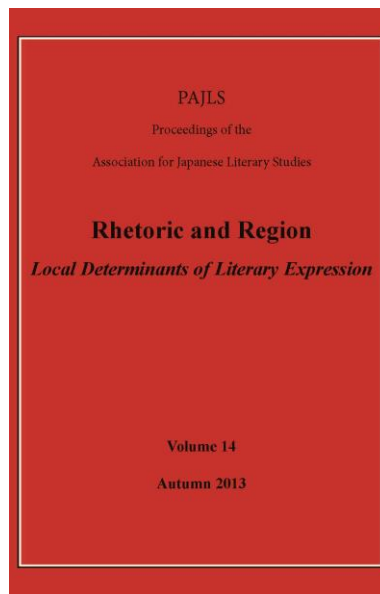


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Nineteenth Century Nagoya”

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*Proceedings of the Association for Japanese
Literary Studies* 14 (2013): 102–110.



PAJLS 14:
*Rhetoric and Region: Local Determinants of Literary
Expression.*
Ed. Richard Torrance

**A Moveable Tea House:
Sharebon in Early Nineteenth Century Nagoya**

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As Edo came to eclipse Kyoto and Osaka as the largest center of print publication in Japan, eventually achieving unrivalled market stature by the late eighteenth century, works of narrative fiction set in Edo, generally representative of Edo cultural sensibilities, and with character dialogue patterned after Edo speech, began to flood the country. The mass production and dissemination of these works to regional markets was facilitated by the century old industry practice of *aihan* 相板, whereby books were produced from jointly owned woodblocks, by publishers operating in different markets. By the late eighteenth century, it was not uncommon for a work of fiction to be published by three, four, or even five different publishing houses, located in the three major cities of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. Also key to the dissemination of works produced by Edo writers and publishers was the rise of commercial lending libraries, which made both new and used books available to readers in places where publishing guilds and commercial booksellers had not developed on nearly the same scale as the major cities—markets that ranged from large castle towns like Matsumoto, Kanazawa, and Nagoya, to regional villages that could support only the smallest of concerns, such as oil peddlers who went from house to house plying book rental as a side trade.

A common view regarding this period in the development of Japan's print culture is that it was one during which Edo writers and publishers exerted considerable influence on the sensibilities of readers throughout the country, radiating the language, humor, and cultural values of the shogunal capital centrifugally outward, as it were, to the remotest reaches of print's dissemination. Obviously this characterization is in need of some refinement, as is the implicit assumption that readers in the various regional markets took to the literary products of Edo with unconditional enthusiasm. To be sure, many a local amateur was star struck by the Edo "glitterati" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, predictably the celebrity writers Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761-1816), Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848), and Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九 (1765-1831)—especially Ikku, who made a point of visiting castle towns and villages to collect material for his work and to ingratiate himself to local booksellers and literary circles. However, at the same time, the Edo-centric nature of Edo popular fiction appears to have engendered disconnects between Edo writers and their non-Edo readers, and even to have compelled writers in some regional markets to create regional variants of popular genres and even individual works,

¹ My gratitude goes out to the staff of Kyoto University Central Library for their generous cooperation in allowing me to examine the manuscripts discussed in this paper.

recasting familiar narratives within local contexts in order to make them more relevant, if not more enjoyable, for local readerships.

In this paper, I examine how a small coterie of writers in early nineteenth century Nagoya reinvented the popular genre of *sharebon* 洒落本 (“fashionable books”) for a local readership. In particular, I focus on *Keiseikai shijūhatte* 軽世界四十八手 (*Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World*), a manuscript that was collaboratively produced by six writers in emulation of Santō Kyōden’s bestseller *Keiseikai shijūhatte* 傾城買四十八手 (*Forty-Eight Moves for Buying a Courtesan*, 1790). Underlying adaptation decisions within this very precise context are some broader issues which are emblematic, I think, of the difficulties of “localizing” *sharebon* for a non-Edo audience of readers. Not only were most works of *sharebon* set in the brothels of Edo, with close observation of practices and protocols that governed interaction between courtesans and their patrons, but they were also heavily reliant on character dialogue for driving the story. Among the challenges faced by writers of local variants of the *sharebon*, then, was how to resituate stories of courtesans and their patrons within a totally different setting, in this case the Nagoya tea house district near Atsuta Shrine, a short distance from the Miya station of the Tōkaidō. Dialogue presented another problem. Since the perceived authenticity of the author’s observations of the pleasure quarters was in many ways predicated on how accurately he was able to capture the vicissitudes of verbal interaction, the Nagoya writers needed to use local dialect and local slang in order to convince readers of the authenticity of their stories. This appeal could not be made convincingly if character dialogue was simply lifted from Edo *sharebon* models. In short, the characters in Nagoya *sharebon* had to talk differently, act differently, and interact in different settings if they, or for that matter, the work as a whole, was to be believed. Before turning to an examination of these issues, a brief introduction of the *sharebon* and the history of its development is in order.

Background on the *sharebon*

The history of the *sharebon* as a genre can be traced back to the late Kyōhō period (1716-1736), with the appearance of booklets describing the customs and protocols of the Yoshiwara in literary Chinese (*kanbun*). This literary idiom, which can be seen in works like *Shirin zanka* 史林殘花 (*Blossoms Lingering in the Grove of History*, 1730) and *Nanka yohō* 南花余芳 (*Southern Blossoms Abounding in Fragrance*, 1738), marks an important departure from the tradition of *shikido* 色道 (“way of love”) writings that prevailed in the Genroku period. Whereas colloquial Japanese sufficed for writers like Hatakeyama Kizan 畠山箕山 (1626-1704), whose magisterial *Shikidō ōkagami* 色道大鏡 (*Great Mirror on the Way of Love*, 1678-1688) relied on devices other than continental diction to establish the connoisseurial authority of its author, the writers of early *sharebon* exploited the possibilities of literary Chinese to great effect, not only to cast themselves as cultured sophisticates, but also to tantalize their readers—who were obviously eager to know what really went on in the inner chambers of the Yoshiwara’s “cerulean towers”—by clothing naked

eroticism in euphemistic pedantry. At the same time, works like *Ryōha shigen* 両巴庵言 (1728) managed to counterbalance this obscurantism with readily comprehensible devices of assessment like maps and *banzuke* 番付 rankings, both of which had been staples of *saiken* 細見 and *hyōbanki* 評判記 guides for decades. *Ryōha shigen* and other early *sharebon* like it were designed to be read both horizontally and vertically—horizontally (as one would conventionally hold a book) for their textual descriptions in literary Chinese and rankings in a baroque idiom of seals and ciphers, and vertically (that is, by turning the book ninety degrees so that pages flipped downward) for the annotated maps they provided of the Yoshiwara, replete with the names of establishments and the courtesans who worked there. However, considering the role that advertising played in the production of *saiken* and *hyōbanki*, there is every reason to be circumspect about the objectivity of the assessments reached in early *sharebon*. For the purveyors of these works, a few of whom literally set up stalls right outside the main gate to the Yoshiwara compound, commercial ties to Yoshiwara brothels and tea houses played a determinative role in how they represented certain establishments and their courtesans to the reader.

A transitional text in the development of *sharebon* was *Yūshi hōgen* 遊子方言 (*A Playboy's Dialect*, 1770), a fictional story about a middle-aged playboy from the lower ranks of the samurai class who presumes to school a wealthy young merchant in the ways of the Yoshiwara. The work is innovative for its use of irony, presenting a cautionary tale about a “half-baked sophisticate,” or *hankatsū* 半可通, who prides himself on his insider’s knowledge of the quarter but is oblivious to his own lack of tact and suaveness when dealing with its denizens. Eventually, it begins to dawn on this benighted character that no one finds his heavy handed punning amusing, no one understands his arcane slang, and no one treats him with any respect; but whether because he is trying to keep up appearances for his young companion or because he is simply delusional, he refuses to mend his ways. Unlike the earlier tradition of *sharebon*, which retailed heavily in connoisseurial pedantry and authoritative assessment, *A Playboy's Dialect* put readers in a position of power by enabling them to judge the faults of the main character for themselves and to laugh at his gaffes. In other words, if the premise of earlier *sharebon* was to instruct readers on how to behave in the quarter, for *A Playboy's Dialect* it was to show readers precisely how *not* to behave. Another key innovation of this work is its narrative structure, which was patterned after playscripts. The majority of the text is character dialogue, interspersed with very detailed descriptions of the characters and what they are wearing. *A Playboy's Dialect* set a precedent for later *sharebon* by enabling readers to perceive every relevant and potentially damning detail about a character—quite literally, every article of clothing he wore and every word that came out of his mouth—with minimal narratorial intervention.

After the success of *Yūshi hōgen*, *sharebon* writers aimed to develop its winning formula in different contexts, such as by setting stories in the *okabasho* 岡場所 (“places on a hill”)—that is, the unlicensed pleasure districts and brothel compounds that had sprung up in station towns throughout Edo by the mid-eighteenth century, including Shinagawa, Shinjuku, and Fukagawa. The *okabasho* represented a step down from the grandeur of the Yoshiwara, but offered potential

for novelty. In *Shikake bunko* (1791), Santō Kyōden experimented with setting stories based on Fukagawa brothels in the similarly named Futagawa, in Kamakura—a sort of witty device that was adopted by later *sharebon* writers, including Shikitei Sanba in *Tatsumi fugen* (1798). However, only rarely did *sharebon* writers actually seek to capture the world of pleasure outside the familiar terrain of the shogunal capital. One notable exception was Ōta Nanpo's 大田南畝 (1749-1823) *Hentsū Karuizawa 変通軽井茶話* (ca. 1772-1781), which is set in a tea house in Karuizawa, Shinshū (modern-day Nagano), and strives to capture the provincial dialect via humorous repartees between serving maids and their customers. Of course Nanpo himself hailed from Edo, and we can detect within his work certain strains of chauvinism towards his regional subjects, not least in his implicitly unflattering comparisons between the simple serving maids in the Nagano tea houses and their more glamorous counterparts in the Yoshiwara. These early gestures towards setting the *sharebon* in provincial tea houses appear to have been motivated by a need to develop the novelty of the genre, rather than by a genuine effort to appeal to readers outside of Edo. But even if the authors of the *sharebon*, writing at the peak of the genre's popularity in the early years of the Kansei period (1789.1-1801.2) did little to adapt their material to the interests of a wider audience, sales were brisk because of prevailing interest in the culture of the Yoshiwara, but also because the books themselves were eminently affordable.

For over two decades between Meiwa 7 (1770) and Kansei 2 (1791), the *sharebon* became one of the most marketable genres of popular fiction in the commercial publishing and lending industries. They were relatively cheap to produce in both *kobon* 小本 and *chūbon* 中本 formats, and sold for reasonable prices by late seventeenth century standards. Nagatomo Chiyoji estimates that *kobon sharebon* sold for approximately one *monme*, five *bun* and *chūbon* for approximately two *monme*, five *bun*.² Based on research into commercial lending library records, Nagatomo furthermore estimates that at some lenders, the cost of borrowing a new *sharebon* was only twenty-four *mon*, or approximately 14% the cost of buying a new *sharebon* in *chūbon* format, and about eighteen *mon* for borrowing a used *sharebon*, or about 10% of the cost of purchase. To cite one of a well worn example, we might estimate that the cost of borrowing a used copy of *A Playboy's Dialect* from a commercial lending library for ten days was about the same as the cost of a bowl of *ni-hachi* soba noodles. Little wonder, then, why both were so widely consumed. Aside from the inherent appeal of the *sharebon* as a genre, its affordability helped ensure its popularity on both the primary retail market and the secondary lending market.

Nagoya *Gesaku* and the Nagoya Publishing Industry

For an aspiring writer living in the castle town of Nagoya during the late Kansei period, the prospect of writing *sharebon* entailed innumerable challenges, with publication being the most pressing. The tradition of Nagoya *gesaku* dates back to the Hōreki period (1751.10-1764.6)—that is, before any real commercial publishing industry had managed to develop in the castle town—

² Nagatomo 1982, p. 70.

when a small coterie of writers, aspiring to the model of Kamigata writers like Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642-1693) and his followers, began to produce manuscript works for private circulation.³ Since Nagoya did not receive permission to form its own publishing guild until the middle of the An'ei period (1772.11-1781.4), these works had no viable venue for print publication. Nor does it appear that they were written with any serious aspirations of commanding a wide audience or achieving commercial success. By all appearances, they were intended for circulation in manuscript form among coterie of writers and poets. This continued to be the case until the formation of the Nagoya publishing guild, which within a short time included highly successful booksellers like the Fugetsudō 風月堂, founded by Fūgetsu Magosuke 風月孫助 around Meiwa 5 (1768), and the Eirakuya 永楽屋, founded by Eirakuya Tōshirō 永楽屋東四郎 (1741-1795) in An'ei 5 (1776). Around the same time, in Meiwa 4 (1767), the Daisō 大惣 lending library was founded by Eguchi Tojirō 江口富次郎 (1728-1811), the first Onoya Sōhachi 大野屋惣八. The Daisō would go on to become the largest commercial lending library in all of Japan, amassing an inventory of approximately 16,734 titles by the time it all but ceased operations in Meiji 31 (1899). Eirakuya developed into Nagoya's largest publishing house, and by the Tenpō period (1830.12-1844.12), Nagoya itself had developed into the fourth largest publishing market in Japan.

By the Kyōwa period (1801.2-1804.2), a more complex network of literary production had taken hold in Nagoya, one which included not only coterie of amateur writers and poets, but also publishers, booksellers, and booklenders. Under the stewardship of Eguchi Seijirō 江口清次郎 (1766-1847), the second Onoya Sōhachi, the Daisō lending library took a greater interest in promoting and publishing the work of local authors—most notably, Kinome Dengaku 椒芽田楽 (act. ca. 1793-1805), a physician who hailed from Komaki, and Ishibashi-an Masui 石橋庵増井 (1774–1847), a *kokugaku* scholar and *zappai* poetry teacher. By no means was the Daisō the only firm to see the benefit of cultivating local talent to produce books that might be later be circulated through their library. The literary circle that formed around Gyokuseidō Shibayū 玉晴堂芝誘, whose members according to one estimate numbered over twenty, represented a worthy rival to the Daisō enterprise. Gyokuseidō commissioned his coterie of writers to produce books for a captive audience—that is, the lodgers at this inn—but the existence of scribal copies of one of these books suggested that his productions may have circulated beyond this closed circle. Both groups sought to emulate the Edo publishing houses and their stables of celebrity writers, as is apparent from the derivative titles of the works they produced and the easy command with which they engaged in authorial puffery. One of the authors of the Nagoya *sharebon Keiseikai shijūhatte* 軽世界四十八手 (*Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World*, 1800), discussed in detail below, even presumed to style himself Sentō Kyōden 川東京伝—an obvious reference to celebrity writer Santō Kyōden. The aspirational quality of these local writings notwithstanding, the principle creative aim of these writers does not appear to have been simply to emulate Edo, but rather to adapt workable elements of popular fiction to the local readership. Thus we find familiar pleasure quarter narratives set in local settings, rather than in the Yoshiwara, with characters who speak Nagoya

³ Hamada 1983, p. 363.

dialect. Another interesting departure is the strategic use of scribal dissemination—that is, circulating manuscripts or handwritten copies rather than printed editions. In theory, this approach had the benefit of enabling a would-be publisher—in this case, the Daisō—to sound out market reaction before committing to the costs of publication. However, it might also be imagined that under the long shadow cast by the Kansei publishing edict of Kansei 2 (1790), handwritten texts also offered a medium for avoiding the scrutiny of bakufu appointed guild censors.

Keiseikai shijūhatte

Keiseikai shijūhatte 輕世界四十八手 (*Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World*, 1800) is a *gesaku* manuscript collaboratively produced by six different authors—Yūga Teikō 有雅亭光, Yūga okinasai 由賀翁齋, Onimo jūshichi 於仁茂十七, Kikutei Kaori 菊亭香織, and two authors mentioned above, Kinome Dengaku and Ishibashi-an Masui. A seventh person involved with the production of the manuscript was Eguchi Seijirō, the second Onoya Sōhachi, who appears to have coordinated the project and provided one or two of his copyists to transcribe the final version of the text and produce the six author portraits. In his preface to the work, Kinome Dengaku indicates that it is an homage to Santō Kyōden’s popular *sharebon Keiseikai shijūhatte* 傾城買四十八手 (*Forty-Eight Moves for Buying a Courtesan*, 1790), a work owned by the Daisō library and which, judging from the wear and tear on its extant copy, appears to have been in regular circulation. It is reasonable to assume that all six authors read Kyōden’s work closely, for there are many filiations between the two works. For one, it adopts the same narrative structure of vignettes based on different strategies for interacting with courtesans at tea houses. Even some of the techniques from the original work appear in *Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World*—namely, the “sincere technique” and the “cheap technique.” It is also similar to Kyōden’s work in that it presents a series of caricatures of tea house patrons—*katagi* 氣質, as it were—who employ these techniques. An ethos of playfulness appears to have subtended the production from beginning to end, as evidenced by Kikutei Kaori’s self-stylization as Santō Kyōden and a reference to the “publisher” (although obviously as a manuscript, it has no publisher) with the expression “from the press of the House of Ivy” 蔦舎梓—clearly a reference to Edo publisher Tsutaya Juzaburo 蔦屋重三郎 (1750-1797), who published Kyōden’s *Forty-Eight Moves for Buying a Courtesan* and whose trademark was a garland of ivy.⁴ The joke carries over to the cover design, which features a motif of ivy leaves. For Onoya Sōhachi, who at this time still had not yet obtained stock in the Nagoya publishing guild, the invocation of Tsutaya appears to have been made in pure jest. In fact, it is difficult to say if this work was ever seriously intended for print publication. More than likely the intent was to simply circulate the book in manuscript form through the Daisō library, as was the case with earlier works of Nagoya *gesaku* produced by Kinome Dengaku, Ishibashi-an, and others.⁵

⁴ Next to the handwritten reference is a seal stamp used by the second Onoya Sohachi, an imprint of a butterfly measuring 1.2 cm in height and 1.8 cm in width in cinnabar ink.

⁵ The manuscript, which is extant and archived at Kyoto University Central Library, bears a Daisō inventory number (〜 638), which indicates that it did indeed circulate through the library. There is moderate wear and tear on the lone copy, which suggests that there was some demand for the book among Daisō readers.

The setting of all eight vignettes is the tea house district near Atsuta Shrine, a twenty minute walk northwest from the Miya station of the Tōkaidō. The district developed in the late seventeenth century to accommodate travellers waiting for boats to ferry them across to Kuwana, this being the only leg of the Tōkaidō intraversable by land. The tea houses were designed primarily to provide travellers with a place for rest and refreshment for a few hours; most were ill equipped to provide lodging for the night. At the same time, the district also received a good number of regular patrons from Nagoya, who lacked anything resembling a pleasure district after a makeshift complex of brothels, built in the Misono district to accommodate laborers working on the construction of Nagoya Castle, was destroyed by the middle of the seventeenth century. Along with Osu Kannon, the area around Atsuta Shrine became one of two principal entertainment districts in the castle town. Most of its local patrons were samurai and merchants of means who traveled by boat down the Horikawa canal connecting the Bay of Ise to the Shogawa River north of Nagoya Castle. The Horikawa provided a direct route of transport from the samurai residences east of the castle and the merchant houses to the south. In many ways, the boat ride down the Horikawa was for Nagoya patrons akin to taking *chokibune* 猪牙舟 skiffs up the Sumida River to the New Yoshiwara for Edo patrons. Nagoya *sharebon* like Ishibashi-an Masui's *Shinansha* 指南車 (*Southward Pointing Chariot*, 1796) seize upon this fortuitous similarity in terrain to co-opt a conventional topos of the Edo *sharebon*—that is, the prefatorial trip down the river before a night of revelry in the quarter. The main characters of *Shinansha*, both young samurai, hire a boat to take them down the Horikawa, drinking liberal amounts of wine along the way, and then after docking at Denma-cho, proceed on foot to a local tea house.

The premise of each vignette in *Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World* is more or less the same, in that all of the patrons who visit the tea houses in the neighborhood of Atsuta Shrine are locals, not travellers resting from their journey on the Tōkaidō. Most are samurai and wealthy merchants, with the exception of the sixth vignette by Kikutei Kaori, in which the patron is the proprietor of a lumber firm. Patrons depicted in the collection travel singly or else in groups of three, such as with an entourage that includes a *taiko-mochi*. Most of the character dialogue is based on exchanges between the groups of patrons, the serving maids who greet them at the tea house, the cook who prepares the food, and in some cases, the proprietor. Exchanges between the patrons and the courtesans of the tea house are surprisingly few, often limited to a few lines of coquettish repartee near the conclusion of each vignette. This subdued treatment of the flirting between courtesans and patrons represents a significant departure from Kyōden's work, and most *sharebon* published before the Kansei publishing edict, or after, for that matter. There is little of the arcane wit and erotic humor that we find in the *sharebon* of Kyōden, Sanba, and others, and none of the romanticism or sentimentalism that we find in later examples of the genre. Instead, the focus shifts to depiction of the repartee between the patrons, their quibbling over choices of tea house to visit, talk of money and unsettled bills, and of course, jokes. In this sense, the Nagoya *sharebon* privileges the meaning of *share* as “wit” rather than the meaning “fashionable.”

Central to this focus on wit is documentation of local dialect and slang used in the district. Situated near the major artery of the Tōkaidō, and home to a diverse population of merchants

transplanted from the Osaka and Kyoto, as well as samurai affiliated with the Owari branch of the Tokugawa family, Nagoya was a veritable melting pot of different dialects. Characters depicted in *Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World* make extensive use of emphatic final particles like *wai*, *zoi* (*zoe*), and *gaya*, which though not exclusive to Nagoya, figured prominently in early modern Nagoya speech. Also common is the copular *deya*, which can be seen in the following early exchange in the sixth vignette of the collection, where the customer Shōsuke is greeted by the serving maid Otofu:

(Otofu): “Donata deya to omottara, omai-san ka.”

(Shōsuke): “Omai-san deya.”

Conclusion

The collaboratively produced *gesaku* manuscript *Keiseikai shijūhatte* (*Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World*) represents a compelling document for considering how regional writers responded to the influence of Edo literary culture. While the coterie of Nagoya *gesaku* writers who authored its eight chapters clearly intended the work to be an homage to Santō Kyōden’s similarly titled *Keiseikai shijūhatte* (*Forty-Eight Moves for Buying a Courtesan*, 1790), for example adopting its premise of caricaturing different types of patrons, there are a number of important differences that bespeak its provenance within Nagoya literary culture. Most salient is the change of setting from the Yoshiwara pleasure district to the tea house district near Atsuta Shrine, a short distance from the Miya station of the Tōkaidō. Within this setting, the tea house patrons interact primarily with serving maids and low-ranking courtesans, whose raiment is hardly given the same lavish descriptions that we find in Kyōden. This is not only the case in *Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World*, but in most *sharebon* produced by Nagoya writers like Kinome Dengaku and Ishibashi-an Masui. Indeed, character descriptions on the whole tend to be much more austere than what we find in the work of Kyōden or other Edo *sharebon* writers, although it is difficult to determine if this stylistic difference is due to the fact that the Nagoya works were produced after the Kansei Reforms and its edict cracking down on eroticism and sumptuous luxury in the *sharebon*, or because this reflected laxer discrimination among Nagoya courtesans and their patrons with regard to the fineries of style. Lastly, for a genre that relied so heavily on character dialogue, Nagoya *sharebon* like *Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World* makes extensive use of regional dialects and local slang in order to capture the repartee between the tea house revelers as accurately and authentically as possible. Although its manuscript format foreclosed the possibility of wide dissemination, *Forty-Eight Moves in the Carefree World* found an audience among the closely knit group of aspiring writers who drafted it and perhaps even a few customers of the Daisō lending library, which organized its production.

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