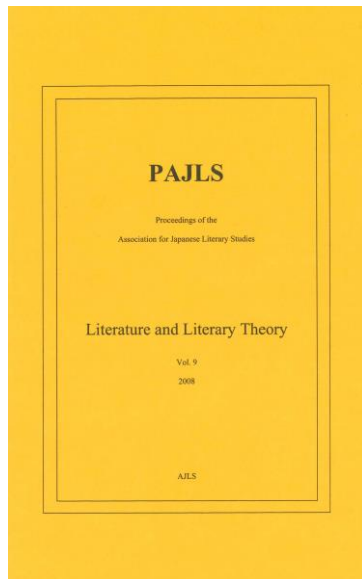


“The Chrysanthemum and the Gourd: Theorizing the Formation of Literary Identities in Early Modern Japan in the Context of Signets, Seal Marks, and Pseudonyms”

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The Chrysanthemum and the Gourd: Theorizing the Formation of Literary Identities in Early Modern Japan in the Context of Signets, Seal Marks, and Pseudonyms

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Commenting over five decades ago on the social repercussions of authorship in early modern Japan, Howard Hibbett remarked that to engage in the endeavor of writing fiction, especially writing fiction for money, was to surrender one's place in the four-tiered feudal hierarchy—of *shi* (samurai), *nō* (farmers), *kō* (artisans), and *shō* (merchants)—and “descend,” in his words, “into the outcast but brilliant company of actors, courtesans, and entertainers of all sorts.”¹ Evocative as the word “descend” is of lore about writers who are damned to hell for retailing in “fancy words and decorated phrases” in violation of the Buddhist injunction against false speech—the example of Murasaki Shikibu, cited throughout the Edo period, comes to mind here—Hibbett does not refer explicitly to the fate of the author in the spiritual afterlife. Rather, the notion of “descent” he presents is that of exclusion from the recognized feudal order, exile to a sort of cultural subterrain where all aesthetic pretensions are eschewed in pursuit of immediate material gain. Hibbett summarizes quite aptly the dilemma described by early modern writers who sought to reconcile pecuniary motives, despite a prevailing cultural taboo against writing fiction for money, with a desire to protect their good names. I would hasten to submit, however, that many writers could and did have it both ways, circumventing a formidable impasse to earn material compensation for their work while also stemming the concomitant loss of social capital that came with doing something perceived as unbecoming of a gentleman of leisure, and after a paradigm shift that came sometime in the mid-eighteenth century, a *bunjin* amateur or socially minded didact. The secret of how this delicate negotiation could be achieved lies in the books themselves, but more specifically in the prefaces, supplementary prefaces, postscripts, documented requests for publication, disclaimers, title pages, frontispiece illustrations, book covers, and other paratexts of books printed and scribally disseminated in early modern Japan, in which authorial presence, and even overt proprietary claims, are made manifest through sets of pseudonyms, seal marks, and signets—and not, I should emphasize, through the publicly recognized family name and given name of a writer.

As I propose in this paper, the act of writing fiction did not necessarily entail a fundamental reconstitution of one's social identity, as Hibbett suggests, but rather an enforced distinction between a social self and a writerly self, which subsequently could be refracted into a multiplicity of imagined subjectivities, and individually reified through the coining of pseudonymous self-designations. Despite the patent playfulness of many of these names, their practical functions when deployed within a text, or even in specific social contexts, belie the notion that they are merely instantiations of self-indulgence or willful obscurity. The often extensive inventories of pseudonyms from which writers could withdraw and strategically deploy names in given textual situations can be seen as discursive manifestations of shifting, rhizomatic patterns of authorial disclosure, collections of names that could be combined and

¹ Howard Hibbett, “Ejima Kiseki (1667-1736) and His Katagi-mono,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3 (December 1951), 405-406.

recombined in different patterns and sequences in order to modulate the disclosure of authorial identity as the occasion demanded. In many cases, assemblages of certain pseudonyms were arranged and rearranged in response to external demands on the text, such as censorious edicts issued by the shogunal authority, or else strategically coordinated to appeal to certain enclaves of readers, some of which would have been constitutive of the fellow members of a discrete field of cultural production—such as a *haikai* network—in which certain names, and not others, would have carried currency.

These pseudonyms, even when they appeared in strategically arranged assemblages, served discrete individual functions, one of which was to certify the cultural value of a given work to readers who recognized the name or else could identify with the name, or an attendant figural seal mark, on a more connotative level. Of course this was imprecise, as a single figure, in theory, could be interpreted in many different ways. To take the example of a gourd, a figure commonly encountered in Edo period prefaces, we would first have to consider its embedment in the visual idioms of mercantilism and commerce, where it was recognizable as a sign for wine shops—because of the practical use of dried gourd husks as receptacles for wine. To the reader familiar with this visual idiom, the appearance of a gourd in a text may have carried the promise of good times. A different interpretation might be reached by the reader who recognized the gourd as the figure, par excellence, of the *ukiyo* ethos, uncertainty of life in the floating world, where human existence was deemed as tenuous and directionless as a gourd carried by the current of a river—a throwness that is justified as the ontological basis for hedonism by the two interlocutors in Asai Ryōi's *Ukiyo monogatari*.²

The symbolic currency of pseudonyms among certain subsets or enclaves of readers, that is, as signifiers that certified the cultural value of works on which they were imprinted, is frequently likened to the function of monetary currency in works of the period, as in a seal mark from the preface to *Daisū jikōki*, a 1780 *sharebon*. In the coin-shaped seal mark that appears at the end of the preface, we find a pun on common coin imprints—such as *Eivaku tsūhō*, imprinted on imported Ming Dynasty Chinese coins, and *Kan'ei tsūhō*, imprinted on Japanese coins during much of the Edo period. Here the expression is *Daisui tsūhō*, a boastful claim of the author's *sui*, or intimate familiarity with the demimonde.³ We would be remiss if we failed to recognize in this figure a harkening to contemporary continental discourses of *qing*, which were disseminated in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Japan through Chinese vernacular fiction, and informed by Feng Menglong's oft quoted analogy of love to minted currency in the preface to *Qingshi* (History of Qing).⁴

As some of the examples below will serve to demonstrate, the increasing complexity of negotiating multiple markers of authorial presence, which by the late eighteenth century could involve the deployment of as many as a dozen or more pseudonyms within a single work, conspired to change the physical structure and anatomy of the book itself. The century or so after 1682 was witness to a relentlessly mounting accretion of front and back matter in published works of prose fiction. The volume and variety of these paratexts attest to an emerging, self-referential discourse about authorship, enunciated through multivalencies of pseudonymous assemblages, as well as a demand for a material space within the book, yet at the same time

² Asai Ryōi, *Ukiyo monogatari*, in Taniwaki Masachika, ed., *Kanazōshi-shū, Shinpen Nihon bungaku zenshū*, vol. 64 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1999), 8.

³ For an image of the preface and accompanying illustration, see Digital Library Division, Information Technology Center, "Katei bunko," Tokyo University, <http://133.11.199.8/cgi-bin/KateiIndex>.

⁴ Feng Menglong, *Qingshi*, in *Feng Menglong quanji*, vol. 20 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1993), 8-9.

outside the parameters of the narrated text, to serve as the site for this discourse. In the course of articulating this thesis further, I will also demonstrate how specific external factors inhibited the writer's coining and deployment of pseudonyms and even, in a more general way, served to shape the discursive and institutional parameters of authorship.

How Saikaku was Renamed Saikaku

Next to Bashō and Chikamatsu, Saikaku is one of the most recognizable names in the canon of early modern Japanese literature. Yet rarely do we stop to consider why this is so, or to reflect on the function of this particular pseudonym in the canon. As a point of departure, I will first offer a definition of pseudonyms as sutures in a canonical symbolic, *quilting points* where a pseudonymous signifier (such as the name "Saikaku") is stitched to its signified (i.e., the name "Saikaku" as a constructed canonical category), and through this conjunction serve to lend a provisional stability, however false or arbitrary, to a shifting body of pseudonymous designations and texts of disputed and disputable authorship. Anyone who returns to the earliest printed editions of works like *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (1682) and *Kōshoku gonin onna* (1684), two works on which Saikaku's canonical legacy seems to most squarely rest, quickly realizes that the name "Saikaku" does not appear anywhere in these texts. In fact, all but one of the works of prose fiction published during the lifetime of the canonical construct known as "Saikaku" do not include the name "Saikaku." I should clarify that it is not my intention to dispute the authorship of works now attributed to Saikaku, but rather to highlight the process of effacement by which "Saikaku" has become an unqualified category for a collection of *kōshokubon* (now called *ukiyo-zōshi*) published between 1682 and 1699, and to uncover the processes of authorial attribution operative in the texts themselves.

The case of Ihara, or Ibara, Saikaku (1642-1693) is exceptional because unlike earlier, commercially successful writers like Tomiyama Dōya (1585-1634) and Asai Ryōi (d. 1691), who wrote in relative anonymity, Saikaku had already made a name for himself, in a manner of speaking, before his prose debut in the winter of 1682. Many of Saikaku's names had currency throughout the extended *haikai* networks of Osaka and Kyoto, but especially in the Osaka Danrin school, where he was a leading poet and *haikai* master. From the age of fifteen, when he first studied *haikai* poetry under famed master Matsunaga Teitoku in the Teimon school, Saikaku principally went by the name *Kakuei* 鶴永. However, after assuming the title of *shishō*, or *haikai* master, at the precocious age of 20 in the spring of 1662, Saikaku began to take on a number of aliases, including: *Kaku* 鶴, an abbreviated form of *Kakuei*, *Shōju* 松寿, *Shō* 松, an abbreviation of *Shōju*, and *Naniwa hairin* 難波俳林, among others.⁵ Not all of these pseudonyms were standard *haigō* or *angō*, atelier names. The name *Shōju* 松寿, for example, was his *kangō* 軒号, which he adopted after becoming a lay Buddhist monk in 1677 and used in the prefaces to a number of subsequent collections that he edited. Another example is the name *Niman ō*, or "Old Master of Twenty Thousand Verses", which he assumed after his legendary *yakazu* performance at Sumiyoshi Shrine in 1682, composing over 23,000 *haikai* verses in a single sitting.⁶ This was more a nominal accolade than a formal *haigō* per se, insofar as its currency was tied to the topicality of a specific event and could be disposed of if one bested the feat that served as the namesake. In fact, until Sumiyoshi, Saikaku had been laurelled by his

⁵ Ogata Tsutomu, ed., *Haibungaku daijiten* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1995), 101-102.

⁶ Ogata, *Haibungaku daijiten*, 101-102.

Danrin *confreeres* with the moniker *Yonsen ō*, or “Old Master of Four Thousand Verses,” another, though far less impressive, recognition of his productivity during an earlier *yakazu* composition. It was in fact quite common during the early days of Osaka *zappai* to try to make a name for oneself—and indeed a spectacle of oneself—by churning out hundreds or even thousands of *haikai* verses at a feverish pace during these compositions. Nanyōsha Kishō (1712-1785), a wealthy merchant from the Kawara district of Osaka who went on to become an important poet in the school of Ono Shōren (1676-1761) was one such poet. Though falling short of Saikaku’s legendary 20, 000 mark, Kishō earned the nickname *Ichiman ō* after composing over 10,000 *hokku* in the course of single night in the spring of 1754.⁷

The widely held view is that Saikaku turned to prose narrative shortly after realizing, during his *yakazu* performance at Sumiyoshi in 1682, his capacity for creating extended narratives from concatenations of *hokku*, *wakiku*, and *daisanku*—all forms of linked verse. Despite the fame this feat had garnered him, however, Saikaku did not append any of his poetic pseudonyms to his earliest works of fiction, however much this strategy might have resulted in brisker sales. All of Saikaku’s earliest works of prose fiction, that is, all *kōshokubon* (the contemporary genre designation which later came to be re-designated *ukiyozōshi*) published before *Saikaku shokoku banashi* (1685), are anonymous and include no prefaces. In *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (1682), widely recognized as Saikaku’s first work, there is a two-line postscript by Mizuta Saigin (d. 1709), a Danrin poet who contributed as the galley calligrapher, in which he gives the date of the work’s completion, Tenna 2, and then an attribution in very bold print in which he declares that he has done the calligraphy.⁸ The name Saikaku does not appear anywhere in the earliest printed editions of this work, or subsequent works, for some time. With the publication of *Saikaku shokoku banashi* in the first month of 1685, however, the format of Saikaku’s published works begins to change: authorial attributions become more explicit, and prefaces become standard.

The preface to *Saikaku shokoku banashi* is itself anonymous, even though the title clearly includes the name “Saikaku.” From 1686 onwards, every published work of prose fiction by Saikaku includes a preface with some form of self-designation, in a combination of signatures and/or seal marks. In total, three different assemblages of signatures and/or seal marks appear in these prefaces, with each assemblage being specific to particular periods in Saikaku’s career; these periods, however, based as they are reconfigurations of pseudonymous assemblages and not on any stylistic or thematic feature of the work themselves, do not match with the usual demarcations of stages in Saikaku’s career as a novelist. The first period spans the eleventh month of 1686 to the second month of 1688 and includes four published works—*Honchō nijū fukō* (Twenty Tales of Filial Impiety in Our Realm), *Nanshoku ōkagami* (The Great Mirror of Male Love), *Budō denraiki* (Legends of the Samurai), and *Buke giri monogatari* (Tales of Samurai Loyalty)—all of which feature prefaces imprinted with two seal marks but no signatures. The first seal mark is his pseudonym Kakuei, his earliest *haigō*, etched in black on a white ground. The second seal mark, etched in white on a black ground, is the *kangō* or Buddhist name Shōju.⁹

⁷ Ogata, *Haibungaku daijiten*, 101-102.

⁸ Ihara Saikaku, *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (Tokyo: Benseiha, 1981), 211.

⁹ Ihara Saikaku, *Honchō nijū fukō* and *Nanshoku ōkagami*, in *Shinpen Nihon bungaku zenshū*, vol. 67 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1996) 153, 291; Ihara Saikaku, *Budō denraiki* and *Buke giri monogatari*, in *Shinpen Nihon bungaku zenshū*, vol. 68 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000), 19, 183.

A different assemblage of pseudonyms begins to appear in the second month of 1688, immediately after the publication of *Buke giri monogatari* (Tales of Samurai Loyalty), the last work to feature the pairing of the Kakuei and Shōju seal marks. After this date, every other work published during Saikaku's lifetime, from *Shin kashōki* (New Record of the Laughable), in the eleventh month of 1688, to *Seken mune san'yō* (This Scheming World), in the second month of 1692, include two signatures—Naniwa Hairin and Saihō—and one seal, Shōju.¹⁰

The coinage of the new pseudonym Saihō effectively coincides with the disappearance of the *haigō* Kakuei—which itself came immediately after the publication of *Buke giri monogatari* in the second month of 1688. Kakuei, or the pseudonym Saikaku for that matter, does not appear in any other work published during Saikaku's lifetime. This disposal of the pseudonym does not appear to have been a matter of personal choice, or aesthetic preference, for it was in the same month that the then reigning fifth Tokugawa shōgun, Tsunayoshi (1680-1709) passed an edict entitled *kakuji hōdo* 鶴字法度, which in effect outlawed the use of the ideograph for “crane” (read *tsuru* or *kaku*) in all printed matter, including works of popular fiction.¹¹ The reason for the passage of this edict had nothing to do with Saikaku per se, rather it stemmed from a personal tragedy. The shogun's eldest daughter, *Tsuru hime* (“The Crane Princess”) had contracted smallpox in the first month of 1688, and in order to prevent unscrupulous satirists from making light of her condition, he made it illegal to use her name, or the individual characters in her name, in any printed matter. The edict remained in effect beyond 1693, the year of Saikaku's death, and years after the death of *Tsuru hime* herself, thus effacing these names from print by virtue of the sheer coincidence that they contained the same ideograph.

So, how did “Saikaku,” or the serial assemblages of recombined and reassembled pseudonyms that I continue to refer to provisionally as “Saikaku,” come to be ratified into the cultural memory and later into the canon of early modern Japanese literature? I submit that the reclamation of the name Saikaku came at least as early 1684, at the insistence of Hōjō Dansui (1663-1711), a Danrin poet and avowed disciple of Saikaku who prepared a number of Saikaku's manuscripts for posthumous publication, or his publisher, or both. As the dust of the attenuating taboo on the use of the ideograph in Saikaku lifted, Dansui prepared five manuscripts for publication: *Saikaku oridome* (Saikaku Fulling the Yarns), published in the third month 1694 with a frontispiece illustration of the author, *Saikaku zoku tsurezure*, (Saikaku's Vulgate Essays in Idleness), published in the first month 1695, *Yorozu no fumi hōgu* (Myriad Literary Scraps), published in the first month 1696, and *Saikaku nagori no tomo* (Saikaku's Remaining Friends), published in the fourth month of 1699, and *Saikaku oki-miyage* (Saikaku's Parting Gift). As is obvious from the list of titles, the name Saikaku figures prominently in all but one of the works, presumably acting as a guarantor of cultural value on a market that, if the fictional Osaka bookseller of Miyako no Nishiki's *Genroku taiheiki* is to be believed, was suffering from slumping sales in the wake of Saikaku's death.¹² Beyond this, it is apparent from the prefaces to these works that new assemblages of pseudonyms, new multivocalities of authorial presence, could continue to be formed after the death of the author. In the preface to *Saikaku okimiyage*, for example, we find two seal marks and two signatures—*Naniwa hairin* and the atelier name *Saikaku-an*—an entirely new assemblage. The very same assemblage of pseudonyms appears in

¹⁰ Ihara Saikaku, *Shin kashōki*, in *Shinpen Nihon bungaku zenshū*, vol. 67 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1996), 311; Ihara Saikaku, *Seken mune san'yō*, in *Shinpen Nihon bungaku zenshū*, vol. 68 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000), 217.

¹¹ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 66 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1996), 604.

¹² Miyako no Nishiki, *Genroku taiheiki*, in Takada Mamoru, ed., *Miyako no Nishiki shū* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1989), 113.

the preface to *Saikaku zoku tsurezure*, along with an illustration, embedded earlier in the preface, in which Saikaku is recast as a sort of modern-day Yoshida Kenkō.¹³ One would like to think that the almost gratuitous deployment of pseudonyms and forced alignment of the late Saikaku with a major figure of the canon was more than a marketing ploy, that instead it was the strategy of a well-meaning curator of his master's cultural legacy. One possibility that cannot be ignored, however, is that the invocation of the name Saikaku in the titles and prefaces to these works may have been a way of establishing their authenticity amidst a veritable flood of pirated editions of Saikaku's works and even legitimate *ukiyozōshi* in which large excerpts of previous works were simply plagiarized.

Conclusion

Many of the richest materials for discussing how disclosure of authorial identity could be modulated in response to external demands on given texts date from the years of the Kansei Reforms (1787-1793). This is especially true of work by writers like Morishima Churyo (1754-1810?), Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), and Hōseidō Kisanji (1735-1813), all of whom were affiliated with the publishing house of Tsutaya Jūsaburō (1750-1797) during its darkest days, when the shogunal authority cracked down on the writers and publishers responsible for works deemed to be in any way seditious or inimical to the public good. While the scope of the present paper would not admit a thorough examination of how the deployment of pseudonyms became increasing complex from the greater Genroku period, the age of Saikaku, to the late eighteenth century, it is hoped that the case of Saikaku, examined in detail above, provides some illustration of the essential issues.

¹³ For an image of the preface and accompanying illustration, see Digital Library Division, Information Technology Center, "Katei bunko," Tokyo University, <http://133.11.199.8/cgi-bin/KateiIndex>.