“Lying About Flying: The Invention of Science Fiction and the Fictions of Colonialism in Modern Japan”

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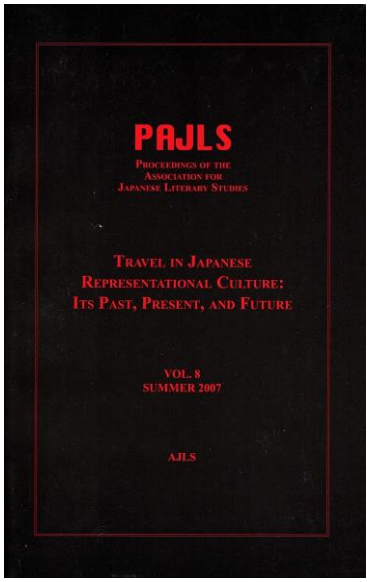
Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 8 (2007): 156–179.



PAJLS 8:
Travel in Japanese Representational Culture: Its Past, Present, and Future.
Ed. Eiji Sekine.

LYING ABOUT FLYING: THE INVENTION OF SCIENCE FICTION AND THE FICTIONS OF COLONIALISM IN MODERN JAPAN

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> Better a fallen rocket than never a burst of light.
> —Oscar Wilde in Tom Stoppard, *The Invention of Love* (96)

> Japan's military circles have achieved far more than warranted by the functions of the airplanes themselves thanks to the remarkable composure, meticulousness, courage, and boldness of our heroic aviators. In view of the technological advancement so far, even a greater expansion of air force capabilities can be expected in the future.[1]
> —Watanabe Chisui, *Bird-man Kōkichi, the Frame-Maker* (5)

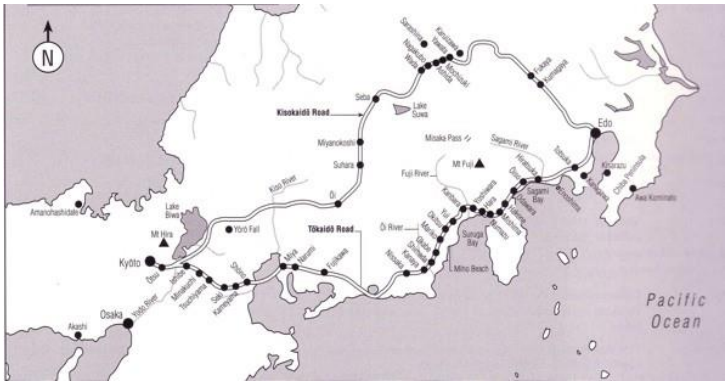
TRAVELLING ON FOOT AND THE DEPENDABILITY OF THE DOMINANT SYSTEM

The increased need for travel and the development of highways in Japan were the result of the Tokugawa shogunate's plan for keeping under control the clan's former competitors and potential enemies. The plan included strategic assignments of "domains" to friends and enemies and the prescription of the so-called alternate attendance for them. The system forced each daimyo to maintain residence in his domain as well as in Edo, where his family was kept in virtual hostage. It necessitated not only elaborate processions of daimyo and their entourage back and forth between their domains and Edo but also a high-speed traffic of messengers, couriers, spies, and whatnot. Peace and prosperity under the shogunate, along with the convenience of newly developed highways and station towns, afforded the masses the luxury of travel for pleasure (although the express purpose was often religious). As travel abroad was banned by the isolation policies, the public's interest in all parts of the country and their fantasy about the rest of the world would have been all the more intense. While a journey in earlier times had often been a religious or poetic undertaking marked by famous spots known in literature and religious history, the general interest now was focused on the physical appreciation of travel. Guide books (*dōchūki*) that began to

[1] All translations from Japanese in this paper are by its author.

be published in early 17th century and pictures of famous places (*meishozue*) that followed, featured the landscape of the stations as well as the services of inns and eateries, which fanned the reader's desire for travel. Famous places, extraordinary landscapes, curious customs, and a great variety of local commodities and entertainment beckoned travelers. Men and women, samurai and commoners, old and young, and even children and dogs traveled long distance with the help of people along the road. Literacy was spread wide enough to enable many to write travel diaries whether they were poetic journeys or matter-of-fact accounts of the miles covered, local delicacies consumed, and money spent.

Map of Tokaido and Kisokaido



Detail from Matthi Forrer, *Hiroshige: Prints and Drawings* (NY: Prestel, 1997), p. 47.

Felicitous pride is detected in the records of travels. Roads were built and maintained by the daimyo's domain who were assigned to the tasks by the shogunate. Official stations were designated and inns were licensed. In short, it was the government that made travels possible and it was the flourishing economy that improved the amenities available even in the countryside. The wide-spread popularity of travel and the fashion of travel writing indicate a trust in the system as well as a pride in the fact that one was partaking in the freedom and abundance that were possible only in the Age of Great Peace, as the citizens understood it. There is something dependably predictable about travel by land. Just as the association of *utamakura*, or poetically known places, had led the traveler to his destination, the stations along the highway now took the traveler to his/ her destination and back. A travel record reflects a trust in

the arrangement of space and faith in the passage of time. Walking along the highway presupposed the dependability of the general order of things.

Ando Hiroshige, *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido* (1831–1834)
From Matthi Forrer, *Hiroshige: Prints and Drawings* (NY; Prestel, 1997). Plate 18.

Ando Hiroshige, *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido* (1831–1834)
From Matthi Forrer, *Hiroshige: Prints and Drawings* (NY: Prestel, 1997), Plate 20.

The great popularity of Jippensha Ikku's series, *Along the Tōkaidō on Foot* (*Tōkai Dōchū Hizakurige*) and its sequels (1802–22) probably came from this sense of stability as the two comical characters were made to

walk from station to station from volume to volume and from book to book. These best-seller series confirmed the predictability of time and space, which must have appealed to the happy-go-lucky mass of the time.

In the absence of the freedom to travel abroad, the Japanese had no opportunity to read or write travels such as William Dampier's *A New Voyage Around the World* (1697), probably the first "scientific" account of an elaborate voyage to the newly discovered continent. Travel in Japan was an almost exclusively pedestrian endeavor so that travel narratives followed not only the spot-to-spot route but also the older forms and conventions of foot journeys. From Tomiyama Dōya's *The Tales of Chikusai* (*Chikusai Monogatari*, c.1621–23) to Ikku's travel series mentioned above, the majority of fictionalized travelogues were parodies of the traditional genre of journey of the poetic or religious sort following a string of famous places as well as the convention of poetic composition at each key juncture.

FLYING AS SUBVERSION: DAEDALUS AND OSCAR WILDE

In a travel-by-foot culture, denial of the right to travel implies a dominant system that is faulty. A poet in *The Book of Songs* voices the lament of a "gentleman" who is forced into service far away from home to encounter severe miseries:

> Neither am I an eagle, a falcon,
> That can flap and soar up to heaven;
> Nor am I a sturgeon, a snout-fish,
> That can plunge to hide in the deep.
> (Translation by C.H. Wang, in Liu and Lo, 14.)

This man of respectable lineage criticizes the unreasonable law of the ruler but no revolution is in view since he is alone in his rage and grief. Given the human limitations, the man has no way to flee from his misery, either. The possibility of flying in the air like a bird was reserved for superhuman creatures. As with an immortal (*sennin*), flying denoted supreme wisdom and, as with the mythical creature *tengu*, it signified magic powers. A mortal human attempting to fly suggested something rebelliously beyond human boundaries—a combination of genius and madness. Ovid's story in *Metamorphosis* is not so much about the poor boy who is made to fly only to fall but is about a mad genius who dares to invent a method for flying. Daedalus, his name meaning "artful craftsman," creates for Minos, King of Crete, a labyrinth from which no

man can come out. In turn, he is trapped and imprisoned there by the king.

> "Though Minos blocks escape by land or water,"
> Daedalus said, "Surely the sky is open,
> And that's the way we'll go. Minos' dominion
> Does not include the air." (Ovid, 187)

Charles Paul Landon, *Daedalus and Icarus*, (1799)
From: http://thanasis.com/icarus.htm

As in the poem from *The Book of Songs*, the wish to fly here is inspired by a combination of suffering in entrapment and a longing for home. The political system is also faulty and cruel as in the case of ancient China. The difference is that Daedalus, the ancestor of modern man, finds a way to escape by air. The wings he creates for himself and for his son Icarus seem perfect. The genius engineer, however, is not a psychologist: he fails to anticipate the boy's fascination with the sun, the cause for his tragic fall. Daedalus' crime is hubris: he defies the king and gods by bringing himself above the ground, out of the magical labyrinth, and away from the land he hates. This is a case of a man's "metamorphosis" into something super-human or extra-human. It is worth noting that this first account of flying with technology ends with a fall.

Pieter Brueghel the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1558)
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels
From Pierre Francastel, *Breugel* (Paris : Hazan, 1995), pp. 94–95

In Pieter Breugel the elder's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" (1558), the boy's body is sinking into the water, a crisis being ignored by the farmer who tends his field near by. Flying is an act that has no meaning to a normal human being and it is completely isolated from human society.

Oscar Wilde is another Daedalus in breaking away from the confines of tradition and from human commonsense. The line from Stoppard's play that opens this paper characterizes Wilde's reckless life and at the same time captures the paradox of his utterances. The play, *The Invention of Love*, features Oxford classicist A.E. Houseman's progress from his knowledge of love as an invention by the Latin poet Catalus to his awakening to a new kind of love, homosexuality. The backdrop is the reports on Oscar Wilde's arrest and imprisonment that inspires discussion on how to replace the term "bestiality" for the newly discovered love. Here, Wilde is the inventor of homosexuality and his invention defies the existing law and the social system. We should note that the quoted line assumes that what flies up must fall, a metaphor for Wilde's philosophy and life.

SCIENCE FICTION AND THE WORLD IN REVERSE: HIRAGA GENNAI

Hiraga Gennai (1728–79) was an imaginary aviator with genius and rebelliousness much like Daedalus and Wilde. Although he boasted of

being the first in Japan in creating asbestos, electric generators, oil painting and great many other things, he was unaware that he was also the inventor of science fiction. In *The Dashing Life of Shidōken (Fūryū Shidōkenden*, 5 vols., 1763), Asanoshin, later called Shidōken, visits countries real and unreal, some based on Terashima Ryōan's *The World Encyclopedia* (*Wakan Sansai Zue*, 105 vols., 1713). The hero's only equipment is the feather fan given to him by the immortal *sennin*. The range of its capabilities is amazing: it operates as a ship, a flying carpet, a water divider across the river, an invisibility cloak, and even a handheld universal translator. The *sennin* also claims that the fan can measure all sorts of distances and let the holder see microscopic details of anything—a scientist's dream. Gennai's conception of the functions of the fan is highly science fictional and postmodern, reminding us of the latest novels and films of our time.

Shidōken as a Yūnan

Hiraga Gennai, *The Dashing Life of Shidōken* (1763)
Nakamura Yukihiko, ed, *Fūrai Sanjin Shū,* NKBT 55 (1961), pp. 212–13.

The fan affords an extraordinary speed: Asanoshin goes from one country to another within one half of a sentence. In flight, there is no sense of direction or of distance. Time is no issue: only at the end of the novel, do the protagonist and the reader learn that the travel has taken seventy years—Asanoshin suddenly turning into an eighty-year-old Shidōken. The long journey he has taken mostly by air confirms that, in

contrast to travel on foot, flying as a method of travel is beyond predictability or even knowability. This mode of travel isolates the traveler from his homeland and his compatriots and throws him into another culture—foreign lands with their strange customs. There is no cohesive law or logic for the world as a whole so that the traveler is always alone, always mad seen from the perspective of any land where he happens to find himself. Flying, if one does not fall in the attempt, results in an encounter with the other, who is totally out of context.

Old Shidōken Flies Back to Japan

Hiraga Gennai, *The Dashing Life of Shidōken* (1763)
Makamura Yuhiko, ed *Fūrai Sanjin Shū*, NKBT 55 (1961), pp. 216–17.

The term "science fiction" is best defined as "narratives in which—unlike in pure fantasy—an explicit attempt is made to render plausible the fictional world by reference to known or imagined scientific principles, or to a projected advance in technology, or to a drastic change in the organization of society." (Abrams, 288) Many of Gennai's works qualify as science fiction in this strict sense—with uses of technical inventions, references to scientific writings, and portrayals of political systems that are different from all existing ones.

The ultimate foreign land in Asanoshin's travel is Women's Island (Nyogogashima), presumably the central goal of male fantasy and the final destination of Yonosuke's erotic journey in Ihara Saikaku's *The Life*

of an Amorous Man (*Kōshoku Ichidai Otoko*, 8 vols., 1682). Although Saikaku's book ends with Yonosuke commencing his voyage, Gennai describes the Women's Island as a nation, suggesting "a drastic change in the organization of society." After a shipwreck, Asanoshin and one hundred Chinese land on the all-women island. The citizens object to the female ruler's monopoly of the newly arrived men so that a national pleasure district, very much like the Yoshiwara, is established with several male prostitutes, called *nanrō* (a pun on Yoshiwara's term, *jorō*) in each brothel. Demand overwhelms supply, resulting in the deaths of all Chinese men. Asanoshin survives thanks to the help of the Kannon Bosatsu in Asakusa who has transformed herself into a dildo to fill in for his overworked organ. The political structure of the Women's Island is both primitive and advanced. It is an absolute monarchy in the simplest form: the single ruler directly governs her subjects without any ministry, congress, or bureaucracy. At the same time, the system is democratic: the ruler responds to the people's complaints by establishing national institutions for their pleasure. It resembles Athenian democracy in the sense that all native citizens are equal while labor is left to slaves, in this case, men who drift to the island. In this structure, men represent subhuman foreigners.

The science-fictional alternative Gennai presents here pokes fun at the male-centered Confucian system of Japan of the time. On the other hand, Gennai's misogyny is obvious here as it is in many other works by him. In his cosmology, heterosexuality represents the established, and necessarily faulty, political system, which fails to make use of talents among the people. In his essay, *The Seclusive History of a Withered Dick* (*Naemara In'itsuden*, 1 vol., c. 1768), he presents an image of himself masturbating at the forbidding "jade gate." (Hiraga, c. 1768, 263.) The man's penis is a symbol of abilities that are potentially useful for the nation, while the jade gate, a euphemism for vagina, is enlarged and actualized as a heavy and cold structure that denies admission, denoting the nation which rejects great talents. The nation's ills are caused by its heterosexual agenda as far as Gennai is concerned. His stance, however, departs from homoeroticism (*nanshoku*), which flourished earlier as a custom among samurai and a fashion among merchants. By Gennai's time, the fashion was overshadowed by the discovery of women's charms and heterosexual love in literature and the arts. Gennai's declaration of homosexuality was not an anachronistic revival of *nanshoku* but was a modern and subversive invention as with the case of Oscar Wilde.

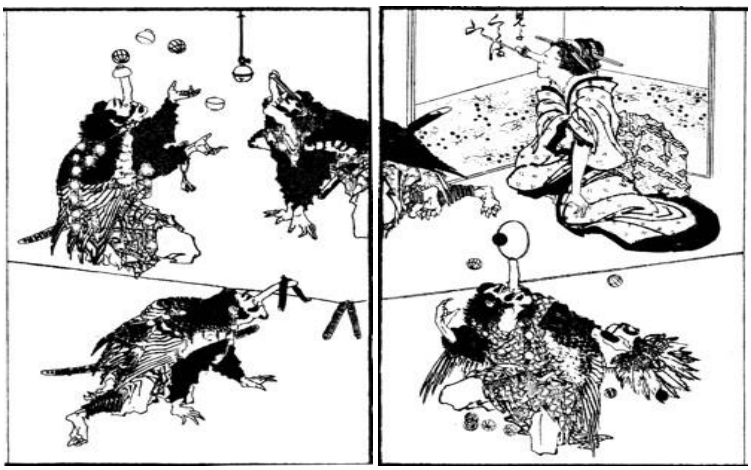
In view of all his objection to heterosexualism or any other kind of orthodoxy, Gennai's nationalism may seem paradoxical. In an earlier episode, Asanoshin persuades the emperor of China that Mount Fuji is superior to any of the Five Great Mountains of China. By the emperor's order, Asanoshin leads a fleet of 300,000 ships carrying soldiers and art mounters along with tons of paper and glue in order to make a life-size papier-mâché model of Mount Fuji to erect in China. Gods of Japan choose to play the same trick they did on the Mongols during the Middle Ages. The well-known deities representing wind, rain, and hail attack the ships causing them to capsize. All Chinese, except those on Asanoshin's ship, die in a sea of glue and paper, "like flies stuck dead on soft, freshly pounded mochi." (Hiraga, 1763, 208) Gennai's insult of China seems to come partly from his awareness that Japan was losing to that country in its dependency on China's natural resources but more from his exasperation with Japan's political and intellectual servility to China. His patriotism, in direct contrast to all the bad-mouthing he does about Japan's system, comes from the panoramic view of the world afforded by his imagined flying. Against China's power and authority, Japan becomes an alternate system to be subversively promoted. This is in keeping with Gennai's ideology. As in all of his writings, the subversive here takes over orthodoxy. The highly structured Yoshiwara is presented as a counter-system to the Tokugawa bureaucracy, homosexuality is favored over the dominant heterosexuality, and Japan is presented as a necessary alternative to the oppressive China. Unfortunately, Gennai's destructive and paradoxical rhetoric cannot sustain even his dystopian cosmology. Like Wilde's rocket, the brilliance of Gennai's political criticism may soar high but is destined to fall because of its own linguistic structure.

THE SCIENTISM OF FLYING IMMORTALS: HIRATA ATSUTANE

In contrast to Gennai, whose writings are a thickly layered comedy, Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843) is serious and monolithic denying any fictionality in his writings. This nativist-folklorist, however, ought to be credited as one of Japan's most important science fiction writers. He appealed to the masses by organizing popular beliefs into a modern scientific mythology or, we might say, by popularizing what was called "learning" at the time. Gennai had laughed at popular religions and superstitions. In his pamphlet, *An Appraisal of a Tengu's Skull* (*Tengu no Sharekōbe Mekiki Engi*, (1776)), as one of his disciples rushes in with "a genuine skull of a *tengu*," the master gives an exaggerated pseudo-scholastic description of the disciples' precious discovery. The target of

Gennai's satire is fakes of all sorts but the chief joke is on the widespread superstition among Edoites surrounding the myth of *tengu*. Atsutane, on the other hand, takes the stance of seriousness. The myths about *sennin*, *tengu* and other supernatural creatures were so widely spread not only in folk beliefs but also in popular arts.

Tengu at Play

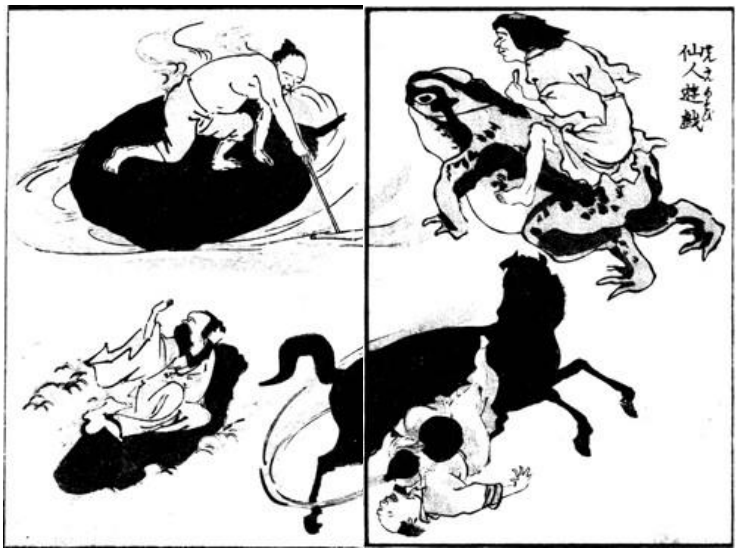


Katsushika Hokusai, *Hokusai Manga*, vol. 6 (1817),
James A. Michener, *The Hokusai Sketchbooks: Selections from the Manga*,
(Rutland, VT: Tuttle), p.200–01.

Atsutane takes the full advantage of the fame of those creatures to appeal to the popular audience. In his *A New Report on the Land of Immortals* (*Senkyō Ibun,* 2 parts, 5 vols., written, 1820), Asutane tells of Torakichi, the teen-age son of a merchant, who has flown to the land of immortals and befriended what he calls a "*sanjin*," or a "man in the mountains." Born at the hour of tiger, on the day of tiger in the year of tiger (1806), the boy has the eyes of a tiger and physical strength to match his looks. He tells Atsutane that when he was six, he met on the street a medicine vender, who magically carried him in his medicine bottle to Tsukuba mountains, the dwelling place of immortals. Atsutane takes the boy into his household to question and observe him closely. Through the words of Torakichi, he explains how *tengu* have come into being, what they look like, and how they behave. According to Torakichi, it is the name humans have assigned to all types of *sanjin* but *tengu* constitutes the least developed species among them or below them. By referring to Western scientific theories, Atsutane attempts to justify magic by science or

rather, to merge the two into a supernatural cosmology that has the format of science. The question-and-answer form which he uses has all the appearance of objectivity and factual truthfulness.

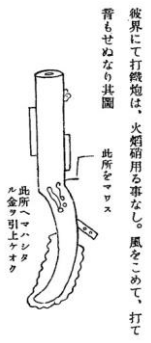
Sennin at Play



Ichiyusai Kuniyoshi, *Kuniyoshi sketches*, vol. 1 (1856–1857)
Isao Toshihiko, ed., *Kuniyisho no Ehon*, (Tokyo: Iwasaki Bijutsusha, 1989), P. 160–161.

The sketches of faces, tools, items of ritual, symbols, and what appear to be ideograms not only add to plausibility but also gives an impression of a scholarly pursuit.

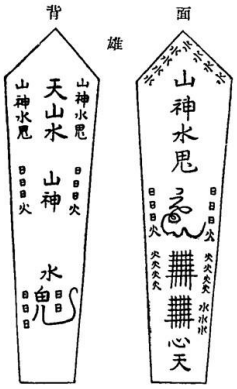
A Gun Without Explosive
Used in Ikai



From Hirata Atsutane, *Senkyō Ibun*, Vol. 1, *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane Zenshū* (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan) Vol. 9, 1976, p. 493.

Debates also take a scientific form: words of people who are suspicious of Torakichi's claims are reported along with Torakichi's replies, enhancing the impression of the latter's credibility. Torakichi's travels include even astronomical observations of the sun, the moon, the earth and the other planets from orbit. The fan here is used only for the take-off and landing—as if Atsutane had imagined the function of the wings on a modern airplane.

Religious Tablets to
Ward off Misfortunes



From Hirata Atsutane, *Senkyō Ibun,*
Vol. 1, *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane Zenshū*
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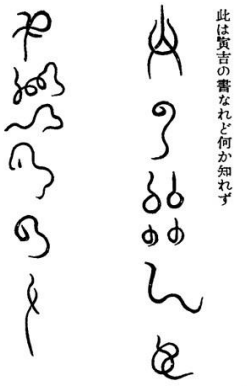
1976, P. 494.

Unlike Gennai, who destroys the dependability of reality, Atsutane attempts to build an ideally rational system. What he creates is a nativist utopia that can be explained not by the old order of things, i.e., Buddhism or Confucianism, but by science that is astronomical, geological, anthropological, folklorist, and philosophical. Since reading here is assumed to follow the single-minded logic of the writing, although the logic itself is problematic, the nationalistic intention in the text is perfectly latent. In describing the "alien world" ("ikai"), Atsutane is intensely involved with language.

Torakichi's Writings



From Hirata Atsutane, *Senkyō Ibun,*
Vol. 1, *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane Zenshū*
Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan) Vol.9,
1976, P. 497.

He reports that Torakichi, although illiterate, writes letter-like symbols of which meaning is unknown. Sometimes Torakichi unknowingly writes a word that Atsutane recognizes: "This is a phrase that was first seen in *The Manyoshū*. How delightful it is that the boy could write it!" (Hirata, 379) The involvement in language echoes the "soul of words" ("kotodama") philosophy of shinto nativism and the connection of the utopian *ikai* to Japan's classical poetry clearly indicates the intention of the "transcriber." Likewise, the details with which the manner of training in the mountains and the rituals performed by the *sanjin* all make the world of immortals look perfectly Japanese and nativist.

While Gennai's foreign lands are marked by differences, Atsutane's are connected to common people and to Japan by sameness. One of Torakichi's flights on the back of the sanjin takes him to a beautiful community enclosed in impressive walls. "It turned out," Torakichi reports, "to be a state of Japanese people, where streets were lined with shops and the gold and silver coins exchanged were no different from those used in Japan." (Hirata, 546) This is a settlement of Japanese people that has expanded into a city-state. Without Robinson Crusoe's troubles in constructing a more-or-less human living on a desolate island, a slice of Japan here is easily transplanted in the middle of foreign territories. The episode reassures Japan's public that Japaneseness is universal and that they have no danger of ever encountering otherness anywhere. The most foreign of foreign lands may be the Women's Island. Here, however, men who drift to the island are eaten up and women are impregnated by the ritual of holding bamboo leaves in hand and kowtowing toward the west. In Torakichi's words, the women characteristically look "no different from Japanese women" (Hirata, 422), but they are presented as man-eating monsters. Even then, in the ideal world, coitus must be replaced by a ritual. Women and sexuality constitute an opaque problem zone in Atsutane's cosmology.

Atsutane defines *sanjin* as:

> …. someone who is born in this world but, for one reason or another, enters the mountains and avoids contact with this world. He learns how to obtain food and clothing and befriends birds and animals.… After living in the mountains for thirty years or so, anyone can become a *sanjin*. A *sanjin*'s life is secure and serene and it will continue for a long time like that of wood or stone. (Hirata, 451)

Sanjin, then, is no different in nature from *sennin*, a direct importation from China's Daoist tradition that dominated popular images of immortality in Japan. By inventing the figure of *sanjin* and creating an alternative world of *ikai* within Japan, Atsutane attempts at eliminating the impressively elaborate Daoist myth from the beliefs of the mass in Japan. The important idea is that anyone can become a *sanjin* so that Atsutane's book can serve as a concrete how-to guide to enlightenment. For that reason, the details given of *sanjin*'s daily lives—their houses, tools, clothes, food, etc.—along with their custom—the writing system, training and rituals, etc.—equal, if not surpass, the power of description in Defoe's fiction. In addition, Japan's folk tales of monsters and magical occurrences are amply cited within Atsutane's conversations with Torakichi. Folk beliefs are tested against Torakichi's first-hand knowledge. These narratives make up the most engaging passages in the book. What Atsutane invents is folklore as a modern methodology. In this voluminous study of Torakichi and his experience, Atsutane does not claim authorship. Part I is inscribed with "Transcribed by Hirata Atsutane" and the second with "Transcribed by Hirata Atsutane with Commentaries." Torakichi is presented as a divinely bright child so that he can remember and report on all that he sees and hears, but he is too young and uneducated in conventional ways to be able to coordinate his knowledge into thought. This scheme allows Atsutane to expound on his ideas of the ideal world. For example, here is an exchange about *nanshoku* in the *ikai*. Curiously, Atsutane refrains from posing himself the question to the boy. Torakichi says, "I know nothing about the other mountains but such practices never exist in ours." Atsutane adds his own observations:

> Unable to ask this question myself, I instructed my disciple Moriya Inao to catch Torakichi when he is in a friendly mood and privately put it to him. My question has to do with the fact that the reported victims of *tengu*'s abduction are mostly young boys. I have always suspected that *tengu*, who have been Buddhist priests, are unable to abandon the evil habit of their former existence so they carry away young boys for their sexual uses. (Hirata, 535–6)

Why is Atsutane so hesitant and cautious as to avoid posing the question himself and to instruct his student to catch Torakichi at a friendly moment and put the question to him in private? While he does not lose the opportunity to accuse Buddhists of the suspicious behavior,

he does not wish to tarnish his own image of perfect innocence by even a sign of ever thinking of any sexual matter. He assumes that Torakichi, too, will be offended by such a topic. Perhaps it is, more specifically, a measure for denying any possible speciulation about the extraordinarily close relationship between him and Torakichi. Generally, it is the folklorist's leading questions and inserted comments that make up the spiritual all-male utopia that rejects all sexuality, heterosexual or homoerotic. Torakichi, however, does not remain an unthinking informant. Being questioned by Atsutane and his disciples and friends, some of whom are equipped with the knowledge of western (or "Dutch") science, as well as fierce opponents and curious public, who demand readily comprehensible answers, Torakichi develops as a rhetorician rather like his keeper and interviewer. His gradual growth cannot be part of the plot of Atsutane's fiction. As Koyasu Nobukuni points out, it is the intense training he receives on the performance of questions and answers that actually makes him increasingly sophisticated, "turning him into a divine child (*shindō*)." (Koyasu, 293) Torakichi comes to share his keeper's fictions of *ikai* to draw its images exactly as expected. Theirs is an extraordinary collaborative performance which coordinates a rationally formulated cosmology with popular tales and beliefs.

FLYING AS AN INDIVIDUAL ACT: KŌKICHI, THE FRAME-MAKER

The first Japanese on record who flew is Kōkichi, the frame-maker. His exploits were reported by the Confucian scholar and poet, Kan Chazan (1748–1827) in his book of essays called *Idle Writings* (*Fude no Susabi*, written c.1815–27 and published, 1857). Under the title of "Smart Technology (*Kikō*)," Chazan reports:

> A frame-maker named Kōkichi in Okayama in the domain of Bizen caught a pigeon, weighed it, measured its wings, and made wings to the size that proportionally suited his own weight. He made a contraption to manipulate the wings and attached it on his chest. He found that he could not directly take off from the ground so he jumped from a roof flapping his wings. One evening, he flew around in the suburbs and noticed a picnic going on far below. Thinking he might find someone he knew, he lowered himself, and not supported by enough wind, fell right into the party. As the startled men and women scattered away, he drank and ate what was left of the picnic. Not being able to fly up, he folded his wings and walked home. The magistrate, who heard about the incident, summoned him. His

> wings were confiscated, and he was expelled from his hometown for startling people by doing what normal people did not do. It was only a topic for laugher but I record it because it was such an extraordinary story. It happened sometime before 1790. (Kan, 155)

What I call a "frame-maker" is "*hyōguya*," a craftsman who works with paper, cloth, and glue in order to makes sliding doors and mount paintings and other art works. Flying, a bird-like or *tengu*-like act is here associated with this very realistic and commonplace profession, which adds humor to Chazan's report. It is interesting that Chazan gives the story the title of "smart technology," rather like the meaning of the name "Daedalus." He records the story for its news value and his emphasis is the power of technology in the extraordinary operation of a man flying. Kōkichi's crime of "doing what normal people do not do" also puts him in the category of Daedalus, a genius and an unwanted madman. This story of the first Japanese to actually fly, also ends with a fall.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY: BERTRAND RUSSELL

The move from walking or voyaging to flying must have been seen as the ultimate stage of technological advancement. In Europe after the geographical discoveries and industrial revolution, it is easy to guess how Daedalus became the symbol of technology. A paper entitled, "Daedalus, or Science and the Future," by J.B.S. Haldane, published in 1923, saw a bright future for humankind thanks to the advancement of sciences in several fields. A 1924 rebuttal by Bertrand Russell was entitled, "Icarus, or the Future of Science." His thesis is that technology itself and the results of technical advancement (such as industrialization) not only necessitates increased organization but also facilitates it so that individuality is in the danger of being suppressed. He predicts that industrialism will defeat individual competition to "make the world an economic unit." (Russell, 16). He points out that "competition, formerly between individual firms, is now mainly between nations" (Russell, 17) and paints a picture of the stage where even nations are organized under an orderly "world government" after a total "destruction of civilization."(63). What Russell warns against is modern technology that is used to "organize" individual views into a single voice. By the mid-1920s, the power of technology among developed countries was motivating individual nations to vie to be the chief organizer of the world. To fly high and survey the world from above is a paradigmatically

patriarcal desire. Airplanes, the prime product of technological advancement, provided the prime tool for fulfilling this desire. Thus airplanes were put to use to encourage and facilitate the causes of nationalism and fascism.

AVIATION AS A SYMBOL OF JAPAN'S NATIONALISM

During the 1930s, Japan confronted a pressing need to put itself on the world map of technology and military advancement. What had been an isolated incident during the eighteenth century in Japan, resulting from a man's individual and eccentric aspiration, came to be organized into a larger historical record. Watanabe Chisui's *The Bird-man, or Kōkichi the Frame-Maker* (*Chōjin Hyōgushi Kōkichi*, 1939) reconstructs the bird-man's life in Okayama and later in exile in Suruga on the basis of four documents including Chazan's essay. The author maintains objectivity by citing all sorts of interpretations represented by rumors and legends. Some say that he was executed in Okayama and others say that he moved to Shizuoka to attempt flying again before his execution. The book maintains a scientific attitude: Kōkichi is seen within a larger history of concepts of, and attempts at, flying since ancient China and Rome and including Leonardo da Vinci. The book contributes to the national effort in the education of children as it begins with a quote from the lesson, "The Invention of Airplane," in Volume 9 of the government-controlled grade school reader. The quoted line merely says, "From long ago, there seem to have been people who watched birds fly in the sky and wished to do the same so that they worked hard to realize their dream." (Watanabe, 3) The statement fans children's fantasy by pointing to its universality. Japan attacked China in 1937 (Sino-Japanese War), and in 1939, the year in which Watanabe's book was published, Japan entered World War II. Aerial battles were anticipated, and the young had to be urgently prepared for them. This was the reason for "The Invention of Airplane" chapter in the grade-school reader and for the publication of *The Bird-man, or Kōkichi the Frame-Maker*. The quoted lines from this latter book at the head of this paper present the image of a new hero, the aviator, who is endowed with a "remarkakble composure, meticulousness, courage, and boldness." (Watanabe, 5) The man who flies is no longer an eccentric isolated from his community but a central figure within the dominant organization, that is, a nation. Commendable moral qualities are attributed to him so that he acquires the status of a symbol for the national cause.

In the following year, the book's contents were incorporated into a much larger and more authoritative oeuvre, *A History of the Development*

of Aviation in Japan (*Nihon Kōkū Hattatsushi*, 1940) by Takeuchi Masatora. It's purpose is to situate Japan within the history of aviation in the world, validating Japan as a technologically advanced country. Attached to this book is a fifty-four-page essay, "A Study of Bird-man Ukita Kōkichi (*Chōjin Ukita Kōkichi Kō*)," written earlier than Watanabe's work. Unlike Watanabe, a local historian in Okayama, this author is an army man so that his language is formal and military. Here, again, Kōkichi is placed on the top of the history of aviation in the world. The fact, for instance, that Kōkichi came far before the Wright brothers is emphasized. Historicization is always a suspicious act, the kind of "organization" about which Russell warns, and the intention here is blatantly clear. Naming is the first step to organizing an individual matter into a history. In Atsutane, for example, Torakichi—an ordinary first name for a commoner—is prefaced by the epithet of a "devine child" (*sendō*) so that Torakichi becomes a model figure worthy of a history. The samurai-like name of Shiraishi Katsuma, which Atsutane gives him, admits him into the category of persons to be mentioned in a history, and the name of Shiraishi Heima, which his *sanjin* master bestowes upon him after some training in the mountains of Hitachi, further elevates him to the level close to the divine, legitimatizing Atsutane's own cosmology based on the knowledge transmitted by Torakichi. (Hirata, 369 and 503) Likewise, Takeuchi calls the frame-maker "Ukita Kōkichi," making use of the family name found on a few of the graves of the clan and connects it to the name of Ukita Hideie, "Ukita" being written in different characters, a warrior defeated at the Battle of Sekigahara. (Takeuchi, 528) Kōkichi now has all the appearance of a modern man with a family name and with a distinguished lineage: he is qualified to be part of a national and even international history of aviation. All achievements and all stages in the development of aerial technology are marked by the so-called Imperial Calendar (*kōki)* declared in 1872 to set the origin of Japan at the enthronement of Emperor Jimmu and reinforced particularly during the 1930s. Takeuchi's book, in fact, commemorates the crucial year for Japan's colonialism, the "Imperial Year 2600 (1939)." (Takeuchi, 1) The chronological table also insists on the Imperial Calendar and, apropriately for the purpose of the book, the last item listed is the fall of an American airplane into the Pacific Ocean in 2594 (1934).

DECONSTRUCTING THE MYTH OF FLYING: TSUTSUI YASUTAKA

A contemporary author and one of Japan's "three big shots of science fiction," Tsutsui Yasutaka (b. 1934) uses imaginary flights in much the same way as Gennai does. In his short story, "Nōkyō Tsuki e

Iku" ("The Agricultural Association Goes to the Moon," 1973), a group of farmers, immensely enriched by the advent of the bubble economy, decides to take a sight-seeing trip to the moon. The incongruity between the farmers' wealth and their life style pokes fun at the nouveau riche of the bubble economy. The passengers on the rocket are unbelievably unruly, blatantly displaying their scatological and sexual desires, and never listening to the pilot's warnings. Tsutsui has been sued by a few powerful organizations for his discriminatory representations of them. He would have received the same kind of acrimonious response from regional agricultural associations for his insulting portrayal of farmers had it not been for the conflicting layers of his language. Upon their arrival on the moon, all drunk from partying inside the rocket, they encounter aliens who are green from head to toe. The two groups immediately mingle well as they try each other's drinks. The agricultural association is acknowledged by the United Nations as the first group to make an intelligible conversation with the aliens. "Never mind," says the narrator, "the fact that the group of green aliens represented something equivalent to the agricultural association on this planet." (Tsutsui 1973, 55) The pessimistic message is that only the thoughtless can communicate. As long as there are stupid masses, the earth's safety is guaranteed. This is precisely the picture Bertrand Russell projected of the future in which civilization is destroyed by overdeveloped technology and a calm order prevails over the entire world.

Tsutsui Tasutaka, *The Agricultural Association Goes to the Moon* (1973), Dust Jacket for the Kadokawa Bunko Edition (1985).

Tsutsui is not one to overlook the story of Kōkichi the Bird-man. His short story, "The Flying Frame-Maker" ("Soratobu Hyōguya," 1972) is a biographical narrative which draws from Kan Chazan's essay with reference to Takeuch Masatora's book. It is worth noting that the author revives the original name "Kōkichi the Frame-Maker," restoring the aviator to his original status of a slightly mad but ordinary individual separate from any national cause. The realistic third person narration has the appearance of the author's exercise in traditional historical fiction. The narrator imagines Kōkichi growing up in a flourishing craftsman's family, marrying a girl who believes in his dream of flying, and working to achieve his goal in isolation from the narrow-minded and suspicious villagers. So far, the story is innocuous and lacks the "high fictionality," which Tsutsui promotes against the domination of the "I novel" in Japanese literature. A Tsutsuiesque joke appears in the episode of a visit of the cultural heroes of the time at Kōkichi's abode in Suruga, where he works as a frame-maker, no longer thinking of flying. The visitors, Hiraga Gennai, Sugita Genpaku, Maeno Ryōtaku, Ota Nanpo, and even Aoki Konyō, who, the narrator recalls, should have been dead for several years by then, ignite Kōkichi's old passion. The narrator accuses intellectuals of "enjoying benefits from political authorities but at the same time pretending to be on the left and sympathetic of those who are pushed away by the system." (Tsutsui, 1972, 59). The famous scientists and scholars named above are the target of the narrator's attack as their ambition is what destroys the happiness of the individual man Kōkichi. Echos of Takeuchi Masatora's ideology is heard in the speech by Gennai, who says after Kōkichi's initial refusal to fly again, "That is regrettable, indeed. Attention to air travel is a trend abroad. And, yet, people in Japan don't dare to try it because of their fear of the government's suppression. Regrettable, indeed. No wonder Japan is falling behind foreign powers." (56) By suggesting his close relations with the all powerful Grand Councilor Tanuma Okitsugu, Gennai assures Kōkichi that the authorities will overlook his illegal venture.

Kōkichi manages to fly high but runs into a large kite. As he is fatally wounded, Gennai cheers him up by predicting that "Japan's skies will be full of airplanes on which women and children can safely travel. These sturdy machines will be able to carry hundreds of people at once to anywhere in the world." (64) Gennai's words echoes Bertrand Russell's warning: "I fear that the same fate (as Icarus') may overtake the populations whom modern men of science have taught to fly." (Russell, 5-6) Kōkichi's last words are: "Flying is against the rules of nature. When a man flies, it must be only when he is prepared to die. Only one

who desires to fly risking his life has the right to fly. It is outrageous that women and children should fly or hundreds of people should travel aboard a machine... No matter what advancement science achieves, and no matter what sturdy flying machines they make, as long as a machine flies, there will never be an end to accidents, falls, crashes... Never, never!" (65) These lines point to the original understanding of the act of flying: a dedicated and possibly mad endeavor of an individual that does not hurt anyone but himself. The ills of organization are suggested in the the presence of the group of intellectuals and the implied support of Tanuma Okitsugu behind them.

In order to expose the crime of organized flying, Tsutsui uses an interesting method. The narrative about Kōkichi's life is interrupted, without warning, by reports of recent airplane accidents. In a cut-and-dry style of a reportage, three accidents are described. The first is the 1966 accident of All Nippon Airlines (ANA) flight 532, in which a small plane that had left Osaka fell into the ocean and exploded killing fifty people. Next is an earlier 1960 accident, in which ANA 25 (DC-3), after landing, crashed into a Defense Army plane taking off from Nagoya Airport killing three and injuring ten. The narrator, then, goes back to 1952, when Japan Airlines (JAL) flight "Mokuseigo" (the plane was Martin 2.02.), crashed into Miharayama mountain. Both the chief pilot and the co-pilot were Americans, who were not aware that a mountain existed in Oshima, so when the control tower instructed them to maintain their altitude, they hit the mountain killing all thirty-seven on board. The narrator omits the most recent incident by saying, "I meant to report on the crash between ANA's Boeing 727 Model 200 and the Defense Air Force Combat Aircraft F86. But the accident took place so recently that its image must be too vivid in the readers' mind." (64) These reports confirm Kōkichi's prediction. Accidents are always caused by human errors because of the size of airline operations and the complexity of the system of command. The fictionalized use of these news items not only recalls repeatedly Kōkichi's last words, but also makes factual news reports themselves somehow outrageously fantastic in contrast with Kōkichi's imagined personal life which the narrator describes realistically. In the news items, people are reduced to numbers, and the domination of the technological system, and, behind it, some enormous and invisible organization, political and economic, overwhelms the lives of individuals. It is the "end of civilization" as Russell foresaw it. Tsutsui's fiction shows the far end of science: it is a science fiction that exposes the fiction of science.

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