Digital Meijis

Digital Meijis

Revisualizing Modern Japanese History at 150

Meiji at 150 Project

University of British Columbia Library
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



Digital Meijis by The authors and editors is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Creative Commons License

Digital Meijis: Revisualizing Modern Japanese History at 150 is copyrighted under a **Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license (CC BY-NC-SA)**. This means you are free to **share** (copy and redistribute in any medium or format) and **adapt** (remix, transform, and build upon) this text under three conditions:

1. **You must give proper attribution**. Please also include a link to the CC license, and specify any changes you've made to the text. You may satisfy these requirements in any way you wish, except in a way that suggests the authors and editors of the original work endorse you or your use.
2. **You may not use this work, or your variation of this work, for monetary gain or commercial purposes**.
3. If you adapt this work, **please use the same license as the original work**.

This Creative Commons license applies both to the text as a whole and to the individual essays, front matter (the preface and acknowledgments) and back matter (the afterword and contributor biographies) contained within it. The license does *not* extend to the images in the collection, which have been reproduced by permission. For permission to reproduce individual images, please refer to their attribution statements.

Citing this work

Per the provisions of section 3.a.1.A.i of the CC BY-NC-SA license, when attributing this work, we request that you reproduce the following elements in your citation:

> *Digital Meijis: Revisualizing Japanese History at 150*. Edited by Tristan R. Grunow and Naoko Kato. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Library, 2019.

If you cite a specific essay in the book, please include the name of the essay and its author's name.

Edits, Preface, and Acknowledgments Copyright 2018 Tristan R. Grunow and Naoko Kato

Essays Copyright 2018 Naoko Kato, Radu Leca, M. William Steele, Gregory Smits, Kanaya Masataka, Tristan R. Grunow, Benjamin Bryce, Allen Hockley, Joshua S. Mostow, Miriam Wattles, Ayako Yoshimura, Yukari Takai, Eiji Okawa, and Ayaka Yoshimizu

Published by University of British Columbia Library, 2019. **Printed by** Simon Fraser University Document Solutions. UBC Library gratefully acknowledges financial support for this project provided by the UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF).

ISBN 978-0-88865-317-8

Digital Meijis

Revisualizing Modern Japanese History at 150

Edited by Tristan R. Grunow and Naoko Kato

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Library

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Table of Contents

Re-viewing Meiji via Japanese-Canadian Connections **| Naoko Kato** • 1

Competing Views of the World in Early Modern Japan **| Radu Leca** • 9

Apocalypse Now: An Alternate View of the Bakumatsu Years **| M. William Steele** • 17

The Ansei Edo Earthquake and Catfish Prints **| Gregory Smits** • 51

Reading Edo Urban Space in the Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku (Tokyo Rich Merchants Board Game) **| Kanaya Masataka** • 65

「東京豪商寿語六」から読み解く江戸の空間構成 **| 金谷 匡高** • 71

Ginza Bricktown and the Myth of Meiji Modernization **| Tristan R. Grunow** • 77

J. Cooper Robinson: A Canadian Missionary and Photographer in Japan, 1888-1925 **| Benjamin Bryce** • 85

John Cooper Robinson and Japanese Commercial Photography **| Allen Hockley** • 95

The One Hundred Poets in the Meiji Period **| Joshua S. Mostow** • 105

Meiji Daughters: Their Stuff and Fancy in Brocade Pictures, 1870s-1880s **| Miriam Wattles** • 115

A Glimpse of Meiji Kimono Fashion **| Ayako Yoshimura** • 125

Via Hawai‘i: The Transmigration of Japanese **| Dr. Yakari Takai** • 133

Japanese Culture and Language in the Prewar Canadian “Mosaic” **| Eiji Okawa** • 139

Associational Lives of Women in the Prewar Japanese-Canadian Community **| Eiji Okawa** • 153

“Exploring the Devil Caves”: Brothels, Sex Workers, and the Disciplining of Women’s Bodies in the Tairiku Nippō (1908-1920) **| Ayaka Yoshimizu** • 165

Contributors • 171

Preface

The 2017-2018 academic year saw the 150th anniversary of Japan's 1868 Meiji Restoration, an epochal political revolution that sparked Japan's remarkable modernization, dramatic cultural transformation, and rapid emergence onto the global stage. To mark this historic date, colleagues across the University of British Columbia in the Centre for Japanese Research, the Department of History, the Department of Asian Studies, the Asian Library, and the Museum of Anthropology partnered to present the UBC Meiji at 150 Project. Over the course of the year, the Meiji at 150 project convened over 60 scholars of Japanese studies from around North America, Japan, and Europe to situate Japan in global history and to interrogate the place of the Meiji Restoration in Japanese history, historical pedagogy, and cultural studies. All told, the Meiji at 150 Project reached thousands of individuals around the globe through its various events and initiatives, centering the study of Japanese history in the UBC university community and solidifying UBC's position as the premier institution for Japanese studies outside of Japan.

Digital Meijis: Re-visualising Modern Japanese History at 150 grew out of one aspect of this larger project, the Meiji at 150 Digital Teaching Resource. Curated and edited by Tristan Grunow and Naoko Kato, the Meiji at 150 Digital Teaching Resource and this companion volume were designed to present and widely disseminate research on the Meiji Period in a public format designed for easy adoption in the Japanese studies classroom. By pairing digitized materials and documents with historical narrative and interpretive analysis, the "visual essays" contained within encourage readers to review and rethink modern Japanese history through images. At the same time, thousands of digitized documents, woodblock prints, photographs, newspapers, maps, and other visual materials dating to the Meiji Period from across UBC's extensive archival collections have been collated in the Meiji at 150 Digital Teaching Resource and made freely available to scholars and the general public. We hope scholars looking for new illustrations and historical documents to introduce into their classroom teaching or research will find these resources useful.

Acknowledgments

Digital Meijis, the Meiji at 150 Digital Teaching Resource, and the UBC Meiji at 150 Project would not have been possible without the financial, technical, and personal support of many institutions and individuals.

The generous financial support of the Consulate-General of Japan in Vancouver, The Japan Foundation, Toronto, the UBC Faculty of Arts, and the UBC Development Office allowed us to involve nearly three dozen scholars of Japanese history, art history, photography, and literature from around the world in our various events and programs, from the public lecture and workshop series to the Meiji at 150 Digital Teaching Resource visual essays. Without this support, we would not have been able to invite the prominent scholars whose presence ensured the success of the Meiji at 150 Project.

The Centre for Japanese Research at the University of British Columbia and director Shigenori Matsui offered vital logisticial and institutional support for all Meiji at 150 events. Sue Choi and Ziqi Wang provided indispensable on-site support, logistical coordination, travel and accommodations arrangements, and publicity

efforts. Yoko Nagao managed financial matters, patiently processing scores of reimbursement requests and accounting for countless receipts and forms. Jacqueline Waite at North South Travel made booking travel arrangements for dozens of visitors to campus as smooth as possible.

The preparation of the Meiji at 150 Digital Teaching Resource presented new challenges and a new host of people whose contributions deserve much recognition. Nurlaila Jamil prepared metadata for digitized materials and laid the groundwork for the website.

The editors would also like to thank the following individuals in the UBC Library system for their assistance along the way:

Asian Library: Shirin Eshghi

Digital Initiatives: Bronwen Sprout, Eirian Vining, Larissa Ringham, Robert Stibravy

Rare Books and Special Collections: Katherine Kalsbeek, Krisztina Laszlo, Chelsea Shriver

Scholarly Communications: Leonora Crema, Stephanie Savage, Zachary Foote

Technical Services: Susan Andrews, Tomoko Kitayama, Anne Lama

Re-viewing Meiji via Japanese-Canadian Connections

Naoko Kato | University of British Columbia



UBC Library's *Meiji at 150* collection consists of woodblock prints, photographs, as well as hand-painted manuscripts. It compliments the *Japanese Maps of the Tokugawa Era* collection, which is a fully digitized collection that is used extensively in Japanese Literature, Art History, and History classes. The *Meiji at 150* collection provides us with a unique opportunity to consider how we teach and learn about Meiji Japan, particularly in a North American context. This is because many of the items pertaining to the Meiji era reveal much about Japan's relationship to Canada. For example, we have photographs from Taishō and Meiji, taken in Japan, by a Canadian missionary. We also have Japanese-Canadian photographs taken during the anti-Asian 1907 race riots in Vancouver, as well as travel posters advertising travel to Japan by the Canadian Pacific Railway. In addition, we have woodblock prints that were printed in Japan, that depict Japan's westernization and modernization.

Though all of these materials were produced in the Meiji era, they were created for a wide range of reasons, for difference audiences. The *Meiji at 150* collection makes it possible for students to examine these vastly diverse items together, and re-examine how Japanese and Canadian histories intersected during the Meiji era. For the purpose of this essay, I have divided the *Meiji at 150* collection into three categories; Japan's self depiction, Japan seen from Canada, and Japanese-Canadian, according to the three major perspectives from which the collection can be potentially examined.



Figure 1. Ikkei, "*Kaiunbashi Kawaseza no zu*." Source: University of British Columbia Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:5.



Figure 2. Hiroshige III. "*Echizen no kuni hōsho shisei no zu.*" Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L2:12.

Japan's Self-Depiction – woodblock prints of modern Japan

Kaika-e (civilization and modernization pictures), feature symbols of modernization such as bridges, railroads,

Western-style buildings (see Tristan Grunow's essay). In addition, ukiyo-e artists often consciously included Japanese motifs such as Mt. Fuji in the background with cherry blossom trees in the foreground, to emphasize Japan as a modern nation. **Figure 1** is a typical *kaika-e*, which highlights the financial district of *Kaiunbashi*, with the first Japanese national bank (*daiichi kokuritsu ginkō).* This building was financed by entrepreneur Shibusawa Eiichi, and was also called Mitsui-gumi building because of Mitsui family's funding. These woodblock prints aim to demonstrate Japan's strength of possessing both cultural traditions of "old" Japan, combined with Western technologies and knowledge. Woodblock prints in the Meiji era increasing became modes of historical recording and a means to inform the public on contemporary events.[1] **Figure 2**, from *Dai nihon bussan zue* (Products of Greater Japan), is one of a series of 120 woodblock prints depicting the economies and industries in Japan from each region, published by Ōkura Magobē. Japan held its inaugural National Industrial Exhibition in 1877, in Tokyo, and Hiroshige III published the series *Products of Greater Japan* to coincide with the exhibition.[2] The exhibition's aim was to survey domestic products through collection, display, research, examination, and ranking products, which was thought to lead to the promotion of local industries.[3] This went hand in hand with the main objectives of the Meiji government's "shokusan kōgyō seisaku" (industrial development policy), which was to "collect items from all over Japan, to categorize them, and to exhibit them to make known to the populace."[4] Not only were these prints used to highlight each region's industries, but also acted as a medium to transfer knowledge on technological advancements.

Japan Seen from Canada



Figure 3. "Canadian Pacific picturesque route by fast steamers and trains to Japan and China." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection. CC-GR-00016.



Figure 4. "Canadian Pacific cruises: information and reservations within." Source: UBC Library RBSC. Chung Collection. CC_OS_00203.

UBC Library's collection includes the Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection, which contains visual materials such as travel posters published by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The primary target audiences for, as well as the designers of these posters were British and American.[5] Both of the posters below that

1. Smith, Lawrence, "Japanese Prints 1868-2008" in *Thomas Rimer Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts*, 1868-2000, (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 6.
2. Masayuki Handa, "Foresight for Modernization: Roots of 'Monozukuri' Interpreted through Agricultural Materials, Technological Writings and Nishiki-e." *The Research Institute for Innovation Management*, Hosei University, Working Paper Series. 45 (October 2007): 37.
3. 松尾正人『日本の時代史２１明治維新と文明開化』（吉川弘文館、2004年）255ページ。
4. 浅野智子「大日本物産図会」と殖産興業政策」（『日本美術研究 (錦絵特集 論文編)』、2002年、18 – 32ページ）。
5. Mark H. Choko, *Canadian Pacific: Creating a Brand, Building a Nation* (Berlin: Callisto Publishers GmbH, 2015), 11.

advertise trips to Japan **[Figure 3 and Figure 4]**, feature a woman in traditional kimono, Mount Fuji, and a shrine. There are striking similarities between the Japanese women in these posters and images of the opera, Madame Butterfly, especially in the poster with the body of water in the background. Madame Butterfly, or Chō-chō-san, is the quintessential oriental woman who awaits for her lover, doomed for failure.

Another rich source is the collection of photographs taken in Meiji Japan by John Cooper Robinson, who was a Canadian missionary. One of Robinson's objective was to document what he saw during his daily life, living in Japan among the rural Japanese communities. One of Robinson's favourite themes was taking photographs of people working, such as the photograph of women thrashing wheat while taking care of the children **[Figure 5]**. There is a remarkable resemblance between John Cooper Robinson's photographs of women carrying their children on their backs **[Figure 6; for more, see Allen Hockley's essay]** and the Canadian Pacific Railway poster entitled, *Orient* **[Figure 7]**.



Figure 5. "Woman thrashing wheat '02." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. John Cooper Robinson Collection. RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-2681.



Figure 6. "[Japanese girls and woman carrying babies on backs]." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. John Cooper Robinson Collection. RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1620.



Figure 7. "Orient." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection. CC-TX-284-13.

Japanese-Canadian Material and Connections to Japan

Students can potentially draw connections between Japanese and Japanese-Canadian material by using multiple related sources from the *Meiji at 150* collection. For example, they can examine the *Products of Greater Japan* woodblock prints from regions where Japanese-Canadians came from. An example of this is the woodblock print of the Ōmi region, which is the current Shiga prefecture where the largest portion of Japanese-Canadians came from.[6] Shiga prefecture is well-known as the producer of Ōmi merchants, who paved the way for modern international trading companies such as Itōchū corporation. **Figure 8** features the Ōmi merchants shipping the mosquito nets, which was one of their prime products that they exported. In 1887, 20 percent (10,000 residents) of Shiga prefecture's population worked for the production of mosquito nets and linen, and one in five households sold their merchandise outside of Shiga prefecture.[7]

6. 末永國紀『日系カナダ移民の社会史：太平洋を渡った近江商人の末裔たち』（ミネルヴァ書房、2010年）34ページ。
7. 末永國紀、 47ページ。



Figure 8. Hiroshige III. "*Ōmi no kuni hamakaya yushutsu no zu.*" Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L2:2.

Figure 9, which depicts the fishing industry, is from southern Osaka (city of Sakai), which was not the region where the majority of fishermen who settled in British Columbia came from. However, the southern Osaka fishermen were rivals to the Mio Village (Wakayama prefecture) fishermen, who immigrated to Canada due to their loss of fishing grounds. From the seventeenth century, Mio Village fishermen began fishing in other areas such as the Kanto region (Tokyo and Chiba prefectures), beyond their local waters. In the Meiji period, they also expanded into the Osaka and Ise Bay areas. With improved fishing technologies such as modern trolling, came fierce competition between fishing boats, to which Mio Village fishermen lost to southern Osaka fishermen.[8] Hence, on the one hand, the woodblock print can be used to explain



Figure 9. Hiroshige III. "*Izumi no kuni Sakai no ura sakuradai narabini uoichi no zu.*" Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L2:11.

8. 谷奈々『和歌山の「アメリカ村」とカナダ移民』和歌山社会経済研究所、2008、 http://www.wsk.or.jp/report/tani/13.html（アクセス2018年9月9日）。

Japanese-Canadian immigration to Canada, whilst it can also be seen as an example of Meiji Japan's successful modernization.

UBC Library also has the Japanese-Canadian Photograph Collection, which spans in time from 1907 Vancouver Race Riot photos to the 1949 WWII internment camp photographs. The 1907 anti-Asian riot photographs were taken to document the damages caused by the riot, in order to assess the reimbursement costs **[Figure 10]**. They can also be regarded as evidence of racial animosity during this era against Japanese communities in Vancouver (for more see Yukari Takai's essay). Students can also contrast these Japanese-Canadian photographs against the first set of woodblock prints of the Meiji period, which emphasize Japan's modernity.

Another noteworthy visual source is the Japanese-Canadian newspaper, *Continental Times' (Tairiku Nippō)* advertisements **[Figure 11; see Ayaka Yoshimizu's essay]** which can be used in conjunction with Japanese-Canadian photographs. One of the photographs is that of Ōmi-ya Inn, which from the name indicates that the owner would have connections to the Ōmi (Shiga) region. It is possible to match the photo with the advertisement in the *Continental Times* and conclude that the owner of this boarding house was Morino Eiji. He was the first president of the Shiga's prefectural association, which was established in 1905 with approximately 300 members.[9] The advertisement then provides more details such as the fact that the inn also sold tickets to go to Japan, and also acted as an employment agent.



Figure 10. "Building damaged during Vancouver riot of 1907 – 461 Powell Street, $1." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Japanese Canadian Photograph Collection.



Figure 11. "E. Morino." February 8, 1908, page 3. Source: UBC Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Tairiku Nippo. PN4919.V23 T3 1989.

What is also noticeable in some of the visual records left by the Japanese-Canadian communities are the Japanese language material, which are often lost due to language barriers (see Eiji Okawa's essay on language and identity for related issues). It is also striking to note that there are visible connections with Japan, as can be seen in the photograph from the Tashme internment camp during WWII **[Figure 12]**. The photograph shows relief items shipped by the Red Cross through Shinwa-kai, which was an elected committee that acted as a liaison between the camp residents and the BC Security Commission.[10] The hand-written caption in this photograph notes, "from the home country Japan, relief goods," with the list of items including tea, miso, and soy sauce. They are to be

9. 松宮哲『松宮商店とバンクーバー朝日軍：カナダ移民の足跡』（サンライズ出版、2017年）43ページ。
10. Nikkei National Museum. Tashme 1942-1946 Historical Project. http://tashme.ca/camp-organization/

distributed in Tashme Camp in 1944, for 2,248 school-aged and above and 385 below school-aged. The vehicle is parked in front of the “Japanese office,” and the barrels of soy sauce and miso have a poster-sized label that reads, “relief items from Japan.”



Figure 12. “View men with horse and wagon at Tashme Camp.” Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections, Japanese Canadian Photograph Collection, JCPC_29_003.

In this essay, in order to reveal the intersections of Japanese and Canadian histories, I have chosen to examine the various archival collections together, under the umbrella of Meiji. The multiple perspectives presented through our collection of visual essays also cross traditional nation-centered boundaries and categories. For instance, the Japanese-Canadian Photograph Collection would fall under Canadian or Japanese-Canadian; Chung Collection under Chinese-Canadian or Asian-Canadian History; and the Meiji-era woodblock prints would be considered Japanese History. Our *Meiji at 150* collection lends us with opportunities to discover possible connections that may have been less visible under different umbrellas.

Competing Views of the World in Early Modern Japan

Radu Leca | Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives



Explore the maps used in this essay, along with over 500 additional maps and atlases, in the UBC Library Open Collections Japanese Maps of the Tokugawa Era digital archive.

A bi-dimensional map is necessarily an imperfect approximation of the three-dimensional shape of the globe, and so a world map centred on Europe is equally 'valid' as one centred on Asia. Given the propensity of humans to centre their spatial knowledge on their immediate surroundings,[1] this should result in an equal distribution of world maps centred on the place of origin of their authors. However, when in the 1980s the Parochial Views of

1. See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

the World study analysed thousands of maps of the world drawn by first-year geography students in universities across the world, it found that 79% of the maps were Eurocentric.[2] This is due to historical and cultural factors that include the adoption of the Greenwich-centred world map as standard in 1884 at the height of the British Empire.[3]

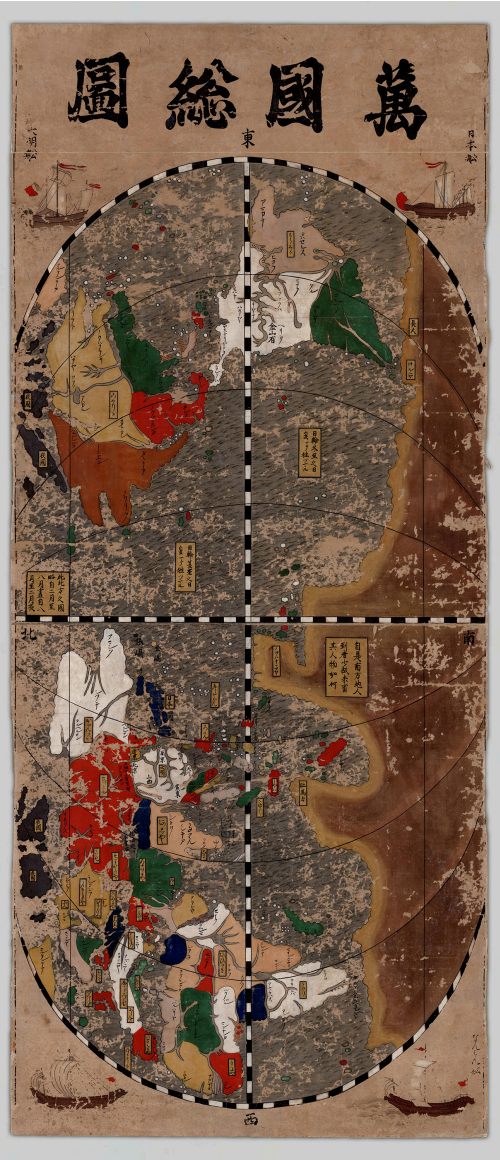


Figure 1. Bankoku sōzu 萬國総圖 (‘Map of All Nations’), late seventeenth century, colour and ink on paper, 113.6 by 55.8 cm. Images courtesy of University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

The sheer variety of the world maps included in that study reveal that our perception of the earth’s surface is at the same time subjective and shaped by the historical and cultural context. Such maps are not concerned with accuracy in the sense of corresponding to scientific data about the earth’s surface. They are however accurate in their portrayal of thought patterns. Maps of the past also constitute rich sources for understanding the history of thinking about space. But they are often dismissed as unimportant. This is because the study of maps in history has often been undertaken by historians of science or by geographers concerned with advances in topographic accuracy. This is true also in the study of the history of Japanese maps. In 1983, for example, Jacobs concluded her thesis on world maps in the UBC collections with the bleak conclusion that Dutch world maps did not have as large an influence in Japan as would be expected.[4] That conclusion was based on a teleological concept of scientific knowledge spreading from Europe outwards. What that conclusion did not consider was the parallel system of knowledge that was evolving inside Japan. It was made up of Neo-Confucian intellectuals, Dutch Studies scholars, and Buddhist monks. The *Rangaku* 蘭学 (‘Dutch Studies’) scholars received Western knowledge directly through access to and translations of Dutch books obtained mainly through the Dutch trading post on Deshima, the sole point of trade with only the Dutch. Confucian scholars, on the other hand, relied more on the precedent of a map of the world initially produced by the Jesuit missionary to China Matteo Ricci, or on maps brought in through other trade routes with South and Southeast Asia.

An alternative approach to the study of historical maps has emerged in the last decades, reconsidering the networks and mentalities that produced maps.[5] Here I would like to illustrate the usefulness of that approach for cultural history by using examples from the UBC collections. For brevity, let’s focus on two issues: the first is the variety of uses and meanings that the world map had in early modern Japan. To discuss this I purposely choose maps that do not fit into the received narrative of cartographic history in Japan. The second issue

2. Thomas F. Saarinen, “The Eurocentric Nature of Mental Maps of the World,” *Revista Internacional de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 9, nos. 1&2 (October 1999): 259, http://revistasociotam.campuscemir.mx/ojssociotam/index.php/SOCIOTAM/article/view/152
3. See Charles W.J. Withers, *Zero Degrees – Geographies of the Prime Meridian* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017).
4. Elisabeth Maria Jacobs, “The Red-Haired in Japan: Dutch Influence on Japanese Cartography (1640-1853)” (M.A. Thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1983).
5. See J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). For a recent application of new approaches to the history of maps in Japan see Kären Wigen, Sugimoto Fumiko and Cary Karacas, *Cartographic Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

is how the uses and meanings of world maps changed after the middle of the nineteenth century, when Japan entered a phase of rapid modernization.



Figure 2. *Shin Buritania 新猊利太怩亜 ('New Britannia')*, from *Gaiban yōbō zuga kon 外蕃容貌圖画 坤 ('Pictures of Foreigners' Features', vol. 2)*, 1855, colour woodblock-print, 18.2 by 25.3 cm. Images courtesy of University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

To understand the role of world maps in East Asia, a brief review of pre-existing developments is necessary. An important premise for thinking about geographical knowledge in Japan is the fact that for most of its history, the main point of reference for Japanese culture and thought was the continental culture typified by Confucian and Daoist classics and Buddhist sutras translated in Chinese script and other narratives. Until the sixteenth century, in Japan these references mostly related to an idealized Tang period. Its world view was that of a Central Kingdom surrounded by uncivilized nations. In other words, space was defined concentrically in terms of the civilization level of its inhabitants.

This world view was updated at the end of the 16th century by Jesuit proselytizers who used geographical knowledge for persuasiveness. This resulted most notably in a customized world map written in Chinese by Matteo Ricci, a version of which appears in figure 2. Although hailed by previous research as a progress in geographic knowledge, this map also overlapped neatly with the established concept of the Central Kingdom, and the pre-existing tradition of encyclopaedic knowledge. It was thus adopted as expressing the world view of Neo-Confucianist scholars, who came to dominate the official intellectual discourse in Japan beginning with the seventeenth century.

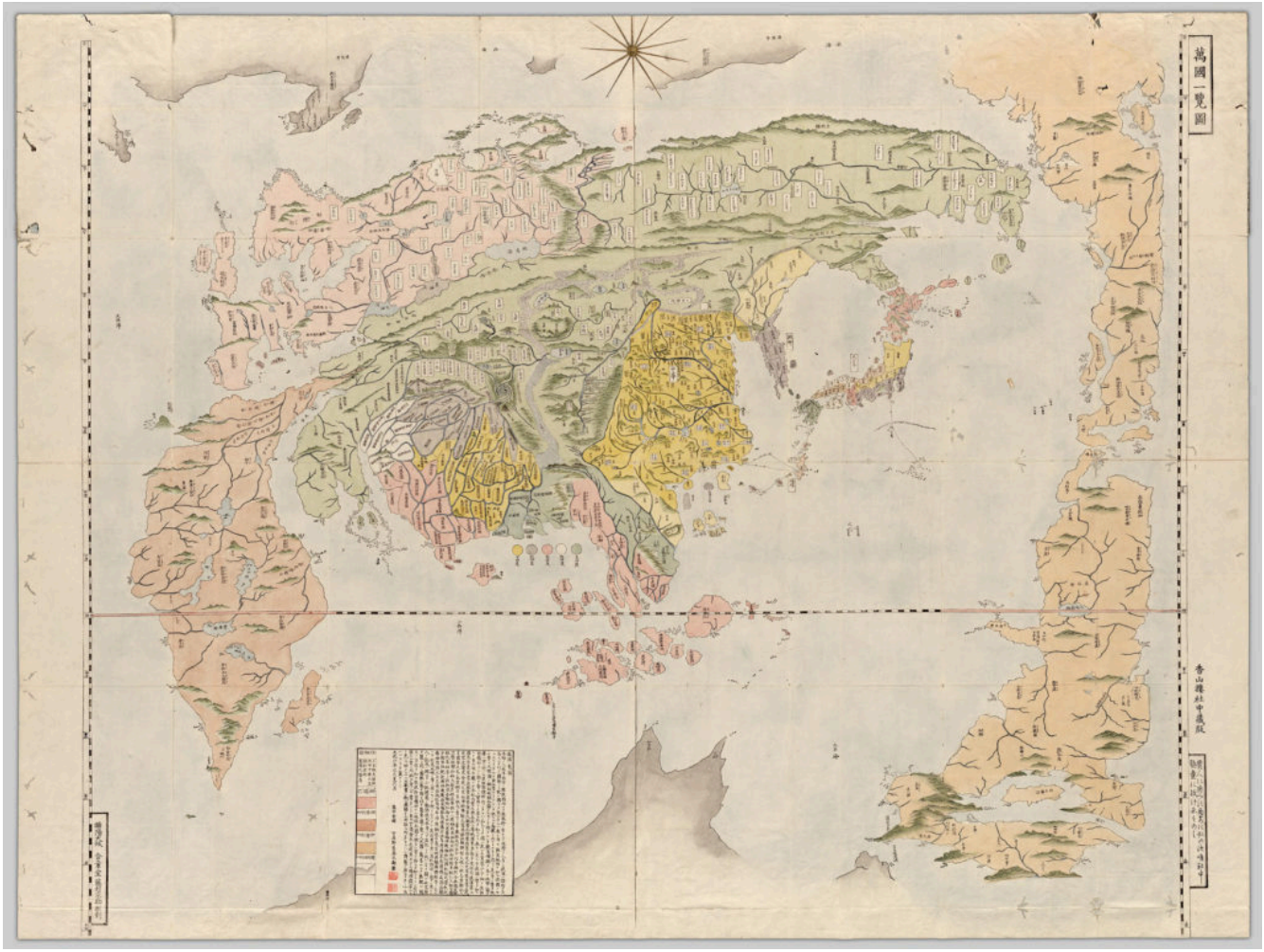


Figure 3. Koyano Yoshiharu, *Bankoku ichiran zu* 万国一覧図 (*'Map of All Countries at a Glance'*), 1809, hand-coloured woodblock print, 105 by 140 cm, Image courtesy of University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

In the latter frame of thought, geographical knowledge was organized indexically as information associated with specific lands and their inhabitants [**Figure 2]**. For example, an 1855 illustration of a country from the American continent was accompanied by the following text: 'Otherwise called Labrador, this country lies to the northeast of the United States, and on its eastern shore is a large trading post of Igirisu ('England'). They say that all the people's features are small: their hands are like that of twelve-thirteen year old kids, they are naturally clever, but when they have to count small objects they can't remember more than twenty. They don't have regulations separating the high from the low classes. Could this be the so-called *Kobito* 小人 ('Small People')? The climate is extremely cold, and they are missing many things [of use]. They are often fishermen. They are situated between 44 and 62 degrees from the North Pole.' The author was trying to insert an update to geographical knowledge into the pre-existing category of the 'Small People' that had appeared in Matteo Ricci's world map.

When it came to the actual Ricci-style maps, their use was reassessed when newer Dutch or French double-hemisphere projections became available at the end of the eighteenth century. A good example of a synthesis of various sources is a map of the world by a Neo-Confucian teacher from the small town of Kurashiki **[Figure 3]**. It mixes the toponyms from Ricci-style maps with toponyms from Buddhist world maps[6] and with newer data from Western maps such as Australia as 'New Holland.'

6. Such as Hōtan, *Nansen bushū bankoku shōka no zu* 南瞻部洲萬國掌菓之圖 (*'Map of the countries in Jambudvipa'*), 1710, woodblock print, 113.1 by 142.2 cm, University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. G3201 S2 1710 H6.

The map was printed in Osaka, but a text on the map spells out that it is ‘not for sale and shown only to pupils in our private school’. In the preface of the associated explanatory text, Koyano writes that the double hemisphere world maps were too difficult to understand for beginning students, for which he prepared a simpler view of the world at a glance.

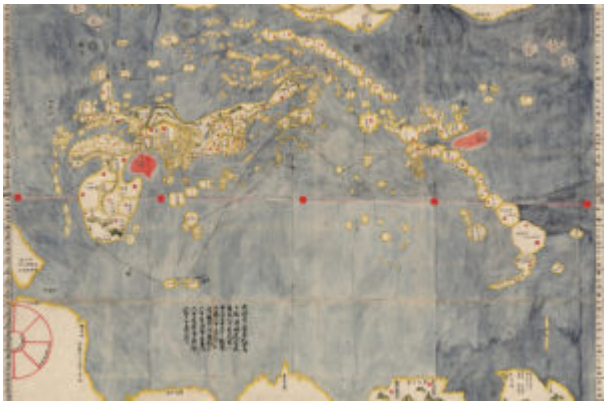


Figure 4. *Bankoku no zue* 萬國之圖繪 (‘*Map of All Nations*’), ink and colour on paper, 108 by 161 cm. Image courtesy of University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

Therefore, for Koyano at least, there was a hierarchy of views of the world, appropriate for teaching to different levels of intellectual formation. Koyano’s world map was a specific mix of knowledge intended for pedagogic purposes. For a pupil, this would consist largely of copying various writings, including maps. One could imagine it was not an extremely enjoyable activity. So it is understandable that a probably bored student omitted to copy an island to the west of ‘New Holland’, and instead transcribed only part of the caption, in the process modifying it slightly to spell ‘Pig Eats Lion’.[7][/footnote]

Other manuscript world maps from the same intellectual environment are further removed from the image of the world as we visualize it now. **[Figure 4]** But rather than dismissing them, we need to understand that they do not depict topography but rather mental connections that form a hierarchized topology, tied by unfamiliar routes. From this point of view, such world maps are snapshots of the mental landscape of intellectuals at the time.

A generation later, the range of knowledge on earth’s shape widely available just before the 1853 visit by Commodore Perry’s squadron is illustrated by the colophone of a copperplate-printed world map:

> *This is an egg-shaped map, and the land shapes lose their accuracy around the two poles. In the case of a double hemisphere map, the centre is compressed, while in a flat map the longitude lines widen the closer one gets to the poles. I would like the viewers to understand that and not think it odd.*
>
> *World maps are not just toys to know land shapes. They are necessary to know each country’s customs, products, and the location of places where brave men fought. That’s difficult for those without detailed knowledge. I made this map for everyone to use and for the convenience of children. If I’ll have time to make another map, I’d like to compile detailed maps for each country, to help with reading the history of the world.*[8]

Again, the Ricci-style ‘egg-shaped map’ is compared to the double-hemisphere map, but the breakdown of the flaws of various projections puts them on an equal par, with no political associations to Holland or China. This is followed by a clear exposition of the map’s purpose of disseminating knowledge. Although the study of the history of the world is mentioned, there is no reference to foreign sources as informing that knowledge.

7. Manuscript copy of *Bankoku ichiran zu* by Ueki Naoki, Nanba Collection, Kobe City Museum.
8. *一、此圖卵形ニシテ兩極規外ノ地勢殆ンド真ヲ失フガ如シ兩圓圖ノ中心縮小シ平方圖ノ經度兩極ニ近キ者延擴スルト同患ナリ請フ覧ル人怪ムコト勿レ 一、凡輿地圖ハ唯地形ヲ知ル為ノ玩物ニ非ズ其各國ノ風俗所産ノ品物ヲ詳ニシ又英雄豪傑割拠闘争ノ故蹟ヲ捜索スル等ニ要タリ是精詳ノ者ニ非ザレハ得難シ本圖ノ如キハ唯人ノ求ニ因テ童蒙ニ便ニス敢テ大方ノ觀ニ供ヘズ予復刀圭ノ餘暇フ得バ各國精密ノ分圖ヲ嗣成シテ世人海外ノ史ヲ讀ム一助ト為ン.*

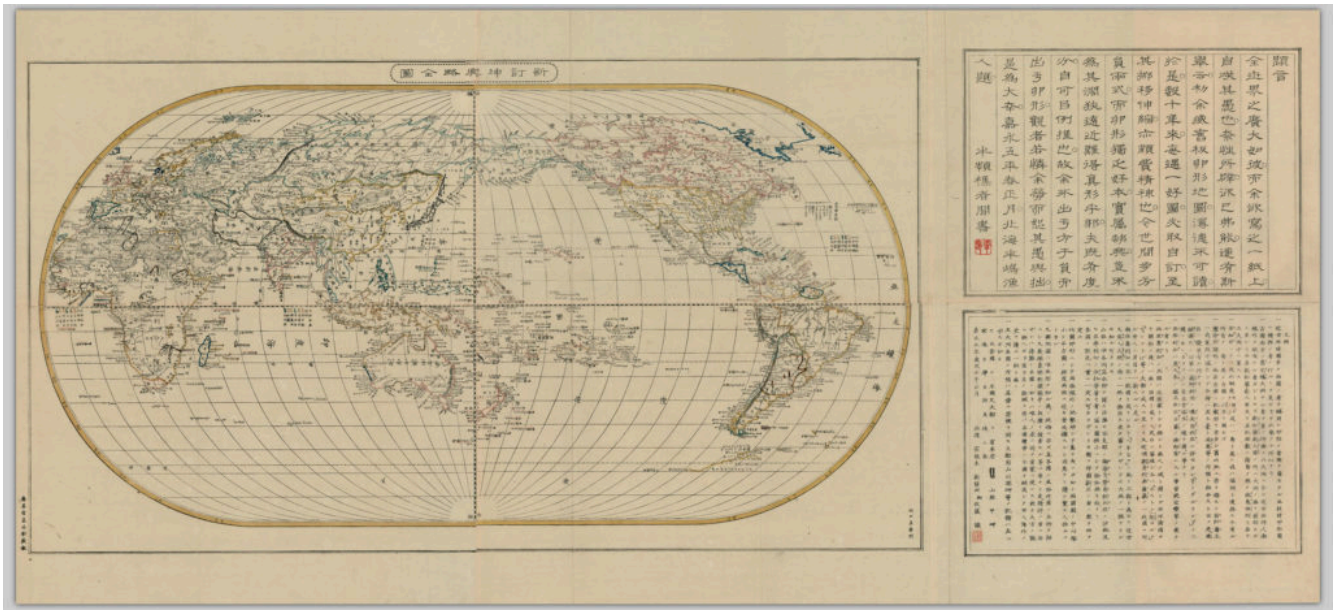


Figure 5. Shibata Shūzō, *Shintei kon'yo ryaku zenzu* 新訂坤輿略全図 (*'Newly Revised Map of the Earth'*), 1852, hand-coloured woodblock print, 35 by 69.5 cm. Images courtesy of University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

This attitude changed in the next decade: in 1860s Japan, world maps started to take on a pragmatic character. Due to the increased availability of travel outside the Japanese archipelago, world maps now showed lines of possibility and anticipation for Japanese readers **[Figure 6]**. Such copperplate-printed world maps were usually translations of European or North American maps. This was not new, but, crucially, the foreign origin of geographic knowledge was now highlighted: foreign pedigree became a selling point.[9]

The map in **Figure 6** is a translation of a Dutch map[10] which is a continuation of Edo period practice, but also marks the end of an era: this is among the last Dutch maps to be translated in Japan. From then on, British maps and the English language would serve as references. Tellingly, this map's prime meridian crosses through Washington D.C. This is also one of the first maps on which Japan appears coloured in red (on the initial map it was in lavender colour). Colour-coding was not standardized before this period, and the red colour can be seen as corresponding to the new flag of the Japanese empire, which was also standardized around this time and is featured prominently in the title.

Interestingly, the island of Sakhalin, which was disputed with the Russian Empire, is coloured orange, an intermediary hue to red. The same red is used to highlight a specific sea route leading from South China through the Malacca Straits, South India and the Red Sea with an overland section to Cairo (The Suez Canal would only be completed in 1869). This was the main access route for Japanese travellers to Europe. The 1864 Japanese embassy to Paris followed this route, and upon meeting the scholar Phillip Franz von Siebold, the vice-ambassador Kawazu Sukekuni gifted him a copy of this same map.[11] World maps were now used as tools of international diplomacy.

9. Copperplate was a novel technique in Japan. Some printers had done it in the preceding decades, but such prints were rather objects of curiosity. In the 1860s, copperplate prints started instead to be treated as serious objects, and the copperplate technique was seen as one of the technologies that needs to be taught by foreign experts such as Edoardo Chiossone. Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 168.
10. J. Kuyper, *Wereldkaart, naar en met de laatste ontdekkkings-reizen, opgedragen aan de to Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (Amsterdam: C.F. Stemler, 1857). The Maritime Museum in Amsterdam holds a hand-coloured world map by Stemler, dedicated to the firm that succeeded the Dutch East India Company, the Nederlandse Handelmaatschappij, viewable at http://www.maritiemdigitaal.nl/index.cfm?event=search.getdetail&id=101003313. It is probably through that route that such a map made its way to Japan.
11. Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan, ed., *Yomigaere! Shīboruto no Nihon hakubutsukan* (Kyoto: Seigensha, 2016), 144.

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, being conversant in the geography of the world was one of the prerequisites of being a modern citizen of Japan. But not all geographical knowledge came from Europe: a 1871 work about the United States, for example, featured both a ‘one glance’ view of the world as well as a double-hemisphere projection. It was essentially the reprint of a work written in Chinese by Bi Ziwhen裨治文, sinicized name of Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801-1861), the first American Protestant Christian missionary appointed to China.[12] At the back of the last volume is a list of works available from the same publisher.[13] One third of these titles are of maps or geography-related books, which speaks to the importance of this topic in the period. The list is followed by an inscription that translates roughly as: ‘On the left is a catalogue of newly published books brought by foreign ships, including illustrated explanations of the celestial and terrestrial globe, as well as various other books that must be read now. They are issued every month, and willing gentlemen from any corner of the land can consult them.’[14] What is significant here is that although there was unprecedented access to information about the outside world, this information was still often packaged in the writing format of neo-Confucian traditional knowledge. Even the audience was phrased in terms of the Confucian ideal of the superior person (*junzi* 君子). Coupled with the lack of standardized teaching manuals for the newly established education system, this led to a plurality of cartographic solutions between worldviews. This situation gave way after 1890 to a more nationalistic geographical discourse encouraged by the Imperial Rescript on Education. Manuals on geography would be increasingly standardized and would impose a new learning system that would eventually replace the neo-Confucian paradigm.



Figure 6. Satō Masayoshi, *Kankyo shinkan yochi zenzu* 官許新刊輿地全図 (*‘Newly Published Map of the Earth’*), 1862, copperplate print, 134 by 127 cm. Image courtesy of University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

Just like the mental maps of the world that began this argument, maps of all periods and regions show that the world is always drawn according to a particular person’s worldview as a response to other participants in his social network. When we consider the variety of world maps in early modern Japan, they show us that mentalities did not change so easily and immediately after the availability of Western maps. They configure a parallel history of visualizing the globe that needs further investigation, starting from other maps in the UBC collections.

12. Fred W. Drake, “Protestant Geography in China: EC Bridgman’s Portrayal of the West”, in *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, ed. Suzanne W. Barnett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1985), 89–106.
13. 博物新編、六合最談、全體新論、省嘗録、新刊輿地全図、同和解、鄭板橋詩鈔、日本沿海圖、萬國公法、西醫畧論、六大洲分文割圖、地球説畧、内外新説、西洋算法分數術、聯邦志略、婦嬰新説、西洋算法此例法.
14. 右之外舶来新板書籍天球地球圖解其他方今必讀之諸書月々發兌希四方諸君子多披閲.

Apocalypse Now: An Alternate View of the Bakumatsu Years

M. William Steele | International Christian University



Figure 1. Anonymous, "A Compendium of Events and Record of the Rice Market from 1853 to 1868" (*Ka'ei nenkan yori bei sōba nedan narabi ni nendaiki kakinuki daishinpan*), n.d., but perhaps mid-1868. Source: Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, ICU, *Poking Fun*, p. 7.

> *"What sort of day was it? A day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our times… all things are as they were then, and you were there."*
>
> —Walter Cronkite, *You Are There*, early television series

Introduction

In the middle of 1868, a woodblock print was published in Osaka that chronicled the years leading to the collapse

of the *Tokugawa bakufu* **[Figure 1; see full translation here]**. The print, entitled "A Compendium of Events and Record of the Rice Market from 1853 to 1868" (*Ka'ei nenkan yori bei sōba nedan narabi ni nendaiki kakinuki daishinpan*), is divided into 16 panels or boxes, one for each year between the intrusion of Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853 and the defeat of the Shōgitai at the Battle of Ueno Hill in 1868. Each box includes a list of major happenings for that year and a pictorial depiction of one of those events. In 1853, for example, the box includes a colorful depiction of a foreign ship, a visual reference to Perry's black ships. In addition to political events such as the assassination of Ii Naosuke (1860) and the procession of Shogun Iemochi to Kyoto (1863), the print depicts military skirmishes (1861, 1864, 1868), a tsunami (1854), an earthquake (1855), a flood (1856), religious festivals (1857, 1865), epidemics (1858, 1862), relief activities (1866), and fires, including the conflagration that destroyed the main keep of Edo Castle in 1859. Rice market data is also given for each year, showing an abrupt decline in the buying power of copper coins in the years leading up to fall of the old regime.

The *Compendium of Events* has not been the object of careful study.[1] It was published by Kintakudō in Osaka. The artist is unknown; the date of issue may be assumed to be 1868, perhaps before the change in era names from Keiō to Meiji on the 28th day of the 9th month.[2] Nonetheless, for its very anonymity, the print is an important historical document. As a cartography of time, it offers a glimpse into the way contemporary people understood and remembered the flow of events that led to what historians today call the Meiji Restoration. It is an alternative view of the bakumatsu years, especially interesting because it was compiled before the imperial side had fully succeeded in its attempt to create a new national government.[3] Moreover, compared with existing textual accounts, the testimony of images found in the print's visual narrative adds depth to our understanding of these dramatic years, replete with man-made and natural disasters and fears that the world that as people knew it was entering its final days. *Naiyū gaikan* (troubles from within, threats from without) described the reality of the age.

Every picture tells a story.[4] This visual essay inquires into which story, if any, is being told. Primary focus is fixed on the *Compendium of Events*, but reference is made to other contemporary visual and textual materials in order to more fully illustrate the lived history of the bakumatsu period. These images are good evidence of the heterogeneity of views and experiences that animated people in Japan in the middle of the nineteenth century, and allows us, as viewers of the past, to achieve a more vivid imagining of the chaos of those days.[5] *Meiji at 150 Digital Resources* website.

The layout of the *Compendium of Events* is immediately reminiscent of a *sugoroku* board game, with an obvious beginning (*furidashi*) and goal (*agari*).[6] In this case, the year 1853 is the starting point and the defeat of the Shōgitai at Ueno Hill is the end point: the final demolition of the old regime. The chronology of events highlighted in the years in-between seemingly lack a clear rationale or narrative. As with many contemporary accounts, one event follows another with no apparent rhyme or reason, no distinction between human and natural affairs, and

1. The copy of "A Compendium of Events and Record of the Rice Market from 1853 to 1868" (*Ka'ei nenkan yori bei sōba nedan narabi ni nendaiki kakinuki daishinpan*) translated and analyzed here is from the Japanese print collection of the Yuasa Hachirō Memorial Museum (International Christian University). It and other bakumatsu prints are included in: *Poking Fun at the Restoration: Satirical Prints in Late 19th Century Japan*, edited and published by ICU Hachirō Yuasa Memorial Museum, 2012. Other copies of the *Compendium of Events* include: Boston Museum of Fine Arts; and the University Library, University of Tokyo (*Ishimoto Collection of Earthquake and Disaster Prints*, no. 230). Osatake Takeshi made brief mention of the print in *Meiji bunka zenshū*, vol. 21 (Shakai-hen), Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha, 1929, pp. 40-41. The print was reproduced inside the front cover. Osatake noted that it was an early example linking changes in the market (the price of rice) with social and political change. See also note in *Meiji bunka kenkyū*, Third year, vol. 3 (section 4), April 1927.
2. Unless otherwise noted, dates follow the solar-lunar calendar in use in Japan before the switch to the Western calendar in 1873, given in the order of day, month, and year.
3. For a convenient overview of the bakumatsu years, see the introduction ("Domestic Disorder, Imperialism, and National Consolidation") in Anne Walthall and M. William Steele, *Politics and Society in Japan's Meiji Restoration, A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017), pp. 1-27.
4. On the use of images as historical evidence, see Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. Regarding visual narratives, Burke notes that "one of the most important consequences of printing images was to make it possible to produce pictures of current events and to sell them while the memory of those events was still fresh" (p. 141).
5. In addition to the collection of the Yuasa Hachirō Memorial Museum, the essay takes advantage of the University of British Columbia's
6. For description and examples of sugoroku board games, see Rebecca Salter, *Japanese Popular Prints: From Votive Slips to Playing Cards*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, pp. 164-182. See also the essay by Kanaya Masataka in this collection.

no indication of cause or effect.[7] But whether this represents a mentality "in which things *happen to* people rather than one in which people *do* things" is open to question.[8] On the one hand, the seemingly incoherent chronology recorded in the woodblock print, in both text and visual image, demonstrates how difficult it was for people at that time to make sense of the passage of time, so disrupted by events beyond their control. At the same time, however, the print reveals a somewhat ominous view of history—an apocalyptic confluence of natural, political, economic, and social disasters.

Indeed, some order can be imposed on what otherwise seems historical mishmash. Of the total of 51 events listed in the print for the 16 years between 1853 and 1868, 17 refer primarily to political affairs, 12 to disasters including earthquakes, fires, and epidemics, 8 to economic matters, 6 to religions festivals, 4 to welfare activities, and 4 to social happenings such as the display of an elephant in downtown Edo. Naturally, such general categories (politics, disasters, economics, religion, welfare, and society) are prone to much overlap; for example, the attack on the imperial palace in 1864 (the so-called Incident at the Forbidden Gate) was carried out by pro-imperial loyalists, but remembered in the print more for the fire that destroyed much of the central district of Kyoto. Nonetheless, what follows is an examination and discussion of the events recorded in the print by category, beginning with the political (closest to what is often considered the "usual" story) and ending with the attention paid to disasters (perhaps, for us, the most "unusual" story). Special attention will be given to the print's complex matrix of images that constitute a visual lexicon of the bakumatsu years.

The Political Narrative

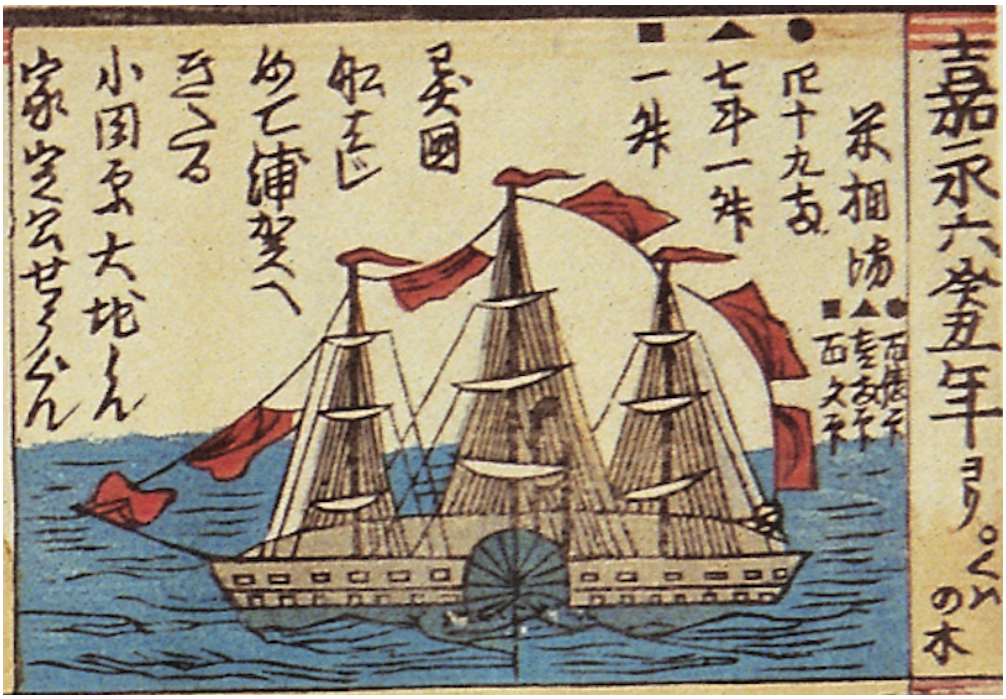


Figure 2. 1853 *(Kaei 6 Kichō) Kuwa no ki (Mulberry bush).* Foreign Ships arrive in Uraga (inside Edo Bay) for the first time. Detail of Figure 1.

7. On chronologies and graphic representations of times, see Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time: A History of the Timeline*, Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012.
8. Rosenberg and Grafton, quoting Hayden White, p. 12.

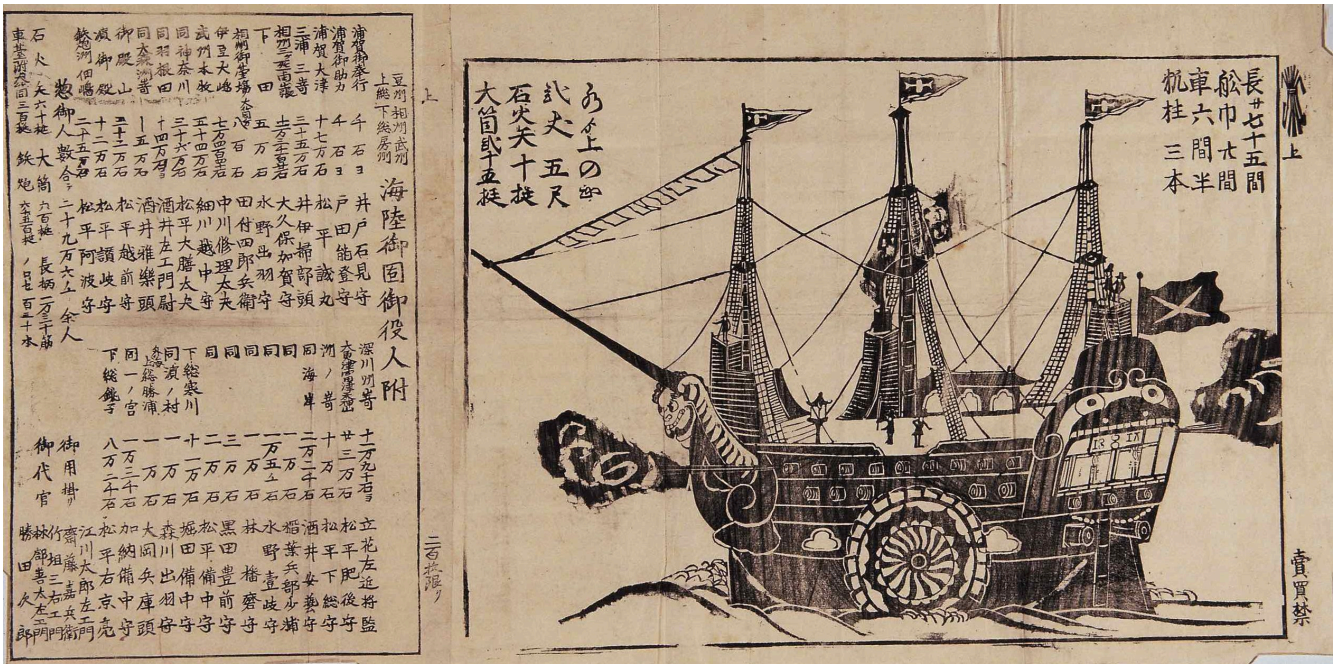


Figure 3. Kawaraban: *A Black Ship*, 1853. Source: Hachirō Yuasa Memorial Museum, Poking Fun, p. 2. Commodore Perry and his "black ships" appeared in Edo Bay in the summer of 1853 and once again in the spring of 1854, initiating changes that would radically transform Japanese foreign and domestic policy. Edo commoners were naturally curious to learn about these aliens who suddenly appeared within sight of their city. Over 500 monochrome woodblock prints known as kawaraban appeared on the streets of Edo for sale during this time. Although filled with inaccurate information, these crude prints gave the commoners their first detailed view of the world outside Japan. They also served as a stimulus for popular national consciousness.

Perry and his black ships were portrayed as the beginning of the end of Tokugawa rule. An American warship had entered Edo Bay earlier in 1846, but Captain James Biddle was easily turned away and the event left little impact on popular memory. A show of force by Naval Commander James Glynn to Nagasaki in 1849 proved successful in repatriating some 13 American seamen in Japanese custody, but this event was also quickly forgotten in both Japan and the United States.[9] Perry and his black ships were different. At full force, the 1853-54 expedition consisted of 9 vessels, around 150 cannon, and more than 1600 men; it was unprecedented in the number of men and munitions mustered in peacetime for the purposes of diplomacy. The illustration of the foreign paddlewheel steam ship in the upper right-hand corner of the print, the starting point, may not appear menacing **[Figure 2]**. There is no billowing black smoke, no visible cannon, and no indication of national origin. But it symbolized the reality of the foreign threat that had troubled Japan's political and intellectual elite from the early nineteenth century. Very likely it was drawn in imitation of the many black ship broadsheets (*kawaraban*) that appeared for sale on the streets of Edo shortly after Perry's arrival in Uraga on the 3rd day of the 6th month (July 8), 1853 **[Figure 3]**.

The popular crude woodblock prints were designed to exploit the curiosity of the Edo commoners as well as to allay their fears.[10]

9. Michael P. Onorato, "The Opening of Japan, 1849-1854: America 'Finds the Key," *Asian Studie*s, 6:3 (1968), pp. 286-296.
10. For a basic information on kawaraban, see Sepp Linhart, "Kawaraban—Enjoying the News when News was Forbidden," in Susanne Formanek and Sepp Linhart, eds., Written Texts – Visual Texts: Woodblock-printed Media in Early Modern Japan, Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005, pp. 231-250. For details on kawaraban and the impact of the "black ships" in 1853 and 1854, see "Goemon's New World View," in M. William Steele. Alternative Narratives in Modern Japanese History, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 4-18. See also John Dower's visual essay, "Black Ships & Samurai: Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan (1853-1854)," in the MIT Visualizing Cultures site. See also, "Perry in Japan, a visual history," Brown University Library Center for Digital Scholarship. Finally, for digital versions of late Tokugawa kawaraban, see the Ono Hideo Collection maintained by the University of Tokyo. This collection includes a broad selection of images related to political and international affairs, but also to fires, earthquakes, and floods and other events related to social and cultural history.

With the help of *kawaraban* and other social media, including word of mouth, news of Perry and the black ships quickly spread throughout Japan. Perry's visit was thus a national event well befitting the beginning of a new era. Reports of a major earthquake that struck months before Perry's arrival, in Odawara on the 2nd day of the 2nd month, 1853 and news of the appointment of Tokugawa Iesada as shogun, following the sudden death of his father on the 22nd day of the 6th month, during the height of the Perry crisis, added to this sense of a new beginning.



Figure 4. Opening of Yokohama to Foreign Trade. Yoshikazu, "Picture of the Landing of Foreigners of the Five Nations in Yokohama," 1861. The five countries, America, England, France, the Netherlands, and Russia, are each indicated by their national flag. Two Chinese are in the center of the picture; as in other treaty ports in Asia, these compradors were essential in facilitating trade with native merchants. Interestingly, the image focuses on the military rather the commercial presence of foreigners in Japan.

But the beginning of what? Aside from attention given to the appearance of foreign ships in 1853 and the opening of Yokohama to trade **[Figure 4]**, the *Compendium of Events* made little mention of international affairs.[11] Events relating to domestic politics were similarly fragmented. Shogun Iesada's death was reported in 1858 but the event was secondary in importance to the cholera epidemic that swept through Japan in the same year.

The illustrated chronology made no mention of the messy succession dispute that followed the death of Iesada in 1858 nor of the reign of terror, the so-called Ansei purge, conducted by the new shogun's chief senior councilor Ii Naosuke in 1859. But the dramatic assassination of Ii, on the 3rd day of the 3rd month, was depicted as the central event of 1860. Snow falls on banks of the moat surrounding Edo Castle near the Sakurada Gate as a group of 17 men from Mito and one from Satsuma cut down the man who had been labeled by his enemies as a tyrant **[Figure 5]**. While the terrorist attack shocked and fascinated the Edo populace, it would seem that another major event of 1860, the bakufu's mission to the United States to sign the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, was of lesser importance. It was not included in the chronology.

On the other hand, the outbreak of hostilities led by anti-foreign, anti-Tokugawa insurgents from Mito in the spring of 1861 in Shimōsa Province (present-day Chiba Prefecture) was depicted as the major event for that year **[Figure 6]**. The incident, absent from most present-day historical accounts, began on the 17th day of the 1st month

11. For images connected with the opening of Japan to foreign trade, see John Dower's "Yokohama Boomtown: Foreigners in Treaty Port Japan" unit in the MIT Visualizing Culture website.

of Bunkyū 1 (1861) in Sawara.[12] Ronin from Mito and elsewhere, proclaiming their desire to "revere the emperor and expel the barbarian" (*sonnō jōi*) attempted to extort money from wealthy merchants and farmers. The men were likely associated with the assassination of Ii Naosuke and with the murder of Townsend Harris' secretary and interpreter, Henry Heuskin, in late 1860 and later, on the 28th day of the 5th month with the attack on the British Legation in Edo. In other words, the hard-fought and bloody skirmish at Sawara denoted the beginning of what would become a prolonged civil war between Tokugawa and imperial supporters.



Figure 5. *1860 (Man'en 1 Kōshin) Sakura no ki (The Cherry Tree).* Battle at the Sakurada Gate on the 3rd day of the 3rd month (in which the chief senior councillor of the Tokugawa bakufu, Ii Naosuke, was assassinated). Detail of Figure 1.



Figure 6. *1861 (Bunkyū 1 Shinyū) Tani no mizu (Water in the Valley).* Outbreak of fighting by rōnin insurgents in Shimōtsuke Province. Detail of Figure 1.



Figure 7. *1863 (Bunkyū 3 Kigai) O-umi no mizu (Water in the Ocean).* Shogun Iemochi travels to Kyoto in the 2nd month. Detail of Figure 1.

The next political event listed and depicted in the print was the 3000-man procession that delivered Shogun Iemochi to Kyoto in the spring of 1863 **[Figure 7]**. The image shows the entry of the shogun into Kyoto, pulled in an ox-cart reserved for the nobility. Intended to awe the court, the shogun's first visit to Kyoto in 229 years instead further weakened Tokugawa prestige. The shogun was forced to bow down before the emperor and promise the impossible: to expel the barbarians. Commoners in Edo were confused by the sudden absence of the shogun, especially at a time when rumors of war with England and America abounded after the murder of an Englishman, Charles Richardson, by Satsuma samurai, and other anti-foreign incidents **[Figure 8]**. A major fire that engulfed the center of Kyoto, barely sparing the imperial palace featured as the event for the year 1864 **[Figure 9]**. The catastrophe was a result of the Forbidden Gate Incident (18th day of the 7th month), a battle that pushed Japan one step further in the direction of civil war. Despite the shogun's presence, Kyoto had become a hotbed of anti-foreign, pro-imperial activists. In the summer of 1864, pro-Tokugawa forces managed to expel the terrorists from Kyoto, but a group of sonnō jōi radicals from Chōshū attempted to retake the city. A contemporary account (*Genji Yume Monogatari*) complements the visual depiction neatly: Soldiers were "brandishing swords and spears, rushed hither and thither. … Some of the townspeople had fled, throwing down their things in the street. Lying prostrate here and there were men who had fallen down wounded and the roads were full of headless corpses. … The sky was lit up by the flames as if it were broad daylight, and the roar of the cannon never ceased. … Palaces of the great and dwellings of the common people came tumbling down with a sound of general ruin, like

12. The incident was reported in many contemporary accounts, including the *Kinsei Shiraku* (translated into English in 1873 as *Kinsé shiriaku*): "During the 1st month of the 1st year of Bunkyū the number of the rónins in Hitachi and Shimôsa increased to such an extent that they proceeded into Kôdzuké and Shimotsuké, where, under pretext of requiring war contributions for the expulsion of the barbarians, they extorted money from the peasants and tradespeople. The Bakufu ordered the house of Mito to arrest them." *Kinsé Shiriaku: A History of Japan from the First visit of Commodore Perry in 1853 to the Capture of Hakodate by the Mikado's Forces in 1869*, E. M. Satow, trans., Yokohama: Japan Mail Office, 1873, p. 17. The Kaei Meiji Nenkan Roku also includes details of the incident at Sawara, and of later disturbances caused by the Mito ronin. Ge volume, pp. 736, 742, 745, 747 (reproducing the Mino ronin manifesto), 767, 770, 773, 778, and 783 (on the ronin attack on the British Legation).

the falling of hundreds and thousands of thunderbolts. Heaven and earth trembled and quaked, until the end of the world seemed to be at hand."[13]



Figure 8. "Curing the Difficult Diseases that Confront Our World, 1863." Source: Hachirō Yuasa Memorial Museum, *Poking Fun*, p. 16. This "panic print" offers satirical comments on problems experienced by Edo commoners in 1863. It takes the form of a parody of a famous satirical print by Kuniyoshi: "A Marvelous Doctor Treating Serious Diseases" (1850). As in the original; a doctor and his assistants attempt to cure various ills of the day. In this print, however, the real doctor is absent and a substitute and his surrogates are called in to handle the caseload. The absent doctor refers to Shogun Iemochi who has left Edo for Kyoto. And the patients who seek help are cart pullers, porters, shippers, landlords outside of Edo and others who have suddenly profited from the mass exodus from Edo in response to rumors of war. Cart pullers, for example, complain of stomach troubles; they spent their sudden wealth on fancy food. Other patients, such as geisha and money lenders, seek help from sudden impoverishment. Two foreigners also seek help. One complains that he can't move forward or backwards because his feet are pointed in opposite directions. The doctor tells him that there is no cure. Another foreigner fears that he will be forced to leave Japan and never return. Again, no cure!

The *Compendium of Events* failed to mention the deepening civil war between Tokugawa supporters and its enemies, with Chōshū domain in the lead. The first campaign against Chōshū was launched in late summer, 1864, soon after the Forbidden Gate Incident; a second expedition began in the spring of the next year. The illustrated chronology for 1865, Keiō 1, focused instead on the breakdown of law and order in Edo, much of the unrest caused by economic dislocations, including the imposition of an extraordinary levy on the townspeople of Edo to cover the expenses of the expeditions.[14] Ronin insurgents were reported to have taken up residence

13. Baba Bun'ei, *Japan, 1853-1864, or Genji Yume Monogatari*, trans. Ernest Mason Satow (Tokyo: Naigai Shuppan Kyōkai, 1905) as excerpted in Walthall and Steele, *Politics and Society in Japan's Meiji Restoration*, pp. 101-103.
14. The reactions of urban commoners to the breakdown in public order as described in graffiti, popular songs, and irreverent verse are included

in the vacant Ogasawara mansion in Honjo, on the east bank of the Sumida River, just north of Ryogoku. Moreover, two *gokumon* were set up at Ryōgoku Hirokōji for the public display of severed heads—primarily those of captured *sonnō jōi* provocateurs.[15] This did little, however, to restore popular confidence in the ability of the Tokugawa government to bring back the peace, stability and prosperity of the recent past.



Figure 9. *1864 (Ganji 1 Kasshi) Umi no kane (Gold in the Sea).* Great fire in Kyoto between the 15th day of the 7th month and the 20th day; many people die. Detail of Figure 1.

The next year, 1866, proved even worse: bankruptcy, robbery and murder, and ultimately rioting in the streets of Edo dominated the news for the year. Inflammatory posters pointed the finger at the bakufu for failing to come to the aid of the people: “Due to High Prices, Goods are in Short Supply, and Able Officials are All Sold Out.”[16] A change in leadership, not reported in the woodblock print chronology, failed to restore popular trust in government.

Shogun Iemochi died in Osaka on the 20th day of the 7th month, 1866, just as mass rioting was breaking out in the hinterland north of Edo. He was replaced by Yoshinobu, destined to be the last of the Tokugawa shoguns. At the very end of Keio 2, on the 25th day of the 12th month (January 30, 1867), Emperor Kōmei passed from the scene, replaced by the young prince Mutsuhito, the future Emperor Meiji. In effect the stage was set for the final act of the bakumatsu drama.

In 1867, police patrolled the streets of Edo and special guard stations were set up to keep insurgents out the city **[Figure 10]**. The commoners were not impressed. One inflammatory poster criticized the peacekeeping squads as inept: “None of the rioters were arrested, only the spectators were caught.”[17] At least the rice harvest, for the first time in many years, was bountiful. Nonetheless, events at the end of the year only confirmed the worst fears of the Edo commoners: on the 14th day of the 10th month (November 9) Yoshinobu decided to return governing authority to the emperor (*taisei hōkan*), and later on the 9th day of the 12th month (January 3, 1868), troops from Satsuma, Echizen, Tosa and Hizen seized the imperial palace in Kyoto, abolished the office of shogun,

in Motoyama Yukihiko, “Patterns of Thought and Action of the Common People during the Bakumatsu and Restoration Epoch,” in *Proliferating Talent: Essays on Politics, Thought and Education in the Meiji Era*, (J.S.A. Elisonas and Richard Rubinger, eds.,) Honolulu: Hawai’i University Press, 1997, pp. 63-81. See also Minami Kazuo, *Ishin zenya no Edo shomin*, Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1980.

15. According to Daniel Botsman, a total of 123 severed heads were put on display in Edo between 1862 and 1865. See Daniel Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 20.
16. Minami Kazuo, *Ishin zenya no Edo shōmin*, Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1980, p. pp. 155-57.
17. Ibid.

and declared the restoration of direct imperial rule (*ōsei fukko*). These key events that led to the Meiji Restoration were not included among the entries for 1867.



Figure 10. *1867 (Keio 3 Teibō) Irori no hi (Fire in the Hearth).* Police patrol the streets of the city (Edo). Detail of Figure 1.

The one "battle" on the list, "Large-scale fighting breaks out in Senba district of Osaka," may well have been a side show in the restoration drama. It probably referred to the outrageous behavior and wild dancing associated with the Harvest Festival dancing (*hōnen odori*) that began in early July in Senba and easily melted into the *ee ja nai ka* (Ain't it great / What the hell!) craze that swept through Japan in the latter half of 1867 **[Figure 11]**. As one *ee ja nai ka* chant put it: "What a dreadful year it was [1866]. Let's forget it! Thanks to the gods we can dance. Isn't that right! Japan is going to be renewed. Isn't that great! Let's celebrate the abundant harvest by dancing. Let's set off on a pilgrimage. Ain't it great!"[18]

The final 1868 panel in the *Compendium of Events* included 9 events that detailed the collapse of Tokugawa rule. The year began with cannon fire. On the 3rd day of the 1st month (January 27), Chōshū and Satsuma forces engage troops loyal to the Tokugawa at Toba-Fushimi, on the outskirts of Kyoto. This marks the formal beginning of the Boshin Civil War that lasted until the final defeat of pro-Tokugawa forces at Hakodate on the 18th day of the 5th month, 1869.

The chronology did not take note of this opening volley but did record the appointment of an imperial envoy (Higashikuze Michitomi) on the 15th day of the 1st month, charged with foreign affairs and dispatched to Kobe in order to meet with the foreign diplomatic corps to formally inform them of the establishment of the restoration of imperial rule. By this time, Yoshinobu had been declared an "enemy of the court." And on the 9th day of the 2nd month, Prince Arisugawa Taruhito was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Army and, presented with the imperial brocade banner and a sword of justice, and ordered to chastise any and all who opposed imperial rule. As the imperial army approached Edo, Tokugawa institutions of government collapsed.[19] The chronology noted that nearly all of the nearly 250 resident-daimyo in Edo, suddenly freed of any obligation to remain in the city, returned to their domains, taking with them family members and retainers.

As a result, the population of the great city of Edo plummeted. According to Henry Smith, "No city in Japan was so profoundly affected by the collapse of the Tokugawa regime as its political capital. In the space of less than seven years, Edo lost half of its population of more than 1 million with a final exodus of more than 300,000 in 1868 alone."[20]

18. On the *ee ja nai ka* movement, see George Wilson, *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan: Motives in the Meiji Restoration*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. See page 106 for a version of this chant. On visual representations of the *ee ja nai ka* craze, see "Publishing Ējanaika: Popular Religion as Media Event," in Formanck and Linhard, eds., *Written Texts – Visual Texts*, pp. 311-340. See also Walthall and Steele, pp. 122-126, for documents on the *ee ja nai ka* movement.
19. On the experience of Edo commoners during this fateful year, see "Edo in 1868," in M. William Steele, *Alternative Narratives in Modern Japanese History*, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 61-87.
20. Henry Smith II, "The Edo-Tokyo Transition: In Search of Common Ground," in Marius Jansen and Gilbert Rozman, eds., *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 347.



Figure 11. *Festival for the Gods of Happiness*, 1867. Source: Hachirō Yuasa Memorial Museum, *Poking Fun*, p. 18. By the end of 1867, civil war, foreign threats, poor harvests, and rapid rises in commodity prices were causing significant social unrest. In the desperate hope for better times, many commoners participated in a frenzied dance craze, shouting out *ee ja nai ka* (What the hell!)." This print depicts the dreams of commoners, who hope that the gods of happiness and fortune will come to their rescue and shower them with money and lucky charms. Ominously, Mt. Fuji in the background appears ready to erupt.

The next entry in the chronology, "In the 3rd month, people riot and Edo in great confusion" only weakly describes the sense of mounting crisis that confronted Edo commoners at that time. As Katsu Kaishū, the Tokugawa official placed in charge of maintain some semblance of order in Edo, noted in his diary on the 19th day of the 2ndmonth: "Edo is in great confusion. There are many rumors. The truth of the morning is false by night. Will the imperial army halt at Kuwana? Will it advance on Sunpu? Will it come through the Hakone Pass? As a result, the people are angry and upset. They run about blindly; the situation is like a boiling cauldron."[21] Katsu, meeting with the chief general of the imperial army, Saigō Takamori, on the 13th and 14th day of the 3rd month, managed to negotiate the peaceful surrender of Edo Castle; this took placed on the 11th day of the 4th month **[Figure 12]**.

None of this narrative was reported in the *Compendium of Events*. Included instead was news of fighting to the east of Edo in the 4th month. Indeed, on the day the castle was transferred to imperial control, many Tokugawa troops decamped. Some three hundred fled to the northeast and, as a contemporary report noted, "formed themselves into bodies of guerrillas and harassed the troops of the Mikado throughout the country around Yedo."[22]



Figure 12. *The Romance of the three Kingdoms and the Magic Fox*, 1868. Source: Hachirō Yuasa Memorial Museum, *Poking Fun*, p. 27. This satirical print borrows a scene from a classic Chinese historical novel in order to depict the surrender of Edo Castle to the Imperial Army. A game of go has just finished. The player on the left is the emperor of Japan (the chrysanthemum crest can be seen on the hem of his kimono). He is surrounded by men from Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and other imperial supporters. The player on the right is Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the last shogun. His Chinese clothes hint at his affection for things foreign. His supporters include Aizu and Sendai. He is shown handing over the white stones, a symbolic gesture of defeat. The phrase shiro o watasu (to hand over the white stones) sounds the same as "to hand over the castle."

21. *Katsu Kaishū zenshū*, Tokyo: *Keisō shobō*, 1973, vol. 19, p. 25.
22. *Dispatch from Harry S. Parks to the Foreign Office, Yokohama*, June 13, 1863, no. 139 (F.O. 46/94). Quoted in Steele, "Edo in 1868," p. 72.



Figure 13. *1868 (Keio 4 Boshin) Mori no ki (The Tree in the Forest).* On the 15th day of the 5th month, the battle at Ueno Hill. Detail of Figure 1.



Figure 14. *Children Playing King of the Mountain and Setting off Fireworks.* Source: Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, ICU, *Poking Fun*, p. 60. King of the Mountain was a common children's game that was easily used to depict the victory over pro-Tokugawa loyalists known as the Shōgitai. This print was probably issued soon after the decisive Battle of Ueno Hill on the 15th day of the 5th month, 1868. The battle resulted in undisputed control of the entire city of Edo by the Imperial Army. In this print, the leaders of Satsuma and Chōshū domains fight their way to the top of the hill. The Chōshū commander was Ōmura Masujirō. He holds the boy emperor aloft and proclaims victory as "King of the Mountain." The battle was decided by superior firepower, especially the use of Armstrong cannon. The firecrackers surely made people recall the roar of the cannon, the barrage of rife shots, and the ensuing fire that engulfed the northeastern section of Edo on that fateful summer day.

The next event listed was the Battle at Ueno Hill that took place on the 15th day of the 5th month.[23] **[Figure 13]**. The battle, together with the resulting fire, was for the visual chronology, the defining image for 1868.[24] A number of satirical woodblock prints (*fūshiga*) poked fun at the decisive battle, treating it as child's play **[Figure 14]**.

Nonetheless, the defeat of the Shōgitai, a squad of Tokugawa loyalists determined to fight to the bitter end, was the final nail in the coffin of the old regime. As a contemporary account put it: "Ah! How sad and deplorable is this day! The most sacred spot in all of the Kanto has been, in but an instant, reduced to flames. Fleeing from the disaster, the aged, the young, and the womenfolk of the city wander aimlessly on the roads, filling them with cries of pity. The working of heaven seems to know no right or wrong."[25]

A new city government, the Saibansho, was set up after the battle; new government troops patrolled the streets and attempted to restore law and order. But while decisive in securing imperial control over Edo, the defeat of the Shōgitai did not guarantee control over all of Japan. Just before the battle, on the 3rd day of the 5th month, some 25 northeastern domains entered into an alliance opposing the new government. Hence the entry "Reports of fighting in northern Japan." For the readers of the *Compendium of Events* there seemed to be no hope for the future.

Unbeknownst to them, Edo would be renamed Tokyo on the 7th month, a new era name, Meiji, would be proclaimed in the 9th month, and the new emperor would take up residence in Tokyo on the 12th day of the 10th month. The civil war, however, would end only after the defeat of Enomoto Takeaki and other pro-Tokugawa holdouts at Hakodate on the 18th day of the 5th month, 1869.

Economic Events

Key to economic data in the *Compendium of Events*

●	Mark indicating value in gold coin (*ryō*) for 100 *hyō* 俵 of rice.
▲	Mark indicating volume of rice that can be purchased for 1 *ryō* gold coin.
■	Mark indicating volume of rice that can be purchased for 100 *mon* copper coins.

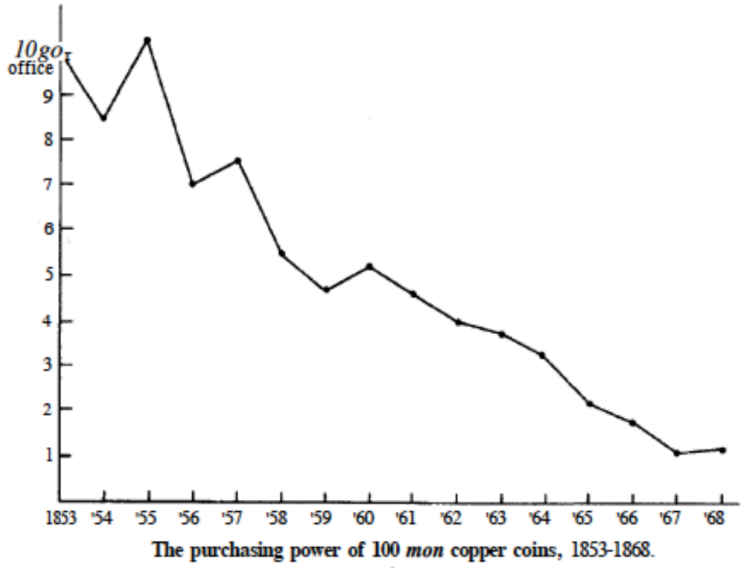
A key to the economic data found in the *Compendium of Events.*

The *Compendium of Events* paid special attention to changes in the economy after the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853. Each panel included rice market data: the price of 100 *hyō* of rice, the amount of rice one *ryō* of gold could buy, and how much rice 100 *mon* of copper, the currency of the commoners, could buy. A key to the data was given in the first panel, the 1853 arrival of a foreign ship (see key).

In all cases, the figures pointed to economic meltdown (see **Chart 1** and **Graph 1**). Issued in Osaka, Japan's financial center, the print may well have reflected merchant concerns, but more likely the story of skyrocketing prices, currency devaluations, and increasing levels of poverty reflected the increasing economic difficulties of ordinary people. The dramatic rise in commodity prices, especially after the opening of Yokohama to foreign trade on the 5th day of the 6th month (July 4), 1859, made it ever more difficult to buy the essentials of daily life (see **Chart 2**). These economic woes, more than the political machinations of their samurai superiors, constituted the lived experience of the majority of Japanese during the bakumatsu years.

23. On the Shōgitai and the Battle of Ueno Hill, see M. William Steele, "The Rise and Fall of the Shōgitai: A Social Drama," in Tetsuo Najita and J. Victor Koschmann, eds., Conflict in Modern Japanese History, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, pp. 128-144.
24. For kawaraban reportage on the fire in northeastern Edo that resulted from the battle between the imperial army and the Shōgitai, see the University of Tokyo Ono Hideo Collection.
25. Soyofuku Kaze, no. 7, n.d., in *Bakumatsu Meiji Shinbun Zenshu*, 3, p. 408.

Graph 1: The Purchasing Power of 100 *mon* of copper coins, 1853-1868



Graph 1. *The purchasing power of 100 mon of copper coins, 1853-1868.*

Chart 1: Market Rice Prices, 1853-1868

Date	Rice→Gold per 100 *hyō* 俵	Gold→Rice per 1 *ryō* 両	Copper→Rice per 100 *mon* 文
1853	49	7.1	10
1854	60	5.8	8.5
1855	45	7.8	12
1856	72	4.85	7
1857	63	9.5	7.5
1858	89	3.9	5.5
1859	105	3.3	4.7
1860	99	3.5	5.2
1861	105	3.1	4.6
1862	123	2.84	4
1863	125	2.8	3.8
1864	150	2.3	3.2
1865	205	1.7	2.2
1866	270	1.2	1.8
1867	420	0.83	1.1
1868	350	1.0	1.2

Derived from data included in each panel of the *Compendium of Events*.
Conversions: A bale (*hyō*) of rice varied in volume according to time and place; in Edo in the 1850s and 1860s, it was just under one-half *koku* of rice.
1 *koku* (石) = 10 *to* (斗) = 100 *shō* (升) =1000 *go* (合) = 10,000 *shaku* (勺) =180 liters
In the early 1850s, 4000 copper *mon* (文) coins were set to equal 1 gold *ryō* (両), but copper coins were steadily devalued; by 1866, 7000 *mon* equaled 1 *ryō*.

Chart 1. *Market rice prices, 1853-1868.*

Chart 2: Commodity Prices, 1853-1868

Date/Season	Rice 1 koku	Miso 1 kan	Salt 1 koku	Soy Sauce 1 koku	Sake 1 koku	Lamp Oil 1 shō
1853 / Spring	118.0	2.1	36.0	104.0	266.0	4.9
1853 / Fall	117.0	2.2	34.5	104.0	244.0	4.7
1854 / Spring	114.0	2.1	34.0	103.5	255.0	4.7
1854/ Fall	114.0	2.1	34.5	104.2	253.0	4.7
1855 / Spring	113.0	2.1	34.0	103.5	251.0	4.7
1855 / Fall	98.5	2.0	33.5	103.8	253.0	4.8
1856 / Spring	101.0	2.0	34.0	102.5	252.0	4.7
1856 / Fall	102.0	2.1	35.0	106.5	254.0	4.7
1857 / Spring	103.0	2.1	35.5	105.0	252.0	4.6
1857 / Fall	115.0	2.1	41.0	106.0	253.0	4.8
1858 / Spring	135.0	2.2	36.6	112.0	254.6	4.8
1858 / Fall	123.9	2.1	41.0	111.8	254.0	4.8
1859 / Spring	135.0	2.0	35.5	111.5	254.0	4.6
1859 / Fall	142.0	2.2	36.5	111.0	263.0	4.6
1860 / Spring	158.0	2.5	38.9	118.0	285.0	5.1
1860 / Fall	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1861 / Spring	194.5	3.1	44.0	140.0	313.0	6.5
1861 / Fall	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1862 / Spring	145.0	3.1	45.0	146.0	326.0	6.2
1862 / Fall	-----	-----	50.0	-----	-----	-----
1863 / Spring	139.0	3.0	48.0	159.0	338.0	6.2
1863 / Fall	139.7	3.0	87.0	189.0	339.0	7.2
1864 / Spring	139.5	3.0	62.0	190.0	341.0	8.8
1864 / Fall	167.5	3.6	68.5	191.6	381.0	9.2
1865 / Spring	258.0	4.5	95.0	240.0	534.0	9.5
1865 / Fall	308.0	5.4	113.0	256.0	632.0	9.7
1866 / Spring	404.0	6.8	113.0	256.0	767.0	9.7
1866 / Fall	585.0	6.7	113.0	285.0	849.0	11.2
1867 / Spring	586.0	8.8	114.0	285.0	905.0	11.2
1867 / Fall	457.0	8.1	127.0	321.0	1017.0	13.1
1868 / Spring	364.1	7.3	101.0	308.4	1042.0	12.2
1868 / Fall	502.0	8.1	128.8	371.0	981.0	15.4

Source: Minami Kazuo, *Ishin zenya no Edo shomin*

Chart 2. *Commodity prices, 1853-1868.*

As can be seen from the charts and graph, economic conditions for urban commoners worsened significantly during the years leading up to the collapse of the Tokugawa government. In 1853, 49 *ryō* in gold bought 100 *hyō* (bales) of rice; the same 100 bales of rice cost 350 *ryō* in 1868, down from the 450 *ryō* required in 1867; in 1853 one *ryō* of gold could buy 7.1 *to* (just under 1 *koku*) of rice, but in 1868 one *ryō*bought only 1 *to* of rice. And, reflecting the economic plight of the lower classes, the buying power of copper currency declined precipitously: in 1853, 100 *mon* could buy 10 *go* of rice, (enough to feed one person for two days), but in 1868 the same 100 mon would only buy 1.2 *go*, barely enough for survival.

The chronology included several events relating to economic issues during the period between 1853 and 1868. The narrative was simple: The opening of Japan to foreign trade (1859) led to disruptions in the domestic economy, confusion in the currency market, and rises in the price of daily necessities. Some merchants prospered, but others went bankrupt **[Figure 15]**. In 1866, poor camps were set up in sections of Edo **[Figure 16]**, and when government relief proved insufficient, rioting and other expressions of social unrest followed. The image is of the rice distribution center in Sakuma-chō in the Kanda district, a bustling economic and industrial hub, is depicted here as an empty space in foreboding gray tones. Rural communities were equally hard hit, and not only by the consequences of foreign trade. The 1860s were years of successive poor harvest caused in some years by drought, in other years by cold, typhoons, flooding and insect damage. Rural and urban rioting reached a peak in 1866. In 1867, despite a better harvest, the economic news was no better: “Commodity prices skyrocket; relief stations set up.” “Foreign rice (*Nankin mai*) sold for the first time; people buy it.”



Figure 15. *Domestic Gold and Silver in Happy Play (Freefall)*, Utagawa Kunimaru, 1865. Source: Hachirō Yuasa Memorial Museum, ICU, *Poking Fun*, p. 17. This print takes an ironic look at the severe dislocations that plagued the Japanese economy after it was exposed to international trade. Whereas the domestic exchange rate between gold and silver was 1:5, the international rate was 1:15. In the 1860s, the Bakufu was forced to devalue its currency, leading to massive inflation. The print depicts these struggles between gold, silver and copper currencies and the attempts of dishonest merchants to profit from the currency crisis.

The *Compendium* made several references to new currency issues or changes in the value of existing currency, strategies traditionally employed by the Tokugawa government to increase its revenue.[26] In 1854, for example, an item noted that the Isshū silver coin went into circulation. The coin, inferior in quality, was issued specifically to help pay for the construction of coastal defense facilities following the arrival of Perry. It was popularly known as "Odaiba-gin" because the coin, with a copper exchange value of 250 *mon*, was used as pay for one day's work on the six island fortresses (*diaba*) off Shinagawa designed to protect Edo from attack by sea.



Figure 16. *1866 (Keio 2 Heiin) Irori no hi (Fire in the Hearth)*. In Edo, poor camps established to alleviate poverty and hunger. One relief station is set up in Sakuma-chō (in Kanda area); cooked rice is distributed at Yanaka Tennōji Temple, crowds of people gather. Detail of Figure 1.

26. On late Tokugawa monetary policy, see Takehiko Ohkura and Hiroshi Shimbo, "The Tokugawa Monetary Policy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in Michael Smika, ed., *The Japanese Economy in the Tokugawa Era, 1600-1868*, London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 241-64.

Later, in 1863, the Bunkyū-sen copper coin (Bunkyū Eihō), valued at 4 mon, was reported to have gone into circulation—in fact some 3.38 billion coins were infused into the economy. And adding to the currency chaos, in 1865 it was noted that 8 mon of Bunkyūsen coin would circulate as 12 mon of Aozeni coin (copper coins minted before 1863), and in 1868, as 16 mon, further debasing the value of the coin most commonly used by ordinary people. By the end of 1867, general impoverishment, caused by the rapid rises in commodity prices and poor harvests, were the cause of significant episodes of unrest. Established ways of life were in danger.

Religion to the Rescue

Amid the confusion of the times, many commoners sought hope in new religions, folk cults, pilgrimages, or episodes of frenzied dancing and carnival-like behavior. According to George Wilson, the bakumatsu years witnessed an explosion of millennial hopes and dreams among Japan's common people.[27] New religions flourished, including Tenrikyō (founded in 1838), Kurozumikyō (1846) and Konkōkyō (1859), along with cults devoted to the worship of Maitreya (Miroku), the future Buddha, Mt. Fuji and the demonic Shōmen Kongō, a blue-faced deity with many arms associated with the Kōshin cult.[28] Shunning established sects of Buddhism and Shinto, the new religions promised healing, salvation and renewal.[29] And, to a certain extent, equality between the sexes. The *Compendium of Events* noted that in 1860 "women allowed to climb Mt. Fuji." In fact, the prohibition against women climbers was only lifted after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The year 1860 was a special exception; its sexagenary cycle was *kōshin* (the 57th year of the cycle) and known as the year of Miroku—a special year promising salvation. Among members of Fujiko confraternities, pilgrimages to climb Mt. Fuji on *kōshin* years were especially important. Thus in 1860, demand being so great, special permission was given to women to climb the mountain.[30]

The urge to construct a new order, a new world, also animated a sudden rise in rural and urban unrest in the 1860s, including rioting and bouts of property destruction, with over 100 separate incidents in 1866 alone.[31] *Yonaoshi* (world renewal) was watchword of many of these uprisings. A broadsheet describing the 1866 Bushū outburst stressed that the farmers felt that they had no choice but to rise in rebellion: "All the villagers found it necessary to meet together and discuss their problem. They talked about the merchants who dealt in rice and other grains and traded with foreign countries, saying that if merchants from various provinces continued to profit in this way, the people will die from starvation. The people decided to risk their lives, wreck the house of the wealthy, and thereby get the prices of things to come down. … On a banner was drawn a rice bowl and crossed rice paddles. Underneath was written 'Great God of World Renewal' (*yonaoshi daimyōjin*). And with this flag in the lead, about 3,000 marched off."[32] Impelled in this way, these and other ordinary people desperately sought a means to mend an imperfect world.

The *Compendium of Events* took note of rural and urban rioting but paid scant attention to informal religious concepts and practices associated with them. Nor did it mention the millenarian remaking of Japan envisioned by loyalist samurai, a sort of emperor-centered *yonaoshi* designed to wreck the bakufu and create a new imperial

27. Wilson, *Patriots and Redeemers*, p. 82.
28. On Japanese folk religion, see Hori Ichiro, *Folk Religion in Japan*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994 (reprint). For description of *kōshin* worship and other local cults, see pp. 66-68.
29. Helen Hardacre, "Conflict between Shugendō and the New Religions of Bakumatsu Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 21, No. 2/3 (1994), pp. 137-166.
30. See the website created by the National Diet Library of Japan on publications relating to the history of climbing Mt. Fuji. It includes reference to a popular book published by Kanagaki Rōbun in 1860/1861 on climbing Mt. Fuji in 1860: *Kokkei Fuji mōde*. This book includes an illustration of both men and women climbing Mt. Fuji.
31. On early modern rural uprisings, see Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, and Herbert Bix, *Peasant Protest in Japan*, 1690-1884, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. On rural unrest in 1866, see Patricia Sippel, "Poplular Protest in Early Modern Japan: The Bushū Outburst," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 37.2, 1977, 273-322. On urban unrest, see Anne Walthall, "Edo Riots," in James McClain and John Merriman, and Ugawa Kaoru, eds., *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994, 407-428. See also Minami Kazuo, *Ishin zenya no Edo shōmin*, Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1980, especially chapter 3, pp. 139-194.
32. Walthall and Steele, "Outbursts of Popular Discontent," pp. 110-113.

order. It did, however, focus on festive religious events known as *kaichō*, the public display of religious objects usually hidden from sight.[33]

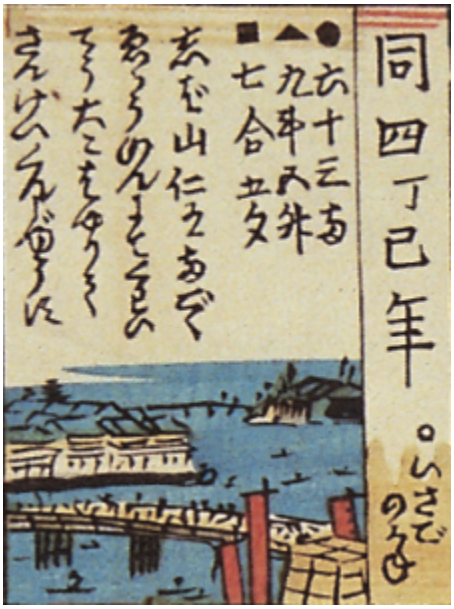


Figure 17. *1857 (Ansei 4 Teishi) Isago no kane (Gold on the beach*). Kaichō of Shibayama Nio held at Ekōin at Ryōgoku; crowds of people throng to the event. Detail of Figure 1.

Some temples held periodic displays of their own treasures, so-called *igaichō*, but more popular, especially in Edo, were *degaichō*, the hosting of a display of another temple's icons and other objects infused with spiritual power. In Edo, Ekōin (on the eastern side of Ryōkoku Bridge) and other temples, including Asakusa Sensōji, were famous for such events, often lasting around 60 days. In addition to the display and veneration of religious items, carnival-like sideshows (*misemono*) in the form of teahouses, gaming booths, and kabuki performances, were held in conjunction, attracting crowds of pilgrims as well as people in search of cheap entertainment.[34]

The chronology took note of five such popular events: *kaichō* held in 1856 (for 60 days beginning on the 20th day of the 3rd month) at Fukagawa (Eidaiji Temple) of items from the Narita-san temple in Shimōsa province; in 1857 (for 60 days for the 16th day of the 4th month), the display at Ekōin of treasures from the Shibayama Nio-son Temple in Kazuka province; in 1860 (for 60 days from the 15th day of the 3rd month), the opportunity to see the image of the kannon (goddess of mercy) at Sensōji in Asakusa; in 1861 (for 60 days beginning on the 3rd day of the 3rd month), religious items were loaned from Takao-san (Jakkō-in) for display at Ekōin; and finally in 1865 (for 60 days from the 28th day of the 6th month), the exhibition of treasures from the Kinkazan Benzaiten (Rikuzen province), including a carved wooden image of Benzaiten, the goddess of water, art, music, and general good fortune.[35]

33. On *kaichō*, see Barbara Ambros, "The Display of Hidden treasures: Zenkōji's Kaichō at Ekōin in Edo," Asian Cultural Studies, 30, 2004, 1-26. See also Nam-lin Hur, Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000 (See especially the Conclusion: "The Cradle of Prayer and Play" for a description and the significance of *kaichō*) and Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan*, 1600-1868, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. In Japanese, see Hiruma Hisashi, *Edo no kaichō*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1980.
34. On *misemono*, see Andrew Markus, "The Carnival of Edo: Misemono Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 45, no. 2 (Dec. 1985), pp. 499-541.
35. The *Bukō nenpyō*, a contemporary record of memorable events, complied by Saitō Gesshin (1804-1878) pays particular attention to *kaichō*. It includes details on each of the *kaichō* noted in the Compendium of Events, noting items on display for religious veneration in the temple as well as events and display relating to popular entertainment in nearby carnival space. The *bakumatsu* years are covered in: Imai Kingo, ed.,

Illustrations of two of these *kaichō*, the 1857 Shibayama exhibition and the 1865 Kinkazan exhibition, were given special prominence by the creators of the *Compendium of Events*, in effect singling them out as the most important event of the year. Why should this be?

The 1857 *kaichō*, held for 60 days beginning on the 16th day of the 4th month, was the only event listed for 1857 **[Figure 17]**. The image shows the masses crossing the Ryōgoku bridge between the carnival grounds on the eastern side of the Sumida River (the make-shift booths can be seen in the foreground) and the sacred zone on the other side of the bridge. The main attractions of the *kaichō* were treasures from the Shibyama Nio-son Temple (in present-day Chiba prefecture, just east of Narita), included an 11 faced kannon statue attributed to Ennin, an early Heian period Buddhist monk famous for introducing esoteric rituals, sutras and relics into Japan from China, and the two Niō (or Kongōrikishi) muscular guardian deities who guard the entrance to the temple, reputed to have been brought to Japan from India. Amulets (*fuda*) promising protection against fires and theft issued by the temple bearing the image of the two Niō were popular among Edo commoners.



Figure 18. *Cleaning up after a Disaster.* Source: Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. "beans_disaster_prints_11." Although discouraged by *kawaraban* notices and posted signs, looting and price gouging and even acts of violence were not entirely absent in Japan in the wake of earthquakes and urban fires. In this anonymous print entitled "House Cleaning" (*Kagu harai*), a thief marvels at his luck to find an abandoned house full of goods free for the taking.

With the memory of the 1855 earthquake, fire, and looting **[Figure 18]** still fresh in people's memory, the chance to be in the presence of these guardian deities (and buy special amulets) was not to be missed. According to the *Bukō nenpyō*, the Niō statues arrived at Ekōin in alcoves borne on the shoulders of sumo wrestlers.[36] The *misemono* attractions on the other side of the Sumida, including contortionists and the famous doll maker, Takeda Genkichi, were no match.

The illustration for the year 1865 also highlighted a *kaichō* held at the same Ekōin **[Figure 19]**. This religious extravaganza featured a collection of sacred objects from the island of Kinkazan, located off the eastern coast of northern Japan close to Ishinomaki (in present-day Miyagi prefecture). In the Edo period, it was a major pilgrimage destination and remains today as one of Japan's so-called "power spots." The 1865 display of its hidden treasures was especially popular. The image emphasizes the mass of humanity, crowed so tightly as to obscure any sense of individual identity. Temporary booths, the equivalent of circus tents, dominate the foreground while people make their way across the Ryokoku Bridge in the distance. Poles hold aloft rows of lanterns, banners proclaim the exhibition of treasures from far away Kinkazan, including the statue of Benzaiten, while others advertise an archery shooting gallery and the display of a giant elephant.[37]

Included in the exhibition was the main object of worship of Daikinji Temple, a carved wooden image of the eight-armed Benzaiten, reputed to possess extraordinary powers, especially with regard to healing and moneymaking. The *Bukō nenpyō* reports that men and women, young and old were lined up from early in the morning to gaze upon the goddess of good fortune and offer their prayers. People also joined in the wild dancing and jostled to obtain special amulets promising salvation, if not in this world, then in the next. The chants and dancing

Teihon Bukō nenpyō, vol. 3 (ge), Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2004. Markus provides a contemporary description of the *misemono* shows that accompanied *kaichō* at Ekōin around 1865, p. 509.

36. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), p. 93.
37. See this popular website on *misemono* in 1865, including illustrations of the giant Indian elephant that was "on tour."

included many references to Miroku, alongside Benzaiten, one of the seven goods of good fortune.[38] To be sure, the crowds making their way to Ekōin were in search of fun and games, but given the unsetting nature of the times, growing levels of impoverishment and desperation, and with no apparent avenue of escape, people were equally in search of salvation, healing, and renewal. Such millenarian aspirations also help to explain why contemporary chronologists placed such emphasis on the opportunities *kaichō* offered for engagement with powerful spiritual forces.

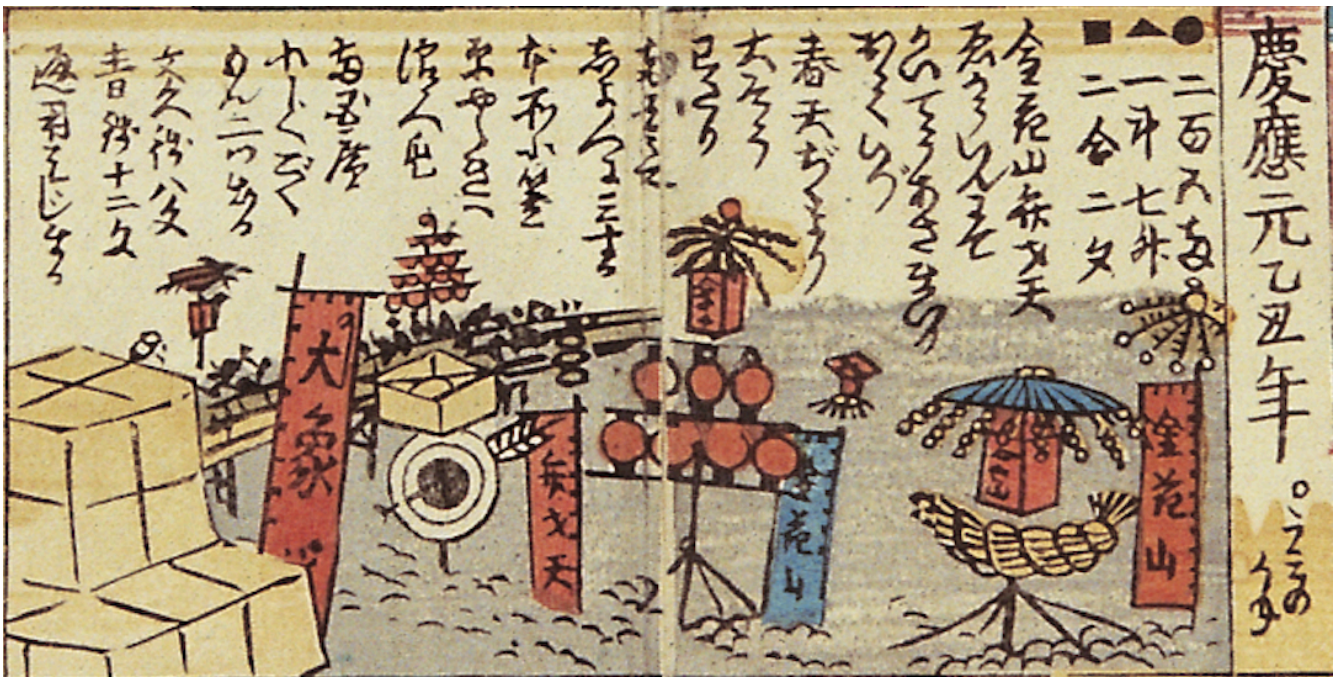


Figure 19. 1865 (Keio 1 Itchū) *Umi no kane (Gold in the Sea)*. *Kaichō* of Kinkazan Benzaiten held at Eikōin; many people gather from early in the day. Detail of Figure 1. Aside from the five events listed in the Compendium of Events, as many as ten *kaichō* each year, many held simultaneously, attracted crowds of devotees.

Scholars have argued that the importance of formal religion gradually declined over the course of the Edo period, citing various trends toward a more secular world view. In turn, the religious significance of *kaichō* events has also been discredited with attention focused more on *misemono* grotesqueries and street shows. How to interpret the meaning of *kaichō* for Edo commoners in the bakumatsu years? Aside from the five events listed in the *Compendium of Events*, often five to ten such events, many held simultaneously, attracted a crowd year after year. In 1857, for example, aside from Ekōin *kaichō*, according to the *Bukō nenpyō*, there were 12 other competing displays of religious treasures.

On the one hand, these festivities, especially in tandem with various *misemono* attractions, did contain much entertainment value: a chance "to withdraw from the hustle and bustle of urban life in search of a moment of liberation from the constrains of feudal society."[39] And in the context of the bakumatsu years, the *kaichō* offered temporary relief and escape from pressing economic and political realities. At the same time, however, it is important to recognize the important role played by deep-felt religious sentiment in making people flock to these mega-temple events. As Barbara Ambros notes, "for an Edo-period audience, religious sincerity and curious attraction to sideshows even were not necessarily mutually exclusive."[40]

38. On Miroku, and connections with millenarian aspirations in the Edo period, see Miyata Noboru, *Miroku shinkō no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Miraisha, 1970 and his later work on apocalyptic beliefs in Japanese folklore, *Shūmatsu-ron no minzokugaku*, Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1987.
39. Nam-lin Hur, *Prayer and Play*, p. 220.
40. Ambros, "Display of Hidden Treasures," p. 4.

Disaster Stories

The *Compendium of Events* placed special importance on disasters as integral to the lived history of all Japanese during the bakumatsu years, listing episodes, one after another, of earthquakes, floods, fires, and epidemics. Challenging the conventional attention given political and military events, and to great heroes and villains, this print and other contemporary accounts (including the *Bukō nenpyō*, *Genji yume monogatari*, *Fujiokaya nikki*, and the *Kaei Meiji nenkanroku*) stood in awe of the power of nature.

From the point of view of the commoners, especially those living in cities, disasters were major events that required record and memory.[41] The carefree (*ukiyo*) image of the Eddoko must be augmented to include a constant awareness of natural disasters as repeating events, requiring practical preparation and the marshalling of spiritual protection. As noted in the introduction, of the 51 events listed between 1853 and 1866 in the *Compendium of Events*, at least 12 related to disasters, of which five were illustrated as the central event of that particular year.

Even the dramatic arrival of American ships in 1853 demanding Japan open its doors to the world competed for attention with a large earthquake in the Odawara region on the 2nd day of the 2nd month. According to a contemporary account, "untoward events taking place in heaven and earth resulted in a clash of yin and yang forces producing thunder and rain in the skies and an earthquake in the ground."[42] The M6.7-7.0 quake did much to destroy Odawara Castle, the power base of the Ōkubo family: "The lord's mansion suffered great damage. Nothing remained of the inner wall, the second wall, and the outer wall, which collapsed into the moat. Many pieces of the stone wall ended up in the water, and structures like the connecting watch towers were completely destroyed."[43] Alongside the foreign intrusion, the Odawara earthquake was seen as an opening volley in a series of assaults on the established order of heaven and earth.



Figure 20. *1854 (Ansei 1 Kōin) Tani no mizu (Water in the valley).* Tidal wave hits Osaka at the mouth of the Kizu river; houses swept away and bridges destroyed. Detail of Figure 1.

On the 27th day of the 11th month 1854, the era name Ka'e was changed to Ansei (peaceful rule), in the vain hope of restoring stability after the arrival of the ominous black ships and the death of Shogun Iesada – but more to the point, after a series of deadly natural disasters beginning with the Odawara earthquake. The *Compendium of Events* made no mention of the return visit of Perry on the 16th day of the 1st month of 1854, nor of the negotiations that led to signing, on the 3rd day of the 3rd month, of the Treaty of Kanagawa; instead the focus was on earthquakes and tsunami.

Indeed, for commoners, Perry's black ships were nothing compared with the power of nature. The *Genji Yume Monogatari*, written in 1864, described the series of disasters that struck Japan a decade earlier: "On the 13th day of the 6th month [1854] there were a great earthquake along the line of the Tokaido and in the Northern provinces houses were overturned in places, and the high road opened and vomited mud and sand, causing the death of a large number of people. On the 15th day of the 7th month there was a great rain storm in the Northern provinces followed by a flood. The river Sae in Kaga, the rivers Koya, Tetori and Hine in Etchu overflowed their banks.

41. On the genre of "disaster descriptions" during the Edo period in general, and in the *bakumatsu* period in detail, see Stephan Köhn, "Between Fiction and Non-fiction – Documentary Literature in the Late Edo Period," in Formanek and Linhart, eds., *Written Texts – Visual Texts*, pp. 283-310.
42. From the text on a 1853 *kawaraban* broadsheet reporting news of the Odawara earthquake. The text and broadsheet is included in Kinoshita Naoyuki and Yoshimi Shunya, eds., *Nyūsu no tanjō*, Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1999, p. 31. For online reproduction of the 1853 *kawaraban*: *Large flooding in Osaka, many bridges washed away*. For a short discussion of the yin yang theory of earthquakes, see Gregory Smits, *Seismic Japan: The Long History and Continuing Legacy of the Ansei Edo Earthquake*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013, pp. 31-34.
43. Smits, *Seismic Japan*, p. 14

The village of Asai was carried away and one hundred and fifty people drowned. On the 4th of the 11th month, between seven and nine o'clock in the morning, a violent earthquake shook the entire country, the effects of which were felt most severely at Osaka; damaging a large number of houses, and a huge wave ran up the three mouths of the Yodogawa, carrying large junks with it whose mast stuck the bridges and carried them away. One hundred and fifty junks of different size were destroyed. More people lost their lives by drowning than it was possible to ascertain."[44]



Figure 21. *1855 (Ansei 2 Itsubō) Tani no mizu (Water in the valley).* Great earthquake strikes Edo on the 2nd day of the 10th month. Many people killed; several sections of the city, including Shin-Yoshiwara, destroyed by fire. Five rescue centers set up. The Marunouchi section particularly hit; many people suffer. Detail of Figure 1.

This last event was listed and depicted in the *Compendium of Events* for 1854 "Title wave hits Osaka at the mouth of the Kizu River; houses swept away and bridges destroyed" **[Figure 20]**. One year after the tragedy, in 1855, recalling that a similar destructive tsunami had struck Osaka 148 years earlier (1707), local officials erected a stone monument to console the victims but also to serve as a warning for future generations.[45]

The *Genji Yume Monogatari* concluded its dismal assessment for the year 1854: "In the eastern provinces three small craters burst forth on Fujisan; the pine forest of Miyo was washed away; a Russian man of war was sunk in the bay of Suruga; throughout the county mountains were leveled and valleys filled up by an earthquake; a tidal

44. *Genji Yume Monogatari*, pp. 10-11. Smits describes these earthquake and tsunami events, "Warding off Calamity," pp. 14-15.
45. For a description of this tsunami warning stone, see Nagao Takeshi, "'Dai jishin ryōkawa-guchi tsunami ki' ni miru Osaka no tsunami to sono kyōkun," *Kyoto rekishi saigai kenkyū*, no. 13 (2012), pp. 17-26. For text of tsunami stone in modern Japanese, see here. For *kawaraban* image of the Osaka tsunami, see *Taiyō korekushon: kawaraban shinbun*, vol. 1, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1978, pp. 26-27.

wave rose along the coast and destroyed the houses of the inhabitants; an immense number of people lost their lives and great damage was done to the property all over the country."[46]

Any hope that a change in the era name to Ansei (peaceful rule) would halt the chain of natural disasters the was quickly negated. To follow account from the *Genji Yume Monogatari* for 1855: "On the 1st day of the 8th month of the next year (1855) a great storm occurred in the home provinces [around Kyoto], accompanied by a flood. On the 2nd of the month, a severe earthquake occurred in the eastern provinces; numbers of houses were destroyed in Mutsu and Dewa and many lives lost. On the 20th there was a great storm accompanied by a flood in the home provinces. The mountain called Kasagi-yama crumbled away and a great many lives were lost.

On the 26th a tidal wave rose in the provinces of Owari, which washed away land to the amount of more than eighteen thousand koku."[47] This was but a prelude to the Ansei Edo Earthquake that continues today, as it did for the compilers of the *Compendium of Events*, to figure as the central event in Japanese history for the year 1855. "Great earthquake strikes Edo on the 2ed day of the 10th month. Many people killed; several sections of the city, including Shin-Yoshiwara, destroyed by fire. Five rescue centers set up. The Marunouchi section particularly hit; many people suffer" **[Figure 21]**.



Figure 22. *A Million Prayers for Earthquake Victims.* Source: Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, ICU, *Poking Fun*, p. 12. Catfish prints appeared in great numbers following the 1855 Edo Ansei Earthquake. Here the catfish, as a Buddhist monk, presides over a ceremony to chant the nenbutsu one million times as a means to appease the souls of the earthquake victims. Some of them, however, are not happy with their fate and glare angrily at the catfish.

Casualties were estimated to be around eight to ten thousand, about 1 percent of Edo's population. Over 14,000 houses were destroyed. People's lives were literally shaken. Hundreds of earthquake-related broadsheets, especially so-called catfish prints (*namazu-e*), allow a glimpse into people's thoughts and fears (for more, see essay by Greg Smits).[48] Some sought to console the dead **[Figure 22]**. Others directed anger on the catfish, the symbolic perpetrator of earthquakes **[Figure 23]**. Others prayed for the restoration of peace and stability **[Figure 24]**. Others showed how, despite death and destruction, the earthquake seemed to benefit the working poor and weaken members of the political and economic elite **[Figure 25]**.

In this sense, the earthquake became an instance of redistribution of wealth, indeed of world renewal (*yonaoshi*). As Smits argues, not only were the rich forced to regurgitate their profits, but the power of the Shogun was severely deflated.[49] The quake exposed the Tokugawa rulers as incompetent, unable to deal effectively with Commodore Perry's Black Ships in 1853 and 1854, and again helpless to resist the forces of nature. Disillusioned with the shogunate, people began to look elsewhere for political and spiritual leadership. While textbooks credit Perry as starting point for events that led to the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Ansei Edo Earthquake can equally be seen as a catalyst accelerating socio-political changes.

The years following the 1855 earthquake offered little relief to Edo commoners; with disaster after disaster, some began to interpret their misfortune as a prelude to the latter days (*matsuji*). The central event for 1856 was another calamity: "Great storm hits the Fukagawa area [in Edo] on the 25th day of the 8th month; large floods wash many

46. *Genji Yume Monogatari*, pp. 10-11. For archived online version, see here.
47. Genji Yume Monogatari, p. 11. See also the richly illustrated *Ansei kenbun shi*, available online through the Waseda University Library Collection of Japanese and Chinese Classics.
48. On catfish prints, see: Corneillis Ouwehand, *Namazue-e and Their Themes*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964; Gregory Smits, "Shaking up Japan: Edo Society and the 1855 Catfish Picture Prints," Journal of Social History, 39.4 (summer 2004), pp. 1045-1077; sections of Gregory Smits, *Seismic Japan*; Kitahara Itoko, *Jishin no shakaigaku: Ansei dai jishin to minshū*, Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000. Gregory Smits has also contributed to the UBC "Meiji at 150 Visual Essay" series: "The Ansei Earthquake and Catfish Prints."
49. On the revolutionary (or not) nature of the 1855 earthquake, see Smits, *Seismic Japan*, Chapter 5 "Meanings," pp. 139-170.

houses away" **[Figure 26]**. The *Bukō nenpyō* reported that the freak winds and rain caused more damage than the earlier earthquake.[50] Areas along the sea coast and near the Sumida River were flooded, Eitaibashi was washed away, and temple buildings at Nishi Hongaji and Reiganji collapsed. A broadsheet detailed the extensive damage caused by the torrential rains [**Figure 27]**. Kanagaki Rōbun published a three volume richly illustrated "disaster documentary" on the event.[51]



Figure 23. *A giant catfish being punished for causing earthquakes.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. "beans_disaster_prints_15." Wealthy merchants, geisha, and priests are among those who seek to punish the catfish. There were those, however, who sought restraint, including construction workers, plasterers, roof tile sellers and other who gained unexpected profits from the disaster.

The *Genji Yume Monogatari* also left a record of the "great storm": "The whole of the Fisher's street was washed away, a great number of houses were destroyed at Shinagawa by a tidal wave, and several thousand junks and boats disappeared. … From the castle, to the temples and shrines, to the residence of the Daimyo and the houses of the common people, there was hardly a roof that was not awry. … It is said that the wounded and killed amounted to more than one hundred thousand persons."[52] The text also offered insight into popular understandings of these acts of nature: "These constantly occurring signs and wonders were attributed by the people to the anger of the gods at the continual pollution of our country by the visits of the outer barbarians."[53]

Despite the entry of an American "barbarian," Townsend Harris, into Edo in late 1857, the *Compendium of Events* failed to list any natural disasters for that year. The next year, 1858, however, more than made up for this lack of "untoward events," headed by a deadly epidemic of unprecedented proportions: "[Cholera] epidemic spreads; many people die of the sickness" **[Figure 28]**.

50. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), p. 85.
51. Kanagaki Rōbun, *Ansei Fūbun shi [Collection of Hearsay on the Ansei Period Storm]*, 3 vols., 1856. Available online through the Waseda University Library Collection of Japanese and Chinese Classics.
52. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), pp. 13-14.
53. Ibid, p. 14.



Figure 24. *Praying to the Kaname-ishi for the Restoration of Stability.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. "beans_disaster_prints_14." According to catfish lore, earthquakes occur when a giant catfish, pinned down by a foundation stone (kamae-ishi) in turn held in place by the Kashima deity, somehow breaks free and trashes about. Either the Kashima deity is away or asleep, or the foundation stone itself is at fault. Here people, represented by the elderly, young women, china shop owners, carpenters, entertainers, prostitutes, physicians and others, offer prayers to the foundation stone, seeking a return to everyday peace and stability. They want an end to the recent spate of earthquakes. The old man has had enough; he wants to live another 200 or even 300 years and never again experience an earthquake! The carpenter is overworked and wants a chance to have a rest. The doctor is also overworked and wants his many patients to recover. In general, everyone wants a return to the ordinary rhythms of life. And when a "reasonable person" (rikutsumono) speaks up, expressing doubts about the foundation stone's divine powers, the stone itself replies: "I assure you that if the earth moves even a little I will stand on my head" (or, if read differently, "I will take revenge").



Figure 25. Redistribution of Wealth. Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. “beans_disaster_prints_30.” As reflected in numerous catfish prints, the destruction of the buildings and storehouses of the rich and powerful allowed for a certain re-distribution of wealth. Carpenters, roofers, plasters, and groups of day-workers reaped profits repairing the residences of the wealthy. Moreover, the disaster imposed a serious financial strain on the *bakufu* already burdened with the cost of building military fortifications. Here the Kashima deity has resumed control over the giant catfish and the rich are showering members or the working class with gold coins. In this reading, the catfish is not a symbol of destruction, but of social rectification *(yonaoshi)*.

The image shows a fiery demon descending upon the city. Such evil spirits (*akushin*) had long been associated with the arrival of other deadly scourges, such as smallpox and measles.[54] Rumors had it that cholera was introduced into Japan by American ships calling at Nagasaki.[55] In the 6th month it quickly spread to Kyoto and then along the Tokaidō, reaching Edo in the 7th month, just after Tokugawa officials had signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce aboard an American warship anchored in Edo Bay. The epidemic was at its worst in the 8th month and gradually receded in the 9th month.[56]

According to the *Genji Yume Monogatari*, "A terrible pestilence broke out. … Its symptoms were a sudden attack of fever, violent vomiting and constant motions; the whole body became cold, and the patient, worn out with pain, died in a couple of days. In several cases the patient succumbed in thirty-six hours, so that by the common people it was called 'three-day cholera.'"[57] This source estimated the national death toll at 300,000. This may be an exaggeration; in Edo the estimates were between 20,000 and 30,000 dead for a mortality rate between 2 and 4 percent.[58] Among the dead were the great ukiyo-e artist Hiroshige, and more ominously, the 35-year-old shogun, Tokugawa Iesada.

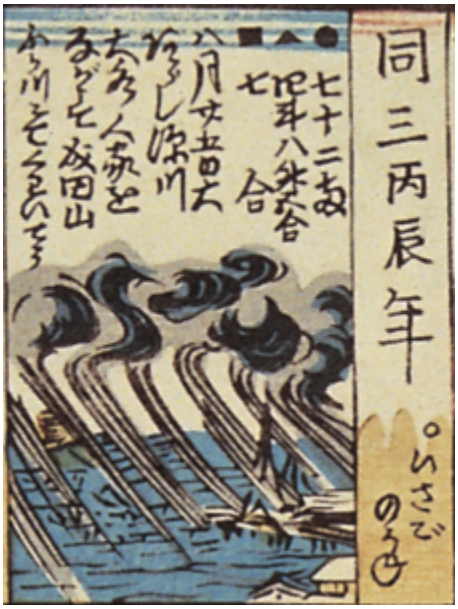


Figure 26. *1856 (Ansei 3 Heishin) Isogo no kane (Gold on the beach).* Great storm hits the Fukagawa area [in Edo] on the 25th day of the 8th month; large floods wash many houses away. Detail of Figure 1.

The sight of dead bodies on the streets of the city became common. With so many people dying each day, cremation centers were busy beyond capacity. Coffins piled up like a mountain and bodies went unattended for days.[59] Edo commoners were suddenly witness to a seemingly unending succession of funeral processions; in the

54. For *kawaraban* coverage of the 1858 cholera and 1862 measles epidemics, see Yoshida Yutaka, *Edo no masukomi "kawaraban,"* Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 2003, pp. 179-237. A measles print shows people throwing beans at a measles demon (looking remarkably similar to the cholera demon in **Figure 28**) in order to drive it away (pp. 232-33).
55. For details on the cholera epidemic with a focus on popular understandings of the disease, see Bettina Gramlich-Oka, "The Body Economic: Japan's Cholera Epidemic of 1858 in Popular Discourse," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, no. 30, *Special Issue: Society and Illness in Early Modern Japan (continued)*, 2009, pp. 32-73. See also Ann Bowman Jannetta, *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, pp. 164-69.
56. The *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), reported in on the course of the epidemic, noting that cholera had first entered Japan in 1819 (actually 1822). See pages 103-06.
57. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), p. 27.
58. Bramlich-Oka, p. 37.
59. Kanagaki Rōbun also published an illustrated "disease documentary" on the cholera epidemic: *Kinton Dōjin [Kanagaki Rōbun], Ansei korori*

Kanda area, for example, fifty or sixty processions could be seen daily, and well over one hundred crossed over the great Nihonbashi.[60] People resorted to various remedies, but nothing seemed to work. It is no wonder that a contemporary compilation of broadsheets and leaflets circulating at the time of the calamity was entitled *Matsudai banashi hakiyose zōshi*—Swept Up Stories of the Latter Days.[61]



Figure 27. *Kawaraban news of typhoon, flood and fire to strike Edo in 1856.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. "beans_disaster_prints_10."

Immediately after its extensive cholera report, the *Bukō nenpyō* noted "A comet appeared every night since early in the 8th month; in the evening it was in the northwest, at daybreak in the northeast. Its tail turned to the north and was very long. Over time it became increasingly small … and by the middle of the 9th month it had disappeared from sight."[62] Connections between the comet and the cholera epidemic are discussion on pp. 3-4. Nenzi quotes from records of the Mito domain: "On top of this turmoil [including the cholera epidemic], an uncommon comet has appeared since the middle of the [8th] month. … Rumors have begun to circulate, and some argue this is a sign of disaster." p. 4.[/footnote] The *Genji Yume Monogatari* also commented on the comet: "it seemed to vomit smoke over the heavens and men feared because they thought such a wonder was a forerunner of great and awful changes in the empire, and of trouble to the country."[63]

ryūkōki, Tenjudō, 1858. Available online through the Waseda University Library Collection of Japanese and Chinese Classics. For color illustration of coffins waiting in line for cremation, see cut 11.

60. Bramlich-Oka, pp. 48-49. See also Minami Kazuo, *Ishin zenya no Edo shomin*, pp. 76-86.
61. *Matsudai banashi hakiyose zōshi*, 1858. National Diet Library copy available online here.
62. The *Bukō nenpyō* was in fact reporting on the appearance of Donati's comet. Coming on the heels of the cholera epidemic, earthquakes, floods, economic collapse and foreign encouragement, the "strange star" was quickly interpreted as an omen of impending catastrophe, if not the arrival of the later days (matsuji).[footnote]See Laura Nenzi, "Caught in the Spotlight: The 1858 Comet and Late Tokugawa Japan," *Japan Forum*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2011, pp. 1-23.
63. *Genji Yume Monogatari*, p. 28. This text also noted the appearance of two later comets, one in 1861 and another "marvelous star" in 1862. The 1861 comet (C/1861 J1) appeared in the "northward corner of the heaven" just after the announcement of the impending marriage between Shogun Iemochi and Princess Kazunomiya, the younger half-sister of the Emperor. The comet, "several hundred feet long … like a river of silver" immediately gave rise to rumors: "Men said with fear that of late years, since the coming of the barbarians, domestic and foreign trouble had increased from day to day, and that this comet was probably a sign that war was imminent" (pp. 39-40). The 1862 comet (Swift-Tuttle, sometimes dubbed the Doomsday Comet) elicited similar fears: "Of late years, some great event had always occurred after the appearance of [a] miraculous star, and therefore when such a star appeared again now, people discussed whether it was a forerunner of some great calamity impending over the empire; or whether it was a good omen prognosticating the uprising of the ronins of the western provinces, and the increase of the national glory through their possessing themselves of the Imperial prestige; but at any rate disturbances of some sort or another were expected" (p. 71).



Figure 28. *1858 (Ansei 5 Bōgō) Tenjō no hi (Fire from Heaven).* Detail of Figure 1. [Cholera] epidemic spreads widely; many people die of the sickness.

Moreover, one broadsheet in the "Stories of the Latter Days" included an illustration of the comet, concluding that the fate of Japan was beyond human control.[64] To many, the arrival of "strange star" seemed to confirm that apocalypse was at hand—or at least something extraordinary was about to happen. Kurosawa Tokiko, a commoner women who participated in the movement to restore the emperor to power, interpreted the comet as a sign that a great war would soon break out.[65] Taking it as an omen, she travelled to Kyoto and made a direct appeal to the emperor, condemning the Tokugawa as despots and urging support for the movement to "revere the emperor and expel the barbarians."

No sooner had the comet disappeared from sight than another disaster struck Edo—this time trial by fire. According to the *Bukō nenpyō*, a fire broke out in the Asakusa are on the morning of the 12th day of the 11th month, 1858. Hot dry winds sent embers far and wide and fires were reported as far as the Azabujuban area. On the 15th another fire broke out in Kanda. Fanned by strong northwesterly winds it quickly spread to samurai residential areas and reached the area around Bakurocho, near Nihonbashi. The fire flared up again in the morning, this time provoked by powerful northeaster winds, and, jumping over the Yanagihara embankment, succeeded in burning the entire Kanda district and a broad area east as far as the Sumida river.[66]

Then, just as people thought the fire was dying down, suddenly what appeared to be a fire whirl, caused by intense rising heat and turbulent wind conditions, descended on the Gofukubashi area close to the Sotobori embankment, uprooting trees and tragically killing a number of people who had managed to escape the blaze along with some of their household goods **[Figure 29]**.[67] Neither of these events, the comet or the fire whirl, were included in the *Compendium of Events* for 1858, but they certainly confirmed the horoscope for the year: fire from heaven.

64. *Matsuji banashi hakiyose zōshi*, vol. 2, p. 20 recto. Also see Bramlich-Oka, p. 57.
65. Laura Nenzi, *The Chaos and Cosmos of Kurosawa Tokiko: One Woman's Transit from Tokugawa to Meiji Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. On the impact of Donati's comet, see pp. 54-55.
66. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), pp. 108-09. For a contemporary map of the fire, see the University of Tokyo Ishimoto Collection of rare books.
67. For image and short description, see *Taiyō korekushon: kawaraban shinbun*, vol. 1, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1978, p. 68. See also leaflet that accompanied the 2014-15 exhibition of rare texts held by the Tokyo National Observatory: Kokuritsu Tenmon-dai Tenmon Jōhō Sentā, ed., *Jōsetsu tenji dai 50 kai: Shisei no tenkō shiryō*, available online here.



Figure 29. *Ansei 5 16th day of 11th month.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. "beans_disaster_prints_2."

The same forecast proved true for 1859. The central image in the *Compendium of Events* for the year featured the main keep of Edo Castle engulfed in red flames **[Figure 30]**. The fire that broke out on the 17th day of the 10th month could easily be viewed as criticism of the ruling elite, powerless to fend off the foreigners, and equally discredited for its failure to prevent or at least ameliorate the effects of earthquakes and epidemics—and fires. The *Genji Yume Monogatari*, for example, began its coverage of 1859 with a reference to the Ansei purges and "the violent and arbitrary way in which Ii Kamon no Kami (Ii Naosuke) governed," hinting that such indignation and hatred could easily lead to revolt against the "onerous government" of the bakufu. This was immediately followed by a description the fire that "consumed the Shogun's residence, with all the adjoining buildings, while the flames spreading to towers of the enceinte burnt them down also."[68] The *Bukō nenpyō* added that all of the buildings of the Ōoku, the woman's quarters of the shogunal palace, were, without exception, destroyed by the fire.[69]

According to the *Bukō nenpyō*, Edo was hit by some 14 major fires during 1859; in addition to the Edo Castle fire, the Aoyama fire that began on the 21st day of the 2nd month destroyed more than 20 daimyo residences and more than 50 temples along an 8 km stretch between Aoyama and Zoshigaya.[70] Right from the beginning of the year, "fire from heaven" seemed to take aim at the ruling elite, presaging the assassination of Ii Naosuke in 1860.

Political and economic disasters dominated the 1860s, but natural calamities continued to exacerbate a shared sense of distress and vulnerability. The *Compendium of Events* made no mention of the so-called Namamugi Incident that took place on the 21st day of the 8th month, 1862. The murder of Charles Richardson by Satsuma samurai came to symbolize new levels of violence between supporters and enemies of the Tokugawa regime. Instead the "cover story" for 1862 was the outbreak of a measles epidemic **[Figure 31]**.

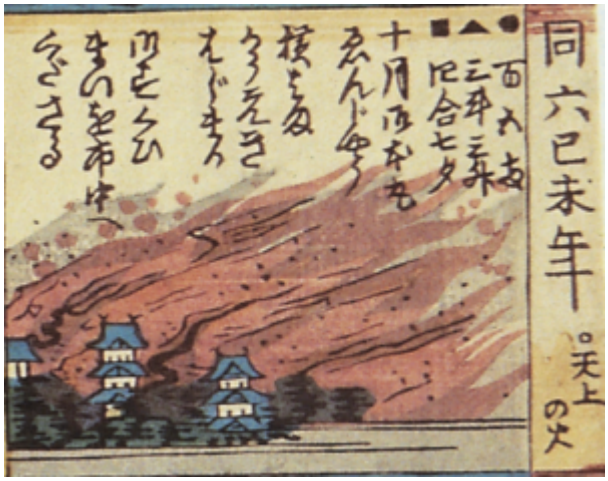


Figure 30. *1859 (Ansei 6 Kibi) Tenjō no hi (Fire from Heaven).* In the 10th month, the main keep of Edo Castle goes up in flames. Detail of Figure 1.

There were incidents of measles in 1859, 1860, and 1861, but in the summer of 1862, the disease spread throughout the country, affecting 63 percent of the population (including Shogun Iemochi): it was the most devastating epidemic of measles in Japanese history.[71] According to the *Bukō nenpyō*, like cholera, measles (*hashika*) was introduced into Japan from overseas in the 2nd month, spreading to Osaka and Kyoto by the 4th month, before reaching Edo in the 7th month.

68. *Genji Yume Monogatari*, p. 35.
69. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), p. 120.
70. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), pp. 111-13 for extensive details on the Aoyama fire. A broadsheet (kawaraban) of the Aoyama fire from the Ono Hideo Collection maps the extent of the destruction.
71. On the 1862 measles epidemic, see Ann Bowman Jannetta, *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan*, Princeton University Press, 2014, especially 124-139. On the visual record of the epidemics, see Harmut O. Rotermund, "Illness Illustrated: Socio-Historical Dimensions of Late Edo Measles Pictures (*Hashika-e*), in Susanne Formanek and Sepp Linhart, eds., *Written Texts—Visual Texts: Woodblock-printed Media in Early Modern Japan*, Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005, pp. 251-277.

There was no household that escaped the disease. In Edo, the death toll stood at 20,952 persons.[72] *ge*), pp. 143-45. According to Minami Kazuo, the measles epidemic produced far more victims than the 1858 bout with cholera; by rough count, whereas in 1858 some 100 funeral processions passed over Nihonbashi in one day, in 1862 the peak was over 200 processions.[73] Naturally, the psychological impact of such rapid loss of life was great. As with the catfish prints that followed the Ansei Edo earthquake of 1855, measles prints (*hashika-e*) offer glimpse into how ordinary people imagined, interpreted and dealt with what seemed to be ever-unfolding episodes of disaster.[74]

As the *Compendium of Events* notes, the government attempted to set up relief stations in order to ameliorate the distress of the people—but to no avail. Recommended medicines and foodstuffs proved illusory. Doctors could offer no cure. In many cases, as **Figure 32** implies, it was left to the crowd of people themselves to subdue the measles demon. As Gregory Smits shows, many of the measles prints included messages of resilience and self-reliance: "control of disease is within our power as individuals."[75]

The popular saying, "Fires and fistfights are the flowers of Edo," captures the ubiquity of fires and firefighting in Edo. The "three great fires" (Meireki fire in 1647; Meiwa fire in 1772, Bunka fire in 1806) were particularly destructive, but more than 1,800 fires, large and small, struck the city and its wooden buildings during the 267 years of the Tokugawa period. Fire disaster in the *bakumatsu* years was particularly onerous; the *Bukō nenpyō* and other contemporary sources reference more than 500 fire episodes during the 15 years between 1853 and 1868.[76]



Figure 31. *1862 (Bunkyū 2 Jinjutsu) O-umi no mizu (Water in the Ocean).* Large-scale outbreak of Measles in Edo and throughout Japan; number of deaths unknown. Detail of Figure 1.

The *Compendium of Events* lists several of these conflagrations. In 1866, for example, reference is made to large fires that broke out in Edo on the 9th day and 10th day of the 12th month. The *Bukō nenpyō* in fact lists some

72. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (
73. Minami Kazuo, *Ishin zenya*, pp. 83-86.
74. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), pp. 143-45. On the visual record of the epidemics, see Gregory Smits, "Warding off Calamity in Japan: A Comparison of the 1855 Measles Prints and the 1852 Measles Prints," *East Asia Science, Technology and Medicine*, vol. 30, 2009, 9-31. See also Harmut O. Rotermund, "Illness Illustrated: Socio-Historical Dimensions of Late Edo Measles Pictures (Hashika-e), in Formanek and Linhart, eds., *Written Texts—Visual Texts*, 251-277.
75. Smits, "Warding off Calamity," p. 16
76. Kuroki Takashi, *Edo no kaji*, Tokyo: Dōseisha, 1999, p. 4.

19 fires for the year, adding to the sense of crisis that gripped the people of Edo already confronted with rising commodity prices, urban rioting, poor camps, street theft and robbery, the shogun's death, and unusual weather in the form of typhoons, extreme thunder storms, and floods in the summer followed by an autumn dry spell. According to the *Bukō nenpyō* there was no rain for fifty days between the 12th day of the 10th month and the 2nd day of the 12th month, creating ideal fire conditions. A fire broke out on the 3rd day of the 11th month in the Samegabashi area close to Yotsuya consuming parts of the Kii daimyo residence. On the 4th day, a major fire struck the Fukugawa district causing extensive damage.[77] On the 6th came another fire, this time in Shiba. Then on the 9th day, a major fire, fanned by strong dry winds, burned for two days and spread widely in the area in around Kanda, Yaesu, and Hibiya and other "low city" districts, destroying daimyo residences, temples, shrines, and over 100 storefronts.[78]



Figure 32. *Hashika-e Stories of Measles Victims.* Source: Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, ICU, *Poking Fun*, p. 13. A deadly measles epidemic hit Japan in 1862. Measles prints offered practical advice (foods to avoid and foods with curative powers) and sometimes served as a charm to keep the disease out of the home. The epidemic caused severe economic dislocations within Edo. In this print, teahouse operators, geisha, and other works who suffered loss of income express their anger at a measles victim, while doctors and medicine sellers offer some protection.

This disaster was followed immediately by another fire that struck the already depressed Yoshiwara pleasure district, destroying nearly all of the teahouses in the area.[79] The next year,1867, also saw Edo burning. On the 29th day of the 12th month, 1866, two major fires extinguished any hope for recovery of a sense of physical and psychological stability. One fire attacked the Hongo area, destroying samurai barracks and threatening several daimyo residences; the other struck temples and samurai residences in the Koishikawa area. As a result of the frequent fires, official New Year's ceremonies were cancelled, and the streets were strangely quiet.[80] The fires, however, kept coming, the first one destroying the residence of the daimyo of Okayama located in the Marunouchi area close to Edo Castle.[81]

The *Buyō nenpyō* made note of some 15 fires for 1867, 10 of them in the spring. Of these, the *Compendium of Events* singled out a fire at the end of the year, just before the outbreak of the Boshin Civil War: "Fire breaks out in Akabane (in Edo) on the 25th day of the 12th month; it burns as far as Shinagawa; many people die." It fact this was a reference to an attack on the Satsuma residence in Shiba led by the daimyo of Shōnai domain, charged with police duties in Edo. Rumor had it that Satsuma samurai had set fire to Nishinomaru Palace two days earlier, on the 23rd day of the 12th month, with the intention to liberate Kazunomiya (widow Shogun Iemochi and half-sister of former Emperor Kōmei) and Atsuhime (widow of Shogun Iesada and adopted daughter of Shimazu Nariakira, the former daimyo of Satsuma). The Satsuma residence was burnt to the ground. When news of these fires reached Shogun Yoshinobu in Osaka, the decision was made to march on Kyoto and engage troops that had begun to call themselves the Imperial Army.

The final disaster story takes place in 1868: "Massive flooding in Osaka, many bridges washed away." Even in the midst of a bloody civil war, people nonetheless had to deal with forces often more powerful than rifles and cannon. The Osaka flooding took place in the fifth month, around the same time as the attack on the Shōgitai, the so-called Battle of Ueno Hill, the event depicted in the last frame of the chronology. The great city of Osaka, occupied by imperial forces after street fighting and the torching its great

77. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), pp. 178-79. For *kawaraban* map (and katsuji text) of the 4/11 fire, see the University of Tokyo Ono Collection.
78. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), pp. 179-180. For *kawaraban* map (and *katsuji* text) of the 9-10/11 fire, see the University of Tokyo Ono Collection.
79. *Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 3 (ge), p. 180.
80. Ibid., p. 182.
81. Ibid., p. 183.

castle, was doubly a disaster victim. Beginning on the 8th day of the 5th month and peaking on the 19th day, the Yodo River breached its embankments and inundated the city.[82] Much like the citizens of Edo forced to witness the defeat of upholders of the old regime, the people of Osaka could only gaze in terror as the infrastructure of their great city was equally destroyed by flame and flood.[83]

Conclusion

What is history? Who makes it? What are its sources? Who decides which events are worthy of memory? These are the sorts of questions that plague historians. In the case of Japanese history, as in other histories, political events, including the reigns of shoguns and emperors, are often used to indicate major breaks with the past or new beginnings. The Meiji Restoration of 1868, the birth of modern Japan, is thus the end of the Tokugawa political system (*baku-han taisei*) and the advent of more centralized imperial system (*tennō-sei*). But there are other approaches to the story of modern Japan. The *Compendium of Events*, a woodblock print issued in the middle of 1868, allows for a more contemporaneous or lived view of changes underfoot during the late Tokugawa years.

Alongside political and economic forces, this visual source gives special insight into the role played by religious forces (including both prayer and play) and natural forces, particularly natural disasters, in historical change. Earthquakes, epidemics, floods and fires helped to discredit the old regime by the sheer cost of human cost of death and suffering, and the economic cost of recovery and rebuilding, but equally by the psychological cost of popular disillusionment, disenchantment and distrust of a government that had proved itself unable to prevent these untoward events from happening and failed to come to the rescue of the people.

The context and end point of any narrative is important. The *Compendium of Events* was issued in the midst of Japan's civil war. The imperial forces had yet to achieve victory over the supporters of the old regime. To the residents of Japan's largest cities, Edo and Osaka, the future seemed bleak. The confluence of political, economic, religious and natural forces offered little hope for a return to everyday stability and established morality; not only was the world turned upside down, but at what seemed to be a dead end. The *Genji Yume Monogatari* ended its narrative in 1864, with Kyoto in flames: "Heaven and earth trembled and quaked, until the end of the world seemed to be at hand."[84] The reality of civil war four years later only confirmed this sense of apocalypse now. "The working of heaven seems to know no right or wrong."[85] By 1871, however, the narrative had changed. Edo had become Tokyo and the emperor had emerged as savior; the new imperial regime not only restored peace and stability but hope for a better future. The *Kinsei Shiryaku*, published in 1871 as one of the first histories of the Meiji Restoration, concluded with a new story of the wonderful changes that had taken place as a result of the restoration of imperial rule. The feudal system was completely disbanded: "From this moment the government power was concentrated in the family of the sovereign, and the Empire was grateful for universal peace."[86]

This happy outcome, however, was not inevitable. As visual sources, such as the *Compendium of Events*, helps to make clear, the experience of ordinary people during the turbulent years between 1853 and 1868 was hardly happy: some made money but many more found their means of livelihood in danger, some found faith in millenarian dreams, but many more feared that all roads ahead were blocked. And as governments faltered and failed to provide everyday peace and stability, many were forced to fend for themselves. Finally, as if the reality of foreign threats and domestic unrest was not enough, people, rich and poor, were challenged by a seemingly interminable series of natural disasters. The *Compendium of Events* thus becomes a valuable visual record of the extraordinary resilience of ordinary people confronted by a nightmare of apocalyptic proportions.

82. For kawaraban image and katsuji text of the 1868 Osaka flood, see the University of Tokyo Ono Hideo Collection.
83. See the section on "Tokugawa Infrastructure in Decline and Crisis," in Carl Mosk, *Japanese Industrial History: Technology, Urbanization and Economic Growth*, London: Routledge, 2016.
84. *Genji Yume Monogatari*, p. 238. Quoted in Walthall and Steele, *Politics and Society in Japan's Meiji Restoration*, p. 103.
85. *Soyofuku Kaze*, no. 7, n.d., in *Bakumatsu Meiji shinbun zenshū*, 3, p. 408.
86. *Kinsé shiriaku*, p. 148.

The Ansei Edo Earthquake and Catfish Prints

Gregory Smits | Pennsylvania State University



The Ansei Edo earthquake (*Ansei Edo jishin* 安政江戸地震) shook the de facto capital of Tokugawa Japan around 10:00 PM on November 11, 1855. However, the people of the time used a lunar calendar. So in their view, the earthquake struck on the second day of the tenth month. This timing was significant because a widely-known aspect of popular religion held that the major deities all gathered in Izumo (in western Japan) for a meeting during the tenth month, leaving behind lesser deities to fill in.

Estimates of the magnitude (M) of this earthquake are 6.9-7.0, and it did not produce a tsunami. Damage was severe in some areas and light in others, and the casualty rates varied similarly. The main determinate of the severity of ground motion was the nature of the soil base. Places that had once been swamps or other bodies of water but had been recently filled in collapsed dramatically, destroying structures and causing many

casualties. For the most part, these severely shaken areas were the residences of elites or were associated with elites. Especially significant was the destruction in “Daimyo Lane” (*damyō kōji* 大名小路), the location of major *fudai* daimyo mansions and several major bakufu organs of government just below Edo castle. In 1600, this area had been Hibiya Inlet, part of the sea, before being filled in to create prime real estate. Also hard hit was the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, a famous playground for the wealthy. Recently-built offshore artillery batteries (*daiba* 台場), an obvious symbol of shogunal power, all collapsed or were severely damaged.

Deaths for civilian and military personnel totaled 8,000-10,000, and they were concentrated in the severely damaged areas. Outside of these areas, including most commoner neighborhoods, casualties and damage were light. This uneven pattern of destruction is one reason that so many of the earthquake prints from this event seem playful or irreverent in tone. Popular culture in Edo already had this tendency, and for many of Edo’s ordinary denizens, the earthquake was a source of potential windfall profits. This potential for profit was especially apparent among skilled workers in the construction trades such as carpenters, roofers, and plasterers, and among merchants who dealt in supplies needed for rebuilding. For example, November 1855 was a good time to be a lumber wholesaler in Edo. Even many unskilled laborers, however, were able to find work at higher wages than usual, and government relief was fast and generous in this earthquake.

Because of the near total destruction of the Yoshiwara area, the bakufu authorized the opening of numerous temporary brothels around Edo. Many earthquake prints used these places as their setting and often depicted newly-rich construction workers spending money there. Overall prints from the Ansei Edo earthquake tended to interpret the significance of the event as a cosmically ordained shakeup of society such that money flowed from the coffers of the rich (daimyo and wealthy merchants) into the hands of hardworking laborers. The usual term for this redistribution of wealth in the context of the Ansei Edo earthquake was *yonaoshi* 世直し, literally “rectification of society.” This term might have other meanings, for example redress of peasant grievances, in other late Tokugawa era contexts.

Many earthquake prints feature some form of a catfish (*namazu* 鯰) and therefore the genre is typically called catfish prints (*namazue* 鯰絵), even though some individual prints lack a catfish. Note that “Namazu” is not really a proper noun, even though it appears that way in some of the print descriptions. Its use as a proper noun in these descriptions refers to the folk belief that a large stone, the *kanameishi* 要石 at the Kashima Shrine 鹿島神宮 to the northeast of Edo, pins down a giant subterranean catfish. The Kashima deity resides at the shrine and pushes down on the *kanameishi* to ensure that the catfish cannot move. During the tenth month, however, because he was absent for the meeting of deities at Izumo, the catfish shook off the foundation stone, moved around, and caused the earthquake.

Many catfish prints reply in this basic folk image of the catfish pinned down by the *kanameishi*. Catfish functioned as a visually striking and usefully malleable symbol of earthquakes in general, and of the Ansei Edo earthquake in particular. Even in today’s Japan, earthquake warning signs in public places sometimes feature an image of a catfish.

It is important to note however, that most denizens of Edo understood this scenario as metaphoric. Earthquakes were understood as the result of an imbalance in yin (cool) and yang (hot) energy. When too much yang energy built up within the earth and sought to escape upward, an earthquake could result, especially in the case of clay soil. Catfish were a widely-recognized symbol of earthquakes, but it is unlikely that many, if any, residents of Edo in 1855 thought that catfish, large or small, actually caused earthquakes.

By 1855, residents of Edo had long been accustomed to broadside prints that commented on the state of society and recent events. There was a censorship system in place, but by coding messages in one or more layers of symbolism and by making use of plays on words, it was possible to produce prints whose messages would have been censored if stated baldly. In other words, the people of Edo were well practiced in reading coded messages,

and it is this phenomenon that makes the catfish prints so interesting. In the guise of reporting on the earthquake, they serve as a window through which to glimpse Edo society.

Contrast the catfish prints with disaster prints 7, 9, and 10 in the UBC Open Collections [**Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3]**. These three prints are attempts realistically to depict the horrors of the 1896 Meiji Sanriku tsunami. This tsunami devastated the Sanriku coast (approximately the same area devastated in 2011), killing over 20,000. These prints succeed in conveying some sense of the disaster, but there is little to analyze about them beyond certain technical features. The 1855 catfish prints, by contrast, are rich in symbolic social commentary, often in multiple layers.

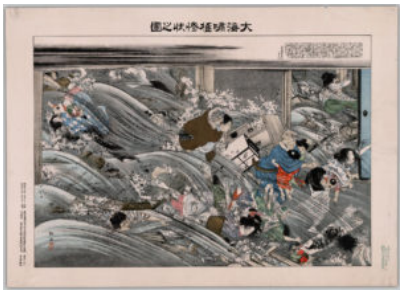


Figure 1.1. UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 7.

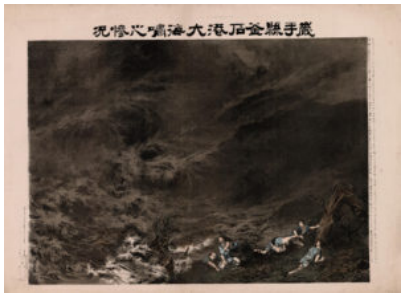


Figure 1.2. UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 9.



Figure 1.3. UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 10.

In the paragraphs below, I discuss the majority of the catfish prints in the UBC Open Collections. For ease of identification, prints are listed by the number in the collection, and titled using the bracketed description from the web site, even if that description contains errors.

Figure 2 reveals important points about the social dynamics of the 1855 Ansei Edo earthquake. The basic image is that of an anthropomorphic catfish, in disguise, visiting or passing by a brothel, while the courtesans and customers attack him. The superficial point is that the catfish caused the earthquake and thus is worthy of animosity or retribution for the damage he has inflicted on society.



Figure 2. "People attacking a Namazu, a giant catfish, for causing earthquakes." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 1.

The name of the brothel is Kannazukiya 神無月屋, a reference to the tenth lunar month, known as Kannazuki or Kannaizuki (month of no deities). During this month, the major deities around Japan travel to Izumo for a conference, leaving lesser deities temporarily in charge. In the Edo area, Kashima left the less competent Ebisu in charge of protecting the city against earthquakes, thus making possible the earthquake that struck on the night of the second day of that month. The reference to Kannazuki might also function to suggest that this catfish is not the proper object of blame.

The catfish himself protests his beating, starting with the statement "Is it possible that a catfish like me has the power to cause the event of the night of the second day?" The catfish goes on to remind the crowd that the

earthquake resulted in this *karitaku* (temporary brothel established in the wake of the earthquake) and the money circulating through it.

Notice the man at the bottom left with black trousers and a brick-like pattern on his blue jacket. He is a skilled construction worker, someone who stands to profit greatly from the rebuilding. Instead of assaulting the catfish, he seeks to restrain the crowd, saying “Thanks to that guy, some good things have happened. Don’t treat him so roughly!”

This print is a good example of the general tendency to interpret the Ansei Edo earthquake as an instance of *yo-naoshi* 世直し. The meaning of this term can differ from one context to another. In connection with this earthquake, it indicated a transfer of wealth from elite merchants and from daimyo into the hands of laborers, especially skilled construction workers. Many prints depicted these workers as spending their windfall profits in brothels.



Figure 3. “Story of a mega earthquake that destroyed temples and pagodas, 1835.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 3.

Despite the description, the print in **Figure 3** is from 1855. The reason for the 1835 date is that the text mentions a Chinese earthquake from that year as an example of the phenomenon of a flash of light shooting up into the sky and traveling north to south in connection with an earthquake. It goes on to explain that in the Ansei Edo earthquake, a ray of light shot from the vicinity of the pagoda at Sensōji 浅草寺, traveling in a southward direction. The text provides a detailed explanation of this phenomenon, relying on the *Classic of*

Changes (C. *Yijjing;* J. *Ekikyō* 易経). The visual image is an imaginary close-up depiction of a "shining object" (*hikarimono* 光物) associated with earthquakes.



Figure 4. "A giant catfish being punished for causing earthquakes." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 6.

The catfish prints of 1855 often depicted society as divided into economic winners and losers vis-à-vis the earthquake. Here in **Figure 4**, wealthy merchants, Yoshiwara courtesans, Shinto and Buddhist priests, among others, attack the earthquake catfish. A construction worker and a roof tile seller (in black) are trying to restrain the crowd and save their friend the catfish.

This print also indulges in parody. At the bottom right is a monkey and a gourd, which is iconography from a different genre of popular prints, *Ōtsue* 大津絵. In that genre, a monkey uses a gourd to suppress a catfish. Here, the monkey has drank the liquor in the gourd and is passed out on the ground drunk. The text includes a parody of the song *Kimigayo* 君が代.

Located on swampy ground, the Yoshiwara red light district went up in flames as a result of the earthquake, with great loss of life. Soon thereafter, the bakufu authorized the establishment of numerous temporary brothels throughout Edo. The earthquake thus devastated a well-known playground for the wealthy, transforming it into local establishments patronized mainly by the newly-rich construction workers—at least according to popular depictions at the time.

Kanameishi 要石 is sometimes translated as Foundation Stone. There are several *kanameishi* in shrines around Japan, but the one in the Kashima Shrine is most famous and appears in the 1855 prints, as in **Figure 5**.

The stone firmly planted in place, as in this print, is a symbol of clam and stability. The stone ajar, pushed over, or in the air (in some other prints) is a sign that the forces of disorder temporarily reign supreme. This print appears to be a retrospective on the recent earthquake. The text includes the perspectives of nine different groups: the elderly, carpenters, young courtesans, pottery merchants, *geisha*, Yoshiwara employees, a courageous person (who prays that there not be another earthquake), physicians, and "logical people" (*rikutsumono*), who are aware that praying to a stone is strange (*fushigi)*.



Figure 5. "People praying to the Kaname-ishi rock, which pins down a giant catfish and prevents it from moving and causing earthquakes." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 5.



Figure 6. "People attempting to capture Namazu, the giant catfish believed to cause earthquakes." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 13.

The carpenter wants finally to be able to finish his vastly increased workload, the young courtesan hopes to be able to watch a play in the future, and the overworked physician wants his overly large number of patients to heal quickly. In general, there is a widespread desire to return to the ordinary rhythms of life.

This complex print in **Figure 6** depicts people seeking the prosperity that became apparent in the wake of the 1855 Ansei Edo earthquake. Notice several points. First, catfish do not have blowholes. Second the blowhole of whales is located atop their heads, not in the middle of their bodies.

Next, notice the text. To read easily the text intermingled with the gold coins apparently spewing from this large black sea creature requires turning the print upside down. Doing so causes the stream of water to look like a mountain. The upside-down text amidst the gold coins is 大国のつち、うごかして、市中へ、宝の山を、つむそ、めでたき. Its basic meaning is "The soil of the great country moves, piling up a mountain of treasure in the midst of the city. Auspicious." The first phrase, *daikoku no tsuchi* is the same pronunciation as 大黒の槌, the magic mallet of the deity Daikoku, whose name literally means "big black." Moreover, Daikoku and his coin-spewing mallet appear in other catfish prints, as we will see. In other words, there are multiple ways to view and interpret this print.

And there is yet another "big black" in it, the "black ships" that had recently visited Edo (1853 and 1854). "Black ship" was a common term at the time for steamships, and popular prints often depicted them as looking like giant sea monsters. Several prints and other earthquake commentary link the 1855 earthquake with Matthew Perry's naval and diplomatic expeditions of 1853 and 1854, and other events of this tumultuous historical era. Notice that the coins are flowing from the place where the smokestack of a steamship would be located. This big black whale-catfish-steamship hybrid, although ominous in appearance, is potentially a source of great wealth. That is why the people in the foreground are beckoning it to come closer. The name of the print is *Ō-Edo no furui* (The shaking of greater Edo), which resonates with all the possible symbolism in the print.



Figure 7. "Daikokuten, a god of wealth, throws money to people below while Nanazu, a giant catfish, is held down by Kashima/Takemikazuch[i], a god of thunder and swords." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 14.

It may seem odd to regard a major earthquake and the visit of Matthew Perry's fleet as beneficial events. However, casualties in the earthquake were light overall, and they were concentrated in several elite neighborhoods. From the standpoint of ordinary denizens of Edo, the earthquake, while terrifying, was a source of windfall profit both in the form of generous government relief and in higher wages even for unskilled laborers during the rebuilding. Similarly, although Perry's visit was jarring for the government, it tended to be fascinating for ordinary people. Moreover, there were many in Edo who thought that increased trade with new countries, via their city, could be a source of wealth, as it had been for Nagasaki.



Figure 8. "Song lyrics about Namazu, the giant catfish who causes earthquakes." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 15.

This description is somewhat peculiar, but like most catfish prints, **Figure 7** contains multiple messages and symbols. We could call this print transitional. Prints in the immediate wake of the earthquake tended to feature a large, menacing catfish, with the Kashima deity gone (off to his meeting at Izumo) or rushing back to Edo to try to restore order. Moreover, the *kanameishi* is typically missing or dislodged in early prints, and if depicted, it tends to be very small. Later prints emphasize windfall profits for members of the construction trades and typically feature anthropomorphic catfish similar in size to humans.

In this print Kashima is in the process of bringing the violent giant catfish back under control. An old association of Kashima was with swords, and in this and other prints, Kashima's sword substitutes for the *kanameishi*. The short text in the middle is a song: "Thanks to the water deity's revelation, our lives are saved. We are happy to visit houses of prostitution!" From above, Daikoku (big black), the deity discussed previously, carries a great sack of wealth and dispenses gold coins from his magic mallet. Energetic-looking construction workers eagerly scoop them up.

Here in **Figure 8**, anthropomorphic catfish perform the song "Earthquake Suchyaraka-bushi" in an irreverent parody. The catfish are dressed as fire fighters, and their water barrel is labeled "Kashima-chō" (Kashima lies to the northeast of Edo). *Suchyaraka-bushi* was a popular song from the Kabuki stage. In the earthquake version, the first half of each line describes a situation and the last half indicates the location of the person or people in question.

One line of the song reads, “Remained too long and could not get out—in the storehouse.” In other words, wealthy people were prone to linger too long trying to save their valuables, even at the risk of their lives. Another line reads, “Running outside naked—in the bath.”



Figure 9. “People praying at the Kaname-ishi rock, in hopes it would prevent earthquakes.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 17.

The print in **Figure 9** is similar to that found in Figure 5. In it Kashima has just returned from his meeting in Izumo, has suppressed the giant catfish, and his workers are putting the final touches on replacing the *kanameishi* securely atop the catfish. The crowd consists of people sleeping out in the open for fear of aftershocks. Kashima assures them that the aftershocks will decrease now that he is back in control of the situation and that it is safe to return home. The people explain their earthquake experiences and their hopes for future calm.



Figure 10. “Beings representing earthquakes (the catfish), fire, and thunderstorms play a game of “Jishin Ken” (earthquake fists), a game similar to rock-paper-scissors, while a stern father looks on.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 18.

The text in **Figure 10** compares the forces of shaking, fire, and rainstorms. The father looking on while drinking *sake* brings to mind the stereotypical list at that time of the four things everyone fears: earthquakes, thunder, fire, and fathers. The final lines of text make reference to carpenters charging high rates, thus causing "the gradual rectification of society" (*dandan yo ga naori* 段々世が直り) as they accumulate money.



Figure 11. "A catfish does something evil to a monkey, while a god of thunderstorms and others watch." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 21.

Figure 11 leverages iconography from the genre of popular prints from the Lake Biwa region known as *Ōtsue* 大津絵. In that genre, a monkey suppresses a catfish with a gourd (typically indicating flood control). Here, the monkey is fast asleep—or perhaps dead. Otherwise, the print bears some similarity to the previous one (number 32, page 18) in that the catfish, the *kanameishi*-as-stone-warrior, and the actor in the upper right corner are playing a fist game. The thunder deity is trying to escape the scene, apparently with a pilfered courtesan's shamisen.



Figure 12. "Representatives of earthquakes, fires, and thunderstorms in a theatrical setting." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 23.

Notice also the father figure in the background of **Figure 12**, thus creating the earthquakes, fires, thunder, and father set of things that everyone fears, which the text also mentions. Many catfish prints took inspiration from the

Kabuki stage, and this one is based on *Shibaraku*. In the print, fire corresponds to the bombastic hero Kamakura Gongorō Kagemasa, the catfish is the sly Namazu-bōzu (bald-headed, i.e., catfish-headed priest), and thunder appears as “Earthquake thunder” in the parody script. Incidentally, it was common to associate earthquakes and thunder at the time, because earthquakes were generally regarded as the same phenomenon as thunder, but occurring under the ground. Moreover, earthquakes were typically thought to occur along with thunder and lightning.



Figure 13. “Play script regarding Earthquakes, Namazu, and other catfish.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 27.



Figure 14. “Play script featuring Namazu, a giant catfish, and Kashima, a god of thunder and swords.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 28.

Originally written for the puppet theatre, *Gosho Zakura Horikawa youchi* 御所桜堀川夜討 was later adopted to the Kabuki stage. In **Figure 13** the play has transformed into an earthquake version, with catfish standing in for the Benkei Jōshi scene. The title of the original drama refers to a night attack, and likewise, the Ansei Edo earthquake struck at night.

Figure 14 is based on the Yukashita (below the floor) scene from the Kabuki drama *Meiboku sendai hagi* 伽羅先代萩. In the original, the scene involves Arajishi Otokunosuke wounding a large rat, which escapes and re-emerges as the arch villain Nikki Danjō. In the print, Arajishi transforms into Araishi Kanamenosuke 荒石要之助, that is, the Kashima deity, and the rat has become a gourd.



Figure 15. "Song lyrics attempting to ward off earthquakes caused by catfish." Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 29.



Figure 16. Utagawa Yoshitora, *"Dōke musha miyo no wakamochi 道外武者御代の若餅."* Source: National Diet Library.

This very interesting print in **Figure 15** is much more than the description suggests. First, it shows members of the construction trades preparing *mochi* (rice cakes) that a catfish is about to eat. In this general way, it indicates the gratitude of the members of the construction trade for the earthquake, which has been so profitable for them.

However, this catfish print is based on an earlier print seen below in **Figure 16** that was sufficiently subversive that its maker, Utagawa Yoshitora, was sentenced to a short period of house arrest. The print, made during the 1830s or 40s (the precise date is uncertain) is *Dōke musha miyo no wakamochi* 道外武者御代の若餅.

The print features Oda Nobunaga and Akechi Mitsuhide pounding the rice into dough, Toyotomi Hideyoshi making the dough into *mochi*, and Tokugawa Ieyasu relaxing and eating the product of the labor of the others. In other words, the print could be interpreted as belittling Tokugawa Ieyasu's accomplishment in forging a unified Japan.

Catfish prints are all anonymous, and they were all technically illegal. After approximately two months, the bakufu was able bring sufficient enforcement pressure to bear in shutting down any further production of catfish prints, although by then, many thousand were in circulation. This print is one of several that make clear the mildly subversive potential of some catfish prints. Although ostensibly about the earthquake, many prints commented, often critically or irreverently, on different aspects of society. These prints were able to flourish for so long because the Edo authorities were busy dealing with more pressing problems in the wake of the earthquake.



Figure 17. “Song to ward off earthquakes caused by catfish.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 32.



Figure 18. “Song lyrics about Namazu, the giant catfish who causes earthquakes.” Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, QE537.2 J3 D57 1800z. Page 33.

The title of the print in **Figure 17** is *Ōtsu burebushi* 大津ぶれぶし (Ōtsu shaking song), which is a play on the title of the popular song *Ōtsue bushi* 大津絵節. The text in the print keeps the same phrasing as the song, replacing the original lyrics with descriptions of the earthquake and its aftermath.

Figure 18 is the left page of a two-page print entitled *Yomunasake ukiyo arisama* 夜無情浮世有様, which is a play on the title of the Kabuki drama *Yowanasake ukina no yokogushi* 与話情浮名横櫛. The print depicts the Genjidana 源氏店 scene. On the missing (right) page is the Kashima deity, derived from Tazaemon (manager of a successful, large shop) in the original. Yosaburō (a young man living a debauched lifestyle) in the original is the standing catfish in the half of the print depicted here. Kōmori Yasu (Yasu-the-bat), a man with a tattoo of a bat on his cheek, is the seated catfish. This print is yet another example of taking famous Kabuki scenes and refitting them with earthquake-themed text and images.

Further Reading

For a detailed study of the Ansei Edo earthquake, including a detailed discussion of the points in the above paragraphs and a lengthy bibliography of Japanese works, see Gregory Smits, *Seismic Japan: The Long History and Continuing Legacy of the Ansei Edo Earthquake* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013).

Ruth Ludwin and Gregory Smits, “Folklore and Earthquakes: Native American Oral Traditions from Cascadia Compared with Written Traditions from Japan.” In L. Piccardi and W. B. Masse, eds., *Myth and Geology* (London: Geological Society of London, 2007): 67-94.

Cornelis Ouwehand, *Namazu-e and Their Themes: An Interpretative Approach to Some Aspects of Japanese Folk Religion*(Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964). This study has relatively little to say about the *namazue* themselves and is instead a thick description of the matrix of folk beliefs in which the *namazue* were embedded.

Gregory Smits, "Conduits of Power: What the Origins of Japan's Earthquake Catfish Reveal about Religious Geography," *Japan Review*, Vol. 24 (2012): 41-65. This article is in part an update of Ouwehand's work cited above.

_____, "Namazu-e: Catfish Prints of 1855," *Andon* (Publication of the Society for Japanese Arts), Vol. 86 (2009): 35-46.

_____, "Shaking Up Japan: Edo Society and the 1855 Catfish Picture Prints," *Journal of Social History*, 39.4 (Summer, 2006): 1045-1077.

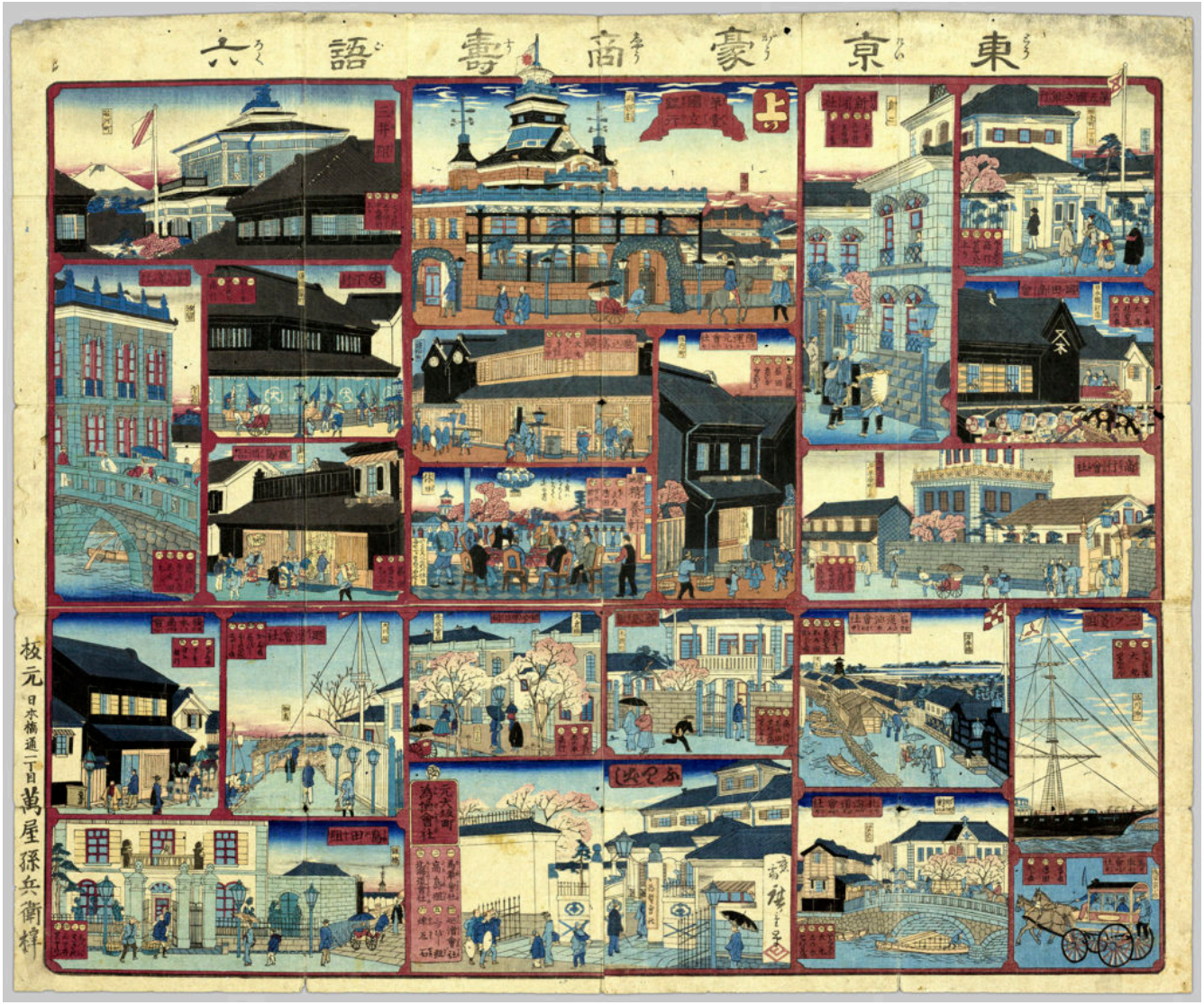
_____, "Warding off Calamity in Japan: A Comparison of the 1855 Catfish Prints and the 1862 Measles Prints," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, No. 30 (2009): 9-31.

***The most important reference for catfish prints in Japanese is*:**

Miyata Noboru 宮田登 and Takada Mamoru 高田衛, eds. *Namazue: Shinsai to Nihon bunka* 鯰絵：震災と日本文化 (Ribun shuppan, 1995).

Reading Edo Urban Space in the Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku (Tokyo Rich Merchants Board Game)

Kanaya Masataka | Hōsei University



Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku. Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:1)

This image drawn by Utagawa Hiroshige III is an *e-sugoroku*, or "picture board game," depicting Tokyo in the early Meiji Period (1868-1912). *Sugoroku* are Japanese board games similar to those seen around the world: players roll a dice to advance from the start (*furidashi*) square through a series of squares around the board. The

player who reaches the end square (*agari*) first is the winner. In Japan, the development of printing technology from the middle of the Edo Period (1600-1868) made possible the publication of various form of so-called *e-sugoroku*, combining board games with graphic images.[1] Classifications of *e-sugoroku* are as varied as the types of board games themselves, but Takahashi Junji has categorized the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku* as one of many "enlightenment board games" (*kaika sugoroku*) illustrating the "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*) of the early-Meiji Period.[2] Still, the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku* also portrays traditional buildings retained from the Edo period right alongside the Western architecture that symbolized "civilization and enlightenment" during the Meiji period. In this way, Western and Japanese architectural forms mixed in the urban space of Tokyo during the early years of the city's modern period. The Westernization of the city was at first pushed by the central government, but was later adopted by local residents as a place to experience a novel urban space by the end of the Meiji Period. By mapping what buildings were erected at which locations, we can locate the early-Meiji Tokyo urban layout and lot division patterns inherited from Edo. Thus, through a close reading of the architectural forms depicted on the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku*, this essay offers a glimpse of the traces of Edo urban space in early-Meiji Tokyo.



Figure 1. Detail of Kawase Gaisha in *Tōkyō gōshō sugoroku*.

First, a detailed look at the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku*. In each of the game squares, we can see a number of building types no longer present in Tokyo – castellated buildings, roofs adorned with mythical sea creatures (*shachi*), or the plastered warehouses and Western-style brick buildings lining the Ginza. Labels identify the names and addresses of companies new to Tokyo at the time. Starting from the Kawase Gaisha commercial exchange in the bottom-central *furidashi* square, players roll the dice to reach the First National Bank in the *agari* square at the top-center. Notice the label in the Kawase Gaisha square locating the building in Moto-Ōsakachō **[Figure 1]**, a commoners' neighborhood from the Edo-period that disappeared in 1933 as part of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Project following the Great Kantō Earthquake (now part of Nihonbashi Ningyōchō). A number of theories exist for the origin of the neighborhood's name, but it is thought it derives from the granting of the

1. 加藤康子・松村倫子編著『幕末・明治の絵双六』国書刊行会、, 2002
2. 高橋順二編著『日本絵双六集成』柏書房, 1980

land to merchants who moved from Ōsaka during the Tenshō Era (1573-1592), with “Moto” added to distinguish the area from nearby Shin-Ōsakachō (now Nihonbashi Tomizawachō).[3] During the Edo Period, the urban space of Edo was made up primarily of samurai areas (*bukechi*), commoner areas (*chōninchi*), and temple and shrine lands (*jishachi*). According an 1869 survey, *bukechi* made up 68.6%, or 9,585 acres, of the urban area of Edo, with the remainder split evenly between *chōninchi* (15.8%) and *jishachi* (15.6%).[4] It is possible, moreover, to roughly define a typical pattern of buildings that would have stood in each of these areas.

To this point, notice the layout of the buildings. Following the precedent of Edo-period samurai areas, the buildings are set far back from the street-front gate, allowing the gate to completely obscure the front entrance of the building. *Bukechi* lands were granted exclusively to warriors by the Tokuagawa Shogunate and varied in size, but most followed the basic layout of gradual stages passing from the street through a main gate into the compound and to a special guest entrance into the residence. In Edo commoners’ areas, on the other hand, storefronts faced directly onto the street with no gates, allowing direct entry into the building. On the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku*, both the Enomoto Kaisha and the Kajima Sakadana are of this type. In this way, by looking at the layout of buildings, it is possible to define a typical pattern of Edo-period compounds. But this would mean that in the case of the Kawase Gaisha a building with a *bukechi* layout was erected in a former *chōninchi* lot.

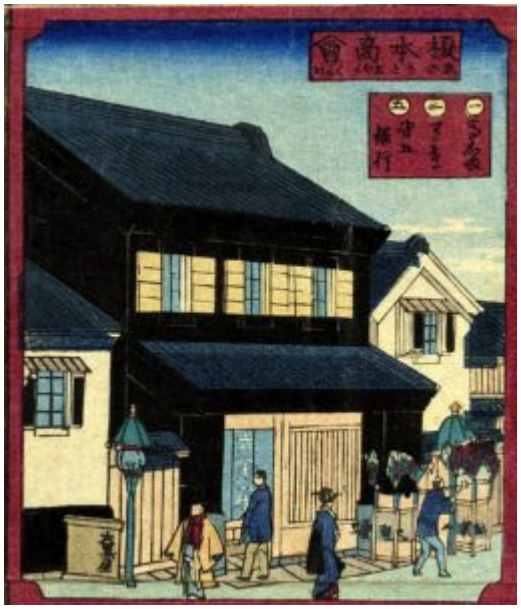


Figure 2. Detail of Enomoto Shōkai in *Tōkyō gōshō sugoroku*.



Figure 3. *Tōkyō zenzu* (1875). Original Format: University of British Columbia Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. G7964 .T7 1875 I3.

Now, why is it that the Kawase Gaisha has a *bukechi* layout in the commoners’ area of Moto-Ōsakachō? In fact, this neighborhood had originally been a *bukechi*. In the detail of the 1874 *Tōkyō Zenzu* in **Figure 3**, we can see a marker for Tōkyō Kawase Gaisha in the centre-upper right in a plot that is quite large compared to the neighboring properties. In reality, the Tōkyō Kawase Gaisha was not in Moto-Ōsakachō at all, but instead in the 2-chōme block of Kakigarachō. Next let’s take a look at the 1859 Owariya *kiriezu* in **Figure 4**, depicting the areas to the south of those seen in **Figure 3**. On this *kiriezu*, we see the name “Ginza” denoting the location of the silver mint later replaced by the Tōkyō Kawase Gaisha during the Meiji Period. The reason the district known as Ginza today is located to the southwest of the “Ginza” shown in **Figure 4** is that the mint had been relocated to this area in 1800 as a result of worsening management and incidents of illegal activity.[5] At this time, the mint was under the direct control of the Tokugawa Shogunate’s finance magistrate (*kanjō bugyō*). The whole of Moto-Ōsakachō and the areas across the street were all *bukechi* with many Daimyō compounds. During the Edo period, *bukechi* neighborhoods did not have names, and the name Kakigarachō was not fixed until the tenth month of 1871.[6]

So, why is the neighborhood in the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku* listed as Moto-Ōsakachō? The key to unlocking this question lies in the fact that in the decades prior to the scene depicted in the **Figure 4** *kiriezu*, just over 1 acre

3. 東京市役所市史編纂『東京案内上巻』1986(1907年書肆裳華房の復刻版を用いた)、また、東京府が明治5年から7年にわたって行った調査(東京都『東京府史料1』1959)には「大坂の廻船此所まて入津せし故に大坂町と唱う」とある。
4. 吉田伸之編「江戸の土地—大名・幕臣の土地問題」『日本の近世9』中央公論社, 1992
5. 大石学『地名で読む江戸の町』PHP新書,2001、および[3]
6. 東京市日本橋区役所編纂『日本橋区史第一册』1916

of land was added to Ginza in the ninth month of 1842.[7] Referring to the 1840 *Go-funai enkaku zusho* map that allows us to trace changes in Edo land usage patterns, we see that the areas subsumed into Ginza are labeled Moto-Ōsakachō **[Figure 5]** since Edo was made up of neighborhoods in which one name referred to areas on both sides of the street. But in this case, since one half of the street was subsumed into Ginza, we know that Moto-Ōsakachō only referred to one side of the street. Because the commoner's district of Moto-Ōsakachō was incorporated into Ginza, the name of Moto-Ōsakachō is listed in the caption on the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku*. Thus, the spatial characteristics of the Kawase Gaisha were inherited from the former *bukechi*. In much the same way, the First National Bank in the centre-top *agari* square, the Fifth National Bank in the top right square, or the Tokyo Grain Exchange (*Tōkyō Shōkō Kaisha*) in the right-middle all have the same spatial layout as the Kawase Gaisha. And as we can see in the *kiriezu*, they all were former *bukechi* prior to the Meiji Period. In the case of the First National Bank, the Shimada-gumi erected the building in the former compound of the Matsudaira governor of Izumi sold off by the government following the Meiji Restoration.

Next, let's turn our attention to the rowhouse gates (*nagayamon*) lining the streets. *Nagayamon* denotes a rowhouse that includes a gate, a type of construction which for the most part only high-level samurai were permitted to build. In the case of Daimyō, soldiers would live in rowhouses on either side of the gate. In the Kawase Gaisha square on the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku*, we can see what at first appears to be a generic *nagayamon* with a window opening onto the street to the right of the gate. However, there are a number of unexpected things here. First, the gatepost. The gatepost in the image is exceptionally advanced for this time-period. Namely, the top of the pillar is ornamented with a spherical *giboshi*, a design not formally used for samurai compound gates. Instead, *giboshi* were a type of ornament seen originally in temple construction and bridge railings. Secondly, the curvature at the top of the gate. Until then, arches and curves were not often seen in a Japan with so much wooden construction. But we can see that the gate of the Kawase Gaisha has an arch with decorations on top. A gate of this same design can also be seen in Tokyo Grain Exchange (*Tōkyō Shōkō Kaisha*) square in the right-middle of the board. The First National Bank in the *agari* square also has an arched gate, indicating that such arches were symbols of Western architecture for carpenters at that time.



Figure 4. *Kiriezu nihonbashi kita* (1852). Original Format: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. G7964.T7 1869 T6 v.1-30.



Figure 5. *Go-funai Enkaku Zusho* (1840).

Although these Western-style buildings all feature arched windows, quoins, and classical entablature, it is clear at first glance that these are not genuine Western buildings. Constructed by Japanese carpenters, the Western-style buildings erected at this time were not made of stone as in the case of actual Western construction but were made of wooden frames and plastered with stone on the outer walls. In other cases, earthen walls were even made to look like stonework. First appearing in the early Meiji Period, this type of so-called "Pseudo-Western" (*Giyōfū*) architecture was built by Japanese carpenters following the example of Western-style buildings erected in the foreign settlement in Yokohama following the opening of the port in 1854.[8] It was Japanese carpenters employed in the construction of these buildings in the Yokohama foreign settlement who made it possible for *Giyōfū* architecture to blossom in Tokyo. The first bloom was surely none other than the 1872 First National Bank in the *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku's agari* square and popularized by the triptych by Shōsai Ikkei from the same year in **Figure 6**. The building was a five-story castle-style structure built through and through with Japanese architectural elements, but the bottom two stories were constructed with a design mimicking Western stone architecture. The compound interior, meanwhile, has a courtyard, and the building was divided into a number of small rooms laid out in the

7. 東京市日本橋区役所編纂『日本橋区史第三册』1916
8. 擬洋風建築の解説については藤森照信『日本の近代建築(上)-幕末・明治篇–』岩波新書,1993に詳しい。

Japanese step-back (*gankō*) style because of its wooden construction, as planned and implemented by Japanese carpenter Shimizu Kisuke.[9]

While Western-style buildings began to be erected in former samurai areas as hoped for by a Meiji government intent on Westernization, buildings in former commoner areas with the exception of Ginza Bricktown largely remained plaster *dozō-zukuri* warehouses (for more on Ginza Bricktown, see essay by Tristan Grunow). Looking back from the early Meiji Period to the Edo Period allows us to see continuities in urban space. In the case of the Nihonbashi area, samurai and commoner areas were mixed in the urban space and were often side-by-side. As a result, the *Giyōfū* buildings of samurai areas and the plaster warehouses of commoner areas, too, were mixed throughout the city. Fires frequently razed commoner areas, with buildings erected only to be consumed by fires time and time again. Finally, in 1881, the Tokyo government issued fireproofing regulations, requiring buildings facing main streets to be built in brick, stone, or plaster. Structures erected following these new guidelines, however, continued to be plaster for the most part. Following the 1872 Ginza Fire and the construction of Ginza Bricktown, Western style buildings gradually began to appear in commoners' areas. But it was not until the late Meiji Period that Western architecture came to be widespread in commoner areas.



Figure 6. *Ikkei, Kaiunbashi Kawaseza no zu.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-06 no.L3:9.

Even still, Western-style buildings erected in the late Meiji period in commoners' areas were actually wooden, with a façade of plaster made to appear Western. The reason for this was that the people who most actively embraced the impact of "the West" in Tokyo were the skillful merchants who could profit from having a unique Western-style building to attract customers to their stores. As a result, vaguely "Western" streetscapes appeared in downtown areas like Ginza and Asakusa by the end of the Meiji period. The "West" that finally became most familiar to the general public in Tokyo, then, was a "West" that was already a misrepresentation, and it was not even until after the end of the Meiji Period that Western-style rooms began to appear in middle-class Japanese houses. By the 1910s, Western architecture and traditional plaster architecture of various designs chaotically mixed in a state of complete disorder throughout the city.[10]

The Meiji Government erected Western-style buildings to appeal to Western countries in the hopes of revising unequal treaties, requiring the construction of authentic Western architecture. That plan would come to fruition with the Rokumeikan, or "Deer Cry Pavilion," completed in 1883. In other words, Government-sponsored

9. 初田亨『都市の明治—路上からの建築史』1981筑摩書房
10. 前掲[9]

buildings gradually transitioned from pseudo-Western *Giyōfū* architecture designed and constructed by Japanese carpenters or hired foreign advisors (*oyatoi*),[11] to more authentic Western architecture. Urban residents, on the other hand, commissioned *Giyōfū*-style structures from craftspeople who eagerly embraced Western cultural influences instead of rejecting them. As a result, new techniques adopting new forms without hesitation and allowing new and old forms to coexist began appearing in the urban space of Tokyo. The *Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku* gives us a visual depiction of this mixing of Western and Japanese styles in early Meiji Tokyo.

Translated by Tristan R. Grunow

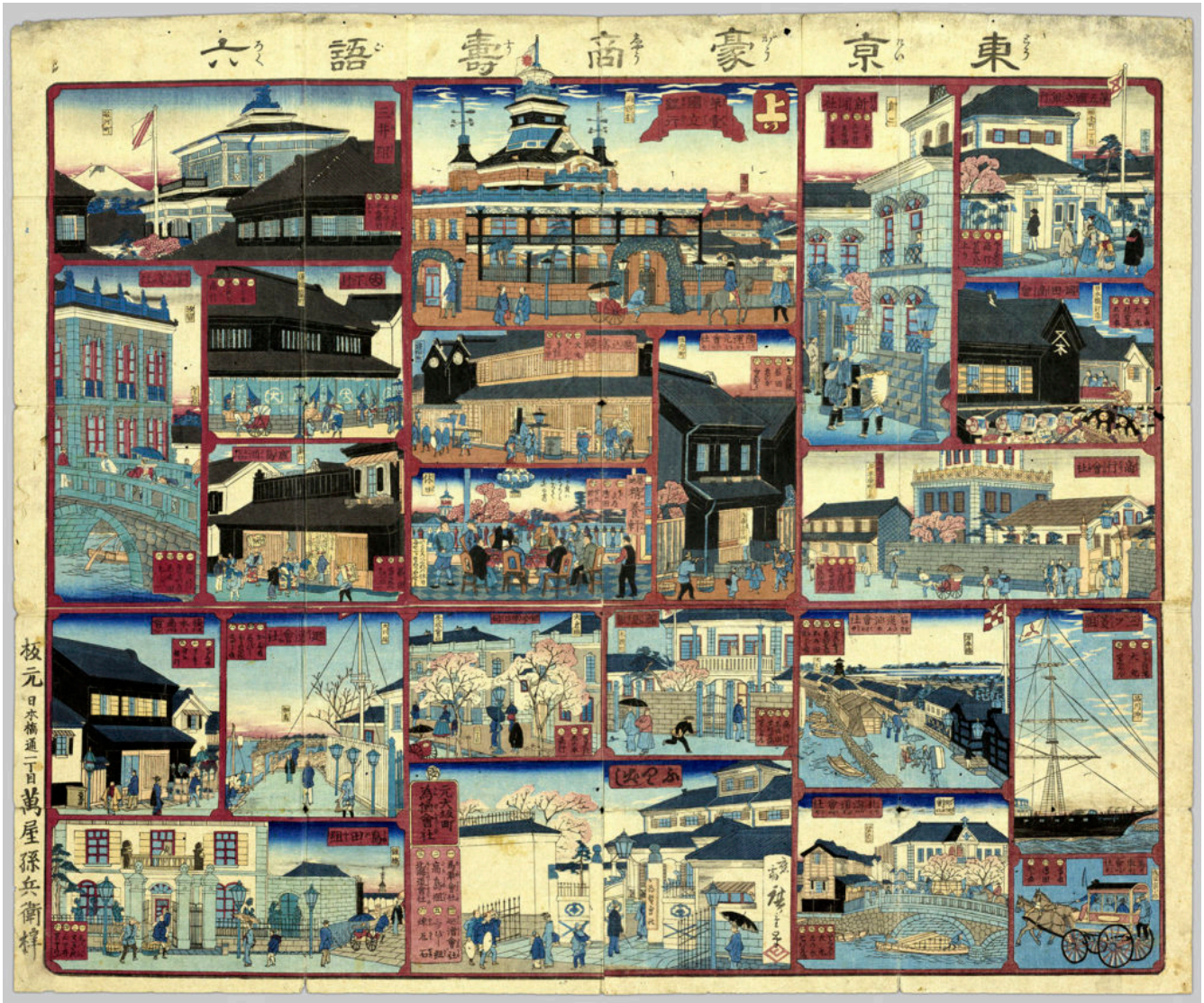
Buildings and Locations Depicted in the Tōkyō Gōshō Sugoroku

- Moto-Ōsakachō – Kawase Gaisha
- Yoroibashi – Shimada-gumi
- Shin-izumichō – Enomoto Shōkai (Daikokuya)
- Ōkawabata – Kaisō Gaisha
- Shinkawa – Kajima Sakadana
- Shiodome – Hōraisha
- Surugachō – Mitsui-gumi
- Tōrihatagochō – Daimaru
- Tsukiji – Seiyōken
- Komagome – Takasakiya
- Sanaichō – Rikuun Motokaisha
- Ginza Sanchōme – Ōkura-gumi, Senshū Gaisha
- Kobikichō – Takashima-gumi
- Edobashi – Yūbin Kaisha (Hokkaidō Kaisha)
- Mannenbashi – Sekitan Abura Kaisha
- Asakusa Hirokōji – Basha Kaisha
- Shinagawa-oki – Mitsubishi-gumi
- Kakigarachō 2-chōme – Shōkō Kaisha
- Nihonbashi – Okada Shōkai
- Ginza – Nichi nichi Shinbun
- Kakigarachō 1-chōme – Daigo Kokuritsu Ginkō
- Kaiunbashi – Daiichi Kokuritsu Ginkō

11. “Hired foreign advisors” (oyatoi) refers to foreigners hired by the Meiji government in the early Meiji period. Many of the foreigners hired relating to architecture were actually engineers rather than architects.

「東京豪商寿語六」から読み解く江戸の空間構成

金谷 匡高 | 法政大学



東京豪商寿語六. ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学図書館貴重史料室Asian Rare-6 no.L3:1. (クリックで画像拡大)

この三代目歌川広重が描いた絵双六は、明治初期の東京の様子を描いた浮世絵である。双六とは、ふりだしの枡目から始まり、さいころを振って上がりの枡目まで相手より先に進んだ方が勝ちとなる遊びである。世界中で似たような遊びが見られ、日本では「絵双六」という印刷物の上で行う双六が広まり、江戸中期の出版技術の発達に伴って様々な種類の物が刊行された。[注1]絵双六は種類が非常に多

1. 加藤康子・松村倫子編著『幕末・明治の絵双六』国書刊行会,2002

く分類方法も様々であるが、高橋順二氏の『日本絵双六集成』の分類によるならば、「東京豪商寿語六」は明治初期に多く描かれた文明開化の様子を描く開化双六に分類されよう。[注2] しかし、そこには、文明開化の象徴である西洋風の建物のすぐ隣に江戸以来の建物が併存して描かれている。このように、近代初期の東京には和洋の建築が同じ都市空間内に混在して建ち並んでいた。都市の西洋化は明治政府主導のもとで始め進められ、明治後半には市民が非日常的な都市空間を体験する場として自ら受容していく。だが、近代初期の東京の街区構造や土地区分は、江戸から受け継いでおり、この都市空間を把握するには、どのような建物がどのような場所に建てられたかを把握することが重要である。この東京豪商寿語六に描かれたものから、明治初期の東京の都市空間を考察したい。



Fig. 1. 為替会社. (東京豪商寿語六). ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学図書館貴重史料室Asian Rare-6 no.L3:1. (クリックで画像拡大)

では、詳しく「東京豪商寿語六」をみていきたい。各枡目には、城郭風の建物や屋根の上に鯱が乗る建物、銀座の西洋館など石積みや土蔵の建物が並び現在の東京では見ることが出来ない建物が描かれている。また、それぞれ見出しが付けられ、当時の東京に新しく現れた会社とその所在地が書かれている。始めの枡目は為替会社で、サイコロを振って第一国立銀行まで進むと上がりとなる。まず、為替会社の枡目に目を向けると、説明に元大坂町と書かれている。(Fig.1)元大坂町とは関東大震災の帝都復興事業により1933年に無くなってしまう町名であるが江戸期の町人地である。諸説あるが、天正の頃(1573~1592年)に移住してきた大阪商人の受領地であったことからこの名が付けられ、新大坂町と区別するために元が付いている。[注3]江戸時代、江戸の都市空間は主に武家地、町人地、寺社地の3つに区分されていた。明治2(1869)年の調査では、江戸市中の面積の内68.6%、1169万坪を占めていたのが武家地であり、それに対して、町人地が15.8%、寺社地が15.6 %でほとんどを武家地が占めていた。[注4] また、それぞれの土地に建つ建物は大まかに類型化する事が出来る。

2. 高橋順二編著『日本絵双六集成』柏書房,1980
3. 東京市役所市史編纂『東京案内上巻』1986(1907年書肆裳華房の復刻版を用いた)、また、東京府が明治5年から7年にわたって行った調査(東京都『東京府史料1』1959)には「大坂の廻船此所まて入津せし故に大坂町と唱う」とある。
4. 吉田伸之編「江戸の土地―大名・幕臣の土地問題」『日本の近世9』中央公論社,1992

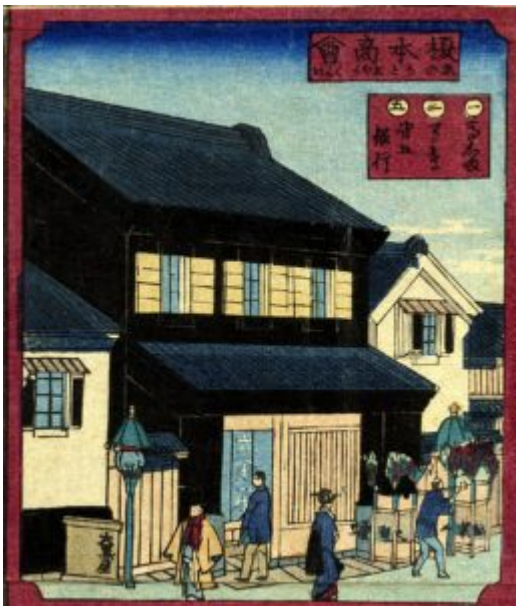


Fig. 2. 榎本商会. (東京豪商寿語六) .ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学図書館貴重史料室 Asian Rare-6 no.L3:1. (クリックで画像拡大)

そこで注目したいのは建物の配置である。街路から門を入り奥まったところに建物が建てられ、正面玄関は前面にある門で隠れてしまい見ることが出来ない。この屋敷配置の特徴は江戸時代の武家地の特徴を踏襲しているといえる。江戸の武家地は徳川幕府から武士に限って与えられた土地であり、その規模は大小様々であるが、基本的な配置は門を街路に面して構え、門をくぐり敷地の中に入る。そして、客を迎える専用の玄関を通り、建物の中へと入っていくという段階制を踏んでいる。それに対して、江戸の町人地は、街路に面して店舗を構えるため、門は構えず街路から直接建物に入ることとなる。絵双六で見れば榎本商会、鹿島酒店などがその典型である。このように、建物の配置を見ることで江戸期の屋敷の類型化が可能となる。だが、為替会社は旧町人地の敷地に武家屋敷の配置をした建物が建てられていたことになる。



Fig. 3. 東京全図 (1875) ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学図書館貴重史料室 G7964 .T7 1875 I3. (クリックで画像拡大)

さて、為替会社は町人地の元大坂町になぜこのような武家屋敷の配置をしているのか。結論から言えばこの地は元々武家地であったのである。まずは、明治7年の東京全図をみてみよう。中央右上に東京為替会社の記載がある。(Fig.3)左側に隣接する敷地と比較すると非常に大きな敷地であるのが読み取れる。実は、東京為替会社は元大坂町ではなく蛎殻町2丁目にあった。そこで、1859年に刷られた尾張屋板の切絵図をみてみよう。(Fig.4)東京全図で見た位置関係は元大阪町に隣接する南側である。切絵図には「銀座」と書かれている。かつての銀造所であった銀座が、明治になり東京為替会社になったのである。補足すると、現在の銀座という町名がFig.4の銀座よりも南西にあるのは、寛政12(1800)年に、経営の悪化、役人の不正事件を理由に元大坂町の隣に移されたからである。[注5]この時、銀造所の銀座は勘定奉行の直轄となる。また、元大坂町と道を挟んだ向かい側一帯は大名屋敷が多く建ち並び、一帯が武家地であった。江戸期の武家地には町名がなく、蛎殻町は明治4年10月に付けられた町名である。[注6]では、なぜ元大坂町なのだろうか。その鍵は、この切絵図よりもさかのぼること十数年前、天保13(1842)年9月に銀座は「1287坪を増した」とある。[注7]さらに、御府内沿革図書という江戸の土地利用の変遷を追うことができる地図をみると、敷地を増やす直前の銀座周辺が描かれ、銀座が新たに取得した部分には元大坂町と描かれている。(Fig.5)江戸の町割りは道を挟んで両側を一つの単位とする両側町と呼ばれる町を形成していた。それが銀座の屋敷に取り入れられたために、元大坂町は片側だけになってしまったのが分かる。つまり、銀座の一部は、元大坂町の町屋を取得して銀座の敷地としており、そのため元大坂町というキャプションが付けられていた事が考えられる。これまで見てきたように為替会社の空間的特徴は、旧武家地から受け継いだものといえる。そして、同様にみていくと、上がりの第一国立銀行や第五国立銀行、商行会社などは為替会社と同じ屋敷配置をしており、切絵図で確認するとどれも旧武家地が

5. 大石学『地名で読む江戸の町』PHP新書,2001、および[3]
6. 東京市日本橋区役所編纂『日本橋区史第一册』1916
7. 東京市日本橋区役所編纂『日本橋区史第三册』1916

明治に変じた空間であった。第一国立銀行、島田組の建物は松平和泉守の屋敷を維新以降に政府から払い下げられて手に入れた土地であった。



Fig. 4. 切絵図日本橋北 (1852) ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学図書館貴重史料室G7964.T7 1869 T6 v.1-30 (クリックで画像拡大)

次に、街路に沿って建てられた長屋門にも注目したい。長屋門というのは、主に位の高い武士に許された建築形式のことで、門に長屋が付属した建物のことを指す。大名のものになると門の両側には建物が並び、そこに配下の武士達が居住した。為替会社の門の右側にも道に面して窓が付いていて、一見するとこれも一般的な長屋門に見える。だが、おかしなところが幾つかある。一つ目は、門柱。当時の門柱としては非常に斬新であった。柱の頂部に丸い飾りが付いているが、形式的な武家屋敷の門には用いられないデザインである。これは擬宝珠と呼ばれ、本来は寺院建築や橋の欄干等に使われる装飾である。二つ目は門扉の上部の曲線である。木造建築の日本では、これまでアーチなどの曲線はあまり見られなかった。為替会社の門扉にはアーチが付けられていて、その上には装飾までされていることがわかる。これと同じデザインの門が別の枡目の商行会社にも付いている。上がりの第一国立銀行にもアーチの門が付けられていて、当時の大工にとって西洋建築を表す記号的な意味をもっていたといえよう。

これらの西洋風の建物にはアーチ窓やQuoins、柱頭のEchinus等が付いているが、これらが純粋な西洋建築では無いことは一目でわかる。当時の西洋風建築は日本の大工によって施工されており、実際には石造の西洋建築とは違い、木造で建てられ外壁に石を貼ったものである。また、土壁によって石積みを表現したものまで現れる。明治初期に現れはじめたこのような建築は、大工が横浜にある西洋館を見よう見まねで建てた建築という事で「擬洋風建築」と呼ばれている。注7)　1854年に横浜が開港し、外国人居留地ができるとそこに西洋風建築が建てられていく。それらの工事を請け負っていた日本の大工が、東京にも擬洋風建築の花を咲かせることになる。そのきっかけとなるのが、この双六の上がりで1872(明治5)年に建てられた第一国立銀行であろう(Fig　6)。日本建築の要素がちりばめられ、城郭のような5層の建築であるが、下2層を見ると石造風の西洋建築を模した意匠が施された建物である。[注8]　しかし、内部には中庭が設けられ、プランも木造建築であるため小さな部屋で分けられた雁行型の日本的なプランであった。これは清水喜助という日本人の大工による設計、施工であった。[注9]

そして、旧武家地には欧化政策を勧める明治政府の思惑もあり西洋風建築が新たに建てられ始めたが、旧町人地の建物はというと銀座煉瓦街を除きほとんどが土蔵造りであった。このように明治初期の様子を江戸期まで遡りみていくとかつての敷地から継承された都市空間の特徴が見えてくる。今回見た日本橋エリアについて述べると、武家地と町人地は都市空間の中に混在し常に隣り合わせになっていた。それが、明治になり土蔵造りと擬洋風の建築が混在する原因ともなっている。町人地には火災が多く建物が建て込んでいて大火になることが度々あった。1881年に東京府により防火例が出され、主要道路に面する建物は煉瓦造、石造、土蔵に制限された。だが、それにより建て替えられた町屋はほとんどが土蔵造りであったという。明治5年の銀座大火によって計画された銀座煉瓦街建設以降、徐々に町人地にも洋風建築が建てられるようになったが、それは混在していた。明治後期にようやく町人地にも洋風建築が受け入れられるようになる。



Fig. 5. 御府内沿革図書 (1840)

しかし、明治後期に町人地に建てられた洋風建築は、木造建築であるがファサードを漆喰で塗り西洋

8. 擬洋風建築の解説については藤森照信『日本の近代建築(上)-幕末・明治篇-』岩波新書,1993に詳しい。
9. 初田亨『都市の明治―路上からの建築史』筑摩書房,1981

風に見せた表面的なものであった。なぜなら、新たに東京に現れた西洋というインパクトを積極的に取り入れた者たちはそれを巧みに利用した商人たちだったからである。西洋風の珍しい外観が店の看板として機能した。そのため、どこの国ともわからない洋風建築の町並みが、明治後期の銀座や浅草のような繁華街に登場した。こうして、ようやく庶民の中にも西洋が身近なものとなってきたが、それは既に歪曲された西洋であった。さらに付け加えると、庶民の生活内部に西洋が入ってくるのは遅く、住宅に洋間が普及するのは明治も終わりになってからのことである。1910年頃には様々な意匠を凝らした西洋風建築や土蔵建築が入り乱れ「百鬼夜行」の様子とまで言われるようになった。[注10]



Fig. 6. 海運橋為換坐之圖 (1872年). ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学図書館貴重史料室Asian Rare-6 no.L3:1. (クリックで画像拡大)

明治政府によって建てられる西洋建築は、条約改正のための西洋諸国への対外的なアピールであり本格的な西洋建築を建設することが求められた。その計画は鹿鳴館の建設で一応の完成をみる。つまり、政府による西洋建築は、始めは大工や御雇い外国人[注11]の設計施工による擬洋風建築であったものから次第に本格的な西洋建築になっていった。それに対して、都市の体験者である民衆は職人による擬洋風建築をその後もどんどんと取り入れていったのだ。これは、職人達が新しく流入した文化を拒絶せず貪欲に吸収していったためともいえよう。新しいものを躊躇なく取り入れ、そして共存させてしまう手法は都市空間にも現れていた。この絵双六はその明治初期日本の西洋と和風が混在している様子を描いた物であるといえよう。

本論を知る上で参考になる資料リスト

- 松山恵『江戸・東京の都市史　近代移行期の東京・建築・社会』東京大学出版、2014
- 初田亨『繁華街の近代 都市・東京の消費空間』東京大学出版、2004
- 吉見俊哉『都市のドラマトゥルギー　東京・盛り場の社会史』弘文堂、1987
- 川崎房五郎『都市紀要十三 明治初年の武家地処理問題』東京都、1965

10. 前掲[9]
11. 御雇い外国人とは明治初期に明治政府から雇われた外国人技術者たちで、建築を担当した多くの人物がArchitectではなくEngineerであった。

Ginza Bricktown and the Myth of Meiji Modernization

Tristan R. Grunow | University of British Columbia



> *One of the myths of modernity is that it constitutes a radical break with the past. The break is supposedly of such an order as to make it possible to see the world as a* tabula rasa, *upon which the new can be inscribed without reference to the past – or, if the past gets in the way, through its obliteration. Modernity is, therefore, always about "creative destruction."*
>
> — David Harvey, *Paris: Capital of Modernity*[1]

Ginza Bricktown occupies an oversized place in the history of modern Japan, let alone the urban history of Tokyo. The common historical narrative of Bricktown is hard to resist, as it seems so fitting, so instructive, and so perfectly comprehensive: the Ginza Fire of 1872, it goes, fortuitously cleared a perfectly-located *tabula rasa* onto which a Meiji government intent on jumpstarting Japanese modernization constructed a Western-style district for the new capital that would impress foreign powers with Japan's progress and assist in the revision of the unequal treaties. Just as the Meiji emperor himself was re-dressed in the new clothes of a modern monarch, as it were, the Shogun's city of Edo would be re-cast with Western built forms as the Emperor's modern metropolis

1. David Harvey, Paris: Capital of Modernity (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

of Tokyo. And Ginza was ground zero. In this way, Bricktown was a "showcase" for the new Meiji government, the new Tokyo, and the new Japan – an attempt to reify in brick and stone the transition between Edo and Tokyo, Tokugawa and Meiji, Japanese modernity and premodernity.[2]

Part of the allure of this narrative, to be sure, lies in its simplicity and its apparent accuracy. What better way for the Meiji government to demonstrate to watchful Westerners the modernity of Japan than an urban space that looked unmistakably Western? Or the permanence of the new Meiji regime to the people of Japan than a solidly constructed capital city built in foreign architectural forms? Or, for us as educators and scholars of Japan, the intensity and reach of Meiji-era reforms to our students and readers? The evidence is undoubtedly there. The central government quickly intervened after the fire to prohibit reconstruction of traditional buildings and in their place erected Western-style brick buildings designed by a foreign engineer, Thomas J. Waters. Laborers paved streets in the most up-to-date macadam surfaces and laid bricks on the first sidewalks in the city. Trees provided protection from sun, wind, and rain, with gas – and later electric – lamps making for a pleasant evening stroll. If all had gone according to plan, Bricktown would have continued to grow, consuming neighborhood after neighborhood as improvements spread to adjacent districts, slowly transforming the built environment of the entire city, just as the Meiji government was then revolutionizing Japan.



Figure 1. Kuniteru II, "Scene of the Thriving Merchants in Brick Houses and the Blossoming of Peoples of All Classes between Kyōbashi and Shimbashi." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:9.

Certain progressive leaders in the Meiji government did indeed talk about Ginza Bricktown as a project of modernization. One anecdote relayed by prominent early-20th century politician Ozaki Yukio places prominent Meiji figures Itō Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, and Shibusawa Eiichi frequently at Ōkuma Shigenobu's compound in Tsukiji, known as the Tsukiji Ryōzanpaku after the legendary bandit hideout of *Water Margin* (JPN: *Suikoden*) fame where great people plotted great things.[3] From there, true to its reputation, the group planned many of the radical progressive reforms of the early Meiji government, including Ginza Bricktown. As Inoue Kaoru later recalled, the group had long recognized the strategic location of Ginza and had already envisioned improvements such as street widening in the area even before the fire that sparked the project. Not surprisingly, then, it was

2. Henry D. Smith, "Tokyo as an Idea: An Exploration of Japanese Urban Thought Until 1945," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 4:1 (1987): 54-55.
3. Ozaki Yukio, *The Autobiography of Ozaki Yukio: The Struggle for Constitutional Government in Japan*, trans. Fujiko Hara (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 47.

Inoue who spearheaded the Meiji Government's reconstruction efforts, calling Ginza Bricktown nothing less than a "shortcut to civilization and enlightenment."[4]*TSS*), vol. 52, 820-822. The petition can also be found in Tōkyō-to, ed., *Ginza Rengagai no Kensetsu*, 34.

Still, it is not to government leaders like Inoue, but to contemporary authors and artists who embraced this narrative and capitalized on it to sell books or woodblock prints that we can attribute the enduring presence and pedagogical power of Ginza Bricktown. It was these contemporary observers, caught up in the "Spirit of 1868" and the enamor of all things new and Western, who popularized the brick district between Shimbashi and Kyōbashi as a small piece of the foreign world right in the middle of Tokyo. Curious readers unable to witness the sights of the new capital themselves could turn instead to Hattori Bushō's *New Tales of Tokyo Prosperity* (*Tōkyō Shin Hanjōki*), published between 1874-1876, to experience wondrous developments like Bricktown. "Tall two-story buildings tower into the blue sky one after the other as high as mountains" Hattori reported, "with a grandeur such that it completely imitates Western buildings!" Surely, Inoue would have been proud of a job well done to hear that "The stone buildings, in other words, are like those of London, the English capital; the streets are like those in Paris, the French capital."[5]

Graphic artists like Utagawa Kuniteru II and Utagawa Hiroshige III likewise quickly adopted this view, producing prints depicting Bricktown as a bustling, foreign commercial district that colored popular views of Ginza and have illustrated many a classroom lecture on the Meiji Period ever since.[6] The 1874 Kuniteru II triptych in **Figure 1** is typical.



Figure 2. Hiroshige III, "Famous Places in Tokyo: Brick Merchant Houses on Ginza Main Street." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:7.

The eponymous brick buildings line either side of a street bustling with traffic of all kinds and sidewalks thronged with pedestrians, protected from the mayhem only by verdant trees and cherry blossoms. The buildings appear to be uniformly two stories tall and stretch into the distance as continuous rowhouses. Their designs are entirely Western: stone plinths and quoins accent the building foundations and edges, colonnades of the Tuscan

4. *Tōkyō-shi Shikō, Shigai-hen* (hereafter
5. Quoted in *Tōkyō-to*, ed. Ginza Rengagai no Kensetsu, 148.
6. A woodblock print of Ginza Bricktown even graced the cover of the most famous English-language history of the city, Edward Seidensticker's *Low City, High City.* The image was retained when the book was republished in 2010 as Tokyo from Edo to Showa, 1867-1989.

order replete with entablature support second story balconies, and the tiled mansard rooftops feature parapets ornamented by lanterns and crenellation. The windows appear to be stained glass. Halfway down on the right appears what looks to be a classical pediment. Hiroshige III's 1874 treatment in **Figure 2** gives much the same impression, with a more detailed view of a single building and only slightly less chaotic street traffic.[7]

The overwhelming feeling we are left with from both of these prints is the bustling prosperity and "modernity" of the scenes. Both artists crowd their prints with what would have been widely recognized as symbols of advanced material civilization at the time: Western-style buildings, horse carriages, parasols, Western dress, tophats, and rickshaws, an invention of the 1860s. Both present views of urban modernity one might expect to see on Regent Street in London, or maybe on the Champs-Élysées and Rue de Rivoli in Paris, just as Hattori Bushō described.

Aside from the built forms, more importantly, the artists depict Ginza Bricktown crowded with people. The throngs are not flâneurs out for a leisurely stroll. Instead, they are merchants, rickshaw pullers, carriage drivers, luggage porters, geisha, school children, long-distance travelers, soldiers, and Chinese tourists – a cross-section of all classes of society in Ginza not to kill time but to productively contribute to and witness the commercial vibrancy of the district. In other words, they are a visual representation of "all classes, high and low" uniting to enjoy the mobility, prosperity, and material benefits of "civilization and enlightenment" promised by the Meiji Restoration. The "mixing of high and low" was a common theme for Kuniteru II, who revisited this egalitarian sentiment in another triptych from the same year, titled "Scene of the unending traffic and mixing of high and low, male and female, young and old crossing Asakusa Bridge" **[Figure 3]**. These scenes are given added political significance in the context of the Charter Oath of 1868, which called for the tearing asunder of "evil customs" of the past, such as the Tokugawa ascriptive class system, travel and occupational restrictions, and sumptuary laws. In this way, depictions of a thriving Bricktown swarmed with commoners of all classes enjoying the benefits of reform were both a radical political statement and a suggestion of widespread popular support for not only Bricktown, but for the Meiji project as a whole.



Figure 3. Kuniteru II, "Scene of the unending traffic and mixing of high and low, male and female, young and old crossing Asakusa Bridge." Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:7. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:8.

With all this in mind, it is tempting at first glance to uncritically accept the easy narrative of Ginza portrayed

7. Hiroshige III was a disciple of the more famous artist Utagawa Hiroshige of *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaidō* fame.

in the prints, that of Bricktown as the spatial analogue of Meiji modernization or as the tangible manifestation of a Meiji success story. We seemingly have a group of perspicacious, enlightened Meiji government leaders united in their desire to protect and improve Japanese material civilization who benevolently bestowed a pre-fabricated modernity onto the people of Tokyo from the top down. In response, the people, we are to presume, welcomed this gift with open arms, fully embracing the benefits of modernization, the Meiji reforms, and the Meiji government by extension, and worked together with the state, moreover, to advance national goals. Yet, as any architect or urban planner will lament about best laid plans, even the best laid historical narratives often fall apart as they move from drafting to implementation. That is to say, the narrative of Ginza Bricktown is a myth, as imagined as the artistic depictions that inspired it and for so long have sustained its existence.

By all indications, the literary and graphic representations of Ginza Bricktown as the wellspring of modernity in Tokyo were more imagined than verisimilar. The photographs in **Figures 4** and **5** offer more accurate glimpses of Bricktown, circa 1875. Comparing images shows that, for starters, the buildings themselves were not nearly as uniform in design, or always as Western, as the prints suggest. And they certainly were not always rowhouses, nor even always brick. In fact, Waters, hired two years prior in 1870 as Surveyor-General of Tokyo, had merely drafted guidelines for brickmaking and blueprints for constructing brick buildings as tall as three stories to be erected by the central government. While buildings fronting the main street were required to be built in brick, landowners privately financing their own housing reconstruction had final say over the final design and arrangement of the building, either as a stand-alone *machiya* or as a *ren'ya* rowhouse. On backstreets, moreover, owners were free to use any building type they preferred, including traditional plastered *dozō-zukuri* warehouse style, provided that it was fireproof. Some owners preferred stucco plaster on their exterior walls, others left the exteriors in naked brick.



Figure 4. "Ginza." Source: *Kenchiku Gakkai*, ed., *Meiji Taishō Kenchiku Shashin Shūran*, 15.



Figure 5. "Ginza." Source: *Kenchiku Gakkai*, ed., *Meiji Taishō Kenchiku Shashin Shūran*, 16.

Many alterations can be attributed to Japanese craftsmen and laborers tasked with constructing unfamiliar structures reaching into their toolkits for more customary forms and practices. When decorating buildings with ornamentation, for example, builders relied on traditional features and flourishes, as seen in many contemporary examples of *giyōfū* "pseudo-Western" architecture (For more, see essay by Kanaya Masataka). For this reason, brick building roofs were tiled in the same tiles as traditional ones, stuccoed exteriors took on the appearance of traditional plaster construction, and visitors were more likely to see a *karahafu* curved pediment over prominent entrances than a classical triangular Greek one. Similarly, engineers unaccustomed to sidewalks or roadside fixtures placed trees and some lampposts directly in the roadbed where they would not obstruct the large numbers of anticipated pedestrians.

But where are all the people? **Figure 6** offers a vision of Bricktown architecture that perhaps best fits the

imagined visages in the woodblock prints. Colonnaded arcades fronting Western-style rowhouses continue as far as the eye can see. But even here, the storefronts are denoted by Japanese-style signage and pediments. The ghostly figure on the sidewalk, furthermore, is the first sign of life seen in the Bricktown images. While the blurring betrays the long exposure time needed for the early photographic technology, the presence of the figure in this image makes the desertion of Bricktown in Figures 4 and 5 all the more striking. For sure, it was possible to capture people in period photographs (see Allen Hockley's essay). But nowhere do we see the throngs of commoners, "all classes, high and low" united in flocking to Bricktown.



Figure 6. "Ginza." Source: *Kenchiku Gakkai*, ed., *Meiji Taishō Kenchiku Shashin Shūran*, 17.

An only slightly more lively urban scene appears in **Figure 7**, a hand-painted glass lantern slide depicting the district circa 1895. Taken from atop the Hattori Clock Tower at the heart of Bricktown, the camera's eye casts northwards towards Ginza 3-chōme and 4-chōme along Ginza Main Street. Now more than twenty years since the early termination of the reconstruction efforts, Ginza exhibits a mixture of Western and Japanese architectural styles and ornamental elements. Two buildings on the right (eastern) side of the street illustrate the wide spectrum of styles seen in Ginza at the time. First, on the right edge of the image, note the Kyōya Clock Company Ginza clock tower, itself a frequent object of woodblock prints depicting the prosperity and bustle of Bricktown. In addition to the defining clock tower, the building exhibits a number of Western features. The exterior walls are plainly rusticated brick; the rooftop parapets are accented by crenelated ornament. Yet, just a couple doors down the street, the Iwaya Shōkai tobacco store spans three signboard-dominated storefronts that bear little resemblance to the colonnaded rowhouses of Figure 6. Styles in the backstreet areas are even more mixed and confused. Still, the only signs of life are a few rickshaw pullers, a few horse-trolleys, a few pedestrians, and two laborers engaged in what appears to be filling potholes or perhaps sweeping up horse manure from the street.

Aside from the retention of traditional building types in Ginza and the absence of people in the images, there

are more significant reasons to question the common historical narrative of Bricktown. As we might glean from the images of an almost entirely empty district, Bricktown was not a success. Put simply, the local officials and residents of Ginza were none too pleased about central government intrusion into their neighborhood. Indeed, in their fervor to construct brick buildings, Meiji government officials Ōkuma Shigenobu, Inoue Kaoru, and Shibusawa Eiichi (all in the Finance Ministry) had overruled the opposition of Tokyo Governor Yuri Kimimasa, who had lost his own home in the fire and had argued for the distribution of donated relief funds to aid those who lost property in the fire rather than for financing construction of new brick buildings. The central government had then expropriated lands necessary to widen streets, had condemned traditional buildings that survived the fire, had torn down temporary shelters survivors erected on their burned out properties, and had even evicted area residents, removing them to nearby government-owned land to make way for construction crews.[8] At one point, the central government even threatened "strict punishment" for anybody who publicly defamed the project by "recklessly ridicul[ing] the new construction regulations, and spread[ing] groundless rumors to incite the people."[9] These are not the actions of a benevolent, enlightened government that has the best interest of the people in mind.

The heavy-handed actions taken by the Meiji government to intervene in the urban space of Tokyo incited tenacious resistance from local residents. Lacking representation in the central government or involvement in the planning process, the residents of Ginza resisted the imposition of Bricktown by whatever means they could. With nowhere else to go for shelter, residents inevitably ignored the injunction on housing reconstruction in the burnt districts and erected temporary dwellings that forced the authorities to repeatedly issue pleas, warnings, and threats to vacate such structures before they were torn down. District residents also vocalized their opposition to the project by publicly criticizing the proposed buildings and spreading rumors demeaning the project. Facing the prospect of losing popular support, officials invoked imperial loyalty, admonishing residents to "reverently and humbly respect the imperial government's wishes and carry them out with absolutely no misunderstandings."[10]



Figure 7. "Rooftop view of city." Source: Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, James Davidson collection, a03334.

In the end, area residents exercised the strongest political statement they could to resist Ginza Bricktown: they voted with their feet and simply refused to move into the new brick buildings. A report from 1872, for example, gave the status of 324 planned buildings: future tenants had been secured for only 84 of the buildings under construction while the other 49 would sit empty after completion; the remaining 191 buildings would be built when ready irrespective of whether they had tenants waiting or not.[11] In this way, Ginza Bricktown served as an outlet for popular frustrations with the new government as the residents of Ginza voiced their opposition to not only Bricktown, but also to the autocratic Meiji regime in general. Facing staunch opposition from both local officials and residents, the Meiji government was left with little choice other than to withdraw central government support, cancelling plans to expand brick construction beyond Ginza in 1873, just one year after the project started with such high hopes.

So, what should we as educators and scholars of Japanese history make of Ginza Bricktown and the narrative

8. According to an order dated 1874.4.19, local residents who had no other place to go during construction were authorized to temporarily relocate to Public Works Ministry land in Kobikichō. See National Archives of Japan, "*Fuka Kobikichō moto Tetsudō Kyoku yōchi nokorite Kyōbashi inan jūkyonin itenchi to nasu*." Call#: honkan-2A-009.00.tai00336100.
9. TSS vol. 54, 817.
10. TSS, vol. 54, 817-818.
11. TSS, vol. 54, 885.

myths that surround it? For sure, Ginza is now a thriving commercial district that draws millions of visitors every year to its many high-end retail shops. But we should be careful to resist too haphazardly drawing a straight line between Bricktown as planned and the current Ginza. After decades of adaptations and retrofitting by local residents, what was left of Bricktown by 1923 was completely destroyed by the Great Kantō Earthquake and the ensuing fires that devastated the city. Prior to that, Ginza was home not to name-brand retailers, but to newspapers and publishers that fostered the People's Rights Movement (*Jiyū Minken Undō*) in the 1880s. It was not until later in the 1910-20s that Ginza overtook Nihombashi as the retail center of Tokyo, with the first subway line in the capital bringing crowds of shoppers when it opened in 1927. All the while, Ginza only thrived because local residents modified the their surroundings to more suit their needs for housing and retail space.

But none of this is meant to detract from the myth of Ginza Bricktown. Indeed, we must by no means disregard Bricktown as a failure, nor too quickly dismantle its place among the narratives of Meiji modernization. For each of the challenges to the myth of Bricktown cataloged above only reinforces its power. Myths are useful. They are created for a purpose. If modernity is a myth, David Harvey notes, it is a myth created in order to differentiate the new from what came before. Certainly the many continuities traversing the supposed fissure between "modernity" and what-came-before call into question the idea of a radical break. In saying that modernity is a myth, however, Harvey's point is not that modernity is meaningless. Instead, "If modernity exists as a meaningful term," he writes, "it signals some decisive moments of creation destruction."[12] In other words, for modernity to be meaningful, there must be radical human-made transformations to existing social organizations and built forms that gouge the putative chasm isolating the modern from the premodern. In this sense, Ginza Bricktown — a project that demolished the antiquated built forms of the premodern city and in their place constructed the streetscapes of the new modern capital— was above all an attempt to reify in brick and stone the transition between Edo and Tokyo, Tokugawa and Meiji, premodern and modern Japan. It is, in the end, the very myths of Ginza Bricktown that makes it such a powerful symbol of Japanese modernity.

If we are looking for a success story in Ginza Bricktown we find it not in a narrative of triumphant top-down modernization or even one of victorious bottom-up resistance against an overbearing state. Rather, it is somewhere more in the middle, a story of urban change as a process of government authorities, business leaders, and local residents working in concert to shape the built environment in response to changing conditions and demands. The lesson of Bricktown for urban planners was that any attempt to unilaterally impose meaning onto the space of the city was bound to spark opposition from local residents. Only actors at all levels of society working together could successfully produce lasting and meaningful urban reform. The lesson for us as historians is that the same was true of Japanese modernization during the Meiji Period.

12. Harvey, Paris, 1.

J. Cooper Robinson: A Canadian Missionary and Photographer in Japan, 1888-1925

Benjamin Bryce | University of Northern British Columbia



Browse UBC's John Cooper Robinson Photo Collection here.

The Canadian Anglican missionary J. Cooper Robinson (1859-1926), an avid amateur photographer, left behind thousands of photographs documenting over 35 years of missionary work in central Japan, mainly in Nagoya between 1888 and 1925.[1] In 2014, some of Robinson's descendants donated almost the entirety of a private collection – approximately four thousand images recorded on glass plates, film negatives, printed pictures, and postcards – to the University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections library.

1. Robinson worked primarily in Nagoya and Gifu, but he also spent some time in Niigata (425 km north) and Hiroshima (480 km south). "The Rev. John Cooper Robinson, D.D." *The Japan Mission Year-Book, no. 25* (1927). 339.



Figure 1. Photographer K. Miyashita Honmachi Sanchiome Nagoya Aichi, late 1890s. Source: Author's personal collection. From left to right: Hilda, Cooper, Lucy Winifred, Bessie, Cuthbert.

This essay is primarily interested in the collection as a private archive: Robinson's photographs spent most of their time in his and then his family's possession. As historian Kevin Coleman argues, private and public photo archives have different goals, and it is worth reflecting on not only author and subject but also archival practices when analyzing photo collections. While a creator of private collections may "keep a copy of almost every negative that he produced," Coleman contends that public collections, made by companies, photojournalists, or governments are "the result of an aggressive attempt to shape" what outsiders see.[2]

The Robinson photographs offer a unique window into life in the Meiji and Taishō eras precisely because the audience and purpose of these photographs are different from many other photos that remain from this period. Robinson surely had motives when taking pictures, but they were significantly different from those of western travellers or missionaries who intended to exhibit or publish their pictures and different from those of Japanese officials or companies that also wanted to document the lives of working and rural people. Cooper Robinson shared the pictures with a small group of people soon after he took them. Yet he saved glass plates or negatives rather than easy-to-view prints, and this suggests that he did not use his private archive to repeatedly share images with others. The glass plates and negatives were stored in a series of family homes, rarely viewed after the photographer died in 1926.

Robinson had a series of themes that he found worthy of documentation. Workers and rural peoples, converts to his Anglican mission, and personal relationships – with his Japanese colleagues and his family – take up a large part of the UBC collection. Shots of Japanese officials, modern cities, industry, historic buildings, or beautiful landscapes do not figure prominently in his project. Robinson, either consciously or not, altered and enlarged a specific image of Japan, whether for himself, his missionary colleagues in Japan, or Anglicans and others back in Canada. But in so doing, he presented one possible vision while hiding other possible ways of seeing the Japanese and the country.



Figure 1 Reverse. Author's personal collection.

Robinson's intended audience for the photographs that remained in his private collection is unclear. Was he simply collecting memories as an amateur photographer? The audience of the more than two-hundred postcard prints he had made was surely different than the glass plates in the collection. Did he take many of the pictures with the intention of showing them to Canadians during his furloughs as a way to justify his missionary activities and to raise money for future Anglican activities in Japan? Based on the pictures he took of Canada during his stay in 1919 (also included in the UBC collection), Robinson visited many parts of the country during his furloughs. Did he meet with people to discuss missionary work and did he show his pictures widely during these ephemeral moments? While the vast corpus gives us hints that the photographer knew many of his subjects, he also likely convinced people he did not know or did not know well to pose for the camera.

2. Kevin Coleman, A Camera in the Garden of Eden: The Self-Forging of a Banana Republic (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016), 16.



Figure 2. *Bessie, Cooper, and Hilda in garden, taken between 1912 and 1918.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. "Family in back garden, Sh[inokabi] Cho." RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-0114.

Cooper Robinson was born near Blenheim, Ontario in 1859 and graduated from Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto in 1886.[3] His wife Bessie (née Poynton)[4] was born in Nottingham, England in 1858 and immigrated to Toronto in 1881.[5] Together, they went to Japan only months after their marriage in 1888. Robinson worked for thirty-seven years as a missionary in the country with furloughs to Canada every five or six years.[6] Their three children were born in Japan: Lucy Winifred in 1890, Hilda in 1891, and Cuthbert in 1893.[7] It was through Cuthbert's son Stuart, and then ultimately Stuart's daughter Jill, that this private collection was preserved and then donated to UBC in 2014.

The expanded Robinson family – now five instead of two – came (back) to Canada for their first furlough in 1894. The family again travelled to Canada in 1902, with Bessie in ill health. Cooper returned to Japan that same year while the rest of the family stayed in Toronto due to Bessie's health and for their children's education. After ten years of living apart, Bessie returned to Japan in 1912 accompanied by Cooper and one daughter, the 21-year-old Hilda, but not the 22-year-old Lucy Winifred nor the 19-year-old Cuthbert.[8] Bessie spent another six years in Japan before returning to Ontario with Cooper on a furlough in 1918; she died a year later while still in Canada.[9] Cooper and his daughter Hilda returned to Japan in 1919. Cooper came to Canada on a furlough in 1925, and he died unexpectedly in Ontario in 1926.

Part of the collection includes pictures – particularly of the young Robinson family in the 1890s – taken at Japanese studios (see **Figure 1**). Other pictures, which appear to be taken with Cooper's camera, include him as the subject, and in these cases there are other photographers (see **Figure 2**). Yet in all three cases (studios, pictures by Cooper, and pictures taken by others using his camera), the collection maintains a certain consistency of documenting personal relationships within the family, and with Japanese converts and other western missionaries. Based on the photos in this collection, it appears that Robinson took up photography in earnest during the ten

3. "Rev. John Cooper Robinson, D.D.," The Canadian Churchman, July 22, 1926, 476.
4. "In Memoriam: Mrs. J. Cooper Robinson," The Canadian Churchman, November 20, 1919, 1.
5. Ibid.
6. "The Rev. John Cooper Robinson, D.D." The Japan Mission Year-Book, no. 25 (1927). 338-39.
7. "Descendants of John Robinson, born 1811." www.ancestry.ca.
8. "In Memoriam: Mrs. J. Cooper Robinson," *The Canadian Churchman*, November 20, 1919, 3.
9. Ibid.

years he worked in Japan without his wife and children (1902-1912). Since the collection consists largely of glass plates and to a lesser extent film negatives, few of the pictures are labelled.



Figure 3. *Students at the Gifu school for the blind, 1921.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. “Blind school grads 1921.” RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-0284.

Canadian Anglicans concentrated in the Nagoya region from Bessie and Cooper’s start in 1888. By the 1920s, this group ran several kindergartens, training schools, and a school for the blind in what became the Anglican Diocese of Mid-Japan.[10] Many images in the UBC collection, such as **Figure 3** of the students at the school for the blind, are of the institutions that Anglican missionaries established and of the Japanese people who used them.

In his book, *The Island Empire of the East: Being a Short History of Japan and Missionary Work therein with special reference to the Mission of the M.S.C.C* (Toronto, 1912), Robinson tells Canadian readers about his success, but he also reveals that a certain amount of isolation shaped his time in Japan. This point can cast more light on the people and things that Robinson photographed and the Japanese subjects who volunteered for the camera. Indeed, many of the subjects of his photographs are the small group of Japanese Christians and foreign missionaries with whom Cooper Robinson spent most of his time (see **Figures 4 and 5**). Although he framed his work in a positive light, he reported to Canadian readers about the slow progress of evangelizing. When he returned to Canada on his first furlough in 1894 after spending almost six years in the country, he reported that he had baptized thirty-seven people, “four of whom afterwards became his fellow-workers in the Gospel.”[11] In

10. Hamish Ion, “The Missionary Connection: Ambassadors of the Cross: Canadian Missionaries in Japan,” 30-47, in *Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century*, edited by John Schultz and Kimitada Miwa (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991), 32; John Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun: Canada Encounters Japan, 1929-41 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 23.
11. J. Cooper Robinson. The Island Empire of the East: Being a Short History of Japan and Missionary Work therein with special reference to the Mission of the M.S.C.C. (Toronto: The Prayer and Study Union of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, 1912), 125.

the missions in Toyohashi (68 km southeast of Nagoya) and Ono (135 km north of Nagoya) that Robinson was involved in, he reported that over the course of sixteen years (between 1896 and 1912), sixty-five people had become baptized Christians.[12]



Figure 4. *Robinson with Japanese minister and followers, 1920s.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. "JC Robinson and Japanese men." RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-0136.



Figure 5. *Scenes from Takaragawa trip, 1921.* "Scenes on Takaragawa[?] trip [group of Japanese men and women]." Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-0449.

Robinson's Photographs

Robinson's pictures depict a broad range of themes relevant to both foreign missionaries in early twentieth-century Japan and the country more generally. There are portraits and group shots of Japanese people, and many of those people are likely – though not clearly – Japanese Christians. Yet there is also a very large number of smiling vendors, peasants, and workers, and their connection to a Christian denomination or even their relationship with Robinson is less clear. According to historian Margaret Prang, "Protestantism in Japan early assumed the dominantly urban, educated, middle-class character it retained throughout the twentieth century."[13]

Some of Robinson's Japanese subjects were fellow Anglicans, with whom he clearly had a personal rapport, and apparently fit Prang's point about middle-class status. Yet many of Robinson's subjects were poor peasants or street vendors, and are likely people who were not Christian converts and with whom he did not have a personal relationship (see **Figures 6, 7, and 8**). Those pictures in particular contain a layer of Orientalism and a belief in Western superiority. Susan Sontag has stressed that "To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, like power."[14]

12. Ibid., 134.
13. Margaret Prang, *A Heart at Leisure from Itself: Caroline Macdonald of Japan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), 24; Prang notes that "former samurai" and their descendants "constituted a large majority of the ministers and lay leaders of the churches, [and] they also accounted for as much as 40 per cent of the total membership (75 per cent in Tokyo), although they were less than 6 per cent of the population [of Japan]" (Margaret Prang, *A Heart at Leisure from Itself: Caroline Macdonald of Japan* [Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995], 24).
14. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1990), 4.



Figure 6. *Men carrying cocoons and Hachiman, 1920.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. “[Men] carrying cocoons. Hachiman, K[?].” RSBC-ARC-1757-PH-0343.



Figure 7. *Japanese Woman Carrying Babies, 1905.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. “Japanese girls and woman carrying babies on backs.” RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1620.



Figure 8. *Children in Canal by Field, 1908.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. "Children in canal by field." RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-0043.

Nevertheless, the agency of the subjects – even the peasants and workers who found their way into Cooper Robinson's pictures – should not be overlooked. The photographer offered these subjects the opportunity to be remembered and to interact with modern technology. To some extent, his subjects may have also known that they would travel, through Robinson's glass plates or prints, back to Canada and would shape Canadians' ideas about Japan. Kevin Coleman stresses that rather than seeing a photographer's subjects as victims of asymmetrical power, "[t]he simple fact that this image exists points to the way that photography can be used by otherwise marginalized people to make modest claims to dignity and to thereby create new ways of thinking, speaking, and acting…Photography enabled the excluded…to see themselves in a new light and to make themselves visible to others."[15] Robinson's act of photographing and saving the images was itself an act of empowering a marginalized subject. Coleman adds that while photography has been "a means of surveillance, discipline, and classification,"[16] it also "allowed people with little power or influence to rearrange the signs of their exclusion and purported inferiority such that they could then see themselves, and others could see them, as worthy of respect."[17]

Family is another important part of the J. Cooper Robinson collection at UBC. There are many portraits of him and his immediate family on their own or with Japanese friends or colleagues (see **Figures 2, 4, and 9**). Hilda Robinson appears in several photos with Japanese women of a similar age (see **Figure 10**). The pictures of Robinson himself are generally of a middle-aged man with a grey beard and grey hair. Photographs of his daughter, Hilda, outnumber her two siblings to an astonishing degree. Lucy and Cuthbert left Japan in 1902 to

15. Kevin Coleman, *A Camera in the Garden of Eden: The Self-Forging of a Banana Republic* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016), 4.
16. Coleman, 28.
17. Coleman, 4.

attend high school and later university in Toronto; Hilda did the same but returned to Japan in 1912. Lucy and Cuthbert's absence and Hilda's presence date most of the photographs between 1912 and 1925, the years between Hilda's return to Japan and Cooper's departure.



Figure 9. *Lucy Winifred at 10 months on O Ei's back, 1891.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. "Lucy on O Ei's back, 10 mo[nth]s." RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-3028.

Conclusion

The J. Cooper Robinson collection at UBC offers students and researchers several important perspectives on Japanese society, western missionaries, and Canadian internationalism between 1888 and 1925. This private

collection offers glimpses of life, work, and landscapes in Nagoya and environs, but the "double testimony" of the photograph also tells us about the photographer himself and about the life and a broader history of Canadian missionary activity in Japan.

As a history professor, I am particularly compelled by the significance of the Robinson collection as a private archive. I am also compelled by a group of scholars' arguments about the agency of the photographic subject rather than the asymmetrical power relations that were also part and parcel of early photography.[18] Robinson's subjects were active participants in forging an image of themselves, their regions, and their lifestyles. Despite his own proselytizing motives, he brought a large number of marginalized peoples into the public eye. He helped them be seen and let them pose and show themselves to an audience of which they had at least some degree of knowledge and about which they perhaps had a desire to know more.



Figure 10. *Hilda, after 1912.* Source: UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. "Hilda Robinson in Japanese dress with Japanese woman." RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1233, Print, 20-013.

Yet as the great-great-grandson of the photographer, researching and writing this essay has been an instructive exercise in subjectivity and objectivity. This personal connection has surely allowed me to be more sensitive to the importance of family relations in the photographer's work and to think about who's who and how that mattered. It has also led me to a research methodology that I have not had with other projects. Having the e-mail addresses of Cuthbert's and Lucy Winifred's grandchildren has allowed me to check facts. And having an uncle who sent me Bessie's and Cooper's obituaries, a father who mailed me a copy of *The Island Empire of the East*, and an aunt who added important, often personal information about the lives of Bessie, Lucy Winifred, and Hilda sped things up in helpful ways and enriched my analysis. Yet my personal – albeit very distant – relationship with this historical subject has also made me uneasy as a historian. Historians cling to a belief in some degree of objectivity – or shy away from flagging our subjectivity – more than in other disciplines. Yet the act of researching and writing something where I cannot get around my own subject position has been far more help than hindrance.

18. Coleman, A Camera in the Garden of Eden; Greg Grandin, "Can the Subaltern Be Seen? Photography and the Affects of Nationalism," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84 (2004): 83–112.

John Cooper Robinson and Japanese Commercial Photography

Allen Hockley | Dartmouth College



Figure 1. Tanaka Miyoji (1861-1890): *John and Bessie Robinson (1888)*. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-4418)

Browse UBC's John Cooper Robinson Photo Collection here.

In late autumn of 1888, shortly after their arrival in Japan, John and Bessie Robinson posed for a photograph in the Tokyo studio of Tanaka Miyoji **[Figure 1: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-4418]**. Though he had been in business for barely one year, Tanaka had already adopted several protocols used by nearly every commercial photography studio that catered to foreigners. The jinrikisha in which Bessie is seated and the painted backdrop of a bucolic country scene were typical of the props commercial photographers employed to create Japanese environments required to memorialize the travels of their foreign clientele. Studios employed models, in this case a male posing in the role of a jinrikisha coolie, to add yet another layer of authenticity to the staged portrait. Not wanting to pass up an opportunity to advertise, Tanaka added his name and the address of the studio in both Japanese and English on the reverse side of the photograph **[Figure 2]**.

John or Bessie added a hand-written Christmas greeting to the back of the photograph that reads “To dear father and mother with love and wishes for a very happy Xmas and New Year, 1888-9.” A brief caption reading “The Missionaries” speaks to the importance of the photograph as a marker of the first foreign posting for the missionary couple. The handwritten note at the bottom that reads “This is JCR and his bride Bessie soon after arriving in Japan” was added later by an unidentified author.



Figure 2. Tanaka Miyoji (1861-1890): advertisement on the reverse side of Figure 1. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-4418)

While Tanaka’s portrait photograph of John and Bessie commemorates the inception of their decades long residency in Japan, it simultaneously marks the beginning of a relationship between Robinson and Japan’s burgeoning commercial photography economy. Robinson was a highly productive amateur photographer, and like all amateur photographers working in Japan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he relied on commercial photography studios for a range of products and services. The UBC Robinson archive thus provides an unprecedented opportunity to examine the relationship between a prolific amateur photographer and the commercial studios necessary to pursue his passion for photography.

Two photographs in the UBC archive offer glimpses of the cameras Robinson used. One shows a group of curious onlookers gathering around Robinson and an unidentified male as they adjust a camera sitting atop a tripod **[Figure 3]**. A second shows Cuthbert Robinson (John’s son) leaning on a tripod with a large-format, folding camera at his feet. A crowd of spectators gathers round Cuthbert with many following his lead and posing for the photograph **[Figure 4]**.



Figure 3. Photographer unknown: *Robinson and unidentified companion adjusting a camera.* (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1436)

While we do not know the precise makes and models of the two cameras featured in these photographs, their sizes and the fact that both utilize tripods suggest that they were dry plate travel cameras that first came onto the market in 1878 and remained popular well into the early twentieth century among both amateur and professional photographers. Prior to the late 1870s, photographers used wet collodion technology, a cumbersome

process that required them to coat a glass plate with photosensitive collodion, insert the plate into a camera, take the photograph, then process the plate immediately after exposure. This multi-step operation required several chemicals and a well-equipped portable darkroom (usually a tent). Dry plate cameras used commercially manufactured glass negatives that had been pre-coated with an emulsion of photosensitive gelatin then baked to ensure their durability. Dry plates could be stored after exposure and developed later at the photographer's convenience.



Figure 4. Attributed to John Cooper Robinson: *Cuthbert Robinson (John's son) posing with a large format camera*. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-4491)

The 700 glass plate negatives in the UBC archive indicate the importance of dry plate cameras to Robinsons' amateur practice. However, nearly twice as many film negatives (1362 in total) reveal that Robinson also used film cameras extensively. In 1888 the George Eastman Company of Rochester NY introduced its first Kodak camera. These small, inexpensive cameras came preloaded with a 120 exposure, celluloid roll film. Amateur photographers would send the camera back to the Eastman Company where the film would be developed. The company returned to the photographer the negatives, printed photographs, and the camera, into which a new roll of film had been installed. During the 1890s the Eastman company introduced several modifications to both its cameras and roll film technology. The debut of the Kodak Brownie Camera in 1900 and development of roll film cartridges that photographers could load into their own cameras equipped amateurs with a basic but versatile kit that would remain popular well into the mid-twentieth century. The UBC archive has a photograph of a young woman at a missionary gathering holding a Kodak Brownie. Robinson's large cache of film negatives were probably obtained with a similar camera.

Sources of dry plates and roll film would have been essential for Robinson's photographic practice, and evidence suggests that he would have had relatively easy access to these products. Scholars of early Japanese photography have documented the existence of more than one thousand commercial photographers working during the Meiji period (1868-1912). Most of the commercial photographers known to scholars thrived in Japan's largest cities and five treaty ports frequented by foreign travelers. Advertisements placed by commercial studios in tourist guidebooks, news publications, and business directories affirm that by the first decade of the 1900s, two of

Yokohama's largest studios (operated by Kusakabei Kimbei and Ogawa Kazumasa) were selling Kodak cameras, roll film and dry plates. Robinson could very well have purchased supplies from one of the larger firms but ninety-three of the known commercial photographers worked in the so-called Canadian diocese (a region of Japan encompassing Niigata, Nagano, Gifu, and Aichi prefectures) to which the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC) assigned Robinson. Far less is known about these photographers but evidence in the UBC archive suggests that some studios in the Canadian diocese had the capacity to supply Robinson with the products he required.



Figure 5. John Cooper Robinson: *Main Street Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture*. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-2812)

A film negative depicting a street in Karuizawa reveals a poorly made sign hanging in front of the studio of J. Tsuchiya, a local and hitherto unknown commercial photographer **[Figure 5]**. It reads: "Photo Studio, Films and Dryplate, Developing and Printing, J. Tsuchiya."

From their inception in the early 1860s to well into the twentieth-century, the financial viability of Japanese commercial photography studios depended on the sale of scenic views and costumes. Scenic views typically depicted historic and/or cultural sites such as temples, shrines, villages, traditional neighborhoods, and natural wonders. Costumes refers to depictions of Japanese people wearing traditional Japanese dress and engaged in common cultural practices. Portraiture, such as Tanaka photograph of the Robinsons **[Figure 1]**, provided an important secondary source of income.

The advent of amateur photography in the late 1880s gradually altered the business practices of most commercial studios. Advertisements continued to emphasize inventories of views and costumes as well as portraiture, but studios also began offering services for amateur photographers such as developing, printing, hand coloring and even access to darkroom facilities.

Evidence in the UBC archive indicates that Robinson regularly used the services commercial studios offered amateurs. Handwritten Japanese notations on some of his negatives indicate that Robinson relied on commercial studios to develop his films and glass plates **[Figure 6]**.



Figure 6. Photographer unknown: Portrait of John Cooper Robinson with studio inscription along the left side. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-2873)

Japanese commercial photographers were highly regarded the world over for their expertise at hand coloring photographic prints and glass-lantern slides. A label attached to the back of one of Robinson's slides depicting a scenic spot along the Kisō River in Gifu Prefecture reads "made by Terada (of) Osaka" (*Osaka Terada-sei*).

The introduction of collotype printing to Japan in the late 1880s enabled inexpensive mechanical printing of halftone images. By the late 1890s and early 1900s several commercial photographers began to offer collotype printing to amateur photographers. Up until the late 1890s national postal services throughout the world retained monopolies on post card production. In 1898 many national postal services loosened their restrictions and began accepting commercially made postcards. Advertisements indicate that by 1905, commercial photographers in Japan had added collotype-printed postcard production to the suite of services they offered amateur photographers. Robinson availed himself of this service and commissioned several postcards printed from his film and/or glass negatives **[Figures 7 and 8]**.



Figure 7. John Cooper Robinson: *Kisō River*. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-2684)



Figure 8. Reverse side of Figure 7. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-2684)

The UBC archive contains a little over two hundred postcards featuring Robinson's photographs. Some images appear on several cards, suggesting that Robinson commissioned multiples of photographs he particularly liked.

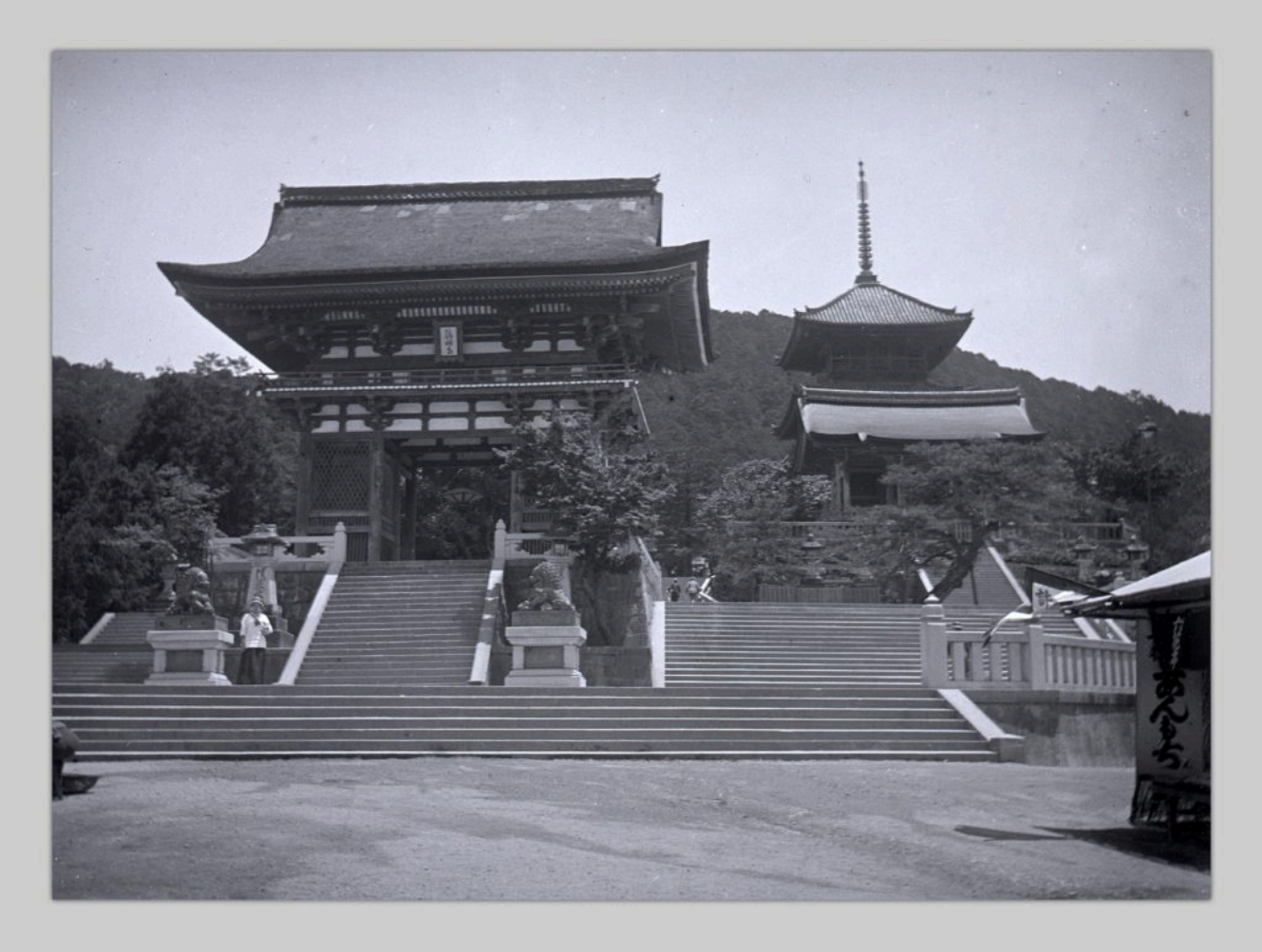


Figure 9. John Cooper Robinson: *glass negative showing Robinson's daughter Hilde near the Main Gate of Kiyomizudera in Kyoto*. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC_ARC_1757_PH_2662)



Figure 10.1. John Cooper Robinson: *collotype postcard printed from the glass negative showing Robinson's daughter Hilde near the Main Gate of Kiyomizudera in Kyoto* (Figure 9). (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1517)

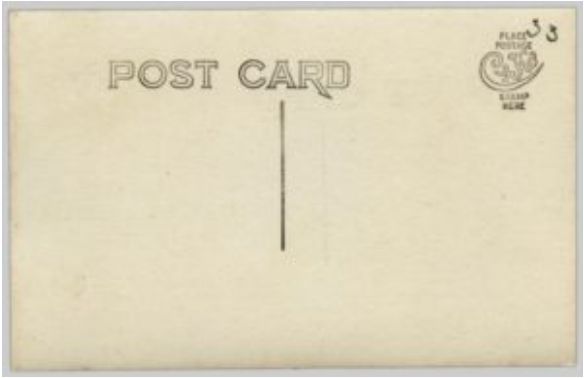


Figure 10.2. The reverse side of the postcard in Figure 10.1. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1517)

Tanaka Miyoji's 1888 portrait of John and Bessie **[Figure 1]** was only the first of several trips the Robinson family made to commercial studios to commission professional portraits. A portrait of John and his daughters Lucy and Hilde shows the family dressed in traditional Japanese garments and sitting in formal *seiza* posture on tatami **[Figure 11]**.

Commercial studios indulged foreigners' fascination with cultural cross-dressing by stocking a selection of Japanese costumes they could don for a portrait. The studio is furnished with traditional Japanese items to enhance the authenticity of the scene. Bonsai appearing behind Hilde on the left balance the low lacquer table and books beside Lucy on the right. A *sencha* tea set and a round fan (*uchiwa*) are laid out in the floor in front of the Robinsons while a hanging scroll (*kakemono*) depicting the traditional literati them of rock and bamboo hangs on the wall above John's left shoulder. The name of this studio proprietor, Kin Miyashita, appears along the right edge of the negative. Miyashita was one of twenty-one commercial photographers operating in Nagoya where Robinson's mission was particularly active.



Figure 11. Miyashita Kin: *Robinson with his daughters Lucy and Hilde.* (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1907)

The inventories of commercial photographs also provided Robinson with access to contemporary subjects that would have been virtually impossible for him to photograph. The UBC archive contains several commercial photographs that Robinson purchased, then re-photographed with his own equipment.

The commercial version of a photograph showing travelers on horseback posing with their grooms in front of a village shop features light green color added by hand to the roof and upper story of the background structures **[Figure 12]**. One of Robinson's glass negative shows this very photograph laying down on a newspaper **[Figure 13]**.



Figure 12. Unknown Photographer: *Travelers on Horseback with their Grooms* (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-4421)



Figure 13. John Cooper Robinson: *Glass Negative copy of Travelers on Horseback with their Grooms* (figure 12) (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-2167)

For centuries women from the tiny mountain village of Ohara carried large bundles of sticks on their heads in to Kyoto to sell as fuel. Oharame, as they were known, wore a highly distinctive costume. Robinson acquired and copied a commercial photograph of an Oharame **[Figure 14**: **RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1843]**, the original photographer's Japanese caption appears in the lower margin).



Figure 14. John Cooper Robinson: *Glass negative copy of a commercial photograph of a Kyoto Oharame*. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1843)

Robinson's glass negative shows the pins he used to secure the photograph to a board. Both the newspaper and the pock-marked board appear in Robinson's copies of other photographs. Once Robinson secured the glass negative he could reproduce the commercial image for his own needs.

In his interactions with commercial studios, Robinson would have had countless opportunities to peruse through commercial inventories of scenic views and costumes. He would have seen firsthand, subjects and themes oriented specifically to the proclivities and predilections of foreign tourists—the primary clientele of commercial studios. We must ask, then, what impact, if any, did studio inventories have on Robinson's photographic practices? At some point during his long tenure in Japan, Robinson purchased fifty hand colored photographs from commercial inventories and had them bound into a small *orihon*-style album to which he added his own descriptive captions. Some of his choices indicate that he subscribed to common stereotypes held by most foreign tourists who visited Japan.



Figure 15. Ogawa Kazumasa: "Committing Suicide (hara kiri)." (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1190)



Figure 16. Tamamura Kōsaburō: "Postman of bygone days." (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1190)

Two of the commercial photographs Robinson purchased had long histories in the inventories of commercial photography dating to the early 1860s when tattooed postmen were a fact of life and foreigners were fixated on the samurai act of ritual suicide (*harakiri*). The props, painted backdrops, actors, and fake blood used to stage these photographs attest to the impossibility of actually witnessing such subjects, as does the reference to "bygone days" in Robinson's caption for the tattooed postman **[Figure 15 and 16]**.

Robinson's album of commercial photographs includes four images of young women carrying children on their back **[Figures 17.1 and 17.2]**. Travel and residency accounts authored by foreigners frequently comment on this

practice. Many accounts are illustrated with commercial photographs such as the examples in Robinson's album, or engravings based on them. Robinson was clearly fascinated with this practice.

He commissioned a portrait from the Nagoya studio of Miyashita Kin featuring a hired model holding his daughter Hilde **[Figure 18]**.

In what is perhaps the clearest evidence of the impact of commercial inventories on his amateur practice, Robinson staged a photograph of him carrying both of his daughters in the Japanese manner **[Figure 19]**. Robinson's wife Bessie likely operated the camera to capture this performance.

Amateur photography in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan remains a severely understudied phenomenon. The intent of this essay was to introduce some considerations scholars might bring to future studies of both the UBC Robinson archive and the work of other foreigners who indulged their passion for photography in Japan.



Figure 17.1. Photographer unknown: "Nurse and Child." (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1190)



Figure 17.2. Photographer unknown: "Nurse and Child." (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-1190)

However, it is important to recognize the inherent limitations of an essay that focuses on Robinson's dependencies on commercial studios. While the concerns of this essay are foundational for future studies of Robinson's photographs, his oeuvre encompasses a rich array of subjects that never found their way into commercial inventories. Robinson was, moreover, the first—and in some cases, the only photographer of any nationality—to record for posterity places and cultural practices unique to the Canadian diocese that have since been lost to

modernization. The UBC Robinson collection is thus a uniquely important archive that offers historians of both Japanese photography and Japanese culture countless opportunities to further our understanding of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan.

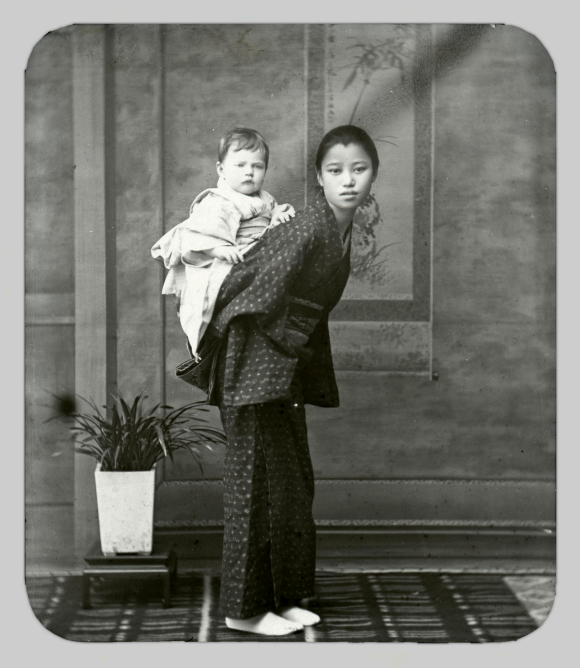


Figure 18. Miyashita Kin: *Studio Model Holding Robinson's Daughter Hilde* (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-3028)

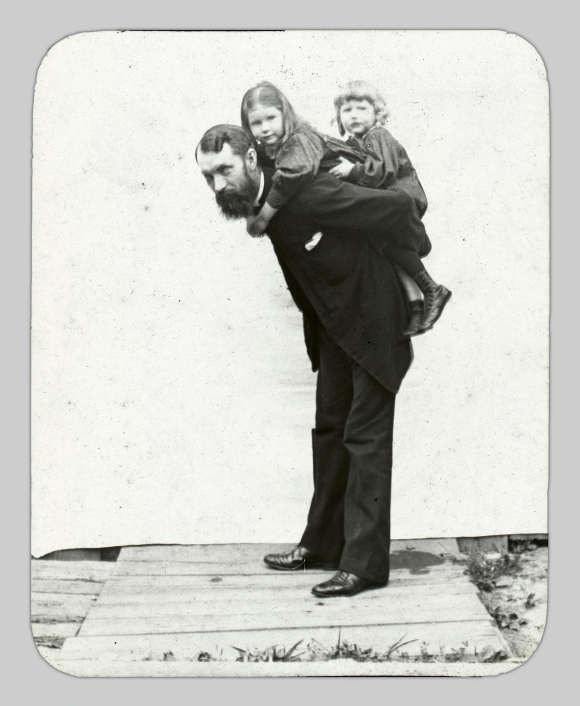


Figure 19. Photographer unknown: *Robinson Holding His Daughters Lucy and Hilde* (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-3028)

For Further Reading

- Bennett, Terry. Photography in Japan 1853-1912. Tokyo, Rutland, VT and Singapore: Charles E. Tuttle, 2006.
- Allen Hockley, MIT Visualizing Cultures Websites:
  "Globetrotter's Japan: Places: Foreigners on the Tourist Circuit in Meiji Japan" (2008)
  "Globetrotter's Japan: People: Foreigners on the Tourist Circuit in Meiji Japan" (2007)
  "Felice Beato's Japan: Places: An Album by the Pioneer Foreign Photographer in Yokohama" (2006)
- Hockley, Allen. "Expectation and Authenticity in Meiji Tourist Photography." In Challenging Past and Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art. Edited by Ellen P. Conant, 114-131. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.

The One Hundred Poets in the Meiji Period

Joshua S. Mostow | University of British Columbia



Hyakunin Isshu (HNIS), or *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*, is without a doubt the most famous anthology of traditional Japanese poetry (*waka*). It has traditionally been attributed to the famous poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) and dated to the 1230s, though the earliest extant manuscript (and commentary) dates only to 1406. Regardless, it has had a profound influence on Japanese culture, and one of the ways it did was through the popularity of its very format, that is, one poem for each of one hundred poets (UBC's extensive *Hyakunin Isshu* digital collection is here).

"Variant HNIS" (*ishu hyakunin isshu*) is the name given to anthologies that use the same organizing principle as the original HNIS (now called the "Ogura HNIS" to distinguish it from its later progeny). The first, "The New HNIS" (*Shin HNIS*), was compiled in 1483 by the ninth Ashikaga shogun, Ashikaga Yoshihisa (1465-1489). The anthology starts with poems by emperor Monmu (697-707) and his son emperor Shōmu (724-749), following the father-child relationship between emperor Tenji and empress Jitō in the *Ogura HNIS*. Likewise, the last two poems are by the father-son pair of emperors Fushimi (1288-1298) and Hanazono (1308-1318). From this it is apparent that it was not simply the idea of one hundred poets with one poem each that could be influential, but the internal structure of the *Ogura HNIS* and the relationships between the poets as well. Yoshihisa's text became a

popular one for calligraphic practice and the UBC collection has a woodblock-printed example by the well-known Edo-period literatus Tachibana Chikage, dated 1837 **[Figure 1]**.

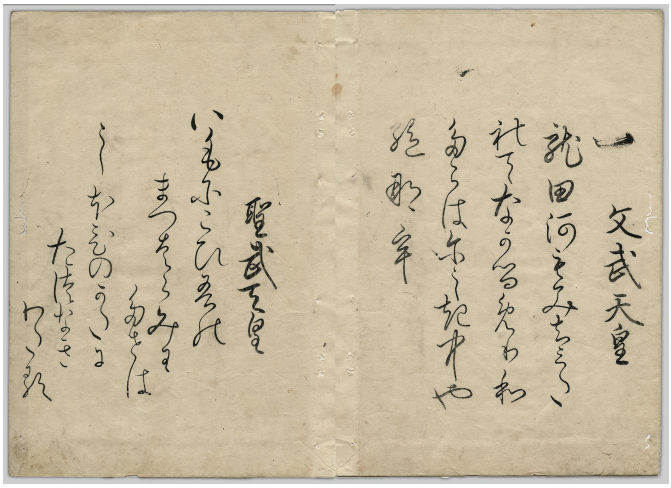


Figure 1. *Jōtoku'in (Ashikaga Yoshihisa)*, ed. Shin HNIS. Woodblock edition with calligraphy by Tachibana Chikage. Kyōto: Katsumura jiemon ; Ōzaka [Osaka]: Kawachiya Kihē… [and 4 others]; Edo: Kitajima Junshirō. Tenpō 8 (1837). Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_082.



Figure 2. Book-wrapper. *Ryokutei Senryū*, ed.; Gakō Gyokuransai Sadahide, illus. Eiyū HNIS. Edo: Yamaguchiya Tobē, Ka'ei 1 (1848). Woodblock-printed books were sold in a paper wrapper that was almost always thrown away—this is an example of a rare survivor. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_060.

It was in fact in the late Edo period that the genre of *ishu hyakunin isshu* really took off. A comic form of haiku developed in the mid-Edo period, promoted by someone named Karai Senryū (1718-1790), who published anthologies of the verses. This proved to be so popular that "senryū" not only became the name of the verse form, but also an inheritable title. It was Senryū IV (1778-1844) who published the first collection of humorous *waka*in the*ishu hyakunin isshu*format, with illustrations by Utagawa Kuninao in 1835. But it was his successor, Senryū V (1787-1858), who published at least eight *ishu hyakunin isshu* collections. His first was *Eiyū HNIS*, or "The Heroes HNIS," originally published in 1844 **[Figure 2]** and reprinted several times thereafter. Clearly aimed at a male audience, the first poem is by the god Susano-o (with what is traditionally considered the very first *waka*, from the mytho-history *Kojiki* [712]), followed by Takenouchi no Sukune (a famous general from the *Kojiki*) and Shōtoku Taishi. It ends with none other than Ashikaga Yoshihisa.

Senryū V went on to publish *Retsujo HNIS* (Exemplary Women, 1847, Mostow_006); *Shūga HNIS* (Surpassing Elegance, 1848, Mostow_021), which had illustrations by Hokusai and four other ukiyo-e artists, of famous authors; *Zoku Eiyū HNIS* (Heroes Continued, 1849, Mostow_018); *Giretsu HNIS*(Exemplarily Virtuous, 1850, Mostow_020); *Kitoku HNIS* (Laudable, 1851); *Kijin HNIS* (Eccentric, 1852, Mostow_016); and *Zōtō HNIS* (Exchange, 1853). As can be seen, several of these included contemporary figures **[Figure 3]**.

The first *ishu hyakunin isshu* from the Meiji period appears to be *Giretsu Kaiten Hyakku* (One Hundred Verses of the Exemplarily Virtuous Encompassing the Heavens) of Meiji 7 (1874). The first verse is by Tokugawa Nariaki (1800-1860), famous for supporting the *sonnō jōi* (revere the emperor, expel the barbarians) loyalist movement,

despite being the father of the last shogun. The last verse is by Katsu Kaishū (1823-1899), credited with forming Japan's modern navy.



Figure 3. "Tachibana Chikage and Hōin Kanjō" from *Ryokutei Senryū*, ed.; Utagawa Kuniyoshi, et al., illus. Zōtō HNIS. Edo: Yamaguchiya Tobē, Ka'ei 6 (1853). Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_005.

Among the volumes in the UBC collection, the oldest Meiji example is the *Meiji Eimei Hyaku'ei Sen* (A Collection of a Hundred Poems by the Eminent of the Meiji Period), a woodblock printed volume published in Meiji 12 (1879).

The frontispiece **[*kuchi-e*, Figure 4]** shows a military figure receiving an enormous cup of saké in the presence of the emperor (hidden by a blind); the caption reads: "Partaking of a heavenly cup within the Imperial Palace" (*kinchū nite tenbai wo tamaharu*).

The next illustration **[Figure 5]** shows the ambassadors of China, Korea, and a western country making their way to court with a background of Mt. Fuji and the imperial palace. The first poem is a New Year's *waka* by emperor Meiji, the second the same by the empress Shōken **[Figure 6]** (*waka* was re-introduced into court ceremonies and an annual New Year's poetry contest inaugurated in 1869).

The third poem is Imperial Prince Arisugawa Taruhito (1835-1895) who as Minister of War suppressed the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 **[Figure 6]**.



Figure 4. "Partaking of a heavenly cup within the Imperial Palace," *Shinoda Hisajirō*, ed.; Ikuda Hōshun, illus. Meiji Eimei Hyaku'ei Sen. Zen. Tokyo: Murakami Shinsuke (Bunsendō) , Meiji 12 (1879). Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_009.

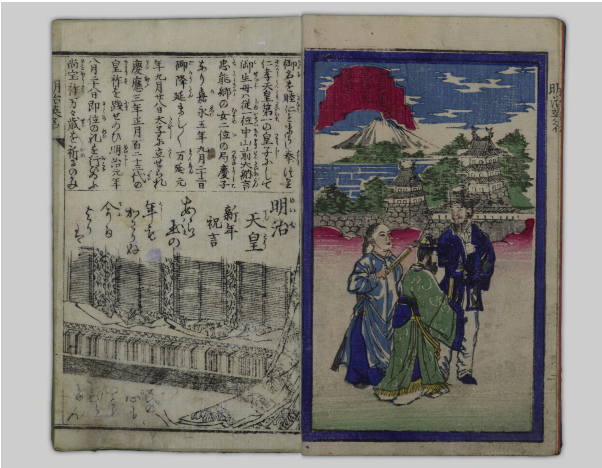


Figure 5. *Foreign ambassadors, Meiji Eimei Hyaku'ei Sen.* Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_009.



Figure 6. *Empress Shōken and Prince Arisugawa Taruhito, Meiji Eimei Hyaku'ei Sen.* Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_009.

In

fact, royalty, the nobility, and soldiers figure largely in this selection. However, there is also a wide range of commoners. Familiar names include Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883, misread as "Tomohira" [009_011]); Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837-1913), the last shogun [009_013]; Saigo Takamori; Itō Hirobumi; the Chinese-style female painter and cross-dresser Okuhara Seiko; the female educator Atomi Kakei [009_071]; industrialist Shibusawa Eiichi; Fukuzawa Yukichi [009_081]; journalist Fukuchi Gen'ichirō (82); and *yōga* artist Takahashi Yuichi (103) [009_103]. Interestingly, many of the verses are actually in Chinese, including those by not only Okuhara but by Atomi as well **[Figure 7]**.



Figure 7. *Atomi Kakei and Okuhara Seiko, Meiji Eimei Hyaku'ei Sen*. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_009.

Meiji 12 (1880) saw the publication of *(Genkon) Eimei Hyakushu* or *(Today's) Famous Names, A Hundred Poems*. The book was popular enough for it to be reprinted, in its original woodblock-print form by a printer in Nagoya, and in a smaller format (12 x 8.6 cm) by copperplate in Tokyo. The frontispiece of the latter shows a poetry contest in the imperial palace, taking place before the empress and with the genders separated **[Figure 8]**.

A poem by Arisugawa Taruhito no Miya is included. Among his other accomplishments Taruhito was known for his interest in poetry and there was a distinctive Arisugawa-style of calligraphy that was used for poetry (of which the present poem may be an example). The collection proper starts with the Chancellor (*dajō-daijin*) of the day, Sanjō Sanetomi (aka Saneyoshi). It would perhaps appear that inclusion of the emperor and empress was somehow seen as lese majesty, and so the collection begins with the highest-ranking government official. It is fascinating, however, how different the frontispiece of the original version is, with Prince Taruhito drinking saké and essentially deshabillé bareheaded, surrounded by young female palace attendants **[Figure 9]**.



Figure 8. *A Poetry Contest in the Imperial Palace, (Genkon) Eimei Hyakushu. Shintei Ōta.* ed.; Sensai Eitaku, illus. Rikiishi Yasunosuke, Meiji 14 (1881). Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_029.



Figure 9. *Prince Arisugawa with serving ladies, (Genkon) Eimei Hyakushu. Shintei Ōta (Numajiri Kai'ichirō)*, ed.; Sensai Eitaku, illus. Nagoya: Kajita Kansuke (Bunkōdō), 1881. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_008.

A poem by Arisugawa Taruhito no Miya is included. Among his other accomplishments Taruhito was known for his interest in poetry and there was a distinctive Arisugawa-style of calligraphy that was used for poetry (of

which the present poem may be an example). The collection proper starts with the Chancellor (*dajō-daijin*) of the day, Sanjō Sanetomi (aka Saneyoshi). It would perhaps appear that inclusion of the emperor and empress was somehow seen as lese majesty, and so the collection begins with the highest-ranking government official. It is fascinating, however, how different the frontispiece of the original version is, with Prince Taruhito drinking saké and essentially deshabillé bareheaded, surrounded by young female palace attendants **[Figure 9]**.

The volume also includes *oiran* of the pleasure quarters, such as ImaMurasaki of the Golden Vase brothel (_021). A startling pairing is KoMurasaki of the Ebirō on the right, and Tenshō-in, an adopted daughter of the Shimazu clan and the consort of the thirteenth shogun Iesada (_079) on the left.

Iwakura's given name is again mis-read (this time as "Tomonori") as is Yanagihara's ("Yoshiko"). One wonders what the author used as his source of information. It is also important to realize that writing about many of these kinds of personages was something completely new. Tokugawa censorship laws had forbidden any depiction or reference to the shogunate or any government officials or any member of the military elite or their ancestors. In the Edo period, "public personalities" were limited to commoners.



Figure 10. *Tenshō-in and KoMurasaki of the Ebirō, (Genkon) Eimei Hyakushu (Nagoya)*. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_008.

The 1880s represented a decided shift in Japanese attitudes towards the West and towards their own history. There was a re-affirmation of the past, after decades of viewing the Edo period as feudal and backwards amidst a rush towards westernization.

During the Edo period, woodblock-printed books depicting famous courtesans accompanied by poems in their own calligraphy were not uncommon, the most famous one being produced by Suzuki Harunobu. And the monogamy of the emperor would not be celebrated until Taishō's marriage. The *(Genkon) Eimei Hyakushu* seems to embody some of this new self-confidence.

The *Meiji Eimei Hyaku'ei Sen* was also reprinted, in 1883, also in metal type in small format. There are interesting differences between the illustrations, however. While in the earlier work the Meiji emperor was hidden by a blind and on traditional tatami **[Figure 5, above]**, in the 1883 edition he is in full Western military uniform and seated on a chair, presaging Edoardo Chiossone's famous portrait of 1887 **[Figure 12]**.

Similarly, while earlier the empress had been depicted as a Heian beauty with her face averted **[Figure 6]**, in the 1883 version she stares straight out at the viewer. But most remarkable of all is the frontispiece, which shows Ambassador Hanabusa Yoshitada negotiating with the Korean prime minister while the king of Korea is shown in the background **[Figures 11 and 12]**. This is presumably the Treaty of Chemulpo (1882), which established a permanent garrison of Japanese troops in the Korean capital.

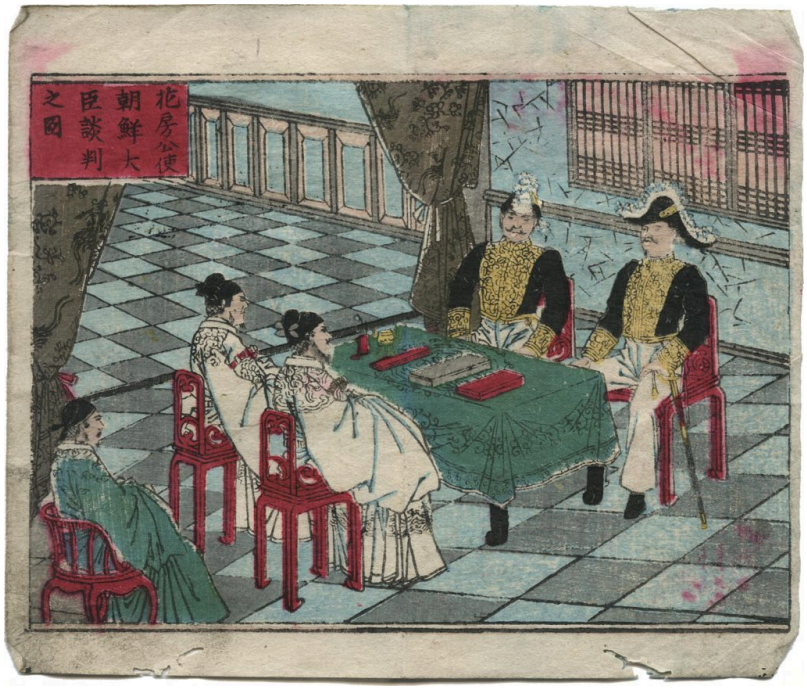


Figure 11. *Ambassador Hanabusa in negotiation with the Korean prime minister, Meiji Eimei Hyakushu*. *Fukujō Komatarō*, ed.; Hasegawa Chikuyō, illus. Tokyo: Bunseidō, 1883. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_010.



Figure 12. *The King of Korea and Emperor Meiji, Meiji Eimei Hyakushu*. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_010.

The UBC collection includes a number of other *hyakunin isshu* from the Meiji period. Some, like the *Kinsei Meifu Hyakunin Sen* (*One Hundred Selected Famous Women of the Recent Past*, 1881, Mostow_080), follow the pattern of exemplary women set by Senryū V and Utagawa Kunisada. Some take a historical bent, such as the *(Meiji Senki) Tokugawa Gishiden* (*[Meiji Battle Records] Biographies of Tokugawa Loyalists*, 1883, Mostow_027). And all during this time the *Ogura HNIS* itself was being constantly republished, from reprints of Edo-period editions that take no account of the tremendous political change that had occurred (such as the *Keiju HNIS* of 1888, **Figure**

13), to newly created versions published with copperplates, such as the *(Meiji Shinkoku) Ogura HNIS Zen* (*[Meiji Newly Printed] Ogura HNIS Complete*, 1885, **Figure 14**).



Figure 13. *Emperor Tenji*, *Keiju HNIS*. Zen. Tokyo: Mizuno Kō. Meiji 21 (1888) (Mostow_093). Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_093.



Figure 14. Komiyama Gorō, ed. *(Meiji shinkoku) Ogura HNIS*. Zen. Tokyo: Sekine Kōsuke (Kin'eidō), Meiji 18 (1885). Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Mostow_86.

References

- "Arisugawa no Miya Taruhito Shinnō," Wikipedia, accessed 20 April 2018.
- "Arisugawa-ryū," Wikipedia, accessed 20 April 2018.
- Ariyoshi Tamotsu. "Ishu Hyakunin Isshu," *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to Kanshō*, vol. 48, no. 1 (1983): 124-131.
- *Atomi Gakuen Tanki Daigaku Toshokan zō Hyakunin isshu kankei shiryō mokuroku*. Tokyo: Atomi Gakuen Tanki Daigaku Toshokan, 1995.
- *Atomi Gakuen Tanki Daigaku Toshokan zō Ishu Hyakunin isshu kankei shiryō mokuroku*. Tokyo: Atomi Gakuen Tanki Daigaku Toshokan, 1999.
- Frédéric, Louis. *Japan Encyclopedia*, trans. Käthe Roth. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.
- "Gose Senyū," accessed 20 April 2018.
- Mostow, Joshua S. "The Revival of Poetry in Traditional Forms," in Joshua Mostow, ed., *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 99-104.
- Sasaki Nobutsuna. *Hyōchū Nanashu Hyakunin Isshu*. Tokyo: Senbunkan, Meiji 26 (1893).
- "Yonse Senryū," accessed 20 April 2018.

For Further Reading

Mostow, Joshua S. *Pictures of the Heart: The Hyakunin Isshu in Word and Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996).

Meiji Daughters: Their Stuff and Fancy in Brocade Pictures, 1870s-1880s

Miriam Wattles | University of California-Santa Barbara



It is not hard to know of the great men of Meiji; theirs is the de facto history. What about the Meiji *musume* (娘 daughters)—those girls who grew into women during that era of tumultuous change? On the whole, it is far easier to appreciate them on display—poised with their various accouterments in visual representations—than to learn very much of their social interactions and overall import. Yet there is no doubt but that these girls and women contributed an inestimable amount to the social fabric of their time. Their physical, mental and emotional labor—performing both in cultural and economic realms—was fundamental to the Meiji modernization project.

This short essay provides a perspective on the impact that these *musume* had on their times by looking inside the frames of five *nishiki-e* (錦絵)—woodcuts called "brocade pictures," because of the way their multi-colored splendor recalled those sumptuously patterned fabrics. They date from 1874 to 1888, or the early Meiji, before photography began to predominate. The titles and explanations, the setting, and the people with their objects all about them tell much about the occupations and roles of women at the time. This selection highlights, further, what the *stuff* of their clothing tells us and how it teased their *fancy*. Women's kimono and other apparel were their identity, means of communication, even their wealth. Yet since these popular and inexpensive prints were made to tease the viewer's fancy or imagination, they cannot be entirely believed. We must be aware of the elaborate embroideries on these brocade pictures. They functioned, in many ways, like the "magic system" of advertising.[1]

1. The phrase is from Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System" in Williams, Raymond, Culture and Materialism, 175-90. London: Verso, 2005.

As well, in considering their ‘stuff,’ we will consider the fundamental aspect of the makings of these textiles and garments. Although rare, a significant few depict girls and women involved in textile production in Japan, in cottage industries or in factories. The period was marked, in fact, by the shift from the former to the latter. Traditionally, cloth was currency in Japan (as elsewhere in Asia) and, during the Meiji period, women’s work producing textiles became, at least for some of them, oppressive national currency for export. Because the textile industry succeeded in making Japan competitive in the world market, these female textile factory workers can claim significant credit in the success of Japanese industrialization. Thus, we attend to clothing: from daughters of rural families, geisha, daughters of the best families known as *ojōsama* (お嬢様), to *jokō* (女工), as factory girls were called.[2] Augmenting the unreliable pictorial evidence, we tune our ear to key verbal accounts as well.

Impressions to Savor



Figure 1. Hiroshige III. *Picturing the Products of Great Japan (Dai Nippon). Rikuchū no kuni yōsan no zu.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L2:1.

This print from a 1877 series by Hiroshige III highlights famous goods of each region. The series as a whole was meant to promote industriousness, collaboration, and inventiveness. Its title, “Picturing the Products of Great Japan (Dai Nippon),” makes the point that the regional production that was hitherto the pride of each local area now served the nation. Their manner of work, along with the visual tropes and conventions in this series, might well identify this as a print of the previous Edo period, since little had changed in a few generations. However,

2. Often the characters were reversed to *kōjo* 工女.

there is one obvious minor difference in the place names. This print depicts "Sericulture in Rikuchu" – a newly named district in the northeast now lying across Iwate and Akita prefectures. The explanation (set within the handscroll at the upper left) enthuses about the frames consisting of rows of bamboo pyramids, this region's inventive device for nesting silk worms. Women, with their kimono sleeves fastened back with red *tasuki* (襷) ties, drop silkworms ready to spin cocoons into these frames. Three to four worms, it is explained, would readily spin their cocoon in each pyramidal space.

For centuries if not millennia, women had been engaged in sericulture all over rural Japan, as in much of Asia. As with spinning and weaving, this first step of cultivating the silk worms was women's work. This labor-intensive multi-stepped process of feeding of the worms lasted just 28 days and traditionally was seasonal, undertaken once per year. It would bring in extra household income. The networks of cottage industries were extensive and although those who produced the cocoons might spin the thread, they often left the weaving to others.[3]



Figure 2. Kunichika, 1878. *Enlightened 36 gourmet spots: Ueno, Seiyōken*. Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:4.

Given the constant poverty in the northeast, we can assume this harmonious and light-hearted scene is somewhat of an idealization of a country sericulture workshop in Rikuchu. The woman standing with the baby strapped to her back seems to be imparting good news to those seated, while someone's son outside holds up his cat to enjoy the fun. Looking closely, we see hints of travel and commerce. Beyond the boy at the door, a traveller passes. Behind him in a rickshaw in the distance is perhaps the go-between in the local trade network. Only the wealthy rode in the new rickshaw (and indeed, this is another marker that this print dates to early Meiji). These beautifully patterned indigo and cotton kimono—most likely fancier and more varied than what was usually worn—would have been dyed with stencils. Although the fabric might have been woven and dyed in the area, for some time already cotton kimonos had been increasingly made of imported fabrics. What remained consistent for a long while, in most households, was the expectation that women would stitch together and care for her family's garments.

From the patio at the Seiyōken restaurant on the hill of Ueno above the famous Shinobazu pond, a lone figure gazes back towards us. She is a geisha, identifiable by her hairdo and the way she lifts the skirts of her fine gown to show her high *geta* footwear. Dusk descends in the sky from the distant banks below, displaying a lovely gradation from a deep regal red to pink; this same pigment (known now as "Meiji red") tints camellia blossoms while in a lighter intensity, it becomes subtle eye- shadow and tints the edges of the plum blossoms. The camellia and plum blossoms tell us that it is very early spring; the scattered pine needles and pinecones in a sprinkling of snow lining the graduated bottom of the geisha's kimono communicate new-year auspiciousness. The ivy crest at the top of her kimono—from a fine silk probably dyed in the exquisite stenciled paste resist dyeing *yūzen* technique of Kyoto—asserts her house affiliation. The magnificent gold embroidered dragon descending from her *obi* (sash) expresses her innate fierceness, dash, and nerve. This print is from a series touting the 36 enlightened restaurants for *kaiseki* (会席a multi-course meal) in Tokyo. Yet a geisha's celebrity does the promotion. If not a recognizable famous personality, this geisha embodies the ideal of Meiji chic.

Employing all of the conventions of the *bijinga* (美人画 beauty picture), this would not be recognizable as a Meiji print except for this Meiji red, the insertion of the word "enlightened" 開花 (*kaika*) in the title and, most odd to us

3. For good description of one of the networks, see Kären Wigen, *The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750-1920*. Berkeley: U of C Press, 1995.

now, the arrangement of chairs perched upon a low table that in turn stands on a stone dais next to her. This type of dais is a *hamadai* (浜台). Long ago used at the most formal ceremonies, it had come to be used for any grand occasion. Here, however, the dais displays the new furniture of the west. Whether these chairs were meant to be used or not is a puzzle not easily solved. It is certain that a very special meeting is about to commence during the New Year's season.

Now a set stereotype of Japan, geisha are usually denied any history. Geisha were not always the leading ladies of the night in Japan, but rather grew more popular during the nineteenth century to reach their height during the early Meiji period. And where and how they were prostitutes or not is a question impossible to answer since "geisha" could mean many things.[4] Yet it is true that the highest echelon of geisha accompanied the important men of the era to public events and galas of the time, as well as entertaining at private parties. Some of them became wives to these men. As Mio Wakita argues, the glamorous geisha typifies the self-created stereotypes of Japan.[5] They were certainly celebrities to foreigners and Japanese alike. They performed for tourists in Kyoto; one of them, Sadayakko, went with a troupe of actors and dancers to cities in the US and Europe to reach great acclaim abroad.

Gradually, as love marriages were increasingly promoted in Japan, they grew to be a site of cultural friction. Yet they were the first models for advertisements. Certainly, many daughters of Meiji, whatever their position in life, would find cause to savor the pictured geisha's taste in dress. Surely the female viewer would imagine herself there, dressed to the nines as she waits for important guests in this exotically Western restaurant.

Impressions to Emulate



Figure 3. Adachi Ginko, 1885. *A pictorial explanation of hairdos for Great Japan.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:3.

4. Liza Dalby, *Geisha Berkeley*: U of C Press, 1983, provides a book-length survey with only a few hasty conclusions. Mikiso Hane, in his chapter "Poverty and Prostitution" in *Peasants, Rebels, & Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan* (Pantheon Books, 1982) gives a picture of the darker reality. For a fascinating example, see Sone Hiromi (Suzanne O'Brien translator) "Conceptions of Geisha: A Case Study of the City of Miyazu," in *Gender and Japanese History, vol. 1* (Osaka University Press, 1999).
5. Mio Wakita, *Staging Desires: Japanese Femininity in Kusakbe Kimbei's Nineteenth Century Souvenir Photography.* Berlin: Reimer, 2013.

During the 1880s Westernization became de rigueur. This triptych (consisting of three prints bought separately) by the prolific and versatile artist Adachi Ginkō espouses a new "Hairdo Association" to boost Westernized hairstyles over past modes. As opposed to the previous print that entices the viewer with a bit of Westernized furniture, this one contains definite guidelines for change. As it says in the long scroll hanging above, the three main reasons to abandon the old Shimada-mage or Maru-mage hairdos were because the Western hairstyles were 1) hygienic, 2) economical, and 3) convenient. It notes that these Western styles had the virtue of not needing the elaborate hairpins or ornaments of old. The explanation goes on to introduce "bangs" while detailing concretely how one twisted, divided, and braided the hair for either hanging styles or buns. It ends by advising occasional shampoos with an egg to make one's hair shiny and radiant.

One sees the first basic step to these hairdos in what is being done to the central seated figure. From gathering and dividing the hair just so, one can create all of the styles described: both in the text, and depicted in the photograph-like pictures of women of various ages. The hairstyles are shown methodically from the back, from profile, and in three-quarters view. The younger ones display bangs. In a light lavender silk kimono with a design of scattered flowers and an *obi* of a rich brocade of medallions, a young lady has her hair done by a *kamiyui* (髪結 a woman hairdresser). The *kamiyui* wears a silk kimono with a stencil-dyed olive vertical pattern.

Surely female viewers were expected to yearn to be this seated young lady with her long, beautifully featured face reflected in the mirror. Just as surely, they were meant to follow these styles—whether they were in a position to join this publicized association or not. But what is the status of the young lady getting her hair done? Is she *ojōsama*, one of the *musume* of higher-class families? Even if an *ojōsama*, she blurs the line, looking very geisha-like in her beauty and daring. How many *ojōsama* would use the services of *kamiyui*? The black velvet *obi* turned inside out like a geisha suggests the *kamiyui* might have been a geisha herself. Many, including the daughters of the best families, were chided at the time for following the fashions of the geisha.



Figure 4. Hashimoto Chikanobu, 1887. *Shōgaku shōka no ryakuzu.* Source: University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Asian Rare-6 no.L3:2.

Two years later, and we are at the height of the adoption of Western fashion, in a Western-style venue. We are made to feel the charm of a new amalgamated music emanating from this salon. A chorus of ladies and five men accompanied by an elegant pianist perform songs from the widely popular elementary school songbook. Since its release six years before, the songbook had spawned sequels and been reprinted repeatedly. There was virtue to

be gained from this new national music, a product of collaboration between a foreign advisor and court officials. With the lyrics to six songs in the central cartouche, we might even join in. The words to the first song begin: “Be fragrant, let out your smell, [you] cherry blossoms in the garden! Stop, flicker, you fireflies in the grasses! Beckon, sway, you reeds in the field! Perch, flutter, you plovers of the river bank!”[6]

The vista outside reveals a pond surrounded by flowers outside of the arches, flowers in the ladies’ chignons lightly pick up on the spring cherry blossoms, *yamabuki*, and peonies outdoors. The deep red of the regal carpet with its flower medallions suggest this location is the famous spot associated with the peerage, the Rokumeikan. This building, designed by the British architect Josiah Conder, was the venue for the dance parties, musical evenings, and genteel games during the 1880s, at a time there were still many Western dignitaries, teachers, advisors, and other assorted adventurers in Japan. The women in their grand robes seem to relish their performance in this setting.

This triptych served palpably as a fashion plate. The role of leading women as cultural stewards necessitated that they perform socially in the foreign manner. And whereas men could display their elegance in this soiree culture by wearing black tailcoats and trousers, a style slow to change, women were obliged to dress according to the mode of the moment. This was less individual choice than something dictated from above. In January of 1887, the year this print came out, the empress had just put out a proclamation to advise women to adopt contemporary Western women’s wear. For the benefit of the country, and to facilitate new western manners such as bowing, she advocated the adoption of the “Western method of sewing.” The proclamation continued:

> *In carrying out this improvement …be especially careful to use materials made in our own country. If we make good use of our domestic products, we will assist in the improvement of techniques of manufacture on the one hand, and will also aid the advancement of art and cause business to flourish. Thus the benefits of this project will reach beyond the limits of the clothing industry.*[7]

And indeed, the print depicts fabric patterns that might well have been spun, woven and dyed in Japan (for example, the blue cloud motif on the dark green top donned by the lady standing to the right of the piano is an ancient Sino-Japanese motif).[8]

The ladies’ sacrifice for Japan through fashion was no small burden. 1887-88, the years when Westernized fashion in Japan were at a height, were the pinnacle of fashion for the bustle. Thus, these ladies had to not only take on the weight of copious layers of fabric, but also distort their figures into the unnatural shape dictated by the bustle. Additionally, even though dresses could be ordered from both native and foreign dress designers in Tokyo, it was difficult to afford for many of the public servants required to wear them.

Yet there were some women who stepped into leadership roles and naturally wore the dress to fit. These events featuring Western music would have been impossible without the few daughters of dignitary families who had been sent to study abroad. Perhaps the pianist in the print is modeled after Baroness Uryū, who had been sent as a girl to study in the US and who had studied music at Vassar College.[9] This rarefied world centering on the circles of court and government accords to the lifestyle of those who went to Gakushuin, the Peers College, as

6. My translation.
7. Julia Meech-Pekarik, pp. 128-130 and passim *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization*. New York: Weatherhill, 1986.
8. For an excellent essay that explicates on representation of women sewing in the Western manner during this time, see Alison Miller, “A Note on Adachi Ginkō’s *Picture of Noble Ladies Sewing: Women and Nationalism in a Meiji Print*” in *Spencer Museum of Art: July 1, 2006- June 30, 2007*, 42-49.
9. See Meech-Pekarik, 164, on another similar print with a pianist.

characterized by Alice Bacon in her 1891 book, *Japanese Girls and Women*.[10] Bacon came to teach at Gakushuin on the invitation of the pioneer in women's education Tsuda Umeko, who also had studied in the US; Tsuda later founded Tsuda College for Women. These were the *ojōsama* of dignitaries, whose example was meant to encourage the rising middle class to marry well then become, as a well-repeated slogan put it, "good wives and wise mothers" 良妻賢母 (*ryōsai kenbō*).

Western dress for urban middle and upper class women was not in fashion for long. By the 1890s, most women were again wearing kimono, reinventing as fashion does, the traditional styles of times past.[11] Moreover, in the countryside the clothing had hardly changed at all, especially among the impoverished peasants who wore coarse work cloths, straw sandals, and whose children wore "ragtag, patched up, old clothes handed down from their older siblings."[12]

A New Type of Female Labor

The Meiji government, in a first major effort to enrich the nation, launched the industrialization of textile machinery factories. In this, they followed in the lead of Great Britain, France, and the United States. What had been a sustainable female-dominated cottage industry with only short seasonal stretches of intensive labor (as seen in the first print) became year-round factory labor. The *jokō* (factory girl) was born.[13] If not so terrible at first, the pay soon descended to the cheapest possible level and working conditions became disgracefully bad. *Jokō* soon were a shunned group, not a suitable occupation for proper daughters. Why did they endure it? As the lines from one of many songs they sung puts it:

> *We do it for ourselves and for our parents.*
> *Boys to the army,*
> *Girls to the factory.*
> *Reeling thread is for the country too.*[14]

Yet, of course, the reasons were not always that idealistic and simple.[15]

The most famous of the textile factories, Tomioka Silk Mill—a filiature plant where silk thread was spun from cocoons—became a world heritage site in 2014. The Meiji government opened it in 1872 as a model factory. Choosing the town of Tomioka (130 kim northwest of Tokyo in Gunma prefecture) for its sufficient water and its already strong infrastructure in cocoon production, the government acquired state of the art machinery from France, and sponsored Paul Bonart, his wife, and an entire team to develop the effort. It was daughters of the old *shizoku* (士族), or samurai class, who first patriotically answered the government's call for 16 girls from each prefecture. One of the samurai daughters who went to Tomioka Mill recounts her joy in learning as well as the trials of life there in her 1931 memoir *Tomioka Diary* (*Tomioka Nikki*). But she stayed less than a year before going back to her hometown to help supervise the establishment of a factory there.[16]

10. Bacon's book remains a testament to the proud strength the rise of a new cosmopolitan elite. Yet, Bacon, as was typical of her class, wrote about women who worked at being members of the leisure class and was blind to the plight of the vast majority of working Japanese women. For a contemporary source that reports on the more impoverished, see Sydney Gulick, *Working Women of Japan* (1915).
11. The best book-length survey of the shifts in kimono fashions and attitudes since the late nineteenth century is Terry Satsuki Milhaupt, *Kimono: A Modern History.* London: Reaktion Books, 2014.
12. Hane, p 41.
13. See E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990; Janet Hunter, *Women and the Labour Market in Japan's Industrialising Economy: The textile industry before the Pacific War.* London: Routledge Curzon, 2003.
14. Tsurumi, p. 92.
15. Tsurumi strongly makes this argument.
16. Wada Ei, *Tomioka Nikki*, 1931 with many reprints. This has recently been translated by Alan Lewinski and Maiko Lewinski as Ei Wada, *Tomioka Diary*. Nagano: Shinshu Educational Publishing Co, 2016.

We must be wary of the selectivity of cultural memory as it is filtered through representations. A print originally published in 1873 (but reissued in 1926) commemorated the inauguration of Tomioka Silk Mill. At the top is a portrait of the factory. Its brick construction was quite rare at the time. To mark the location, the distant mountains are labeled. A plaque segues the top outside view and the bottom interior of the factory. It contains the poem that the empress dedicated upon her official visit to the factory in 1872.



Figure 5. *Choko, 1926 (1873) Tomioka seishijo kōjo benkyō no zu*. Source: Gunma Prefectural Library (used by permission).

The *hakama* (袴 divided skirts) worn in the print tell an interesting story. Originally a court garment, then taken up by samurai, by early Meiji it distinguished the new figure of the schoolgirl. Front and forward two girls stand full of pride, the one on the right ready to fasten her *haori* (羽織 jacket) sleeves up with the *tasuki*. They are "first class girls" who, by spinning faster and better quality thread, had proven themselves above the rest, and so had higher *geta*, to literally stand taller than the others. According to the title of the print, they are about to start their lessons. That this factory was a place to gain an education, rather than be exploited for their labor, was a pleasant fiction used to recruit girls to the factory. And there is the question of how long or often the simple yet rich *hakama* as portrayed here were actually worn at the mill.

This print was not very representative of either Tomioka Silk Mill, which privatized by 1893, nor of the hundreds of similar factories that sprang up in the countryside and cities. The first phase when the majority of workers at Tomioka were samurai daughters soon passed. Almost all of the cheap female labor eventually came from impoverished rural areas. Families there, with too many mouths to feed and rising rents on their tenant farms brought on by political-economic changes, sent out their daughters to work from as young as seven years old. Their choices were limited. They might send their daughters to serve as *komori*, or "nursemaids," to wealthier neighbors; they might "sell them" to a brothel to become geisha or lower prostitutes;[17] or, increasingly through the years, they would contract them out to distant dormitories to become *jokō*. In theory the contract was only up to a few years, but many worked for decades. Under heavy capitalistic pressure for higher profits, working conditions rapidly worsened. Because of the perennial problem of runaways, *jokō* were confined to the factory and their dormitories except for rare occasions; physical, sexual, and verbal abuse was common; and illnesses brought on by the harsh conditions often led to death.

Yet to be heard?

[18]

Some of the Meiji *musume*, as well as some of those around them, recorded their stories and songs of sacrifice and self-valuation. The *Tomioka Diary* has been mentioned above. In 1925 Hosoi Wakizō captured the attention of many with his *The Sorry History of the Factory Girls* (*Jokō Ai-shi*), and his wife, a main informant, later published *My Own Sorry History of Female Textile Workers*(*Watashi no jokō aishi*).[19] In 1968, Yamamoto Shigemi put out *Oh! The Nomugi Pass! Aa! Nomugi tōgei!*) out of extensive interviews with the women, now grandmothers, who had worked at a factory near lake Suwa factory, entitled for the precipitous Nomugi pass they

17. Hane.
18. The subtitle "Yet to be heard?" refers to the title of an article written by the late formidable scholar of University of Victoria, E. Patricia Tsurumi, who translated the stories and songs of these down-trodden factory women into English.
19. See "Changing Consciousness: Takai Toshio's *My Own Sad History of Female Textile Workers (Watashi no jokō aishi)*" in Ronald P. Loftus, *Telling Lives: Women's Self-Writing in Modern Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004, 82-131.

had to cross to arrive at the factory. In 1979, this was turned into an epic film. It seems to have inevitably brought tears to families as they watched it in movie theatres or when replayed on TV.[20]

Documented songs remain the *jokō*'s most powerful voice in their mix of fierce pride and steely nerve. One most resonant today lionizes a silk worker in Nagano named Iwataru Kikusa for being a "fighter against male oppressors met every day within the factory."[21] When attacked in 1907 when returning back to her dormitory, she seized the balls of her assailant so forcefully that he revealed his face, leading to his arrest. The man turned out to be a wanted murderer. Two verses of the song ran:

Iwataru Kikusa is a shining
Model of a factory girl.
Let's wrench the balls
Of the hateful men!

Who dares to say that
Factory girls are weak?
Factory girls are the
Only ones who create wealth.[22]

The term *jokō aishi* ("sorry history of factory girls") from the 1925 exposé is now used as a title for books about the exploitation of textile workers in Southeast Asia and China.

Concluding Remarks

The visual and textual evidence from these *nishiki-e* allows us a few glimpses of very different settings for women's labor (in our broad definition of labor). Because of the blur between imagination and reality in these prints, they provide a skewed view. They express the aspirations of the period more than lived reality. We have considered a set of complementary questions: What was the social meaning of what they wore? Who made them? Where were they made? Questioning their clothing for what is fanciful in these woodcuts allows us to interrogate the degree of truth portrayed. For, as we learn when we read actual accounts, most did not have such a happy, easy lifestyle, nor did many so always contentedly conform to social expectations in this picture-pretty way. Many of the actual daughters of Meiji were made of much tougher stuff than it may appear.

20. From my personal interviews with a number of Japanese people.
21. Tsurumi, 197.
22. Idem. Translated from Yamamoto Shigemi's *Aa nomugi tōge.*

A Glimpse of Meiji Kimono Fashion

Ayako Yoshimura | University of Chicago



Moyō no hon 模様之本 [Pattern book]—part of the UBC Meiji at 150 collection—contains twenty-one hand-painted designs for what we recognize today as *tomesode*s 留袖 [literally, "trimmed sleeves"], the most formal type of Japanese-style clothing for women. The *tomesode* is sewn in the shape of a *kosode* 小袖 [literally, "small sleeves"], which is the most common article of Japanese-style clothing, and which is better known today as the kimono. (The Japanese word "*kimono* 着物" originally meant merely "clothing," but over the centuries it became—both in Japan and abroad—the word to denote a particular type of Japanese-style outfit involving a *kosode* and other accoutrements.)

The book bears no publication information, suggesting that it is an *unicum* created for a small circle of designers and clients. Based on comparison with similar pattern books from the Meiji period 明治時代 (1868–1912), the item can tentatively be dated to the turn of the century. A bookplate states that it once belonged to an as-yet-unidentified Imao Collection—whose plate and seal (*Imao zōsho* 今尾蔵書) are registered in the ex-libris database compiled by the National Institute of Japanese Literature, but without attribution **[Figure 1]**. A sticker inside the back cover indicates that the book passed through the hands of the erstwhile Kyoto bookseller Yamamoto Bunkadō 山本文華堂 **[Figure 2]**.



Figure 1. Front Cover Detail. Source: University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC). Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 1.



Figure 2. Back Cover Verso Detail. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 44.

A Brief History of Pattern Books

Pattern books (called "*hinagata bon* 雛形本 [model books]," "*hiinakata* ひいなかた [models]," "*ishō bon* 意匠本 [design books]," "*zuan chō* 図案帖 [ideas-in-illustrations books]," etc.) like this one functioned in the past as fashion magazines and catalogs. Browsing through such books, clothing designers could concoct ideas for new patterns, while prospective customers could imagine what sort of *kosode* they might commission.

The Edo period 江戸時代 (1603–1868) was the heyday of pattern books. In the wake of Japan's civil war, the seventeenth century saw the beginning of a long era of political stability. With this came an improvement of the social and economic infrastructure, which allowed the merchant class to flourish. It was during this period that the general population became cognizant of the concept of "fashion" and its concomitant commodities. Fabric sellers partnered with publishers to issue pattern books for circulation among potential clients from the warrior and merchant classes, and artists and designers launched their own clothing brands. Around 1800 the production of pattern books dipped for unknown reasons. But the Meiji period saw a resurgence in production. Thanks to the importation of new technologies (particularly synthetic dyes and techniques for their use) from the West that revived the textile and printing industries, pattern books once again circulated as sources of fashion inspiration. Handcrafted catalogs such as *Moyō no hon*, as well as the kimonos depicted within, were products of the newfound availability of such dyes.

During the Meiji period, sericulture became one of the most profitable sectors of foreign trade for Japan. While much top-grade silk fabric was exported to Europe, there was an ample supply for domestic consumption by the wealthy. Silk kimonos were luxury items not available to women of all classes. Hence *Moyō no hon* provides a glimpse into the ways in which wealthy women might have enjoyed kimono fashion in the Meiji era.

Tagasode

The style in which the *tomesodes* in this book are rendered is called "*tagasode* 誰が袖." "*Tagasode*" literally means "Whose sleeve?"; and the word carries a romantic connotation that implies a longing for the owner of the *kosode*. The concept of *tagasode* is believed to have its origins in a literary motif from classical Japanese poetry. An anonymous poem in the Spring section of the famous poetry anthology *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 [A collection of poems from ancient and modern Japan] (ca. 920) reads: "*Iro yori mo ka koso aware to omouyure tagasode fureshi yado no ume zomo* 色よりも香こそあはれと思ほゆれ誰が袖ふれし宿の梅ぞも [It is their fragrance rather than their color that affects me. I wonder whose sleeve might brush against these plums to carry away their scent]." This evocative *topos* evolved into a popular aesthetic motif in the decorative arts, from screens to writing boxes (see examples at the Metropolitan Museum of Art). In such contexts *kosode*s are shown folded casually and hung on clothing stands. There even exist *kosode*s whose patterns show *kosode*s hung in this *tagasode* style.

This way of hanging the *kosode* effectively reveals the lining, which is an important element of kimono fashion (see the vivid orange lining in **Figures 3-5**). The color of the lining needs to complement the color of the outer fabric, whether through strong affinity or sharp contrast. As such, the color of the lining says much about the kimono wearer's taste.



Figure 3. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 20.



Figure 4. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 22.



Figure 5. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 24.

Kimono pattern books that use this *tagasode* style to showcase patterns are not uncommon. For instance, the first volume of *Onna shorei shū* 女諸礼集 [An anthology of manners and etiquette for women] (1660)—a guidebook for young women preparing for marriage—shows *kosode*s in the *tagasode* style to instruct readers in seasonally-appropriate patterns. A more recent example is *Jidai kosode hinagata byōbu* 時代小袖雛形屏風 [A collection of *kosode* patterns from the past] (compiled in 1939 by Nomura Shōjirō 野村正治郎), a pictorial encyclopedia of *kosode*s from previous centuries.

Motifs

The *tagasode* style works well for the *tomesode*s in this pattern book, because *tomesode*s have patterns only below the torso; therefore, there is no need to show the sleeves or upper part. During the Meiji period

the *tomesode* assumed its function as a formal garment for women to wear when attending celebratory events such as weddings, and it was thus common to feature auspicious symbols that contributed to the making of a congratulatory atmosphere. Most of these auspicious symbols (*kisshō moyō* 吉祥模様), though fully embedded in Japanese culture, derive ultimately from China—whence they were adopted during Japan's first-millennium steps toward nation-building.

Figure 6 — *Shō-chiku-bai* 松竹梅 motif



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 2.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 4.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 20.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 26.

Shō-chiku-bai 松竹梅 [pine-bamboo-plum]: Known as the three friends of winter in Chinese culture, pine, bamboo, and plum symbolize perseverance and vitality because all three survive the harsh winter. This is one of the most common auspicious symbols in Japan, and the book contains four patterns that feature it **[Figure 6]**.

Figure 7 — *Matsu* 松 Motif



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 6.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 28.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 32.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 42.

Matsu 松 [pine tree]: As an evergreen tree, the pine symbolizes vitality and strength **[Figure 7]**.

Figure 8 — *Tanchō-zuru* 丹頂鶴 Motif



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 4.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 26.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 32.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 42.

Tanchō-zuru 丹頂鶴 [red-crowned crane]: This particular type of crane symbolizes longevity in Chinese culture (an ancient Chinese text called *Huainanzi* 淮南子 [A collection of philosophies] records that they live a thousand years). The motif is often paired with other auspicious symbols **[Figure 8]**.

Figures 9 and 10 — *Botan ni chō* 牡丹に蝶 and *Nami chidori* 波千鳥 Motifs



Figure 9. UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 14.



Figure 10.1. UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 16.



Figure 10.2. UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 32.

Botan ni chō 牡丹に蝶 [peony and butterfly]: The peony is considered the king of flowers in China because of its rich beauty and medicinal value (the root of the plant has long been used to treat convulsions). The flower also symbolizes elegance and sophistication. The butterfly symbolizes evolution, resurrection, and longevity, thanks to the transformations that it undergoes in the course of its life cycle.

One pattern in the book exemplifies feminine elegance with peonies, butterflies, and a folding fan (a high-class motif due to its associations with court life) on soft pink fabric **[Figure 9]**.

Nami chidori 波千鳥 [waves and plovers]: Birds (often plovers) soaring in formation over the waves symbolize a couple's bond to overcome obstacles in life.

In one pattern the beach is dotted with clams suggestive of the couple's inseparability (as each half of the bivalve has but one perfect match), making this *tomesode* especially suitable to be worn by a wedding guest **[Fig. 10, left]**. Another incorporates the pine-bamboo-plum and the crane into its design, wishing for a marital union as hardy as the plants and as long-lived as the crane **[Fig. 10, right]**.

Figures 11 and 12 — *Hagi* 萩 and *Misu* 御簾 Motifs



Figure 11. *Hagi* 萩 Motif. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 12.

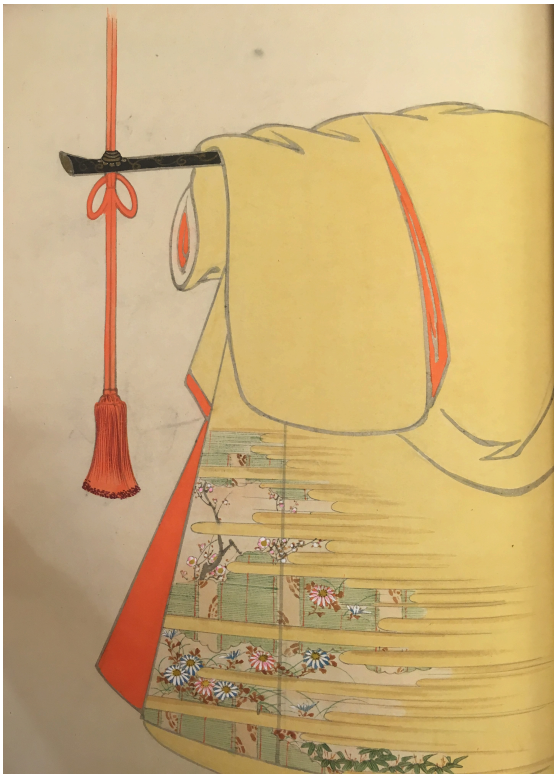


Figure 12. *Misu* 御簾 Motif. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 30.

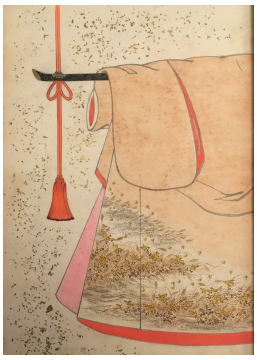
Hagi 萩 [bush clover]: The *hagi* is one of the autumnal flowers that appear often in classical Japanese poetry.

The design in the book also includes the *nami chidori* motif, which suggests that this *tomesode* would be suitable for wearing to an autumn wedding **[Figure 11]**.

Misu 御簾 [royal screen]: The *misu* is a type of suspended blind used for the sake of propriety at the royal court (for instance, to sequester the noblewomen, and to shield the nobles from the gaze of commoners in their employ).

Due to its associations with court life, the motif as it appears on the formal garment exudes a sense of nobility and elegance. The pattern with the *misu* motif in the book has a design with plums and chrysanthemums partially obscured by a haze—an artistic gambit frequently used in paintings in pre-modern Japan **[Figure 12]**.

Figure 13 — Seasonal Plants and Flowers Motif



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 10.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 34.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 36.



UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 18.

Seasonal plants and flowers: An assemblage of plants and flowers can evoke a particular season. For example, the book includes a design with an autumn theme featuring Japanese silver grass and chrysanthemums (Page 10). Chrysanthemums and maple leaves are both evocative of autumn (Page 34; Page 36). Other designs fit multiple seasons. The combination of colored maple leaves and scattered cherry blossom petals with birds might be appropriate for attendees of autumn or spring weddings (Page 18).

The combination of flowers from early summer (sweet flag) and autumn (bellflower, bush clover, Japanese silver grass, chrysanthemums) makes this design suitable for spring or autumn (Page 22). The sense and sensibility of seasonal motifs has always been very important in Japanese culture. It is considered fashionable to wear a kimono with botanical motifs marking the coming season, while it is seen as uncouth to wear a kimono with seasonal patterns after that season has passed.

The most inclusive pattern in the book is the one with many of the aforementioned motifs alongside Mount Fuji **[Figure 14]**.



Figure 14. Several motifs with Mt. Fuji. Source: UBC Library, RBSC. Asian_Rare_06_no_L01_019_L. Page 8.

Taste through Design

Clothes communicate personality. Discussion of kimono fashion often centers on casual kimonos, which ostensibly afford more freedom of expression. However, even within the limited realm of *tomesode*s (where formal dress codes may restrict one's style), there is room for personal choice. All *tomesode*s are generically alike (in their basic shape, their modest pattern placement); therefore, it is through the selection of colors and symbols that a woman reveals her taste. For example, this book includes several patterns with the same auspicious motifs such as pines and cranes, but arrayed in different designs.

Likewise, contained in the book are several different patterns with similar seasonal botanical motifs. The variety of patterns attests to the varied tastes of prospective wearers. Auspicious motifs would communicate a wearer's good wishes to onlookers, and seasonally-appropriate motifs would please them as well. Yet at the same time the ways in which the motifs are arranged in the design bespeak the wearer's taste in fashion. A kimono wearer would enjoy going through this kind of book, pondering which motifs might suit her style and how she might arrange them to create a look that would best represent her personhood.

Further Reading

Boettcher, Cheryl. 1987. "The Kimono Imagined." *Occasional Papers* (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Graduate School of Library Science), no. 180.

Maruyama, Nobuhiko 丸山伸彦. 2008. *Edo mōdo no tanjō*: *mon'yō no ryūkō to sutā eshi* 江戸モードの誕生: 文様の流行とスター絵師 [The birth of Edo fashion: pattern trends and celebrity designers]. Tōkyō: Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan.

Mostow, Joshua S. 1996. *Pictures of the Heart: The* Hyakunin Isshu *in Word and Image*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Nagasaki, Iwao 長崎巌. 2002. *Kosode kara kimono e* 小袖からきものへ [From kosode to kimono]. *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 [The art of Japan] no. 435.

Siffert, Betty Y. 1992. "*Hinagata Bon*: The Art Institute of Chicago Collection of Kimono Pattern Books." *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1: 86–94, 103. (Since the publication of this article, most of the pattern books discussed within have been transferred from the Institute's Ryerson and Burnham Libraries to the Asian Department of the adjacent museum.)

Yokoya, Kenichirō. 2008. "Kimono Zuanchō in Kyoto." Translated by Maya Hara. In *Zuanchō in Kyoto: Textile Design Books for the Kimono Trade*, edited by Becky Fischbach, 5–32. Stanford: Stanford University Libraries.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mizuho Kamo and Natsuko Takasu for their assistance in dating the item and in clarifying certain historical aspects of kimono pattern books.

Via Hawai‘i: The Transmigration of Japanese

Yukari Takai | Department of History, University of Windsor; York Centre for Asian Research, York University



Figure 1. Japanese immigrants on board the S.S. Kumeric at the port of Vancouver, 1907. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: JCPC_36_002b)

Browse UBC’s Japanese Canadian Photograph Collection here.

On July 25, 1907, over 1100 Japanese on board the steamship *Kumeric* arrived from Honolulu at the port of Vancouver, British Columbia. They were the largest contingent of Japanese immigrants from Hawai‘i that this seaport was yet to receive. The night before, the steamer had stopped at Victoria where the passengers were inspected and the day after their arrival in Vancouver, they were again to be examined by Canadian officials in Vancouver. All landed at this Pacific gateway. Eight hundred were then moved on to Steveston for lodging because their number exceeded the capacity of Vancouver’s boarding-houses. Most strikingly, many intended on moving to the United States. The sheer number of migrants rang alarm bells among Japanese, Canadian, and American officials.They also sharpened the sense of imminent threat among white residents on the Pacific coast. Steeped in clear racial undertones, local newspaper *The Daily Province* reported on the arrival of the *Kumeric* and

its Japanese passengers accompanied with several black-and-white photographs.[1] **[Figure 2]** One photograph was intended to depict a horde of "little brown men" covering "the deck of the steam[ship] from stem to stern like a swarm of ants."



Figure 2. On board the ship. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: JCPC_36_004a)

Another showed a Japanese woman dressed in a kimono on the deck. And yet another presented the entire body of the 6200-ton vessel. **[Figure 4]** The message was clear and provocative. Worse still, the newspapers suggested, this was the tip of iceberg of large- and small-scale movements of *issei* (first generation Japanese), who were allegedly inundating the Pacific shore of Canada and who would force their way into the United States.

The landing of Japanese on board the *Kumeric* and several other vessels that preceded or followed highlights the determination of the nation-states, in this case Japanese, Canadian, and American, to curb the mobility of issei workers. Such incidents also indicated the limitations of the measures imposed by state authorities to control such movements. The circuitous routes of Japanese transmigrants who journeyed from Japan to Hawai'i, then to Vancouver or Victoria and finally to Seattle or San Francisco, for example, shed light on how determined immigrant labourers were in their search for a better life and how they used their mobility as one of a few assets they could put to use for their pursuit. Finally, the roundabout journeys of Hawaiian Japanese illuminates the crucial role that the transpacific companies played in challenging or accommodating the regulatory and exclusionary regimes of in- and out-migration that the national governments set up in order to regulate or exclude the movement of foreigners, citizens or subjects considered dangerous, undesirable or inassimilable.

Step migration, or what some historians call the transmigration of Japanese, across the Pacific and towards the Pacific coasts of Canada and the United States took place at a very time when Japan, Hawai'i, Canada, and the United States were each tightening control over the exit or admission of in- and out-migrants. This was also a period when race relations along the Pacific coast of North America and inland were further deteriorating.

It was no coincidence that in 1907, shortly before and after the *Kumeric's* arrival in late July, a series of the most violent anti-Oriental riots erupted along the Pacific coast on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border. In the spring, summer and fall of that year, white unionists and residents manifested against Chinese in San Francisco, attacked South Asian workers in Bellingham (Washington) and destroyed the properties of Japanese and Chinese residents in Vancouver. **[Figure 5]** (For more, see UBC's Chung Collection; see also photographs of Japanese-owned buildings damaged in the riots here.)



Figure 3. Japanese woman on board. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: JCPC_36)

As early as the late nineteenth century the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had restricted the migration of Japanese labourers bound for Canada or the United States through the issuance of passports, and it continued to do so in the

1. Vancouver Daily Province, July 24 and 25, 1907.

early twentieth century. In August 1900, the Japanese Foreign Ministry suspended issuance of passports to labourers, male or female, bound for Canada or the United States. The main reason behind the ban was an imminent concern on the part of the Japanese Foreign Ministry about mounting anti-Japanese feelings among the residents of the West Coast of Canada and the United States.

The restriction was lifted twenty months later in June 1902 and allowed for former labourers to return and for the reunification of wives and family members. The regulation of out-migrants (emigration) from Japan continued. The Foreign Ministry restricted the destinations of the emigrants by allowing an emigrant to leave only for the locality listed on the passport. If one held a passport to Hawai‘i, for example, one was allowed to go to Hawai‘i but not to any other destination. In practice, however, Tokyo’s attempt to regulate the mobility of its citizens/subjects through passports and other regulations failed outright. This was because once immigrants went to Hawai‘i, for example, with passports marked “Hawai‘i only,” they passed beyond the jurisdiction of Japan and therefore, its restrictions no longer held any effective power of enforcement.

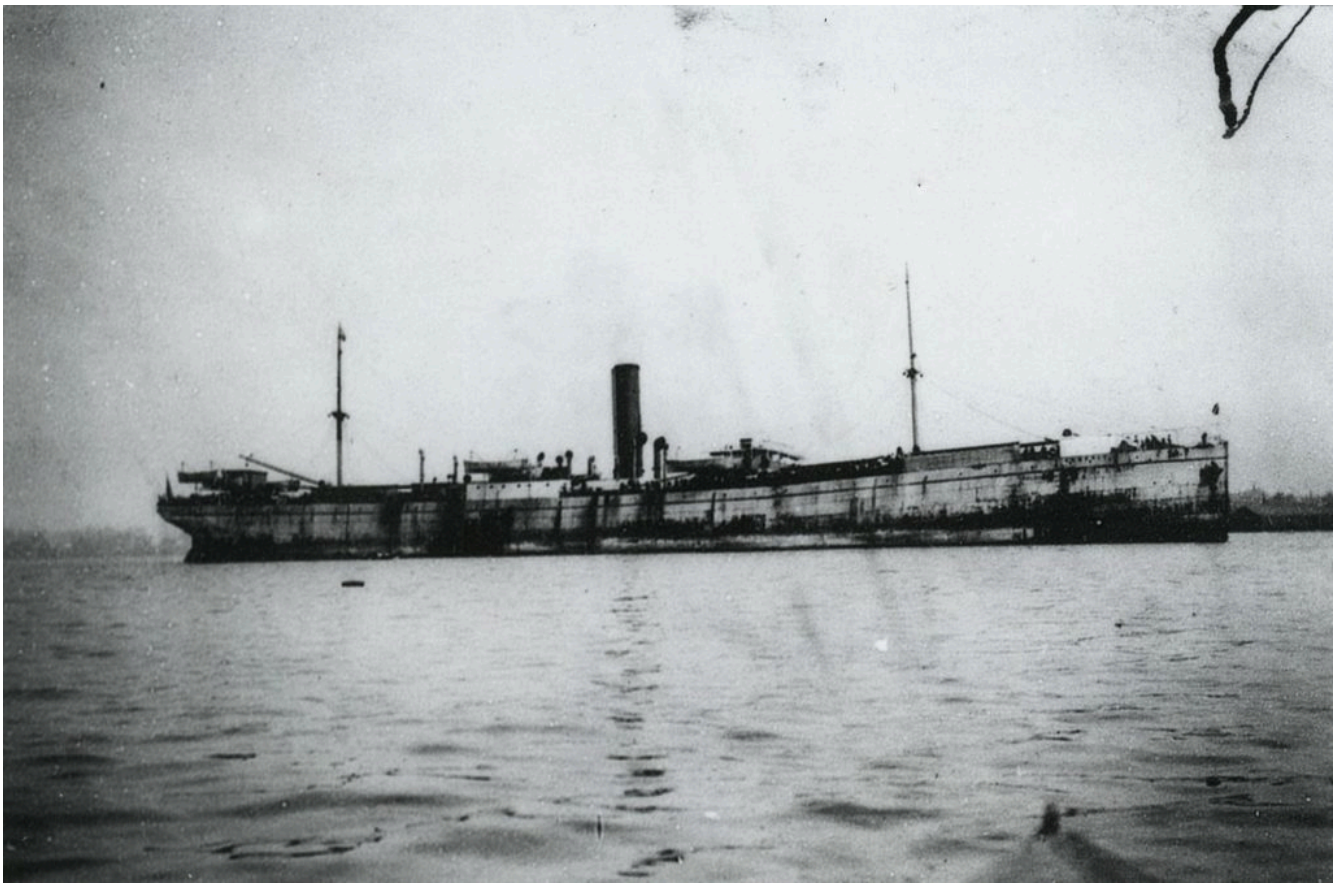


Figure 4. The S.S. Kumeric. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: JCPC_36_002a)

The Canadian and U.S. governments, for their part, also stepped up its efforts to restrict the admission of foreigners deemed undesirable in the first decade of the twentieth century. They did so by implementing in lock step a series of exclusionary laws and regulations designed to prevent the previously little regulated travel of foreigners.

By 1908, the U.S.-Japan Gentlemen’s Agreement banned the admission of Japanese labourers while the Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement with the Canadian government severely restricted it. In the same year, President Theodore Roosevelt’s Executive Order 589 barred foreign contract labourers, including Japanese, from entering the United

States; and Canada restricted step migration through the Continuous Journey Order-in-Council[2] designed to prevent entry of foreigners unless they travelled directly from the country of birth or citizenship to Canada.

One of the unintended results of the exclusionary regime of immigration in 1907 and 1908 was that it left open a window, albeit briefly, for a growing number of *issei* labourers in Hawai‘i to move to or through Canadian ports. They quickly learned that the passage from Hawai‘i to the mainland United States was now closed with the stipulation of Roosevelt’s Executive Order, but that they could move to Vancouver and Victoria until Canada’s continuous journey clause came into effect.

Once they landed in Canada, many stayed there. But many others moved on to cross the border into the United States by foot, by train or by a local boat. Like their friends, neighbours, and colleagues who had left for San Francisco or Seattle before the 1907 Executive order, *issei* cane workers rushed to board transpacific steamers for Canadian destinations. Their transmigration from Hawai‘i to the Canadian ports was propelled by the desire for higher wages, better working conditions, or simply a promise of greater opportunities unavailable in Hawai‘i.



Figure 5. Vancouver riot. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: JCPC_36_017)

Another often overlooked, but important, consequence relates to the transoceanic steamship companies. They saw their ability to comply with, or challenge, the nation-states’ power to regulate and exclude specific immigrant groups either constrained, or in some cases enhanced, through creative strategies. Transoceanic steamship companies were precursors of multinational enterprises. With the capacity to deploy their ships and dispatch their crewmembers, sales agents, and branch office representatives across the continents, their operation interlaced the globe.

2. *An Act to Amend the Immigration Act, 1908.* Ottawa: SC 7-8 Edward VII, Chapter 33.

Despite or because of such arrangements, their business remained highly vulnerable to the ebb and flow of passenger volumes.[3] Moreover, legal restrictions forced the steamship companies to compete for shrinking profits in their passenger business. Companies such as U.S.-based Dodwell & Company, an affiliate of which owned the *Kumeric*, the Japanese-owned and -run Nippon Yusen Kaisha (N.Y.K.), and the Canadian Pacific Railroad (C.P.R.) had to fulfil government regulations requiring them to pay the return fare of any passenger denied entry into the United States or Canada. Such burden weighed more heavily on transpacific steamship companies than their transatlantic counterparts because of the far more stringent and discriminatory immigration legislation and regulations targeting Asian passengers, including Japanese **[Figures 6 and 7]**.



Figure 6. Yokohama pier, NYK gangboard.
(Source: RBSC, UBC Library: RBSC-ARC-1757-PH-4434)



Figure 7. Nihon Yusen Kaisha(?) ship in the background with three women in the front. (Source: RBSC, UBC Library: JCPC_36_002b)

It was within the context of increasing legal and financial constraints that some transpacific companies directly or indirectly challenged the directives of the U.S. government. One of the most salient protests to the order from the U.S. Bureau of Immigration came from Dodwell & Company and Frank Waterhouse. The U.S. Bureau of Immigration conducted an investigation in 1907 which revealed that almost half of the Japanese (499 passengers

3. Drew Keeling, "The Economics of Migrant Transport between Europe and the United States, 1900-1914," *Working Papers, UC World History Workshop*, UC Berkeley, November 2005, 8-16.

out of 1029) disembarking at Victoria were refused the sale of steamship tickets to their destination in the United States and that they were able to secure tickets only to Victoria or Vancouver despite their intention to move on to the United States. Others were "put off" or disembarked at Victoria by a crewmember, despite holding a ticket to a point in the United States. Others still were erroneously told by steamship agents that the vessel did not go to a U.S. destination. On one occasion, a U.S. steamer issued a voucher to U.S.-bound Japanese passengers disembarking in Vancouver with a promise of free transportation to their final destination in the U.S. if they applied within ten days. These cases make it clear that the transpacific steamship companies were at the forefront of the transmigration of Japanese, linking multiple sites, be they Hawai'i, Vancouver, or Seattle, among others, in a way that accommodated or clashed with the will of the national governments to stem the tide of Japanese transmigration.

References

Canada, Royal Commission, *Report of W. L. Mackenzie King, C.M.G. Commissioner Appointed to Enquire into the Methods by Which Oriental Labourers Have Been Induced to Come to Canada.* Ottawa, 1907.

Gaimushô, "Hawai ni okeru Honpô Imin Raiou Meisaisho Shintatsu no Ken," In *Gaimushô Nihon Gaikô Bunsho.* Tokyo, 1906.

Sasaki, Toshiji, *Nihonjin Kanada Iminshi.* Tokyo, 1999.

Takai, Yukari. "Navigating Transpacific Passages: Steamship Companies, State Regulators, and Transshipment of Japanese in the Early-Twentieth-Century Pacific Northwest." *Journal of American Ethnic History,* Spring 2011, vol. 30, no. 3: 7-34.

U.S. Industrial Commission, "Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration: Including Testimony with Review and Digest," *The Commission's Reports, vol. 15, 1901*; Repr. New York, 1970.

Japanese Culture and Language in the Prewar Canadian "Mosaic"

Eiji Okawa | University of Victoria



Browse the UBC Open Collections Japanese-Canadian Photograph Collection here.

On Alexander Street in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside stands Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall. The school has served as a pillar of the Nikkei community since very early in the twentieth century.[1] The current premises include a section built in 1928, now designated by the city as a heritage site.

1. Nikkei refers to people of Japanese heritage. In this essay, this term is used to refer to Nikkei people in Canada.

The historic building witnessed dramatic changes over time, not least of which being the destruction of the Japanese-Canadian community by wartime policies. Until early in 1942, this area of town thrived as a vibrant Nikkei neighbourhood. The Canadian state didn't just expel "persons of the Japanese race" from the coast. It also sold properties they left behind without their consent. The school was a notable exception. Its board members navigated political pressures in the 1940s to keep the building in their hands.



Figure 1. Photo courtesy of Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall.

The school is neither public nor private but communal (*kyōritsu*, meaning "sustained together," is how it styled itself in prewar times). Not supported by government funding, maintaining the school itself was a formidable task. In the 1920s, the community grew, and the original school opened in 1906 became inadequate to accommodate increasing enrolment.



Figure 2. The "old" school at 439 Alexander Street operated from 1906 to Monday, December 8, 1941, a day after Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor. On that day, the RCMP phoned the school to order closure of all Japanese language schools in the province. Classes were dismissed by afternoon. Later in 1947, this building was sold under the Canadian government policy to sell properties owned by Japanese Canadians after they were physically removed from the area. Note that the sale occurred two years after the end of war and had nothing to do with security threat, the slogan under which Japanese Canadians were confined in internment. Indeed, persons of Japanese backgrounds were prohibited from returning to the coast until 1949, as anti-Japanese sentiment ran high in British Columbia. See **footnote #2** for representative literature on Japanese-Canadian history with emphasis on discriminatory policies, internment, dispossession, and exile. (Source: University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books are Special Collections, Japanese Canadian Research Collection, JCPC_25_058)

2

Some of these historiographies were closely related to the postwar activist movement to seek formal apology and redress from the Canadian government for its wartime mistreatment of citizens of Japanese lineage. Redress, achieved in 1988 with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney offering a formal apology in the House of Commons, was a momentous event in Canadian history. For developments of the redress movement, see Roy Miki and Cassandra Kobayashi, *Justice in Our Time: The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991); Roy Miki, *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004). Tatsuo Kage discusses the exile of Japanese Canadians in 1946 with rich oral historical accounts in his *Uprooted Again: Japanese Canadians Move to Japan after World War II*, trans. Kathleen Chisato Merken (Victoria, BC: Ti-Jean Press, 2012, orig. pub. in Japanese (Akashi shoten, 1998).

The oral historical approach has been immensely important in recent discussion of Japanese-Canadian history. For studies employing oral historical methods, see Pamela Sugiman, "Memories of Internment: Narrating Japanese Canadian Women's Life Stories," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 29/3 (Summer 2004), 359-88; Sugiman, "'Life is Sweet': Vulnerability and Composure in the Wartime Narratives of Japanese Canadians," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études canadiennes* 43/1 (Winter 2009), 186-218; and Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto press, 2012).

Important contributions to Japanese-Canadian history by community historians include Roy Ito, *We Went to War* (Stittsville, ON: Canada's Wings, 1984); Ito, *Stories of My People* (Hamilton, ON: S-20 and Nisei Veterans Association, 1994); and Masako Fukawa with Stanley Fukawa and Nikkei Fishermen's History Book Committee, *Spirit of the Nikkei Fleet: BC's Japanese Canadian Fishermen* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Pub., 2009).

The dispossession of Japanese Canadian is being comprehensively examined and analyzed by researchers of Landscapes of Injustice, a collaborative research project of which the author is a part as a postdoctoral researcher. Recent works by Landscapes researchers include Jordan Stanger-Ross and Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, "Suspect Properties: The Vancouver Origins of the Forced Sale of Japanese-Canadian-Owned Property, WWII," *Journal of Planning History* 15/4 (2016), 271-89; Stanger-Ross and Nicholas Blomley, "'My Land is Worth a Million Dollars': How Japanese Canadians Contested Their Dispossession in the 1940s," *Law and History Review* 35/3 (2017), 711-751; Eric M. Adams, Jordan Stanger-Ross, and Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, "Promises of Law: The Unlawful Dispossession of Japanese Canadians," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 54/3 (2017), 687-740; Stanger-Ross and Sugiman, eds., *Witness to Loss: Race, Culpability, and Memory in the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians* (Montreal and Kingston; London; Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017); and articles in the *Journal of American Ethnic History* special issue with Landscapes of Injustice forthcoming in summer of 2018. In addition to academic studies, Landscapes is developing teacher resources, museum exhibits, and public history as well as an archival website to share research findings with public audiences. Witness to Loss also has a website providing compelling records of a Japanese Canadian man

2. For works on Japanese-Canadian history with a focus on racist politics and wartime policies, see Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981); Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants*, 1858-1914 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); Roy, *The Triumph of Citizenship: The Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941-67* (Vancouver: UBC press, 2007); and Roy, J. L. Granatsein, Masako Iino, and Hiroko Takamura, *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto press, 1990). Greg Robinson provides a comparative analysis of Canadian and American treatment of persons of Japanese heritage during the Second World War in his *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). For essays on Nikkei histories in Canada and America, see Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura, eds., *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in association with University of Washington Press, 2005).

involved in the Canadian policy to dispossess people in his community. These are merely a selective sample of the wealth of works and literatures on Japanese Canadian history.

Expansion was necessary but money was lacking. A committee was formed by dedicated volunteers to oversee the construction of a new building. The community responded well to call for support. Donations totalling $38,155.22 came from all kinds of Nikkei enterprises and organizations as well as individuals and families in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Yukon.[3]

Photographs show the construction of the 1928 building underway roughly ninety years ago.



Figure 3. Contractors working on foundation and raising scaffoldings for the new school building, ca. October 1927. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, Nikkei National Museum (hereafter NNM) 2010.23.2.4.184

3. Tsutae Sato, ed. *Bankūbā nihon kyōritsu gogakkō enkakushi*, *History of Japanese Language School* (Vancouver: Bankūbā nihon kyōritsu gogakkō ijikai, 1954), 174.



Figure 4. Nikkei women and a man posing for a photo in front of a scaffolding. Woman to our left is Hanako Sato, and man on right in Tsutae, her husband. The women in the middle may have been teachers or members of the school's Mothers and Sisters Association (boshikai), which played critical roles in running the affairs of the school. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.224

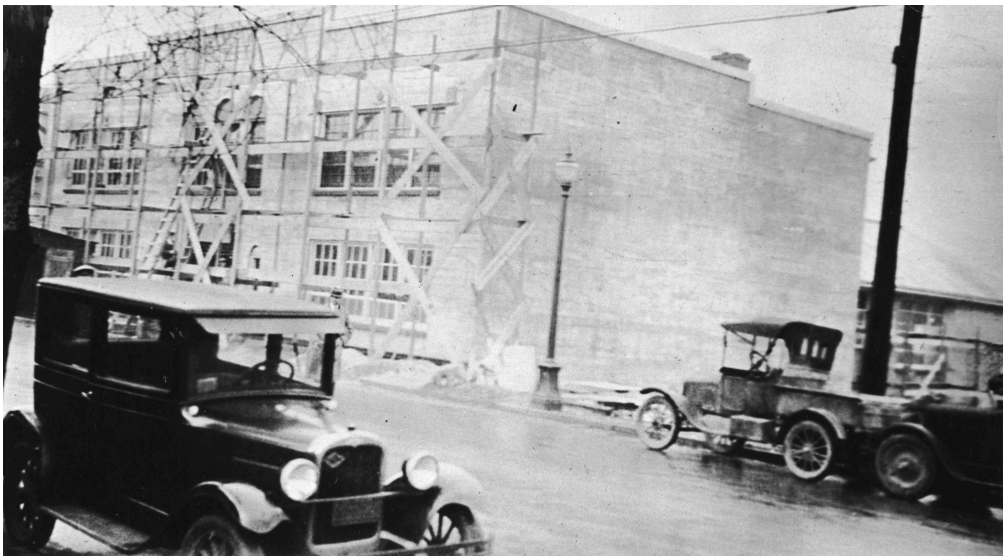


Figure 5. This photo taken on January 19, 1928 shows the building close to completion. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.226

Tsutae Sato, who served as principal from 1921 to 1966, has said the building was the crystallization of the heart and soul of every member of his community and the biggest accomplishment of his generation of Issei immigrants.[4] As it is the case with any group of people, there were diverse interests and agendas creating fissures and tensions within the Nikkei community of the day. But differences were put aside to unite under the common goal of the education of heirs in the Japanese language.

Why was Japanese school so important and what roles did language education play in the community?

4. Sato, *Enkakushi*, 177.

Caveats

A couple of historical factors need to be fleshed out. The first is prewar Canada's approach to difference and diversity. Living in the late 2010s, we are aware that Canada is a country avowing to stand by the values of inclusion and diversity, even as entrenched prejudice and discrimination remain to marginalize people based on their race and social backgrounds. Canadian multiculturalism is a postwar construction that can't be taken for granted. Prewar Canada was diverse and plural, too, but it was a society organized by codified and pervasive forms of discrimination and oppression. As white settlers dominated political processes, they took land away from First Peoples, crushing their communities, maiming their intricate relations to the environment and resources, and subjecting them to the laws of the settler regime that undermined their rights and interests. Unfair restrictions were imposed upon the entry of migrants from Asia to safeguard white interests, and as a general rule, people of colour were barred from political participation with the denial of the franchise. At the pinnacle of the racialized order were the British, but arguably, there were strands of ideas akin to multiculturalism. Canadian society was a "mosaic," it was said. But that really meant diversity among peoples of European descent.[5]

Second, the way Japanese migrants expressed themselves in the prewar era differs from how their descendants do in our time. Issei wrote and talked in Japanese, and concepts and ideas they evoked were rooted in the cultural norms of Japanese modernity. To generalize, whereas Japanese Canadians since the latter half of twentieth century have come to assert themselves primarily as Canadians with Japanese background, their predecessors, especially Issei, tended to think of themselves as Japanese members of a plural Canadian society. They sought integration into the social fabric of their adoptive country without compromising their Japaneseness. One specialist of Japanese-American history observes that in prewar "Japanese America," the sense of belonging was not singular or exclusive but "eclectic."[6] This characterization applies to the Nikkei community north of the border. Rigid ideas about the nation prevent us from coming to terms with their identities and subjective positions.

The remainder of this essay sketches out fragments of prewar Japanese-Canadian expressions of identity, drawing on precious historical records held in the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre in Burnaby and the UBC Library's Japanese Canadian Research Collection in Rare Books and Special Collections. Note that excerpts of historical texts appearing in the paragraphs to follow were translated by the author.[7]

5. As John Murray Gibbon put it in his 1938 book, *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (McLelland & Stewart ltd, Toronto), Canadians are "made up of European racial groups, the members of which are only beginning to get acquainted with each other, and have not yet been blended into one type. Possibly, in another two hundred years, Canadians may be fused together and standardized so that you can recognize them anywhere in a crowd…" (vii).
6. Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
7. This collection boasts exceptionally rich historical records of Issei from the early to mid twentieth century. Importantly, this collection came into existence as a result of an urgent call in 1971 by long-time Alexander Street school teacher Tsutae Sato, who we shall touch on in this essay, to save Issei records from oblivion as Issei entered twilight years and generation changed. Prior to that, the records were held by Japanese-Canadian individuals and families some of whom played vital roles in the community's economic, cultural, and religious lives. Mitsuru Shinpo, a UBC-trained sociologist who oversaw the creation of the collection recounts the donation of materials from community in his monograph on Japanese-Canadian history, *Ishi o mote owaruru gotoku [As if Being Chased with a Stone]* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu shobō, 1996, orig. pub. 1975). For an inventory of records in UBC RBSC's Japanese Canadian Research Collection, see http://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/uploads/r/university-of-british-columbia-library-rare-books-and-special-collections/6/7/67725/japanese_canadian_research_collection.pdf.

Language Education

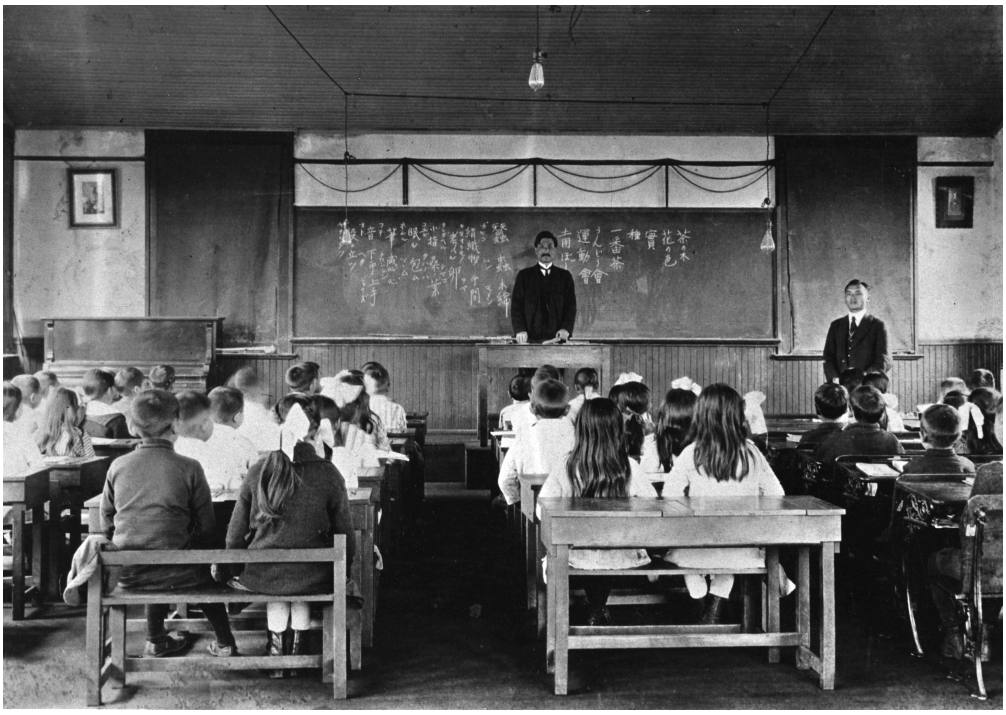


Figure 6. Classroom of Japanese language school, ca. 1920s. This is the original school located at 439 Alexander Street. Teacher standing on the side is Tsutae Sato. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.257

According to newsletters circulated by the Alexander Street school, the aim of language education was not simply to develop linguistic competency but to cultivate Japanese values and even "spirit" (*nihon seishin*). The emphasis on ethical cultivation was modeled on Confucian teachings and dovetailed with the educational curriculum developed in the Meiji period. From postwar perspectives, prewar moral education (*shūshin*) is easily condemned as an ideological machination of imperial governance. But the community's approach to education should be considered in light of cultural conceptions and worldviews entwined with it. Nikkei educators and parents tended to presume their language embodied virtues and values they believed to be universal. Therefore, learning was naturally ethical and didactic. Language, in other words, was more than a means for communication. It was a hallowed repository of cultural capitals of the homeland, to be bequeathed to descendants during formative stages of their personhood and character.

To be sure, since the 1920s, as migrants increasingly considered Canada as the country of their permanent residence rather than a temporary job site, the dominant view of the community regarded Canadian public schools as the primary educational institutions for Canadian-born Nisei (second generation). Language schools only provided supplementary learnings, but in so doing, they were to nurture students' growth into good Canadian citizens. That is, language schools were intended to bolster Nisei's Canadianization. Issei parents were anxious about the future of their children in Canada, and whether or not they would prevail against racist exclusion loomed large in community discussions.[8] Nisei's performance in Canadian schools served as a barometer for contemplating their future prospects. Indeed, with their diligence and work ethic, many Nisei excelled in their studies and showed they had the stuff to succeed in Canadian society.



Figure 7. Students enjoying ice cream with Sato-sensei and another teacher during a picnic outing, ca. 1920s. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.220

Yet parents and teachers insisted on Japanese values. An essay titled "Things We Want to Nurture in the Nisei" (*Kongo dainisei ni kanyō shitai mono*), featured in the newsletter's December 1936 issue, expounds on four cardinal "Japanese" virtues: 1) indomitable spirit (*futō no seishin*), 2) the heart of pride and self-respect (*hokori no kokoro*), 3) the spirit of reverence and gratitude (*kei/uyamai no seishin, kan'on no seishin*), and 4) the spirit of service (*hōshi no seishin*). Emphasised by teachers of the language school, these virtues were understood to empower the Nisei to overcome exclusion and facilitate their integration into Canadian society.

This mentality is reflected in the following composition written by Kikuchi Toshio, a student at Japanese Language School in New Westminster. His piece was featured in July 31, 1934 issue of Vancouver's Nikkei newspaper, Tairiku Nippō (Continental Daily News).

My Thoughts on the Future as a Nisei: Where are We Headed?

Born in Canada in British territory, I am Nisei and hence differ from my parents. Though I am a Nisei myself, I feel that Nisei in general suffer from a certain lack, namely of Japanese learning [Nihon-gaku]. Nisei tends to be fluent in English but many of them are clueless when it comes to Japanese learning. Therefore, they are looked down upon by the Issei.

Some Nisei say "I'm a Canadian [kanada-jin] so there is no need for me to take up Japanese learning." Of course, as Canadians we should be granted the right to vote but that is not the case. In newspapers I often read about the uncertain future of the Nisei. If we go around thinking like *hakujin* [whites] kids, we will doubtless end up without jobs [due to discrimination in employment]. Now, therefore, we must rid ourselves of the shortcomings of Japanese and embrace their merits and strengths. That is, we ought to draw on Japanese strengths as well as *hakujin's* and devote ourselves to our occupations. We must pursue our paths while never forgetting the homeland. Unlike us, the Issei could not speak English well thus could not take part

8. *Gakkō katei tsūshin, vol. 35* (Dec. 1938), 2. This is the school's prewar newsletter. I referenced the copies in Tsutae and Hanako Sato Fonds housed in the Nikkei National Museum.

> in *hakujin* society. But our era is on the horizon. We are fluent in English and Japanese. The only thing we lack is the spirit of effort (*doryoku*).
>
> With the beautiful Japanese spirit of effort, I am determined to drive myself into *hakujin* society. I will prevail over any obstacle along the way by wringing every ounce of effort from my heart and blood. We are the foundation for the Sansei [the third generation]. If we fall now the fate of the Sansei would be jeopardised. I will be a fine Canadian no *hakujin* can laugh at.

Toshio's piece alludes to a complex dynamic within the community. Many Nisei apparently resisted or rejected Japanese learning, imposed as it was by their parents. But his writing conveys a visceral sense of yearning for a full membership in the Canadian nation, juxtaposing the reality of systemic exclusion and marginalization. Lacking political representation and having employment prospects diminished by racial discrimination, Toshio believed there was no way for the Nisei to prosper in Canada if they simply went about their lives like white youths. For Toshio, this was not merely a matter of Nisei's individual lives; rather, the fate of the community rested on their shoulders. The Nisei, he believed, bore the duty to lift the community from marginality. Fortifying his willpower with Japanese spirit, Toshio was determined never to give up in his pursuit of becoming a "fine Canadian" (*rippa na kanada-jin*).

No doubt, Toshio's attitude was a result of his socialization and upbringing. His was the sort of argument the Issei wanted to hear from the Nisei. It also reminisces the concept of the nation as a "melting-pot," which combined and reduced attributes of numerous groups to forge a unified peoplehood. All the same, this kind of hybrid imagining of the nation was not entirely a diasporic construct. Japanese statesmen, too, admonished the Nisei to commit to their country, not Japan.

As former Minister of Colonial Affairs and governor of Tokyo Nagata Hidejirō (1876-1943) told Sato, education of Nisei must focus on their growth into "good Canadians" (*zenryō naru kanada-jin*).[9] He used a parable of marriage within the patriarchal mores of Japanese modernity to argue that, like a wife who commits herself to the prosperity of her husband's family, the Nisei must devote themselves to their adoptive nation. The wife's donning of a white kimono during the wedding symbolized her "death" as a member of her natal family. Likewise, the Nisei must have no question about their allegiance. Yet, he argued for the importance of nurturing the Nisei with Japanese morality, for that was the basis for the progress of the Japanese nation (*nihon minzoku no hatten*). Here, Nagata's nationalism is not exclusive or antagonistic to Canada. He placed the Nisei in the body politic of the Canadian state, just as he regarded them members of the Japanese ethnic community extending across the Pacific. Nisei's Japaneseness, vitalized by moralistic education, boosted their capacity to contribute to both.

Indeed, a sense of dual belonging was the orthodox way the community understood and situated itself in Canada, and this was related to the notion that it occupied a space linked with the British empire, Japan's ally in the contentious arena of global politics.

9. On this, see texts concerning Nisei's education in Canada compiled in 1926 and 1927 by Canadian Japanese Association. Copies of these texts are found in Yasutaro Yamaga Fonds in UBC library's Rare Books and Special Collections. For inventory of materials in Yasutaro Yamaga Fonds, see http://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/index.php/yasutaro-yamaga-fonds.



Figure 9. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.223. This image is a scan of Tsutae's photo album, housed today in Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto. The Japanese caption says, "jubilation of the opening day, look at the soaring flag!"

The hybrid identity was not only debated or discussed but also enacted in public spaces. Taken on the day of the opening ceremony of the 1928 school building, the photograph below shows the Rising Sun beside Red Ensign which was the Canadian flag at the time, draped over the main entrance while the Union Jack flies above on the flagpole. The flags befit an institution dedicated to the transmission of Japanese language and culture to Canadian-born children to facilitate their growth as good Canadians. The flags were also dramatically displayed during graduation ceremonies at the school as well as communal events and gatherings.

The last photo shows a large crowd of people in the front yard of the school, gathered for an event involving a speech or discussion. Participants are predominantly men in formal attire. Possibly, this was an assembly of the Canadian Japanese Association (*Kanada Nihonjinkai)* an influential association of elite men that coordinated and organized communal affairs.[10]

10. For an English account of activities of this association in the prewar era, see Adachi, 123-27.

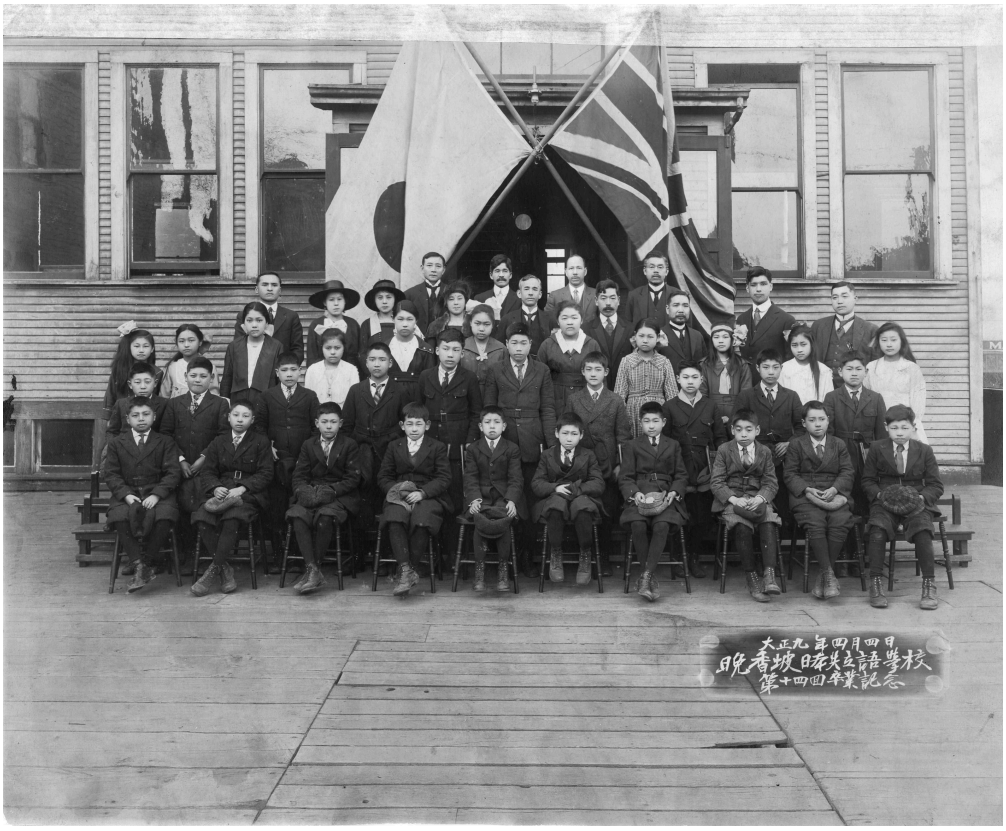


Figure 10. A class of 1920 photo, taken in front of the old school at 439 Alexander Street. Ken and Rose Kutsukake Collection, NNM 1994.70.32



Figure 11. Here's a photo of a larger grad class, likely from the mid or late 1920s but before 1928. Yataro Arikado Collection, NNM 2010.31.26



Figure 12. Yataro Arikado Collection, NNM 2010.31.15

The school served as a forum for associational lives of the community. The new building included the Japanese Hall used by community groups to hold various events and assemblies. Below is a 1940 photograph of the fifth annual convention of the Japanese Canadian Citizens League, a Nisei group that lobbied Ottawa to grant them full civil rights.



Figure 13. Miki Family Fonds, NNM 1994.64.11.4

The school was also the venue for monthly and annual meetings of Japanese Women's Association (Nippon Fujinkai). Here is a photo from the association's tenth anniversary event, held in 1918 at the language school.[11]



Figure 14. Yataro Arikado Collection, NNM 2010.31.28

A dramatic display of prewar Japanese-Canadian identity was occasioned by the Royal Tour of Canada by King Gorge and Queen Elizabeth in 1939. Japanese Canadians in the Fraser Valley set up an arch in New Westminster

11. According to Nakayama Jinshirō, the Japanese Women's Association was originally established in Vancouver in 1904. However, 1908 was an watershed for the association, which passed legislations including a stipulation to use the school for its meetings and assemblies. Anniversary here likely refers to the years passed since then. Nakayama Jinshirō, *Kanada dōhō hatten taikan*, zen [Encyclopedia of the Progress of Japanese in Canada] (1921), 1691-92, in Sasaki Toshiji and Tsuneharu Gonnami, eds. *Kanada iminshi shiryō, vol. 8*. Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2000. For a brief account of Japanese Women's Associations in prewar Canada, see my "Associational Lives of Women in Prewar Japanese-Canadian Community" essay.

to welcome the sovereigns. This followed from the earlier practice of erecting arches during royal visits both from Japan and Britain.



Figure 15. View of gate and decorations at the foot of Granville Street in honor of visit of Prince Fushimi to Vancouver in 1907. Source: University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books are Special Collections, Japanese Canadian Research Collection, JCPC_38_001.

In 1939, however, girls and women dressed in Japanese kimono and filled a section of the city's street, waiting for the sovereign couple. *Tairiku Nippō* reported on the extraordinary scene in New Westminster in its June 3rd issue. In Vancouver, Nikkei people organized a reception in a similar style as they mingled with other Canadians. Rows of girls and young women in kimono waved the Union Jack as the Royal entourage came their way.



Figure 16. Nishihata Family Collection, NNM 2010.80.2.67.



Figure 17. Girls waiting for the King and Queen outside train station at Main Street and Terminal Avenue in Vancouver. Morishita Family Collection, NNM 2011.79.4.1.3.111.



Figure 18. Nishihata Family Collection, NNM 2010.80.2.79

They also gathered at the school.



Figure 19. Nishihata Family Collection, NNM 2010.80.2.130

Rather than waiting passively to see the King and Queen, the community took part in the great public spectacle, parading the streets with special floats. The photo of the float bearing the banner "Japanese Community" was taken in front of the Tamura building, situated at the corner of Powell and Dunlevy Streets in the heart of Vancouver's Nikkei neighbourhood, also known as "Japan town." On the spectacular float decorated with the Crown, a Nikkei girl and boy impersonated the Royal couple. *Sakura* (cherry blossoms), Shinto *torii* (arches), and girls in kimono symbolized the heritage of the community.

A photo from the back indicates the dedication of the *torii* to the King and Queen, thus engraved with letters G and E.



Figure 20. Shigetaka (Steve) Sasaki Family Fonds, NNM 2011.64.3.1

Deployment of kimono and girls was strategically planned and coordinated by the Canadian Japanese Association in liaison with the Mothers and Sisters Association of the Alexander Street school. The community had always faced harsh discrimination and exclusion by mainstream Canadians, but it confronted heightening animosity in the 1930s fueled by Japan's invasion of China and its relentless fascist colonial pursuits. Canadian public opinion linked and conflated the Japanese state and military with Canadian citizens and residents of Japanese heritage, therefore, anxiety toward Japan in global politics was directed toward Nikkei residents. The community tried to facilitate mutual understanding but with little success, and Japan's increasing alienation from the international community didn't help. Anti-Japanese politicians incited fear among the mass and argued for the "inassimilability" of persons with Japanese blood in their veins. In such a context, young women in kimono must have been perfect exemplars of Japan's cultural refinement, safe and benign as well as fitting with the romanticized imaginings of Japanese aesthetics.



Figure 21. Shigetaka (Steve) Sasaki Family Fonds, NNM 2011.64.3.32



Figure 22. Shigetaka (Steve) Sasaki Family Fonds, NNM 2011.64.3.31

Rupture in Identity

After Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the thrust of exclusion prevailed. Nikkei people were uprooted from their homes and communities as the government designated a hundred-mile corridor along the coast as a "protected area" where they could not remain or enter. They were confined in internment in the name of "national security," then dispersed across the country as BC politicians adamantly opposed their return to the coast even

after the war ended. Homes, businesses, and other properties they left behind were not only stolen and vandalized but also forcibly sold and liquidated by the state.

Ramifications of these events were far-reaching. In the postwar era, Nisei intelligentsia claimed that prewar language education had stifled the Nisei from becoming authentic Canadians.[12] Partly this has to do with a generation gap one may observe in any diasporic community, as well as the general ideological force of assimilation. For this community, however, postwar ambivalence toward Japaneseness was also a response to political violence on the grounds of race. With the trauma of the 1940s, Japanese Canadians felt compelled to dissociate themselves from cultural baggage from Japan and avoid anything that set them apart from other Canadians, for their *difference* stirred agitation of the mainstream and hindered their membership in the Canadian nation.

Multiculturalism in Canada emerged in the aftermaths of the merciless denial of Japanese-Canadian rights. Tolerance, inclusion, and respect for difference are among the core tenets of Canadian multiculturalism, which is also couched upon the logic of the equality of the individual regardless of one's racial, religious, cultural, or social backgrounds. Looking back to prewar times, Canada was a society organized by the inverse of these values.[13] Confined to the fringes of Canadian society, Japanese Canadians empowered themselves with Japanese culture and values and claimed their space in what they regarded as the multi-nations-state of Canada.

How do our nationalisms and ideas about the nation influence the way we understand and tell Japanese-Canadian history? What do Nikkei historical experiences tell us about the complexity of the past and the evolving terrains of Canada's diverse and discriminatory society?

12. See Adachi, 127-28.
13. This statement borrows from Mary Elizabeth Berry's analysis of the public sphere in prewar Japan in her article, "Public Life in Authoritarian Japan," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 137.

Associational Lives of Women in the Prewar Japanese-Canadian Community

Eiji Okawa | University of Victoria



Browse the UBC Open Collections Japanese-Canadian Photograph Collection here.

Japanese-Canadian history is most often discussed in terms of mistreatment of the minority by the Canadian state and society. Indeed, Japanese immigrants and their children were subject to explicit and legal forms of racist marginalization and exclusion throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 brought Canada's anti-Japanese policies to unprecedented heights. The government established what it called the "protected area" along the Pacific coast to expel from it all "persons of the Japanese race" irrespective of their citizenship status. What followed were internment, forced sale of properties they had to leave behind, as well as their dispersal east of the Rockies. Nearly 4,000 Japanese Canadians were even exiled to war-torn Japan, a country many of them, born and raised in Canada, had never seen. The community was destroyed and their rights were blatantly violated in this shameful chapter of Canadian history.[1]

1. For works on Japanese-Canadian history with a focus on racist politics and wartime policies, see Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981); Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); Roy, *The Triumph of Citizenship: The Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941-67* (Vancouver: UBC press, 2007); and Roy, J. L. Granatsein, Masako Iino, and Hiroko Takamura, *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto press, 1990). Greg Robinson provides a comparative analysis of Canadian and American treatment of persons of Japanese heritage during the Second World War in his *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). For essays on Nikkei histories in Canada and America, see Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura, eds. *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans &*

Some of these historiographies were closely related to the postwar activist movement to seek formal apology and redress from the Canadian government for its wartime mistreatment of citizens of Japanese lineage. Redress, achieved in 1988 with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney offering a formal apology in the House of Commons, was a momentous event in Canadian history. For developments of the redress movement, see Roy Miki and Cassandra Kobayashi, *Justice in Our Time: The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991); Roy Miki, *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004).

Tatsuo Kage discusses the exile of Japanese Canadians in 1946 with rich oral historical accounts in his *Uprooted Again: Japanese Canadians Move to Japan after World War II*, trans. Kathleen Chisato Merken (Victoria, BC: Ti-Jean press, 2012, orig.pub. in Japanese Akashi shoten, 1998).

Oral historical approach has been immensely important in recent discussion of Japanese-Canadian history. For studies employing oral historical methods, see Pamela Sugiman, "Memories of Internment: Narrating Japanese Canadian Women's Life Stories," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, 29/3 (Summer 2004), 359-88; Sugiman, "'Life is Sweet': Vulnerability and Composure in the Wartime Narratives of Japanese Canadians," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études canadiennes*, 43/1 (Winter 2009), 186-218; and Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto press, 2012).

Important contributions to Japanese-Canadian history by community historians include Roy Ito, *We Went to War* (Stittsville, ON: Canada's Wings, 1984); Ito, *Stories of My People* (Hamilton, ON: S-20 and Nisei Veterans Association, 1994); and Masako Fukawa with Stanley Fukawa and Nikkei Fishermen's History Book Committee, *Spirit of the Nikkei Fleet: BC's Japanese Canadian Fishermen* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Pub., 2009).

The dispossession of Japanese Canadian is being comprehensively examined and analyzed by researchers of *Landscapes of Injustice*, a collaborative research project of which the author is a part as a postdoctoral researcher. Recent works by *Landscapes* researchers include Jordan Stanger-Ross and Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, "Suspect Properties: The Vancouver Origins of the Forced Sale of Japanese-Canadian-Owned Property, WWII," *Journal of Planning History* 15/4 (2016), 271-89; Stanger-Ross and Nicholas Blomley, "'My Land is Worth a Million Dollars': How Japanese Canadians Contested Their Dispossession in the 1940s," *Law and History Review* 35/3 (2017), 711-751; Eric M. Adams, Jordan Stanger-Ross, and Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, "Promises of Law: The Unlawful Dispossession of Japanese Canadians," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 54/3 (2017), 687-740; Stanger-Ross and Sugiman, eds., *Witness to Loss: Race, Culpability, and Memory in the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians* (Montreal & Kingston; London; Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017; and articles in the *Journal of American Ethnic History* special issue with Landscapes of Injustice forthcoming in summer of 2018. In addition to academic studies, *Landscapes* is developing teacher resources, museum exhibit, and public history as well as archival website to share research findings with public audiences. Witness to Loss also has a website providing compelling records of a Japanese Canadian man involved in the Canadian policy to dispossess people in his community. These are merely a selective sample of the wealth of works and literatures on Japanese Canadian history.

This history of injustice is vital to our society especially in the face of entrenched discrimination and inequality persisting to this day. However, in contrast to the prominence of the narrative of victimization in established historical accounts, the social history of the community tends to be overlooked. You don't have to know anything about a minority to understand they were oppressed, after all. But like any other community, Japanese Canadians have fascinating stories to tell, and these can be analyzed in their own right to enrich our engagements with history. Aiming to provoke interests in sociohistorical experiences of Japanese Canadians and records thereof, this essay

Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in association with University of Washington Press, 2005).

looks at the associational lives of several women in the Japanese-Canadian community during the early to mid-twentieth century.

O'Melia-san



Figure 1. Photo taken by author, March 2018.

O'Melia-san was a white Catholic Nun who dedicated much of her adult life to Japanese immigrants and their community. This is attested to by her grave, situated in the "East Asian" section of Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery, where graves of Nikkei persons as well as Chinese Canadians are clustered together.[2] O'Melia-san's tomb is surrounded by those of Japanese Canadians. It was her wish to be with them, and so when she died of heart-attack while giving a catechist lecture in 1939 she was buried there. Of course, a cemetery is a place of symbolic significance. Among the most grandiose Nikkei tombstones is a towering twelve-foot stupa, built in 1934 with funds raised by a Buddhist Youth Association. It is dedicated to migrants who died in Canada without any relative or family member to offer them ritual care. During the *Obon* festival of the dead in August, Japanese Canadians make homages to deceased members of their community. O'Melia-san is there, blended as she is into the ritual landscape of the community.

The Japanese inscription in the middle says "O'Melia-san's grave, built by Japanese volunteers." Beside her stone is Sister Antoinette McDonough's (d. 1985), built by "Japanese community and friends." These women belonged to Franciscan Sisters of Atonement and ran convents serving Japanese-Canadian communities in the prewar era.



Figure 2. Photo taken by author, March 2018.

Kathleen F. O'Melia was born in Norfolk, England in 1869.[3] She arrived in Vancouver in 1902. Soon, she began working with Japanese migrants. In 1928, she was ordained in the Sisters of Atonement, which purchased a building at Cordova and Dunlevy Street in Vancouver's Japanese neighbourhood, around Powell Street. That happened to be right next to Oppenheimer Park, where the famous Nikkei ballclub Vancouver Asahi put on great shows of tactical baseball against big-swinging players of local teams.

2. Nikkei means persons of Japanese lineage. In this essay, this term is used to refer to Nikkei persons in Canada, and is largely synonymous with Japanese Canadians.
3. For studies of O'Melia-san, see Jacqueline Gresko, "O'Melia San and the Catholic Japanese Mission, Vancouver, B.C.," *Historical Studies* 75 (2009): 83-100; Deborah Rink, Spirited Women: A History of Catholic Sisters in British Columbia (Vancouver: Sisters' Association Archdiocese of Vancouver, 2000), 216-20.

As a Franciscan nun, her formal name was Sister Mary Stella, but Japanese Canadians continued to call her O'Melia-san. Earnest in her religious calling, she proselytized her faith to migrants but also offered services for the community, including English classes, daycare, and kindergarten. These catered to working mothers. It is said that about 275 children attended her kindergarten and daycare in the first year.[4] *The Bulletin Geppō*, Jul. 1996, 12.



Figure 3. A group photo in front of Catholic Japanese Mission on Dunlevy Street in Vancouver, taken ca. 1930. O'Melia-san is standing in the middle of back row. Tasaka Family Collection, NNM 2011.83.1.5.

Sister Antoinette McDonough, who worked alongside O'Melia-san in the 30s, writes of her as follows:

She encouraged and inspired us with her great love and zeal for the Japanese people. Sister visited the sick in their homes and hospitals, she taught Religion and English, went begging, acted as interpreter and any other work that needed doing. Nothing was too much for her. I was fortunate to be her companion almost daily on her visits to wherever duty called, and so my first year in Vancouver passed very quickly and I hope not without catching some of Sister Mary Stella's charisma.[5]

In addition to the "Sister's Place" on Cordova Street, O'Melia-san opened another convent in Steveston, a fishing village south of Vancouver home to many fishers who came to Canada from Mio village in Wakayama prefecture. With Sister Antoinette, O'Melia-san walked door to door in Steveston to let women know about the daycare services they were offering. By 1934, there were sixty babies in the nursery and eighty children attending Sunday School.[6] Many women working in canneries could leave their toddlers with O'Melia-san rather than carrying them on their backs as they toiled on the production lines earning income for their families. O'Melia-san learned to speak Japanese with Wakayama dialect just like the women around her did.



Figure 4. Japanese women in a Steveston cannery working with babies on their backs in 1913. Photograph by F. Dundas Todd. Vancouver Public Library 2071.

The Catholic Sisters' involvement with the community continued after O'Melia-san's death and into the internment era. When the removal of Nikkei people from the coast was announced early in 1942, Friars of the Franciscan order negotiated with the mayor of Greenwood in the interior to set up residential quarters for internment.[7] That is why many people from Steveston went to Greenwood, and Sisters moved with the community. Some rode on the same trains carrying people away from their homes in a seventeen-hour ride, in which internees, including mothers and infants, were prohibited from leaving their cars. Sisters did what they could to help along the way. Some nuns had gone to Greenwood ahead to help set up the camp and welcomed the arrival of people from Steveston. As Nikkei children were not permitted to attend public schools, Sisters opened a school and kindergarten and provided care and education for children and adolescents. They taught

4. Lurana Kikko Tasaka, "An Unforgettable Past—A Time to Remember—With Gratitude,"
5. Cited in Rink, 219.
6. Gresko, 94.
7. Rink, 220-25.

English grammar, high school courses, and even business and piano. As a result, students did not suffer from a lack of education and went on to succeed in various careers in mainstream Canadian society in the postwar era.



Figure 5. Nikkei youths, women, and men, along with Catholic Sisters in Greenwood. This was a farewell party for people exiled to Japan in 1946. Tasaka Family Collection, NNM 2011.83.1.43



Figure 6. Children, youths, and women and men pose on snow for a photo with Sisters and Priests in Greenwood, December 1946. Tasaka Family Collection, NNM 2011.83.1.52

Women's Associations

The Japanese Women's Association (Nippon Fujinkai) was founded in Vancouver in 1904, seventeen years after the arrival of first known Japanese woman in Canada and had over 170 members by 1907.[8] With the growth and diversification of Nikkei communities and enclaves, there were at least nine Japanese Women's Associations in British Columbia by 1921. The largest of these were the Japanese Women's Association, the Buddhist Women's

8. My source on the history of women's associations is Nakayama Jinshirō, *Kanada dōhō hatten taikan, zen [Encyclopedia of the Progress of Japanese in Canada]* (1921), 1683-1702, in Sasaki Toshiji and Tsuneharu Gonnami, eds. Kanada iminshi shiryō, vol. 8. Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2000

Association (Bukkyō Fujinkai), and the Christian Women's Association (Kirisuto Fujinkai). Haney, Steveston, Fraser Mills, Ocean Falls, New Westminster, and Swanson Bay were all homes of regional women's associations. Members of these associations worked tirelessly to support immigrants and their community. Aspiring for public good, they led charity campaigns and raised funds for hospitals as well as schools and kindergartens. They also sent relief and aid to Japan, extending support to those affected by natural disasters as well as bereaved members of soldiers who lost their lives in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). They also held discussions on various topics over afternoon teas, at times with members of white women's associations.



Figure 7. Yataro Arikado Collection, NNM 2010.31.17

A photo of Japanese Women's Association from ca. 1910 **[Figure 7]** shows women wearing fine dresses and fancy hats with flowers, suggesting that prominent women took part in this association.

Children also typically appear in photographs of Women's associations, such as the one taken in front of Japanese Buddhist Church in Vancouver in 1920, found in UBC library's Japanese Canadian Photograph Collection **[Figure 8]**. The women in this photo were most likely members of the Buddhist Women's Association, who gathered with some of their children at the church for their meetings and events.



Figure 8. UBC Library Rare Books and Special Collections, Japanese Canadian Research Collection, JCPC 39.001

Women's Associations also organized events for special and ceremonial occasions such as the emperor's birthday, receptions for dignitaries from Japan, and other celebrations. Below is a photo from a *kanreki* celebration, or sixtieth birthday of members of the Buddhist Women's Association, taken in Vancouver in 1939. They also sponsored floats paraded during festivals.



Figure 9. Genzaburo and Kimiko Nakamura Family Collection, NNM 2012.10.1.5.14

Unfortunately, there is paucity of records on women's associations. What's available are accounts about them written by men rather than records produced by women themselves. Probably the most comprehensive of such accounts are found in Nakayama Jinshirō's 2,036-page magnum opus on the immigrant community, *Kanada dōhō hatten taikan*, published in 1921.[9] Nakayama chronicles meetings of the associations as well as their major projects and achievements. For instance, in 1909, Japanese Women's Associations raised over $1,000 for Vancouver City Hospital, and cleared outstanding medical bills that migrant patients couldn't pay themselves. In 1919, three Japanese women's associations contributed about $5,000 in a public charity campaign for the same hospital. Such charitable works were indispensable as government funding for basic medical care was insufficient. During WWI, immigrant men managed to work around a ban from serving in the Canadian military and formed a voluntary corps that fought

9. Ibid.

courageously alongside the Allies in Europe. To support their efforts, the Japanese women's association in Haney worked with the Canadian Red Cross and sent special care packets consisting of bandages, pajamas, socks, and undergarments for wounded soldiers.



Figure 10. Nishihata Family Collection, NNM 2010.80.2.78

As Nakayama puts it, women empowered the community to transition from a collective of temporary *dekasegi* workers to permanent settlers, and women's associations made great contributions to the progress of Japanese peoples on the frontier land. But these associations were highly institutionalized. Japanese Women's Association, for instance, had a president and ten women sitting on board for three-month terms. It even had an anthem sung during meetings. Women's associations, then, represent a formalized mode of women's network practices. Are there records that speak to more informal associational practices among women and their cohorts?

Hanako's Diary

Hanako Sato (née Awaka) taught at the Vancouver Japanese Language School on Alexander Street from the 1921 to 1966, though she farmed in Alberta for about a decade after the school was shuttered by the government in December 1941. Together with her husband Tsutae, she devoted her life to the education of Canadian-born Nisei (second generation). Two years into her professional career as a school teacher in Tokyo, at age twenty, Hanako accepted a job offer from the Alexander Street school and decided to move to Canada. The offer included a marriage arrangement with Tsutae who was just promoted to principal. She knew him as teacher of her younger brothers.



Figure 11. Hanako and Tsutae Sato in 1921. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.472

Hanako's heart pounded in excitement at the idea of moving abroad. But she was concerned about her beloved and widowed mother whose approval she sought. The mother needed a night to think. After a sleepless night of deep reflection, the mother told Hanako she trusted her to make her own decisions. Then she went to Suitengū shrine in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, to get her daughter a special protective amulet as her memento. The amulet was presented to the altar of deceased father, then handed to Hanako the day before her departure. She held it dearly for the rest of her life. On May 12th, 1921, merely a month after first hearing about the offer, Hanako boarded *SS Arizona* in Yokohama. Standing on the vessel's deck, she saw and heard her students shouting and cheering from the wharf, "Awaka-sensei!" again and again. The mother did not come, for, being raised in a soldier's household, she found it shameful to shed tears in public. Clasping the amulet tightly, Hanako bid farewell to Japan and set sail for Canada.[10]

Hanako's life in prewar Vancouver overlapped with the "golden age" of their school. With the growth of the

10. Tsutae and Hanako Sato, *Nikkei Kanada-jin no nihongo kyōiku: zoku kodomo to tomoni gojūnen* (Tokyo: Nichibou shuppansha, 1976), 201-207.

community, student enrolment increased from about fifty in 1909 to roughly a thousand by 1941, becoming among the largest Japanese-language school in North America.[11]

However, Japanese language schools were often targeted by anti-Japanese politicians who made their careers by pitching exclusionary campaigns, taking advantage of the fact that the unpopular minority lacked political representation. A crisis came in January 1941 when the provincial government initiated a legal measure imposing restrictions on foreign language schools. To make matters worse, City of Vancouver alderman Halford Wilson launched a movement to close Japanese language schools. He alleged the schools were not only backed by the Japanese state and prevented children from Canadianizing but also posed health threats to students.[12]

City Council established a Special Committee and summoned Tsutae for interrogation. Facing Wilson, Tsutae dismissed links with the Japanese government and explained the importance of the school for the community, stressing, as he always had, that the mandate of his school was to raise children into good citizens of Canada.

Wilson's move lost momentum. But the authorities demanded the schools adopt new textbooks, as the ones in use were too imperialistic. This prompted Tsutae to go to Japan to gather materials for textbook compilation, which would have been fine were it not for the escalation of tension between Japan and the US in the summer of 1941, just days after Tsutae's departure. As a result, ships from Japan were prohibited from entering North American ports. Tsutae's return became uncertain, all the while the contending states appeared locked on a collision course. Eventually, Tsutae returned to Vancouver aboard *Hikawa Maru* just before Japan and Canada entered war.



Figure 12. Hanako's diary, Tsutae and Hanako Sato Fonds, NNM 1996.170.3.4a.1.2.1

Hanako's diary begins July 19th, the day Tsutae left for Japan. She missed him dearly and she dreaded nothing more than the spectre of separation by the imminent hostilities she sensed in the air. Everyday she followed the news, hoping to see the lifting of the ban of ships from Japan. She wrote and telegrammed him. Board members of the school urged him to return as soon as he possibly could. She called him as well, speaking to him briefly in English through an operator in San Francisco. The choppy phone line cut their conversation when he uttered, "If I can't go…"

Amidst disconcerting circumstances, Hanako was comforted by visitors who came to see her daily. People in the community did what they could to support her. Not only did they call her all the time and dropped by her place with gifts and treats, they also sent their girls to stay with her so she did not have to spend nights alone. Below are brief excerpts from her diary (translated by the author):

Jul 19

The house is now empty and lonesome. If I stayed still, sadness overwhelms me. So I found places to clean here and there, and kept myself busy. At night, I worked on the accounting book, but my mind wasn't clear. So I went to bed. I was in bed by 11. I couldn't sleep. Tsutae-san kept on

11. Tsutae Sato, ed. Bankūbā nihon kyōritsu gogakkō enkakushi, History of Japanese Language School (Vancouver: Bankūbā nihon kyōritsu gogakkō ijikai, 1954), 91-96.
12. Sato, 193-218; Tsutae and Hanako Sato fonds, NNM 1996.170.1.6.1/1.

coming up on my mind. I wonder if the ship reached the Pacific and is now rolling in big waves. I pray for a safe voyage. The thought of spending the next two months alone makes me anxious.

Jul 20

Ochiai's mother called. She said to me, "The night when you send off [your husband] *is very sad and lonesome. Last night, I wanted to send Kayo to your place but couldn't because of a little incident on our end. I will send her along today in the afternoon."*

Just past two, Kayo-san came with some gladiolus. She asked if there was anything she could help me with, so I asked her to write names on pay envelopes. It turned out that the incident yesterday had to do with canned grapefruits that she and her family ate. Kayo's father became sick from it. Kayo-san was not affected too badly, but her father, with his poor health, vomited and suffered badly. When I hear a story like this I can't help but to hope that Tsutae-san would not eat foul food. I was going to ask Kayo-san to have some dinner, but her stomach is still not well. So she went home by evening.

Satō Matsue-san and Shizu-chan called me, too. They said, "I had no idea sensei went back. Had I known, I would have gone to the port to see him off…" Shizu-chan said she'd love to come by for a visit on Sunday.

Jul 21

When I got home, your letter was in the mailbox. I read it again and again. It's only been three days since you left, but it feels like we haven't seen each other in eternity. You are concerned about me. As you tell me, Tsutae-san, I won't push myself too hard. I need to stay healthy and take care of the house and school for fifty days during your absence. You are concerned about me being alone at night. But starting tonight, Sadako and Kinuko, Tsuji's children, will be staying with me at night. When I spoke with Mrs. Tsuji about your trip, she said that her children are free and can help me with anything I might need. Aoki-san, too, was concerned about me being alone. She spoke with Tsuji-san about that, and they decided to get the two of them—Sadako and Kinuko—to come and stay with me.

Michiko from Aoki-san's stayed with me for dinner and left at around 9:30. We had dinner together. At around 10, Sadako and Kinuko came over with pajamas. Mrs. Tsuji said that Iwata-san nowadays begins work around 7 in the morning so Sadako has to go home at 6:30. Therefore, we went to bed right away. It was odd for me to go to bed when it was still not completely dark. But I was so relieved to have someone stay at the house with me.

July 22 (Tues) Sunny

The alarm went off at 6:30. Sadako and Kinuko went home. I could have gone back to bed, but no, I got up. Just when I was ironing some clothes, Michiko came over. "Did you come alone?" I asked. "Mama dropped me off at Victoria [drive]" She stayed until noon. She played with dolls, then went outside in the back yard to pick flowers. She also danced there. We chitchatted. Thanks to her, I didn't feel lonely at all…

After dinner, Tanaka Kiyoko-san phoned. She said, "I heard sensei went to Japan. It must be lonely without him. We will come over now to keep you company." Soon she came with Mieko. They brought some toffy candies and stayed until about nine in the evening. I'm very grateful that everyone is concerned about me, and treating me kindly.

In the evening, I chatted with Mrs. Yakovich on the veranda.

"Where did your husband go?"

"To Japan."

"To Japan? German submarines are sinking ships with torpedoes these days, you know. Isn't it dangerous for him to be going to Japan now?"

"I think the Pacific is safer, relatively speaking."

"Why didn't you go too? Are you afraid, because Japan is fighting war?"

"…."

Tsuji-san's children came around nine. They looked at photographs, and we talked. After about an hour, we went to bed.

Community and Associational Practices



Figure 13. Hanako and children enjoying themselves during an outing ca. 1920s. Perhaps this was a school picnic. Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, NNM 2010.23.2.4.713

These are snippets of associational practices of Nikkei women in the prewar community in the Lower Mainland. What comes to the fore is the diversity of their positions and roles as well as modes of interactions shaping communal structures and historical experiences. O'Melia-san and her fellow Sisters remind us that the community was not isolated from mainstream society. These white women engaged and contributed to the community and helped to embed immigrant lives into the fabric of the broader societal environment. Members of women's associations networked extensively among themselves and with other organizations such as ubiquitous Prefectural

Associations (kenjinkai), white women's associations, and hospitals. They organized themselves to address social issues and to direct the resources of the community toward common public good.

Rather than being confined to homes and matters on the domestic front, women were a key force in the community's public life. All the same, Hanako's diary suggests that homes could be loci of important social interactions. Hanako, to be sure, was a prominent public figure, but her relational practices extended beyond her professional roles as an educator. Her diary is filled with emotions and affects lacking in more formalized records, offering glimpses of rich human experiences as well as robust networks helping Hanako navigate uncertain times.

Social networks cultivated and sustained by these women were integral to the Nikkei community that once thrived in coastal Canada. Indeed, the community was a dynamic complex of associational practices like the ones touched on above. Records from the past speaking to actions and interactions of women in the community are numerous and diverse. Paying attention to their voices, we can gain fuller understandings of the history of Canada's diverse society as well as Japanese immigrant experiences.

Sex Workers, Waitresses, and Wives: The Disciplining of Women's Bodies in the Tairiku Nippo (1908-1920)

Ayaka Yoshimizu | University of British Columbia[1]



Browse the UBC Open Collections Tairiku Nippō *digital archive here.*

In Japanese migrant communities in early twentieth century North America, Japanese-language newspapers were an important source of information and knowledge, providing international and local news, including telegraph news from Japan and other parts of the world, stories of Japanese communities in North America, and local issues that affected the lives and work of the immigrant population. It was also a provider of entertainment, a promoter of community businesses, and a site of social interaction, having large sections devoted to advertisements of Japanese-owned businesses, reviews, gossip, and literary works. In fact, Japanese language newspapers were a site of amateur literary practice for migrants who had limited access to mainstream publications due to cultural and linguistic differences and a lack of resources. Stories contributed by migrant writers were featured in serialized columns called *tsuzuki-mono*, following a common literary practice in Meiji Japan.

What was unique about the Japanese migrant community in North America at the turn of the 20th century was that it consisted disproportionally of a large group of bachelor male labourers and a much smaller group of women. This resulted in the prominent presence of women working as restaurant waitresses, barmaids, and sex workers to serve the interests and needs of men, as well as a number of literary writings that explored the themes of male labourers' romances with Japanese women in the nighttime entertainment businesses, including the sex trade.[2] Sometimes "fallen women" themselves were protagonists of stories that were sympathetic to their situations.

1. I would like to acknowledge that this essay is built on my past collaborative work with Julia Aoki. We presented a more elaborated discussion on Shohei Osada's column series "Exploration of Devil Caves" at 2015 BC Studies Conference (Richmond, BC).
2. Satae Shinoda, "Nikkei Amerika bungaku no rekishi," *American Review* 14 (1980), 67. For an in-depth study of the history of Japanese sex workers and barmaids in North America from this period, see Kazuhiro Oharazeki, *Japanese Prostitutes in the North American West, 1887-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

For example, Shoson Nagahara, a young, male novelist from Yamaguchi Prefecture, wrote the novella "*Osasto-san*" between 1925 and 1926 for *Rafu Shimpo*, a daily newspaper based in Los Angeles. The story features Osato, who migrated to the United States to join her husband only to realize that he is jobless and frequents gambling places. She ends up in the red light district of Little Tokyo, working as a barmaid, and later manages her own bar.[3] Another example would be the short story entitled "*Kantsu*" (adultery), which was published in April 1911 in Seattle's *Taihoku Nippō* and written by a presumably female author who published under the penname "Woman Aki." It narrates in the first-person voice a story of a married woman who gets involved with a young, kind man behind the back of her drunk and violent husband.


(2) 明治四十一年十一月十九日 大陸日報 第四百八號 (木曜日)

◎魔窟探檢記(一)

此ふ謂ふ魔窟とは專ら加奈陀の奥で同胞の面を汚しつゝ白粉臭ひ金で懷中を肥して居る醜業者の一團を指すのであつて、無論記事の間ふは女で飯を食て居る倅輩のみならず本尊の醜業婦並びに媒介者たちの動靜にも筆を及ぼす積りであるが、唯大体に於ては抑も渠等が如何ふして日本から渡たか、什麼方法で來知のタウンに踏込で行くか、其間に如何なる惡漢醜漢が采配を振て居るか、日本の惡漢と如何なる聯絡を附けて居るか、晩香坡ふ泊るとき如何ふ戰々恟々として世間の眼を忍んだか、勿論一概に醜業婦とは云ても晩香坡から行たのもあり、日本で誘拐されて得心づくで來た者もあり、

獵師の娘、百姓の娘其他事情を知らずに唯外國へ渡て勉強でも爲て見たいと云た樣な

女學生などが日本で人喰鬼に欺瞞され、遙々四千哩の波濤を越て來て見れば案に相違して、知らぬ他國で便りふ思た男から醜業を強られ逃るふは逃げられず、言語は通ぜず、二進も三進も行かなく成て遂に泣く〳〵

惡漢の犧牲ふ供された女が、今では心から墮落して立派な姐さん株となつて居る迹の實例もあるし、其他渠等日常の生活狀態は略々什んな樣子であるか、

警察當局は如何なる態度を以て渠等に臨で居るか、實際に於て醜業婦其ものが果して金の儲かるものか、其金は什ふ始末するか、また醜業婦たちが如何なる嗜好を有して平素の慰藉をば得つゝあるか、特ふ

晩市の所謂有力家の中ふ奥の醜漢赤鬼や青鬼共と聯絡して不義の泡沫錢をせしめた者が果して有るか什ふか、有るとしたら什麼事件に關係したか、吾人は有らゆる方面に渉て、適々吾が編輯室の机上には材料が山の如く積て居るので、徐々片端から渠等の罪惡を摘發して見やうと思ふ

其所でだ、斷つて置きたいのは、全体世間には能く皮相な上面な見解を前提ふして誤迷論を吐く倅輩があるもので、例へば此の醜業婦ふ就てもだ、洋の東西、時の古今何れを問はず、苟くも移民地の發展には必ず醜業婦が先驅となつて鑑て勞働者が其處へ集まり、斯て一方に生慾の犧牲となつて勞働者達を慰藉する機關?があるので、自から渠等勞働者も一時的の移住でなく茲ふ永住の地磐を重ね得られるのであり、隨つて大局の上から國民の發展を助ける事となるものだから、一の政策として醜業は寧ろ奬勵すべきものであると、現に日本で早川鐵治の如きは

有名な醜業奬勵者の一人なのであるが、此論は氣の毒ながら加奈陀の魔窟には適用の出來ない代物と言はざるを得ない、出來ない處か、渠等醜窟の存在は寧ろ

同胞の發展を阻害すること夥しいのである、讀者は此の魔窟探檢記に現はるゝ事實に依つて大ふ首肯して貰ひたいのである

◎小池總領事の轉任

曩ふ當沿岸米國實業家の日本觀光隊と共に天洋丸にて歸朝したる桑港總領事小池張造氏は曾て加藤高明氏の秘書官たりし事あれば多分今回も新駐英大使秘書官として倫敦に轉任するに至るべしと傳へられたるも忽ち否認せられたり然るに去る十三日附を以て右小池氏は愈々本天總領事ふ轉任を命ぜられたる旨同日外務省より桑港總領事館に公電ありたりと尚ほ後任者は華盛頓大使館三等書記官永井松造氏に決定したる由なるも同氏は一應日本に召還され更に歐洲を經て赴任すべしと言へば着任期日は未定也

◎排日寫眞問題

去る十二日の本紙上に於て當地各ソーミル就働同胞の注意を促し置きたる如く此程怪しげなる白人各ソーミルに就働せる同胞の寫眞を撮影せんと

Figure 1. "Exploration of Devil Caves, Ep. 1," *Tairiku Nippo*, 19 Nov. 1908. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, PN4919.V23 T3 1989.

However, newspapers published not only fictional novellas submitted by readers, but also tabloid news and neighbourhood gossip. Just like their counterparts in Japan, migrant newspapers targeted fellow commoners rather than elites, exposing private details of individuals' "immoral" behaviour, particularly that of women, and turning sex workers, barmaids, restaurant waitresses, and wives in extra-marital relationships into objects of criticism and condemnation.[4] In this way, Japanese language newspapers in early-20th century North America were micro-institutions that produced didactic discourses of "ideal" and "bad" womanhood for migrant communities by disciplining women's bodies according to the ideology of *ryōsai kenbō*, or in English, "good wives, wise mothers."

Such effort can be discerned in early issues of Vancouver's *Tairiku Nippō* (*Continental Daily News*), which ran between 1907-1941.[5] In one example, *Nippō* catalogued for its readers "Qualifications for the Ideal Wife Who Is Worth Her Husband's Praise" with sixteen bullet points in a small section written in the first person voice of a married man, delineating the following criteria: "My wife has a modest appearance"; "Her chastity is indubitable";

3. This story has been translated in English by Andrew Leong and included in *Lament in the Night* (Los Angeles: Kaya Press, 2011).
4. Satoru Saito notes that smaller-sized papers known as koshinbun emerged in the 1870s in Japan had a column called zappo (miscellaneous reports), which collected tabloid news and neighbourhood gossip and covered topics such as local crime, adultery, the pleasure quarters, and even domestic quarrels ("Newspaper serials in the late nineteenth century," *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* edited by Haruo Shirane et al., Cambridge University Press, 583-587).
5. Earlier issues of *Tairiku Nippō* typically consisted of six, or occasionally eight, pages and sold at five cents per issue, thirty-five cents per month, two dollars per six months, and three dollars and fifty cents per year. While its circulation is unknown, other writings on this publication suggest that it was quite influential among the Japanese-speaking (im)migrants in Vancouver (see Mitsuru Shinpo, Norio Tamura and Shigehiko Shiramizu, Kanada no Nihongo Shinbun, Tokyo: PMC Shppan, 1991). Nippo and Kanada Shinpo were the two largest, rival papers until the late 1910s when Shinpo "lost" its battle with Nippo and discontinued its operation (Shinpo et al., 48-56). Shinpo et al. argue that Nippo had an advantage over Shinpo, as it had a strong affiliation with the Vancouver Buddhist Temple and about 90% of the Japanese in Vancouver then were Buddhists, while Shinpo was Christian-leaning and supported by a small group of Christian readers (55-56).

"She is my only and best assistant"; "She sews the most comfortable clothes"; "She cooks delicious food"; "She educates children without flaws." Women were severely criticized for transgressing these standards.



Figure 2. "Qualifications for Ideal Wife Who Is Worth Her Husband's Praise," *Tairiku Nippo*, 27 Jan. 1912. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, PN4919.V23 T3 1989.

The most explicit and extensive example of the disciplinary effects of the *Nippō* on women's bodies was a series called "*Makutsu Tankenki*," or "Exploration of Devil Caves." Written by Shohei Osada, the series was published over seventy-one installments between November 19, 1908 and February 13, 1909 **[Figure 1]**. With detailed documentation of Japanese men and women, or "devils" and "bitches" respectively, involved in the sex trade in Canada at the turn of the twentieth century, the series attempted to identify "deviant" individuals, shame their behaviour, and ultimately eradicate prostitution among Japanese in Canada. The presence of Japanese "devil caves," referring to brothels, were perceived as a contributing factor to white people's racism against the Japanese. In fact, the series came out soon after the anti-Asian riots of 1907, which led to the Hayashi-Lemiueux Agreement in 1908 and the restriction on the number of Japanese migrants admitted to the country.

The Devil Caves series was one project commissioned by *Nippō*'s new owner, Yasushi Yamazaki, who took over a paper that was already nearly bankrupt after being founded as recently as June 1907.[6] *Issei* immigrant Katsuyoshi Morita testified that the previous owner "Mr. Kashiwa" had almost been forced to leave his business because the "article on public morals" he published resulted in "threats" by some forces and the operation became difficult to continue.[7] It seems that the new owner, Yamazaki, who had purchased the business in March 1908, did not submit to such pressure and rather responded to it by directly addressing issues of "immoral" activities in the community. In fact, Yamazaki had previously managed another daily newspaper called *Hokubei Jiji* based in Seattle. Around this time, Japanese sex workers, as well as brothel owners and managers, guards and pimps, were highly visible in downtown Seattle, and the profit made in the brothel businesses had a strong economic influence in the community. *Jiji* in turn was sponsored by the underground business, which was one of the main reasons why Yamazaki left the paper.[8] When he made a fresh start with *Nippō*, Yamazaki was likely as strongly determined to fight against prostitution as he was to sell copy.

The Devil Caves series exposed the identities of "devils and bitches" with their names, nicknames, and backgrounds, including their hometowns. Stories were written in a tabloid style with hyperbolic language, highlighting individuals' names and some dramatic phrases in big and bold fonts. Lurid descriptions of murder incidents, internal conflicts, and relationship scandals emphasized the violent, barbaric and "abnormal" character of the "bitches." Other stories were comical or entertaining, suggesting how foolish and nonsensical the brothels were. The series proved popular enough with readers for the first installments to be re-edited and reorganized alongside portraits of local sex workers into a book with a new title, *Kanada no Makutsu* [*Brothels in Canada*] published in 1910. A second column series consisting of 32 installments followed daily from March 1 to April 6, 1912.

6. Mitsuru Shinpo, Norio Tamura and Shigehiko Shiramizu, *Kanada no Nihongo Shinbun* (Tokyo: PMC Shppan, 1991), 49-50.
7. *Powell Street Monogatari*, Burnaby: Live Canada Publishing, 1988, 78. The exact content of this article is not elaborated in Morita's account.
8. *Kanada iminshi shiryo*, Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1995-2000, 115.

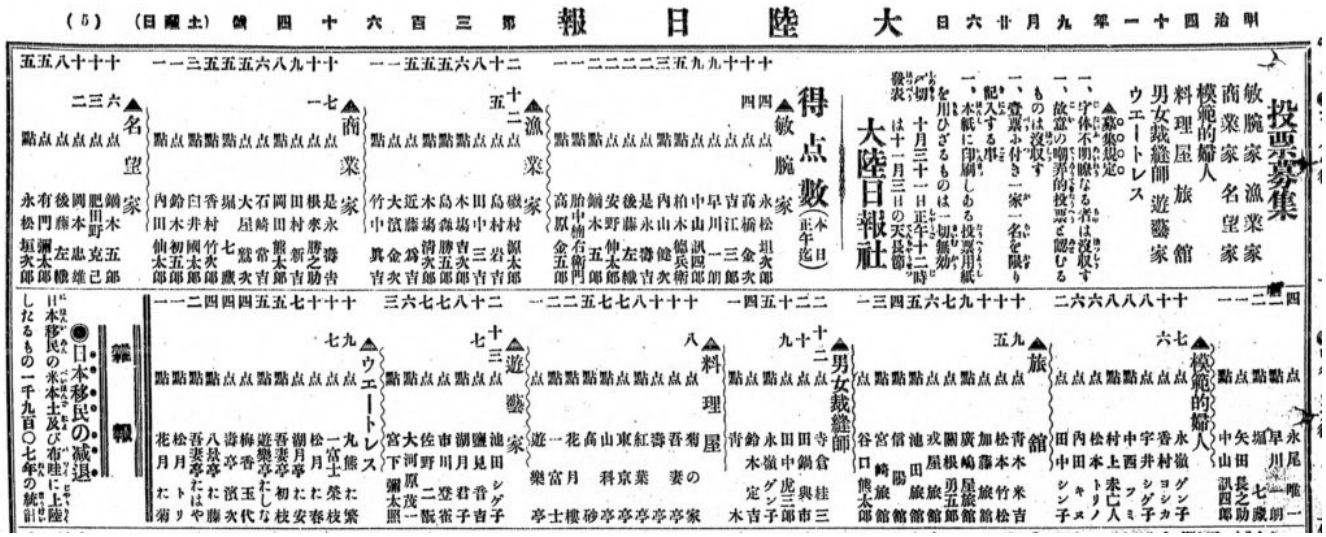


Figure 3. "Calls for Votes" and "Voting Results (as of noon today)," *Tairiku Nippo*, 26 Sep. 1908. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, PN4919.V23 T3 1989.

Outside of "Exploration of Devil Caves," *Nippō* routinely disciplined women by presenting examples contrasting deviant and ideal womanhood in news reports, gossip, and opinion pieces. The paper repeatedly punished women for committing adultery, running away with their lovers, overly exposing their skin, or even just laughing with their mouths open on the street. At the same time, *Nippō* was quite rigorous in announcing the best women in the community. For example, it regularly called for readers' votes to determine model citizens in the fellow migrant community; for women, there were categories for "ladies" and "waitresses."

Japanese restaurants were ambiguous places of sexuality where servers could potentially be expected to entertain male customers in roles similar to those of *geisha*, or could just be waitresses, in which case they should meet the customers' notions of ideal, "virtuous" women. Gossip written by *Nippō*'s staff and contributed by readers often included information about beautiful or graceful waitresses. There was also a column series called "*Ryōriya Nozoki*" (A Peek at Restaurants; January 6 and early February, 1908), which offered reviews of Japanese restaurants elaborately detailing their food, service, and of course their waitresses. Women's bodies, therefore, were often turned into discursive and material sites of discipline by male writers, editors, publishers, and very likely, both male and female readers of community papers like the *Nippō*.

But women were not always passive victims of disciplinary power. There were women writers who wrote about and for women. The most well-known example among those who contributed to *Nippō* was Toshiko Tamura, whose award-winning debut novel *Akirame* ("Resignation," 1911) featured a female protagonist who pursued a professional writing career against the "good wives, wise mothers" ideology and addressed transgressive sexualities, including adultery and female homosexuality. As a writer she outgrew her male partner Shogyo Tamura, who was also a writer and senior compared to Toshiko both in age and in writing career. She moved from Tokyo to Vancouver in 1918 to follow journalist Etsu Suzuki, who had quit his previous work at *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper company and just joined *Nippō*. This also meant that they were starting a new life as a couple outside their marriage back home.[9] While she became less active as a writer in Canada, being removed from the much larger and more vibrant Japanese language literary community in Japan, Toshiko contributed to *Nippō* and played a leadership role as a feminist writer. Most prominently, she started a weekly column series "Saturday Women's Section" in August 1919, in which she wrote to fellow Japanese migrant women to raise awareness about women's rights.[10]

9. See Kudo Miyoko and Susan Phillips (*Bankuba no ai: Tamura Toshiko to Suzuki Etsu*, Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1982) for a detailed account of the couple's life in Vancouver.
10. Kudo, 88.



Figure 4. Portraits of “fallen women” included in *Kanada no Makutsu, Tairiku Nippo Sha*, 1909. Source: UBC Library, Rare Books and Special Collections.

What was less visible but equally powerful, however, was the ambivalence of newspaper representations of women. These representations had been initially produced to serve patriarchal institutional purposes of controlling women’s bodies in the migrant community, yet simultaneously undermined male writers’ condemnations of “bad” women. For example, the photographic portraits of women in Japanese brothels included in *Kanada no Makutsu* are far from stereotypical imageries of aggressive, vulgar and deceitful “prostitutes.” Quite contrary, the women present themselves with sophistication, tranquility, and dignity, making us question the discursively constructed wall that separates “bad” women from the rest. Unfortunately, their image quality is painfully poor as these portraits come from a photocopy of the original book **[Figure 4]**, which to my knowledge is the only copy in Canada that is publicly available today. Regardless, they resist the historical erasure of their presence and participation in the social, economic, and cultural development of the early Japanese migrant community and the larger North American societies in which they lived.

Contributors

Naoko Kato *is Japanese language librarian at the University of British Columbia. She completed her PhD and her Master of Science in Information Studies degree at the University of Texas at Austin. Her doctoral dissertation, "Through the Kaleidoscope: Uchiyama Bookstore and Sino-Japanese Visionaries in War and Peace" (2013), is a transnational history that focuses on Sino-Japanese networks surrounding a bookstore in Shanghai during the first half of the twentieth century and touches upon Pan-Asianism, Christianity, and the peace movement.*

Radu Leca *is a Romanian historian of art and cartography, who has studied Japanese literature and art history before engaging with the history of maps in Japan. An extended version of this article is forthcoming as Radu Leca, "Maps of the World in Early Modern Japan," in Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History, ed. David Ludden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).*

M. William Steele *is Professor Emeritus at the International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. He specializes in the social and cultural history of Japan in the late nineteenth century. He is author of* Alternative Narratives in Modern Japanese History *(2003). His recent publications focus on mobility and environmental issues, including the role played by natural disasters in modernizing Japan.*

Gregory Smits *is Professor of History and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University. His research includes East Asian intellectual history, the history of earthquakes and seismology in Japan, and the history of Ryukyu (present-day Okinawa Prefecture and parts of Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan).*

Kanaya Masataka *is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Architecture in the Graduate School of Engineering and Design at Hōsei University in Tokyo, Japan. He specializes in the modern architectural and urban history of Tokyo, and is researching the repurposing of former warrior compounds into cultivated fields in the early Meiji Period, early Meiji urban dairy farming and agriculture, and changes to the urban core and suburbs of Tokyo under Shokusan Kōgyō policies.*

Tristan R. Grunow *is Assistant Professor without Review in the History Department at UBC. Previously, he was Postdoctoral Fellow at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University, and Visiting Assistant Professor of History and Asian Studies at Bowdoin College. He is currently completing a manuscript charting the transformation of Tokyo under the processes of Japanese state-formation and empire-building.*

Benjamin Bryce *is an assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of Northern British Columbia. He received his PhD and MA from York University (2013, 2008) and his BA from the University of British Columbia (2005). His research focuses on migration, education, and religion in Canada and Argentina.*

He is the author of To Belong in Buenos Aires: Germans, Argentines, and the Rise of a Pluralist Society *(Stanford University Press, 2018). He is also the co-editor of* Making Citizens in Argentina *(University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017 and* Entangling Migration History: Borderlands and Transnationalism in the United States and Canada *(University Press of Florida, 2015).*

***Allen Hockley** received a BA from the University of Victoria, an MA from UBC, and a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. He currently holds a joint appointment in the Department of Art History and the Asian Societies, Cultures, and Languages Program at Dartmouth College. His research interests include Japanese prints and illustrated books of seventeenth through twentieth centuries and early Japanese photography.*

***Joshua S. Mostow** is a Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at UBC. In addition to his study of the reception of HNIS, he is also author of Courtly Visions: The Ise Stories and the Politics of Cultural Appropriation. Japanese Visual Culture 12 (Brill, 2014).*

***Miriam Wattles** is Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Architecture, University of California, Santa Barbara. She has worked on a range of topics in Japanese visual culture from the Edo through the early Shōwa periods. Her present book project concerns the little-known transition from giga to manga from 1870-1930. The gendered history of textiles and garments in Japan during the long twentieth century is a new scholarly interest of hers.*

***Ayako Yoshimura** works as Japanese Studies Librarian at the University of Chicago Library. She earned a Ph.D. in folklore at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her dissertation—entitled "An Autoethnography of Kin-aesthetics: Retrieving Family Folklore Through the Wearing of Used Kimonos" (2015)—investigated what it means for a contemporary Japanese woman to wear kimonos, especially inherited ones. While continuing her kimono research, she offers university lectures and public talks on both folklore and kimono culture.*

***Dr. Yukari Takai** is a professor at the Department of History at the University of Windsor and a Faculty Associate at the York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR) at York University in Canada. Born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, she completed her PhD in history at the Université de Montréal in Canada. She is a historian of North America and Asia specialized in issues of migration, women and gender, border and borderlands. A former Fulbright Research Fellow at Columbia University in New York, Takai is the author of* Gendered Passages: French-Canadian Migration to Lowell, Massachusetts, 1900-1920 *(2008). Currently, she is completing a book on Japanese transmigration across the Pacific and across the Canada-U.S. border during the Exclusion Era (1882-1941). She is also conducting a new project on the gender and social relations of Japanese in Hawai'i in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Dr. Takai is a recipient of grants and fellowships from several organizations, including, among others, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and the Japan-U.S. Educational Commission (Fulbright Japan).*

***Eiji Okawa** is a social historian specializing in medieval and early modern Japan as well as Japanese diaspora in early to mid twentieth century Canada. He is interested in religious and social institutions, and how people relate to cultural landscapes and organize their society by managing or overcoming conflicts and tensions. He completed his doctoral degree in Japanese history at the University of British Columbia in 2016. Currently, he is a postdoctoral fellow with Landscapes of Injustice as well as University of Victoria's history department. Landscapes is a collaborative project on the dispossession of Japanese-Canadian properties by the state during the 1940s.*

Ayaka Yoshimizu *is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia and an instructor at the Department of Mass Communication at Columbia College. She completed her PhD in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. Her areas of interest include transpacific studies, cultural memory, women's transnational migration, postcolonialism, and critical and creative methodologies. Her postdoctoral project is concerned with cultural memories of Japanese women who engaged in sex work in North America at the turn of the 20th century. She examines different ways in which their experiences are memorialized today through literary, cinematic and other creative forms in Japan, Canada and the United States, and explores alternative ways to engage this history through her critical archival research.*