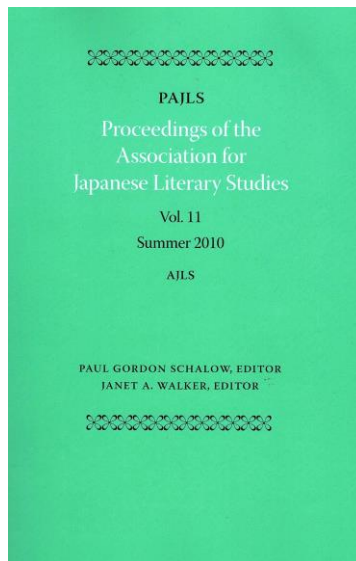


“In Pursuit of Success: Kanshi Poet Hara Saihin’s  
Masquerade of Masculinity”

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# In Pursuit of Success

## Kanshi Poet Hara Saihin's Masquerade of Masculinity

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

Composing verses and reciting poems, these are my duties.

罷女無家還自由

嘲風吟月是吾任

—Hara Saihin, “At Ordinary Times”

Hara Saihin 原采蘋 (1798–1859), now an obscure figure, enjoyed great reputation as a Confucian scholar and poet at the end of the Edo period. She lived an independent life when women had few career choices. Coming from a small domain in Kyushu, she worked in the city of Edo for twenty years, identifying herself as a Confucian scholar. Since Saihin hoped to be successful in the field of Confucian studies, a field that had traditionally been dominated by male scholars, she created a male identity for herself behaving in a manly manner and creating a masculine persona in her poems. Such behavior triggered arguments about gender norms, and many intellectuals who interacted with Saihin expressed their opinions on the propriety of women. In this paper, I examine Saihin's adoption of a masculine persona as well as the arguments on women's propriety made by Saihin's contemporaries in response to her masculine behavior and unusual career aspiration. Through this I hope to illuminate the changing discourse on gender norms during the early nineteenth century and Saihin's influence on it.

Saihin was born into the family of an official Confucian scholar of Akizuki, a branch-domain of Fukuoka. She was educated in the Confucian Classics from childhood, as well as her brothers, by their father Hara Kosho 原古處 (1764–1827). Kosho was a respected official Confucian scholar in Akizuki. He had a strong interest in his young daughter's “success,” which is obvious from letters he sent to

Saihin in 1812 from Edo, where he was attending the lord of Akizuki. At that time Saihin was in her fifteenth year. One letter he sent to his daughter 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、出世も出来可申候).<sup>1</sup> In this phrase, Koshō used the word *shusse* (出世). The word literally translates as “emergence into the world,” meaning “public advancement” or “success in society.” As this example indicates, her father had inspired Saihin to seek public and social success from her childhood years.

In 1812, Koshō suddenly lost the favor of the Akizuki lord.<sup>2</sup> He was dismissed from both his administration position and the professorship at the domain’s official school, Keikokan 稽古館. This meant the end of the Hara family’s traditional occupation, the professorship. Koshō’s elder son, Hakkei 白圭 (or Eitarō 瑛太郎), who inherited the family’s headship, was not appointed to a position related to the domain’s school, even though he had been properly educated and prepared. Hakkei eventually left his office, the Section of Weapons (*buki-kata* 武器方), in 1823 because of sickness. Koshō’s second son, Kinjirō 瑾次郎, 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.

Having retired early, Koshō traveled widely, visiting his scholar-friends and giving lectures at different places, including Hiroshima, Toyoura (in present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture), as well as nearby towns in Kyushu. Saihin often accompanied him on his journeys, thereby becoming acquainted with local scholars in various places. At home, she assisted him 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, Koshō 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. Koshō and Saihin were welcomed by local officials and wealthy intellectual townsmen. Koshō decided to stay for a while in Nagasaki to give lectures on Confucian texts and poetry. According to Koshō’s letter to his wife Yuki ゆき, he decided to stay a while in Nagasaki so that Saihin could “experience the world” (*seken-itasu* 世間いたす).<sup>3</sup> With this intention, Koshō made Saihin the primary lecturer at their temporary school in Nagasaki. The school was popular and received many visits from local officials, intellectual townsmen, and their children.

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Miyazaki 1989, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>The reasons for Koshō’s sudden dismissal are unclear. Yamada Shin’ichirō suggests that Koshō’s remonstrance 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 Koshō’s dismissal since Koshō was a scholar of the school of Ancient Rhetoric (*kobunjigaku*). Yamada 1951, pp. 13–14.

<sup>3</sup>*Hara Saihin shishō*, p. 11. “It’s because Saihin can have some public experience and I think we might become less concerned about her in the future.” 采頼も世間いたし候に大心遣いこれ無きように相成りも可致也と考思故也。

In the beginning of 1825, the year following Saihin's return from Nagasaki, a deliberate arrangement was made for Saihin to leave home by herself, this time for the city of Kyoto, to extend her scholarship.<sup>4</sup> 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" (*na nakushite kojō ni iru wo yurusazu* 不許無名入故城).<sup>5</sup> The idea of "returning home with fame" implied social success achieved in cities, which was most often expected of sons.

Kosho continually expressed his hopes 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 great difficulty. . . . I am truly anticipating that Yoshitarō [Kosho's best student] and you will gain fame" (不佞病魔同狀扱々困窮之次第御座候 . . . 吉太郎卜足下之名ヲ成ハ實ニ不佞力樂ニ御座候).<sup>6</sup> It is clear from this that 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 in her literature.

On the way to Kyoto, Saihin heard about her father's critical condition and hurried back home. Then, in 1827, a few months after her father's death, she again left her home, this time for Edo, to establish herself as a Confucian scholar. In Edo, she worked as a private Confucian scholar boarding at the Shonenji 称念寺 temple in Asakusa for twenty years, where she tutored people, composed *kan-shi*, and wrote calligraphy when requested. In these twenty years, Saihin attained considerable fame, so much so that she was listed in a guidebook of well-known scholars and artists in the city. While Saihin was working in Edo from 1828 to 1848, a sort of "Who's Who in Arts," entitled *Edo genzai kōeki shoka jinmei-roku* 江戸現在広益諸家人名録 (*Widely Useful List of Various Contemporary Literati and Artists in Edo*) was published twice, first in 1836 and then in 1842. Saihin was listed in the second copy, which testifies to her rising reputation.

Saihin was also listed in the book entitled *Genzon raimei edo bunjin jumyō zuke* 現存雷鳴江戸文人寿命附 (*Evaluation of Well-Known Contemporary Edo Literati*), which was published in 1850 (Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> 216 literati are listed in this book. Among them, thirty-five received the highest evaluation. Saihin was among them, the only woman to receive the highest evaluation. Others who received the highest evaluation include Watanabe Kazan 渡辺華山 (1793–1841), Kikuchi Gozan 菊池五山 (1769–1855), Tani Buncho 谷文晁 (1763–1840) – well-known figures still recognized by many. In this guide, Saihin was categorized as "ju 儒," Confucian Scholar

<sup>4</sup>To make Saihin's 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.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in *Hara Saihin shishō* 1951, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>The letter of which this passage is a part was hand-copied by Yamada Shin'ichirō and included in "Hara-shi sanju ishi shōroku."

<sup>7</sup>Hata 1976, p. 348.



FIGURE 1 *Genzon raimei edo bunjin junyō zuke* 現存雷鳴江戸文人寿命附 (Evaluation of Well Known Contemporary Edo Literati; 1850) Image reproduced from Hata 1976, p. 148.

(Figure 2). This book inserted a comment in waka style for each artist. The comment on Saihin reads: “Nothing is left to be desired from her scholarship of Confucian studies. Poetry, prose composition, amazing brushwork – all splendid!” (*kyōgaku ha ifu koto mo nashi, shi, bunshō, me wo odorokasu fude no migotosa* 経学はいふこともなし詩文章 眼を驚かす筆の見事さ). These examples demonstrate that Saihin enjoyed a solid reputation as a Confucian scholar.

Saihin established herself as a Confucian scholar, which was by no means a usual career for a woman of that time. As expected, Saihin occasionally received unfavorable criticism, especially at the beginning of her career. For example, Matsuzaki Kōdō 松崎謙堂 (1771–1844), a successful scholar who, like Saihin, had come from Kyushu, strongly discouraged her from becoming a scholar. Saihin visited him in 1829, a year after her arrival in Edo. Kōdō recorded his conversation with Saihin on that occasion in his diary, *Kōdō Nichireki* 謙堂日曆. According to the account, Kōdō and Saihin discussed “the ways for a woman to establish herself” (*joshi risshin no michi* 女子立身之道). Saihin revealed her intention and desire to gain recognition as a “female Confucian scholar” (*nyōju* 女儒). Kōdō criticized her plan, implying that it was inappropriate. His diary reads:

25th. Clear day. I got up early and offered a bowl of gruel to Saihin. At day-break, I talked with her about the ways a woman could establish herself. Her intention was to come into society as a female scholar. 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



FIGURE 2 Portrait of Hara Saihin and comments on her included in the *Evaluation of Well Known Contemporary Edo Literati*. Image reproduced from Hata 1976, p. 148.

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 transform a frivolous reputation into one of a respect. Here you can complete your aim.” She seemed not yet to be convinced. I ordered some sake, but she left after a few cups.<sup>8</sup>

廿五日 晴、曉起進粥、天明、與蘋語女子立身之道、彼意在以女儒發跡、余誨之曰、以女子單行三千里、且僑食於人、假能貞潔脩束、安能免人議乎、不如謝去雜交以從良也、或宮仕五六年、積脂粉俸奉迎母親以侍養、身本始立、而今日浮名始轉爲才名、於是達志可也、渠猶似未肯者、主人命酒數酌而去。

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 had stayed with those people on her way to Edo, some of whom were her father’s friends and others cultivated local men who favored the arts and welcomed

<sup>8</sup>Matsuzaki 1929, pp. 342–43.

traveling artists. As she was well learned in Chinese poetry and Confucian studies, Saihin associated almost exclusively with men familiar with Chinese literature, and 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. While Saihin clearly expressed her intention to become a "female scholar," Kōdō, mentioning the two most commonly pursued women's careers, tacitly criticized Saihin's transgression of gender boundaries in pursuit of a career.

It was not unusual for Saihin, who was almost thirty years old, unmarried, traveling and living by herself, to be encouraged to marry. To communicate her serious intention of becoming a scholar, she often needed to deflect the usual gender expectations directed at her. When told to marry, she usually refuted the suggestion by employing ostentatiously masculine discourse. For example, when Rai Kyōhei 頼杏坪 (1756–1834), a Confucian scholar of Hiroshima, told Saihin that she should settle into marriage, Saihin responded to him with the following poem. She composed it in 1827 while staying at Kyōhei's house:

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.<sup>9</sup>

次韻杏坪先生  
 父執有君孤不孤  
 相依遍接搢紳徒  
 区区自抱地方寸  
 杳杳重遊天一隅  
 羈雁飛鳴迷汜國  
 家人思夢入江都  
 如教志業青年遂  
 世上寧無逐臭夫

This poem conveys Saihin's aspiration to an intellectual career and her intention to continue her journey. In the concluding couplet, the author mentions

<sup>9</sup>Hara Saihin *shishō*, p. 4; and "Yūirō sōkō bassui."

her “ambitious venture” (*shigyō* 志業). She makes it clear that her primary goal is accomplishing her ambitious plan, and then she adds, in the last line, that an unusual man might find her attractive. In this poem, Saihin presented herself as a young person with aspirations, by employing wording such as “*shigyō*” that had been used to express social ambition. In its adoption of the manly discourse of ambition and success, this poem contradicts the expectations of the women of the time.

Another poem, composed in 1827, shows a similar use of a masculine persona. The poem was composed in response to Marukawa Shōin 丸川松蔭 (1758–1831), a former official scholar of the Niimi domain, in present-day Okayama prefecture. When he criticized Saihin for traveling by herself, she wrote the following in response:

RESPONDING TO THE RHYMES OF THE VENERABLE SHŌIN

My load is heavy and my destination far.

People 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.

I laugh at myself, who with no ladder, wants to climb to heaven.<sup>10</sup>

次韻松隱翁

任重三千道杳然

人言遠覓伯鸞賢

月中折桂知何日

自笑無階欲上天

In the second line, Saihin refers to the famous Chinese anecdote of Mengguan 孟光, an ugly yet wise and chaste woman who insisted that she would only marry an intelligent man like Baluan 伯鸞. Referring to this anecdote, Saihin implies that people assumed she would be traveling to find a fine husband. Then in the second couplet, she rejects the assumption of marriage, referring to the *katsura* tree, the metaphor for academic and social success. In the Chinese literary tradition, picking a sprig of the *gui* or *katsura* tree symbolized success in the civil examinations. This metaphor is inevitably associated with males, since only men were allowed to take the examinations. Saihin challenged the normal expectations of the female gender here by incorporating into her poem a distinctive metaphor associated with men.

Indeed, Saihin's poems generally left a masculine impression on readers. Two of her famous contemporary scholar-poets, Rai San'yō 頼山陽 (1780–1832) and Yanagawa Seigan 梁川星巖 (1789–1858), noticed the masculine quality in her poetry. When Saihin stayed in Kyoto a while in 1828, Seigan and San'yō made

<sup>10</sup> Hara Saihin *shishō*, p. 23; and “Tōyū nikki.”



comments on poems that Saihin had composed on her way to Kyoto. Both poets were impressed by their vigorous, heroic tone and expressed their wonder and admiration, comparing her poems to those by contemporary male poets. San'yō wrote, "Men with thick beards and eyebrows<sup>11</sup> 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 as a soaring dragon" (鬚眉男子為女郎詩。當今滔滔皆是也。何圖纖纖玉指。具此鵬龍之力。)<sup>12</sup> 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?" (當今作律詩者。率皆委弱支離。女史何從而得此骨力雄勁几氣脈連絡來。)<sup>13</sup> In these comments, the two scholar-poets especially pointed out the masculine quality of Saihin's poetry in contrast to the effeminate verses by many contemporary men.

Saihin's effort at masculinity was not limited to her poetry. She behaved like a man in her social life as well. The diary of Hirose Tansō 広瀬淡窓 (1782–1856), a scholar-educator who ran the private school Kangien in Kyushu, testifies to it. Tansō observed Saihin when she visited him at the age of twenty-two with her father in 1820. Tansō recorded: "Her behavior is frank and openhearted, not different from men. Also, she drinks vigorously" (其行事磊々落落トシテ男兒ニ異ナラス。又能ク豪飲セリ。)<sup>14</sup> As this comment demonstrates, Saihin was successful in impressing people with her manly demeanor.

For Saihin, who was actually a woman, the emphasis on her masculine character was a vital strategy to make her way into the field of Confucian studies, a strategy that was often effective. Rai Kyōhei and Maruyama Shōin, the two scholars who initially advised Saihin to get married, supported her plan after having heard of the heroic expressions of her determination. Rai Kyōhei helped Saihin's trip to Edo by writing recommendations to his scholar-friends along the way so that she would receive accommodation and other support. Maruyama Shōin, reading the poem that emphasized her social aspiration, acclaimed Saihin for being "truly a manly fellow among women, an unparalleled one" (真可謂女中丈夫子不可有二者矣)<sup>15</sup> While some scholars such as Matsuzaki Kōdō were critical of Saihin's transgression of feminine gender boundaries, many scholars eventually approved of her transgression, recognizing her passion and seriousness, the excellence of her education, and her ability to act "as good as" a man.

Another male scholar, Onuma Chinzan 大沼枕山 (1818–1891), also prized Saihin for her manliness. In 1848, when Saihin was leaving Edo for her hometown,

<sup>11</sup>"Beard and eye brows" (*shubi* 鬚眉) is a metaphor for a man of traditional Chinese literature.

<sup>12</sup>The comments by San'yō and Seigan are included in "Yūirō sōkō bassui" as well as *Hara Saihin shishō*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Hirose 1971, p. 259.

<sup>15</sup>The comment is included in *Hara Saihin shishō*, p. 74.

her scholar associates held a farewell party. On this occasion, the young poet Chinzan expressed his admiration for Saihin in this poem, especially commenting on her masculine personality:

...

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 establish their positions.  
 The castles of poetry, forts of wine, the battle is at its height,  
 Miss Hara shouts out, then all take off their armor.  
 No one else is a real man.<sup>16</sup>

贈原氏采蘋

...

不櫛進士何足說  
 丈夫之膽丈夫姿  
 慨然忽起寧親志

...

會客河樓薦別卮  
 滿樓人士齋張陣  
 詩城酒壘酣戰時  
 原氏大呼衆解甲  
 無復一個是男兒

Chinzan admired Saihin because she behaved like a man, shared a common educational background with men so they could enjoy composing Chinese poems together, while drinking sake. Such activities as composing Chinese poetry and drinking sake are described in the above poem as compared to a battle scene, accentuating the masculine associations. Saihin not only shared a part in those manly activities but excelled in them. Thus Chinzan regarded her as an honorary man and appreciated her participation in the literary society.

Saihin's adoption of a masculine persona was an effective means for her to make her way into a field dominated by men. While she met with criticism regarding her transgression of gender boundaries, she was often convincing in her pursuit of a scholarly career because of her intentional display of masculine qualities.

<sup>16</sup>Chinzan's poem to Saihin is included in *Hara Saihin shishō*, p. 77.

Another strategy that Saihin employed to have her choice of career accepted was an emphasis on her filial intentions, especially her devotion to her father. Saihin's belief in filial piety was so intense that she made it a rule to read the first chapter of *The Classic of Filial Piety* (Ch. *Xiaojing* 孝經) on every New Year's Day. The brief first chapter 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 . . .<sup>17</sup>

This message celebrates the intention of seeking fame, implanting filial value into it. Following this teaching, Saihin was rightly ambitious in pursuing fame "for her father" and to extend their family scholarship. However, there is a twist in her performance of the reading. While the major Confucian Classics assumed the readers to be male, Saihin read them, regardless of her gender. Then, she cultivated her character following the ideals described in the books, disregarding the implied gender appropriateness.

Her father Hara Kosho encouraged his daughter to be an accomplished scholar. His strong support armed Saihin, as it gave her a way to justify her career pursuit. She could assert that her desire for social success was the embodiment of filial piety, by stating that her father wished her to become a famous scholar. Since filial piety was one of the most valued moral qualities in Confucianism, the emphasis on filial intention was very effective in convincing other Confucian scholars of the appropriateness of her intention.

On quite a few occasions, Saihin cited her father's line that commanded her to be successful and famous. For example, when composing a farewell poem in response to a male friend, Murakami Genho 村上彦甫, she mentioned her father's order in the last couplet.<sup>18</sup> The couplet reads: "Please understand, I have a vow concerning this journey. I dare not return to my hometown without fame" (看取此行吾有誓, 無名豈敢入山城).<sup>19</sup> She was going to be successful as a way of fulfilling her father's expectations of her, and that justified her ambition.

Saihin paved her way to success by performing as well as men and by justifying her ambition in the name of filial piety. Her dedicated move into the male field caused reconsideration of the gender norms, the effect of which is clearly seen in the complex response made by Kamei Shōyō 亀井昭陽 (1773–1836), an official Confucian scholar of the Fukuoka domain. Shōyō was a close friend of Saihin's father, Hara Kosho, and when Kosho was sending his daughter off to the city,

<sup>17</sup>Legge 1879, p. 465.

<sup>18</sup>Murakami Genho (?–?) was a student of Hara Kosho and an elder brother of Murakami Butsuzan 村上但山 (1810–79), who was also Kosho's private student. Butsuzan is known as a scholar and educator and the founder of a successful local private school, Suisaien 水哉園, in Kyushu.

<sup>19</sup>*Hara Saihin shishō*, p. 21; and "Tōyū nikki."

he had her stop at Shōyō's house. In his letter, Kosho asked Shōyō to compose a farewell poem for Saihin. The poem Shōyō composed reads:

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 to travel as far as 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.<sup>20</sup>

原闈秀遠來告別、走筆贈之

孟春惟羊日  
蘋子遠方來  
驚問此何故  
吾將遊洛師  
乃翁手裁柬  
懇徵贈別辭  
又云衰態消豪氣  
此女儘存我舊時

...

女子有闈範  
闈範無遠離  
乃翁視蘋子  
礪落若男兒

...

<sup>20</sup>Quoted in Haruyama 1958, p. 105.

古來賢哲詩文集  
無送室女遠遊辭  
自我始古人將笑  
任君笑我老態癡

Shōyō was surprised to hear about Saihin's unconventional plan and he resisted, saying no model for a farewell poem to a woman was to be found in the books of Confucian teachings. Yet, he took up his brush after all, even though he was well aware that he was starting something new, making a great modification to convention by recognizing Saihin as a woman capable of pursuing a career traditionally reserved for men.

Shōyō's concern was also expressed in a letter given to Saihin. The text entitled "Words to Present to Miss Hara on the Occasion of Her Departure to Kyoto" (贈原女史遊京師語) includes the following:

... Now you are to travel a thousand leagues by yourself. What would the venerable sages say about this? Yet, you are to do this following your 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."<sup>21</sup> Thus, as for your traveling, I dare not criticize it yet. I will just wait for another day when you have been put to the test. . . .<sup>22</sup>

... 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。我誰毀誰譽。有所譽者。其有所試。故女史之行。我未敢間然。以試之異日耳。 . . .

Shōyō doubted the propriety of Saihin's traveling by comparing it to Confucian norms, feeling that she was obviously going to transgress the teachings for women. However, Shōyō tried to rationalize her plan by referring to filial piety, emphasizing that she traveled in order to fulfill her father's expectations of her. Still, Shōyō reserved his judgment, saying that he would wait until he saw the result of her journey, following Confucius' words in the *Analects*. It is significant that Shōyō applied the words of the *Analects* to Saihin, words that had been traditionally targeted to men. In this way, Shōyō also disregarded and expanded the gender implications inscribed into the Confucian Classics so that he could justifiably accept the unconventional event he confronted.

<sup>21</sup>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. Lau 1992, p. 155.

<sup>22</sup>Quoted in Haruyama 1958, p. 105.

Shōyō's head student Hirose Kyokusō 広瀬旭莊 (1807–1863), who was eighteen years old then, was also present when Saihin visited Shōyō's place. Kyokusō composed a farewell poem as well, which reflects a more flexible view of a woman's life choice.

...

Among educated women, someone like you is rare.  
 There has been no woman traveling afar for her study since ancient times.  
 It is only because of your talent that this journey is possible.  
 You don't need to be concerned about what people say about your gain  
 and loss.

...<sup>23</sup>

...

閨秀如君少儕類  
 婦人古無遠遊義  
 唯有斯才有斯遊  
 得失不必關人議

...

Thus, Confucian teachings and conventional expectations of gender roles did not bind young Kyokusō's opinion of Saihin's uncommon decision. The time was becoming ripe for change in the society, and quite a few younger intellectuals responded to Saihin's life in a positive light.

One example is Suzuki Shōtō 鱸松塘 (1823–98), a scholar-poet from present-day Chiba prefecture. One year, Shōtō's family invited Saihin to stay with them a while. During her stay, she conversed with him intimately, exchanging several poems. Later, Shōtō gave his second daughter the sobriquet of Sairan (采蘭), taking the first kanji from Saihin (采蘋), and went to Tokyo with the daughter to open a kanshi school that encouraged women's enrollment. He published an anthology of kanshi by his female students in 1877. Shōtō's commitment to kanshi education for women thus indicates his positive response to Saihin's scholarship and life.

At the end of the Edo period, Saihin created a masculine persona to enter the field of Confucian studies. In effect, she was successful not only in becoming a recognized scholar-educator but also exerting some change in others' normative views on gender proprieties. Hara Saihin's activities and achievement, as well as those of other eminent elite women of the time, thus paved the way for emerging women writers and educators in the Meiji period.

<sup>23</sup>This poem by Hirose Kyokusō is included in *Hara Saihin shishō*, p. 71.

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