetry of the new nation: *shintaiishi* (new-style poetry). While not subsuming satirical verse genres, *shintaiishi* contributed to the elimination of many comic genres. In contrast to “vulgar” comic forms, *shintaiishi* was touted as part of the acculturation of the nation to a vision of a “Western” Japan.<sup>66</sup> The pressure to do away with the “bad customs” of the past and the impact it had on cultural production in general is in these very *senryu* shown to be extensive, as is found in the countless satires of the Kaika. To expunge vulgar forms and to implement *shintaiishi* went beyond distinctions of former class-based verse forms. Major genres with historical class associations include courtiers writing primarily *waka* (and *kanshi*); higher-ranking samurai primarily *kanshi* (and *waka* and *kyoka*); and commoners singing and writing folk songs, *hayariuta* (inclusive of countless forms), *senryu* as well as *waka*, *kyoka* (crazy poems), and haikai.

Yanagida Izumi used the phrase “all-encompassing truth” (*issai no shinjitsu*) as a metaphor to describe the new quality of the dissemination of knowledge in the Bunmei Kaika.<sup>67</sup> In the con-

<sup>66</sup> See, for instance, the prefaces to the *Shintaiishisho* and Yamada Bimyo's introduction to the *Shintaiishisen* in Yamamiya Makoto, ed. *Nihon Gendaishi Taikei*, v.I. Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1950, 23-26 and 90-91.

<sup>67</sup> Yanagida goes into details about the common-sense underlying the “grasping of principles,” which he takes as the contemporary standard aim of all study. The Bakufu also had a policy of encouraging learning and study, but the “consciously established aims of studying” (*gakumon*) were different. He explains, “the dissemination of a knowledge that extended an all-encompassing truth (*issai no shinjitsu*) to the people involved the enlightenment of the people (*jinmin no kaika*), a redefinition of the lives of the people in the culture, and [the inculcation of] a grasping of principles. Though this was not the primary aim in the ‘encouragement of learning’ (*gakumon*)”

text of comic poetry and song, “all-encompassing truth” meant a seriousness that threatened to diminish the enjoyment of these subcultures, as well as many aspects of commoner culture in general. At the same time, the introduction of this seriousness itself was one of the most satirized aspects of early Meiji society.

In these one recognizes a pattern of using *senryu* to expose folly and to find means of making sense, in this ironic language, of the historical complexities that led to whatever events were at hand and scene being depicted. Though the range of subject matter is far broader than the slice of *senryu* discussed here in the context of nation and ideology, these adequately illustrate a form of expression that retained the language of pun-filled wordplay while reflecting changes in how commoners viewed and participated in public opinion-making during the struggle to construct a new Japan and an ideological consensus that settled well with enough people to stave off any further serious revolutionary coup.<sup>68</sup> Part of the significance of *senryu* lies in relation to other “serious” verse discourse, especially *shintaiishi*, which would virtually ban puns in favor of univocal stylistics resembling high European poetry.

#### *Rakusho: Verse as Underground Exposé*

*Rakusho* are anonymous, versified lampoons or satirical ditties in the most general sense, encompassing many varieties of illicitly printed and posted graffiti. The use of “*rakusho*” (落書, lit. “fallen writing”), thought to have existed since the Muromachi period, varies widely. Some literary histories suggest that we distinguish it

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*shorei*) by government offices, it was a natural result....” See Yanagida Izumi. “*Meiji Shin-Seifu Bungei Seisaku no Ittan*.” *Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyu* 11. Undated offprint, Yanagida Collection, Waseda University Library, 2.

<sup>68</sup> For a more general sense of the range of subjects in the form, see the major collections of *senryu* in *Haifu Yanagidaru* (1796) and *Haifu Yanagidaru Shui* (1801), in Sukimoto Nagashige and Hamada Giichirou. *Senryu Kyouka Shu*. *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* 57. Iwanami Shoten, 1958.

ary histories suggest that we distinguish it from “*rakushu*” (落首, lit. “fallen verse”) and “*rakugaki*” (落書き, graffiti). Kamisaka disagrees with Motoori Norinaga’s explanation that *rakushu* is a phonetic transformation of *rakusho*, preferring the explanation that *rakushu* designates lower-grade work and *rakusho* higher-grade work. Regardless, it is clear that *rakushu*, which came to refer specifically to 31 or 17 syllable verses, were more narrowly defined than *rakusho*, though they both came to be used interchangeably in the Edo period. However, the more heterogeneous *rakusho* too came to be most closely associated with such short forms, especially 31 syllable verses, which often resemble *kyoka*.<sup>69</sup> Kamisaka sees *rakusho* as developing out of the emulation of a *senryu* mode of satire, but emphasized that *senryu* tend to confine themselves to events within the lower echelons of society (rumors, talk of illicit trysts, prostitution) and do not evidence the broader awareness of multiple class relations that distinguishes *rakusho*.<sup>70</sup> It is in this doubly defiant sense of outdoing and even mocking *senryu* and *kyoka* themselves that *rakusho* were “fallen writing.”

Though once prominently including prose as well, from the Edo period, *rakusho* most often take the appearance of “crazy and playful poetic language.”<sup>71</sup> They substituted for legally sanctioned means of expressing dissent and flourished during the late Tokugawa period.<sup>72</sup> Unlike legally published *yomiuri* and *kawaraban* (clay tablet-printed news), which reported news and

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<sup>69</sup> See Kamisaka, 4.

<sup>70</sup> Kamisaka, 38.

<sup>71</sup> In the Edo period there also appeared *rakusho* expressions consisting solely of the pictorial, with no script. Though falling under the broad rubric of *rakusho*, they are more specifically referred to as *fushiga* (風刺画, satirical pictures). Kamisaka 4. For a general pictorial overview of the period treated in this paper, see the works of Yoshitoshi (1839-1892).

<sup>72</sup> See Kida, 129-130; Kamisaka, 3ff.

contained editorials in a direct prose style, *rakusho* were figurative,<sup>73</sup> so as to disguise the message in the medium, and avoid the excessive wrath of the censors and the particular officials scrutinized in their lampoons. However, the use of figurative language also reflects the lack of more or less contractual obligation to provide current news and events, as was the case with the *yomiuri* (lit., “read-and-sells”), which were sold by vendors as they walked around reading them aloud. While *yomiuri* were printed in order to turn a profit, and depended on ordinary public channels, *rakusho* were not for profit and could be distributed under the censors’ radar. They were posted and distributed primarily by viewing and subsequent retelling by word of mouth. *Yomiuri* and *kawaraban* had to conform to censor regulations lest the authorities stop their distribution, which was of course essential if they were to turn a profit. Those producing *rakusho* were relatively unfettered by such entanglements.<sup>74</sup>

Discussing the widespread use of *rakusho* as a means of eluding censorship laws, Sakuraki Akira writes in his *Sokumenkan Bakumatsushi*, a multi-volume collection of *rakusho*:

Preceding the Meiji Ishin, in the feudal world of the Tokugawa, freedom to criticize the government of the realm in newspapers and magazines as we do today, and to denounce social ills, was not permitted at all. Thus hierarchical distinctions as they stood in their proper order did not allow for interference, however minor, by the lower classes.<sup>75</sup>

Commoners (including low-ranking samurai) had to submit to anything the Bakufu ordered, and

in this set of circumstances, no matter how unequal the people (*jinmin*) were, there was no room for addressing this inequality. Thus it was only natural that by way of ‘*rakusho*’, ‘*tobun*’ (written challenges) and the like did criticism of the realm inadvertently come to be circulated in abundance.<sup>76</sup>

Though they had been written since the Genpei period, it is in the Tokugawa period that they came to flourish at a new level. When Bakufu failures to address the needs of the common people grew extreme, *rakusho* were written in profusion. When the Shogun’s Council suggested to the Shogun that the prohibition of *rakusho* genres be ordered, the Shogun on the contrary told them they were becoming ministers of admonishment.<sup>77</sup> From this exchange one can see the attention attracted by the proliferation of *rakusho*, and the seriousness with which some officials sought to quell this affront to their authority. Although *rakusho* is a broad rubric, including numerous verse forms, I shall focus especially on *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) acrostics, satirical dialogue, and enumerating verses such as *kazoe-uta* (counting songs) and *iroha-uta* (ABC songs). As a particular mode of social expression, *rakusho* use many of the same verse forms used by commoners (*senryu*, *kyoka*, and *hayariuta*). However, *rakusho* are not always written from the point of view of politically disenfranchised commoners. Most *rakusho* appear to have been written by disgruntled *ronin* (masterless samurai)<sup>78</sup> and some by merchants. A deluge of *rakusho* of the *sutebumi* (opinion/grievance handbills) and *harifuda* (pasted handbills) types accompanied the

<sup>73</sup> See Kamisaka, 8.

<sup>74</sup> Kamisaka, 7-8. On laws against *rakusho* and punishments, see Kamisaka 25ff.

<sup>75</sup> Sakuraki, 1. For an overview of developments in censorship from the *bakumatsu* into the Meiji period, also see Rubin, Jay. *Injurious to Public Morals - Writers and the Meiji State*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984, 19-23.

<sup>76</sup> Sakuraki, 2.

<sup>77</sup> Sakuraki, 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ronin* or *roshi* are samurai who had renounced their lords, leaving their domains against the wishes of superiors, or who otherwise had become unaffiliated with their former domain or house because of, for instance, disobedience.

rise of independent bands of *ronin*, who formed terrorist groups making strikes against governmental powers and challenging their legitimacy. It is an ideologically interesting form that distinctly reveals dissent within certain strata of the nominally ruling samurai class, as well as the economically empowered merchant class. *Rakusho* exhibit a spectrum of positions, from humorously conciliatory, silly satires of current events (similar to what can be found in *senryu*) to calculated formulations of grievances and plans for rebellion, as well as to bitter references to failed terrorist attacks.<sup>79</sup> The form is so diverse that, in this brief introduction, I can best explore examples of representative subgenres rather than try to characterize *rakusho* by way of vague generalizations.

Research of *rakusho* has focused predominantly on the historical.<sup>80</sup> Kamisaka emphasizes the historical setting reflected in *rakusho*, which he calls “particularly biased” and containing a “corrective evaluation” that reflects critical observation of the underside of how situations appear. In a way complementing my ideological examination of verse, Kamisaka defends the use of *rakusho* as historical documentation that is necessarily of a fragmentary nature. For him, the compression of expression is an outstanding feature of *rakusho*, which he praises for its capacity to reveal core complexities of contemporary events.<sup>81</sup> Kamisaka situates *rakusho* in terms of

its development from a form differentiating interests (*rigai*) with respect to various social phenomena, to a form employed to foment class opposition to the ruling top-tier samurai.<sup>82</sup>

The following *rakusho*, arranged as a sequence of *kyōka* that can be read individually or in the context of a narrative series, treats the arrival of Perry.

In June everyone out in fishing  
boats,  
going back and forth, an uproar  
in the harbor.  
A cold sweat in the heat, gathering  
as ordered  
boats speed to the mouth of the  
dragon.  
The morning sun goes down in  
the white sails and into the  
high rigging,  
The news goes out to all domains  
[or countries] in rapid  
order.  
Japanese would rather eat dregs  
than be a country eating  
American rice.  
Japan, muckraked clean by a  
foreign country —  
looking back, what an awful time at the [Ur-  
aga] harbor.

水無月や四そうの船のみな  
と人  
上を下へとさwぐ浦かな  
暑中にてひや汗流す奉行衆  
辰の口へといそぐ早舟  
高繩に白帆の続く旭影  
諸国注蝕櫛の齒を引  
あめりかの米より食ぬ国な  
れど  
日本人はあわをくふなり

<sup>79</sup> Kamisaka writes that *rakusho* were disseminated by pasting them where people could see them, such as on gates. Kamisaka, 3.

<sup>80</sup> Major titles of research and annotated collections of *rakusho* include: Kamisaka Kuratsugu. *Shakai Jihyo toshite no Rakusho*. Takahara Shoten, 1930; Kida Jun'ichiro. *Rakusho Nihonshi*. San'ichi Shoten, 1967; Suzuki Tozo and Okada Satoshi. *Rakusho Ruiju* (3 Vol.). Tokyodo Shuppan, 1984; Sakaraki Akira. *Sokumenkan Bakumatsushi* (2 Vol.). Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982 [1905]. Three of these collections focus on the historical importance of *rakusho* in their titles.

<sup>81</sup> Kamisaka, 1.

<sup>82</sup> See Kamisaka, 2. This class division of not four principles classes but rather of samurai and non-samurai is affirmed by W. G. Beasley in *The Rise of Modern Japan*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, 7.

日本のあかを異国で荒ひは  
り  
かえしてみればうらが大変<sup>83</sup>

The first two verses are about the stir Perry caused, the fourth deals with ongoing trade issues, and the fifth verse suggests the possibility that part of the energetic satire of the events unfolding most likely produced a degree of pleasure, at least for the non-ruling classes, in watching the already failing Bakufu have to agonize even more under foreign pressure. The concern for the country as a whole rather than in local domains would appear in these verses to have been stimulated by the external threat that Perry brought to Japan, already on top of the internal problems alluded to with “muckraking.” These historical facts are well known, but these verses depict local reaction with details about the different angles from which people tried to sort events into a loose narrative.

Satire in the third *kyōka* is grounded in the play of twice-removed relations of symbols caught between conflicting forces. It reflects both historical contingencies and discursive possibilities in the situation. The indirect, symbolic play suggests various relational possibilities and anxieties concerning the symbolic and ideological stability of a society in crisis. Perry came at a time when it had become increasingly clear that structural change, including the possibility of the restoration of imperial rule, was not unlikely. In this verse, the rising sun, symbol of Japan, is replaced by the image of morning sunlight filling the white sails of the “black ships.” It is as if the sunlight being caught in the high rigging puts into images the capture of the very symbol incorporated into the name of the nation itself, the “rising sun.” Moreover, the “spreading of the news” is to “various domains/countries” (*shokoku*), which then could mean both foreign nations and internal domains, implying a cross-referencing of points of views and concerns in terms of symbolic and actual power, and the sovereignty and solidarity of Japan. Embarrassment was both internal to the archipelago and international. These verses are among the most entertaining and historically insightful, revealing a witty if not bitter awareness

<sup>83</sup> Sakuraki, 10-11.

of what current events entailed in terms of the symbolic capital and status within and without late Tokugawa Japan.

A particular *senryū* collected as a *rakushō* suggests the impact of imagery and depiction of current events on how people viewed events. Obvious interpretive orientations and values are couched in the following imagery that certainly carried the power to disseminate and popularize attitudes and ways of formulating views on the events of the day. For instance, we come across pieces like the following (which I hesitate to quote), a textbook example of the use of sexual imagery of feminization and violation in colonialist situations:

Visible to America between the rain,  
the Japanese pussy.  
あめりかにあまみ見らるる日本ぼぼ<sup>84</sup>

#### Amerika ni amama miraruru Nihon bobo

In this short, very playfully prosodic *rakushō* one can see how this form had the potential to derive its impact from the exploitation of every nuance and from the conversion of landscape into a memorable (albeit in bawdy taste) caricature of the situation with regard to foreign affairs and national sovereignty. Such self-parodying depictions of Japan’s humiliation, in being, for example, forced into accepting unequal trading agreements and extraterritorial rights for foreigners, were inevitably linked to sexual images invoking gendered stereotypes of dominant and subordinate powers. Like the *senryū* examined earlier, which deal with the sexuality and sovereignty of samurai after the abolishment of swords, this *senryū* displays a nexus whereby such images and motifs reinforce each other’s misogynist and nationalist views.

Another form of *rakushō* takes the form of acrostic *kanshi* rebus. Though it appears in many forms, including maze-like chains of *kanbun* (Chinese prose written by Japanese), the most prevalent form is a series of grids of 9 characters

<sup>84</sup> Sakuraki, 7.

forming a square.<sup>85</sup> They are read as four lines, with each line utilizing the central character, however the English delineation removes the pleasure of deciphering the reading and posted message. Though more cerebral than poetic, the form as read in the original is invested with a rhythm based on the repetition of the central character in the acrostic, providing a locus for both linking diverse associations and creating humorous effects such as presenting alternative, ironic sides of a given situation, and incorporating amusing, sudden or clever turns. Some of these acrostic poems have some characteristics of sorites (logically progressing nonsensical syllogistic chains), which can be found in comic lines in Shakespeare.<sup>86</sup>

Being linked by a central Chinese character, there is the added element of a rhythmic unity as well as a somewhat "logical" play with shifting contexts and aspects linked by the axis of the central, recurrent character. These acrostics, like sorites in English, make a mockery of coherent lines of relation or reasoning by underscoring the discrepancy between lived and ideal relations in the surviving socio-political order, the "logic" or "reason" involves falling between reference to the historical situation, and the use of the central character in the acrostic as a pivot for a "circling back" effect, which for the sake of situating such repetition in an English-language context may be compared with devices of repetition in a villanelle or sestina (though the tone in these acrostic blocks is usually serious and political rather than aesthetically detached). The following is a very concise, direct example:

The good retainers are in hiding,  
the rebel retainers are amassing;  
there are no loyal retainers  
and many traitors

<sup>85</sup> For examples of the maze-like chains of *kanbun* acrostics used for *rakusho*, see Kida, 49-51; and Suzuki Tozo and Okada Satoshi. *Rakusho Ruiju* (3 Vol.). Tokyodo Shuppan, 1984, III:35.

<sup>86</sup> See Sister Miriam Joseph's treatment of sorites in her *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language*. New York, 1947.

賊 忠 良  
  \ | /  
多—臣—逆  
  / | \  
隱 無 集<sup>87</sup>

These acrostics are read as four lines, beginning with the upper-right character and diagonally down, secondly from the upper-left character diagonally down, then from the central character of the top row vertically down, and finally from the central character of the rightmost column horizontally across to the left. They are read in the order indicated in the following example (from a work to be treated later), following the numbers and repeating the "no" in each line.

Above there is no trust,  
below no propriety,  
the retainers have no loyalty  
and the masters have no heads.

下 臣 上  
  \ | /  
首—無—主  
  / | \  
信 忠 禮<sup>88</sup>

<sup>4</sup>below [there's] <sup>7</sup> retainers [have] <sup>1</sup>above [there 's]

<sup>12</sup>heads no (in each line) <sup>10</sup>[&] masters [have]

<sup>3</sup>trust <sup>9</sup>loyalty <sup>6</sup>propriety

When translating this acrostic into English, "no" adequately provides a substitute for the central, repeated "nai" character in this acrostic. The central character would have been read as the final character in the typical Japanese method of reading *kanbun*, reversing the order of the final two characters in each line and thus further complicating the reading as would be desirable in these outlawed satires. The first line would be

<sup>87</sup> Kida Jun'ichiro. *Rakusho Nihonshi*. San'ichi Shoten, 1967, 191.

<sup>88</sup> Kida, 165. Also in Sakuraki, I:337.

read, “*ue de shin [ga] nai*,” and “*ga nai*” would round off every line, creating a dry rhythm punctuating the message. As we will see below, this “stanza” concludes a series of four such blocks of *kanshi* acrostics. A rhythm based on the repetition of the central character in the acrostic provide a locus for both linking diverse associations and creating humorous effects in the juxtapositions that arise. This is precisely how the form is adeptly used in the above example.

In other uses of the form, unfair relations of power in hierarchical oppositions are exposed, as well as financial contradictions that burdened the non-sovereign classes:

A foreign country’s ship  
comes to an eastern domain [country]<sup>89</sup>  
sending the country into turmoil  
changing domainal rule.

Many domains are surprised  
by another country’s strength.  
Nippon is in an uproar,  
the country under duress.

With the seashores fortified  
rumors circulate among the public,  
smoke rises around the fields  
and neighborhoods are bustling.

```

東  乱  異
 \  |  /
  變—国—治
 /  |  \
船  城  来

```

<sup>89</sup> I.e., Perry arrived in Shimoda, in eastern Japan, and Japan was a country in the East. The distinction was ambiguous, and became an issue in 1867, when the Satsuma Domain, providing evidence in its possession of the Ryukyu Islands, applied as a sovereign nation for a place in the Paris Exposition. See Marius B. Jansen, “The Meiji Restoration,” in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 184.

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異—倭—諸
 \  |  /
愁—国—自
 /  |  \
驚  騷  強

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公  野  海
 \  |  /
賑—辺—近
 /  |  \
堅  煙  嚙90

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This last acrostic “stanza” makes full use of the form, creating a sense of reversals and confusion by situating the most unobtrusive puns in imbedded multiple-kanji words (*jukugo*) and by reinforcing the image of hysteria and rebellion. Here, all four “lines” (readings) vary the meaning of the central character, imbedding the following different *jukugo*: “seashore” (*kaihen*), “the public” (*kohen*), “around the fields” (*nohen*; fields), and “neighborhood” (*kinpen*). Moreover, in the first two versions, the first two lines describe the menacing danger from outside, while the latter two lines suggest internal turmoil. In English translation these word-plays may not be apparent when there are variations in the reading of the central character of the acrostic.

Changing his residence,  
bitter under house arrest,  
plotting a quiet retreat  
a warrior in retirement.

A time in the future  
before the troops set off,  
they won’t have changed their base  
ways before awakening.

In a world full of decay  
today this is too much,  
the barbarians prosper  
sending people bustling.

Above there is no trust,  
below no propriety,

<sup>90</sup> Kida, 129-130.



the retainers have no loyalty  
and the masters have no heads.

```

蟄 閑 住
 \ | /
 土-居-隱
 / | \
代 企 恨

軍 眼 時
 \ | /
 止-末-幣
 / | \
來 覺 癸

今 夷 世
 \ | /
 騷-盛-人
 / | \
哀 也 過

下 臣 上
 \ | /
 首-無-主
 / | \
信 忠 禮91

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Class schema, and their insolvency, are mapped out in this final acrostic “stanza,” easily rendered in English, by reading the central word, “no,” in its appearance in diagonal, vertical and horizontal lines. For a merchant, this crisscrossing of negations (discussed as the example used to illustrate how to read kanji acrostics) would have symbolized the decline of transactions by which he collected his profits.<sup>92</sup>

The ruling class needed to be able to trust those below them, the lower samurai, who were in normal circumstances obliged to convey trustworthiness to their sworn masters. Thus the “trust” (*shin*) was *between* high and low and es-

<sup>91</sup> Kida, 165. See also Sakuraki, I:337.

<sup>92</sup> Kida notes that though *rakusho* were written mostly by lower samurai, the *shomin* still figure prominently in this genre. See 261.

pecially important within the samurai class — within each domain and, ultimately, with respects to domainal ambitions and their relative standings vis-à-vis the shogunate. As unrest grew among all classes and domains, the ruled (all lower-samurai and below) no longer bothered to exhibit a sense of respect and decorum, which conveyed trustworthiness in compliance with the firmly established ideological orthodoxy. The retainers, who were the mediators between the very top and the other classes, exhibited no loyalty, so that the relations between ruler and ruled no longer benefited from a unity of command, actions, and legitimacy to govern and be governed under a Confucian model of reciprocal relations between ruler and ruled (the ideas of which were hotly debated to diverse ends). Such relations became murky and loyalties diverse.

“The masters have no heads” refers especially to Ii Naosuke who was assassinated outside the Sakurada Gate of Edo Castle, in revenge for the purge of Mito retainers who advocated the overthrow of the Bakufu and the restoration of the emperor. Thus the “warrior in retirement” is probably Yoshinobu (Keiki), son of the shogun Iesada and potential successor who Ii Naobumi had forced into retirement.

A very similar, but extremely dry and direct acrostic appears as politically empowered independent bands of *roshi* began making terrorist strikes and employing a deluge of handbills in the early 1860s.

The lord’s words esteemed,  
the retainer’s words taken lightly;  
heaven’s will is flawless,  
the barbarians good as dead.

The country’s authority is strong,  
the barbarian’s authority in ruins;  
the lord’s authority is awesome,  
retainers’ authority gains backing.

The country’s authority is strong,  
the barbarian’s authority in ruins;  
the lord’s authority is awesome,  
retainers’ authority gains backing.

The lord holds the Way,  
the retainers hold loyalty;

the people are in order  
the barbarians will be punished.<sup>93</sup>

臣	天	君		
\		/		
亡	—	命	—	賊
/		\		
重	正	輕		
夷	君	国		
\		/		
備	—	威	—	臣
/		\		
強	嚴	哀		
臣	民	君		
\		/		
罰	—	有	—	賊
/		\		
道	治	忠		

This acrostic, as Kida writes, illustrates the thought of independent bands of *roshi* and their terrorist groups. It maps the political ideals and the unresolved, tense relations between factions advocating various solutions to the country's problems. The opening acrostic reflects *sonno joi* (revere the emperor, expel the barbarians) thought, and the last "stanza" reaffirms the main tenets of Confucian ideology in general. In this acrostic, as Kida writes, "lord" versus "rebel" indicates restoration thought, and "country" (or domain) versus "barbarian" (foreign countries) reflects "Expel the Barbarians" thought. Both are situated within the binary conceptual pattern attendant to Confucian thought. After the opening of the ports, the cost of living rose, and the first to be affected were the people at large (*minshu*) and the lower class samurai, who become the most vociferous proponents of "expelling the barbarians."<sup>94</sup>

This form more than any other reflects the turbulent class relations from the point of view of

<sup>93</sup> Kida, 170.

<sup>94</sup> Takahashi Shin'ichi. *Takahashi Shin'ichi chosakushu*, v.10. *Hayariuta de tsuduru Nihon Gendaishi*, Ayumi Shuppan, 1985, 12.

those upper merchant (commoner) class and the lower samurai, where the ruling ideology was most at odds with the realities of the day: wealthy merchants were buying last names so as to attain samurai status and privilege, while samurai, became more indebted to merchants. The ruled (lower-ranking samurai and below) no longer stood in awe of the power of samurai ceremony and decorum, which represented the orthodox Confucian ideology's firmest consummation.

In a broader perspective, these *kanshi* acrostics are the most serious of the satirical verse forms that include most prominently *kyōka* as satirical with respect to waka, *senryū* as satirical vis-à-vis *hokku*, and *kyōshi* and this *kanshi* acrostic as satirical with respect to the more philosophical and abstract *kanshi*. These acrostics, because of the tendency of the repetition of the central character to exaggerate parallelism that is already prominent in *kanshi*, in practice are more analytical in their critical raids on established ideological and structural assumptions.<sup>95</sup> As *kyōka* parody the elevated literary court language specific to waka, *kanshi*-based satire parodied and twisted the rules of *kanshi* precepts, specifically those of Confucian values. These bitter acrostics did not always attack these values themselves and certainly not so as to dispense with them altogether. Neo-Confucianism of some kind was all they knew, and even when calling for the Restoration of Imperial rule, their arguments were usually based on these very values. Kida sees the partisan propagandistic uses of *ra-kusho*, from around 1863, as having robbed the genre of its "original esprit."<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> It would be easy to label them "deconstructive," but I believe this term has been overused for the sake of unifying a critical ideology in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century at the expense of understanding the complexities of the way language was handled and wielded in these *bakumatsu* and Meiji contexts, where Western notions of an integrated subject associated with expression are but one dim possibility for situating linguistic and ideological practices.

<sup>96</sup> Kida, 171.

The governing order was at that time breaking down on all fronts: politics, economics, social order, and foreign relations. The somewhat bitter mode of protest in these acrostics, whereby the subjects (the ruled) exhibit a concern for the realm as a whole, is important to Confucian models of state. As is apropos in a Confucian manner of sympathetic remonstrance, both anger and paternal concern over the state of affairs is expressed.

*Rakusho* of yet another variety take the form of a satirical assemblage of snippets of purported dialogue. In some of these *rakusho* lines are attributed, with varying degrees of innuendo, to specific classes or stations. The device of enumeration that structures such *rakusho* resembles the numerous *hayariuta* in the subgenera of *mariuta* (ball songs), *iroha-uta* (ABC songs), and *kazoe-uta* (counting songs), all of which utilize the vehicle of catalogue to assemble a litany of complaints, usually about social ills and unjust situations. While *hayariuta* tended to make light of all in “good humor,” *rakusho* were in general more serious, intimating the challenge of an oppositional force with which to be reckoned. Being a broadly inclusive genre defined by its illicit means of distribution, they often utilized an enumerative, cataloging device to add rhythmic and mnemonic staying power along with a sense of conviction.<sup>97</sup>

The following example is an extended, playful and satirical “graffiti verse” (with missing fragments indicated by ellipses). The left column of lines represents an array of distinct voices uttering various opinions on current events. The right may be read either as a direct attribution or a clarifying gloss on the utterances.

From the Back Streets: One’s Fortune on  
Slips of Paper in this World of Change  
(世の中辻うら *Yo no Naka Tsujiura*)

<sup>97</sup> These lampooning dialogues were *rakusho* that sometimes were based on or became popularly circulated *hayariuta*, such as is the case of the well known “Close-Cropped” (*Jangiri*), which will be treated below.

Quick, over here don’t be so loud about it I am delighted.	Mito lords in retirement public affairs of state the abbot at Zojoji Temple
They’ll really change? my chest is pounding, aren’t they cute? How could it be? the dirty things ... Dreadful!	rumors of their return impoverished (shogunal) retainers Japan’s ‘great vessels’ these hard times anything over 100 <i>koku</i> enlisted into service ...

はやくおいでよ 静かにおしよ 嬉しいねへ ほんとうかえ 胸がどきどきするよ かはいいいねへ どうしてこんなだ らう きたないこと。。。 いやだよ <sup>98</sup>	水戸殿御隠居 公儀のはなし 増上寺のはなし 帰帆の噂 貧乏な御家人 日本の大船 世の中ふけいき 百石三両の御手伝
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The left column suggests the multiplicity of banter one might overhear in an imaginary public sphere that reaches into the back rooms of concerned players in pre-Restoration politics. The right column provides solid points of reference, which quite interestingly evoke ideologically diverse voices, which cohere in their consistently ironic tone and as a medley of fragments of conversational utterances.

The contrasting voices create a cacophony designed to amuse, and which can be read as columns and confusedly, with interruptions, as somewhat arbitrarily divided lines designed to convey a sense of disorder. This example epitomizes Kamisaka’s emphasis on *rakusho* as being “critical, mocking (*choroteki*), satirical (*fushiteki*),” and “incorporating overlapping (*jufukuteki*) and associative (*engoteki*) expression.” He

<sup>98</sup> Sakuraki, 23.

continues, *rakusho* “began with the aim of disseminating throughout the community information about the advantages and disadvantages of things of interest, by raising [questions related to] every sort of event or incident in the government and blunders in someone’s actions.”<sup>99</sup> Historical engagement and lack of fixed topics for composition distinguishes *rakusho* as an anti-literary form of verse, performing as an affront not only to specific policy issues, but also to the ascendancy of higher poetry as distinguished by proper diction, and inclusions and exclusions of topics.<sup>100</sup>

Similarly interesting in its treatment of historical imagery is the *kazoe-uta* or “counting song” “*Daikoku-mai*,” which is written with the characters for “dance of the great nations” but which is homophonic with a folk dance developed in the Muromachi period as a prayer for the new year, called “Dance of the Great Black.” The dancers would don masks so as to take the form of Mahakala, a Buddhist protector deity, and sing prayers of thanks to the deity. This subtext is significant as a framing device, noticeable in the closing word, “*go-anshin*,” translated as “royal peace of mind.” But rather than a prayer for the new year, it reads like a lament for a chain of misfortunate events:

Dance of the Great Japan

First	The English pick a fight
Second	Japan is stirred into an uproar
Third	Blinded by the confusion
Fourth	The bows and javelins of our world
Fifth	To practice from now on
Sixth	With our military science of old
Seventh	Just seems like we won’t make it
Eighth	Estates are royal warehouses
Ninth	And ensuing royal pledges
Tenth	Will surely insure royal peace of mind.

<sup>99</sup> Kamisaka, 2.

<sup>100</sup> According to Kamisaka, topics for *rakusho* are various, without a broadly accepted generically defined range of topics and objectives for writing *rakusho*. Kamisaka, 5.

大国舞

一に	イギリスおしかけて
二に	日本をさはがして
三に	さんさぬろたへて
四ツ	世の中弓鐘ぼう
五ツ	今から稽古して
六ツ	むかしの軍学も
七ツ	中なかまにあはず
八ツ	やしきは御物入
九ツ	今度の御固めも
十ツ	とうとうご安心 <sup>101</sup>

Here the punster begins with a general allusion to samurai who advocated “expelling the barbarians” and expressed their infuriation over the presence of foreigners by assaulting English subjects (who were shielded by extraterritorial rights).<sup>102</sup> In 1861 and 1863 the English are said to have ‘picked a fight’, and in actuality one Englishman lost his life, leading the English government to seek compensation and punishment of the Japanese who killed the British subject. Because of inter-domainal conflict, it could not be resolved to their satisfaction, and this incident culminated in the British bombardment of Kagoshima in August 1863. The opening lines conflate the national subjects of England and the Shogun with the local subjects involved in this physical fight. The ‘turn’ in the *rakusho* comes midway, as comparisons of weaponry available to back “the great nation” are made, so as to satirize how Japan has not living up to its samurai bravado. With an antiquated “military science of old,” it seemed like Japanese would not “make it” in time to stop outright colonization. The use of enumeration underscores the parody of the understood order of the daimyo with their “royal” estates, pledges, and security, which were all rendered ineffectual by the dangerous combination of military inferiority, lack of political order, and brash actions by stalwart samurai. This *rakusho* displays some of

<sup>101</sup> Sakuraki, 25-26.

<sup>102</sup> See Samson, George, *A History of Japan, 1615-1867*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963, 239-240.

the dangers of the late 1850s and 1860s known as “troubles within [open the country to] disaster from without” (内憂外患).<sup>103</sup>

Semantically playful *rakusho*, could express resistance to the glib application of new names and ideas. Such words were often presented as a panacea capable of transforming a troubled social milieu into a glorious one. Though government supporters may take them seriously, for satirists such words were seen as ruses employed to mislead lower classes into acting against their own interests, as the following *kyōka* suggests:

Read backwards by the underlings,  
it means they shall not prevail.

上からは明治どなどといふけれど治明  
(おさまるめい) と下からは読む<sup>104</sup>

“Meiji,” read “backwards” (lit. “from below,” in usually vertically written Japanese) is “*osamarumei*,” or “they shall not prevail.” This punning portrays class tension invested in the ideological bent latent in the very designation “Meiji” itself. This *kyōka* lampoons the name for being merely a nominal attempt to decree a lasting remedy for the country’s problems.

Kida correctly cites this as an example of the people’s (*minshu*) opposition to “revolution from above” (*ue kara no kakumei*). However, we must also point out that the form for such opposition to the government by lampooning the name of the reign was not new. One finds in the *Somenkan Bakumatsu-shi* similar play with the “Ansei” period name (1854-1860). At that time many criticized the Bakufu for opening the country to broader foreign relations: “Ansei (peaceful government) read backwards is Isen (parallel of lati-

<sup>103</sup> On *naiyu gaikan* see Marius B. Jansen, “The Meiji Restoration,” in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 144-150.

<sup>104</sup> Kida, 218. Furigana appear in parentheses. Note that the name of Edo was changed to Tokyo in 1866.7.17.

tude), / and what’s left is the land of America.”<sup>105</sup> The purport here is that the Bakufu had capitulated to American demands and had orientated its actions and principles in line with America. It also suggests that America, given such appeasing policies, will rule at every latitude, throughout the world.

Similar songs include two appearing in the *Yubin Hochi Shinbun* in 1874, under the heading “a few *hayariuta*.” They reflect in song various attitudes toward imposed changes in social customs. One is very similar to the previously cited song, on the futility and sheer stupidity of trying to change deep-rooted customs, values, and institutions overnight by mere proclamation.

Though mouthing the words  
‘Civilization and Enlightenment’,  
dyed-in-the-wool bigots

文明開化と口では伝へど染みた固陋<sup>106</sup>

Another song reads:

O august body politic of equal rights  
between men  
and women, where today’s women are  
nobody’s fools.

今の女は馬鹿にはならぬ男女同権の御政  
体<sup>107</sup>

It is a song on the hypocrisy of suddenly treating women as equals when diminutive attitudes toward women were still the norm. This song parodies the solemn, exhortative voices that characterized proclamations of ‘rights’, whether general human rights or specific cases of marginalized groups such as women.

Here are a few comical examples of how *senryū* ditties expressed the feeling of absurdity

<sup>105</sup> Sakaraki, 1: 109.

<sup>106</sup> From the *Yubin Hochi Shinbun*, included in *Meiji Jidai Bunka Kiroku Shusei*, 129.

<sup>107</sup> *Meiji Jidai Bunka Kiroku Shusei*, 129.

upon seeing the pomp invested by the ruling class of intellectuals:

Across the page sideways  
like the crab-letters, so go people's minds.  
蟹文字の横へそれ行く人心

"Enlightenment" is summoned  
and shapes are magically transformed.  
開化とは開けて化ける姿なり

For as long as we have some life in us,  
our eyes will only get bluer.  
これからは目玉が青くなるばかり<sup>108</sup>

All of these satires reflect differences between former ways of conducting daily affairs and the new ways, which were imposed from above and often enforced by law, giving rise to much dismay and scrutiny. The comic element here derives from what Bergson described as a situation that "belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time."<sup>109</sup> Here the "series" are Tokugawa rules and routines in contrast to the newly reformed "enlightened" rules for living. It is hard to imagine a situation more prone to such clashing of norms of established series than in this period, especially with the grandiose claims of "Kaika" publicists abutting the pettiness and superficiality of the actual impact.

This essay attempts to demonstrate how historically contextualized satirical verse, though reactive in most instances, visibly interacted in the formation of subjects and ideological commonsense of the former Bakuhan classes and formative Meiji classes. Changes in the uses of these forms also reflect variations in ideological stability. The most recurrent theme in this study of *senryu*, *rakusho*, and *hayari-*

*uta* has been how these verses negotiated class relations, and the relation of the forms of power represented in the examined verses to the developing field of variously competing ideologies. The class conflict manifest in these ideologies may be understood, as I have suggested, in terms of resentment towards "the revolution from above"<sup>110</sup> and the impositions made by leaders who wielded and distorted language in ways to advance their positions and diminish the voices of those with dissenting opinions. From the point of view of the dissenters themselves, these verses show how the words and slogans of the new leaders became entertaining fodder for satire, became means of expressing bitter criticism publicly displayed as acrostics and versified dialogue, and became in 1890s *senryu* voices reinforcing the ruling bureaucracy's position on national issues. *Senryu* especially can be seen to migrate from being forms of annoying marginal dissent to being ironic voicing only mildly taunting the nation as it quietly applauded Japan's rise to regional dominance as an industrial, modernized nation with various issues of ideological backing that these verses document.

<sup>108</sup> Kida, 221-222.

<sup>109</sup> Cited in Susan Stewart, *Nonsense - Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1978, 157.

<sup>110</sup> For instance, see Kida, 218.

## Book Reviews 書評

**James L. McClain and Wakita Osamu, eds.**  
*Osaka: The Merchants' Capital of Early Modern Japan.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Of the various forms of scholarly writing, the topical essay collection most expediently introduces a broad range of research topics and methods to a reading audience. Despite its occasional shortcomings it remains the most efficient way to "cover" large tracts of historical territory, as well as to engage new theories and methods. Despite the relatively prominent role essay collections have played in the writing of medieval Japanese history in English, until fairly recently, the genre has not exerted an especially great influence on the historiography of the early modern period. This situation may be changing somewhat with the appearance of *Osaka: The Merchants' Capital of Early Modern Japan*. *Osaka* follows on the heels of *Edo & Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (Cornell University Press, 1994). Together these volumes, diverse in subject matter and in methodology, have laid the foundation for the subfield of early modern Japanese urban history in English.

*Osaka* brings together Japanese and American specialists on early modern history and culture. All have previously published on topics related to, if not specifically within the field of urban history. In the editors' preface, James L. McClain and Wakita Osamu explain that they asked each contributor to address three central themes: the first was to give a sense of "the dynamics that resulted in Osaka's emergence as one of Japan's leading cities during the early modern period," the second was to "expand our understanding about the distinctive nature of Osaka's urban experience, especially in contrast to Edo and Kyoto," and the third was to "explore the contributions that Osaka's residents made to political, social, and economic developments across Japan." (p. xiii) Moreover, the editors intended the essays to be of interest to specialists as well as accessible to students new to the study of Japanese history. This is a tall order, but it is one the volume is, for the most part, able to fill.

The lead essay, co-written by editors McClain and Wakita, gives a broad survey of "Osaka Across the Ages." It is a solid introduction to the history of both region and city from the Jomon period through end of the Tokugawa period, and is accompanied by photographs, reproductions of artwork and, most helpfully, by several clearly drawn historical maps. McClain and Wakita set the tone for the essays that follow by seeking to show "what made Osaka Osaka." (p. 20) This is an implicitly comparative query, one whose task is to contest the characterization of the entire early modern period as the "Edo Period." (*ibid*) McClain, Wakita, and most of the contributors argue that Osaka's history was quite distinct from the histories of Edo and Kyoto, and by understanding its role in the larger scheme of early modern Japanese history, one can better appreciate the "richness and diversity of urban life." (p. 20) The various contributors undertake this task in quite different ways.

Wakita Haruko's essay on "medieval urbanism" in the Osaka region is a concise and provocative discussion of urban and economic growth between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. She shows convincingly that Osaka had deep roots as a commercial center well before the early modern period. The early development of ports, and subsequently of warehousing and transshipping activities led to a pattern of settlement she terms the "medieval urban community." (p. 30) These communities were characterized by "concentrated, nonfarming populations; the performance of economic activities that revolved around the distribution of commodities supplied by peasant and artisan producers; and a decline in the influence and power of the traditional proprietary lords...." (p.30) By this definition, she argues that while Kyoto, Nara, and Kamakura could be called medieval cities, "the new urbanism was associated particularly with *entrepôt* communities." (p. 31)

James McClain's essay on "Space, Power, Wealth, and Status in Seventeenth-Century Osaka" shows how new political and economic developments in the early modern period manifested themselves in the changing physical and social geography of Osaka. By reading the urban landscape, McClain argues that while the city was in the early seventeenth century a "city of samu-

rai and power," it became over time a city of "merchants and commerce," and one of "artisans and production," as the commoner population grew in size and power and spread throughout the city. He shows that while mid-seventeenth century maps of Osaka are dominated by the looming presence of Osaka Castle (and by metaphorical extension, the official/samurai presence), by the mid-eighteenth century, the castle is squeezed out toward the margins of the map and diminished in size. (p. 75-77) As in McClain's earlier essay on "power, space, and popular culture" in Edo (in *Edo & Paris*, pp. 105-131), one sees clearly how the Tokugawa policy of balancing control from above and autonomy from below affected settlement patterns and economic and cultural activity in the city. In other words, the reader gets a revealing picture of Osaka's distinctive historical geography.

In Uchida Kusuo's essay "Protest and the Tactics of Direct Remonstrance: Osaka's Merchants Make Their Voices Heard," the author highlights the dialectical relationship between shogunal authorities and Osaka commoners by showing how merchants forged new types of alliances and developed new forms of protest during the early modern period in order to contest the heavy-handed regulatory policies employed by the shogunate to regulate the prices of rice and other commodities. Merchants began petitioning city magistrates in Edo in 1733, and when they proved unresponsive, these peaceful tactics were followed by the first urban riots of the early modern period. The conflict spread to Osaka in 1735-36; as in Edo, the process began peacefully, with appeals making their way up through the urban chain of command. But as each round of protest was met with only partial concessions by officials, Osaka's merchants began to devise new tactics, which culminated in the unprecedented direct remonstrance to the city magistrates for postponement of payment for mandatory grain purchases. In the end, Uchida argues that although "the protest movement did not result in any major concessions on the part of the government," the merchants did not see this as defeat. "On the contrary, the unfolding of events almost seems to have given birth to a sense of self-satisfaction among the merchant estate...for having stood up against the arbitrary and, for

some, despotic expropriation of commoner wealth...." (p. 102) The tactic of direct remonstrance, then, forms just one example of the ways in which "pressure from below" transformed Osaka into the "people's city." (p. 103)

In the first of two essays on Osaka culture, C. Andrew Gerstle's "Takemoto Gidayu and the Individualistic Spirit of Osaka Theater," Gerstle shows how an "individualistic, self-reliant spirit" (p. 105) came to pervade Osaka *joruri* in the eighteenth century, and continues to characterize the modern *bunraku* puppet theater to this day. This is striking because it stands in contrast to the more familiar *iemoto* system of lineage- or community-based institutional organization that characterized *kabuki* and other traditional arts in Edo and Kyoto. Gerstle gives a brief history of *joruri*, and describes the important roles of two Osaka-based artists, Kaga no Jo and Takemoto Gidayu, in shaping and refining its practice. He shows how the particular views of Kaga no Jo and Gidayu, combined with the fiercely competitive atmosphere of the eighteenth-century Osaka theater to create a teaching and performing method that valued innovation and individuality over the formulation of a school-based style transmitted through a family or lineage.

Gary Leupp's essay, "The Five Men of Naniwa: Gang Violence and Popular Culture in Genroku Osaka" reveals a different aspect of Osaka, and by extension, early modern culture through representations of a gang of hoodlums who raised havoc on the streets of Osaka, committing robbery, assault, and murder at the turn of the eighteenth century. For the most part, the Five Men of Naniwa and their cohort targeted wealthy commoners. In 1701 the local police captured the men and they were executed the following summer. Rather than being disparaged for their crimes, after their deaths the five men "became transformed into protectors of ordinary people and the embodiment of the best and most noble aspirations and values espoused by the commoners of Osaka." (p. 126) This transformation was effected largely through song, drama, storytelling, and woodblock prints, and it was a phenomenon that was not limited to Osaka; Edo *kabuki* playwrights also dramatized the affair beginning in 1716. Leupp argues that commoner outlaws were lionized by the public because they tapped into "a



very conscious, if unfocused, class hatred." (p. 154)

Two essays in *Osaka* discuss early modern religion. Yoshida Nobuyuki's article discusses a brotherhood of mendicant monks in Osaka and their relationships to the local authorities (the Osaka city magistrates) and to the religious establishments with which they were affiliated (in this case, the monastery Daizoin on Mount Kurama north of Kyoto). The monks themselves quarreled over alms-gathering practices; in particular, they disagreed over whether or not to engage in the somewhat unorthodox tactics of dressing up as Buddhist or even Shinto deities, or as "spirits and apparitions," or of putting on street-corner performances in order to gather alms. To resolve these disputes, in 1672, Kurama authorities issued a "notification" (*oboe*), which the Osaka city magistrates then enforced. As a result, both church and secular officials compelled the brotherhood to organize and regulate itself, in an "amalgam of religious law and government-approved code of conduct." (p. 162) Yoshida points out both the similarities and differences in the organization of brethren in Osaka and in Edo, and relates them to the structural differences in the political and social organization of each city. (p. 165-66) Ultimately, Yoshida argues, rather than forging a separate and distinct identity, "the friars have passed into historical memory as just one among several groups that helped to create popular religion and fuse it with commoner culture during the early modern era." (p. 176)

The second essay on popular religion concerns the worship of Inari in Osaka. Nakagawa Sugane uses the case of Inari to provide a clearer view of the problems besetting forms of "popular" religion in early modern Osaka. The worship of Inari, which reached "explosive" proportions by the nineteenth century, had its roots in the decline of community Shinto shrines, whose maintenance had become difficult and costly for many neighborhoods and villages. Shrines thus initiated the worship of popular deities like Benzaiten, the Seven Gods of Good Fortune (*shichi fukujin*), and Inari specifically to increase the number of worshippers and thus broaden the shrine's base of support. This move had the effect of also diversifying forms of worship, as "mountain ascetics, sorcerers, seers, clairvoyants, and all manner of

other folk religionists also were busy communicating with Inari on behalf of grateful clients." (p. 192) As the trend toward increased Inari worship spread from Osaka to surrounding areas, the shogunate began to worry that such popular beliefs might lead to the emergence of "peculiar heterodoxies" and ultimately, to social unrest, and officials began to crack down on prominent Inari sects and to regulate folk religion in general. These regulations had the effect of stifling Inari worship, but, as Nakagawa concludes, in an unusually strident tone, Inari still "constitute[s] a means, however modest, for ordinary people to defy modern rationalism as it tries to crush underfoot the feelings of reverence toward nature, and to resist an omnipotent state that so often seems bent on destroying happiness in this life." (p. 212)

In Tetsuo Najita's essay "Ambiguous Encounters: Ogata Koan and International Studies in Late Tokugawa Osaka," the author shows clearly that Koan, a leading scholar of so-called *rangaku*, or "Dutch studies" fused his "Western" learning with Tokugawa Confucian thought. Koan did so in practice, by requiring his students to study both Dutch and Confucian thought at his academy in Osaka, the Tekijuku, and in theory, for he understood Dutch studies, especially medicine, to be a form of "ethical action" (insofar as its goal was to save lives) of the sort advocated by Tokugawa Confucian thinkers like Kaibara Ekiken. The roots of this thinking lay in the concept that human knowledge was fundamentally incomplete, but that individuals were obligated to do their utmost to learn how to sustain life: "What the theory allowed was that the Dutch knew more about certain things. And while that knowledge was worth mastering, it, too, was relative, an epistemological presupposition that would persist into the early industrial era." (p. 223) The precision and economy with which Najita explicates a quite complex set of ideas is difficult to reproduce here; the essay fully succeeds in, as the author puts it, "forsaking [the] dualities" that have marked early modern intellectual history: Ogata and Fukuzawa Yukichi, Osaka and Edo, past and future. (p. 216-223) One comes to understand each component in the duality by understanding its "other." Of all the essays in the book, Najita's perhaps addresses the concept of Osaka's dis-

tinctiveness most effectively by illuminating its (more precisely, its intellectuals') connections with other places and ideas.

In the penultimate essay in the collection, Murata Michihito provides a "geography of governance in central Japan" (p. 245) by looking at Osaka's role in regional governance. Arguing that commoners have often been ignored in studies of governance in the Kansai area (though he does not really explain why), Murata focuses on the roles of the *yokiki*, later known as *yotashi*, Osaka's "merchant delegates" who assisted shogunal officials at various levels with governing tasks. As in Edo and other cities, commoners in Osaka assumed a variety of governing tasks; their duties tended to expand over time, and become increasingly integrated into the official administrative system. The *yokiki/yotashi* were no exception. Murata argues that they played a part in the "complex geography" of power in the Kansai area.

The concluding essay is an afterword of sorts by Wakita Osamu, and combines a recapitulation of Osaka's early modern development with a brief synthesis of each of the preceding essays' contributions to understanding Osaka's early modern urbanism (as opposed to its medieval urbanism, as conceived by Wakita Haruko). What were these characteristics? We might note first trends related to political, social, and economic growth and change in the urban context: increasing merchant self-governance; expanding merchant presence in the city, both vertically (up into the lower rungs of political administration) and horizontally (across the physical space of the city itself); continuous merchant protest against stifling shogunal policies; persistent class conflict, not only between merchants and samurai, but within the merchant class itself. At the same time there were cultural and intellectual movements that flourished or foundered (or both) in the context of Osaka itself: the growth, regulation, and/or suppression of popular religious movements; the development of distinctive styles in Osaka performing and literary arts; the differing intellectual currents joining and separating the city's academies, schools, and individual thinkers.

Throughout the volume, one hears quite clearly the voices of common people, and one grasps immediately the importance of commoner

initiative, energy, and acumen in making Osaka the city it was (and, to a certain degree, remains). In addition to the historical voices, however, are the historians' voices, and they add a murmuring chorus of catchphrases to which the reader is meant to hook the information gleaned from the essays: Osaka is the "merchants' city," the "merchants' capital," the "people's city," or the "country's kitchen." Almost every essay resorts to one or several of these phrases, in great part because they are apt descriptions. For the novice student (to whom the volume is in part addressed), such reiteration might prove helpful, but to "advanced specialists in [Japan's] urban history," (p. xiii) for whom the volume is also intended, these already-familiar catchphrases emphasizing Osaka's merchant-centered identity begin to raise more questions than they answer. This is not to say the volume fails to convince the reader that Osaka was in fact the "merchants' city"; on the contrary, the research gathered here is impressive and persuasive in its both breadth and depth. The smoothness of the narrative, however, whets the reader's appetite for further discussion of merchants themselves. For example, one wants to know more about divisions within the merchant class (hinted at in Leupp's essay); about the nature and organization of labor; about material culture and lifestyle; about gender relations within the merchant class.

Further questions arise from the emphasis on merchant activity as a cornerstone of Osaka's "distinctive" urban identity. As noted at the beginning of this review, highlighting Osaka's distinctiveness contributions to the larger society, polity, and economy was part of the agenda set before the contributors. But in the absence of relevant comparisons, what does it *mean* to say that early modern Osaka was politically, economically, or culturally distinctive? *Osaka's* predecessor, *Edo & Paris*, contained within it an inherent tension because the comparison between the two cities was overt, as was the thematic approach (the relationship between urban life and the state). The comparative angle made the Edo essays stand out in greater relief, their arguments honed against the European opposite number. This is a tension *Osaka* lacks. The absence of consistent comparisons to other cities is perhaps the result of a more or less explicit desire to de-

throne Edo as the representative early modern Japanese city. But there are several instances in which a comparison to Edo would have been helpful. For example, why did popular riots fail to break out in Osaka, as they did in Edo in the 1730s? Similarly, why was gang violence more prevalent in Edo? Can these phenomena be explained by the weaker presence of the samurai class in Osaka? Another question might address the comparative spatial dynamics of the two cities: how did their differences in physical geography influence urban geographies of power?

*Osaka* fills a significant gap in the historical literature, and readers and scholars should be grateful for the wealth of information and interpretation this volume provides. At the same time one detects a tendency to fill the historiographical gap with "pure" Osaka--that is, to downplay the many and important connections that tied Osaka to its environs, and to other major and minor cities in Japan via trade, travel, and information networks. It could be argued that one distinctive feature of early modern Japan was its connectedness; the emergence of shared political, economic, and cultural practices is surely one of its defining characteristics, and Osaka was, as Tetsuo Najita points out, an international city. Osaka was also an early modern city, marked by the interconnection and cross-pollination that defined the era, in Japan as elsewhere. In contrast to this image, with a few exceptions, *Osaka's* Osaka seems to float in a void. Osaka was certainly a center of merchant power, but merchants all over Japan became increasingly powerful, organized, and autonomous during the early modern period. To what degree, then, is merchant power an "Osaka" trend versus an "early modern" trend? More explicitly comparative analysis would allow the reader to judge for him/herself, and would make this useful and informative volume more provocative and open-ended.

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Gerald A. Figal, *Civilization and Monsters : Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1999.

This is a fascinating and remarkably readable book, effectively describing how the various figures and narratives of the supernatural were dealt with during Japan's rapid modernization.

Have you seen a ghost today? Never encountered *tengu* in your life? Seemingly our enlightened modernity has succeeded in expelling the supernatural monsters and ghosts out of the real, and thus, out of the historical. Then, why should a modern historian be concerned with mythical monsters and superstitious spirits? Isn't it the very task of a historian to de-mythologize our understanding of mysterious events? Shouldn't the modern historian tell us that the *kamikaze* wasn't a divine intervention at all, but merely an incidental meteorological phenomenon? Doesn't modernity dictate to us to convince my Japanese granny that there is no divine spirit living in that weather-beaten stone statue of a fox?

Figal, as a historian, is of course concerned about this fundamental desire of modern history to expel ghosts from its territory. Yet, he finds the tenacious presence and vicissitudes of the supernatural within various Japanese modern discourses a key to understanding better, historically to wit, the formation of Japanese modernity itself. Figal points out three major discursive operations with regard to the mysterious (*fushigi*) in Meiji. One is the rationalization of the mysterious, driven by the scientific will to demystify all supernatural phenomena. The second is the incipient development of folk studies spearheaded by Yanagita Kunio as well as the extraordinary, intellectual jack-of-all-trades Minakata Kumagusu. The third is the political reorganization of regional "spirits" into a centralized, nationalized "Japanese Spirit."

If this book were overtly focused on the political aspect implicit in the last issue stated above, it would have been a rather predictable, ideologically driven study. I admire this work for not being pontifical or accusatory in tone even when it discusses some clearly political issues. In fact, it seems to me that Figal is at pains to be fair to all the main figures in his narrative. Instead of narrating another one-dimensional political tragedy of Japan's empire, Figal delineates a complex web of diverse discourses surrounding the super-

natural, including science, medicine, psychology, folklores, and literature. As the author of a book transformed from a dissertation, I see Figal eager to distinguish this book from others' on a similar topic. He declares that his is the first study on Japan's modernity that takes monsters seriously. Moreover, while other historians of Japanese modernity have ignored or marginalized the mysterious, Figal wants to claim that "a discourse on the supernatural, the mysterious, and the fantastic . . . was *constitutive* of Japan's modern transformation" (7). He also finds it necessary to differentiate his work from Marilyn Ivy's seminal work, *Discourse of the Vanishing*. But the differences he proposes seem too paltry for me to take note of here. The only impression I received from his effort to respond to Ivy's use of the term "uncanny" is that Figal is less inclined to pursue the now fashionable Freudian / Lacanian path to analyze his topic. So be it.

Also, his main "theoretical" thesis that the supernatural was *constitutive* of Japan's modernity may seem somewhat trifling and too pedantic. Doesn't any identity require its "other" to constitute itself as such? It is perfectly understandable that *tengu* have disappeared from our sight, that modern rationality continuously attempts to expel various elements of the irrational from the official center of Japan's modern culture. Thus, it is refreshing to hear that the monsters were doing well and playing havoc within the modernizing process of a nation. But, perhaps that is to misread Figal's true intention. What he brilliantly shows us is, again, the complex, political and institutional network of discourses on the supernatural appearing quite conspicuously and abundantly in Japan's modernizing era. He categorizes a certain discourse on the supernatural, such as Izumi Kyoka's literature, as having a potential subversive force against the central enlightenment program of Japan's modernization. Having the same resistant impulse as Kyoka early on, however, Yanagita Kunio's effort to establish a new academic discipline of "national" folk studies is seen as being co-opted by the government's will to shape a homogenized nation under one "Japanese Spirit," whose incarnation was of course the Emperor. A fascinating paradox then becomes visible: modernity's basic impulse to censor the past, along with its outdated spirits

and superstition, is somehow forcefully and perversely thwarted by the state's will to resurrect or preserve at least a portion of folks' beliefs in the supernatural. You are an enlightened citizen now, so you shouldn't be worried about fox deities bewitching you. As for spirituality, just trust the central divinity of our nation, the Emperor!

This is an ambitious work in that it attempts to encompass different disciplines, yet what Figal presents after all is their modern histories: the history of folk studies, of medicine, of science, of literature. Being a literature specialist, I may want to complain about Figal's facilely generalized presentation of Japanese Naturalism or about his competent yet not very exciting reading of Kyoka's texts. (It is too bad that he did not have a chance to read the important, recent works on Kyoka by Charles Inouye and Nina Cornyetz.) But I have no desire to force these complaints on this "history" book.

There is one thing that leaves me somewhat puzzled after reading this excellent book. And I know that this question is not really fair to Figal, the historian. It is about the divisions of discourses (genres, disciplines, academic fields). This work is in a way about how the irrational, or the mysterious, gets incorporated into various "institutionalized" discourses. The two main characters in the book, Yanagita and Minakata, were both well aware of the distance between their interests in the irrational and the institutionalized academic discourses of the rational. What I want to know is how we should understand the institutionalized aspect of this book — the book that makes us aware of the risks of institutionalized knowledge / language. Should we just go on feeling secure in the academically sanctioned historiography, even when it is talking about monsters? Figal writes with exemplary clarity and academic rigor. But shouldn't we be nervous about such an exemplary, enlightened academic style? After all isn't that what this book is asking me to question? Where are the monsters in your text?

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## Translation of the Memorial of Imakita Sakubei to the Lord of Tosa, Yamauchi Toyochika

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**Translators introduction:** The following document is a petition submitted by a samurai of Tosa domain to his lord in 1787. Many samurai submitted memorials that year offering advice on how to improve a government that was in deep crisis. In the previous years famine had aggravated deep dissatisfactions with corruption in government. Widespread peasant and townsmen protests had rocked the domain in the spring of 1787 and induced the lord to initiate a governmental reform to restore more legitimacy to rule. Sakubei's petition is remarkable in that he calls for inclusion of commoners into the councils of government, but it also includes much thought about government and corruption common to his contemporaries. Sakubei was a full samurai but of low rank. He had served as a castle guard and as a shinobi, a kind of secret investigator for the lord. At the time of the petition he had been recently promoted to magistrate of the tax storehouses. Sakubei was decently learned but not a scholar. His petition is filled with originality as well as reliance on continental learning such as Confucianism and the I-ching. The lord did not adopt the suggestions in Sakubei's petition but did subsequently employ Sakubei as a member of the reform government.

### Translation of the Memorial of Imakita Sakubei to the Lord of Tosa, Yamauchi Toyochika<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Kojo oboe" (6/26/1787) transcribed in ms. "Toyochika-ko ki" "Tenmei shichinen jūgatsu-jūnigatsu no kan", 65-74th folios held in the Yamauchi jinja homotsu shiryokan in Kochi city, Japan. I have assigned my own folio numbers counted from the first folio of the volume. This is a transcription made in the 1920's or 30's

### Memorial

The whole country [of Tosa]<sup>2</sup> is in disturbance because there have been bad harvests of the five grains throughout the *tenka* 天下一 (Japan) in recent years. The people have become impoverished because the price of rice has risen to unheard of levels. I think it is indeed a case of the saying, "If the people lose a secure living, then they lose secure hearts and cannot avoid selfish wrongdoings". I think, however, that there is another related source of the recent disturbances: In recent years the high and low have been drifting apart.

Because your lordship's primary duty is to be ruler of this country, I expect that you think of nothing but how to maintain the people in peace and security. However, as your intentions pass down through the hands of officials their true content becomes lost, and your lordship's will does not reach the low. Therefore, I think that you

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by Yamauchi house historians. The original memorial was held in the archives of the lord of Tosa but the portion of the archives in which it was held ('Tenmei monjo') was burnt in the air raids of World War II. The transcription is the only known version to survive. I have published the original Japanese in "Tosa hanshi Imakita Sakubei ni yoru hansei kaikaku an--Tenmei shichi-nen no jiyu minken shiso no ichi genryu," *Tosa Shidan* (Jan. 1996), no. 200, pp. 53-61, and an extended English discussion of the petition in "A Petition for a Popularly Chosen Council of Government in Tosa in 1787," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 57, no. 2, (Dec. 1997), pp. 575-96.

<sup>2</sup> In the documents of early modern Tosa the word *kuni* 国 refers almost invariably to Tosa, while *tenka* or *Nihon* 日本 refers to Japan. I prefer to translate *kuni* as 'country' rather than 'province' or 'realm' because I think that many aspects of modern nationalism in Japan were formed within large domainal countries such as Tosa. For my thoughts on this matter see my book, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in Eighteenth Century Tosa* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

should return the way of government to what it was a hundred years ago, and in order to do this you should, at the right time, directly ask the lower people what they think as well, and consider how to do things so that in all respects the feelings of the high and low are communicated to each other.

Of course because your lordship's finances are in a poor state, you cannot order things for the welfare of the people just as you would wish. Although you may think that with the world as it is today it would be extremely difficult for the high and the low to become close, it is the way of heaven and earth that when they are in harmony then all things flourish. This has not changed through the ages. If your lordship places importance on righteousness and sincerely thinks of nothing but the welfare of the people then that truth will be communicated to the low, and high and low will become as one body.

Why should your lordship forget your financial straits? If you order things directly and honestly, and if all officials came to live properly according to their status, then the high and low would come to trust each other. Then, even if you did not disburse rice and money, your intention of benevolent care would be communicated to the low and they would receive your benefits. But there is a saying, "the more you rake in wealth, the more the people flee". Although your lordship is in financial straits, officials with power are amassing wealth and the people are fleeing.<sup>3</sup> There is also the proverb, "criticising others while not holding oneself accountable to the same faults." Currently all of the officials entrusted with instructing the people live themselves merely for their own benefit. Therefore the people are not submissive in their hearts, and all scorn and despise those on high. Although your lordship is in financial straits, the people see the better half of your officials getting wealthier and they come to develop hearts hating your lordship. For retainers to arouse such hatred of your lordship in this way is the extreme of disloyalty! Retainers entrusted with positions have many

expenses, and even when they receive office stipends they should naturally be poorer than retainers without office. But what does one see? Their houses and whole style of life are full of wealth.

Because people see these officials take care of those close to them, and ignore those of no relation, the people are not honestly obedient. Thus the government of the country suffers greatly. The ruler of *tenka* rules by spreading his intentions over all of the *tenka*, the ruler of a country by spreading his intentions over that country. It is a great crime for an official in the middle to alter your lordship's intentions. For one person to cause many people distress for his selfish benefit is a crime against heaven. There is the saying, "The benevolent man loves people well and hates people well" which is apt. To punish one for the benefit of the many is the way of benevolent government. If you investigate thoroughly and punish severely then the country will become peaceful.

ITEM. If you wish to govern the country peacefully then you should give great thought towards improving the public morals of both the high and the low. With the current way of government the low have nothing but distrust of your lordship. If public morals became healthy again, then the high and low would come to trust each other. If you wish to order things to improve public morals, then you should select a number of "people of fidelity" (*chushin no hito* 忠信の人) from among people throughout the country high and low, regardless of status. If you then place these people at your side and have them discuss and investigate everything, then public morals will improve and the people will trust your lordship.

ITEM. Because it is the recent custom for many people to desire appointment to public office only to make a living, from the day they are employed all they hope for is to do their job without incident for a certain number of years so that they may achieve a promotion and an increase in their fief. They abandon righteousness and pursue wealth. They take care of those close to them and ignore those who are not. Because of this they bring hardship to the masses and cause

<sup>3</sup>This is in reference to one of the spring protests wherein over 700 mountain villagers fled the domain.

you great expense.

ITEM. A person of fidelity is one who strives to reject profit and carry out what is righteous, who strives to abandon self interest and carry out the lord's public will. Such people are without ambition for fame or fortune. But there are two kinds of people without ambition: There are those born inept and unable and thus without ambition, and there are those who have intelligence and virtue and can perceive what is righteous. Likewise, there are two kinds of ambitious people: There are those who when they attain office hope to raise their families in ease and who hope for later advancement and fief raises, and there are those who look at the customs of the day and put themselves forward so that they may do something. Although these are quite different from the virtuous type without ambition, because they desire to do something, they can still be made useful and should be given full and careful consideration.

On the whole, although it is possible for those on high to know in a general way about the conditions and feelings of the low through writings, it is very hard to get a real understanding of things without talking directly to people who live in that location and are routinely involved with the things [under consideration]. People who live in an inferior position know all about what is wrong and right, profitable and unprofitable in government. However, if you ask the average person about the conditions and the feelings of the common people, you will come up against the problem that they will answer according to their own interests, and for their own benefit and righteousness will be hidden. Because this would have the opposite effect of giving your heart consternation, you must choose people of fidelity.

Now, because people of fidelity are of a will different from the mass of people, they cannot be chosen in the ordinary way. You should order all of the people of the country to choose such people, and if you order a careful investigation then such people will be found. Certainly there will be those who merely pretend to be people of fidelity, and you must be careful about this. If you can find one good person then there will be others like him. If you do the above then public morals will naturally improve. There are many examples

in history showing that when a ruler gains good people their realms are well governed. Even in these times there are good people living within the country.

ITEM. After you have assembled these people of fidelity, they should report to you all of the details of the good and bad of the country's government. Beginning with:

- One. Frugality for the high and the low.
- Two. Public morals, from the samurai down to the very low, as well as occasional rewards and punishments.
- Three. Methods to reduce transportation *corvée* during the three seasons of spring, summer, and autumn so that it does not interfere with peasants' farming.
- Four. The punishment of peasants who neglect farming and methods to promote agriculture.

And many other things, such as government office expenses at all levels, concerning which you should order these people of fidelity to report to you.

ITEM. Setting these people of fidelity to work will certainly crimp the freedom of greedy people. Therefore some people will slander and reject the people of fidelity, and plead difficulties so as to obstruct your use of these people of fidelity. However if you investigate these issues thoroughly the common people and retainers without government office will be put at ease.

ITEM. You send secret investigators around the country entrusted with investigating the good and bad of people high and low. The effectiveness of government and the comfort or hardship of the people depends upon whether the hearts of these investigators are true or false. When good and evil, corrupt and true are revealed plainly then people of fidelity will come forward, wicked people will retreat, and all of the people will enjoy peace equally. When good and evil are unclear then people who race after profit will advance, righteous people will retreat and all of the

people will experience hardship.<sup>4</sup> The secret investigator is a very important post, so in the future you should choose a few understanding and honest men from among the ranks of the samurai who receive your great favors, and at times send them out as secret investigators. If they see to it that your lordship's intentions are not lost during implementation and are truly communicated to the low, then the condition of public morals will be restored.

ITEM. Ninety five out of a hundred people already appointed to office are good people, but it is the common man's desire to pursue profit. They become stained with base customs they learn over many years. Even though what they learn over many years in all of the public offices goes against reason, they become confused by the feelings of their superiors, or fall victim to a weakness for helping their brothers and relatives. Even though they know their ways to be wrong they let their days pass without mending their ways, and public morals naturally go into decline. If you ordered now a great cleansing, then the common person would become a good person again.

ITEM. If you wish to wash out these stained-in, base customs, then first you should order the chief administrators to make inquiries on all of the magistrates and the lower officers at unexpected times. And in keeping with this you should order each magistrate to take great concern in the affairs of his office down to the least official. If you order things so that there is no rift between high and low, and so that nothing is hidden, then

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<sup>4</sup>The original of this sentence contains two transcription errors which I have corrected in the translation. The original reads 善悪邪正分明候時ハ利ニ走り候者進ミ義を重する者随申萬民苦ミ申候。 However the 分 should be 不, and the 随 should be 退. In both cases the cursive forms can be almost identical. The meaning of the sentence is unclear without these changes, and with the changes it contains the contrast with the previous sentence which was obviously intended.

common people will become honest. Indeed, it is impossible for me to convey on paper the importance of this one item.

ITEM. You should order a strict governmental reform, noting that you will grant pardons for all but the most severe offenses of the past, but reproclaim the laws and note that henceforth all offenses will be punished most severely for high and low alike. This will improve public morals and when all officials, from the general administrators down to the least work selflessly and tirelessly for the governance of the country, and high and low become as one, then your finances will become healthy and this will become a country governed in peace.

ITEM. From ancient times grave governmental matters were decided in accordance with the will of the gods. That is the purpose of the *I-ching*. Now if at this time you wish to do things carefully, you should order a consultation of the *I-ching* to help you make your decisions. If you would do this much to reveal your interest in the importance of the government of the country, and your true heart spread throughout the country, then the common people would become eternally loyal and obedient.

The items that I present above are my deepest thoughts and are difficult for me to fully express on paper. If there are some items that you find questionable, I respectfully submit that I would like to explain things orally in your presence.

Seventh year of Tenmei (1787) year of the lamb, sixth month, twenty sixth day

Imakita Sakubei (seal) Takamitsu  
Magistrate of the Tax Warehouses



*Early Modern Japan*

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