WOMEN WRITERS OF CHINESE POETRY
IN LATE-EDO PERIOD JAPAN

by

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This dissertation investigates *kanshi* poems written by three Japanese women: Ema Saikō (1787-1861), Hara Saihin (1798-1859), and Takahashi Gyokushō (1802-1868). These three women from the late Edo period cultivated excellent literacy in classical Chinese and established their reputations as scholars and poets. However, their works in Chinese have been underestimated in modern scholarship. The goal of my dissertation is to re-situate these highly literary women more accurately in the discourse of “Japanese literature,” while challenging established ideas about “women’s literature” and “Edo literature.”

The introductory chapter argues against the dismissal of Edo-period women *kanshi* writers. Firstly, it examines the general underestimation of women writers from the Edo period and the dismissal of works written in Chinese from the category of “Japanese literature.” Secondly, it investigates the late Edo-period cultural and ideological background, which supported the emergence of women *kanshi* writers.

The next three chapters explore works of each poet. Saihin was a vigorous scholar and poet from Kyūshū. She lived in Edo for twenty years, determined to make herself a successful Confucian scholar. I illuminate her complex gender identification, as presented in her poems, while describing her astounding aspirations. Ema Saikō, a scholar-painter and poet, is known for her feminine style in the genre of *kanshi*. While I examine her conscious use of “feminine expressions,” I also present the diversity of her poetic subjects. Takahashi Gyokushō from Sendai established herself as an educator and poet in Edo. She often hosted fund-raising literary parties, and published two anthologies during her lifetime. A comparison of Gyokushō and Saihin, two female scholars who lived in Edo, elucidates how affiliations with different poetic societies affected their careers and poetry.

The relative prominence of women *kanshi* writers in the late Edo period becomes clear through this study. The *kanshi* writers were, indeed, precursors of early modern Japanese women educators and writers. This dissertation bridges the literary effort by women of the Edo and Meiji periods, while contributing to a revision of the history of women’s literature in Japan and correcting a distorted image of the literary environment for women of the Edo period.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................ ii

Table of Contents .......................................................................................... iii

List of Illustrations ......................................................................................... iv

Note on Style .................................................................................................... v

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................ vi

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND CRITICAL FOUNDATIONS. ............... 1
   I.  Questioning the Portrayal of the Edo Period as a Dark Age for Women .... 3
   II. The Formation of "Women's Literature" and the Exclusion of Kanshi Works .......... 11
   III. Women and Chinese Literature in the Edo Period .................................. 18
   IV. Ideological Background of the Emergence of Women Kanshi Poets .......... 26

CHAPTER TWO HARA SAIHIN (1798-1859) ..................................................... 48
   I.  Pursuit of Success .................................................................................. 51
   II. Poetic Self-Construction and Gender Identification .............................. 77

CHAPTER THREE EMA SAIKÔ (1787-1861) ................................................ 118
   I.  Essentialism and Realism: The Construction of Feminine Poetry .......... 124
   II. Beyond the Feminine Ideal: Poems from 1826 and 1827 ....................... 152

CHAPTER FOUR TAKAHASHI GYOKUSHÔ (1802-1868) ........................... 202
   I.  Publication and Commercialism ......................................................... 206
   II. Poems: The Naturalization of Kanshi ................................................ 225

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION ...................................................................... 245

Illustrations .................................................................................................... 255

Bibliography ................................................................................................. 269
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Illustration Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Portrait of Hara Saihin</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Aoki Mokubei. <em>Sunny Morning at Uji</em> (1824)</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Aoki Mokubei. <em>Returning Home on Donkey-back Through a Secluded Valley</em></td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Ema Saikō. <em>Landscape Drawn at Age Seventy-Three</em></td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Ike Taiga. <em>Fuji in the Twelve Months: the Fifth Month</em></td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Group portrait of the Hakuōsha</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Portrait of Takahashi Gyokushō</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>A handbill for the “Gyokushō hyakuzetsu kokusei hokkai.”</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>A handbill for the “Jibo shichijun gaen.”</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>A handbill for a 1857 <em>shogakai</em></td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>A handbill for a <em>shogakai</em> (date unknown)</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Utagawa Hiroshige. <em>Edo Kömei Kaitei Zukushi: Köchiya</em></td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Front of <em>Gyokushō hyakuzetsu</em> (Calligraphy by Kikuchi Gozan)</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Map. Shrines by the Sumida River</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Utagawa Hiroshige. <em>Ryōgoku Hanabi</em></td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE ON STYLE

Japanese words in this dissertation are romanized according to the Hepburn system used in most English-language publications on Japan. Chinese words and names are given in the official pinyin system of romanization.

Japanese names are given in Japanese order—surname followed by a given name. However, names of literary and artistic figures from the Edo period are mostly given with the surname followed by sobriquet or pen name in accordance with contemporary convention in Japanese scholarship (e.g. Hara Saihin rather than Hara Michi. Saihin is a sobriquet while Michi is a personal name). After their first appearance, most modern personages are referred to by their surnames. Conventions of usage dictate, however, the use of a pen name or sobriquet for many literary or artistic figures (e.g., San’yō for the scholar and writer Rai San’yō).
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND CRITICAL FOUNDATIONS

This dissertation focuses on the poetic works of three women of the late Edo period (1603-1868). These poems were written in classical Chinese, what is called in Japanese, kanshi. Kanshi by women of the Edo period has been marginalized in the modern scholarship of Japanese literature. However, as the category of “women” has emerged as a major interest in the academic world and as women’s writings of the Edo period are more fully investigated, the relative eminence of women kanshi practitioners in their own times becomes clear. The purpose of this dissertation is to re-situate these highly literary women more accurately, while also introducing their works and lives.

In a review of Breeze Through Bamboo: Kanshi of Ema Saikō by Hiroaki Sato, Sonja Arntzen remarked in 1999: “[Saikō’s] poetry opens up a world of women’s experience in the Tokugawa period that has been virtually overlooked in previous studies and translations of Tokugawa literature. The received interpretation is that, except for a few minor haiku poets, there were no women writers of note in the Tokugawa period... Moreover, she was writing in the kanshi genre, so long a bastion of male literary achievement in Japan.”¹ As Arntzen states, Saikō’s substantial poetry, which re-appeared in 1992 in Japanese and in 1998 in English,² inspired students of the field to question established literary presumptions, specifically the dismissal of women writers of the Edo
period and the dissociation of women from literature written in Chinese. After the publication of Saikō’s anthology in 1992, many other Edo-period women writers were re-discovered. In 1998, Kado Reiko, the very person who revived Saikō’s poetry, published a comprehensive survey of Edo-period women writers, *Edo joryū bungaku no hakken* (Discovery of Edo Women’s Literature). In this book Kado introduced approximately sixty women and their works written in different genres, including diaries, travel accounts, *monogatari* (tales), essays, *waka* (Japanese poetry), haiku, and *kanshi*. In addition, Kado and her associates recently presented a work of *gesaku* (comic fiction) written by a woman. Other than Kado, Shiba Keiko has uncovered numerous travel accounts produced by women of the Edo period—in 1997, Shiba commented that she had collected more than one hundred such works. Maeda Yoshi has introduced approximately thirty literary women, focusing on women in non-urban areas, especially those in Kyūshū who wrote in different genres, including *kanshi*.

The revelation of Edo women’s works mentioned above refutes two presumptions, that of women’s literary silence during the Edo period and that of women’s exclusion from the field of literature written in Chinese. Why, and how, were these false presumptions produced and passed down to us? To answer this question, I will examine the exclusion of the Edo period women *kanshi* poets in the modern canons of “Japanese literature,” “Edo literature” and “women’s literature,” while considering the historical, political and cultural background of these dismissals.
I. Questioning the Portrayal of the Edo Period as a Dark Age for Women

Works devoted to the history of women’s writings commonly and repeatedly describe the prominence of Heian women writers and poets. After the Heian, they mark the modern writer Higuchi Ichiyō (1872-1896) as representing the “reemergence of the woman writer,” leaving untouched the “centuries of silence” between them. The Edo period, falling in the latter part of these centuries of silence, has been imagined as a dark age for women, when their voices were subjugated and suppressed in a Confucian-based, male-dominated feudal society. This assumption about the Edo has been consolidated in academic descriptions of Japanese literature since the Meiji period. However, as mentioned above, women writers of considerable ability were actively creating works during the Edo period. To explain why these writers have been overlooked, I will examine the formation of the Edo literary canon since the Meiji period and clarify the grounds for the elimination of literary women from Edo literature.

“Edo Literature” in 1890

As Haruo Shirane, Tomi Suzuki, and Tomiko Yoda have expounded, the first modern academic configuration of “Japanese literature” took place at the end of the nineteenth century and was epitomized by several kokubungaku (national literature) scholars’ works published in 1890. Among them, the works related to Edo literature are Ueda Kazutoshi’s Kokubungaku, an anthology of late Edo and early Meiji works; Haga Yaichi and Tachibana Sensaburō’s Kokubungaku tokuhon (A Reader of
National Literature), a chronologically arranged anthology including works from Hitomaro to Bakin; and Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō’s *Nihon bungakushi*, the first comprehensive literary history of Japan with abundant excerpts from the ancient era to the Edo period.

The Edo literary canon set forth in these three books is vastly different from that set forth after WW II. Many of the texts selected as exemplary literary products of the Edo period were those written by scholars, both Confucian and *kokugaku* scholars. For example, Haga and Tachibana’s *Kokubungaku tokuhon* included texts by as many as eight scholars, such as Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714), Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), Muro Kyūsō (1658-1734), Yanagisawa Kien (1706-58), Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), Ban Kökei (1733-1806), and Kagawa Kageki (1768-1843), out of the total of thirteen writers chosen to represent Edo literary flowering. The five non-scholar writers selected were Bashō (1644-94), Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724), Yokoi Yayū (1702-83), Ōta Nanpo (1749-1823) and Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848).\(^7\)

Mikami and Takatsu in their *Nihon bungakushi* were more generous in their introduction of what we now consider representative Edo literature, such as haiku, *joruri* (puppet theater) and kabuki texts, and so-called *gesaku*. Nonetheless, academic works by scholars constituted half of their selections to represent “Literature of the Edo period.” Their classification of Edo literature was: first *wakan konkō bun* (mixed Japanese-Chinese style) by Confucian scholars (*kangakusha*); secondly, belles-lettres and *waka* by *kokugaku* (国学 national studies) scholars; thirdly, *haikai* (popular linked verse), haiku, *haibun*
(haikai prose), kyōka (comic waka), kyōbun (comic prose); and finally, gikyoku (drama) and shōsetsu (fiction).

The 1890 kokubungaku scholars considered the Edo period as a literary heyday ranking equally with the Heian period. The following is an outline of their description of Edo literature: Literature (bungaku, which in 1890 included texts on philosophy, history, and academic discussions) prospered brilliantly during the Edo period as a result of the Tokugawa government’s encouragement of Confucian studies. Then, as a reaction to the excessive zeal for Chinese culture, the study of ancient Japanese texts became especially active. Writings by both Confucian and kokugaku scholars were the respectable and representative literary achievements of the era. Meanwhile, the literature of the “lower society” (chūtō ika no shakai), such as “drama” (gikyoku), “fiction” (shōsetsu), and haikai, also prospered, assuring the period’s literary progress.

In short, the 1890 kokubungaku editors considered “polite literature” written by scholars, and “popular literature” produced for commoners, as complementary parts that together represented Edo literature as a whole.

The 1890 editors’ strong preference for “polite literature” is obvious when contrasted with later literary historians’ partiality for “popular literature.” One reason that the Meiji kokubungaku scholars devoted such abundant space to the introduction of former scholarly writings was their desire to provide their readers with models for an appropriate writing style. Around 1890, the creation of the genbun-itchi style (union of spoken and written languages) became an urgent national concern. In both the academic and literary
world, writers were struggling to construct a proper, modern, and effective writing style. Addressing this issue directly, a prefatory note to Haga and Tachibana’s *Kokubungaku tokuhon* explained the abundance of excerpts from the “recent period” (*kindai*, i.e. Edo period), in contrast to scattered selections of literature from the ancient period, as necessary since the former served as appropriate models for contemporary writing. They held that contemporary “common writing” (*futsū-bun*) should model itself on the literature of the “recent period.”⁹ The examples of literature of the “recent period” (Edo literature) they selected were excerpts from thirteen writers, among them eight scholars. Meanwhile, Mikami and Takatsu’s *Nihon bungakushi* especially stressed the Confucian scholars’ *wakan konkōbun* as a writing model. They asserted that *wakan konkōbun* should be the style that “today’s Japanese writing should model itself after” (*konnichi kokubun no mohan to subeki mono*).¹⁰

For Edo literature, as these comments show, the primary intention of the 1890 *kokubungaku* editors was to provide their presumed readers, male elite students and male intellectuals, with suitable writing models. The Edo period’s polite literature, having been written by respectable scholars or statesmen, was considered most appropriate for men in the Meiji academy to imitate, because of its writing style and content as well as the social status and moral attitude of the authors. Works by women of the previous period were not part of their consideration. Literature by women, which purportedly was marked with the authors’ sex and gendered life experiences, was assumed to be irrelevant as a model for male students in the Meiji academy.
The Canon of “Popular Literature”

For the 1890 kokubungaku editors, “literature” of the Edo period covered both polite literature, including academic writing, and popular literature. However, during the first decade of the twentieth century, the term “bungaku” came to mean primarily literature as art, excluding texts on philosophy, history, and academic debates. The definition of “literature” had been changing in modern Japan, reflecting the western definition of “literature.” In the West, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the term “literature” had come to signify “creative literature.” Discussing this shift in the definition of “literature,” Haruo Shirane writes: “From around the middle of the eighteenth century, this notion of literature gradually began to narrow to include only creative or imaginative literature, with particular stress on the genres of poetry, the tale (prose fiction), and drama, as opposed to other forms such as rhetorical persuasion, didactic argumentation, and historical narration.” This new notion of literature, which stressed the creative quality of writing, affected the description of Edo literature, resulting in the marginalization of scholars’ writings while haiku, joruri, kabuki and gesaku were celebrated. For example, Haga Yaichi, who in 1890 felt a need to make a special note to include a few excerpts from what had been then considered the “base genres,” “gikyoku, shōsetsu, haiku, and kyōka,” publicly extolled “popular literature” in 1906. Haga contributed a preface to Iwaki Juntarō’s Meiji bungakushi (1906), one of the first books to accept without question “literature” as creative literary art. In this preface, Haga wrote the following criticism of Tokugawa scholars who
had despised “literary art” (bungei).

The scholars of the Tokugawa period respected intelligence and moral conduct while making light of feelings (jō). Their attitude neglected the greatness and value of literary art (bungei), only recognizing its dark side. When Arai Hakuseki admitted the popularity of sarugaku, he remonstrated with the shogun on social disorder. Yamamoto Hokuzan loved reading jōruri texts, but he said he only read the texts in the lavatory. Kyokutei Bakin, while devoting his whole life to writing shōsetsu, said he only wrote his useless works so he could purchase some beneficial books. How cold they were to literary art (bungei) and how awfully they despised it!15

Continuing, Haga discussed the benefit of “popular literature” (heimin bungaku) such as “shōsetsu, jōruri, and engeki (drama),” valuing especially their merit for having widely spread bushidō and patriotism. Aware of his own change of heart toward popular literature, he described the new appreciation of the once-despised Edo popular literature as a manifestation of a general “respect for literature” (bungaku ni taisuru sonchō). Haga’s two very different evaluations of popular literature illustrate the process whereby the new notion of “literature” highlighted the creative literature of the Edo period: namely, haikai poetry; gesaku fiction; and drama, including jōruri and kabuki. The works written in these genres became the basis of the Edo literary canon, characterizing the period as the heyday of commoners’ culture.

In this new canon, heavily partial to popular literature, most works by women were
again set aside. It is likely true that very few women had actually written in those popular
genres, except for women authors of *haikai* poetry. As Joan Ericson has explained, "what
has survived in the literary canon from this [Edo] period was written almost entirely by
men." However, the conclusion that "a strong female voice seems to have died out in
Japanese literature before the modern period" is an oversimplification. Indeed, women
writers were active in both polite and popular genres not included in the canon of Edo
literature. For example, if the "travel account" is considered an important literary genre,
women's voices in "Edo literature" would have to be considered very strong. The *Nikki
kikōshū*, an anthology of travel accounts from the Kamakura to Edo periods compiled in
1922, included works by Inoue Tsüjo (1660-1738), Takejo (?), and Yuya Shizuko
(1733-52), as well as works by five male authors, Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), Bashō,
Kamo no Mabuchi, Motoori Norinaga and Takizawa Bakin. This proportion testifies to the
active literary participation of women in this particular genre and the high quality of their
work. Women had continued to write during the Edo period, yet their works were not
integrated into the modern literary canon. The canon was set in accordance with the modern
emphasis on creative literature and the general characterization of the period as "popular"
in nature. As a result, literary women of the Edo period were again overlooked.

**The Exclusion of Women Kanshi Writers in the Discourse of *Kanbungakushi***

As Haruo Shirane, Tomi Suzuki, and Tomiko Yoda have mentioned, works in
Chinese produced in Japan were excluded from the modern notion of "national literature,"
which was identified with *kana* or *kana-and-kanji* mixed texts.\(^{21}\) Thus, not only Chinese verse written by women, but all literature written in Chinese was dismissed from the modern discourse on Japanese literature. However, a reaction to this exclusionary practice occurred as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, Haga Yaichi titled a course taught in 1908 and 1909, "A History of Literature Written in Chinese in Japan" (*Nihon kanbungakushi*). In the introduction to the course, Haga defined "*Nihon kanbungakushi*" as "a history of Chinese literature (*Shina bungaku*) composed by Japanese people" and stated that he considered such works to be a part of Japanese literature.\(^{22}\) He argued that the study of Japanese literature would not be complete without considering literature written in Chinese, and insisted that it be included in the categorization of "national literature."\(^{23}\) In Haga's historical survey of Japanese literature written in Chinese from the ancient era to the end of the Tokugawa period, only one woman writer was mentioned: Princess Uchiko (807-47). In his description of the Edo period, he constructs a narrative around the development of different Confucian schools, such as Kogakuha (the School of Ancient Learning), Kobunjigakuha (the School of Philology of the Classics), and Setchūgakuha (the Eclectic School). As Haga was so strongly interested in the Confucian academic world, he seemed not to have considered mentioning women who were practicing *kanshi* outside the academy. Haga's interest in "literature" written in Chinese tended to be focused on academic writings but not on creative "literary art." In this subcategory of literature, i.e. *kanbungaku*, only when poetry (*kanshi*) became the central interest did Edo women's works in Chinese come to light.
II. The Formation of “Women’s Literature” and the Exclusion of *Kanshi* Works

In 1901, the first inclusive anthology of women’s writings, the *History of Women’s Literature* (Joryū bungakushi) was published. This anthology, chronologically arranged, included works written by women from the Nara period to the end of the Edo period. In the section on the Edo period, twenty-five female writers and their works were introduced. In the introductory chapter, the compilers commented that “women writers were fairly abundant” in the Edo period, making special reference to the *monogatari* writer Arakida Reijo (1732-1806), the *waka* poet Otagaki Rengetsu (1791-1875), and the *haikai* poet Kaga no Chiyo (1703-75) as the representative writers of the time. Among twenty-five women writers were *waka* poets, *haikai* poets, and prose writers who wrote in the forms of *monogatari*, diary, travel accounts, essays, letters and mémoirs. However, *kanshi* poets were excluded from this anthology.

The preface reads; “Within our national literature (*kokubungaku*), *waka* and *wabun* are the forms appropriate for women. . . . To begin, in accordance with their nature, women’s literature, unlike literature by men, should avoid being daring and heroic (*yūsō kappatsu*), and should be docile and elegant (*onjun yūbi*). . . .” As the opening states, the anthology was edited in accordance with the definition of “national literature,” which was identified with *kana*, or *kana* and *kanji* mixed texts and excluded texts written in Chinese. In addition to this definition, the editors’ polar characterizations of women’s literature in contrast to men’s literature—“docile and elegant” in contrast with “stirring and
heroic"—corresponded with the expulsion of women's *kanshi* works, as *kanshi* had been stereotypically considered a heroic and unfeminine genre. The editors noted the appropriateness of "*waka* and *wabun*" for women, suggesting that it would be improper for women to write in their counterparts, "*kanshi* and *kanbun*." The exclusion of *kanshi* poets from the *History of Women's Literature* accorded not only with the definition of "national literature" but also with the editors' gendered literary principles.

The Spread of Chinese Learning and Its Influence on Women's Education

From the early Meiji period until late in the 1890's, when the *genbun-itchi* style would become widely accepted, the importance of literacy in classical Chinese increased. While official documents during the Edo period had been written in *sōrōbun* (epistolary style), the Meiji government adopted the *kanbun kundoku* style for its official documents. Textbooks for elementary schools and major newspapers that were characterized by the inclusion of political debates also adopted the *kanbun kundoku* style. According to Suzuki Sadami, the official adoption of the *kanbun kundoku* writing style was clearly an innovation undertaken by the Meiji government. Under these circumstances, acquisition of proficiency in classical Chinese, on which the *kundoku* style was based, became indispensable for success, especially in politics, journalism, and the academic world. The Educational Policy (Kyōgaku seishi) issued in 1879, which Tomi Suzuki described as a reactionary move against the Freedom and People's Rights movement, emphasized Confucian ethics and became another factor that encouraged the study of Chinese learning.
In the same year, the Department of Letters (bungakubu) at Tokyo University made composition in classical Chinese (kanbun) a compulsory subject and required students to write their graduation papers either in English or classical Chinese. In 1886, kanbun reading and composition became compulsory subjects in the middle schools as well.

As the value of literacy in kanbun increased, classical Chinese poetry also became popular. Burton Watson has described the popularity of kanshi practice in the early Meiji period as follows: “This widespread popularity of the kanshi form carried over [from the late Edo period] into the early years of the Meiji period, and in fact reached new heights. Many of the founders of the new government were writers of kanshi and encouraged the use of the form. Literary societies and schools devoted to the teaching of kanshi flourished, modern printing methods aided the dissemination of poetry collections and works on poetic criticism, and the leading newspapers ran kanshi columns alongside those devoted to poetry in Japanese. . . .” Endorsed by influential statesmen and educators, kanshi composition boomed in the early Meiji period and began to decline only after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95.

The institutional emphasis on kanbun education affected the quality of women’s education also. Referring to lists of women’s schools and their curricula included in Jogaku zasshi (Woman’s Education Journal), issued in 1886 (no.25, 26), Hirata Yumi notes that most public and private women’s schools of that time had kanbun courses as well as courses in Japanese (kokugo) and English. Hirata offers the curriculum of Shōei Women’s School in Tokyo as a typical kanbun curriculum. According to this curriculum, as
described in an advertisement placed in *Jogaku zasshi* no.196 issued in 1890, students would first study *Kokushi ran’yō* (Collection from National History), then Rai Sanyō’s *Nihon gaishi* (Unofficial History of Japan), *Shiba shilüe* (J. *Jyūhachi shiryaku*, Digests of the Eighteen History Books), *Mengqiu* (J. *Mögyū*, A Collection of Rhymed Encomia on Famous Individuals), *Shiji* (J. *Shiki*, Records of the Grand Historian), and *Wenzhang guifan* (J. *Bunshō kihan*, A Collection of Exemplary Writings). In grade five, they would read *Tang Song badajia wen* (J. *To So hachitaika bun*, Writings by the Eight Masters from Tang and Song Dynasty), and *Mengzi* (J. *Mōshi*, Mencius).\(^{35}\) As this curriculum shows, students in some women’s schools at this time were educated to be highly literate in classical Chinese, and through these readings they were exposed to discussions of history, politics, education, and ethics.

The practice of *kanshi* composition also spread among women. The readers’ columns placed in the *Jogaku zasshi* from the twelfth issue (1886.1.15) often included *kanshi* works by women as well as *waka* and *wabun* compositions.\(^ {36}\) From the twenty-sixth issue of June 15\(^{th}\) 1886, there appeared advertisements specifically targeting women for the correction of their *kanshi* by correspondence.\(^ {37}\) As these facts suggest, *kanshi* composition was becoming popular among young women.

These young women also had access to *kanshi* works by women writers from the Edo period. Ema Saikō’s anthology *Shōmu ikō* was posthumously published in 1871, and an anthology of *kanshi* works by seven female disciples of Suzuki Shōtō (1823-1898) was published in 1877. In 1880, the *Nihon keien ginsō*, an anthology of *kanshi* poems composed
by fifty-four Japanese women from the late Edo to the time of publishing, was issued. This book included *kanshi* works by eminent female scholars or artists from the late Edo period, such as Saikō, Hara Saihin, Chō Kōran (1804-79), Takashima Bunpō (1791-1857), Shinoda Unpō (1810-83), and early Meiji educators such as Seki Rin’o (1826-77) and Atomi Kakei (1840-1926). By placing these authors together, the anthology certainly suggests the existence of a cultural connection and literary tradition of leading intellectual women educated in Chinese literature from the late Edo to the Meiji period. Women who were studying *kanbun* at some women’s schools in the 1880’s and 1890’s may have identified with the tradition of women *kanshi* practitioners of the late Edo period.

As more women were acquiring literacy in Chinese, criticisms against them became more intense. After receiving *kanbun* education in the schools, many young intellectual women started to use Chinese loanwords and loan-phrases in their daily speech and to compose their arguments and opinions in the *kundoku* style. When it became obvious that women were lacing their communication with Chinese phrases, they were mocked and criticized as being saucy and impertinent, conceited and unfeminine. Hirata Yumi includes such criticisms, many contained in letters to the editors of newspapers or magazines, as she discusses the struggles experienced by writing women in the early Meiji period. For example, Katō Hyōko, chief of the printing section of the *Yomiuri* newspaper, published his criticism of young women’s use of Chinese phrases in the readers’ column of the April 7th 1882 issue. He asserted that women should speak and act in a womanly manner and attacked the girls at *jogakkō* who adopted such Chinese loanwords as “*boku*” (*I*) and “*kimi*”
(you) in their conversations with friends, and who learned to write in the printed style (kaisho) while writing poorly in the cursive style (sōsho). He described this situation "as if a waka poem were translated into Chinese verse." Then he personally attacked Nakajima Shōen (also known as Kishida Toshiko, 1863-1901), who frequently gave eloquent speeches in Osaka supporting the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. Shōen was educated in Chinese literature and began her career as a lady-in-waiting to the Meiji empress, giving lectures on Chinese literature. After two years of court service, she retired and began to participate in political activities organized by the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. As a result of her scholarship in Chinese literature, Shōen was able to handle Chinese rhetoric freely, forming eloquent political arguments. Her public speaking was full of Chinese loanwords and phrases. She was also a composer of kanshi and later became one of the first women to write shōsetsu. Hyōko acknowledged Shōen's impressive talent while simultaneously criticizing what he considered to be her lack of feminine virtues. Hyōko clearly associated literacy in Chinese with masculinity and regarded its attainment by women as a regrettable erosion of femininity.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, more and more women had an opportunity to pursue higher education and learned to speak and write in a style pervaded with Chinese idioms and phrases. This new mode of communication based on Chinese scholarship afforded some women occasion to publicly comment on social and political issues, causing great anxiety among some male educators. This use of Chinese by women was widely regarded as a sign of the collapse of feminine virtues. It was in this
social and literary atmosphere that the gendered literary persuasion of the 1901 preface to the *History of Women's Literature* was made. The editors strongly maintained that women's literature should be naturally feminine and that femininity would be best represented by the *waka-wabun* writing style. By emphasizing the appropriateness of *waka-wabun* for women, they were discriminating against *kanshi-kanbun* composition and discouraging women from using this "masculine" style.

It might seem natural that the *kanshi-kanbun* tradition was ignored and left to die when one considers the disdainful attitude assumed toward China as a consequence of the Sino-Japanese war (1894-95) and the general replacement of the *kanbun kundoku* writing style by the *genbun-itchi* style. In literary compositions, educated women and men shifted to the *genbun itchi* style to write in the newly esteemed *shōsetsu* genre. Adding to this, the revulsion against women's use of the Chinese language, most actively expressed in the 1880s and 90s, intensified the tendency to exclude women's *kanshi* works from the history of women's literature.

Following the 1901 publication of *Joryū bungakushi*, descriptions of women's literature continued to exclude *kanshi* poets and their works. The *Joryū bungaku zenshū* (1918-9), a collection of Edo women's literature compiled by Furuya Tomoyoshi, included numerous works by thirty women writers through the Edo period but no *kanshi* works; neither did the *Nihon joryū bungakushi* published in 1927.40

The *Nihon joryū bungakushi* (1969), a post-war compilation of papers on Japanese women's literature edited by Hisamatsu Sen'ichi and Yoshida Seiichi, included an essay on
the Heian *kanshi* poets Princess Uchiko (807-47) and other court ladies, but made no mention of Edo women *kanshi* poets. The inclusion of *kanshi* from the Heian period implies that this book was freed from the modern definition of “national literature,” which had excluded texts in Chinese. Still, it overlooked *kanshi* works written in the Edo period.

The subcategory of “Edo period women’s literature” has, until very recently, been dominated by *haikai* and *waka* poems, with a few prose works written in the styles of *monogatari*, diary, and travel accounts.

III. Women and Chinese Literature in the Edo Period

Women’s involvement with Chinese literature in the Edo period has been largely disregarded. However, some educated women of the period seriously studied Chinese literature and some used Chinese poetic forms to express themselves. The sheer quantity and quality of *kanshi* works by women poets from the late Edo period is considerable.

Discussing women’s familiarity with Chinese literature in the Heian period, Joshua Mostow has cautioned against a hasty application of the metaphor of gender differences. Although it was true that Chinese literature was associated with men in both the Heian and Edo periods, this association did not mean an absolute exclusion of women from Chinese learning. Discussing Heian court ladies, both Mostow and Tomiko Yoda explain that what was considered unfeminine was a showy attitude toward their learning, not their knowledge of Chinese literature itself. That knowledge, indeed, enabled some noble women to enhance their status.
As had been true for some Heian court ladies, certain women of the Edo period also received social benefits from their knowledge of Chinese literature. A woman’s familiarity with Chinese literature was often considered in a positive light as it was associated with Confucian learning, especially in the ruling samurai class. Knowledge of Chinese literature—especially that of Confucian texts—was considered helpful for a woman to cultivate her virtue, and to acquire a good position as a lady-in-waiting at an influential lord’s household. Occasionally, literacy in Chinese led a woman to unusual social success. In the Edo period, women who were literate in Chinese were not necessarily condemned as impertinent, but were often respected.

Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714), an official Confucian scholar of the Fukuoka domain and a famous educator, described an ideal literary education for women as follows.

From the age of seven they should be made to learn kana (和字) and also Chinese characters (男文字). They should be made to read old poetry that is free of improper thoughts, and should learn the elegant arts. As in the case of boys, they should be first made to read and memorize a great many individual phrases and short selections. Afterward they should be taught filial piety, obedience, chastity, and bravery by having them read the opening chapter of *The Classic of Filial Piety*, the first section of the *Analects*, *The Precepts for Women* by Ts’ao Ta-chia, and other works. Ekiken emphasized the importance of virtue as defined by Confucianism, and advocated a Confucian education involving literary training in Chinese. Although there were already
Japanese translations of the major Confucian texts, Ekiken encouraged educators and parents to teach girls how to read those texts in Chinese. In these instructions, the acquisition of female virtues based on Confucian studies transcended the association of femininity with illiteracy in Chinese. One representative example who was celebrated in accordance with this new Confucian educational standard was Inoue Tsujo (1660-1738). Ekiken once obtained Tsujo’s waka poems and Chinese verses through his friends. He was overwhelmed by her talent, saying that she must be the most intelligent woman since Princess Uchiko.\textsuperscript{47} Note that Ekiken compared Tsujo not to Murasaki Shikibu or Sei Shonagon, but to Uchiko, who was known as an excellent kanshi poet. No doubt he highly valued Tsujo’s skill in Chinese poetic composition. On Ekiken’s recommendation, Tsujo’s travel account, \textit{Kika nikki} (A Diary of Returning Home), was published in Kyoto in 1715. Its popularity prompted the publication of another of her travel accounts, \textit{Tokai kiko} (A Travel Diary of the Tokai Highway), in 1717. Although both works were basically written in classical Japanese, they included Chinese verses as well as waka poems. According to Muro Kyuso (1658-1734), contemporary intellectuals such as Arai Hakuseki read her works with admiration.\textsuperscript{48} Tsujo was a prolific writer in both Chinese and Japanese. According to her son’s description, many of her works, including her personal \textit{kanshi kanbun shu} 六 volumes of \textit{Katsuno shu} 括囊集 and a volume of \textit{Zoku katsuno shu} 絧括囊集 were lost in a fire along with other voluminous writings of hers in Japanese.\textsuperscript{49}
Background of Tsujo’s Success

Tsujo’s father was a Zhu Xi-school Confucian scholar and a local official samurai in the Marugame domain in Sanuki, present-day Kagawa prefecture. He arranged for his daughter to be educated in both Chinese and Japanese literature. In her twenty-second year, Tsujo was hired as a jidoku (tutor) by the domain lord’s mother, Yoseiin, who was then living at the Edo residence of the Marugame domain. Tsujo kept a diary, Edo nikki, in which she recorded her days as an official employee. One episode from her diary details how her skill in Chinese composition was a great benefit to her reputation. The episode goes as follows.

On the Fifteenth Day of the Ninth Month of 1682, Yoseiin’s younger brother, Todo Takato, the lord of Sado, paid a visit to Yoseiin. She showed him Tsujo’s Chinese verses and waka poems that had been composed two nights earlier on the subject of the moon. Impressed, Takato repeatedly recited her poems, speaking of Tsujo in high terms while comparing her to Sei Shonagon and Murasaki Shikibu. On the seventeenth day of the month, through Yoseiin, he requested that Tsujo compose three Chinese verses and three waka poems on six topics he had selected. Tsujo shut herself in her room one whole afternoon to complete the task. Her mistress, happily and proudly, immediately sent off the verses. In the evening, a letter from Takato arrived, highly praising Tsujo’s poetic talent. The following day, all of the ladies-in-waiting recited Tsujo’s waka and kanshi poems in front of Yoseiin, to great applause.50

This anecdote illustrates how a literary education in Chinese in addition to the
usual Japanese literary education distinguished Tsujo from other women in service and earned her her mistress’ special regard. As Tsujo’s experience demonstrates, training in Chinese literature could benefit some samurai-class daughters by enabling them to attain fame and high position while in service at their lords’ households.

Uchida Tosen (1681-1720) is a similar example. Tosen’s father was enthusiastic about her education in Chinese literature and published her personal *kanshi* anthology in 1692, when she was only twelve. She became employed by an influential politician of the time, Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658-1714). Favored by the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi (1646-1709), Yoshiyasu had risen to unusual prominence. In response to the shogun’s interest in Confucian studies, Yoshiyasu was recruiting talented Confucian scholars, including the most eminent scholar of the time, Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728). Tosen was also hired by Yoshiyasu to increase his cultural prestige. When the shogun visited Yoshiyasu’s residence in 1705, he had Tosen give a lecture for the shogun on a section from the *Shijing*, *Classic of Poetry*. At Yoshiyasu’s fiftieth birthday party, Tosen and Sorai were among twenty scholar-retainers who composed Chinese verses celebrating the occasion. While Yoshiyasu exploited Tosen’s unusual expertise in Chinese literature to benefit himself politically, Tosen enjoyed an unusual social opportunity as a result of her scholarship, bringing her family some fortune and a good reputation.

In the late Edo period, a high degree of literacy in Chinese allowed some women to establish themselves as Confucian scholars and educators in their own right. Among them are Hara Saihin and Takahashi Gyokusho, who will be discussed in detail in Part Two.
of this study. An eminent precursor to them was Takashima Bunpo (1791-1857). Bunpo grew up as the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Kojimachi, the neighborhood of Edo castle, the shogun’s residence. She was not from the samurai class but was well educated in calligraphy and Chinese literature. Her reputation as a scholar spread in the city and came to the attention of the shogunate. In 1821, the shogunate employed her as a teacher for ladies-in-waiting of the inner quarter (ooku). Following the shogunate’s example, the Kishu and Owari domains, two among the three major related domains of the Tokugawa shogunate (Gosanke), also invited Bunpo to give lectures at their inner quarters. After these events, her reputation soared and she received more than six-hundred students, both men and women. Remarkably, she was allowed to become a disciple of Hayashi Jussai (1768-1841), the head of the Tokugawa’s official school Shoheizaka Gakumenjo. Bunpo’s scholarship in Chinese was officially supported and she became a great social success.

Following Bunpo, other women aspired to become Confucian scholars and educators. Among them were Saihin, Gyokusho, and Shinoda Unpo (1810-1883). This path was followed by a few founders of women’s schools (jogakko) in the early Meiji period. For example, Atomi Kakei (1840-1926), who studied Chinese literature under Goto Shoin (1797-1864), a student of Rai San’yo, started her career as a teacher at a private school and later became a tutor for ladies serving at the Akasaka Palace. She then established her own school, Atomi Jogakko, in 1875. Miwada Masako (1840-1927), who had studied Chinese literature under Yanagawa Seigan and his wife, Koran, began her career as a tutor of Iwakura Tomomi’s wife and children. Later she ran private schools, and eventually in 1902
she founded Miwada Jogakko. These women, from Bunpo to Masako, pursued their careers as educators, each with a solid background in Chinese scholarship. They were also *kanshi* writers.

Other than the scholarly women who regularly practiced *kanshi* composition as most male Confucian scholars did, a few women writers known for their Japanese writings, such as Arakida Reijo (1732-1806) and Tagami Kikusha (Nun Kikusha, 1753-1826) also composed Chinese verse. Arakida Reijo, who is known mostly for her *monogatari* works, studied Chinese literature in Kyoto under Emura Hokkai (1713-1788). She occasionally composed *kanshi* verses and wrote a *monogatari* work by adapting the Chinese prose narrative, *Youxianku* (J. Yusenkutsu). Some of Reijo’s *kanshi* verses are extant.

Kikusha, who is best known as a haiku poet, was multi-talented and studied Chinese pronunciation and literature from the time when, in her thirty-eighth year, she visited Manpukuji, a Chinese-style Obaku Zen temple in Uji. The last two of four volumes of her haiku anthology, *Taoregiku* (A Plucked Chrysanthemum, 1812), include numerous Chinese verses. In most cases, she composed both a Chinese verse and a *haiku* at an occasion and put them side by side.

Painters such as Ema Saiko (1787-1861), Yoshida Shuran (1797-1866), Noguchi Shohin (1847-1917), and Okuhara Seiko (1837-1913) also practiced *kanshi*. As it was customary to compose an inscription in classical Chinese on a Chinese-style painting, so-called *nanga* or *bunjinga*, the skills of calligraphy and Chinese composition were necessary for these painters. Also, for these artists in the Chinese style, Chinese poetry was
the main source of artistic inspiration. In Saiko’s case, *kanshi* eventually became an important medium beyond her painting. She recorded personal events and thoughts in the *kanshi* form, leaving more than two thousand verses.

Many of these women who established themselves through their scholarship in Chinese literature and art either remained single or divorced. Saiko, Saihin, Seiko, and Kakei remained unmarried, while Bunpo and Unpo were divorced. During their lives, they were not criticized or marginalized for their marital status. It was during the Meiji period that a negative attitude towards these independent literary and artistic women emerged. On November 25th 1888, a person writing under the penname of Shikin Joshi⁵² contributed an opinion to the *Onna shinbun* (Women’s Newspaper). The person cautioned scholarly or artistic-minded young women.

As for the ladies who are devoted to academic studies or art, it seems that once they become capable of reading scholarly books or attain some artistic skill, suddenly they begin to make light of men and insist that no man in the present world deserves their respect and trust as husband and life-long partner. I have heard there are many women who, at the proper age, missed an opportunity to marry and were single all their lives...⁵³

Independent female scholars or artists who remained single were now condemned as ill-fated women. The emergence of the new ideal of womanhood, which eventually gave birth to the slogan of “good wife and wise mother” (*ryosai kenbo*), was to cast a dark shadow on the reputation of the female scholars and artists who had established themselves
with the help of their exceptional education in Chinese literature.

As previously mentioned, more than a few women writers of the Edo period seriously studied Chinese literature and some of them used the *kanshi* form to make a record of their life-experiences and thoughts, producing significant and numerous literary works. If women’s involvement in Chinese literature and the literary fruits of their labor remain devalued, the result will be an inaccurate picture of women’s writing during the Edo period and an incomplete literary understanding of the era.

IV. Ideological Background of the Emergence of Women *Kanshi* Poets

Around the time of the transition from the eighteenth to nineteenth century, the attitudes and ideals surrounding *kanshi* composition dramatically changed. As a reaction against the rigid stylistic conformity of the previous influential poetic school known as the Kakuchoha (Ch. Gediaopai 格調派, Formalists, Archaists), a new poetic ideal that emphasized a poet’s natural, original expression became widely accepted. This new poetic ideal was represented by the term *seirei* (Ch. *xingling* 性靈), a word that can be translated as “spirit” or “native sensibility.” As explained by Timothy R. Bradstock and Judith N. Rabinovitch, “The Spiritualist poet rejected the archaizing, formalist tendencies of earlier times, advocating instead the cultivation of natural sensibility and spiritual depth. This style emphasized the expression of the poet’s innermost emotions and the depiction of everyday surroundings to create a more naturalistic and personal poetry.”

This dramatic change of poetic trends from “archaism” to “spiritualism” in the
late-Edo period seems to have provided a great impetus to the emergence of women kanshi poets. In the following section, I will review the transition of poetic trends, giving special attention to its influence on kanshi poets' attitudes toward "women" and on the general acceptance of women artists in society.

The Emergence of the Seireiha

The movement towards Seirei poetics in Japan was greatly animated by Yamamoto Hokuzan (1752-1812), a Confucian scholar in Edo who ran a private school, the Keigijuku. In 1783, Hokuzan published his discussion on poetry, *Sakushi shiko* (The Aim of Poetic Composition), in which he severely attacked the archaistic approach to poetic composition propagated by the influential scholar-poets, Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) and Hattori Nankaku (1682-1759). Hokuzan took the archaistic poems to task, calling them false verses filled with imitation and plagiarism. While criticizing the archaists' compositions, he advocated a new poetic ideal that focused on seirei, a poet's innate nature.

Hokuzan's argument was deeply grounded in a poetic discussion developed by Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610), a poet and leading exponent of the Xingling poetics of the Ming dynasty. Hongdao had criticized the formalistic approach in Ming China and spread a new poetic attitude that emphasized a poet's innate sensibilities. He maintained that poetic inspiration should originate from a poet's natural, spontaneous response to his own environment and a poem should express the poet's true self in accord with his actual surroundings. In contrast to the formalists' "false poetry with plagiarized phrases,"
Hongdao championed more personal, original expressions, valuing the authenticity of such products.

Adopting Hongdao’s discussion, Hokuzan stressed the importance of a poet’s “spirit” (seirei 性靈, Hokuzan also used the term seishin 精神) in the writing of poetry over conformity to “forms and rules” (kakuritsu 格律). Following Hongdao, Hokuzan valued individualistic quality in a poem and the novelty that accompanied such a poem. Hokuzan wrote:

Generally, it is important in writing poetry to make its meaning (趣) deep and its phrases novel (清新). You should endeavor not to be affected by the error of plagiarism, as you work hard to eliminate hackneyed phrases in your writing. Remember, it is much better to compose a clumsy verse spewing out your own poetry (吾詩) than to make a skillful poem cribbing expressions from others’ poems. The poems by the “Seven Men of Talent” (七才子), including Li Panlong, and those by Hattori Nankaku and Takano Rantei of Japan, are all filled with plagiarism and imitation, and have damaged the way of poetry. If you hope to make your own genuine poetry (自己ノ真詩), never read Selections from the Seven Men of Talent (七才子集), A Collection of Zekku Verses After the T’ang Dynasty (唐後詩絶句解) [edited and annotated by Ogyu Sorai], or the anthologies of Li Panlong, Wang Shizhen, Nankaku, or Rantei.

As this passage shows, Hokuzan, and the Seirei poetics generally, directed poets’ attention to the individual “self” (吾, 自己) and celebrated a poet’s sincerity and the fresh
expressions that originate from personal sensitivity. A poem composed using this orientation was evaluated positively as "genuine poetry" (真詩) in contrast to the "plagiarism and imitation" (剽竊模倣) of archaists. Hokuzan stated confidently: "Why should respectable men plagiarize and imitate someone else's poetry, neglecting the genuine poetry existing in our selves?" (己レニ有スル真詩)\textsuperscript{62}

The introduction of this new poetic ideal that stressed the "self" prompted \textit{kanshi} practice to spread beyond a limited group of people. Previously, the archaists had held the great works from the High T'ang period to be the poetic authority and expected poet-writers to imitate this style, affecting an attitude of great men from an idealized past. Seirei poetics, on the contrary, encouraged \textit{kanshi} lovers to consider their own concerns and circumstances, without adopting an ideal persona. The individual "self" was respected as the direct source of "authentic poetry" (真詩) and a variety of subject matter and perspectives became acceptable. Consequently, \textit{kanshi} practice was opened to a greater variety of people, including merchants, wealthy farmers, and women.

\textbf{Innovation in Seirei Poetics}

Seirei poetics was further promoted by members of the Kokoshisha, a poetry circle established in Edo by Ichikawa Kansai (1749-1820). Among the main members of the Kokoshisha were Okubo Shibutsu (1767-1837), Kashiwagi Jotei (1763-1819), and Kikuchi Gozan (1769-1849). Shibutsu had previously studied Confucian texts under Yamamoto Hokuzan and Jotei was an acquaintance of Hokuzan. Consequently, they introduced Seirei
poetics to their teacher Kansai.

Although they had initially become familiar with the new poetics through the writings of Hokuzan and Yuan Hongdao, their interest in promoting Seirei poetics was greatly propelled after their encounter with the works of Yuan Mei (1716-98), a leading exponent of Xingling poetics in mid-Qing China. Discovery of this common poetic orientation in contemporary China gave momentum to the popularization of Seirei poetics in Japan.

Yuan Mei’s major poetic discussions, which revived late-Ming Xingling poetics, were best described in his *Suiyuan shihua* (*Poetry Talks from Sui Garden*). The main sixteen volumes of the work were published in China from 1789 through to 1791, at the latest, and then imported into Japan through Nagasaki as early as 1791. Members of the Kokoshisha had read the books within ten years of their first importation and took an active role in introducing Yuan Mei’s works. For example, Kashiwagi Jotei published his selections from *Poetry Talks from Sui Garden* in 1804 and Ichikawa Kansai published his *Selected Poems from Sui Garden* (*Zuien shisho*) in 1816. In 1830, Okubo Shibutsu published his selections from the anthology of Yuan Mei’s women disciples, *Suiyuan nü dizi shixuan* (*随園女弟子詩選*), which had been published in 1796 in China. Kikuchi Gozan started to write and publish *Poetry Talks from the Five Mountains* (*Gozando shiwa*) from 1807, modeling it on the *Poetry Talks from Sui Garden*. Following the manner of Yuan Mei, Gozan widely collected poems by contemporary Japanese people and commented on them, often introducing ideas from Xingling poetics. Through these
publications, Yuan Mei and his poetic discussions became well known among the
intellectuals in Japan.

Yuan Mei stated:

Poetry is what expresses one’s nature and emotion. It is enough to look no further
than one’s self [for the material of poetry]. If its words move the heart, its colors
catch the eye, its taste pleases the mouth, and its sound delights the ear, then it is
good poetry.66

Like the Ming-dynasty advocates of Xingling poetics, Yuan Mei stressed the poet’s
personal sensibilities. However, there was also an innovative point in his discussion. He
stressed xingqing (性情 feelings, emotion) more strongly than had his Ming-dynasty
predecessors.67 He wrote:

In the first place, poetry is something that originates from emotion (情). First there
is always an inscrutable emotion, then, there can be an immortal poem. As for the
gravest matter in emotions, nothing is like passion between a man and woman.68

Yuan Mei considered “emotion” the primary component in poetry and held romantic
passion in a positive light as the element that agitates one’s emotions most. The emphasis
on romantic emotion as a major source for poetry was an innovation Yuan Mei introduced
into the history of Xingling poetics.

Xingling Poetics and Women

In a discussion about how the publication of women’s poetry flourished in the late
Ming era, Dorothy Ko draws a parallel between the general interest in women’s literary voices of the period and the vitalization of Xingling poetics, which emphasized the sincere expression of the poet’s inner self.69 As Ko asserts a connection between the rise of Xingling poetics and the emergence of women poets in the Ming dynasty, we may also consider the connection between the proliferation of Seirei poetics and the growing acceptance of women poets in late-Edo Japan.

Kikuchi Gozan, a leading member of the Kokoshisha, wrote in the fifth issue of his Poetry Talks from the Five Mountains that women poets of the present times were centered at the household of Yamamoto Hokuzan, the first advocate of Seirei poetics.70 Gozan then introduced Hokuzan’s wife Shoto (Imagawa Tami, 1756-1831), a painter who also composed kanshi, and his two female students, Bunki (Osaki Ei, ?-1818) and Unsho (?-?).71 Bunki and Unsho were among seventeen boarding students at Hokuzan’s private school, the Keigijuku. Hokuzan’s school of Chinese literature was open to women, and the acceptance of female students was not a point of criticism.

After the introduction of Yuan Mei, who was known for his patronage of women poets, the advocates of Seirei poetics came to support women poets more openly and enthusiastically. For example, Kikuchi Gozan stated in the second issue of his Poetry Talks that he strove to spread women’s kanshi works, collecting them whenever he had the opportunity. In all, he introduced fifteen contemporary Japanese women kanshi poets in his series of Poetry Talks. While Gozan was introducing Japanese women poets, Okubo Shibutsu, another leading member of the Kokoshisha, introduced contemporary Chinese
women poets, publishing selections from the anthology of Yuan Mei's female disciples. As these facts reveal, the advocates of Seirei poetics often became sponsors of, and advocates for, women poets.

Yuan Mei's Xingling poetics were favorably inclined toward romantic love, which increased the Seirei poets' interest in "women." One outcome was the flowering of the *chikushi* (Ch. *zhuzhi*, bamboo branches) style poetry, which in late-Edo Japan typically described scenes in the pleasure quarters. *Chikushi* style poetry of this time was first exemplified by Ichikawa Kansai's *Song of the Northern Quarter* (Hokurika 北里歌), which was published in 1786 under his provisional pen-name. This work, including thirty *kanshi* verses with twenty-one *ukiyo-e*-style illustrations, depicted spectacles in Yoshiwara and expressed romantic sentiments, often from a courtesan's point of view. The verses are lyrical and straightforward, unlike contemporaneous *sharebon* stories that comically and cynically described activities in the pleasure quarters. Later in 1799, Okubo Shibutsu wrote, evaluating the *Songs of the Northern Quarter*.

Around the end of the Meiwa period [1764-72], the lingering influence of the Ken'en school [of Ogyu Sorai] had not yet been extinguished. Poets were often inclined to support a formalistic approach to writing poetry. Master Kansai composed thirty verses for the *Songs of the Northern Quarter*, and with this work he demonstrated that nothing is prohibited from description in the poetry of the Seirei school. Shibutsu clearly associated Kansai's poems on the pleasure quarters with the movement of
Seirei poetics.

Following Kansai, members of the Kokoshisha produced verses in the *chikushi* style. Kashiwagi Jotei composed thirty *chikushi*-style *kanshi* and compiled them into *Yoshiwara Songs* (*Yoshiwarashi* 吉原詞, 1789?). Kikuchi Gozan published his *Continuation of Yoshiwara Songs* (*Zoku yoshiwarashi* 続吉原詞) and *Chikushi Poetry from Fukagawa* (*Fukagawa chikushî* 深川竹枝) in 1797. Translated below is an example of the *chikushi*-style poetry composed by Kashiwagi Jotei.

There go sounds of wooden clappers, the night is growing late.

A young man faces a young woman.

They are full of emotion yet speechless, being shy together.

Incense shaped like the character “heart,” placed by the pillows, burns out.

In this poem, Jotei conspicuously emphasized “emotion,” the central idea of the Seirei poetics, by using the expression “*ta/o*” (多情, full of emotion) and especially mentioning the incense in the shape of a “heart” (心).

The expression of romantic sentiments in poetry was also applied to conjugal relationships. For example, Yokoyama Chido (Noriyoshi, 1788-1836), a high-ranking samurai of the Kanazawa domain who later became a chief retainer (*karō*), wrote about his affection for his wife in the *kanshi* form while having her write *kanshi* as well. His wife Rancho (Tsuda Kei, 1795-1815), the daughter of another high-ranking samurai family in Kanazawa, married Chido around the age of twelve and practiced *kanshi* composition. Soon after she died at the age of twenty-one in a difficult delivery of their first child, Chido
privately published one hundred of each his and her Chinese poems in her memory. Some poems express their affection. The following are examples. The first two were probably composed while Chido was in Edo on duty, while the last one was composed when Rancho died.

To My Husband

Skies clear on cloudy day as the hour approaches noon.
Spring departs in the fourth month, days pass like years.
Nesting swallows thread the blinds and fly off as a pair,
While I, alone, lean on the railing, too languid to pluck the strings.

Responding to My Wife

Thoughts of home in the wanderer's heart deepen day after day,
In a butterfly dream, resentment at being away from you deepens.
I convey words for the person at home to bitterly read,
With one cup of wine only to dispel my sad sighs.

Grieving Her Death

Her lively scent has faded from our conjugal quilt,
In dreams my soul starts awake, the night is long.
Past memories, clearly etched, disturb my thoughts.
In one moment hard to convey this hurt in the heart.
The poems that Chido composed for Rancho in particular focus on emotional expressions, in accordance with the principle of Seirei poetics. Actually, Chido studied poetry under Okubo Shibutsu, when the former was on duty in Edo. They became close friends, and Chido even invited Shibutsu to his home in Kanazawa. Directly and intimately influenced by a leading advocate of Seirei poetics, Chido expressed his private feelings for his wife. He also eagerly promoted his wife’s poetry. In 1824, he published another 126 kanshi verses by Rancho, entitling the anthology “Collection of an Extinct Scent” (Dankoshu 断香集). It was prefaced by Okubo Shibutsu. In 1834, Chido published his second wife’s kanshi anthology, again with Shibutsu’s preface. The second wife, Yokoyama Ei (1805-61), received an elegant name Ran’en, obviously named after Rancho. Her anthology was entitled “A Collection of the Continued Scent” (Zokkoshu 続香集).

It was innovative that a samurai of such high status as Chido published his affectionate, private feelings for his wife and the anthologies of his wives. It shows that the expression of personal romantic affection in the kanshi form had become widely accepted and even admired after the praise of emotion by the Seirei school. This trend certainly encouraged the emergence of women poets, as the desire for romantic expression in poetry required favorable attention towards women, often favoring a woman who could share in the literary romantic expression.

**The New Ideal of the Female Mate**

In the romantic inclination of kanshi poets of the late Edo period, a new ideal of
the conjugal relationship can be detected. Rai San’yo, the most well-known scholar, poet and writer from this era, described his ideal of a mate in a letter. The letter was written in 1813 to his friend Shinozaki Shochiku (1781-1851), a wealthy Confucian scholar who ran a successful private school in Osaka. San’yo had moved to Kyoto and opened a private school two and a half years earlier. He was ready to settle and start a family and asked his friends to help him find a wife.

It may sound like a story (小説 shosetsu), but I have an opinion. A woman not involved in using brushes would not tolerate life with a destitute Confucian scholar. Ordinary women yearn for good looking men and men with money. If a man doesn’t provide her with sets of clothing and tickets for the theater, she would appear like a zither out of harmony. There is a poem about a painting made jointly by a Chinese couple.

A refreshing work in their room, they cut a strip of white silk.

The husband draws a bamboo, while the wife paints an orchid.

I can imagine, combining a couple of superb arts in one painting,

They look at it, leaning shoulders together, under a crystal curtain.

This situation is, indeed, enviable.76

As this letter shows, San’yo was yearning to be married to a highly educated woman who would understand and share his literary and artistic life. He envied the couple described in the Chinese poem, who collaborated in making a painting. Interestingly, San’yo recognized his ideal of a companionate marriage as something that sounded like a “story” (shosetsu,
Ch. *xiaoshuo*. *Shosetsu*, a word that was later applied to indicate fictional prose literature developed under Western influence, was used to refer to Chinese fiction during the Edo period. Throughout the Edo period, Chinese fiction, both literary and vernacular, was actively imported into Japan and enthusiastically read among some intellectuals. Some of them, such as Asai Ryōi (1612–91), Tsuga Teishō (1718–94?), Takebe Ayatari (1719–74), Ueda Akinari (1734–1809), and Kyokutei Bakin (1767–1848), translated or adapted Chinese works into Japanese. Although it is uncertain to which romantic Chinese story San’yo was referring, much Chinese vernacular fiction after the late Ming period regarded a “companionate” marriage as ideal, a marriage between a talented man and a literate woman. As mentioned by Dorothy Ko, “portrayals of companionate marriage in Ming-Qing literature are too numerous to be recounted.” This popular, new literary conjugal ideal imported from China certainly influenced the perspectives of San’yo and other intellectual readers of the late Edo period.

Famous exemplary couples who embodied the companionate marriage at this time were *kanshi* poets and educators Yanagawa Seigan and his wife Cho Koran, and artists of Chinese-style paintings in Kyoto Okura Ritsuzan (1785–1850) and his wife Yoshida Shuran (1797–1866). The couples often participated in literary and artistic activities together. Seigan and Koran traveled together extensively, living in Edo, Kyoto and their home town in Mino, where they ran private schools. Their lifestyle and conjugal relationship were novel enough at the time to offend some conservative people. Notably, Seigan, who studied poetry under Yamamoto Hokuzan in his youth, not only helped his wife Koran’s
intellectual growth, but he also maintained a good friendship with Ema Saiko, helped Hara Saihin on her journey, and taught many female students, including Shinoda Unpo and Miwada Masako—who would later, in the early Meiji period, establish themselves as educators.

This was the cultural climate in which such notable women *kanshi* poets as Saiko, Saihin, Gyokusho, and Koran made their appearance in the literary and artistic world. Under the influence of Seirei poetics, which stressed the novelty of individual, original and sincere expressions, the *kanshi* form was opened to women as a vehicle to describe their environment and concerns. Then, following the reception of Yuan Mei’s poetics and the stress on emotion, female poets were further encouraged in their creativity, and male poets were encouraged to involve women in their literary activities.

Although this discussion is limited to intellectuals who specialized in Chinese literature and art, the generation active from the end of the eighteenth century through the first decades of the nineteenth century was especially open and encouraging of literary women more generally. This favorable climate supported educated, determined women who established themselves as poets, painters, and scholars. The three women who will be discussed individually in the following chapters are the scholar and poet Hara Saihin (1798-1859), the painter and poet Ema Saiko (1787-1861), and the learned poet Takahashi Gyokusho (1802-68). They are fine examples of those women who became recognized during the late Edo period on the merit of their exceptional education in Chinese art and literature.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE


5Atsuko Sakaki speculated on the erasure of Edo women’s literary contributions in a 1999 paper. As for why this erasure occurred, she mentioned the national desire to “invent the notion of women’s liberation in modern Japan,” which was emphasized in contrast to the severe gender discrimination practiced in the feudal society, and the gender association of Edo literature with the “masculine” as opposed to “feminine” Heian literature. See Atsuko Sakaki, “Sliding Doors: Women in the Heterosocial Literary Field of Early Modern Japan.” US-Japan Women’s Journal 17 (1999): 4, 32 n. 6.


7Among the five non-scholar writers, haiku poet Yokoi Yayū and Ōta Nanpo, a writer of comical poems and prose works, were to be later excluded from the Edo literary canon. Often they were samurai-class writers who lived official lives as retainers while producing their works.

8According to Tomi Suzuki, the term genbun-itchi was first used in 1885 by the scholar

9Haga Yaichi and Tachibana Sensaburō, Kokubungaku tokuhon, in Haga Yaichi senshū 2, ed. Haga Yaichi Senshū Linkai (Tokyo: Kokugakuin Daigaku, 1983), 3. 此書、古代に略にして、近世に詳ならば、普通の文の模範とすべきもの、彼に在らずして、此にあらばなり。

10Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō, Nihon bungakushi, vol. 2 of Meiji Taishō bungakushi shūsei, ed. Hiraoka Toshio (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1982), 211. かかる知くして、新に漢学者の手に成りたる、一種の和漢混交文は、實に今日國文の模範とすべきものなり。

11Suzuki Sadami, Nihon no “bungaku” gainen (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1998), 243-45. Suzuki Sadami thoroughly examines the changes in definitions of the term “bungaku” (literature) through the history of Japan.


13Haga Yaichi and Tachibana Sensaburō, Kokubungaku tokuhon, 3. 戯曲・小説・俳句・狂歌の如きは、従来我文学上、殊に観来て来ることなれども、是亦一種の光彩を文園に放つものなるを以て、此書には其模範として最も高雅なるもの、若千篇を選出ししたり。

14Suzuki Sadami, Nihon no “bungaku” gainen, 243.

15My translation. Haga Yaichi, Preface to Meiji bungaku-shi, by Iwaki Juntaro (Tokyo: Ikueshia, 1906), 1. 徳川の學者が是徳を重んじて情を軽んじ、文藝の暗黒面を認めてその価値の至大なるを忘らるる如し。新井白石は猿楽の流行を訝、政経紛乱の兆として苦言を將軍に進め、山本北山は澄琉璃の文を愛読しながら、尚之を断中にのみ繕読せずといふ。曲亭馬琴の如き、生涯を小説の述作に委ねたる人すら、言ふところは有用の書を購はんが為に無用の書を著すといふに在り。何ぞその文藝に対するの冷淡にしてこれを軽侮したるの甚しきや。


17Ibid.

18Tsujō’s life will be described later in this introduction.

19Takejo was a shirabyōshi who served the Owari domain. She wrote the “Kōshī michi no ki,” a travel diary that described her journey from Owari to Edo, in 1720. It was first published in 1809 by the kokugaku scholar Shimizu Hamaomi.

20Yuya Shizuko was born the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Edo. She studied waka composition under Kamo no Mabuchi. After her death at a young age, her waka anthology Ayanuno was published in 1758. She wrote a travel diary “Ikaho no michiyukiburi” in 1750.


22Haga Yaichi, Nihon kanbunbukushi, in Haga Yaichi icho, ed. Haga Dan (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1928), 1.日本漢文文史とは日本人の作った支那文学の歴史である。之を私は日本文学史の一部として見たると思ふ。The Nihon kanbungakushi was compiled a year after Haga’s
death by his student Sano Yasutarō who wrote it referring to Haga’s manuscript of the lectures and his own and his friends’ notes on the lectures. The class “Nihon Kanbungakushi” was taught for two years from April 1908.

2Ibid., 2.

23Ibid., 2.


25Ibid., 4.

26Ibid., Preface, 1. 我國文學の中にも、取りわけて和歌和文こそ、女子には適すべきものなか。女子はよろず優美なるを和びて、輕薄浮華なるは好ましからず。・・・押女子の文学者は、男子の文學と異なり、勇壮活潑なるを避け、温順優雅なるべきは、其性質自らこれを示せり。

27Suzuki Sadami, Nihon no “bungaku” gainen, 169.

28Ibid.

29Ibid.

30Tomi Suzuki, Narrating the Self, 43.

31In 1877 Tokyo University was divided into four departments: Law, Science, Medicine, and Letters. See, Suzuki Sadami, Nihon no “bungaku” gainen, 180.

32Suzuki Sadami, Nihon no “bungaku” gainen, 170.


34Hirata Yumi, Josei hyōgen no Meiji-shi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), 141, 251 n. 1.

35Ibid., 251 n. 1.

36Ibid., 141.

37Ibid., 139-40.


39Ibid., 22-23.


For example, Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714) used the word “otoko-moji” (men’s letters) to denote Chinese characters in a passage on literary education for girls in his book Wazoku dōjikun (Precepts for Children of the Laity, 1710). Kan Chazan, a Confucian scholar and educator and kanshi poet of Hiroshima, used the word “otoko-bun” (men’s writing style) to denote writings in classical Chinese in a comment on some of Hara Saihin’s poems. See, Hara Saihin, Saihin shishū, in vol. 14, Zoku zoku Nihon jurin sōsho, ed. Seki Giichirō (Tokyo: Tōyō Tosho Kankōkai), 12.

Joshua Mostow, “Mother Tongue and Father Script,” 137-38; Tomiko Yoda, Gender and National Literature, 105.

The translation is by Donald Keene. This is a passage from Wazoku dōjikun (Precepts for Children of the Laity, 1710). Donald Keene, Travelers of a Hundred Ages: Through 1,000 Years of Diaries (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 328.


Inoue Tsūjo Zenshū Shūtei linkai, ed., Inoue Tsūjo zenshū, 371.


Gotō Shōko and others, eds., Hajimete manabu Nihon josei bungakushi, 227-28.

The Chinese characters used for the name Shikin is “clear zither” (清琴) and are different from the name of an early Meiji woman writer, Shimizu Shikin (清水紫琴, “purple zither”).

Hirata Yumi, Josei hyōgen no Meiji-shi, 47. My translation. 世の学問や芸術に、熟心なる貴婦（かたが）は、少しにても、書物が読めると歯（か）が、或（あるひ）は術芸に達せると歯言へば、急に男子を侮り軽蔑して、我が良人（おっと）と仰ぎ、我が所夫（おっと）と貴び、生涯身を委（まか）すべき程の男子は、今の世にはなし杯と称（とな）へ、可憐（あたら）時期を過（あやま）ち、一生を寡婦（やもめ）くらしに、おはるかたも訳（さは）あるとの事なり。

Burton Watson explains the Kakuchōha as a school that “emphasized diction and formal elements of poetry over considerations of content or originality and advocated careful imitation of the works of the past, particularly those of the High T’ang period (early eighth century), the golden age of traditional Chinese poetry.” Burton Watson, Kanshi: The Poetry of Ishikawa Jōzan and Other Edo-Period Poets (San Francisco: North Point Press 1990), x. The poetic ideals of the Kakuchō school were vigorously propagated by the influential Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728). The theory remained influential through the eighteenth century.


Following is part of Yuan Hongdao’s commentary introducing his brother’s poems, which
exemplifies his poetic philosophy. Hongdao wrote, “Generally, [to compose a poem,] you just release your natural spirit (性靈), without binding yourself to formality. You should not write down a verse if it does not flow out from your own bosom (己胸臆). On a certain occasion when your emotions (情) and circumstances (境) correspond, a thousand words will flow out in a moment like water [of the rivers in China] naturally flows to east, and the words will enchant people. Among the phrases, some will be fine ones and others will have some blemish. As for the fine phrases, nothing needs to be said. As for the poor phrases, if they fully express the poet’s nature and are filled with his original expression, then I will greatly enjoy the awkward expressions. . . .” Yuan Hongdao, “Commenting on Xiaoxiu’s Poems,” quoted in Ibi Takashi, Edo shiikaron (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1998), 66. 大都独性靈，不拘格套，即自胸臆亦流，不欲下筆。有時情與境會，領刻千言，如水東注，令人驚魂。其间有佳处，亦有疵处。佳处自不必言，即疵处，亦多本色独造语，然予则极喜其疵处。


58 Li Panglong (1514-1570) was one of the scholars who led the literary movement to adopt archaic studies in the sixteenth-century Ming dynasty. The seven representative archaist-scholars were respectfully called the Seven Men of Talent (才子).

59 Hattori Nankaku (1683-1759) and Takano Rantei (1704-1757) were disciples of Ogyū Sorai. They excelled in poetry.

60 Wang Shizhen (1526-1580) was another of the archaist-scholars in sixteenth-century China and was counted among the Seven Men of Talent.


62 Ibid., 14. 大丈夫ナルモノ如何ノ、己ヲ有スル真詩ヲハテ、他ノ詩ヲ剽姦模擬スペキ.

63 Ibi Takashi, Edo shiikaron, 82.

64 Kansai purchased thirty-one volumes of Yuan Mei's anthology, Xiaocang shanfang shichao (小倉山房詩抄), in Nagasaki when he visited there in 1813. He selected 441 poems from the over 1,500 poems included in the anthology to publish in Japan. Ibi Takashi, Edo shiikaron, 256.

65 The original anthology of Yuan Mei's women disciples included poems by twenty-eight women, while Shibutsu's version included works by nineteen poets. Ibi Takashi, Edo no shidan jyōnarizumu (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2001), 146.


67 Matsushita Tadashi, Min, Shin no san shisetsu (Meiji Shoin; 1978), 154-56, 167.

68 Yuan Mei, Xiaocang shanfang wenji, vol.30, quoted in Matsushita Tadashi, Min shin no san shisetsu, 154. 且夫詩由情生者也。有必不可解之情，而後有必不可朽之詩。情所最先，莫如男女。

69 Ko explains, “The valorization of woman poets discussed above, or the equation of a
woman’s voice with sincerity, naturalness, and truthfulness, was a major impulse behind the boom in anthologies of women’s verse. . . . Men of letters began to recognize the literary and market potentials of women’s words around the end of the sixteenth century. From the perspective of literary history, this attention to women’s writings was part of a reaction against a rigid stylistic conformity that many critics saw as prevailing in the sixteenth century. The Chinese scholar Cao Shujian has termed this movement, which flourished from the Longqing period (1567-72) to the end of the Ming (1644), ‘the literature of inspirational gusto’ (xingling wenxue). Influenced by philosopher Li Zhi’s (1527-1602) notion of ‘innocence’ (tongxin), this loosely defined movement held that the mark of good literature was the truthful expression of one’s inner self. Adherence to ancient or contemporary schools of literary style was denigrated, as was the regurgitation of the Classics. It is thus not surprising that many adherents of this movement were also promoters of women’s writings.” Dorothy Ko, Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 59-60.


71Bunki, who was disowned by her family at the age of thirty-four, found enjoyment in reading and poetic composition. After Hokuzan’s death in 1812, Bunki became a boarding student at the school of Asakawa Zen’an (1781-1849), previously a student of Hokuzan. She died in 1818 at Zen’an’s house. Unshō, another of Hokuzan’s female students, fell in love with another boarding student at Keigijuku, Tachi Kaian (or Saitō Tenrai). They married and moved to Kiryū, and there opened a private school. Ibi Takashi, Edo no shidan jyānarizumu, 160-61, 87-88.

72Okubo Shibutsu, Shiseidō shiwa, quoted in Ibi Takashi, Edo shiika ron, 167. 明和の末、藩園の余燼未だ尽きず。詩人動（やや）もすれず卒するに格調を以てす。寛斎先生北里三十首を作り、以て性靈の詩、言う可からざる者莫見を見（あら）はす。

73Ibi Takashi, Edo shiika ron, 169.

74Kashiwagi Jotei, Yoshiwara shi, quoted in Ibi Takashi, Edo shiika ron, 170.


76Yokoyama Chidō, ed., Kaidōen gasshū (Kanazawa: Utsunomiya Genpei, 1906). 寄外（蘭蝶）

77Yokoyama Chidō, ed., Kaidōen gasshū (Kanazawa: Utsunomiya Genpei, 1906). 答内（致堂）

45
Dorothy Ko defines companionate marriage as follows. “By ‘companionate marriage’ I refer to a union between an intellectually compatible couple who treat each other with mutual respect and affection.” Dorothy Ko, Teachers of the Inner Quarters, 179.

Discussing the popularity of companionate marriage in literature from the late Ming, Ko also writes; “The cult of qing, the publishing boom, women’s education, and the ‘talent-virtue-beauty’ ideal all contributed to the currency of companionate marriage in seventeenth-century Jiangnan. Although many real-life couples did not live happily ever after, the pages of Ming-Qing novels and dramas were inundated with romantic and idealized portrayals of love matches.” Dorothy Ko, Teachers of the Inner Quarters, 183-84.

Although the novels San’yō and other intellectuals actually read are not within the scope of this study, I would like to show two examples that suggest a source of their literary, romantic imagination. Yanagawa Seigan, San’yō’s close friend, referred to The Peony Pavilion, writing a poem on the “Portrait of a Beautiful Woman Reading a Book” done by Hirata Gyokuon (Toyoko, 1787-1855), an accomplished female painter of Onomichi in present-day Hiroshima prefecture. Gyokuon, the daughter of a wealthy merchant, studied Shijō school Japanese painting from her childhood as well as Chinese literature, which she studied under Rai Shunpū (1753-1825) and Kan Chazan (1748-1827). After her father’s death and the collapse of their family business in her late teens, she decided to become a professional painter to support herself and her mother. She became a successful, independent painter. On Gyokuon’s painting, “Portrait of a Beautiful Woman Reading a Book,” Seigan wrote:

At the other side of the flowers, bush warblers are talking, intimately.
The female warbler is calling its mate, the voice woke the woman from a spring dream.

The daytime still remains, the yard is quiet.

By a bamboo screen, silently, she reads *The Peony Pavilion.*

Referring to *The Peony Pavilion*, Seigan reveals his association between the reading beauty in Gyokuon’s painting and Du Liniang, the intellectual and passionate female protagonist in the story. The poem above is quoted in Ito Makoto, *Yanagawa Seigan-ō: hu Kōran Joshi* (Gifu: Yanagawa Seigan-ō Itoku Keshōkai, 1925), 93.

The other example is found in a poem of Saikō. While Saikō was staying alone in the lodge of a temple in Kyoto, someone teased her by comparing her with the female protagonist of *The Story of Ying-ying*, a short story originally written by Yüan Chen (779-831) during the T’ang dynasty. Ying-ying is a beautiful, passionate woman who loves poetry and writing. Saikō rejected the association, writing the poem.

-Someone past her mature years, emotions turned to ashes,-
-I leave myself to a monastery cut off from dust and dirt.-
-Refreshing nights, I just want to open blue book-holders,-
-Unlike the one who awaited the moon in the west room.-


As these two examples suggest, famous Chinese romances were widely read among intellectuals in the late Edo period and male *kanshi* writers often projected the romantic images of Chinese female protagonists on intellectual women who were versed in Chinese literature.

Kamei Shōyō (1773-1836), a Confucian scholar in Fukuoka, criticized Seigan who traveled about Kyūshū with his young wife, saying she looked as if she were a woman from the pleasure quarter. See Nakamura Shin’ichirō, *Rai San’yō to sono jidai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1971), 364.
CHAPTER TWO

HARA SAIHIN (1798-1859)

If I accomplish my ambitious venture while young,

There must be, in the world, a man who chases one with an unsavory reputation.

如教志業青年遂

世上寧無遂臭夫

(Hara Saihin, “Responding to Master Kyōhei”)

Hara Saihin was a native of the Akizuki, a small branch of the Fukuoka domain governed by the Kuroda clan. Born into the family of an official scholar (藩儒 hanju), she was educated in Chinese literature from her childhood. After meeting with familial disasters during her early years, she began to gain a living and reputation by capitalizing on her Chinese scholarship. Eventually, in her thirtieth year, unmarried, she left her hometown for the city of Edo, in hopes of becoming a successful Confucian scholar. The lines above from a poem composed in 1827 on her way to Edo fully express her social aspirations. As the first line puts it, she had an “ambitious venture” to accomplish.

That Saihin’s ambition was to establish herself as a Confucian scholar is evidenced by the record of a conversation held between Saihin and Matsuzaki Kōdō (1771-1844), a successful Confucian scholar in Edo.¹ She visited him on the twenty-fourth day of the
eleventh month of 1829, almost a year after her arrival in Edo. She stayed the night at his house. Early the following morning, they discussed the ways of “a woman’s self-establishment” (女子立身之道 joishi risshin no michi). Kōdō recorded the content of their discussion in his diary, Kōdō nichireki.

25th. Clear day. I got up early and offered a bowl of gruel to Saihin. At daybreak, I talked with her about the ways a woman could establish herself. Her intention was to emerge as a female scholar (女儒 nyōju). I admonished her, “As a woman, you have traveled alone for thousands of miles, and moreover, you have stayed with various people. Even if you have kept your chastity, you cannot avoid other people’s suspicious talk. You had better get married, breaking off your broad associations. Or, after serving at a lord’s household for five or six years, saving rewards from the office of the female quarter, then take your mother into your house and serve her. In this way, you can earn a living by yourself and change your frivolous reputation into one of a talent. Here you can complete your aim.” She seemed not yet to be convinced. I ordered some sake, but she left after a few cups. As this record reveals, Saihin firmly held to the idea and desire of gaining recognition as a “female Confucian scholar” (女儒 nyōju).

At the same time, Kōdō’s diary exposes his strong antipathy towards Saihin’s plan. First, he criticized her traveling, which included her association with many male intellectuals. Saihin stayed with those people on her way to Edo. Some were her father’s friends and others were cultured local men who favored the arts and welcomed sojourning
artists. As she was well learned in Chinese poetry and Confucian studies, Saihin associated almost exclusively with men familiar with Chinese literature. This could readily lead to the accusation of immorality. Kōdō advised Saihin instead to marry or work in the inner quarter of a lord’s Edo mansion, which he thought would be a more appropriate means for Saihin, as a woman, to secure her living.

Saihin was an unconventional character who maintained an unusual social ambition and acted to fulfill it. As Saihin put it, such a woman was likely to attain “unsavory” (臭) fame. Even while recognizing this, Saihin was never discouraged from seeking success and fame as a scholar. How was she, then, able to conceive and maintain her extraordinary aspiration? How did she conduct herself in order to achieve her goal? How did contemporary intellectuals respond to her unusual pursuit and how did they affect her? Interested in the conditions that enabled Saihin to uphold her aspiration, in the first section of this chapter I investigate her educational and familial background and her experiences. In the second section, I examine Saihin’s literary fashioning of her self in poetry, focusing on her complex gender identification. The section also considers how contemporary intellectuals responded to Saihin’s presence and the extraordinary pursuit of her goals. Her poetry is noticeably self-referential, which is typically reflected in her frequent use of the first person pronoun, ware (我 and 吾). Owing to her strong interest in self-presentation, Saihin’s works vividly embody the existence of a struggling, ambitious literary woman from the period.
I. Pursuit of *Shusse*

**Father's Expectation**

One principal reason that enabled Saihin to envision her career lies with her father’s strong encouragement. Saihin’s father, Hara Kosho (1767-1827), was a respected local official Confucian scholar in Akizuki, a position he had inherited from his adoptive father. He educated his daughter, as well as his two sons, in Chinese literature. Kosho initially may not have raised his daughter with the intention of making her a Confucian scholar. However, he had a strong interest in his young daughter’s “success,” which is obvious from letters he sent to Saihin in 1812 from Edo. Kosho visited Edo twice attending the lord of Akizuki. He stayed in the city for his official duties from the twelfth month of 1810 to the fourth month of 1811 and the fourth month of 1812 to the fifth month of 1813. A letter written in the fifth month in 1812, addressing Saihin, who was in her fifteenth year, reads, “If you achieve excellent skill in calligraphy, you may possibly advance in the world” (手習見事出来上り候ハヽ出世も出来可申候 tenarai migoto dekiagarisōrohaba *shusse* mo dekibeku mōshisōro).³

In this phrase, Kosho uses the word “*shusse*” (出世). This literally translates as “emergence in the world,” meaning “public advancement” or “success in society.” The word, often used in the expression “*risshin-shusse*” (self-establishment and public advancement), later became a popular credo among ambitious young men in the upheaval of the Meiji period (1868-1912). But in the Edo period with its stable class system and gender discriminations, what kind of “*shusse*” was legitimately available to a woman?
Actually, "shusse" was not such a distant idea for women in the Edo period. The interest of women in "shusse" is typically seen in the popular game sheets called e-sugoroku (picture-sugoroku), a game similar to backgammon, which is played with dice on a large piece of paper divided into sections with colorful illustrations. Developed in the seventeenth century, the game’s design was based on a variety of themes. One typical theme was "shusse" and some shusse sugoroku were designed specifically for young women. Recently, a few scholars, including Anne Walthall, Hata Naoko, Yabuta Yutaka, and Susanne Formanek have analyzed these sugoroku games, while discussing the desirable life for women of the period. What they all agree on is that, for women, especially for those of the merchant class and wealthy local farmer families, going into service at the ōoku, the domestic quarters of shogun and local lords’ households, was a very desirable experience.

There were numerous ōoku in Edo. Under Tokugawa rule, local lords were obliged to live one year in Edo and the next in their province, alternating years, while their wives and children, as a rule, resided always in Edo. Consequently, all local lords had residences in Edo as well as in their domains. Ōoku, the great inner-quarter of the shogun, was the representative model of domestic quarters, where the shogun, his wives, children, mother and their ladies-in-waiting and maids all lived. Each local lord’s household had a similar arrangement. This situation provided middle- to higher-class women in Edo with a great opportunity for decent employment. Especially women and parents of daughters of the merchant and farmer classes were enthusiastic about service in the inner-quarters.
Employment in a high-ranking samurai household was socially prestigious and would possibly lead to a better marriage. For these women, the *oku* functioned as an educational institution, where the young women would be taught fine manners and sophisticated culture.

It is not clear how much of this enthusiasm was shared by daughters of the samurai class, to which Saihin belonged. While non-samurai class women needed to cultivate special skills such as music and dance to gain an advantage in the competition for entering an inner quarter, samurai class daughters could enter into an inner quarter, usually that of the lord’s household to which her father was in service, more easily and with less competition. For example, Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825), the daughter of an official doctor working at the Edo residence of the Sendai domain, entered into the service in the Sendai domain’s inner quarter in Edo at the age of sixteen. Her highly educated mother had strongly hoped for it, since she regretted that she herself had not had the experience of working in an inner quarter. She opposed accepting a marriage proposal for her young daughter, saying that it would be a pity to marry so early since she would not be able to do anything once she had a child. Instead, she sent Makuzu to the inner quarter. For samurai class daughters, service at a lord’s household might not have been a brilliant situation to yearn for, yet still it was an agreeable experience.

In the inner quarter, higher positions were reserved for the daughters of upper class samurai families, while lower positions were open to daughters of lower samurai families, wealthy merchants and some powerful local farmers. For women who had excellent skill in
composition and calligraphy, there was a desirable office called *yūhitsu*, a middle-ranked position, which dealt with diaries, records, documents and letters. A *yūhitsu* in the inner quarter of Tokugawa Iesada (1824-1858), for example, received eight *koku* of rice (*kiri-mai*),

7 twenty-five *ryō* of money (*gōriki-kin*), rice enough to hire one male servant and two maids (*fuchi-mai*) annually, and other minor benefits.8 *Otoshiyori*, also called *rōjo* or *tsubone*, women of the highest position in the organization who supervised the *ōoku*, received fifty *koku* of rice, sixty *ryō* of money, and extra rice enough to hire ten servants and maids. If a woman served the inner quarter longer than thirty years, she could continue to receive either *kirimai* or *gōriki-kin*, whichever had more worth, and the *fuchi-mai* after her retirement for as long as she lived. Thus, service at an inner quarter could financially secure a woman's life, providing a samurai-class woman in the Edo period with an alternative to marriage.

When Kosho mentioned "*shusse*" in his letter to Saihin, he was probably thinking about the possibility of Saihin’s advancement in the inner quarter of his domain. Staying in Edo, Kosho found educated women from respected families working at lords’ households. He was especially impressed by a woman named Taso, who was serving at the Akizuki domain’s Edo residence. In the intercalary second month of 1810, curious about Taso’s literary reputation, Kosho sent a Chinese verse to her and received her response in *waka* form. Impressed, he wrote about the exchanges in a letter to his colleagues in his home domain, admiring her reading ability (in Chinese) and *waka* composition.9 Soon after this incident, in the same month, he wrote to Saihin and strongly encouraged her to put more
effort into her learning. He was most concerned with her calligraphic skill, in which she seems to have been weak.

. . . Please make your best effort in your studies. I think your calligraphy (書) should be improved. In Edo, you do not see women who produce poor calligraphy, poor writing, or are illiterate, which you may see in your province. Of course, we are not talking about those who are married to the sardine-seller or such. As for the women who serve in a lord’s household, even a girl of the lowest rank writes properly. So please, make your best effort. . .

Mentioning properly educated women in Edo, Kosho urged Saihin to improve her writing skill. At this time, Kosho was comparing Saihin to women in Edo, to those in service in inner quarters. Then, in a letter of 1812, he told her that she would be able to attain public advancement (shusse) if she could improve her calligraphic skill. Kosho was most likely envisioning his bright daughter’s advancement in an official position in an inner quarter.

**Downfall**

While Saihin’s father showed interest in having Saihin serve at the inner quarter of his domain, she did not take up any office. Actually, her chance for an official position at the domain’s inner quarter lapsed because of her father’s untimely dismissal from his official positions.

Hara Kosho began his career as an official professor, succeeding to his adoptive father’s position in 1787. He was promoted and by the year 1800, he was appointed head of
the domain's school, the Keikokan. He also started a private school in his home, which gradually became popular, even attracting students from outside the domain. In 1805, the family was provided with a more spacious house, so that Kosho's home school could accommodate more students. He gained the confidence of the Akizuki lord and in 1808 the Hara family received an extraordinary elevation. For three generations, the family had been classified as the house of an official scholar and a lower-class samurai of *musoku-gumi*\(^{11}\) with a small annual stipend of 14 *koku* of rice. However, in 1808, their status was raised to that of middle-class (*oumamawari-gumi*), providing them with 100 *koku* of rice annually.\(^{12}\)

As a middle-class samurai, Kosho was then allowed to attend the lord more closely and began his career as an administrative official while maintaining his professorship and headship at the Keikokan. He was appointed Head Manager of Money and Clothing (*gonando-gashira*) in 1810, which provided him opportunities to visit Edo while attending his lord.

Then, in 1812, while in Edo on official duty, Kosho suddenly lost favor.\(^{13}\) He was dismissed from both his administration position and the professorship of the Keikokan. This meant the end of the Hara family's traditional occupation. Kosho's elder son, Hakkei (or Eitarō), who inherited the headship together with the 100 *koku* of basic income (*karoku*) in 1813, was not appointed to a position related to the domain's school, even though he had been properly educated and had worked at the Keikokan as an assistant instructor while his father was heading the school. Hakkei eventually left his office, the Section of Weapons (*buki-kata*), in 1823 because of sickness. Kosho's second son, Kinjirō, did not inherit the
headship either on account of sickness. The brothers moved to Buzen to recuperate from their illnesses while opening a private school there to earn a living. The Hara family’s relationship to the domain was severed and the chance of Saihin acquiring a position at the domain’s inner quarter accordingly lapsed.

**Traveling and Training**

After his early retirement, Kosho began to travel widely, visiting his scholar-friends and giving lectures. Saihin occasionally accompanied him. In 1815, Kosho took his wife Yuki and Saihin on a trip as far as Hiroshima, covering a distance of about three hundred kilometers. In 1816, Saihin accompanied her father, visiting Toyoura in present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture, where he gave a series of lectures. After these initial trips, she regularly accompanied him on his journeys. At home, she assisted in his private school and poetry society, while her brothers were often away from home due to duty or illness.

In 1823, the year Saihin’s elder brother Hakkei left office, Kosho took Saihin on a grand trip to Nagasaki, a very special place in the Edo period where people could experience the exoticism of foreign cultures. Kosho and Saihin were welcomed by local officials and wealthy intellectual townsmen. Kosho decided to stay for a while in Nagasaki to give lectures on Confucian texts and poetry. According to Kosho’s letter to his wife Yuki, he decided to stay a while in Nagasaki so that Saihin could “experience the world” (*seken-itasu*). With this intention, Kosho made Saihin the primary lecturer at their
temporary school in Nagasaki. The school was popular and received many visits from local officials, intellectual townspeople, and their children. Kosho proudly wrote to Yuki that Saihin taught these influential people "as if they were mere kids."\textsuperscript{15} In another letter, he reported that Saihin alone was invited to a party held for her by officials of the Nagasaki magistrate and that she came back after midnight—about two o'clock—having beaten her hosts at drinking. Kosho boastfully wrote to Yuki that Saihin did not seem to have a hangover the following morning and that he was perplexed as she was becoming famous for both her poetic compositions and her drinking.\textsuperscript{16} Although he wrote that he was "perplexed" (komariirisōro) about Saihin's fame as a drinker, he was, in fact, happy and proud of her excellent drinking ability. In the Edo period, drinking capacity was respected, especially in male society. At the beginning of 1824, Kosho returned home, leaving Saihin alone in Nagasaki. She taught another four months there before she returned to Akizuki.

By this time, Kosho seemed to have realized that Saihin could become famous, even more so as she was a woman. In a letter to home from Nagasaki, he expressed his recognition of her popularity as follows: "I think Saihin must be winning great popularity as she is unusual"; "Michi [Saihin] seems to be the first intelligent woman who has visited Nagasaki."\textsuperscript{17} As these remarks suggest, Saihin could attract attention all the more because of her extraordinariness, that is, being a woman and excellently educated in Chinese literature. As an unusual woman who had the skill to exchange poems in Chinese and give lectures on the Chinese Classics, she had more potential for gaining a reputation than her brothers.
In the beginning of 1825, the year following Saihin’s return from Nagasaki, she was to leave home by herself, this time for the city of Kyoto. To make her travel possible, Kosho arranged for her to be formally adopted by a man of the samurai class of the Kurume domain, since the law of Akizuki domain did not allow women of the samurai class to travel alone.\(^{18}\) Saihin was then in her twenty-eighth year. As she was leaving, Kosho presented Saihin with a poem, the last line of which reads, “I will not allow you to return to your hometown without fame” (不許無名入故城).\(^{19}\) The idea of “returning home with fame” implied social success in cities, which was most often expected of sons.

Kosho continually expressed his hope for Saihin’s success. A letter by Kosho sent to Saihin in Kyoto in 1826 included the following message: “My illness persists and I am in a great difficulty. . . . I am truly anticipating that Yoshitarō [Kosho’s student] and you will gain fame.”\(^{20}\) Kosho placed his hopes in his daughter, treating her as if she were a surrogate son. Saihin seems to have been happy to assume this position, and actually began to create a masculine persona both in her social life and literature, which will be discussed later.

**Motivations**

Saihin and her father both wanted Saihin to become famous as a Confucian scholar. In Edo, there was already an example of a woman scholar who was gaining a reputation. Takashima Bunpō (1791-1857), who grew up as the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Edo and was educated in calligraphy and Chinese literature, became known for her talent. Her
reputation as a scholar spread throughout the city and came to the attention of the shogunate. In 1821, the shogunate employed her as a teacher for the ladies-in-waiting of the inner quarter (ōoku). Following the shogunate’s example, the Kishū and Owari domains, two among the three major related domains of the Tokugawa shogunate (gosanke), also invited Bunpō to give lectures at their inner quarters. After these events, her reputation soared and she received more than six-hundred students, both men and women. She became a great social success. It was in 1825, just four years after Bunpō had been employed by the shogunate, that Saihin left her hometown Akizuki. As Bunpō’s contemporary, Saihin may have aspired to become successful as a female scholar.

The urgency of Saihin’s departure for a city was motivated not only by her desire to become a scholar, but also by the family’s poor financial condition. Although the family was receiving the 100 koku of basic income as karoku, it was not enough to sustain a proper lifestyle. Saihin’s two brothers, who were officially recorded as “retired,” were earning their livings in Buzen, teaching the local youngsters. Kosho, who was purged from the domain’s political and educational positions, likely had far fewer private students at home to provide him with income. Accordingly, he needed to travel, giving lectures. It was true, especially after his elder son Hakkei’s withdrawal from office, that the Hara family experienced severe financial difficulty. Saihin repeatedly attributed her departure from home to the family’s poor financial condition.

One example is found in a poem composed in 1826. Saihin composed the poem after she had returned home from Kyoto. Actually, while she was in Kyoto in 1826, she
heard of her father’s grave illness and hurried back home to attend him. Saihin wrote the following phrases, while attending Kosho with her two brothers, recalling the years past:

“... There are times when it is difficult to endure an impoverished condition./ We have two respectable parents./ Seeking the means to earn our livings, we were absent from home./ Each of us became a sojourner. . . .”21 According to these lines, Saihin and her two brothers left home to earn livings and support their parents.

Kosho died a few months after Saihin’s return. Then, in 1827, after a period of mourning, Saihin left home again, this time for Edo. On this occasion, she composed a long, affectionate farewell poem of fifty-four lines to a local male friend, Sano Zeizan.22 The poem recounts events from Saihin’s encounter with Zeizan in Nagasaki to the time when she decided to leave her hometown again in 1827. She wrote of an earlier departure in 1825 as follows: “When my family’s income had lessened, I laughed at myself./ It was difficult to endure our impoverished condition./ Risking my life, I left my parents’ home,/ And went as far as Kyoto.”23 In this poem, she claims that her departure in 1825 was made because the family’s finances were severely diminished.

The reason for her second departure to Edo in 1827 was described a little differently. The following excerpt from Saihin’s poem to Sano Zeizan describes her return from Kyoto in 1826 and her second departure for Edo in 1827.

... I, a child of this world, suddenly received news:

My father was suffering; I went home at full-tilt.
I was distraught just thinking of myself,

A grass mat for a sail was raised. I went, crossing waves both big and small.

Finally I entered my hometown without fame.

Fruitlessly, I had marred my father’s limitless favor.

Worrying, grieving, I steeped his medicine,

Morning and evening, with my younger and elder brothers.

Heaven did not take pity.

For the three months of spring, my tears did not dry.

Not so many days have passed since the mourning period ceased.

To follow my father’s will, I will leave again on a trip.

...24

According to this poem, when Saihin returned from Kyoto in 1826, it was with some guilt for breaking her promise “not to return home without fame.” After her father’s death, she decided to leave home again to fulfill the promise, which she now calls her father’s “will” (遺言).

Later in her life, in 1847, when she visited the Bōsō peninsula, Saihin composed a poem addressing a local doctor, Katō Genshō. In the poem, she again referred to her family’s poor finances as the reason for her departure from home in 1827. She wrote, recollecting.

...25

Both my father and brother passed away and my family’s income was limited.
As for me, I didn't wish to take a broom and become someone's wife.

I left my humble home by myself with my late father's writings.

Now I am thoroughly familiar with the difficulties of life in this world.

Actually, her elder brother Hakkei was not dead yet in 1827, when Saihin left Akizuki. Hakkei died in 1828, the year Saihin arrived in Edo. Her brother's death probably added to her father's death in order to emphasize the familial financial crisis at the time when she had left her hometown. Another reason revealed here is her aversion to marriage. Thus she left home, "with her father's writings," most likely in hope of publishing them in the city. This description suggests her desire to portray herself as a dutiful child.

Saihin attributed her independent journey to the family's poor financial situation, to her promise to her father, and to her rejection of married life. These reasons were justification for Saihin to spend twenty years in Edo in a struggle to gain fame for herself.

In Edo

Saihin attempted to establish herself as a "female scholar." However, her life in Edo was not easy. An extant fragment of her daily notes ranging from the beginning of the first month of 1831 to the third day of the fourth month of the same year, suggests that her life was unstable and somewhat reckless. According to these notes, she spent her days reading, composing poems, meeting and drinking with people, and occasionally giving lectures, tutoring, and weaving. It is very remarkable that she frequently stayed with other
people, mostly men—consuming a lot of alcohol at almost any opportunity. As Matsuzaki Kōdō recorded in his admonition to Saihin when she came to Edo, her association with men could cause unfavorable criticism. However, Saihin’s daily notes indicate her stay with different male friends very frankly, as if unconcerned with the moral implications and the potential harm to her reputation.

In Edo, Saihin was based at a temple called Shōnenji, located in Abegawa-chō of Asakusa. Sometimes she was long absent from the temple, staying with people. For example, she did not return to Asakusa for ten days from the twelfth of the second month of 1831. On the twelfth, she stayed at the official residence of the Kurume domain in Edo, which was located in present-day Mita district. The purpose of Saihin’s visit is unknown. The next day, on her way from the official residence of Kurume, she encountered Honda Masamoto and she stayed with him in Banchō in present-day Chiyoda-ku. Then, the following day, she “returned” to Mita from Banchō. Then on the fifteenth, Saihin went to Kaizu Denbei’s house together with Watanabe Tōri and others. Denbei’s identity is unknown other than that he was a resident of Hijirizaka in Mita. Tōri was a Confucian scholar from the Kiyosue domain of Chōshū.

On the seventeenth, she composed poems with Tōri and stayed the night at Honda Masamoto’s place. The following day, with several men from the Kurume domain and Tōri, she went boating and enjoyed viewing the plum blossoms. The next day, she got up late, suffering from a hangover, gave a lecture, and composed poetry (the place is unknown) and visited Tōri to make a picture of the boating at the Sumida river. On the afternoon of the
twentieth, Saihin returned to the official residence of Kurume from Tōri’s place and that night she stayed with Yoshimi Shichijirō, a samurai from the Kurume domain. The next day Saihin finally headed for Asakusa, but as she encountered a woman called Shunkō joshi (春光女史; her identity is unknown) along the way she stayed overnight at her place. The diary entry of the twenty-second understandably records, “Returned to Asakusa, very exhausted.”

Saihin’s notes are puzzling, as they indicate her frequent visits to the Kurume domain’s upper-residence (kamiyashiki), which was located in Mita, and her associations with men there. The upper-residence held the domain’s administrative offices. The samurai who came from their country homes to Edo for duty lived in the mansion. The lord and his wife also lived there. It is possible that Saihin was lecturing there, though her notes do not specifically indicate it. Nor is it known to whom she gave lectures. We learn from her notes that while she did not record her associations with women living in the domain’s mansion, she left a candid record of her associations with men. She also specified men with whom she stayed, which is again perplexing if we consider the moral code found in the Onna daigaku or in Matsuzaki Kōdō’s admonition against Saihin’s conduct mentioned earlier.

Saihin drank heavily with men, and the word “hangover” (shkusui 宿醉) is found here and there in the fragments of her daily notes. On the fourteenth day of the third month, for example, she drank with several men from the Kurume domain and Watanabe Tōri, while viewing flowers at the Gotenyama in Shinagawa. She became heavily drunk and had to be carried home (大醉抱倒帰). Then she agonized over a severe foot pain for more than
four days, which may have been gout.

The fragment from Saihin's daily notes also records the existence of two female friends, "Shunkō joshi" and Shinoda Unpō (1810-83). Shunkō has not yet been identified. One entry indicates that Saihin visited Shunkō and they drank together at her place until midnight, talking about Saihin's trips to Nagasaki and Hyōgo and about Shunkō's husband. The other woman mentioned, Shinoda Unpō, became known as a female Confucian scholar. Unpō was born into the family of a medical doctor in Shimoda of Izu, and moved to Edo with her family when she was six years old. At the age of nine, she began the study of Confucian texts with Asakawa Zen'an (1781-1849) and later studied Chinese poetry under Yanagawa Seigan. She married three times, divorcing twice. Her scholarship was recognized by the community and she eventually became a successful scholar and educator.30 In 1831, when Saihin wrote her diary entries, Unpō was still a young woman of twenty-two. One day, Saihin met Unpō by chance on her way home, and visited with her late into the night. Another day, Saihin visited Unpō's place and stayed through the night with her.

Fragments of Saihin's life in Edo are also recorded in the Nikkan saji bibōroku (A memorandum of trivia from everyday life) written by Hirose Kyokusō (1807-1863), who visited Edo for three months in 1837.21 Kyokusō was a talented poet and scholar from Hita in Kyūshū, and younger brother of Hirose Tansō (1782-1856), who was known as a teacher and manager of the private school the Kangien. Kyokusō was an old acquaintance of Saihin, and his nine meetings with her in Edo were recorded in his memorandum. For five of the
meetings, Saihin showed up with Watanabe Tōri, who seemed to be her closest friend in Edo. Kyokusō, Tōri, Saihin, and sometimes other men boated together, walked along the Sumida River, and drank together. Indeed, drinking seems to have been an indispensable tool for Saihin to socialize with her male friends. For example, on the twenty-seventh of the third month, Kyokusō visited Saihin at the Shōnenji for chat and drinks. The next day Saihin visited Kyokusō and they went to a tavern to drink again.

These recorded facts about Saihin’s activities in Edo are incompatible with the strict gender ideology propagated by Tokugawa society. However, a puzzling fact is that she did not receive such severe criticism as to inhibit her from associating with men and drinking with them publicly. Her activities, which seem to have been against the moral climate, did not hinder her from gaining some reputation as a scholar during her life time.

Meanwhile, only a few of Saihin’s poems composed in Edo are available. Her life in Edo, as expressed in her poetry, was typically represented as one filled with hardship and frustration. The following poem was composed ten years after her arrival in Edo.

Thoughts on New Year’s Day

The temple bell has been rung—one hundred-eight peals.

My dream about my hometown interrupted, the sky already light.

In the fresh morning—my image in the mirror—I pity myself for having been ill.

Reflecting my distress, a few white hairs have grown.

Long since has my poetic inspiration flagged, because of the medicine.
My desire to return home fruitlessly chases the setting sun.

I am here alone ten years to fulfill my father’s will.

How do I dare return to my hometown with no fame?\(^{32}\)

Being sick and ill, she was distressed. However, the last line expresses her resolve to remain in Edo to fulfill her promise of becoming famous. The following poem, also composed in Edo, expresses her frustration and aspirations.

The Middle of Autumn. I Composed These Poems in Response to the Verse, “Tonight the moon is bright and everyone is viewing it.”\(^{33}\)

[translated below is the third poem]

When one is determined, nothing goes without reward.

I sing on and on, to drain my frustration and indignation.

My body is like dust on grass,

My spirit is like a bamboo shoot under a rock:

Bent, wound, waiting for the time to burst out,

Enduring severe wind and frost.

I love tonight with the bright moon best.

Refreshing breeze comes, inexhaustibly.\(^{34}\)

Frustrated, Saihin compared herself to “dust,” an insignificant existence. Yet her spirit is like “a bamboo shoot under a rock,” challenged by a huge obstacle but still awaiting its time to emerge into the world.

Although Saihin’s life in Edo may not have been easy, her public reputation
certainly grew. This fact is verified by lists of well-known literati and artists published during the twenty years of her stay in Edo. In the late Edo period, lists of scholars and artists, so-called *jinmei-roku* (人名録), which included various literary and artistic masters' names, addresses and fields of expertise, were occasionally published. The publication was intended to assist people who were planning to visit Edo to locate masters for study or to obtain paintings or calligraphy. During Saihin's stay in Edo from 1828 to 1848, the first version of the *Widely Useful List of Various Contemporary Literati and Artists in Edo* (江戸現在広益諸家人名録 Edo genzai kōeki shoka jinmei-roku) was published in 1836, and the second version in 1842. In the first version of this book, twenty-three women among 564 literati or artists were listed and in the second version, again twenty-three women among 665 were listed. Saihin's name was listed in the second edition. As for the other women who excelled in Confucian studies or Chinese verse, Unpō, Takahashi Gyokushō (1802-68), Yanagawa Kōran (1804-79), Takashima Bunpō, and Bunsō were also listed.

Saihin was recognized as an excellent literary Confucian scholar in another Edo *bunjin* guide: the two volumes of *Evaluation of Well Known Contemporary Edo Literati* (現存雷鳴江戸文人壽命附 genzon raimei edo bunjin jumyō zuke), which were published in 1849 and 1850. These were edited by Hata Ginkei (1790-1870), a medical doctor and master of *kyōka*, or comic poetry in the *waka* form. He listed 216 Edo *bunjin*, among whom were fifteen women. He put each *bunjin*’s name, address, an *ukiyo-e* style portrait, a comment in *waka* form, and an imaginary age that embodied Ginkei’s evaluation. “A
thousand years old” indicated the highest evaluation. Thirty-five bunjin received this honor, Saihin among them, and she was the only woman to receive this highest evaluation. The comment on her reads, “nothing is left to desire from her scholarship of Confucian study. Poetry, prose composition, amazing brush work, all splendid!” (kyōgaku ha ifu koto mo nashi, shi, bunshō, me wo odorokasu fude no migotosa) (Fig. 1). As for the other women who excelled in Chinese literature, Bunpō, Unpō, and Gyokushō were listed. Bunpō received “990,” while Unpō and Gyokushō received “900 years.” Although the assessments in this book depended solely on Ginkei’s personal judgment, it nonetheless demonstrates that Saihin was recognized as an excellent literary Confucian scholar in contemporary Edo.

Another witness to Saihin’s fame is Hirose Kyokusō. Kyokusō reported about her life in Edo to his brother Tansō, who had also known her personally. Tansō noted in his diary that his brother, who had visited Edo, told him that Saihin had gained quite a reputation in literary society.41 As shown by the two guide books on famous Edo literati and Tansō’s note, Saihin successfully attained some fame in Edo.

Saihin desired to continue working in Edo to further develop her reputation. However, there was a concern that eventually made her return home. In Akizuki, Saihin’s aged mother Yuki was living under the care of Yoshida Seizō, who became head of the Hara family as the adoptive heir of Hara Hakkei. After Kosho’s death in 1827, Saihin’s brothers died in succession: the elder died in 1828, and the younger in 1832. As the only surviving child, Saihin strongly hoped to live with her mother for her mother’s remaining years. Saihin requested the Akizuki domain permission for Yuki to move to Edo. The request was
rejected. Then, in 1841, after thirteen years in Edo, Saihin wrote an appeal directly to the domain’s Steward (karō), Inoue Shōzaemon, in Chinese, making the request for Yuki’s move. Saihin expressed to Inoue her strong desire to live with her mother in Edo. She wrote that she did not wish to return Akizuki because once she did so, it would be very difficult for her to return to Edo.

... As the ancient [Confucius] used to say, “As a traveler, one holds an ever-lasting sadness, living some place afar depending on strangers. If you plan to support your family after establishing your fame, how can you avoid the grief of missing the opportunity to attend to your parents?” This is what I, Saihin, am agonizing over every morning and evening. How many times I have felt I would go mad! ... 42

As this argument reveals, Saihin considered herself still working toward the goal of establishing her fame as a scholar. Her desire to pursue social success and her hope of taking care of her mother were in conflict as long as she lacked the domain’s permission for Yuki to move to Edo.

The appeal was rejected again. The domain had concluded that Yoshida Seizō, the heir of the Hara household, was very able to continue to look after Yuki as her adopted son. Then, in 1843, Saihin made a direct appeal to the Akizuki lord. This was also written in literary Chinese. Saihin argued;

... As for the administration’s decision, I don’t say it is unreasonable. Since I have read some books, I have a rough idea about social duties. However, there is good
reason why I would violate the standard rule and continue to make these offensive requests. I did not marry. I have been earning my living independently, as I have had a goal to accomplish. And I do this solely for my parents! . . . A great lord understands human emotion. I beg you to break with the regular rule, having compassion for my personal sentiment. As for the cause of human emotion, it is not what sages would criticize. . . .

Saihin argued against the domain, composing in Chinese, supporting her argument with Confucian ideals. She emphasized her filial intention and human emotion in the hope of overturning the official decision. This appeal also failed.

After her twenty years in the city, Saihin eventually decided to leave Edo to see her mother. Before leaving Edo, from 1847 to 1848, she made a trip to the Bōsō peninsula, visiting local intellectuals and raising funds for her return trip. Some poems composed during this trip suggest that Saihin was unhappy with her situation and feeling rather miserable. The latter half of the poem “Kagami-ura” (Mirror Bay), composed in present-day Tateyama city, described the author: “Now I have a worn-out look and have fallen low. / How can I bear to see my disheveled hair, white on the temples.” Another poem that was composed in response to Suzuki Tōkai includes the lines, “Only I, a floating weed on water, past fifty, the year one should know one’s mission. / Throwing away my life, I am resigned to this fallen condition.” These poems indicate that an aged Saihin felt bitter about her situation. She regarded it as “fallen,” a situation far from the one she had dreamt of and strived for.
Another recurring subject among the poems composed during her trip to Bōsō is her intense longing for her mother.

Returning to My Home Town in a Dream

I dreamt of my hometown.

The dream interrupted, immediately I lost the details.

I only remember my widowed mother speaking.

The sorrow of being away from her, lingering and wavering, persists.\(^{46}\)

Longing for Home

I am fifty, one parent is still sound.

I am blessed. It is worth ten thousand pieces of gold.

Why should I say a thousand leagues is too far?

My desire to go home moves, as abundant water flows.\(^{47}\)

Eventually, her filial attention and care for her aged mother overshadowed her anxiety over neglecting to fulfill her promise to her deceased father. In 1848, Saihin left Edo for her hometown to see her mother Yuki. Then, Saihin and Yuki moved to Yamae, an important station on the Nagasaki Highway. There Saihin ran a small school from 1850 to 1859. In 1852, Saihin attended her mother’s deathbed. Alone again, she occasionally made trips within Kyūshū.

One poem composed during this period, in 1856, expresses her distress at not having accomplished “what her brother had expected” of her.
A Thought at the End of the Year, Applying Yu You’s Rhyme

Wanting to comb my disheveled hair,
I sit alone in front of a clear mirror.
Strings of white hair—it is difficult to interrupt aging.
Sixty years with plenty of sorrow.
Cherished hopes are like steaming sand,
When will they turn to dead ashes?
Circumstances went against my brother’s expectation.
I sigh fruitlessly; days and months pass.
I acted against reason, I have been defiant.
Late in my life, I am becoming more and more crazy.
Yet, I descend from an upright official.
How can I fail to be steady when facing difficulty?\(^48\)

In the first six lines, Saihin expresses her frustration and indignation. “Dead ashes” (死灰) in the sixth line was often used to express a selfless, still condition of mind, which Saihin felt she had not attained. Her mind was like “steaming sand” (蒸沙), hot and passionate. Being alone, distressed and frustrated, she felt as if she were becoming insane. She attempted to steady herself by identifying herself as “a descendant of an upright official,” that is, as a child of Hara Kosho.

In the second month of 1859, at the age of sixty-two, Saihin again left Kyūshū, this time taking Kosho’s poems with her, clearly in hope of publishing them. Visiting her
acquaintances and local intellectuals along the way, in the eighth month she arrived at Hagi in present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture. There, Tsuchiya Shōkai (1829-1864), a scholar who was running a school in the Hagi domain, helped Saihin.\textsuperscript{49} He took care of her when she contracted an illness, and dealt with her death, including all the posthumous rituals and official chores. When Saihin first arrived in Hagi, Shōkai wrote a letter of introduction for her to Maeda Rikuzen, a senior official of the domain.\textsuperscript{50} In the letter, Shōkai detailed the purpose of Saihin's travel.

\ldots She said she has not published her father's posthumous manuscripts yet, which afflicts her heart always. She wants to realize the long-standing hope [of publishing her father's works], consulting with gentlemen all over the country. That is the only reason why she is to travel a thousand leagues alone, hurrying herself on her way, without thinking about herself.\ldots \textsuperscript{51}

According to this letter, Saihin began the journey in hope of having Kosho's poems and writings published. Another letter, which Shōkai wrote officially to the Akizuki domain after Saihin's death, also reveals her strong intention of publishing Kosho's works.

\ldots While she was sick in bed, I repeatedly asked her to contact your domain and communicate with her relatives. However, she would not agree. She said it was needless since she was a traveler and completely alone. She said she would have nothing to regret if I could bury her at the temple I support when worst came to worst. She said her only concern was that she had not published her father's poems. She said she would leave them in my care and asked me to realize her wish.
whenever I had the chance. She also said that it would be a joy beyond expectation if I would find some meritorious works among her poems and writings and publish them as an appendix to her father’s anthology, and if I would arrange an epitaph for her grave..."52

What Saihin asked Shōkai as her primary will was to publish Kosho’s anthology, and then, her works as a supplement to her father’s anthology. At the end of her life Saihin presented herself as Kosho’s devoted child.

In Confucianism, which the Tokugawa shogunate strongly supported, “filial piety” was one of the most important moral qualities. Saihin especially prized The Classic of Filial Piety (Xiaojing 孝經) and even made it her rule to read the book on every New Year’s Day. Confirming this rule, a fragment from Saihin’s daily notes indicates that she read the book and copied the first chapter on the first day of 1831. Also, a poem composed one New Year’s Eve after 1856 includes the lines: “I recite, following our household’s rule,’The Scope and Meaning of the Treatise’.”53 “The Scope and Meaning of the Treatise” (闥宗明義章第一) is the short first chapter of The Classic of Filial Piety, which explains the goal of filial piety as follows:

. . . When we have established our character by the practice of the [filial] course, so as to make our name famous in future ages and thereby glorify our parents, this is the end of filial piety. . ."54

This message celebrates the intention of seeking fame, implanting filial value into it. Saihin took the message sincerely, reading it again and again, dutifully, every year. Following the
teaching, she was rightly ambitious to pursue fame “for her parents” and to extend their family scholarship. Her persistent ambition to materialize *shusse* was justified by “filial piety,” and this reason actually convinced many Edo-period intellectuals.

While the major Confucian books essentially assumed the readers to be male, Saihin read them, regardless of her gender, and cultivated her character following the ideals described in them. Then, when she carried out her plan to succeed as a Confucian scholar, she adopted an ideal masculine personality both in her social life and literary presentation. She led an unusual life, independently, realizing her ambition. The society in which she chose to pursue her ambitions was just open enough to accept such an unusual personality.

II. Poetic Self-Construction and Gender Identification

Having quit being a woman and lacking family I am restored to freedom.

My duties are to compose simple verses and recite poems under the moon.

罷女無家還自由

嘲風吟月是吾任

(Hara Saihin, “At Ordinary Times”)

Discussing classical Chinese poetry, Stephen Owen states that “The poem (here only *shi* 詩) was a privileged document of inner life, a presentation of self that potentially carried strong autobiographical dimensions.”55 Saihin was one of the poets who made good
use of the “strong autobiographical dimensions” of Chinese shi poetry, often recording her own life and thoughts in her poems. Even while traveling in new places, she only occasionally paid tribute to the landscape and surroundings, unlike Saikō, who will be discussed in Chapter Three. Many of Saihin’s extant poetic works, numbering about 500 poems, record her poetic dialogues with people she met as well as expressions of her personal thoughts, emotions and concerns.

As we have seen earlier, Saihin’s father trusted her to inherit the family’s traditional scholarship and extend its influence. Since this trust was usually given to a son, Saihin adapted to this extraordinary arrangement by assuming the role of surrogate son. In two poems, one composed in 1828 and the other sometime shortly after 1848, Saihin used the self-defining phrase, “having quit being a woman” (罷女).\(^56\) This suggests that Saihin was acutely conscious of her separation from usual womanhood, and that the idea persisted throughout her life.

In 1828, the year she left her home for Edo after her father’s death, Saihin wrote, “Having quit being a woman and leaving family, I can travel freely” (罷女去家遊自在). Later, in 1848, she wrote “Having quit being a woman and lacking family, I am restored to freedom” (罷女無家還自由).\(^57\) These lines reveal some of Saihin’s notions about “woman.” First, the lines suggest that Saihin understood “a woman” not as a biological fact but as a cultural, social role or responsibility that she could quit being if she so chose. Secondly, she juxtaposed the idea of “woman” to “ie,” the social and familial basic unit of the samurai community that had strong control over individuals. The lines suggest that
Saihin considered “being a woman” as socially binding as the family system of “ie.” Her recognition is that she became able to “travel freely” and “was restored to freedom” by abandoning the two, womanhood and ie.

**Masculine Impersonation**

Refusing to follow typical female social roles, Saihin assumed a male role. Since her purpose was to gain popularity as a scholar in society and since kanshi composition for Saihin usually involved public or social interaction, her male impersonation involved both a literary and social effort.

Atsuko Sakaki notes that “Hara Saihin, as legends have it, wore men’s clothes, carried a sword, and loved to drink in the mode of her favorite poet, Li Bai.” Whether Saihin was crossed-dressed or not is uncertain; she did wear a sword in Kyoto, and she drank a lot. She generally impressed people with her confident and masculine character. For example, an entry in a diary written by Hirose Tansō (1782-1856) on the twenty-third of the seventh month in 1820 testifies to her impressive masculine behavior.

Hara Shinpei [Kosho] visited here with his daughter Saihin. Thus, I provided a party. . . . Saihin must be twenty-three or four now. She has read Chinese texts and studied literature since childhood. She excels in poetry. Her behavior is frank and openhearted, not different from men. Also, she drinks vigorously. Tansō noted, Saihin was “frank and openhearted, not different from men” (磊磊落落、不異男児). He also noted her outstanding drinking capacity, which was usually associated
Later in 1848, Onuma Chinzan (1818-1891), a *kanshi* poet in Edo, writing a farewell poem to commemorate Saihin’s departure from Edo, described her as “a genuine manly character among women” (女中真豪傑) and that she had “manly courage and a manly appearance” (丈夫之膽丈夫姿). As these descriptions attest, throughout her life, Saihin projected a masculine presence in public.

### The Poetic Fashioning of an Aspiring Self

Saihin assumed a masculine personality in her compositions as well. The male impersonation is especially conspicuous in works from her late twenties and early thirties, around the same time she decided to travel alone and establish herself as a Confucian scholar. To dramatize her determination and aspiration in poetic form, she often wrote in the persona of an ambitious youth. In *kanshi* poetry, it was not unusual for poets to express a social aspiration for success and fame. For example, Gesshō (1817-1856), a monk from present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture, wrote in his youth, “Young men who wish to make their mark leave their village behind./ If they don’t succeed in their studies, they never come home again” (男兒立志出郷闇/ 学若無成不復還). Rai San’yō in his thirteenth year wrote, “Would that I could be ranked with the ancients, / Remembered forever in the annals of history.” (安得類古人/ 千載列青史). As these examples show, the persona of an aspiring youth was a common perspective in the *kanshi* form.

On the day of her departure from home in 1825, Saihin in her twenty-eighth year
composed the following poem. The persona assumed by the author was, firstly, that of a filial child, and secondly, an aspiring youth.

Leaving Home, On the Twenty-Third Day of the First Month in 1825

I rose early this morning and greeted my parents.
I will leave home, having seen the New Year.
The willow trees, which I planted by the gate,
Hold me especially long.
Making offerings to our ancestors, I pray for my parents’ longevity.
“Bless my parents with prosperity.
Bless me, a traveler, with safety.”
To ride the whale—a cup of sake in one gulp.
To ride the whale—a cup of sake in one gulp.
My spirit is uplifted, ready for the trip.
Yet, I am already twenty-eight.
I feel shame thinking of Zhuge Liang leaving his home at Nanyang.

This poem, especially the latter half, fully expresses Saihin’s aspirations. The eighth and ninth lines allude to the great Tang dynasty poet Li Bai (701-762), whom Kosho and Saihin admired most. Li Bai called himself “a traveler riding on a whale” (海上騎鯨客), meaning a creature who moves about the ocean freely like an immortal (仙人 sennin). Drinking sake for strength and associating herself with Li Bai, Saihin described her mental state of high morale.
The last two lines exhibit Saihin’s identification with the famous male figure, the historic Chinese strategist and general Zhuge Liang (181-234). Gifted Zhuge Liang was once eagerly requested by the warlord Liu Bei (161-223) to join his court. After refusing twice, he finally accepted Liu Bei’s request and left his hometown in the countryside of Nanyang at the age of twenty-seven. Zhuge Liang played an important role as a prime minister and greatly contributed to the foundation of the State of Shu. In the poem above, Saihin compares herself to Zhuge Liang and writes that she was “ashamed,” because she was already twenty-eight while he had been only twenty-seven when he made his decision to leave his hometown. While comparing herself with this celebrated historic male character, Saihin ignored their gender and circumstantial differences, only emphasizing the difference in their ages. In this manner, Saihin represented herself as an ambitious young man who was leaving the country to make a significant stand in the larger world.

For several years after 1825, the persona of an ambitious youth was Saihin’s favorite to assume in her poetic expression. During this time, Saihin’s personal circumstances underwent a great upheaval. In 1826, her two sickly brothers officially retired, sacrificing their rights to head the Hara family. In the following year, their father Kosho died. Under these conditions, she decided to go to Edo again in pursuit of her “father’s will,” which emphasized “not to return to your hometown without fame” (不許無名入故城).66 Continuing her mission, she chose to assume the posture of an ambitious young man.

Examples of her self-presentation as an aspiring youth are found in poems written
to her peers in Kyūshū. The following poem was composed in 1827 to one of Kosho's former students, Murakami Genho\(^\text{67}\)

A Farewell Poem to Murakami Genho

Counting on my fingers, I anticipate the three thousand leagues (\(ri\)) to go.

Many years I have visited my old fellows, holding a zither and books.

Several imported chairs are here, the surface of water is variable.

We have a cask of village sake, the setting is tasteful.

A few stars in the Milky Way, the bright moon is suspended.

Outstanding ridges soaring in the high sky of autumn, beautiful clear evening.

Please understand I have a vow concerning this journey.

I dare not return to my hometown without fame.\(^\text{68}\)

This poem dramatizes her departure, first contrasting her expected long journey with an old friendship at home that she was to leave behind. The last two lines refer to her heroic and filial determination to become famous, which gives rise to the image of an ambitious youth. This poem represents Saihin as a fellow of equal standing with its receiver, ignoring their gender difference.

Responding to a Farewell Poem by Murakami Butzuzan

Following the trace of a floating weed single-heartedly, I leave my hometown.

The sorrow of separation persists, it seems to circulate.

*Katsura*’s blooms in moon palace at high autumn are fragrant.

Watch me, I will return home with a sprig of that tree.\(^\text{69}\)
In Chinese legend, a huge tree called gui (J. katsura 桂) grew on the moon. Later the gui was associated with the sweet osmanthus, whose fragrance was highly admired. In the Chinese literary tradition, picking a sprig of the gui metaphorically indicated success in the civil examinations. Utilizing this metaphor in the last two lines, Saihin expresses her social and academic ambition and her hope for a glorious return home. The metaphor is inevitably associated with males, since only educated men could take the civil examinations in China.

Saihin uses the same metaphor to express her social ambitions in a poem composed later, in 1827, in response to Marukawa Shōin (1758-1831). Shōin was a former official scholar of the Niimi domain in Bitchū, present-day Okayama prefecture. He criticized Saihin for her self-reliant, solo journey. Saihin responded to him with the poem below.

Responding to the Rhymes of the Venerable Shōin

My load is heavy and my destination far.
You say I am to go far away to find a smart man like Baluan.
I wonder when I might pick a spray of the katsura tree in the moonlight.
Yet, I laugh at myself, who with no ladder, wants to climb to heaven.  

“Baluan” in the second line is also known as Lianghong. He was a man of the Late Han dynasty who was known to be very learned, although orphaned and poor. Mengguang, a woman who lived in the same province, was fat, ugly, swarthy and very picky in choosing a husband. She was still unmarried when she turned thirty. When asked about marriage by her parents, she answered that if she could marry a very smart man like Lianghong she
would. He accepted the marriage and she became a good, devoted wife. Saihin refers to this story, acknowledging Shōin’s advice concerning marriage. Yet, the third line of the poem refutes the idea of marriage, suggesting her interest in public success. The phrase “picking a spray of the katsurai tree,” again refers to the metaphor of success in the civil examinations. With this metaphor, Saihin informs Shōin that she is going to the capital with the intention of achieving success equivalent to “picking a spray of katsura tree,” but not with the intention of finding a husband to make herself a good wife, like Mengguan. The fourth line, however, illuminates the conflict between her positive literary posture and her real circumstances. Saihin has “no ladder with which to climb to heaven,” to reach the gui tree in the sky. She has no concrete means to attain public success. Neither the civil examinations, which had not been adopted by the Tokugawa government, nor an official appointment as a domain scholar, limited to men, was available to her. She could only “laugh at herself,” at the discrepancy of her literary dramatization and the social reality.

Having lost her father, her brothers both sick, the thirty-year-old, unmarried Saihin was socially and financially insecure. Concerned people strongly advised her to get married. When faced with these criticisms and advice, Saihin often ostentatiously wore the masculine air of an aspiring young scholar. The poem below, which Saihin composed in response to Rai Kyōhei (1756-1834), conveys her indomitable will while rejecting his advice concerning marriage. Kyōhei, an uncle of Rai San’yō, was an official scholar of Hiroshima and a close friend to Kosho. Saihin had been familiar with him since 1815 when she and her father visited him during a trip to the San’yō area. In the autumn of 1827, after
her father’s death, Saihin again stayed with the Rai family on her way to Edo. Concerned about his departed friend’s daughter, Kyōhei advised her to abandon her dangerous, uncertain journey and settle into marriage. Saihin’s response was as follows.

Responding to the Rhymes of Master Kyōhei

As my father’s friend, here you are; I am orphaned but not alone.
Staying in your house, I have met with various respected people.
It is trivial, but I keep my heart to myself.
On and on, I repeatedly explore the corners of this world.
The migrating goose, honking, is lost in a marshy land.
Those at home are in my dreams as I enter the city by the river.
If I accomplish my ambitious venture while still young,
There may be, in the world, a man who will chase one with an unsavory reputation.\(^{71}\)

In this composition, Saihin clarified her will to continue her journey and her determination to “accomplish her ambitious venture” (遂志業). The last two lines concede that she might still marry, yet her primary goal is to accomplish her dream. Saihin desired Kyōhei to see her as an “aspiring youth.” In the end, he kindly wrote a reference letter for Saihin, which asked his friends on the road to offer their patronage to her.\(^{72}\)

When she met with men of her generation and qualifications, she represented her relationship with them as that of fellows and friends of equal standing. In 1827, shortly after the death of Kan Chazan (1748-1827), Saihin visited the Renjuku, his private school
in Kannabe, Hiroshima. In 1825, on her way to Kyoto, Saihin stayed with Chazan who had been Kosho’s associate. Chazan had edited some of Saihin’s poems, giving them a positive review.\textsuperscript{73} Visiting Kannabe again after Chazan’s death, Saihin composed poems with the head student of Chazan’s school, Nakamura Ganshū, and other visitors while recollecting the deceased Chazan.

\textbf{Paying a Visit to the Renjuku to Bow to the Portrait of the Deceased.}

\textbf{Meeting with Nakamura Ganshū, Shōryō, Mr. Soegawa, and Others, We Composed Poems.}

\begin{quote}
We, traces of water grass, gathered: How unusual it is.

All of us, including the host and guests, came here from other provinces.

Cold flowers on the plum tree, white snow hanging.

I, a visitor, have the deceased’s writing in my blue sack.

How difficult to fulfill a promise! This place was far, beyond mountains and rivers.

Talking about days past, we come to feel the pain, to regret being late repaying the deceased’s kindness.

This evening, if I had not met with the excellent gentlemen here,

How, in grief, would I have taken cups of sake?\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

The first couplet places Saihin on the same footing as the others present, by mentioning their common situation: they all came to the Renjuku from different domains. The last two lines suggest her competitive masculine ability. The lines suggest that she was very able to
compose and exchange Chinese poems with “excellent gentlemen” (群彦) drinking sake.

Another poem composed on the same occasion also depicts Saihin as a competitive fellow to the man to whom the poem was addressed.

In Response to a Poem of Mr. Soegawa

I am traveling by myself, only my shadow follows me.

I have made acquaintances at places, mostly anew.

After a journey of a thousand leagues (ri), I take pity on my gaunt flesh.

Having conversations with you night after night, I am intoxicated by your loyal personality.

It is cold in the mountains; the steep path is still closed by snow.

The mist is light; the treetops of plums are ready to release spring.

As well as you, I have a promise to cross the Hakone barrier next year.

I wonder who will succeed in arriving there first!  

After revealing some personal experience and then expressing a positive impression about the addressee, Mr. Soegawa, Saihin placed him and herself in a competitive position in the last line, confirming their equality in their plans to cross the Hakone barrier, on their way up to the capital, the following year.

A poem composed in Edo directly touches on her concerns about gender distinction. When Hirose Kyokusō, Saihin’s old associate in Fukuoka, visited Edo in 1837, Saihin, Kyokusō and Watanabe Tōri, a young samurai man from Chōshū, went out together to see the cherry blossoms along the Sumida River. Saihin’s poem composed on this
occasion includes the following lines.

... Two men and one woman in company.

The distinction between man and woman is lost, the same spirit is shared.

In every place, the scenery becomes our possession.

We laugh thinking of ourselves, become like hermit crabs.

...In these lines, Saihin mitigated her sexual difference from her fellows, emphasizing their sameness, the “same spirit” and the same situation as lodgers in Edo from the western provinces.

As these examples display, at the time Saihin left home in 1825, she thought of herself as a person who had “quit being a woman.” She represented herself as an aspiring youth in her poetry, desiring others to see her in that way. While attending social occasions, she competitively associated herself with male fellows.

Indeed, Saihin’s poems composed around 1827 and 1828 generally left a masculine impression on readers. Two of her contemporary poets, Rai San’yō (1780-1832) and Yanagawa Seigan (1789-1858), admitted the noticeable masculine quality in her poetry. When Saihin arrived in Kyoto in 1828, Seigan and San’yō made comments on poems that Saihin had composed during her trip. Both poets were impressed by the vigorous, heroic tone and expressed their wonder and admiration, comparing her poems to those by contemporary male poets. San’yō wrote, “Men with thick beard and eye brows make
feminine poems. These days everybody follows the fashion. How could I imagine that the
delicate beautiful fingers of a woman could have the same strength of a soaring dragon.”
Seigan also gave a similar opinion: “As for people who compose poems these days, most
make pliant, frail, and incoherent pieces. Where did she get this vigor of brush and gallant,
strong spirit?” The two poets pointed out the masculine quality of Saihin’s poetry in
contrast to the “effeminate verses” by many contemporary men. It was a period when the
heroic tone typically associated with the high Tang poetry was regarded as somewhat
old-fashioned. However, Saihin, actually being a woman, strategically emphasized her
masculine character in order to make her way in the male dominated field.

Saihin’s effort at male impersonation sometimes brought a positive response.
Maruyama Shōin in Bitchū, who had advised Saihin to marry, giving up her journey, wrote
about Saihin after she had left his house:

... When it became the time for farewell, she stated her resolution, wiping her
tears. Her statement was most acute. It was heroic and passionate. It moved me
greatly. She is truly a manly fellow among women, an unparalleled one. I had
compassion for her intention. . . .

As well as Saihin’s tears, her “heroic and passionate” (悲壮慷慨) words successfully
moved Shōin. He concluded that Saihin was “a manly fellow among women” (女中丈夫
子) and finally supported her goals.

Saihin’s male persona also elicited Onuma Chinzan’s admiration. The following
poem was composed in 1848 at a farewell party held for Saihin. She was leaving Edo for
her hometown.

Presented to Saihin from the Hara Family

Recently there are many skilled women in the literary and artistic world. With blue ink and red ink, they often compete in talent and originality.

Among them one or two call themselves the leader.

That one is good at calligraphy in the running hand, this one, at making small poems [haiku].

Yet, here we especially see an outstanding character among women.

Hara Saihin from the western corner.

She is thoroughly familiar with literature, with the classics and the histories.

... When I saw her the first time, I was surprised and grieved,

I wished I had known her ten years earlier.

That she is a woman does not matter,

She has a manly courage and a manly appearance.

When she expresses her indignation, suddenly intimate feelings arise in me.

... Guests gathered at this restaurant offer parting cups.

The men who filled the building all pitch their camps.

The castles of poetry, forts of wine, the battle is at its height,

Then Miss Hara shouts out, all take off their armor.
No one else is a real man.\textsuperscript{81}

Chinzan admired Saihin. He did so because she looked and behaved like a man, shared the common educational background with him and other male intellectuals and excelled in those qualities. After recognizing this, he could say that the fact she was a woman did not matter. She embodied a familiar character to him, not his “other.” Chinzan regarded Saihin as an honorary man and accepted and appreciated her active participation in the male dominated literary society. We see here that Saihin’s male impersonation was successful.

Saihin attempted to avoid the ideological expectations attributed to her gender by adopting a manly discourse and assimilating masculine behavior. By doing so, she hoped to attain permission and a potential to achieve public success, a social position which had been previously reserved for men.

Reactions

Saihin led an exceptional life, transcending gender boundaries. She assumed a masculine personality and worked as an individual in Edo for twenty years, mingling with men. Her lifestyle could have become a target of criticisms, and actually, as we saw, Matsuzaki Kōdō criticized her lifestyle and Rai Kyōhei and Marukawa Shōin advised her to settle into marriage. Indeed, Saihin occasionally received negative reactions to her decisions in life. A political letter written by Saihin in 1841 to the domain’s Steward (karō) Inoue Shōzaemon includes the following passage:\textsuperscript{82}

\ldots Alas! Being born as a woman, how could it be easy to travel alone thousands of
leagues? When I began my trip to the east, people who heard about it all showed a cold smile. They considered me as if I were affecting the female version of a chivalrous character. I was determined for myself and didn’t pay attention to them. I crossed boundaries by myself, because I had something in which I put my faith. . . .

Saihin recognized that her gender caused some difficulties in her travels. She also mentions people’s cold reactions to her unwomanly resolve.

However, more than a few men were supportive of Saihin’s plans and decisions. After all, Saihin did lead an independent life and gained considerable fame. If society had been totally against her, she would not have been able to achieve the success she did. It is true that some people were offended or perplexed, however, many others showed more flexible responses, sympathizing with her efforts. Since the favorable responses from Saihin’s contemporaries run counter to the widely accepted view of women’s status in Tokugawa society, an examination of some more of those positive reactions to Saihin’s lifestyle will contribute to a revision of the characteristics of the intellectuals of the time.

First, I would like to examine the complex response of Kamei Shōyō (1773-1836), an official Confucian scholar of the Fukuoka domain. He succeeded to the position held by his father Kamei Nanmei (1743-1814), who was also a renowned scholar. Saihin’s father Kosho studied under Nanmei. Nanmei highly regarded this talented student and Kosho and Nanmei’s son Shōyō developed a close friendship. In 1798, just two months before Saihin was born, Shōyō’s first daughter, Shōkin (1798-1857) was born. The fathers, Kosho and
Shōyō, educated their daughters in Chinese literature and art, and soon the daughters were well known in Fukuoka for their talent. Shōkin and Saihin stayed in touch with each other from childhood, occasionally visiting each other's home accompanying their fathers, though Fukuoka and Akizuki were about forty kilometers apart. Shōkin, as well as Saihin, composed *kanshi* poems, and her anthology *Yōchōkō* includes poems she composed before her marriage. In 1816, in her nineteenth year, Shōkin was married to one of Shōyō’s most promising students, who was also a distant relative.85

In the first month of 1825, before her departure for Kyoto, Saihin visited Kamei Shōyō’s home accompanied by two of Kosho’s students, including Murakami Butsuzan. Shōyō welcomed Saihin. He counted Saihin’s visit as one of his three delights of the new spring, the other two being Hirose Kyokusō’s presence as the Head Student at his private school and Shōkin’s visit, bringing with her his first grand child.86 Shōkin had delivered the baby girl Kozome five months earlier. While Saihin’s visit pleased Shōyō, however, he was bewildered by her plan to travel to Kyoto.

*Miss Hara Visited Us From Afar, to Bid Farewell. I Hurriedly Write This to Give to Her.*

The fourth day of the first month,

Saihin came from afar.

Hearing the reason of her visit, I am startled.

She is going to Kyoto.

She came with her father’s letter,
In which he cordially requests of me to give her my farewell words.

The letter also says that he is in decline, losing his vigorous spirit,
and that his daughter possesses all he had in his bygone days.

... There are particular teachings for women.

And the teachings do not include a woman’s journey to a far place.

The father regards Saihin
As if she were a boy, openhearted and upright.

... In the collections of poems and writings by sages and philosophers from ancient times,

There is no line found written to send off a lady traveling afar.

Were I the first to start this tradition, people would laugh at me.

I let you laugh at me, my stupidity in old age.87

Shōyō was perplexed hearing about Saihin’s unconventional lot. He resisted, saying no model for a farewell poem to a woman was available. Yet, he took up his brush to reluctantly write his message, while being aware of his involvement in beginning a new mode of women’s life.

The following is entitled, “Words to Present to Miss Hara on the Occasion of Her Departure to Kyoto” (贈原女史遊京師語). Shōyō’s concern over the propriety of Saihin’s action in contrast to Confucian norms is persistent in this writing as well.

95
Now she is to travel a thousand leagues by herself. What would the venerable sages say about this? Yet, she is to do this following her father's order. How could a child be in defiance of the father? Confucius said, "Whom among men have I ever praised or condemned? If there is anyone I praise, you may be sure that he had been put to the test." Thus, as for her traveling, I dare not yet to criticize it. I will just wait for another day when she has been put to the test.

Shōyō doubted the propriety of Saihin's intention to travel on her own. Saihin was to transgress the teachings for women, yet she would do so to meet the requirements of a filial child. Shōyō tried to rationalize Saihin's plan by comparing it with filial piety. Still, he reserved his judgment, saying he would wait to see the result of her journey, following Confucius' example. Significantly, Shōyō did not rush to judge that Saihin's transcendence of the gender boundary was wrong.

Shōyō's daughter Shōkin also expressed her complex feelings about Saihin's plan. The following poem contains Shōkin's message to Saihin. Actually, the poem was composed by Shōkin's father, Shōyō. According to a note on the poem, since Shōkin needed to leave the father's house to fulfill New Year's duties at her own home, she asked her father to put her message into a poetic form. Thus, the poem was composed by Shōyō to convey his daughter's feelings. The opening lines express how much the father loves and treasures Shōkin. Then, as translated below, Shōkin's encouraging message to Saihin as well as her assessment of her own life circumstances is described.
Your venerable father is especially outstanding and free-minded.

He ordered you to go to the big city.

I deplore anticipating our separation for years.

You will be at a different corner under this heaven.

You don’t yet talk about your marriage.

You are going to travel alone like a man.

Demonstrating your brushwork, you will surprise people, as if to shake the

Five Mountains.

Taking cups of sake, you will associate yourself with renowned scholars.

Because of the father, such a child grew up.

This sort of example can not be found in the past.

This is the true point that will please your parents.

Please make your best effort and take great care for your future.

In our lives, we each have our own destiny.

Your destiny is very different from mine.

Once when I was in my daughterly room,

I also worked hard on histories and paintings.

However, after my main job had become kitchen work,

Worldly affairs have clung to me day after day.

My father tells me not to run counter to his order.

My mother tells me not to abandon her.
It is not essentially easy to serve people.

Being afraid of disgracing myself, I have worked very hard.

As I could pay little heed to elegant matters,

My poetic spirit dried up a long time ago.

In this composition, Shōkin openly cheered Saihin's plan. Then she contrasted her lot to that of Saihin, admitting the great differences. However, Shōkin did not value one over the other. The Confucian ideology, with which Shōkin was thoroughly familiar, did not influence her to judge their contrasting situations. Rather, she expresses her complex feelings about the suspension of her literary and artistic commitment after her marriage.

While Shōyō withheld his open encouragement toward Saihin, a man of a younger generation, Hirose Kyokusō, expressed his enthusiastic respect for her decision. Kyokusō was in his nineteenth year, the Head Student at Shōyō's private school. His poem entitled "Sending off Miss Hara to Kyoto" includes the following lines.

Among literate women, someone like you is rare.

In the old times, there weren't any women who traveled far away for study.

It is only because of your talent that this journey was made possible.

You don't need to be concerned about what people say of your gain and loss.

While he recognized that Saihin's situation was novel for a woman, he encouraged it. His
justification was her exceptional education. He advised her not to be concerned about people's judgment, "gain and loss."

The Rai family in Hiroshima, especially Kyōhei and Baishi (Rai San'yō's mother), helped Saihin greatly. While Saihin was staying in Hiroshima, Kyōhei invited her to poetry gatherings several times, introducing her to other intellectuals. Baishi provided her with some money as a farewell-gift. Although Kyōhei initially suggested that Saihin seek marriage, eventually he wrote a letter for her in which he asked his acquaintances from Hiroshima to Kyoto to accommodate and support her.

Another prominent supporter of Saihin was Yanagawa Seigan, whom she met in Kyoto in 1828 on her way to Edo. Seigan had shown his interest in Saihin earlier in 1824, when he visited Nagasaki with his wife Kōran. It was just a couple of months after Saihin had left Nagasaki after completing her teaching. Hearing of her reputation there, Seigan wrote a poem about her. In 1828, when Saihin visited Kyoto, Seigan and Kōran were living there, having moved from Mino the previous year. Seigan, as well as Rai San'yō, read and commented on the poems Saihin composed on her way to Kyoto.

Saihin's letter to Rai Saishin (1791-1850), the first son of Rai Kyōhei, written on the twelfth day of the eighth month in 1828, testifies to Saihin's occasional meetings with San'yō and Seigan. Saihin wrote, "San'yō-sensei is increasingly active and vigorous. During my stay in Kyoto, I have occasionally gone to see him. I am overwhelmed with joy receiving his high praise of my poems. I entered Kyoto at the end of the fifth month, and from the beginning of the sixth month, I have been boarding at Mr. Yanagawa's abode."
As this letter informs us, Seigan and his wife Kōran accommodated Saihin while she was in Kyoto, for more than two and a half months. Seigan also wrote Saihin a reference letter to his acquaintances between Kyoto and Edo, asking them to welcome her as she visited along her way.\textsuperscript{96} Inferring from the extant poems Saihin composed on her way to Kyoto in 1827 and 1828, not a few intellectuals at various places helped Saihin both materially and intellectually.

While materials that document Saihin’s life in Edo are scarce, Saihin’s anthology Tōyū mansō, which includes poems composed during her trip to the Bōsō peninsula in 1846 and 1847, verifies the existence of supportive intellectuals in the region. Among them was a young Suzuki Shōtō (1823-98). Saihin in her fiftieth year wrote to him, “Conversation with you night after night, / Console my feelings in my declining years.”\textsuperscript{97} Shōtō in turn wrote a poem admiring Saihin’s scholarship.\textsuperscript{98} It is said that Shōtō’s second daughter’s sobriquet, Sairan (采蘭), was taken from the Chinese characters in Saihin and Kōran.\textsuperscript{99} Later in 1870, the third year of Meiji, Shōtō went to Tokyo with Sairan, who remained unmarried, and opened his poetry school, the Shichikyoku-ginsha, in Asakusa. Their school included several women students, whose works were published by Shōtō in 1877.\textsuperscript{100} Shōtō’s partial adoption of Saihin’s name for his daughter and his later commitment to kanshi education for women indicate his positive response to Saihin’s scholarship and life.

Saihin’s life as a woman was unusual and extraordinary. However, her originality was in a way relative. As Martha C. Tocco states in her study of Tokugawa women’s education, by the late Edo, women teachers were becoming visible and teaching was
becoming considered a suitable occupation for women.\textsuperscript{101} The visibility of educated women can also be confirmed in Onuma Chinzan's poem discussed earlier, in which he mentioned the phenomenal appearance of talented women in public. Saihin was still exceptional in that she chose to associate, almost exclusively, with highly intellectual male society. However, the role she took as teacher was not sensational in relation to her gender. Tocco also discusses \textit{kanbun} education for women as follows.

By the end of the [Edo] period, elite women's education often extended to higher levels, and some women had the advantages of a "man's education." Although women trained in \textit{kambun}-Chinese and in the classics of Chinese literature might describe this aspect of their education as drawn from male traditions. . . , facility with "men's learning" did not contravene gender boundaries to such a degree that women so educated were rendered social or educational pariahs.\textsuperscript{102}

Tocco's discussion is convincing, as women who excelled in Chinese literature and art, including Saihin, Saikō, Kōran, Gyokushō, Bunpō, Unpō, and others, were generally celebrated by their contemporaries, far from being treated as "social and educational pariahs." Behind them must have been many less recognized women. Tocco introduces the example of a samurai daughter, Aoyama Chise (1857-1947), of the Mito domain, who studied Chinese literature under a woman "by the name of Matsunobe, the highly educated daughter of a Kumamoto domain Confucian scholar" in the 1860s.\textsuperscript{103} This example confirms that Chinese learning was a token of higher education for a woman and could positively qualify her for the role of teacher, which was becoming a suitable occupation for
People who supported Saihin's aspirations were not unfamiliar with other educated women either. Shōyō had his daughter, Shōkin, assist at his school in the teaching of Confucian texts. Rai Kyōhei's associates included Ema Saikō and Hirata Gyokuon (1787-1855), the latter an accomplished painter who studied *kanshi* with Kan Chazan and remained unmarried, supporting herself as a professional painter. Yanagawa Seigan in his youth studied at Yamamoto Hokuza’s private school, which included female boarding students. Seigan’s wife Kōran became recognized as a *kanshi* poet, and Ema Saikō was his old local associate. Seigan became an influential teacher in Edo, and his numerous students, which included women, witnessed Kōran’s success as a poet. In a way, Saihin’s “extraordinary” life was made possible as the society at large was witnessing a phenomenal surge of educated women in public and thus Saihin’s decision in life was not so odd and offensive as to be stamped out.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1Kōdō was born into a farming family of Higo Province, the present-day Kumamoto Prefecture in Kyūshū. He was sent to a local temple as an apprentice when he was eleven. Unsatisfied with his life, he went to Edo, seeking refuge at a temple called Shōnenji in Asakusa. Under the protection of the priest, he entered Tokugawa’s official school Shōheigaku and later became a private student of Hayashi Jussai (1768-1841). In 1802, Kōdō successfully became an official professor of the Kakegawa domain in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture. In 1815, he retired from his official position and opened a private school in Edo. The Shōnenji, where Kōdō took refuge when he first came to Edo, was the same temple at which Saihin boarded in Edo.

2Matsuzaki Kōdō, Kōdō nichireki, in vol. 11, Nihon geirin sōsho, edited by Hamano Tomosaburō and others (Tokyo: Rikugokan, 1929), 342-43.


7One koku is about 150 kg of rice.
This letter to Saihin was written on the second day of the intercalary second month of the seventh year of Bunka, which falls on 1810.

The main categories of Fukuoka domain’s samurai rank were, from the top: tairō (大老), chūrō (中老), ō-gumi (大組), umamawari-gumi (馬廻組), musoku-gumi (無足組), jōdai-gumi (城代組), ashigaru ika (足軽以下). While samurai of lower ranks (musoku-gumi, jōdai-gumi, ashigaru and the lower) received rice as annual stipend, upper and middle-rank samurai were granted their own fiefs.

The representative forms of salary that a samurai class man received were, karoku (basic payment for the household), shokuroku (additional payment for the occupation), and fuchi-mai (rice allowance to support family members, servants and maids). In 1808, the Hara family’s annual basic income, karoku, was increased from fourteen koku to a hundred koku (one koku is about 150 kg of rice). The net income of the one-hundred-koku allocation was forty koku, as sixty percent of the harvest was the farmers’ share. Thus, the Hara family’s actual profit from the karoku was about six-thousand kilograms of rice a year. Usually, that much karoku was not sufficient for a middle class samurai family to lead a decent life. In the case of Kosho, in addition to the karoku, he was receiving shokuroku as the domain’s official professor and later as the Head Manager of Money and Clothing (gonando-gashira). He was also running a school at home and could expect tuition from his private students.

The reasons for Kosho’s sudden dismissal are unclear. Yamada Shin’ichirō suggests that Kosho’s remonstration with the lord may have offended him. Yamada also suggests that the Kansei reform (1787-93), which emphasized Neo-Confucianism as the official philosophy, possibly affected Kosho’s dismissal since Kosho was a scholar of the school of Ancient Rhetoric (kobunji-gaku). Yamada Shin’ichirō, ed., Hara Kosho, Hakkei, Saihin shōden oyobi shishō (Akizuki: Akizuki Kōminkan, 1951), 1:13-14.

Yamada Shin’ichirō, ed., Hara Kosho, Hakkei, Saihin shōden oyobi shishō, 3: 11. “It’s because Saihin can have some public experiences and I think we might become less concerned about her in future.”

10 Yamada Shin’ichirō, ed., Hara Kosho, Hakkei, Saihin shōden oyobi shishō, 3: 9. “Saihin treated them as if they were kara and meirei.”
talent). Here, she caused an even greater sensation. This morning, she did not have noticeable hangover. I am perplexed; she is famous both for her poetry and drinking.”

17Ibid., 3: 7; 3:8. 采薬珍数趣にて定て大評判と被存候；才女長崎に遊候はみちを始と被存候。

18Okuhara Seiko (1837-1913), a well-known nanga painter, also used a similar means to go to Edo in 1865 and establish herself as a painter. Since the Koga domain where Seiko was born did not allow a woman to travel outside the domain, she became the adopted daughter of her aunts’ family living in the Sekiyado domain. The Sekiyado domain did not restrict women’s travel. See Martha J. McClintock and Victoria Weston, “Okuhara Seiko: A Case of Funpon Training in Late Edo Literati Painting,” in Copying the Master and Stealing His Secret: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting, edited by Brenda G. Jordan and Victoria Weston (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 132.

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The *Onna daigaku* (The Greater Learning for Women), the most influential instructive book for women of the Edo period, called for a rigid separation between men and women. A section in the *Onna daigaku*, the source of which is attributed to the fifth chapter of Kaibara Ekiken’s *Wazoku dōji-kun*, called for a strict demarcation between the two sexes. The section reads, “From her earliest youth a girl should observe the line of demarcation separating women from men, and never, even for an instant, should she be allowed to see or hear the least impropriety. The customs of antiquity did not allow men and women to sit in the same apartment, to keep their clothing in the same place, to be in the same place, or to transmit to each other anything from hand to hand. . . .” Shingoro Takahashi, trans. *Women and Wisdom of Japan: Great Learning for Women* (London: John Murray, 1905), 34.

In her later years, Unpō was employed as a professor at an official girls’ school annexed to Hokkaido Kaitakushi Gakkō, which was temporarily established in 1872 in Tokyo by the Meiji government. After her retirement, she opened a private school, Shinchi-juku, and taught there until 1878. Kado Reiko, *Edo joryū bungaku no hakken* (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 1998), 263-66.

The phrase, “Tonight the moon is bright and everyone is viewing it” (今夜月明人尽望), refers to the third line of the poem “Viewing the Mid-Autumn Moon” (十五夜望月) composed by a Tang-dynasty poet Wang Jian (768-830?).
清風吹不盡
35 狩原智子, “Edo no josei bungeika tachi,” 71-72. According to Katakura, the first *jinmeiroku* of Edo area was published in 1815.
36 The *Edo genzai kōki shoka jinmei-roku: shohen* (1836) and the *Edo genzai kōki shoka jinmei-roku: nihen* (1842), whose editors are unknown, are reprinted in vol.2, *Kinsei jinmei-roku shūsei*, compiled by Mori Senzō and Nakajima Masatoshi (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1976).
37 Gyokushō will be discussed in Chapter Five in detail.
38 Yanagawa or Chō Kōran, or Kimi, was another female *kanshi* poet of the late Edo period. Kōran was born into a wealthy local land lord’s family in a village of Mino (present-day Gifu prefecture). She studied Chinese literature from the age of nine under Monk Taizui, a relative. In 1817, when Yanagawa Seigan, a distant relative of Kōran, returned from Edo and opened a private school in the village, Kōran started to study at his school. They fell in love and married in 1820. They traveled widely together, visiting as far as Nagasaki. They lived many places, including Edo, Kyoto, and their home town in Mino. After Seigan’s death in Kyoto, Kōran opened a private school there for boys and girls. In the Meiji period, Seigan’s activity against the Tokugawa was posthumously awarded, and, Kōran, due to her support of him, was rewarded with a special stipend from the government. She died in 1879.
39 Bunsō is not identified yet.
41 Hirose Tansō, “Kaikyūro hikki,” in *Zōho Tansō zenshū* vol. (1971), 259. orgt東都ニ在リ。謫吉 旭荘 東遊ノ時、相見セリ。詞林＝於テ頃ル名誉アルヨシ。
42 This writing, “Presented to Steward Inoue” (呈上参政: 1841), is included in the “Hara Saihin Bunshō,” a manuscript copy held by the National Diet Library in Tokyo. This is also included in the “Hara Saihin shishō” edited by Suzuki Torao. See, “Shishō,” 63.
43 “An Appeal to the Lord” (上書). This is included in “Hara Saihin Bunshō.” Also in “Shishō,” 64-65.
44 This excerpt constitutes the last two lines of the poem “Mirror Bay.” Hara Saihin, “Tōyū mansō”; “Shishō,” 32.
镜子
十八年來夢一場
曾臨鏡面照容光
如今憔悴猶淪落

107
45. The translated excerpt is the last two lines of the poem “To Show to Suzuki Tōkai, Using the Same Rhyme.” The poem is the third among three composed under the same title. Hara Saihin, “Tōyū mansō”; “Shishō,” 34.

似木東海 畳前韻 三首

[the third poem]
同是烟霞痼疾身
番番早已及花辰
唯吾萍水過知命
抛却生涯甘委淪


夢中還鄉
結成故郷夢
夢断忽遺忘
唯記憶親話
離愁絮絮長

47. Ibid.

思郷
五十親猶健
餘慶抵萬金
豈云千里遠
浩浩有歸心

48. This is a poem among four composed under the title of “A Thought at the End of the Year, Applying Yu You’s Rhyme.” Only two, including this one, are extant, recorded in the “Hara Saihin joshi seiyū nichireki bassui,” which was hand-copied by Satani Shōsō, Saihin’s maternal relative, in the year Saihin died, i.e. 1859. This handwritten copy is held by the Akizuki Kyōdokan. This poem is also in “Shishō,” 46.

歳暮感懷 用陸放翁韻

欲梳飛蓬首
獨坐明鏡前
絲絲難遮老
多愁六十年
心事似蒸沙
死灰何時然
乖違伯氏託
空嗟日月遷
倒行且逆施
暮年愈狂顚
清白吏子孫
敢忘窮益堅

49. Tsuchiya Shōkai, who studied Confucian literature in Edo, came back to his hometown Hagi in 1854 and opened a school in 1855. His contribution in the field of education was
acknowledged by the local lord and Shōkai was awarded with a samurai title. He was deeply committed to the movement of somnō-jōi (“Respect the Emperor, Expel the Foreign Barbarians”) in his last years. He was known for his friendship with Yoshida Shōin (1830-59), the contemporary eminent pro-emperor thinker who was also from Hagi.

50 Maeda Rikuzen was then a gun-bugyō (magistrate of rural districts).

51 This letter is quoted in Maeda Yoshi, Edo jidai joryu bungeishi: Chihō wo chūshin ni, haikai, waka, kanshi-hen (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1999), 321. “彼言。先父遺稿、未得上梓、是妾平生痛心也。将欲遍謀海內諸彥、以仲吾著志。其不自顧惜、千里単行。途々道路者、以此焉耳。”

52 Ibid., 322-23. “当人病中、貴藩江御懸合に及、親類等も有之候は＞伝達可致と、再度申聞候得共、一向に引受無之候。天外獨遊之身に候得は不及び義、万一不諱之節は厄介ならず、拙者旦家へ士葬致呉候は＞更々遺憾無之候、只心懸りは先父之詩稿未だ上木不致に付、兄江託候故、折も有之時は念願相届候様、是のみ願入との事に候。且又当人詩文稿は可取者あらば先父之後に附刻し、尚嘉鉢等相調彼呉候は＞望外なりと申居られ候。・・・” In another letter written to Tezuka Raisuke and Tohara Yōho on the twentieth of tenth month after Saihin’s death, Tsuchiya Shōkai also explained Saihin’s motivation as follows. “...Her intention of the trip was, it seemed, to collect some money at places by writing poems, so as to realize her plan (of publishing Kosho’s anthologies). ...” 同人御遊歴之趣意は処々にて潤筆等を得、其力にて業志御企之様子＝相見申候。・・・ This letter is quoted in Maeda Yoshi, Edo jidai joryu bungeishi: Chihō wo chūshin ni, haikai, waka, kanshi-hen, 326.

53 誦読隨家例。開宗明誼篇。


56 The phrase is included in the two poems entitled “On the Second Day, Drinking with Old Chikudō, I Composed This Poem” (二日同竹堂翁飲、席上賦此) and “At Ordinary Times” (平生). See, Hara Saihin, “Tōyū nikki” (manual copy held at Osaka Daigaku), Hara Saihin, “Hara Saihin shishō” edited by Suzuki Torao, 23, 39.

57 Saihin considered she lost her “ie” because the Hara family was inherited by someone unrelated, from whom Saihin felt distant. She also had been officially adopted by Toyoshima Sazen, a samurai-class man of Kurume domain. The adoption was arranged by her father, Kosho, for the sake of the convenience of Saihin’s travel, as the Akizuki domain did not allow a woman of samurai class to travel alone beyond the domain’s boundary while Kurume-domain did. Although Saihin continued to use the family name Hara, she did not seem to consider she belonged to either of the households after the deaths of her father and brothers, and never relied on the protection of either house.


59 A report passed down from a disciple of Murakami Butsuzan says that Saihin neither applied make-up nor wore hair ornaments. She had a sword and wandered around in a
strange costume. She was quite big and tall. Another recorded report by a witness of Saihin in her late years says she kept her hair coiled on her head, wearing a tight-sleeved kimono (tsutsusode) and a narrow sash (hanhaba obi). While samurai and merchant class men and women usually wore kimono with sleeves of short length, farmers and artisans wore tight-sleeved kimono. The hanhaba-obi was a casual sash for women. Thus, Saihin’s attire as described in the report does not clearly represent the gender demarcation. Rather than crossed-dressed, it seemed she dressed in a strange, unusual way. See, Hara Saihin Sensei Kenshōkai, *Hara Saihin joshi* (Fukuoka: Hara Saihin Kenshōkai, 1958), 16-17.

60 Nakajima Sōin, *Kinsōshū* 金帚集 (Osaka, 1839). The two poems Sōin presented Saihin are also included in “Hara Saihin shishō,” 75.

61 Hirose Tansō, “Kaikyūrō hikki,” in *Zōho Tansō zenshū* jō edited by Hita-gun Kyōiku-kai (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1971), 259. 二十三日。原震平其娘采薇ヲ携へテ。来訪セリ。因ツテ宴會ヲ設ク。・・・采薇時ニ歳ニ二十三四ナルヘシ。幼ヨリ讀書文藝ヲ學ヒ、尤詩ニ長セリ。其行事磊々落々トシテ男児ニ異ナルス。

62 Onuma Chinzan, *Chinzan shishō* (Edo, 1859). Chinzan’s poem to Saihin is also included in “Hara Saihin shishō,” 77.


64 Ibid., 274.

65 “Hara Saihin shishō,” 18. Saihin’s calligraphy of the poem is held by Kiyō Bunko in Fukuoka. The photocopy is found in *Edo kanshisen 3: Joryū*, edited by Fukushima Riko (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 138. This poem written in gushi (古詩 J.koshi) style has an unusual couplet structure (see from the fifth line to tenth line). It is uncertain if Saihin manipulated this structure deliberately. According to Yamada Shin’ichirō, Saihin noted with this poem, “This poem needs to be elaborated a little more” (此詩少々要推敲). Yamada, p.12, in the part “Saihin shōden.”

乙酉正月廿三日、発郷
起ぼ辉高堂
新年出故郷
門前手柲柳
殊飴離情長
朝献於天壽
使我二尊昌
行人亦安憩
一飲騎鰻觴
一飲騎鰻觴
此行風色揚
唯我二十八
愧応出南陽

66 The original poem is lost. The line is cited from “Saihin shōden” in, *Hara Kosho, Hakkei, Saihin shōden oyobi shishō*, edited by Yamada Shin’ichirō (Akizuki: Akizuki Köminkan,
67 Murakami Genho (?-?) was a student of Hara Kosho and an elder brother of Murakami Butsuzan (1810-79), who was also Kosho’s private student. Butsuzan is known as an scholar and educator and the founder of a successful local private school, Suisaien (水裁園), in Kyushu.

68 Hara Saihin, “Tōyū nikki” (handwritten copy, Osaka Daigaku); “Hara Saihin shishō,” 21.

村上彦甫有送行之詩
三千屈指期程
幾歳琴書尋舊盟
数脚胡牀移水面
一樽村酒有風情
縫河星少懸明月
傑嶂秋高佳夕晴
看取此行吾有誓
無名豈敢入山城

69 Hara Saihin, “Tōyū nikki”; “Hara Saihin shishō,” 21. Murakami Butsuzan (1810-79), to whom this poem was written, had studied under Hara Kosho, then Kosho’s son Hakkei who resided in Buzen after he had quit from his position in Akizuki. He also studied under Saihin when she was assisting Hakkei in Buzen. As for Butsuzan’s relationship with the Hara family, see, Margaret Mehl, Private Academies of Chinese Learning in Meiji Japan (Copenhagen, NIAS Press, 2003), 104.

次村大有[村上佐山]送別之詩
一從莽跡出郊山
離恨綿綿如循環
月桂秋高香馥郁
看吾更折一枝還


次韻松隠翁
任重三千道沓然
人言遠覽伯鸞賢
月中折桂知何日
自笑無階欲上天


次韻杏坪先生
父執有君孤不孤
相依遍接搆縈徒
区区自抱地方寸
杳杳重遊天一隅
巍巍飛鳴迷沢国
家人恩夢入江都
如教志業青年遂
The Rai family, especially Kyōhei and Rai Baishi (1760-1843), showed considerable sympathy with Saihin. Baishi was the wife of Hiroshima domain’s official Confucian scholar, Rai Shunsui (1746-1816), who was Kyōhei’s brother. After her son Rai San’yō had left the house in 1809 and her husband died in 1816, Baishi was living with Yoichi (1801-56), San’yō’s son with his first wife, who succeeded to Shunsui’s position. Baishi’s diary includes records of Saihin’s activities with the members of the Rai family through the ninth month of the 1827. Earlier in this year, Kyōhei and Baishi had visited San’yō in Kyoto, where they had shared some time with another woman kanshi poet, Ema Saikō. See, Rai Baishi, “Baishi nikki,” in Rai San’yō zensho furoku, edited by Rai San’yō Sensei Iseki Konsōkai (Hiroshima: Rai San’yō Iseki Kenkyūkai, 1931), 734-36.

73 “Hara Saihin shishō,” 2.

74 These lines are included in poem entitled, “Together with Watanabe Tōri and Hirose Kyokusō, I Visited Mukōjima.” Hara Saihin, “Yuūō sōkō bassui”; “Hara Saihin shishō,” 28.
Beard and eye brows” (鬚眉 shubi) is a metaphor for a man of traditional Chinese literature.

77 Hara Saihin, “Yūrō sōkō bassui”; “Hara Saihin shishō,” 9. 鬚眉男子為女郎詩。當今滔滔皆是也。何圖纖纖玉指。具此騰龍之力。

78 Ibid. 當今作律詩者。率皆委弱支離。女史何從而得此骨力雄勁凡氣脈連絡來。

79 “Hara Saihin shishō,” 74. 追至告別、揮淚言志。其言切至。悲壯慷慨。使人感激不已。真可謂女中丈夫子不可有二者矣。余哀其志。

80 Onuma Chinzan, Chinzan shishō (Edo, 1859). Chinzan’s poem to Saihin is also included in “Hara Saihin shishō,” 77.

枕生一見驚且嘆
相識已恨十年遲
不識進士何足說
丈夫之膽丈夫姿
慨然忽起寧親志

82 With the letter, Saihin asked the Akizuki domain for special permission for her mother, Yuki, to move to Edo. For more information, see page 70 to 72 of this chapter.

83 This passage is included in Saihin’s letter of petition to an executive officer of the Akizuki domain, which is entitled “Inoue sansei ni teisu” (呈井上參政). She petitioned the domain twice asking for permission to have her mother come to Edo to live. The petition was rejected both times. Hara Saihin, “Hara Saihin bunshō” (Handwritten copy, Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan); “Hara Saihin shishō,” 63. • • • 悲哉生世為女、千里獨行豈容易乎、始蒔東遊也、聞者皆冷笑、以為學女俠之流、蕩蕩斷然不顧、單身越者、以有所恃也、• • •
This is where Saihin wanted to stress the difficulty of traveling back to Edo once she returned Kyushu. Accordingly, the reference to her gender as a reason of her reluctance to return Kyushu should also be considered a strategic reference.

For Shokin’s detailed biography, see Chapter 9 “joryū bunjin Kamei Shōkin shōden” included in the Edo jidai joryū bungeishi: chihō wo chūshin ni, haikai, waka kanshi hen, by Maeda Yoshi (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1999), 255-91.

Shōyō’s poem composed during the New Year period expresses the delights. The poem is cited in, “Hara Saihin shishō,” 71; Haruyama Ikujirō, Nihon yuiitsu keishū shijin Hara Saihin joshi (Fukuoka: Hara Saihin Kenshōkai, 1958), 104. 今春有三吉，廣子在吾門，迎得 米開秀、抱斯紅女孫.

Haruyama Ikujirō, Nihon yuiitsu keishū shijin Hara Saihin joshi, 105.

This refers to the Analects of Confucius, Chapter 15, Verse 25. It includes the following: “The Master said, ‘Whom among men have I ever praised or condemned? If there is anyone I praise, you may be sure that he had been put to the test...’” The translation is by D.C. Lau. D.C. Lau trans., The Analects (Lun yü), (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1992), 155.

Haruyama Ikujirō, Nihon yuiitsu keishū shijin Hara Saihin joshi, 105 今女史千里獨行。宗賢將謂之何。亦唯家先生之所命。子而可逆父乎。聖人之言曰。我誰毁誰譽。有所譽者。其有所試。故女史之行。我未敢聞然。以試之異日耳。...
This poem Hirose Kyokusō is cited in, “Hara Saihin shisho,” 71; Haruyama Ikujiro, Nihon yuiitsu keishū shijin Hara Saihin joshi, 108-09. This poem is not included in Kyokusō’s anthology, Baiton shishō (梅壇詩抄).

92This poem Hirose Kyokusō is cited in, “Hara Saihin shishō,” 71; Haruyama Ikujiro, Nihon yuiitsu keishū shijin Hara Saihin joshi, 108-09. This poem is not included in Kyokusō’s anthology, Baiton shishō (梅壇詩抄).

93Saihin’s activity in Hiroshima is recorded in her “Tōyū nikki” and Rai Baishi’s diary, “Rai Baishi. Hara Saihin, “Tōyū nikki” (Handwritten copy, Osaka Daigaku); Rai Baishi “Baishi nikki,” in Rai San’yō zenshō furoku. Edited by Rai San’yō Sensei Iseki Kenkyūkai (Hiroshima: Rai San’yō Iseki Kenkyūkai, 1931), 734-36.

94Below is a poem Seigan composed in Nagasaki upon hearing about Saihin.

Reading Saihin’s poem, I composed this poem. When Saihin was in Nagasaki, she gave lectures, attracting students. The last part of my poem relates to the situation.

Her splendid phrases verified what I had heard about her before.
Fragrant wind sways the hem of the long willow branches.
You will not find a good partner, someone like Wen Jiao, who would match you.
You have a perfect talent nearly as good as Zuo Fen.
Intoxicating peach blossoms, full-blown apricot flowers, the spring should have been dim.
Words of congenial friends, smiles like warped bamboos, your spirit must have

115
been vigorous at night.
The young students of your school with the thin, crimson silk curtain are
far away from you to communicate.
Missing you, they are gazing at the clouds around Keisho mountain of
Nagasaki.

讀采蘋女史闢詠却寄。采蘋向在崎開講肄延生員故詠尾及之
麗句吟來懷素聞
香風搖曳柳絲裙
可無佳婿如溫嶠
僅有清才亞左芬
桃醉杏酣春暗澹
歸言竹笑夜氳氤
絳紗弟子音塵隔
悵望瓊山一段雲

This poem is included in Seigan zenshū vol. 1, ed. Itō Makoto (Gifu: Yanagawa Seigan Zenshū Kankōkai, 1956), 175.
95 The letter is included in the Rai San'yō zenshō 2, edited by Kizaki Aikichi and Rai Seiichi (Hiroshima: Rai San’yō Sensei Iseki Kenschōkai, 1932), 266. 山陽先生、益御勇健、滞京中、時々輩出、拙稿懸御高評被下、不堪欣然候。五月晦、入京、六月初旬より権川君[星斎]之儕
居今寄宿候。
96 “Hara Saihin shishō,” 75. The photocopy of the original is included in the Hara Saihin joshi, edited by Hara Saihin Sensei Kenschōkai (Fukuoka: Hara Saihin Sensei Kenschōkai, 1958). 各位吟長兄益御多福の由。諸文人来往傳話に承り候。先以欣喜々々。小生事畳々無事に而京師寓居仕候間、乍恵御安等可被下候。只爾篋前秋月原君震平之令愛采蘋女史。
今般束下。必以諸貴境遇髪。何卒官敷御歡待之程奉願上候。小生近況ハ女史より御承知可
被下候。草々頃首。 八月四日 詩禪事 梁川新十年 [Names of nine individuals follow].
97 These lines are included in the poem entitled “At Kaijin Shioku, I Composed These Poems to the Host” (懐人詩屋席上呈主人). Kajin Shioku was Suzuki Shōtō’s study. Hara Saihin, “Tōyū Mansō”; “Hara Saihin shishō,” 32. ･･････、與君連夜話、慰我暮年情、･･････。
98 The poem is entitled “Responding to Saihin Joshi’s Poem. Using the Same Poetic Rhyme in the One She Presented Me” (酬采蘋女史次其贈韻). Suzuki Shōtō, Shōtō shishō (1851), reprinted in Shishū Nihon kanshi, vol.18, edited by Fujikawa Hideo, Matsushita Tadashi and Sano Masami (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1988), 13. This poem is also included in “Hara Saihin shishō,” 76. 闇裏有斯秀、男児真媚君、弓鞋輕萬里。形管掃千軍。習氣非巾幗。才情過錦文。廣酬我何敢。筆硯殆將焚.
99 Shōtō studied poetry under Yanagawa Seigan who had moved to Edo in 1832 and opened a poetry school, Gyokuchi-ginsha, in 1834. The school attracted numerous students including Mori Shuntō (1819-89), Onuma Chinzan, Otsuki Bankei (1801-78), Shinoda Unpō and others. Shōtō was one of Seigan’s top students. Kōran highly regarded him, which is known from her poems to Shōtō. Shōtō visited the couple in Mino and Kyoto after they had left Edo in 1845.
100 Suzuki Shōtō, Shichikyoku ginsha keien zekku (Tokyo, 1877).

116
Martha Tocco writes, “The increasing visibility of women from both the samurai and the commoner class in the public role of teacher and school administrator shows that teaching had become a suitable occupation for women as a gender group and not just for women of a certain social stratum.” Martha C. Tocco, “Women’s Education in Tokugawa Japan,” in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, edited by Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 194.

101 Ibid., 213.
102 Ibid., 204.
CHAPTER THREE

EMA SAIKŌ (1787-1861)

Compared to the other two poets discussed in this study, namely Hara Saihin and Takahashi Gyokushō, Ema Saikō (1787-1861) has received more popular and academic attention. In 1991, Patricia Fister recounted the details of Saikō’s life focusing on her activities as a painter-artist.¹ In 1998, Hiroaki Sato translated one-hundred and fifty-seven of Saikō’s *kanshi* verses in *Breeze Through Bamboo: Kanshi of Ema Saikō*.² The following year, Atsuko Sakaki discussed Saikō’s *kanshi* works, focusing particularly on how “femininity” is embodied (and rejected) in her poetry and its modern reception.³ In Japan, Saikō initially became widely known through her relationship with her poetry teacher, the famous scholar Rai San’yō, which people assumed was a romantic one. Novelists such as Morita Sōhei (1881-1949), Nakamura Shin’ichirō (1918-97), and Nanjō Norio (1908-2004), have eroticized her, depicting Saikō as San’yō’s mistress.⁴ More recently, Saikō has received attention for her literary accomplishments. Kado Reiko, who has annotated Saikō’s anthology *Shōmu iko*, has done the most to spotlight Saikō the poet, on the merit of her works and life.⁵

Saikō’s autographic manuscripts contain over two-thousand, roughly chronological, poems—the latest piece included in the manuscripts was composed at age seventy-four. These poems are still extant and remain in the possession of the Ema family in Ogaki City,
Gifu Prefecture. Many of the manuscript poems were corrected in red ink by Rai San’yō and others.

The quantity and quality of the works that we have access to could provide us with valuable knowledge about the literary and artistic environment of the period. To begin, this study will focus on the conscious fashioning of a feminine mode of expression, especially noticeable in the works composed in Saikō’s late twenties and early thirties. In contrast to Hara Saihin’s poetry, which often adopted a masculine persona, Saikō’s poetry is known for its fresh expression of a feminine style. Saikō’s teacher San’yō led her to cultivate a feminine mode, considering it both natural and helpful for Saikō to express her true self. However, the feminine mode was nevertheless a poetic construct with which the poet needed to negotiate as an individual. Saikō’s well organized and preserved poems are an excellent record of her effort to construct a feminine identity as well as the conflict between her self-presentation and gender identification. Next, I discuss the diversity of subjects Saikō dealt with. As she matured and became more recognized as a painter and poet, her sphere of social activity expanded as did her subject matter and perspective on poetic composition. Saikō was not just a quintessentially feminine poet. She dealt with a variety of topics, such as nature, friendship, family, history, literature, paintings, and travel. Her diverse poetic topics reveal that she enjoyed considerable literary and social freedom regardless of her gender.

To Saikō’s available biographies—in Patricia Fister’s article and Hiroaki Sato’s introduction to his translation—I add a few details. Ema Saikō was born in 1787 in Ogaki
in Mino Province as the first daughter of Ema Ransai (1747-1839), a successful local official-doctor. Ransai had Saikō study Chinese-style painting from a very early age. She showed excellent talent from the start, and her proud father cherished his daughter greatly. For example, in 1797, when Saikō was eleven years old, Ransai sent her ink-painting of chrysanthemums and a sheet of calligraphy in “Western letters” (西洋文字 seiyō moji) to Kyoto to have it included in a major exhibition at Kiyomizu-dera.\(^6\) The calligraphy in “Western letters” was probably done in Dutch under the instruction of Ransai, who had enthusiastically started to learn the language in 1792, at the age of forty-six.\(^7\) The list of art pieces contributed for the exhibition includes works by more than two hundred people. Among them, only Saikō’s age is recorded, which suggests that she was an uncommonly young contributor. Her young age and the unusual calligraphy in Dutch letters must have drawn the spectators’ eyes, which surely delighted the proud father. Ransai occasionally showed off his brilliant, precocious daughter’s talent and skill. For example, when he contributed a preface to *Oranda Yakusen*, an elementary text book in Dutch written by Maeno Ryōtaku (1723-1803), Ransai had Saikō copy the preface for the publication. The book was published in 1797. Saikō’s name and age—eleven years old—was printed as the calligrapher of the preface. As these episodes suggest, Saikō grew up enjoying the special treatment and attention of her father.

When Saikō reached her teens, Ransai arranged for her to study Chinese-style painting by correspondence under the famous monk-painter, Gyokurin, then residing in Kyoto. She became an outstanding student in Gyokurin’s circle. A letter written by Hirata
Mine, mother of accomplished female painter Hirata Gyokuon (1787-1855, Onomichi, Hiroshima), eloquently describes the excellence of Saikō’s paintings. The letter was written to a merchant in Onomichi, Takeuchi Hikouemon, who was also a student of Gyokurin. Mine and Gyokuon were visiting Kyoto in 1811, where they saw paintings by Ema Saikō. Saikō had visited Kyoto a couple of months earlier. At the time of this letter, Saikō was in her twenty-fifth year, not yet a student of San’yō. Hirata Mine wrote, addressing Takeuchi Hikouemon:

. . . We are talking about you, that you will work hard on your paintings through this year and come to Kyoto next spring in order to show your excellence to other disciples of Monk Gyokurin. But, however hard you practice this year, it will not be easy to surpass the two accomplished women (女史), Saikō and Seihō. They are very proficient. Please, do work hard and surpass even the two women masters! I am not saying this favoring them because we are both women. Their works are simply very skillful. . .

Impressed by Saikō’s art, Gyokuon purchased a ceramic piece decorated with Saikō’s painting. Gyokuon presented it to her kanshi teacher, Kan Chazan, as a souvenir from Kyoto. Before she became recognized for her poetic compositions, Saikō was already recognized as an artist.

Ransai had only two children who survived into adulthood, both daughters. With no male heir, the family decided to take a son-in-law to succeed in the occupation and headship of the household. It was arranged for Saikō’s younger sister, Tsuge, to marry, so
that Saikō could continue her artistic pursuits. Saikō remained unmarried, but continued to enjoy warm family relations and material wealth. Saikō resided with her parents, who lived to be quite old, and her sister’s family, which included two sons. As Saikō’s brother-in-law died relatively young, Saikō was required to be actively involved in the education of her two nephews. She cultivated a strong relationship with them and came to influence Ema family descendants.

Saikō’s father Ransai was promoted in 1802 and their annual stipend became one hundred koku of rice. Although this was the same amount as the stipend Hara Saîhin’s father received at his prime, the Ema family had other highly profitable sources of income. Ransai’s private school in Dutch medicine, the first in the western region, received quite a few students. Ransai himself was also a practitioner of medicine. Especially after his successful examination of the abbot of Nishi-Honganji temple in Kyoto in 1798, his reputation as a skilled physician soared. Ransai became a highly sought-after doctor in the Mino, Owari, Kyoto and Osaka areas. His fame was such that a few inns were opened near the Ema household to accommodate his patients and visitors.

Ransai’s son-in-law, Shōsai, was also a talented physician. In 1814, while in Edo, Shōsai treated Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829), the former senior chief councilor of the shogunate. Having great faith in Shōsai’s treatment, Sadanobu made two of his physicians Shōsai’s apprentices. Although Shōsai died relatively young, at the age of forty-two, his first son, Gen’eki, who succeeded to the headship of the family, also extended the family’s honor. In 1844, while Gen’eki was in Edo, the shogunate asked him to give lectures on the
Honzo kōmoku (本草綱門: published in 1596 in Ming China), a comprehensive Chinese book on medicine, at the Tokugawa’s medical school, the Igakukan. In his home province, Gen’eki was very popular and active as a practitioner. The Ogaki lord was proud of the Ema family and occasionally bestowed special gifts to honor them. Saikō was also honored with special gifts. In 1856, the Ogaki lady bestowed on Saikō a robe embroidered with Ema family-crests, and in 1860, the Ogaki lord himself did the same.

Although both Hara Saihin and Ema Saikō are recognized today as kanshi poets, their familial situations, their purposes for composing poetry, and their poetic styles were remarkably different. While Hara Saihin lacked dependable family support and financial security throughout her life, Saikō grew up and matured nurtured within her family’s growth and prosperity. Saihin primarily aimed to be a Confucian scholar and composed kanshi poems in order to communicate with other intellectuals, and occasionally to express her intentions and emotion. Saikō practiced kanshi, in addition to painting and calligraphy, to cultivate elegant taste and culturally elevate her spirit. Saihin’s poetry is heroic. Saikō strove to achieve a feminine style.

Hara Saihin in her fifty-ninth year, three years before her death, expressed her distress and frustration in the poem “A Thought at the End of the Year.” In this poem, she compared her mental state to “steaming rocks,” wondering when her mind would be like “dead ashes,” a metaphor for a selfless, quiet mental condition. Ema Saikō’s untitled poem composed in 1860 in her seventy-fourth year also compares her mind to ashes.

My age: seventy-four,
feelings colder than ashes.

Not ill but growing thin,

I'll make a smaller padded robe.\textsuperscript{12}

Saikō in her advanced age expresses that her feelings are colder than ashes. She lived her life to the fullest and her mind at seventy-four was undisturbed. She impassively acknowledges her emotional life as one exhausted. This was Saikō's last poem.

I. Essentialism and Realism: The Construction of Feminine Poetry

One reason Saiko's poetry has been attractive to her readers is the "feminine" quality of her expression. Iriya Sensuke, for example, praises Saikō, suggesting that she "demonstrated the possibility of conveying a woman's delicate psychology in Chinese verse,"\textsuperscript{13} while Ibi Takashi says, "Saikō succeeded in achieving a womanly style, clean and enchanting."\textsuperscript{14} And Fukushima Riko describes the characteristics of Saikō's poetry as "very womanly and rich with a tender sensibility grounded in her actual feelings."\textsuperscript{15} These laudatory remarks show how Saikō's work was thought to express an innate sensibility unique to women.

However, critical reviews by Fukushima Riko, Atsuko Sakaki, and Robert Campbell have suggested that San'yō may have manipulated the formation of the "womanliness" in Saikō's poetry. After describing Saikō's poetry as characteristically "womanly," Fukushima mentions that San'yō repeatedly instructed and urged Saikō to "make the most of the unique sensibility of women."\textsuperscript{16} Following Fukushima's suggestion,
Atsuko Sakaki discusses the places in San’yō’s commentary where he distinctly indicates which poetic phrases have “true feminine expression.” Robert Campbell points out in his review of Breeze Through Bamboo that “His [San’yō’s] comments on the finished poems [of Saikō] show him nudging his pupil closer and closer to ‘his’ poetic ideal of womanliness and in his interventions with her rough drafts we catch him, more than once, trying to ‘womanize’ the text.” Thus, Saikō’s “womanly poetry” was not simply a natural product originating with her nature and gender but the fruit of San’yō’s instruction and her subsequent effort intentionally to write verse in a recognizably feminine mode.

San’yō was under the strong influence of the school of Seirei poetics. He considered “sincere, realistic expression” to be the primary concern in writing poetry. He regarded “genuine expression” (真) so highly as to name his private school in Kyoto the Genuine School (真塾). He instructed Saikō in this vein as well.

In discussing the feminine quality of Chinese song lyrics, that is, ci poetry, Grace Fong notes that “Shih poetry in the T’ang, as in most periods of Chinese history, is a male discourse essentially founded on a poetics that is apparently non-gender-specific and ‘universal.’ Yet the ‘universal’ poetics of shih poetry has all the underlying assumptions of male perspective and orientation.” Chinese shih poetry, the poetic form Saikō employed for her writing, was pervaded with this “universal” and masculine discourse. In this long tradition of Chinese shi poetry, a specific poetic style had been cultivated to speak of and for women. It abstracted and defined a quintessential feminine quality and crystallized an ideal feminine image from a masculine perspective. This specific style of feminine poetics
most commonly objectified a young, beautiful woman, often a woman experiencing unfulfilled love, followed by resentment, seclusion and loneliness. The “genuine women’s words” that San’yō and Saikō desired to achieve in poetry was not free from this established feminine poetics. To render her poetry so as to appear feminine, Saikō needed to fashion her poetry after this established feminine style to make it recognizable as such.

It was not only feminine poetics that underlaid Saikō’s poetry, however, since the ideology of Seirei poetics demanded that she write “truthfully,” referring to her real life experiences and feelings. Thus, her poetic persona as a woman, in theory, was required to be consistent not only with established feminine poetics but also with her real life circumstances. This requirement to be truthful may have caused Saikō to identify with the poetic female, to internalize typical feminine sentiments as represented in traditional poetry, so that she might incorporate these into her own poetry. While Saikō was a young woman, the internalization of the feminine ideal, embodied by youth and grace, may have appeared possible, even pleasant. More problematically, the typical poetic representation of women would sometimes appear to be compatible with her reality, while at the other times the two would seem to be in conflict. As she aged and matured as a poet, this distinctive conflict between traditional feminine representation and her reality seemed to become more and more clear, both to Saikō and San’yō. Eventually they both had to recognize the contradiction in producing womanly poetry while attempting to maintain their poetic principles of honest expression.

A letter from San’yō to Saikō written in the tenth month of 1814 reveals his
ambivalent attitude towards the literary representation of “women.” While on his journey to Onomichi, San’yō received Saikō’s finished copy of his poem composed in the kōren style, which typically describes a beautiful ideal woman.²⁰ He made a note on this work to introduce his poem and his calligrapher to the local art lovers.

This is my poem composed in the kōren style. My female disciple Ema Saikō hand-copied it. My calligraphy tends to be wild, even writing this kind of poetry. It is as if a man with a beard and long eyebrows was compelled to learn dancing. Although Saikō studies my calligraphy, she always renders it as a soft and gentle work, and naturally shows charm. A trace of powder and a smell of cosmetic oil adorn the paper. Indeed, her hand matches this form of poem.²¹

Then, in the letter to Saikō, San’yō excused himself for embellishing her image.

I introduced the work in this way, although I thoroughly understand that you never write with heavy powder and cosmetic oil. Yet, if I had not expressed it in this way, it wouldn’t have sounded womanly (onna rashiku). I explained it to the people present, and we laughed.²²

While writing a literary introduction describing Saiko’s skill, San’yō felt a need to portray his female student as “womanly.” Thus, he portrayed her as a charming woman with elaborate makeup, although he was very aware of the fabrication and even spoke with people about the embellishment. In San’yō’s introduction to the local art lovers, however, representing Saikō as womanly was given priority over a realistic description of her.

For Saikō to explore previous “women’s expression,” San’yō provided her with
opportunities to study traditional Chinese women’s poetry, which was an innovative act on his part. San’yō considered authentic “women’s expression” in the genre of *kanshi* could be found in texts written by Chinese women and that they would be the most appropriate model for Saikō to emulate. Thus, Saiko’s search for a womanly style included the study and imitation of the poetic style of Chinese women of the past.

Providing an interesting parallel to Saikō’s development as a poet, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Guber discuss Aurora’s development referring to Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Aurora Leigh*.

Aurora’s self-development as a poet is the central concern of Barrett Browning’s *Bildungsroman* in verse, but if she is to be a poet she must deconstruct the dead self that is a male “opus” and discover a living, “inconstant” self. She must, in other words, replace the “copy” with the “individuality,” as Barrett Browning once said she thought she herself had done in her mature art.23

Although Saikō’s model for her poetic writings may not necessarily have been “a male ‘opus,’” since Saikō intensively studied poetry written by women, yet, even so, her development as a poet may be compared to that of Aurora (and Barrett Browning). Maturing as a poet, Saikō renounced the practice of “copying” Chinese women’s poetry and started composing about her individual life with more accuracy and confidence. Fortunately for Saikō, the contemporary poetic ideology supported her exploration of individualistic expression, which provided her works with more substance.

In order to gain this perspective on Saikō’s maturation as a poet, it is important to
examine examples of both her earlier poetry, which strove for ideal feminine representation, and her later works, which were more individualistic in their self-reflective descriptions. This transformation in her work was illuminated by San’yō’s commentary to a certain degree, which affirms that it was a vital concern to both of them. Making reference to San’yō’s relevant comments, which identify specific poems of Saikō’s as either “womanly poetry” or “realistic poetry,” the following section will examine her poetic treatment of femininity and self-expression. This will allow us to reconsider the “womanliness” that some found to be such an appealing feature of her poetry.

Pursuing Feminine Words

San’yō marked some of Saikō’s poems with such phrases as: “Truly, it is a verse by a woman”; “Truly, they are a woman’s words”; “Truly, a reflection of a woman’s voice,” and other such variations. I refer to the poems marked with these phrases as her “feminine” poems. The poetry that falls under this category is mostly found in the works produced in her late twenties and thirties. The following poem is the earliest feminine piece, composed in 1814, almost a year after Saikō had become San’yō’s student at the age of twenty-seven.

A Summer Afternoon

A day seems long as a year, daytime moves slowly.

A fine misty rain falls, season of plum rains.

By an afternoon window I have napped, fully, my secluded room, quiet.

Now ready to copy four amorous poems.24
San’yō commented on this poem, “Truly, it is a verse by a woman poet” (真闇秀之詩也 \textit{makoto ni keishū no shi nari}). As is typical, the voice of this poem is one that displays feminine gestures. The woman is alone, idle, feeling the passage of time as slow in her secluded chamber. She lives leisurely, almost unnaturally free from normal, worldly household duties. This positioning of a female subject perfectly conforms to the conventional representation of woman cultivated in the poetic tradition. The application of such terms as \textit{shinkei} (深閑, deep, inner chamber), which intimates a woman’s room, and the word \textit{kōren} (香甄, woman’s toilet box, woman, a poem in the \textit{kōren} style), make the gender-attribution of the poem conspicuous. In the last line, the poet mentions her intention to copy “four amorous poems” (香甄四艷詩 \textit{J. kōren shi-enshi}, Ch. \textit{xianglian si-yanshih}). This description is symbolic, as it divulges her process of learning and producing feminine poetry. The word \textit{kōren}, which originally signified a woman’s toilet box, can mean two different things in the context. It may indicate “poems written in the \textit{kōren} style,” or it may imply “woman” figuratively. Thus, the phrase “\textit{kōren shi-enshi}” in the last line can be interpreted either as “four amorous poems written in the \textit{kōren} style (by a man)” or “four amorous poems written by a woman poet.” Fukushima Riko takes the first interpretation, while Kobayashi Tetsuyuki takes the latter.

If what the poetess, the speaking subject, was to copy are poems written in the \textit{kōren}-style, she was literally and symbolically to copy what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Guber called the “male ‘opus’,” since the woman described in the \textit{kōren} style was an idealistic representation of women refined by male poets in the tradition. She copies the
kōren style poetry and then produces feminine poetry herself, modeling her work and herself after the conventional poetic representation of women. But even if, as Kobayashi Tetsuyuki interprets the phrase “kōren shi-enshi,” the speaking subject were to copy, “four amorous poems by a woman,” they were “amorous poems” composed on romantic themes. They position the speaking subject as a man’s lover, which reinforces the masculine-feminine conceptual framework. By copying a woman’s amorous poems, the poetess and speaking subject of “A Summer Afternoon” was to learn the appropriate viewpoint from which to express herself, from the stance of a female lover. The poem, therefore, exhibits the poetess’s conformity with the conventional poetic representation of women, and it reproduces such a feminine image as her own self-presentation.

It should be noted that Saikō intended to describe her reality, as that was the ideal manner of Seirei kanshi composition at that time. Thus, in reality, Saikō probably felt the hot, humid summer day to be long, she might have regularly had a nap, her room in the countryside was probably quiet and she could be truly living the leisurely life of an unmarried daughter of a wealthy family. However, the problem is that this was the only sort of reality perceivable and describable within the established feminine poetic codes.

There is another poem among the works composed in 1814 that San’yō remarked upon because of its femininity.

A Winter Day

The year passes swiftly like an arrow shot from a bow-string.

My small nephew’s now past my hips, the big one past my shoulders.
In my inner-room I’ve watched both children grow,
and feel my “fragrant years” further decrease.29

Recognizing her nephews’ physical growth, the poetess realizes that she is aging, which had been considered a particularly vital concern for women. On this poem San’yō commented, “The effect is saddening and deplorable. This is truly a woman poet’s words” (風情悽惋真是閨秀語). A woman’s sorrow at losing the fresh beauty of youth was a recycled subject, frequently combined with the grief of losing the love of a man. Thus, Saiko’s expression of her sense of declining appearance conforms to a popular subject, one particular to women. In addition, Saiko was actually in her late twenties, which would seem the right age to express a concern for a change in her appearance. This actuality gave the poem a sense of authentic expression while it sounded typically feminine as well.

Significantly, San’yō’s corrections of this poem show his preference for perfecting its feminine quality over a more honest description of the scene. Saiko originally rendered the third line as, “because of the growth of the two children around my sitting place,” (坐下稍因両児長) describing herself as a family member surrounded by her nephews who were attached to her. San’yō changed this line into, “in my chamber, I’ve watched the two children grow,” (閨裡看他両児長), which hides her intimacy with the two children. Instead, the corrected line reflects upon the speaking subject in a solitary state, secluding her inside her chamber. It effectively added the image of a lonely woman to the scene, which was more poetically feminine.

A poem composed in 1817 after she returned from her trip to Kyoto in the tenth
month, received San’yō’s praise, “This is truly an able woman’s poem. Excellent” (真女郎詩、絶佳).

**Coming Home**

Soft feet ignoring frost and dew, again, I’ve come home.

The quiet bamboos, still hale, shine on my study door.

Carried away with pleasures and not ready for cold,

I begin by cleaning my sewing board to make a padded robe. This poem is clearly gendered, first by the use of the expression “soft feet” and secondly by presenting the speaking subject’s primary concern of making a robe. “Soft feet” stands for a woman’s feet, which had been conventionally described as delicate objects in poetry. Saikō employed this word for her own feet, although hers were tough enough to travel between Mino and Kyoto. Sewing was a typical kind of work for women and the description of this activity also genders the poem.

Saikō produced some of her feminine works by imitating poems by particular Chinese women. One example is her imitation of poems by Yang Wan (ca. 1600-ca. 1647), a talented courtesan who lead a dramatic life in Nanjing at the end of the Ming dynasty. In the spring of 1814, Saikō visited her teacher, San’yō, in Kyoto for the first time. On the occasion, she hand-copied an entire anthology of Yang Wan, the Zhong-shan xian (錦山献). Within the anthology, there is a series of poems written under the heading, “Composing sixteen amorous poems in the same rhyme with poems by my husband and a friend” (和外和友人十六艶次韻). In 1820, Saikō composed poems in reference to four
particular verses included in the series. The poems of Saikō were entitled “Playfully composing on topics included in Yang Wan’s sixteen amorous poems” (戲賦楊宛宛十六艷中題). One of the four is described by San’yō as being, “truly, a woman’s expression” (真女子語). The verse reads as follows.

Throwing a Lotus Pip at Mandarin Ducks

Floating together, diving together, in gentle green waves,

they do not understand separation in the human world.

For fun I pick up a lotus pip and throw it in the pond.

They fly up, separately — I hope they miss each other for awhile.32

A pair of Mandarin ducks is a popular symbol of a loving couple in Chinese literature. While lightheartedly expressing a woman’s jealousy of the lovebirds, this poem represents the speaker as a love-stricken woman. Since a lovesick, lonely woman had been repeatedly depicted in traditional Chinese poems by male poets, this presentation of the female subject as such is very conventional. Below is Yang Wan’s poem.

Throwing a Lotus Pip at Mandarin Ducks

In a beautiful pond, they dive, facing each other, as if dancing.

I sit in front of the flowers, alone, and see them passing by repeatedly.

Throwing a lotus pip at them, I shall share my anguish.

I am jealous of them only because my situation is not equal to theirs.33

Saikō recast the female subject of Yang Wan’s poem, that is, an unhappy woman jealous of the lovebirds, although Saikō rendered the agony in a much lighter and less intense way.
In the spring of 1815, a year after having copied Yang Wan’s anthology, Saikō purchased a copy of the Mingyuan shigui (名媛詩婦, Poetic Retrospective of Famous Ladies, ca. 1620) on the recommendation of San’yō, who had gone to great pains to obtain a rare copy for her. Compiled by Zhong Xing (1574-1627), a leading advocate of Xingling poetics in the late Ming, the collection is a comprehensive record of Chinese women’s poetry, including 2700 poems by more than 400 women from ancient times to the late Ming era. In the year Saikō obtained the book, she wrote about her experience reading the works.

Reading Mingyuan Shigui under a Lamp

The hushed night deepening, I can’t take to my pillow;

Lamp trimmed, I quietly read the women’s words.

Why is it that the talented are so unfortunate?

Most are poems about empty beds, a grudge against husbands.34

The last two lines state Saikō’s impression of the poems included in the Mingyuan shigui. While reading the poems, Saikō discovered that most of the poems expressed the grief, loneliness and helplessness, of being left by a man. This was her realization of the typical mode of female self-presentation, and the fact disturbed Saikō greatly. She could not help but question, “why is it like this?” (何如此).

Saikō grasped this poetic female representation, the lovelorn woman, but she did not follow the tradition wholly. Her own works were tempered with concern for truthful and authentic self-presentation based on the emergent Seirei ideology of kanshi composition. Her poems would be read as a reflection of her real life experiences, unless
specially noted. Thus, it would have been socially improper and dangerous for Saikō, a daughter of a respectable official doctor who stayed single through her life, to write on the boudoir theme in association with love. She avoided the subject, or she approached it “playfully” when imitating a model work, as she did with Yang Wan’s poems.

While avoiding subjects related to love, Saikō actively adapted other forms of feminine diction and sentiment expressed within the “clean” (i.e. not amorous) boundaries of poetry. Examples of these safe topics include descriptions of seasonal or scenic environments and daily activities appropriate for women, such as sewing and embroidering. In the year she read the Mingyuan shigui, Saikō modeled a set of four seasonal poems upon those by the Wife of Zheng Gui (?-?) from the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). Although Saikō did not explicitly indicate her models, her reference to them is evident. The example below is on summer.

Summer

A pair of parent swallows sweep in the blinds,

and I wake from dreams in the slow afternoon.

Perspiration moistening the collar, beads of rouged sweat on my skin.

dislodged hairpin tangled in side-locks, ample hair droops.

The stitching by the window I’m too languid to resume,

no desire to open a book half read then put away.

Day-lily flowers fragrant beyond the railing,

I flutter my silk fan quietly, standing in idleness.35
Below is the corresponding poem by the Wife of Zheng Gui.

Summer

Plantain tree, the leaves extend like tails of a blue phoenix.

Day-lily, the flowers are like beaks of a golden phoenix.

A pair of parent swallows comes out from an engraved beam.

A few new lotuses float on green water.

The weather troubles me, when the daylight is long,

Too languid to pick up a needle and thread in this slow afternoon.

Getting up I stand in the shade of a pomegranate tree.

For fun I try to hit a baby bush-warbler with a plum fruit.\textsuperscript{36}

Saikō utilized some wording from the poem of the Wife of Zheng Gui. Examples are, “a pair of parent swallows” (一双乳燕), “the slow afternoon” (午漏遲), and “day-lily flowers” (萱草花). Saikō also adopted the sentiment of languidness, and especially the tiresomeness of taking up a needle to work at sewing. As for the difference in the two poems, Saikō excluded the playful assault on baby birds described in the last line of the poem of the Wife of Zheng Gui, which would remind us of a similar phrase in another of Saikō’s imitative works, “Throwing a Lotus Pip at Mandarin Ducks.” Instead, she added a description of her reading, which she also found tiresome. The reading was paralleled with the sewing, both of which may likely have been a somewhat regular activities of Saikō’s. However, since the gender attribution of “reading” is not apparently feminine while the “sewing” definitely stands for womanliness, the couplet may appear unbalanced and
Another apparent difference in the poems is Saikō’s objective, physical description of a woman in the third and fourth lines. The female speaker who has just awakened describes the sweat on her skin, reddened with rouge, and her long hair, untied. This kind of visual, sensual presentation of woman in her private space had been typically practiced by male literati poets. The practice even formulated a distinctive genre called palace-style poetry (宮体詩 Ch. gongtishi, J. kyūtaishi), which initially became in vogue in the Qi (479-502) and Liang (502-557) courts in the period of the Southern Dynasties. The best of palace-style poetry was anthologized into the Yūtai xinyong (玉台新詠 New Songs from the Jade Terrace) by the Liang court, and the anthology circulated widely in the Edo period. Below is part of a palace-style poem composed by the Emperor Jianwen of Liang (r. 549-551).

Smiling as she dreams, lovely dimples appear;
Sleeping on her chignon, crushed petals drop.
Patterns of the bamboo mat impressed on jade wrists,
Fragrant perspiration soaks the red silk.

This fragment uses the imagery of a fallen hair ornament and perspiration soaking the sleeping woman’s robe. Although Saikō may not have particularly referred to this verse while writing the poem cited above, her visual presentation of the female subject/object...
(herself) in the third and fourth lines clearly follows the poetic manner of the masculine gaze, which was most typically demonstrated in palace-style poetry.

On reading the seasonal poems, San’yō did not detect that Saikō referred to the poems of a Chinese woman, but inferred that she modeled them after Su Shi’s seasonal poems. After mentioning his conjecture, San’yō commented on Saikō’s set of seasonal poems, admiring the feminine rendition: “all the phrases are graceful and beautiful; they really show a woman’s expression. A man with a beard and thick eyebrows would not be able to accomplish this style even if he imitated it with various schemes” (句々柔麗真女子口吻、鬢眉男児百計模倣不可得). San’yō stated that Saiko’s poetic style was something that would be impossible for men to copy, as if to attribute the feminine expression to her actual sex. However, Saikō accomplished her feminine poems by imitating specific forms of diction and sentiment from the seasonal verses of a Chinese woman and interweaving them with a conventional visual presentation of a woman fashioned by male poets in palace-style poetry.

Another group of poems that was marked as “feminine” typically expressed a love for flowers. Below are three examples composed in 1826, 1830 and 1831, respectively.

On a Spring Day of the year 1826, Lodging at the Hermitage of Jōrin Temple, I Admire the Cherry Blossoms of Kamagatani

My robe rustles, wearing haze and mist.

I came to stay at a house at the foot of the mountains in the Fujishiro area.

Neither the spring nor I have yet departed.
For three days, under slightly cloudy skies, I have adored the cherry blossoms.\textsuperscript{39}

San’yō’s comment: “Truly, a poem by a woman writer” (真閨閣之詩也).

\textbf{Recording the Events at Suiseisō}

In the garden, through the night, threadlike rain aslant,
the green on extended branches glows on the amethyst silk.
Beneath the leaves a lingering touch of spring remains,
Affectionately, I look at the lovely flowers, three or two.\textsuperscript{40}

San’yō’s comment: “Without asking, one can tell that this was
composed by a woman poet” (不問而可知其為閨秀詩也).

\textbf{Spring Day, In My Room}

Not ill, but too lazy to comb my side-locks and bun;
all day by the window I stay with a book.
The narcissus in the vase, pity, I have yet to discard;
its flowers remain, retain some scent.\textsuperscript{41}

San’yō’s comment: “Truly, the poem of an able woman” (真女郎詩).

Love for pretty flowers, especially for those of a small size, was associated with the
feminine sensibility, and made the poem recognizable as “feminine.” The association of the
subject of flowers with women is typically seen in the field of literati-painting, which was
closely related to poetic composition. Both in China and Japan, many women painters
practiced drawing flowers, birds and insects, especially the orchid, gourd, day-lily, and butterflies. In contrast, the mountain and rivers, nature on a larger scale and the central subjects of the literati-painting, were predominantly practiced by male intellectuals, and thus associated with masculinity. In fact, one of Saikō's poems on mountains and rivers was, in contrast to her poems about flowers, critiqued as "unlike a woman's poem." The example below was composed in 1829.

Going from Kuwana by Boat I Reached Moritsu.

Quietly poling, and the day breaks over the clear river;
Out of the thatched window I look, and it's already fall.
Mino mountains, lined up, form a row;
Shinano waters, broken up into flows, merge here.
Willow leaves, frosted, fly about the coast;
reed flowers, like snow, fill the sandy bar.
I prick up my ears and see the accent has changed;
our boat has entered Owari Province. San'yō commented on this poem, "Skilled and stout. Not like a woman's poem" (強勢,不似女子詩). This reveals his perception and ideas about what constitutes the distinguishable qualities of "feminine" from "masculine."

On closing this analysis of Saikō's feminine poems, I would like to discuss a poem composed in 1815, when Saikō was twenty-nine years old. This poem utilizes feminine diction and sentiment similar to those seen in the poems discussed above. The speaking
subject is alone in her private space, bored and at leisure. However, it was remarked on not for its feminine quality but for its expression of “genuine circumstance.”

A Spring Day

The long daytime is like a year; all the neighboring places are quiet.

As it becomes warmer, my garden refreshes little by little.

Holding dew, blossoms of crab apple are slightly shaded with scarlet.

Rustled by wind, the willow is pervaded with fresh green.

Bored with stitching, I lean against a couch; it is easy to fall asleep.

Casually reciting, I compose phrases; how difficult to make the intent genuine.

In Kyoto, all the flowers must be about to bloom.

Alone, in my secluded chamber, I miss last year’s spring.  

The speaking subject is alone in her quiet inner chamber, feeling languid—the day is too long. She presents her delicate observations of the small things in her garden, and her (interrupted) commitment to her needle work. All these expressions typically accord with the feminine poetics discussed earlier. Yet this piece was praised because of its genuineness, not for its womanliness. San’yō wrote, “I begin to recognize every piece of your poetry is an expression of real circumstances. This is what pleases me.” Commenting on this poem, he did not highlight its use of feminine poetics, but took it for Saiko’s genuine expression incorporating her actual life.

In fact, the genuineness of this poem was partly confirmed by the message
conveyed in the last two lines. Saikō expressed her longing for the spring in Kyoto, where she had actually visited in the previous year and enjoyed viewing cherry blossoms with San’yō and other literati friends. The following year, she stayed in Mino, thinking about her friends in Kyoto who would gather for flower viewing just as in the previous year. Reference to such a concrete, personal experience, which the reader (i.e., San’yō) was familiar with, surely made the poem feel genuine. Also, the statement in the sixth line, which speaks of the difficulty of composing true feelings, paradoxically authenticated its genuineness, emphasizing the poet’s sincere intention for honest expression. In effect, this poem even authenticates the feminine aspects of her self-presentation, incorporating conventionally feminine images and diction with experience particular to her.

When Saikō was young, it was probably not so difficult for her readers as well as she herself to confuse and identify her life-style and perceptions with typical feminine attributes from traditional poetry. Yet, however consistent the poetic feminine was with her real life while she was young, the typically feminine would become more and more incompatible as she aged. She aged, while the ideal feminine in literature remained eternally young and beautiful. She needed to negotiate further the poetic feminine to represent comfortably and confidently—and truthfully—her changing self.

In Search of Truthful Self-Presentation

While San’yō appreciated the feminine mode of Saikō’s poetry, he attached a greater importance to realistic, truthful expressions. This principle affected his poetic
guidance of Saikō from the very beginning. In 1814, the same year when Saikō wrote a 
feminine verse entitled “Summer Afternoon,” she also composed a poem that impressed 
San’yō with its “realistic” expression.

Summer Afternoon at a Leisurely Dwelling

What would hamper the scorching heat of this human world?
The shade of plantain leaves is deep, coolness naturally occupies it.
Refreshing breeze over a couch; I begin to awaken.
Sun aslant through half-raised blinds, I recite a verse exaggerating my voice.
After a meal, I call my nephew and play a game of go.
After bathing, I have the boy water irises.
We put our collection of books, an abundance of volumes, in the sun, disorderly.

Trying to find missing volumes, my evening is always busy.

While the first half of the poem represents a leisurely, tasteful life of a woman of good family in accord with feminine poetics, the latter half rather prosaically describes the poet’s evening activity and routine. She eats, takes a bath, enjoys her time with family members and does some chores within the household. By describing these usual, worldly activities in her life, this poem replaces the literary construct of the feminine ideal with a living, social female subject. San’yō commented favorably on this poem: “All phrases are about actual matters. That is the principle of my school” (句々実際、是僕法門).

The philosophy of Seirei poetics, which placed a high value on realistic description,
potentially allowed Saikō and San’yō to express and approve of authentic, individualistic descriptions of Saikō as speaking subject in her poetic compositions. In fact, however, most of the poems marked as “realistic” or “genuine” by San’yō were descriptions of scenery and occasions, not descriptions of Saikō herself. Saikō’s self-presentation, which had been repeatedly rendered in the feminine mode as we saw above, is scarcely found in the “realistic” or “genuine” poems. It seemed Saikō’s practice of “realistic description” was mostly directed at the objective observation of natural surroundings and activities. The following are a few examples.

Arranging a Chrysanthemum

Having cut a yellow flower, I put it beside a green screen.

It is regrettable that I cannot find a tidy match for this restrained scent.

A branch of rose with its hips ripe and red,

I casually add it to a single-flower vase; it accompanies the winter flower.46

This record of the process of arranging flowers was composed in 1818. The imagery of the elegant yellow chrysanthemum arranged in front of a green screen with red rosehips is visually appealing. San’yō highly regarded this poem and wrote: “Actual event, genuine poem. This delights me, this pleases me” (実事真詩、可喜可喜). While the love of flowers is considered a particular feminine trait, San’yō admired this poem for its “actuality.”

Another picturesque poem is also highly praised for its plain description. The following poem was composed in 1828.

On My Way to Kashiwabara with Ryūkei Koji, I Wrote Down What I Saw
The late-spring landscape is clear after rain,
a soft waft of east wind, and field pheasants call.
Vegetables and wheat parted by a ridge, yellow, green,
between them a spread of Chinese milk vetch.47

The contrast of colors in the countryside fields is impressive in this poem. San’yō commented, “Plainly describing the scenery before your eyes, this poem makes the reader imagine the scene. This is women’s true character, and at once, that is the true character of poetry” (目前之景平平叙去、使人想其境、是女郎本色、即詩本色也). Here, San’yō equates the character of women with the character of poetry, which he considered to be a plain description of what the poet saw.

The following poem composed in the same year also received high marks because of its “genuine” descriptive expression.

Returning Home Late

A grove of woods, as if brushed over, trees vague,
the moon atop the woods, opaque, is about to fade.
On my return passage I simply rely on fireflies for light;
along the bank the water’s dark, the rushes grown tall.48

Like the two poems we saw earlier, this poem also depicts what the poet perceived visually. San’yō wrote: “Your regulated verses have not degenerated by following today’s fads. It is not that you intentionally avoid it. You just profoundly understand my school’s principle, that is, ‘only because of its genuineness, it becomes novel’ ” (近體諸篇亦不墮時様、非有
He appreciated Saikō’s depiction of her real experiences and perception since they engendered a fresh poem.

The following is another example of her work based on a real incident. It was composed in 1829 while Saikō was traveling in Ise. It expresses the poet’s joy at seeing a friend on her trip.

During My Stay in Yamada town, I Encountered Kashiwabuchi Atei

Drinking everyday, I have enjoyed myself, but I was missing my old friends.

I am very pleased that you visited me. It is as if we had an appointment.

Frequently visiting each other we have had drinks together for many years.

Yet, drinking together in a different land, I enjoy the sense of strangeness. San’yō’s comment reads, “It describes truth thus it is novel. You profoundly understand San’yō’s school’s principle” (唯真故新深得山陽家訣). Then, commenting on the twenty poems composed during her trip to Ise, San’yō expressed his unstinting praise: “All the poems on your trip to Ise are realistic. They make people feel as if they were traveling with you. Of your poems, such as these, it may be said they are not inferior to my own” (勢遊詩一々實際、使人有同遊想、君詩能如此、可謂不負我者也).

San’yō acknowledged Saikō’s poetic talent and literary abilities insofar as they fulfilled his school’s main principle of truthful expression. However, his generous admiration for Saiko’s genuine expression only applied to certain scenic descriptions or to poems describing particular events. The principle of truthful expression unmistakably affected Saikō’s self-reflective poems also, on which San’yō did not especially remark. The
following was composed in 1817 under the title of “Autumn Night.” Autumn is the season
that traditionally agitated poets to compose on sad feelings (愁). Saikō challenged the
poetic expectation, honestly describing her contented state.

Autumn Night

Under the lamp, I have just quit copying some writings.

Fresh coolness in both of my sleeves, refreshing.

The chirping of insects are autumn’s walls, all four sides.

The moonlight tells it is about midnight.

Not sickly, I know little of sorrow.

I sleep a lot, and feel my mind is calm.

My poem to express emotion thus turns out to be of small-scale.

Rouge and powder, they do not interest me.50

After describing the bracing autumn night in the first four lines, she describes her own state,
implicitly comparing it to a typical poetic melancholic self of autumn. While many women
poets in China had referred to their sickness in their verses, Saikō was sound. Being
unmarried but enjoying good family relationships and a privileged life, she was free from
worries. She could sleep well, being content. She was not like the poets who had led
dramatic and tragic lives and left great heartbroken poems. Unlike the feminine figures in
literature, she was not interested in beautifying herself to attract men. In this poem, Saikō
attempted truthfully to depict herself by writing about her peaceful state while implicitly
contrasting it with typical poetic presentations.
In the poem “Sent to Myself” composed in 1822, she expressed her self-awareness as an exceptional woman.

Sent to Myself

I don’t resemble other women who cling to their alluring appearance,
Whose chignons are fine and distinct, who bear gloominess and languidness.
By chance, while sitting, I thought of a new phrase hearing a cock crow.
I had quit with needlework a long time ago, I asked the maids to sew.
With my eccentric nature, I have never attained the Four Virtues.
My state is leisurely. My life is to be the one without the Three Followings.
Within half of my expected life, I have had many chances to go on excursions.
Beneath the moon, about the flowers, that’s where my feeling becomes intense.51

After distinguishing herself from “other women,” who were represented as people who care excessively about their appearance, Saikō boldly discloses her abandonment of the feminine woman’s task, sewing. Then, she denies her commitment to the Confucian dictum of Three Followings and Four Virtues, which had exercised considerable authority in defining womanhood in the Edo period.52 Instead, she illuminates her commitment to traveling, distinguishing herself from home-bound, married women. Then she states that her love (情 feeling) is directed toward the beauty of nature, freeing herself from the association of women with romantic love.

Another poem composed in 1828 was written with the same attitude. Saikō was
then forty-two years old.

Describing Myself

The Three Obediences I’ve had none of all my life;
as my face declines, my mind grows more free.
To try out a painting brush, I rip a light-silk sash;
to buy myself a gourd [of sake], I take a silver pin out of my hair.
Write verse on plantain, the sheet tears in the rain;
smear one in the air, the geese formation appears.
I only fear that lazy, careless women at large
might try to follow the wind and the moon after me.53

Saikō again denies a commitment to the Confucian doctrine of the Three Followings. She perceives aging positively as a factor that frees her, which clearly shows a separation from past poetic convention that invariably described the aging of women as tragic. Feminine objects, such as “a light-silk sash” and “a silver pin,” were symbolically disposed of. The fine sash was substituted for paper “to try out a painting brush” and the pricey ornamental hair pin was exchanged for “a gourd” of sake. Aging freed her from the expectations and stress of adorning herself and emulating the feminine ideal of traditional literature. At the same time, she was freed from the burden of presenting herself as womanly in her poetry. Instead, she proudly expressed her enjoyment of a life involved in painting and poetry.

These poems are striking for their expressions subversive of the value of traditional womanhood and feminine poetics. Overcoming femininity, her poetic
expressions opened to a larger scope of subjects and perspectives. In the poem below, for example, Saikō portrays her self-image as transcending gender and identifies herself with Du Fu.

The Last Day of the Year

Alone, staying awake till the wee hours, like Du Fu,

I'm startled how years and months fly like shuttles.

A dim light shines aslant on hair at my temples,

my fortieth year will pass as the morning comes.\(^{54}\)

Not only had she become able to identify herself with a male literary figure, she was also able to write about her concerns as a woman without taking examples from established poetic topoi. In a poem considering the worthiness of her painting, she justified her childlessness in a positive vein.

On Bamboo

Standing svelte, green by the Hsiang River:

I meet someone and make several paintings.

If handed down, these will be my descendants;

I have no need to regret my childlessness.\(^{55}\)

Although the topic of a woman conceiving children (or not) is closely related to the issue of female sexuality, it was not treated in traditional women’s poetry. Thus, the poem is not feminine. That is, it is not an expression of collective women, it was Saikō’s personal, original expression as a woman who lived as a painter and poet and who did not marry and
bear children.

As Judith Butler states, criticizing the assumption that the term "women" denotes a common identity, "If one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is." The characteristics of Saikō's poetry are not limited to the feminine style but are, in fact, very diverse, taking up material from nature, friendship, family, history, literature, paintings, trips, etc. This diversity of subject matter was enabled by the Seirei poetic ideology powerful at that time, which authorized poets to write his (or her) reality. It cherished sincere, individual sensibility grounded in actual experiences. As Saikō became older and more recognized as a painter and poet, her sphere of social activity expanded and so did her subjects and perspectives in poetic compositions. In the following section, I would like to display the diversity that moved Saikō to compose poetry by discussing poems composed in 1826 and 1827, the period when Saikō was most productive and active.

II. Beyond the Feminine Ideal: Poems from 1826 and 1827

Although Saikō has often been noted for her feminine style, the scope of her poetry impresses the reader with its diversity of subject matter and activities, as well as copious references to her many literary associates. Saikō the actual, social human was very different from the ideal woman typical of traditional poetry. This ideal woman was confined to a limited space and engaged in "proper" feminine activities. Saikō, on the other hand, was frequently out of the house, visiting her male friends and attending poetry meetings. This section reveals the relative freedom of Saiko's literary life and the diverse
subject-matter of her poetry with an in-depth discussion of poetry composed in 1826 and 1827. These two years were very eventful and productive for her.

In 1826, Saiko turned a healthy and active forty years of age. Her local reputation as a painter had become established, and she produced at least forty-eight poems, all included in the *Shomu shiso*. In this year, Saiko made a few excursions with her local friends. She also attended local poetry gatherings. She occasionally visited her friends in Mino, such as Murase Tojo (1791-1853), Yanagawa Seigan (1789-1858), and Kashiwabuchi Atei (1785-1835). At home, her nephew Gen’eki (1806-91), who had succeeded to the headship of the Ema family, welcomed his first son.

In 1827, Saiko traveled to Kyoto with her stepmother, Sano, and her sixteen-year-old nephew, Genrei (1812-82). They enjoyed the spring in Kyoto, meeting with Rai San’yo, his family, and other literati friends. After returning from the city, Saiko spent her time leisurely, only making a few local trips. She closely read a few chapters from the *Records of the Great Historian* (Ch. Shiji, J. Shiki, 109-91BC), prompting her to compose five poems. In this year, Saiko composed at least fifty poems.

First, I will discuss the poems composed in 1826 and 1827 that focus on four recurring subjects: trips, friendship, drinking, and family. Then, I will discuss poems composed in relation to two special events in 1827, a trip to Kyoto and a study of “history.”
Travel and Poetry

Great ambition finally yields to white hair,
I long to return home to the green mountains.

... Among farmers, there is true sincerity of feeling;
Ladling spring water for tea, I lose myself to intoxication.\textsuperscript{60}

(Kameda Bosai, “Ending Aspirations and Forgetting the Self”)

Kameda Bosai (1752-1826), a Confucian scholar and calligrapher in Edo, suggests in this poem that the antithesis to “great ambition”—the aspiration of intellectuals for social success—was to lead a simple rustic life in the countryside. This yearning for a secluded life away from the capital was widely shared among the Japanese “literati,” late-Edo intellectuals who had obtained an appreciation of Chinese art and literature.\textsuperscript{61} James Cahill, who has studied literati painting of Southern Song Hangzhou, late Ming Suzhou, and late Edo-period Japan, describes this literati ideal. Cahill maintains that the “underlying ideal narrative, or myth” that constructed literati painting was “the myth of living in seclusion in nature, or strolling through the mountains in search of poetic sensations, of pausing to experience certain sights and sounds and to savor the feelings they arouse, and of returning to the security of one’s home.”\textsuperscript{62} Saiko cultivated her skill in, and appreciation of, Chinese art in three disciplines, namely, painting, calligraphy and poetry, and shared in the ideal
literati myth of yearning for a secluded life. Her poetry reflects this inherited ideal—especially poems she composed while traveling.

Saiko was an avid traveler. In her later years, she made a few local trips almost every year and occasionally made major trips to Kyoto, Osaka, and Ise. Her very first poem of 1826 expresses her general enthusiasm for travel in its opening line. She boasts, “I flatter myself that I am behind nobody in the matter of poetry-trips” (自讃吟遊不後人).63 As the word “poetry-trips” (吟遊) suggests, her trips were usually related to literary activities. Trips were, indeed, a major source of her poetic inspiration. Almost half of the poems composed in 1826? twenty-three poems among forty-eight? were composed while on a journey to a particular place or to visit a particular person. In most cases, the charms of nature in the mountains and the countryside inspired her to write. Below are a few examples. The first was composed when she visited Kamagatani, a destination about ten kilometers from Saiko’s house famous for its cherry blossoms. She composed four poems on this occasion while viewing flowers.

On a Spring Day of 1826. Staying at Jorin’an, I Appreciated the Cherry Blossoms of Kamagatani.

Both the north and south sides of this valley are fully covered with mountain-cherry blossoms.

This area is isolated from worldly dust, and the whole prospect is pristine.

I wondered why the flowers on those branches were swaying.

Then, the sound of a sho sprang up, music played by an immortal.64
This poem emphasizes the enchanting otherworldliness of the scene, incorporating an exquisite landscape and mysterious music. The mountain is idealized as a clean, secluded space and contrasted with the space of everyday life defiled with “worldly dust.”

Two poems among the four she composed on her way to Yanagawa Seigan’s house indicate keen attention to her natural surroundings. In 1826, Saiko visited Seigan at his home in Mino three times. The poem below was composed during the summer as she returned home from Seigan’s house. Seigan’s home in the town of Sone was only about five kilometers from Saiko’s house in Ogaki.

The Same [as the previous poem]. On my Way Home.

The greenery looks even greener in contrast to my robe—the reflection on the water is fresh.

The wind is cool. I wonder who is on the wandering boat.

The water chestnuts are filling this lake, how can he remove them all?

He is also planting red and white lotuses.

Composing this poem, Saiko drew attention to a rustic man working on a boat on a small lake. He harvests water chestnuts, which were widespread in the ponds of Japan and once commonly eaten. At the same time, he plants lotuses, whose roots also supplied food. She observed and described the farmer and his activity picturesquely. Although Saiko was from a privileged background, she admired and appreciated rustic activity and the rural setting in her composition.

The next poem was composed in the autumn as Saiko visited Seigan for the second
Visiting Seigan Koji Again

Under the late-autumn sky, I again pass the Kiso Mountains.

Coming this way, I find the suburban scenery has quickly changed.

The last time I saw sharp green leaves shaped like needles.

The rice fields are now covered with yellow ears like clouds.\(^{67}\)

Here Saiko focused on seasonal changes in the rural scenery, particularly emphasizing her observation of the rice fields. The “last time” when she visited Seigan in summer, the rice plants had sharp, green leaves. Now in autumn, they had turned vivid yellow, yielding abundant crops. The rice field, the most prominent site in the rural agricultural scene, is favorably spotlighted in this poem.

The last example here was composed in early winter when she visited Murase Tojo in Kozuchi, in present-day Mino city, Gifu Prefecture. Kozuchi was about forty kilometers away from Saiko’s house in Ogaki. Tojo was a wealthy, respected, active village headman (shoya) and one of Saiko’s closest friends.\(^{68}\)

In Early Winter, I Traveled North to Visit Tojo Sanjin

The scenery, vivid and clear, fresh to my eyes.

White clouds, yellow trees, the water clean and clear.

Coming this way, I have become completely familiar with the mountain’s faces;

It heartens me to plan the next trip to see my old friend.\(^{69}\)

This poem emphasizes the wild natural beauty of mountains and water, incorporating the
poet's appreciation of and intimate feeling for the scenery.

As shown in these examples, many of Saiko's travel poems portray rustic landscapes in a picturesque manner. This manner of rendering landscapes in poetry unmistakably suggests the influence of certain kinds of Chinese-style paintings, so-called bunjinga (literati painting) or nanga (southern painting). Literati painting, which was flourishing in Saiko's time, typically valued reclusive life in mountains and rural areas. Note that Saiko addressed Seigan and Tojo as "Koji" (居士) or "Sanjin" (山人) in her poems. Both words signify a recluse, a man who has rejected official rank. Although Tojo was an active village headman and deeply involved in local politics, Saiko addressed him as "recluse" since it was the most respectful, appropriate way to refer to a person in the world of Chinese-style, scholarly arts.

In fact, Saiko had strong personal connections to contemporary leading literati painters in Kyoto. According to art historians Yoshiho Yonezawa and Chu Yoshizawa, Rai San'yo was the leading literati-painter of his time in the Kyoto-Osaka area. Listed as members of San'yo's circle are Aoki Mokubei (1767-1833), Uragami Shunkin (1799-1846), Tanomura Chikuden (1771-1835), Shinozaki Shochiku (1781-1851), Koishi Genzui (1784-1949), and Monk Unge (1773-1850). These members befriended Saiko as she became part of San'yo's circle. Uragami Shunkin, who was probably the most recognized literati-painter of his time, became Saiko's painting teacher on San'yo's recommendation. Although she rarely painted landscapes but instead focused on painting bamboo, Saiko was, indeed, part of the group of scholar-artists in Kyoto. Her thorough familiarity with the ideal
landscape of literati paintings predetermined her poetic interpretation of nature. As a result, the natural scenery in her poems strongly resembled the landscapes depicted in *bunjinga*.

Figures 2 and 3 are paintings done by Aoki Mokubei. These depict travelers on a boat and in the mountains, which are comparable to Saiko as a traveler and the landscape she described in her poem “In Early Winter, I Traveled North to Visit Tojo Sanjin.” Figure 4, a rare work of landscape painting by Saiko herself, also depicts mountains, a waterfall and a traveler in a Chinese robe with his servant crossing a bridge. Figure 5, from a hanging scroll done by a famous master of scholar-painting, Ike no Taiga (1723-1776), depicts a landscape of rice fields and farmers working them, just as Saiko described rice fields in her poem “Visiting Seigan Koji Again.”

Showing the connection between Saiko’s poetry and literati painting, the following poem from 1826 was composed as a complement to a painting entitled “A Painting of Mountains and Water” (山水圖). Unfortunately, the painting is unknown.

**On the Painting of Mountains and Water**

Shadows of trees overlap, the flow of water emerges.

The gate and fence eternally exclude worldly dust.

Peaks of mountains mingle with the bottom of mist and clouds.

A man there is about to plant gourd seeds in the garden.

Saiko took from the painting a remote mountain landscape with a stream, a secluded dwelling and a man working in his garden. This poem, composed on the typical landscape subject of *bunjinga*—mountains and water—depicts the literati artists’ ideal.
While traveling, Saiko produced many descriptive poems framing them with the *bunjinga* ideal—the ideal that valued wild nature, rustic scenery, and a simple life in the countryside. The frequency of her travels, as well as the poetic mode available and suitable for Saiko as a Chinese-style artist, afforded her many opportunities to produce picturesque, landscape poetry.

**Friendship**

Friendship between Saiko and her local male friends as presented in her poetry is impressively broad and warm, full of a sense of mutual respect and sincerity. She took many trips to visit her literary friends, and during those visits they composed poetry together. The Confucian standard of conduct represented by the *Onna daigaku* (The Greater Learning for Women), the most influential instructive book for women of the Edo period, called for a rigid separation between men and women. However, Saiko, an educated daughter from a good family, does not seem to have been much troubled by this ideological hindrance.

Most of Saiko’s closest friends were local intellectuals, with whom she frequently studied and composed poetry. In 1820, the local *kanshi* lovers around Ogaki established a poetry society called the Hakuosha (White Gull Society). Among its members were Saiko, Yanagawa Seigan and Koran, Murase Tojo, Kashiwabuchi Atei (1785-1835, a rural samurai or *goshi* of Takada in Mino), Shibayama Rozan (1788-1852, a chief retainer of a *hatamoto* residing in Ibi of the Mino Province), and Kanda Ryukei (1793-1851, a medical doctor.
from Fuwa in Mino) (Fig. 6). They were, except for Koran, all similar in age and became life-long friends. In 1826, they gathered at Kashiwabuchi Atei’s residence, where Seigan presented two poems to Saiko. One of them is translated below.

To Saiko of the Ema Family

Shades of emerald, outstanding crimson, uncommon flowers were assembled.

Drinking, reciting poetry, we lavishly used innumerable sheets of paper, like mist.

On this occasion, the mystic fragrance especially burst fourth.

A bouquet of Indian *sumana* flowers.77

Here Seigan showed his admiration for Saiko, comparing her to the exotic *sumana* flowers of India. The flower was highly appreciated for its exquisite scent. And like the presence of exotic *sumana* flowers in Japan, Saiko was an unusual, special participant in the literary society, but her participation was welcomed and appreciated. Her association with some of the Hakuosha members extended to personal friendship, which is easily inferred from their exchanges of poems and letters. In 1826, Saiko visited Seigan and Tojo personally. In 1827, Kashiwabuchi Atei visited Saiko’s home. The following poems intimate their warm relationships.

In 1826, Saiko saw Seigan for the first time in four years. Seigan, after having returned from Edo in 1817, had stayed home in Mino for five years, then left the country again in 1822 with his recently-wedded wife Koran for a journey to Kyushu.78 Seigan’s return in 1826 from his four-year absence delighted local poets in Mino Province. Saiko visited Seigan’s house three times this year, once with Kashiwabuchi Atei.
On the Twelfth Day of the Sixth Month I Visited Seigan Koji

Long parted, you had many new things to tell,

At all those details, I couldn’t help smiling.

Time to go, it was close to dusk,

My servant impatiently urging me to leave.

A shower came, but when it stopped,

The evening sun was still atop the hills.

Paddies with rice seedlings, blue, everywhere,

We parted our sleeves, out the pine gate.  

In this poem, Saiko conveyed her joy at listening to Seigan, who enthusiastically told of his experiences during his journey. The enjoyment of the conversation made them forget the passage of time. Interestingly, Saiko rarely mentioned Koran, who is also known as an eminent female *kanshi* poet from the period, while visiting the Yanagawa family. Koran was seventeen years younger than Saiko, while Seigan was only two years younger. Koran remained properly polite to her senior, Saiko, which may have hindered the cultivation of a friendship. It was Seigan, not Koran, with whom Saiko was drawn into friendship and kept in contact.

The next poem was composed when Saiko visited Murase Tojo in Kozuchi in the early winter. She stayed with Tojo for three days, drinking sake and composing poetry. She composed at least ten poems during the visit.
Responding to the Rhyme of Tojo Sanjin

The yard of your house is refined, I recognize your secluded life-style.

Though the autumn is ended, a row of chrysanthemums still remains.

Gold of kumquat and silver of fish? We enjoy cups of fine sake.

Blue mountains and emerald water? We compose on every subject anew.

Our friendship is ten years old; you are such a fine friend to visit.

We have entirely enjoyed these three days, troubling your good wife.

We become sober, the sake is exhausted. Now we utter no word.

Tomorrow morning I will bid you farewell—We will be separated, east and west!  

After describing her appreciation of Tojo’s home and his hospitality, Saiko reveals her recognition of their long “friendship” (交誼). She also expresses her recognition of his wife, who served them for three days, preparing sake and food so her husband and his friend could best enjoy their time together. This situation implies that Saiko’s status as literatus was well respected by her friends and their families, despite the fact that she was a “woman,” which potentially could invite some awkward or spiteful social interpretations.

Kashiwabuchi Atei was another of Saiko’s close local friends. In 1826, she visited Seigan’s house together with Atei. In 1827, Atei visited Saiko’s house to drink and study poetry together. That same year, just after Saiko had returned from Kyoto, Seigan and Koran again left their home in Mino, this time for Kyoto. Losing the central figure in their local poetry circle, Saiko and Atei came together to compose and drink.

Visited by Kashiwabuchi Atei on an Autumn Night
Members of the White Gull Society now dispersed.

My old friendship with you alone endures.

You came here kindly, along with sake.

We quietly work on our poems, elaborating them, leaning against couches.

Raindrops dampen the insect's chirping.

Quickly moving clouds confine the moonlight.

Some tidbits still remain, a gourd of sake is also left.

We drink again to exhaust our remaining fun. 81

Saiko recognizes her relationship with Atei as an “old friendship” (旧交), which was maintained by their common interest in poetry composition and drinking.

As these poems reveal, Saiko was rather free to visit and invite her male friends to spend days together. That she did not hesitate to record her associations with male friends in poetic form, written on the premise that they were open to public scrutiny and preservation, testifies that her associations with male intellectuals were not considered improper.

Although Saiko wrote about her friendships with male literati openly, there was one poem where San’yo warned her about careless expression of her feelings for a certain male friend. The poem below is one of four poems composed in 1826 when she visited Kamagatani to view the cherry blossoms. The previous year, she had visited the same place with a painter from Nagoya, Yamamoto Baiitsu (1783-1856). They had stayed a night at a temple called Jorin’an. Saiko stayed there again in 1826 by herself. Missing her friend from
the previous year, she composed the following poem with a note which reads, “I once
visited here with the painter Baiitsu.”

On a Spring Day of 1826. Staying at Jorin’an, I Appreciated the Cherry
Blossoms of Kamagatani

In the past, I had come to see the cherry blossoms with him, strolling in the
spring.

Now facing the flowers again, my heart suffers.

This refreshing night and the pillow in the room in this temple just as before.

Alone, with my back to the light of the Buddhist altar, I dream of an old
friend.82

The reference to bedding in the third line and expression of bitter feeling for an absent man
could easily be interpreted as a love affair. San’yo cautioned, “On a lone pillow at the
temple, whom did you dream of? Unless you note clearly, I am afraid you make readers
suspicious”(僧房孤枕所夢何人不注明則恐起人疑也). San’yo here suggests that her
poem could be interpreted as an expression of unfulfilled love toward Baiitsu, unless she
wrote a note explaining the situation clearly. Regardless of San’yo’s precautionary advice,
Saiko did not edit the poem or add any more notes while copying the poem into the Shomu
shiso. Saiko seemed to be rather nonchalant with the content of a poem that could
potentially harm her reputation by implying she acted immorally.

Saiko’s associations with male literati were maintained through their common
interest in literature and art. She even proclaimed the equality of the men and women in the
field of literature in a poem. It was composed in the winter of 1826 at a poetry-party held at the residence of “Seichu Rojin,” whose details are unknown. At the gathering, Saiko responded to the rhyme of Toda Gensai (Suio, 1791-1857), a chief retainer (karo) of the Ogaki domain, who was an avid kanshi lover.

On a Snowy Day, We Gathered at Old Seichu’s Residence. Responding to the Rhyme of Gensai Daibu.

Half a day’s enjoyment, the snow our go-between,
Light from sake danced, warming the cold cups.
Who knows that in poetry contests women and men are equal,
That swords, pendants, hairpins and skirts, can mingle together?\(^{83}\)

"Poetic battle," in the third line, which is translated from the word “white war” (白戦), indicates a battle without weapons, particularly a poetic game in which poets demonstrate their skill and knowledge composing verses with certain restrictions.\(^{84}\) In the last couplet, Saiko suggests the equality of the men and women in the field of poetic composition. On just that field, Saiko eventually gained great respect in local intellectual society. She was even nominated to be the head of a local poetry society, the Kosaisha, which was established in 1848.\(^{85}\)

Poetry and Sake

There was some anxiety in society about the potential for drinking to lead to sexual misconduct. Indeed, a play by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725), *The Drum of the
Waves of Horikawa, used sake as a convincing prop to lead the samurai wife Otane to commit fatal adultery. However, drinking was a regular topic in Saiko’s poetry. Moreover, many of her drinking poems imply the presence of male company. Yet, those poems betray no anxiety over a possible association of drunkenness with misconduct. Writing in the *kanshi* form, Saiko was more inclined to celebrate alcoholic intoxication as a source of poetic inspiration and also as a means of enhancing enjoyment among friends.

In a poem Saiko composed at a New Year’s party held in 1826, she wrote, “Cups of sake and scrolls of poetry are part of everyday life.” Indeed, a notable number of Saiko’s poems refer to the consumption of sake. She frequently described her drunkenness in a positive light. This probably reflects the strong and favorable association of wine with poetry in traditional Chinese literature. Famous Chinese poets such as Tao Qian, Li Bai, and Bo Juyi were strong admirers of wine and left many poems on drinking. Du Fu, in sympathy with Tao Qian, wrote, “it is only wine that relaxes my heart / nothing is better than poetry to raise enjoyment.” Su Shi, also in sympathy with Tao Qian, wrote “when you have wine, poetry is generated of its own accord.” As these descriptions show, poetry was often paired with drinking.

Drinking has usually been associated with male society. It was probably true that women had fewer opportunities for public drinking and that a hard drinker was often associated with a masculine personality. However, women were not barred from drinking, nor was it considered inappropriate behavior for their gender. Portuguese missionary Luis Frois, for example, remarked in 1585 how common it was for Japanese women to consume
sake, while in Europe it was considered inappropriate for women to drink wine. *Ominaeshi monogatari* (1661), a book on appropriate conduct for women written by an early-Edo Japanese scholar Kitamura Kigin (1625-1705), does not prohibit women from drinking, but advises moderation and consciousness of social context. Although the book states that “For a woman to drink sake is an undesirable thing,” it also claims, “it is not acceptable [for a woman] to avoid drinking sake completely and shirk social interaction just because drunkenness is bad; when drinking, do so in moderation so as to avoid intoxication.” A proper amount of drinking on appropriate occasions was even considered more courteous than rejecting drink altogether. An example from Saiko’s time is the diary of Rai Baishi, San’yo’s mother, which included references to her drinking. As these examples reveal, it was not unusual for a woman to have the opportunity to enjoy drink and the tradition of Chinese poetry esteemed drinking. Accordingly, it may not be overly surprising to see quite a few of Saiko’s poems referring to drink.

Saiko’s references to drinking were most typically made on occasions when she described gatherings with her literati friends. The occasions when poetry-lovers gathered regularly included drinking. Saiko often drank sake with her peers to pass the time enjoyably. For example, twelve poems composed in 1826 refer to sake or drunkenness and seven of them describe her drinking in the company of her male friends. Three poems of friendship previously introduced? poems composed upon meeting with Murase Tojo and Kashiwabuchi Atei and a poem composed in response to Toda Gensei? are examples. A few other examples are translated below.
Impromptu. At a Party at Kansai Daibu’s Residence

Keeping myself intoxicated, I walk with you through the plum flowers.

It is pleasant. Fragrant wind obliquely blows on my face
As the giddiness on my eyelids disappears, my mouth senses thirst.
I shall bother you for a bowl of quickly steeped, refreshing tea.92

This poem was composed in the early spring of 1826 at the residence of Kimura Kansai, one of the chief retainers (karō) of the Ogaki domain. Saiko and Kansai maintained a long-lasting friendship through a common interest in kanshi composition.93 In the poem above, Saiko chose flowers and drunkenness as the main subject, observing and writing about the temporal effect of alcohol.

Saiko and Kansai met again in the winter of the same year. A poem composed on this occasion also refers to drunkenness and plum flowers.

Winter Solstice, Having Some Drinks With Kansai Daibu

Facing each other, we drink cups of sake by the quiet window, much time has passed.
The southward branches are quick to bloom, I already see plum flowers in the garden.
It is not only because the heavens have slightly moved toward warmness.
But also because we are in a drunken state that we are feeling warmer and warmer.94

Again the poetic focus is a description of the alcohol’s effect as well as that of the seasonal
flowers. Saiko utilized two long-appreciated subjects of traditional Chinese poetry, wine and flowers. The appreciation of these two, and a shared friendship, are very appropriate subjects for a kanshi poet to write about. This poem could only appear unorthodox if we consider that it was composed by a woman describing her companionship with her male friend. Saiko, however, writing in the kanshi genre and immersed in Chinese literary tradition, did not seem concerned that her poems might be misinterpreted to suggest her sexual intimacy with male literati friends. Saiko wrote the above poem assuming an appropriate and time-honored attitude of a “poet,” regardless of her gender.

The next poem depicts a scene at a poetry-party held in 1826. The members and the location are uncertain.

A Gathering at the Cherry-Blossom Park (Oju’en)

Seated unceremoniously, we forget the distinction between guests and host.

Our writings develop in all directions, freely.

Shallowly or deeply, we are all drunk.

Exchanging verses, we quickly form a poetic circle.

The gate is opened, the mountains are green.

The eaves are covered, the leaves are red.

Let the winter day be short.

We may continue our enjoyment holding candles.95

Here again poetic composition is accompanied by drinking. In accord with the typical attitude and perception inculcated by traditional Chinese poetry, Saiko treated drinking and
nature's beauty as appropriate subjects for poetic enjoyment and enthusiasm. The last line, which proposes to continue the fun by holding candles, makes a reference to the “West Gate Ballad,” a poetic work in the yuefu style from the Han dynasty. The ballad includes lines that read, “... Drink strong wine!/ Roast the fat ox! / Call for my heart’s delight,/ Maybe to dispel dull care. / Man’s life does not last a century, / He ever nurses worries of one thousand years. / Morning is short and night is long, / Why not hold a candle and have fun?” Following this literary tradition, Saiko again associated drinking with the delight of poets.

Saiko consumed sake not only with her friends or at poetry-gatherings. Drinking at home is also described in some of her works from 1826.

Impromptu

Few happy events, the hair on my temples is becoming white.

Little by little, I am exclusively befriended by this large sake cup made of gemstone,

I try to get drunk so often—don’t be amazed!

I want to recover the feeling of my youth, just for a while. On this poem, San’yo commented, “charming” (可憐). The topic of drinking was incorporated into a subject typical of feminine poetry, an aging woman’s sorrow and wish to recapture her youth, which appealed to San’yo. This is the only representation of drinking in the feminine mode among the poems composed in 1826.

Another poem about drinking seemingly describes Saiko’s usual evening.
Impromptu, Early Autumn

Entering autumn, several showers have run past.
The cicadas' cries from the tree tops are winding down.
Though the afternoon heat still presses a person,
At night, coolness arrives quickly.
I finish bathing. My hempen robe is light.
I order a servant to sweep the steps in the yard.
I completely roll up the blind like a lobsters' barbels.
Refreshing breeze, I feel great.
The thin crescent rises over the trees of the grove.
Early crickets chirp in dewy grass.
We sisters are at leisure and call for cups of sake.
We toast, facing each other, wishing to exhaust the keg.\textsuperscript{98}

Saiko describes her enjoyment at an autumn night, which climaxes in the last couplet. Saiko and her younger sister Tsuge drink together, relaxed, facing to each other. Tsuge was Saiko’s only surviving sibling, and the sisters remained close through their lives.\textsuperscript{99} Tsuge was married in 1804 to Nukui Shosai, who was taken into the Ema family as a son-in-law (\textit{muko-yoshi}). Consequently, the couple and their children lived in the same house as Saiko and her parents. By 1826, Tsuge had been widowed for six years and her children were grown: the elder son was in his nineteenth and the younger in his fifteenth year. Now the sisters could share a leisurely moment drinking on a pleasant evening. This casual
presentation of drinking with her sister is a unique way of representing the subject, neither in the context of feminine poetry or public drinking with male literati friends.

Saiko even chose her sister’s apparent alcoholism as the subject of a composition.

Forbidding My Sister Sake

My good sister has a sick habit
mostly generated by sake.
What to do is to wet one’s lips with it,
but she’s grown to be like her sister.
When moonlight’s on our green blind
or plum lends its scent through our window,
My heart yearns to simply get drunk with her;
my lips dare not ask her to have a drink.\(^{100}\)

When the “moonlight” and “plum scent” provided Saiko as a poet with a tasteful setting, she yearned to get drunk with someone, to complete an idyllic condition for a poet. However, the yearning was disturbed by a non-poetic actuality: her sister’s unhealthy drinking behavior. Although the situation did not fit the traditional poetic code of drinking, Saiko still rendered it in poetic form, diverging and pushing beyond traditional taste.

Following the time-honored celebration of the drunken state in traditional Chinese poetry, Saiko as a \textit{kanshi} poet wrote frequently and favorably on her drinking and drunkenness. This inclination was not limited to Saiko. The other two female \textit{kanshi} poets discussed in this study, Hara Saihin and Takahashi Gyokusho, also describe drinking in
positive terms, as a source of poetic inspiration. Poetry and sake had long been associated in traditional Chinese poetry and the Japanese women poets who composed in this genre also celebrated this value and attitude.

Family

Family affairs were also a frequent subject in Saiko’s poetry. Although she was unmarried and her feminine poetry sometimes represented herself as a solitary woman, she was, in fact, always surrounded by her family members. She was living with her parents, sister and the sister’s husband, and their sons. As a member of the Ema family, Saiko was very concerned about the household’s welfare and prosperity. Familial events were so significant for Saiko as to become regular subjects in her poetry. Some of her poems express worries over illness in her family, mourning her loss of family members, celebration of births, rapture over her family member’s public promotions, and well-wishing words for those going on trips. In 1826, Saiko composed a long poem about her deceased niece and a poem on the birth of her nephew’s first son. These poems display Saiko’s strong attachment to and deep care for the members of her family.

The poem about her deceased niece Ei, “A Composition on the Night of the Harvest Moon” (丙戌中秋作), contains twenty-four lines, which is unusually long among Saiko’s works. Ei had died in 1821. The poem informs us that Ei lost her life on the night of the harvest moon, when the Ogaki area had been flooded due to a heavy rain. At the time Saiko had been away from home attending a poetry gathering in Sekigahara, which seems
to have deepened her sorrow. Saiko introduced her niece’s name and her memory in the poem, while expressing her deep sorrow. She lamented, “...When osmanthus flowers emit their fragrance, I feel too listless to compose poems. / Leaning against a handrail, I force myself to get drunk, yet to no avail. / Alas, those past become more distant day by day. / She is becoming like a faint dream, as if she was deserted. / . . . / When will I recover a peaceful heart, a time when I can feel that sake is sweet? / Every year when the night of the harvest moon arrives, my heartbreaking sorrow increases. / . . .”101

In another poem, “Celebrating the Birth of My Nephew’s Child” (賀家姪生子), Saiko celebrates the birth of the first son of Ema Gen’eki, Saiko’s nephew, who was head of the Ema family by 1826. The baby, who became known by his later name Shinsei, was expected to succeed to the Ema’s family’s headship and familial occupation as a domain doctor.

Celebrating the Birth of the Child of My Nephew

An orchid sprout came out, our family celebrates.

I imagine him precociously mature, following the ways of our family.

He must surely be a doctor in the future.

May the baby’s cry become a voice of reading books!102

Saiko celebrates the birth of the Ema family’s heir, expressing her highest expectation for the baby. She refers to the new born as an “orchid sprout,” since the Ema’s specialty was Dutch medicine (rangaku 蘭学), whose Chinese characters translates into the “study of the orchid.” In this poem, Saiko conveyed her unreserved expectations for the boy to become
head of the Ema family and a domain doctor of Dutch medicine.

Saiko was especially attached to Shinsei and composed several poems about him. When she was in her seventieth year, for example, she composed the following poem. In the year 1856, Shinsei at the age of thirty left for Edo, attending the Ogaki lord as his doctor.

**After Our Parting, I Send This to My Grandnephew, Shinsei**

You are going a thousand leagues, attending the official procession.

You left home in the mountains at dawn, on a very hot day.

Two days now you have been gone from me.

I calculate the distance. Today you must be passing the Hakone barrier.

I have kept seated alone by this quiet window since you left.

I view the east sky, between the clouds, where you may be.

When it is sunny, I think of your hardship in the intense heat.

When it is rainy, I am worried about your trouble on the muddy road.

In the morning and evening, I just wait for your letter.

Don’t be stingy in writing letters home.103

In poetic form, Saiko conveyed her worries, and admonished her grandnephew to write to her. As she became older and in a position to guide young members of the family, she adopted the voice of a caring senior and authoritative protector.

While it is true that the majority of Saiko’s poems reveal her voice as a “poet” who cares mostly for the moon and flowers, she was very concerned for the Ema’s prosperity,
was an active member of the family, and not hesitant to compose on related events. She paid particular attention to the studies and achievements of her nephews and nephew's sons. Since her nephews' father Shosai died relatively young in his forty-second year, Saiko took some responsibility for his young children's education. It was Saiko who taught basic Confucian texts and sent her younger nephew to study under Murase Tojo and Rai San'yo. Her influence extended to her nephews' children, especially to Shinsei. It was Shinsei who edited and published Saiko's anthology *Shomu iko* in 1871. According to his preface, he earnestly urged his great aunt to publish her poetry. However, she did not agree, while giving him permission to publish her poems after her death. He expresses in the preface that he published the anthology because he would feel sorry and irresponsible for neglecting his "great-aunt's lifelong work of heart and blood." As his sincerity demonstrates, Saiko was deeply respected by her younger family members. She also kept a very warm relationship with her parents and sister throughout her life. The family members were very supportive of Saiko's artistic pursuits, which no doubt contributed to fulfillment in her art and personal life.

**Visit to Kyoto**

Saiko visited Kyoto at least thirteen times during her lifetime. Kyoto remained a significant place for Saiko, especially as a center of culture.

In 1827, Saiko left home for Kyoto on the seventh day in the second month to stay there for two months. It was her seventh visit to Kyoto, and this time, she accompanied her
mother Sano and her sixteen-year-old nephew Ema Genrei. She intended to introduce
Genrei to Rai San’yo and let him study under San’yo for a few years. Her stay in Kyoto
was all the more eventful as San’yo’s mother Baishi and uncle Kyohei visited Kyoto at
about the same time.104

During her stay in Kyoto, Saiko composed fourteen poems under eleven titles. The
number of poems she composed during the two months and the quality and content are not
so impressive. Actually, Saiko seemed to be less poetically inspired by urban surroundings,
which she suggested in the next poem composed when she visited Kamo, a suburban area
in Kyoto, with San’yo and Kyohei.

On the Thirteenth of the Third Month, Accompanying Two Masters,
Kyohei, San’yo, I Went to Kamo and Improvised This Poem

I came as far as three hundred leagues, pursuing spring.
I have stayed on a street in an urban area for a few dozen days.
Clamorous sounds of strings and singing voices, crowds of gorgeous robes.
At a place with no flowers in the spring wind, the clatter of hooves and wheels
are loud.
I worry that the sleeves of my travel robe,
the plain color, would gradually get soiled in the worldly dust.
As for the scenery, beauty exists outside of the city center.
Rape blossoms and wheat, green and yellow, are like a carpet.
Being accustomed to seeing rape blossoms and barley in my everyday life,
I feel the colors come close to me, intimately.\textsuperscript{105}

In this poem, the urban environment is represented in negative terms, as a place filled with worldly noises and crowds. In contrast, Kamo, the suburban area with fields of rape blossoms and barley, is regarded as an appealing place.

While Saiko loved to visit Kyoto, she rarely described urban scenes in her poems. Among the fourteen poems produced during this trip, three were composed on a boat to Osaka and four were composed as farewell poems to express her sorrow on parting. Only one poem distinctively and appreciatively described Kyoto.

**Entering Kyoto**

Light rain on the main street, it will clear up around sunset.

Buildings form an uneven line, as light shines out from the haze.

Charming flowers and alluring willows, the spring, like an ocean.

In a pair of woman's sandals, I enter this city!\textsuperscript{106}

This poem expresses the poet's sharp attention upon arriving in the charming city. Under the same title, she composed another poem, which more eloquently reveals her purpose for visiting Kyoto.

Again I visit my old friends in Kyoto.

Once parted, four autumns have quickly passed.

Seeing people again, I recall their faces from before.

While partly I rejoice over our reunion, partly I feel sad.\textsuperscript{107}

What Saiko cared for mostly in her visits to Kyoto was meeting her old friends. Therefore
her farewell motivated her best compositions with full attention and deliberation. Two examples are translated below.

Bidding Farewell to Masters in Kyoto under the Cherry Blossoms at Hirano

The falling petals flutter, to the west and to the east.
I view this scene near the end of spring with the sorrow of separation.
When will it be for us to drink together again, viewing flowers?
The sake is exhausted, wind blows to stalls in the twilight.  

Responding to the Rhyme of Monk Unge’s Farewell Poem

Ready to depart for my hometown, I feel forlorn? the sorrow of parting.
Pretending to lament the passing spring, we have a big cup of sake.
Your aged appearance saddens me; I shall think of you sincerely.
Dawdling over half the day, I postpone the time of my departure.  

While Saiko was less interested in describing urban scenes and activities, she more urgently expressed her feelings for her old friends. For Saiko, Kyoto was a special place not so much because of its scenic charms and urban attractions but much more because of the presence of her old associates with whom she had shared a common artistic interest through the years. Saiko had cultivated strong bonds with the literati gathered around San’yo.
Writing on “History”

After returning from Kyoto, Saiko composed poems on various occasions as she always had. She composed on the flowers in her yard, on a summer day or an autumn night, on thoughts she had during a quiet winter night, on the occasion of an outing to the surrounding countryside, or when a local friend visited her. In addition to these subjects, in 1827, Saiko took inspiration from historical subjects. Since the discussion of history had traditionally been considered a masculine intellectual activity, Saiko’s compositions on “History” deserves special attention.

Saiko composed five poems after reading three chapters from the Records of the Great Historian written by Sima Qian (c.145-90 BC). She read the sixth to eighth chapters, which described the fall of the Qin Dynasty and the establishment of the Han court, involving the lives of Shihuangdi (259-210 BC) the emperor of Qin, Xiang Yu (232-202 BC) the great general of Chu, and Emperor Gaozu (256 or 247-195 BC) of Han. Translated below are the second and the third poems among the five poems. The second poem ponders Shihuangdi’s loss and Xiang Yu’s victory.

Reading History

The fish oil was burnt out, the stench of war is rank.
The horses of Chu, stirred, trampled the Imperial Court.
For three months the fires in Xianyang caused people grief and regret.
The flame would never again illuminate the dim nether world.¹¹⁰

Shihuangdi built a magnificent grave for himself, preparing plenty of fish oil to burn to
light his grave forever. The oil, however, only fueled the fires of war, which burned down the capital of Qin. Saiko cleverly associated the oil prepared to light the grave of Shihuangdi with the fires that destroyed his court, illuminating the irony and catastrophe.

The third poem refers to Xiang Yu's fatal mistake, which led to his death. Xiang Yu was a great general from Chu. He burned down the capital of the Qin and exercised great power over China. However, his treatment of other generals and the people was often unfair and sometimes cruel. He was faced with constant revolts and was finally defeated by the army of the Han lead by Liu Bang, the future Emperor Gaozu. While taking flight from the enemy, Xiang Yu asked a farmer for directions. The farmer deceived him by directing him to a swamp. The Han army caught up with Xiang Yu.

To east and west, he went and lost his way—the road to escape was lost.

His body was caught in a boundless, vast swamp.

Once a hero, he had mastered ways to fight ten thousand enemies,

How did it happen? He was led to his end by one farmer. 111

As these examples show, Saiko composed on "history," that is, a Chinese history of battles, the rise and fall of dynasties, and heroes from nearly two thousand years before her time.

What made her interested in reading and composing poems on Chinese history? The Records of the Great Historian was one of the important texts for Edo-period intellectuals educated in classical Chinese literature. It was natural for Saiko, who had cultivated literacy in classical Chinese, to find interest in reading this famous, canonical text, even if the genre was considered unfeminine. Furthermore, Saiko had nephews who
needed to study the representative books of Chinese history as part of their basic education in classical Chinese. One poem composed in 1827 suggests Saiko’s attention to her nephew who was reading the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the official chronicle of the state of Lu (1055-249 BC). The compilation had been traditionally attributed to Confucius.

**Impromptu**

Though a pot of tea is now ready, I don’t yet raise my head.

A piece of red glitter, the morning sunlight is dim.

I couldn’t tell where the murmur was coming from.

Lying down, I listen to my nephew reading the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The poet tells us that she did not get up immediately because she heard the subdued voice of her nephew reading the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. She continued to listen to him.

Because of her involvement in the education of her nephews, Saiko had opportunities to become interested in history books in her everyday life. In 1834, Saiko composed five poems on the history of the Five Dynasties (907-60), under the names of each dynasty: Later Liang, Tang, Jin, Han, and Zhou. These poems were composed in response to her nephew Genrei’s poems composed under the title, “Reading the *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*.” Written by Ouyang Xiu (1007-72) of the Song dynasty, this book covers the period of 907-979, from the time of the Later Liang to the Later Zhou.

Saiko’s compositions on the fall of the Qin and the rise of the Han impressed San’yo. Commenting on the five poems of “Reading History,” he wrote, “to compose a discussion of history in the *zekku* form is something of what an imposing man does. I did
not imagine a woman’s mouth could do it!” (以絶句作史論是堂々丈夫之事、不料脂粉之口乃能為之). This comment reveals his assumption that discussions on “history” would be exclusively appealing and suitable for men but unappealing and difficult for a woman to deal with. For many intellectuals of the Edo period, “history” signified the canonical texts of histories written in classical Chinese, and was typically associated with the masculine mind because of its content and language. Saiko probably shared the same assumption about “history.” However, the traditional association with masculine interest and intellect did not inhibit her from pursuing her poetic comments on the subject.

In contrast to Hara Saihin’s kanshi poetry, which impresses the reader with its masculine vigor and heroism, Saiko’s poetry has been noted for its fresh feminine rendering. However, as a creative and independent artist, Saiko produced works on many diverse subjects, including those that were typically attributed to men. Although the feminine aspect of Saiko’s poetry together with her romantic relationship with Rai San’yo have been repeatedly emphasized, this is only a part of the expanse of her poetic composition and life experience. Further exploration of Saiko’s abundant extant works, including corrections and comments by Rai San’yo and others, will offer many more valuable insights into the intellectual society of her day.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE


6The list of contributed works and artists in the 1979 exhibition at Kiyomizudera (Higashiyama Shin Shoga Tenran) is available in the journal, Bijutsu shigaku (April, 1944), 173-180.

7In 1792, Ransai, who was greatly impressed by the translation of a book of Western anatomy, the New Book of Anatomy (Kaitaishinsho, translated into Japanese from Dutch and published in 1774), acquired from the Ogaki lord permission to leave his duties to study Dutch medicine in Edo. Initially Ransai studied under Sugita Genpaku (1733-1817), a doctor in practice and one of the translators of the New Book of Anatomy. The following year Ransai started to study under Maeno Ryōtaku (1723-1803), another translator of the New Book of Anatomy, with an emphasis on Dutch language. Upon his return to Ogaki in 1795, while resuming his duty as an official doctor, he opened a private school in Dutch medicine, the Kōrandō (好蘭堂).

8The details of “Seihō joshi” are unknown except that she was from the present-day Sakai city in Osaka.

9The letter is included in vol.2, Shinshū Onomichi-shi shi (Hiroshima: Onomichi Shiyakusho, 1972), 554. • • • 今年中御けいこあそハし、来春御のほり二で、すいふん玉隠和尚門人御かきめきなされ候もと、せっかうわき致居候。しかし細香栖鳳二女史ニハ、中々今年中御けいこ被成候でも、是にはやういかて不申、いたって達者に御座候。何とにて ～御けいこあそハし、かの二女史も御かきめきなさるへく、是婦人のつれにて、ひいき致てハ御座なく、じつ達者なる御事にて候。・・・

10An entry on the twenty-eighth of the tenth month of 1811 (Bunka 8) in Kan Chazan’s diary records that Gyokuon sent him the gift of ceramic ware. The diary is cited in
Fujikawa Hideo, *Kan Chazan*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Fukutake Shoten, 1990), 69. (十月)廿八，晴，
平田章女，土宜に美濃の細香女史の細く磁鏡を鍔る。

11 For this poem, see page 74 in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

12 Hiroaki Sato trans., *Breeze Through Bamboo*, 192.

    吾年七十四
    情味冷於灰
    無病身仍瘦
    綿衣欲窄裁


16 Ibid. 女性ならではの感性をいかすことによると繰り返し助言している。


20 Poems in the *kōren* style, derived from its original signification of a “woman’s toilet box,” indicate poems on women, most typically the beautiful, yet solitary and unhappy concubine living in the Palace. Han Wo (844-923) is most famous for this kind of poetry. He left one volume of *Xianglianji* (J. *Körensū*, a collection of verses in the *kōren* style). Poems in the *kōren* style were generally composed by males.


22 Ibid. “[following the writing in Chinese of note 21] たいし候 脂粉題は無之事熟知候へども、かく云はねば、女らしくなき故に候。其譯も人々に申し笑申候事に候，”


186
This is a reproduction of Saikō’s handwritten copy. Afterward, Shōmu ikō indicates Kado’s 
Ema Saikō shishū Shōmu ikō, while Shōmu shisō indicates San’yō sensei hiten: Shōmu 
shisō.

夏日偶作
永日如年∶熱満
霧黒細雨熟梅時
午悶眠足深闇静
臨得香薰四鮎詩

I referred Hiroaki Sato’s translation which reads as follows.

A Summer Afternoon

All day, as in any other year, the water clock moves slow.
A fine rain falls continuously, plums ripening.
By the afternoon window I have napped fully in my quiet room.
I am now ready to copy poems of the four female poets.

This is included in Breeze Through Bamboo by Hiroaki Sato, page 33. Regarding this poem, 
I did not use Sato’s translation as I do not agree with his interpretation of the first and last 
lines. My interpretation is based on Fukushima’s interpretation in, Fukushima Riko, Joryū, 
3.

For the explanation of the koren style, see note 8.

Sato translated the phrase “koren shi-enshi” into “poems of the four female poets.” 
However, as the number “four” (shi) obviously modifies “amorous poems” (enshi) but not 
“koren” (woman), I do not discuss Sato’s interpretation which is based on Kado Reiko’s 

Fukushima Riko, Joryū, 3-4; Kobayashi Tetsuyuki, “Shōmu shisō ni mieru chūgoku joryū 

See note 8.

Hiroaki Sato, Breeze Through Bamboo, 38. I changed the third line of his translation from 
“In our living room I’ve observed both children grow,” to “In my inner-room I’ve watched 
both children grow.” The word “kei” (閑), which Sato translated as the “living room,” 
primarily indicates a private space for women to live. Shōmu ikō, 20-21; Shōmu shisō, 17.

冬日偶題
流光倏忽箭雕絃
小徑過腰大煙屑
闇裡看他兩兒長
儕身更覺減芳年

30Hiroaki Sato, Breeze Through Bamboo, 59 (adapted); Shōmu Ikō, 60-61; Shōmu shisō, 
58-59.

帰家
柔腳新侵霜露婦
幽窓無恙映書幰
耽遊未有寒時計
先掃繡牀裁熟衣

187
Saikō’s hand-written copy of the Zhong-shan xian is still extant in the possession of the Ema family.

Sato Hiroaki, Breeze Through Bamboo, 67 (adapted); Shōmu ikō, 91-92; Shōmu shisō, 96.

My translation. Hearafter the translations are mine unless otherwise noted. This poem is included in Kado Reiko’s annotation of Shōmu ikō, 92-93.

Hiroaki Sato, Breeze Through Bamboo, 50 (adapted); Shōmu ikō, 37; Shōmu shisō, 27-28.


The first part of San’yō’s comment on Saikō’s seasonal poems reads: “The seasonal poems of Master Sushi were composed in the form of ancient verse. You modeled your poems after these (Sushi’s) poems while using the regulated *liishi* form. They (Saikō’s seasonal poems) are also naturally good to recite.” *Shōmu ikō*, 36; *Shōmu shisō*, 27. 東坡先生四時詩古詩也。是則以律詩擬之。亦自可誦。

Shōmu ikō, 188-89; Shōmu shisō, 228.

Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze Through Bamboo*, 132. I have changed the last line of his translation. The last line in Sato’s translation reads, “where I am moved to see gentle flowers, three or two.” *Shōmu ikō*, 298-99; *Shōmu shisō*, 313.


Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze Through Bamboo*, 126; *Shōmu ikō*, 288-89; *Shōmu shisō*, 308.
信水合波流
柳葉霜飛岸
蘆花雪滿洲
怪聞語音變
船入尾張州

44Shōmu shisō, 22.
春日偶題
長夜如年靜四時
庭園嫌暖昨夜新
海棠含露微紅暈
楊柳風嫩緑勻
倦繡倚牀眠易著
漫吟裁句意難真
京城萬樹應開遍
獨在深閨懷去春

45Shōmu shisō, 13.
閑居夏日
人間炎熱亦何妨
蕉葉陰深自占涼
一榻清閑眠始覺
半瞑斜日吟正長
飯餘呼妓圍茗局
浴後倩童澆石菖
亂晒藏書千百卷
欲收散帙晚常忙

46Shōmu ikō, 69-70; Shōmu shisō, 68.
摘菊
剪取黃花傍翠屏
惜無清侶共幽馨
一枝紅熟薔薇子
漫伴寒艱上華瓶

同柳溪居士赴柏原途中所見
晚春光景雨餘清
軟弱東風野雉声
菜麦分塍黃與翠
中間一剏紫雲英

晚婦
林園抹樹樹模糊
月在林頭澹欲無
Kashiwabuchi Atei (1785-1835) lived in Takada of Mino, present Gifu prefecture. He was a member of the local poetic circle Hakuō-sha which Saikō also participated in. The two were good friends and occasionally went on poetic outings together.

The teaching of Three Followings told a woman to obey three men through her life: first her father, then her husband, and lastly, her son. The Four Virtues indicate womanly speech, womanly virtue, womanly deportment, and womanly work. These teachings were initially written down by Ban Zhao (ca45-116ce) in her book *Nüjie* (J. Jokai, Precepts For women) and had exercised strong influence in forming moral guides for women in Confucian cultures.

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51 *Shōmu shisō*, 130-31.

自贈
不似他家惜冶容
鬟鬟楚々任幽慵
偶思新句開隂坐
久邇裁衣倩婢縫
性僻何曾悔四德
身閑應為欠三從
半生贏得多行樂
月底花邊情正濃

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52 The teaching of Three Followings told a woman to obey three men through her life: first her father, then her husband, and lastly, her son. The Four Virtues indicate womanly speech, womanly virtue, womanly deportment, and womanly work. These teachings were initially written down by Ban Zhao (ca45-116ce) in her book *Nüjie* (J. Jokai, Precepts For women) and had exercised strong influence in forming moral guides for women in Confucian cultures.


自述
三從締欠一生涯
漸逐衰顔益放懷
擬試畫毫裂羅帯
54 Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze Through Bamboo*, 107 (adapted); *Shōmu ikō*, 206-07; *Shōmu shisō*, 245.

除夜夜作
独守残更似杜家
自開歲月急於梭
鬓杀斜照青灯影
四十明朝又欲過

55 Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze Through Bamboo*, 114; *Shōmu ikō*, 240-41; *Shōmu shisō*, 278.

題竹
玉立湘江碧
逢人写数枝
流年如有後
不必恨无兒


57 *Shōmu shisō* refers to the *San’yō sensei hiten: Shōmu shisō*, which Saikō edited for herself. The collection includes 747 poems and 15 short writings composed between 1814 and 1832, from the year when Saikō became Rai San’yō’s student until the year he died. Around 1830, Saikō started to compile those poems which had been critiqued by San’yō. She copied the corrected poems together with much of San’yō’s commentary, arranging them in chronological order. The *Shōmu shisō* was printed in 1997 with an explanation (kaisetsu) by Kobayashi Tetsuyuki. See Ema Saikō, *San’yō sensei hiten shōmu shisō* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1997). While the *Shōmu shisō* includes forty-eight poems produced in 1826, the *Shōmu ikō*, which was posthumously compiled and published in 1871 by Saikō’s sister’s grandson, Ema Shinsei, only includes fourteen of them. Hiroaki Sato translated nine poems from the fourteen in the *Breeze Through Bamboo*. The *Shōmu ikō*, which include 350 poems representative of Saikō’s life’s work, was newly issued in 1992 by Kado Reiko with annotations and was translated into modern Japanese. See, Ema Saikō, *Ema Saikō shishū Shōmu ikō*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992, 1994).

58 Ema Genrei was the second son of Saikō’s sister Tsuge.

59 The fifty poems composed in 1827 are included in the *Shōmu shisō*. Sixteen of them are also included in the *Shōmu ikō*. Two poems from the sixteen are translated in Hiroaki Sato’s *Breeze Through Bamboo*.


61 The term “literati” used in this study follows Yoshiho Yonezawa and Chu Yoshizawa’s
definition of the term. Yonezawa and Yoshizawa claim, “Since it is doubtful that Japan ever had any literati in the strict Chinese sense of the term, when we use the term ‘Japanese literati,’ we mean those who attained an appreciation of Chinese literature, perhaps broadening the concept to include Japanese poetic forms like waka and haiku. At least insofar as the Edo period (1603-1868) is concerned, the term ‘Japanese literati’ must be applied chiefly to those who were well versed in Chinese poetry, those men of culture who earnestly aspired to the life of their Chinese counterparts.” Yoshiho Yonezawa and Chu Yoshizawa, *Japanese Painting in the Literati Style* (New York: Weatherhill, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1974), 13. In her recent book, Anna Beerens argues that it is dangerous to apply the term *bunjin* (literati) in our present-day discussions of early modern intellectuals, because we tend to view past individuals through our understanding and characterization of *bunjin* as dissatisfied intellectuals (See, Anna Beerens, *Friends, Acquaintances, Pupils and Patrons—Japanese Intellectual Life in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Prosopographical Approach*, Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2006, 23-29). However, I found it is relevant and effective to use the term as defined above by the art historians, Yonezawa and Yoshizawa, in this chapter on Ema Saikō, since she was among the artists who closely studied the Chinese literati-style painting that flourished in and after the Sung Dynasty and consciously imitated the Chinese *wenren* ideal.


63 The first line of the poem “In 1826, the Two Days After the Day of People [the seventh day], With Nonoyama Ōtei, I Stayed at the Senzairō” (丙戌人日後二日同野々山櫻庭宿千載樓). *Shōmu shisō*, 225.

64 The *shō* is a wind instrument resembling the mouth organ. *Shōmu shisō*, 227. This poem is also included in the *Shōmu shiko*. See, Kado Reiko ed., *Ema Saikō shisu: Shōmu ikō* (hereafter, *Shōmu ikō*), 186-87.


66 *Shōmu shisō*, 233.

67 *Shōmu shisō*, 237.
Murase Tōjō was born in 1791 into a wealthy village-head family. In 1811, in his twenty-first year, he went to Osaka to study, where he met Rai San’yō. San’yō was about to establish his school in Kyoto, and Tōjō became his first student. In 1813, Tōjō invited San’yō on a trip to Mino. On this occasion, San’yō visited the Ema family and met with Saikō. She became his correspondent student on this occasion.

初冬北遊姫訪藤城山人
風物鮮明觸眼新
白雲黃樹霧漣漣
到來識盡山々面
預念重遊見故人


The illustrations are included in Yoshiho Yonezawa and Chu Yoshizawa, *Japanese Painting in the Literati Style*, 95, 153.

The illustration is included in Patricia Fister, “Female *Bunjin*: The Life of Poet-Painter Ema Saikō,” 127.

A section in the *Onna daigaku*, whose source is attributed to the fifth chapter of Kaibara Ekiken’s *Wazoku dōji-kun*, called for a strict demarcation between the two sexes. The section reads, “From her earliest youth a girl should observe the line of demarcation separating women from men, and never, even for an instant, should she be allowed to see or hear the least impropriety. The customs of antiquity did not allow men and women to sit in the same apartment, to keep their clothing in the same place, to be in the same place, or to transmit to each other anything from hand to hand . . .” Shingoro Takahashi, trans. *Women and Wisdom of Japan: Great Learning for Women* (London: John Murray, 1905), 34.

“Shōika” (稱意花), which is also written “shumanna” (須曼那), stands for a Sanskrit word for the flower “sumanā.” The flower is known for its exquisite scent and is occasionally mentioned in Buddhist texts.

During this journey, Seigan and Kōran visited Nagasaki, where Hara Saihin had been teaching Confucian texts until a few months before Seigan and Kōran arrived. Interested in this unusual woman scholar, Seigan sent a poem to Saihin on this occasion.


六月十二日訪星巖居士
久別多新話
譚々更解顏
歸途將及暮
從僕忽催還
驟雨纔收腳
夕陽猶在山
秋田青滴目
分袂出松關

*Shōmu shisō*, 241.

次藤城山人韻
戸庭瀟洒認幽棲
秋後猶餘菊一疎
金橘銀鱗好清酌
青山碧水盡新題
十年交誼尋佳友
三日單歡煩令妻
酒醒更惆闊無語
明朝分手奈東西

*Shōmu shisō*, 257.

秋夜柏桂亭見訪
鷹盟方散落
君獨舊交長
來過親攜酒
推敲靜對牀
零露濕晶語
軸雲籠月光
看殘瓢仍在
又酌盡餘歡

*Shōmu shisō*, 228.

丙戌春日寓於浄林養賞釜露櫻花
曾遊櫻花共踏春
櫻花重對意酸辛
清宵依舊僧房枕
Actually, the third line was rewritten in San’yō’s hand. Saikō’s original third line reads, “On this occasion, there is no discrimination between upper and lower, all are refined guests.” (座無上下風流客). This original line could be interpreted as stating the equality of literary people from different social classes, such as upper samurai and lower samurai, and non-samurai family members. In fact, Toda Gensai, whose rhyme Saikō responded to, was a relative of the Ogaki lord and chief retainer of the domain, while Saikō was only from a middle-class samurai family, a family of an official doctor. While Saikō’s original third line referred to the class differences, San’yō’s alteration placed the focus on the gender differences, which became consistent with the content of the fourth line and together emphasized this issue.

The kanshi circle Kōsaisha was established in 1848 in the Ogaki area. Ema Saikō headed the circle and the members included Ogaki’s senior councilor, Obara Tesshin (1817-1872).

This play is translated in Early Modern Japanese literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900, edited by Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 259-82.

This is the seventh line of the poem, “In 1826, the Two Days After the Day of People, With Nonoyama Ōtei, I Stayed at the Senzairō.” (丙戌人日後二日同野々山櫻庭宿千載楼).


"得酒詩自成." This line is included in the third poem of Su Shi’s “Responses to Tao Qian’s Twenty Poems on Drinking” (和陶飲酒二十首). Ref. Kutsukake Yoshihiko, Kochūten suihō: Chūgoku no inshu shi wo yomu (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 2002), 217.


For example, on the fourteenth of the fourth month in 1827, Baishi wrote, “Having had sake at the arbor [of San’yō’s residence], I took a walk in the neighborhood, taking advantage of the moonlight” (卒にて酒のミ、月に乗じ、近辺歩行). On the seventeenth in the same month, she wrote, “Monk Taigan and a person called [Takashima] Chiharu visited us. We had a meal together. A break from sake” (大含僧、江戸千はるなる者来、一緒に飯食、酒休ミ). Baishi casually and frequently mentioned her drinking in the same way as she wrote on her eating with guests. Drinking was a regular activity for Baishi. Rai Baishi, Baishi nikki, in Rai San’yō zensho: furoku, edited by Kizaki Aikichi and Rai Seiichi.
A letter written from Kimura Kansai to Saiko around 1839 reveals their lasting friendship through poetry. In 1839, he was in Edo on duty. Saiko traveled to Kyoto and Osaka. He wrote, “... I heard from Kenzan [Goto Shoin] that you traveled the western countries [Kyoto and Osaka]. I would like to read your fine works produced there. Since this place [Edo] is very different from the western countries and full of worldly dust, my intention to remain elegant eventually degenerates into worldliness. ... Although I occasionally meet with Kikuchi Gozan, Haruki Nanmei, and Ogata Kanrin, on many occasions we just drink sake excessively and lose our sense of elegance. Please consider this miserable situation. ... Our young lord for the next generation and [his younger brother] Kannoshin-sama are gradually improving their skills of composing poetry. ...”


"Though Saikō had an elder brother, he died prematurely in his eighth year."

Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze Through Bamboo*, 106 ("sister" in the fourth line is "sis" in Sato’s translation); *Shōmu shisō*, 242-43; *Shōmu ikō*, 204-05.

阿妹禁酒
佳妹有病癖
酒半為胚胎
唯是沾唇好
恐似阿姊来
淡影細篠月
清香縷縷梅
偽心日々念同醉
偽口不敢勸一杯

丙戌中秋作

桂花香度懶吟詩
強倚欄干不成醉
鳴呼去者日々棲
漸如淡夢如遺棄

意平酒甘定何時
每逢中秋增傷悲

*Shōmu shisō*, 235-36.

賀家姪生子

*Shōmu shisō*, 234; *Shōmu ikō*, 197-98.

秋初偶作
入秋雨数過
樹頭鶯聲老
午熱猶逼人
晚間得涼早
浴罷亭衣輕
庭階柳蔓捲
全捲蝦鬚簾
清風人意好
鐵月上林梢
早蟲吟露草
姊妹閨呼杯
對拳壺欲傾

*Shōmu shisō*, 236-37.
The important events of this trip which involved Saikō are listed below.

The first poetic event was the plum-flower viewing. On the twentieth of the second month, Saikō, with her mother and nephew, went to Fushimi, located in the southern part of Kyoto, together with San’yō, Monk Unge (1783-1850, a scholarly monk of Higashi Honganji), and Koishi Genzui (1784-1949, a doctor of Dutch medicine who lived in Kyoto). She composed two poems on this occasion.

On the twenty-fifth, San’yō sent a letter to Saikō inviting her for a short walk from the Chion’ in to the Sōrinji, where his friend, the painter-monk Geppo (1760-1839), resided. The walk was planned for the following day. The purpose of the walk was, according to San’yō’s letter, to see the cherry blossoms, compose poetry, and drink sake together. However, no poems from this occasion are left.

Then Saikō made a short trip to Osaka by boat. She composed three poems during this trip, all while aboard ship. Early in the third month, Saikō’s mother retuned home to Mino, leaving Saikō and Genrei in Kyoto. At about the same time, San’yō’s mother Baishi and his uncle Rai Kyōhei came to Kyoto from Hiroshima. It was Baishi’s third visit to Kyoto since San’yō had settled there. Saikō and Baishi had already met in 1824 when they had visited Kyoto.

On the tenth of the third month, Saikō went to see a Noh play at Shōgoin with Baishi and Rie, San’yō’s wife. On the eleventh, Saikō and Genrei went to Kamo to see the cherry blossoms with San’yō, Rie, Baishi and Kyōhei. Saikō composed a poem on this occasion. This night, Saikō and Genrei stayed at San’yō’s house. On the following day, a party was held at San’yō’s house. According to Baishi’s diary, twenty-one people were present for the party, including children.

On the sixteenth, Saikō and Genrei, together with painter Okura Ritsuzan, went to Arashiyama to join the Rai family who were staying there.

On the twenty-ninth, Otsuki Bankei from Edo, a son of a doctor of Dutch medicine,
Otsuki Gentaku, who served the Sendai domain, visited Saikō’s abode. He visited her because their fathers had been friends though their common interest in Dutch medicine. On this day, Bankei wrote down his favorable impression about Saikō in his diary.

The following day, Saikō and Genrei joined the company of San’yō, Kyōhei, Baishi, Uragami Shunkin, Koishi Genzui, Monk Unge, Okura Ritsuzan and his wife and painter Shūran, Bankei and others. They visited Kitano Shrine and Kinkakuji, and then had drinks at Hirano viewing the late cherry blossoms. Saikō composed a poem on this occasion. Soon after this day, Saikō left Kyoto for home. Three farewell poems were composed, one for all at a gathering at San’yō’s house, one for Baishi, and the other for Monk Unge.

105 Shōmu shisō, 251; Shōmu ikō, 213-15.

三月十三日陪恭杏坪山陽丙先生至加茂偶有此詩

三百里外遠赴春
紫陌街頭寓數旬
絲肉喧闐簇羅綺
東風花外開蹄輪
唯恐西東行楽袖
素色荏苒化緇塵
景物卻有城外好
菜青黃布如茵
平生慣見菜與麥
政覺顏色來親人

106 Shōmu shisō, 248.

入京
微雨天街暮欲晴
參差樓閣出煙明
嬌花媚柳春如海
一兩弓鞋行入城

107 Shōmu shisō, 248.

京城重叩舊交遊
一別匆々四送秋
相見寧存昔時面
半含歡喜半含愁

108 Shōmu shisō, 252-53; Shōmu ikō, 218.

平野花底別京師諸先生
落片飄々西又東
殘春光景別愁中
對花重醉知何日
酒盡黃昏野店風

109 Shōmu shisō, 253.

次雲華上人送別韻
離愁寂寞向郊時
擬惜餘春舉一卮
老景可憐親可憶
遲回半日緩歸期

Shōmu shisō, 264; Shōmu ikō, 228.

讀史
魚膏滅盡戰氛腥
楚馬騰々階帝廷
憶懐咸陽三月火
炎々不復照幽冥

Shōmu shisō, 264; Shōmu ikō, 229.

讀史
西東迷失道途窮
身飄茫々大澤中
曾學英雄萬人敵
如何却困一田翁

Shōmu shisō, 261.

偶作
鼎茶已熟未擇頭
一片紅暉朝影幽
不識咿唔聲底處
臥聞家姪誦春秋
CHAPTER FOUR
TAKAHASHI GYOKUSHŌ (1802-68)

In spite of her achievement as a published poet, Takahashi Taki, or Gyokushō (1802-68), has been virtually ignored. Gyokushō’s two anthologies, Gyokushō hyakuzetsu (One Hundred Quatrains of Gyokushō) and Gyokushō shikō (An Anthology of Gyokushō), were both published in Edo during her lifetime, in 1849 and 1862 respectively. These publications seem extraordinarily remarkable if we consider that Ema Saiko’s anthology Shōmu ikō was only posthumously published in 1871, while Hara Saihin’s poems were not published until 1937, when they were included in the third volume of the Zoku zoku Nihon jurin sōsho (A Library of Japanese Confucian Scholars: Third Series).

Saikō and Saihin did not publish their anthologies during their lifetimes for different reasons. According to the preface written by Ema Shinsei, Saikō’s nephew’s son, for the Shōmu ikō, Saikō shunned publishing her anthology because she was concerned about being criticized as a seeker of fame and profit. On the other hand, Hara Saihin, who clearly hoped to publish her poems as well as her father’s, could not do so for lack of financial means.

Only a few women kanshi writers of the Edo period had their individual anthologies published during their lifetimes. Gyokushō was among these exceptional poets. Other examples known to us are Uchida Tōsen (1681-1720), Tachibana Gyokuran
(1733?-94), Yokoyama Ran’en (1805-61), and Chō or Yanagawa Kōran (1804-79). Even among these writers, Gyokushō seems to be even more exceptional with respect to her independent pursuit of publishing.

Uchida Tōsen was known for her precocious scholarship in Confucian studies and Chinese poetry and was later employed by Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658-1714), the influential soba-yōnin (Grand Chamberlain) of the fifth shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709). Tōsen’s anthology Tōsen shikō was published in 1692, when she was only twelve. Considering her age, someone else, most probably her father who encouraged her in the study of Chinese literature, was responsible for publishing her anthology. Tachibana Gyokuran’s anthology Chūzan shikō was published in 1764 in Edo. It had a preface by Hattori Nankaku (1683-1759), who was known as the best poet among Ogyū Sorai’s disciples. Gyokuran was born into an extremely privileged family, a close relative of the lord of the Yanagawa domain in Chikugo Province. Gyokuran’s farther cherished her talent and diligence and moved her teachers in Edo to facilitate the publishing of her poetry. Meanwhile, Yokoyama Ran’en’s anthology, Zokukōshū, was published in 1834 at the hands of her husband. Her husband Yokoyama Chidō (1788-1836), a high-class samurai who became a chief retainer (karō) of the Kaga domain, designed the publication, obtaining a preface from his teacher Okubo Shibatsu (1767-1837), who was a leading poet of the Seirei School in the city of Edo. Lastly, Yanagawa Kōran’s anthology, Kōran shōshū, was published in 1841, no doubt with considerable help from her husband Yanagawa Seigan, a rising poet and popular teacher who had been actively publishing his own poetry in Edo as
well as his students’ works.

In short, these four women poets who had their anthologies published during their lifetimes had at least one male family member who supported and handled the publishing of their works. However, Gyokushō had no influential father or husband, nor a mentor. Unlike Tachibana Gyokuran or Yokoyama Ran'en, Gyokushō was not a daughter of the privileged class. Gyokushō was from a merchant family, the least respected, though wealthy, class. She was not provided with the prolonged support of her father either, as her father died early. While Gyokushō was married at least for a while, unlike Kōran’s husband Yanagawa Seigan, Gyokushō’s otherwise unknown husband seems not to have had any influence on or knowledge with which to help her in publishing.

Then, how could Gyokushō, a woman of less exceptional background, publish her anthologies, while more recognized, samurai-class poets such as Hara Saihin and Ema Saikō could not, or did not, publish their anthologies? Being a female author, rare in the field of kanshi, did she need to employ any special strategies to have her poems published?

Gyokushō’s success in publishing stands out especially in contrast to Hara Saihin’s failure. When Gyokushō came to Edo about 1839, Hara Saihin, from Chikuzen, four years older than Gyokushō, had been working in the city privately as a scholar for ten years or so. Saihin resided in Asakusa while Gyokushō lived in the Ryōgoku area, both of which were commercially and culturally vital zones located by the Sumida River and populated by commoners. Both Saihin and Gyokushō attained considerable fame—enough to have their names included in a list of recognized literati in Edo, the second edition of A Widely Useful
List of Various People of Contemporary Edo (Edo genzai kōeki shoka jinmei-roku) published in 1842.\(^7\) The two scholars were also listed in the second volume of the Evaluation of Well-Known Contemporary Edo Bunjin (Genzon raimei edo bunjin jumyō zuke) edited by Hata Ginkei (1790-1870) and published in 1850.\(^8\) While the editor Hata Ginkei rewarded Saihin with the highest evaluation, “a thousand years,” Gyokushō only received “nine hundred years” (Fig. 7). The points Gyokushō received are even less than the points rewarded to two other contemporary women scholars active in Edo, namely, Takashima Bunpō (1791-1857) and Shinoda Unpō (1810-1883). These two scholars each received “990 years.” At least in this bunjin guide, Saihin’s scholarship was evaluated much higher than that of Gyokushō. However, Saihin was doomed to leave the city in 1848 in poor financial condition, while Gyokushō succeeded in publishing her first anthology in 1849 seemingly without many setbacks. What made this difference, while Saihin and Gyokushō were of similar ages and both active as scholars around the same time in the same city? In hope of elucidating the cultural backgrounds that brought different effects to these two scholars and poets, this chapter first attempts to illuminate Gyokushō’s particular strength in her affiliations in comparison to those of Hara Saihin. Secondly, I will discuss her poems, focusing on works that represent urban culture in Edo. It is true that Gyokushō did not leave as many and as substantial works as did Saikō or Saihin. However, an examination of her poems provides us with valuable insight into the culture of the city of Edo, which the works of Saikō and Saihin barely reveal. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Saikō’s literary and artistic activities were mainly developed in a provincial area.
with a connection to Kyoto’s *bunjin* circles, while Saihin was most productive on her journeys. Meanwhile, many of Gyokushō’s poems depict her life and cultural events in Edo, which will more fully complement the picture of the female *kanshi* poets’ presence in the late Edo period’s literary world.

I. Publication and Commercialism

The details of Gyokushō’s biography are not known. What follows is a rough sketch of her life constructed from information gathered from short articles included in modern biographical dictionaries, her poems, and two prefaces and a postscript to *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu.*

Gyokushō was born in 1802 into a wealthy merchant family in Sendai. She lost her father early. She traveled Mutsu province widely, often with her mother. In her late thirties, she moved to Edo and opened a private school. She became known in the city for her erudition and skill in poetic composition and calligraphy. The wives of successive Sendai lords occasionally invited Gyokushō, a woman scholar from their domain, to give lectures in their inner quarters at their Edo mansion. In 1849, Gyokushō published her first anthology, *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu.* Then, in 1862, she published another anthology, *Gyokushō shiko,* which consisted of 72 poems. Later, probably in 1864, she returned to Sendai. There she stayed at the household of a Sendai magistrate by the name of Ishida. Gyokushō died in the second month of 1868, the very end of the Edo period, at the age of sixty-seven.
Gyokushō was married once, at least for a while, which is inferred from one of her poems. The fifth poem included in the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu* celebrated her father-in-law’s seventieth birthday, revealing her marital status.

Deferentially, in Celebration of My Father-in-Law’s Glorious Seventieth Birthday

My father-in-law’s name is Masaiwa. He lives in the Yōrō area of Awa Province [Tokushima]. When I met my husband, he happened to be far from his hometown, visiting and living in Edo. Thus, I have not yet had an opportunity to see my parents-in-law at their home.

Selecting a mountain side to settle on, he is a refined man.

This year he is to see precisely his seventieth spring.

Tidying myself up, I offer my clumsy poem as congratulations,

I pretend to be in front of you, making obeisance to you, my parent.11

As this poem reveals, Gyokushō had a husband. However, neither her two contemporaries who wrote prefaces to the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu* nor writers of the biographical dictionaries mention Gyokushō’s marriage when introducing her person and career. The disregard of her husband implies that he was not someone of note, most likely neither a prominent samurai nor a recognized *bunjin*.

While Gyokushō’s marriage is completely disregarded in descriptions of her life, the employment of her by the Sendai domain is invariably noted. The appointment of
Gyokushō as a teacher to the Sendai ladies was obviously considered a great honor. Both prefaces to the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu* especially make reference to the appointment, which was possibly considered all the more honorable since Gyokushō was from the merchant class. It was very exceptional for a woman from her class to serve closely members of a daimyō family, since those positions were usually reserved for the daughters of high-class samurai families.

In her own postscript to *Gyokushō’s hyakuzetsu*, Gyokushō briefly describes how she had become engaged in literature. According to her, she started studying Chinese literature under the guidance of her father. As she became older, she developed a love for travel. Whenever she was moved by scenic views, she composed poems. While traveling she met many art and poetry lovers and heard about the progressive literary situation in Edo. Yearning for the literary life in the city, she went to Edo, following a “person” (possibly her husband). There she associated herself with many literati masters. She enjoyed visiting famous locations with them, such as “the Sumida River and Asuka Hill,” in flower and in snow; “in spare moments from kitchen work.”

**As a Proper Woman**

Gyokushō wrote, “In my spare moments from kitchen work, I enjoyed myself by the Sumida River and the Asuka Hill following various literary masters.” Here she suggests her proper commitment to a womanly task, “kitchen work.” Indeed, Gyokushō was very tactful in presenting herself as a proper woman. Addressing her male associates,
she often belittled her gender attributes, conforming to an appropriate manner of self-presentation by a woman in the culture.

Gyokushō did not fail to display her modesty in conveying her intention to publish. One preface, which was written by Tōjō Kindai (1795-1878), explains the circumstances. In 1849, the year the preface was written, Kindai was a Confucian scholar serving in the official Edo residence of the Takada domain of Shinano province. He had formerly been a scholar of the Tokugawa’s Shōhei school, from 1824 to 1832, though he was dismissed from the position as a result of a lavish calligraphy-painting party (shogakai) he had sponsored in 1832. Tōjō wrote,

. . . Recently, disciples [of Gyokushō] started to compile her anthology and have selected one hundred quatrains of seven characters (shichigon zekku). They plan to publish the anthology with funds from their school. Gyokushō visited me and said, “My poems are poor. They bear the way of a woman (shifun no shū), and thus naturally they are not good enough for the public. However, because I want to consider my dawdling students’ trouble at having copied my poems, I am to realize this [publication]. If you bestow a word [on the anthology], nothing would be more delightful.” . . .

According to Kindai’s preface, Gyokushō explained that the compilation of her poems was conducted by her students, not by herself. She belittled her poems on the grounds of her gender, because of the way of “rouge and powder” (shifun no shū). Another part of Kindai’s preface also displays Gyokushō’s humble attitude toward being a woman. When Kindai
complimented her as a talented woman, Gyokushō responded to him as follows, Kindai wrote,

. . . Gyokushō said, “No, no, I don’t deserve [to be called as a talented woman]. I just hate those women of these days who amuse themselves with calligraphy and paintings, and call themselves women literati (joshi). I don’t wish to be associated with them. Accordingly, without considering the narrowness of my experience and knowledge, I only secretly try to make trivial writings of a woman’s brush.” . . .

Addressing Kindai, Gyokushō expressed her desire to separate herself from other educated, talented women who would style themselves “joshi,” the title reserved for scholastic women. She belittles the “woman’s brush” and comments that she only “secretly” writes. Of course, her words are not at all true. In reality, Gyokushō had a desire to publish her poems, far from keeping them “secret.” While she said she “hated” contemporary women who displayed their artistic skills, Gyokushō herself occasionally demonstrated her sheets of calligraphy in front of the general public, holding calligraphy and painting parties (shogakai). She called herself “joshi,” a woman literatus, as her signature written in her postscript to the Gyokushō hyakuzetsu, indicates. It reads, “The seventh month, autumn, the second year of Kaei [1849], Woman Literatus, Gyokushō, Takahashi Taki, of Sendai, writing at a temporary abode in Iwashiro district in the city of Edo.”16 However, Gyokushō desired Kindai not to group her with other women literati, who were often regarded as flippant and hoydenish.17 Instead, she emphasized her modesty and humility as a woman, repeatedly referring to her gender attributes in negative terms.
Gyokushō’s humble self-reference as a woman was consistent with her association with an influential Edo poet, Kikuchi Gozan (1769-1855). A poem included in the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu* celebrates Gozan’s eightieth birthday.

**Celebrating Gozan Sensei’s Eightieth Birthday**

Heaven bestowed longevity as well as talent upon you.

Beautiful scenes in the world are clearly and freshly portrayed in your poetry.

A woman’s soft hand lacks the means to compose celebratory verses.

I just offer a cup of sake to you, the one at the highest seat.  

In this poem, Gyokushō tells that she is not capable of composing a poem to celebrate Gozan’s birthday—yet, this is in a poem—because she is a woman. As these examples show, Gyokushō often referred to her gender to suggest her inability, though in fact her seemingly humble speech often contradicted what she did.

While actually participating in a literary field dominated by male intellectuals, Gyokushō tried to prevent herself from appearing to be a competitor, often reminding her male peers that she was a woman of unequal standing. This strategy is in sharp contrast to that of Hara Saihin, who assimilated herself to male society and presented herself as a masculine personality, competitively.

**Money and Shogakai**

Another considerable difference between Gyokushō and Saihin is the former’s advantage in material wealth. Gyokushō, who was a daughter of a wealthy merchant in the
city of Sendai, had, for example, enough initial resources to start a private school. She could rent a space to organize private classes, while Saihin, who boarded at a temple, left no evidence of running a *juku* in Edo.\(^{19}\) Once Gyokushō opened the school, it accumulated enough capital over the years to finance the publication of her anthologies. Gyokushō’s occasional teaching at the inner-quarter of the Sendai domain, no doubt, added value to her school while attracting more students.

The financial difference may be the most critical reason for Gyokushō’s success in publishing and Saihin’s failure. When Saihin was about to die in Hagi, where she stopped during her travel to raise funds to publish her father’s writings, she asked Tsuchiya Shōkai, who was taking care of her on her sickbed, to publish her father’s anthology and some of her poems.\(^{20}\) After her death, Shōkai wrote a letter to Saihin’s relatives informing them of Saihin’s belongings and listing his expenses for Saihin in her sickbed and for her funeral. Shōkai wrote,

... Saihin’s reason for traveling seems to have been to raise money here and there and realize her plan [of publishing her father’s anthology]. While she was staying here, gradually more and more people came to ask for her poems. This would have helped her somewhat if she had stayed well. However, since she was ill, she could not cope as she would have liked. She could earn only a little bit more than *ichi-ryō*, with which one can not do much. Such being the case, the publication of the late Hara Kosho should not be treated lightly. However, I am currently involved in the publication of a book that I have edited. My acquaintance in Osaka,
a publisher called Köchiya, is taking care of it. As soon as I finish this business, I will consult about the publication of the writings left by the deceased Hara Kosho and the anthology of Saihin. I only hope that I can obtain some aid from my friends. I do not have any other good means. If someone in your domain has an interest in this, I will return [the manuscripts of Kosho and Saihin] any time. . .

This letter exposes that the problem of Tsuchiya Shōkai in publishing Kosho and Saihin’s anthologies was not a social hindrance caused by cultural ideologies or inaccessibility to a publisher, but simply a lack of finances. Saihin did not have, and did not leave, enough money to have her father’s and her own anthologies published.

In contrast, Gyokushō could afford to publish her anthology at her personal expense, or by using funds raised at her private school. Her success in publishing more or less depended on her material wealth.

Gyokushō’s financial success may also be related to her active participation in a highly commercialized practice called shogakai (calligraphy and painting parties). Shogakai, or “celebrity banquets” as Andrew Markus called them, were a popular literary institution that flourished from the beginning of the nineteenth century and were most prosperous during the Tenpō period (1830-44). Many bunjin from different disciplines, which included poets, painters, calligraphers, ikebana artists, gesaku writers and ukiyo-e artists, occasionally organized shogakai parties. A few scholars, including Robert Campbell and Andrew Markus, have illuminated the institution. Cited at length below is an outline of Edo’s shogakai system as described by Andrew Markus in 1993.
In its classic form, the Edo shogakai resembled in many of its specifics a modern fund-raising dinner. After setting a date and reserving a sizable room, usually in a restaurant accustomed to such events, the sponsor (kaishu) would make the rounds of his closest friends and most illustrious associates, in hopes of winning their luster as subsidiary attractions to his banquet. The names of the celebrities scheduled to attend, posted on a sort of marquee or printed as handbills, became the prime attraction of the shogakai for the general public. On the specified date, if all went well, large throngs of an admiring public, eager to consort at close range with celebrities from all disciplines, purchased admission to the banquet—a price that hovered typically around one shu (=one-sixteenth ryō). This revenue from admissions was the main source of income for the banquet sponsor, though the supplementary income derived from other sources as well. Guests were expected to purchase separately meal-tickets (zen-fuda) and side dish tokens (sakana-fuda) before sitting down to their repast. Etiquette, and occasionally house rules demanded that participants provide a gratuity to each celebrity before requesting a souvenir inscription or sketch. On the debit side of the ledger, the costs of the banquet to the operator were considerable: in addition to the basic costs of the facility, catered meals, attendants and entertainers, the sponsor was expected to provide fans, squares of silk, and other door gifts in their hundreds as favors to the paying guests. . . . Despite the very heavy capital outlay, however, the profits in cash and in that more precious commodity, prestige, were
enough to ensure the viability of the institution for many decades.²³

What is notable is that the shogakai was not only an elegant, literary sort of gathering, but also dealt with very worldly business. The sponsors and organizers were interested in financial gain, as well as fame, in holding shogakai parties.

Gyokushō occasionally hosted shogakai gatherings, which is evidenced by extant handbills for her banquets. Robert Campbell, in his informative paper that reveals various devices and the influence of shogakai, lists the handbills preserved by Tōjō Kindai and Seki Sekkō (1827-77).²⁴ Kindai’s scrapbook contains fliers made between 1835 and 1843, while Sekkō’s contains fliers made between 1848 and 1860. One handbill of Gyokusho’s shogakai was included in Kindai’s scrapbook, and three in Sekkō’s (Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11). These were perhaps not the only shogakai Gyokushō sponsored. At the very least she hosted one shogakai within a few years after coming to Edo, and one each in 1851, 1852, and 1857.

For example, on the twenty-sixth day of the ninth month of 1851, Gyokushō hosted a party to celebrate the publication of her first anthology, Gyokushō hyakuzetsu. The banquet was held at a first-rate restaurant called the Kōchiya located in the busy Yanagibashi, Ryōgoku district at a scenic point where the Kanda River flows into the Sumida River. The Kōchiya, as well as the Manpachi restaurant nearby, was a popular facility among writers and artists with their spacious, scenic rental rooms for holding shogakai parties. A ukiyo-e in the series called Edo kōmei kaitei zukushi (All the famous restaurants in Edo) by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) depicts a scene of shogakai held at
Kōchiya (Fig. 12).

Gyokushō called her gathering “Gyokushō hyakuzetsuku kokusei hokkai” (The first meeting in commemoration of the publication of Gyokushō hyakuzetsu), as seen in the handbill she prepared to advertise the party (Fig. 8). The handbill reads, “On the twenty-sixth day of the nine month, at the Water Tower of the Kōchiya in Ryōgoku Yanagibashi, we will host a banquet. We hope to be honored by your presence, not withstanding the weather” (九月二十六日於両国柳橋河內屋之水樓開筵不論晴雨御賀臨奉希候). A note also states that various masters would write or paint during the party (本日筵上諸名家揮毫). In addition, the names of her six associate literati as kaikan (organizers) and Gyokushō’s name as kaishu (sponsor) were printed.25 These adopted phrases and the format of the handbill are typical of the shogakai fliers.

In the case of Gyokushō’s publication party, Gyokushō and the six organizers were to obtain some cash from visitors in exchange for their extemporaneous art pieces. In addition, Gyokushō could expect to receive congratulatory gifts of money from her acquaintances, as the party was organized to commemorate her publication. By holding the shogakai, Gyokushō could raise some money, while promoting her anthology.

Gyokushō held another shogakai in 1852 under the auspices of celebrating her mother’s seventieth birthday (慈母七旬賀筵). Remarkably, the handbill brazenly asked for a gift of money. After the typical expression of the shogakai invitation, a special message was added, which reads, “We beg you to contribute some donation on the day of celebration” (本日賀銀御投与伏乞). This frank request for cash suggests that Gyokushō’s
primary intention of sponsoring the shogakai was to raise funds. For this occasion, twelve of her associates, including two female masters, Takashima Bunpō (1791-1857) and Kōn (?-?), were listed as the organizers.

Women, not only geisha who would serve sake on the occasion but also women teachers, were very visible at the early nineteenth-century shogakai parties. The popularity of female masters at shogakai was vividly described in classical Chinese by a contemporary writer, Terakado Seiken (1776-1848). His comical and critical observation of shogakai was published in 1832 and included in the first volume of his successful series, Edo hanjōki (Account of the Prosperity of Edo, 1832-36). A passage from the chapter on shogakai depicts the allure of female artists.

. . . Alluring in comely fard and fair attire is a female sensei—of late so much in vogue. In delicate hands she manipulates her brush, or strikes a pose, brush poised to her lip. Her person so resplendent, her brushwork nigh divine—a horde of guests surrounds her, envelops her like ants or flies. The more she declines their requests, the more importunately they beg. Her stern instructors at her side look on intently, concerned: though she is faithful to their injunctions not to go beyond their teachings, they are powerless to curb this (unexpected surge) of transactions.²⁶

As Seiken’s description suggests, a female teacher was not only a strange participant at a shogakai but “in vogue.” Women could attract a larger audience, who would buy their art pieces. Although the number of women teachers in the field of Chinese literature was rather
small, there were a few female scholars who actively involved themselves in shogakai events, notably, Gyokushō, Takashima Bunpō, and Shinoda Unpō (1810-83).

However, Hara Saihin’s name is found nowhere in shogakai-related documents, although she was working in Edo from 1828 to 1848 and became recognized as a scholar and calligrapher. This likely suggests that Saihin did not wish to concern herself with profit-seeking shogakai parties. In fact, more than a few contemporary intellectuals were critical of the shogakai institution because of its heavily commercialized interest. Among the dissenters were Terakado Seiken, Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), and Hata Ginkei (1796-1870).²⁷ For example, Terakado Seiken, an unemployed, impoverished Confucian scholar in Edo, expressed his disdain toward shogakai in his Account of the Prosperity of Edo. In the chapter describing lotteries (tomi), this author mentions his own financial difficulty. Then, he mentions that he wonders if he should be a monk or “organize a shogakai party to get through the pressing difficulty for the time being.”²⁸ He concludes that he could be a monk anytime and, as for the shogakai, he rejects it as he considers the organization to be simply a “mean affair” (hiji).²⁹ He states, “rather than bowing around obsequiously, exposing my own face to a huge number of people” at a shogakai, it would be better to earn a living by making a prompt report of the winning numbers of a lottery, running and shouting around the city in dark, with his face covered.³⁰

Takizawa Bakin also had an aversion to shogakai, which was expressed in his letter to Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842).

I am ashamed to sound so vituperative in saying so, but of late all authors or artists
hold these *shogakai* affairs at the slightest provocation—conspiracies to scrape up some ready cash. Few indeed are the invited guests who attend gladly; most participate, faces set in a “grin and bear it” expression (as the colloquialism has it). The perpetrators strip you of one *namryō* [=2-1/2 *shu*]—why, it is virtually an elegant sort of highway robbery! They may be great figures, “Master This” or “Professor That,” but few fail to resort to this expedient for livelihood. I have resolved, sir, that I will never do such a thing.\(^{31}\)

Bakin, who is known to have set great store by Confucian ethics, scorned *shogakai*. He harshly compared it to “an elegant sort of robbery” (風流の賊).

Similar to Seiken and Bakin, Hara Saihin was proud of being a right-minded Confucian scholar, even though she was poor. Saihin described herself in her poem, “I descend from an upright official. / How can I neglect to be steady when facing difficulty?”\(^{32}\) She likely shared an antipathy to the expediency of *shogakai* and, as a result, her name is not found in *shogakai*-related documents.

A late-Edo period reference work, the *Kiyū shōran* (An Amusing View of Happy Play, 1830), written by Kitamura Nobuyo, informs us of the leading figures of *shogakai* affairs.

The exponents who concern themselves with this affair [*shogakai*] all the time are those sort of men such as Kikuchi Gozan and Okubo Tenmin [Shibutsu]. . . . Now it is taken granted to consult with Senmentei or Gozan if one wants to hold a *shogakai* party.\(^{33}\)
This description refers to two *kanshi* poets, Okubo Shibutsu (1767-1837) and Kikuchi Gozan, as well as the manager of a folding fan store, Senmentei Denshirō, as the exponents of *shogakai*. The two poets mentioned, Shibutsu and Gozan, are also known as leading advocates of the Seirei poetics, which promoted fresh, realistic descriptions based on a poet's actual surroundings and gave rise to the popularization of *kanshi* compositions. Importantly, the Seirei school flourished while attacking the former dominant mode of Kobunji school, which regarded High Tang poetry as the model of poetic expression.

Hara Saihin, who had inherited the family scholarship of the Kobunji school, was at odds with the popular poetic trend influenced by Seirei poetics in Edo. When she returned to Fukuoka from Edo in 1848, she expressed her general contempt for literary production in the city. At a welcome party held to celebrate her return, Saihin composed a poem in response to a local fellow who asked about Edo’s literary situation. She wrote, “In Edo, the literary products are all too delicate and skillful. There is no poet who could bring a whale of the emerald ocean under control” (東都文物皆纖巧，碧海掣鯨無一人). Here Saihin euphemistically criticized Edo poets for the lack of gallant and stouthearted spirit in their works. This suggests that her uncompromising faith in the scholarship and the poetic approach she had inherited hindered her from following the popular poetic trend in Edo. Saihin did not swim with the new current and failed to benefit from the commercially-oriented urban literary culture of Edo.

Meanwhile, Takahashi Gyokushō had a firm connection with the influential, popular Edo poet Kikuchi Gozan. Two poems included in *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu* were
addressed to Gozan, one celebrating his eightieth birthday, and the other showing her highest gratitude for a poem he wrote to her in return for her gift of sake. The latter is translated below.

I Presented a Keg of Sake to Gozan Sensei. He Thanked Me With a Poem. Reverently, I Respond to the Gem of His Rhyme.

I presented sake hoping to see the long eyebrows of your advanced years.
Everyday affairs, which shackle people, were distressing my mind.
Then suddenly I received a fine poem, a jewel-like reward.
It washed off ten thousand large cups of dust from my mind.35

As this poem suggests, Gyokushō made an effort to maintain an advantageous association with Edo’s most influential poet.

Kikuchi Gozan contributed to *Gyokushō hyakuzeatsu*. The title page of the anthology was written in his hand, and bears his signature (Fig. 13). He was the grand authority of the literati in 1849, when *Gyokushō hyakuzeatsu* was published. His signature on the title page tacitly assured the validity of the publication of Gyokushō’s anthology, the *kanshi* poems by a commoner woman.

Saihin’s distance from the popular literary trend of Seirei poetics and influential poets likely frustrated her career in Edo. On the other hand, Gyokushō’s associations with Edo’s famous poets and her active involvement in the commercially-oriented literary activities contributed to her success in the city. Indeed, Gyokushō’s excellent sociability is ostentatiously exhibited in her first anthology, the *Gyokushō hyakuzeatsu*. The anthology
includes two prefaces and a number of dedications written by twenty-nine male literati. While it is not unusual to obtain a couple of prefaces to publish this sort of private anthology, the inclusion of so many dedications attracts special notice. The poems contributed by twenty-nine literati, which were printed after the prefaces, naturally celebrate the publication and admire Gyokushō’s talent. Her anthology was adorned and authorized by these prefaces, dedications, and especially by the calligraphy on the title page done by Kikuchi Gozan. In this manner, Gyokushō skillfully displayed the approval and support of male intellectuals, which would have smoothed the way to public acceptance of the exceptional, female-authored kanshi anthology.

As a Successor

Another cultural factor from which Gyokushō benefited was the increased visibility of women teachers in the field of literature and art in the late Edo period. Gyokushō’s presence as a teacher of Chinese literature and calligraphy was no longer so unusual in 1839, around the time when she came to Edo. Notably, she had a few eminent female precursors in her field. Before Gyokushō started her career as a Confucian scholar and educator, Takashima Bunpō, Hara Saihin, and Chō Kōran had already been actively working in the city. Takashima Bunpō, who had been employed by the shogunate as a teacher of the inner-quarter in 1821, ran her private school with great success. Hara Saihin had worked in the city for twenty years from 1828, while Chō Kōran stayed there from 1832 to 1845 with her husband Seigan. All these women were known in their field of
Chinese literature, which is testified to by the fact that their names were included in one or two of the three editions of *List of Various People (Shoka jinmei-roku)* published in Edo in 1818, 1836 and 1842.\(^{37}\)

The recognition of Gyokushō as a successor to these eminent women scholars is displayed in a poem contributed to *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu* by Otsuki Bankei (1801-1878). Bankei was a Confucian scholar born in Edo as a son of Otsuki Gentaku (1757-1827), a well recognized scholar of Dutch Studies (*rangaku*). Bankei, as well as his father, served the Sendai domain.

Dedicated to the Woman Literatus, Gyokushō

Bunpō was a phoenix among women,

Atop the high hill, she was the first to break into sound, gaining reputation.

Who can be compared to her with regard to the splendid brush?

It is Ema Saikō of Mino province.

And Saihin, the reverent lady who gathers duckweed. \(^{38}\)

Her goal is to offer her round and square boxes, filled with what she gathered, to her ancestors.

Kōran, respecting her worthy husband,

Can be said to be Mengguang of the Yanagawa family. \(^{39}\)

Gyokushō from our Oku province,

In pursuit of them, joined them to soar.

She opened a school in the city of Edo,
To sit behind a thin silk curtain in a lecture room.

Sprightly working female scholars,

Each occupying her own place.

The faces of men should reveal some shame.

I inform you gentlemen, offering these words.\(^{40}\)

Bankei, who grew up in Edo, was aware of women educated in Chinese literature gaining a place for themselves in academic and literary society. In addition, he knew Saihin and Kōran personally. He was acquainted with Saihin in Edo, which is verified by Saihin's inclusion of Bankei's name in her notebook titled *Kinranbo,* a list of people with whom she became acquainted.\(^{41}\) Bankei knew Kōran, as he studied poetry under her husband Yanagawa Seigan. Bankei also contacted Ema Saikō. In 1827, he visited her in Kyoto on a journey to Nagasaki as their fathers were friends through their common academic interest, Dutch Studies. Saikō made a positive impression on Bankei as a female scholar, which he recorded with admiration in his diary.\(^{42}\) The two kept exchanging poems for a few years after their meeting.

Bankei designated Gyokushō, a female scholar of his age from his own province, as a successor to those women excelled in their Chinese erudition. His familiarity with talented women such as Bunpō, Saikō, Saihin, and Kōran from his youth no doubt prompted him to support Gyokushō. Bankei also contributed a preface to the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu.*

When Gyokushō started to work in Edo, literary society had already been pried
open to exceptionally accomplished women in Chinese literature. Benefiting from this favorable situation, Gyokushō could make the most of her own talent and social skills and eventually succeed in fame and publication, seemingly without encountering such great difficulty.

II. Poems: The Naturalization of Kanshi

Gyokushō published two anthologies in her lifetime, the Gyokushō hyakuzetsu in 1849 and the Gyokushō shikō in 1862. The former includes a hundred poems all written in the form of shichigon zekku (Ch. jueju, quatrain), which consists of four lines with seven Chinese characters in each line. The latter, Gyokushō Shikō, includes seventy-two poems in different forms, including zekku and risshi (Ch. lūshi, regulated verse with eight lines) with five or seven characters in each line. While the Gyokushō hyakuzetsu contains two prefaces, many poetic contributions by Gyokushō’s associates and a postscript by Gyokushō herself, the Gyokushō ikō includes only a short sentence of praise of ten characters contributed by Otsuki Bankei.43

The majority of Gyokushō’s poems celebrate natural, seasonal beauty. Poems related to spring by far outnumber the other topics. Gyokushō’s poems, which were produced under the influence of the Seirei school, mostly describe in relatively simple terms her everyday experiences. Her poems avoid complicated metaphors or allusive phrases, which would require in-depth knowledge of classical Chinese literature and history to comprehend.
Timothy Bradstock and Judith Rabinovitch attribute the most significant characteristics of the *kanshi* development in the late Edo period to naturalization of the poetic form, which included incorporation of “imagery, vocabulary, and themes representative of the native environment and Japanese society.” Gyokushō’s poems are excellent examples of the “naturalization of *kanshi*.”

Gyokushō’s poetry is in sharp contrast to that of Hara Saihin. Saihin, who was trained in Kobunji school scholarship and poetic attitude, revered Tang poetry, which, in Burton Watson’s words, “for all its occasional setting, pulls almost always in the direction of the timeless, the mythic, the grand and tragic gesture.” Admittedly, Saihin has great strength in expressing her ambitions, frustrations, and sorrows, yet is weak in her descriptions of the details of the actual setting. Although Saihin lived in Edo for twenty years, her poems reflect little of that particular cultural and material environment. Contrarily, Gyokushō excelled in portraying her living conditions and details of the city life.

Gyokushō lived in the so-called *shitamachi* (Low City) area along the Sumida River. Specific shrines and temples in the area and some activities that took place by the Sumida River frequently appear in her poems, reflecting her living environment. The following two poems refer to shrines located along the river. (Fig. 14)

**White Beard Shrine**

At a bank beside the Shirahige Shrine, I enjoy the fragrance of spring,

In silk socks and blue skirt, my delight is refreshed.

Snow of cherry blossoms, mist of peach flowers, it is a wonderful view.
Poems and fashions—100% spring.\(^{46}\)

Viewing Flowers from a Boat

Negotiating at a ferry, chartering a boat, amusement increases.

Poling along, the fresh water green as thin silk.

Around the bank of Mimeguri Shrine, spring is at its best.

Snow of cherry blossom, haze of peach flowers, a bankful of blooms.\(^{47}\)

Both poems celebrate spring, spotlighting the famous sight of cherry blossoms along the Sumida River. The names of particular shrines, Shirahige Shrine (白髭祠) and Mimeguri Shrine (三塚祠), give a sense of locale.

Gyokushō did not fail to describe Edo’s representative festival, the Ryōgoku Firework Display at the Sumida River. This popular, famous scene was also made into *ukiyo-e* by such artists as Utagawa Hiroshige (Fig. 15).

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Fifth Month, Summer 1860 (Kanoe-saru),

Watching Fire Works at Yanagibashi, Two Poems [translated below is the second piece]

Uncountable flowers in the sky, a night scene is brightened.

Piercing clouds, scattering over the water, they light the whole river.

Many visitors upstairs, leaning on handrails.

Voices cheer, shouts of “Tamaya”!\(^{48}\)

This poem vividly conveys the excitement of the crowd. Gyokushō employed the word
“Tamaya” (玉屋), a name of a leading firework manufacture in Edo, which the spectators customarily yelled out when viewing the fireworks. Adopting the native word and describing the very local, contemporary event, Gyokushō’s kanshi no longer exhibit the pretension of an ancient Chinese cultural aura.

One of her poems depicts her visit to the Asakusa Kannon Temple, a popular place thronged with commoners. The attraction of the Asakusa Temple was not limited to religious interest, but extended to worldly amusement of street performances, shops, cafés, and prostitution. The “Kannon Temple” of Asakusa mentioned in this poem is now known as Sensōji.

Winter Day: A Composition on My Way to Worship Kannon

The long main street of Asakusa,

The light of the setting sun is cast aslant.

Chilling through my hood, wind from the river passes.

My footwear is light, frost and snow sparse.

The tower is newly painted with gold.

Waitresses with rouge and powder compete at cafés.

Coming to worship at the Kannon Temple,

I suddenly feel that my dishonest, sly mind is cleansed.

The topic of the poet’s visit to the temple, popular among townspeople, is fresh. The kanshi form had long been associated with elite class. However, Gyokushō did not hesitate to write from her standpoint as one living among the crowd of commoners.
Gyokushō’s representation of Edo culture included the frantic appreciation of bonito fish throughout the city. As a widely circulated, anonymous Edo comic haiku (senryū) has it, “I will eat the first bonito, even if I have to pawn my wife” (nyōbō wo shichi ni irete mo hatsugatsu), the season’s first bonito was wildly sought after in the city. The early bonito fish was sold at an extraordinary price and relishing the fish became one of Edo’s cultural values. One of Gyokushō’s poems reflects the craze for the fish.

At the Place of Ritsuen Sensei, Sharing Rhyme, We Composed on the Bonito Fish

How much money was needed to exchange for one bonito fish?
A plate of gems is brought out, sake is incessantly poured.
The sharp knife made the first cut, red strings flew.
It is not only the flavor that makes its savor deep.50

Another poem also vividly presents their culinary delight.

In Early Autumn, I Went Boating with a Guest on the Sumida River.
Having Caught Fish in a Net, I Came Home in the Evening Twilight
Filling the boat, brisk fish and shrimps are noisy.
Returning home we hold a lamp, the sun already down.
I have a dish of raw fish prepared immediately, another party begins.
Half the fragrant unrefined sake is still in the keg.51

The still culturally celebrated, yet polluted Sumida River, once offered the townspeople a clean and fun opportunity to catch edible fish and shrimps. This poem provides us with
another glimpse of experiences of residents of the Edo city center. The next poem describes a daily commodity used particularly in their time and region.

**Paper Tent**

Four walls are pitched to guard against frost and wind,

When the flame of light brightens, my spirit naturally melts.

A dream from a snooze is broken, the sky is not dawning.

I just wonder if my body is amidst white clouds.\(^{52}\)

The paper tent, hung inside a room, was used among commoners during the Edo period to preserve heat in winter and avoid mosquitoes in summer. As the following two haiku by Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828) suggest, paper tents were a product of the eastern regions and commoners substituted them for more expensive nets made of hemp.

Kyoto people wouldn’t know this brightness, \( kyōbito ha akarusa shiraji \)

Paper mosquito net \( kami no kaya \)^{53}

The moonlight is coming through, \( tsuki sasuya \)

It is my house, even with a paper mosquito net. \( kami no kaya demo ore ga ie \)^{54}

As well as Issa, Gyokushō took the familiar, vulgar object of everyday use for her subject matter. Consequently, her poem succeeds in impressing the readers with its freshness.

Gyokushō’s contribution to the naturalization of *kanshi* included her compositions on *waka* subjects. One of her poems employed the established association of a stag’s cry with loneliness in autumn. A representative *waka* poem that utilizes this imagery is the one
composed by the legendary Sarumaru Dayū, which became widely known by being included in the Kokin wakashū (Collection of Early and Modern Japanese Poetry, 905) and later in the Hyakunin isshu (One Hundred Poems, first compiled in the 13th century). The following is Sarumaru Dayū’s waka.

When I hear the voice of the stag crying for his mate stepping through the fallen leaves deep in the mountains—then is the time that autumn is saddest.\(^{55}\)

Gyokushō’s kanshi poem below combines the sadness of autumn triggered by a stag’s cry with the loneliness of a traveler.

Traveling and a Stag: A Topic from Waka

The moon set in the western peaks, the darkness of night.

Alone, I wander in autumn, in a strange land.

I am afraid to hear a crying stag.

When it cries, I become truly saddened.\(^{56}\)

In the tradition of Chinese poetry, a deer cry has been associated with enjoyment of a party.\(^{57}\) However, in her kanshi composition, Gyokushō utilized the native poetic association of a stag’s cry with autumn sadness, dismissing the conventional trope in Chinese poetry, the comparison of the cry to a party and the host’s pleasure.\(^{58}\)

As a poet affected by the new poetic approach of the Seirei school, Gyokushō was able
to react against conventional poetic expectations. The next example expresses her positive perception of her atypical life.

A Quiet Dwelling in Autumn

As the bamboo blind is rolled up, my dream by the western window is interrupted.

In a cave I dip spring water to make tea; it boils slowly.

Pastoral fields with clamorous birds, an abundant crop of rice.

Few visitors, the path to the gate is wild with weeds.

A view of flowers goads the world of letters to partake somewhat of sake.

Facing the moon in the autumn sky, alone, I compose poems.

Don’t laugh, but I can sleep soundly on a lone pillow.

Some prefer nettles—this is also life.59

The first three couplets depict a pleasant, rustic life, reflecting an ideal of reclusive life shared among many of her contemporary *kanshi* poets. The concluding couplet displays a more personal observation of her life, the content of which does not necessarily conform to traditional poetic expectation. The first line in the last couplet, “I can sleep soundly on a lone pillow,” counters the conventional poetic association of lonely bed and sleepless night. The line contends that the poet is not a person who misses a partner, but one who is content by herself and enjoys her circumstances. Then in the last line, the poet constructively acknowledges her atypical, individual life. She used the word “*ryōchū/ tademushi*” ( Kyoto:), indicating an insect which has a strange liking for *tade* ( Kyoto: smartweed), a bitter plant which other insects would not eat. She compares herself to the insect with a strange taste,
admitting her atypical life. Then she approves such a life, writing positively, “this is also life” (亦是一生涯).

Gyokushō became an accomplished poet in the trend of Seirei poetics. Reflecting the diffusion of kanshi practice among commoners and the naturalization of the form, Gyokushō’s kanshi project not the conventional perspective of the ruling class or Confucian scholars who had previously been in charge of kanshi composition, but the perspective of Edo’s townspeople. Although her poetry does not make a strong portrait of the poet herself, it vividly illustrates cheerful events and seasonal beauties in Edo’s downtown. Below translated is part of Gyokushō’s postscript in which she explains her intention of publishing Gyokushō hyakuzetsu.

. . . Nowadays, troubles are coiling around. Matters of literature are mostly left in devastation. Longing for the leisure of my past, my soul soars for this. Recently, I had one-hundred of my quatrains printed. Presenting copies to some gentlemen with whom I had enjoyed time, I gave some vent to my lingering nostalgia.60

Gyokushō came to Edo around 1839,61 a short time before the Tenpō Reforms which began in the fifth month of 1841. During the Tenpō period (1830-44), the Tokugawa shogunate was confronted with a multitude of difficulties, including a nationwide famine between 1833 and 1836 (the Tenpō Famine) and increased foreign threats on the coastlines. While Japan was in an economic and social turmoil, the commercial and cultural liveliness of downtown Edo was attaining its height, yet, finally the effects of the Tenpō Reforms greatly diminished its vitality. The measures restricted various commercial and cultural activities,
including tightened censorship on writers and *ukiyo-e* artists, relocation of *kabuki* theaters; expulsion of unlicensed pleasure quarters; the closure of lavish restaurants, confectionery shops, and kimono makers; and the regulation of decorations for festivals, extravagant fireworks, boating parties, and so on. These restrictions greatly affected the Edo literati’s activities. Although the infamous Reforms were discontinued in 1843, the increasing domestic troubles and external threats left the city under a dark cloud. The publication of her poems was something of a memento to the glorious bygone days when literary activities had thrived along with the commercial prosperity and cultural boom in the city. As she intended, Gyokushō’s poetry affectionately represents the flowers of Edo culture enjoyed by the townspeople in the early nineteenth century.

Although Gyokushō was a published woman poet, rare in the field of *kanshi*, her achievement was dismissed in the later periods. The *Poetic Flowers of Japanese Women* (*Nihon keien ginsō*), published in 1880, includes *kanshi* poems by fifty-four Japanese women from the late Edo period to the early Meiji. It contains *kanshi* composed by many poets mentioned in this dissertation, including Ema Saikō, Hara Saihin, Yanagawa Kōran, Shinoda Unpō, Kamei Shōkin, Takashima (Hayashi) Bunpō, Tsuda Ranchō, Atomi Kakei, and other less known poets. However, Gyokushō’s name and works are not found in this collection. Meanwhile, a pioneering masterpiece of modern popular literature (*taishū bungaku*), the *Great Bodhisattva Pass* (*Daibosatsu tōge*) written by Nakazato Kaizan (1885-1944), evokes Gyokushō’s lively character. In the chapter “White Clouds,” a samurai-painter, Tayama Hakuun, the protagonist of the chapter, visits Sendai and meets
with Gyokushō who had returned there from Edo. She is rendered as a very attractive woman scholar in her forties, beautiful, erudite and wealthy. She intrigues Hakuun with her affable talk.63 Nakazato Kaizan’s interest in utilizing Gyokushō’s personality in his work confirms that Gyokushō had lasting appeal to the popular side of literary imagination. Though Hara Saihin’s scholarship may have excelled that of Gyokushō, it was Gyokushō who thrived as a teacher and poet in the downtown of Edo energized by commoners at the end of the period.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR


2 Shōmu ikō was published by Saikō’s nephew’s son, Ema Shinsei, in 1871. Saihin shishū, which contains more than 440 poems, is included in Zoku zoku Nihon jurin sōsho edited by Seki Giichirō (Tokyo: Tōyō Toshō Kankōkai, 1937; repr., Tokyo: Otori Shuppan, 1971).

3 Ema Saikō, Ema Saikō shishū: Shōmu ikō, 2 vols., annotated by Kado Reiko (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992, 1994), 4. The preface by Ema Shinsei reads, “I once saw a letter by Master San’yō encouraging her to publish her poems, which I found at the bottom of a box of hers. I also repeatedly urged her to do so. My great aunt said, ‘My late teacher sent me this letter in past. I refused firmly and didn’t agree to his suggestion, because I was afraid of being criticized as a fame and profit seeker. In addition, even if I had published my poor poems, how would they have benefited the world? However, after my death, if you have an intention [to publish Saikō’s poems], please do whatever you like with them. . . .’” (My translation)

4 According to a letter by Tsuchiya Shōkai, Saihin on her deathbed asked him to publish her poems as an appendix to her father’s poems. For the detail, see page 75 to 76 of this dissertation.

5 Before the publication of Ran’en’s anthology in 1834, Chidō had published his deceased first wife’s anthology, Dankō-shū, in 1826.

6 According to a preface to Gyokushō hyakuzetsu written in 1849 by Tōjō Kindai, Gyokushō came to Edo “ten years before” the year he wrote the preface. 此先十年到于江戸.


10 A letter from Senmentei Denshirō to Tōjō Kindai tells of Gyokushō’s move to Sendai. This letter is inferred to have been written in 1864 as it relates that a painter, Fukuda Hankō, (1804-1864) died “on the 23rd of the eighth month of this year.” The letter is included in Nishio Toyosaku, Tōjō Kindai (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1918), 221-23.

11 Gyokushō hyakuzetsu, poem 5.
The following is a translation of the first part of Gyokushō’s postscript to her anthology, *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu*: “Our Mutsu province is located at the remote corner of the east side of Japan, surrounded by the hindrances of ocean and mountains. Its grandness and magnificence, it is said, has few things that can be compared with it under heaven. When I was young, following my deceased father’s guide, I keenly engaged myself in Confucian literature. Meanwhile, by nature, I loved mountains and rivers. With a pair of grass sandals, I explored scenic places and left my footprints almost everywhere in Mutsu province. Whenever I saw uncommon, superb mountains and rivers, I wandered around the spot day after day admiring the spectacle. Loving and appreciating the sight, I composed poems or wrote about it. The only regrettable matter was that a woman’s frail brush is not able enough to exhibit the profound secrets of the mountains and rivers. Thus I quit. Mountain spirits would know things. What would they tell me? Though I felt this way, the places I visited became boundless. The number of friends increased day by day. Discussing art, everyday I heard something new and truly realized that there was some progress. I thought I should put myself under someone’s protection for the time being and went to Edo. In my spare moments from kitchen work, following various literary teachers, I enjoyed myself by the Sumida River and Asuka Hill. We strolled under the moon and sang in the mist. We boated in flowers, wandered in the snow. I wasted almost no day. A rustic person from the east side of Mutsu province, though weak and vulgar by nature, succeeded in filling the city with her empty name. Well, how honored I was!”

See, note 12.

Tōjō Kindai’s preface to the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu*. 頃其門人就集中鈔七絶百首。刻之家塾,水龍齋[王蕉]來示余日。妾拙韻語。脂粉之習。因循自然固不足以示大方。從遊子弟欲省膳寫之煩。所以有此撿也。幸無尤之願賜一言。

Ibid. 否若妾不敢當。妾唯惡方今弄書書自號女史者。不欲與之伍。故不揣寡陋。竊擬移管之微旨矣耳。

Gyokushō’s postscript to the *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu*. 嘉永己酉秋瓜月。仙臺玉蕉女史高橋瀧鏡于江都巖城街寓居。

For example, Otsuki Bankei (1801-1878), a Confucian scholar of Sendai domain based in Edo, wrote, “In most cases, women with literary skills tend to be flippant and detestable”
(大抵関秀有文書者。従来軽薄可憎。). This comment is included in his travel diary, Seiyū kitei (See the article written on the 27th of the Third Month in the Year of Bunsei 10th [1827]). Ōtsuki Bankei, Seiyū kitei (1831), reprinted in vol.3, Kikō Nihon kanshi, ed. Fujikawa Hideo and Sano Masami (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992), 183.

18 Gyokusō hakyuzetsu, poem 85.

Although Timothy Bradstock and Judith Rabinovitch state that Saihin "opened a private academy in Asakusa, Edo," I have not yet been able to find any evidence of this in my research. Bradstock and Rabinovitch, An Anthology of Kanshi (Chinese Verse) by Japanese Poets of the Edo Period (1603-1868), 333.

19 See page 75 to 76 of this dissertation.

20 Maeda Yoshi, Edo jidai joryū bungeishi: chihō wo chūshin ni, haikai, waka, kanshi-hen, 326. 同人御遊歴之趣意は処々にて潤筆等を得、其力にて素志御企之様子＝相見申候。当地御滞留中追々詩作等乞候者も有之、無事之義＝候ハゝ少しの助には相成可申之処、病中故不任意、僕力金子一両余を呈し候者のみにてはか 敷事も無御座候、右之次第故古処翁之詩稿上木之義不懲事＝御座候得共、小生知人大坂書林河内屋と申者、此節小生校閱致候書籍を上木＝取懸り候最中故、相済次第右古処翁遺稿采覧君詩集上梓之義相談＝及ぶへ覚悟＝御座候、其節ハ友人よりも少々之助力は可致候と存候のみ、外に好手段も無御座候、尤貴藩にて思召も御座候ハゝ何時にも御返し可申候・・・。


24 Gyokusō's six associate bunjin invited as the organizers of her 1851 shogakai are Kamedō Ryōrai (1778-1853), Ubukata Teisai (1799-1856), Onishi Chinnō (1792-1851), Tōdō Ryūun (1809-86), Jokō (family name and birth dates are unknown), and Tōjō Kindai (1795-1878).

1989), 35.
27 For the criticisms and disputes about shogakai among contemporary intellectuals, see Andrew Markus, “Shogakai: Celebrity Banquets of the Late Edo Period,” 140, 146-47, 154-167; Robert Campbell, “Tenpō-ki zengo no shogakai,” 61-69.
30 This part of Bakin’s letter to Bokushi (“Suzuki Bokushi ni atauru fumi”) is translated by Andrew Markus. “Shogakai: Celebrity Banquets of the Late Edo Period,” 140.
31 These lines are included in a poem entitled “A Thought at the End of the Year, Applying Yu You’s Rhyme.” The poem is included in Hara Saihin, “Hara Saihin joshi seiyū nichireiki bassui.”
33 Kitamura Nobuyo, Kiyū shoran (1830), (1970; repr., Tokyo: Meicho Kankokai), jō, 563. My translation. 年中其事にかゝつらびて興行をなす者ハ菊池五山大窪天民が輩なり・・・此会催す者ハ毎扇面亭五山を頼みて催さねばならぬやうになりたり。
34 The lines are from the poem entitled, “At a party where my friends celebrate my return. Answering to Tohara Shunpei; using the same rhyme.” “Hara Saihin shishō”: 38.
35 Gyokushō hyakuzetsu, poem 98. 月崎酒五山先生 先生以詩見謝謹次其 объем
欲拝前席薦一席
絆人俗累意悠哉
佳篇忽辱煖報
洗却胸中萬斛埃
36 Martha Tocco discusses, “The increasing visibility of women from both the samurai and the commoner class in the public role of teacher and school administrator shows that teaching had become a suitable occupation for women as a gender group and not just for women of a certain social stratum.” Martha C. Tocco, “Women’s Education in Tokugawa Japan,” in Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan, edited by Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 194.
37 Bunpō is included in the lists published in 1818 and 1836, while Kōran is included in the list of 1836, and Saihin in 1842.
采蘋
于以采蘋、南澗之邊。
She goes to gather the ping waterplants, on the bank in the southern stream-valley; she goes to gather the tsao waterplants, in those running pools, She goes to put them in vessels. There are baskets square and round; she goes to boil them, there are cauldrons and pans. She goes to deposit them, under the window in the ancestral shrine; who sets them forth? There is a reverent young girl.

39 The first Chinese character of Seigan’s last name Yanagawa (梁川) is the same as the family name of Liang Hong of the Later Han Dynasty, whom Mengguang, a woman to whom Kōran was compared, married. Mengguang served her husband Liang Hong, an outstanding scholar with high ideals, showing great respect and modesty toward him.

40 Gyokushō hyakuzetsu, contributed poem 17

41 Hara Saihin, “Kinranbo” (MS. Akizuki Kyōdokan).

42 Bankei, who had left Edo on the 17th day of the second month of 1827, arrived in Kyoto on the 16th day of the third month. The following refers to Saikō. “The 27th day. Visited Ema Saikō at her temporary abode. Her name is Taho. A native of Ogaki. The eldest daughter of Ransai, her father. She has loved literature from her childhood and excelled in bamboo painting. In most cases, women with literary skills tend to be flippant and detestable. Yet, only Saikō is not like that. While I was in conversation with her, she was calm and gentle, disarming and relaxed. However, when you see what she writes, the graceful excellence and novelty almost make men run and collapse. She is an unusual

240
43 Otsuki Bankei’s praise reads, “She is distinguished for her literary talent among women. Her intelligence and sensitivity are like those of the sages under the trees.”


46 *Gyokushō hyakuzetsu*, poem 8.

白髭詞
白髭詞畔摘芳辰
羅緞青裙興亦新
樱雪桃霞好風景
詩篇裝就十分春

47 Ibid., poem 41

舟行看花
尋渡買舟興坐加
一箇新水碧於緞
三園祠畔春尤好
樱雪桃霞滿岸花


庚申夏五月二十八日柳橋觀煙火二首

[the second poem]
無數天花夜色晴
穿雲散水一江明
樓臺多少凭欄客
玉屋喧々喝采聲

49 Ibid., poem 21.

冬日觀音途中作
長街浅草道
落日欲斜初
帽冷江風過
屐輕霜雪皁
畫金新立塔
紅粉競當壇
來觀觀音寺
機心頓覺除

241
Ibid., poem 29.

51 Gyokushô hyakuzetsu, Poem 17.


Gyokushô hyakuzetsu, poem 87.

57 In the context of traditional Chinese literature, a deer cry is associated with a joyful time with a fine guest. The Rokumeikan (Deer Cry Pavilion) built from 1880 to 1803 by the Meiji government to accommodate and entertain Western visitors was named as such in connection to this Chinese poetic association. The archetype of the association between a deer cry and a joyful party is found in the *Book of Odes*, in the section of “Minor Odes of the Kingdom.” Bernhard Karlgren trans., *The Book of Odes: Chinese Text, Transcription and Translation*, 104-05.

Deer Cry

Ióg-ióg cry the deer, they eat the Artemisia of the open grounds;
I have a fine guest, we play the lute and blow the reed-organ;
we blow the reed-organ and vibrate its tongues;
the baskets presented, them we take;
the man who loves me, he shows me the (ways:) manners of Chou.
Iög-iög cry the deer, they eat the southernwood of the open grounds;
I have a fine guest, his reputation is very brilliant;
he does not regard people in a (slighting:) mean way;
the nobleman take him for a pattern, they imitate him;
I have good wine, my fine guest feasts and amuses himself.
Iög-iög cry the deer, they eat the k’in plants of the open grounds;
I have a fine guest, we play the lute, we play the guitar;
we play the lute, we play the guitar, together we rejoice and stepped in pleasure;
I have good wine, with it I feast and rejoice the heart of my fine guest.

鹿鳴
呦呦鹿鳴，食野之苹。
我有嘉賓，鼓瑟吹笙。
吹笙鼓瑟，承筐是將。
人之好我，示我大周。
呦呦鹿鳴，食野之苹。
我有嘉賓，德音孔昭。
視民不恌，君子是則是效。
我有旨酒，嘉賓式燕以敖。
呦呦鹿鳴，食野之苹。
我有嘉賓，鼓瑟鼓琴。
鼓瑟鼓琴，和樂且湛。
我有旨酒，以嘉樂嘉賓之心。

58Gyokushō was not original in composing kanshi on waka topics. For example, Kikuchi Gozan published his kanshi poems exclusively composed on waka topics in 1839 (Gozan-dō waka dai zekku). According to Ikezawa Ichirō, Kan Chazan, Minakawa Kien (1734-1807) and Tanomura Chikuden (1777-1835) left many kanshi on waka topics. See, Ikezawa Ichirō, “Waka to kanshi: waka dai kanshi ni tsuite,” Edo bungaku 27 (November, 2002), 149-52.

59Gyokushō ikō, poem 33.

秋日間居
西窗夢覺捲簾時
洞酌溪泉烹茗遲
鳥噪田園禾穫穂
客稀門徑草離離
看花文苑聊催酒
對月秋天獨詠詩
孤枕安眠君莫笑
蓼蟲亦是一生涯

60The postscript to the Gyokushō hyakuzetsu by Gyokushō herself. 今也事故牽繫翰墨之事
See note 6 of this chapter.


Nakazato Kaizan, *Daibosatsu tōge* (1913-1941). The Chapter 34, “Chapter on Hakuun” (*Hakuun no maki*), was originally published in a literary journal *Rinjin no Tomo* (Friends of Our Neighbors) in March 1933.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The strength gained from a thousand books helped you
As you faced your house’s bankruptcy.
You, a woman, recovered the business, as I understand:
Maintaining a house doesn’t have to be a man’s work.

(Tomiioka Ginshō (1762-1831), the daughter of a kimono fabric store family in Ise, succeeded to the business when her parents and siblings had all died and the business was thrown into danger of closing. At that time, Ginshō was over thirty and unmarried. She restored the business to prosperity.

In the poem above, Saikō makes reference to Ginshō’s gender, and presents the
argument that a woman can maintain a family business as well as a man. Saikō did not belittle the female gender, but claimed women’s equality to men in their talent and abilities.

Saikō’s poem for Ginshō also informs us that Ginshō had recently published two Chinese epic poems, “Ode on Mulan” and “A Pair of Peacocks Southeast Fly.” Among the two, a yuefu style poem on Mulan, a legendary young woman who went into battle disguised as a man, attracts special attention in regard to the issue of gender transgression. Mulan is now widely known through a 1998 Disney animated film. Just as the character of Mulan captivates young girls’ minds in our time, the protagonist no doubt fascinated independent minded women of the late Edo period as well. In the epic, the cross-dressed Mulan goes into battle in place of her father. She fights brilliantly and the emperor recognizes her contribution. Ginshō, who loved to study Chinese literature and ran the family business in place of a male heir, may well have identified her personal life in some way with the story of Mulan. Ginshō was so deeply attached to the epic that she decided to publish it for wider audience, financing the publication in her old age.

Rai San’yō, who proofread Saikō’s poem, made a special reference to the two yuefu poems Ginshō published. He wrote, “The two works [“Ode on Mulan” and “A Pair of Peacocks Southeast Fly”] are the ones I always love to chant” (両首僕所常喜読) . Not only Ginshō (and Saikō who had composed a poem on Mulan earlier in 1829), but San’yō, a male scholar, also found a special appeal in the story of a cross-dressed woman who performs brilliantly in battle, a masculine endeavor. This is suggestive of the period’s tolerance for, or even celebration of, a talented woman’s success in a social sphere
previously preserved for men.

As stated in the first couplet of Saikō’s poem to Ginshō, what qualified Ginshō to “maintain a house” as well as a man was, “a thousand books,” that is, Chinese scholarship. In fact, Ginshō studied under a local Confucian scholar, Tsusaka Tōyō (1756-1825) and became known for her erudition. In the late Edo period, if women—those from the samurai class and merchant class alike—were educated in Chinese literature as the respected men were, they could possibly have an opportunity of working among males as scholars, artists, and/or educators. Those qualified, learned women were becoming increasingly visible, as Otsuki Bankei’s poetic reflection on women scholars revealed. Hara Saihin, Ema Saikō, and Takahashi Gyokushō were not so much extraordinary figures in the period as they were fine representatives of women who became more or less recognized working independently using their education in Chinese art and literature. The emergence of women intellectuals was phenomenal in the late Edo period, and the trend was warmly received, even encouraged, by many male intellectuals such as Kan Chazan, Rai Kyōhei, Rai San’yō, Yanagawa Seigan, Kikuchi Gozan, Onuma Chinzan, Otsuki Bankei, Hirose Kyokusō, Suzuki Shōtō, and others.

Notably, many women who were recognized for their Chinese scholarship and art, including Saihin, Saikō, Gyokushō, Takashima Bunpō, Shinoda Unpō, and Tomioka Ginshō, remained unmarried or divorced. The exceptions are Chō Kōran and Yoshida Shūran (1797-1866), who married, respectively, kanshi poet Yanagawa Seigan, and scholar-painter, Okura Ritsuzan (1785-1850). Discussing early-Meiji women writers’
conflict between a commitment to writing and marriage, Rebecca Copland writes, “For a Meiji woman to be respectable, she needed to be respectably married. To acquitted herself as a proper wife, she could hardly remain a serious, publishing author. To be sexually faithful, she had to remove herself from literature and its unchaste reputation. And to be selflessly devoted, she had to subjugate her own ambitions to those of the family.”

Compared to the situation of early Meiji women writers, late-Edo kanshi writers suffered less from an expectation of marriage. Whether they were unmarried or divorced, accomplished scholars and artists could earn recognition regardless of their marital status. As for Hara Saihin, she could justify her unmarried life by referring to the rubric of filial piety, similar to the situation of Higuchi Ichiyō who could be excused from the conflict between marriage and writing because of her role as a family head and breadwinner. However, Ema Saikō, who did not have any particular reasons to stay unmarried other than her devotion to art, also remained single, enjoying her family’s material wealth and warm support. Regardless of her marital status, Saikō eventually gained considerable respect and reputation in society. As for the marriage of Takahashi Gyokushō, it was not considered important at all by her contemporaries who wrote prefaces to her anthology. Takashima Bunpō, a successful Confucian scholar who was employed by the Tokugawa shogunate, and Shinoda Unpō, a scholar and poet who studied with Asakawa Zen’an (1781-1849) and Yanagawa Seigan, were both divorced, but their careers and reputation were not affected by the fact. In the case of these accomplished women Confucian scholars, divorce was not necessarily associated with impropriety.
It may not be appropriate to compare late Edo *kanshi* writers to early Meiji women writers. Unlike the Meiji “writers” who were expected to commit to creative writing professionally, late Edo women who left *kanshi* works were never professionally “*kanshi* poets.” They were not required to publish the works in exchange for money, nor were they required to commit solely to producing *kanshi*. They were scholars, artists, calligraphers, and/or educators, who also wrote *kanshi* as a means of creative, literary self-expression. Their identity was not “*kanshi* poet,” but rather, scholar, artist, and educator, whose qualifications were exalted with the additional ability to compose poetry.

The direct successors of the late Edo *kanshi* writers could be sought among the early Meiji female educators. The examples are Atomi Kakei (1840-1926), the founder of Atomi Jogakkō established in 1875, and Miwada Masako (1840-1927), the founder of Miwada Jogakkō established in 1902. Both left *kanshi* poems.\(^1\) Kakei studied Chinese literature under Gōtō Shōin (1797-1864),\(^2\) a student of Rai San’yō and the main proofreader of Ema Saikō’s poems after San’yō’s death. Born into a rural elite family in Osaka that had fallen into decline, Kakei grew up being instructed by her learned father that “she would not marry, but restore the fortunes of the family.”\(^3\) Remaining unmarried, Kakei privately taught elite class women in Kyoto and Tokyo, then opened a private school for girls in Tokyo, which eventually grew into the Atomi Jogakkō. Miwada Masako, the daughter of a Confucian scholar in Kyoto, studied Chinese literature under Yanagawa Seigan and his wife, Kōran. After being widowed, she ran a private school in Matsuyama, her husband’s hometown. Later she went to Tokyo with her son and continued to work as a
teacher, which led to the establishment of the Miwada Jogakkō. Their careers and life courses certainly resonate with those of Hara Saihin, Takahashi Gyokushō, and Shinoda Unpō. Because of the established tradition of female Chinese scholarship and teaching, Kakei and Masako, who were trained in Chinese literature, could readily envision establishing themselves as scholars and educators when they chose or when the situations demanded it.

In 1880, the Nihon keien ginsō, an anthology exclusively dedicated to kanshi poems composed by Japanese women from the late Edo until 1880 was issued. It includes works by fifty-four women, nineteen from the late Edo period in the first section, thirty-five from the Meiji period in the second section. The arrangement of poets clearly suggests a connection between the female intellectuals educated in Chinese in the two successive, yet separate eras. In fact, kanshi composition was gaining more popularity in the early Meiji, and the form became one of the available literary modes for the increasing number of women who attained an opportunity for a higher education. Emblematic of this eclectic literary situation, the January 1890 issue of Jogaku zasshi included different types of literary works written by four contemporary women writers. The issue, adorned with a portrait of a young woman drawn by Atomi Kakei, included kanshi poems by political activist and writer, Nakajima Shōen (1854-1936), waka poems by a prominent educator Shimoda Utako (1854-1936), and two short stories in genbun-itchi style by modern female writers, Miyake Kaho (1868-1943) and Wakamatsu Shizuko (1864-1896).

Yet, as the genbun-itchi style became the dominant, proper writing mode for men
and women, the practice of reading and writing in classical Chinese was gradually abandoned. *Kanshi* lost its popularity. The women’s literary tradition became strongly associated with literature written in *kana*. The lives and works of the independent, well respected women who were excellently educated in Chinese literature during the late Edo period were submerged and forgotten.

However, as this study of three late-Edo women’s substantial *kanshi* works demonstrates, the degree of elite women’s acquisition of highly valued Chinese literacy was considerable. A few, including Saihin, Saikō and Gyokushō, left valuable, vivid records of their individual lives and literary efforts in the *kanshi* form. Hara Saihin, who determined to be a famous Confucian scholar in the Edo city, typically employed a masculine persona and heroic mode in her poetic composition. She left some powerful records of her emotional responses to the life situations she experienced. Ema Saikō, who was under the influence of the new poetic approach of Seirei poetics, developed her self-expression negotiating between the double bind of femininity and truthfulness. She eventually attained a real confidence in expressing her actual life experiences and thoughts in *kanshi* form. Takahashi Gyokushō, a commoner woman who became popular in downtown Edo by profiting from the commercialization of literature and education during this era, demonstrated with her *kanshi* a high degree of naturalization of the poetic form.

Close examination of their works reveals that late-Edo elite women enjoyed more social and literary potential than has been considered. This examination exposes a modern biased view about the literary situation for women in the Edo period, which has usually
stressed the feebleness of women's voices relative to their low status in patriarchal, feudal society. A reconsideration of women's *kanshi* works from the late Edo period is indispensable for acquiring a more accurate picture of women's involvement in the literary and social activities of that time, and accordingly, for attaining a more accurate picture of the history of women's literature in Japan.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1 Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze through Bamboo*, 196; *Shōmu shisō*, 329; *Shomu ikō*, 317. “Congratulating the Woman Scholar Ginshō on Her Seventieth Birthday” (壽吟松女学士七十).

2 The last couplet of Saikō’s poem and a note to it read, “Away from worldly matters, you are now printing / Magnolia and The Peacock, those two poems—she had recently published the two poems, The Peacock Flies Southeast and Magnolia” (隔世関心事領梓/木蘭孔雀両篇詩—近刻孔雀東南飛木蘭二詩). Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze through Bamboo*, 196; *Shōmu shisō*, 329; *Shomu ikō*, 318.

3 This comment by San’yō is included in *Shōmu shisō*, 329; *Shomu ikō*, 318. The second yuefu style poem, “A Pair of Peacocks Southeast Fly,” recounts the tragedy of a couple who eventually commit suicide. The wife first speaks of the hardship of her lot, a life overwhelmed by toilsome domestic works and ill treatment by her mother-in-law. The coldhearted mother-in-law orders her son to divorce the wife. Powerless in front of his mother’s authority, the husband lets his wife return home. The divorced wife is at odds with her natal home, so a remarriage is arranged for her. Learning this news, the former husband comes to see her and they make a pact to commit suicide on the day of her wedding. Grieving their children’s deaths, the two families bury the two bodies together. This story celebrates a strong romantic bond between a man and woman. The popularity of this story suggests the romantic inclination of the intellectuals of the late Edo period, which is also discussed in Introduction of this study. See page 36 to 38 in Chapter One.


5 See page 223 to 224 in Chapter Four.

6 Shūran, a painter of bunjinga in Kyoto, also wrote kanshi. Shūran was Saikō’s friend throughout their lives, and their linked verse is found in Saikō’s *Shōmu shisō*.


8 For Higuchi Ichiyō’s situation, see Rebecca Copeland, *Lost Leaves: Women Writers of Meiji Japan*, 226.

9 Asakawa Zen’an was a Confucian scholar in Edo. He studied under Yamamoto Hokuzan in his youth as well as Yanagawa Seigan.

10 Bunpō was employed by the Tokugawa shogunate even after her divorce, and then by the Kishū and Owari domains. Unpō, who was active as a scholar and teacher from her
twenties, was divorced twice and married three times. Regardless of her personal life history, the Meiji government employed sixty-two-year-old Unpó in 1872 as a professor of an official girls' school annexed to Hokkaido Kaitakushi Gakkō, which was temporarily established in Tokyo.

Miwada Masako's *kanshi* poems, as well as *waka*, are included in *Baika no fu: Miwada Masako den* (Tokyo: Miwada Masako Sensei Gojūnensai Kinen Shuppankai, 1977). Atomi Kakei's poems are included in the *Nihon keien ginsō* (1880) edited by Mizukami Yoshiaki.

Gotō Shōin grew up in the present-day Anpachi-gun of Gifu Prefecture, the same area where Yanagawa Seigan and Kōran grew up. After he studied with the Confucian scholar Hishida Kisai in Ogaki, he went to Kyoto to study with Rai San'yō. After his marriage to the daughter of Shinozaki Shōchiku (1781-1851), Confucian scholar in Osaka, Shōin lived in Osaka running a private school. As a fellow from the same province and a fellow student of San'yō, Shōin cultivated a friendship with Ema Saikō. Shōin proofread and made comments on Saikō's poems after San'yō's death, and wrote an epitaph for Saikō's tomb upon her death.


Miwada Masako's biography and educational philosophy, as well as those of Atomi Kakei, are discussed in Margaret Mehl's article, "Women Educators and the Confucian Tradition in Meiji Japan (1868-1912): Miwada Masako and Atomi Kakei." Mehl's study of Masako is also included in *Private Academies of Chinese Learning in Meiji Japan: The Decline and Transformation of the Kangaku Juku* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003), 72-89.


The relationship of these women writers to *kangaku* tradition requires further research. Shōen and Utako, who were born a decade earlier than Kaho and Shizuko, obviously received an education in classical Chinese literature as well as in Japanese literature. Shōen, still in her late teens, tutored the Meiji Empress in classical Chinese literature. Utako, who was born into a family of scholars in Mino (present-day Gifu), studied classical Chinese literature with her grandfather, though for only short time, when she came to Tokyo from her hometown, ambitious for success, in 1871. Her grandfather, Tōjō Kindai (1795-1878), was a Confucian scholar in Edo. He is one of the two contributors of the prefaces to Takahashi Gyokusō's anthology, *Gyokusō hyakuetsu*. For further information on Shōen, see Rebecca Copeland and Melek Ortabasi eds., *The Modern Murasaki: Writing by Women of Meiji Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 55-71. For detailed discussion on the lives and works of Miyake Kaho and Wakamatsu Shizuko, see Rebecca Copeland, *Lost Leaves: Women Writes of Meiji Japan*, Chapter Two and Chapter Three.
Figure 2  Aoki Mokubei. *Sunny Morning at Uji* (1824). Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper. Yoshiho Yonezawa and Chu Yoshizawa, *Japanese Painting in the Literati Style*, 95.
Figure 4  Ema Saikō, *Landscape Drawn at Age Seventy-three*.

Figure 5  Ike Taiga. *Fuji in the Twelve Months: the Fifth Month.* Hanging scroll.

From website
Figure 6  Group portrait of the Hakuōsha (1822)
Figure 8 A handbill for the “Gyokushō hyakuzetsu kokusei hokkai” (1851), in Seki Sekkō, Vol. 1, Sekkō sensei harimaze, 78.

Figure 9 A handbill for the “Jibo shichijun gaen” (1852), in Seki Sekkō, Vol. 1, Sekkō sensei harimaze, 98.
Figure 10. A handbill for a 1857 shogokai.” In Seki Sekkō, Vol. 2, Sekkō sensetsu hanaizue.
Figure 11  A handbill for a *shogakai* (date unknown). In Tōjō Kindai, *Shōgo keiroku-satsu*. 
Figure 12  Utagawa Hiroshige, *Edo Kömei Kaitei Zukushi: Köchiya* (c. 1830-44).
Woodblock printing. From website.
This shows a *shogakai* at the Köchiya restaurant.
Figure 13  Front of Gyokushō hyakuzetsu. Calligraphy by Kikuchi Gozan.
Figure 14

Map. Shrines by the Sumida River.
Figure 15

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