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*The two characters ki-tō, written by Arthur Witteveen.
For details, see inside this volume.*

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Haka in the form of the body from the article *Dealing with Death and Disaster*

PREFACE

Inevitably, the disasters that struck Japan in March continue to ‘draw their tail’, as the Japanese phrase goes, affecting daily life, society, the economy, and the political situation. In view of the tremendous loss of life, and of the dent in the Japanese self-esteem caused by the nuclear calamity in Fukushima, this will amaze no one. It will take a long time for the individual and collective trauma to disappear. Two of the contributions in this last issue of our journal in 2011 are directly or indirectly inspired by the consequences of the flood. Hendrik van der Veere’s contribution analyses the ritual and religious problems that confront the survivors who mourn the disappearance of entire families and communities. What do you do, when the usual supports of the ceremonial are unavailable? When there is no body to cremate, no temple to go to, and the house altar and family grave have been swept away? Thanks to his Buddhist training and temple affiliation, Van der Veere is able to give an insightful, authoritative account of the difficulties mourners in Japan’s North-east encounter, and of how they cope with them. Key terms in this context are ‘ancestors’ (*gosenzo-sama*) and ‘prayer’ (*kitō*). These two words inspired Arthur Witteveen’s calligraphies. As he explains himself, the characters are written in two appropriately different styles.

Politics, in the meantime, went their own callous way. Inadequate handling of the aftermath of the earthquake was as good a pretext as any for some members of the Democratic Party who wanted to topple their Prime Minister Kan Naoto. The various factions, all supporting their own candidates, girded their loins and engaged in battle, but in the end it was not the candidate supported by Ōzawa Ichirō, the leader of the anti-Kan faction, who succeeded Kan, but the more neutral Noda Yoshihiko. In his column, Dick Stegewerns analyses the context of the fight, and the personality of Ozawa.

Frans Verwayen contributed the translation of the modern poem ‘Namiddag’, describing morose reflections in a station cafeteria. As the cafeteria is ‘filled with the Japanese people’ drinking beer, one imagines a holiday afternoon, but the atmosphere can hardly be called festive. Older poetry, of a more ebullient nature, is found in Henk Akkermans’ translation of the third and fourth sequences of linked verse of the *haiku* anthology *Sarumino* (1691). After the sequences ‘Winter’ and ‘Summer’ of the third issue of this year, we now have the sequences ‘Autumn’ and ‘Spring’, again accompanied by Akkermans’ informed comments on the genre and his notes on the individual verses.

The final contribution is my translation (with notes and introduction) of an essay in praise of Dutch medicine that Sugita Genpaku (1733-1871) composed in 1775. Genpaku, in later years the doyen of Dutch Studies in Edo, wrote the essay in the year after the translation of Kulmus’ *Ontleedkundige tafelen* was published, which event put Dutch Studies on the map and turned Genpaku into a controversial figure.

On behalf of the Board of Editors

W.J. Boot

Ozawa Ichirō and Japan's Political 'Revolution'

Dick Stegewerns

It is already more than two years since the shift in power from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the Democratic Party (DPJ). At the time Western media discussed the political transition in terms of 'revolution'. In Japan the influential and outspoken pro-DPJ newspaper Asahi Shinbun even gave the date on its front page as 'x days since the regime change'. However, the reaction of the Japanese electorate to the victory of the DPJ was not euphoric. They were rather cynical and their vote could be better characterised as anti-LDP than pro-DPJ. After the two short-lived and not terribly successful DPJ cabinets of Hatoyama Yukio and Kan Naoto many political commentators now show a more detached and cooler attitude. Western academia has followed suit. Leonard Schoppa in his recent book *The Evolution of Japan's Party System* (University of Toronto Press, November 2011) discusses the political events of September 2009 not in terms of revolution but positions them rather neutrally within the framework of a long-term process towards a two-party structure that has been underway ever since the electoral reforms of the early 1990s. The volume *Japanese Politics Today* (Palgrave MacMillan, October 2011), edited by Takashi Inoguchi and Purnendra Jain, also situates the recent political changes in Japan within a long-term 'globally unfolding transition from representative democracy to monitoring democracy'. In my writings in this journal and other Dutch media I have taken an identical stand and have since long stressed the evolutionary aspects of these changes and rejected the notion of 'a revolution'. In doing so I have described Japan as a visual-media driven 'TV democracy', a term which I still prefer over 'kabuki democracy' now proposed by Inoguchi and Jain, as the latter concept gives the impression that the present political system is uniquely Japanese and traditional.



Kawamura Takashi

The most outstanding Japanese example of TV democracy still is Koizumi Junichirō. This charismatic leader was able to rule for more than five years, i.e. five times longer than the average rule of all other Japanese prime ministers since the start of this century, solely on the basis of his media-derived individual popularity. He was successful in enacting a constant struggle against such 'bad guys' as 'conservative forces', 'the establishment' and 'the bureaucracy'. The rapid succession of short-lived cabinets ever since the end of

Koizumi's rule can be regarded as a reflection of a lack of true stars on the level of national politics. However, on the regional level we find such masters of TV democracy as the mayor of Nagoya and leader of the 'Tax-Decrease Japan' movement Kawamura Takashi and, most of all, the young former governor of Osaka Prefecture and former 'TV lawyer' Hashimoto Tōru, who has just been elected as the new mayor of Osaka. Both are continually accused of 'dictatorship' by their critics and opponents. However, as long as their rule seems to be aimed against 'the system' they enjoy an unrivalled popularity, on the basis of which they can bring about 'change'. Just like Koizumi was able to bring down the national lower house elections of 2005 to the single issue of reform of the postal system, Hashimoto successfully dominated the combined Osaka mayor and governor elections of 27 November with his quest to turn Osaka City and Osaka Prefecture into one Osaka Metropolitan Area.



Hashimoto Tōru

In sharp contrast the established parties have huge problems with their public relations. None of the major parties has been able to put forward its own candidate for these local elections. The central party leaderships in Tokyo have clearly judged it unwise to confront Hashimoto directly, for fear of the implications this may have for their parties' popularity on the national level. Of course it is not easy for established political parties to present themselves as rebels against 'the system', when they have been formed and function within it. And charismatic leaders who can make the people forget about this contradiction are neither easy to find nor easily created. The Matsushita Seikeijuku, the training institute for politicians established by the business leader Matsushita Kōnosuke, has not yet produced top stars, although it has spawned its first political top leader in the form of the present prime minister Noda Yoshihiko. However, even without strong TV personalities as their leaders political parties and democracy can function. In this case unity, continuity and consistency are important factors. In other words, even if the message is not delivered with some kind of added value, the electorate most likely will not defect *en masse* to the opposition party, as long as the message is consistent (and not overly unpopular). Prime



Noda Yoshihiko

minister Noda is also aware of this, as he had no qualms in presenting himself in his maiden speech as a loach (*dojō*), a small and dull fish that prefers to live in mud, and in a Japanese book of aphorisms functions as the opposite of the bright and attractive goldfish.

By electing Noda rather than the more flamboyant and outspoken Maehara Seiji the DPJ finally seems to have reached tranquil waters. During its first two years as the ruling party it has been almost continuously tormented by intra-party disunity, an oppositional majority in the upper house, blundering leadership and disastrous popularity polls. One of the major elements bringing about the crisis of the DPJ is the existence of Ozawa Ichirō. This political veteran easily is the most controversial person on the present-day Japanese political scene. Some have held him up as the saviour of Japanese politics ever since his crucial contribution to the

downfall of the LDP hegemony and the publication of his book *A Blueprint for a New Japan*, both in 1993. Others mainly see him as the favourite pupil of Tanaka Kakuei and Kanemaru Shin and focus on the Tanaka faction's legacy of 'money-based politics', characterised by backroom powerbroking, vote-buying and corruption scandals. Some political specialists value him highly as 'the genius of elections', who through his many connections and his insight in political power has been successful in welding alliances resulting in electoral victories. Still others know him mainly as an opportunistic wrecker and sower of contention, who just as easily dissolves alliances and parties as he forms them, and who does not take any interests into account that go beyond his own, personal interests. Ozawa probably was most popular during his years as party leader of the DPJ (2006-2009), when he brought stability, experience and unity to the self-imploding opposition party. He was able to fine-tune his image of an extremely stubborn politician into that of a reformer *pur sang* who would not be led astray from the road towards fundamental reform, no matter how fierce the opposition. However, as many critics had expected, Ozawa eventually had to resign his leadership due to a corruption scandal, just before the elections turned the DPJ into the new ruling party and would have turned him into the first DPJ prime minister of the country. Ever since his public image has once again been that of a power-hungry intriguer, a 'shadow shōgun' who, despite his high age (69) and serious health problems, cannot let go of his ambitions to become prime minister.

Ozawa may have thought that he would be able to take over easily from his stand-in Hatoyama Yukio once the outcry over his own scandal had died down, but the latter had to step down sooner than expected. In the ensuing elections for the party presidency Kan Naoto was victorious over Ozawa, on the ticket of doing away with money politics and eradicating the influence of the Ozawa faction from the DPJ. It was illustrative of his position within the party that Ozawa, who put up a brave fight in the political centre, obtained the same number of votes as Kan from the DPJ members of parliament, but was undone by his lack of popularity amongst the plain party members in the region. The continuing rivalry between Kan and Ozawa reached its climax when the latter's active party membership was suspended, due to his legal indictment in a case

of political corruption. The party went out of control and became completely unstable, as much time and energy were spent on the infighting between the pro- and anti-Ozawa forces. The final duel, willingly orchestrated by the LDP opposition party, was extremely distasteful and lacked all human or political courtesy. It led indirectly to the downfall of prime minister Kan but also to a further loss of face and popularity of Ozawa. Most Japanese were just as disgusted by the LDP as by the rebels within the DPJ, who could not set aside their petty quarrels at a time of national crisis in the wake of the earthquake. The fact that Ozawa seemed disloyal to his own retainers when he did not show his face during the vote of no-confidence against Kan appears to have fatally stained his political credibility.



Ozawa Ichirō

Whereas the power of Ozawa and his faction were instrumental in toppling an already lame prime minister, it no longer is sufficient to lead the DPJ. In the recent elections for the party leadership, the pro-Ozawa candidate was easily defeated. Moreover, the new party leader and prime minister Noda Yoshihiko, despite his please-all policy aimed to re-establish unity within the party, does not seem to be willing to go so far as to reinstate Ozawa as an active party member, thus thwarting Ozawa's ambition to become party leader and prime minister. In a former age the ambitious powerbroker might have led the remainder of his loyal retainers out of the DPJ, to once again form his own party or to unite with the LDP. And even now rumours are that Ozawa may do so before the end of the year (a timing essential to qualify for the public funds supporting political parties). However, the present electoral system of small

single-member election districts is geared towards a two-party structure and most of Ozawa's followers will think twice before leaving the relatively safe environment and future the DPJ provides. This new fundament of Japanese politics seems to prevent Ozawa from ever reaching the supreme position of prime minister.

Some commentators, including my fellow-countryman Karel van Wolferen, will not give up their hopes for Ozawa. Just like Ozawa himself, they speak of his corruption scandal in terms of 'a political conspiracy', proclaim the 2009 change from LDP to DPJ rule 'a revolution', and tend to do away with other reformers – no matter whether some of the reforms are in line with Ozawa's blueprint – as 'fake'. However, I cannot help thinking that the man's style and image are not in line with the present trend of TV democracy and that his lack of service towards the electorate in explaining some odd 'details' concerning the corruption scandal of himself and his political secretaries will only further reduce the popular appeal that would be essential for him to fulfil his aim.

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Dealing with death and disaster

Hendrik van der Veere

1. Questions

On September 11th of this year, 2011 (Heisei 23) remembrance services were held in numerous places. In the US and Europe media attention focussed on New York where thousands of people had lost their lives in terrorist attacks. On the same day, ceremonies were held in north-eastern Japan for those who had perished half a year earlier, on March 11th, in consequent disasters, of which the *tsunami* claimed more than 10.000 lives.

In discussions about the extent of the damage done to the economy and the social framework and about the ensuing relief efforts questions were raised concerning the role of religion and more specifically Buddhism in dealing with the aftermath of the disasters. The nature of some questions and the background from which these were posed made me realise two things. Firstly, questions about aid and relief were almost solely geared to material matters while the problem of mental assistance and comfort for the victims (dead or alive) was overlooked. Secondly, the functions ascribed to Buddhism within Japanese society, including its role in dealing with matters of loss and grief, appeared to me to be misunderstood by most non-Japanese. The first point may be a matter of choice, and for the second point one can say that this may be true not only for Buddhism but for other aspects of Japanese society as well. An evaluation or criticism, however, of the actions taken by Buddhist organisations, of the courses open to them, and of the responsibilities they have to shoulder, should be build on an adequate understanding of the place accorded to Buddhist rituals within the world-view of modern Japanese. In other words, the actions undertaken after the disaster must be seen against the backdrop of ritual patterns that are generally accepted.

In the following I want to describe this ritual background in general terms as I came to understand it through my studies and my work as a priest over the years. This description sketches a general image of the ritual functions Buddhist priests and temples carry out in Japanese society and touches upon some of the underlying suppositions of the place of Buddhism within the community. Thereafter, I will discuss some of the immaterial problems that surfaced in the aftermath of the disasters in order to bring to more general attention the psychological problems that are, as I remarked, overlooked in most if not all western publications.

2. The ritual background: dealing with the dead

Buddhism may boast of an incredibly large volume of texts produced over centuries of efforts. Some of these texts are devoted to speculation and doctrinal discussion, many texts concern practice and ritual. Western scholars initially explored this wealth of material in the assumption that Buddhism could be understood by studying its doctrine, which approach and perspective



Bochi near a temple

was copied by Japanese university employed scholars, thus creating their a field concerned with exegesis of doctrine. The central place that ritual and practice occupies in the Buddhist traditions of Japan was thereby relegated to the background. Doctrinal studies have no bearing on the actual ritual functions of Buddhism nor do they reflect the place Buddhism occupies in the world-view of ordinary Japanese.

In present-day, twenty-first century Japan most people will only interact with Buddhist matters through its ritual functions at ritually determined days. What is more, the direct incentive to contact a Buddhist temple is generally crisis-driven. A crisis may be loosely defined here as any deviation and anomaly in the expected course of one's life, from divorce or business failure, to mental or physical illness. Japanese ritual experts provide relief in any crisis through a number of methods ranging from counselling to the performance of rituals or the construction of talismans and amulets. Most importantly, Buddhist ritual specialists almost monopolize the services for the dead, such as the funerary rites and the cyclic remembrance-rituals.

In the absence of a crisis, funeral services and the set of rituals that follow constitute the nucleus of the contacts between family and temples. Although all the preparations for the actual funeral, including cremation etc, may be left to the funeral parlour, there is general agreement on an accepted ritual order in which the physical remains are "guided" by the priests. These priests chant sutras to guide the spirit, erect an altar, and organize the wake on the eve of the cremation (*tsuya*), hold a final farewell ceremony (*kokubetsu-shiki*) and so on. They also provide, on the day of cremation, the posthumous (Buddhist) name for the deceased and prepare the funerary tablet (*ihai*) on which this name is written. In many cases, the spirit of the deceased ritually becomes the disciple of the priest who on the one hand guides the spirit through the after-life and who on the other hand takes care of the remains of the body in this life. This intricate

connection between the caretakers of the dead and the spirits of the dead is visible in the fact that the grave-monuments (*haka*) are placed together in a yard (*bochi*) situated near temples or other spiritually rich places. The monuments themselves, under which the urns with the bones may be stored, are often stylized representations of the human body through geometrical forms following concepts from the Buddhist tradition.



Haka in the form of the body

3. The ritual calendar: *higan* and Obon

The involvement of the family with the temples does not end with the funeral. Allowing for ritual differences between the various schools of Buddhism in the way the bodily remains and spirits are treated, there is on a more general level an awareness of a ritual calendar that should be followed. This ritual calendar counts a number of days in which ties between the living and the dearly departed are strengthened. The weeks around the spring and autumn equinox are two of these periods and are known as the periods of *higan*. *Higan* is a term of Buddhist provenance and was originally used to refer to the other shore of a river or sea. More specifically, the other shore was seen as the space that could be reached by Buddhist practice, and is variously described as the world of enlightenment, the level of insight and wisdom, the domain of ‘transcendental’ knowledge etc. Metaphorically, Buddhism was called the raft that enabled people to reach the other shore, crossing the sea of suffering. Often, this other shore was imagined as a place one could travel to horizontally, and not as a heaven above, which accounts for much of the imagery found in texts and rituals dealing with the other world.

This world on the other shore became conflated with the world of the spirits of the deceased. On *higan* days it is easier to contact this other world than on ordinary days and such a day is thus more suited to pay respect to the spirits of the dead. The accompanying activities involve family visits to gravesites and the upkeep of the site, sutra-readings by priests before the grave-monument or before the ancestor altar at home etc.

Even more important for the contacts between the family and the spirits of the deceased is the period of Obon in which the ancestors actually return to the main family residence. Ritual participation is at its height during this period. Obon's central position in the ritual calendar is reflected in the large number of accompanying festivities, which makes Obon a pivotal period for social and cultural relationships as well. The rituals of Obon firmly fix ancestor relationships in society and the prevailing world-view.



Haka at the time of Obon

For the temples and the priests Obon constitutes one of the busiest periods of the year, while for those returning to their family homes from far off places it means endless traffic jams. The spirits are invited by placing lanterns (*tōrō*) at the entrance of the family residence and the grave-monuments are decorated. The family members gather at the ancestral home where the ancestor-altar is kept, visit the grave-monuments and enjoy parties at home. In the community, festivities are organised and the spirits may be entertained by communal dancing (*bon-odori*).



Festive mood during Obon

4. The family

The individual family, on the other hand, entertains more personalized contacts with the deceased, often on a daily basis. The head of the household, the eldest son, counts among his responsibilities the upkeep and continued ritual attendance to the *butsudan*, the ancestor altar, from which (exalted) place the deceased (*hotoke*) partakes of family life. He/she may be spoken to, presented with gifts and receives all kinds of attentions. Whether this attention is a product of fear for the consequences brought on by angry spirits or a token of respect and gratitude is a discussion I will not enter at this place.

The daily observances of flower offering and incense burning are combined with grave-visits on birthdays, the *higan* days and during Obon. Attention is relocated to the temple-hall for specific commemoration days (*kaiki*). These *kaiki* rituals for commemoration, sometimes called ancestor veneration, take the form of *hōyō*, Buddhist services carried out by the religious expert in the ancestor temple, the Bodaiji. In combination these services form a schedule in which ritual guidance is given to the deceased on the path he follows in the afterlife. The first of these *hōyō* takes place seven days after the demise, and is followed by rituals at intervals of two and three weeks and so on. The remembrance ceremony held one year after the actual death is one of the more important, but gradually attendance may decrease for the following rituals in the third and seventh years or in the thirty-third year. Although there are differences among the Buddhist schools, the best-known schedule is that of thirteen commemoration moments with each of the services devoted to one of thirteen “Buddha’s” in an ascending order related

to insight, starting with Fudō myōō and ending with the thirteenth step in the thirty-third *kaiki* connected to Kokūzō Bosatsu. The basic aim of the ritual is to solicit the guidance of the thirteen Buddhist figures for the spirit in the afterlife.

5. *Hatsubon*

Within this framework of funeral rituals, possible contact moments, and commemoration days, the *hatsubon* observances are most important socially and religiously. The *hatsubon* refers to the first Obon festival after the death of the family-member. In some communities the observances held resemble the memorial service, although this time without cremation. As with the *kokubetsu-shiki*, the saying farewell service before the actual cremation, family and friends gather, in rural Japan on a large scale. The spirit of the deceased is sent off to the other shore in a specially constructed float in the form of a ship on wheels, the *shōryō-bune*, which is decked with lanterns and personal items of the deceased. After the initial gathering at home the ship is pulled through the streets, stopping at places familiar to the deceased to say farewell, and preceded by acquaintances who throw fireworks around to frighten bad influences. In the end, a Buddhist priest chants sutras such as the *Kannon-gyō* before the ship is put to sea (*nagashi*) and sent on its way to the other shore. Nowadays, this has become a symbolic act and the ship is left at the quay for the garbage truck to collect, but the intention is clear. Meanwhile, the bereaved family observes a number of rites during the first year after the death, while outsiders, those who are aware of the death, keep the taboos involved, such as refraining to wish the bereaved a happy new year (*omedetō gozaimasu*). Such well-wishing is considered inappropriate.



Haka of the founder of UCC Coffee

6. Re-creation

Within this complex of rituals the tasks of the Buddhist priests and the temple is twofold. It is evident that the care of the spirit of the deceased in the afterlife is entrusted to them as experts in this matter. Further, they have the task of re-creating the physical presence of the deceased as a focus for ritual action by the bereaved. As I discussed, this task translates in a number of actions, starting with the fabrication of the *ihai* (memorial tablet) in which the spirit may take up residence and the construction of the *haka* (grave-monument). Both carry the new posthumous name attributed by the priest. The *ihai* and *haka* may vary in form depending on the Buddhist school, but the net result is the reconstruction of the physical body of the deceased in a perfect form. The *haka* often are constructed from five geometrical forms corresponding to the building stones of the material world, and they carry the *shittan* signs used in Buddhism to refer to the ideal world. The form of the *haka* may also refer to personal qualities or activities of the deceased.

The ashes and bones placed in the urn display the same idea of re-building the body. After cremation the remains of the body, including the bones, are lifted by means of chopsticks from among the ashes. The fragments from the lowest part of the body are taken up first and placed in the urn. Moving upwards in the order of the build-up of the body, the pieces are placed in the urn. This urn is then placed inside the *haka*. By these reconstruction efforts the *ihai* as re-created body becomes the material focal point for ritual at home, while the *haka* contains the same body near the temple or the last resting-place.

7. Immaterial damage

The *tsunami* in north-east Japan not only destroyed infrastructure and the social fabric, but also damaged the ritual system, adding to the feelings of loss, and creating seemingly unsolvable problems. Leaving the problems of the evacuation sites of Fukushima aside, we know that many *bochi* were destroyed and that grave-monuments were tumbled over by the earthquake or *tsunami*. At numerous places nothing could be salvaged because nothing remained. The focal point of *haka-mairi*, the grave-visits, disappeared. In many cases the family-temples, mostly nearby the grave-monuments, also were severely damaged and incapable of performing their tasks as ancestor temples. The other focal point, the *butsudan* with its *ihai*, was also destroyed with the houses that contained them. Thus, the material damage done by the disasters did not only hurt the living but the dead as well because it touched upon the physical manifestations of their world. For the living, the focal points of their ritual reality were taken away, creating insecurities that transcend the basic needs for means of subsistence. The direst consequence in this abstract disaster is that accepted responsibilities felt towards the progenitors and deceased members of the family cannot be shouldered and that the expressions of respect due to “those that were before” cannot be carried out.

The first actions of government-organisations, NGOs and Buddhist temples in the aftermath were to secure the “lifelines”, water, food, heating etc. Temples provided temporary lodging to the homeless and played their own part in relief efforts, depending on temple and priest. Their added responsibility was to restore the ritual system that entertains the contacts between living and dead, especially in a situation in which so many had died or gone missing. Erecting gravestones that had tumbled over in the earthquake was one of the most visible actions. One television program showed a Buddhist priest who, dressed in white anti-radiation suit, was allowed to enter the forbidden zones around the nuclear reactor of Fukushima to

salvage his ritual implements and memorial tablets from his temple in the no-entrance zone. The problem became most acute at the *hatsubon* period, in the middle of august. So many persons had died that priests had a hard time battling with the workload. In addition, other problems arose. The yearly ritual performed for spirits that had no ritual connection with the living, the *segaki*-ritual, had to be extended to a greater number of dead and missing people. One reason is that whole families had perished. A second reason is that more than five thousand people were still unaccounted for at that time. A third reason is that many orphans were not capable of performing the ritual duties of the householder.

Presumably washed out to sea by the *tsunami*, the bodily remains of many people had not been recovered. This created both a ritual problem for the temples, and anxiety for the survivors. Among testimonies about the hardships such as living in community-centres, the destruction of their environment and the “lifelines”, electricity, water-supply and so on, mention is made of one specific dilemma that cannot be solved. On the one hand people are aware of their ritual duties towards the dead, often part of the mourning process, but as no bodily remains were found, they had no certainty or proof that family members had actually died. To perform the rituals for someone who might still be alive would constitute a breach of etiquette and even rudeness towards the older family-member.

Against the background of the ritual system, which organizes the contact and interaction with the spirits of the dead, the scale of the mental damage can to a certain extent be assessed. The disasters did not only inflict much material damage but because the ritual system has its focal points in concrete things linked to the spirits, the earthquake and *tsunami* also affected the basis of this ritual system. On the one hand the focal points of physical recreation were destroyed while the possibility to rebuild the newly deceased was severely limited by the absence of bodily remains. With the momentary collapse of the ritual system, the foundations of a world-view were undermined, which lead to mental insecurities of the people and instability of the social and cultural fabric with which it was intertwined.

8. Restoring the ritual system

In order to erect the ritual system anew, the first task for the priests was to re-erect the material focal points as a way to alleviate the anxieties and loss of the people they are serving. A subsidiary task was, and still is, to take away anxieties about the state the spirits of the diseased are in, given in by fear of wrathful spirits, spirits that had received insufficient ritual attention. This became most visible this summer at the time of *hatsubon*. Even before this period media-reports showed devastated areas with a flower-shop as one of the first shops to re-open, since flowers were offered to the dead or missing. The same florist also functioned as a communal point of comfort for the living because people could express their feelings of loss. Buddhist temples needed to restore the semblance of ritual normality as soon as possible. One way to go about this is through the material forms that underpin the world-view of the populace. Another way is to cater to the ritual need of the people. Both these courses provide comfort and stress-relief, as is indicated in some reports. In this process a reappraisal of Buddhism is mentioned by younger people, who evidently have become aware of the functions of the Buddhist ritualists or see them in a different light. The responsibility for the rituals is usually with the head of the household and younger people rarely meet the ritual specialists. In these changed circumstances the interaction between the temples and the population has broadened to include younger generations who now for the first time become aware of other aspects of the ritual system they live in, before their time as it were. There are reports that attitudes of

indifference have changed to a more positive one. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to verify whether these reports represent the opinions of a minority or voice what is a more common insight or change of attitude. What is clear is that remarks are heard that in this time of crisis Buddhism or rather local temples are valued for their role of providing mental support.

9. Ritual conclusion

On September 11th Buddhist priests from six prefectures gathered near the Kongōji in a town in Iwate-prefecture to carry out a large-scale outdoor fire ritual (*saitō-goma*). Around 140 parishioners of this temple perished in the *tsunami*. The fuel for this fire-ritual was provided by pine-trees from stretches of land that had been affected by the *tsunami*. The aim of the ritual was twofold, on the one hand to “pray” for the reconstruction efforts and, on the other hand, to pacify the spirits of the dead (*iryō*). From the commentaries of the attending public it becomes clear that this commemoration ritual provided comfort for those present as well.

For the actual ceremony on September 11th see:

<http://sankei.jp.msn.com/affairs/photos/110911/dst11091121290019-p1.htm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36gAoCt9Sww>

Hendrik van der Veere (1954) studied Indology and Japanology at Leiden University, specializing in Buddhist Studies. After doing research in Japan at Taishō Daigaku (Tōkyō), he wrote his dissertation on the Shingon monk Kakuban (1095-1144) and took his Ph.D. in Leiden. In connection with his research he became a fully initiated priest of the Shingon School, which allowed him to take advanced initiations and qualifications, and also a certified pilgrims' guide (sendatsu) for the Shikoku pilgrimage. He is employed at Leiden University, where he teaches and conducts his research. His present interest is in three research problems: 1. a broad investigation of systems of knowledge and transmissions of lore within Japanese Buddhism; 2. research of (esoteric) ritual in its workings and exegesis; 3. patterns of pilgrimage and the place of pilgrimage within Japanese culture.

Kitō (ritual prayers) and *Go-senzo-sama* (ancestors)

Calligraphy by Arthur Witteveen

The calligraphy on the cover of this issue of the Netherlands-Japan Review reads *Kitō*, prayers. It is executed in *reisho*-script, an old formal script-style that gives the expression greater solemnity. *Kitō* are prayer rituals in which the help of supernatural powers (Shinto *kami* or Buddhist deities) is invoked to influence reality in favour of, or for the protection of a person, who prays, for instance, for an illness to be cured, for safety of travel, or for success in an examination. But they can also be performed for a more public purpose, like peace and prosperity for the nation.

The calligraphy on the opposite page reads *Go-senzo-sama*, ancestors. As is done generally on the tablets at the altar for the ancestors in Japanese family homes, I have used the clearly readable *kaisho*-script. And although the term *Go-senzo-sama* does not refer to a particular ancestor, but to all ancestors together as a group, I have written the characters in a single line reminiscent of the ancestral memorial tablets in stele format.

As is explained in Henny van der Veere's article "Dealing with Death and Disaster", it is utterly important that the spirits of deceased family members can be guided on their way to ancestorship by the performance of the appropriate rituals. The spirits that have not received sufficient ritual attention might not reach that status of ancestor, becoming in the end *muenbotoke*, **Buddha's** (*hotoke* is the Japanese word for Buddha, but it is also used as a euphemism for the dead) **lacking** (*mu*) a **relation** (*en*), and therefore cannot find an ultimate resting-place. This might be the case for the spirits of people having no relatives or having died in catastrophes, like the victims of the earthquake and tsunami of March of this year.

As in the Japanese tradition a certain power of implementation is ascribed to writing, it is my hope that the *Kitō* and *Go-senzo-sama* calligraphies may, in whatever small way, contribute to the attenuation of the spiritual consequences of that disaster.

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御先祖様

魏雅慧書



De speelman en zijn aapje:
Een vertaling van de *renga* in Bashō's *Sarumino* – Deel II

Henk Akkermans

Summary

Nowadays, Bashō is known as a haiku poet. Few people realize that for Bashō himself the haiku rather were a byproduct of the 'linked verse' or renga, over the composition of which he, as a renga master, presided. We see this also in the anthologies that renga masters composed, i.c. in Sarumino ('The monkey's raincoat'; 1691). The bibliographical database says that it was 'written by Bashō and edited by (his disciples) Kyorai and Bonchō,' but the majority of the haiku it contains are not by Bashō, but by his disciples, and apart from the haiku the anthology also contains four renga. The renga are of the kasen type, i.e., they count thirty-six verses - the number of the Poetic Immortals. In this contribution, the third and the fourth renga ('autumn' and 'spring') are translated and annotated.

Knippen en plakken in kettinggedichten

Natuurlijk ademt bij ons elke bundel wel een bepaalde sfeer, maar strikte regels over hoe de verzen in een bundel onderling samenhangen zijn er niet. In Japanse kettinggedichten is dat nadrukkelijk anders. Dit zijn echt gedichten "in een ketting", en elke schakel in die ketting heeft een duidelijke relatie met de schakel er voor en die erna. Evenwel, wat is dan die relatie? Hier valt veel over te zeggen en ook veel bij te genieten. Om te beginnen het concept van *kannon-biraki*, letterlijk "het openen van de deuren van een Boeddhistisch altaar". Die deuren aan weerszijden van het altaar zijn identiek, zijn symmetrisch, en dát mag beslist niet. Voor elk vers geldt dat het vers dat er op volgt zich weg moet bewegen in thematiek en sfeer van het vers dat er aan voorafgaat. Zo houdt men continu ontwikkeling. En zo krijg je dus ook echt schakels van twee verzen, waarbij elk vers onderdeel is van twee schakels, net als in een fysieke ketting. Een voorbeeld hiervan uit een heuse klassieker is de navolgende korte sequentie uit de *Minase Sangin Hyakuin* uit 1488, gecomponeerd dus ruim twee eeuwen eerder dan *Sarumino*¹.

¹ Zie Akkermans, H.A. (2005) : *Zelfs wat ik nodig heb gaat niet lang mee. Een vertaling van de Minase Sangin Hyakuin*. The Pauper Press, Leiden.

<i>Itadakikeri / na</i> <i>Yonayona / no / shimo</i> <i>Shōhaku</i>	<i>Getooid zijn met, op je</i> <i>hoofd dragen / van</i> <i>nacht na nacht /van/ rijp</i>	Vorst van vele nachten Kroont zijn hoofd
<i>Fuyugare / no /</i> <i>Ashitazu / wabite</i> <i>Tateru / e / ni</i> <i>Sōgi</i>	<i>Wintergebleekte / van</i> <i>Kraanvogel in 't</i> <i>riet / afzien, lijden</i> <i>Opstaan/ kreek / in</i>	Gebleekt door de winter staat hij lijdzaam In het riet bij de kreek De verweerde kraanvogel
<i>Yū~shio~kaze / no</i> <i>Okitsu / funa~bito</i> <i>Shōhaku</i>	<i>avond~zout~wind / van</i> <i>open zee / boot-man</i>	In de zilte avondwind De bootsman op volle zee

Het middelste vers vormt een overzichtelijk geheel met het eerste. Dit is één gedicht van vijf regels, dat gaat over een kraanvogel met grijze kop die op betere tijden en vangst staat te wachten in het riet. Een al even duidelijk geheel vormt het middelste vers met het derde vers. In dit vijfregelige vers is er sprake van twee lijdzame figuren die in een vergelijkbare positie en lichaamshouding verkeren, en die elkaar wellicht zelfs aankijken vanuit de verte, de kraanvogel en de bootsman. En duidelijk is ook dat vers 1 nadrukkelijk verschilt van vers 3. Weet dan nog dat het vers dat voorafgaat aan vers 1 gaat over iemand die gewekt wordt na een zware nacht door klokkengelui, en dat het vers na vers 3 gaat over iemand die naar een soort van Paradijs gevaren is, en het is evident dat er sprake is van grote stemmingswisselingen tussen de verzenparen, en dat elk vers telkens in een twee heel verschillende contexten gelezen moet worden. Juist dit knippen-en-plakken maakt *renga* zo'n verfijnd genot voor de liefhebber.

De tijd staat niet stil en smaken veranderen, of evolueren in elk geval. In de *Minase Sangin Hyakuin* wordt er heel strak en duidelijk geknipt en geplakt. Echter, in de tijd van Bashō mochten de overgangen al wat minder geprononceerd en vager zijn, sterker nog, dat vond men inmiddels mooier. Men spreekt dan over *nioi-zuke*, wat Haruo Shirane in zijn Engelstalig standaardwerk over de poëzie van Bashō de “scent link” noemt², een “geur-link” in het Nederlands. Zo'n geur-link draagt iets van de sfeer over van het ene vers naar het andere, niet zozeer door meteen de handeling in het voorafgaande vers op zijn kop te gooien, maar eerder door er iets naast te zetten dat er qua sfeer aan doet denken, zoals de verweerde kraanvogel en de eenzame bootsman “iets” met elkaar hebben.

Dit principe van de indirecte, vage link, de “geur-link” is veel breder verbreid in de Japanse kunst in deze periode dan alleen binnen het genre van de kettinggedichten. Zo zijn de blokdruckprenten met aan de zijkant een gekalligrafeerd gedicht algemeen bekend, ook uit de Chinese kunst. Je verwacht dan dat de afbeelding in de prent een visualisatie vormt van waar het gedicht over gaat, maar juist in deze tijd is dat vaak niet het geval. Yosa Buson (1716-1783), een van de bekendste *haiku*-grootmeesters na de tijd van Bashō, vond een indirecte geur-link zelfs de meest voortreffelijke voor dit soort prenten³.

2 Shirane, H. (1998) *Traces of Dreams. Landscape, cultural memory and the poetry of Bashō*. Stanford University Press, Stanford CA.

3 Althans volgens Shirane (1998), p. 93.

We gaan een slag dieper. *Hoe* doe je dat dan precies, dat knippen-en-plakken middels geur-links, welke technieken worden hierbij gehanteerd? Het antwoord hierop is niet specifiek voor enkel kettinggedichten. Je vindt dezelfde principes ook terug binnen “losse” *haiku*. Nemen we twee wel zeer beroemde *haiku* van Bashō als voorbeelden:

<i>Kara-eda / ni</i> <i>Karasu / no / tomari-keri</i> <i>Aki / no / kure</i>	<i>Lege-tak / op</i> <i>Kraai / van / stoppen/</i> <i>verleden tijd</i> <i>Herfst / van / avondduister</i>	Op een lege tak Is een kraai gestopt - Herfstavond
<i>Furu-ike / ya</i> <i>Kawazu / tobikomu</i> <i>Mizu / no / oto</i>	<i>Oude-vijver / twijfel</i> <i>Kikker / springen</i> <i>Geluid / van / water</i>	Een oude vijver De kikker die springt Het geluid van het water

Het vers van de oude vijver is misschien wel de bekendste *haiku* van Bashō en behoeft geen nadere introductie. De kraai op de tak in de herfstavond is een al even een krachtig en prachtig beeld. Ook in deze twee verzen zien we een splitsing, nu binnen één en hetzelfde vers. Het Japans kent zelfs speciale woorden die zo’n splitsing aangeven, zogenaamde *kireji* of “knipwoorden”. In het Nederlands blijven die vaak onvertaald, maar voor de Japanse lezer, die een *haiku* leest in één verticale lijn, vormt zo’n *kireji* een signaal dat hier inderdaad de “knip” ligt in het vers. In het eerste vers ligt de knip tussen regel 2 en regel 3, en wordt aangegeven door *-keri*. In het tweede vers ligt de knip tussen regel 1 en regel 2, en hier is het knipwoord *ya*. Als je deze verzen leest, dan kloppen deze knippen ook met de inhoud. De herfstavond van regel 3 contrasteert en past tegelijkertijd met de kraai op de lege tak van regels 1 & 2, net zoals de oude vijver van regel 1 in het tweede vers contrasteert met de kikker die met een plons in het water springt in regels 2 en 3. Vergelijkbare technieken hanteren *renga*-dichters dus ook niet alleen binnen een vers, maar ook tussen verzen.

Bashō en zijn school zijn heel expliciet geweest over wat voor soorten links er waren. Dit is keurig terug te lezen in de *Kyoraishō*, een werk van Bashō’s leerling Kyorai, waarin deze een aantal gesprekken van Bashō met hem en anderen heeft opgeschreven die gaan over wat mooi is en wat minder mooi is aan poëzie. Interessant is dat dit precies de periode beschrijft waarin deze groep bezig was met het samenstellen van *Sarumino*. In deze *Kyoraishō* stelt Bashō dat er drie vormen van links zijn:

- a) *Kotoba-zuke*, of “woord-links”;
- b) *Kokoro-zuke*, of “inhouds-links”;
- c) *Nioi-zuke*, of “geur-links”.

Categorie a) is daarbij de klassieke variant, vooral populair in vroeger tijden, waarbij men het fraai vond om woordspelingen te maken tussen woorden met bijvoorbeeld dezelfde klank maar verschillende betekenissen. Dat gebeurt in Bashō’s tijd nog steeds, zoals we zo straks ook bijvoorbeeld terug zullen zien in “Herfstkrekels”, waarin in vers 5 het woord *ne* dubbelzinnig

gebruikt wordt in de zin van “rat”, en “slapen”, en in vers 6 hierop doorgegaan wordt met *ne* in de betekenis van “stem, roep”. En in vers 15, waar twee keer het woord *aki* wordt gebruikt, eerst in de zin van “herfst” en dan in de zin van “open”.

15. <i>Chōnai / no</i> <i>Aki / mo / fuke-yuku</i> <i>Aki- / yashiki</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>In de stad / van</i> <i>Herfst / ook / later, dieper worden; gaan.</i> <i>Open zijn / huizen, percelen</i>	Ook de herfst in onze buurt wordt allengs dieper: leegstaande huizen
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Van categorie b), de inhouds-link, hadden we daarnet al enkele voorbeelden uit de *Minase Sangin Hyakuin*. Hierbij is het verhalende element dominant, dus oorzaak en gevolg, het uitbeelden van een scene, iets waarbij de handeling in de verzen een bepalende rol speelt.

Binnen categorie c) onderscheidt Bashō een viertal subcategorieën⁴:

- *Utsuri*: overdrachts-link;
- *Hikibi*: echo-link;
- *Kurai*: status-link;
- *Nioi*: geur-link in enge zin.

Bij een *utsuri*-link wordt de stemming overgedragen van het ene vers na het andere, en dat lijkt in de praktijk vaak op een inhoudslink. Een voorbeeld van een echo-link vinden we in Herfstkrekels.

7. <i>Noridashite</i> <i>Kaina / ni / amaru</i> <i>Haru / no / koma</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Opstappen-en-wegrijden</i> <i>Arm, vaardigheid, talent / in / overblijven</i> <i>Lente / van / hengst</i>	Hij stapt op en rijdt aan: Zijn arm volstaat maar net Voor de lentedolle hengst
8. <i>Maya / ga / takane / ni</i> <i>Kumo / no / kakareru</i> <i>Yasui</i>	<i>Berg Maya / van / hoge top</i> <i>Wolk / van / hangen, zijn</i>	Om de hoge top van berg Maya Zijn donkere wolken komen hangen

Het energieke vers 7 echoot als het ware nog na in vers 8, waarin het woeste paard in een donkere wolk verandert.

Bij een statuslink gaat het over twee opeenvolgende verzen die gesitueerd zijn in hetzelfde sociale stratum, en dat kan zowel zeer verheven, als zeer volks zijn. Van de laatste een voorbeeld uit Zomergeuren.

⁴ De beschrijving van deze indeling, en veel ook van de voorgaande uitleg, is voor een groot deel gebaseerd op Chapter 4, “The Art of Juxtaposition” uit Shirane’s standaardwerk *Traces of Dreams* (1998).

10. <i>Noto / no / Nanao / no</i> <i>Fuyu / wa / sumi- / uki</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Noto (schiereiland) / van</i> <i>Nanao (dorp op Noto) / van</i> <i>Winter / wat betreft /</i> <i>leven / moeilijk</i>	In Nanao op Noto Is het leven 's winters zwaar
11. <i>Uo / no / hone</i> <i>Shiwaburu / made / no</i> <i>Oi / wo / mite</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Vis / van / bot, graten</i> <i>Kauwen / tot / van</i> <i>Oude man / LV partikel / zien</i>	Zie die oude man Hij sabbelt aan De graten van de vis

En hier is nog een voorbeeld uit Herfstkrekel:

9. <i>Yūmeshi / ni</i> <i>Kamasugo / kue- / ba</i> <i>Kaze / kaoru</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Avondmaal / voor</i> <i>Zandspiering / (vr)eten /</i> <i>als, wanneer</i> <i>Wind / ruiken, geuren</i>	Als we als avondmaal Spierinkjes gaan kanen Dan dampen ze in de wind
10. <i>Hiru / no / kuido / wo</i> <i>Kakite / kimi / yoki</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Bloedzuiger / van / beetplek /</i> <i>lijdend vw. /</i> <i>Krabben / gevoel / goed</i>	Bij de bloedzuigerbeten krabben – Ah, dat voelt goed!

Om het nog ingewikkelder te maken is er ook nog een subcategorie van geur-links binnen de hoofdcategorie geur-links. Wellicht een soort catch-all voor alle overige vormen van verbindingen? Een mooi voorbeeld, waar dit artikel haar titel aan ontleent, komt uit Zomergeuren:

16. <i>Sō / yaya / samuku</i> <i>tera / ni / kaeru / ka</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Monnik, priester /</i> <i>nogal / koud</i> <i>Tempel / in, naar /</i> <i>terugkeren / vraagpart.</i>	Zal de monnik in deze kou Naar zijn tempel terugkeren?
17. <i>Saruhiki / no</i> <i>Saru / to / yo / wo / furu</i> <i>Aki / no / tsuki</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Speelman, jongleur / van</i> <i>Aap / met / wereld / lijdend</i> <i>vw / ervaren, doormaken</i> <i>Herfst / van / maan</i>	De speelman en zijn aapje Ze gaan samen door het leven Onder de herfstmaan

De monnik en de speelman, ze zijn niet precies van dezelfde sociale klasse, maar leven beiden wel aan de marge van de samenleving en hebben wel een vergelijkbare onzekere levensweg voor zich, zonder dat ze daar nadrukkelijk onder gebukt lijken te gaan. Feit blijft dat het in de praktijk vaak lastig is eenduidig aan te geven binnen wat voor soort categorie, laat staan subcategorie een specifieke koppeling van twee verzen valt. En hoe erg is dat nou eigenlijk?

Aki - Herfstkrekels⁵

1. <i>Aku- / oke / no</i> <i>Shizuku / yami- / keru</i> <i>Kirigirisu</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>As / emmer; tobbe / van</i> <i>Druppel / eindigen,</i> <i>ophouden / verleden tijd</i> <i>krekels</i>	Uit de loogtobbe Is het druppelen opgehouden: De krekels beginnen te zingen
2. <i>Abura / kasurite</i> <i>Yo-ine / suru / aki</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>(lamp)olie / schampen,</i> <i>(de bodem) schrapen</i> <i>Vroeg naar bed gaan /</i> <i>doen / herfst</i>	De lampolie raakt op: Vroeg het bed in deze herfst
3. <i>Ara- / tatami</i> <i>Shiki-narashi- / taru</i> <i>Tsuki- / kage / ni</i> <i>Yasui</i>	<i>Nieuw / tatami-mat</i> <i>Netjes uitspreiden /</i> <i>verleden tijd</i> <i>Maan / schijnsel / in</i>	Fris-nieuwe tatami Liggen netjes uitgelegd In de stralen van de maan
4. <i>Narabete / ureshi</i> <i>Tō / no / sakazuki</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Op een rij zetten / gelukkig</i> <i>Tien / van / sakekommen</i>	Blij zet ik ze op een rij: Tien rijstwijnskommetjes
5. <i>Chiyo / fu- / beki</i> <i>Mono / wo / samazama</i> <i>Ne-no-bi / shite</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Duizend jaar / voortgaan /</i> <i>moeten, behoren</i> <i>Zaken, dingen /</i> <i>lijdend vw / allerlei</i> <i>Feest van de Rat / doen</i>	Dingen die nog duizend jaar Gedaan worden, van alles hoort Bij het Feest van de Rat
6. <i>Uguisu / no / ne / ni</i> <i>Dabira- / yuki / furu</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Nachtegaal / van / stem / in</i> <i>Vlokkerige / sneeuw / vallen</i>	Op het lied van de nachtegaal Valt de sneeuw in dikke vlokken

5 De vertaling is gebaseerd op *Bashō Shichibu-shū, Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai 70*, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1990, 6e druk, 2007, pp. 313-326. Nrs. 1-36 van *Aki* corresponderen met Nrs. 2070-2105.

- 1: Loog wordt gemaakt om textiel mee te bleken. Dat doe je door as met water te mengen en dat wordt dan loog. De laatste krekels van het seizoen zingen nog, en die plegen dat te doen zo tegen de avond.
- 2: De lampolie is op, en wat rest er dan anders dan op tijd naar bed op deze herfstavond?
- 3: Een mooie tegenstelling, en wellicht daarom een echo-link, tussen het op zijn einde raken van de olie en het frisse begin van nieuwe tatami.
- 4: In dit al even montere vers werkt die frisse start door, een voorbeeld van een *utsuri* of overdrachts-link.
- 5: Er worden woordspelingen uitgehaald met het woord *ne*, dat zowel rat / muis kan betekenen als slapen. *nenobi-suru* kan ook betekenen “zich in bed nog eens goed uitrekken”, al klopt dat niet met de gegeven karakters. In oudere tijden waren dit soort woordgrapjes zeer gebruikelijk, maar ook Bashō’s school speelt er dus nog graag mee.
- 6: De Japanse nachtegaal roept al in vroege lente, en in de Japanse vroege lente kan het nog goed sneeuwen, neem bv. *Yuki nagara / Yamamoto kasumu / Yūbe kana*, het openingsvers uit de *Minase Sangin Hyakuin*, dat ook in maart gesitueerd is (Sneeuw ligt er nog / Nevel aan de voet van de berg / Wat een avond).

<p>7. <i>Noridashite</i> <i>Kaina / ni / amaru</i> <i>Haru / no / koma</i> <i>Kyorai</i></p>	<p><i>Opstappen-en-wegrijden</i> <i>Arm, vaardigheid, talent /</i> <i>in / overblijven</i> <i>Lente / van / hengst</i></p>	<p>Hij stapt op en rijdt aan: Zijn arm volstaat maar net Voor de lentedolle hengst</p>
<p>8. <i>Maya / ga / takane / ni</i> <i>Kumo / no / kakareru</i> <i>Yasui</i></p>	<p><i>Berg Maya / van / hoge top</i> <i>Wolk / van / hangen, zijn</i></p>	<p>Om de hoge top van berg Maya Zijn donkere wolken komen hangen</p>
<p>9. <i>Yūmeshi / ni</i> <i>Kamasugo / kue- / ba</i> <i>Kaze / kaoru</i> <i>Bonchō</i></p>	<p><i>Avondmaal / voor</i> <i>Zandspiering / (vr)eten /</i> <i>als, wanneer</i> <i>Wind / ruiken, geuren</i></p>	<p>Als we als avondmaal Spierinkjes gaan kanen Dan dampen ze in de wind</p>
<p>10. <i>Hiru / no / kuido / wo</i> <i>Kakite / kimi / yoki</i> <i>Bashō</i></p>	<p><i>Bloedzuiger / van /</i> <i>beetplek / lijdend vw. /</i> <i>Krabben / gevoel / goed</i></p>	<p>Bij de bloedzuigerbeten krabben – Ah, dat voelt goed!</p>
<p>11. <i>Mono / omoi /</i> <i>Kyō / wa / wasurete</i> <i>Yasumu / hi / ni</i> <i>Yasui</i></p>	<p><i>Dingen / denken</i> <i>Vandaag / wat betreft /</i> <i>vergeten</i> <i>Rusten, slapen / dag / in, op</i></p>	<p>De zorgen aan mijn hoofd Wil ik vandaag vergeten Op mijn vrije dag</p>

12. <i>Mukae / sewashiki</i> <i>Tono / yori / no / fumi</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Ontvangst, tegemoet gaan /</i> <i>druk, haastig zijn</i> <i>Heer / van(daan) / van / brief</i>	Een heel gedoe om in ontvangst te nemen de brief van mijn Heer
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8: De Berg Maya (699 m) ligt ten Noordoosten van Kobe.

9: Het gaat hier volgens het commentaar om een streekspecialiteit uit de buurt van Kobe: *Ammodytes personatus*, d.w.z. een straalvinnige vis uit de familie van zandspieringen (*Ammodytidae*), orde van baarsachtigen (*Perciformes*). De vis kan een lengte bereiken van 15 centimeter, kleine visjes waarschijnlijk dus.

10: Wederom zorgt Bashō hier voor de boertige *haikai*-noot, waarin ervaringen van het “gewone” volk ook onderwerpen van gedichten mogen zijn, niet enkel thema’s voor prinses en prinsessen. Zie bijvoorbeeld ook in Winterregen vers # 13 over de soep, # 20 over vieze sloffen, in Zomergeuren twee keer referenties naar vlooien, in vers # 26 en # 35, en hier dus over bloedzuigers. We blijven duidelijk bij de wereld van het gewone volk, dit is een status-link.

11: Om een brief van een hooggeplaatst persoon formeel in ontvangst te nemen moet je een net pak aan trekken, en dat is voor deze eenvoudige persoon, die al genoeg aan het hoofd heeft, een heel gedoe.

13. <i>Kin- / tsuba / to</i> <i>Hito / ni / yoba- / ruru</i> <i>Mi / no / yasusa</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Goud / stootplaat / aldus</i> <i>Mensen / door / noemen /</i> <i>passivum / zelf, lichaam /</i> <i>van / makkelijk, goedkoop.</i>	“Goudplaat”, door anderen wordt hij zo genoemd en zo losjes is hij ook wel
14. <i>Atsu- / furo- / zuki / no</i> <i>yoi-yoi / no / tsuki</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Heet / bad /</i> <i>houden van / van</i> <i>Avond aan avond /</i> <i>van maan</i>	Genietend van hete baden En avond aan avond van de maan
15. <i>Chōnai / no</i> <i>Aki / mo / fuke-yuku</i> <i>Aki- / yashiki</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>In de stad / van</i> <i>Herfst / ook / later;</i> <i>dieper worden; gaan</i> <i>Open zijn / perceel, huis</i>	Ook de herfst in onze buurt wordt allengs dieper: leegstaande huizen
16. <i>Nani / wo / miru / ni / mo</i> <i>Tsuyu / bakari / nari</i> <i>Yasui</i>	<i>Wat / lijdend vw /</i> <i>kijken / bij / ook</i> <i>Dauw / enkel, slechts / zijn</i>	Waar je ook kijkt Ligt de dauw, overal

17. <i>Hana / to / chiru</i> <i>Mi / wa / sainen / ga</i> <i>Koromo / kite</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Bloesems / als / vallen</i> <i>Lichaam / wat betreft /</i> <i>lekenpriester / van</i> <i>Gewaad, kleet / dragen</i>	Op zijn lichaam dat vergankelijk Als bloesem neervalt, draagt hij Het kleet van de lekenpriester
18. <i>Kiso / no / suguki / ni</i> <i>Haru / mo / kure-tsutsu</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>De streek Kiso / van /</i> <i>zure-scheuten / in</i> <i>Lente / ook / ondergaan /</i> <i>alsmaar</i>	Met wortels-in-het-zuur uit Kiso Loopt de lente gaandeweg ten einde

13: Een stootplaat is wat er zit tussen het heft van een zwaard en de kling. Zo'n *tsuba* zit los, vandaar de vertaling van *yasui*, als "losjes". Ook hier zit wellicht een woordgrapje, want *yasui* betekent naast "gemakkelijk" ook "goedkoop", en het ligt niet voor de hand om iemand die "goud" in zijn naam heeft als "goedkoop" te betitelen.

14: Een uitstekende manier om van de herfstmaan te genieten, in zo'n heet bad. wellicht een gezamenlijk bad met de hele buurt, zoals niet ongebruikelijk is in Japan.

15: *Aki* betekent zowel "herfst" als "open", wederom een woordspeling. Wellicht staan de huizen leeg omdat iedereen in bad zit?

16: Dauw hoort in Japan nadrukkelijk bij de herfst, en is een zeer vergankelijk fenomeen. Nu zou *yashiki* in het voorgaande vers eerder kunnen betekenen: percelen, de lege stukken land waar de dauw overheen gedaald is.

17: Al even vergankelijk als dauw zijn bloesems, een duidelijk geur-link hier, waarbij de sfeer van het ene gedicht overgaat in het andere. Er is een klassieke associatie tussen dauw en bloesem, zie ook het vers uit de *Minase Sangin Hyakuin: Oki-waburu / Tsuyu koso hana ni / Aware nare* (Beschroomd zet hij zich neer / De dauw, op de bloem / Die juist met hem weer medeleven heeft). In vers 17 wordt de vergelijking ook getrokken tussen de vergankelijkheid van het lichaam en dat van de bloesem. Wederom een geur-link.

18: Dit is Kyoto cuisine. De *suguki* is een zurige knol. Tegen het eind van de lente zijn de lekkere uit Kyoto op. Dan moet er geïmporteerd worden uit Kiso, zo'n 150 km ten Noordoosten van Kyoto.

19. <i>Kaeru / yara</i> <i>Yama- / kage / tsukau</i> <i>Shijūkara</i> <i>Yasui</i>	<i>Terugkeren / of zo</i> <i>Berg / schaduw, schijnsel,</i> <i>vorm / gebruiken</i> <i>Soort mussen</i>	Zouden ze op hun terugkeer De lijnen van de bergen volgen, Deze zwermen mussen?
20. <i>Shiba / sasu / ie / no</i> <i>Mune / wo / karageru</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Sprokkelhout / insteken /</i> <i>huis / van</i> <i>Nok / lijdend vw /</i> <i>vastbinden, oprollen</i>	Van 't huis met sprokkelhout verstevigd maakt men de nok stevig vast

21. <i>Fuyu- / zora / no</i> <i>Are / ni / nari- / taru</i> <i>Kita- / oroshi</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Winter- / hemel / van</i> <i>Storm / in / worden /</i> <i>verleden tijd</i> <i>Noord / Bergwind</i>	De winterhemel Is stormachtig geworden: De bergwind uit het Noorden
22. <i>Tabi / no / chisō / ni</i> <i>Ariakashi / oku</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Reizen, reis / van /</i> <i>gastvrijheid / in, voor</i> <i>nachtlantaarn / plaatsen,</i> <i>zetten</i>	Voor een feestelijk onthaal op reis Zet zij alvast de nachtlantaarn klaar
23. <i>Susamajiki</i> <i>Onna / no / chie / mo</i> <i>Hakanakute</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Verbleekt, verkild,</i> <i>beangstigend; extreem</i> <i>Vrouw / van goede raad,</i> <i>slimheid / ook</i> <i>Vergankelijk, voorbijgaand</i>	Om bang van te worden Zo vergankelijk De sluwigheden van vrouwen
24. <i>Nani / omoi-gusa</i> <i>Ōkami / no / naku</i> <i>Yasui</i>	<i>Wat / liefdes-kruid</i> <i>Wolf / van / huilen</i>	Wat nou liefdeskruid? De wolven zijn aan het huilen!

19: De *shijūkara* is een soort mus (*susume-ka*) Ze schijnen 's winters grote groepen te vormen, net als spreeuwen, maar het zijn geen trekvogels, zoals de ganzen die vaak verschijnen in *renga* dat wel zijn. Het terugkeren kan dus niet bedoeld zijn naar verre oorden.

20: De mussen vliegen over een boerenwoning die opgeknapt wordt. Een typische voorbeeld van een *kokoro*-link, een inhouds-link, vanwege het verhalende element.

22: *Ari-akashi*: ochtendglorie-licht, een lantaarn die tot 's morgens vroeg blijft branden, wellicht voor de reiziger die met stormachtig weer arriveert vanuit vers 21.

23: Blijkbaar heeft de vrouw die de nachtlantaarn plaatste daar een verborgen, sluwe bedoeling bij.

24 *omoi-gusa*: “denken-aan-kruid”, liefdeskruid, de *aeginetia japonica*. Al in oude tijden een begrip in de poëzie, zie het bijgaande gedicht uit de *Manyōshū*:

<i>Michinobe no</i> <i>Obana ga shita no</i> <i>Omoigusa</i> <i>Imasara ni nazo</i> <i>Mono ka omowamu</i>	Aan de rand van de weg Aan de voet van de pluimbloem Het liefdeskruid Vanaf nu, waarom zou ik nog aan iets (anders) denken?
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24: Bij het plukken van het liefdeskruid hoort men in de verte het gehuil van wolven. Dan heb je wel wat anders aan je hoofd dan verliefde dagdromen!

25. <i>Yūtsuki-/yo</i> <i>Oka / no / kayane / no</i> <i>Go-/ byō / moru</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Avondmaan / avond</i> <i>Heuvel / van / gras, riet</i> <i>Erend / mausoleum, schrijn /</i> <i>de wacht houden</i>	In de maanverlichte avond Houden de graspluimen op de heuvel de wacht over de graftempel
26. <i>Hito / mo / wasureshi</i> <i>Akasobu / no / mizu</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Mens / ook / vergeten- / verl. t.</i> <i>Rode verkleuring / van / water</i>	Vergeeten door de mensen Is het water roestbruin verkleurd
27. <i>Uso-tsuki / ni</i> <i>Jiman / iwasete</i> <i>Asobu- / ran</i> <i>Yasui</i>	<i>Leugenaar / door</i> <i>Trots, opscheppen / spreken- /</i> <i>hww causatief</i> <i>Plezier hebben / hww</i> <i>waarschijnlijkheid, kennelijk</i>	Om de praatjesmaker zijn opschepperige verhaal te laten houden: Wat een lol moeten die hebben!
28. <i>Mata / mo / daiji / no</i> <i>Sushi / wo / toridasu</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Weer / ook / groots, kostelijk</i> <i>Sushi / lijdend vw / naar voren</i> <i>brengen, produceren</i>	Nog maar eens tovert men Kostelijke sushi voor de dag
29. <i>Tsutsumi / yori</i> <i>Ta / no / ao-yagite</i> <i>Isagi-yoki</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>Dijk / vanaf</i> <i>rijstvelden / van /</i> <i>groen- / doen</i> <i>Puur, schoonheid</i>	Kijkend vanaf de dijk Groen-golvende rijstvelden: pure schoonheid
30. <i>Kamo / no / yashiro / wa</i> <i>Yoki / yashiro / nari</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Kamo / van / tempel /</i> <i>wat betreft</i> <i>Goed / tempel / zijn</i>	De tempel van Kamo Da's pas een toppie-tempel!

25: Een verstild beeld, een grafmonument uit vroeger tijden, verlaten door iedereen...

26: ... en vergeten door de mensen. Met ijzeroxide in de grond wil stilstaand water nog wel eens roestbruin verkleuren.

27: Een grote sprong, van oprechte verstillings en eenzaamheid naar drukte en leugenachtigheid. *Aka* is ook open, eerlijk, *uso* is leugen, onwaarheid.

28: Bij deze geanimeerde vertellingen worden lekkere hapjes geserveerd.

29: Men zit in een eetgelegenheden op het platteland en kijkt uit over de rijstvelden.

30: Een wel heel simpel vers van Bashō maar wellicht ook de verbeelding van de verzuchting van een simpele ziel.

<p>31. Mono- / uri / no Shirigoe / takaku Nanori- / sute <i>Kyorai</i></p>	<p>Dingen / verkopen Rijzende stemhoogte / hoog namen noemen / eruit gooien</p>	<p>Om hun spullen te verkopen Prijzen met overslaande stem De handelslui hun waren aan</p>
<p>32. Ame / no / yadori / no Mu- / jō- / jin- / soku</p>	<p>Regen / van beschutting Niets / blijven / snel / bewegen</p>	<p>We rennen naar beschutting tegen de regen: “Alles stroomt, niets is blijvend!”</p>
<p>33. Hiru / neburu Aosagi / no / mi / no Tōtosa / yo <i>Bashō</i></p>	<p>Middag / slapen Blauwe reiger / van / lichaam / van Vererenswaardig</p>	<p>Het lijf van de grijze reiger Slaapt onverstoorbaar in de middagzon - Bewonderenswaardig!</p>
<p>34. Shoro-shoro / mizu / ni I / no / soyogu- / ran <i>Bonchō</i></p>	<p>Ruisen, ritselen / water / op Riet / van / trillen, bewegen / hww waarschijnlijkheid, kennelijk</p>	<p>In het ruisende water Zullen de rietsprietten zacht ritselen</p>
<p>35. Ito-zakura Hara-ippai / ni Saki- / nikeri <i>Kyorai</i></p>	<p>Draad-hangende-kersenboom Voldaan, tevreden / op Weelderig bloeien / verleden tijd</p>	<p>De kersentakken Hangen tevreden en voldaan In weelderige bloei</p>
<p>36. Haru / wa / san-gatsu Akebono / no / sora <i>Yasui</i></p>	<p>Lente / wat betreft / derde maand Dageraad / van / lucht</p>	<p>Het is de derde lentemaand En de dageraad fleurt de hemel</p>

31: Rond de tempel zijn, net als in de Bijbelse context, marktkooplui steevast nadrukkelijk aanwezig.

32: Wellicht ironisch bedoelde toepassing van een diepe filosofische gedachte, die we ook kennen in de Europese traditie, nl. als Heraclitus's *Panta rhei, kai ouden menei* (Alles stroomt, en niks blijft). Verfrissend aan de *renga*-dichtvorm blijft dat vlooien en ratten er even makkelijk in kunnen figureren als de zware filosofische Sino-Japanse kost van dit vers.

33: De inhouds-link hier is er een van tegenstelling, tussen de beweging van het rennen in vers 32, en het onverstoorbaar stil slapen in vers 33.

34: Het gaat hier om de *pitrus juncus effusus*, groene sprietten met blauwe bloempjes. Hier klinkt de rust van de reiger juist weer door in het sippelen van water en het ritselen van het riet.

35: *Hara-ippai ni* betekent letterlijk “met volle buik”, en dat wordt dan “voldaan, tevreden”.

Ook hier blijft de rustige atmosfeer gehandhaafd, al verplaatst de handeling zich van het riet naar de bewoonde wereld waar kersenbomen groeien.

36: Het alomtegenwoordige rood van de kersenbloesems lijkt wel op een dageraad in de lente, dan wel, we nemen het vers letterlijk: het is een rood-kleurende dageraad, of desnoods allebei tegelijkertijd.

Haru - Lentegroenten⁶

Afscheidsgeschenk voor Otokuni, die op reis naar het oosten van Musashi gaat

1. <i>Ume / wakana</i> <i>Mariko / no / shuku / no</i> <i>Tororo-jiru</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Pruimen / lentegroente</i> <i>Mariko / van / herberg van</i> <i>Yamswortel / soep, bouillon</i>	Pruimenbloesem en lentegroenten Bij de herberg van Mariko... En dan yamswortel-soep!
2. <i>Kasa / atarashiki</i> <i>Haru / no / akebono</i> <i>Otokuni</i>	<i>Regenhoed / nieuw</i> <i>Lente / van / dageraad</i>	Met mijn reishoed op stap Bij het gloren van de nieuwe lente
3. <i>Hibari / naku</i> <i>Oda / ni / tsuchi / motsu</i> <i>Koro / nare / ya</i> <i>Chinseki</i>	<i>(Veld-) leeuwerik / roepen,</i> <i>zingen</i> <i>Klein rijstveld / in / aarde,</i> <i>rond / dragen</i> <i>tijdstip / is / uitroep</i>	De leeuweriken zingen: Om nieuwe grond in de rijstvelden te dragen Is dit wel het moment
4. <i>Shitogi / iōte</i> <i>Kudasare- / nikeri</i> <i>Sōdan</i>	<i>Bollen van gestoomde rijst /</i> <i>vieren,</i> <i>Geven, begunstigen /</i> <i>verleden tijd</i>	De bolletjes rijst voor het feest Zijn al uitgedeeld door de heer
5. <i>Katasumi / ni</i> <i>Mushiba / kakaete</i> <i>Kure / no / tsuki</i> <i>Otokuni</i>	<i>Hoek / in</i> <i>Rotte kies / vasthouden,</i> <i>ermee zitten</i> <i>Avond / van / maan</i>	In een hoekje zit hij Met zijn rotte kies te kniezen In de avondmaan
6. <i>Ni-kai / no / kyaku / wa</i> <i>Tatare- / taru / aki</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Tweede-verdieping / van /</i> <i>gast / wat betreft</i> <i>Opstaan / verleden tijd / herfst</i>	De gast van hierboven Is vertrokken in de herfst

6 De vertaling is gebaseerd op *Bashō Shichibu-shū*, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 70, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1990, 6e druk, 2007, pp. 337-342. Nrs. 1-36 van Haru corresponderen met Nrs. 2106-2142.

Plaats van handeling van deze *renga* is Kyōto, en ten oosten daarvan ligt Musashi, maar vooral ook Edo, waar Otokuni naartoe afreisde.

1: Mariko was de twintigste van de drieënvijftig haltes van de Tōkaidō, de “Oostelijke Zeeroute”, de beroemde “snelweg” tussen Edo en Kyoto, die voor een groot deel langs de kustlijn gaat, vandaar de naam.

Wakana zijn de eerste eetbare blaadjes die in de lente verschijnen. Zeven van deze kruiden werden die in de eerste maand aan het hof gegeten in een soepje.

2: De reiziger gaat ‘s morgens vroeg monter op stap op deze Tōkaidō, met zijn geliefde reishoed op.

3: Rijstbouw is natte bouw, en daarom moet aan het veld regelmatig nieuwe aarde toegevoegd worden.

4: *Shitogi* zijn mochi, rijstbollen. *Kudasare* is het geven van een hoger geplaatste aan een lagere, het Japans heeft een hele collectie van dit soort werkwoorden die een statusverschil tussen de betrokkenen aanduiden. Bij het bewerken van de rijstvelden deelt de landheer smakelijk voedsel uit aan de boeren die dit zware werk uitvoeren.

5: Het eten van de rijstbollen is een man met een rotte kies blijkbaar niet goed gekomen.

6: We zijn nu in een herberg, met in een hoekje de man met de rotte kies, en met een intrigerende heer van de tweede verdieping die inmiddels al weer vertrokken is.

7. <i>Hanachi-yaru</i> <i>Uzura / no / ato / wa</i> <i>Mie mo sezu</i> <i>Sōdan</i>	<i>Vrijlaten</i> <i>Kwartel / van / resten /</i> <i>wat betreft</i> <i>Zichtbaar zijn / ook / niet doen</i>	Van de kwartels Die vrijgelaten werden Is niks meer te zien
8. <i>Ine / no / ha- / nobi / no</i> <i>Chikara- / naki / kaze</i> <i>Chinseki</i>	<i>Rijstplant / van / blad / groeien</i> <i>Kracht / niet zijn / wind</i>	Over de hoog opgeschoten rijstplanten Waat een krachteloze wind
9. <i>Hosshin / no</i> <i>Hajime / ni / koyuru</i> <i>Suzuka-yama</i> <i>Bashō</i>	<i>Bekering / van</i> <i>Begin / in / overschrijden</i> <i>De Suzuka-berg</i>	Bij het begin van zijn bekering: Het oversteken Van de Suzuka-pas
10. <i>Kura-no-kami / ka / to</i> <i>Yobu / koe / wa / tare</i> <i>Otokuni</i>	<i>Hoofd Magazijnen / vraag /</i> <i>aldus</i> <i>Roepen / stem / wat betreft / wie</i>	“Heer Magazijnmeester!” Welke stem riep dat toch?
11. <i>U / no / koku / no</i> <i>Minote / ni / narabu</i> <i>Konishi- / gata</i> <i>Chinseki</i>	<i>Haas / van / tijd, uur / van</i> <i>De mouwen van een strooien</i> <i>regenmantel / op / opstellen</i> <i>Generaal Konishi / partij, kant</i>	In het vroege Uur van de Haas Stellen zij zich op in gespreide formatie De troepen van Generaal Konishi

12. <i>Sumikiru / matsu / no</i> <i>Shizuka / nari- / keru</i> <i>Sodan</i>	<i>Zich scherp aftekenen /</i> <i>pijnboemen / van</i> <i>Stil / zijn / verleden tijd</i>	Rond de scherp afgetekende pijnboemen Is het doodstil geworden
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7: Hier een geurlink, tussen de heer die vertrokken is en leegte achterlaat uit vers 6, en de kwartels die eveneens weg zijn zonder een spoor achter te laten.

8: Een echo-link, de turbulentie rondom het vrijlaten van de kwartels is afgezwakt tot een slap briesje over de restvelden.

9: letterlijk: “het opstaan der gevoelens” = religieus ontwaken. Suzuka-berg ligt op de Tōkaidō, rond de vierenveertigste halte. Dit vers verwijst naar een gedicht van de fameuze priester/zwerfer/dichter Saigyō (1118 –1190) een van Bashō’s grote voorbeelden:

<i>Suzuka-yama</i> <i>Ukiyo wo yoso ni</i> <i>Furi-sutete</i> <i>Ika ni nari-yuku</i> <i>Waga mi naruran?</i>	De Suzuka-berg De droeve wereld Heb ik weggeworpen Hoe zal ik nu verder klinken Hoe zal het me vergaan?
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10: *Kura-no-kami*: officiële titel uit de Keizerlijke hofhouding. We zijn meteen terug in de tijd van de *Genji-monogatari* of de *Heike Monogatari*. Let ook op de vele k-beginklanken in dit vers.

11: Konishi Yukinaga (overl. 1600) was een generaal van Hideyoshi. Hij verloor de slag bij Sekigahara (1600), die het begin van de suprematie van de Tokugawa markeerde. Sekigahara ligt bij de Mino-pas. Konishi’s leger stond opgesteld in de vorm van een halve boog, in de vorm van een wan (*mi*).

12: Er zingen zelfs geen vogels meer in de bomen kort voor de slag ’s ochtends. De dood hangt zwaar in de lucht...

13. <i>Hagi / no / fuda</i> <i>Susuki / no / fuda / ni</i> <i>Yomi- / nashite</i> <i>Otokuni</i>	<i>Klaver / van / vel papier</i> <i>Helmgras / van / vel</i> <i>papier / op</i> <i>dichten- / doen</i>	Op een klavervel Op een pluimgrasvel schrijft hij zijn gedichten
14. <i>Suzume / katayoru</i> <i>Mozu / no / hito / koe</i> <i>Chigetsu</i>	<i>Mus / overhellen</i> <i>Ekster / van / één / stem</i>	De mussen duiken naar een kant Bij een enkele kreet van de ekster

15. <i>Futokoro / ni</i> <i>Te / wo / atamuru</i> <i>Aki / no / tsuki</i> <i>Bochō</i>	<i>Boezem / in</i> <i>Hand / lijd. voorw. /</i> <i>verwarmen</i> <i>Herfst / van / maan</i>	Hij warmt zijn handen Op zijn borst Onder de herfstige maan
16. <i>Shio / sadamara- / nu</i> <i>Soto / no / umi- / zura</i> <i>Otokuni</i>	<i>Getij / beslissen / ontkenning</i> <i>Buiten / van / zee / smoel,</i> <i>aanzicht</i>	Het tij zet maar niet door - De aanblik van de zee daarbuiten
17. <i>Yari / no / e / ni</i> <i>Tachi- / sugari- / taru</i> <i>Hana / no / kure</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Speer / van / steel</i> <i>Staan / leunen op / verleden tijd</i> <i>Bloesem / van / avond</i>	Hij staat leunend Tegen de greep van zijn speer – In een avond vol bloesem
18. <i>Hai / maki-chirasu</i> <i>Karashina / no / ato</i> <i>Bonchō</i>	<i>As / uitzaaien, uitstrooien</i> <i>Mosterd / van / resten</i>	De as wordt uitgestrooid Over de resten van de mosterdplanten

13: Een *fuda* is een langwerpige stuk papier waarop je gedichten of een toverspreuk of iets dergelijks kunt schrijven. Een *hagi no fuda* kan een vel papier zijn waarop een afbeelding van een klaver staat gedrukt.

14: De tegenstelling tussen de kleine, angstige mussen in zwerm en de solitaire grote en agressieve ekster wordt hier door de Japanse poëzie liefhebber gewaardeerd.

15: De gedichtenliefhebber uit vers 13 staat blijkbaar buiten 's avonds terwijl de mussen wegschieten. Het is kil, en hij houdt zijn handen onder zijn kimono.

16: De man met de handen in z'n zakken is een schipper geworden, die binnen wacht op het wisselen van het tij zodat hij uit kan varen.

17: En nu is de hoofdpersoon een boer geworden met een speer, of wellicht een *ronin* die de boeren beschermt, zoals in Kurosawa's onvolprezen *Seven Samurai*.

18: De mosterdplanten zijn geoogst, en er wordt weer nieuwe as, die vruchtbaar maakt, over de velden uitgestrooid. Een primitieve vorm van bemesting, illustratief voor de armoede van deze omgeving.

Vanaf hier zijn het steeds meer gastdichters die hun verzen aanbieden. Bashō doet al niet meer mee vanaf vers 9, Kyorai dicht nog tot # 17 & 20, Bonchō dicht # 18 als laatste. Daarna komen er liefst twaalf "special guests", die elk als afscheidsgeschenk een vers dichten voor Otokuni.

19. <i>Haru / no / hi / ni</i> <i>Shimōte / kaeru</i> <i>Kyō-/ zukue</i> <i>Masahide</i>	<i>Lente / van / dag / op</i> <i>Eindigen, wegleggen /</i> <i>terugkeren</i> <i>Sutra / buro, tafel</i>	Op deze lentedag Bergen we ze op en gaan naar huis, De sutra's in onze burola's
20. <i>Tenyamono / kuu</i> <i>Tomo / no / tegawari</i> <i>Kyorai</i>	<i>Gerechten / smikkelen, smullen</i> <i>Knecht, vriend / van / afwisselen</i>	Smikkelend van de hapjes lopen de knechten af en aan
21. <i>Asenugui</i> <i>Hashi / no / shirushi / no</i> <i>Kon / no / ito</i> <i>Hanzan</i>	<i>Handdoekjes, zweetband</i> <i>Einde, rand / van / teken / van</i> <i>Marineblauw / van / draad</i>	In hun handdoekjes Is aan de rand als een teken Een blauwe draad ingeweven
22. <i>Wakare / sewashiki</i> <i>Niwatori / no / shita</i> <i>Tohō</i>	<i>Afscheid / haastig</i> <i>Kippen / van / onder, beneden</i>	Een haastig afscheid Onder het kippengekakel
23. <i>Daitan / ni</i> <i>Omoi-kuzure- / nu</i> <i>Koi / wo / shite</i> <i>Hanzan</i>	<i>Ongeremd, onbeschaamd /</i> <i>bijwoord</i> <i>denken aan, liefhebben / ineen</i> <i>storten / ontkenning</i> <i>Liefde / lijdend vw / doen</i>	Nooit zal zij verloren gaan de ongeremde liefde die wij bedreven
24. <i>Mi / wa / nure- / gami / no</i> <i>Toridokoro / naki</i> <i>Tōhō</i>	<i>Persoon, zelf / wat betreft / nat</i> <i>worden / papier / plaats om aan</i> <i>te pakken / niet zijn, hebben</i>	Als een natte tissue voel ik me, niet om aan te pakken!

19. Op dit platteland is er ook ruimte voor intellectueel-religieuze verdieping in een landelijk gelegen tempelcomplex.

20. Naast de studie is er ruimte voor ontspanning. *Tenyamono* zijn “de dingen van de kraampjes”, wat slaat op het eten dat in de diverse kraampjes gekocht kon worden. *Tomo*, van het moderne *tomodachi*, “vriend”, dat zijn de dienaren die hun heer begeleid hebben naar de tempel. Binnen laten de heren sutra's lezen, buiten wachten hun knechten en die eten een hapje. Volgens het Japanse commentaar gaat het hier om een tempelbezoek bij gelegenheid van de lente-equinox, maar dat moet je dan ook maar net weten...

21: De jeugdige helpers bij het tempelfeest, die zojuist nog beurtelings aan het smikkelen waren, dragen nu dezelfde handdoekjes om hun nek of aan hun gordel.

22: Nu zijn de dragers van dezelfde handdoekjes ineens twee geliefden. Hun liefdesafscheid, dat in alle discretie plaats zou moeten vinden, wordt tegen de bedoeling in begeleid door een luid gekakel.

23: Wie roept dit? Wellicht de minnaar, die op zijn ponteneur staat, na zijn wat smadelijke afgang in het vorige vers?

24: Vers gedicht door een dichteres, Tohō, die hier het negatieve zelfbeeld van de in de steek gelaten minnares vertolkt. *Nuregami* betekent nat papier, en dat klinkt als “natte dweil”, maar kan hier ook meer letterlijk opgevat worden. Immers, na de daad moet er her en der het een en ander afgeveegd worden met tissues. Er zijn *shunga*, Japanse klassieke erotische prenten, waarbij de grond bezaaid ligt met zulke papiertjes....

25. <i>ko-gata / no hamaguri-ba / naru saikubako</i> <i>Hanzan</i>	<i>Klein model / van Mosselachtig schelpdier- (zwaard-)blad / zijn gereedschapskist</i>	Als een klein mes Met een kling zo stomp als een mossel Lig ik in de gereedschapskist
26. <i>Tana / ni / hi / tomosu Ōdoshi / no / yoru</i> <i>Empū</i>	<i>huisschrijn/ op / vuur, licht / aansteken Eindejaar / van / avond</i>	Een vuur ontsteekt hij in de schouw Op de avond van oudjaar
27. <i>Kokomoto / wa Omou / tayori / mo Suma / no / ura</i> <i>Ensui</i>	<i>Hier / wat betreft Denken, voelen, hopen / bericht / ook, zelfs niet Suma / van / strand</i>	Op deze plek komt er zelfs geen bericht Van dat je aan me denkt, Hier op het stille strand van Suma
28. <i>Mune / uchi-awase Kitaru / kataginu</i> <i>Hanzan</i>	<i>Borst / over elkaar heen slaan Gekleed zijn / ceremonieel kleed</i>	Over mijn borst heen getrokken Draag ik mijn gala-uniform
29. <i>Kono / natsu / mo Kaname / wo / kukuru Yare-ōgi</i> <i>Empū</i>	<i>Deze / zomer / ook Spil, oog / lijd. Voorw. / repareren Breken / waaier</i>	Deze zomer heb ik weer eens Het oogje gerepareerd Van mijn kapotte waaier
30. <i>Shōyu / nesasete Shibashi / tsuki / miru</i> <i>Ensui</i>	<i>Soya-saus / doen-slapen, laten rusten Even / maan / kijken</i>	Ik laat de soya-saus rustig indikken En ga even naar de maan kijken

25: *Hamaguri-ba* kan een zwaard of mes zijn dat tussen de rug en de snede een zekere welving heeft, als een *hamaguri*, een mosselachtig schelpdier. Deze welving maakt zwaard / mes / bijl steviger, en beter geschikt om te hakken.

26: *Tana* is letterlijk een plank, maar bedoeld wordt *kami-dana*, een huisschrijn voor Shinto-goden.

27: Citaat uit Nō-spel *Matsukaze*, Suma was de streek waarnaar Prins Genji verbannen werd, een desolate plek.

28: Een arme *samurai* draagt op dit eenzame strand zijn *kataginu*. Een *kataginu* is een dun, gesteven kledingstuk dat je over je andere kleding draagt, en dat vooral de schouders (*kata*) benadrukt. Een kledingstuk dat je bij formele gelegenheden aantrok. Draagt onze hoofdpersoon het omdat hij bezoek dan wel bericht verwacht, dan wel omdat het koud is en hij niks anders heeft om aan te trekken?

29: Onbekommerd door zijn armoe repareert deze man zijn kapotte waaier.

30: En al even onthaast combineert de hoofdpersoon het bereiden van soyasaus met buiten naar de maan kijken.

<p>31. <i>Sekigoe / no</i> <i>Tonari / wa / chikaki</i> <i>En-zutai</i> <i>Ensu</i></p>	<p><i>Kuchen, keel schrapen / van</i> <i>Naast, buur / wat betreft / nabij</i> <i>Veranda – via, langs</i></p>	<p>Och, het gerochel Van mijn buurman vlakbij In het tuintje hiernaast</p>
<p>32. <i>Soe- / ba / sou / hodo</i> <i>Kokumen-na / kao</i> <i>Empū</i></p>	<p><i>Vergezellen / als, wanneer /</i> <i>in de mate van</i> <i>Waar, waarachtig / gezicht</i></p>	<p>Hoe langer je bij elkaar bent Hoe duidelijker het ware gezicht wordt</p>
<p>33. <i>Katachi / naki</i> <i>E / wo / naraitaru</i> <i>Aizu-bon</i> <i>Ranran</i></p>	<p><i>Vorm / niet zijn</i> <i>Schets, tekening / lijdend</i> <i>vw. / leren / verl.tijd</i> <i>Aizu-dienblad</i></p>	<p>Van die abstracte versieringen Op dienbladen uit Aizu heb ik leren schilderen</p>
<p>34. <i>Usu-yuki / kakaru</i> <i>Take / no / warigeta</i> <i>Shihō</i></p>	<p><i>Dunne-sneeuw / bedekken</i> <i>Bamboe / van / tuinsandalen</i></p>	<p>Een dunne laag sneeuw bedekt Het bamboe van mijn tuinsandalen</p>
<p>35. <i>Hana / ni / mata</i> <i>Kotoshi / no / tsure / mo</i> <i>Sadamara- / zu</i> <i>Yasui</i></p>	<p><i>Bloemen / in / weer</i> <i>Dit jaar / van / metgezel / ook</i> <i>Beslist worden / ontkenning</i></p>	<p>Ook dit jaar weer Kan ik mijn metgezel niet kiezen Om mee naar de bloesems te gaan kijken</p>
<p>36. <i>Hina / no / tamoto / wo</i> <i>Somuru / haru / kaze</i> <i>Ukō</i></p>	<p><i>Pop / van / mouw</i> <i>Verven, kleuren / lente / wind</i></p>	<p>De mouwtjes van de poppen Kleuren in de lentewind</p>

- 31: Bij het staren naar de maan wordt de hoofdpersoon gestoord door het onsmakelijke gerochel van zijn buurman, die ook buiten op de (doorlopende) veranda zit, voor zijn eigen woning. De plaats zou een *nagaya* zijn volgens het commentaar: een langwerpig gebouw met een verdieping, bestaande uit kleine appartementen van een of twee kamers naast elkaar; alle voordeuren aan de ene kant, en aan de achterkant een veranda. Die zal tussen elk appartement wel een afscheiding hebben, maar in principe een doorlopend geheel vormen. Kennelijk zat men op de veranda, of had men de deur open.
- 32: Dit kan nu over oude burens of oude vrienden of zelfs een oud echtpaar gaan, *tonari* was vertaald als “buur” in 31, maar is letterlijk “hiernaast”.
- 33: Zoals je met de jaren iemand beter leert kennen, zo leer je ook vreemde stijlen van kunst waarderen in de loop van de tijd. Nu is *narau* geen passief “wennen”, maar actief “leren”. Deze stijl van schilderen leren gaat dus niet vanzelf, zoals je een levensgezel leert kennen, maar misschien is dat ook wel hard werken...
34. De kunstzinnige persoon die abstracte schilderijen op lakwerk weet te waarderen merkt op, met dezelfde sensibiliteit, het dunne laagje sneeuw op zijn tuinsandalen. *Geta* worden gewoonlijk van *kiri* (Paulonia-hout) gemaakt, maar deze *geta* zijn gemaakt van gespleten, maar verder onbewerkte bamboe, en worden geassocieerd met de theeceremonie - voor de theemeester, als hij even de tuin in moet om water te halen.
35. Dezelfde gevoeligheid kan ook kieskeurigheid worden, deze man kan maar geen metgezel kiezen voor het kijken naar de bloesems.
36. Een mooi einde: Het poppenfeest op de derde dag van de derde maand, dat is door de bank genomen begin april, en dus met een lentezonnetje.

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The Words of a Mad Doctor *Introduction and Translation*

W.J. Boot

Introduction

What follows, is a short introduction to, and a complete translation of *The Words of a Mad Doctor* (*Kyōi no gen*), an essay composed in 1775 by Sugita Genpaku (1733-1817). He wrote it, one would almost say ‘in a flush of triumph,’ one year after he had printed and published *A New Book on Dissecting Bodies* (*Kaitai shinsho*; An’ei 3 [1774], eighth month), which was the translation of Johan Adam Kulmus’ anatomical manual *Ontleedkundige Tafelen* (Amsterdam, 1734). This was the first more or less complete translation of a Dutch medical book, and it was trumpeted, not in the last place by Genpaku himself, as the true beginning of Dutch Learning (*Rangaku*). The aim of the essay was to cast doubt on the superiority of Chinese medicine, and to vindicate his new approach. One gets the impression that Genpaku had grown impatient with covert criticism that his work had given rise to, and had decided to blast the opposition out of the water once and for all. The essay is written in Chinese, which in itself is an indication that he was addressing his professional colleagues. His message was crisp and clear: eastern medicine is flawed; western medicine is superior, because western medicine fits the facts.

Genpaku was well qualified to judge the relative merits of Dutch and Chinese medicine, and his position was such that his word would be heeded. He was the scion of a family of doctors, had *samurai* status, and was an established physician (attending physician of the *daimyō* of Obama) in his own right, while the translation had made him the pivotal figure among the students of Dutch Learning (*Rangaku*) and an important innovator of Japanese medicine. The translation was not his alone; it was the result of a collaborative effort that lasted from Meiwa 8 (1771)/3/5 till An’ei 2 (1773), third month.¹ The leading scholar in the group had been Maeno

¹ The starting date is mentioned in *Rangaku kotohajime*, p. 37. As final date one can take either the date of the Preface by Yoshio Kōgyū, as I have done, or the date in the colophon of the printed book: An’ei 3 (1774), middle month of autumn. In *Rangaku kotohajime* Genpaku says that it took four years until the manuscript could be handed over to the woodcutter, which, counting inclusively, refers to the years from 1771 till 1774.

Ryōtaku (1723-1803), but Genpaku was the man who had had the original idea, who organized the group and kept it moving, who signed for the translation of Kulmus' original Preface, and who eventually recorded the history of the translation in *How Dutch Studies Began* (*Rangaku kotohajime*).² He also had the foresight to have himself succeeded by a scholar who shared his qualities as a researcher and an organizer of joint efforts, Ōtsuki Gentaku (1757-1827). When, by the end of the century, Genpaku gradually disengaged himself from the world of Dutch scholars and spent more time on his lucrative private practice,³ his role as central figure of Dutch scholarship devolved on Gentaku.⁴ It was Gentaku who was responsible for having Dutch Studies recognized by the *bakufu* as a respectable branch of learning, which happened in 1811, with the establishment of the Translation Office (*Wa-ge goyō-kata*) within the Bureau of Astronomy (*Tenmondai*). Gentaku also inherited Genpaku's manuscript of *How Dutch Studies Began*, and changed it in unknown and untraceable ways.⁵



Title page of *Rangaku kotohajime* (1869) with portrait of Sugita Genpaku.

Genpaku's and Gentaku's scholarship was distinguished by a preference for exact, verifiable knowledge. The point is made with great insistence in Genpaku's *Mad Doctor*, as we will see before long, but Gentaku made it, too, in his dialogue in two chapters on the nature, practice, and mission of Dutch Studies called *Upward and Forward in Dutch Translation*

2 The book is easily available in Japanese, e.g. in the Iwanami Bunko; there is an English translation by Matsumoto Ryōzō.

3 See the short biography by Satō Shōsuke in NST 64, p. 589.

4 One of the things Gentaku did in this capacity was organizing 'Dutch New Year' parties; see Hesseling, 'A Dutch New Year.'

5 See Honma, 'Nagasaki *Rangaku*,' p. 33.

(*Ran'yaku teikō*; 1816⁶). The young student in the dialogue, whose role it is to pose the right questions, asks Gentaku about the critics of Dutch medicine. He answers as follows:

I have reflected on this carefully. First, it would seem that in our Art of Medicine the various methods of Chinese medicine that we have grown used to over the ages adequately serve their purpose, and that its techniques provide all-round coverage. We must, therefore, conclude that the people who have learned Chinese medicine well and who continue to study it ever more thoroughly are not waiting for Dutch Studies to supply something they lack, and that they need in order to do their work of saving lives and healing ailments. The views and opinions I state here do not imply that I have not been trained in the traditional methods, or that I want to abolish all of them. I fully admit that there are colleagues who conduct themselves as well-trained, mature physicians while practising their craft according to the Chinese method. In their kind of medicine, however, the emphasis is on feeling the pulse and observing the symptoms; *when it comes to exploring the underlying causes, they are greatly remiss*. Now, as there are things that I have discovered *through the application of the western quantitative theories*, all I want to do is to study them and to repair deficiencies in traditional medicine; I want to continue the traditional techniques, and refine and refine again a method of healing in which inner and outer interact.⁷

‘The interaction of inner and outer’ is a reference to ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ medicine. ‘Outer’ stands for the traditional East-Asian medicine, which according to Gentaku emphasizes the observation of external symptoms. ‘Inner,’ by contrast, is the European medicine, which explores the hidden causes of illnesses and ailments. This European medicine is characterised as ‘quantitative,’ which is my translation of the term *jissoku*, a compound of *jitsu* (full, solid, true) and *soku* (to measure).

Although the word *jissoku* itself does not appear in *The Words of a Mad Doctor*,⁸ and Gentaku argues in a conciliatory tone that is strikingly different from that of his master, the message had not changed in the forty years that elapsed between the completion of *The Words of a Mad Doctor* and *Upwards and Forwards*. Gentaku’s message, too, is that traditional East-Asian medicine is inexact, and that it lacks the apparatus that is needed to understand the real, underlying causes of physical processes.

Both Genpaku’s essay and Gentaku’s dialogue remained unpublished during the remainder of the Edo Period. This is intriguing. One could entertain the thesis that the reason was that any attack on Chinese medicine, even one as carefully phrased as Gentaku’s, was felt to be dangerous thought, and that therefore both Genpaku and Gentaku thought it wiser not to publish. I am not sure. One reason is that the number of surviving manuscripts is extremely small. Of *The Words of a Mad Doctor* only five manuscripts are extant, and of *Upward and Forward*, only two.⁹ The paucity of manuscripts indicates that the authors did not permit their texts to be copied, but the reason can hardly have been that they contained dangerous thought.

6 The title is a classical tag. *Tei* means ‘ladder,’ and is a device for climbing mountains; *kō* means, ‘to cross the seas.’ Together the words should be interpreted as ‘bravely going forth toward new horizons.’ The title chimes with an earlier book by Gentaku, his primer for Dutch Studies entitled *Rangaku kaitei* (‘A Stepladder for Dutch Studies’; 1783). *Ran'yaku teikō* is written in characters and *katakana*, which is an indication that it is a serious text, but intended for the general public.

7 *Ran'yaku teikō*, NST 64, p. 374a-b. The italics are mine.

8 The term does appear *Rangaku kotohajime*, in the phrase *Oranda jissoku kyūri no kotodomo*: ‘the results of Dutch quantitative natural science.’ (*Rangaku kotohajime*, p. 31), but Genpaku wrote that text ‘when he was eighty-three,’ i.e., in 1815.

9 The bibliographical handbooks list three undated manuscripts, one manuscript dated An’ei 4 (1775), and one manuscript dated Kaei 1 (1848). None of these seems to be the autograph. The two surviving manuscripts of *Ran'yaku teikō* are undated.

We can be sure that, in that case, the authors would have allowed others to copy them, and that many more manuscript copies would have existed than we have now. Both Genpaku and Gentaku had a wide circle of acquaintances, colleagues, and disciples, and, then as now, dangerous thought is attractive.

Of course, we will never know for sure, why Genpaku and Gentaku did not allow copies to be made. We do know, however, that the texts were finished, and that considerable thought had gone into writing them. The natural urge would be to share the fruit of such efforts with others. If they did not allow copies to be made, my guess would be that they intended to publish their texts. In the end, they did not, for reasons unknown. No money? No prospective market? More urgent claims on their time? Dissatisfaction with the texts as such? As a matter of fact, *Mad Doctor* was at one time announced for publication. In a list of forthcoming publications that is appended to one of the printed editions of Genpaku's *Dialogues about Dutch Medical Matters* (*Oranda iji mondō*; 1795) *The Words of a Mad Doctor* is mentioned, with the following blurb: 'It sees through the pretences of Japanese and Chinese medical theories of antiquity and of the present, and it rectifies the Art of Medicine on the basis of western medical theory.'¹⁰ In view of this recommendation, it does not seem likely that the attack on traditional medicine as such was estimated to invite dangerous repercussions.

To my knowledge, no complete translation of *The Words of a Mad Doctor* exists. The text enjoys some notoriety, however, because of the argument Genpaku made to undermine the credence 'China' enjoyed with the majority of Japanese intellectuals,¹¹ but as a result, the medical part of the text, and of the argument, is ignored. I think this is wrong, for Genpaku's aim in writing the essay was to make a case for Dutch medicine, and not, to debunk Chinese culture. What he says against the claim to universality of Chinese culture is based on common sense and common knowledge. Positive proof of the correctness of his argument is offered in the medical part. Before he could offer it, however, with any chance of success, he first had to get his readers to acknowledge the possibility that even barbarians could be right. This he attempted to achieve by altogether denying any fundamental differences between the Chinese and the barbarians.

Genpaku's argument against Chinese culture is, in essence, a denial of the claims that that culture was the single Universal Culture, and that China was the Middle Country. 'Universal Culture,' Genpaku claims, should be defined as an abstract, moral concept, and the differences that could be observed between the various existing cultures could be reduced to such accidental factors as climatic conditions and should, therefore, be regarded as external. Add to this the obvious fact that China did not lie in the centre of the world, but—as any globe or world map would show—was just one of the many countries dotting the globe,¹² and

10 Quoted from NST 64, p. 592.

11 Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, pp. 41-46, gives a paraphrase with occasional translations of *Kyōi no gen*. His aim is to situate its repudiation of Chinese culture in the context of (a) the intellectual history of the Edo Period, and (b) of Genpaku's other writings. His conclusion is: 'Sugita ... retained considerable respect for Sinocentric civilization. ... He repudiated Confucian moral culture in order to assimilate superior Western medical techniques—and for that purpose only. In his mind, these techniques could be appropriated and utilized without disrupting traditional ways of thought or existing socio-political institutions.' (*op. cit.*, p. 46) See also Winkel, *Different Dimensions*, pp. 18-19.

12 This is the reason why Genpaku consistently refers to China with the word *Shina*, and does not use *Zhongguo* (J. *Chūgoku*). I have translated *Shina* as *China*, and *Zhongguo* as 'the Middle Kingdom.' *Shina* is a corruption of the name of the first imperial dynasty, called *Qin* (221-207). The name originated in Central Asia and was used in, e.g., India. In this way, it came to be used in Buddhist texts, and thus re-entered China, written with a variety of character combinations, when Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese. In Early Modern Japan the term was used by scholars who wanted to deny China's claim to cultural and moral superiority; hence its use by Genpaku. Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 41, says it was a neutral term, but as it denied China's claims to 'moral and

Genpaku could rest his case. In an age when students of Japanese Learning (*Kokugakusha*) had been doing their best for several decades already to undermine the claims of Chinese culture, and when Dutch globes and world maps were becoming the common frame of reference and were being reproduced on screens, Genpaku could expect to get a hearing for his argument. Nevertheless, it was quite drastic. Especially the fact that he severed the links between a particular set of social arrangements and a particular dress code and ‘Culture’ in the abstract, and his definition of universal culture in terms of ethics and not of Rites or Ritual, was startling. Genpaku, however, had no choice. If he wanted to make the Dutch *salonfähig*, he could neither accept China’s blanket condemnation of all foreign peoples as barbarians, nor Japan’s claim to inherent superiority.

After his argument against Chinese culture, Genpaku introduces a specific argument against Chinese medicine. It rests on Genpaku’s acknowledgement of the authority of the Chinese Saints, the hallowed creators of Chinese culture. He correctly describes them as superior and eminent men, and then proceeds to argue that their very superiority precludes the possibility that they also created Chinese medicine. First, nowhere in the Classics is it said that they did. Second, Chinese medicine is wrong and the medical handbooks deceive the people, but Saints do not lie; *ergo*, they cannot have had anything to do with it. It is a neat argument, though somewhat inconsistent after his denial of the superiority of Chinese Culture that these very Saints had created. It makes one wonder whether Genpaku was sincere in his appreciation of the Saints, or had his tongue in his cheek when he wrote this.

What remained to be done was for Genpaku to prove that Chinese medicine was in fact a lie. He does this through introducing concrete medical evidence, and by juggling the twin concepts of *fang* and *fa*, which nowadays live together happily in the compound *hōhō* 方法 (‘method’), but which Genpaku sharply distinguished.

The medical evidence falls in the fields of anatomy and pathology. Especially the anatomical part relies heavily on the autopsy of the executed criminal Granny Greentea (Aochababa), which Genpaku had attended in 1771 together with Maeno Ryōtaku and Nakagawa Jun’an (1739-1786).¹³ At this occasion, Genpaku claims, he had seen with his own eyes that the illustrations in *Ontleedkundige Tafelen* were an exact depiction of the organs and bones of the body, and were in this respect by far superior to the illustrations in books of the Chinese tradition. He cites the lungs, the heart, and the spine as points in case. Because of this reliable grasp of anatomy, he continues, Dutch doctors are able to make a much more reliable diagnosis of internal ailments. He cites two instances of patients with abdominal pains, and concludes that, where the Chinese guess and formulate theories on the basis of single cases, the Dutch know and are able to relate unique cases to a general theoretical framework. This general framework he calls *fa* (‘law’), while he reserves the term *fang* (‘method’) for practical, rule-of-the-thumb ways of dealing with illnesses. The key sentence of the essay is ‘In Chinese books you find methods, but no laws. Or rather, you do find laws, but it is completely unclear, why they are to be regarded as laws.’ (支那之書者有方無法也、非無法,所以為法者不明). Another way in which he distinguishes the two is: ‘What clarifies the symptoms is the theoretical framework (‘is the laws’); what cures the disease, is the methods’ (明其症者法也, 治其病者方也). Genpaku ends his essay with a last sarcastic attack on his Japanese colleagues, when he points out that the Chinese themselves are already using European books in astronomy and civil engineering, and that in this respect the Japanese Sinophiles are lagging behind the Chinese.

The final point I want to make is Genpaku’s rhetorical stance. Throughout the essay, he projects a sense of being a solitary defender of the truth, and stresses that he will continue

cultural superiority,’ it was, in fact, polemical and programmatic.

13 The incident is related at length in *Rangaku kotohajime*, pp. 33-36.

on his path, whatever his friends and professional colleagues think of him. The title itself is already a give-away. Who would seriously want to flaunt himself as a madman? Of course, Genpaku does not think he is mad, but he pre-empts the word that he is sure his colleagues will use to refer to him.¹⁴ At the end, he compares himself with the ancient Chinese heroes Bo Yi and Shu Qi. It is a double-edged comparison. Bo Yi and Shu Qi's loyalty was commendable, but they died for a lost cause (a defeated dynasty, that had clearly lost the Heavenly Mandate). If they had truly wanted to do what a gentleman should do, i.e., assist a ruler in ruling the country, they should have joined King Wu, and not disappeared into the woods and died of hunger.¹⁵ Genpaku certainly was not about to die of starvation, and he certainly did not see himself as a voice of the past. The point of comparison can only have been the stubbornness that the two brothers exhibited, and that he was prepared to exhibit, too. At the end of the essay, this stubbornness causes his friend to leave him; all alone, Genpaku remains behind. This scene, though in keeping with the overall tenor of the essay, is hardly a true description of the situation in which Genpaku found himself.

14 Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 41 sqq translates 'a fanatic doctor.' I see no reason to follow him. 狂 means 'mad.' There is no reason to give a positive twist to it.

15 Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 41, turns them into positive heroes, which they were not.

The Words of a Mad Doctor

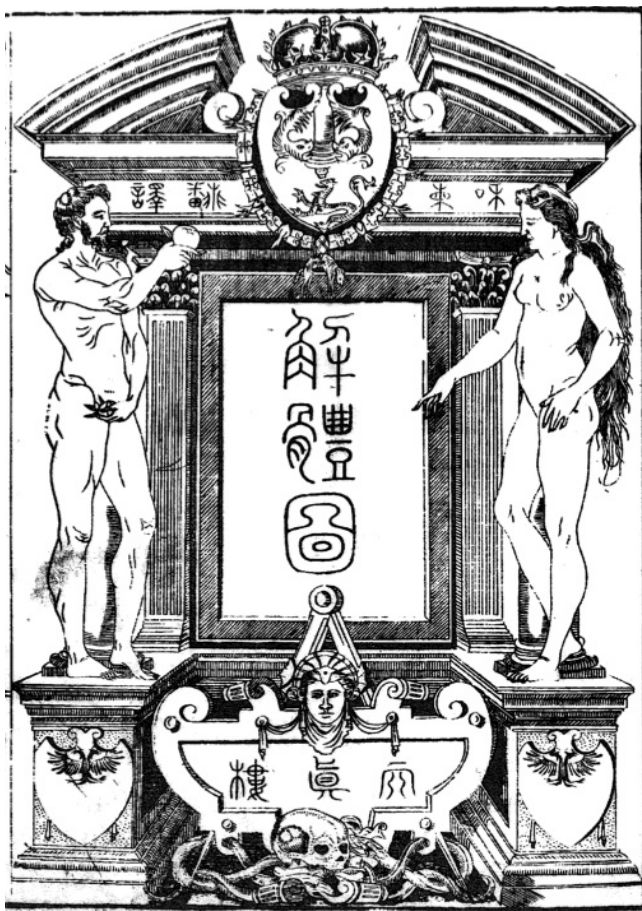
by

Sugita Genpaku

A FRIEND¹⁶ came by to visit me and said: ‘Some time ago there was a small gathering in someone’s house. As we sat drinking wine, each of us gave his comment on personalities of the present time. When one of the company praised your medical skills, a physician shuffled forward and said indignantly: “Ah! What talk is this! My friends, were we not talking about the gentlemen of our times? Please do not talk about such a rascal, a traitor of the medical profession.” Nobody in the group dared to open his mouth and ask him to explain.

‘Because you and I are friends, I said: “Master Sugita is an old friend of mine. You are of the opinion that he is a traitor of the medical profession. *Mencius* says, that friendship implies that friends criticize each other and encourage each other to do good.¹⁷ I would therefore like to obtain your esteemed teaching, pass it on to him, and make him transform himself.”

‘This doctor—his name does not matter now—said: “Well, the Middle Kingdom is the country of the Saints and the Sages. The ancient Kings have established the Rites and Music and caused civilization with all its artefacts to shine forth. They spread their teachings within the Four Seas, and these were also accepted by the barbarian nations of the four directions. Take for example our medical art. Emperor Yan (= Shennong. WJB) established the Way; Xuan Yuan, (= the Yellow Emperor. WJB) spread the doctrine; thereafter, men like Liu, Zhang, Zhu, and Li¹⁸ appeared, following one upon the other. For thousands of years,



Title page of *Kaitai shinsho*.

16 The following translation is based on the edition in NST 64, pp. 239-242 (*Kanbun*) and pp. 227-238 (annotated Japanese translation). This edition was made by Satō Shōsuke, who used the manuscripts in the possession of the Jingū Bunko (undated), the Yamazaki Bunko of Juntendō Daigaku (dated 1848), and the Kenkensai Bunko (undated); *op. cit.*, p. 592. *Nihon no meicho* Vol. 22 contains a translation into modern Japanese by Haga Tōru.

17 Reference to *Mencius* 4B30: ‘To admonish each other to be good is the way of friends.’

18 These physicians were Liu Wansu (Shouzhen), Zhang Congzheng (Zihe), Zhu Zhenheng (Yanxiu, a.k.a. Danxi-xiansheng), Li Gao (Mingzhi, a.k.a. Dongyuan). They were all active under the Jin (1125-1234) and Yuan (1260-1368) dynasties.

their theoretical framework (*fa*) has been clear and has cured the people of their diseases. Here and now, their Way does not lack in anything. That small-minded fellow, however, from a liking of the bizarre, has cast doubt on books of the Saints and Sages, and puts his trust in the writings of the barbarians. He wants to corrupt the theoretical framework (*fa*) that they have transmitted. If he is not a traitor of the medical profession, what is he?

“Vassal countries such as Korea and the Ryūkyū are not too far distant from the Middle Kingdom and in their books they use the same language (*i.e.* Classical Chinese. WJB). Scattered throughout these books, you find the words of the ancient Saints. What he has studied, are the books of a country that is located in the north-western corner of the world, ninety thousand miles away from the Middle Kingdom, where they speak a language truly reminiscent of the screeching of buzzards and the squeals of barbarian music. Never in their lives have its inhabitants heard of the way of the Saints. Of all barbarian peoples, they are the most remote and distant, and their customs are entirely different. You can imagine, what their medical skills will be like.”

‘As I have not studied medicine, I do not know, who is right and who is wrong, but as I see it, “the Saints did not remain stuck in things; they were able to move along and change with the times.”¹⁹ They tended to choose the simple rather than the bizarre.²⁰ I am afraid that what you study is wrong. Please, think about this.’

On hearing his words, I bowed and spoke to him as follows: ‘Humbly I accept your instruction, and I do not dare to ignore it. I am not too smart, however, and to my shame and mortification I have inherited the profession of my father and grandfather. For three generations by now we have been known in the world as physicians. It is not the case that I do not have my predecessors’ books, or that I have not studied this Way since my youth. On the contrary, I have read and doubted; I have studied and understood. For a long time I have known the inaccuracies. That is why I want to correct them. Although you, my older brother, have not studied medicine, please try to listen to this.

‘I believe that, when the ancient Saints and former Kings of China founded the state and established Rites and Music, they purposely elevated China and denigrated the barbarians. They did this to raise a wall around their people, in order to prevent that their customs would mingle with those of other peoples.²¹

‘Well, the Saints did not have four eyes and two mouths. They were men who were intelligent, gave security to the people, and did not deceive them. Hence, they led the people with laws (*fa*), and promoted this teaching of the superiority of China and the inferiority of the barbarians. Confucius said: “Without Guan Zhong I would probably have had my hair hanging down from my head, and would have closed my clothes left over right.”²² Here Confucius praises Guan Zhong, because he concluded his task successfully. I think you have large and small countries, and strong and weak customs. The customs of China are weak. Intelligent as

19 Reference to the poem *Yufu* (‘The fisherman’) in *Chuci* (‘The Songs of Chu’). With these words the fisherman rebuked Qu Yuan, who had been banished from the court and was complaining.

20 Two important elements of Chinese decision-making: the wise man adapts to the times and does not try to go against the stream. And the bizarre (strange, exceptional) is not sound and will not last.

21 This passage is also translated in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 43

22 Reference to *Analects* XIV.17. Guan Zhong (dates unknown; active in the seventh century B.C.) was a statesman of the state Qi and helped its lord, Duke Huan (685-643), to become the leader (hegemon) of the feudal lords. Although he had not taken revenge for the murder of his first master by Duke Huan, but on the contrary, had entered the service of the murderer, Confucius considered him a ‘benevolent’ man. See also *Analects* XIV.9 and XIV.16, which are favourable to Guan Zhong, and III.22, where Confucius is critical of him. History has him down as a Legalist; there exists a book, *Guanzi* (‘Master Guan’), which is attributed to him.

they were, the Saints must have known this. The Way of the Three Dynasties²³ declined, and by the time of the Qin (221-207) the northern barbarians were already violating China's borders. The first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, too, knew the weakness of his people, and he built the Great Wall to protect it. Since the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - 8 A.D.; 25-220) China has no longer been able to resist the power of the northern barbarians. Numerous times it concluded peace treaties with the barbarians and accepted that they stood in a relation of older and younger brother.²⁴ Eventually, with the Yuan (1279-1367) and the present-day Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the entire country became Tartarian. More than one hundred years have passed since the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661-1722) founded the dynasty; by now, the many millions, nay, billions of the people of the thirteen provinces of China all wear barbarian clothes and are subject to the restrictions the barbarians impose. I have not yet heard, however, that even one of them is ashamed. This is due to the weakness of their customs.²⁵

‘With their intelligence, the Saints were able to foretell that this day would come. That is why they made a clear distinction between Chinese and barbarians. They did this in order to educate and indoctrinate their people. They did not really believe that China was superior and the barbarians, inferior. If they really had believed that, how would something like Taibo's flight to Wu have been possible?’²⁶

‘Corrupt Confucians and quack doctors do not realize how vast Heaven and Earth are. They have heard a little about two or three countries in East Asia, and immediately they conclude that China is the crown of the ten thousand states. Barely have they read a few Chinese books, or they become arrogant and praise themselves, saying: “Barbarian customs never had anything resembling Rites and Music.”²⁷ Well now, Rites, Music, and other products of civilization are used to distinguish superior from inferior. What country does not know a distinction between high and low? What country would not possess Rites and Music? Confucius said: “The barbarians have a lord.”²⁸ If they have a lord and treat him as superior, then by that

23 The Three Dynasties are the kingdoms of Xia, Shang (or Yin), and Zhou. The traditional dates of these dynasties are 2205-1766 (Xia), 1766-1122 (Shang-Yin), and 1122-249 (Zhou), but the Xia Dynasty is not attested in the archaeological record. The other two dynasties existed.

24 I have here translated *washin* (lit. ‘harmony and intimacy’) as ‘peace.’ The term implies the conclusion of marriages between the two parties (‘a Chinese princess for the barbarian ruler’) in order to secure the bonds entered into through the treaty. Defining the relationship between China and the barbarian state as one ‘between the older and the younger brother’ makes use of a similar family metaphor.

25 This passage is also translated in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 43-44.

26 Taibo was born in what would become the royal house of the Zhou Dynasty. He was the eldest son, and by rights should have succeeded his father, but being a Saint himself, he knew that the son of his younger brother would be a Saint (the later King Wen). In order to secure the succession of his nephew, who would afterwards be canonized as King Wen and be regarded as the first king of the Zhou Dynasty, he fled the country and hid himself among the barbarians of Wu. To perfect his disguise, he even tattooed his body and shaved his head - things no decent Chinese would have contemplated doing. The story has a tail, which is, that from Wu Taibo (or his descendants) crossed the sea and civilized Japan, and that in Japan they were deified as Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess) and/or Ninigi no mikoto (the first deity to rule over Japan). Genpaku's reasoning is that, if the Saints had really despised the barbarians, Taibo would never have sought refuge with them.

27 This passage is also translated in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 44. Wakabayashi translates *liyue* (J. *reigaku*) as ‘rules of ethical behavior.’ Further down on the same page, he emphatically equates *li* with ‘rules of ethical behavior.’ I object to the adjective ‘ethical’; *li* is ‘ritual.’

28 Partial quotation from *Analects* III.5. The full quotation is: ‘Barbarians having a lord is not like the Chinese states not having one.’ It is Confucius' classic pronouncement on the subject of China *versus* the barbarian peoples, but it is ambiguous. Historically, it has been interpreted in two ways: (1) Even when the barbarians have a lord, they are still inferior to China, even though China might at some moment not have a ruler. (2) At this moment, the barbarians have a lord, unlike China, which does not have one. In the case of the first interpretation, China is inherently superior because of its system of Rites and Music and its hierarchically organized society, which continue to exist even in the temporary absence of a single ruler at the apex of the socio-political pyramid. In the

very fact they have Rites.²⁹ Clothes and caps serve to distinguish between high and low. That the systems are different in different countries is the result of climatic conditions or of the customs of the age. Confucius said: “The Yin based its Rites on the Xia. It is known what was removed and what was added. The Zhou relied on the Rites of the Yin. It is known what was removed and what has been added.”³⁰ That things were ‘added or removed’ was the result of the customs prevalent in the period concerned.

‘As regards the first point, climatic conditions - suppose, for example, that you regard the clothes and caps of the Zhou Dynasty as the correct attire and that you impose them also in tropical countries like Borneo or Sumatra, then the people would not be able to stand the heat, which would, I fear, give rise to many diseases. If a Saint would be born in those countries, he would surely design a new style of clothes and caps that would ensure that those peoples would not need to suffer. This example will show you that clothes and caps and other products of civilization are there to distinguish high from low. Clearly, you should not consider China as correct; “correct” is what fits the local climatic conditions.³¹ The Way has not been established by the Chinese Saints; it is the Way of Heaven and Earth. Everywhere where sun and moon shine, where ripe and dew fall, you have states, you have nations, you have the Way.³²

‘What is the Way? In essence, it means eliminating evil and promoting the good. If one eliminates evil and promotes the good, then the Way of Human Relationships will manifest itself.³³ The rest is all a matter of customs. In their customs, all countries are different. I have never yet heard of a country where people are born with four eyes and two mouths; I have only heard of countries with different customs. Xunzi says: “At birth they all have the same voice; when they grow up, they all have different customs.”³⁴ This is what I mean.

‘Again, following their Chinese books, these corrupt Confucians and quack doctors regard that country as the centre of the Earth. Now, the Earth is one gigantic globe, over which the ten thousand countries are distributed. Wherever they lie, it is always the centre. Which country should be the centre of the world? China, too, is but a small country in a corner of the Eastern Ocean.

For a humble person like me, his allotted duty is to follow the Way of Heaven and Earth, to abide by the laws of the state, and to pursue his calling as well as he can. Callings are different for each individual. The arrow maker regards making arrows as his calling; the seller of footwear regards the manufacture of footwear as his calling; and I regard medicine as my calling. It seems to me that medicine is one of the ways to succour the people. It is not easy to become an accomplished master of its techniques. That is why I have not yet been able to shed light on all aspects of these techniques, though I have studied it since my youth.

The reason must be that in medicine there never was a Saint.³⁵ Everyone says that Shennong established our Way and Xuan Yuan spread the teachings. In the Six Classics,

case of the second interpretation, Confucius supposedly bewailed the situation in the China of his days; it did not have one central ruler, and in this respect was inferior to the barbarians.

29 This passage is also translated in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 44.

30 Quotation from *Analects* II.23.

31 This part, from the quote of the *Analects* until here, is also translated in Winkel, *Exploring*, pp. 18-19.

32 This passage is also translated in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 45.

33 The ‘Human Relationships’ (*renlun*; *J. jinrin*), also known as the Five Relationships (*wu lun*; *J. gorin*) are the relationships between parent and child, lord and subject, man and wife, older and younger brothers, and friends. They imply mutual obligations of nurturing, caring, and obedience, and are regarded as the basic, universal fabric of all possible human societies.

34 Quotation from *Xunzi* I (*Quan xue*).2. According to this passage in *Xunzi*, differentiation arises because people are educated differently.

35 I.e., someone with superior insight and skill, who created the medicine, like the Confucian Saints created human society.

however, no mention is made of Emperor Yan or the Yellow Emperor explaining medical matters. Only in the *Rites of Zhou*, in the category “Heavenly Officials,” a medical functionary is listed.³⁶ Only when we come to the Han Dynasty, *Huainanzi* for the first time tells the story of Shennong licking the hundred herbs.³⁷ *Huainanzi* is a Taoist book, written by followers of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. The text consists of parables; one cannot use it as proof.

‘Well now, Saints were men who were intelligent, who brought peace to the people, and who did not cheat. Emperor Yan was a Saint. Among the books that in recent times have become popular there is a *Shennong bencao jing* (‘Shennong’s Classic of *materia medica*’). It contains 120 recipes labelled first-class, which all claim that, if you take the medicine for a long period, it will make your body light and extend your life. I have never yet heard of anyone who obtained this effect by taking one of these medicines. We must, therefore, call it a book that deceives humanity. The Yellow Emperor, too, was a Saint. Tradition says that *Suling*³⁸ is a book that contains the conversations between the Yellow Emperor and his physician Qi Bo and others. Everything is discussed, from the Five Agents and the Six Kinds of *Qi* to the veins and arteries, the bones, the entrails and organs, the joints, diseases, acupuncture, and moxa caution.

‘Recently, when we cut open the body of an executed criminal and studied her organs, we discovered that the positions and the shapes of the organs were different from this book. If the real things are different from this book, then this, too, is a book that deceives humanity. I have never heard that even in the most ancient times there ever was a Saint who deceived humanity. It is clear, therefore, that this book is not the work of a Saint.

‘The only medical book that does not deceive humanity is the book of the Governor of Zhangsha.³⁹ When it says that something will cause diarrhoea, the patient will get diarrhoea when you give it to him. When it says that something will cause sweating, the patient will sweat when you give it to him. When, however, it comes to a discussion of the malady, you come to the part that has passed through the hands of Wang Shuhe.⁴⁰ Thus, jade and stone are mixed. Moreover, due to incorrectly bound bamboo slats, transposed lines are frequent. It cannot be considered as a fixed guiding rule.⁴¹

Ever since then, all physicians who have arisen in successive generations have made *Suling* their tutelary deity,⁴² and based themselves on the works of Zhang Zhongjing, Sun

36 The *Zhouli* (‘Rites of Zhou’) is one of the three ritual handbooks that are part of the Confucian canon. It projects a highly idealized image of the bureaucratic organization of the early Zhou Dynasty. The text is much younger, and probably dates from the fourth or third century B.C.

37 Reference to *Huainanzi* 19 (*Xiumu xun*).1. The relevant passage says: ‘Thereupon, for the first time, Shennong taught the people to sow the five grains. With his tongue he detected which herbs were tasty, and which springs were sweet or bitter, and he let the people know what to take and what to avoid.’ Shennong is represented as a man with an oxen’s head, which explains why he licked the plants and waters in order to establish their properties. As the text says, *Huainanzi* was of Taoist inspiration. It was compiled under the auspices of a member of the imperial family of the Han, who was King of Huainan (i.e., the area south of the River Huai); hence the title.

38 *Suling* is another name of *Huangdi neijing* (‘The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor’). It consists of thirty chapters and is commonly divided into two parts, called *Suwen* (‘Simple Questions’) and *Lingshu* (‘The Spiritual Pivot’). It is the oldest Chinese medical Classic.

39 Reference to Zhang Ji (*style* Zhongjing). He lived under the Later Han Dynasty, and is the author of the medical classic *Shanghanlun* (‘Treatise of the Treatment of Sudden Fever’).

40 Wang Shuhe (fl. 275) is responsible for the present edition of *Shanghanlun*. As he edited the text, he introduced many elements from *Neijing*.

41 The Chinese term is *dingfa* (J. *teihō*), a compound of *fa* (law, rule, method) and *ding* (to settle, to fix, to determine). It comes from the *Yijing*, *Xici* (‘The Great Appendix’) II.

42 The term used is *sheji* (J. *shashoku*), which refers to the god of the earth (of a given territory) and the god of the five grains. Together, they were the tutelary deities of a state. The binome is also used as a synecdoche to refer to ‘the state’ as such.

Simiao⁴³ and Wang Dao.⁴⁴ They formulated their theories, wrote their treatises, and each laid claim to being a separate school; their teachings, however, are full of speculation and forced analogies. As each man followed his own predilections and decided things on the basis of his private opinion, their teachings are not a worthy object of criticism. As the phrase goes, “It will never be the case that the basis is confused and the extremities are well organized.”⁴⁵ Why should that not be the case here? This is the reason why I have gotten rid of my Chinese books and only make use of Dutch books.’

My friend asked: ‘Do the Dutch not deceive their fellow men?’ I replied: ‘No, they do not.’ He asked: ‘How do you know?’ I replied: ‘I am born in a doctors’ family and have never studied anything else; all I studied were medical books. Well now, we doctors treat men. When someone who treats men does not know men (i.e., does not know how men are constituted. WJB), then he cannot do his job.⁴⁶ That is the reason why I first wanted to verify the constitution of the human body, and to begin with observed the dissection of an executed criminal.

‘Traditionally it is said that the lungs have six lobes and two ears, so eight lobes in all. It is also said that their shape resembles the human shoulder, or that they have two big lobes⁴⁷ and a number of small lobes, and that there are twenty-four holes in. Now that I have observed them myself, I know that on the left and right side there are two or three lobes, and certainly not more than five.⁴⁸

‘Traditionally it is said, that the liver has three lobes on the left side and four on the right, so seven lobes in all. It is also said that the liver has two large lobes and one small lobe, and that its shape resembles the breaking bud of the flower of a tree. Now that I have observed it myself, I know that the liver looks like one large chunk of meat and that it has a small furrow in the middle.⁴⁹

‘Traditionally it is said that the heart has seven holes and three hairs. It is also said that its shape resembles a lotus blossom that has not yet unfolded, and that in its centre it has nine cavities. Now that I have observed it myself, I know that there are four blood vessels that connect there.

‘Traditionally it is said that the spleen has the shape of a horseshoe and encloses the stomach. Now that I have observed it myself, I know that it is shaped like a cow’s tongue and lies behind the stomach on the left side.

‘Traditionally it is said that the gallbladder is situated between the short lobes of the liver. Now that I have seen it myself, I know that it lies behind the liver.

‘Traditionally it is said that the stomach weighs two catties and one tael (1,237.5 gram), and that it twists and turns and stretches to a length of two feet and six inches (79cm). Now that I have observed it myself, I know that it is like a big sack and lies underneath the diaphragm.

43 Sun Simiao lived under the Tang Dynasty. He was the author of such books as *Qianjin fang* and *Qianjin yifang*.

44 Wang Dao lived under the Tang Dynasty. He wrote *Waitai biyao*.

45 Reference to *The Great Learning (Daxue)*. Legge, *Analects*, translates: ‘It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well ordered.’ Plaks translates: ‘For one to put the peripheral ‘branches’ of one’s behaviour into order, while the ‘roots’ at its core are yet in a state of chaotic entanglement, would be a contradiction in terms, ...’ (*Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung*, p. 6).

46 A similar remark can be found in Rangaku kotohajime, pp. 36-37: If we want to work as physicians, we should first know how the human body is constituted.

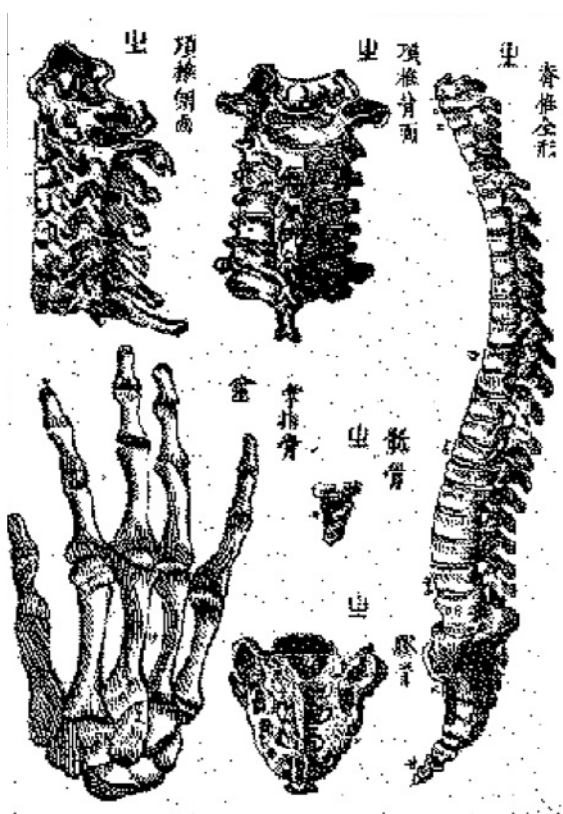
47 The text has 布葉. This combination is listed in the dictionaries, but refers to the lush foliage on Mt Heng in the south of China. In view of the *xiao* (J. *shō*, *chiisai*) that follows, I have translated the character as ‘big.’

48 These same anatomical features are mentioned in Rangaku kotohajime, p. 35.

49 These same anatomical features are mentioned in Rangaku kotohajime, p. 35.

‘Traditionally it is said that the small bowels are stacked in sixteen left-turning loops, and that the big bowels are situated to the right of the umbilicus in sixteen right-turning loops. Some say that the small bowels are to the left of the umbilicus. Now that I have observed them myself, I know that the small and large bowels are one single tube of membrane, which begins at the lower opening of the stomach, winds and turns, and ends at the anus.⁵⁰

‘These are the major differences. Besides, there are things that previously were not discussed, e.g., the “big gland,”⁵¹ the lymph vessel,⁵² the mesentery, etc. These are the most important. Limitations of space (*sic*) do not allow me to enumerate all the small things. When you check all these observations in the Dutch books, there is nothing the latter do not account for, and if you verify the Dutch books against the real things, again there are no differences. This means, then, that the Dutch do not lie.’



Spine etc. in *Kaitai shinsho*.

Thereupon, my friend asked me: ‘When someone dies, his *qi* is cut off. When the *qi* is cut off, I fear that the organs and intestines⁵³ lose their position. For the same reason, shape and colour will also change.’ I replied: ‘These are the doubts of someone who never observed an autopsy. When something has shrunk, you blow air into it through a tube, and when something has dried out, you spray water on it and then look at it. About such a thing as loss of position, you need not worry; all ligaments and membranes are connected with each other, so an organ cannot move easily. Only of such a thing like the colour you cannot be sure. However, when you would at this moment dissect a living bird or animal and observe it, you will notice that, the colour of the living animal is not different from the colour of the dead animal; the only difference is that it no longer moves.

‘What cannot change in the case of humans, even though they die, is their bones. Traditionally it is said that there are twenty-one nodes from the first thoracic vertebra to the sacrum and the tailbone.⁵⁴ Now that I have observed them myself, I know that from the first thoracic vertebra to the tailbone there are

50 These same anatomical features are mentioned in *Rangaku kotohajime*, p. 35.

51 The name is composed of the Chinese character 大, meaning ‘big,’ and three characters, 機里爾 (*jilier*, J. *kiriji*), that together transliterate the Dutch word ‘klier’ (gland). The ‘big gland’ thus referred to is the pancreas. Note, that the transliteration only makes sense on the basis of the Chinese pronunciation of the characters.

52 The name is composed of two characters, 奇縷 (*qilü*; J. *kiru*), that together transliterate the Dutch word ‘chijl,’ and the character 管, meaning ‘pipe.’ The compound translates the Dutch medical term *chijlvat*, i.e., lymph vessel, or *chijlbuis*, i.e., lymph tube.

53 The compound *zangfu* (J. *zōfu*) refers to the Five Organs (heart, liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys) and the Six Intestines (stomach, gallbladder, three *jiao*, bladder, great bowels, and small bowels). The ‘three *jiao* 焦 (J. *shō*)’ seems to be a functional, not an anatomical entity. They are distinguished in the ‘upper, middle, and lower *jiao*,’ located respectively in the breast, above the navel, and underneath the navel. They regulate digestion, respiration, and faeces and urine.

54 The word 尾骶 (*weidi*; J. *bitei*) denotes the sacrum and the tailbone together.

twenty-two nodes. It may be a difference of only one node, but the so-called “eight bones of the sacrum that are glued together and the four vertebrae of the tailbone”⁵⁵ as a whole must be counted as one node. It is as big as the palm of a hand, and its several layers cannot be prised apart. It is as if five nodes have run into each other, one layer corresponding to one vertebra. When you add these to the others, you get twenty-six nodes. There cannot be the slightest doubt about the count.⁵⁶

‘Furthermore, it is also said that there are two of three small vertebrae. Now that I have observed them myself, I know that there are seven vertebrae above the first thoracic vertebra. On the basis of this observation, the five vertebrae of which people traditionally spoke are not five, and the seven vertebrae are not seven.⁵⁷ This is the reason why I reject the Chinese books. This is how peculiar their account of the organs and intestines, bones and nodes is. What do you think? How could my argument be incorrect?’

My friend said: ‘Your argument is correct, but ever since the medical method arose in the Middle Kingdom, many myriads of people have taken medicines when ill, or they have been treated with acupuncture and moxibustion, and this has been going on for several thousands of years. How is it possible that all these people have never been given a wrong treatment?’

I replied: ‘It is like feeding birds. There are birds that eat millet (*kibi*; *Panicum miliaceum*); there are those that eat millet (*awa*; *Setaria italica*); there are those that eat fruit; there are those that eat insects. The one who feeds them follows the nature of the bird. He observes what they eat, and that is what he gives to them and feeds them with. In case they eat insects, however, he may not always have the right insects in stock. In that case, he substitutes flour of roasted rice, the dried meat of freshwater fish, and raw turnip leaves. He puts these ingredients together and grinds them into a paste, and then gives it to the birds to eat. Fed in this way, they live for a long time. Would the man who made this substitute food for the first time really have eaten insects himself, and thus have been able to know how they tasted? Of course he did not! That he did not know the taste of insects and yet made this substitute food was the effect of human genius. Anyone who practises medicine should apply thought; who does not think, cannot heal people. If he puts his mind to it, ever so often he will hit the mark. In which

55 Translated according to the explanation given in notes of the edition in NST 64.

56 The count is less unequivocal than Genpaku claims, and clarity is not improved by the vocabulary he employs. He uses three generic terms: *jie* (J. *setsu*) 節, which I have translated as ‘node’; *chui* (J. *zui*) 椎, which I have translated as ‘vertebra’; and *zeng* (J. *sō*), which I have translated as ‘layer.’ ‘Node,’ a word originally referring to the nodes in bamboo, which also stand out, is here used to count the vertebrae. *Chui* refers to the vertebrae, and *zeng* to the five vertebrae that have coalesced to make up the sacrum. The count begins with the *dachui* (J. *daizui*). In classical Chinese medicine, this term does not refer to a vertebra, but to a ‘hole’ 穴, i.e., a spot suitable for the application of acupuncture or moxa. According to some the *dachui* is located above, and according to others, below the last cervical vertebra; in the latter case, it lies *above* the first thoracic vertebra. The word *dachui* can also be used, however, to refer metonymically to either of the two vertebrae themselves. Because of the references in the following paragraph to the cervical vertebrae, I have here translated the term as the ‘first thoracic vertebra.’ Now, beginning with the first thoracic vertebra, Genpaku counts twenty-two vertebrae, which number includes the sacrum and tailbone, counted as one. This is strange, for according to ordinary anatomy (Wikipedia & *Kaitai shinsho*), ‘humans normally have thirty-three vertebrae, including the five that are fused to form the sacrum and the four coccygeal bones that form the tailbone. The upper three regions comprise the remaining twenty-four, divided into seven cervical vertebrae, twelve thoracic vertebrae, and five lumbar vertebrae.’ So, by any normal count, Genpaku should have found $12+5+1=18$ vertebrae, not twenty-two. If we want to reach the other number he mentions, twenty-six, we would have to add the 5 + 4 vertebrae of sacrum and tailbone to the twelve thoracic and five lumbar vertebrae, which conflicts with Genpaku’s description. Something, therefore, is wrong, either with the arithmetic or with the text. I consulted *Kaitai shinsho* 1:17b-18b, where the spine is treated, but it does not really help to clarify the matter.

57 ‘Seven vertebrae’ will refer to the seven cervical vertebrae. What the ‘five that are not five, and the seven that are not seven’ refers to is unclear. The annotation of the edition in NST 64 cites a passage from *Suwen*, but the quote does not seem relevant.

case one can say that the patient took the medicine and was treated successfully. In the terms of my analogy, it is as if, without being a bird, he knew the taste of insects and made food that could be substituted for them.’

My friend said: ‘If it is as you explain, it would be sufficient to study the experience-based methods (*fang*) that the ancient sages of the Middle Kingdom have collected. Why would you want to discard them?’ I replied: ‘In Chinese books you find methods, but no laws. Or rather, you do find laws, but it is completely unclear, why they are to be regarded as laws.⁵⁸ Their “laws” are made by people who all follow their own predilections. They posit a theory, formulate an argument, and erect this into a law. That is why ten books come up with ten different theories, and they do not agree on anything.

‘A good analogy would be a copper pot that is shrouded in such a way that you can only feel the heat. Some will say that it is a charcoal fire; others, that it is a fire of brushwood; others, that it is hot water; others, again, that is cooked rice. They are unable to distinguish between hot water and fire. They only feel the heat and argue about its cause on that basis.

‘Now suppose that you have an ailing woman. Her pulse is slow and weak, and she also has a lump at the upper right-hand side of her navel. From time to time there is a spasm of pain, and when it occurs she has a slight increase in temperature. Try and send her for diagnosis to three men who are familiar with Chinese medicine. One will say that she has a digestive problem and the food has accumulated; one will say that she has a problem with her circulation, and the cause is bad blood; one will say that she has an abdominal obstruction and does not secrete what she has drunk. Now let them treat her. For five days they will give her a digestive that dissolves the accumulated food. If she is not cured, for ten days they will give her a medicine that destroys the blood. If this still does not cure her, for another ten days they will give her a diuretic that expels the fluid. If she has the good fortune to be cured, the doctors will assume that this was because they were able to diagnose the illness correctly. The patient, for her part, will assume that it was because she had the good fortune to come across a good doctor. If unfortunately she fails to be cured, then the doctors will be baffled, and they will not understand the cause of her death. The patient, too, will not understand what she is dying of. This is because the basis is unclear, and the theoretical framework is incorrect.⁵⁹

‘Even a mediocre doctor will not make mistakes in the treatment of knife cuts and boils. Why? Because the affected area lies on the surface of the skin. In such cases, however, as the accumulation of food or the retention of fluids even someone who has the reputation of being a good doctor will sometimes be mistaken about the symptoms. Why? Because the affected area lies inside the body. The people of the world are wont to say that the more books a doctor reads, the clearer will be his insight, and that the more frequently he gives treatment to his patients, the more he finds himself in the dark. What logical connection is there between clarity through reading books and bafflement through giving treatment? It is, that the books he regards as the theoretical framework and therefore studies are obscure.’

My friend said again: ‘You argue with much conviction that the Dutch doctors are clear about the basis and that their theoretical framework is correct. Could you please explain that a little further?’ I replied: ‘Suppose that in the winter months there is a patient who suffers from digestive problems. The man has spasms in his heart and abdomen, and he is unable to vomit. His pulse is reversed.⁶⁰ Send him to a student of Chinese medicine to have him

58 As I argued in the Introduction, this is the key sentence of the essay.

59 This is an abstract formulation. Translated back to the case just described, it means, ‘Because they had not clearly identified the *cause* of the illness, they let themselves be led by the wrong theories.’

60 See Porkert, *Grundlagen*, p. 141. The word I have translated as ‘reversed’ 厥 (*jue*; J. *ketsu*) means that the

diagnosed, and that doctor is bound to say: “He has been exposed to the cold weather and the chill has penetrated inside. The arteries⁶¹ are blocked, and therefore what he eats and drinks is not digested. This causes the pulse to be reversed and the disease to manifest itself with these symptoms. This is a case of arguing about the inside on the basis of what one observes on the outside.

If one would argue the same disease according to Dutch medical studies, the diagnosis would be that the chill has penetrated inside; therefore, the movements of the bowels and stomach have lost their rhythm. Personally, I think it works as follows: food and drink enter into the stomach, which lies below the diaphragm and is shaped like a big sack. When it receives food, it gradually sends that down to the bowels, which are connected to the lower opening of the stomach. At the place where they connect, there is a kind of valve that hangs over the opening as the reed of a flute.⁶² It is permanently able to open and close. When a person’s stomach is impaired by a cold, the valve loses the regularity with which it opens and closes. As a result, drink and food remain stuck in the stomach and cannot descend into the bowels. The more the patient eats, the heavier the stomach becomes, and this, eventually, causes the valve to remain closed and not to open itself anymore. In this way, the stomach is caused to distend; it rises painfully upwards and pushes against the diaphragm. When the diaphragm is pushed, heart and lungs lose the harmony of their movements. Now, the pulse depends on this harmony of the heart and lungs. Because this harmony is now impaired, the pulse becomes weak. With the worst digestive problems, the patient cannot vomit anymore, in which case the disease is incurable. If he can vomit, the stomach relaxes, and the valve can open and close again. Then the patient will recover and return to normal. It is comparable to a water drip⁶³: because it has a small hole, you can hold it on his head, and it will not leak, but once a little bit of water has found its way out, there is no problem for what comes out after.

‘Well, patients with digestive problems of course present clear-cut symptoms. Everyone knows that they will be cured, once the patient can be made to vomit. When, however, you are clear about the cause, you know why the disease occurs and how the cure works. A doctor who knows these things and treats his patients accordingly, will not make a single mistake in one hundred cases, while a doctor who treats his patients without knowing these things, will not be successful even once in a hundred cases. If it is already like this with diseases with uncomplicated symptoms, how much more must it be the case with diseases with complicated ones! What clarifies the symptoms is the theoretical framework; what cures the disease, is the methods. If one has no clear understanding of both the theoretical framework and the methods, one is not fit to be called a doctor.’

My friend asked again: ‘If it is as you claim, then all Dutch doctors need to do is to read one book. Is there no difference between skilled and clumsy doctors?’⁶⁴ I replied: ‘There is. It

qi streams into the wrong direction. Porkert calls this phenomenon *qi flectens* and describes it as follows: ‘Die Umkehrung der normalen Strömungs- oder Ausbreitungsrichtung der physiologischen Energie und die sich daraus ergebenden sekundären Konsequenzen (Kraftlosigkeit, Gefühllosigkeit, Erkalten, Paraesthesien in Extremitäten und Organen).’

61 See Porkert, *Grundlagen*, p. 150-151. Porkert translates ‘arteries,’ i.e. *jingmo*, as ‘Leitlinien,’ and defines them as the connections between *xue* (‘Reizpunkte’) situated at determinate places all over the body. They are not an anatomical reality, but a theoretical construct.

62 The character I translate as ‘flute’ is 簫 (*xiao*; J. *shō*). In the dictionaries it is explained as Pan-pipes, but in the Chinese Wikipedia, as a long flute, comparable to the Japanese *shakuhachi*. Whichever it is, neither type of flute has a reed. Perhaps the 笙 (*sheng*; J. *shō*) is intended? It consists of a number of shorter and longer pipes, but has a reed.

63 An implement used in writing. It is a small ceramic box with one hole, used to drip small amounts of water on the ink-stone.

64 The part of the argument that is not spelled out is the relation between theory and practice. If you only

is like good and poor handwriting. Someone who writes a good hand takes a brush in his right hand and, his eyes seeing and his heart following, writes the characters. Someone who does not write a good hand acts in exactly the same way. The reason why he does not succeed, though his theoretical framework is the same, is talent and maturity. If you are without talent, how would you be able to write well, however well you observe?⁶⁵ In the practice of medicine it is the same. Suppose that there is a huge stone weighing ten thousand catties (approximately six tons. WJB), and that someone wants to move it. To move it you can use a horse, or you can use a cart, but the wish to move the stone is one and the same. When the man in charge has talent and his skills are mature, he will know which is right and which is wrong. Say, for argument's sake, that the use of horses is harmful and that the use of a cart is not. Then the man who uses a horse when he should have used a cart, is a bungler, and the one who uses a cart when he should use a horse, is a capable man. With doctors curing illnesses, it is exactly the same. Who clearly knows what disease it is, and then applies his methods, is a good doctor, and those who do not know what disease it is, and apply a method at random, are quacks. Even Dutch doctors cannot practise medicine, if they do not do a lot of studying.'

My friend asked again: 'There are southern and northern countries, and there are strong and weak nations. I fear that the people of a southern region will not tolerate medicines from northern regions.' I replied: 'That is right. Occasionally there are diseases that occur elsewhere but not here, or that occur here but not elsewhere, but most diseases are the same both here and elsewhere. If a disease is the same both here and elsewhere, then the medication must also be the same.'

Such methods as Zhu Danxi's "Method of the Lost Voice"⁶⁶ or "The Dispersion of the Five Treasures"⁶⁷ have all been transmitted to us from overseas. The same applies to ingredients such as gum arabic (*nyūkō*), gum arabic (*motsuyaku*), South African lily juice (*rokai*), or musk (*jakō*), which are produced in Western countries. We have used them for several centuries, and have achieved quite a few amazing results. In these instances we encountered the same illnesses as the people abroad and gave the same medicine. You also have saffron and *theriaca*⁶⁸; these, too, are products of western countries and were originally produced over there. The Chinese did not know how they were produced, but on the basis of their shape and appearance they made up fanciful theories about their effectiveness. Nowadays physicians have to learn these theories and, without knowing their composition, they prescribe these drugs at random to their patients. This you may call deceiving your fellowmen. Someone who has studied Dutch medicine knows the composition of these drugs and he also knows their effect. Therefore, when he uses them,

need to know in order to practise correctly, all you have to do is read a book. As the mad doctor's friend points out, however, medicine is not only *fa* but also *fang*, and actual treatment requires not only knowledge, but also practice, or talent, of *Fingerspitzengefühl*.

65 A strange phrase. The present translation entails an argument to the effect that in order to write well, it is necessary to observe, but that the ability to observe well is not, in itself, a sufficient condition for writing well. It is a bit cumbersome.

66 *Daocang* 倒倉 is a strange name; the characters mean 'overturning the barn,' but the compound is glossed as 'a singer losing his voice.' Zhu Danxi was a physician, who was active under the Yuan. His school became known in Japan through Tashiro Sanki 田代三喜 (1465-1544), who studied in Ming China. The recipe, intended for patients with serious symptoms, is as follows: in the hottest time of the year, cook the tender meat of a yellow cow and its four hooves, collect the sticky juice and drink it on an empty stomach. This will lead to vomiting or diarrhoea, or both, depending on where the disease is located (annotation of NST 64 and the standard dictionaries).

67 This is a remedy for syphilis. Its main ingredients are stalactites, amber, and cinnabar (annotation of NST 64 and the standard dictionaries).

68 According to the annotation in NST 64, saffron was used in against stomach ache, while *theriaca* was used in plasters against poisons.

he makes no mistakes in his treatment. If one administers medicines in this way, why must one still discuss about northern and southern regions?

It would seem to me that such people as the Chinese astronomers and calendar makers, and various artisans have long known that what is transmitted in their country is wrong. Since the end of the Ming, many have studied the theoretical framework of the west. Western books that are current in China are, among others, the book on the western calendar entitled *Compendium about Calendar Calculation (Lisuan quanshu)*, *Illustrated Explanation of Marvellous Products (Qiqi tushuo)* by J. Terrenz, *The Celestial Sphere of the Observatory (Lingtai yixiang)* by F. Verbiest, and *Western Hydraulic Machinery (Daxi shuifa)* by S. de Ursis. This is the reason why the modern celestial sphere is constructed differently from the old ones. This means that the Chinese have selected from European knowledge what was good, and follow it. Only the likes of our Japanese doctors are obstinate and stubbornly guard the stump,⁶⁹ not changing anything. How could you not feel sorry for them?’⁷⁰

My friend said: ‘Your explanations are truly correct. You forget, however, that for several thousands of years people have become completely imbued with the learning of the Middle Kingdom. You want to change that on your own, but I fear that the others will not submit themselves and follow you. When others do not follow you, what, then, is the point of doing this? The few cannot hold out against the many; that is logically impossible. Would it not be better if you yourself would change?’ I replied: ‘At the time when the Zhou Dynasty took over from the Yin, Bo Yi and Shu Qi did not go along. I believe that at the time King Wu was the ruler and the Duke of Zhou summoned Count Taigong Wang⁷¹ and made him his minister. Then the people of the empire all subjected themselves to the Zhou. Only Bo Yi and Shu Qi did not follow suit, for they had their own ambitions.⁷² I may not be very clever, but how could I possibly practise laws that I find deceitful?’

My friend was flabbergasted, and saying ‘It is quite terrible, how narrow-minded and biased you are!’ In the end he left without saying another word.

Written in the 10th month of An’ei 4 (1775),
in my official residence in the
second palace (*nakayashiki*) of the fief Obama

69 Reference to the story of a stupid farmer who once found a hare next to the stump of a tree trunk that the animal had apparently bumped into. Since then the farmer continued to guard the stump in the hope that the same would happen again.

70 This passage is also translated in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism*, p. 42.

71 Taigong Wang is another name of Lu Shang 呂尚. He was the preceptor of King Wen, and assisted Wen’s son, King Wu, in the overthrow of the Yin and the founding of the Zhou Dynasty. *Taigong* means ‘grandfather,’ which here must be taken in a figurative sense, because he was not a member of the royal family. His name is prefixed with the character *bo* (J. *haku*), which in this case should denote an aristocratic title (‘count’). Why Genpaku says that the Duke of Zhou summoned Wang, is unclear. This title refers to King Wu’s younger brother, who acted as regent after Wu’s death.

72 After King Wu had defeated the Yin and established the Zhou, the two brothers retired into the mountains and starved to death, rather than serve under the new dynasty. They thus became the symbols of stubborn loyalty.

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昼下がり

何かがあるわけではないが
指でなぞれば、雲がたなびく、セスナ機も飛ぶ
眼をしばたけば、歓楽の館がならぶ、列車も通る
夏椿の花は好きだ、枇杷をしゃぶる子供は嫌いだ

生きていたくないあなた、死んでもいたくないあなた
あなたを追って跨線橋をわたり、駅構内の食堂に入る
店内はおびただしい日本国国民で満席、汗が噴きだしてくる
テーブルには父母がいて、弟夫婦も従兄弟も叔母もわたしの娘もいて
今しも生ビールで乾杯するところだ
誰も私に気付かないので気持ちだけは涼しい
昔も今もこれからも、いつでも彼らは私に気付かない
食堂にはベッドがしつらえてあって、横たわるようあなたをうながす
私はスパゲッティをフォークに巻きつけ
あなたと私の唇をトマトソースで汚す
もう片方の手をシーツの下に這わせ
あなたの性器のありどころ、暗がりのなつかしい湿り気をさぐる
たっぷりとした太ももが逃げていく
海底を這う蛸のようにすり抜けていく
あなたはひじょうに小さくなって街路を歩いていたりする
ひじょうに大きくなって床に横たわっていたりする
国民の頭と頭の間で学生時代の友人が手招きしている
なんだ死んだんじゃないのか、とおもう
垣間見える父母や叔母や従兄弟も、
なんだ死んだんじゃないのか、とおもう
ビールがぬるいとあなたはいう、生きてこれたのねとあなたはいう
おたがいさまだと私がいう

食堂の窓の外は天気雨
老人がチューバを吹いている
私の娘がバトンガールの練習をしている、槿の花が咲いている
通過列車が窓をかき消し、三秒後には遥かな地平を巡っていく
列車に乗っているあなたが見える、あなたをさがしている私も見える
どこへでも行けばいい
あなたにも私にもさよならだ

何かがあるわけではないが
風だけは吹いている昼下がりだ
行進曲はやめてもらいたい

鈴屋

Vroeg in de middag

Niet dat er iets is, maar

Als je het met je vingers natrekt, er drijven wolken, er vliegt ook een Cessna

Als je met je ogen knippert, weergalmt er een speelhal, komt ook een trein voorbij.

Ik houd van zomercameliabloesem, aan loquats sabbelende kinderen heb ik de pest.

Jij die niet wilde blijven leven, ook niet dood wilde zijn,

Jou liep ik achterna op de loopbrug over het spoor en ging,

Opzij van het station, de restauratie in

Daarbinnen was het barstensvol met het Japanse volk,

Het zweet begon mij uit te breken

Aan tafels zaten daar ouders en jongere broers met hun vrouwen

En neven en tantes en ook mijn eigen dochter was daar

Ze waren net met tapbier aan het proosten

Niemand merkte mij op en zo gaf dat wel weer een koel gevoel

Vroeger en nu en ook van nu af aan merken zij mij nooit op

Er waren bedden in de restauratie neergezet, men spoorde je aan te gaan liggen

Ik wond spaghetti op mijn vork

Jouw en mijn lippen dropen van tomatensaus

Eén hand liet ik al onder het laken kruipen

En daar waar jouw geslacht moest zijn, zocht ik de duistere vochtigheid van vroeger weer

Je volle dijen gingen mij ontwijken

Zoals een octopus over de zeebodem kruipt ontglipten ze mij

Jij werd bijzonder klein en wandelde op straat

Dan weer, bijzonder groot geworden, lag je op de grond

Tussen de hoofden van het volk wenkte een vriend uit mijn studententijd

Hè wat? Was jij niet dood? dacht ik

En ook de ouders, tantes, neven, door het hek heen zichtbaar,

Dachten: hè wat, was jij niet dood?

Het bier is lauw, zei jij, je bent weer tot leven gekomen hè, zei jij

Insgelijks, zei ik

Buiten de ramen van de restauratie regenweer

De oude man blaast op een tuba

Mijn dochter is aan 't oefenen voor majorette, de heemst bloeit

Een doorgaande trein verduistert het raam

En rijdt na drie seconden langs de verre horizon

Jij bent te zien gezeten in die trein, zoals ook ik naar jou op zoek te zien ben

Het maakt niet uit waar we heen gaan

Voor jou en ook voor mij is dit het afscheid

Niet dat er iets is, maar

De wind alleen waait deze vroege middag

Ik wou dat die marsmuziek ophield

Suzuya

Ook dit gedicht is weer afkomstig uit de rubriek excellente gedichten van het internet-tijdschrift *Bungaku Gokudō* (Litteraire Gangsters; <http://bungoku.jp/>) en wel uit het juli-nummer van dit jaar, te vinden op: <http://bungoku.jp/monthly/?date=2011047>

Over de dichter, Suzuya, was helaas geen informatie te vinden, behalve dat hij regelmatig bijdragen levert aan *Bungaku Gokudō* die door de redactie als excellent beoordeeld worden. Zelf vind ik dit bij nader inzien eigenlijk niet zo'n goed gedicht. Wat mij betreft valt het onder de categorie 'litteraire aanstellerij'. Blijkbaar denkt de redactie van *Bungaku Gokudō* daar anders over. Misschien ligt het aan de manier waarop ik het vertaald heb. Ik heb niettemin mijn best gedaan en hoop dat ik zo in ieder geval een idee geef van wat vandaag de dag in Japan als poëzie gewaardeerd wordt.

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