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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the twenty-sixth volume of the *Japan Studies Review* (JSR), an annual peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the Asian Studies Program at Florida International University. JSR remains an outlet for the Southern Japan Seminar. The 2022 issue presents interdisciplinary scholarship dealing with traditional and contemporary Japanese studies with a special section dedicated to translation.

Appearing in this volume are four original articles. Anne Giblin Gedacht, in “Immobility Through Motion: Historicizing Emigrant Regionalism in Japanese Proletarian Literature, 1929–1939,” analyzes the diasporic mobility and parochialism within modern Japanese regional identity of Tohoku migrant laborers exemplified in two proletarian novels, *Sōbō* (1935) and *Kanikōsen* (1929). The second article, “The *Mugen* Noh Structure in Translation: A Study of Two English Versions of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *Ashikari*” by Rihito Mitsui, explores the variations in the structure of two different translations of the same *mugen* Noh play known as *The Reed Cutter* while reflecting on the stylistic distinctions of the translators. The third article, “Contemporary Meaning of the Avatamsaka Philosophy” by the eminent priest Kōsei Morimoto, provides a philosophical discussion of the Buddhist worldview evidenced in one of the early Mahāyāna scriptures titled *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. Finally, in “The Presentation of Spirit: A Case Study of the Zen Painting ‘Rushleaf Bodhidharma,’” Yiqin Sun compares paintings from different centuries using similar themes to represent Zen's first patriarch.

Two essays are also featured in this volume. The first essay by Jhonatan Baez, “*Ichinichi Ichizen*: On Translating an NHK Guide to Everyday Zen,” presents some of the challenges of translation in exploring the concept of “One Zen phrase a day” based on Masano Shunmyo's work illustrating daily Zen practices. In “The Japanese/Okinawan Descendants in Cuba: A Preliminary View of Transculturation,” Elisa Romulo Borges takes a sociocultural approach to examine the impact of Japanese and Okinawan pop culture in Cuba based on a novel concept of transculturation. Lastly, there are three book reviews with varying topics. Akihiro Odanaka and Masami Iwai's *Japanese Political Theatre in the 18th Century: Bunraku Puppet Plays in Social Context* is reviewed by Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr.; Takashi Horie, Hikaru Tanaka, and Kiyoto Tanno's *Amorphous Dissent: Post-Fukushima Social Movements in Japan* is reviewed by Yuichi Tamura; and Araceli Tinajero's *Kokoro: A Mexican Woman in Japan*, translated by Daniel Shapiro, is reviewed by Raul Caner Cruz.

Re: Submissions, Subscriptions, and Comments

Submissions for publication, whether articles, essays, translations, or book reviews, should be made in electronic formats, preferably Word for Windows via email attachment. The editors and members of the editorial board will referee all submissions.

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Articles

**IMMOBILITY THROUGH MOTION:
HISTORICIZING EMIGRANT REGIONALISM IN JAPANESE
PROLETARIAN LITERATURE, 1929–1939**

*Anne Giblin Gedacht
Seton Hall University*

Two classics of pre-war Japanese literature present distinct narratives. The first, *Kanikōsen*, written by Kobayashi Takiji in 1929, was a seminal work in Japan's pre-war proletarian literature movement. The second, Ishikawa Tatsuzō's 1935 *Sōbō*, became an instant classic, winning the first Akutagawa Prize in literature and vaulting Ishikawa into the annals of best Japanese fiction authors of the 1930s. These books share similarities in cast and setting: characters hail from the Tohoku region (an area in northeastern Honshu Island cast as an underdeveloped hinterland) and take "country bumpkins" out of their native place, making them mobile characters hurtling through the world. Moreover, both serve as commentary on how modern Japanese capitalism has transplanted people, uprooting them from their familiar and parochial settings and placing them in new roles that, as the stories progress, do not seem to be improvements on their previous conditions.¹

A Japanese citizen in the 1930s reading these texts together would have been left with a haunting and dystopian view of Japanese modernity, one that calls into question progress by displaying the resultant disjuncture of mobility that untethered each character from their traditional spaces, regions, and homes. However, while these two serialized novels chronicle the suffering of the common man experiencing displacement, they do not end with their characters simply submitting to their new realities. They serve as literature of resistance, books that chronicle a portable community, and regional brotherhood that triumphed over the degradations of Japan's expansionist program or the hegemony of modern capitalism. Finally, these works underscore the fundamental disjuncture between popular perceptions

¹ Author's Note: I would like to thank my fellow members of the 2019 Association for Asian Studies panel titled, "A Nation of Emigrants: New Research on Transpacific Mobilities and Identity in Imperial Japan": Eiichiro Azuma, Seth Jacobowitz, Robert Hegwood, and Sidney Xu Lu. Special thanks to Seth for his commentary that reminded me to explore further linkages between *Sōbō* and *Kanikōsen*.

of a predominantly rural region like Tohoku as a bastion of parochial immobility and the recognition that such regions provided the source of migrants, networks, and people who propelled Japan's new mobile horizons, which in turn extended the nation across borders and oceans.

Kobayashi Takiji's *Kanikōsen* (1929), Japan's premiere work of pre-war proletarian fiction, features a group of oppressed and exploited seasonal laborers on a crab cannery boat who, while nameless, bear all the regional and dialectical traits from Kobayashi's childhood home in the Tohoku region. *The Cannery Boat* highlights the abuse of these Tohoku natives as they battle the harsh realities of life away from home, working as seasonal laborers in the brutal international waters off the coast of northern Japan.² Mistreated and degraded by the "boss" Asakawa, while being told that their sacrifices are patriotic acts, these unnamed men ultimately mutiny and reclaim the ship in the name of the workers. In the end, however, the long arm of the Japanese government arrests these workers instead of the capitalist bosses who had oppressed them, displaying the complacency of the Japanese nationalist imperial project built upon exploitative capitalism.

A few years later, Ishikawa Tatsuzō published his critically acclaimed novel *Sōbō* (1935), a text about the modern process of overseas emigration to Brazil. The novel mobilizes the characters' emigrant origin in Akita Prefecture as a stand-in for the innocence lost as the protagonists undergo the dehumanizing process of transiting through the National Emigrant Center in Kobe. *Sōbō* chronicles the passage of laborers as they

² *Kanikōsen* has been translated into English as a "cannery boat," a "factory ship," and a "crab cannery boat." See Kobayashi Takiji, *The Cannery Boat and Other Japanese Short Stories*, trans. William Maxwell Bickerton (New York: International Publishers, 1933); *Factory Ship & The Absentee Landlord*, trans. Frank Motofuji (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1973); and *The Crab Cannery Ship and Other Novels of Struggle*, trans. Željko Cipriš (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013). A film adaptation, directed by So Yamamura, emerged in 1953 and SABU films remade the movie in 2009 after the books return to popularity following the global 2008 economic downturn. There is even a manga version intended to be read in just 30 minutes by university students, *Manga Kanikōsen: sanjippun de yomeru daigakusei no tame no*, released by Higashi Genza Shuppansha in 2006. Any translations of the text that are not my own are noted as being from the 1973 edition by Frank Motofuji.

wait to depart Japan's shore to set up a new life in Brazil. Their experience in the emigration centers of Kobe, although still in Japan proper, highlights how common individuals were cast to the wind because of Japan's new status as a powerful, capitalist nation. With little hope of making a decent living back in Tohoku, these uprooted emigrants undergo humiliation as they become fungible representatives of Japan's growing international push in reeducation centers intended to turn out ideal overseas settlers for the Japanese empire.

While these pieces of Japanese literature are best known as acclaimed works of fiction, they also present a historical truth about the zeitgeist of people from the Tohoku region within pre-war Japanese national histories. Both highlight the travails of those from Japan's parochial heartland, the Tohoku region, who had been whisked away from their native place only to suffer due to the vicissitudes of Japan's modern capitalism. Thus, this article argues that the lack of cognitive dissonance between painting Tohoku natives as (1) hopelessly parochial individuals, archetypical country bumpkins uprooted and abused by the shifting winds of capitalist modernity, and (2) mobile bodies traversing and seeking dignity within the international waters of the global capitalist marketplace is indicative of the entrenched division between immigrant history and emigrant space in the pre-war Japanese nation.

Through close readings of *Kanikōsen* and *Sōbō*, this article will show how popular literature of the 1930s reflected the national conception of people from the Tohoku region as parochial victims who also stood as a fierce exemplar of resistance to the inequities inherent in Tokyo's quest to achieve international stature as a modern capitalist society. Both of these widely-read works of popular literature (written by Tohoku natives) articulate the failings of capitalist modernity while prominently featuring characters from this region. But they also accomplish something more. They offer a window into the complicated relationship between mobility and immobility inherent in pre-war imaginings of Tohoku identity. The writers did not forget or exclude the realities that reflected their own experiences as mobile natives.

Nevertheless, their critiques of Japanese modernity still served to amplify assumptions of Tohoku naïveté, promote stereotypes of northeasterners' stoic endurance of hardship, and underscore the anti-modernist longing for a simpler life that no longer exists. They lauded their former homes as the site of the vanishing authentic Japan, as well as a location from which people must escape. This new perception of Tohoku

recast the mobile body as disconnected from the land even as it further entrenched assumptions of provinciality.

Modern Japan and the Mobile Japanese Body

With the rise of the Meiji government following the Boshin Civil War of 1868–1869, the confederate model of government, which unified autonomous domains, was abandoned in favor of a strong imperial-style central rule. The new government formed in the name of the Meiji Emperor, housed in the renamed capital of Tokyo, and disrupted the previous Tokugawa shogunate erstwhile policies, intended to decrease the mobility of most Japanese subjects within the nation to their respective by lifting century-old restrictions on international and domestic travel for Japanese citizens.³ While Japan had never truly been a “closed country” to all foreign visitors, unrestricted trade with foreign countries did not exist during the Tokugawa period, and the mobility of Japanese peasants was highly regulated.⁴ With the new Meiji government’s adoption of international trade due to the unequal treaty system, more Japanese subjects set their sights beyond their domanical boundaries, which fueled the growth of domestic urban centers and emigrant settlement abroad.⁵

³ David L. Howell, *Capitalism from Within: Economy, Society, and the State in a Japanese Fishery* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995). Howell’s third chapter is particularly useful in contextualizing the transition between the traditional independent “family fishery” to a world of overseers (*bannin*) and workers (*kasegikata*) that is taken to extremes in Ishikawa’s *Kanikōsen*.

⁴ Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁵ While Japan did have a *sakoku* policy that limited interactions between Japan and proselytizing Christian nations like Spain, Portugal, Britain, France, and later the United States, it is important to reinforce that Japan was not indeed “closed” during this period. There was substantive exchange of goods, materials, and ideas from the Netherlands, Southeast Asia, China, and Korea during this time. See Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, and Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

This new mobility became intrinsically tied to the modernization efforts of the new Meiji government. Industrialization required the movement of bodies from the countryside to the cities. For the Meiji authorities, fungible Japanese peasants-cum-workers would provide the workforce necessary to achieve rapid industrialization. However, the mobility did not stop within Japan's borders in a rural-to-urban pipeline. Increased pressures to internationalize while securing Japan's new borders also sparked mobility between rural spaces. With the Meiji revolution came a new definition of Japanese boundaries, exemplified by the claiming by fiat of an island to the north of Honshu that would become Hokkaido. The government enlisted agrarian settlers to populate this new northern frontier, settlers often recruited from the former samurai class and commoners used to farming in northern climates. Drawing heavily on populations from northeastern Honshu Island, which constituted the newly formed administrative unit known as the Tohoku region, the Japanese government incentivized the colonization of Hokkaido under the banner of nation-building.

Part of the reason that Tohoku natives were so attractive as settlers in Japan's new north starting in the 1870s was that this territory had a long history of *dekasegi* labor practices. *Dekasegi*, or traveling seasonal laborers, existed even before the Meiji period in Mutsu and Dewa, the two domains that would merge into Tohoku's administrative region. This northeastern zone became the largest administrative region in the modern nation-state, covering 67,000 square kilometers of land; yet, during the pre-war period, Tohoku was home to only roughly 10 percent of the Japanese population.⁶ During the heavily regulated Tokugawa period, however, because those two domains encompassed such a large land area, the restrictions against interdomain travel were not a significant limit on mobility for migrant laborers. Therefore, for generations, Tohoku natives had a culture of travel for seasonal work, particularly important in the agrarian border areas with

⁶ The Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications reported in 1940 that the six prefectures of Tohoku had 7,165,000 people with Japan's total population numbering 73,114,000. Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku, "Showa 15nen kokusaichōsa jinkō zenkoku, dōfukuken," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau (accessed November 15, 2021, <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/>).

harsh winters that only allowed for a single growing season. As we shall explore, this tradition of *dekasegi*, merged with the modern internationalization of oceanic spaces, set the stage for Kobayashi's *Kanikōsen*.

The colonization of national frontiers, domestic urbanization, and even seasonal migration were not the only forms of mobility that became integral to the formation of the modern Japanese nation and economy. International migration, starting with plantation workers to Hawai'i and a later diaspora to other independent nation-states, began in earnest in the 1880s, picking up speed by the turn of the century.⁷ While the Tohoku region did not send the largest numbers of emigrants abroad in the pre-war period, populations from Miyagi or Fukushima prefectures generally accounted for the third or fourth largest source of migrant populations in destinations such as Hawai'i, Canada, the Philippines, the continental US, and Brazil.⁸ For example, as reflected in the cast of Ishikawa's *Sōbō*, which we will examine in the second part of this article, migrants from the Tohoku region were not only common but made up 20 percent of the Japanese migrants on the very first boat to São Paulo in 1906.⁹

⁷ Alan Takeo Moriyama, *Imingaisha: Japanese Emigration Companies and Hawaii, 1894–1908* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985).

⁸ Depending on the recipient nation, Okinawa, Hiroshima, Okayama, Wakayama, or Yamaguchi prefectures sent the largest numbers of emigrants in the prewar period. However, Tohoku migrants from Miyagi, Fukushima, Akita, Iwate, Aomori, and Yamagata prefectures also left home in significant numbers.

⁹ Kōkoku Shokumin Kaisha, "Lista de bordo do Kasato-Maru, 1908," in *Kasato-Maru: Uma viagem pela história da imigração japonesa* (São Paulo: Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo, 2009), 51–74. The first seventy-seven émigrés listed on the official passenger list of the *Kasato maru* hailed from Fukushima, with another ten coming from Miyagi. Brazilian authorities considered "Okinawans" to be distinct from "Japanese," counting the separately, resulting in Tohoku residents comprising 20 percent of the total number of "Japanese" migrants, and outnumbered only by migrants from Kagoshima (133) and Kumamoto (108).

Emigration was an important part of the Japanese government's plan to industrialize and increase capital through remittances.¹⁰ Not only did emigration fuel the economic growth of Japan, but it also became a pillar in Tokyo's push for a uniform nationalism during the pre-war period. Starting in the 1910s and 1920s, as foreign locations controlled by white powers like the United States, Canada, and Australia began to close their borders to Japanese migrants, mobile Japanese bodies began to be redirected to "less desirable countries (e.g., South America) [...] and emigration was promoted in the name of the nation."¹¹ Stressing the need to keep relocating Japanese nationals abroad to mitigate population growth and maintain Japanese presence internationally, "overseas development" became a hallmark of expansionist policies.¹² Indeed, emigrant contribution to the economy of Japanese modernization was significant; the 98.6 million yen sent to Japan by emigrants in 1933 alone amounted to 10 percent of Japan's total trade surplus. It is also worth noting that Brazil spent US\$3.8 billion on travel to Japan alone.¹³ Thus, the mobile Japanese body, including those relocating to places like Brazil (as illustrated in *Sōbō*), was indeed part of the modernization process of pre-war Japan.

¹⁰ Ayumi Takenaka, "Japanese in Peru: History of Immigration, Settlement, and Racialization," *Latin American Perspectives* 31/3 (2004): 77–98; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Waga kokumin no kaigai hatten: iju 100-nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1971); Wakatsuki Yasuo and Suzuki Joji, *Kaigai iju seisakushi-ron* (Tokyo: Fukumura Shuppan, 1975).

¹¹ Takenaka, "Japanese in Peru," 79. For more on the systematic exclusion of Japanese to "white settler" countries, see Patricia Roy, *The White Man's Province: British Columbia politicians and Chinese and Japanese immigrants, 1858–1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1966); and Andrea Geiger, *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Caste, and Borders, 1885–1928* (Yale University Press, 2011).

¹² Eiichiro Azuma, "'Pioneers of Overseas Japanese Development': Japanese American History and the Making of Expansionist Orthodoxy in Imperial Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 67/4 (2008): 1187–1226.

¹³ Takenaka, "Japanese in Peru," 79.

“Tohoku” as a Character Trope in Popular Discourses of Mobility

The texts *Sōbō* and *Kanikōsen*, written by authors from the Tohoku region, feature displaced characters from that northeastern area of Honshu Island as they traverse in-between spaces beyond their homeland. The decision to cast Tohoku natives in the leading roles of both stories carried baggage due to specific stereotypes about people from that region that had emerged following the Boshin Civil War. Before the Meiji coup, the area that would become the Tohoku region consisted of multiple domains from the areas of Mutsu and Dewa. This included the land of prominent families who held high status in the Tokugawa government.¹⁴ When the upstarts from Satsuma and Chōshū initiated their revolution that would ultimately overthrow the shogun, some of the most vocal defenders of the status quo came from these northern areas of Honshu Island.¹⁵ But their support for the Tokugawa shogunate proved unwise since, in the end, the Meiji revolutionaries won the civil war.

As argued by scholars like Michael Wert and Kawanishi Hidemichi, what followed was a concerted campaign by the victorious Meiji leadership to marginalize and reconstitute those loyalist areas as a hinterland, a political periphery.¹⁶ As newly dubbed, the Tohoku region soon became pigeonholed

¹⁴ Aizu domain was home to a branch family in the Tokugawa line. Sendai domain boasted one of the largest numbers of samurai in the country and had great political power in the *bakufu*. For a map of major domains in the Ōu (northeastern area of Honshu Island) districts of Japan and their worth on the eve of the Meiji Coup in 1867, see Ozaki Takeshirō, *Tōhoku no Meiji ishin: tsūkon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Seimuru shupankai, 1995), 1.

¹⁵ The anti-Satsuma/Chōshū (Satchō) alliance was not so much about a deep sense of loyalty to the Tokugawa rule itself, but instead to a shared set of interests among those opposing the revolutionaries based on self-interest. This alliance consisted of predominantly families from the Mutsu and Dewa provinces (collectively referred to as Ōu), headed by Date Yoshikuno (1825–1874) of Sendai domain and Uesugi Narinori (1820–1889) of Yonezawa domain. See Takeshi Kudō, *Ōu reppan dōmei no kiso kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwata shoin, 2002); and Hoshi Ryōichi, *Ōuetsu Reppan Dōmei: Higashi Nihon seifu juritsu no yume* (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1995).

¹⁶ The assertion of Tohoku as a backward or provincial region has a long history. Many postwar scholars argue that following the Meiji Coup, Tohoku was an internal colony of the center. Kawanishi Hidemichi, “Tōhoku ha

administratively as a borderland-in-transition, likened by some to the “Scotland of Japan” and others as an internal colony ruled like “the British Raj.”¹⁷

As residents of a legislated site of underdevelopment within the Japanese nation, characters from Tohoku quickly became shorthand for rural, backward, and uneducated individuals.¹⁸ Yet, it is no coincidence that the unnamed cast of characters in *Kanikōsen* speaks with a Tohoku dialect, nor that Akita natives fill the leading roles in *Sōbō*. In Japanese literary writings, the dialect of individuals from this northeastern area of the country, called Tohoku-ben, was commonly used when portraying country bumpkins, slaves,

nihon no sukottorando ga,” in Hidemichi Kawanishi, Kenji Namikawa, and M. William Steele, eds., *Rōkaru hisutorī kara gurōbaru hisutorī e: tabunka no rekishigaku to chiikishi* (Tokyo: Iwata shoin, 2005): 207–225; Nathan Hopson, *Ennobling Japan’s Savage Northeast* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); Kawanishi Hidemichi, *Tōhoku: Tsukurareta ikyō* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2001), rereleased in English as *Tōhoku Japan’s Constructed Outland*, trans. Nanyan Guo and Raquel Hill (Leiden: Brill, 2016). See also Okada Tomohiro, *Nihon shihon shugi to nōson kaihatsu* (Kyoto: Hōritsu Bunkasha, 1989); and Akasaka Norio, Ogumi Eiji, and Yamauchi Akemi, “Tōhoku” *saisei* (Tokyo: Isuto puresu, 2011), 15.

¹⁷ “On the Secret Dispatch of Inspectors to the Ōu Region,” in Irokawa Daikichi, Gabe Masao, eds. *Meiji kenpakusho shūsei 2* (1990), 911–913. Historian Hara Katsurō (1871–1924) argued that Tohoku was an inner colony of the Japanese empire in the 1920s. Hara Katsurō, *An Introduction to the History of Japan* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1920), 26–27. The acclaimed diplomat Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933) argued that those from Tohoku were distinctive from the rest of the nation in multiple works over the 1910s–1920s. Nitobe Inazō, “Kitaguni no jinzai no shūkaku” and “Tōhoku Nihon,” in *Nitobe Inazō zenshū*, vol. 20. Christopher Noss, *Tōhoku, the Scotland of Japan* (Philadelphia: Board of Foreign Missions, Reformed Church of the United States, 1918).

¹⁸ Mie Hiramoto, “Slaves Speak Pseudo-Toohoku-ben: The Representations of Minorities in Japanese Translation of *Gone with the Wind*,” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 13/2 (2009): 249–263; and Christopher Robins, “Revisiting Year One of Japanese National Language: Inoue Hisashi’s Literary Challenge,” *Japanese Language and Literature* 40 (2006), 47, fn24.

or fools.¹⁹ Thus, when Ishikawa and Kobayashi utilized this dialect in their writings rather than standard Japanese, they were cognizant of the implications. Historical actors at the turn of the century who ventured outside Tohoku's boundaries often chronicled their conscious decision to mask their dialect to escape stereotyping while abroad.²⁰

The placement of a Tohoku native in a story signaled to the audience that this person was parochial and unsophisticated. Setting such individuals in motion by having them traverse the liminal spaces between nation-states created expositional characters, especially characters who could relate their jarring experiences to the reader to empathize with them as they navigated the alienating displacement of modernity. However, upon further analysis, this article will argue that this was not the only use of the mobile Tohoku body that proved an effective tool in these two iconic works of proletarian literature. Dragging such vulnerable hayseeds into these in-between spaces allowed the authors to decry the loss of innocence on the one hand and challenge the abuses of capitalism on the other.

¹⁹ For example, Tohoku-ben was also used for the Fool (*dōkeyaku*) in the Japanese version of Shakespeare's "A Winter's Tale." Hiramoto (2009) has shown conclusively that Tohoku dialect was the model for translations of slaves in *Gone with the Wind*. This literary trope continues to the present, as Tohoku-ben became the dialect chosen for Hagrid in Harry Potter who, in the English version, boasted a heavy "West Country" accent synonymous with rural England.

²⁰ Anecdotally you can find this in multiple migrant narratives like in the interview of Umeno Goto by Yukiko Kimura in 1980, quoted in Kimura, *Issei: Japanese Immigrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 30. One prominent exception to this was Katsunuma Tomizō, a Hawai'ian known for expressing his love for his emigrant identity by retaining his native dialect in speaking and even his public writings. Takahashi Kanji, *Imin no chichi Katsunuma Tomizō Sensei den* (Honolulu: Bunkichi suda, 1953); Takahashi Kanji, *Fukushima iminshi Hawaii kikansha no maki* (Fukushima: Fukushima Hawaikai, 1958); Maeyama Takashi and Shibuya Shōroku, *Hawaii no shinbōnin: Meiji Fukushima imin no kojinshi* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu shobō, 1986), 40–44; Hashimoto Sutegoro, "Kugatsu jūichinichi," *Fukushima Shūnjū* 2 (2004): 130–164; and Kōyama Shinkichi, ed., *Nanka Fukushima kenjinkai sōritsu hayakushūnen kinen* (Torrance, CA: Nanka Fukushima Kenjinkai of Southern California, 2008).

Yet the idea of a Tohoku native serving as a seasonal laborer or relocating abroad, as will be discussed, was not revolutionary. Indeed, the Tohoku region historically sent large numbers of people to work in Japanese urban centers, to populate Japan's frontiers like Hokkaido or later Manchuria, or to independent nations abroad.²¹ Tohoku natives, including Ishikawa and Kobayashi, were often found in motion and away from their native place. For most Japanese not born in Japan's northeast, encounters with a Tohoku native occurred anywhere but within the boundaries of Tohoku. Thus, rural areas that sourced these outflows of people became viewed as parochial and unchanging and as spaces bereft of young talent since so many had relocated beyond Tohoku's boundaries to partake in the tides of modernity.

This fundamental truth that the emigrant homeland was both the site of immobility and the source of mobile bodies is reflected in the Japanese language itself. The Japanese word *imin* can translate into two separate terms in English: "immigrant" and "emigrant." The bifurcation of this diasporic identity into distinct categories that separate the mobile body of those who have arrived in a new community from their previous identities within the communities from which they left, common in many languages, is not apparent when exploring the history of mobility within and beyond Japan's borders. Instead, in Japanese, multiple words define what kind of mobility a given Japanese individual has. *Imin*, or "migrants," were any who took part in new mobilities brought about by Japanese modernization, be it within the confines of Japan proper, within Japan's growing empire, or to sovereign

²¹ For sample numbers to Hokkaido, see Tokyo Chihō Shokugyō Shōkai Jimukyoku, "Hokkaidō nishin gyogyō rōdō jijō, 1928," in Okamoto Tatsuaki, ed., *Kindai minshū no kiroku: Gyomin*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 1978), 531. For information on Tohoku farmers in Manchuria, see Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998): 307–399. For Japanese expansion in foreign, sovereign countries see works like Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Eiichiro Azuma, *In Search of our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019). In his most recent work, Azuma looks at re-migration of displaced Japanese emigrants in Japan as they relocated to other countries and/or colonies.

states abroad. But they were not simply immigrants to a new place; they were also emigrants from their home regions. *Dekasegi* workers were short-term laborers, seasonal laborers, or sojourners who were “working away from home” and would return with any profits to enrich their native place.²² *Shokumin* were settlers and colonists, individuals who left their physical home behind and rebuilt their communities abroad or in the colonies. They were sometimes interchangeable with *kaitakumin*, or “pioneers of overseas development,” as notably translated by Eiichiro Azuma.²³ In particular, terms like migrant and colonist were often used interchangeably or combined in the 1920s and 1930s with the expression *ishokumin*, carrying the connotation of Japanese nationalism shaping an individual’s resultant mobility. In contrast, the English language lexicon is rooted in the idea of leaving or arriving.

The separation of Japanese migration history from the country’s national history provides a similar conundrum for scholars of transnational Japan writing in English. How can we reunite the two halves of the Japanese migrant identity and convey the importance of the emigrant origins and the immigrant narratives? For pragmatic reasons, namely the need to limit the scope of inquiry, scholarly discussions of Japanese mobility in the pre-war era tend to fall primarily into four distinct categories: domestic migrations within Japan from rural to urban areas driven by industrialization, nation-building settlement projects, imperial mobility to Japan’s growing empire, and the vast literature on Japanese international migration to other sovereign states outside Japan, like the United States, Canada, and Brazil.²⁴ This last category of international migration can be further sub-divided into tales of

²² Taguchi Shōichirō, *Kindai Akita-ken nōgyōshi no kenkyū* (Akita-shi: Mishima shobō, 1984), 294–320.

²³ Azuma, “Pioneers of Overseas Japanese Development,” 1187–1226.

²⁴ Examples on nation building include studies like Tessa-Morris Suzuki (1999, 2008), David Howell (1983, 1995) as well as more recent contributions like Hiroko Matsuda, *Liminality of the Japanese Empire* (2019) and Sidney Xu Lu, *Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism* (2019). For more on the incorporation of imperial history into national history see Louise Young (1998) and Jun Uchida (2011). Discussions of international mobility are often found in the historiographies of the receiving countries, but that has been changing with works by Andrea Geiger (2011) and Eiichiro Azuma (2019), which integrate Japanese domestic and international history with the history of the Americas.

the *immigrant* experience, generally found in the historiography of the receiving nation, and the mechanics/politics of *emigration*, as seen in Japanese historiography.²⁵

Domestic Japanese works about migrants, like *Sōbō* and *Kanikōsen*, do not make this distinction between emigrant and immigrant identities. Character experiences are inherently linked to their native place or emigrant identity as much as their lives are identified beyond the boundaries of “home.” The push factors that drove Tohoku natives away from their birthplace in the north – poverty, underdevelopment, natural disasters, and even opportunity – all rang true as the informed reader already knew that Tohoku residents had good reasons to leave, as their homes could not provide what they needed to live well in modern Japan. In the end, however, every character is shown to inhabit spaces of modern mobility, be it in international waters in the case of *Kanikōsen* or the Kobe Emigration Center for *Sōbō*. Ultimately, they were Tohoku natives, with all the baggage that entailed transiting through the rough waters of Japan’s new international modernity.

The following sections will show how Kobayashi Takiji (1903–1933) and Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985), both born in Akita Prefecture,

²⁵ This category of historical research, within Japan Studies, must be further subdivided into literature that chronicles the granular mechanics of migration like Alan Moriyama’s *Imingaisha*, political histories concerning migration policies like Pedro Iacobelli’s *Postwar Emigration to South America from Japan and the Ryukyu Islands*. On the other hand, immigrant narratives tend to be the purview of subcategories of other national histories such as Japanese Canadian, Japanese American, or Filipino Japanese studies. Up until quite recently, the vast majority of the scholarly work on Japanese international migration did not originate in Japan Studies. Rather, it emerged in the subfields of ethnic studies or immigration history within in the historiography the receiving nation, and as such served to provide texture to the diversity of lived experience of national histories of countries other than Japan. Common themes include localized tales of immigrant success, failure, or the politics of racism. Major exceptions to this distinction are a few ground-breaking works by historians who defy the established area studies boundaries to bridge the divide between ethnic studies and Japanese history. For example, in the case of Japanese-America, Eiichiro Azuma and Takashi Fujitani, have written notable cross-over studies that will hopefully serve as models for a new generation of scholarship.

created portraits of Tohoku subjects encountering profoundly modern situations and, at the same time, offered a stinging critique of that very Japanese modernity. However, these works also paint the Tohoku region as rural and unchanging, impoverished and abandoned due to endemic poverty. While other scholars have examined these writers as examples of emerging trends in Japanese intellectual thought, particularly as evidence of indigenous criticisms of Japanese capitalism, this article focuses on examining their wider import for concepts of regionality within the Japanese nation.

Group Identities in *Kanikōsen*: Writing Region into International Waters

Kanikōsen, written by Kobayashi Takiji in 1929, encapsulated the themes of the emerging Marxist literature in Japan. Serialized over two months in the communist-leaning literary magazine *Senki*, *Kanikōsen* not only represented the author's view as a Tohoku native who had decamped to Hokkaido and then Tokyo but also came to be regarded as the premier work of Japanese fiction writ large.²⁶ *Kanikōsen* follows the story of a group of men from northern Japan who work as seasonal (*dekasegi*) laborers on a crab cannery boat trawling the seas off the coast of Kamchatka, Sakhalin, and Hokkaido. These men are following a pattern of *dekasegi* work that was common not only in the modern period but also in early modern Japan.²⁷

²⁶ For an excellent discussion that places Kobayashi in the larger trends of the 1930s, see Hamabayashi Masao, "*Kanikōsen*" *no shakaishi: Kobayashi Takiji to sono jidai* (Tokyo: Gakushū no Tomosha, 2009). This book was a revised edition of *Kiwameru me: Kobayashi Takiji to sono jidai* (Tokyo: Higashi Ginza shuppansha, 2004). Donald Keene, "Japanese Literature and Politics in the 1930s," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2/2 (1976), 226–227. Regarding the resurgence of Kobayashi following the economic downturn of 2008, see Norma Field, *Kobayashi Takiji: 21 seiki ni do yomu ka* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2009).

²⁷ Kaitakushi, "Tōhoku shokō hōkokusho" (1880), National Diet Library Digital Collection (accessed June 15, 2022, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/805487>); Takeuchi Toshimi, *Shimokita no sonraku shakai: sangyō kōzō to sonraku taisei* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1968), 120–126. Howell discusses the creation of a "Seasonal Proletariat" in Hokkaido made of *dekasegi* fishermen from Tohoku, breaking down the number from Akita, Aomori, Iwate, etc. in *Capitalism from Within*, 132–147.

Throughout the text, these workers suffer extreme abuse at the hands of the only named character in the book, the superintendent Asakawa, who eventually drives the crew to rebel while in international waters. The main characteristic that identifies the group as a unit is their Tohoku dialect.

Japanese proletarian literature, or literature written to shed light on the ills that modern capitalism wrought on the social condition of workers, generally eschewed the first-person narrative that had become common in the modern Japanese “I novel.”²⁸ Thus, Kobayashi’s cast of proletariat heroes remains an unnamed group of men who rise together to act against the atrocities of their captain: the capitalist villain Asakawa. But that does not mean that the nameless workers have no identity, as Kobayashi does confer upon them the clear regional affiliation and the dialectal traits associated with the supposedly benighted Tohoku region. Therefore, Kobayashi’s classic text forgoes heroic mythologizing of the individual in favor of composite portrayals that underscore the plight of the put-upon workers and reify the stereotype of Tohoku provinciality.

Moreover, it is clear from the introductory pages that the regionalism of Japan’s north shapes the character of the community, particularly for those unnamed laborers who form the backbone of the novel. The opening pages spotlight the miserable assortment of “country bumpkins” from Akita, Aomori, and Iwate Prefectures when a recruit is shown the space that would become his new transitory home. This character addresses the various “factory” hands of most boys of fourteen or fifteen to inquire about the origins. Their answers all point to Japan’s northern territories, with some being children of the Hakodate slums, other farmers from Nanbu in Aomori or different parts of Akita, and a veteran who tells horror stories from his time working in Hokkaido’s Yūbari coal mines.²⁹ Still, the clear implication is that these men are not fishermen by choice.

Not surprisingly, for a Marxist work of fiction, much of the emphasis in this text falls on the exploitation of the poor souls on the cannery boat. Yet Kobayashi draws from Tohoku’s long history of *desakegi* mobility, locating the exploitation in that particular labor geography and describing the

²⁸ Yoshio Iwamoto, “The Changing Hero Image in Japanese Fiction of the Thirties,” *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 4/1 (1966), 29.

²⁹ Kobayashi Takiji, *Kanikōsen* (Tokyo: Senkisha, 1929), 5, National Diet Library Digital Collection (accessed June 15, 2022, info:ndljp/pid/10297644).

ability of owners to exploit the fishermen on the cannery boat as stemming from Tohoku natives' inability to survive at home: "All had left home because they could not make a living there, where they started work in the fields before sunrise. They had left their eldest sons in charge and the womenfolk had to work in factories while the other sons had also to seek work elsewhere."³⁰ These laborers on the cannery boat had nowhere to turn, and the notion that the horrors of working in the cannery are better than their previous existence in Tohoku almost baffles the mind. But it also sets the stage for the realization that they have sold their bodies to be pawns of capitalist merchants once the reality of their existence on the open ocean forces them to confront the harsh facts of modern exploitation. While the sufferings they experienced before as farmers are not specified, the author depicts the brutal anguish that stems from their forced departure from Tohoku.³¹ Some of these boys are shocked by their treatment onboard which further implies that no matter what situation they escaped back home, they have previously been sheltered from such experiences.

The proletarian messages are not subtle in Kobayashi's work, but they also bear clear indicators tied to the imaginary and physical cartography of the Tohoku region within the nation-state. He invokes industrialists' concerns that labor unions from Tohoku's Aomori and Akita were "struggling desperately to get organizers in on the crab canneries," as the exposure of the terrible working conditions aboard "was the great fear of the exploiters."³² This juxtaposition between the laborers whose exploitation a reader would witness and the organizations that could help protect their rights is tied to the national space, identified as specific labor unions in Aomori and Akita prefectures. The idea of such regional activists discovering the abuses of the cannery ships, information that would allow for action within the

³⁰ Ibid., 12.

³¹ In the postwar, authors like Satō Kin'yū and Matsumura Chōta recorded oral histories of such Tohoku dekasegi fishermen who, apart from the physical and psychological abuse of working the fisheries, did acknowledge that it provided them with opportunities to earn wages not available in their native places. See Satō Kin'yū, *Hokuyō no dekasegi: Hokuhen gyojō ni ikita kosaku nōmin no kindaiishi* (Akita: Akita bunka shuppansha, 1985), and Matsumura Chōta, *Akita no dekasegi monogatari: Gyominhen*, 3rd ed. (Akita: Akita bunka shuppansha, 1975).

³² Kobayashi, *Kanikōsen*, 13.

administrative structures of the nation-state, was the major concern of the industrialists. From such statements, historians can infer that the flagrant abuses of human dignity in the text were beyond the pale of what would have been considered acceptable back home in the Tohoku region.

But these laborers are literally and figuratively set adrift from their moorings within the nation. Removed from their native land and placed in international waters, their ties to their citizenship and identity become tethered to their distinctive regional dialect. These men are from provincial and parochial Tohoku, farmers removed from the soil. At one point in the introduction, Kobayashi refers to these cannery men as *hyakushō no gyofu* (百姓の漁夫), or “farmer fishermen.”³³ While accurate, the English rendering does not show the level of disdain reflected in such a characterization. The word *hyakushō* does indeed mean farmer, but it also has a strong connotation of “the commoners” and “peasants” rather than the skilled career farmer.³⁴ Such men, Kobayashi asserts, hoped to return home with newfound riches. Instead, they found themselves stranded in Hokkaido and forced to sell their bodies to industrialists.³⁵

Similar to other works of proletarian literature and exposés intended to reveal the gruesome inner workings of the daily life of oppressed factory workers, such as Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1905), Kobayashi deploys visceral language to fully evoke the labor conditions of the men and women on the cannery boat, referencing how “the air was foul and stinking with tobacco smoke and crowded humanity” and “Sprawling in their bunks the men looked like wriggling maggots.”³⁶ Such metaphors that work in both land and ship-based spaces underscore the fisherman-farmer’s connections back home, as well as their current struggles within the new mobile space.

The implication, of course, is that the Tohoku region had been skipped in the country’s rush to western-style capitalist modernity. Due to its lack of development, residents of this area remained poor but in a traditional, agrarian way. However, with the advent of modernity, a new dimension of their poverty meant that working the land was simply not enough. Women were driven off the land to work in factories to make ends meet, while fathers

³³ Ibid., 10.

³⁴ Ibid., 11.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kobayashi Takiji, *The Cannery Boat and other Japanese Short Stories* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 9.

spent their off-seasons laboring away from home on fish canneries, like Kobayashi's fictitious boat *Hakko Maru*, and sons were left to toil behind the plow. Poverty and oppression often comprised the norm in early modern Japan, with rural families suffering abuses at the hands of absentee landlords. But in the modern iteration, there was a glimmer of promise that if they just worked harder in new industries or beyond the boundaries of their farms, they could get ahead. Nevertheless, as expressed in works like Kobayashi and others, such capitalist industrial sectors offered harsh realities of their own, rooted in exploiting workers inherent in the quest for modernity.

The marriage of capitalism to nationalism is explicit in the book. In the first address to the gathered laborers, the company industrialist reminds the erstwhile farmers turned fishermen that they are now battling the might of the Japanese empire and the Russians. Linking their project to the nation's growth, he discusses the importance of having additional food supplies to feed the rising population. Further, he warns against worker unionization, appealing to each as a cog in the machine that can create a strong Japan: "I want you all to realize," the Boss intoned, "we are serving our Empire when we risk our lives braving the stormy seas of Hokkaido. So if any one of you are imitating the Russian tactics that are popular nowadays and stir up trouble, I tell you, that man would be doing nothing short of selling his country."³⁷ Here, the Russian tactics referenced pertain to socialism and the embrace of workers' rights. Regardless, a few common refrains are loaded in this speech to justify the labor abuses emanating from Japan's capitalist modernity. Japanese citizens were expected to give themselves in service to the nation. According to the "boss" Asakawa, each individual was in a battle against Russians for supremacy of the seas. They would accomplish nothing less than solving the "Population Problem" and "Food Supply Problem" for the entire nation.³⁸

³⁷ Kobayashi, *The Cannery Boat*, 10; Kobayashi, *Kanikōsen*, 14.

³⁸ Kobayashi, *Kanikōsen*, 14. Rhetoric of the 人口問題 and 食糧問題 were both mobilized to promote Japanese overseas settlement, nation-building in Hokkaido and even underdeveloped Tohoku itself, and expansionary agendas that sparked imperial settlement efforts in Japan's formal and informal colonies. For example, in Nakayama Kōichi's self-published book on the 12 major problems in Japan, he listed the population problem and the food supply problems as the number one and two needing solutions. Nakayama

However, while industrialists loftily articulated the importance of sacrifice to the nation, there was a disconnect between the horror of the laborer's lives and the national glory embodied in the emperor. At one point, right after leaving Japanese waters for the windswept international seas, a student reacts to being belittled by Asakawa, asking, "What right does that fellow have to speak to us like that?" The response from a compatriot embodies this disconnect, as he relates that "the Emperor's above the clouds, so whatever he does doesn't hurt us, but Asakawa's here with us all the time."³⁹ Indeed, while few cannery workers would argue against the nation or the emperor, there was a clear separation between the idealized Emperor's role in their lives and the ship boss who forced them to sacrifice their dignity and even lives to reap a profit for the company.

The text also challenges who controls the lives of the men on board. On the open seas, the ship captain sometimes makes unprofitable choices to keep the boat afloat in challenging weather. However, in the early parts of *The Cannery Boat*, it becomes evident who is the master of the ship: It is not the individuals with the most experience or moral authority but the industrial capitalists. The following exchange between the captain and the "boss" Asakawa shows how profits trump human life, especially when the captain attempts to help a fellow crab cannery in distress. Asakawa starts the dialogue, saying:

"Who's ordered you to go out of your course unnecessarily?"

Who had ordered him? Wasn't he the captain? Taken aback for the moment, he became as stiff as a poker but then he soon reasserted his position. "As captain, I do it."

"Captain is it?" With his arms stretched out sideways in front of the captain, the boss raised his voice insultingly at the last word. "Look here, whose ship d'ye reckon this is? The company's chartered and paid for it. The only ones you've got any say are Mr. Sugi and me. You, you're called

Kōichi, *12 mondai kaiken no jiki* (Tokyo, 1928). Available online in the NDL Digital Collection at <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1267036>.

³⁹ Kobayashi, *The Cannery Boat*, 15.

the captain and you think yourself bloody important but you don't count any more than a scrap of stinking fish."⁴⁰

In this example, the capitalist Asakawa reprimands the captain for seeking to maintain an ethical code that demands fishermen at sea to help distressed boats. Ultimately, the neighboring boat with 425 souls goes down without aid from the *Hakko Maru*. In essence, capitalism triumphs over human life and the ties that bind humanity.

Asakawa's abandonment of human decency is in direct contrast to a narrative of foreign kindness some crew members experience. The factory fishermen go off course during a storm only to be rescued by the Soviets before returning to the ship. When they return to the *Hakko Maru*, these men share their tale, highlighting how the Soviets had stressed that Japanese capitalism was heartless and dehumanizing but that the Japanese proletariat could turn away from that to become once again righteous individuals. All they needed to do was to join the international communist movement.

The decision to include such an encounter with the Soviets raises an obvious comparison between the misery on the ship and the humanity of the foreign and communist "other." It questions the notion that allegiances should be tied to the nation, a concept repeatedly pushed by the capitalist Asakawa, arguing instead that the people of Tohoku should be true to the global proletariat, thereby contributing to this new imaginary of the communist international. Ultimately, *Kanikōsen* offers a critique of the presumed geographical boundaries of Japan as coterminous with nationalism, with the revolt taking place in unclaimed oceanic spaces. These Tohoku natives are suddenly "Japanese" through the presence of representatives of the Soviet Union. That this all takes place in a legal no man's land shows the portability of Japanese capitalist modernity, a modernity that has essentially enslaved and immiserated these Tohoku natives but also questions the necessity of that enslavement.

While the book about nameless Tohoku natives ultimately became an international success, matters did not end well for the author, Akita-native Kobayashi. With their anti-capitalist themes and criticisms of Imperial Japanese governmental policies, *Kanikōsen* and his other writings garnered the attention of the authorities, marking Kobayashi for surveillance by the Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu (Tokkō or Special Higher Police). After the Peace Preservation Law of 1924, this newly empowered Special Higher Police

⁴⁰ Ibid., 17.

sought out those who would threaten the *kokutai*, or national body, following the mandate of Article 1:

Anyone who organizes a group for the purpose of changing the national polity (*kokutai*) or of denying the private property system, or anyone who knowingly participates in said group, shall be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment not exceeding ten years. An offense not actually carried out shall also be subject to punishment.⁴¹

Ultimately, Kobayashi's work with the Japanese Communist Party in general, and his writings in *Kanikōsen* in particular, provided grounds for *lèse-majesté* charges in 1930. The government banned the novel in Japan, but not until 15,000 uncensored copies were already in circulation.⁴² The uncensored part that most offended the government and put Kobayashi on the wanted list was one of the fishermen's declarations noting how he hopes the Emperor chokes on the crabmeat they are canning.⁴³ In the end, Kobayashi was brought to the Tsukiji Police Station in Tokyo on February 20, 1933, tortured and beaten to death. According to the eminent literary scholar Donald Keene, "the killing of Kobayashi was an act not only of extreme brutality but also extreme stupidity... Kobayashi became a martyr, to be remembered if not emulated."⁴⁴

The author, Kobayashi, embodied a mobile Tohoku subject, a man living in Tokyo who had left his native place in Akita. Much like his characters, he met a tragic end. As literary scholar Bert Scraggs indicates, a common theme in proletarian literature is how the police and the military do not serve the people but the capitalist system.⁴⁵ While Kobayashi would die

⁴¹ "Peace Preservation Law, April 22, 1925," *Asahi Shimbunsha, Shiryō Meiji Kyakunen*, 466–467. Translated in David Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc, 1997), 397.

⁴² Donald Keene, *A History of Japanese Literature, Vol. 3: Dawn to the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 616–618.

⁴³ Heather Bowen-Struyk, "Why a Boom in Proletarian Literature in Japan? The Kobayashi Takiji Memorial and the Factory Ship," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 7/26.1 (2009), 1–7 (accessed June 11, 2021, <https://apjif.org/-Heather-Bowen-Struyk/3180/article.html>).

⁴⁴ Keene, "Japanese Literature and Politics," 227.

⁴⁵ Bert Mitchell Scraggs, "Class Consciousness, Fictive Space, and the Colonial Proletariat," *Translingual Narration: Colonial and Postcolonial Taiwanese*

of a heart attack during interrogation by the Special Higher Police, his characters four years earlier were arrested by the Japanese Imperial Navy at the end of *Kanikōsen*. “Indeed,” writes Schruggs, “after enduring weeks of abuse under a cruel company superintendent, men on a crab-processing ship in the waters off Sakhalin go on strike. But it is the workers, not the superintendent, who are taken away by bayoneted-rifle-toting sailors when a destroyer later comes aside the factory ship.”⁴⁶

Translocation in *Sōbō*: Exploring Emigrant Regionalism in Kobe’s Emigration Center

In contrast to *Kanikōsen*’s narrative of temporary workers on a boat at the periphery of state power, Ishikawa Tatsuzō’s celebrated 1935 novel, *Sōbō*, chronicles the experiences of a group of Japanese emigrants from Akita bound for Brazil just before they disembark in Kobe’s National Emigrant Center. This book, featuring Tohoku and its inhabitants, would receive considerable acclaim and earn the first-ever Akutagawa Prize in literature. As with *Kanikōsen*, we see in this text how the place of emigrant origin in Akita Prefecture becomes the primary identifier for the protagonists as they undergo the dehumanizing process of preparing to relocate to Brazil within Japan’s National Emigrant Center in Kobe. Ishikawa’s narrative of the struggle of emigrants from his home region departing for Brazil reflected his own experiences. After dropping out of university at twenty-five years old, Ishikawa received a government subsidy that gave him free passage to Brazil as an assistant supervisor of Japanese emigrants. Once he arrived in South America, he worked for a month on a coffee plantation in Santo Rosa, near São Paulo, then spent a month in the city before returning to Japan to get married.⁴⁷ Thus, in some ways, *Sōbō* is an example of Ishikawa writing about his personal experiences. He portrayed his protagonists as displaced individuals from his home district of Japan, Akita Prefecture, desperately seeking a better life abroad.

While several scholars have examined *Sōbō* as a paradigmatic example of the outflux of Japanese migrants to Brazil, far fewer have

Fiction and Film (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015), 66 (accessed June 11, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvvn83q.7>).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 57–87.

⁴⁷ The plantation’s name was the Fazenda Santo Antonio. See Reiko Tachibana, “Loss and Renewal in Three Narratives of the Nikkei Brazilian Diaspora,” *Japan Review* 29 (2016), 146.

considered the significance of the region from which many of these sojourners departed. Indeed, the title of Ishikawa's work implies a specific positionality of the author and his readers, one of a decidedly domestic Japanese perspective, a story of the forging of emigrant identities that starts before leaving Japan proper. The title of the work sets the tone for this exploration, with literary scholar Reiko Tachibana arguing that the title could be translated as "All People" or as "Dispersed People," signaling Ishikawa's intention to evoke "translocation through its use of uncommon Chinese characters...implying such transitory individuals as nomads and migrants."⁴⁸ An English translation in the journal titled *The East*, published in serial form between 1985–1986, rendered it "The Emigrants." In many ways, these possible English translations prove the generally accepted interpretation that Ishikawa's work offers a scathing critique of Imperial Japan's project of promoting emigration to Brazil as disingenuous and full of false promises. As Tachibana argues in her 2016 article, "the title suggests the author's empathy with and sympathy for people and ignorant emigrants who, like grass, are repeatedly trodden down, yet were resilient enough to survive."⁴⁹ However, only some critics consider the particular "where" from which these individuals emigrated, not merely from Japan, but from areas of biographical importance to Ishikawa, like the Tohoku region in general and the Akita prefecture in particular. The choice of "*Sōbō*" as a title for this story of emigrant translocation can thus provide insight into the distinctive perspective Ishikawa wished to articulate in his work: dispersal, displacement, and ignorance.

Native place and domestic spaces constitute underlying themes in this work, with Ishikawa characterizing the Emigrant Center in Kobe as a transitional space from domestic Japan. In turn, authentic geographic places become de-territorialized and re-inscribed as these mobile sojourners prepare to become official "emigrants." Indeed, the first words spoken by officials to these migrants are the terse query "Who are you?" followed by the phrase "*Doko da?* [from where?]" The emigrant's reply is confusing, so the official presses further by asking, "Where...What prefecture?" Finally understanding

⁴⁸ Tachibana, "Loss and Renewal," 149. Tachibana is building on the linguistic analysis of the title done by Iwaya Daishi, "Ishikawa Tatsuzō, Hito to sakuhin," *Showa bungaku zenshū*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1988), 1064.

⁴⁹ Tachibana, "Loss and Renewal," 149.

the question, the man, Ōizumi Shinnosuke, emphasizes his emigrant identity. He affirms that he is from Akita, replying with exaggerated politeness and revealing his local dialect.⁵⁰

This classification becomes crucial in the ordeal that follows, as officials summon each family in an order based on their prefecture of origin, beginning with Hokkaido and moving south to Aomori, Akita, Iwate, et cetera.⁵¹ These categories sort migrants into not just prefectures but also regions, allowing them to traverse the dehumanizing process of medical inspection and admittance to the Center. Moreover, they provide an effective connection to home amidst the sterile realities of celluloid bags containing meal tickets hung around their necks and sleeping quarters filled with rows of beds.

While Ōizumi Shinnosuke's outward answer to the Japanese government official's question is succinct and obsequious, a few paragraphs later, Ishikawa provides readers a window into his internal musings about the home he has left behind. Watching the endless arrival of nameless migrants at the center, Ōizumi recalls the mountains and rivers of his hometown where he had "left a leaning house, a medium-sized farm whose ripe wheat lay under a blanket of snow, and the memory of a long struggle."⁵² He had said farewell to his ancestral home, made offerings at the graves that held his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and sold his house and farm. For Ōizumi, his native place means a long ancestry buried in the soil of Akita and its geography of territorial markers of mountains and rivers. However, despite the comfort of traveling in a group that he expected to include his next-door neighbors, he stands cheek and jowl with strangers. All they have in common is that they depart Japan for the same place (or, at least, so it appears to him initially). However, it does not take long for him to discover commonality with some of his fellow travelers: a commonality again tied to his newly portable native place affiliation.

As they come to terms with their transit space, the question of "where" grows in importance since the emigrants' first disorienting night in

⁵⁰ Ishikawa Tatsuzō, *Sōbō* (Akita: Akita Sakigake shinposha, 2014), 8. For example, he used *shi* instead of *su* at the end of verbs, a common feature of the dialect of Akita prefecture.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 9. Translation from Ishikawa Tatsuzō, "The Emigrants 1," *The East* 21/3 (1985), 63.

the center. Conversations between roommates start with the question of “where are you from,” and those who share an emigrant native place regard their common origins as the basis of friendships based on that obvious connection:

“You are from Akita Prefecture, aren’t you?” “I’m from Yuzawa”...“I’m from Tazawa.” A friendly conversation began as smoothly as thread unwinding from a spool. Unlike intellectuals meeting for the first time, they enjoyed a conversation free of vanity, investigation, caution and contempt, and soon became friends. Besides, they were all there for the same reason. Having despaired a livelihood in Japan, they all harbored the common sorrow born of the necessity to migrate to some place where they could begin again.⁵³

This marking of place that resulted in camaraderie, in turn, entailed a deeper and more ominous meaning for Ishikawa, the severing of attachments necessary not by choice but owing to the realities of the 1930s Akita experience:

That they were soon on good terms was attributable to their common sorrow. While chatting good-naturedly with one another, they began to feel for the first time encouraged and relieved of the various tribulations of the past several days: they had been busy disposing of their household effects, taking care of miscellaneous affairs, bidding farewell to farms whose cultivation had consumed all of their energy, making preparations for the trip. They could not help but associate their departure with death, and so they hesitated to depart, and felt oppressed, gloomy, and dejected.⁵⁴

Thereby removed from their homes in Akita, the identity of these migrants becomes transportable across the “transnational village” of Tohoku. The safe harbor in this storm of displacement is the common history of being “from” the same place: Akita.

⁵³ Ishikawa, *Sōbō*, 17. Translation from “The Emigrants 1” *The East*, 66.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Ishikawa's text criticizes the Japanese government during the turbulent 1930s. He explicitly gestures to a host of push factors that motivate these common Japanese subjects to uproot their lives and set sail for Brazil. During the first years of the Great Depression, an economic downturn that only exacerbated the difficult conditions in Japan's rural northeast, *Sōbō* starkly discusses how these emigrants lacked anything to tie them to Japan.⁵⁵ The depression began in the 1930s and would be essentially over by 1935 when Ishikawa published *Sōbō*.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, during those five years, this economic crisis proved devastating for rural areas like Akita, spreading across many aspects of daily life: Rice and silk prices plummeted; the urban-industrial economy collapsed simultaneously, amplifying the harm to rural communities; and farm families struggled under persistent rural debt that inhibited their ability to balance income and expenditure.⁵⁷ According to the historian Kerry Smith, rapid urbanization resulted in rural areas losing population to the city for its vibrant urban culture, which many rural observers viewed as distasteful frivolity and decadence.⁵⁸

Even so, the most significant change for regionalism in Brazilian emigration projects stemmed from rural advocates who grew in strength and numbers starting in the 1920s. After 1931, as Sandra Wilson has argued, some of these activists looked to emigration to Greater Japan as a valve to relieve the pressures of rural life, only to receive a lukewarm response from farmers.⁵⁹ Before the invasion of Manchuria and the creation of a puppet state there, many of these advocates argued for the relocation of rural poor to other sovereign nation-states, yet the options had been severely reduced following the racially-motivated immigration legislation restricting Japanese migration that swept through the United States, Canada, and Australia. For many,

⁵⁵ For more on the impacts of the global depression on Japan in general and Tohoku in particular, see Kerry Smith's *A Time of Crisis: Japan, the Great Depression, and Rural Revitalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁵⁶ Smith, *A Time of Crisis*, 42.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Sandra Wilson, "Securing Prosperity and Serving the Nation: Japanese Farmers and Manchuria, 1931–33," in Ann Waswo and Nishida Yoshiaki, eds., *Farmers and Village Life in Twentieth-century Japan* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003): 169–171.

therefore, the answer lay in Brazil. In Jeffrey Lesser's foundational work *Negotiating National Identity*, for example, he recounts nationalist fears among Brazilians that their country would be "forced to kowtow to an expanding and imperialist 'Shin Nippon' (New Japan)."⁶⁰ This concern arose from the creation of Japan's Overseas Emigration Federation in 1927, establishing the *Brasil Takushoku Kumiai* (Brazil Colonialization Corporation, BRATAC). By 1929, BRATAC had acquired four large tracts of land near São Paulo and provided millions of yen to create a system where any Japanese migrant could make a down payment in order to receive passage to Brazil, complete with a 25-hectare lot upon which to settle.⁶¹

Ishikawa asserts, however, in his "typically straightforward Tohoku-style prose," as identified by the Akita City library director in a 2009 pamphlet, that these migrants did not embrace the government's entreaty to set forth as an act of patriotism.⁶² Instead, they sought to flee deplorable conditions: a Japan mired in scandal and poverty in which they no longer thrived but struggled to survive. While the main characters speak about the poverty of Akita prefecture, other characters expand that commentary to encompass other regions. One example is the dialog from Katsuta-san, a man identified as hailing from Shinshū in Nagano prefecture, who declares how "all things considered, Japanese agriculture is – well, I think – hopeless...What's worse is that the situation seems to be deteriorating year by year. I concluded I should not remain in Japan and had better make a new start as soon as possible...That's why I'm going to Brazil."⁶³ These people

⁶⁰ Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 101.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Hōjō, Tsunagu, "Ishikawa Tatsuzō no bungaku" [Literature of Ishikawa Tatsuzō], Ishikawa Tatsuzō Memorial Room pamphlet, Akita City Central Library's Local Literature Room (*kyōdo bungakukan*).

⁶³ Ishikawa, "Emigrants 1," *The East*, 69. Ishikawa's choice to write about migration to Brazil itself also reflects a growing hostility toward "white settler" countries that counter to the overarching Malthusian-inspired rationale for overseas migration: that migration was one of the only viable outlets for Japanese population pressures. Brazil was an outlet for the internal push factors of the global depression and rural poverty on the one hand and

departed less for the opportunity that Brazil might provide than for the lack of such in Japan.

Beyond the general economic and agricultural climate of particular significance to emigrants from Japan's rural northeast, *Sōbō* invokes numerous domestic scandals surrounding corrupt officials and what many considered the international diplomatic debacle of the London Naval Conference of 1930.⁶⁴ At this conference, widely covered in Japan and directly referenced through the eyes of multiple emigrants in Ishikawa's work, Japanese officials agreed to expand on the already unequal limitations of a 5:5:3 ratio that allowed the British and Americans to deploy five tons of naval warships on the Pacific but limited the Japanese to only three tons.⁶⁵ The allusion to the London Naval Conference in Ishikawa's work on Japanese emigration signals a growing discontent with the domestic as well as international politics that appeared to institutionalize the international perceptions of Japanese racial inferiority.⁶⁶

the external pressures of a growing pattern of institutionalized diplomatic racism on the other.

⁶⁴ This treaty expanded the definitions of regulated classes of vessels to include a number of previously unlimited classes, such as submarines, all classes that the Japanese navy during the previous decade had worked hard to develop to guard against the Pacific becoming an "American lake." Adding insult to injury, while the Washington Conference had merely limited shipbuilding to maintain the extant ratios after WWI, the London Conference effectively stopped the Japanese from producing any new heavy cruisers that reduced Japan's strength vis-à-vis the other powers. For more, see David Evans and Mark Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Navy*, especially 237.

⁶⁵ The 5:5:3 ratio outlined in the Five-Power Treaty (Washington Naval Treaty) of 1922–1923 placed limits on the most powerful weapon then in existence, the construction of battleships, battlecruisers, and aircraft carriers. It was based on a ratio of tonnage that granted the UK and US five tons of carriers each while limiting Japan to three tons. The other signatories, Italy and France, agreed to limit their naval arms limitations to 1.67 tons each.

⁶⁶ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 181–182. While Japan did get a seat at the table as one of the Big Five powers after WWI, Japanese diplomats failed to get the statement of racial equality into the preamble to the covenant of the

The musings one Brazil veteran in the Emigration Center shares with new emigrants display this frustration with modernity's impacts on Japan's national and international prestige. A man toiling for four years on a coffee plantation stands for the voice of a realist who does not see Brazil as paradise but rather as a land where all that is good in Japan can be transplanted into exotic soil. Indeed, he reflects on Brazil as almost an escape, a place where life might be challenging, but the day-to-day turmoil associated with modernity does not prevail. He argues that, while life in Brazil is difficult, he appreciated not knowing about the events in the outside world beyond his small Brazilian village. For him, ignorance was bliss. However, after returning to Japan months before, even while he stayed with family in an out-of-the-way place in Okayama Prefecture (outside of Tohoku), the realities of modern Japan could not be ignored. Every corner of Japan was connected, rendering ignorance of the daily news virtually impossible. Reflecting on the influx of bad news he had learned over the past months, such as government officials taking bribes, economic conglomerates that "unpatriotically" profited from Japan's economic downturn, accusations of violating election law, companies laying off large numbers of employees, and prosecution of possible communist organizers. He considers that they all "reflected the corruption of the political and financial worlds."⁶⁷ For him, the news of each event extinguished his "hopes for Japan and made him despair for its future, which he believed was dim. He wished he had been ignorant of those events. He felt nothing for Japan. Indeed, he was waiting for the day of his departure with the feeling of escape."⁶⁸

Ishikawa's work does not paint life in Akita prefecture in the 1920s–1930s in a positive light. In the 1985–1986 translations of *Sōbō* in the journal *The East*, the introduction highlights how this work merits particular note and a translation because of "its graphic illustration of the actual conditions of Japanese emigrants at a time when Japan's farming villages were abysmal pockets of poverty."⁶⁹ While the individuals emigrating from such rural areas in his literature have great nostalgia for the family and ancestry left behind,

League of Nations and rising immigration problems in many white settler nations proved that the negatives of modernity overshadowed the positives.

⁶⁷ Ishikawa, "The Emigrants 1," *The East*, 70.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

their commentary demonstrates a realization that staying in their native places in Tohoku would have robbed them of a future and the chance to thrive.

Interestingly, despite these opposing views on Akita expressed in his famous work on pre-war Brazil migration, Ishikawa has enjoyed a revival in contemporary, twenty-first-century Japan, and local history enthusiasts residing in Akita today revere him as a local hero. Organizations like Akita city's Youth Action Group have celebrated Ishikawa in campaigns to promote Akita during its "*furusato* [native place] movement."⁷⁰ Today, he has an entire exhibition dedicated to his life at the Akita City library titled "Furusato and Literature 2016: *Ishikawa Tatsuzō's Akita*" that features not only his work on Brazil but also his groundbreaking writings on the Pacific War, sketches, personal letters, and documents relating to his youth in Akita. In the brief biography written by Akita City Central Library's Hōjō Tsunagu, Ishikawa is remembered as a man of "unassuming moral courage" who deeply loved Akita prefecture thanks to his deep bloodlines.⁷¹ According to Hōjō, this manifested not only in the content of his works but also in his writing style that constructed "sturdily built, Tohoku-like" narratives.⁷²

The Immobile Emigrant Adrift: Viewing Modernity in the In-Betweens

This article has shown how regional stereotypes proved integral to the character development in two of Japan's most acclaimed works of fiction of the 1930s. Both *Kanikōsen* and *Sōbō* relied on assumed understandings of seemingly contradictory realities embodied in the mobile Tohoku body: first, that they comprised a significant part of the Japanese diaspora, and second, that the space they were leaving embodied a parochial site of immobility. By the Taisho period (1912–1926), writers, politicians, and ordinary people increasingly imagined Japan's Tohoku region – and indeed much of rural Japan – as the site of authenticity and tradition, often linked to a naïve but persistent belief in folk superstitions that defied the rationality demanded by western modernity.⁷³ By the 1910s, the internal and international acceptance

⁷⁰ Pamphlet for the Ishikawa Exhibit at the Akita City Library, collected in summer 2018. The Akita City's Youth Action Group is my translation for 秋田市動合青年会.

⁷¹ Hojo, "Ishikawa Tatsuzō no bungaku."

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ For more on Japanese encounter with modernity and quest to preserve the rapidly disappearing subcultures by establishing tradition, see Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago:

of Japan as a modern nation-state resulted in a kind of domestic backlash, with key thinkers in Japan proper searching for articulations of “tradition” to combat the alienation that accompanied modernity.

The transformation of rural Tohoku into a synecdoche for tradition, paradoxically, required the division of “immigrant” and “emigrant” histories as well as the occlusion of networks of “mobile Tohoku.” Empirically, people might leave the region, but in so doing, they left Tohoku history not just by proximity but also by becoming exposed to modernity. According to Tokyo intellectuals like Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) and members of the *Minzokugaku* movement he spearheaded, it was precisely those who stayed in Tohoku who should be seen as representative of authentic Japanese-ness, an authenticity defined by a lack of modernity only achieved through immobility.

There is great significance in how both Kobayashi and Ishikawa were born in Akita prefecture and spent their childhood in Japan’s north. Depicting their characters as authentic but also as prisoners of geographic fate who could not make ends meet in their native places, each author vividly portrayed how these men and women are simply struggling to survive in the modern world while being exploited by their fellow citizens. But overlooked in analyses of these famous authors (or infamous, depending on the era) is the omnipresent portrayal of the mobile Tohoku body. Seeing their characters as in transit in spaces away from their home but between state boundaries allow English-speaking scholars to experience each character existing as both emigrant and immigrant. Kobayashi and Ishikawa express great sympathy for the exploited residents of Tohoku; however, they still utilize characters as an avatar of Japanese rustics, as provincial people shocked upon their first encounter with the dystopic modern. As such, they reify the stereotype of Tohoku as the homeland for mobile and immobile Japanese subjects.

University of Chicago Press, 1995). An excellent work discussing the way that Tohoku fit into various movements related to preserving folk traditions in the modern period, see Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

**THE MUGEN NOH STRUCTURE IN TRANSLATION:
A STUDY OF TWO ENGLISH VERSIONS OF
TANIZAKI JUN'ICHIRO'S *ASHIKARI*¹**

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Introduction

Ashikari 蘆刈 (*The Reed Cutter*) by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎潤一郎 (1886–1965) has been translated into English twice. This is unusual for the author's works, except for *Shisei* 刺青 (*The Tattooer*) and *Shunkinshō* 春琴抄 (*The Story of Shunkin* or *A Portrait of Shunkin*). The case of *Ashikari* is worth examining because the two versions were translated and published in contrasting contexts. The first translation, by Okita Hajime 沖田一 (1905–1985) and Roy Humpherson (dates unknown), was titled *Ashikari* and published alongside *The Story of Shunkin* in 1936 by Japanese publisher Hokuseidō Press 北星堂書店, in a book named *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin: Modern Japanese Novels*. In the 1930s, modern Japanese novels were mostly translated by Japanese, sometimes working alongside native English speakers, but they did not prevail as much as Noh plays in the English-speaking world. The second translation, by Anthony H. Chambers, was titled *The Reed Cutter*, and it appeared with another of Tanizaki's works, *Shōshō shigemoto no haha* 少将滋幹の母 (*Captain Shigemoto's Mother*), in a book published in 1994 by a major American publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, named *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother: Two Novellas*. This translation was produced in the 1990s when contemporary Japanese authors such as Murakami Haruki 村上春樹 (1949–) had gained recognition in the United States beyond the stereotyped image of modern Japanese literature fixed by the works of Tanizaki, Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 (1899–1972), and Mishima Yukio 三島由紀夫 (1925–1970) during the 1950s and 1960s. The present essay compares these two translations of *Ashikari* to show how the different contexts influenced the translated text itself.

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The study begins by outlining the background of each translation in terms of the translators and publishers. This study considers the purpose of the publication and the target audience by analyzing the materials accompanying the translation. Gérard Genette's notion of "paratext" is useful for examining this issue. According to Genette, paratexts accompanying the text, such as the author's name, title, preface, and illustrations, certify the existence, reception, and consumption of the text in the form of a book.² Paratexts are composed of peritexts, which are paratexts that exist in the same volume of a book, and epitexts, which are all other paratexts except for peritexts.³ The peritexts studied in this article include a foreword, a glossary, footnotes by translators, and a dust jacket produced by publishers. The epitexts analyzed in this article comprise translators' memoirs and academic papers, publishers' advertising materials, and reviews published in magazines and newspapers. By focusing on the paratexts, this study compares the translation strategies of the two versions of *Ashikari*.

Another key factor in this study is how the classical *mugen* Noh structure, to which *Ashikari* can be compared, was transferred in each translation. The reading of this structure in the novella presupposes that while the narrator depicts the landscape as *waki* (the supporting actors of a Noh play), the other man tells his father's love story as *shite* (the main actor). The major reason why critics see this structure in Tanizaki's novella is that it not only clarifies the roles of the characters but also compensates for the other man's vanishing in the ending. This article argues that the visibility of the translation and the translator emphasized by the paratexts, which connects the reader to the original culture, evokes the *mugen* Noh structure even further. In addition, this examination proposes a new conception of the translator as *waki*. Thus, this case study explores the role of the translator from a different perspective than that of the so-called linguistic equivalence between the original and the translated text by considering the input of translators of *mugen* Noh.

***Ashikari*, *Mugen* Noh Structure, and Invisibility**

Tanizaki's *Ashikari* was serialized in November and December 1932 in the magazine *Kaizō* 改造. In April 1933, it appeared in book form with 500 limited copies produced by the offset printing of Tanizaki's

² Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans., Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

handwriting. This edition was titled *Jun'ichirō jihitsubon Ashikari* 潤一郎自筆本蘆刈 (*The Reed Cutter: Jun'ichirō's Handwriting Edition*). Regarding such a specific printing format, Tanizaki wrote, in his essay “Sōtei mandan” 装幀漫談 (“Rambling about Book Design”), published in *Yomiuri Shimbun* on June 16th and 17th, 1933, that a literary work consists not only of content but also of form and format, such as the book design, paper quality, and typeset.⁴ The handwritten edition, bound in Japanese style and produced with *ganpishi* (traditional Japanese paper), shows Tanizaki's commitment to form and format and evokes classical Japanese writing. Equally important to the history of its publication, it must also be mentioned that *Ashikari* was included together with *Kaoyo* 顔世 in the first edition of the novella *Shunkinshō*, published in December 1933 by Sōgensha 創元社.

Ashikari begins with the narrator's visit to the Minase Shrine on a September evening. While strolling, he recalls the world of classical works, such as *Masukagami* 増鏡. Then, while reciting poetry and drinking *sake* beside the Yodo river, the narrator hears a sudden rustle in the reeds and realizes that a man is sitting beside him. After offering him *sake*, this man tells the narrator about his father's love story. According to the man in the reeds, his father, Seribashi Shinnosuke, had fallen in love with a widow from a wealthy family named Oyū and wished to marry her. However, Shinnosuke noticed that he would not be able to do so because Oyū had already had a baby with her deceased husband, and her relatives did not want a quick remarriage because of the customs at that time; instead, he married her younger sister, Oshizu. However, Oshizu knew that Shinnosuke and Oyū loved each other, so she suggested to Shinnosuke that the two of them remain chaste to be faithful to Oyū. After Oyū's baby passed away, she remarried amid rumors of the relationship between her and Shinnosuke. In the end, the man in the reeds reveals to the narrator that he is the son of Oshizu. Once the narrator asks the man whether Oyū is nearly eighty years old, the latter vanishes.

This unexpected ending stimulated discussions among critics such as Kōno Taeko and Hata Kōhei about who the man in the reeds really is.⁵ Also, the structure of the work was often likened to the *mugen* Noh form. *Mugen* Noh is a way of classifying plays “featuring deities, the spirits of

⁴ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, “Sōtei mandan: Jō,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 16, 1933.

⁵ Kōno Taeko, “Kaisetsu,” in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Ashikari, Manji* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1985), 286–287, Hata Kōhei, *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1989), 139–140.

plants and animals, and the ghosts of humans,”⁶ in contrast with *genzai* Noh, which “refers to plays featuring people alive in the dramatic present.”⁷ From the perspective of *mugen* Noh, the narrator in Tanizaki’s *Ashikari* assumes the role of *waki*, the “secondary role in noh,”⁸ while the man in the reeds plays the role of *shite*, “Literally, doer; refers to the main role in noh, kyōgen, and early kabuki.”⁹ Particularly, Mikame Tatsuji first highlighted the relationship between *Ashikari* and Noh in 1973, around forty years after its publication. Mikame argues that *Ashikari*’s structure can never be separated from that of *nogaku*, one of the two traditional styles of Japanese theatre together with *kyōgen*.¹⁰ According to Mikame, the narrator appears as *waki*. This character first refers to the purpose of his stroll. Then, in the manner of *michiyuki* (the lyric composition of a traveler describing the scenery throughout a journey), he also describes the landscape and sites seen on the way to his destination. The man in the reeds, however, appears as *shite*. He tells the narrator the story of his father, then vanishes. Mikame concludes that this ending, which evokes *mugen* Noh, leaves Oyū in the world of beauty for eternity, generating a modern *Nohgaku* world.¹¹

Many critics agree that *Ashikari* resembles the *mugen* Noh structure. Noguchi Takehiko argues that the man vanishes after recounting his delusion of a beautiful woman in a way typical of *mugen* Noh and adds that he might actually be the spirit of the narrator’s obsession with an ideal woman.¹² Hata Kōhei claims that *Ashikari* has a *mugen* Noh structure in which the main topic

⁶ Karen Brazell, ed., “Glossary of Theatrical Terminology and Index to Illustrations,” in *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 539.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 529.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 548.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 545.

¹⁰ Mikame Tatsuji, “Tanizaki no ‘Ashikari’ ni okeru nōgaku teki kōsei,” *Kaishaku* 19/7 (1973), 40. This text is reprinted, with revisions, in Mikame Tatsuji, *Kindai bungaku no tenkyo: Kyōka to Jun’ichirō* (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 1974), 142. According to Mikame, Amino Kiku’s article is the only study to refer to the connection between Tanizaki’s *Ashikari* and Noh. Amino suggests that *Ashikari* was inspired by Noh. See Amino Kiku, “‘Ashikari’ sonota,” *Tenbō* 49 (1950), 106–108.

¹¹ Mikame, *Kindai bungaku no tenkyo*, 159.

¹² Noguchi Takehiko, *Tanizaki Jun’ichirō ron* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1973), 206.

is the man in the reeds' love toward his mother, who is Oyū rather than Oshizu, and that the narrator plays the role of *waki*.¹³ As Hata indicates, the sympathy and affection that the narrator feels for the lady of Eguchi when recalling Zeami's play *Eguchi*, in which the *shite* transforms into the bodhisattva Samantabhadra and vanishes in the moonlight of the western skies, enhances the dreamlike effect in *Ashikari*.¹⁴ Another factor in considering that *Ashikari* has a *mugen* Noh structure is that its *bunkobon* – the Japanese paperback edition, which is most readily available today – includes Chiba Shunji's commentary explaining that *Ashikari* is based on the aforementioned Noh play *Eguchi*, which itself has the *mugen* Noh form.¹⁵

The poet, novelist, and translator Ikezawa Natsuki, in his commentary following Tanizaki's volume of the best-selling *Nihon bungaku zenshū*, a series of collected works of Japanese literature edited by Ikezawa himself, mentions that the man's vanishing into the darkness of time bears a resemblance to the composition of *mugen* Noh.¹⁶ In a recent study, Shibata Shōji writes that the man in the reeds gets possessed by the spirit of Shinnosuke in a way typical to the *mugen* Noh structure.¹⁷ Through the lens of these critics and commentators, *Ashikari*'s *mugen* Noh structure assigns the man in the reeds the role of the protagonist as *shite* and the narrator that of the listener as *waki*. This structure also suggests that Shinnosuke appears as a ghost whose spirit has transcended and taken over the man in the reeds. It also transforms *Ashikari* into a requiem for the man or his father, whom the narrator himself mourns, hence emphasizing the idea of freeing the spirits of the dead.

However, critics such as Ōishi Naoki reject the clear *mugen* Noh structure and argue that the man in the reeds' story is a fantasy that the narrator is imagining.¹⁸ According to Ōishi, the narrator views not the actual

¹³ Hata, *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō*, 139–140.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁵ Chiba Shunji, "Kaisetsu," in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Yoshinokuzu, Ashikari* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1986), 168–169.

¹⁶ Ikezawa Natsuki, "Kaisetsu," in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Ikezawa Natsuki kojū henshū nihon bungaku zenshū 15: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 2016), 481.

¹⁷ Shibata Shōji, *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō: Bi to seimei no aida* (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2021), 197.

¹⁸ Ōishi Naoki, "'Kindai' teki jikan tonō kōsō, aruiwa, 'biteki moderune' mondai," *Bungaku geijutsu* 31 (2008), 7.

site of the Minase Shrine but an illusion he has created by reading *Masukagami* and Gotoba's poetry, so the place where the man in the reeds appears is also part of the narrator's inner vision.¹⁹ Hence, in this reading, the existence of the man in the reeds embodies the narrator's conception of the odd relationship between Shinnosuke, Oyū, and Oshizu. This structure disregards the man in the reeds' identity, whether Shinnosuke and Oyū had a relationship or not, and the issue of the man's sudden vanishing in the ending. Instead, it presents the narrator as the protagonist of *Ashikari*, which is contrary to that of reading it within the *mugen* Noh structure.

This second approach shows that *Ashikari* offers distinct reading experiences that vary with the interpretation of the structure. Along those lines, the two translators interpreted *Ashikari*'s structure differently. The translator of the 1936 version, Okita Hajime, mentions in a short epitext the memory of his co-translator, Roy Humpherson, and that the story is the narrator's fantasy from the middle that the narrative suddenly comes back to reality at the end.²⁰ Although the description of the stroll is the narrator's actual experience, the man in the reeds, Shinnosuke, Oyū, and Oshizu are part of the narrator's imagination. Then again, the 1994 translator, Anthony H. Chambers, clarified in an epitext, this time an academic book he published in the same year as *The Reed Cutter*, that: "[t]he structure of Tanizaki's *The Reed Cutter* is close to that of *Eguchi*. It is hard to know which play or plays served as a model for the novella, but *Eguchi* is a likely candidate, and in any case, it is clear that Tanizaki borrowed and adapted the *mugen* nō structure."²¹ In the next section, this study examines how these different interpretations affect the translated texts. The first translation portrays the fantasy of an ideal love concocted by the narrator, who can be identified with Tanizaki, while the second translation depicts the requiem for the deceased who longed for the loved one, at the end of which the narrator, as *waki*, liberates the spirit of the man, who serves as *shite*. This contrast shows that, depending on the translation strategy, the focus of the novella shifts.

It must be added that the *mugen* Noh structure is related to the issue of invisibility because the narrator never actually sees Shinnosuke, Oyū, or Oshizu, who exist only in the recount of the man in the reeds, and also because the man vanishes in the ending. The *mugen* Noh structure makes this

¹⁹ Ibid., 17 and 20.

²⁰ Okita Hajime, "Gyotaku," *Bungaku seishin* 1 (1950), 44.

²¹ Anthony Hood Chambers, *The Secret Window: Ideal Worlds in Tanizaki's Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 47.

disruption in the realistic narrative acceptable, compensating for both forms of invisibility. However, the issue of invisibility is further complicated in translation because the *mugen* Noh structure relies on familiarity with Noh among the target language culture. This, in turn, requires the translator to be more present in the translated text.

The concept of “invisibility” in translation was coined by Lawrence Venuti. Venuti uses the term “to describe the translator’s situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture.”²² He laments that a translated text is typically valued for its fluency, which makes the translation seem “not in fact a translation, but the ‘original’ and creates ‘the illusion of transparency.’”²³ Venuti argues that this situation causes “a domesticating practice, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to receiving cultural values, bringing the author back home,” and instead advocates for “a foreignizing practice, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.”²⁴ Venuti emphasizes that domestication and foreignization are not binary opposites but “ethical effects” in translation.²⁵ Foreignization entails ethical resistance to the dominant style, discourse, and text selection, based on the relationship between the source language culture and the target language culture in the Anglo-American framework. For this reason, in Venuti’s view, the translator’s visibility starts from an implicit assumption that one culture is superior to another and indicates said translator’s resistance to the hegemonic culture.

However, this article understands the terms visibility/invisibility in a different sense than Venuti. The focus is neither fluency in the text nor resisting the asymmetrical relationship between the original and receiving culture. In this study, these terms refer to how and to what extent the translator participates at the paratextual level in the interpretation of the translated text. The translator’s visibility also shows that the work is indeed a translation and makes the *mugen* Noh structure likewise visible. Ultimately, an approach to the translations that regards *Ashikari* as a novella with a *mugen* Noh structure invites us to consider the translator’s role as *waki*. In

²² Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008). Reissued in Routledge Translation Classics series, 2018, 1.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 15.

²⁵ Ibid., xiv.

such a light, the translation itself is a metaphor of *mugen* Noh in the sense that it summons the original in a different form and releases its spirit into the receiving culture. In the 1936 translation by Okita Hajime and Roy Humpherson, the translators step back to let the author move forward. They do this by rewriting the structure without adding detailed information. In the 1994 translation by Anthony H. Chambers, the translator steps forward to make the translation visible and to move the reader to the original culture, accompanying the author and helping him in a sort of performance. This contrast arises from the variation in the visibility of the translators and the reception of Japanese literature in different contexts. The next section further examines the backgrounds of the two translations.

Contrasting Conceptions of Japanese Literature in the 1930s and 1990s

Ashikari was first translated into English in Shanghai by the aforementioned Okita Hajime, a Japanese scholar of American literature who studied the history of Shanghai, and Roy Humpherson, an ex-British Army captain.²⁶ Okita was a teacher of English in Shanghai Kyoryū Mindanritsu Nihon Kōtō Jogakkō 上海居留民団立日本高等女学校 (Girls' High School for Japanese Residents in Shanghai), and Humpherson moved to that city after working at the British Embassy in Tokyo. According to Okita, he chose *Ashikari* and *Shunkinshō* as the source texts because he regarded the novellas as appropriate for introducing Japanese literary works and culture outside Japan, though he claimed that it would be almost impossible to fit Tanizaki to anglophone literary tastes.²⁷ In Japan, the translation was published by Hokuseidō Press, an editorial house that dealt mainly with English-language textbooks and introductory books about Japan. In the press catalog, a page of *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* has a catchphrase that says: “[The] Most Exquisite Japanese Novels of Today!”²⁸ These epitexts show that *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* was published with the specific purpose of introducing Japanese literature and culture in a new context. The peritexts

²⁶ I have referred to Okita, Humpherson and Hokuseidō Press in my study on the translations of *Shunkinshō*: Rihito Mitsui, “Narrative Structure in Two English Translations of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s *Shunkinshō*,” *Bulletin of the Graduate Division of Letters, Arts and Sciences of Waseda University* 66 (2021): 797–824.

²⁷ Okita, “Gyotaku,” 43.

²⁸ Hokuseidō Press, *Hokuseidō shuppan tosho sō mokuroku* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1938).

within the translation support this intention. The “Biographical Note” explains that Tanizaki’s style has “a peculiar charm for foreign readers by virtue of its literary ‘purity’ and freedom from Western influence.”²⁹ Also, the translators include a map of the Kansai area and the setting of the work at the beginning of *Ashikari*, and they offer a glossary to explain Japanese terms at the back of the book. The paratexts clarify that the translation was produced to benefit readers unfamiliar with Tanizaki and Japanese culture.

It must be mentioned that *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* did not have a major impact in Japan, though prior to its English publication, there was a debate on whether *Shunkinshō* should be translated at all.³⁰ *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* was, however, well-received in Shanghai. According to Okita, the translations sold well, which gave Humpherson a reputation as a translator and provided him with a position in charge of the literary reviews in *The North-China Daily News*.³¹ With regards to the book’s reception in the English-speaking world, Donald Keene (1922–2019) argues that *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* was obscure in the United Kingdom and the United States because it was published in Tokyo.³² However, a review did appear in *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1936,³³ mentioned in the latter part of this essay when analyzing translation strategies.

In the 1930s, British and American presses rarely published translations of modern Japanese novels. Noh, however, with its supernatural structure and poetic perspective, was well-received by modernist writers of the early twentieth century, such as Ezra Pound (1885–1972) and William Butler Yeats (1865–1939). After Marie Stopes’ (1880–1958) 1913 publication of *Plays of Old Japan: The Noh*, the first book focusing on Noh plays and their translations, another influential volume, “*Noh*,” or;

²⁹ Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita, “Biographical Note,” in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin: Modern Japanese Novels* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1936b), iv.

³⁰ Mitsui, “Narrative Structure in Two English Translations of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s *Shunkinshō*,” 807.

³¹ Okita, “Gyotaku,” 45.

³² Donald Keene, “Kaigai Tade kū mushi,” in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, *Tanizaki Jun’ichirō zenshū dai jūroku kan: Furoku jūni* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1958), 1.

³³ John Otway Percy Bland, “Japanese Character,” review of *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin*, by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1820, December 19, 1936.

Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan, was released in 1916 by Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) and Pound.³⁴ Although Pound notes that “[t]he vision and the plan are Fenollosa’s” and that “[i]n the prose I have had but the part of literary executor,”³⁵ his stylistic contribution to the translation was significant. T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) wrote an essay, “The Noh and the Image,” in which he calls Pound and Fenollosa’s work “a textbook” because of Fenollosa’s notes; he also criticizes it by saying that “they have made the book appear a service to literature, like a good doctor’s thesis, rather than as literature itself.”³⁶ Regardless, despite disagreeing with Pound’s use of Irish diction, Eliot writes that “when the writing is most like Mr. Pound it also presents the appearance of being most faithful to the original.”³⁷ He further describes Pound’s translation as “a remarkable triumph of translator’s skill: it is certainly English, and it is certainly new in English.”³⁸ As presented by Eliot, Pound appears to be visible in the translated text. This is particularly noticeable in light of how Noh theatre approaches emotion. According to Eliot, the phantom-psychology of Orestes and Macbeth in Western theatre, for instance, is substantially different from the Japanese way of depicting a ghost in plays: “In the former cases the ghost is given in the mind of the possessed; in the latter case, the mind of the sufferer is inferred from the reality of the ghost.”³⁹ Implicit in Eliot’s thinking is the fact that translating Japanese texts of this kind entails importing the structure for spectral apparitions to the receiving language culture. Furthermore, his review highlights Pound’s achievement in doing so through the poetic perspective he brought to the translation and shows that the supernatural themes in Noh were already recognized at the time by readers with different backgrounds.

Although Okita and Humpherson possibly knew of Pound’s translation and the studies on Noh plays conducted outside Japan, they may

³⁴ Before the publication of Stopes’ book, Noh plays were translated as part of books about Japanese literature, such as Basil H. Chamberlain’s (1850–1935) *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese* in 1880 and William G. Aston’s (1841–1911) *A History of Japanese Literature* in 1899.

³⁵ Ezra Pound, “Note,” to “Noh,” or, *Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan*, by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917).

³⁶ T. S. Eliot, “The Noh and the Image,” *The Egoist* 4/7 (1917), 102.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

not have focused on the *mugen* Noh structure when translating *Ashikari*. The “Foreword” of *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* indicates that “Japanese words have been left untranslated; partly because many of them are the names of things which have no exact equivalent outside Japan, and partly because they were thought to be in keeping with the slightly exotic atmosphere of the stories.”⁴⁰ Considering that most of these untranslated words gathered in the “Glossary” are Japanese objects and historical terms, what the translators mean here by “exotic” is the atmosphere Tanizaki’s style creates through references to concepts inherent to Japan and its classical works, all of which conveys “a peculiar charm for foreign readers.”⁴¹ The “Biographical Note” also mentions that “[a]mong readers of discrimination, [Tanizaki’s] reputation now is unsurpassed by any other living Japanese author” and that *Ashikari* and *Shunkinshō* “created something like a sensation in Japanese literary circles.”⁴² Thus, the paratexts show that Humpherson and Okita aimed to introduce Japanese literature by translating Tanizaki’s works for new readers. This intention fitted the purpose of Hokuseidō Press, which published introductory books on Japan written in English alongside translations of Japanese literature.

However, it should be noted that neither translator was a specialist in translating Japanese literature. Indeed, Okita writes that, since Humpherson could not read the original text, he produced a preliminary translation before revising it with his co-translator.⁴³ This reflects how Japanese writers tried to introduce their own literature outside of Japan at the time. Although it is necessary to further analyze the readership in each case, a textual analysis of the translation does allow us to examine how *Ashikari* was received. This article argues that the translators’ and the publisher’s purpose of introducing Japanese literature outside of Japan succeeded in the sense that it presented Tanizaki’s work as something representative of Japanese literature. In light of the stereotypic image of Japan held by readers unfamiliar with Tanizaki, this implies that the translation might have been received as a story of restricted love in a feudal society rather than a novella about the author’s specific vision and reworking of ideal love within the history of Japanese literature.

⁴⁰ Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita, “Foreword,” in *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin: Modern Japanese Novels* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1936a), i.

⁴¹ Humpherson and Okita, “Biographical Note,” iv.

⁴² *Ibid.*, iii and iv.

⁴³ Okita, “Gyotaku,” 43.

When *The Reed Cutter* appeared in 1994, the situation surrounding translations of modern Japanese literature changed significantly. American trade publishers, including Knopf, Grove Press, and New Directions, started to publish translations of Japanese works in the 1950s. Particularly, Knopf's translation project, launched in 1955 by editor Harold Strauss (1907–1975), and Kawabata's Nobel Prize in Literature in 1968 greatly contributed to the dissemination of modern Japanese literature outside of Japan. In an interview about the first two works of the said project, Osaragi Jirō's 大佛次郎 (1897–1973) *Kikyō* 帰郷 (*Homecoming*), translated by Brewster Horwitz (1924–1954), and Tanizaki's *Tade kū mushi* 蓼喰ふ虫 (*Some Prefer Nettles*), translated by Edward G. Seidensticker (1921–2007), which were both published in 1955, Strauss expressed his hope that Tanizaki would become a Nobel Prize-winning author and that the two translations would reach and influence intellectuals (*interi sō*).⁴⁴ Tanizaki actually achieved recognition with Knopf's publication of *Some Prefer Nettles* and Seidensticker's 1957 translation of *Sasameyuki* 細雪 (*The Makioka Sisters*), as well as Howard Hibbett's (1920–2019) translation of *Kagi* 鍵 (*The Key*) in 1961. There was also a collection of his short stories titled *Seven Japanese Tales* in 1963 and *Fūten rōjin nikki* 瘋癲老人日記 (*Diary of a Mad Old Man*) in 1965, translated by Hibbett. Indeed, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize seven times.⁴⁵ However, Knopf's translations of Tanizaki, Kawabata, and Mishima may have created a limited image of modern Japanese literature. Edward Fowler calls it “the postwar image of Japan in America – an exoticized, aestheticized, and quintessentially foreign land quite antithetical to its prewar image of a bellicose and imminently threatening power.”⁴⁶ Fowler also points out that the texts to be translated were selected by Strauss and a limited number of experts of his acquaintance, such as Keene, Seidensticker, and Ivan Morris

⁴⁴ Harold Strauss, “‘Kikyō’ to ‘Tade kū mushi’ amerika de shuppan,” *Asahi Shimbun*, December 1, 1954.

⁴⁵ Tanizaki was nominated in 1958, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, and 1965. Refer to the Nomination Archive: “Nobel Prize Outreach AB 2021,” *NobelPrize.org: The Official Website of the Nobel Prize*, Sep 27, 2021 (accessed October 1, 2021, https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show_people.php?id=12374).

⁴⁶ Edward Fowler, “Rendering Words, Traversing Cultures: On the Art and Politics of Translating Modern Japanese Fiction,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18/1 (1992), 3.

(1925–1976).⁴⁷ Hibbett should be added to the list. All of this shows that translations of Japanese literature in the United States developed under the influence of trade publishers in affiliation with experts from domestic academic institutions.

By the time *The Reed Cutter* was published in the early 1990s, 1994 Nobel Prize winner Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎 (1935–), Abe Kōbō 安部公房 (1924–1993), and Endō Shūsaku 遠藤周作 (1923–1996) had already gained recognition. However, it was the generation born after the war that conveyed a new image of Japanese literature beyond that produced in the 1950s. For instance, the influential magazine *The New Yorker* published Murakami's *Tībī pīpuru TV* ピープル (“TV People”), translated by Alfred Birnbaum, in the issue of September 10, 1990. Likewise, a collection of short stories titled *Monkey Brain Sushi: New Tastes in Japanese Fiction*, edited by Birnbaum and published in 1991 by Kōdansha International (a New York branch of the Tokyo-based major publisher Kōdansha), also introduced new authors born in the aftermath of the war. In the introduction of this anthology, Birnbaum describes “Kawabata, Tanizaki, and Mishima, or even Abé, Endo, Oé” as “staples of the older diet”⁴⁸ and excludes their works. He specifies that the collection includes authors who “were all born and raised in an Americanized postwar Japan” and “who will go on to cater to the nineties.”⁴⁹ Birnbaum's intent to create a new trend in Japanese literature is substantially different from that of reviewers of the translation of Tanizaki's *Manji* 卍 (*Quicksand*) and *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother*, both published in 1994, who tried to show an image of the author unchanged from that of the 1950s. Lee Lescaze, for instance, writes in a 1994 review titled “Three Tales of Obsession” that, “Tanizaki, one of Japan's most prized novelists of the century, is probably best known in the U.S. for ‘Some Prefer Nettles’ and ‘The Makioka Sisters.’”⁵⁰ Kitty Chen Dean mentions, in another review of the same year, that the translations imply “[g]ood news for Tanizaki fans: the master Japanese novelist, author of *The Makioka Sisters* and *Some Prefer*

⁴⁷ Ibid., 12, n. 25.

⁴⁸ Alfred Birnbaum, “Introduction,” in *Monkey Brain Sushi: New Tastes in Japanese Fiction* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1991), 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1 and 4.

⁵⁰ Lee Lescaze, “Three Tales of Obsession,” review of *Quicksand* by Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Howard Hibbett, and *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother* by Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Anthony H. Chambers, *The Wall Street Journal*, February 24, 1994.

Nettles [...] is ably represented by two new translations” and that the novellas “explore Tanizaki’s recurrent theme of obsessive love.”⁵¹ These reviews indicate that Tanizaki was still recognized in the 1990s by those two works published 40 years before. They also indicate that he was still regarded as old-fashioned and as one of the canonized Japanese authors.

This article argues that Chambers’ *The Reed Cutter* was an attempt to challenge Tanizaki’s canonization following Seidensticker translations rather than reinforce it. Chambers can be described as part of the next generation of pioneers in modern Japanese literature translation. He received a Ph.D. in Japanese literature from the University of Michigan in 1974 by writing the dissertation *Tradition in the Works of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō*, following Seidensticker’s ideas.⁵² In 1980, Chambers translated Tanizaki’s essay “Shunkinshō Kōgo” 春琴抄後語 (“Postscript to ‘A Portrait of Shunkin’”), which appeared in the prestigious academic journal of Sophia University, *Monumenta Nipponica*. Soon after, he also translated *Bushūkō hiwa* 武州公秘話 (*The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi*) and *Yoshinokuzu* 吉野葛 (*Arrowroot*) as one book, *The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi and Arrowroot*, published in 1982 by Knopf. They also released his *Chijin no Ai* 痴人の愛 (*Naomi*) in 1985. In 1994, Chambers produced *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto’s Mother*, as well as an academic work entitled *The Secret Window: Ideal Worlds in Tanizaki’s Fiction*, published by the Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University. Thus, Chambers added variety to translations of Tanizaki’s works and contributed to the development of Tanizaki studies.

Chambers regards *Some Prefer Nettles* and *The Makioka Sisters* as “orthodox” novels, characterized by dialogue and objective description.⁵³

⁵¹ Kitty Chen Dean, review of *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto’s Mother: Two Novellas* by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Anthony H. Chambers, and *Quicksand* by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Howard Hibbett, *Library Journal* 119/1 (1994), 169.

⁵² Anthony H. Chambers, *Remembering Tanizaki Jun’ichirō and Matsuko: Diary Entries, Interview Notes, and Letters, 1954–1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 1. Chambers mentions that Seidensticker suggested that Chambers consider Tanizaki, Iwano Hōmei 岩野泡鳴 (1873–1920), and Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862–1922).

⁵³ Jun’ichirō Tanizaki and Anthony H. Chambers, “Postscript to ‘A Portrait of Shunkin’: Shunkinshō Kōgo,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, 35/4 (1980), 458–459.

Ashikari's form, on the other hand, he calls "essay-novel."⁵⁴ Likewise, he considers *Captain Shigemoto's Mother* an essay-style novel that does not follow an orthodox structure either.⁵⁵ Seidensticker produced an abridged translation, "The Mother of Captain Shigemoto," which he included in the anthology *Modern Japanese Literature: From 1868 to Present Day*, edited by Keene and published by Grove Press in 1956. Seidensticker wrote that the translation was abridged due to space limitations and to make it fit a form familiar to the English-language reader since the original often resembles an essay.⁵⁶ By translating these essay-style works in the 1990s, then, Chambers approached Tanizaki's coherent theme of love from a different angle than his two canonized works and Seidensticker. In addition, his text selection and translation strategy, including the style reminiscent of classical writing, went against the new wave of Japanese literature in the 1990s, which depicted the post-Americanized Japan. In that sense, Chambers' translation can also be interpreted as an attempt to counter the new generation of translators like Birnbaum and their stance against old Japanese authors.

Furthermore, an examination of the peritexts of *The Reed Cutter* helps consider the translator's role and the target audience. First, in terms of book production, translators in the 1990s were more visible than those in the 1950s. The dust jacket of the first edition of *Some Prefer Nettles* did not even include the translator's name, nor did that of *The Makioka Sisters*, though the back flap included it. By contrast, the dust jacket of the 1994 first edition of *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother* includes Chambers' name, and the back flap further describes his academic career, including the titles of his other translations. Clarifying the translator's name and record in the peritexts stresses his qualifications as a specialist in Japanese literature. Second, regarding the book content, there was a general increase in the number of footnotes in translations. While *Some Prefer Nettles* (200 pages) features one footnote and *The Makioka Sisters* (501 pages) includes 17, *The Reed Cutter* (51 pages) has 29 footnotes, and *Captain Shigemoto's Mother* (122 pages) has 27. The fact that Chambers' earlier translations published by Knopf, *The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi and Arrowroot* and *Naomi*, included no footnotes, shows the translator's emphasis on them in *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother*. Knopf allowed Chambers to add

⁵⁴ Ibid., 458.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 459.

⁵⁶ E. G. Seidensticker and Anzai Tetsuo, *Sutandādo eigo kōza dai ni kan: Nihonbun no hon'yaku* (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1983), 205.

footnotes this time, something which commercial publishers would have hesitated to offer. These arrangements enabled Chambers to make himself more visible and directly explain the original cultural context. This means that the publisher expected the translator, as an expert in the field, to mediate between original and translation, not to be the translator behind the author.

The target audience likely included not only the established Tanizaki reader but also a wider audience. Chambers belonged to the academic community as a professor of Asian language and literature at Wesleyan University, which might have led him to assume that students and scholars of Japanese literature would be part of his readership. However, since Knopf is not an academic or university press but a commercial one, the publication aimed not only for a limited academic readership but also to reach the general reader. This duality in the target audience is evidenced by the fact that *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother's* has many footnotes, on the one hand, and that it does not have an introduction, on the other hand. Having many footnotes means that reading it requires specific information that a specialized scholar needs to make clear to the reader. Not having a preliminary introduction that gives a fixed direction to the reading indicates that the assumed audience was someone knowledgeable about Tanizaki who did not require a considerable amount of background information before reading the text but also wanted to jump immediately into the text without any prior academic guidance. This device shows that the translation was intended to function as a scholarly one, not a completely specialized one.

These observations bring to light the differences in the reception of translated Japanese literature between the 1930s and the 1990s. In the 1930s, modern Japanese novels were rarely translated into English, and Tanizaki was not known outside Japan. Noh plays were already recognized within the modernist movement, albeit focusing on adapting their poetic aspects rather than presenting the original context in detail. *Ashikari* was an early attempt by non-specialist translators of Japanese literature to introduce Japanese novels that went against the reader's expectations outside Japan. By contrast, *The Reed Cutter* was translated by an experienced American scholar and translator in the 1990s, when the English-language reader already regarded Tanizaki as one of the canonized Japanese authors and expected contemporary writers to provide a different aesthetic than his. Knopf assumed a general educated reader that was familiar with the literary canon, just as Chambers assumed the academic community of Japanese literary studies as his readership. The translator, positioned as a specialist in Japanese literature, therefore reflects a situation in which there was already an

established reading base in the English-speaking world, which allowed Chambers to provide this wider audience with a direct presentation of the cultural context through the mere use of footnotes. A textual comparison of the 1936 and 1994 translations reveals how the assumptions of the target audience affected the translated text and how the translator became part of each version.

The Translator's Visibility and the *Mugen* Noh Structure in Different Translation Strategies

The above examination explored the translators' and the publishers' purposes in publishing their translations of *Ashikari* and assessed the reception of translated Japanese literature. The following analysis aims to demonstrate how these factors affected the translated text. It is a close reading that does not focus on mistranslations or the equivalence between the source text and the translation. During the analysis, this article cites the source text and the translated texts because it helps illustrate how each translator renders the original text with a different target audience in mind.⁵⁷ Focusing on the

⁵⁷ The source text is cited from *Ashikari*, the version of which is included in *Shunkinshō* published in 1933. Considering that Humpherson and Okita's signatures appear in the 1935 foreword to the translation (Humpherson and Okita, "Foreword," ii.), the following four versions of *Ashikari* are the ones that Okita could have had access to: the one published in 1932 in *Kaizō*; the handwritten one of 1933; that appended to *Shunkinshō* in 1933; and the one included in Sōgensha's 1934 新版春琴抄 *Shinpan Shunkinshō* (*Shunkinshō: New Edition*). There are some corrections between the 1932 version, the handwritten version, and the 1933 version. The 1934 version is based on the one included in *Shunkinshō* in 1933, but *hentaigana* (variant *hiragana*) is replaced by *hiragana*. By contrasting Humpherson and Okita's translation with the four versions of *Ashikari*, it is likely that Okita used the 1933 version included in *Shunkinshō* or the 1934 version as his main source. On the other hand, the colophon of *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother* notes that the translation is "based on the ChuoKoron-sha, Inc., editions of *Ashikari*, published in 1973" (Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto's Mother: Two Novellas*, Anthony H. Chambers, trans., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), which would confirm that the source of Chambers' translation is the version in the publisher's 1973 complete works

mugen Noh structure influences the reading experience. In order to examine the paratexts and the style of each translation, it is important to first analyze the section of *waka* poetry in the text:

- Source text by Tanizaki

君なくてあしかりけりと思ふにもいとゞ難波のうらはすみうき。⁵⁸

- Translated text by Humpherson and Okita

On the lonely shores of Naniwa

The reeds grow drearily;

In solitude I yearn for you

By this deserted sea.⁵⁹

- Translated text by Chambers

How wretched I am without you, cutting reeds!

Life at Naniwa Bay grows harder still to bear.*⁶⁰

*Anonymous, *Shūiwakashū* (compiled early in the eleventh century) #540. “Ashikari,” the original title of the novella, comes from this poem. The word denotes “reed cutting” and “reed cutter,” and connotes “wretched,” “miserable.” Naniwa is an old name for Osaka.⁶¹

of Tanizaki. A comparison of the 1933 and 1973 versions shows that the difference lies in the fact that the *hentaigana* are replaced with *hiragana*. Thus, it is likely that Humpherson and Okita’s translation on the one hand, and Chambers’ on the other, are both based on the 1933 version with *hentaigana* replaced by *hiragana*. Therefore, the 1933 publication is cited as the source text by replacing *hentaigana* with *hiragana* for convenience in this study. Traditional character forms (*kyūjitai*) have been replaced with their simplified equivalents (*shinjitai*). Relevant excerpts from all three primary texts are underlined for emphasis.

⁵⁸ Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, “Ashikari,” *Shunkinshō* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1933), 109.

⁵⁹ Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, “Ashikari,” in Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita, trans., *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin: Modern Japanese Novels* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1936), 3.

⁶⁰ Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, “The Reed Cutter,” in Anthony H. Chambers, trans., *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto’s Mother: Two Novellas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 3.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Ashikari begins with the above *waka*. In Humpherson and Okita's text, the poem, which stresses the protagonist's feelings and characterizes the setting, does not include the meaning of reed "cutting" and reed "cutter." In the foreword, they refer to the difficulty of conveying the double meaning: "It is seldom possible to reproduce a play on words in a foreign language. Moreover, the word *ashikari* is itself an abstruse archaism, the real significance of which is not readily grasped even by a Japanese. *Ashi* has the double meaning of *reed* and *bad*; while *kari*, besides meaning *cut*, is a verbal termination in the Literary Style. All efforts to render this into English of suitable brevity were unavailing, and it was finally decided to retain the original Japanese title."⁶² This explanation, together with the fact that the translated text does not offer information about the poem's appearance in previous classical works, compels the reader to question the author's identity. The poem is directed to a reader unfamiliar with Japanese literature and affects the final scene.

In contrast, Chambers' translation has the two terms "wretched" and "cutting reeds" to attempt to preserve the double meaning of *Ashi* and *kari*. Furthermore, with the detailed footnote, Chambers notes the original title's derivation from an anonymous poem, when it was composed, the denotation and connotation of the word, and the fact that the name of the place is an old one. This means that, from the very beginning of the novella, Chambers connects the text with classical Japanese literature. Moreover, the fact that it is a translation becomes patent to the reader.

- Source text by Tanizaki

それにちやうどその日は十五夜にあたつてみたのでかへりに淀川
べりの月を見るのも一興である。⁶³

- Translated text by Humpherson and Okita

As it happened to be the night of *Jugoya*, the Full Moon Festival, I should have the pleasure of viewing the moon from the banks of the Yodo on my way home.⁶⁴

- Translated text by Chambers

What is more, the day corresponded to the fifteenth of the Eighth Month by the old calendar – on my way home I

⁶² Humpherson and Okita, "Foreword," i.

⁶³ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," 112.

⁶⁴ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," Humpherson and Okita, trans., 6.

could enjoy the view of the full moon from the banks of the Yodo river.*⁶⁵

*The Eighth Month fell in mid-autumn. The full moon of that month being considered the most beautiful of the year, it was customary to hold elaborate moon-viewing parties on the fifteenth, the night of the full moon.⁶⁶

The next example highlights a scene where the narrator connects the moon to a time in the past, following the descriptions of the character's stroll, reminiscent of *michiyuki* in *mugen* Noh. The translators explain the cultural context of moon-viewing in different ways. Humpherson and Okita add the phrase "the Full Moon Festival" to "*Jugoya*." In the glossary at the back of the book, "*Jugoya*" is described as "Festival of the Full Moon. Aug. 15th. (Lun Cal)." "Lun Cal." is an abbreviation of "lunar calendar," which means the old calendar here. Chambers not only explains traditional moon-viewing in a footnote but also adds the phrase "the Eighth Month by the old calendar" to the body text. The usage of "the Eighth Month," not "August," is distinguished from the narrator's reference to "September" at the beginning of this novella. The emphasis here makes the reader expect that the moon in the subsequent narration will be connected to the past.

It must be noted that, in the translations, the reader's conception of the temporal setting is different from that of Tanizaki's *Ashikari*. Humpherson and Okita's explanation and Chambers' footnote and added words create three layers of time; namely, the time of the old calendar, the time when the primary narrator lived, and the time when the reader receives the translation in 1936 or 1994. There is another layer of time in the footnote in Chambers' translation. The additional layers of time emphasize the lag between the original and the translations, once again making the translator visible.

- Source text by Tanizaki

さあ、もう一献おすごしなされませ、さあもう一献と矢つきばやに三杯までかさねさせてその三杯目の酒をわたしが飲んでゐるあひだにやをら「小督」をうたひ出した。⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Tanizaki, "The Reed Cutter," Chambers, trans., 5–6.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁷ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," 133.

- Translated text by Humpherson and Okita

He was so pressing that I drank three cups in quick succession, and while I was drinking the third one he began to sing ‘*Kogo*,’ slowly and deliberately.⁶⁸

- Translated text by Chambers

Here, please have another... and another, he said, quickly refilling my cup twice, and as I drank the third cupful he began slowly to sing *Kogō*.^{*69}

*A *nō* play by Komparu Zenchiku (1405–1468). In the best-known section, a messenger searches for the emperor’s beloved *Kogō* under a full moon in Sagano, on the western edge of Kyoto. He finds her by following the sound of her *koto*.⁷⁰

In this scene, the man in the reeds sings *Kogō* to the narrator, a piece where the protagonist looks for his beloved under the moon, just as in Tanizaki’s *Ashikari*. Moriyasu Masafumi notes that *Kogō*, sung by the man in the reeds, who manifests by the moon’s invitation and vanishes into the moonlight, serves as a prelude to the story of Shinnosuke and Oyū.⁷¹ Humpherson and Okita describe ‘*Kogo*’ as the “Title of a song. A woman’s name” in the glossary.⁷² They do not detail the content of the *Noh* play. The reader is required to imagine why the man “slowly and deliberately” sings the song that includes a woman’s name.

Chambers, however, clarifies in the footnote that *Kogō* is a *Noh* play and alludes to a connection between the setting in *The Reed Cutter* and *Kogō* by adding the phrase “in Sagano, on the western edge of Kyoto.” While strolling and describing the landscape, the narrator of *The Reed Cutter* recounts that “the villages with their many bamboo groves, the design of the farmhouses, the shape of the trees, and the color of the soil recall the outskirts around Saga, and one feels that the Kyoto countryside extends to this

⁶⁸ Tanizaki, “*Ashikari*,” Humpherson and Okita, trans., 23.

⁶⁹ Tanizaki, “*The Reed Cutter*,” Chambers, trans., 20–21.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷¹ Moriyasu Masafumi, *Tanizaki Jun’ichirō: Asobi no bungaku* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1983), 269.

⁷² Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita, “Glossary,” to *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin: Modern Japanese Novels* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1936c), 171.

point.”⁷³ Indeed, the added explanation encourages the reader to imagine the relationship between the setting of *The Reed Cutter* and that of *Kogō*. This deliberate connection can also be interpreted as a stronger visibility for the translator.

Not only *Kogō* but also other Noh plays that connect the moon with a beloved woman are alluded to in the narration:

- Source text by Tanizaki

お伺ひしたいのはいまわたしどもがこうしてゐる此の洲のあたりにもむかしは江口の君のやうな遊女どもが舟を浮かべてみたのではないでせうか、此の月に対してわたしの眼前にはうふつと現はれてくるものは何よりもその女どものまぼろしなのです。⁷⁴

- Translated text by Humpherson and Okita

I believe that on the water near this very sandbank, the courtesans from Eguchi used to row about in pleasure boats, didn't they? Perhaps you can tell me about them. When I am enjoying the moonlight on a night like this, it is such visions that rise before my eyes.⁷⁵

- Translated text by Chambers

Do you suppose that courtesans like the Lady of Eguchi poled their boats around this sandbar? That, more than anything else, is what I see as I look at the moon – visions of those women floating dimly before my eyes.⁷⁶

This part of the original references the Noh play *Eguchi* by Zeami, and the narrator refers to the women in it when viewing the moon. Humpherson and Okita render the phrase as “the courtesans from Eguchi,” merely dealing with “Eguchi” as a place name, but Chambers translates it as “courtesans like the Lady of Eguchi.” Using “the Lady of Eguchi” as a woman’s name reminds the reader of the character in the Noh play *Eguchi* more clearly than in Humpherson and Okita’s translation. It should be noted that Humpherson and Okita do not explain *Eguchi* in the glossary, and Chambers does not add a footnote on it either. This means that neither explicitly connects *Ashikari* with the *Eguchi* Noh play here. However, the moon can be interpreted as a symbol

⁷³ Tanizaki, “The Reed Cutter,” Chambers, trans., 10.

⁷⁴ Tanizaki, “Ashikari,” 136.

⁷⁵ Tanizaki, “Ashikari,” Humpherson and Okita, trans., 25.

⁷⁶ Tanizaki, “The Reed Cutter,” Chambers, trans., 22.

of the past that likewise reminds the reader of the classical work. In this way, the narrator's ideal vision of women (the woman in *Eguchi*) is tied to that of the man in the reeds (who tells his father's story after singing *Kogō*). Indeed, as Mishima Junko points out, the different spaces of Oyū, Shinnosuke, and Oshizu are connected through the image of the moon.⁷⁷ This strengthens the idea that the moon functions as a symbol to overcome time and space.

Many references to classical works in *Ashikari* relate to the narrator's subjectivity. During his stroll, the narrator describes the landscape by citing various works. Notably, he visits the Minase Shrine because it had been in his mind since he first read *Masukagami*. The Minase Shrine is connected to the narrator's reading experience of *Masukagami*, which requires the reader to construct the landscape according to the literary references of the narration, not as an actual historical place. *Masukagami* stimulates the reader to imagine the scene painted by the man in the reeds, in which Oyū enjoys the moon viewing. The citation below appears when the narrator pictures Gotoba's pavilion while strolling in the Minase Shrine. In Humpherson and Okita's translation, *Masukagami* is described as "That celebrated, anonymous, XIVth century chronicle, the *Masukagami*, or *Mirror of Mirrors*."⁷⁸ In Chambers' translation, *Masukagami* is referred to as "*The Larger Mirror*"⁷⁹ with a footnote elaborating: "*Masukagami*, a fourteenth-century historical narrative. The Genkyū era began in the Second Month of 1204 and ended in the Fourth Month of 1206."⁸⁰ The point is that the citations from *Masukagami* are translated with different types of paratexts, revealing disparate translation strategies.

- Source text by Tanizaki

「夏の頃水無瀬殿の釣殿にいでさせ給ひて、ひ水めして水飯やうのものなど若き上達部殿上人どもにたまはさせておほみきまゐるついでにもあはれいにしへの紫式部こそはいみじくありけれ、かの源氏物語にも近き川のあゆ西山より奉れるいしぶしやうのもの御前に調じてとかけるなむすぐれてめでたきぞとよ。⁸¹

⁷⁷ Mishima Junko, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 'Ashikari' no kōzō: Kōten kaiki no najjitsu," *Kokugo kokubun* 77/1 (2008), 4.

⁷⁸ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," Humpherson and Okita, trans., 3.

⁷⁹ Tanizaki, "The Reed Cutter," Chambers, trans., 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," 116.

- Translated text by Humpershon and Okita

“One summer’s day, attended by a number of officers of the Household, the Emperor was refreshing himself with iced water and *suihan* in the Fishing Pavilion; and when the wine was being served, he suddenly exclaimed, “What an amusing woman Murasaki Shikibu must have been! She related in the *Tale of Genji* that on one occasion someone presented to the Emperor *ayu* from a near-by river, and *iwabushi* caught in a mountain stream, and straightway cooked them in the Imperial Presence; truly a most diverting idea.⁸²
- Translated text by Chambers

His Majesty went out one summer to the angling pavilion at Minase Palace, where he shared ice water and cold rice porridge and other dishes with some young nobles and courtiers.* When the drinking began, he said, How wonderful was Murasaki Shikibu! Her *Tale of Genji* is truly splendid: his son and the others prepared trout for Genji from a nearby stream, and bass from the Katsura River.⁸³

*Gotoba is deliberately re-creating the scene at the beginning of “Wild Carnations” (*Tokonatsu*). See Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, translated by Edward Seidensticker (Knopf, 1976), p. 441. In the original *Genji*, the “wine and ice water and other refreshments” of Seidensticker’s translation include the porridge that Gotoba eats here.⁸⁴

Humpherson and Okita define *suihan* as “A summer drink made of rice” in the glossary, *ayu* as “The sweet-fish. (*Plecoglossus Altivelis*),” and *iwabushi* as “Small fresh water rock-fish.”⁸⁵ In their translation, the task of relating Gotoba’s actions to *The Tale of Genji* and the narrator’s in *Ashikari* to *Masukagami* is assigned to the reader. Chambers, however, explicitly states in the footnote that Gotoba follows the character of *The Tale of Genji*.

⁸² Tanizaki, “Ashikari,” Humpherson and Okita, trans., 9.

⁸³ Tanizaki, “The Reed Cutter,” Chambers, trans., 8–9.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁵ Humpherson and Okita, “Glossary,” 171–172.

Chambers also cites Seidensticker's *The Tale of Genji* with page numbers. The footnote implies that the narrator in *The Reed Cutter* follows Gotoba and produces a multi-layered world. This information connects the internal text with the external one. Here, *The Reed Cutter* offers different layers of time: that of *The Tale of Genji*, that of *Masukagami*, that of Tanizaki's *Ashikari*, that of *The Reed Cutter*, and that of the footnote. These layers reveal the translator's intent to deliberately connect these times. Also, in this fragment, Humpherson and Okita explain items typical of Japan in the glossary, which does not include reference page numbers. By contrast, Chambers uses a footnote at the bottom of the same page to give the reason for citing the classical works. The paratextual difference in the two translations indicates to what extent each translator participates in the reading.

The examples in the translated texts of *waka*, the moon viewing, and the associations with Noh plays clarify the distinct ways in which the two translations refer to classical Japanese literature. In addition, the above excerpt of *Masukagami* shows the departure in style. In the sentence, "he said, How wonderful was Murasaki Shikibu!" Chambers links the narrative to the dialogue without quotation marks and uses a capital letter after the comma. This differs from how Humpherson and Okita use quotation marks for Gotoba's remarks. This translation strategy can also be seen in the narrative of the narrator and the man in the reeds. In Humpherson and Okita's translation, the story of Shinnosuke, Oyū, and Oshizu is presented as a dialogue between the narrator and the man in the reeds using quotation marks. The dialogue between the characters is also written with them. This way, the dialogue is distinguished from the narrative, and the reader can easily know who speaks. Humpherson and Okita rewrite the narrative structure and make themselves invisible to benefit a target audience unfamiliar with Japanese literature.

In contrast, Chambers omits the quotation marks in the dialogue, in line with Tanizaki's original text. Tanizaki omits quotation marks for most dialogue and deviates from modern Japanese punctuation with many uses of *hiragana*. He even justifies this characteristic style of *Ashikari* in "Shunkinshō kōgo," an essay published in *Kaizō* in 1934 in which he explains the narrative technique he used in *Shunkinshō* (1933):

I chose this form after studying the technique of George Moore in *Heloise and Abelard* and later works, and of the classical Japanese novel from *Genji Monogatari* on. As everyone knows, it is hard to distinguish dialogue from

narrative in the rainy-night passage of ‘Hahakigi’ in *Genji*, and hard to know who starts talking where, but the beauty of Japanese prose is most apparent in such passages. This intrigues me, and I have paid special attention to the links between narrative and dialogue. In *Manji*, I accommodated the reader to the extent of providing quotation marks, but I did away with them in *Ashikari*.⁸⁶

In the above passage from “*Shunkinshō kōgo*,” Chambers, who also translated it into English with the title “Postscript to ‘A Portrait of Shunkin’: Shunkinshō Kōgo,” adds a footnote to show that “Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita undo Tanizaki’s efforts by using quotation marks and starting each speech on a new line.”⁸⁷ He also mentions in an introduction to this postscript that “[t]he translators of *Ashikari* [...] restore all the punctuation and indentations that Tanizaki so carefully excised” and argues that “[t]ranslations of Tanizaki’s fiction, too, might well benefit from more ambitious attempts to duplicate his stylistic devices.”⁸⁸ “Postscript to ‘A Portrait of Shunkin’” and Chambers’ introduction to it were published in *Monumenta Nipponica* in 1980, fourteen years before the publication of *The Reed Cutter*, and were aimed at an academic reader rather than a wide audience. Even so, this translation and introduction from 1980 can be read as an intertextual preface to *The Reed Cutter* of 1994, already hinting that *Ashikari* needs to be translated in a different style from Humpherson and Okita’s. Hence, Chambers attempted to produce a style reminiscent of classical Japanese writing, even maintaining narrative ambiguity. The following is his style:

The man nodded vigorously. Yes, yes, it’s just as you say.
I suppose it’s natural for an ordinary person to get that way
with age, but even when I was a child my father took me
every year, on the evening of the Fifteenth Night festival,
for a walk of five miles or more under the moon, and those

⁸⁶ Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, “Postscript to ‘A Portrait of Shunkin’: Shunkinshō Kōgo,” trans. Anthony H. Chambers, *Monumenta Nipponica* 35/4 (1980), 462.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Tanizaki and Chambers, “Postscript to ‘A Portrait of Shunkin’: Shunkinshō Kōgo,” 460.

days come back to me on the Fifteenth Night. Come to think of it, my father said what you have just said: You probably won't understand the sadness of this autumn night, he often told me, but a time will come when you do understand. What's that you say? Did your father love the moon of the Fifteenth Night that much? And why did he take you on a walk of five miles or more when you were still a small child? Well, I was six or seven the first time he took me along.⁸⁹

Chambers attempts to overcome Humpherson and Okita's translation style that separated narrative and dialogue. In the above sentences, Chambers omits quotation marks for direct speech and does not use indentation. He also uses personal pronouns as if it were direct speech. In such a way, Chambers obscures "the links between narrative and dialogue" and produces a hazy and fluid effect with long paragraphs. *The Reed Cutter* has 51 pages but only 16 paragraphs. This strategy creates the atmosphere of classical writing and obfuscates the story of the narrator and the man in the reeds. With the vague narration and veiled pronouns such as "I" and "you," the man in the reeds' story about Shinnosuke, Oyū, and Oshizu is told as if with the narrator's voice. The effect also enhances the supernatural element in the novella. All these are what Chambers himself calls "more ambitious attempts to duplicate [Tanizaki's] stylistic device." While Humpherson and Okita adapt the style to fit the English novels of their time, Chambers attempts to retain the approach of the original Japanese text.

The last sentence of the novella reveals a difference in the translators' interpretations concerning the reception of translated Japanese literature and its readership.

- Source text by Tanizaki

わたしはをかしなことをいふとおもつてもうお遊さんは八十
ぢかいとしよりではないでせうかとたづねたのであるがたゞそよ
そよと風が草の葉をわたるばかりで汀にいちめん⁹⁰に生えてみたあ
しも見えずそのをこの影もいつのまにか月のひかりに溶け入る
やうにきえてしまつた。⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Tanizaki, "The Reed Cutter," Chambers, trans., 23–24.

⁹⁰ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," 197.

- Translated text by Humpherson and Okita

Thinking this strange, I said: "But surely, Oyu must be very old by now – almost eighty!"

But where he had been sitting, there was nothing to be seen save the tall grasses swaying and rustling in the wind. The reeds which grew down to the water's edge were fading from sight, and the man had vanished like a wraith in the light of the moon.⁹¹

- Translated text by Chambers

That's odd, I thought. But Miss Oyū would be nearly eighty years old by now, wouldn't she? I asked, but there was only the rustle of the wind blowing across the grasses. I could not see the reeds that covered the shore, and the man had vanished as though he had melted into the light of the moon.⁹²

In the end, the man vanishes in the moonlight, described as a symbol of transcending time and space, as mentioned above. Humpherson and Okita add the word "wraith," which means a ghost that can be seen before or after a person dies. The addition of "wraith," arising from Okita's interpretation of the man in the reeds as the narrator's fantasy, is targeted at a reader unfamiliar with Japanese literature in order to compensate for the man's sudden vanishing. The poem at the beginning of *Ashikari* is echoed in this ending as if it was composed by the man or "wraith," which sounds as if it presented the novella's theme at the very beginning. Also, withholding information about the origin of the poem encourages the reader to wonder who the composer is. Such an echo functions as a supernatural explanation for the invisibility of the protagonist and emphasizes the mysterious relationship between Shinnosuke, Oyu, and Oshizu. The term "wraith" blurs the boundary between the narrator's fantasy and what he actually saw. In Humpherson and Okita's translation, therefore, the story told by the man in the reeds is interpreted as the narrator's fabrication, inspired by viewing the moon. Hence the main focus is on the narrator, while the man in the reeds and Shinnosuke are cast as imaginary creations of the former.

Since English readers had absorbed Noh through the modernist movement, there is a possibility that the word "wraith" encouraged them to

⁹¹ Tanizaki, "Ashikari," Humpherson and Okita, trans., 67.

⁹² Tanizaki, "The Reed Cutter," Chambers, trans., 53.

imagine a ghost from the Noh tradition. However, the only contemporary review of *Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin* outside Japan, published in *The Times Literary Supplement*, notes that “[i]n both the romantic love theme is delicately presented, with undertones of poetic feeling and pathos; but it remains secondary in importance, as tradition prescribes, to the fundamental law of duty and self-sacrifice.”⁹³ The reviewer mentions neither the ghost nor the *mugen* Noh structure. With the reception of English translations of Noh plays already established in the English-speaking world, *Ashikari* could have been referred to as a novella that followed a *mugen* Noh structure even much earlier than such a notion’s acknowledgment in Japan. But instead, the review stressed the restraints in the protagonists’ display of love in their society, which fixed *Ashikari* within the typical pattern of writing about Japanese literature. Humpherson and Okita’s intention to introduce Japanese literature and their attempt to move away from the translated text by rewriting the narrative structure as though the translation was the original succeeded in that their work was received as what was considered typical Japanese literature in their context.

On the other hand, in Chambers’ translation, the disappearance of the man in the reeds into the moonlight is associated with various classical works, which inspires the reader to relate the character’s invisibility to *mugen* Noh. In his review, Ian Buruma mentions that “the storyteller appears and then vanishes as mysteriously as the ghost in a Noh play,”⁹⁴ which assumes that readers in the 1990s were aware of the concept of “the ghost in a Noh play.” The ending further demonstrates a *mugen* Noh structure, in which the narrator plays the role of *waki* and the man in the reeds that of *shite*. This structure focuses on the man in the reeds as possessed by Shinnosuke, while the narrator draws out the protagonist’s tale and acts as a listener, ultimately functioning as the one to metaphorically release the spirit of Shinnosuke. In this way, the structure simulates that of a requiem for the deceased and his unfulfilled love rather than the narrator’s imagination. Richard Eder writes that while *Quicksand*, translated by Hibbett and published in the same year, is “fluent and polished,” Chambers’ *The Reed Cutter and Captain*

⁹³ Bland, “Japanese Character,” December 19, 1936.

⁹⁴ Ian Buruma, “Fatal Attractions: In Junichiro Tanizaki’s Fiction, the Readiness to Die Is the Ultimate Form of Sensual Pleasure,” review of *Quicksand* by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Howard Hibbett, and *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto’s Mother* by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Anthony H. Chambers, *The New York Times*, February 13, 1994.

Shigemoto's Mother is “seemingly rougher and more ‘foreign’ sounding, evokes the distance of centuries as well as cultures.”⁹⁵ The review reflects the emphasis that the translator placed on the transcendence of time and space, as well as his association with classical Japanese literature. *The Reed Cutter* exemplifies a way of presenting the original cultural context directly to a 1990s audience through the use of a style foreign to the latter and reminiscent of classical Japanese writing.

The textual analysis has shown that the visibility of the translator in the case of Chambers helps the *mugen* Noh structure to become more visible in the case of Humpherson and Okita. Yet, Chambers hints at the possibility of this structure rather than showing it explicitly. Although he mentions in one of his academic essays that “[t]he structure of Tanizaki’s *The Reed Cutter* is close to that of *Eguchi*,”⁹⁶ in his translation, he does not refer to it at all. The *mugen* Noh structure is, hence, not entirely obvious but visible to readers as a construction of the translated text. Chambers himself writes, about the narrative structure of *Ashikari*, that “[the man] has heard it from his father and tells it to the narrator, who in turn recounts it to the reader, adding appropriate comments and descriptions of his own.”⁹⁷ Chambers’ translation strategy stresses that his text is indeed a translation and makes the translator participate in the story by adding his footnotes. This participation leads me to argue that the reader conceives of the translation itself as if it were the *mugen* Noh, in which the translator plays a supporting role suggestive of *waki*. In terms of *mugen* Noh, the translator releases not only the spirit of the narrator and the man in the reeds but also that of the original author. Nogami’s viewpoint of the four roles that *waki* originally played develops this argument.

According to Nogami, *waki* was the one who spoke first; the one who asked a question; the one who received an appreciation; and the one who was neither the same type of character as *shite* nor the contemporary of it.⁹⁸ In *Ashikari*, the narrator does indeed play these roles of *waki*. In the

⁹⁵ Richard Eder, “Confession as the Ultimate Deception,” review of *Quicksand* by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Howard Hibbett, and *The Reed Cutter and Captain Shigemoto’s Mother* by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, trans. Anthony H. Chambers, *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1994.

⁹⁶ Chambers, *The Secret Window*, 47.

⁹⁷ Anthony Hood Chambers, “Tradition in the Works of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 1974), 91–92.

⁹⁸ Nogami Toyochirō, “Waki no butaiteki sonzai riyū,” *Nō no yūgen to hana* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1943), 207–208.

translations of *Ashikari*, so do the translators. In this structure, the relationship between the translator and the original author can be likened to that of *waki* and *shite*. Continuing this metaphor, the translator summons the author from the past to the present, making him appear in a different form than the original and releasing his spirit. Being translated with a strategy that focuses on the form of the original text, *Ashikari* succeeds in making the *mugen* Noh structure apparent and upholds the harmonious bond between translator and author.

Conclusion

This article has revealed that the context of the two translations of *Ashikari* influenced the selection of their respective target audiences and the content of each of the translated texts. The article has also shown that two translations of the same work can function in different ways. In the 1930s, Humpherson and Okita rewrote the narrative structure of *Ashikari* in order to step behind the author for the audience's benefit. It is possible to understand their lack of focus on the *mugen* Noh structure by their assumption that Japanese literature had not spread widely outside Japan. Rather, they assumed that the story functioned as a novella set within a foreign culture and included many exotic references. Even if the combination of the added term "wraith" with the man's vanishing in the ending could have produced the effect of the *mugen* Noh structure, the translation worked within the stereotyped narrative pattern ascribed to Japanese literature at the time.

Alternatively, Chambers emphasized the link between his translation and classical Japanese literature with its particular style. This translation appeared in the 1990s when new contemporary Japanese authors were being accepted through English translations that went beyond the old-fashioned image of modern Japanese literature during the postwar period. Against this background, Chambers' translation challenged Tanizaki's established literary canonization, which began in the 1950s. The textual analysis of Chambers' translation strategy revealed that *The Reed Cutter* was, in fact, a translation with a visible translator that managed the foreign effect of classical Japanese literature despite being written in English. It stood on the assumption that this would draw the attention of a wider audience, including the academic community at the time, familiar as they were with modern Japanese literature and Tanizaki's works. In this situation, *The Reed Cutter* invited the reader to imagine the *mugen* Noh structure created by the narrator and the man in the reeds. Within this strategy, the visible translator, who accompanies the author and implicitly presents the *mugen* Noh structure,

suggests a concept of the translator as *waki*. Thus, this study has tried to unlock new horizons for literary translations, which can exist as individual works rather than just as secondary products to the original. Furthermore, the paratextual and textual analysis of translations not only offered different interpretations of the same original work in terms of the translator's participation in the reading, but also proposed a new conception of translation itself by employing the metaphor of *mugen* Noh.

CONTEMPORARY MEANING OF THE AVATAMSAKA PHILOSOPHY¹

Kōsei Morimoto

The Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji is Vairochana Buddha

Vairochana Buddha is the Buddha of Illumination as Described in the Avatamsaka Sūtra

The Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji (Tōdai Temple), known affectionately as the “Great Buddha of Nara,” is called Vairochana (Vairocana) Buddha (Rochana Buddha in some scriptures). This Sanskrit name means “the one who shines brightly throughout the universe.” The Chinese translated the name as “Omnipresent Illumination.” Some people associate the word “shining” with the sun and explain that it is a deification of the sun, but this is a mistake.



Figure 1. The Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji (Photo by Kōsei Morimoto)

¹ Author’s Note: This article a transcript of a lecture given at Ryukoku University in Kyoto on October 8, 2013, with some additions, completed on June 21, 2021. Translated by Eri Tomita and edited by Sean Kelly.

Before his death, Shākyamuni Buddha willed that his flesh and body would be extinguished, but the teachings or the “dharma” he expounded would be immortal, so that after his death, people should rely on the “dharma,” the unchanging truth. However, the disciples believed in his teachings by means of the personhood of Shākyamuni Buddha, so they tended to regard him as a supernatural being. Thus, the theory of the Buddha’s body emerged, and early Buddhists personified the dharma taught by Shākyamuni Buddha and called it the immortal body, or *dharmakāya* (dharma body), while they called the human body the *rūpakāya* (form body).

With the development of Buddhist philosophy and the emergence of Mahāyāna philosophy, Buddhists came to believe that Shākyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment, transcended the flesh body or *rūpakāya* (form body), and became the *dharmakāya* (dharma body) as light, and referred to this state of Shākyamuni Buddha as Vairochana. The light here has no form, of course, but it penetrates everywhere, does not create shadows, and even reaches into places like hell to save people. In this sense, Vairochana is “the Buddha of Illumination.”

The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Flower Splendor Sūtra*, also translated as *Flower Ornament* or *Flower Garland Sūtra*), one of the early Mahāyāna scriptures, explains the existence of Vairochana in this way. Although there are countless sūtras, each one was expounded for the sake of specific recipients, and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* is said to have been presented to bodhisattvas.

What does it mean to be a bodhisattva? Several hundred years after the death of Shākyamuni Buddha, Indian society was in turmoil due to the invasion of different ethnic groups, especially in northern India. In the *Amitābha Sūtra*, for example, this situation is described as the “unwholesome world with five types of pollutions.” A group of people called “bodhisattvas” appeared on the scene to help people out of their sufferings. These bodhisattvas were inspired by various cultures and religious beliefs that were practiced along the Silk Road and pursued their own methods of salvation.

They said that Shākyamuni was still alive and expounding the dharma to people, that a new buddha would come to replace Shākyamuni and save them, or that even if there was no Shākyamuni in the Sahā World (the world of endurance, the Earth), there were many other buddhas somewhere in the universe who were coming to save us. They were all praying for the return of the Buddha.

Among these bodhisattvas, there was a group that wanted to thoroughly explore the content of Shākyamuni Buddha’s “enlightenment.”

Their ultimate goal was to find out what a bodhisattva should be like and to establish bodhisattva identity. Their ideas were compiled into various sūtras from the second century, C.E., which were eventually compiled into a sūtra called the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* in Khotan in Central Asia. The original Sanskrit text was translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra at the beginning of the fifth century and became the sixty-fascicle version. However, in China, after hundreds of years, the meaning of the text became unclear due to changes in the language, and there was a movement to retranslate it. In the late seventh century, Shikshānanda retranslated it. However, by then the original Indian text had probably been expanded and it became the eighty-fascicle version.

Shākyamuni and Vairochana

In the Nara period (eighth century, C.E.), as part of the policy on Buddhism undertaken by Emperor Shōmu (reigned 724-749), monks were encouraged to read under the guidance of lecturers and study not only the Mahāyāna and early Buddhist sūtras, with the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* taking a central position, but also the precepts, treatises, and commentaries. As a result, temples in the southern capital Nara had a deeply-rooted spirit of learning and a traditional form of dharma rites called *rongi* or “dharma discussion” was born.

Dharma discussion is a ceremony in which a questioner, called a *monja*, asks various questions about Buddhism, and a senior monk, called a *kōji* (lecturer), who acts as a teacher, answers them. At some point in history, the text with the questions and answers on each topic was formulated, and the written content of these questions and answers became established as *rongisō* or “scripts for discussion.” In other words, the scripts for discussion became a textbook, and it is still used in dharma ceremonies today.

At Tōdai-ji, one of the titles of the dharma discussion is “the Lord of Avatamsaka Teaching,” in which it is discussed that Shākyamuni directly became Vairochana. For example, in the scripts for discussion, there are phrases such as: “Shākyamuni who attained the way under the (bodhi) tree became Vairochana...” And in the chapter, “The Honorary Titles (of Tathāgata),” we read: “The Buddha is sometimes called Vairochana and sometimes called Shākyamuni.” This is understood to mean that Shākyamuni directly became Vairochana Buddha.

Vairochana here is not the same as Mahāvairochana, the Buddha who is commonly called *Dari Rulai* in Chinese and *Dainichi Nyorai* in Japanese, the title that is said to have been created in the seventh century after

the development of Esoteric Buddhism. This is also a “dharma body,” but the concept is different.

In the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Shākyamuni Buddha, who appeared in the historical world and had a human body (*rūpa-kāya* or form body) is regarded as having become the dharma body (*dharmakāya*) or Vairochana upon his enlightenment. In other words, the sūtra recognizes the continuity of the personhood of the Buddha. Apart from a human being, the act of enlightenment cannot exist. On the other hand, the “dharma body” of esoteric Buddhism is detached from personhood and is independent as the truth of the cosmos. In other words, Mahāvairochana resembles the One God of monotheism.

The Original Scene of the World-Honored One Shākyamuni's Enlightenment

So, what exactly was the state of the World-honored One Shākyamuni when he attained enlightenment and became the ultimate existence of Vairochana Buddha? In the beginning of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the original scene of the World-honored One Shākyamuni's first enlightenment is depicted: “Long ago the Buddha, at a place of serenity in Maghada Kingdom, attained enlightenment. The place was solemn and pure, adorned with diamonds, various treasures, and flowers. Above was a wondrous jewel wheel, complete and pure. Countless wondrous colors, and all types of splendors was just like the ocean...”²

The words are quite difficult to understand, but I think they can be summarized as follows. In the past, the World-honored One Shākyamuni was troubled about human existence and his mind was covered with tremendous darkness. However, after a long period of asceticism, he meditated under a large tree, and after a few days he suddenly found a ray of light within himself. The scripture describes the outpouring of light as if he were watching a slow-motion film. It is a scene full of glitter, as if the morning dew on the tips of the leaves had turned into diamonds in the light emanating from Shākyamuni. And it did not stop there. The light gradually became brighter and brighter, spreading out like a vast ocean. Eventually, he himself became the light and left the earth, shining out into the universe in an infinite expanse.

The World Honored One Shākyamuni was aware of this dramatic experience of transition from darkness to light not only in space, but also in time. In other words, he had a spiritual experience of the infinite expansion

² *Taishō*, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, 1912–1924), 395f.

and diffusion of the self in time and space. In this manner, he became Vairochana Buddha.

The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* is a scripture that describes this enlightenment of the World-honored One Shākyamuni. In it, there is a penetrating worldview of looking at all things, big or small, long or short, wide or narrow, as infinite. For example, historically, Shākyamuni Buddha is said to have practiced asceticism for six years, but in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the time of six years is replaced by the absolute psychological time of infinity.

The Hairline Engraving of the Pictures on Lotus Petals of the Great Buddha Pedestal (Painting of the Lotus Womb World)

The visualization of this philosophy of infinity is depicted in hairline-engraved pictures on the petals of the lotus pedestal on which the Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji sits in a lotus position.

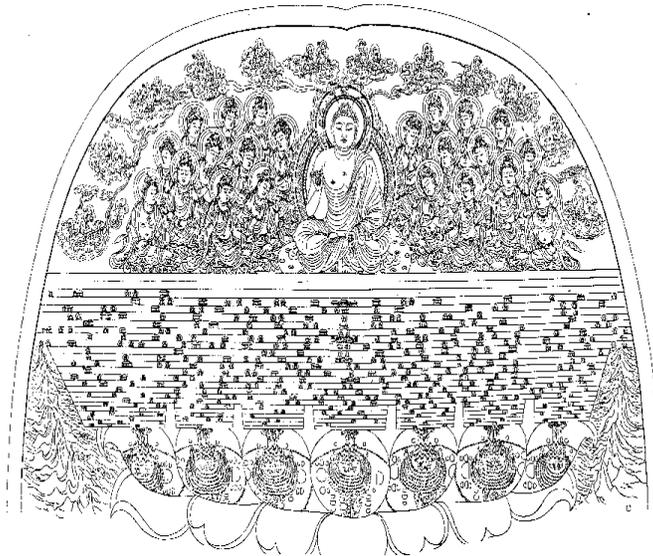


Figure 2. Hairline engraving of the pictures on lotus petals of the Great Buddha pedestal at Tōdai-ji (Drawing by a painter stored at the Nara National Museum)

The lotus petals of the pedestal consist of twenty-eight pieces, all of which have the same design. Later, Tōdai-ji was affected by two wars, one at the end of the twelfth century and the other in the mid-sixteenth century, and the temple buildings were destroyed by fire. However, most of the hairline engravings of the pictures survived the disasters, and their entire design has been restored (Figure 2). It represents a kind of spiritual cosmology known as the painting of the lotus womb world. It is still not known who it was that realized the Avatamsaka philosophy, iconized it, and had artisans carve the images.

The eighth century, when Tōdai-ji was built, was the most flourishing period in terms of the exchange of civilizations between East and West Asia through the Silk Road. Japan often sent envoys to Tang China to eagerly absorb elements of the civilizations of India, Central Asia, and various remote parts of China. However, there is no other cosmological illustration similar to this one known at this time.

Roughly speaking, this picture is divided into upper and lower layers. In the center of the upper layer is a large, seated figure of the Tathāgata giving a dharma discourse with a halo with flames in the back. On both the left and right of the Tathāgata are eleven bodhisattvas, symmetrically and beautifully depicted.

In the lower half of the lotus petal, the upper part represents a celestial world in layers with small palaces and buddhas. In the lower part, there are several circles with a high mountain in the center, surrounded by mountain ranges and an ocean. And what seem to be drawn as circles and half circles are continents in the ocean. If you look closely, you can see that each of the circular shapes is a single lotus petal, forming a pair with the downward petal on the bottom. There are seven pairs of petals, all with the same image depicted on them, and this huge lotus flower is blooming in the middle of the ocean. If you zoom in on one of these circular lotus petals in Figure 3, you will see that it is an illustration of the world centered around Mt. Sumeru. There are seven such worlds depicted on each petal of the lotus.

What is the meaning of this complex pattern? There are various theories, and there is not necessarily a unified view. However, if you read the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, you will find a description which says that Vairocana Buddha, in meditation, emits light and observes all phenomena in the vastness of the universe illuminated by that light. The bodhisattvas surrounding him intuit Vairocana Buddha's mind and expound the dharma on his behalf. I realized that this pattern is a visualization of the scene described in the sūtra. In short, it is an expression of the cosmic world of the

central deity, Vairochana Buddha. It can be said that it is an illustration or iconization of the spiritual worldview taught in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.

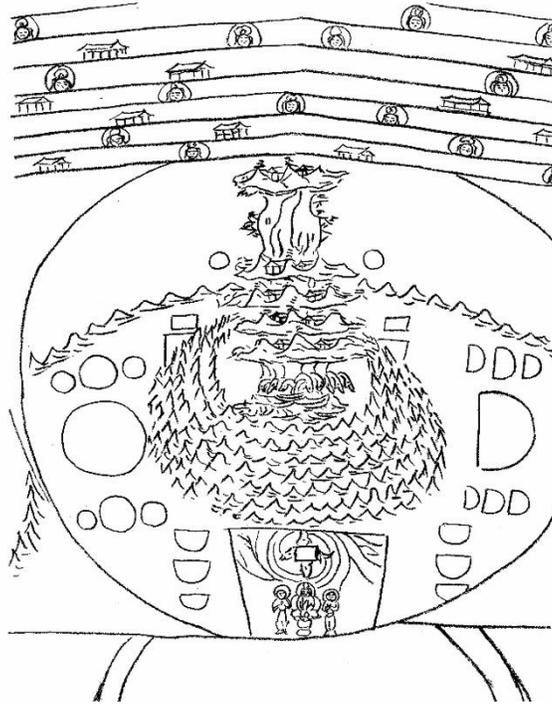


Figure 3. The worldview of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* centering around Mt. Sumeru (Drawing by Kōsei Morimoto)

The core of the painting of the lotus womb world is the illustration of the world centered around Mt. Sumeru. It can be said that this is an early Buddhist cosmology, which was developed from the cosmology of the Aryan Civilization of ancient times, common to India and Iran. Buddhism did not simply adopt the creation myth, and in principle the universe was the object of fresh observations. However, since the observations were made more than 2,000 years ago, there was a natural limit to their ability.

If one looks at the enlarged illustration of the world centered around Mt. Sumeru, one can see that: First, (1) the Earth is a vast disc-shaped land, with Mt. Sumeru rising in the center. The height is eighty thousand *yojana*,

which is equal to a height of about 56 kilometers above sea level. The circular land is called the metal layer and its outer ring is surrounded by a mountain range called Iron Layer Mountain Range, which is made of iron and is said to keep the water of the oceans from spilling into the void. This is also shown in this diagram.

Also, (2) above Mt. Sumeru, there is a world of gods in layers. At the top of Mt. Sumeru, there is a Tushita Heaven Palace, where Thirty-three Gods reside, with Indra as the main deity. In the middle of Mt. Sumeru, the Four Guardian Kings and their attendants live in the four directions of east, west, north, and south, standing by to respond to prayers by believers. However, in the illustration of the world centered around Mt. Sumeru on the lotus petals of the Great Buddha pedestal, the four palaces of the Four Guardian Kings are represented as four layers from top to bottom. Since Mt. Sumeru is a sacred mountain that cannot be approached by humans, the Two Great Dragon Kings reside at the foot of the mountain, and the Eight Dragon Kings also rear their heads. Mt. Sumeru is surrounded by seven layers of mountain ranges separated by oceans and lakes. These are all functioning as a barrier.

Next, (3) outside the seventh mountain range from the center of Mt. Sumeru, there is a vast body of water called the Salty Ocean. It is bounded on all sides by Pūrva-videha Continent in the east, Dakṣiṇa-jambu Continent in the south, Aparā-godānīya Continent in the west, and Uttara-kuru Continent in the north, with islands attached to each continent.

Then, (4) the shape of Jambu Continent in the south resembles the Indian subcontinent. From this point of view, the world centered around Mt. Sumeru is how the ancient Indians thought of the Earth. In the void around Mt. Sumeru, the sun, moon, and planets are in orbit. People believed that the distinction between day and night was caused by the sun's orbit around the giant Mt. Sumeru. Since Mt. Sumeru is accompanied by the sun, moon, and planets, it can be said that the world centered around Mt. Sumeru is a kind of geocentric image of the universe.

Finally, (5) although it is not depicted in the pictures on the lotus petals of the Great Buddha pedestal, there is a liquid layer called the water layer below the metal layer with the same diameter. Below that, there is an atmosphere called a circular layer of air, which is so huge that its diameter and depth are not an issue.

Unlike the layer of metal and that of water, the layer of air has movement. Of course, people at that time did not yet know about the law of gravity. Nevertheless, the Buddhists in India 2,000 years ago believed that

celestial bodies were floating in open space. Then, they had to come up with a reason. This is what the “circular layer of air” was for. They thought that the circular motion of the huge gas whirling around created a “force” that supported the entire Earth to float in the open space. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* describes these countless layers of air.

The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* depicts a vast and limitless view of the universe, which is nevertheless encompassed by the “the Buddha of Illumination,” Vairochana Buddha. Emperor Shōmu tried to actualize Vairochana Buddha, who was the invisible light, in concrete forms. Apparently, there is a reason for this.

Emperor Shōmu and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*

“*Rushana Zō San Isshu Narabini Jo*” (A Poem in Praise of the Image of Vairochana Buddha with a Preface)

It is usually explained that Emperor Shōmu was inspired to build the Great Buddha at Tōdai-ji when he saw the Vairochana Buddha statue at Chishiki-ji in Kawachi Province in the twelfth year of the Tenpyō Era (740). This is based on the description in the *Shoku Nihon Gi* (Sequel to the History of Japan),³ but in fact, the emperor had a good understanding of what kind of buddha Vairochana was much earlier. Evidence of this can be found in the emperor's own handwritten *Zasshū* (Miscellaneous Notes) kept in the Shōsōin Storehouse. The emperor selected 145 poems from a collection of poems and essays from the Six Dynasties Period to the Tang Period in China and copied them into the book, which contains more than twenty thousand ideographs. At the end of this notebook, there is an inscription that reads, “Completed copying on the eighth day of the ninth month of the third year of the Tenpyō Era (731),” indicating that it was written when the emperor was thirty-one years old.

In this *Zasshū*, there is an article titled, “*Rushana Zō San Isshu Narabini Jo*” (A Poem in Praise of the Image of Vairochana with a Preface), which reads as follows:

Although *dharmakāya* is not a form, it appears as a form
for the sake of the phenomenal world, thus ten billion
Jambu Continents are manifested. In the seven places and

³ A history of Japan from 697 to 791 C.E. compiled by the national government.

eight assemblies, the Buddha invites humans and devas to join...The image of Vairochana Buddha has awesome and complete presence. It feels as if the Buddha were right at the place of enlightenment. It is as if Boy Sudhana were to enter Maitreya Bodhisattva's dharma world of open sky... This is Vairochana Tathāgata in the lotus womb world.

In the first part of the verse, "*dharmakāya*" refers, of course, to Vairochana Buddha. The "form" refers to material existence, such as things with color and form. The word "the phenomenal world" means that which exists between heaven and earth. It extends to "all things" and "persons." In Buddhist terms, it means sentient beings, which in this case means "people." Therefore, this explains that "Vairochana Buddha naturally has no forms and shapes but for awakening sentient beings, the Buddha's form is revealed.

In the next verse, which says "the ten billion Jambu Continents are manifested," "Jambu Continent" is supposed to be the southern continent of Jambu where we live, according to the illustration of the world centered around Mt. Sumeru shown earlier. There are seven worlds centered around a Mt. Sumeru depicted in the hairline engravings of the pictures. "Seven" is a substitute for an infinite number. In the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, it is believed that there are an infinite number of worlds centered around a Mt. Sumeru, or in modern terms, an infinite number of planetary systems in the universe. This is represented as "ten billion." However, since this is impossible to show, the seven worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus are drawn to represent the ten billion worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus and the ten billion Jambu Continents. In other words, it is saying, "no matter where you are in the universe, you can see the image of Vairochana Buddha." Without discussing the rest of the text, the emperor probably received an explanation of the contents of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* from monk scholars. However, the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* is a difficult sūtra with many volumes. It seems that the emperor wanted to have more systematic studies done.

Lectures on the Avatamsaka Sūtra begin at Konsyu-ji

In the tenth month of the twelfth year of the Tenpyō Era (740), the same year that Emperor Shōmu made a pilgrimage to Chishiki-ji in Kawachi Province, a series of lectures on the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* began at Konsyu-ji, the preceding temple of Tōdai-ji. In the *Tōdai-ji Yōroku* (Essential Record of Tōdai-ji, compiled during the early twelfth century in the late Heian Period), there is a description which reads as follows:

For the sake of His Majesty, Reverend Shinjō was asked to teach the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* for the first time. In the same year, celebrating the emperor's fortieth birthday, the first lecture was held.⁴

“His Majesty” refers to Emperor Shōmu. The lecture started by celebrating his fortieth birthday. The following is a summary of the events described in the *Tōdai-ji Yōroku*, taking into account the description in the *Shoku Nihon Gi*:

On the eighth day of the tenth month of the twelfth year of the Tenpyō Era (740), at the request of Emperor Shōmu, Reverend Rōben invited Reverend Shinjō from Daian-ji, who is a monk scholar who had studied in Silla (Korea) and had been recommended by Reverend Gonchi of Gangō-ji to give the first lecture on the Chinese translation of the sixty-fascicle earlier version of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* at Konsyu-ji. This year was the fortieth birthday of the emperor, and the lecture was held in celebration of the occasion. The lectures were given over a period of three years, with Jikin, Kyōnin, and Enshō as multiple lecturers.

In fact, Emperor Shōmu issued an edict for the construction of the Great Buddha Vairochana on the fifteenth day of the tenth month in the fifteenth year of the Tenpyō Era (740), as if to coincide with the completion of these lectures.

The Imperial Edict for the Construction of the Great Buddha Vairochana

On the twenty-fourth day of the second month in the thirteenth year of the Tenpyō Era (741), Emperor Shōmu issued an edict ordering the establishment of a state system of monasteries and nunneries in each province throughout Japan. The purpose of this edict was to publicize Buddhist philosophy as a spiritual support for the people who had been tormented with fear and depression from starvation and the epidemic of smallpox, exacerbated by natural disasters such as famine and earthquakes during the six years between the fourth and the ninth year of the Tenpyō Era (732 and 737). The will to build the state temples and nunneries seems to have been

⁴ *Tōdai-ji Yōroku*, annotated by Tsutsui Eishun (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1977), 156.

already developed in the ninth year of the Tenpyō Era (737), when an imperial edict was issued to build a seated form of the sixteen-foot tall Shākyamuni Buddha image and statues of the two attending bodhisattvas in each province.⁵

However, since the temple of the province of the capital city had an exceptional status, it was thought that Vairochana Buddha as the central deity, rather than Shākyamuni Buddha, would be appropriate, and an imperial edict was issued for its construction.⁶ The contents of the edict are long and difficult to understand, so I summarize them as follows:

1. Since my accession to the throne, I have tried to save all living things and have governed the people with compassion. However, although I believe that my compassion has spread throughout the country, I cannot say that the benefits and virtues of Buddhism have spread throughout the land.
2. Therefore, I hope that the power of the awesome spirit of the Buddha dharma will bring peace to heaven and earth, and that all animals and plants will flourish by accomplishing splendid projects that will endure for generations to come.
3. Thus, on the fifteenth day of the tenth month in the fifteenth year of the Tenpyō Era (743), I will make a great vow as a bodhisattva. That is to initiate a great project to construct the gold-gilded bronze statue of the Great Buddha Vairochana, announce this project to the world at large, and make those who agree with the purpose of this project my dharma companions. Through this project, I wish for everyone to equally receive blessings of the Buddha and arrive at an enlightened state free from delusion.
4. In the first place, it is I who possess all the wealth and power in the nation. If I were to create a statue of the

⁵ *Shoku Nihon Gi*, vol. 2, 313.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 431–432.

Buddha with that wealth and power, the statue might be easy to create. However, it would be impossible to say that the true intention of creating the statue would be fulfilled.

5. The only thing that I am afraid of in undertaking such a project is that, by merely imposing hardships on the people, I would not be able to make them understand the holiness of its spirit, but would cause them to slander me, and some of them might commit crimes.

6. Therefore, those of you who participate in the project to create the Great Buddha statue as my dharma companions should bring forth great happiness with a truly sincere heart and worship Vairochana Buddha in your heart three times a day. I hope that each one of you will be willing to understand the purpose of this project and work on the construction of the Vairochana Buddha statue with the same spirit.

7. If anyone is willing to participate in the statue-making project, even if this adds only a blade of grass or a handful of soil, please allow them to do so.

8. Provincial governors, county supervisors, and other officials must not intrude on citizens' properties or rob taxes for this project.

9. I declare this to all areas of the country, both far and near, to inform them of my intention.

This edict is enough to convey Emperor Shōmu's intention regarding the creation of the Great Buddha. It is important to note that the emperor made his request from the standpoint of a bodhisattva and asked those who agreed with his intention to cooperate with him by becoming his dharma companions. Although the word *Avatamsaka Sūtra* is not explicitly mentioned in this edict, the words "bodhisattva," "dharma companions," and "a branch of grass and a handful of soil" are all expressions endorsed by the principles of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. The existence of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* in the emperor's mind was revealed six years later in an imperial edict issued

to the monks of the twelve great temples just before his abdication of the throne.

The Edict for Regarding the Avatamsaka Sūtra as the Basis

In the second month of the twenty-first year of the Tenpyō Era (749), Emperor Shōmu's heart was filled with joy when he received news that gold, which was believed not to be found in Japan, had been discovered in Mutsu Province (present-day Tohoku region). This was because the emperor was concerned about how to procure the gold to cover the Great Buddha while it was taking shape. According to the political philosophy of the time, which regarded natural disasters as the Lord of Heaven's condemnation of the emperor's politics, nature had been giving the emperor a harsh fate. But at this time, heaven and earth granted him a blessing. With this understanding, on the first day of the fourth month, the emperor stood in front of the unfinished Great Buddha Vairochana statue and proclaimed himself to be "a servant of the Three Treasures." Wishing to share his joy with all people rather than to keep it to himself, he gave everyone an award. It was extended to the monks as well and became an imperial edict on the twentieth day of the leap fifth month of that year. The following is a passage from the text:

Each of the five temples (Daian, Yakushi, Gangō, Kōfuku, and Tōdai) is to receive five hundred rolls of silk and 1000 *ton* (2000 *kin*) of silk floss. It is my wish that the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* be the basis of all scriptures. You shall also recite and lecture on all the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna sūtras, precepts, treatises, summaries, commentaries, chapters, etc., and study them thoroughly...⁷

I have already discussed this edict, but here the emperor clearly states that "the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* shall be the fundamental sūtra." Furthermore, the fact that the emperor recommended that all Buddhist scriptures and their commentaries, whether Mahāyāna or earlier Buddhist teaching be studied without omission makes me think that he had already foreseen the tendency of later Japanese Buddhism to establish schools based on various sūtras.

In any case, the long-cherished Great Buddha Vairochana had an "opening the eyes" ceremony on the ninth day of the fourth month of the

⁷ *Shoku Nihon Gi*, vol. 3, 81–83.

Tenpyō Shōhō Era (752). According to the *Shoku Nihon Gi*, the grand scale of the event had never been seen before.

From a Multi-Dimensional, Multi-Layered Worldview to a Philosophy of Infinity

A Multi-Dimensional Worldview

To reiterate the Avatamsaka philosophy, as can be seen from the illustrations on the Great Buddha pedestal mentioned earlier, in the early Buddhist period before the time of the Mahāyāna, people imagined only one world centered around Mt. Sumeru. However, around the time of the birth of Mahāyāna Buddhism, perhaps due to the development of astrology, some Buddhists began to believe that there were countless worlds or planetary systems in the universe with each centered around their own Mt. Sumeru. The Buddhists of ancient India used the idea of numbers to facilitate their understanding of this.

Indeed, the hairline engraving of the pictures on the lotus petals of the Great Buddha pedestal depict as many as seven worlds centered around Mt. Sumeru on a single petal. Seven is a sacred number that represents infinite numbers. In the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, ten is also used to represent infinite numbers, so the seven pictures on the Great Buddha pedestal may have been based on the *Two Guardian Kings Prajñā Sūtra*. One of the topics of discussion at the dharma discussion rites held at Tōdai-ji is called “Immediately eliminating the seven calamities” and explains as follows:

Seven calamities are immediately destroyed, and seven types of happiness are immediately born in a description of the *Two Guardian Sūtra*. What does it signify?” “Its meaning comes from the description that the power of the praised Sūtra King will destroy the seven calamities and produce seven types of happiness.” “He shall destroy countless calamities and bring boundless happiness.” Furthermore, “In India, people let the number seven represent infinity. Therefore, infinity was expressed in the seven difficulties and the seven blessings.⁸

⁸ From the scripts: “Immediately eliminating the seven calamities.”

This explains that, according to Indian custom, the number seven represents the full number that is infinity. In the carving of the lotus womb world, it refers to the existence of countless worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus, or countless planetary systems. Therefore, a single large lotus petal refers to a universe composed of an infinite number of worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus.

In order to express more concretely this vast universe consisting of an infinite number of worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus, the Buddhists of India at that time thought of it in this way: A collection of a thousand worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus is considered to be “small-thousand” worlds; a collection of a thousand “small-thousand” worlds is considered to be “middle-thousand” worlds; and a collection of a thousand “middle-thousand” worlds is considered to be the “great-thousand” worlds. Since this “great-thousand” worlds consists of three kinds of thousand worlds (small, middle, and great), this is named the “Three Thousand great-thousand worlds,” which is the third power of one thousand.

In other words, there are one billion worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus. It is not the number of one billion that is important. They used the aggregate of one billion worlds centered around Mt. Sumerus to represent an infinite number of worlds. In China, this was translated as ten billion and considered to be a world that is taught by one buddha. In terms of modern science, the “three thousand” great-thousand worlds can be thought of as a single galactic system that includes countless solar systems. In the hairline engraving of the pictures on the lotus petals, this is represented by a single painting of the lotus womb world.

By the time the Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures were formed, especially when the proto-Buddhāvatamsaka, an original form of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, was born, the Buddhists in India, who came up with the “three thousand” great-thousand worlds, had further developed their imagination. They began to search for the existence of the countless “three thousand” great-thousand worlds in the ten directions. In other words, the four directions of east, west, north, and south, and the four directions in between, plus upward and downward, were added to create a universe called “all worlds in the ten directions.” This is an equivalent of the entire universe with countless galaxies. In the lotus petals of the Great Buddha pedestal, it is represented by twenty-eight petals, which is a multiple of seven. In conclusion, it can be said that all of these assume the existence of an infinite and multi-dimensional universe.

Ocean of the Lotus Womb World: The World of Vairochana Buddha in the Avatamsaka Sūtra

It must be said that the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* is difficult to understand without prior knowledge of these concepts, but it expresses various aspects of this multi-dimensional universe in an extremely poetic manner. An example is the following lines from the “Chapter on Vairochana Buddha”:

All children of the Buddha, you should know this. The Ocean of the Lotus Womb World is where Vairochana Buddha solemnly purified himself for as many eons as particles in the countless worlds when he was practicing the bodhisattva way. In each eon, he respected and made offerings to tathāgatas, as many as there are particles in the world, and in the body of each buddha he practiced as many vows as the particles in the ocean of the world.

All children of the Buddha, you should know this. There are layers of air equal to the number of particles of Mt. Sumeru, and it holds an ocean of the Lotus Womb Splendor Worlds. The lowest layer of air is called Equal, and it holds the Jewel Illuminating Land. The next layer of air is called the Splendor of Various Jewels.... Going up in this way, the next layer of air is equal to the particles of Mt. Sumeru.

The topmost layer of air is named Excellent Treasury, and it has the Ocean of Fragrant Water. At this Ocean of Fragrant Water, a great lotus flower called the Fragrant Banners Illuminating Splendor holds the Lotus Womb Splendor World Ocean. On the shore of this ocean of the worlds, there is a Diamond Mountain Range that spreads and surrounds... In this way, on top of it, there are Oceans of Fragrant Water (and their universality) as many as there are particles in the world. The worlds of all the ten directions are also like this. This is the place where Vairochana Buddha always turns the Wheel of Dharma.⁹

⁹ *Taishō*, vol. 9, 412–415.

Next, I will quote from the “Chapter on the Tathāgata’s Shining Enlightenment”:

Now, the World-honored One Virochana Buddha shines ten billion rays of light from the spires of his two feet, illuminating the ten billion worlds. It illuminates ten billion Jambu Continents and ten billion Pūrva-videha Continents...ten billion great oceans, ten billion Diamond Mountain Ranges...ten billion kings of Mt. Sumeru, ten billion Four Guardian Kings, ten billion Thirty-three Devas...ten billion Tusita Heavens, ten billion Wondrous Pleasure Heavens...and ten billion Ultimate Form Heavens. All things existing in this world are manifested.¹⁰

A Multi-Layered Worldview

The Buddhists who created the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* did not stop at merely imagining the existence of multi-dimensional worlds or vast worlds. They turned their attention to a more thorough understanding of the structure of the worlds. This may seem paradoxical at first glance, but it involves the observation that the big is contained in the small. Let’s look at some descriptions in the sūtra.

Since it would be too difficult to simply show the Chinese translations of the sūtra as they are, I will present some of them in a summarized form. First, here is a passage from the preface of the “Chapter on Entering the Dharma Realms”:

Shākyamuni Buddha embodies all the worlds in his body, and all the buddhas of all the worlds are contained in his body. In each of his pores, all the buddha lands, as many as the particles in all the worlds, are contained, and he inconceivably manifests perishing and forming of all the worlds throughout timeless eons (past and future).

In this way, the Jeta Grove became the buddha land, a pure Earth. The same thing happens to the ten directions – east, south, west, north, northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest, down, and up – of the Jeta Grove that has

¹⁰ *Taishō*, vol. 9, 422.

become vast and boundless, and all the worlds to the end of the universe become pure and splendid. Then, the ten great bodhisattvas from the ten buddha lands in these ten directions infinitely far away, only from these buddha lands with the permission of the buddhas, together with their countless followers, adorn the sky with clouds of flowers, sprinkle jeweled flower petals, descend into the Jeta Grove, and join in the dharma elucidation assembly.¹¹

From the “Chapter on Vairochana Buddha,” the following words may be cited:

In a single pore, there peacefully abide a countless number of buddha lands all as many as the particles of the infinitesimal land, magnificently pure and vast... Within a single particle, all things, as many as the particles in infinitesimal lands, abide.¹²

The following is from “Chapter on the Merit of the Beginner Bodhisattvas”:

[Beginner bodhisattvas] know that the infinitesimal world is no other than the great world, and the great world is no other than the infinitesimal world... They know that a single world is no other than countless, boundless worlds, and countless, boundless worlds are no other than a single world. They know that countless, boundless worlds are within a single world, and a single world is within countless, boundless worlds... They know that a single world gives birth to all the worlds, yet they want to know that all the worlds are like open space. They want to know that all the worlds are in one moment and that there is nothing left. Thus, they arouse aspiration for supreme enlightenment...

¹¹ *Taishō*, vol. 9, 677.

¹² *Ibid.*, 410.

Beginning bodhisattvas know that a long eon is no other than a short eon, and a short eon is no other than a long eon. They know that a single eon is no other than countless infinite eons, and countless infinite eons are no other than a single eon...They know that immeasurable eons are no other than one moment, and one moment is no other than immeasurable eons. They want to know that all eons enter no eon, and no eon enters all eons. They wish to fully understand formations and destructions of all number of eons in all worlds in the past, future, and present, thus, they arouse aspiration for supreme enlightenment.¹³

The following lines are from the “Chapter on the Ten Abodes of Bodhisattvas.”

The bodhisattva knows that one is not separate from many, and many are not separate from one. The bodhisattva examines the meaning and knows the significance and examines the significance and knows the meaning. The bodhisattva knows that non-existing is not separate from existing and existing is not separate from non-existing...It is because the bodhisattva wants to utilize skillful means in all dharma.¹⁴

We see such phrases as “all the worlds are contained in one body,” “see the countless number of buddha lands in a single pore,” and “an infinitesimal world is no other than the great world.” If we look for these meanings in the hairline engravings of the pictures on the lotus petals, we will find that the vast universe is depicted within a single large lotus petal. Moreover, mathematically speaking it is a multi-layered concept that the world centered around Mt. Sumeru is differentiated in each of the seven lotus petals. In other words, what is infinite converges into what is infinitesimally small. Moreover, this takes place both in time and space. Thus, a very complex mutual relationship is understood. The keywords that symbolize the Avatamsaka philosophy are “one is not separate from all, all are not separate from one,” “one is not separate from many, many are not separate from one,”

¹³ *Taishō*, vol. 9, 450–451.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 446.

and “small is not separate from large.” We can say these words summarize a view of extremity. In addition, it is noteworthy that one and many are in a two-way relationship, and the value of a balance between one and many is accepted. One and many are not only a matter of numbers. It is also inclusive of the contrast between uniqueness and diversity.

Infinite Mutual Relationship – What This Viewpoint on Infinity Suggests

If I were to rephrase this complex mutual relationship, it would be something like this. All things, including time, not to mention concrete matters and phenomena, are not isolated entities, but are limitlessly connected to all other entities, and also related to one another as parts of a whole. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* teaches that this kind of limitless mutually dependent relationship functions in the world. We are not usually aware of such a relationship. However, in March 2011, when the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred, we were reminded of the fact that people are all connected with one another. We realized that we live in mutual interconnections and that we can live, or we are let to live, because of these connections.

The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* teaches that there are limitless mutually dependent relationships among everything in this world. What is remarkable is that such mutual relationships can be understood even for completely opposing matters and phenomena, such as “small is not separate from large,” “one is not separate from many,” and even “one is not separate from all.” This is an extreme interpretation of the Buddhist common philosophy of simultaneous codependent arising.

In Avatamsaka studies, this is expressed by the phrases, “mutually inseparable and mutually interacting.” “Mutually inseparable” means that seemingly opposing matters and phenomena are in relationship of being in one body and inseparable. In modern terms, this is a defining concept when matters and phenomena are perceived statically. In Buddhist teaching, this corresponds to examining things from the viewpoint of “things as they are.” On the other hand, the concept of “mutually interacting” is an attempt to understand matters and phenomena from the perspective of “working,” in Buddhist terminology. In modern terms, it is a mutual relationship that is understood when examining matters and phenomena dynamically.

In this way, all matters and phenomena are endlessly overlapping chronologically and in multiple layers. In Avatamsaka studies, this is expressed by the phrase “overlapping without end.” Another important suggestion of this extreme perspective is that it includes the concept of seeing

both extremes, or both extreme ends—that is, of relativity. In order to recognize such an inseparable mutual relationship between completely opposing matters and phenomena, we must be grounded in a penetrating view that there is nothing that can be determined as substance. This is an idea that there is nothing in the world that is absolute and unchanging. In other words, to see things as relative is possible by making the concept of *shūnyatā* (emptiness/ boundlessness) in Mahāyāna Buddhism a common denominator of both extremes. A substance is thought of as independent, unchanging and lasting forever but there is nothing in this world that exists on its own without depending on other things, maintains its own identity without changes, and exists forever. A basic philosophical tenet of Mahāyāna Buddhism is that all things are “empty” or “without boundary.”

Existence as a substance includes, for example, “the One God who created the cosmos,” “a self as a soul,” and “the atom.” The One God who created the cosmos is said to be eternal, is neither born nor dies, and does not change. However, this concept of God did not exist in India and East Asia. A soul is a substance that is thought to survive the death of the body, but Shākyamuni Buddha denied the existence of such a soul as an individual entity. From ancient Greek to modern times, the atom has been thought of as the ultimate unit of matter, considered to be a single particle that cannot be further divided. However, in modern quantum physics, there is no such substantial particle, but rather there is a matter in motion, forming and perishing moment by moment.

Keywords of Avatamsaka Philosophy

I would like to summarize the flow of Avatamsaka philosophy as I have described it so far with some keywords. First, “From *rūpa-kāya* (form body) to *dharmakāya* (dharma body), and from *dharmakāya* to *rūpa-kāya*.” One great person, Shākyamuni, attained enlightenment and became the dharma body. In reality, however, Shākyamuni Buddha ended his life, so there was no longer a Shākyamuni Buddha, or Buddha, in this world as a guide, and we entered the age of no buddhas.

Even so, the people of the world who sought salvation continued to long for Shākyamuni Buddha who used to be alive. Such a period indeed lasted for a long time, but there were inevitably limits. In particular, when the age of turmoil came and people’s desire for salvation became more earnest, various movements were formed to try to fulfill that desire. One of these movements was to visualize Shākyamuni Buddha in concrete forms as a means to remember him. As a result of this “from *dharmakāya* to *rūpa-kāya*”

trend, many Buddha statues were created. Historically, this was around the time of the Kshāna Dynasty.

As I mentioned earlier, “pushing the view of simultaneous codependent arising to its extreme” means to take the Buddhist common philosophy of simultaneous codependent arising to the extreme point, which has to do with the core principle of the Avatamsaka philosophy. “An infinite chain and its multi-dimensionality” means that, although all matters and phenomena are boundlessly connected to one another, according to the Avatamsaka way of thinking, it is not connected merely as a linear chain, but multi-dimensionally. As a concrete metaphor, I use the example of “Indra’s net,” which is an “entity of the net-shaped infinite chain.” Indra’s net is a beautiful net of jewels that is said to be stretched over the palace where Indra lives above the top of Mt. Sumeru. Each knot has a jewel attached to it, and they shine brightly and reflect each other endlessly. It is used as a beautiful poetic way of explaining the relationship of “lying on top of another without end.” In the modern age, the Internet has made us realize that the world is connected in a network. However, it seems that this network is not always as beautiful and shining as “Indra’s net.”

In order to maintain this kind of relationship, “acceptance of diversity” is a prerequisite. In addition, if we can observe the relationship between “static and dynamic mutual dependence of all matters and phenomena,” then we will be able to “speculate on seeing conflicting extremes in relativity.” However, the reality of society and the world is harsh. I believe that the Avatamsaka philosophy suggests a principle of action in the actual competitive society that comes with the difference between the superior and the inferior as well as winners and losers.

Of course, Shākyamuni Buddha did not clarify the nature of the universe. He explained what human existence is, what the self is, and what the relationship between the self and others is. The early Mahāyāna Buddhists deciphered Buddha’s profound insight. The bodhisattvas, especially, who created the Avatamsaka philosophy, recaptured the Buddha’s insight from the perspective of extremity.

Today, in the twenty-first century, human beings on Earth are living in the context of diverse races, languages, religions, cultures, nations, and political systems, while struggling for survival in the face of globalization centered on the economy. Under these circumstances, if I were to point out a principle of action that the Avatamsaka philosophy calls for, it would be “solemnly purify all types of flowers.” This phrase is a very simple description of the scene when the Buddha first attained enlightenment. It

states that “the moment the Buddha attained enlightenment, various flowers bloomed all around (due to the light emitted by the Buddha) and (the place of enlightenment) was beautifully decorated.” There are peonies, violets, and small flowers that bloom in the wild whose names we don't know, but they all decorate the world as beautifully as they can. Like these flowers, let each one of us become a flower and decorate this world beautifully.

This is the message in the phrase “solemnly purify all types of flowers.” If we are to apply this message in the real world, we must start with the purification of our own bodies, minds, and immediate surroundings. Then, we must face the reality of the various pollutants that we humans are emitting and spreading, resulting in climate change, and make unceasing efforts to purify and purge them from the local communities, nations, and ultimately the universe. Moreover, people of the world are currently facing a spread of infections by a new type of coronavirus, similar to the smallpox epidemic that the Japanese encountered in ancient times (including the eighth century). I hope that with the help of science, the minds and bodies of people around the world will be purified and the new coronavirus disaster will be brought under control as soon as possible.

Kanji Glossary

Amitābha Sūtra 阿弥陀經	Amida-kyō
Apara-godānīya Continent 牛貨洲	Goka shū
Avatamsaka philosophy 華嚴思想	Kegon shisō
Avatamsaka studies 華嚴教学	kegon kyōgaku
Avatamsaka Sūtra 華嚴經	Kegon-kyō
bodhisattva 菩薩	bosatsu
Boy Sudhana 童子善才 (善財)	Dōji Zenzai
Buddhabhadra 仏駄跋陀羅	Buddabadara
ceremonies/ dharma rites 法儀	hōgi
Chapter on Entering the Dharma Realms 入法界品	Nyūhokkai-bon
Chapter on the Merit of the Beginner Bodhisattvas 初發心菩薩功德品	Shohosshin bosatsu kudoku bon
Chapter on the Tathāgata's Shining Enlightenment 如来光明覺品	Nyorai kōmyō-kaku bon
Chapter on the Ten Abodes of Bodhisattvas bon 菩薩十住品	Bosatsu jūjū bon

Chapter on Vairochana Buddha 盧舍那仏品	Rushana Butsu bon
Chishiki-ji 知識寺	Chishiki-ji
countless worlds 阿僧祇世界	asōgi sekai
Daian-ji 大安寺	Daian-ji
dharma 法	hō
dharma discussion 論義	rongi
dharma rites 法要	hōyō
dharma-kāya 法身	hosshin
Diamond Mountain Range 金剛圀山	Kongō-isen
Eight Dragon Kings 八龍王	Hachi-ryūō
Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇	Shōmu Tennō
enlightenment 悟	satori
Enshō 円証	Enshō
eon 劫	kō/gō
Excellent Treasury 勝蔵	shōzō
Four Guardian Kings 四天王	Shi-tennō
Fragrant Banners Illuminating Splendor 香幢光明莊嚴	kōdō kōmyō shōgon
Gangō-ji 元興寺	Gangō-ji
Gonchi 巖智	Gonchi
great-thousands worlds 大千世界	dai sen sekai
hairline engraving of the pictures on lotus petals of the Great Buddha pedestal 大仏蓮弁毛彫圀	Daibutsu remben kebori-zu
Hīnayāna 小乘	shōjō
illustration of the world centering around Mt. Sumeru 須弥山世界圀	Shumi-sen sekai-zu
immediately eliminating the seven calamities 七難即滅	shichinan sokumetsu
imperial edict ordering the construction of state monasteries 国分寺建立の詔勅	Kokubun-ji konryū no chokoku
Indra 帝釈天	Taishaku-ten
Indra's net 因陀羅網	indara mō
Iron Disk Mountain Range 鉄輪圀山	Tetsurin-isen
Jambudvīpa Continent 瞻部洲	Sembu shū

Jikin 慈訓	Jikin
kōji (lecturers) 講師	kōji
Konsyu-ji 金鍾寺	Konshu-ji
Kyōnin 鏡忍	Kyōnin
Lord of Avatamsaka Sūtra 華嚴教主	Kegon kyōshu
Maghada Kingdom 摩竭提国	Magada koku
Mahāvairocana 大日如来	Dainichi Nyorai
Mahāyāna 大乘	daijō
Mahāyāna philosophy 大乘思想	Daijō shisō
Maitreya Bodhisattva 弥勒菩薩	Miroku Bosatsu
Metal Disk 金輪	konrin
middle-thousand worlds 中千世界	chū sen sekai
monjya (questioners) 問者	monja
Mt. Sumeru 須弥山	Shumi-sen
multi-dimensional world view 多元的世界觀	tagenteki sekaikan
multi-layered world view 多重的世界觀	tajyūteki sekaikan
Mutsu Province 陸奥国	Mutsu-no-kuni
Ocean of Fragrant Water 香水海	kōzui-kai
Omnipresent Illumination 光明遍照	kōmyō henjō
opening the eyes ceremony 開眼供養	kaigen kuyō
Painting of the lotus	
womb world 蓮華藏世界図	rengezō sekai-zu
philosophy of simultaneous	
codependent arising 緣起思想	engi shisō
place of the Buddha's enlightenment 寂滅道場	jakumetsu dōjō
Pūrva-vidaha Continent 勝身洲	Syōshin shū
Rōben 良弁	Rōben
rūpa-kāya 色身	shikishin
Rushana Zō San Isshu Narabini Jo	Rushana Zō San Isshu
(A Poem in Praise of Virocana Buddha	Narabini Jo
and Preface) 盧舍那像讚一首并序	
Sahā World 娑婆世界	shaba sekai
scripts for discussion 論義草	rongi-sō
Shikshānanda 実叉難陀	Jisshananda

Shinjō 審祥	Shinjō
Shoku Nihon Gi (Sequel to the History of Japan) 続日本紀	Shoku Nihon Gi
Shōsōin Storehouse 正倉院	Shōsō-in
shūnyatā (emptiness/boundlessness) 空	kū
small-thousand worlds 小千世界	shō sen sekai
solemnly purify all types of flowers 雜華嚴淨	zakkegonjō
state nunneries 国分尼寺	Kokubun-niji
state monasteries 国分寺	Kokubun-ji
statues of the two attending bodhisattvas 二菩薩像	nibosatsu-zō
Tathāgata 如来	nyorai
Tenpyō Era 天平	Tempyō
theory on the Buddha's body 仏身論	busshin-ron
Thirty-three Devas 三十三天	sanjū san-ten
three thousand great-thousand worlds 三千大千世界	sanzen dai sen sekai
Three Treasures 三宝	sambō
Tōdai-ji 東大寺	Tōdai-ji
Tōdai-ji Yōroku (Essential Record of Tōdai-ji) 東大寺要録	Tōdai-ji Yōroku
Tushita Heaven Palace 忉利天宮	Tōriten gū
Two Great Dragon Kings 二大龍王	Nidai-ryūō
Two Guardian Kings Prajnā Sūtra 仁王般若經	Ninnō Hannya-kyō
Ultimate Form Heaven 色究竟天	shikikukyō-ten
unwholesome world with five types of pollutions 五濁惡世	gojoku akuse
Uttara-kuru Continent 俱盧洲	Kuru shū
Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那仏	Birushana Butsu
Water Disk 水輪	suirin
Wind Disk 風輪	fūrin
Wondrous Pleasure Heaven 化樂天	keraku-ten
World Honored One 世尊	seson
Zasshū (Miscellaneous Collection) 雜集	Zasshū

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**THE PRESENTATION OF SPIRIT:
A CASE STUDY OF THE ZEN PAINTING
“RUSHLEAF BODHIDHARMA”**

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Introduction

The term Zen, which derives from the Sanskrit *dhYāna* (Pali: *jhana*), meaning meditation, refers to the mainstream monastic form of Mahayana Buddhism in China (Chan), Japan, Korea (Sōn), and Vietnam (Thien).¹ Recent scholarship on Zen tends to focus on ritual practices, philosophical investigations, and aesthetic elements, including the fine and literary arts. A major factor in the spread of Zen from Japan to China in the thirteenth century was an emphasis on the arts.² Therefore, an analysis of Zen art offers an opportunity to examine the integration of religion and spirituality, art theory and practice, and aesthetic reception.

One of the most essential Zen teachings is that spiritual awakening can be achieved under the master’s guidance. In other words, Zen practitioners need to be trained in the process of spiritual cultivation to achieve awakening. In considering Zen and the arts, paintings have the capacity to illustrate Zen teachings, engage the viewers, and prompt their visual aesthetic experience. This is one reason that the philosopher Van Meter Ames emphasizes painting as the most beneficial artistic form for spreading Zen Buddhism and guiding practitioners towards enlightenment.³ At the same time, painters have the opportunity to present the meaning of Zen Buddhism, which lies beyond language, through visual elements.

Zen paintings depict different themes common in Zen Buddhism, such as birds, flowers, nature, vegetables, and the like. Beyond these themes, the topic of Bodhidharma (菩提达摩, known as Daruma in Japan) is considered one of the best-known subjects in the field of Zen paintings. In

¹ William. M. Bodiford, “Zen,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 10, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zen>.

² Steven Heine, preface to *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen: A Remarkable Century of Transmission and Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), xiii.

³ Van Meter Ames, “Zen and American Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West* 5/4 (1956), 305 (accessed April 2, 2022, <https://doi:10.2307/1396882>).

this essay, I examine pictorial depictions of the “Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed” (also referred to as “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” (*Royō Daruma*, 蘆葦達摩).⁴ This study focuses on how Zen paintings engage viewers through their representation of Bodhidharma’s spirit. By presenting a brief analysis of the appreciation of Zen paintings, I examine pieces dealing with “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” that provide important elements contributing to the promotion of viewers’ aesthetic experience.

Appreciation of Zen Painting

To better understand how Zen paintings engage viewers, we can start by asking, what is Zen art? The East Asian art historian Brinker Helmut suggests that it is difficult to provide a persuasive interpretation of Zen art. In addition, certain Zen artwork does not require any elucidation since it does not convey an essential meaning.⁵ The Asian art historian Sherman E. Lee also states that the field of Zen painting is beyond logic or description. As he said, the imagery related to Zen art is meaningful since it generally functions as an expression of Zen Buddhist ideology.⁶

Meanwhile, the field of Zen art is so limitless that examples of it tend to lose their significance and become meaningless.⁷ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Zen paintings are boundless and indescribable. Any attempt to define the concept of “Zen painting” in concrete terms is fruitless.

Although providing a precise and convincing description is not possible, one of the most fundamental characteristics of Zen painting is the expression of religious meaning. If Zen Buddhist ideology is not involved in the creation, appreciation, or criticism of the painting, it cannot be described as a work of Zen art. Besides the most fundamental function,

⁴ Charles Lachman, “Why Did The Patriarch Cross The River? The Rushleaf Bodhidharma Reconsidered,” *Asia Major, Third Series* 6/2 (1993), 237 (accessed January 19, 2022, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41645494>).

⁵ Helmut Brinker and Hiroshi Kanazawa, “ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings,” in Andreas Leisinger, trans., *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum* 40 (1996), 56 (accessed November 6, 2021, <http://doi:10.2307/1522704>).

⁶ Sherman E Lee, “Zen in Art: Art in Zen,” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 59/9 (1972), 239 (accessed November 6, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25152451>).

⁷ Ibid.

which is expressing religious meaning, Zen paintings can also serve to introduce an honorable person, depict dharma transmission, offer advice, practice repentance, represent the bond of friendship, and emphasize the importance of moral belief.⁸ Zen paintings also depict the everyday experience of humans and ordinary objects, especially those from nature. As a result, such works, which generally portray animals, fruits, flowers, or landscapes, provide viewers with an easily accessible reference to Zen religious ideology.

Since the expression of religious meaning is an essential and typical characteristic of Zen painting, we will first consider how Zen painting serves as an influential and persuasive aesthetic expression. As mentioned above, Zen's creative, expressive works and meditative practices were transmitted from Chinese to Japanese culture in the thirteenth century. Therefore, to understand how Zen paintings convey Zen meaning to viewers, a close examination of the classical Chinese art theory of creation and appreciation will be useful. Because of globalization, this heritage of artworks has also been observed by modern Westerners.⁹

In his book *Classified Record of Painters of Former Times (Guhua Pinlu, 古畫品錄)*, the Chinese painter and art historian Xie He (active in the sixth century, 謝赫), inspired by artists from the Liu Song (420–479) and Southern Qi (479–502) dynasties, put forward the “Six Principles” (*liufa, 六法*) of Chinese painting. The appreciator or critic needs to follow these essential standards for the processes of practice, appreciation, or criticism. Although the interpretation and translation have changed over time, the basic meaning of the “Six Principles” can be considered as follows:

1. *Qiyun shengdong* (氣韻生動): “Spirit Harmony-Life’s Motion” (Arthur Waley); “animation through spirit consonance” (Alexander Soper)
2. *Gufa yongbi* (骨法用筆): “bone-means use brush” (Waley); “structural method in the use of the brush” (Soper) [implies “knack” for using the brush]
3. *Yingwu xiangxing* (應物象形): “fidelity to the object in portraying forms” (Soper)

⁸ Brinker and Kanazawa, “ZEN Masters of Meditation,” 115.

⁹ Heine, *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen*, 11–12.

4. *Suilei fucai* (隨類賦彩): “conformity to kind in applying colors” (Soper)
5. *Jinying weizhi* (經營位置): “proper planning in placing [of elements]” (Soper)
6. *Chuanyi muxie* (傳移模寫): “that by copying, the ancient models should be perpetuated” (Shio Sakanishi).¹⁰

It is not difficult to realize that the principle *Qiyun shengdong*, which is mentioned in the first category, plays an important role in the “Six Principles.” The philosophical concept *qi* (氣) refers to the universal spirit, or cosmic energy, that animates everything in the universe. As for the role of the painter, *Qiyun shengdong* requires the artist to depict the inner life and cosmic spirit of the subject represented. In other words, they must show the invisible universal energy through the visual elements of line and color.

The art historian Michael Sullivan states that a painting can become an expression of “spirit consonance” if the artist develops awareness of the universal energy, accommodates it, and immerses himself in this spirit.¹¹ In this case, the second, third, fourth, and fifth principles can be understood as different methods for representing the first one visually and vividly. This way, the painting is able to convey the spirit and energy of the depicted subject. By following these principles, the painting can engage the appreciator. As for the appreciator, he or she needs to feel the cosmic energy and capture the painting’s spiritual resonance. In addition, the subject of the painting must be regarded as a living existence in the universe so that the appreciator can participate in a spiritual exchange with creation and creator. The painting has a better chance to fully engross its appreciator.

Zen paintings have been instrumental in the creation and appreciation involved in artistic theory as well as in the expression of religious meaning. Therefore, the artist and viewers are also expected to have gained knowledge of Zen, not just the theory of East Asian art. After

¹⁰ These renderings of the Six Principles are from Arthur Waley, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (London: Ams Pr Inc, 1923), 72; Alexander Soper, “The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 8 (1949): 412–423; and Shio Sakanishi, *The Spirit of the Brush* (London: John Murray, 1939), 51. Please see Michael Sullivan, “Three Kingdoms and the Six Dynasties,” in *The Arts of China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 95–96.

¹¹ Sullivan, “Three Kingdoms and the Six Dynasties,” 95.

that, both may have a spiritual exchange in the ideal way. As mentioned earlier, the visual representation of natural objects and humans' daily experiences can supply viewers with a more understandable reference to the religious ideology.

Regarding the viewers' aesthetic experience, there is still a question that we may want to consider. In the age of globalization, an increasing number of people from the West are interested in Zen art. Hence, it is reasonable to ask how Western viewers, especially the ones completely outside the context of Zen Buddhism, participate in the spiritual exchange. The philosopher Van Meter Ames states that rejecting the appeal of Zen painting is nearly impossible since it has worldwide appeal.¹²

Art historian Jennie Klein thinks viewers should be aware of Zen Buddhism and further analyze a work's religious meaning.¹³ According to Melissa Miles and Robin Gerster, it is more reasonable to appreciate the works of Zen art within the context of Zen Buddhist aesthetics.¹⁴ In brief, understanding the religious and aesthetic context is necessary to appreciate Zen paintings fully. From the perspective of art history, interpreting the religious context helps make sense of why ancient holy images frequently are of great interest to so many viewers.

The Event of “Bodhidharma (*Daruma*) Crossing the Yangzi River”

The earliest surviving record about Bodhidharma is preserved in *Luoyang qielanji* (洛陽伽藍記), written by Yang Xianzhi (楊衒之) during the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534). It said that Bodhidharma was a Persian who came from the West. When he saw the glorious Yongning temple in Luoyang, he stopped, held his hands together, and chanted. He saw how the golden roof reflected the sunlight and heard the sound of bells in the wind.

¹² Van Meter Ames, “Current Western Interest in Zen,” *Philosophy East and West* 10/1.2 (1960), 29 (accessed March 19, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1397122>).

¹³ Jennie Klein, “Being Mindful: West Coast Reflections on Buddhism and Art,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 27/1 (2005), 83–84 (accessed March 19, 2022, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3246387>).

¹⁴ Melissa Miles and Robin Gerster, *Pacific Exposures: Photography and the Australia–Japan Relationship* (Canberra, Australia: ANU Press, 2018), 226 (accessed March 20, 2022, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv9hj8jz.11>).

People who lived far away from the temple could still hear the sound.¹⁵ Another reference to Bodhidharma can be found in *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* (續高僧傳), which was written by the monk Daoxuan (道宣, 596–667) in the Tang dynasty (618–907).¹⁶ A brief introduction of Bodhidharma and his journey through China are mentioned in this work. The art historian Charles Lachman has traced the evolution of Bodhidharma’s biography in his article “Why Did The Patriarch Cross The River?” Based on his study of some major historical records, he thinks that the “official” story of Bodhidharma had not necessarily been “fixed” until the late eighth century. Several popular episodes of the Daoxuan biography, such as “facing the wall” at the Shaolin Temple in Henan Province, were gradually added to the texts composed during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. However, according to Lachman’s research, Bodhidharma’s crossing of the Yangzi River was not added to the texts until the early twelfth century.¹⁷

The best-known historical account of this event is a koan from the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Biyantu*, 碧岩錄), which is a collection of Chan koan. It was compiled by Chan master Yuanwu Keqin (圓悟克勤, 1063–1135) from the Northern Song dynasty. The *Blue Cliff Record* has many versions or blocked-printed editions. However, all these describe the same event: Emperor Wu (464–549) of the Liang dynasty (502–557) has a meeting with the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma, who travels to China to transmit Chan Buddhism. However, the emperor could not fully understand Bodhidharma’s contradictory response. After an unpleasant conversation, the patriarch leaves the emperor’s country, crosses the river, and arrives in the land of Wei. However, so far, none of the versions have mentioned that Bodhidharma crosses the river on one reed.¹⁸ Since the koan is generally related to Chan/Zen teaching, it is reasonable to regard paintings of the theme “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” as the illustrated narrative of said

¹⁵ Yang Xianzhi 杨衒之, *Luoyang Qielan Ji Jiaozhu* 洛阳伽蓝记 校注 [A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luo-Yang], ed. Fan Xiangyong, 范祥雍, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999), 50.

¹⁶ Dao Xuan 道宣, *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳 [Supplement to the Biographies of Eminent Monks Domain], Puti Damo Zhuan 菩提达摩传 [The Biography of Bodhidharma], ed. Guo Shaolin 郭邵林, vol. 13 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014), 565–566.

¹⁷ Lachman, “Why Did The Patriarch Cross The River?” 242–245.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 269–271.

teaching.¹⁹ Moreover, since paintings are the visual expression of the essential and engaging quality known as “spirit consonance,” the painter must consider how to adequately represent Bodhidharma’s emotion, spirit, and life through art.

Chan Paintings of “Rushleaf Bodhidharma”

The painting *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* (Figure 1) was produced before 1317. This piece is probably an early treatment of the theme “Rushleaf Bodhidharma.” In the painting, Bodhidharma is represented as a tall and robust figure. He wears a hooded robe and stands on the reed. The long sleeves indicate that he probably stands in the wind while crossing the river. His earring, beard, and face inform viewers that he is a monk from India. The concentration in his eyes and the gritted teeth reveal his spiritual constancy. This painting is signed by Li Yaofu (李堯夫) and inscribed by Yishan Yining (Issan Ichinei, 一山一寧, 1247–1317). Yishan Yining was a famous Chinese Chan monk and missionary. He went to Japan in 1299 and never returned to China.²⁰ His inscription said:

Traversing the [Yangzi] River and its Han tributary he
came,
Who professed ignorance to the Emperor.
Upon his failure he left without hesitation,
Pressing on, his feet treading the water.
Written by Monk Yishan Yining with respect.

逾河越漢來，對御道不識。
事負即抽身，腳下浮逼逼。
一山比丘一寧拜手。²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., 240–242.

²⁰ See *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/40515>).

²¹ Ibid. The translation is cited from Department records in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Chinese believe that the connection between the sage and the people is a common rule of nature. Through the power of attraction, people's hearts and minds can be affected by the sage.²² Therefore, it is reasonable to consider that the subject of this piece, Bodhidharma, who is regarded as a wise and holy man in Zen/Chan Buddhism, draws the attention of viewers without difficulties. The visual representation of his ancient holiness can also influence viewers through this relationship. However, painting a picture of Bodhidharma does not only concern nature or religion. It is also a matter of aesthetics.

According to the philosopher Shin'ichi Hisamatsu, in order to create a true image of Bodhidharma, the painter must first decide the characteristics of Bodhidharma on his own. Then, the painter can decide which anesthetic technique can be employed to best represent Bodhidharma.²³ In other words, the painter needs to have religious awareness of Bodhidharma's features to create a true image of him.

As shown in Figure 1, Bodhidharma's qualities had first been described in literary works. Therefore, this painting can be considered both a visual depiction of Bodhidharma's characteristics and a stylized version of the event. Bodhidharma's identity, emotion, and spirit are represented mainly through the face and facial expressions, and the content of the "Rushleaf Bodhidharma" tale is transformed into an abbreviated ink illustration.

As for the employment of artistic techniques in Li Yaofu's painting, the monochrome ink allows the painter to illustrate with artistic spontaneity the life of Bodhidharma in a simple way. Furthermore, Li Yaofu did not employ the style of Song painter Li Gonglin (李公麟, 1049–

²² Hellmut Wilhelm, ed., "Book I: The Text" in Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 123.

²³ Shin'ichi Hisamatsu, "On Chan Art," January 3, 2008 (accessed June 7, 2021, <http://www.fas.x0.com/writings/hisamatsu/onchanart.htm>). This article is translated by Richard DeMartino in collaboration with Fujiyoshi Jikai and Abe Masao (in the Japanese name order) and made public in *The Eastern Buddhist* 1/2 (1966): 21–33; and *Hisamatsu Shin'ichi Chosakushuu*, vol. 5 (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1996), 93–101. Revised by Tokiwa Gishin, the present version supplies the original translation with further notes for corrections and brief explanations, uses "Chan" for "Zen" except in "Rinzai-zen."

1106), who is well-known for the thick, austere, and controlled lines in his portrayal of Bodhidharma. Such an approach, which is generally used in the figure paintings of the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties, is replaced by a more flexible and dynamic style in this painting. The modulation of the thick flowing line and the unconstrained rendering of the ink-wash technique can be mostly observed in the treatment of the drapery and the reed. The exquisite and careful depiction of the face and bare feet reflects Bodhidharma's identity as a foreign Chan monk while suggesting his determination and persistence.

Another example is the fourteenth-century painting *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* (Figure 2). On top of it, viewers can see an inscription written by the monk Liaon Qingyu (了庵清欲, 1288–1363), famous for the use of ink in paintings. During the Yuan dynasty (1279–1367), he was the head monk of Baoning and Kaiyuan Temple in China. The inscription reads:

Wind rises from the reed flowers, the waves are high,
It's a long way to go beyond the cliff of the Shaoshi
mountain,
Above the worlds of kalpas a flower is opening into five
petals,
So that your barefoot heels are just fine for the whipping
rattans.

蘆花風起浪頭高，少室岩前去路遙。
劫外一花開五葉，腳跟正好喫藤條。²⁴

In this poem, “a flower is opening into five petals” refers to the development of Chan Buddhism in China. Bodhidharma transmitted Chan to China, thus, he is treated as the first patriarch. Huineng (慧能) received the Dharma transmission during the seventh century. He became the sixth and last Chan Patriarch. In brief, the poem indicates Bodhidharma's persistence in spreading Chan. This idea is also expressed through the painting (Figure 2).

²⁴ See *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed*, Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art (accessed April 14, 2022, <https://web-collection-prod.clevelandart.org/art/1964.44>).



Figure 1. Li Yaofu's *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* (before 1317)²⁵

Figure 2. *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* (1300s)²⁶

²⁵ Li Yaofu 李堯夫 (Chinese, ca. 1300), *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* 達摩渡江圖軸, before 1317, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 155.6 × 35.6 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/40515>).

²⁶ *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* 蘆葉達磨圖, 1300s, Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), hanging scroll, ink on paper, 91.1 x 36.5 cm,

Figures 1 and 2 were painted in almost the same period. In fact, these two Chan paintings can be interpreted through the theme of “Rushleaf Bodhidharma.” It is not difficult to realize that both painters attempt to represent the true image of Bodhidharma in a similar way, such as with the “foreign” appearance, the concealed hands, the style of dress, the composition, and the brushstrokes. The main difference is the facial expression. Different artists have different ideas about how the first patriarch felt after the disappointing conversation with the emperor.

For the artist who painted *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* (Figure 2), Bodhidharma was imagined as dejected after this encounter but still insistent on transmitting Chan. Despite this disparity, the structural similarities between these two Chan paintings suggest that Chinese painters had established a pictorial model for representing the Rushleaf motif and embodying its spirit of decisiveness around the fourteenth century. Such a paradigm was appreciated, learned, and developed by Japanese artists in the following centuries.

Zen Paintings of “Rushleaf Bodhidharma”

During the Northern Song (960–1279) and Yuan dynasties (1271–1368) of China, ink paintings remained popular. This phenomenon can be explained by the art theory of the Northern Song dynasty. In the well-known literary work *Yizhou Minghualu*, which means “Famous Painters from Sichuan” (益州名畫錄), the scholar Huang Xiufu (黃休復) states that the best painters will not focus on colorful and delicate representations. Instead, they depict the *qi* of the subject and their inner self through the simplest visual elements—line and ink.²⁷

This idea exerted a profound influence on the Chinese painters of that time, especially the literati painters. Moreover, during the Northern Song, Chan was highly favored by well-educated scholars who did not work for the royal court and by the elite class of scholar-officials. Many of them, such as Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修, 1007–1072), Su Shi (蘇軾, also known as Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1037–1101), and Huang Tingjian (黃庭堅, 1045–1105),

Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art (accessed April 15, 2022, <https://web-collection-prod.clevelandart.org/art/1964.44>).

²⁷ Huang Xiufu 黃休復, “Yizhou Minghualu” 益州名畫錄 [Famous Painters from Sichuan] in Anlan 于安瀾, ed., *Huashi Cong Shu* 畫史叢書 [Serious of Chinese Art Theory Books], vol 3 (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1962), 3.

developed close relations with Chan monks. Therefore, it is not surprising that the spirit of Chan was expressed through the literati paintings of the time.²⁸ Meanwhile, the art created by Chan monks was also probably influenced by the tradition of literati art. This helps us understand why we can find the abbreviated ink painting style in the distinct versions shown in Figures 1 and 2. Both paintings were created during or soon after the Northern Song dynasty.

Most Japanese Zen depictions of “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” were produced during the Kamakura period (Kamakura jidai, 鎌倉時代, 1185–1333). These pieces generally follow the tradition of Chinese literati paintings, especially the abbreviated ink painting style. When more Chan monks started to immigrate from China to Japan during the Kamakura period, the tradition of literati paintings was also transmitted to Japan. At the same time, the samurai, the emerging military force in Japanese society, began to replace the dominant Tendai religion (Tendai-shū, 天台宗) with Zen Buddhism in the Kyōto court (京都御所).

As a result, the artistic production of Zen was supported by the military leadership of the Kamakura shogunate and became more popular in Japan. Painting, gardening, the tea ceremony, and other aesthetic forms favored in Chinese literati circles became part of Zen culture during this period. Over the next several centuries, Zen painters practiced the Chinese ink painting style.

This tradition can be observed in Zen paintings like the fifteenth-century version of *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* in Figure 3. Created during the Muromachi period (Muromachi jidai, 室町時代, 1336–1573), this version appears very similar to the Chan painting of the same name created before 1317 (Figure 1). The stylistic similarity between these two paintings can be observed from the treatment of the drapery, the spontaneous use of the brushstroke, the changing thickness of the line, and the employment of monochrome ink. Such freely expressive style, Brinker Helmut believes, “grants [the viewer] access to the fleeting, but simultaneously timeless act of creation.”²⁹

²⁸ Liu Guirong 刘桂荣, *Songdai Chanzong Meixue yu Chanhua Yishu Yanjiu* 宋代禅宗 [The Studies of Chan Aesthetic and Chan Arts in Song Dynasty] (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2019), 22–23.

²⁹ Brinker and Kanazawa, “ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings,” 126.



Figure 3. *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* (15th century)³⁰ (left)

Figure 4. Kano Genshun's *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* (before 1641)³¹ (right)

³⁰ *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed*, Muromachi period, fifteenth century, hanging scroll (mounted on panel), 46.7 x 26 cm, Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art (accessed April 17, 2022, <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1907.141/>).

³¹ Kano Genshun 狩野元俊 (Japanese, 1588–1672), *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* 芦葉達磨図, before 1641, hanging scroll, ink on

In addition, the details in Chan paintings that illustrate the Rushleaf Bodhidharma event, such as the portrayal of him standing with bare feet on a reed, the sleeves, the cowl, the covered hands, the earring, and the beard, are also present in this Zen painting (Figure 3). The main difference among these works is how the painters imagine Bodhidharma's emotions. For instance, Bodhidharma's facial expression in the fifteenth-century version seems depressed and less energetic. However, the concentration in his eyes still points to his persistence in the transmission of Chan Buddhism.

Another Zen painting, created before 1641, was also titled *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed* (Figure 4). The painter, Kano Genshun (狩野元俊, 1588–1672), also called Hayato, was an artist of the Kano school in the early Edo period (Edo jidai, 江戸時代, 1603–1868) and the first head of the minor Yamashita Kano studio.³² Zen monk Gyokushitsu Sōhaku (玉室宗珀, 1572–1641) wrote a poem on the top of the painting. It said:

Lightly sailing on a single reed,
He is majestic and commanding.
Far from Liang territory,
Ah, what does he recall?
Humbly inscribed by the remote descendant and monk,
Suiminshi

輕乘一葦
威風凜然
遠離梁土
回顧那邊
咄
遠孫比丘睡眠子拜贊。³³

paper, 162.6 x 44.5 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/73645>).

³² See *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/73645>).

³³ The translation adapted from Miyeko Murase. See Kano Genshun, *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed*, New York,

From the perspective of iconographic representation, the features that Chinese painters used to present the Rushleaf Bodhidharma event were also used by Kano Genshun to illustrate it (see Figure 4). In particular, this artist depicts Bodhidharma's robe with flowing brush strokes in a simple and spontaneous manner, which suggests the style of Chinese ink painting. But compared to Chinese painters' re-interpretation of Bodhidharma, Kano Genshun's version shows the figure in a more demythologized, unconstrained, and expressive way. His Bodhidharma, uncovered by the hood, seems calm and casual. The result of the meeting with Emperor Liang exerts less of a negative influence on him. He is set to continue the transmission of Chan in China.



Figure 5. *Onna no Daruma*³⁴

Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/73645>).

³⁴ Keiri (Japanese, active first half of the nineteenth century), *Onna no Daruma*, Edo period (1615–1868), woodblock print (*surimono*), ink and color on paper, 21.6 x 18.6 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/54325>).



Figure 6. *Bodhidharma*³⁵ (left)

Figure 7. *Portrait of Daruma*³⁶ (right)

³⁵ Unkoku Tōgan 雲谷等顔 (Japanese, 1547–1618), *Bodhidharma* 達磨図, late sixteenth to early seventeenth century, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 89.6 x 33.4 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed May 11, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/671040>).

³⁶ Fūgai Ekun 風外慧薰 (Japanese, 1568–1654), *Portrait of Daruma* 達磨図, early seventeenth century, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 77.5 x 30.8 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (accessed May 11, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/78147>).

From the stylistic point of view, it is not difficult to see that both the Muromachi painter and Kano Genshun experimented with different means of conveying the spiritual value of Bodhidharma and the theme of the patriarch crossing the river. On the one hand, they follow the earlier examples and the monochrome ink painting style introduced in China. Such visual representations of “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” had been followed by Zen artists for centuries. Painters also used these techniques and motifs in other artworks besides Zen paintings. During the Edo period (1615–1868), artists started to associate this traditional paradigm of Bodhidharma with the imagery of courtesans. In the woodblock print titled *Onna no Daruma* (Figure 5), a young and beautiful woman dressed in a red robe stands on the reeds, floating on the water’s surface. It is not difficult to recognize the similarity of the composition.

On the other hand, the painters are free to illustrate Bodhidharma’s emotions within the context of his biography. This method is also employed to depict other motifs of Bodhidharma. For instance, in his work *Bodhidharma* (Figure 6), Unkoku Togan (雲谷等顔, 1547–1618) focuses on showing the patriarch as a conscious and decisive figure. In *Portrait of Daruma* (Figure 7), Fūgai Ekun (風外慧薰, 1568–1654) emphasizes Bodhidharma’s concentration and struggle during meditation. The pictorial theme “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” has its origin in China.³⁷ Its derivative has been developed in Japan since the Muromachi period. The spirit of Bodhidharma and the significance of crossing the river are embodied aesthetically in Zen paintings, capturing viewers’ attention through this theme.

In summary, Zen paintings with the theme “Rushleaf Bodhidharma” liberate one from words and concepts that attempt to describe Bodhidharma’s teaching and legacy. These visual representations have the capacity to guide the viewers to feel the spirit and energy of the patriarch in a more visible, direct, and flexible fashion. As the painter attempts to fully engage viewers with his depictions, the result is an enriching aesthetic experience that allows viewers to communicate with Bodhidharma through the art piece and the painter. During this process of contemplation, viewers must concentrate on the portrayed Bodhidharma to appreciate the religious meaning expressed in his vitality, personal qualities, and spirit within the context of Zen Buddhism. Viewers can then participate

³⁷ Lachman, “Why Did The Patriarch Cross The River?” 246.

in a spiritual exchange with the painter and the patriarch.³⁸ Through this approach, then, the paintings can convey the spirit of Bodhidharma to their viewers and move them in deliberate and meaningful ways.

³⁸ Susan Bush, “The Views of Northern Sung Literati,” in *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch’i-ch’ang (1555–1636)* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 50–51 (accessed May 26, 2022, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854hr.8>).

Essays

**ICHINICHI ICHIZEN:
ON TRANSLATING AN NHK GUIDE TO EVERYDAY ZEN¹**

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The publication titled *Ichinichi Ichizen* (一日一禪, “One Zen Lesson a Day”), produced by the Japanese public broadcaster NHK, provides insight into the realm of Zen practice and its practicality for everyday activities. With its light tone and illustrative Japanese-style drawings, it colloquializes and illuminates essential concepts in the Zen tradition using “Zen phrases” (禪語 *Zengo*). The moniker 一日一禪 is itself a play on words, as is common in Zen dialogues, referring to the more common Japanese proverb 一日一善 (also pronounced *Ichinichi Ichizen*), meaning “one good deed a day.” The play on words achieves a dual meaning by associating the ordinariness of “one good deed a day” with “one Zen lesson a day,” while implying that committing to daily Zen acts, no matter how trivial, is equivalent to performing a good deed. This interplay involving words and their meanings and readings highlights the charm of *Ichinichi Ichizen*.

The articles are written entirely by the master Masano Shunmyo, who uses his expertise in the field of Zen as well as architecture to explain the importance of incorporating practices from the religious tradition into everyday life. The content of the articles concentrates primarily on providing brief straightforward explanations of Buddhist terms and framing them in a manner that shows readers the applicability of Zen to the challenges of modern existence. The main ideas can be divided into four important elements of Zen practice that have relevance for everyone’s life: purpose, meditation, writing sutras, and cleaning. Underscoring the other points is the basic idea that monks do all their activities in a monastery as part of a daily routine that laypeople can also integrate them into their routines. Meditation is an essential method for controlling untamed thoughts and connecting with

¹ Author’s Note: The present essay is an extension of the translation project completed for my Master of Arts in Asian Studies in the Spring 2020 at FIU. For the original magazine published in Japanese, see: 俊明栞野 Shunmyo Masan, 禪の言葉で暮らしをクレードアップ：一日一禪 *Zen no Kotoba de Kurashi wo Guredo Appu: Ichinichi Ichizen*. [Improve Your Daily Life with Zen Phrases: One Zen Lesson a Day] (Tokyo: NHK Publishing, July 2017), 7–59.

one's inner self. Sutra transcription and recitation allows for single-minded concentration and offers a reprieve from daily worries. And finally, cleaning becomes a way to tidy not only the space around oneself but also the spiritual space inside oneself. Zen words are used as tools for explaining the importance of these practices.

In this essay, I encapsulate the various messages of *Ichinichi Ichizen* as listed above through a partial translation of the essays written by Masano Shunmyo, while further commenting on some of the main themes he explicates. I also provide the kanji (characters) and their readings for specialized Zen or related Buddhist terms.

Zen Origins and Zen Today

To begin with, *Ichinichi Ichizen* addresses the questions of Zen: What is it? Why should it be practiced? Masano answers these questions with reference to Buddhist words that help explain the qualities of Zen. The first key term is “Buddha-nature,” which emphasizes that the innate or “true self” is possessed by everyone. Buddha-nature is explained in the following passage:

There is a phrase: “all sentient and non-sentient beings possess the Buddha nature” (一切衆生悉有仏性, *Issai shujou shitsu u busshō*). This means that every person has the Buddha-nature within their mind. The Buddha-nature is the absolute truth, and the “original self” (本来の自己, *Honrai no jiko*). Through practice, you will become aware of that mind inside yourself and come face to face with it.²

Metaphysically, Zen is presented as an all-encompassing, non-discriminating practice that anyone can utilize; hence, the saying, “all sentient and non-sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature.” This points to the accessibility of the true self; therefore, everyone should commit to practicing seated meditation.

In a more down-to-earth tone, the practicality of applying daily Zen practice in a modern context is explained by using the traditional Buddhist terms for “dust” and “desire”:

² Ibid., 6.

Because of the widespread use of internet technology, there is an overflow of information being disseminated so that, despite the advantages of convenience, isn't it often thought that human relationships are unsatisfactory and stressful as contemporary life is becoming ever more complex? Information overload causes desires, and troublesome personal relationships exhaust the spirit. Desire and weariness are dust and debris that wrap around the mind. It can be said that the minds of people today are cluttered with greed and pettiness. I call this a "mental metabolic syndrome." Zen is an excellent "prescription" for doing away with mental metabolism.³

Here, Zen is framed as the solution to the modern problem of "information overload." Masano comments on the mental and social issues caused by the vicissitudes of modern life. Desire and weariness take on a symbolic Buddhist flavor in terms of "dust and debris," as information overload becomes a precursor to "desire." The cure for this so-called "mental metabolic syndrome" is readily available in daily Zen practice.

Understanding the "why" and "what" of Zen, including the relation between monastic and lay practice, is a focal point recurring throughout *Ichinichi Ichizen*. Therefore, Masano's abstract approach to grasping the necessity of Zen is juxtaposed with a description of daily practices carried out by monks. Although these practitioners live a much more regimented and disciplined life, all the religious activities in a temple setting can also be done in one's own home.

The monks awaken early in the morning (3:30 AM or 4:00 AM in the winter), and throughout the day they meditate, eat meals, read sutras, and clean. All these activities are prescribed to the reader and imbued with religious significance. To emphasize that the monks are constantly committed to practicing, even when involved in seemingly mundane activities, Masano says:

There is a phrase, "Awaken on half a *tatami*, sleep on a single *tatam*." (起きて半畳寝て一畳, *Okite hanjou nete ichijou*), meaning the same space where a novice monk

³ Ibid., 9.

sleeps and wakes, whether a full tatami, or half a tatami space, can be described as “simple...” Practice is “walking, standing, sitting, and lying down” (行住坐臥, *Gyōjū zaga*). That means that twenty-four hours a day, one’s manners and bearing are all exemplary of practice.⁴

In other words, no matter which of these activities one commits to, they should all be considered a form of “Zen practice,” which highlights the idea of applying Zen to one’s daily life. While the monks are immersed in the challenge of “walking, standing, sitting, and lying down” as a form of practice, it is clear that not only monastic practitioners can live in such a manner anywhere and anytime. So can lay followers of Zen. Meditation is the first step in this process.

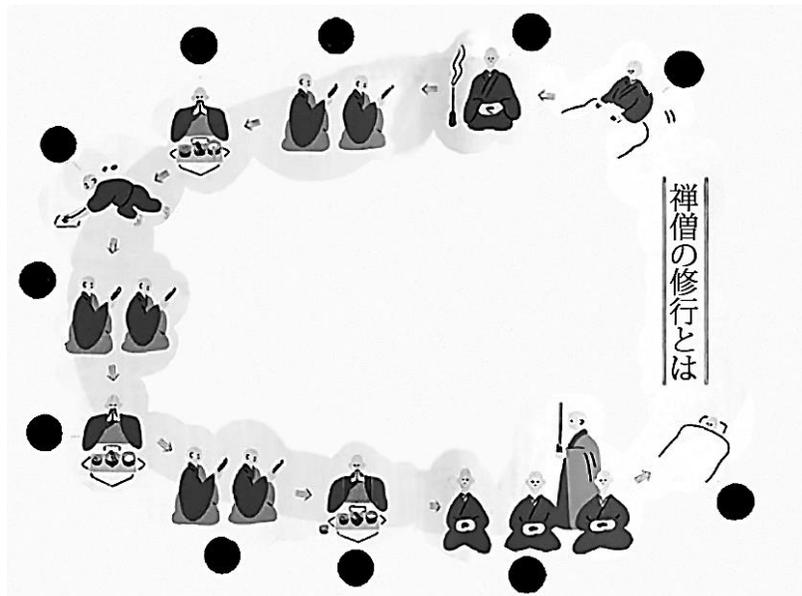


Figure 1. Daily practice at a Zen monastery⁵

⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁵ The images in this essay have been enhanced by María Sol Echarren.

Meditation

A prominent component of *Ichinichi Ichizen* revolves around clarifying the purpose behind meditation and providing succinct steps for performing it properly. Masano covers, first, the aim of seated meditation and what one hopes to accomplish with it, and then provides a detailed explanation of the necessary clothing, seating, length of time, and location; additionally, he explains the proper posture from clasping your hands together to form an “egg” shape to “rocking” the upper body back-and-forth to find a comfortable position.

The goal of seated meditation is considered through an examination of the Zen phrase 心身脱落 (*shinjin datsuraku*), or “casting off body and mind,” whereby one achieves clarity of mind through reflecting on their original self. Masano describes the Zen phrase as follows:

You will, without listening, effortlessly hear the sound of the faintest breeze, and not realize the passage of time or that you’re even sitting...The condition of complete liberation and clarity, whereby you are free of ensnarement and have been cut off from all attachments, is “casting off body and mind.” It can be said that this is the highest state of mind that Zen seeks to attain.⁶

In this section, Masano implies that liberation from attachments is not just achieved in the physical conditioning of meditation, but also in training the mind to be cast-off along with the corporeal self. Upon doing so, a higher state of being is achieved.

Taking the description of a condition of “complete liberation and clarity” a step further, Figure 2 illuminates this notion with an interesting analysis of the character for “sitting” (often used interchangeably with meditation). The image depicts the “duality” of the mind represented by the character for sitting “座” (the “za” in *Zazen* 座禪). In the inner portion of this kanji, the radical for “person” (人) lies on both sides of the radical for “earth” or “world” (土). This figure eloquently indicates that while there is a “twoness” in the self, there is also a sense of “oneness,” as both sides cannot exist outside the very foundation of the self. The goal of casting off body and mind

⁶ Ibid., 15.

as shown here is to achieve oneness. The following description summarizes this point:

The character for “*za*” [sitting] illustrates how the disturbed, unsettled self, comes face to face in this world with its original Buddha-nature (its true form). To discover the Buddha-nature (the form of the original self) that resides in all of us, you should sit quietly every day for at least a brief period of time.⁷

In short, meditation is an introspective journey to find the Buddha-nature in oneself. As a result of this introspection, one meets their inner Buddha-nature and casts aside the attachments that weigh one down. A brief look at the Zen phrase in an accompanying image in the text – 独座大雄峰 (*dokuza daiyuhō*, “Sitting alone as a majestic mountain” – encapsulates the author’s point about meditation being a self-explorative process.

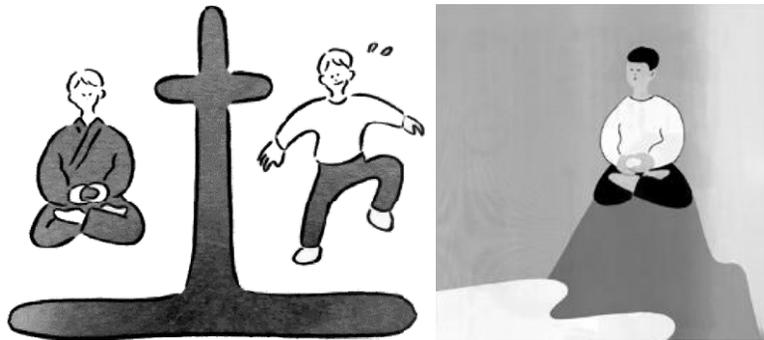


Figure 2. The character for “sitting” (left)

Figure 3. Sitting alone as a majestic mountain (right)

The reader can see in Figure 3 that the person meditating sits above the clouds and beyond the mire of the world below. Notice that he/she is sitting alone with no one else assisting or interloping. The person here

⁷ Ibid., 12.

becomes the majestic mountain itself: unmoving, tall, upright, and above the pettiness of the muddy world.

To make another comment on meditation, Masano uses a series of Zen phrases that detail the stages of sitting. The three phrases are: “harmonious body, harmonious breathing, harmonious mind” (調身, 調息, 調心, *chōshin*, *chōshoku*, *chōshin*). The sequence of these three words has a melodic tune to it, from the first phrase on “body” (身) to the last phrase on “mind” (心), thus implying the profound connections linking physical and spiritual realms. An interesting play on words happens here as the pronunciation of both characters is *shin*. This gives the reader the image, or better yet, the “sound” of the integration of the meditative process. Masano comments further on the relationship between the three components:

These three elements are deeply interconnected, so if you harmonize your posture, then your breathing will harmonize. Once both posture and breathing are harmonized, the mind will harmonize...Even if it is difficult to harmonize the unseen mind, you can harmonize your posture when you engage in seated meditation.⁸

This reminds us of the process of “casing off body and mind.” Once the steps of harmonization are completed, and mind and body are one, then they can simultaneously be “cast off.”



Figure 4. Harmonize posture, harmonize breathing, harmonize mind

While seated meditation is a significant component of the philosophy expressed in *Ichinichi Ichizen*, the insight into Zen phrases and

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

practices does not end there. The next section refers to another form of practice: copying and reciting sutras. As with meditation, the purpose and step-by-step process of performing sutra-copying are explained in meticulous detail.

Transcribing Sutras

Sutra transcription (写経, *shakyō*) is just as vital to the practice of Zen as meditation; so much is this the case that transcribing sutras is another activity that Zen monks carry out nearly every day at a monastery. This fulfills a similar purpose to meditation by helping the practitioner performing the task reach a state of “no-mind” (無心, *Mushin*). Masano’s guiding words on achieving this state accentuate its relatability to the average person by highlighting that one can achieve an extremely advanced level of focus even during daily work. He writes the following about no-mind:

In Zen, it is taught that no matter what you come across, when engaging with it you must realize no-mind (無心). Considering this, you have unintentionally thought about last evening’s drinking party while you were working, right? Or perhaps there are times when you are enjoying your hobby on your day off, yet you can’t get your mind off work the next day. However, everyone has had the experience of being in no-mind (無心)... You’ve likely had a time when you concentrate and engage fully in your work, complete it, and then think to yourself, “What? This much time has gone by already?”⁹

No-mind is not a special state that can only be achieved by monks adhering to strict practice and sitting in temples. Instead, it is an inner power that can be tapped into by anyone. This notion follows the earlier theme of meditation and finding one’s own Buddha nature within the discord of the world and the undisciplined aspects of the typical self. Sometimes one can even access the wellspring of Buddha-nature through single-minded concentration when completing a given task. Copying sutras is done to enter this state of mind by focusing intently on the writing of Chinese characters.

⁹ Ibid., 30.

Masano next explains the absolute focus that occurs when copying the sutras:

Sutra transcription is just copying sutras the way they are. Originally, this practice began with monks transcribing sacred texts, but today many people are engaged with the process because its effectiveness in calming the mind. It is said that writing a single character is equal to carving the body of the Buddha...When you are moving the brush, you can drift away from the mundane for a little while and reexamine yourself; the time you are copying the sutras will itself be a moment of tranquility.¹⁰

The emphasis here is that copying the characters of a sutra is non-dualistic or unified in its sacredness and pragmatism. It is also noted that understanding the meaning of the characters is not as important as the act of copying. The very movement of the brush sliding across the paper engages your mind as it purposefully concentrates on the strokes, curves, and balance of writing the characters. This becomes another form of “walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.”

No-mind is connected to the everyday application of sutra-copying that offers a respite from overstimulated thinking and stress. The strict guidelines on how to ritualize the process means it is far from merely setting down a piece of paper to write. Masano instructs for preparing to copy sutras:

Wash your hands, rinse your mouth, and cleanse yourself. Bring your hands together and bow deeply, recite that day's entire sutra passage, or the single character you will copy...Harmonize your breathing while you neatly copy character by character. Once you finish writing, check for any incorrect or missing characters. If there are any incorrect or missing characters, write a (‘) to the right side and write the character in a blank space, or at the end of the character line. Recite the Parinama (transfer of merit). Place your hands together and bow deeply.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., 32.

¹¹ Ibid., 33.

In Zen, “temple work” (作務, cleaning and other chores), is one of the most important things. “Cleaning first, devotion second” is a Zen phrase demonstrating that, as a person who aspires to the path of the Buddha, you place “temple work” above all important “devotional intentions” (信心). Cleaning is not just a matter of tidying up a place, it is also the act of wiping away the mind free of dust and debris or worldly desires.¹²

Temple work is another part of “practice” and is taken very seriously by the monastic community. Its purpose is to clean at once physical and spiritual space. More importantly, before practitioners consider the abstract notion of devotion, they must first commit to acting concretely in the everyday world.

In the Zen temple setting, the latrine (東司, *tōsu*), bathroom (浴司, *yōsu*), and the monk’s hall (僧堂, *sōdō*), are all categorized as part of the “3 silent dojos” (三黙道場, *sanmoku dōjō*). Therefore, it can be surmised that the seemingly unimportant peripheral places for washing up or sleeping are just as significant as what is considered the central buildings in a complex, such as the buddha hall or dharma hall where lectures and rituals are held. To explain the importance of this in a normal home setting, Masano comments on how the opportunity to clean one’s own washroom as indispensable:

In today’s average homes, I think that there are not many places that are cleaned with a wet dust cloth. The toilet is one of those “precious” places where you can do this. Polish the floor thoroughly and conscientiously and thus polish your mind completely. Every time you use the toilet, check for any stains on the seat and dust on the floor. If you keep the area clean, the person who uses it next will naturally pay attention to how they should maintain it.¹³

Despite being an unseemly location (the Japanese suggests the euphemisms, “eastern office” or *tōsu* and “wash office” or *yōsu*), the bathroom is presented as an exalted space where one can wholeheartedly practice Zen. Another important aspect to note is that Masano uses the term “dust” (埃) in his

¹² Ibid., 46.

¹³ Ibid., 51.

explanation to signify the connection between the body and mind by evoking a wordplay. The literal dust that accumulates on the bathroom floor is swept away, while the spiritual “dust” is simultaneously polished and removed from the mind. Furthermore, the verb “to polish” (磨く) points to the Zen idea of eliminating the “dust” from the mind to reveal the “pearl” or the Buddha-nature of the true self. Cleaning, therefore, extends well beyond the tiles of the bathroom.

As with the other Zen activities, the philosophical explanation is accompanied by a practical everyday instruction. A guide on how to clean your living room, kitchen, Japanese entranceway (*Genkan*), furniture, and indeed every nook and cranny is also prescribed. However, the kitchen takes a special position and is highlighted as a “holy place:”

The kitchen is a holy place that deals with life. The things that we eat all have a life. Certainly, meat and fish do, but vegetables and fruits do as well. In other words, we receive life from other things for us to live. The kitchen where we prepare food is a place that deals with this precious life...If you are not putting away cooking utensils and leaving plates dirty, you cannot preserve the area’s holiness. It is also disrespectful to the life forms with which you are dealing.¹⁴

The comment on food points to the Buddhist respect for life from, even while accepting that meat and fish are often consumed. It also highlights to the usually obscure “holiness” of the everyday routine in the kitchen. In addition to this, the role of the cook in a monastic setting is highlighted to emphasize how crucial maintaining kitchen hygiene is:

The person standing in the kitchen is a special Zen figure called a *Tenzo* (典座, a cook representing a distinguished monk who has practiced extensively). The *Tenzo* keeps the area clean with meticulous attention to every nook and cranny.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 50.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Again, stressing the notion of “walking, standing, sitting, and lying down,” cooking clearly must be added to the list of sincere practices. We also see the applicability of the activities of monks to everyday life in the non-monastic realm. Notice that the characters for the cook (典座) transliterate into “ceremony officiant,” thus indicating the highly valued role of the chef and his cooking in Zen monastic practice. Turning back to the theme of practicality, Masano encourages readers to, in effect, become the *Tenzo* in the holy place that is their own kitchen.

A final and crucial point is made in the chapters on cleaning by focusing on the importance of gardens. The garden in Zen is explained as a place where one comes in touch with nature and appreciates life. It is also a space where one can reflectively contemplate on the self. Returning to the idea of harmonization and musicality, Masano, who is a professional architect and garden designer, comments on how rock gardens are constructed for people who want to have a garden with “nothing” in it:

In order to make a space with nothing, you have to put something in it. Scrape off all unnecessary things to the point of not being able to remove anything else. Then, finally, place no more than a few rocks. Look at the expressions of the rocks, then construct the garden while listening to the voice of the rocks. This is the mentality behind constructing “Zen Gardens.”¹⁶

This passage carries the spirit of minimalism, indicating that only the bare minimum is necessary for the garden. It is also important to note that the rocks are anthropomorphized into having “expressions” and “voices,” suggesting a connection between the “sentient” and “non-sentient” within the realms of existence. The rocks are no more than a reflection of the mind of the viewer, meaning that interpreting the “expressions” of rocks is simply reading the expression of the self and, in turn, reading into nature is, in a way, reading into the self of all beings. In other words, nature functions as a mirror for the condition of one’s mind. Further comments on the “expressions” of the garden are included by Masano:

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

What you feel when you look at a “Zen Garden” differs from person to person. It also changes depending on your state of mind at that time. Because each time you examine it, the garden changes its expression. Your mind is constantly stirring, and when the mind complements and resonates with it, that is when the space truly turns into a “Zen Garden.” This type of garden becomes “the true mind,” a place where you can look at yourself objectively. Gazing at a garden is like seated meditation.¹⁷

Here, we see a turn to words such as listening (聞く) and resonate (響く), which are used to describe the musical quality of crafting a garden. The song of the garden then harmonizes its rhythm with the “gardener’s” mind to make the garden a place of single-mindedness.

Moreover, the equivalency of gazing at a garden and meditation, as stated in the last sentence of the passage, is important. Returning to Masano’s first aim, which stated that meditation is an introspective process, we see this reemerge in the act of just looking at nature. A good visualization of “listening to expressions” is provided in the image of a monk contemplating a rock garden:



Figure 6. A Zen monk “listening” to the rocks

¹⁷ Ibid.

Once more, gardening and cleaning are tasks that anyone can do. The passage by Masano implies that the garden only becomes a “Zen Garden” when one’s mind harmoniously resonates with it. Therefore, as part of home-based practice, we are encouraged to remove all unnecessary things from the space around us as well as within our minds, while focusing on “polishing” every corner in accordance with its particular form of “expression.”

Conclusion

Ichinichi Ichizen is an accessible resource for gaining insight into the world of Zen and Japanese culture. It provides detailed explanations of important Buddhist terms, in addition to robust instructions on how to approach meditation, sutra transcription, and cleaning, while undergirding the spirit of Zen: that is, by imbuing every action from start to finish with a meditative focus.

To achieve this, Masano uses the iconic “one Zen deed a day” to familiarize readers with the methods of practicing Zen while simultaneously acquainting us with the religious pursuits of monks in a process that can be referred to as using “skillful means” (*hoben*) to attain enlightenment. *Ichinichi Ichizen* can undoubtedly be turned into a resource for studying the message and communicative power of the modern Zen Buddhist institution, as well as serving as an introduction to those unfamiliar with its tenets.

Appended Notes: Translation Challenges

Although *Ichinichi Ichizen* was written in a relatively simple and straightforward tone, there are many challenges for the translator. First and foremost, perhaps the most difficult component of translation from the Japanese language involves discerning the topic of a sentence and tracking its way throughout a paragraph or even an entire page. This was the case with this article and its occasional drawn-out sentences that are likely intended to “wrap” around the readers’ minds as they read through the text. Moreover, the use (or lack thereof) of pronouns in Japanese presents an issue when deciding which English pronoun to use. Another consideration with “pronoun-less” sentences is whether this deliberately implies a Zen notion of “it” as a designator for Buddha-nature or no-mind, or simply indicates an ordinary grammatical function.

Additionally, the translation of specialized Buddhist terminology is also challenging. While most Buddhist terms have already been translated and the lexicon is readily available for researchers, there are numerous terms that do not necessarily have a clear meaning in a specific context. This also

works inversely, whereby multi-kanji words are broken down into individual lexical components rather than translated as a compound to provide a better rendition. Another issue involves the omission of some words. In addition to the absence of pronouns, Japanese sentences also tend to omit verbs or are ambiguous as to their referent.

Long Japanese sentences that have an intricate syntax are a challenge because they vary from the grammatical order of English, so that a translator may misplace the subject of the sentence or where the verbs are directed. An example is a sentence on page 9 of the original text (translated on the top of page 119 above): “技術革新が進み、世の中の流れが速くなっている現代は便利になった一方で心が満たされない、心が騒ぐ、渴いている、という思いを多くの人が抱いているのではないのでしょうか?”¹⁸ This sentence places the subject (現代) in the middle, a descriptive phrase (技術革新が進み、世の中の流れが速くなっている) at the beginning, and the verb (抱いている) at the end. To translate such a sentence in a concise and readable way, it is essential to locate the grammatical components first and then rearrange the syntax to fit the English structure. While taking into account that the Japanese sentence order is usually subject, which sometimes implied rather than clearly indicated, object, and verb, the artistic liberties that the author often takes also need to be considered. Therefore, a “Zen-like” focus is likely needed so as not to get lost while both rendering and reading this type of sentence.

The need to recognize the tone and style of the author leads to another frequent obstacle: recognizing what pronouns are necessary when translating to English. One challenge is determining whether to use the word “you” or the more impersonal “one.” Initially, it seemed more appropriate to use the pronoun “one” for a more impersonal way to address the reader, as it suggests the “feel” of a Zen master giving a lecture. Yet, as the translation progressed, it became clear that *Ichinichi Ichinen* is tailored for the average reader and is less of a sermon and more of a conventional, interactive, and entertaining read targeting those who are not experts in Zen. Therefore, it seemed more appropriate to use the pronoun “you” in most cases, despite the fact that word あなた is used only once on page 3 out of a total of over 80 pages. Moreover, tracking the “you” or the “it” as the subject of the sentence is also a challenge that remains an essential part of translating with accuracy and consistency. A sentence with hidden pronouns is perplexing at first, but it can be translated with adequate contextual interpretation provided by the

¹⁸ Ibid., 9.

preceding and following sentences. An example on page 2 is the sentence: “悩みや迷いの中にいても、いたずらに心が騒ぐことなくどっしりと安心していられる。それらを乗り越え...”¹⁹ Without the context of the previous sentence, the part meaning “overcoming those (それらを乗り越え)” has no appropriate translation in English. However, by turning back to the previous sentence, it becomes clear that “those” refers to delusion and suffering as well as the uneasiness of the mind (悩みや迷い, いたずらに心が騒ぐこと). Special attention should be paid to the context of a Japanese sentence.

An additional challenge was balancing a holistic and atomistic approach to translation. In some instances, translating as a unit by highlighting the general meaning renders a proper translation. However, there are cases where this does not work, and a more detailed analysis of words and their meaning is necessary to properly convey the author’s message. One representative case was the phrase, 調身、調息、調心 (*chōshin, chōsoku, chōshin*); see page 123 above. The individual words in the phrase all have the character for 調える (*totoeuru*), which is usually used to mean to tidy up, to clean, or to put in order. Therefore, an initial translation was “correct body, breath, and mind.” However, this was not the best approach to this phrase, even if the translation made sense. After further investigating the origin of the character 調, it is evident that there is a musical quality connected to its original use in Zen. Some of the definitions are “tone, meter, and harmonize,” with the word harmonize being the most appropriate because it is applicable to the message that the three aspects are deeply interconnected.

The phrase “心のよりどころ” (*kokoro no yoridokoro*) presents a similar issue. If translated directly, it would be “the basis/foundation of the mind,” which can be understood as an erudite comment on the essential quality of the mind. However, understanding the meaning of the phrase as a whole provides a more syntactically appropriate definition, “something one can rely on,” which better fits into a paragraph speaking about a set of rules that one needs to follow. Even so, it can be argued that the author was trying to make a play on words using both the regular and Buddhist meanings.

Another example where the opposite approach was effective was with the phrase 法界定印 (*hokkai jōin*). This word is defined holistically as a “impression of reality,” but a clearer meaning can be drawn from the phrase when breaking down the compound and translating the characters

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.

individually. A more appropriate translation is, “the seal (定印) of the dharma realm (法界).”

Other Buddhist terms are also challenging. For example, the word 捨てる usually means to “throw away,” but in a Buddhist context, it indicates to “cast off” in a positive sense. Similarly, the word 塵 (*chiri/gomi*), which in regular modern Japanese means garbage or trash as well as dust, is strictly referred to by Masao as “dust” or clutter on the mind. Another Japanese word for dust, 埃 (*hokori*), and the compound “塵埃” (*jinai*), which means “dust,” are common in Buddhist texts and are also used to indicate “petty worldly affairs.” The challenge lies determining whether the author deliberately chose these words in the literal or Buddhist sense, or both.

For example, another word that has both a Buddhist and secular meaning is 醍醐味 (*daigomi*), which means either “the appeal of something” or “the Buddha’s gracious teachings.” In order to determine whether the Buddhist meaning or the secular meaning is the one being used, a thorough understanding of the context in the sentence is necessary. Again, it can be argued that the author purposefully chose words for both their secular and Buddhist meanings, playing a word game similar to the title *Ichinichi Ichizen*, which can be read as 一日一善 or 一日一禪.

Lastly, a key issue is deciding whether to add individual words or omit them based on the target language (in this case, English) while preserving the essence of the original Japanese text. For example, the phrase “この呼吸を繰り返す,” which would translate as “repeat this breath,” needs the word “technique” or “exercise” to make sense in English. To provide another case where this was important, the phrase “[~ながら]をやめ” is clearly understood in Japanese as “stop while doing,” but the direct translation may not indicate the full meaning a short phrase. A more extended translation such as “stop doing this while doing that” is a more appropriate way of capturing the meaning by adding words that are not in the Japanese version.

While the translation difficulties were indeed demanding, a translation project such as this is an invaluable opportunity to educate oneself on central Buddhist themes and topics, whether you are a practitioner or an academic. The mental somersault from Japanese to English challenges one to interpret words and phrases differently, and this is a useful skill to develop when approaching other translations, research, or even reading sutras. Such a project also becomes a meditative practice in itself. To better understand practical meditation techniques and the reasoning behind them, it requires the translator to tap into his/her interpretive, creative, and linguistic mind to construct creatively a personal and veritable expression of the self on paper.

THE JAPANESE/OKINAWAN DESCENDANTS IN CUBA: A PRELIMINARY VIEW OF TRANSCULTURATION

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Introduction

Although a considerable amount of literature addresses the contributions of the Indigenous, African, and European components of Cuban culture, little has been written about the Asian counterparts. Most documents available focus on the Chinese during the sugar boom but rarely on the Japanese and Okinawans. Okinawa, although part of Japan today, was once an independent state known as the Ryukyu Kingdom, colonized by Japan during the late nineteenth century. Rather than addressing them as one group of people, the Japanese/Okinawan distinction is analyzed here in an attempt to steer away from Japan's colonizing discourse, which has deprived Okinawans of agency, by grouping all people under a homogeneous umbrella. There are also cultural differences between Japanese and Okinawans that are crucial for establishing this distinction. This essay seeks to demonstrate the significance of the contributions of Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants to Cuba's complex socio-cultural mixture. It explores the preservation of Japanese culture in Isla de Pinos, specifically through the celebration of the Obon Festival to honor ancestors. By expanding on what Fernando Ortiz has coined *transculturation* or cross-fertilization as a main theoretical framework, my research focuses on establishing the role Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants have played and continue to play in this *ajiaco*.¹

The large gap in the social science literature and the new emerging opportunities in Cuba make it necessary to develop Ortiz's work on transculturation and use what has been written in the field of sociology about the Chinese to assess the revival of culture. The study of the traditional Japanese festivals, Obon, in particular, and the new emerging *otaku* (geek) annual festivals in Havana, will demonstrate that Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants have been and continue to be active participants in the

¹ The blending of European, African, Indigenous, and Asian ingredients is comparable to the process of making *ajiaco*, or Cuban stew, whereby minimal participation is granted to Asians in the process, and even less so, to the Japanese/Okinawan and their descendants.

creation of the Cuban identity. In order to place the lack of contemporary literature about Japanese/Okinawan-Cubans in context, the first part of this essay addresses well-established theories and historical approaches to the study of minorities, from transculturation to the constant use of an Orientalizing narrative, as well as some reflections on diaspora literature. Then, while examining these concepts, I summarize the recent scholarship on Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants in Cuba and their portrayals as challengers of the status quo. Finally, I situate my own research and discuss future ideas to further develop these theoretical frameworks.

On the Social Phenomenon of “Transculturation” and Its Importance in Cuba

In his book *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (1947), Fernando Ortiz describes the term transculturation as a process of “mutual cultural fashioning” and “the result of extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here [Cuba] and without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the evolution of the Cuban folk” (98). As proposed by Ortiz, the term transculturation is considered a substitute for “acculturation” – the transition of one culture to another – and became a way to differentiate the island and its people in a post-colonial anchoring in the Atlantic rather than in the Mediterranean (Tsang 2).

Like in the Cuban *ajiaco*, the literature has mainly attributed the Asian ingredient in this cultural mix to the Chinese and Chinese descendants living in Cuba, but minimal attention has been paid to other Asian minorities. Shortage of labor was perhaps the main pull factor that propelled the migration of East Asian minorities to Latin America and the Caribbean. In the case of Cuba, the Chinese were the highest in number and have been studied on numerous occasions from the sugar industry boom until recent times. Japanese and Okinawans were also attracted to the labor opportunities available on the island of Cuba, but the number of migrants was much smaller. These Japanese and Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants have contributed to the cultural richness of Cuba, yet no anthropological study has explored their impact as attempts of cultural revitalization take place. One of the primary objectives of this essay is to look at the processes that facilitated Japanese contribution to the *ajiaco*.

Martin Tsang writes about *sinalidad* to represent the Chinese and establish an opposition to *cubanidad* or “Cubanness” (Tsang 2). The Japanese/Okinawans were also considered the “others” and were often lumped with the Chinese, frequently referred to by the pejorative term

“chinos,” which further complicated the process. Perhaps the only time when there was a differentiation of these Asian minorities was during the Japanese invasion of Manchuria leading to World War II. Japanese imperial expansion into Manchuria led the vast majority of Chinese immigrants on the island to voice their displeasure with Japanese actions. The Chinese also appealed to the Cubans’ sympathy, making their differences as Asian immigrants clear, at least for some time. Other historical factors, such as the Cuban government’s declaration of war against Japan and incarceration of Japanese nationals and second-generation (*nissei*), played a role in this differentiation that lasted almost as long as the war. In light of the theoretical frameworks selected for this preliminary study, it seems that Ortiz’s *transculturation* and the persisting Orientalizing discourse surrounding Asian minorities find themselves at odds when trying to explain the Japanese/Okinawan phenomenon.

Patronizing Representations of “The Orient” According to Edward Said

Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, is “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience” (Said 1). According to Said, the Orient has served to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience (2). Said clarifies that far from being merely imaginative, the Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture (2). In Cuba (ex-Spanish colony), where racial identity continues to be a way of negotiating social status, Asians were labeled as non-white most of the time, yet this negotiation could be overridden by economic status. However, the literature of their descendants shows pride in their ancestry by marking the distinction from everything “Cuban.”

The further disconnection from Japan/Okinawa in embellished narratives of their homeland and culture contrasts with Ortiz’s *transculturation*. The primary sources of literature fetishizing the Far East continue to present Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants in contrast to what it means to be Cuban. After all, Ortiz claimed the *ajiaco* was Indigenous, African, and European, with some of these ingredients, especially the African, in constant negotiation of their positions. The premises of Orientalism are engraved in the literature Cuban scholars have produced. There is a tendency to fetishize Asian cultural practices as beautiful, foreign, and exotic. Although of tremendous historical value, the work produced in Cuba has portrayed Japanese/Okinawan cultural practices

through the nebulous narrative of Orientalism, albeit benevolently. The challenge of portraying Asian minorities in an accurate light is still very much present in the current literature as it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate between a commodified tradition and genuine cross-fertilization.

This interplay between transculturation and Orientalism is present in literature, for example, in Lidia A. Sánchez Fujishiro's biographical novel. As narrated by the author, "the last name Fujishiro denominates us all, regardless of the place we occupy in the family tree" (50).² Sánchez Fujishiro emphasizes the "otherness" surrounding Japanese and Japanese descendants by implying that the Japanese ingredient of her Cuban family would always distinguish them as "others." In her book, it is also explained that other Cubans opted to call them just Fujishiro, omitting the Sánchez altogether because of its "exotic" character (50). In the text, she mentions that although her ancestors were from Japan, they are a "Cuban family that is not afraid to flaunt its ancestry and adds with pride that it is such a mix what makes them diverse" (Sánchez Fujishiro 50). While there seems to be a purposeful claim to the Japanese ethnicity because it made the family special and different, the search for a transcultural identity drove the author to embark on a journey to reinforce her Japanese identity while also upholding her Cuban roots.

Latin American and Caribbean writers cultivated a specific type of Orientalism that fetishizes the Far East. Sánchez Fujishiro describes the people of Japan as tenacious, hardworking, and intelligent: "peoples that like the phoenix always arise from their ashes to achieve progress" (50). She takes pride in her ancestry as a third-generation Japanese-Cuban. Without knowing so, or perhaps on purpose, the scholar reinforced her and her family's status as "others" in Cuba. Like many Asian-Cubans, Sánchez Fujishiro claims her identity by adhering to a form of self-orientalization. This perception also shows the readiness of other Cubans to situate them as different, ignoring all Cuban ancestry and simply labeling them as "the Fujis."

Another example of the few pieces written by Cubans about the Japanese immigrants who settled on the island is a book produced by Rolando González Cabrera (2009). His work celebrates multiculturalism

² See Sanchez Fujishiro, *Un japonés en Santiago de Cuba: Una historia de amor* (Santiago de Cuba: Ediciones Santiago, 2013), 50. All of the citations from this book have been translated from Spanish to English by me.

with a heavy focus on history. González Cabrera briefly elaborates on the role the Japanese played in the formation of the Cuban identity. Curiously, he emphasizes the hard work and tenacity also mentioned by Sánchez Fujishiro. However, his contribution is significant because it mentions and provides examples of preserving traditions. Indeed, he stresses the importance of preserving the Japanese language and cultural festivals such as *matsuri*, a tradition associated with a successful harvest (González Cabrera 60). González Cabrera writes about Japanese-Cubans as an integral part of Ortiz's *ajiaco* since they maintain and contribute to forming the Cuban national identity. Nevertheless, it is unclear which contributions (besides their own condition as mixed individuals) specifically represent transculturation. His description of Japanese people and traditions, like Sánchez Fujishiro's, has a tone of admiration of them as "others," as something not typically Cuban.

Hispanic Orientalism

Addressing the Orientalizing narrative from Said's perspective alone would be insufficient to explain the Cuban case. Erik Camayd-Freixas defines Orientalism in the Hispanic world as "the formation of Latin American constructs of the Other and self, from colonial times to the present" (3). In subsequent works, Camayd-Freixas refines his approach to Orientalism from the perspective of the probable Asian origin of Amerindian peoples. He argues that the "degenerated" Asians and "primitive" Amerindians "were imbricated stereotypes conceived by colonialist discourses as an exotic continuum of otherness" (Camayd-Freixas 2). By linking the Asian and Amerindian and the degenerated with the primitive, the scholar argues that the traits of exoticism are perpetuated and transferrable. Camayd-Freixas also indicates that Latin American *modernismo* was characterized by its own veneration of the Orient compared with the European version (8). This, in turn, somewhat explains why many novels written in Cuba, even those biographical accounts, contain traces of this "benevolent" Orientalism. Hence, this particular approach was adopted because it "departs from the hegemonic paradigms to reconfigure the Orient in parallel with Latin America's own peripheral, uneven, and conflictive modernity" (Camayd-Freixas 8).

Sánchez Fujishiro's description of and reminiscence on Japanese paintings as something otherworldly is also explained by Camayd-Freixas's approach. Chinese and Japanese plastic arts and literary texts were influential in creating Latin America's Orientalist discourse and were "the

engendering sources of Modernist Orientalism” (Camayd-Freixas 105). This narrative has been prevalent in Cuban literary production: “Underlying the *modernista* creed was a rejection of Western rationality and their use of synesthesia is actually related to Eastern mysticism” (Camayd-Freixas 120). Thus, it explains the fascination with the Orient of Japanese and Okinawan descendants and Cubans themselves, whose literary productions seem more poetic than biographical at times. The work produced continues to emphasize the yearning for a land and culture completely disconnected from the Cuban reality. It is in this attempt to venerate the land of their ancestors that current narratives continue to emphasize “otherness.” By doing so, these literary productions reinforce exclusion as opposed to the inclusion of these minorities. Questions about the predisposition to embrace the Japanese/Okinawan ancestry and reject the Cuban counterpart come to mind. Some factors addressed later, such as the negotiation of social and economic status, may also play a role.

Labor and Asian Diasporas

In diaspora literature, two specific theoretical debates are worthy of attention. First, as Robin Cohen suggests, in labor diasporas, “instead of arising from a traumatic dispersal, a diaspora could be caused by the expansion from homeland in search of work” (57). This definition fits the Japanese and Okinawans who arrived in Cuba propelled by the opportunities that the sugar boom presented. Most Japanese/Okinawans initially arrived on the island following earlier Chinese migratory waves of indentured labor to meet labor shortages (Masaaki Yokota 91). Cohen proceeds to further clarify that if among these migrant workers there is any evidence of retention of group ties maintained over a period of time, a myth of connection to a homeland, and high levels of social exclusion in the destination societies, then a labor diaspora is said to exist (58). This definition of labor diaspora proves to be problematic when classifying the Japanese/Okinawans who arrived in Cuba.

Cohen utilizes the Indian indentured workers as an example of labor diaspora. Although the Japanese/Okinawans and other Asian minorities who arrived in Cuba searched for better economic opportunities, a few points deserve elaboration. First of all, the Japanese and Okinawans came from two different territories, as previously mentioned. Okinawa was known as the independent Ryukyu Kingdom, colonized by Japan in 1879. Only twenty-eight years after the colonization of the Ryukyu Islands by the Japanese did the first Okinawan migrants

arrive in Cuba in 1907. Masaaki Yokota explains that Okinawans were the largest group to migrate to Cuba, suggesting that Cuba had more exposure to Okinawan culture than Japanese overall (92).

These factors present a major dilemma when applying Cohen's definition of labor diaspora to my research. Principally, the myth of a strong connection to a homeland is invalidated. Okinawans had their own culture and territory before becoming part of Japan. Therefore, when applying the labor diaspora discourse, it is essential to recognize their differences to avoid falling into the colonizing discourse used by the Japanese themselves post Okinawan annexation. Another issue is the lack of differentiation between mainland Japanese and Okinawans by Cubans. If it was almost impossible for Cubans to make the distinction between different Asian immigrants, it was harder for them to separate migrants from Japan and Okinawa as different ethnic groups.

Additional problems arise with the labor diaspora theory when considering the Japanese and Okinawans who migrated to Cuba for other reasons besides labor shortage demands, such as wars or other types of conflicts. Although ultimately looking for a better life, they did not specifically form part of the indentured labor system. This category also includes those who used the island as a "back door" to enter the United States after the immigration restrictions imposed by the US Immigration Act of 1924 (Masaaki Yokota 92).

Similar to the myth of a strong connection to the homeland among Japanese and Okinawans, the strong retention of group ties regarding language, religion, and cultural norms is also questioned. Okinawans have their own language and cultural practices, although they speak Japanese and celebrate festivals like Obon. Because of the small number of immigrants that came from this region, compared to other migrant minorities, and because Okinawa is considered part of Japan today, it is helpful to address both groups as one migratory wave while always distinguishing between the two. It can be argued that a transculturation process may have happened within the Okinawan and Japanese diaspora in Cuba as cultural practices blended with elements of the destination over time.

Within the diaspora literature, a significant factor exists in the argument of trade diasporas in which Asian minorities, specifically the Chinese, are cited by Cohen as examples to study. When discussing the Chinese, Cohen affirms that "second or third generations became culturally localized and began to drop away old habits associated with the past" (89). The argument of trade diasporas seems inadequate when applied to the

Japanese and Okinawans since few of them worked as merchants, unlike the Chinese, and instead focused more on farming and day labor (Gardiner 55).

Lastly, Cohen elaborates on cultural diasporas by using Caribbean diasporas as a comparison. He suggests that at least three elements should be present: (1) there should be evidence of cultural retention or affirmation of identity (in reference to the place of origin); (2) there should be literal or symbolic interest in “return;” and (3) there should be cultural artifacts, products, and expressions that show shared concerns and cross-influences between the countries where the migrants come from and the destination countries (Cohen 144). Although his analysis was focused on Caribbean diasporas abroad, it can be applied when studying Japanese and Okinawan migrations to Cuba.

Even though no one particular diaspora literature fits these groups of migrants, combining several aspects of them all can be helpful when studying festivals and cultural practices. Using Cohen’s broad definition of labor diaspora as migrants searching for work, both Japanese and Okinawans in Cuba can be inserted into the literature. Although some aspects of the definition are invalidated by the “myth of homeland,” the strong connection of Okinawans to Japan, specifically, as well as to language and cultural practices, indicates that such a definition can still be used by treating each migratory group separately and identifying which of the aspects overlap or *syncretize* (as Cohen prefers to call it) due to the Japanese colonization of Okinawa. This concept can be further developed and linked to Ortiz’s transculturation by merging the Cuban element. Eliminating the distinction between Japanese and Okinawans (or ignoring Cohen’s suggestions) would not be the best approach, as it would produce an incomplete result due to the exclusion of certain cultural aspects. Besides the main challenges presented by each discourse, using Cohen’s imagery and applying it to specific groups is in itself problematic. Even so, the concepts provided in the book can prove to be extremely useful when intertwined with Ortiz’s transculturation.

Comments on Recent Scholarship

Some US scholars have taken the lead in elaborating on the cross-fertilization process found in the Asian-Cuban cultural mixture. Martin Tsang’s claim of Asian influence in Afro-Cuban religions was a breakthrough in the social sciences field. Cuban scholars emphasize otherness as a way to express mystery and uniqueness, inadvertently

separating these Asian minorities from everything “Cuban,” while US scholarship has written very little about transculturation of Japanese/Okinawan practices in Cuba. Some scholars have written about the Japanese presence in Cuba, but there are still gaps in the literature and more so in the social sciences. For instance, Masaaki Yokota mainly explores how the Japanese in Cuba differed from the Chinese migratory patterns, which were the product of the indenture labor system as well as the shortage of labor force in the early 1900s. His work is vital when studying the Asian presence on the island of Cuba. He claims that although both sets of Asian migrants arrived in Cuba to meet labor shortages, their cultures are completely different. Distinct cultural practices would then yield a different process of transculturation in the way they influenced the island’s socio-cultural dynamics. Since Asian minorities cannot be studied with a one size-fits-all approach, in future studies, I plan to address the cross-fertilization or transculturation that could occur between Japanese and Cuban culture.

The vast majority of the academic literature written on Asian minorities in Cuba is either a historical or biographical primary source, which does not address in-depth socio-cultural processes. Martin Tsang’s pieces on the Chinese-Cubans are the exception; however, he addresses another minority altogether. The small number of migrants from Japan and Okinawa is possibly the cause of the lack of attention paid to these migrant groups over the years. Nonetheless, the current organizations in Cuba that act as liaisons with Japanese/Okinawan governments have been re-educating a broader sense of community (Masaaki Yokota 101). Outreach has increased, facilitating the revitalization of culture.

Newly available technology and Internet access in Cuba will facilitate further cultural exchanges. It will be essential to explore the process of transculturation before and after this “revival” of culture. For example, the taiko drum, a typical Japanese musical instrument, was donated to one of the communities as an attempt to continue cultural heritage practices by using it in festivals. Scholars like Masaaki Yokota have been pioneers in writing about Japanese and Okinawan presence in Cuba, and their historical accounts have been comprehensive in their collection of information. But the process of transculturation, as researched by social scientists in these communities, lacks concrete examples. Masaaki Yokota employs this theoretical debate concerning transculturation as a closing remark highlighting the importance of these ethnic groups despite their small size. His utilization of the term, far from lacking development, is

rather an invitation to scholars from other fields to continue researching the social and cultural phenomena that have taken place and will continue to evolve.

Cuba's movement from the agricultural and industrial sector toward a tourist economy will represent greater exposure and cultural exchange (Masaaki Yokota 102). In effect, Masaaki Yokota claims that these official touristic encouragements have played a small role in developing a greater multicultural awareness amongst the younger generations (102). These claims and perhaps the fact that most of the literature on Japanese/Okinawan-Cubans has been produced in recent times call for attention in the social sciences field. Observation of these cultural practices, such as traditional festivals, and their evolution over time as Cuba becomes more open to the world, physically and technologically, provides an excellent opportunity for new scholarship.

Other scholars like Martin Tsang and Kathleen López have challenged Ortiz's tripartite definition of Cuban cultural heritage by emphasizing the contributions of Asian immigrants. The work that has been produced in recent times, including their own, still focuses on the Chinese. Because Cuba was associated with the production of sugar and the majority of indentured laborers were Chinese, every Asian migrant has been coined a "*chino*" (Chinese), as the Japanese have disappeared in the literature with no anthropological work conducted to assess how their traditions have influenced Cuban culture in general.

The central premise of this analysis is to establish, albeit with limitations, to what degree transculturation has occurred with the Japanese/Okinawans and how, if at all, they have tried to preserve their cultural practices. Although the work of Ortiz does not focus on Asian minorities, his contribution to the field of anthropology means that his work is relevant to my research. It is his analysis of the process of transculturation that I use to explore this topic as my main theoretical framework to fill the gap in the current literature. Because of the pioneering nature of this research, using Ortiz's theoretical foundation is essential when comparing it to the work conducted by other scholars as a way to break ground in this field.

Martin Tsang's studies of Chinese religiosity and syncretism are probably among the best inclusions of Asian minorities in the constructs of Cuban cultural heritage. In his recent publication titled "Yellow Blindness in a Black and White Ethnoscape: Chinese Influence and Heritage in Afro-Cuban Religiosity" (2016), he addresses the foreignness with which Asian

migrants, especially Chinese, have been studied in Cuba. Specifically, he emphasizes *sinalidad* (Chineseness) as a counterpoint to *cubanidad* (Cubanness) to argue for the exclusion of these migrants (Tsang 2). He claims that religion provided a space within Cuban society, where Chinese practices merged with the Afro-Cuban religions. I will attempt to determine if such a space existed for the Japanese and Okinawans. Tsang's work provides a framework of study to analyze how different cultural practices can merge into Ortiz's *ajiaco*, particularly addressing the exclusion of certain minorities and how important these have been to the formation of Cuban culture. Caution is necessary for my research because the Japanese/Okinawans and Chinese occupied different spaces within the Cuban ethnic landscape.

Although Chinese and Japanese/Okinawan migrants both went to Cuba looking for better economic opportunities, the cultural diversity of their homelands is completely different. Whereas China is more diverse in terms of minority groups, Japan is more homogeneous. This particular difference could mean, for example, that the Chinese would be more open to acceptance of other cultures, whereas the Japanese/Okinawans would be more reserved and tend to preserve their unique cultural practices. Okinawans, a minority group within Japan itself, present another dilemma. Okinawans were perhaps more willing to accept and integrate into Cuban culture than other Japanese immigrants who arrived on the island. Beyond these complexities, Tsang's work provides an excellent framework for analyzing the syncretism and cross-fertilization of cultures.

Kathleen López focuses on the Chinese, and her research has shed light on contemporary Chinese-Cuban cultural revival efforts. Tsang and López's approaches are useful when studying Japanese and Okinawans in Cuba, especially since the economic shift from sugar to tourism, the social and cultural dynamic "preserved" by the descendants of these minorities has changed. Also, López argues that projects of cultural restoration organized by "mixed" descendants of the Chinese "have left the aging native Chinese – who are actually commodified as part of the tourist circuit – as mere observers" (197). She claims that the government's attempt to promote international tourism has been criticized for being more of an economic than a cultural enterprise (López 197). Although the Japanese and Okinawan attempts at cultural revival are nowhere near as advanced as those of the Chinese community in Cuba, they may encounter the same setbacks. As cultural activities become more attractive to international tourists, the risk of commodification will increase. However, a

counterargument can also be presented where funds from the tourism industry may aid the revival of these traditions.

López further argues that “[e]ven third-generation descendants of Chinese in Cuba have created imaginative ties to an ancestral homeland” (166). Based on Sánchez Fujishiro’s book and Hispanic Orientalist theories, it is certain that the same has occurred with those of Japanese and Okinawan descent. Unlike the Chinese, when using this argument for Japanese and Okinawans, a careful distinction should be made between migrants from the main Japanese island and those from the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa). The literature talks about Japanese paintings, but which part of Japan exactly?

Masaaki Yokota’s use of transculturation already implies that a give-and-take of cultural exchanges has occurred between the Japanese/Okinawans and Cubans. However, it is worth exploring what specific cultural exchanges have taken place. Masaaki Yokota also reinforces how the Japanese/Okinawans – although much smaller in number than other migrants – contributed to the multicultural and multiracial mix. Though there are some publications about Chinese participation in the Cuban Independence Wars, Masaaki’s article is the first one that directly mentions Japanese/Okinawans. This contribution is significant because participation in the Independence Wars has been referenced extensively to negotiate Cuban citizenship, implying that if one is a patriot, then one is automatically Cuban. His essay highlights how overlooked the contribution of this ethnic group to the island’s history has been. Works like those of Martin Tsang, Masaaki Yokota, and Kathleen López have engaged and challenged discourses of citizenship. They have demystified the character of “otherness” and Orientalizing narrative surrounding East Asian minorities in Cuba.

Another major problem arises with the commodification of culture, as people begin to redefine themselves to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by these growing cultural enterprises. As López explains, the “native Chinese are only seen as an incidental economic benefit,” but the revival of these cultural endeavors and their economic advantages have become pull factors to draw descendants and individuals with prior Chinese identity (López 169). Undoubtedly, the same risks are present with Japanese and Okinawan descendants in their attempt to revitalize their culture. Even if not ideal, efforts to re-inculcate culture and identity will serve to re-connect the descendants with native Japanese still alive and Japanese/Okinawans abroad. Unfortunately, no first-generation

Okinawan is alive today in Cuba (Masaaki Yokota 102). Nonetheless, the connection with associations in both Japan and Okinawa can positively influence the native-descendants relationship, resulting in increased tourism, which, in turn, could also propel the funding and expansions of their descendants' cultural activities in Cuba.

Prospects for Future Research

Using Tsang and López's approaches to address the cross-fertilization of cultures, the inclusion of Asian minorities, and Cuban ideals of citizenship, my future studies will explore how Japanese and Okinawan minorities are key components in Ortiz's *ajiaco* from an anthropological theoretical framework.³ Overall, this analysis will provide a structure to address cultural diversity and inclusion from the perspective of the theoretical debates mentioned above and the relevant literature available. It will also reinforce an understanding that Japanese, Okinawans, and their descendants are not disconnected from Cuba but are essential contributors to the Cuban identity.

Another phenomenon that deserves attention is the emergence of *otaku* (Japanese for "geek") festivals in Havana, Cuba. Better access to the Internet and the opening of the country have allowed the Cuban youth to be exposed to the Japanese pop culture of manga and anime. The *Japan Times* reported that more than 1,000 fans of this fantasy world gathered in Havana to flaunt their cosplay of popular anime/manga characters. The article mentions that the *otaku* community is growing daily thanks to Cubans' access to Japanese television and media. "El Paquete," literally, "the package," is a service of recorded programs on a USB stick that can be acquired for a fee and is available weekly. The Cuban *otaku* have begun to adopt the cosplay traditions so characteristic of Japanese pop culture and have even created a community event to show their enthusiasm. As the Internet becomes more widely available and the era of smartphones and computers progresses, Japanese/Okinawan-Cuban interconnectedness becomes more complex.

On the one hand, tourism may increase due to the revival of Japanese/Okinawan cultural traditions, or cultural traditions may be

³ Keeping in mind the Orientalizing quality of the narrative established in the primary sources, I refrain from fetishizing cultural practices as much as possible by providing a detailed description of what I observe when I conduct fieldwork.

commodified to yield to the touristic demands. On the other hand, Japanese pop culture has influenced Cuban youth in an unexpected turn of events, and now festivals are held annually. Hence, the apparent emergence of these trends provides numerous opportunities for new scholarship in the social sciences. As Cuba becomes more open to global trends and embraces cultural diversity, future research will show significant changes over the years.

The research involving minorities' role in the formation of culture has continued to boom as our world becomes more and more globalized. Ortiz's transculturation or "mutual cultural fashioning" revolutionized the study of the clash of cultures. Specifically addressing the Cuban case, Ortiz compared the mixture of cultures to an *ajiaco* to describe not only its diversity but also its complexity. Ortiz, however, limited this cross-fertilization of cultures to the blending of the European, African, and Indigenous roots, leaving out the Asian ingredient in the creation of the Cuban idiosyncrasy. Asian immigrants and their descendants have generally been depicted as challengers of the status quo, never as an essential part of the creation of Cuban culture. As I have shown, the concept of transculturation is continuous and somewhat complex, and it is not easy to separate from the Orientalizing narrative surrounding Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants. Thus, when studying these concepts by overserving "traditional" festivals, there is an inevitable risk of reification of Orientalism. Establishing transculturation will further challenge ideals of race and citizenship, and by including this minority as an essential component of Ortiz's *ajiaco*, the constructs of *cubanidad* will also change.

Although the degree of transculturation is difficult to measure due to the complexities established earlier, my encounters in Havana with Japanese and Okinawan descendants demonstrated that the exchange of cultures is still very present in their everyday lives. For instance, while meeting with a family of second-generation Okinawans, the wife mentioned that she still uses Japanese cooking techniques to the best of her abilities. They also made clear their Okinawan ancestry instead of generalizing it as Japanese. The Japanese in Isla de Pinos also utilize farming techniques they brought from Japan and are recognized for the success of their crops. Therefore, the focus on Japanese/Okinawans and their descendants as integral parts of Cuban culture through the study of traditional festivals and elements of fusion amongst both cultures may provide an unexplored but rich field of research.

In reviewing the most recent scholarship on the Japanese/Okinawan diaspora in Cuba, my future study plans to fill in the gap in the current social sciences literature addressing the Japanese/Okinawans-Cubans and shed light on the important contributions of Asian minorities. Most of the research today is on the Chinese due to the large number of immigrants in Cuba. At the same time, the Japanese presence in Cuba has been opaque in the literature and more so in the social sciences. This study, then, will assert the importance of analyzing how the preservation of tradition and the recent emergence of *otaku* festivals are not completely divorced from one another but an indication of continuity. With more access to the Internet than ever before, young Cubans have felt compelled to adopt contemporary Japanese pop culture festivals, while older generations continue to uphold the traditional celebrations. This cultural revival may increase tourism; however, traditions might also be commodified to please such touristic demands. By highlighting the impact of these emerging traditions and what they represent to Japanese/Okinawan descendants in Cuba, my future studies will emphasize the dynamics of traditional and contemporary culture, particularly the influence of these forces in the everyday lives of Japanese/Okinawans and Cubans alike, as they present opportunities for these festivals to create a sense of respect and pride that reinforces Japanese and Okinawan cultural identity in Cuba.

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Book Reviews

Akihiro Odanaka and Masami Iwai, *Japanese Political Theatre in the 18th Century: Bunraku Puppet Plays in Social Context*. New York: Routledge, 2021. 228 pp. ISBN: 978-0367150624, \$47.95.

Reviewed by Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr.

Odanaka and Iwai have crafted a remarkable resource for students, scholars, researchers, and the casual Japanophile. Through close readings of individual *bunraku* plays within their specific historical contexts, the authors effectively frame the plays as enlightening products of their times, allowing the reader to understand both play and period. The book will have immense value for those engaged in the teaching and learning of history, theatre, theatre history, Japanese culture and literature, and Japan in general.

The volume contains a brief preface, followed by an introduction that presents the background and purpose, a chapter on the dramaturgy of *bunraku*, and eight subsequent chapters, each centered on a single play from the “golden age of *bunraku*”: 1703–1783 (9). Playwrights Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Chikamatsu Hanji dominate the volume, as they did during the period. However, other authors also state their purpose in creating this volume: “to make readable the texts of *bunraku*” (xvi). Not only do they succeed in doing so, but they do it cannily by analyzing plays already translated to English from other sources. Thus, *Japanese Political Theatre in the 18th Century* makes for an excellent companion text to volumes already published by Andrew C. Gerstle (*Chikamatsu: 5 Later Plays*, 2001), Stanleigh H. Jones, Jr. (*Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy*, 1985, and *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees*, 1993), and Donald Keene (*Chushingura*, 1971), among others.

The chapters on the individual plays are the heart of the volume, although the introduction and chapter on *bunraku* dramaturgy are invaluable in helping the reader understand the art form in the context of eighteenth-century Osaka. As the authors note, by 1748, the theatre district in Osaka had eight playhouses, only one of which was dedicated to *kabuki*. Six of them were puppet-based theatres. Histories of Japanese theatre tend to be Edo-centered as if *kabuki* was the major (and in some histories, only) theatrical form for the masses. Osaka, however, was dominated by puppet theatre, which, as the authors prove, is inextricably linked to Osakan history and identity. The plays produced during this period need to be read through that lens.

In the first close reading, Chikamatsu's *The Battles of Coxinga* (1715) is presented as one of several plays about the warrior Coxinga. In Chikamatsu's play, however, the authors observe that "the differences between Japan and China are repeatedly stressed," and the play itself is a meditation on the self-image of Japan in comparison to foreign countries (45). The play suggests that Japan was not as isolated as is sometimes indicated in this period. Fascinatingly, the authors also propose reading *Coxinga* "as a space opera," in all senses of the word, as exploration and heroic battles, all within an imagined and unexperienced (by playwright and audience, at least) space (42).

Subsequent chapters engage with the plays in context. *A Courtly Mirror of Ashiya Dōman* (1734) is read through its central character, an outcast, and serves as a means by which the audience may reflect upon social discrimination and class difference in historical and present Japan. The play is also significant for being the first drama to utilize the three-puppeteer model of jōruri/bunraku. *Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy* (1746) concerns the emperor, raising the question of the relationship between the Imperial court, the nobility, the military government (*bakufu*), and the commoners. The authors posit that the play demonstrates the "involvement of commoners in the power struggles of the nobility" (81) and, in doing so, gives the audience (themselves commoners) a role and stakes in Japanese history. Many of the *jidai mono* (history plays) involve the nobility and samurai. bunraku, particularly the genre of *sewamono*, advocates for the significance of commoners and merchants, making them equally worthy of involvement in a historical narrative. The 1746 play "talks about the relationship between the Emperor and his people" (96). *Sugawara*, the authors claim, writes commoners into the history of Japan, a fascinating and viable approach to that play.

Building from that chapter, the next one, on *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees* (1747), offers an alternative history to that of the *Taiheike* or the *Heike Monogatari* and "merges the nobility of failure, as symbolized by Yoshitsune, with the commoners' desire to participate in history" (101). In this chapter, the volume clearly reveals that it is not concerned with just theatre history but with framing history through the theatre. The link between the desire for commoners to "participate in history" and bunraku is also present in "Japan's national epic," *Kanadehon Chūshingura* (1748), the subject of chapter six, which Odanaka and Iwai pose as "a drama of the samurai as seen through the eyes of the commoners" (120). They also make a compelling case for seeing the play as a crypto-*sewamono*,

rooted in deals, honesty, and negotiations as much as, if not more than, bushido and loyalty. It is a play about “money, love and trust” (135), which puts it in the same category as most *sewamono*. Read this way, the play concerns the loyal retainers who behave very much like commoners, and conversely, it can be read to show that commoners also have honor and loyalty.

Chikamatsu Hanji’s *The Genji Vanguard in Ōmi Province* (1769), perhaps not as well-known as the previous plays, offers an insight into Osakan identity and attitude towards the Tokugawa Shogunate by narrating the story of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Local pride in Toyotomi, bunraku, and the history of Osaka come into play, offering a contrast to kabuki theatre of Tokugawa (or Edo) period. *Mount Imo and Mount Se: Precepts for Women* (1771), on the other hand, displays the growing influence of kabuki on bunraku, as well as Hanji’s fascination with rebels. In the case of this play, however, the rebels are women engaging in illicit love affairs. *Mount Imo* is “a political play in the sense that Eros is not given a proper place in the male struggle for power” (182). One would not call it a feminist play by any stretch of the imagination, but it does engage directly with gender politics and discrepancies at the highest levels of government. The final play is *Travel Game while Crossing Iga* (1783), Chikamatsu Hanji’s last great play and one of several about the period concerning the Iga vendetta. Unlike previous plays, in context, *Travel Game* suggests the absurdity of revenge and signals that the era of such “heroics” is ending. A brief conclusion ends the volume, and, like the rest of the book, it is well-written, insightful, and carries implications beyond the subject at hand.

Overall, *Japanese Political Theatre in the 18th Century* is eminently readable, engaging, and informative. It places significant bunraku plays in context while arguing for the importance of bunraku not just as a theatrical form but as a series of historical snapshots that help understand eighteenth-century Japan. I suspect the book will be welcomed by undergraduates, graduates, scholars, and researchers and will find a prominent place on the Japanese theatre shelf with other ground-breaking works that serve as excellent introductions to the topic and allow for deep reading of the material in English. Kudos to the authors for such a remarkable volume.

Takashi Horie, Hikaru Tanaka, and Kiyoto Tanno, eds., *Amorphous Dissent: Post-Fukushima Social Movements in Japan*. Tokyo: Trans Pacific Press, 2020. 244 pp. ISBN: 978-1920901851, \$41.95.

Reviewed by Yuichi Tamura

The Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, and the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident led to the emergence of social activism movements that have not been seen in Japan since the 1970s. This revival of social activities in 21st century Japan naturally attracted the attention of scholars interested in understanding and theorizing about collective action. *Amorphous Dissent: Post-Fukushima Social Movements in Japan* is a culmination of these scholarly endeavors, bringing together articles about various social protests in post-3.11 Japan written by authors from various disciplines, such as political science, history, and sociology.

Most importantly, this book introduces the concept of “amorphous,” originally used in natural science, to advance our understanding of today’s social movements. While the term generally signifies the absence of form, shape, organization, or unity (37), the authors use it to capture those features of post-3.11 social movements that are qualitatively different from the ones in the post-war period (1950s–1970s). During these critical years, when there was a significant upsurge in social movement activities in Japan, protests were led by established groups who headed the associated institutions, such as labor unions or student organizations. Recruitment and mobilization depended on preexisting status identities, such as workers or university students, and those who participated in collective protests were united under ideological and movement goals. But in the amorphous social movements, these conventional factors for protest mobilization do not exert the same level of influence and may even have a negative impact by making people steer clear of social protests. The analyses of post-3.11 social movements in *Amorphous Dissent* found that established leaders did not lead collective demonstrations such as the anti-nuclear power movement, that there were no hierarchical organizations through which recruitment and mobilization were undertaken, and that participants did not share any overarching ideology. Instead, protest participants were, as the authors put it, “an extremely random assortment of people” (5) from diverse backgrounds with a broad range of

motives to join the event without an official long-term commitment to it. The large-scale mobilization in the post-3.11 movements was made possible because of the “amorphous” nature of the protests.

Three editors of this book, Takashi Horie, Hikaru Tanaka, and Kiyoto Tanno, wrote the excellent Introduction and Chapter 1 of *Amorphous Dissent*. These sections introduce readers to “amorphous” movements, whose applicability is shown in case studies in subsequent chapters. Here, the authors claim that the recent series of amorphous movements emerged because Japanese society, in general, has gone through “amorphization” (27). The authors contextually explain the rise of amorphous dissent in terms of how Japan as a system is fragmented due to the end of economic growth, globalization, and denationalization, as well as cultural shifts in identity bases and human relationships. As people pursue more heterogeneous and fleeting lifestyles in a more fragmented Japan, it becomes difficult to form relationships based on “a single crystallized identity” (32). The amorphous nature of social movements today reflects Japan’s general social transformation.

In addition to this groundbreaking introduction of the concept “amorphous” into the field of social movement research, this book can be read, particularly by those specializing in Japan Studies, as an empirical research study of contemporary social movements reflecting the general cultural contexts of twenty-first century Japan. After presenting the guiding concept and the overall framework of the book in the Introduction and Chapter 1, each subsequent chapter provides an analysis of a specific “amorphous” social movement: the anti-nuclear power movement (Chapter 2), the Anti-National Security Legislation campaign (Chapter 3), the Amateur Revolt (Chapter 4), the anti-U.S. military base protest movement (Chapter 5), and the anti-hate speech campaign (Chapter 6). Each case study not only provides a reliable sequence of social mobilization that clarifies the applicability of the concept “amorphous” but also densely covers the Japanese historical background that led to the emergence of each campaign. Those interested in Japan will find the coverage and analytical commentary on recent protests extremely compelling and valuable.

Two issues are left underexplored, which may point to directions for future research. First, while this book is strong in analyzing how mass mobilization took place amorphyously, there is no full evaluation of

movement outcomes. The post-3.11 amorphous movements, such as the anti-nuclear power movement and the anti-National Security Legislation campaign, were successful in mobilizing mass participation, but they failed to achieve their goals. The authors mention that, in general, the very nature of amorphous movements – that is, their dependence on weak and loose networks for recruitment, absence of organized leadership, and the diversity of participants' motives – makes it difficult to sustain large-scale protests and to attain overall campaign goals. The authors, especially Takashi Horie in Chapter 3, also identify several achievements of these amorphous activities, such as raising consciousness about social issues and making protest participation more feasible for a much larger number of people. It would be more intriguing, however, if the authors provided an in-depth examination of why the amorphous anti-nuclear power movement did not succeed in preventing the reopening of nuclear plants and why the anti-National Security Legislation campaign in 2015 could not stop the passage of the legislation. Such an analysis would be valuable in practical terms since future protests amorphously mobilizing a significant number of participants can learn from these cases to map out how to use amorphous dissent to achieve campaign goals.

Second, as emphasized, the introduction of the term “amorphous” to characterize social mobilization is truly insightful. However, this book misses the opportunity to contribute to the theoretical developments in social movement research. How does this identification of an “amorphous” nature evident in contemporary Japanese social movements fit into or refute the existing theoretical models of social activities, such as resource mobilization theory, political process model, or new social movement theory? It is often the case in the social sciences that theoretical models developed in the study of a Western social phenomenon are applied to cases in Japan, only to find either that Japan provides another example to confirm the theories or that Japan is an exception to them. But the concept of “amorphous” seems to have the potential to reverse this trend and to open up a process of theoretical revision or addition in social movement literature. For this purpose, this reviewer wishes that the volume included a conclusion in which the authors would discuss how this idea of “amorphous” captures some features of social movements that previous theoretical models are not equipped to explain and,

thus, how it allows scholars to have a new framework to examine and analyze a variety of social protests around the world.

Overall, *Amorphous Dissent* provides an excellent analysis of post-3.11 social movements in Japan. It is rich in empirical information, and its conceptual anchorage in the introduction of “amorphous” is truly groundbreaking. This is a must-read for academic audiences concerned with the potential for mass mobilization in highly developed societies. This book is readable, rich in evidence, theoretically compelling, and valuable to any university course teaching Japanese society.

Araceli Tinajero, trans. Daniel Shapiro, *Kokoro: A Mexican Woman in Japan*. New York: Escribana Books, 2017. 172 pp. ISBN: 978-1940075471, \$20.00.

Reviewed by Raul Caner Cruz

The Western fascination with Japan has a long history and has seen its expression not just in the realm of scholarship but in literature as well. In the nineteenth century, famed Japanophile Lafcadio Hearn strove to describe the Japanese character – as he saw it – in his book *Kokoro*. That word, *kokoro*, is one of those terms which defy a straightforward translation: in anglophone terms, it may just as easily be thought of as “heart,” “mind,” “spirit,” or all at once. But Hearn was a European of mixed ancestry, and the Japanese *kokoro* he described was that of the revolutionary Meiji Era. In her own book of the same title, Araceli Tinajero provides us with a snapshot of the heart and mind of 1980s Japan. She does so self-consciously, as a Mexican woman whose love of Japan derives in no small part from how she finds herself and her country reflected in this far-flung archipelago. But just as Mexico left her imprint in Japan through Tinajero and others like her, Japan helped mold Tinajero into the woman and academic she eventually became.

Kokoro: A Mexican Woman in Japan is part travelogue, part memoir. Tinajero writes in a casual, conversational style, as one who shares reminiscences of their trip with close friends. Jokes, interjections, and digressions abound. Those looking for a detached anthropological work squarely focused on Japan may be disappointed. The book is personal rather

than objective, literary rather than academic. It is about Tinajero as much as about what she encounters, about Mexico almost as much as it is about Japan. For the right reader, this is an asset. How many books can the English speaker find that talk so extensively about the Japanese love for Mexican food, music, wrestling, or the Spanish language? Japan's relationships with the US, the UK, and Germany are well documented, but there is a subtle attraction to the Spanish-speaking world that often goes unnoticed. In her account, Tinajero cannot help *but* notice it: the Aztec calendar in Nagoya's Central Park is to her like a Mexican flag firmly and proudly planted on foreign soil. That sense of connection between Japan's *kokoro* and Mexico's *corazón* (in her usual style, Tinajero might point out the two words' loose resemblance) and unabashed love for her homeland permeates the entire narrative. For instance, hardly any praise of Japan or its people fails to be accompanied by a discussion about her own Mexican kinsfolk's equivalent but distinct virtues.

The book is divided into nineteen chapters, each covering a particular incident or aspect of Tinajero's life in Japan. All chapter titles are in Japanese, serving as a sort of cultural aperitif to specific anecdotes. Some, such as "Ikebana (Flower Arranging)" and "Yakyū to Sumō (Baseball and Sumō Wrestling)," should be self-explanatory even to those who know little of Japan. The likes of "Arubaito (Part-Time Work)" and "Katakori (Stress)" introduce somewhat more obscure concepts. Others offer more intriguing hooks specific to Tinajero's experience: "Ninjin to Tamago (A Carrot and an Egg)" tells of the typical diet of her Japanese roommates, who lived through the scarcity of World War II in Japan; "Akai Toyota (Red Toyota)" concerns a serious accident she had riding the titular car and the hospitalization that followed; and "Buta Mitai (You Look Like a Pig)" leads with a rude comment she received from a local doctor.

The order of the chapters is not strictly chronological. The book begins with Tinajero's original visit to Japan starting in 1981 and ends with her belated return in 2008. But the bulk of it concerns her two prolonged stays between 1981 and 1984, and in-between the organization tends to be by subject matter, e.g., the chapter on flower arranging is set in 1984, while the latter one on Japanese sports takes place in 1982. On a large scale, this structure reflects the stream-of-consciousness style with frequent tangents throughout the piece.

One of *Kokoro*'s greatest assets is its unexpected visual component. Photographs of Tinajero and Japan in the 80s are appended to several chapters to illustrate the preceding narrative. They enrich the reading experience in a myriad of ways. The author incorporates cultural tidbits such as the Japanese variety show *Waratte itomo* or *sumō* wrestler Chiyo no Fuji: But even by themselves, the array of pictures offers a sense of progression. The first set has the feel of tourism: Tinajero set against some Kyoto landmark, smiling at the camera. In later chapters, the reader will see her working for local enterprises, in a domestic setting alongside Japanese friends, or simply walking her dog in an otherwise nondescript scene.

Early on, Tinajero remarks that, though Mexico is her home, she found a second one in Japan. The photographs show as much in their own terse but eloquent style. They also reflect another theme of *Kokoro*, mentioned earlier – those places where Japan and Mexico intersect. One set shows Tinajero in various styles of traditional Mexican dress as she stands in front of the bold Japanese proclamation 世界と名古屋 (*sekai to Nagoya*, the world and Nagoya), on the occasion of the 1982 Sister Cities Fair (Nagoya, Tinajero's abode for most of her stay in Japan, had Mexico's capital as one of its sister cities). But compelling as these are, the book's most effective use of photographs comes at the end, where a final set provides a mostly pictorial epilogue to the memoir. While the text does not go beyond 2009, the pictures are not so constrained. In them, we see her in 2010 outside Nagakute's Takayoshi Museum of Mexican Art, a project from whose fruition she derived a great deal of personal satisfaction, as a lecturer on Latin America at the University of Tokyo in 2014, and even a 2015 Japanese-language feature by the Ryukyu Shimpo dealing with her academic work on Cuba. They show that not only is Tinajero's relationship with Japan far from one-sided, but it continued beyond *Kokoro*'s narrative and was alive and well as recently as 2015.

A discussion of the present edition of *Kokoro* would not be complete without discussing Daniel Shapiro's translation. Inevitably, a fair amount is lost in the transition from Spanish to English. Some readers may notice awkward or confusing expressions, but these are rare and minor issues. A greater loss is one of flavor and what could be termed authenticity. Shapiro does a good job of translating the casualness of Tinajero's writing, but not so much its Mexican quality. Bland English declarations substitute the colorful

Spanish originals: “como la tierra de uno no hay dos” (literally “like one’s land there isn’t two”) becomes “there is no place like home,” and the idiomatic “No manches” (literally “do not stain [it]”) turns into “You’ve got to be kidding,” which, while semantically equivalent, misses the local slang of the original Mexican expression. The translator can hardly be blamed for the resulting stiffness in some of the language used in the English version. After all, this is not Shapiro’s first time translating literary works from Spanish, and it is just these sorts of idiosyncrasies that are bound to frustrate a translator’s best efforts. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Tinajero’s original voice did not survive the translation process altogether.

Regardless, the spirit or *kokoro* of the piece remains intact. The past is a foreign country, akin to the proverbial river one may step on but once. In that sense, *Kokoro* is the chronicle of a lost world, written from a unique perspective. As Tinajero wistfully points out in the latter parts of her memoir, you *cannot* go back to Japan – not 1980s Japan, and certainly not *her* 1980s Japan. Too much has changed. However, it is still possible to experience it vicariously through accounts such as this one. And in our more cynical era, it does the *kokoro* good to read a story about international rapprochement and the sunnier side of our globalized world.

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