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Rethinking Nature in Japan
From Tradition to Modernity

edited by
Bonaventura Ruperti,
Silvia Vesco and Carolina Negri

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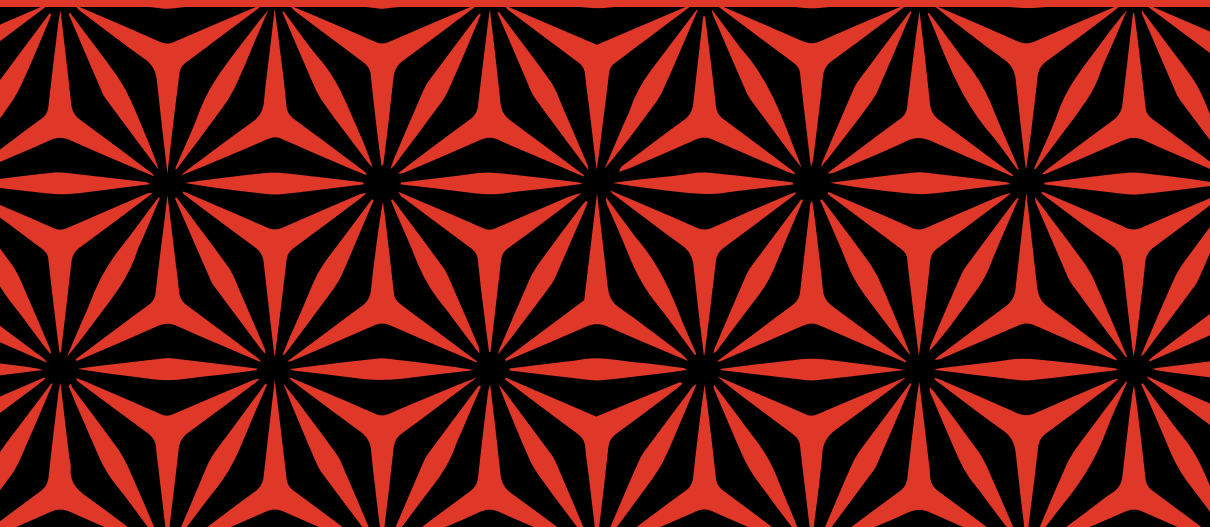

Rethinking Nature in Japan

Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies
Arts and Literature

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Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan
From Tradition to Modernity

edited by
Bonaventura Ruperti, Silvia Vesco and Carolina Negri

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Preface / Foreword

It is a pleasure for us to present this book, with the contributions of the International Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Japan: from Tradition to Modernity* held at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in the Auditorium Santa Margherita.

This was the Second International Conference organized in Venice: in 2013 we celebrated the first Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan. Science, Economics, Politics*, published by Edizioni Cafoscari in 2014.

The aim of the Symposium was the analysis of Japanese society and the international relationships after the accident at Fukushima nuclear plant in March 2011.

Its wide-ranging consequences on everyday life of Japanese citizens brought into the limelight issues such as the protection of the environment, the management of natural resources, and food safety, both within the country and abroad, as fundamental challenges to our globalised society.

In 2013, the participation of scholars from Europe, Japan and United States helped us to achieve a deeper insight into this multifaceted issue, combining several disciplines under a multidisciplinary and comparative approach.

At the root of all these problems stand the basic theme of the relation between man and nature. Historically, Japan has developed through the centuries an extremely rich tradition on this complex topic, in the intellectual field as well as in terms of material culture.

That is the reason why we decided to choose as the theme of this Symposium in 2014 the cultural representations of the idea of *Nature* in the transition from tradition to modernity.

This Symposium, "*Rethinking Nature in Japan: From Tradition to Modernity*", was centered on Fine Arts, Religion and Thought, Literature, Theatre and Cinema.

We had four panel sessions: "Nature and Environment in Japanese Fine Arts: from Tradition to Modernity", in Japanese Literature, in Japanese Thought and in Performing Arts.

First of all, as a representative of Ca' Foscari University and of our colleagues, we would like to thank all students, guests and colleagues for their presence at the Symposium, and thank also our special guests from Japan, from the United State, from Europe and from Italy for their (precious) contributions. We believe for all the participants [students, scholars, lecturers, for you and for us] our Symposium was very interesting and fruitful and we hope that the same will be also for this book.

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We would like to thank the representatives of our University, the Rector of Ca' Foscari University, prof. Carlo Carraro and prof. Tiziana Lippiello, Director of the Department of Asian and North African Studies for their constant support.

We are much indebeted to the Director Matsunaga Fumio and to the Japan Foundation for their special attention to the Japanese Studies Section of our Department.

As for our sponsors, we would like to express our thanks to SAGA [School of Asian Studies and Business Management] for the generous financial support.

We are also grateful to the artist Miyayama Hiroaki who painted the wisteria branch in the poster of the program and generously allowed us to use it as the logo of our Symposium, and prof. Caterina Virdis Limentani of Padua University who organized the exhibition: *Splendori dal Giappone, Le storie del principe Genji nella tradizione Edo e nelle incisioni di Miyayama Hiroaki* and the relation between this work and Miyayama's prints in Padua at Palazzo Zuckermann from March 1st to 31st, 2014.

Last but not least, we would thank again all the students who attended the Symposium, the speakers/contributors from Japan, United State, Europe, Italy, the student staff, all our colleagues of the Japanese Section, our young researchers, the organizing committee: Paolo Calvetti, Massimo Raveri, Luisa Bienati, Aldo Tollini, Marcella Mariotti, Giovanni Bulian, Caterina Mazza, Toshio Miyake, Andrea Revelant and Pierantonio Zanotti, to all the administration staff Anna Genovese, Lisa Botter and Anna Franca Sibiriu in the Department and in this Auditorium.

The Symposium was the perfect occasion to rethink about the relationship between man and nature in our World, and more in particular about the intimate connection between Japanese culture and nature. For this reason we were delighted to invite as keynote speaker prof. Shirane Haruo (the Weatherhead East Asian Institute and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University, New York City) who in recent years published *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons,* a compelling account of how Japan has appropriated, interpreted, and valued nature over the centuries.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to all our speakers for their active and fruitful participation in the Symposium and very much hope that we will have chance to work again together in the not too distant future.

Carolina Negri
Silvia Vesco
Bonaventura Ruperti

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Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons
Nature, Literature and the Arts

Haruo Shirane
(Columbia University, New York City, USA)

Abstract This paper examines the major functions of the representations of nature in traditional Japanese culture with an emphasis on the following: 1) the codification of nature and the seasons in a wide range of Japanese cultural phenomena, beginning with classical poetry (*waka*) and scroll paintings (*emaki*), from at least the tenth century onward; 2) the cause, manner, and function of that codification, particularly the social and religious functions; 3) a major historical change in the representation of nature in the late medieval period (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries) to include more farm-village based views of nature and the seasons; and 4) the dynamic of intertwining courtly and popular representations of nature in the early modern period (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries).

Summary 1 Talismanic Representation. – 2 The Function of Seasonal Words. – 3 *Satoyama* (Farm Village at the Foot of a Mountain). – 4 Seasonal Pyramid. – 5 Seasonal Words in the Modern Period.

Keywords Nature. Four seasons. Japanese culture. Social and talismanic functions.

This essays aims to deal with the major functions of nature in traditional Japanese culture. The analysis will be drawn from my recent book title *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons*.[1]

Let us begin with a large Japanese screen painting (*byōbu-e* 屏風絵) from around the sixteenth century (fig. 1). The painting below has no title, leaving us to guess the content. However, if the viewer knows the iconography, the view will recognise both time and place.

If we look closely at this painting, we will see not only cherry blossoms surrounding a mountain stream. This particular combination signals that this is Yoshino, a mountain (or series of high hills) outside of Nara, which became famous for its cherry blossoms. The flower at the very centre of the painting is a *yamabuki* 山吹 (yellow kerria), sometimes translated into English as 'mountain rose', which indicates not only that the scene is spring but that it is late spring.

1 Shirane, Haruo (2012). *Japan and The Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts*. New York: Columbia University Press.

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Figure 1. “Blossoming Cherry Trees in Yoshino”. Courtesy of the John Weber Collection

Figure 2 shows another example, from the cover of a black lacquer box, again with no title, owned by the Nezu Museum in Japan.

The combination of the moon, the autumn grasses and deer indicates that the scene is from a famous poem in the *Kokinshū* 古今集 (Collection of Poems Old and New, Autumn no. 214), the first and most influential imperial anthology of classical poetry. As a matter of fact, this particular combination of natural motifs appears in poetry from as early as the Nara period, in the *Man’yōshū* 万葉集 (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves, edited in the mid-eighth century). The implied poem is:

Yamazato wa aki koso koto ni wabishikere
Shika no naku ne ni me o samashitsutsu

A mountain village,
ever so lonely in autumn!
The sound of the crying deer
keeps awakening me.[2]

The *susuki* 芒 (pampas grass) and *hagi* 萩 (bush clover) are autumn grasses, and the moon suggests loneliness. The combination indicates that the deer

2 All the translations are by the Author.

Figure 2. “Deer Under An Autumn Moon”. Courtesy of the Nezu Museum

Figure 3. “Autumn Moon in the Mirror Stand”. Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago

is lonely and seeking its female partner. The following eighteenth century *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 print by Suzuki Harunobu 鈴木春信 shows the interior of a house: the same *susuki* appears in the window, indicating autumn. A young woman is seated in front of a mirror stand in which the mirror takes the shape of an inverted crescent moon, thus evoking the same autumnal combination. This is a witty visual combination that only the connoisseur would catch, but it is indicative of the prevalence of this kind of seasonal codification over the centuries.

Some of the questions that may be raised are: why is the encoding of nature and the seasons so detailed and so extensive in Japan, especially in the pre-modern period? Where did this come from? Why did it occur? In what ways was it manifested? What kinds of functions did the seasonal representations have? And most of all, how did it evolve historically? Since the Meiji period (1868-1912), scholars and critics have provided three basic answers for the prominence of representations of nature in Japanese culture:

1. Mild Climate;
2. Gentle Topography;
3. Agricultural (Rice) country.

These three factors, the argument goes, led to the prominence of nature and seasons in Japanese culture and arts as well as to a sense of harmony between humans and nature. A widely used teacher’s handbook in high

school today describes the "Special Characteristics of Japanese Literature" as follows:

> Japan is an agricultural country; the Japanese are an agricultural people. Since agriculture is controlled by the seasons and the climate and since the climate in Japan is warm and mild, Japan is characterized by the leisurely change of the seasons. In contrast to the Westerners who fight with and conquer nature, the Japanese live in harmony with nature and desire to become one with it. The literature that is born from such a climatic conditions (*fūdo*) naturally emphasizes unity with nature.[3]

The truth is that Japan is far from a mild climate; it has a severe monsoon season, with annual flooding, hot summers and hurricanes. This chart shows the environmental reality of Japan's climate, topography and rice agriculture.

Mild Climate	⇨	Reality: severe monsoon climate, hurricanes, annual flooding, hot and humid summers.
Gentle Topography	⇨	Reality: earthquake zone, volcanic, mountainous terrain, tsunami.
Agricultural Country	⇨	Reality: rice agriculture led to deforestation and the destruction of wild nature.

Instead of gentle topography, Japan is mountainous and volcanic, sitting on a fault zone with frequent earthquakes and tsunamis. The excessive construction of rice fields in mountain terrain led in many cases to the devastation of the natural environment. The building of the massive Tōdai-ji Temple in Nara, in the eighth century, led to deforestation in the Kansai region and, by the seventeenth century, environmental degradation had resulted in a nation-wide phenomenon called *hageyama* 禿山 (bald mountains), in which the hills surrounding rice fields were stripped of vegetation, leading to landslides and infertile soil.

It may be argued that Japan's 'harmony with nature' was largely a cultural construction that occurred in the capital and large cities and that was enforced and deepened by a number of cultural phenomena such as screen paintings and court poetry (31-syllable *waka* 和歌), both of which focused on an aesthetically refined representation of nature and the seasons.

The aesthetic relationship between nature and human emotions is demonstrated in this scene from the famous *Tale of Genji Picture Scrolls* from the twelfth century (fig. 4). The painting, which depicts a scene from the "The Rites" (*Minori*) chapter, shows the hero Genji in grief as he watches his great love, Murasaki, dying. On the left is a garden filled with autumn

3 Nishihara Kazuo; Tsukakoshi Kazuo; Katō Minoru; Watanabe Yasuaki; Ikeda Takumi (eds.) (2000). *Shinsōgō zusetsu kokugo*. Tōkyō: Tōkyō shoseki.

Figure 4. “The Rites”, in *The Tale of Genji Scrolls*. Courtesy of the Gotō Museum

grasses (bush clover and pampas grass), which provide the basis for the poetry exchange between Genji and Murasaki:

oku to miru hodo zo hakanaki to mo sureba kaze ni midaruru hagi no uwatsuyu

So briefly rests the dew
upon the bush clover—
even now it scatters in the wind.

In this poem Murasaki is talking about her own life, which she compares to the dew on the bush clover, about to be blown away by the wind in the garden. As we can see here, Japanese classical poetry (*waka* 和歌), like the painting itself, depends on natural and seasonal imagery to express deep human emotions.

Another scene, from *The Tale of Genji Scrolls*’ “Azumaya” chapter, shows the prevalence of natural imagery within Heian aristocratic residences (fig. 5). If we look carefully, we see that nature is represented not only in the garden (beyond visual sight to the far left) but throughout the interior: on the sliding door, the wall, the hanging curtain and the women’s dress. This can be defined as ‘secondary nature’, that is nature reconstructed in court poetry, painting, architecture, gardens, dress, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and other visual phenomena, particularly from the Heian period (794-1185).

When did this kind of secondary nature develop? The first systematic representation of nature and the four seasons occurs in the *Man’yōshū* 万葉集 (edited in the eighth century), in Books Eight and Ten, where thirty-one syllable poetry is arranged by seasonal topics in seasonal order. These poems were almost entirely composed in the city and at the residences of

Figure 5. "An Eastern Cottage", in *The Tale of Genji Scrolls*.
Courtesy of the Tokugawa Reimeikai Foundation

aristocrats, in the Tenpyō era (729-749), when Japan developed its first major metropolis at Nara. This was not an engagement with primary nature but with reconstructed nature in an urban setting.

The ideal of the four seasons is embodied in the *Kokinshū* 古今集 (Collection of Japanese Poems Old and New, early tenth), which further refined the seasonal arrangement found in Books Eight and Ten of the *Man'yōshū*. Here are some of the major seasonal motifs from the seasonal books of the *Kokinshū*:

- SPRING: plum blossoms, warbler, cherry blossoms, yellow kerria (*yamabuki*), wisteria;
- SUMMER: small cuckoo (*hototogisu*), deutzia (*unohana*);
- AUTUMN: bright foliage, bush clover, pampas grass;
- WINTER: snow, waterfowl.

The seasons, at least as presented in the *Kokinshū*, are understood as having three specific phases, with a strict progression within each season. In spring, we start with plum blossoms, then move to cherry blossoms, before coming to the yellow kerria (*yamabuki*) and the wisteria. The seasonal books of the *Kokinshū* were weighted heavily toward spring and autumn, which had two books each:

Spring poems	134	(two books)
Summer poems	34	(one book)
Autumn poems	145	(two books)
Winter poems	29	(one book)

In reality, Japan had long summers and long winters, with a relatively short spring and autumn. Some climatologists in Japan believe that Japan has five seasons: *tsuyu* 梅雨, the monsoon season, and *tsuyu-ake* 梅雨明け, the post-monsoon season. If you have been to Japan in summer, you know that there are two very different seasons. In other words, summer is very prominent and very long, but in the poetic culture of the *Kokinshū* summer has been reduced to a short, if not inconsequential, season. Secondary nature of this type is not a reflection of nature so much as an ideal. In the *Kokinshū*, poetry about summer is not about hot summer, but about the summer night, which is thought to be the shortest and the coolest time. Likewise, poetry on winter is not about the cold but about the falling snow flakes that look like scattering cherry blossoms; in other words, snow represents a wishful feeling that spring will arrive as quickly as possible.

By the thirteenth century, these seasonal associations had become so codified that Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241), the most influential *waka* poet of his time, wrote a series of poems in which he matched specific flowers with specific birds for each phase of the season.

First Month	willow	bush warbler (*uguisu*)
Second Month	cherry blossoms	pheasant
Third Month	wisteria	skylark (*hibari*)
Fourth Month	deutzia flower (*unohana*)	small cuckoo (*hototogisu*)
Fifth Month	Chinese citron (*rokitsu*)	marsh hen (*kuina*)
Sixth Month	wild pink (*tokonatsu*)	cormorant (*u*)
Seventh Month	yellow valerian (*ominaeshi*)	magpie (*kasasagi*)
Eighth Month	bush clover	first wild geese (*hatsukari*)
Ninth Month	pampas grass (*susuki*)	quail (*uzura*)
Tenth Month	late chrysanthemum	crane (*tsuru*)
Eleventh Month	loquat (*biwa*)	plover (*chidori*),
Twelfth Month	early plum blossom	waterfowl (*mizutori*)

These pairs became the basis for many of the seasonal paintings in subsequent periods. This particular codification appears in court and aristocratic fashion. Heian court robes worn by women had coloured sleeves with the interior and the exterior named after a particular flower. An example is the drawing from the *Sanjū-rokkasen emaki* (Picture Scroll of

Figure 6. Detail from the *Picture Scroll of the Thirty-six Poetic Geniuses*. Courtesy of the Museum Yamato Bunkakan, Nara

the Thirty-six Poetic Geniuses; fig. 6) depicts a Heian twelve-layered robe (*Jūni-hitoe* 十二単).

Some of the more prominent sleeve colours are as follows.

Crimson Plum (*kōbai*)	white surface, dark red interior	Second Month
Cherry Blossom (*sakura*	white surface, flowered interior	First to Third Month
Yellow Kerria (*yamabuki*)	light tan surface, yellow interior	Third Month
Wisteria (*fuji*)	light lavender surface, dark green interior	Third and Fourth Months

The yellow of the *yamabuki*, for example, indicated the Third Month, the third phase of the spring. In the *Makura no sōshi* (The Pillow Book, around 995-1004), Sei Shōnagon 清少納言, a court lady, makes fun of those ladies whose sleeve colours failed to match the phase of the season.

Figure 7. Doll's Festival and *ikebana*. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

1 Talismanic Representation

Let us now turn to another important aspect of the cultural representation of nature: the talismanic function. Here natural images represent things that will last forever or that will bring protection. Prominent examples are the crane, the pine (evergreen), and the rising sun, which appear in poetry, paintings and annual observances (such as New Year's). Talismanic images or objects were very important in the pre-modern period when disease and mortality were constant concerns. As it is probably known, the rising sun became the central image of the modern Japanese national flag.

Festivals (*matsuri* 祭り), to worship or thank gods or buddhas, and annual court observances (*nenjū gyōji* 年中行事) also employed nature for talismanic purposes. Each of the *Gosekku* 五節句 (Five Annual Observances), the most important of the annual observances, was associated with a specific plant, which was thought to bring protection or good fortune.

The *ukiyo-e* print above (fig. 7) is an example of the Doll's Festival (*Hina-matsuri* ひな祭り), one of the *Gosekku*, which is still celebrated today, on the third of the Third Month. The nectar from the peach blossoms (depicted here in the *ikebana* 生け花, or 'flower arrangement') was thought to bring immortality.

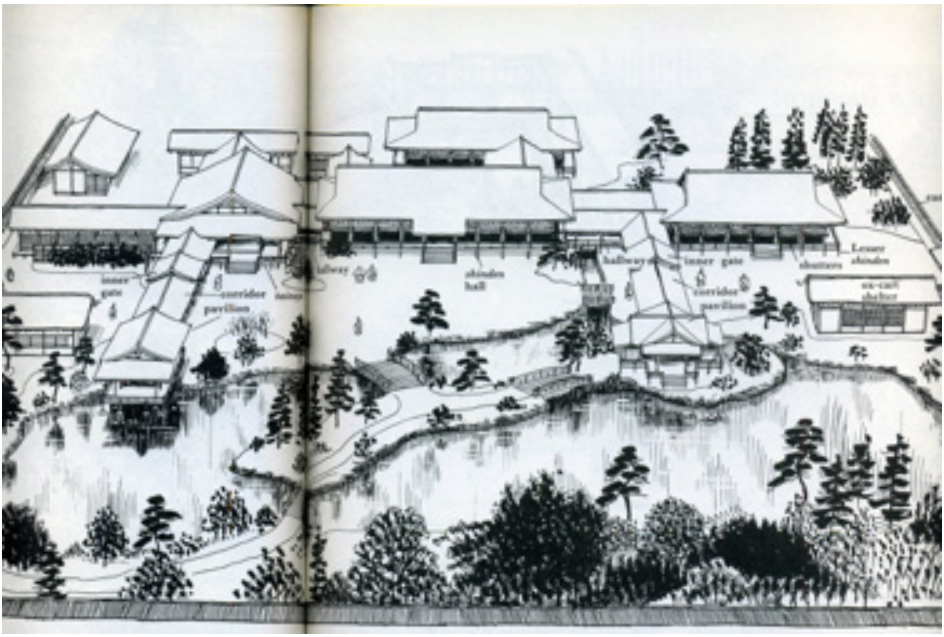

Figure 8. Heian-period 'palace-style' residence. Courtesy of Kazuo Nishi and Kazuo Hozumi

Figure 9. Black lacquer incense container with Mount Hōrai. Courtesy of the Suntory Museum of Art

When nature is represented in traditional Japanese visual arts and poetry, it is necessary to remember that there are two possibilities: 1) it is usually seasonal, often a particular phase of the season; and 2) it could be trans-seasonal, with talismanic functions. A typical example is the chrysanthemum (*kiku* 菊), which usually indicates an autumnal scene in poetry but which can, as a talismanic image, also indicate longevity and good fortune, as in the Japanese Imperial Crest. Another example is the plum blossoms, which marks the beginning of spring in classical Japanese poetry but which can, particularly in a Chinese-style painting, imply endurance. The plum tree blossoms early, while it is still snowing, and is able to endure the snow. It thus became associated with endurance in both the Chinese and Japanese tradition.

Motifs in gardens constructed by the aristocracy in the Nara (710-784) and Heian (794-1185) periods were also talismanic. The design in Figure 8 shows a *shinden-zukuri* 寝殿造り (palace-style) aristocratic residence from the eleventh century.

In the middle of the large garden is a miniature island, called *nakajima* 中島, or 'middle island', which originally represented an island in the sea where the gods (*kami* 神) were thought to descend. If you crossed over to the *nakajima*, it would bring you good luck and long life. The *suhama* 州浜, the sandy beach that surrounds the island and the edge of the pond, was also considered talismanic. The millions pebbles of sand, the endless weaving in and out of coves, where waves from the sea came to land, made it talismanic.

Japanese garden often had a small island referred to as Hōrai (PengLai), which represented the land of the immortals. Figure 9 is an example of Hōrai depicted on the cover of a black lacquer container. The painting contains a cluster of talismanic motifs: pines, cranes and the sandy coves.

In Japanese literature and painting, the protagonist will often come across a garden in which the four seasons appear in four directions, a marker of a timeless utopia. At the height of *The Tale of Genji*, for example, the Shining Genji builds a four-winged, four-season palatial structure for his women called the Rokujō-in. Genji's great love, Murasaki, is housed in the spring quarters, the most important of the four wings.

2 The Function of Seasonal Words

Seasonal greetings are an implicit requirement at the beginning of Japanese letters. The opening line usually mentions a particular phase of the season. The seasonal word (*kigo* 季語) was also a requirement for the seventeen-syllable haiku. The function of the *kigo* is demonstrated here in a famous haiku by Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694):

shiragiku no me ni tatete miru chiri mo nashi

gazing intently
at the white chrysanthemums—
not a speck of dust.

The poet comes to a house and sees the white chrysanthemum, which may be arranged at the entrance. Here the white chrysanthemum represents his hostess (Sono), who is a female patron and poet. The poem implies that the hostess (and by implication the house) are as pure as the white chrysanthemums. The *kigo* also indicates that the meeting took place in autumn. As we can see here, the *kigo* 季語 or 'seasonal word' not only marks time and place; it can show respect to the addressee and serve as a sign of politeness and cultivation.

This kind of social function occurs in a wide range of Japanese arts and media. *Ikebana* 生け花, or 'flower arrangement', which emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is another prominent example. There are two historical roots for *ikebana*: one is the flower as a Buddhist offering, a show of respect to the deceased or to a deity, and the other is the flower attached by Heian aristocrats to classical poems and letters. This scene (*Boki-ekotoba* 簿記絵詞) from a fourteenth century painting scroll depicts a *waka* party in front of a low *tokonoma* 床の間 (alcove) decorated with an image of Hitomaro (namely the god of *waka*). In front of the hanging scroll of Hitomaro are two small flower arrangements.

The flower arrangements can be seen as offerings to the god of Hitomaro; they can also be seen as the beginning of *ikebana* in which nature is reconstructed within the dwelling and served as a greeting to the guests.

The flower arrangement became a complex art. The most sophisticated form was referred to as *rikka* 立花 (standing flower), which had a wide range of social functions. One of the most famous of the *rikka* treatises, the *Sendensho* 仙伝抄 (1445-1536), gives instruction on the type of flower arrangement suitable for specific social occasions. Here are two examples:

Flowers for going off to battle [*shutsujin*]
[...] should not use camellia, maple, azalea [*tsutsuji*], or other plants whose flowers or leaves scatter easily

Flowers for a new dwelling [*watamashi no hana*]
[...] should not include anything that is red, which suggests fire

In the entry for "flowers for going off to battle", a major social event for warriors, the treatise notes that one should not use camellia, maple leaves, azalea, or plants whose flowers or leaves scatter easily (scattering would be a bad omen). Fires were a constant danger in the pre-modern period because of the

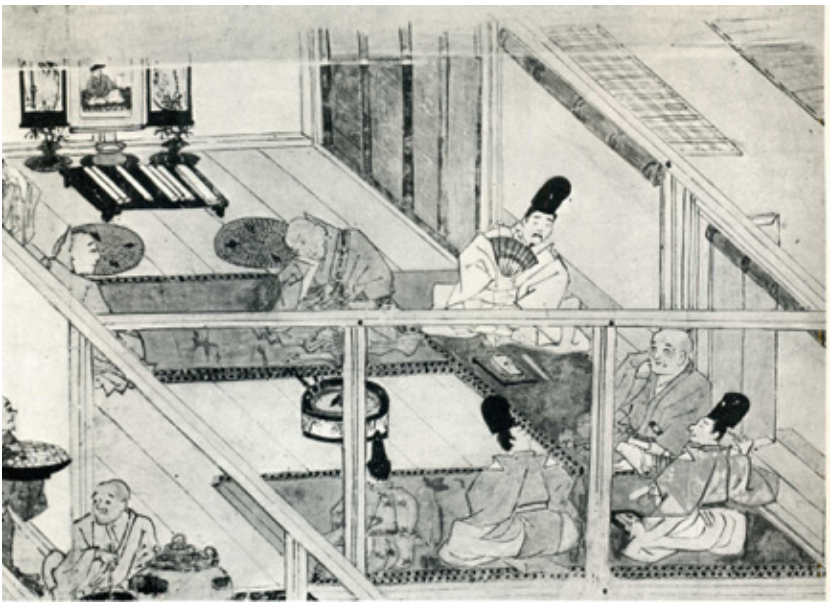

Figure 10. Scene from *Boki-ekotoba*, reprinted in *Zoku Nihon no emaki*, vol. 9, 1990. Courtesy of Chūō kōron sha

Figure 11. *Satoyama*, by Nagai Kazuo, 2007. Courtesy of the artist

wood dwellings. As a consequence, the advice for a new house celebration is that the *ikebana* should not include anything that is red, suggesting fire.

3 *Satoyama* (Farm Village at the Foot of a Mountain)

Now the focus can be shifted on a different kind of cultural construction of nature, outside the city and the court, one that can be referred to as *satoyama* 里山 (literally, village mountain), or 'the farm village at the foot of the mountain'. Typically the farm village was built near a river and at the foot of the mountains, for irrigation and for fertilizer, which was taken from the underbrush. The following painting is a modern rendition of the *satoyama*.

The *satoyama*, which became the frequent setting for folk tales and popular fiction from the Heian period (794-1185) onward, includes farm animals in the village as well as wild animals in the hills. The following is a more expanded landscape that includes the supernatural and otherworldly creatures that appear in folk tales, popular literature and medieval theatre:

Mountain Peak	wizard (*sennin* 仙人), *tengu* 天狗, heavenly maiden (*tennyo* 天女), heavenly swan (*shiratori* 白鳥)
Mountain Recess	mountain ogre (*yamanba* 山姥), demon (*oni* 鬼)
Mountain Foothills	fox, raccoon, monkey, rabbit, boar, snake
Farm Village	dog, cat, chicken, cow, horse, mouse
Rice field	snake, frog, insects

In the village are the domesticated animals (such as dogs, chickens, etc.). Immediately above, in the foothills, are the animals that were hunted, such as foxes, raccoons, monkeys, rabbits, and boars. Significantly rabbits and raccoons do not appear in classical poetry; they were not part of the court culture found in the capital.

This new *satoyama* cosmology becomes increasingly prominent in the late medieval period. The result was two distinct cultures: a court culture developed from the ancient period in the capital and a rural and popular culture found in the provincial villages. The following chart shows some of the differences in their representation of nature.

PLANTS	
COURT-BASED	***SATOYAMA*-BASED**
herry, plum,	red pine
willow, *ominaeshi*	*susuki* (pampas grass)
yellow kerria (*yamabuki*)	chestnuts, barley
ANIMALS	
bush warbler	sparrow, swallow
deer	wild boar, raccoon
cicada	fly, mosquito

The courtly images of nature, which emerged from as early as the sixth and seventh centuries, are on the left: the cherry blossoms, plum blossoms, *yamabuki* (yellow kerria), and so forth. On the right are the plants and animals that appeared in farm villages and in the popular literature. Sparrow and swallow, for example, do not appear in the court poetry, but they became a very important part of folk literature (*setsuwa* 説話) and Muromachi tales (*otogizōshi* 御伽草子) in the medieval period. In the court-based nature, the emphasis is on colour and scent and on beautiful, harmonious sounds. In farm village-based culture, by contrast, nature is regarded as bounty (harvest) and the source of disaster or pests.

Interestingly, by the late medieval period, from about the fourteenth or fifteenth century, these two cultural lineages begin to appear side by side in a wide range of visual, literary and theatrical genres such as Kyōgen, Noh drama, *haikai* 俳諧 (popular linked verse) and *renga* 連歌 (classical linked verse). By the fourteenth century, warriors from the provinces had come to the capital in large numbers and aristocrats in the capital had fled to the provinces, taking court culture with them. The result was a new mixture of natural landscapes and associations, from both the capital and the provinces, which became the foundation for Japanese culture as we know it today.

4 Seasonal Pyramid

In the Edo period (1600-1868), the practice of *haikai* 俳諧 (popular linked verse) became widespread among both aristocrats and urban commoners. The seventeen-syllable *hokku* 発句 (now called *haiku*), the opening verse of *haikai* linked verse, required a seasonal word (*kigo* 季語). By the eighteenth century, poets had compiled huge compendia or almanacs of seasonal words, reflecting what had become a seasonal pyramid and serving as a kind of cultural encyclopedias. At the top of the pyramid were the most prominent topics from classical Japanese poetry. These words had a very rich associations that the poet could employ for a variety of purposes.

Seasonal Pyramid

1. *Peak*. Cherry blossoms, small cuckoo (*hototogisu*), moon, bright leaves, and snow.

2. *2nd layer*. Spring rain (*harusame*), returning geese (autumn), orange blossoms (summer), warbler (spring), willow (spring), paulownia flower (summer).

3. *Wide base* (seasonal words from spring). Dandelion (*tanpopo*), garlic (*ninniku*), horseradish (*wasabi*), cat's love (*neko no koi).*

The second layer, lower down on the pyramid, consisted of lesser known seasonal words such as the frog (*kawazu* 蛙), which was thought to sing and was a spring *kigo*. At the bottom of the pyramid were literally thousands of new seasonal words, which came from a commoner life in both the cities and the provinces. A popular seasonal word for spring was cat's love (*neko no koi* 猫の恋), or 'cats in heat', in which a female cat squealed as a male cat chased her around. Spring words at the base included, for example, garlic and dandelion, which one could consider 'commoner' plants.

Haikai poets in the Edo period could freely explore both the top and bottom of the seasonal pyramid and often linked the two in surprising and humorous ways. The following example is a *hokku* (*haiku*) by Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉:

takotsubo ya hakanaki yume o natsu no tsuki

octopus traps—
fleeting dreams
under the summer moon

Bashō has been travelling along the Inland Sea and comes to Akashi, near the present-day city of Kobe, where troops from the Heike warrior clan were slaughtered many centuries earlier on the beaches by the Genji warrior clan. The Genji warriors rushed down at night from the cliffs overlooking the Akashi beach, in a surprise attack, and slaughtered the Heike warriors camped on the beach. *Takotsubo* 蛸壺 (octopus traps), a word from the bottom of the pyramid, refers to the urns that were lowered into the water and that octopus would crawl into at night. The octopus in the traps are having "fleeting dreams", with no idea that in the morning they will be harvested, the way the Heike warriors were many centuries ago. The summer moon, from the top of the seasonal pyramid, is a very elegant image. Because summer was so hot, the evening moon was thought to bring a sense of coolness. Summer nights were also thought to be "fleeting" in that they were the shortest nights of the year. Here Bashō combines a classical image of impermanence with a down-to-earth and humorous image of the unknowing octopus to evoke a tragic historical past.

5 Seasonal Words in the Modern Period

In the modern period, *haiku* 俳句 continued to be very popular, but it was also a traumatic moment for poets as Japan moved from a lunar calendar, which had been the basis for all the seasonal words, to the Gregorian (solar) calendar. The seasonal words shifted about one month, often moving from one season to the next. The Meiji government also abandoned the

Gosekku (Five Annual Observances), which had been one of the major cultural markers of the seasons.

Under the Gregorian calendar *Tanabata* 七夕, the Star Festival, on the seventh of the Seventh Month, moved from the first month of autumn (in the lunar calendar) to July, to the end of summer. As an observance *Tanabata* became a summer festival, as it is today, but modern *haiku* poets opted to stick with *Tanabata* as an autumn topic because of the rich autumn cultural associations (two constellations, a man and a woman, separated by the Milky Way). Under the lunar calendar, New Year's Day and the beginning of spring had been together. But in the new calendar, which had been imported from the West, New Year's day and the beginning of spring were separated, as they are now. So today *haiku* poets carry five volumes of seasonal words: the four seasons plus New Year's, which now comes before spring.

Eventually, the seasonal words in *haiku* covered a wide range of social activities from food to fashion. A typical seasonal almanac (*saijiki* 歳時記) has about five to six thousands seasonal words. Since new phenomena constantly appear, there are always new seasonal words. New seasonal words for summer, for example, include yacht, sunglasses and t-shirts. Japanese drink beer all year around but, since beer is now closely associated with cold beer on hot summer nights, it became a seasonal word for summer.

Rethinking Nature in Japan
From Tradition to Modernity
edited by Bonaventura Ruperti, Silvia Vesco and Carolina Negri

Nature in Miniature in Modern Japanese Urban Space
Tsuboniwa – Pocket Gardens

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Abstract This article is devoted to the study of the Japanese approach towards nature through the phenomenon of *tsubo-niwa*, which can be translated in various ways: 'courtyard gardens', 'small gardens in a limited space', 'pocket gardens'. The Author traces their historical development and modern interpretation in recent architectural projects both for private residences and buildings for public use. Since the recent developments in architecture tend to blur the boundaries between traditional types of Japanese gardens and since *tsubo* can be translated as 'small space', the Author has included various types of small gardens of urban constructions into the discussion such as the entrance gardens or front gardens, rooftop gardens, balcony gardens, gardens under the ground level, pass-away gardens, *tōri-niwa* and other small gardens that are typical of Japanese urban constructions within a limited area. Through the discussion of Japanese attitude towards nature in different philosophical schools, the analysis of the historical development of Japanese gardens and formation of the Japanese attitude towards nature, as well as the studies of gardens themselves, the Author concludes that the nature that is found in Japanese gardens in any period of their existence has never been authentic like the wild nature. It is a product of Japanese philosophy, culture and it is adjusted to serve people's needs. However, recent architectural and garden projects tend to reflect a more caring attitude towards nature, greater respect and a wish to take it closer to people's lives and educate the younger generation in an eco-friendly way.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 *Tsubo-niwa* and Recent Environmental Philosophy. – 3 Historical Development of *tsubo-niwa*. – 4 Types of *tsubo-niwa*. – 4.1 Centre *tsubo-niwa*. – 4.2 Edge *tsubo-niwa*. – 4.3 Corner *tsubo-niwa*. – 4.4 Image *tsubo-niwa*. – 5 Essential Features of *tsubo-niwa*. – 6 Negative Aspects of the Japanese Way of Treating Nature through the Example of *tsubo-niwa*. – 7 Conclusion.

Keywords Courtyard Garden. Environmental Philosophy. Tsubo-niwa. Nature.

1 Introduction

In the never-ending Japanese urban fabric – asphalt, concrete, metal, steel, dust, noise, crowd, rush – a pleasant relief for the eyes are tiny gardens, the so-called *tsubo-niwa*. As a matter of fact, these gardens remind us of nature (figs. 1-3) and are often placed in areas that would hardly suit for practical purposes: angles, corners and narrow spaces. They refresh, calm the mind, entertain and relax. The article will offer a study of what is the Japanese attitude towards nature and how the phenomenon of *tsubo-niwa* reflects that.

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Figure 1 (Left). *Tsubo-niwa* in Kyoto *machiya* house. Photo from www.pinterest.com
Figure 2 (Right). Corner *tsubo-niwa* at the entrance of the restaurant, Kyoto. Photo by A. Haijima 2013

First, let us have a look at what the term *tsubo-niwa* means. The word *tsubo-niwa* can be written with different characters: 坪庭, 壺庭, 経穴庭. In the first most common version the kanji *tsubo* 坪 refers either to a measurement of an area of 3.3 metres, approximately the size of two tatami 畳 mats, or to a small courtyard entirely enclosed by buildings (see *Japanese Gardening*). However, the actual size and form of *tsubo-niwa* can be varied, so the word *tsubo* is used to mean a 'small garden'. Also it is interesting that the size of a *tatami* mat, 90×180 centimetres, is adjusted to the scale of the human body: a *tatami* mat is just as big as to sleep on and when Japanese talk about dimensions in their house they refer to the number of tatami mats, not metres or centimetres.

Another character used for *tsubo* 壺 means 'pot' or 'jar', so a *tsubo-niwa* 壺庭 is literally a 'pot-garden', or a garden contained within a small, enclosed space.

The third set of kanji (*keiketsu* 経穴) is associated to the flow of *ki* 気 energy through the human body and is used for the point at which *moxa* (*mogusa* 藻草) is applied to the skin and ignited. Such points are known as *tsubo* in Japanese. Energy flows not only through the human body but all around too. Japanese consider a house as a living body where certain places are energetically strong. These are the entrance hall (*genkan* 玄関), the alcove (*tokonoma* 床の間) and the garden (see *Japanese Gardening*). By maintaining these places well cared, Japanese believe that prosperity will arrive to the inhabitants of the house. In this interpretation, *tsubo-niwa* is connected to the restorative powers of nature that are brought to the environment of the house.

The connection between the energy flow in nature and garden is elabo-

rately described in Japanese earliest known theory on garden art twelfth-century *Sakuteiki* 作庭記 (A Record of Garden Making) (Takei, Keane 2008).

From the above-mentioned meanings of *tsubo* we can conclude that the term *tsubo-niwa* can be interpreted in various ways: a courtyard garden, a small garden, a pot-garden, an energetically strong place, a pocket garden. Therefore, the author of this article will use the term '*tsubo-niwa*' to talk about the gardens in a small space that are varied: courtyard gardens, corner gardens, front gardens, entrance gardens, roof-top gardens, balcony gardens, gardens below ground level, passageway gardens, etc.

There is a variety of names for this type of garden. Besides *tsubo-niwa* several terms are used, including *hako-niwa* 箱庭 (box garden). A courtyard garden in the Kansai area is called also *senzai* 前栽 (front plant/tree)*;* in the northern district of the Kantō area, a common garden is called the home's *tsubo* (Ohashi, Saito 1997, 107). Mizuno uses the term *machiya* – city dweller's garden (Mizuno, Yoshida 1987, 107). When translated into English, *tsubo-niwa* can be called 'pocket garden' since it also means a 'very small garden' (the translation of *tsubo-niwa* as 'pocket gardens' was used in M.Reeman's book *Pocket Gardens. Contemporary Japanese Miniature Designs*; Freeman, Noriko 2008).

2 *Tsubo-niwa* and Recent Environmental Philosophy

To understand the Japanese attitude towards nature through the phenomenon of *tsubo-niwa,* it is necessary to find an answer to the following questions: what is nature for Japanese? How should we protect it? What is the value of the natural environment that is non-human to Japanese? How can we best understand the relationship between the natural world and human technology and development?

In recent scholarship various opinions have appeared about how Japan's environment and natural world could be protected on a global level. Several groups of opinion can be traced. The group led by A.F. Whitehead (often labelled as "Whiteheadists") believes that, while all events in the interconnected web of life have moral standing and biospheric equality as sentient occasions of experience that enjoy attainment of life, experience, and beauty, at the same time they are developmentally organised into a hierarchy of degrees of values – including aesthetic, moral, cognitive, and spiritual values. They are opposed to the so called "Deep Ecologists" (a term coined by Arne Næss) who argue that one must affirm biological egalitarianism rejecting any type of hierarchy of values according to which some beings have more intrinsic value in the biosphere of life forms. "Animal liberationists" are opposed to "Deep Ecologists" in that they instead focus on animals and people rather than on the biosphere of holistic ecosystems (Odin 2008, 2-3).

Figure 3 (Left). Edge *tsubo-niwa*, private residence, Kyoto. Photo by A. Haijima 2013

Figure 4 (Right). Kanō residence garden, Kyoto. Courtesy of Mizuno 1987

Deep Ecology is an ecological and environmental philosophy promoting the inherent worth of living beings regardless of their instrumental utility to human needs, plus it supports a radical restructuring of modern human societies in accordance with such ideas. Deep Ecology argues that the natural world is a subtle balance of complex interrelationships in which the existence of organisms is dependent on the existence of others in the ecosystems. Therefore, human interference with or destruction of the natural world poses a threat not only to humans but to all organisms constituting the natural order. It stresses valuing other beings as more than just resources. Actions of modern civilisation lead to a reduction of biodiversity. Environmentalists are warning that civilization is causing mass extinction at a rate between 100 species a day and possibly 140,000 species a year. Deep Ecologists say what is needed to solve eco-crisis "is a transformation of consciousness" (Roberts 2011 cited in Drengson et al. 2011, 104). They criticise anthropocentric environmentalism that is concerned with the conservation of the environment only for exploitation by and for human purposes. On the other hand, social ecologists have formulated robust critiques of Deep Ecology saying that, in light of the real functions of living natural systems, it is impossible to even come close to affirming both the ability of all individuals to flourish to old age and the integrity and stability of ecosystems (Callicott, Froderman 2009, 207-210).

Imanishi Kinji 今西錦司 (1902-1992) wrote of the active interaction between individuals and their environments, of parallels in the structure of the lives of living and non-living things, and that the natural world exists, not as a resource for human life, but as a path by which we can understand

Figure 5. Masuume tea house garden in Kyoto. Courtesy of Mizuno 1987

our biological affinity with the living world, and that the roots of our behaviour are in the world of living things (Asquith 2006, 201).

Now, by keeping in mind the above-mentioned ideas about nature and its protection, let us have a look at three typical traditional *tsubo-niwa* gardens of city dwellers and see whether their appearance conforms the theories of modern environmental philosophers.

Mizuno Katsuhiko splits city dwellers gardens in three basic styles:

> 1) those which are boldly naturalistic, and were influenced by the landscape gardens seen in the villas of court nobles or of the shogun family; 2) influenced by rock gardens, as often seen in Zen temples; and 3) those called *roji* 露地, or 'tea gardens', taking their inspiration from the philosophy and traditions of *chanoyu* 茶の湯, 'Japanese tea ceremony'. (Mizuno, Yoshida 1987, 104)

He points out that

> it was *chanoyu* which undoubtedly exerted the strongest influence on the garden of the city dweller. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the popularization of this artistic pastime, *chanoyu*, took on an important role in establishing a certain typical style for the *machiya* 町家 garden.
>
> A typical example of this is Kanō residence courtyard garden in Kyōto, which comprises typical elements of a *roji* 露地 garden: the customary garden path *roji* leading to the cottage or room of a house (*chashitsu* 茶室) built especially to enjoy *chanoyu* 茶の湯 made of stepping stones, a stone water basin, a lantern. Besides these elements, there is a bamboo sleeve fence and a well. The water of this well is used, among other things, to sprinkle the *roji* tea garden, filling the stone water basin, and

> supplying the water for the tea when guests are invited for formal tea. This garden of a typical Kyōto city dweller fundamentally includes both practical and aesthetical elements common to *roji* tea gardens, because it developed in conjunction with *chanoyu*, the tea ceremony. (Mizuno, Yoshida 1987, 104; fig. 4)

Masuume tea house garden in Kyoto is a good example of Zen temples rock garden influence.

The bright whiteness of the wall and the thin gravel of this garden are commanding. The contrast between outdoors and indoors and between light and shade gives the impression of two different worlds. The neatly combed gravel, like the waters of the sea, wash the rocks. There is a tall stone water basin in front of the veranda. From this garden, designed like the rock gardens of Zen temples, a crisp air blows into the room (Mizuno, Yoshida 1987, 104; fig. 5).

In Rakushō coffee shop (Kyōto), ferns and flowers of the four seasons that change throughout the year and exudes the cheerful air of vitality are planted in the garden. In the long, narrow pond, colourful carps swim. An arched bridge connects the two sides of the pond. Long branches of pine trees stretch down and give the garden a mountainous atmosphere. This garden could be attributed to the type that had been influenced by landscape gardens of court aristocrats (Mizuno, Yoshida 1987, 103; fig. 6).

Do these *tsubo-niwa* support the idea of richness and diversity of life forms? Trees and plants that are selected for gardens belong to a few appreciated species that have a long history in Japanese culture: pine, maple, cherry tree, etc. Traditional Japanese gardens are not the places that have biodiversity and wild ecosystems. Does non-human life in these gardens has well-being and does it flourish? Not always. Some plants are suffering from insufficient sunlight, limited space for growing and other problems. Each element in these gardens serves a certain purpose for human needs, and plants and trees and other live beings are not respected for 'their needs'. These gardens are artificial man-made objects with multilayered symbolic meaning.

Various scholars support this idea. According to Byron H. Earhart, the "appreciation of nature is a mixture of aesthetic and religious appreciation of the countryside" (Kalland, Asquith 1997, 2). Saito and Wada put it even more precise. They say that stone arrangements in Japanese gardens have several layers of symbolic meaning (this idea can be attributed to Japanese gardens in general): natural symbolism, mood symbolism, idea symbolism, spiritual symbolism, melodic symbolism (Saito, Wada 1964, 67). Brett L. Walker supports this view and argues that "Japanese have crafted an exceptional relationship with their natural world, one that is carefully sculpted like *bonsai* trees in a temple garden" and that "many scholars of Japan explore the country's cultural heritage exclusively without concern

Figure 6. Rakushō coffee shop, Kyoto. Courtesy of Mizuno 1987

for physical and biological legacies […] and only a few have begun to explore the deep environmental consequences of modernization" (Miller et al. 2013, xii). Walker believes that at present "Japan teeters on nature's edge, a country trying to transcend – through engineering, industry, and culture – its earthbound roots".

As seen from the example of *tsubo-niwa*, Japanese approaches nature in a highly aestheticised way. To support this idea further, let us see what is the attitude towards nature in different Japanese philosophical schools and how the existing attitude towards nature in Japanese gardens formed historically.

Nature in different schools of thought is interpreted in various ways giving contradictory views at times but, nevertheless, in some of them there is plenty of ground for nature protection and respect.

Contrary to Western anthropocentrism where man is the lord of nature, in the Shinto world-view *kami* are not above but within natural world, and nature is pure, but the world of men is corrupt. "There is no place in which a god does not reside, even in the wild waves eight hundred folds or in the wild mountains bosom" (Nakamura 1964, 350; cited in Kalland, Asquith 1997, 2). The Mahāyāna Buddhism thinker Seng Zao (僧肇 384-414) wrote: "heaven, Earth and myself have the same root, all things are one corpus within me". In Shingon Buddhism Kūkai 空海, also posthumously known as Kōbō-Daishi (774–835), wrote that world is regarded in all its aspects as the manifestation of the Universal Buddha. Dōgen wrote about being no difference between animate and inanimate. "To see mountains and rivers is to see Buddha nature" (Tucker, Williams 1998). In James' opinion, if in Buddhism human beings are one with nature, this does not necessarily imply that they are in harmony with it (Callicott, McRae 2014, xxiv).

In Chan and Zen Buddhism emphasis is laid on learning from and becoming like the natural world – from the uncarved block to the flow of the river – and natural entities are seen as teachers, models, and exemplars […] but

respecting nature cannot mean total non-intervention in the natural world (Eric 2004, 123). James believes that Zen cannot yield an environmental ethics in which natural beings have an intrinsic value and is potentially nihilistic because of its focus on emptiness (sa. *sūnyatā*) and no self (sa. *anāthan*) (Eric 2004, 123). Moreover, James points out that Zen cannot motivate environmental practices, especially political activism, because of its supposed escapism and quietism but he argues that *wu wei* (無爲 not doing) of Zen is not a 'letting be', that is indifferently accepting anything, since *ahimsā* calls for emptiness rather than holiness and accordingly does not only concern one's own actions but also others'. In Zen responsibility is perfected as a natural and effortless responsiveness to things as they are. For masters as Dōgen, mindfulness in the ordinary and everyday life is the perfection of *zazen* 座禅. Zen suggests that one can stir onelself and clean out eyes, ears and mind in order to look and listen responsively to things as such in their interdependence and uniqueness (Eric 2004, 124).

In Chinese Neo-Confucian thought, Zhu Xi understands the universe as an organic holistic process in which human self, cultivation is contingent in one's harmonious interrelation with the natural world. This epitomizes the philosophical shift from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism (Callicott, McRae 2014, xxiv).

3 Historical Development of *tsubo-niwa*

Japanese *tsubo-niwa* developed from traditional Chinese courtyard houses. *Feng shui* 風水 principles used to help people to harmonize with their environment. Traditional Chinese believed that it ensured prosperity and structured the Beijing courtyard dwelling. Imitating the landforms of an ideal *feng-shui* site in nature, the spatial form of the Beijing courtyard dwelling embodied the ideal f*eng-shui* habitat. Emphasizing orientations and positions, serving 3 or 4 generations, the typical Beijing courtyard house was a group of yards enclosed by one-story buildings (Ping Xu 1998, 271). Also in Japanese courtyard gardens *feng-shui* principles were taken in mind.

The *feng-shui* concept of environment takes into account many factors, spiritual as well as spatial, ranging from sky to earth and from human life to nature. The major goal of *feng-shui* is to find a way to live in harmony with heaven, earth and other people. The ancient Chinese left open sky over their courtyards to represent heaven. The square courtyard dwelling symbolised the earth and the central opening of the courtyard provided the family with an individual piece of sky representing heaven and giving them a place to observe the changing paths of sun, moon and stars (Ping Xu 1998, 271).

During the Heian period (794-1185), *tsubo* 壷 was the term given to the roughly rectangular space created between several buildings and cor-

ridors in a *shinden-zukuri* 寝殿造り residence (fig. 7), which was copied from Chinese examples. *Tsuboniwa* 壷庭 simply referred to an alcove or an 'enclosed garden'. The *Genji-monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji), which also dates to the Heian period, describes how *tsuboniwa* created within the niches of vast palace complexes would be dominated by a particular plant, and the plant would become attached to or associated with the person who overlooked that garden in the form of an epithet. *Fujitsubo* 藤壷 (Wisteria Courtyard) and *Kiritsubo* 桐壺 (Paulownia Courtyard) are mentioned there and, although Prince Genji was fond of gardens, he was even fonder of the ladies who tended them. The nature of *shinden* architecture and the socially-restricting conventions meant that privacy was difficult to come by in noble residences, so *tsubo-niwa* were prized for their intimate ambiance, a characteristic that has dominated their design ever since. These gardens were not heavily shaded as they were not partitioned or enclosed (*Japanese Gardening*).

Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118-1181), who was the chief of the Heike clan, made a *yomogi* 蓬 (Japanese mugwort) *tsubo* in the Heian Era (794-1185). Mugwort is the grass that is said to grow on Eternity Island. Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147-1199), chief of the Genji clan, made an *ishi* 石 (stone) *tsubo*. The Genji clan overcame the Heike clan and established the Kamakura Shogunate government (Ohashi, Saito 1997, 6).

In Heian period aristocrats set out on travels to select plants in the wild nature and brought them to artificially create a spot with selected plants to appreciate nature. They did not appreciate nature as a whole, but only certain elements of it. Plants were associated with land forms: maples and pine trees resembled hillsides and distant mountains respectively, whereas kerria[1] should reflect upon water surface (Kuitert 1988, 54).

In the Heian period gardens were closely connected with court culture. "Their gardens […] formed an integral part of the elegant way of life of the Heian nobles. They did not appreciate garden as an outside form […] for them it was emotionally experienced from within" (Kuitert 1988, 4).

The garden styles mentioned in Sakuteiki 作庭記 (late eleventh century) are idealized landscapes of the elegant and intellectual aristocrat and not copies of actually existing geographical landscapes. For example, "The Ocean Style" is reduced to a precisely defined form of one type of rough seacoast. The mental image belonging to "The Ocean style" is therefore a typification, an idealization of reality […] an idealized archetype (Kuitert 1988, 37). *Sakuteiki* lists a number of advice and taboos in garden making, for example: "those who follow these rules will create places encompass by Four Guardian Gods and be blessed by ascending careers, personal wealth, good health and by long lives" (*Sakuteiki*, section on Trees).

1 *Kerria japonica*, where *kerria* is the common name.

Figure 7 (Top-left). The Imperial residence, Numazu. Photo from *Japanese Gardening* website

Figures 8-10 (Top-right, centre-left and bottom-right). Entrance of Kyoto *machiya*. Photo by A. Haijima 2013

Figure 11 (Bottom-left). Kyoto *machiya*, *Roji*. Photo by A. Haijima 2013

Appreciation of natural beauty in the world of Genji (Heian period) meant the delight that was felt when recognising themes known from lyrical poetry (Kuitert 1988, 53).

To summarize, it is possible to say that garden of the Heian period relied much more on its almost esoteric theory, on the geomantic schemes, the taboos, and on a literary appreciation (Kuitert 1988, 134). The garden was a carefully planned man-made creation where every form, size, colour, layout, direction was created following a set of rules. These rules derived from geomancy, which follows how things are in the nature, as if macrocosm had to be displayed in a miniature way in the garden. Gardens imitated the nature following the rules of geomancy. Aesthetic looks were taken into consideration. Gardening is an art and a garden is not a spot of wild nature. The forms and sizes of a garden are adjusted to the architecture following a set of rules, as written in *Sakuteiki*. Gardens of the Heian period were complex constructions. They were not simply aesthetic playthings, neatly designed pretty pictures or sculptural objects.

Courtyard gardens are also found in Zen temples and samurai residences, again, mostly because of the architectural styles favoured by priests and warriors.

For early Japanese Zen priests, perceiving of natural scenery began to be an activity of contemplation in which they referred to Chinese literature and its more intellectual world-view rather than Heian lyrics and emotional perception (Kuitert 1988, 86).

Zen Buddhist gardens became appreciated for their view and were meant for contemplation (Kuitert 1988, 89). *Tsubo-niwa* were influenced by the tradition – with ancient roots in Chinese and Japanese culture – of imitating the nature in miniature form. Whether it could be a single stone on the table of a Chinese scholar, a *bonsai* 盆栽 tray or imitation of sandy beach in the miniature garden, *suhama* 州浜, these tiny replicas of nature were connected with religious and philosophical thought and were meant to bring the energy of cosmos, the powers of nature in peoples' lives and were believed to grant people longer life, better health, harmony and peace of mind.

Sesson Yūbai 雪村友梅 (1290-1348) in 1346, upon viewing the garden of a priest Dokusho, wrote: "a little group of fist big stones makes the effect of a thousand miles" (Kuitert 1988, 94).

Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 (1325-1388) wrote in 1384: "the suggestive effect of thousand cliffs and ten thousand valleys is woven on a tiny piece of land east of the house" (Kuitert 1988, 94).

Tray landscapes *bonzan* 盆残 – miniaturized landscapes – were the forerunners of the present-day *bonsai* miniature trees. A record of 1466 *shogun* Yoshimasa appreciating *bonzan* tray landscape states: "little water, little waves, seen far away, it looks like the spirit of an estuary mountain of ten thousand miles" (Kuitert 1988, 94).

During the Momoyama period (1568-1603), courtyard gardens were most frequently built by the *chōnin* 町人 (townsfolk) within the confines

of their *machiya* 町家 (town houses) and *omoteya* 表屋 (display stores). During this period Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537-1598) had enforced the partitioning of house lots into thin strips that were called "the bed of eels" (Ohashi, Saito 1997, 6). For the houses built on these slender strips courtyard gardens were necessary for sunlight and ventilation (figs. 8-10). The term *naka-niwa* 中庭 (middle garden) is preferred for these urban courtyard gardens, especially when referring to the most rear garden of a long, narrow town house. Gardens at the entrance way to shops are known as *mise-niwa* 店庭 (shop gardens) (*Japanese Gardens Online*). The restrictions in size due to surrounding buildings mean that these gardens are not usually intended to be entered physically, but contemplated from nearby rooms or verandas. *Tsubo-niwa* that are located in the centre of the house bring in the light, provide ventilation and secure privacy (*Japanese Gardening*). In times of disaster, such as fire, heavy winds or earthquake, the inner garden provided a certain amount of temporary shelter (Saitō, Wada 1964, 34). Yoshida describes the development of the courtyard gardens in the *machiya* houses in the following way:

> It was not until the fifteenth century or so – about the middle of the Muromachi period – that the city area of Kyōto became urbanized nearly up to what it is today […]. There were many small merchant houses lining the street, the average sizes of these probably being about five and half meters in both width and depth. Because they were so narrow and shallow, and in the back, they opened out onto communal backyards, they got sufficient lighting and ventilation. Thus the concept of leaving an area of space open on one's own property had not yet emerged; the so called pass-through garden running from the front street to the backyard, and enclosed on top and to the side by the roof and wall of the house, was all the outer space necessary within the actual building site […]. However, as the economy in general gradually became much more active, and the capital became more densely populated […] merchants started building large scale shop-residences […]. Due to the long and narrow shape of the plots on which they are built, and the fact that they are built right next to each other, the *machiya* of Kyōto are […] long and narrow, causing them to be nicknamed "eel shelters" […] one reason for deciding upon such a narrow street frontage for each plot was that in those days ax was assessed according to the amount of street frontage one owned. The merchants thus cleverly divided the land so that they could equally have a bit of street frontage and, while owning ample land […], evade tax. Because of this shape […] the houses had to be provided with a certain amount of open space somewhere between the front and back, so that sunlight and fresh air could come in. It was, thus, from about the early eighteenth century that courtyard gardens came to be installed. (Mizuno, Yoshida 1987, 8)

Yoshida describes his own house with a courtyard garden and his emotions towards it in the following way:

> The style of architecture of this house, with its frontage of about ten meters, is called *omoteya-zukuri,* or 'streetfront-style construction'. The middle courtyard garden is located between the store, which faces the street, and our residence in back, and serves the cold season, the rooms are closed off from the garden at night by sliding 'storm doors'. I think with nostalgia about those nights of my childhood when the lady palms would be rustling and the storm doors rattling, and I would feel so merry that I could hardly get to sleep, because I knew. From those sounds, hat it was going to snow. (6)

Here Yoshida describes his *tōri-niwa* 通り庭 pass-through garden and stresses its practical purpose:

> Not exactly an exterior or interior space, since it is mainly covered overhead by the roof of the house, but has no floor, it runs straight down from the door facing the street, past the middle door, then past the sink environs, and out through the back door. From there, it reaches the laundry and clothesline area, and finally leads to the storehouses in the very rear. It might be said that this kind of pass-through garden constitutes the most primitive form of garden typical of Kyōto's so-called *machiya* 町家 or inner city dwellings. (6)

From here we can see that Japanese have developed a particular sentiment towards nature that comes from the deepest heart. Particularly they appreciate seasonal change and treasure each moment since it will not be the same in the future. Upon watching a courtyard garden Yoshida Kōjirō wrote:

> gardens are living and constantly changing things [...] The enjoyment we have gotten from this back garden over the eighty years of their existence, or, also from the middle courtyard garden [...] is beyond measure. (6)

From the quotation we see that gardens and nature inside them is dear to Japanese hearts but as seen from analysis above, there are a number of factors that have shaped the Japanese point of view on nature in each period of the history of the development of the garden art. There were certain types of gardens and theories that supported them, but in no historical period of the garden development in Japan can we speak of appreciating pure wild nature as it exists in the original form without altering it. All gardens have been man-made objects with the selection of certain elements of nature to appreciate, nurture the soul, remind of natural landscapes and famous views, relax, harmonise the mind, search for philosophical truths,

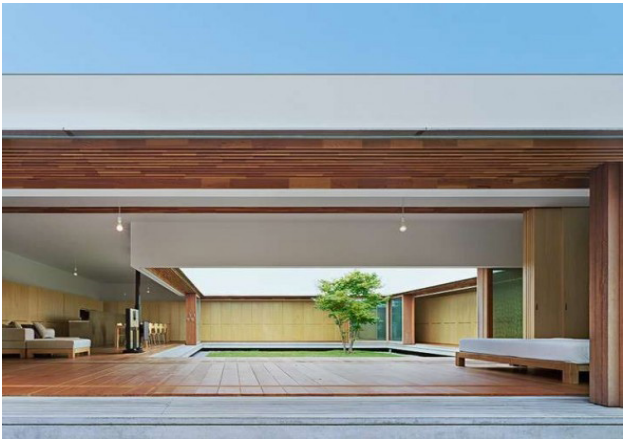


Figure 12. Cloister House, Hiroshima. Architects: Tezuka Takaharu, Tezuka Yui, 2009

and so on. Nature in Japanese gardens has never been what modern environmental philosophers, particularly Deep Ecologists, talk about.

From authors observation, during her stay in Japan for 12 years, she has always admired unique aesthetics with which Japanese approach everything in their life, also nature, but at the same time, while travelling in crowded trains and observing outside endless urban landscape she has constantly been missing the untouched nature: the forests, lakes and meadows that she has known in her childhood. While living in Japan and watching in her close neighborhood how more and more territories of unused ground are covered with asphalt, old trees are cut to provide more space for parking or make the roads wider, how for other trees tops and branches were cut for not to disturb electricity lines, she felt that in modern cities there is no place left for natural ecosystem, only a limited room is given to domesticated nature which serves for the necessities and comfort of people. The attitude in the society towards the wild nature in the city was negative. She saw that there was no place for wild seeds to grow. A beautiful plant with white bell-like flowers found its habitat in the crack of the asphalt and was miraculously flowering there. This plant that had too low status in Japanese hierarchy of flora and its existence in the city was 'illegal' – it was a weed. In the comfort seeking consumer society for the remains of nature there is given just a marginal space in the cities.

Drengson believes that "when we are ecologically aware, we know that we need wild places in Nature to help us realize our wholesome wild energies. This is what completes us as human Earth dwellers. " (Drengson in Drengson et al. 2010, 104)

Spaces given to the nature in the cities testify Japanese longing for nature and unconscious need of that but the cultural background and practical purposes hinder nature's acceptance in a wild form.

Further, we can only talk about certain types and shapes of this domesticated nature and see whether the newest projects in architecture and garden art have shifted towards a new concept of treating the nature and protecting it.

Then, we will see several examples of *tsubo-niwa* gardens in the modern interpretation. Here the author will address the question of how Japanese apply technology and development to react to the environmental challenge, such as environmental degradation, pollution and climate change. This group of *tsubo-niwa* will be split according to four types.

4 Types of *tsubo-niwa*

While a line dividing different types of *tsubo-niwa* is difficult to draw, especially in modern projects that challenge the existing borders between disciplines and provide new attitudes towards nature clashing existing philosophical and cultural prejudices, *tsubo-niwa* could be roughly split into four groups: 1) Centre; 2) Edge; 3) Corner; 4) Image.

4.1 Centre *tsubo-niwa*

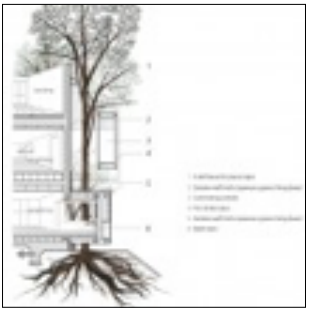
Centre *tsubo-niwa*, following the classical layout, are gardens in the centre of the house. This tradition comes from Chinese courtyard gardens but Japanese imitated them in a smaller size. The courtyard gardens were appraised because they opened the dwelling to the sky while maintaining privacy and provided architectural focus for the entire structure. The house revolves around this central point and rooms on all four sides face inward to nature. The structure combines the feeling of openness with a sense of enclosure. The central courtyard serves to bring the outside into the interior while at the same time securing privacy for the living space.

This urban building (fig. 12) features an ascetic courtyard garden with only one tree in the centre of its structure. The central *tsuboniwa* allows more light into the building and provides a view on the garden from the surrounding rooms. The rooms are planned so that the person who arrives is gripped by the desire to make a circular tour. The building was inspired not only by traditional Japanese structures with a courtyard garden but also by medieval monasteries with a gateway around the central garden, where monks were moving around and praying. The project got its name “Cloister house” also probably because of its minimalist structure, while actually it was designed for a happy family with three small children. The children were supposed to move around the house while playing with maximum free space at their disposal (*Kenchiku Zasshi* 建築雑誌 2009, (124), 34). Simplicity and functionality were highly considered.

Figures 13-17. NEST, Hiroshima. Architect Maeda Keisuke, 2013

Figure 18 (Top). Shell, Karuizawa city, Nagano. Architect: Ide Kotaro, 2010

Figures 19-22. Dancing Trees, Singing Birds, Tokyo. Architect: Nakamura Hiroshi, 2010. Courtesy of Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP



Tezuka Takaharu is an architect who used to say: "how can you bring happiness to the people if you have not experienced it yourself?" (Tezuka 2013, public lecture). An architect who takes inspiration directly from life has created innovating spaces that fit well to their clients' lifestyles and needs.

Another vivid project where trees are harmoniously incorporated in the private residence is "Nest" (figs. 13-17). This dwelling, located at the feet of the mountain in the woody outskirts of Onomichi city, was designed to connect the environment with the house. The idea of the forest nest was expanded to the house. A indivisible space was created rethinking the elements such as floors and walls and creating a half-outdoor environment inside (*Kenchiku zasshi* 建築雑誌 2013, (128), 172).

A garden was designed inside the house with the trees growing through the second floor and up through the roof. The inhabitants – three women and their cat – can enjoy nature from any part of the building. This project also demonstrates that recent technologies allow people to cut deeper into what was previously regarded as unsuitable places for living as this mountain slope, and shows the process of further domestication of nature. Here the architect implies the ancient technique of *shakkei* 借景 (borrowed scenery) developed in traditional Japanese garden art.

The building in the form of a shell (fig. 18) is an interesting experiment by the architect Ide Kotaro who wanted to challenge the traditional understanding of architecture as something having a strict grid, boxed spaces, and right angles. It seems like a step forward for the building to coexist with the surrounding nature, a step forward toward greater fluidity of forms and wish to bring the outside inside and the inside outside. As a place for weekend relax it is not just a functional space but its goal is to provide us with good rest, leisure, and picturesque views that never become dull, all in the vicinity of nature.

In the centre of the prolonged structure is a circular courtyard garden with a single tree. This garden, which is in the form of a spiral, is another modern interpretation of the *tsubo-niwa*. The winding roof line further continues the circular movements creating an effect of fluid elegance.

In the Karuizawa region where there is general preference for wood as a building material, concrete was chosen to protect the villa from humidity. Unlike the usual solid, heavy and static concrete structures the architect bends it in the form of a light shell (*Kenchiku Zasshi* 建築雑誌 2010, (125), 130).

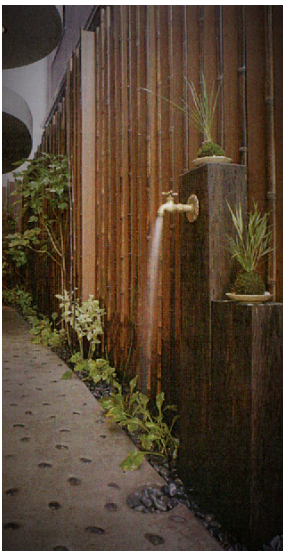
The very title of the house suggests seeing nature not as a static unit but as an ever changing, evolving system of which we are an integral part. This project can be viewed as a vivid example of the shift in recent architecture towards greater tolerance of wild nature and attempts to preserve it as much as possible with the aid of recent technologies or a new method in which, with the help of newest technologies, it has become possible for people to cut deeper into the natural world, by starting to make residences for people in the areas that were regarded earlier as uninhabitable.

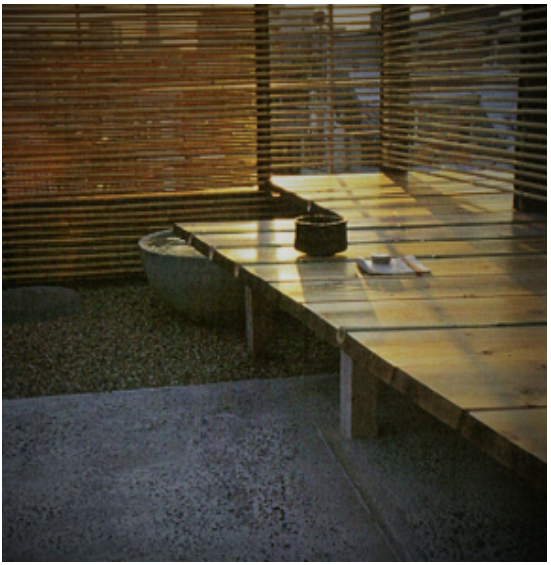
Figure 23. Michimasa Kawaguchi terraced house in Tokyo in Old Kyoto style. Courtesy of M. Freeman

Here the housing consisting of six units in a three-story terrace on a slope is protruded by tiny gardens created around preserved trees. The trees are growing through the architectural structure. The wall of the bathroom is broken by the branch of the tree. The project prioritized the preservation of existing trees, avoiding felling as far as possible, protecting roots and branches and integrating the surrounding greenery in the interior. One of the façades is irregularly shaped to give priority to the trees. The construction process was extremely difficult. Three-dimensional analyses were given to trees by specifically developed computer program. In some places the foundation was bent into the snake form in order to preserve trees. The building was laid down in the spaces given by the nature. The trees prioritized in the planning give an unexpected quality to the interior space and project itself was proclaimed to be a proof towards a more preserving attitude of wild nature.

4.2 Edge *tsubo-niwa*

The second type of *tsubo-niwa* are edge gardens that adjoin dwellings creating the dialogue between interior and exterior. The interpretation of interior and exterior is a recurring theme in Japanese architecture. These gardens extend the dwelling into the open space, at the same time creating a buffer against urban surroundings. A special type of Japanese edge garden derives from Kyoto tradition of town houses known as *machiya* 町家. These houses – which are rectangular and very deep in relation to their façade – typically incorporate a long and narrow garden running





Figures 24-25 (Top-left and centre). Michimasa Kawaguchi terraced house in Tokyo in Old Kyoto style. Courtesy of M. Freeman

Figures 26-27 (Top-right and bottom-left). Edge *tsubo-niwa*, Kyoto *machiya* houses. Photos by A. Haijima 2013

Figure 28 (Bottom-right). "Garden Now Heaven", Architect Takeshi Nagasaki, Tokyo. Courtesy of M. Freeman

Figures 29-31. “Garden Now Heaven”, Architect Takeshi Nagasaki, Tokyo. Courtesy of M. Freeman

Figure 32. “Kansai University Mediapark Rinpukan”, Osaka. Architects: Miyagi Joichi, Masuda Toshiya, Ohira Shigehiko, Hamaya Tomoyuki, 2006

the length of the property on one side. Here the term ‘garden’ includes a simple floor of packed earth.

One of vivid examples is architect Michimasa Kawaguchi terraced house in Tokyo in Old Kyoto style (figs. 23-25). Applying this *machiya* garden to a Tokyo house, Kawaguchi employed a wall of vertical wooden planks separated by single bamboo poles and a flooring of cement set with widely spaced small black stones. The same black stones edge the pathway, where they provide the base for a row of simple plantings. Two thick wooden beams have been placed upright near the entrance, one installed with a tap that plays water onto the concrete and a small circle of stones. The beams are topped with *kokedama* 苔玉, i.e. decorative plants attractively arranged in moss balls that grow around a sticky mulch (Freeman, Noriko 2008, 76). Narrow edge gardens are frequently seen in Kyoto *machiya* houses (figs. 26-27).

Architect Takeshi Nagasaki (figs. 28-31) designed this calm Tokyo rooftop garden borrowing Zen concepts. Its name can be literally translated as ‘Garden Now Heaven’. The idea for the garden is based on *nure-en* 濡れ縁, an open veranda attached to a Japanese house, where people can sit and appreciate the moon in it. Here the water is symbolized by the rough surface of the concrete floor, while shore is conveyed by pebbles at one end. The reflection of the moon is represented three times, by a disc-shaped bronze object and two circular glass lights placed in different spots along the floor. Each bears a bamboo impression. Other adapted Zen techniques, including the placement of lights in a way similar to *tobi-ishi* 飛び石, or stepping stones, the *kakei* 筧 bamboo water spouts sandwiched between the planks of the wooden deck seating, which carries the water away, *shakkei* 借景 borrowed landscape, the gardening technique of framing a distant view to incorporate it in the garden looks, and layers of *misugaki*

Figures 33-34. Fuji kindergarten. Architects: Tezuka Takaharu, Tezuka Yui

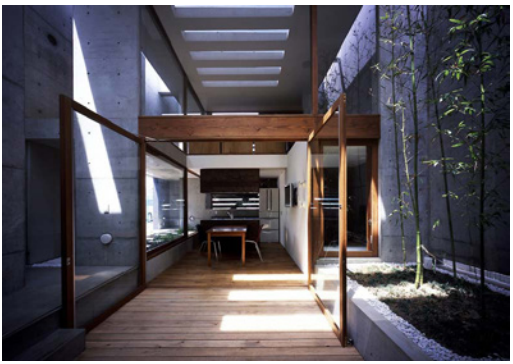
御簾垣 fencing, employing bamboo loosely spaced to allow partial views through it (Freeman, Sakai 2008, 78-83).

The Osaka's "Kansai University Mediapark Rinpukan" features another roof-top garden, which (because of its great scale) as a matter of fact is difficult to incorporate in the *tsuboniwa* category, but this public project itself is interesting because here landscape, architecture and education are blended into one whole. This project demonstrates the Japanese intention to raise the new generation with values of an eco-friendly lifestyle and a greater respect for nature.

The new Mediapark building commemorating University's 120th Anniversary boasts the goal to connect the surrounding environment with the building already in its title and creates a structure that is a park at the same time. The facility was adjusted to the sloping hill creating it into a Hill of Architecture. The entire rooftop is covered with plants. 120 cherry blossom trees have been planted on the roof. Also different environment-friendly technologies have been adopted including 1,600 square metre rooftop green belt, photovoltaic power generation, wind power generation, cogeneration system, rainwater utilization and garbage processing equipment. The building epitomises sustainable campus policy and provides students with opportunity to engage in various activities enjoying the closeness with nature.

While "Cloister House" was designed for a single family, Fuji kindergarten (figs. 33-34) is a public project made for 500 children. About this structure we can say that architecture does not oppress and constrain a person inside but rather liberates him/her. Here the roof of the oval shape structure is made in a way that children can run around on the roof and they love to do that; besides, projecting through the roof deck are three preserved zelkova trees that create a natural playground for the children. Kindergarten photos show that children like to play next to trees rather

Figures 35, 36. (From top to bottom) Work Oasis: Office and showroom for fashion label, Kobe. Architect: Yuko Nagayama & Associates, Tokyo. Landscape architect: Toshiya Ogino. Courtesy of Daici Ano



Figures 37-40. “ES house-02”, Osaka. Architect Yada Asashi, 2012

Figure 41. Corner garden in front of the temple, Kyoto. Photo by A. Haijima 2013

than any other places. Children who have climbed the trees, sat in their shade, listened to their sounds and felt their smell should not grow up as people who will thoughtlessly demolish nature for their convenience.

The last two public projects show that architecture and landscape gardening are closely tied up with society and here they help as an aid to educate a new generation with greater awareness of the environment.

4.3 Corner *tsubo-niwa*

Another type of pocket gardens are the ones arranged in the corner. Despite being tiny, they have the advantage of being designed for places that might be ignored or neglected (fig. 38). Corner pocket gardens do not require many materials or a sophisticated technique, so they are often seen at the entrances, as corners of rooms and patios, even as corners of the building façade. They fill in the gaps, punctuate volume and create points of view at strategic locations. Very often these small compositions surprise, catch the visitor's eye causing him to stop, pause and look. Here every possible space is employed.

Figures 35-37 depict the office for fashion label Sisii in the densely wooded foothills of Mount Rokko, a local recreation area that features several tiny gardens inside the office. The landscape planner Toshiya Ogino decided to bring the woods into its interior. Employees and customers entering the showroom with its integrated office areas take four steps up from the street and immediately find themselves on steel-plate pathways leading between oases of green. The flooring, which is black in colour due to the phosphoric acid with which the steel was galvanised, continues through the interior and in places is folded up towards the ceiling to form

Figure 42 (Top). “House in Minami Danbara”, Hiroshima. Architect: Yamashita Hiroyuki, 2012

Figures 43-44 (Bottom). Toshiya Ogino, House in Tondabayashi. Courtesy of M. Freeman, 2008

partitions, or cut away altogether to reveal sunken spaces where meetings are held or employees are able to work undisturbed. At this lower level the surface of the flooring is repeated on table tops, while wooden compartments installed beneath the raised floor act as storage space for less decorative but indispensable items such as folders, printers and other office materials. Here and there the steel membrane has the appearance of being punctured by greenery, as if nature was forcing its way through the man-made floor surface with trees, shrubs, ferns and moss growing between lava stones in a complex solution made up of planter troughs and watering, drainage and ventilation systems. Since the plants do not have enough daylight in the interior, the showroom lighting stays on day and night.

"ES house-02" is located in an urban area with little free space (figs. 38-40). The family's life is enclosed in a large reinforced concrete box, which is an 'external shell' that protects the family not only from disaster and crime, but also from urban noise and pollution while capturing nature between them. Light, wind and rain are brought through the slits and holes made on this exterior shell into the interior. Three small gardens consisting of simple plants that do not require much care within the building create natural environment with high mutability, that is the ability to change according to season, weather, daytime. In this house the air blows bringing the season smells; people hear the sound of rain and enjoy sun rays (*Kenchiku zasshi* 建築雑誌 2012, 158).

4.4 Image *tsubo-niwa*

The fourth type of pocket gardens are image gardens where the small size garden can be taken in a single glance. The designers create them as images, often framed like a picture. In some of these gardens their elements – plants, stones, rocks, etc. – are used primarily for compositional effect; in others a certain symbolic meaning is invoked.

The "House in Minami Danbara" (fig. 42) contains a vivid example of image *tsubo-niwa*. Situated in an area with a high concentration of condominiums, this building was conceptualised and designed to provide all the comforts of living and still protect privacy for a married couple. Shielded by walls on four sides and with no opening to the street, a living space was created where residents can feel light, wind and spaciousness while still being isolated from the neighbourhood. On the first floor, the area is equally divided into four squares, one of which is a courtyard, serving as an entrance as well as an extension to the living room. Adjacent to this is a tea ceremony room with its own distinctive quality: a lower ceiling and a window featuring a *nijiriguchi* 躙り口 – a small entrance to a tea ceremony room – through which the courtyard can be viewed. By making

Figures 45-49 (Bottom). Elements of nature in shop displays, Kyoto 2013. Photo by A. Haijima

use of different kinds of openings (full open windows, top lights and low windows), connection to external space and daylight is controlled. As the natural sunlight comes from different angles, shadows are cast on the white walls and together with carefully considered tree shapes and their locations creates pictures (建築雑誌 2012, 168).

Toshiya Ogino's designed house in Tondabayashi (figs. 43-44) has gardens designed with symbolic imagery. In the central courtyard, he focused the composition on two large flat stones that represent the sun and the crescent moon, and also form part of the stepping stones across the white gravel and moss that link the rooms.

On another side of the house, a garden area is accessed from a large tatami room by *shōji* 障子 sliding screens. Here a magnificent pine symbolises connections to the past through its exposed roots, which rise up from a carefully sculpted mound of moss and stones surrounded by white pebbles (Freeman, Sakai 2008, 208-9).

As exemplified by the popularity of *tsubo-niwa* in the modern Japanese architecture, elements of untouched and unpolluted nature in general, which recently in Japan have become quite scarce and expensive, have made 'nature' an attractive tool of marketing in other spheres of city life too: a flower pot with miniature landscape placed at the entrance of a hotel in a narrow street, fresh vegetables in the basket, bamboo mat, maple leaves decorating meals on display in the restaurant window, promising customers healthy products, relax from concrete and the steel structures of the city (figs. 45-49).

Nature is much commercialised in Japan. The less of it is left, the more expensive it gets. Many Japanese have a nostalgia towards the quiet clean country environment that they used to experience in their childhood. This causes the constant search for nature and its restoring powers even in the most high-tech structures.

5 Essential Features of *tsubo-niwa*

Next, I would like to focus on the essential features of *tsubo-niwa* trying to understand the Japanese way of treating nature:

1. *Nature is seen through the prism of culture.* Japanese look at nature through the prism of culture. The bush is not beautiful if it is not trimmed. Contemporary Japanese architect Tadao Andō (1941-now), when describing the three main principles that guide his work, listed "Materials, Geometry and Nature". When he spoke more particularly about nature he said that he did not mean raw nature, but rather domesticated nature, nature that has been endowed by man with order and is in contrast with chaotic nature (Andō 1990, 4).

2. *Artificiality.* The concrete buildings designed by Andō look quite artificial. In his lecture entitled "Architecture in Harmony with Nature" he admitted that the construction of buildings and the protection of the environment are contradictory, and the fact that they both exist in a state conflict within him makes things difficult" (Andō 2002). In many *tsubo-niwa* designs we saw that, despite trying to get closer to nature, the compositions were quite artificial.
3. *Distilled nature*. In ancient Japan there was no word as 'nature'. The words that were used – *ame-tsuchi* 天土 (heaven and earth), *yama-kawa* 山川 (mountains and rivers), *ue-sue* 上末 (above-end) – speak of separate entities extracted from nature (Fujita 2012). Western people saw nature as one whole. When Japanese try to imitate nature they extract a few essential elements from the whole, limiting themselves to a few species that are carefully chosen following the principle "less is more".
4. *Putting nature in the box, framing*. Japanese architecture where right angles and rectangular forms prevail naturally causes designs where cubic forms dominate with a tendency of putting objects into a closed space, either surrounded by walls, framed or put in the box. By this artificial border they separate the so-called 'domesticated' nature from the 'raw' nature outside.
5. *Miniaturization*. Another important feature is the miniaturization, reduction of size. Cosmos represented in microcosm has roots in Buddhist thought but there are also pragmatic reasons for small scale gardens. In general, Japanese are known for their preference for tiny and refined objects in their culture. Vivid examples are *netsuke* 根付 (carvings in wood or ivory), *bonkei* 盆景 (tray scenes; also said *ko-niwa* 小庭 'little gardens', or *toku-niwa* 床庭, 'bed/floor gardens'), the art of creating miniature gardens in planters, ceramic vessels, or carved wooden trays is mentioned in the eleventh-century *Sakuteiki* 作庭記 (A Record of Garden Making). Sometimes, a tray garden would be placed on a raised stand in the garden of an aristocratic *shinden-zukuri* 寝殿造り residence, or in a *tokonoma* 床の間. However, the art came originally from China, where it was known as *penjing* 盆景. Philosophically, the idea of adding a *tsubo-niwa* 壺庭 derives at least in part from *penjing*, which was an attempt to invoke harmony and unity within buildings. "At a fundamental level of the harmony of opposites 陰陽 (*yin-yang*)", speculates Michael Freeman, "they bring restorative powers of nature in symbolic form to the interior environment of a home" (Freeman, Sakai 2008, 7). Related to *bonkei* is *bonseki* 盆石 (tray rocks), the art of 'growing' rocks in shallow trays. Miniature landscapes are recreated with rocks lying in, or surrounded by, sand or gravel. These intriguing rocks often imitate the Mystic Isles of the Blessed, or evoke cranes and turtles,

both symbols of longevity. The aesthetic principles of composition are based on asymmetry and triangular balance and, coupled with the paucity of materials and purity of design, they have led some scholars to speculate that dry landscapes (*karesansui* 枯山水) may have developed out of these art forms.. Closely related to tray gardening is *bonsai* 盆栽 (tray planting), the art of cultivating miniature trees and shrubs. Most practitioners of this art insist that bonsai is not about stunting or physically harming the plants, but involves the judicious pruning of branches and root systems in conjunction with the application of careful training.. Although the Chinese are credited with originating *bonsai*, the fundamental concept of cultivating dwarfed plants may have come from India. It was introduced into Japan along with so much of China's culture around the late Nara period (710-794). Of course, the inspiration for miniature flora comes from nature as well. Looking at the blasted coastlines of China, Korea and northern Japan, or the windswept upper reaches of any mountainous region, we can find plants naturally dwarfed or contorted by lack of nutrients, poor or salty soil, insufficient sunlight, and prevailing winds.

6. *Simplicity, austerity*. Some gardens are designed without flowers or trees in simple colours.
7. *Practicality*. People prefer spots of nature in their homes that require minimum care or are maintenance free. Recently many tools have been invented as automatic watering system or aqua soil that keeps moisture longer than the usual one and gives relax for the owner since they keep him/her away from watering plants too often. From the examples above we can judge that Japanese have developed an individual outlook on nature and original design that inspires trials in new realms. Small gardens are economical: they occupy tiny space, require little materials to build and are cheap.
8. *Tranquillity*. Japanese try to construct visually restful and tranquil views, trying to escape from urban noise, stress, keeping their private life far away from the public eye. Spots with calm beauty quiet the heart while dreams hold sway.
9. *Unity of inside and outside*. Gardens are integrally connected with the architecture and the life of the inside. Modern architects tend to blur the line between different parts of the building, inside and outside.
10. *Light shades*. Light – the source of it and the way it enters the garden – is an important factor. Architects carefully plan how the light will fall into the garden since it influences the overall composition. Light can fall from above, creating a nice effect. It can shine from the side reflecting on the wall or on the water surface. Light can

enter only partially through the fence or *shoji* screens creating a relaxed atmosphere.

11. *Cool, damp, shady*. Pocket gardens are often arranged in places that are not pleasant for people to stay, but in which plants endure. *Tsubo-niwa* are found within areas formed by the junction of buildings, under the overhang roofs or between buildings. It may be due to the reduction of natural light that they are austere, dry landscapes featuring sand and small rocks. They are often shady, receive a good deal of the run-off from neighbouring roofs during rain and snow. This cool, damp shadiness is reflected in the predominantly shiny, dark green flora frequently encountered in *tsubo-niwa*.
12. *Finely crafted details*. Gardens are pleasant when they are well cared, clean, and each detail is well-tended. The visual order probably stimulates the viewer's inner order and harmony.
13. *The presence of four seasons*. Many of the garden compositions are made in a way, that they are enjoyable in all four seasons, different times of the day, weather conditions.
14. *Rusticated elegance*. Many *tsubo-niwa* compositions include plants with simple yet stylish elegance, like pampas grass. These plants, which may not have bright flowers, are appealing to the eye.
15. *Interval in time and space*. Beauty can be found also in laconic compositions cherishing emptiness. This feature is often called *ma* 間, describing empty spaces, vagueness, abstraction, asymmetrical balance and irregularity. Silence, empty space and interval play an important role in Japanese culture. Already in the eighth century the poets used the word *ma* 間 to express the misty spaces between mountains and as a marker of the passage of time. By the eleventh century, the word defined the gaps between pillars in Japanese rooms and the in-between spaces of verandas that separated the interiors of buildings from their adjacent gardens. By the nineteenth century it described the pauses in action in Kabuki theatrical performances. Kawai Hayao (1928-2007), Japan's first Western trained Jungian psychoanalyst, incorporated Buddhist values into his ideas about psychology, describing the key to understand the psyche as a "hollow center", a reference to the Buddhist concept of *mushin* 無心 meaning 'emptiness' (Graham 2014, 40).

6 Negative Aspects of the Japanese Way of Treating Nature through the Example of *tsubo-niwa*

As seen from the examples above, Japanese have developed a unique way of seeing nature and offer original ideas for design, though at the same time there are certain points for concern:

1. Nature is adjusted to the needs of the person and admitted in people's dwellings only to serve their basic needs. Most people are concerned with adopting it for their necessities but not so much with protecting and saving nature itself.
2. Domesticated nature does not provide so many changes in its looks and condition as the raw one.
3. Artificiality.

7 Conclusion

As shown with the example of *tsubo-niwa* Japanese tend to see nature through the prism of culture. Wild and untamed nature is abhorred. However, in the recent projects we see that there is a tendency towards a greater acceptance of nature in its raw form. To protect nature means to change the dominant perception of nature as a static world into seeing nature as heterogeneous, constantly changing and evolving system of which we are an integral part. Nature should be viewed as a passive and vulnerable identity that must be protected from the interests of humans.

Particularly after Fukushima disaster Japan has become the country with one of the most degraded environment in the world. Through the examples of new architecture, modern gardens and the way Japanese organise their everyday environment, as demonstrated in this article, we can see that Japanese are aware of this and have shown a greater wish to coexist with nature in this 21st century. If beforehand nature was demolished to give space of living for people, now we are one step forward towards a greater tolerance of nature. Japanese being conscious of their mistakes towards nature and aware that the suffering of nature will eventually influence their own lives, are developing one of the best environmental-friendly technologies in the world and are demonstrating their wish to educate the new generation with values of respect towards the world's ecosystem, an eco-friendly lifestyle and a respect for the traditions. In the field of modern architecture and garden art, as demonstrated in this article, instead of blindly copying achievements of other countries, Japanese place great value in their own ancient traditions and give them a fresh interpretation in the 21st century.

Meanwhile it is possible to conclude that, within the long period of the development of the Japanese gardening art, Japanese have achieved a highly sophisticated level in mimicking nature and have worked out a number of techniques to secure comfortable living and proximity of nature even in the derogated city environment suffering from intense urbanisation, overpopulation, noise, pollution and other unfavourable conditions. The nature that accompanies Japanese life in the cities is a domesticated one or, as Shirane calls it, a "secondary nature", the function of which is to "create an ideal environment through linguistic, visual, tactile, and alimentary means" (Shirane 2012, 16).

Besides, as the above-mentioned kindergarten and the university projects show, Japanese place importance on educating the younger generation in an eco-friendly way, which incorporates such elements as teaching responsibility and care towards the environment from an early age. Meanwhile Japanese do not perceive nature in the way as, for example, Deep Ecologists postulate; rather, their approach is more practical, trying to balance the interests of nature and those of people, even though in some recent projects they give more way to the nature. The previously-described modern projects of *tsubo-niwa* testimony to the search of a new balance between man's activities and nature within a renewed attitude towards nature in the twenty-first century.

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Rethinking Nature in Japan
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The Relationship between Nature and Human Feelings in Heian *waka*

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Abstract Nature and human feelings in Heian *waka* are expressed simultaneously by *kakekotoba*. *Waka* was composed and exchanged in daily life like greeting cards today. *Waka* poems were written on strips of paper and presented, often tied to flowers or branches of plants in season. It was natural that the *waka* had expressions of those natural things. *Kakekotoba* is essential for the *waka*, containing two meanings in one sequence of *kana* characters, one meaning in the context of nature and the other in that of human feelings.

Summary Introduction: Nature in Early Japanese Poetry. – 1 Treating Nature for Itself. – 2 Ancient Equivalent of Today's Greeting Cards. – 3 *Kakekotoba*, the Most Important Art In *Heian Waka* Composition. – 4 Two Illustrations of *Kakekotoba*. – Conclusion.

Keywords Kakekotoba. Kokinwakashū. Kana letters. Atsutada. Takamitsu. Tenth century.

Introduction: Nature in Early Japanese Poetry

Japanese *waka* 和歌 poems are full of expressions relating to natural scenery, such as mountains, rivers, lakes and the seashore, and to plants and animals, such as trees, flowers, birds, even insects like crickets and cicadas. I recently read Earl Miner's *An Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry* (Miner 1968) and was enlightened to discover that treating nature for itself, which is common in early Japanese poetry, did not come into English literature until the eighteenth century. Miner wrote "It was not nature that was cursed by a fall in some distant paradise. In their poetry the Japanese have looked upon nature without uneasiness and have loved it without remorse. It has always been a home, a source of repose and strength, to which they could return" (1968, 150).

The first Imperial anthology of *waka* poems, that is the *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Old and New Japanese Poems, 10th century), consists of twenty volumes, in other words, twenty scrolls containing about one thousand *waka* poems. A *waka* poem is very brief in form, written in five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables each, thirty one syllables in all. But in the

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Kokinwakashū, we find an integrated sequence of these short poems. On opening the first scroll, one will find a *waka* relating to the first day of spring. From one poem to the next, the environment gradually changes from the cold early spring to warmer days. It is clear that the compilers ordered the poems to show how nature changes beautifully through the four seasons, the chronology of nature.

1 Treating Nature for Itself

The spring breeze melts the iced ponds and rivers, the sound of the river flow changes with the water increasing with the melting ice. Birds begin to sing. Flower and tree buds grow plump. Plums begin to bloom. People anxiously wait for the cherry blossoms to follow. But although saddened by the inevitable fading and fall of the delicate cherry blossoms, they accept the end of spring and welcome the bloom of the wisteria and the warblers of summer birds, and so on. Thus follow *waka* poems of autumn and winter. The last *waka* poem of the winter volume relates to the end of the year. As can be seen, the world of the seasonal poems of the *Kokinwakashū* is shown as the chronology of nature. We might liken this to be a beautiful woven tapestry.

This movement is the result of the compilers' policy to arrange the poems according to the seasons as they were observed rather than by chronology of composition or arrangement by composers (Matsuda 1956, 13-40).

The *Kokinwakashū* was first compiled in 905 A.D. circa, followed by twenty Imperial anthologies. Twenty-one of them in total were produced from the early tenth century to the fifteenth centuries. Every anthology begins with a poem of early spring. One can imagine the great number of seasonal poems produced.

2 Ancient Equivalent of Today's Greeting Cards

Why was it possible for Heian *waka* poetry to be wealthy in expression of nature?

There are two points of view. One is related to the function of the Heian *waka*. The second is related to the art of *waka* composition.

A unique characteristic of the *waka* then was its use to communicate and express ideas and feelings among members of the aristocracy. When a child was born, relatives sent gifts with *waka* poems. When a man died, his widow received *waka* as laments from her friends. When a man left the capital, he exchanged *waka* with his friends. *Waka* was composed and exchanged on every special occasion in their life. It can be said that they were the ancient equivalent of today's greeting cards. As you see in the picture scroll, a letter is delivered by a servant (Hirano 2010, 142).

It was tied to flowers or branches of plum, cherry, wisteria blossoms and so on in season. The colour of the letter paper was expected to be the same as that of the flower. It is easy to understand that the *waka* must have had words related to the flower. It was very important to choose flower, to write the poem on paper of matching colour, and of course in graceful calligraphy. If a guest came and sat in front of the host and saw the cherry tree in the garden in full bloom, the *waka* poems exchanged naturally included the cherry tree (Hirano 2010).

3 *Kakekotoba*, the Most Important Art in *Heian waka* Composition

The second point of view is related to the art of *waka* composition. Despite its central role in the formation of Japanese literature and culture, *waka* is less widely known than *haiku* 俳句 outside of Japan. As Haruo Shirane suggests in his book, this is because *waka* uses much more highly encoded language than *haiku*, which tends to be image-centered. As he says, *waka* requires more "unpacking" (Shirane et al. 2012, 3).

Aristocrats in the *Heian* period could exchange ideas and feelings through *waka* as mails or conversations, through the use of *kakekotoba* 掛詞 which played the most important role in *waka* composition in those days. This has to do with the "unpacking" which Shirane calls for the encoded language of *waka* poems.

Waka poems containing *kakekotoba* simultaneously present two separate contextual strands of meaning: the emotions and feelings of composer on one hand and natural phenomena on the other. Furthermore these two strands coexist in mutual parity rather than in a relationship in which either one is subordinate to the other.

This is shown in the two *waka* poems below, composed in the mid-tenth century, which were exchanged between two persons in conversation.

4 Two Illustrations of *Kakekotoba*

Atsutada 敦忠 (906-943) was a son of Minister Fujiwara no Tokihira 藤原時平. He was a handsome and talented nobleman whose wife passed away leaving a boy named Sukenobu 助信. Marriage then was quite different from married life today. It was common for them to live separately. The man visited his wife's house and when their child was born, it was wife's family that brought up the child. It was not unusual that the husband stopped visiting his wife's house when she passed away.

Atsutada visited his wife's house and was standing under the cherry tree. The petals of cherry flowers were falling down like a snow. The first *waka* poem was communicated from the person inside the house by a servant.

Ima yori wa	Now ever after
Kaze ni makasemu	I shall leave it to the wind —
Sakurabana	The cherry blossom—
Chiru ko no moto ni	For you stopped by the shedding bough
Kimi tomarikeri.	Of the lorn child's sheltering tree.

[Fujiwara no] Atsutada no Ason 敦忠朝臣 replied:

Kaze ni shi mo	Leave it to the wind…
Nani ka makasen	What could such a flower be?
Sakurabana	Not cherry blossom
Nioi akanu ni	For whose bloom I still reached out
Chiru wa ukariki	To this bitter scattering.

(Cranston 2006, 254-5)

"*Chiru ko no moto ni kimi tomarikeri*" means 'you are standing under the cherry tree in our garden'. In this context, "*ko no moto*" is '*ki no moto*' which is '*ki no shita*' (under the cherry tree). In Japanese, when words are pronounced or written in *kana* letters, this reminds people of the other meaning; that is, "*ko no moto*", also means 'near the child'.

Cherry blossoms are longed for at the advent of spring, and after blooming at last the petals flutter away in no time. The poet (one of the deceased lady's family) laments that the cherry blossoms fall with the wind. The person inside the house who gave this *waka* to Atsutada also wanted to express with gratitude "you visited the child as you visited his mother when she was alive". This *waka* expressed thanks for Atsutada's visit and how much they were consoled by his concern for the child. Read this *waka* poem aloud and when pronouncing "*ko no moto ni*", be mindful of the two meanings 'under the cherry tree' and 'near the child'.

Fujiwara no Takamitsu 藤原高光 (940-994), a son of a minister, was a promising young nobleman to be able to be a man of wealth and power. But he thought deeply the true meaning of life in this world. His decision to be a monk, leaving his beloved family, sent shockwaves in the aristocracy.

Kaku bakari	In this world
Hegataku miyuru	Where life is so hard,
Yo no naka ni	How enviable the moon,
Urayamashiku mo	Clear and untroubled!
Sumeru tsuki kana.	

(W. McCullough, H.C. McCullough 1980, 91)

"*Kaku bakari*" means '*kore hodo*' in modern Japanese. "*Hegataku*" is an adjective, the end-form '*hegatashi*' meaning 'hard to live'. It is hard to live in this world, indeed, full of difficulties, misunderstandings and troubles. "*Sumeru*" has two meanings; one is 'clear' in relation with the word 'the moon', and the other is 'living' in relation with the part "*hegataku miyuru yo no naka ni*", which means 'in this world that seems hard to live in'.

Conclusion

When reading *kakekotoba* 掛詞, it is important to find the two meanings which were intentionally chosen by the person who uttered it. To distinguish 'Heian *kakekotoba*' from the pun, we must notice two meanings expressed by one sequence of *kana* letters and expressing two separate contextual strands. 'Heian *kakekotoba*' always has two meanings simultaneously, one in the context of nature and the other in the context of human feelings (Hirano 2013). This is the point that distinguishes *kakekotoba* from the pun.

A plenty of *waka* poems like these examples were composed in the middle of the tenth century. It is fifty years later that *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji, 11th century) and *Makura no sōshi* (The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon, 11th century) of Sei Shōnagon 清少納言 were produced.

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Rethinking Nature in Japan: From Tradition to Modernity
From Tradition to Modernity
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Nature as a Problematic Concept in Japanese Literature
Looking for Reality

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Abstract The outlines of modern Japanese literature were drawn in the 1880s; while strongly influenced by the literary concepts of the West, it also carried on the styles and concepts of premodern literature, creating a revolution in the regulated concept of 'literature' in all its aspects from form through content and story. An important part of this was the perspective on 'nature.' In his epochal essay on literature, *The Quintessence of the Novel* (published as 9 magazine volumes by Shogetsudo in 1885-86), which proved the beginning of modern Japanese literature in a detailed account covering both literary theory and literary methods, Tsubouchi Shoyo includes the now- famous passage "The pulse of the novel is human affection, to which setting and styles come second. What is human affection? Human passions, the failings to which humans are prone." Here he argues that the main focus of the novel is to depict 'human passions,' as human affection. The issue here is also one of how to describe inner human motivations and awareness down to the last detail, and it is understood here that the concept arises that the fictional mechanism of the novel is able to depict human interior life. This is so-called realism; when we consider its division into the direction of descriptive writing and that of naturalism, the major issue of the awareness of 'nature' in Japanese literature arises. In the late Meiji period, that is around the year 1900, the form of literature moved toward "unifying the spoken and written language', but a diverse variety of forms and expressions were being used. There was no consistent format of notation, idiom, even of punctuation or transliteration of characters. This is a significant issue in the study of Japanese literature. Conversely, one might say that at this period notation, storytelling, the depiction of styles and affections had just that much freedom. This strategic jumble is perhaps what gave rise to the fertile production of modern Japanese literataure. Eventually, as a result of all this, the 'I-Novel' came to be—it is said to be an original Japanese literary form—and went on to become a stranglehold on writers within the long literary tradition. The major innovations of the late Taisho period, including modernist literature such as the neo-sensualists and proletarian literature as well, also struggled within the grip of this bondage. The "proletarian realism" advocated by Kurahara Korehito was indeed a concept reflecting the issue of the awareness of 'nature' within Japanese literature. This presentation will present an overview of the grasp of the multifaceted concept of 'nature', discussing how 'nature" has been approached in modern Japanese literature and what characteristics of Japanese literature it has formed.

Keywords Nature. Japanese modern literature. Realism.

The outlines of modern Japanese literature were drawn in the 1880s; while strongly influenced by the literary concepts of the West, it also carried on the styles and concepts of premodern literature, creating a revolu-

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tion in the regulated concept of 'literature' in all its aspects from form through content and story. An important part of this was the perspective on 'nature'. In his epochal essay on literature, *Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髄 (*The Quintessence of the Novel*, published as nine magazine volumes by Shōgetsudō 松月堂 in 1885-6), which dealt with the beginning of modern Japanese literature in a detailed account covering both literary theory and literary methods, Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遥 (1859-1935) includes the now-famous passage:

> The pulse of the novel is human affection, to which setting and styles come second. What is human affection? Human passions, the failings to which humans are prone. (Tsubouchi 1974, 40-165; 1983)

Here he argues that the main focus of the novel is on depicting 'human passions', such as human affection. This issue regards also the description of inner human motivations and awareness down to the last detail, and it is understood that the fictional mechanism of the novel is able to depict human interior life. This is the so-called realism; when we consider its division into the direction of descriptive writing and that of naturalism, the major issue of the awareness of 'nature' in Japanese literature arises.

In the late Meiji period, that is around the year 1900, the form of literature moved toward 'unifying the spoken and written language', but a diverse variety of forms and expressions were being used. There was no consistent format of notation, idiom, even of punctuation or transliteration of characters. This is a significant issue in the study of Japanese literature. Conversely, one might say that at this period notation, storytelling, the depiction of styles and affections had just much freedom. This strategic jumble is perhaps what gave rise to the fertile production of modern Japanese literature.

In *The Quintessence of the Novel*, Shōyō had already stated that writing a novel was 'applied psychology'.

> His characters must be psychologically convincing. Should he contrive to create by his own invention characters at odds with human nature, or worse, with the principles of psychology, those characters would be figments of his imagination rather than human beings, and not even a skilful plot or a curious story could turn what he wrote into a novel. (Tsubouchi 1983)

Nishi Amane西周 (1829-97), after returning from his study in the Netherlands, opened a private school, the Ikueisha 育英舎, in his home in 1870; he later gave lectures there on the *Encyclopedia* (*Hyakugaku renkan* 『百学連環』, 1870) written by his disciple Nagami Yutaka 永見裕 (1839-1902). These included mentions of psychology. Here Nishi pointed out the division

of science into the intellectual and physical forms, and that of the psyche into the mental, the moral, the spiritual, and the metaphysical ones; he stated that the most important were the non-physical fields of study. In 1875-9 he published a two-volume translation (*Shinrigaku* 心理学) of Joseph Haven's *Mental Philosophy* (1857). This was Shōyō's introduction to psychology. As Toyama Masakazu 外山正一 (1848-1900) was lecturing on psychology in 1877, Shōyō was most likely one of his students. Distinct from these Scottish-derived studies, an American father of psychology was William James (1842-1910), under whose spell Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867-1916) fell. It was 1888 when Motora Yūjirō 元良勇次郎 (1858-1912), a student of G. Stanley Hall (1846-1924) and through him influenced by the father of psychology, Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), began lecturing at Tokyo University; Sōseki also paid attention to this cutting-edge field. William James was hired as an educationalist, reflecting the current influence of American pragmatism on Tokyo University. This rapid development of an academic structure fascinated the writers of the earliest period of modern Japanese literature. That is, 'human affection' became the desires of the 'I who is not I' (Mori Ōgai 森鴎外, *Maihime* 舞姫) (Ōgai 1971) deep inside and psychology a significant item in the search for that mechanism.

Here 'the psyche' represents the reality based on human actuality and related to the concept of 'nature'. By connecting the search for the human interior world with literature, a new demand for the grasp of reality was made. Shōyō tells writers to depict human affections rather than styles and settings, but the outside world exists as an influence on the human spirit, and the outer environment is taken as an object in opposition to the spirit. However, around 1900, the modernising process washed by the waves of 'civilising' displayed a scenery of recursive nostalgia. Here, the 'objective description' told through the metaphors of the pictorial method Shōyō promotes to depict objective human affections is applied also to the landscape. The landscape is genuinely discovered. In *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen* Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人 writes that the 'landscape' that Shōyō could not see was establishing itself around 1900. As a reason for this, he points out that the landscape that Shōyō's written style could not fully describe being established around 1900 could not be grasped by the topsy-turvy reality of the outer world as the landscape of Shōyō's realism. That is, description was not only depicting the 'outer world' but finding the outer world. It is, he understands, not in opposition to the spirit and the psyche, the human interior world, but something that coexisted with these as a reflection thereof. The wide acceptance of the 'descriptive writing' lauded by Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規 (1867-1902) surely derived from its dramatic connection of the awareness of a grasp of the outer world that traditional literature in the form of short poems had always had, with the 'realisation of the outer world that was suppressed in the modern world. Here landscape is not simply a general word for the outer world, but a

new awareness as a vessel for the spreading of the concept of nature. Karatani writes:

> The subject/object locus of awareness theory developed within 'landscape'. That is, it was not there from the beginning, but was derived within 'landscape'. (Karatani 1980)

Going back in time, Sōseki writes the following in his *Shaseibun* 写生文 (Descriptive Writing) of 1907:

> The sympathy of the descriptive writer for humanity does not struggle helplessly along with the people described, weeping bodilessly, leaping in the air, or running madly in all directions. It is a sympathy which stands by and watches, full of pity which enfolds a slight smile. It is not cold-blooded. It simply does not scream along with the rest of the world. (Sōseki 2016)

Here Sōseki is explaining the method of objective description in a novelistic description, which is common up to the present day. He is presenting the need to depict human interiors with the same detached method as that of depicting the outer world, for the generation of writers who, as Karatani says, established the difference between *thou* and *I*. This shows that the methodological awareness of landscape as natural description was already established.

However, another significance was being attached to the concept of landscape. In 1888, the Seikyōsha 政教社 group was founded as a criticism of the excessively Europeanising government, and its journal *Nihonjin* 日本人 (The Japanese), later *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* 日本及日本人 (Japan and the Japanese) was first published. Group members included Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 (1863-1927), Sugiura Jūgō 杉浦重剛 (1855-1924), Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858-1919), and Miyake Setsuryō/Setsurei 三宅雪嶺 (1860-1945). In 1894 Shiga's *Nihon fūkei ron* 日本風景論 (*On the Japanese Landscape*, Seikyōsha) (Shiga 1995) became a bestseller, and later a bible for the connection of landscape and nationalism. The Seikyōsha and its conservative nationalism located nature as a connection from earlier eras in a newly discovered landscape. The agreement of the national territory and nationalism was deeply involved in the establishment of the nation-state. However, when one thinks about it, the borders called national territory were 'discovered' within the imagination. Modern Japan had matured to the point that its 'nationals/Japanese' could share these. Shiga's *On the Japanese Landscape* is positioned as a forerunner of the representation of 'the Japanese' in deep agreement with nature, which is seen, among others, in Yanagita Kunio's folklore studies, Watsuji Tetsurō's *Climate and Culture. A*

Philosophical Study, (Watsuji 1935, 1961)[1] and Kamei Katsuichirō's *Scenes from Ancient Japanese Temples* (Kamei 1943).[2] However, in addition, while these bristle with the excess energy of finding the outer world and translating it into 'national territory', they do not yet find the later direction of the communalisation of the Japanese in terms of destiny, blood relationships and land bindings. This is a phenomenon that should be considered along with the thriving Orientalism and Asianism of the period.

The discovery of landscape also produced the phenomena of 'homeland' and 'national territory', as well as 'homesickness' and 'patriotism'. It produced regionalism and also encouraged the development of nationalism within the framework of the nation-state, as well as fomenting statism and fascism. Tokutomi Roka's *Shizen to jinsei* 自然と人生 (*Nature and Life*) (Roka 1929),[3] published in 1900, avoided this problem, which was endemic to the discover of nature, through literary expression. Readers were gripped by the new literary style, reverberating as Shiga's scientific sentences had failed to do. These days it would be called an essay, focusing on the description of various forms of nature, that is landscape.

Again, there were no established genres yet at this time. The method of giving over one's senses to nature had been used since premodern times. It was the main focus of short poetry as well. Roka expressed it in the new format of prose.

"One gardenia in the corner of the garden. In the gloom of May darkness, it opens fragrant white blossoms. Well suited to this house of quiet people" (A pun on the Japanese word for gardenia, which also means 'mouthless')

The story proceeds as nature and the feelings of the writer interchange. Through the focus on this kind of nature observation, fragments of societal observation appear here and there. The section on "The Nation-State and the Individual" describes the festivities as the Meiji Emperor (Mutsuhito) returned from Hiroshima, and the sight of a starving beggar amidst the crowds, gobbling a cake dropped by a child. At the end, Roka did not hesitate to write this: "I leave arguments of nationalism or loyalty to you. I would not like to see the Emperor's child starve".

Here, Roka is trying to see the interior of the beggar, a part of the landscape, which ends up as a criticism of the nation-state. At the bottom is not so much humanism as a quest into the discovered interior of the self through objectivity. *Nature and Life*, with its Wordsworth epigraph, shares blood with the pastoral ideology of the West while boldly criticising society: this is worth focusing on. It is the moment just before naturalism.

1 Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889-1960).

2 Kamei Katsuichirō 亀井勝一郎 (1907-66).

3 Tokutomi Roka 徳富蘆花 (1868-1927).

Through realism and the 'realist baptism' of social novels, dark novels and tragic novels, the real approach to realism began. It may be argued that naturalism was the first literary theory in Japan, and its generative process shows us that the collusion of the description of the outer world as nature with the exposure of nature as 'interior' is the focal point of this creative theory. As Shimamura Hōgetsu 島村抱月(1871-1918) writes,

> [i]t is clear that if perfect description is indistinguishable from natural beauty and imperfect description no better than a lifeless photograph, extreme realist description is far from the truth of art. It is thought that when describing a person the physical and spiritual aspects cannot be done as one, and that realist description is no more than faithfully describing the physical and missing the spiritual; but this is a prejudice. A perfect physical description would naturally contain some of the spiritual as well, since the heart is not a separate object. (Shimamura 1894)

The exemplars of naturalist literature are said to be Shimazaki Tōson's *Hakai* 破戒 (*The Broken Commandment*, 1906) (Shimazaki 1974) and Tayama Katai's *Futon* 布団 (*The Quilt*, 1907) (Tayama 1981). If we put the point of departure here at least for novels, it is startling that more than ten years earlier Hōgetsu was laying out the rules for naturalism at the age of just 24. He was pointing out the possibilities of expressions divided into two: interior and exterior, spirit and material, abstract and realist. The theme of accusation against social discrimination is clear in Tōson's *The Broken Commandment*, but the landscape of the Shinano region, which he describes so vividly to bring out his theme, is a perfect example of the call and reply between exterior and interior. The human affect of sexual desire, which also Katai pursues, comes out clearly through finely detailed descriptions of clothing and behaviour. Katai became better known as a travel writer later on, with *Tōkyō no sanjūnen*『東京の三十年』(*Thirty Years in Tokyo*, 1917) among other books, but there his description is not only surface expression but fully succeeds, as we see even now, in representing the interior awareness.

However, while naturalism appeared in this way and flourished as a theory expressing both the natural self and the natural outer world, disharmony began to intervene as early as 1908. The major naturalist theorist Hasegawa Tenkei 長谷川天渓 (1876-1940) published "Shaseibun no myōshu" 写生文の妙趣 (Aspects of Realism, *Taiyō* 太陽, June 1908) this year, drawing a certain conclusion about naturalist literature. Tenkei was not logically gifted, or perhaps let himself go a little too far given the magazine he was writing for, but even so the banal generalisability in his point cannot be brushed aside entirely.

> The ego of each individual, embracing this statism, has no collision with reality. Because we are Japanese does not mean we must agree with every movement or ideology in Japan. Even if we expand our ego to the scope of the Japanese Empire, dragons [??] separate from reality with no contradiction.

And, encouraging the uprising of a national literature at the end,

> [t]he literary arts which were originally naturalistic must, as a natural result of focusing on reality, become expressions of the nation's people.

Uozumi Setsuro 魚住折蘆 (1883-1910), of the next generation, took this as solid criticism and, two years later in August of 1910 – that is, two months after the Great Treason Incident – published on the 22nd and 23rd, in the Tōkyō Asahi Journal, *Jikoshuchō no shisō to shite no shizenshugi* 「自己主張の思想としての自然主義」(Naturalism as an Ideology of Self-Expression), making fun of Tenkei's 'ire' with "What's the point now of going on about the energy of the nation-state or the destiny of the Orient?".

Ishikawa Takuboku 石川啄木 (1886-1912), much stimulated by this, poignantly argued about what position the 'self' of 'self-expression' might exactly be in.

> Right now we young men, in order to escape our state of self-destruction, have come to a time when we must be aware of the existence of that 'enemy.' This is nothing we hoped for, but something that must be. We must stand up as one and declare war on this state of a closing era. We must throw away naturalism, give up blind rebellion and nostalgia, and focus our whole spirits on considering tomorrow – we must throw ourselves into an organized consideration of our own era.[4]

This young man, who had once written that "the naturalist movement of recent years is the budding philosophy woven from forty years of modern Japanese life",[5] is now calling for naturalism to be thrown out; this struggle is that which the culture of Japan itself was dealing with at the end of the Meiji period. One edge of the possibilities of newly altered cultural production had been closed. But their disappointment would be salved by the rich soil left by Ōsugi Sakae 大杉栄 (1885-1923) for the Taishō avant-garde to cultivate.

It is necessary to view this sudden turnaround in literary ideology through its connections with the ideologies and philosophies of the underlying aca-

4 *Jidai heisoku no genjō*「時代閉塞の現状」(*This state of a closing era*, written late August 1910).

5 "Yumi chō yori" 弓町より (From Yumi-chō), *Tōkyō Asahi Journal*, 30 November 1909-7 December 1909.

demic world. In January and February 1905, just after the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War, Kuwaki Gen'yoku 桑木厳翼 (1874-1946), assistant professor at Tokyo Imperial University and the introducer of neo-Kantian philosophy of pure reason into Japan, published the volumes of *Tetsugaku zasshi* 哲学雑誌 (Philosophy Journal) his *Puragumatizumu ni tsuite* 「プラグマティズム」に就て (On Pragmatism), sharply criticising pragmatism as a false philosophy and beginning a fierce argument on the topic with Tanaka Ōdō 田中王堂 (1868-1932). Tanaka had met John Dewey at the University of Chicago while studying in America between 1889 and 1898. He received a baptism of pragmatism and, after returning to Japan, energetically argued on literature, philosophy and ideological criticism in *Tetsugaku zasshi* (Philosophy Journal), *Teiyū rinrikai* 丁酉倫理会 (Teiyū Ethics), and *Myōjō* 明星. Notably, he structured aesthetic and symbolic art as concrete forms of pragmatic life awareness. From an anti-naturalist perspective, he also debated with Shimamura Hōgetsu. Taking on the top theorists of the field, he never gave an inch, even opening battle with Sōseki.[6]

Pragmatism spread instantly through the post-Russo-Japanese-War cultural milieu. In particular, it seems to have become a solid theoretical outpost for the anti-naturalism side of the debate. Hasegawa Tenkei, a pillar of the naturalist literature movement along with Hōgetsu, published *Rironteki yūgi wo haisu*「論理的遊戯を排す」(Disposing of Theoretical Games Arguing for the Naturalist Position) in October 1907 in *Taiyō*, to an argument by Kinoshita Mokutarō 木下杢太郎 (1885-1945), who patiently took on Hasegawa's violently incoherent demand to "fling everything left by the religion, morals, philosophy of our fathers into the sea and face up to the real world" with an urging to "pay close attention to the recent spread of experimental philosophy and pragmatism".

Hōgetsu later complained that "the root of the problem is how to unify all the contradictions of life, in the past, present and future, and pragmatism hasn't solved this"[7] but that, in the contemporary ideological status as of *Waseda Bungaku* 早稲田文学 November 1907, in philosophy 'human-centered pragmatism' was said to be effective for a new 'self-development'.[8]

Nakazawa Rinsen 中沢臨川 (1878-1920) reconciled this opposition with naturalist literature. His *Shizenshugi hanron* 自然主義汎論 ("General Thoughts on Naturalism", *Waseda Bungaku*, September 1910) states that "while moving towards realism, philosophy was drawn in that direction too.

6 "Natsume Sōseki shi no "Bungei no tetsugakuteki kiso" wo hyōsu" 「夏目漱石氏の 『文芸の哲学的基礎』を評す(抄)」筑摩書房〈現代日本文学大系 96〉、1973年。

7 *Kaigi to kokuhaku* 「懐疑と告白」("Doubt and Confession", *Waseda Bungaku*, September 1909).

8 *Ryōsen, Chogyū, jisei, shinjiga* 梁川、樗牛、時勢、新自我 ("Ryōsen, Chogyū, the Times, the New Ego", *Kindai bungei no kenkyū*, 近代文藝之研究, November 1909).

It is William James' pragmatism that shows that tendency most strongly now". Thus, he pointed out the similarities between the two. Rinsen later extended his reach to *James yori Bergson he* 「ジエームスよりベルグソンへ」 ("From James to Bergson", *Waseda Bungaku*, May 1913) and *Bergson* ベルグソン (Jitsugyō no Nipponsha, 1914), becoming the leading Bergson scholar in Japan.

We may also not leave out Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870-1945). From 1906, still a student at the Fourth High School, he was fascinated by James and published "Junsui keiken to shii, ishi,oyobi chiteki chokkan" 「純粋経験と思惟、意志、及び知的直観」(Pure Experience, Thought, Will, and Intellectual Intuition) in *Tetsugaku zasshi* in August 1909 (*Philosophy Journal*). This eventually became the first section, "Junsui keiken" (Pure Experience), of his 1911 *Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究 (*Research into Good*, Kōdōkan 弘道館). His departure point was the moment he describes as "in the state of direct experience, giving up subject and object, the one true reality cannot be doubted even if one would, and there is the certainty of truth". That is, we must not forget that the Japanese-style theory of consciousness (the 'natural perspective') produced by Nishida was connected to this. At the root of the regionalism passed on from Nishida to Watsuji, which resulted in backing up fascism, was this similarity with the theoretical form of naturalism. It also continued to influence the creative theory of socialist literature, anarchist literature, and communist literature.

The creative theory system of the "I-Novel" that came about in the 1920s has this as its background. The problem attached to the 'traditional' and so-called uniquely Japanese format of the I-Novel is the stunting of the swell against society found from realism through naturalism in the push for true realism. The binding of the I-Novel within Japanese literature became a stranglehold on writers. The major innovations of the late Taishō period, including modernist literature such as the neo-sensualists and proletarian literature as well, also struggled within the grip of this bondage. The 'proletarian realism' advocated by Kurahara Korehito 蔵原惟人 (1902-91) was indeed a concept reflecting the issue of the awareness of nature within Japanese literature.[9]

This is an issue that must be narrated as a problem of fascism and colonialism. Paradoxically, it met with the question of how the nation-state used the Japanese perspective on nature as a part of the national ideological apparatus, and how it tamed, taught and educated people.

Granting the premise, we need to stop here and go back to Shōyō, Sōseki, Ōgai, Takuboku etc. We need to go over the form of their ideas again. It may be added, finally, that the concept of nature has indeed continued to function as a bitter testing place for and a stranglehold on

9 『プロレタリア芸術と形式』天人社(新芸術論システム 1930.

modern intellectuals.

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Rethinking Nature in Japan
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Japanese Buddhism and Nature
Man and Natural Phenomena in the Quest for Enlightenment

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Abstract Japanese Buddhism developed a debate on the role of nature based on the imported schools from China, from where the name itself of nature was taken. However, in the 13th century, Dōgen gave an original turn to the conception of nature as the locus of enlightenment. The Sōtō school evolved from his teaching recently developed a new perspective influenced by Western concerns for nature and its relation with society.

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Keywords Japanese Buddhism. Dōgen. Nature. Sōtōshū.

1 Introduction

If we inquire into the ancient Japanese texts, we cannot find the description of how nature was created. In the oldest text describing the myths of the creation of Japan, *Kojiki* 古事記, where a great number of gods (*kami* 神) make their appearance, none of them is responsible for the creation of the natural environment. This is in strong contrast with the Western Christian assumption that God is the creator of the natural world.

One of the possible explanations is that in ancient Japan there was no clear concept of 'nature' as an object of speculation. Until the arrival of Chinese culture, there was not even the word for 'nature', which was conceived as the manifold concrete manifestation of mountains, rivers, trees, and so on.

When, under the impact of Chinese culture, the Japanese started to conceive of 'nature', they expressed it with the noun *ametsuchi* 天地,[1] or

1 See Takagi et al. 1962, poems nos. 20/4392 (433) and 20/4426 (447).

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'heaven and earth'. Also *ikitoshi ikerumono* いきとし生けるもの, that is 'all living beings', is to be found in ancient texts.[2] Later, *tenchi manbutsu* 天地万物 'all the things of heaven and earth' taken from the Chinese tradition, *sansui* 山水 'mountains and rivers',[3] *kenkon* 乾坤 'heaven and earth',[4] *monomina* 物皆 'all things'[5] and similar.[6]

In the West, the scientific approach towards nature led to speculation about it, and in the end promoted the philosophical and scientific attitude that gave a great contribution to the development of Western culture.

2 The Word *shizen* 自然

It is not until very recently that did Japan find a word to express what in the West we mean by nature; as a matter of fact, it was only in the Meiji period that under the stimulus of the impact with Western culture the word *shizen* 自然 was adopted from ancient Chinese and given a new meaning.[7]

In China, we find this word both in Confucianism and Daoism with the meaning of 'something not produced by human hands', or 'that which is as it is by itself', 'not being produced'. Lǎozǐ 老子, in the chapter 25 of *Dào dé jīng* 道德経, says 「人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然」: "Man's law is the earth, the earth's law is heaven, heaven's law is the Way and the Way's law is *to be as it is*" (emphasis added).[8]

In Meiji Japan this word was chosen to express the meaning of 'nature' because in the Sinitic world nature was considered to be "unproduced" and having existence by itself independently from any external source. The difference in the meaning of the words for nature in the West and in the Sino-Japanese culture leads to different visions of nature. While in the Christian world the human being is the lord of nature and uses it for his purposes in a hierarchical structure where God is at the top, man intermediate and nature at the lowest level, in Japan (with differences compared to China) Gods (*kami*) are part of nature and the expression of

2 One of the earliest is in the Japanese introduction (*kanajo* かな序) of *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905). Regards the latter see Saeki 1958, 93.

3 In *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻 (751). See Kojima 1964, 83.

4 In *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠 (1018). See Kawaguchi et al. 1965, 188.

5 In *Man'yōshū*, poem no. 10/1885. See Takagi et al. 1960, 68.

6 In the Hindu tradition of India, there was the word *swayambhu* meaning "self-manifested, that which is originated by its own". It may have influenced the Buddhist tradition of China.

7 In Japan at an early date it is found in the Chinese introduction 真名序 of *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905) and in *Ōkagami* 大鏡 (1189). For the first see Saeki 1958, 335; for the latter see Matsumura 1960, 412.

8 Author's translation.

its forces (Ōno 1976, 125). Therefore, they are supposed to cooperate in harmony, each one fulfilling its own role. In any case, as Lǎozǐ says, the fundamental law that governs both man and the inanimate is *shizen*, that is, each phenomenon of the universe should follow its natural inclination, i.e. the natural law that is the great model and mould for anyone.

In the Shintō view, the *kami* are not above, but within the natural world, or better they are manifestations of the phenomena of nature, which is pure in contrast with man's society that is corrupt. In order to approach nature in harmony, man must purify himself from the dirtiness of his artificial world. Purification (*harae* 祓い) is performed to reestablish order and balance between nature, humans and deities, all of which are interdependent since the social and the natural environments are interrelated.

3 The Word for 'Nature' in Japanese Buddhism

In Japan, the word 自然 is also read in *go'on* pronunciation as *jinen*. This version basically has the same meaning, but has also a strong Buddhist connotation, meaning 'that which is as it is by itself and not produced by the karmic law of 'cause-and-effect'" or *inga* 因果. In the Buddhist world this meaning has been often taken to be an unorthodox view, or *gedō* 外道, since nothing is supposed to escape from the inflexible law of *kārma*, though there are no source showing which is the *causa prima*.[9]

This very meaning is quite central to the Buddhist doctrine of Shinran (1173-1262), founder of the Jōdo Shinshū school 浄土真宗. As a matter of fact, one of his key teaching is *jinen hōni* 自然法爾, which means 'without calculations', 'spontaneously'. In Shinran's school, the karmic law of 'cause-and-effect' is often negated, since salvation comes from the Buddha Amida without any effort, or cause, on the part of the believer and, therefore, the 'no-cause and effect' called *muin uga* 無因有果 is preferred. That is to say that salvation comes naturally. In *Mattōshō*, one of his fundamental texts, Shinran says:

> As for *jinen*, *ji* means 'of itself' – it is not through the practicer's calculation. *Nen* means 'one is made to become so' – it is not through the practicer's calculation; it is through the working of the Vow of Thatagata. As for *hōni*, it means 'one is made to become so through the working of the Vow of the Thatagata. (Ueda 1978, 29)

In short, *jinen hōni* means to reject any effort in view of salvation (*jiriki* 自

9 "According to Buddhist doctrine, this word is an un-orthodox (*gedō* 外道) view in contrast with the law of cause-and-effect". See Nihon Daijiten Hakkōkai 1985, 20.

力) on the part of the man and to give oneself up completely to Amida who will come to save him. It is a way to avoid producing (bad) *karma* and return to a state of "non-productiveness", abandonment and renunciation. In a sense, it is to return to a state of primordial or natural innocence. It is a kind of natural paradise where, as stated in the *Amida kyō*, "all the infinite things of nature whom you desire to obtain are already in front of you".[10]

However, in most of the other Buddhist schools, it was the law of cause-and-effect *inga ōhō* 因果応報 that was believed to correspond to nature (Kanaoka, Yanagawa 1989, 12). Nature is considered to be a complex mechanism where the karmic law of reward is inescapable and, as a matter of fact, it is the most important law that governs the entire universe. In a sense, in the world and in our lives, there is nothing else than this severe law of cause-and effect – everything works according to it, including man: it is how nature functions, or better, it is nature itself.

4 'Nature' in Buddhism

The Chinese Buddhist master Sēng zhào 僧肇 (374-414), a disciple of Kumārajīva (334-413) in his *Zhào lùn* 肇論, says 「天地與我同根，萬物與我一體」, that is "heaven, earth, and myself have the same root; all things are one corpus with me".[11]

In Mahāyāna Buddhism (to which I will limit the discussion), since the early stages, a contrast between man and the natural world, that is animals and the inanimate realm, arose due to the principal objective of the Way: the chance of reaching *nirvānā*, or 'Enlightenment'. The main question concerned the fact that *nirvānā*, Enlightenment, or anyway the final stage of liberation, was reached by means of the mind *kokoro*/*xīn* 心. It is the mind that is defiled and needs to be changed: the transformation of mind, be it to be purified or not is unavoidable. In brief, the supreme goal of Buddhism was to be achieved realising the deceptiveness of our own ego, which is insubstantial and unreal. Once this illusion is abandoned, our true self, a non-self, will manifest in its full purity and brightness.

10 See *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [online], 12: 301. URL `http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html` (2017-06-12). All quotations from Japanese and Sino-Japanese in this essay are Author's translations from original texts.

11 See *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [online], 45: 159.

Now, the question into which many Buddhist masters inquired was: if animals and inanimate objects do not have a mind (which is not to have 'no-mind'!), they should be excluded from the realm of Enlightenment. They cannot reach *nirvānā*.

However, this view contrasted with the basic principle of Mahāyāna teachings according to which the chance of Enlightenment is given to all sentient beings and, even more problematically, that Buddha-nature 佛性 is universal. As regards 'sentient beings', there were masters who included the natural world and others who excluded it. However, the universality of Buddha-nature could not cut off 'nature' and, since Buddha-nature is the hidden potentiality of evolving in manifested and full Enlightenment, everything – animals and inanimate objects, mountains, rivers, flowers, etc. – in principle should have the capacity of becoming enlightened.

In China, famous masters such as Fǎzàng 法藏 (643-712) of Huāyán 華嚴 school, Jízàng 吉藏 (549-623) of Sānlùn 三論 school, and Zhànrán 湛然 (711-782) of Tiāntái 天台 school debated the question. They all tried to find arguments in favour of the inclusion of nature into the world of Enlightenment. Fǎzàng, from the point view of Huāyán teaching of the universal mutual interdependence and mutual identity of all phenomena, asserts that nothing should be excluded. Jízàng also supported the possibility of Enlightenment for plants, and Zhànrán said that the whole universe manifests Buddha-mind, which is the foundation of all phenomena, and therefore nothing could be excluded.

As a matter of fact, the most important Chinese schools supported the idea of the universality of the capacity of Enlightenment, though from different points of view. Mahāyāna, that is literally the 'Great Vehicle' on which everybody could mount on to be transported to the final liberation, proved to be faithful to its name.

5 Nature in Japanese Buddhism

A detailed discussion of how nature was dealt with within Japanese Buddhism exceeds the scope of this essay, which will limit itself to a synthetic approach to Shingon, Tendai and a more detailed discussion of the founder of the Sōtō Zen school 曹洞宗, Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253).

In the Japanese Shingon school 真言宗, starting from its founder Kūkai 空海 (774-835), the phenomenal world in every aspect is regarded as the manifestation of the universal Buddha Mahāvairocana or Dainichi 大日 (literally 'the Great Sun') and, consequently, nature itself is an expression of Vairocana's presence in the world. All phenomena, including those belonging to nature, and of course human beings, are in the realm of buddhahood. All the elements of the universe are composed of six basic elements, that is earth, water, fire, wind, space, and mind or conscious-

ness. This means that man, and nature, plants, trees, rivers, etc. share the same origin, belong to the same dimension, and only the composition of the elements among them make the difference. This explains the reason why, Shingon believes that all phenomena exist in buddhahood equally, without distinction between animate and inanimate beings. They all are equally manifestation of Dainichi, have a Buddha-nature without distinction and can reach Enlightenment when the oneness with Dainichi, or the Absolute Reality, the Dharmakāya,[12] is realised. In its extreme formulation, i.e. Kūkai's, natural phenomena are already in possession of the Buddha-nature simply by virtue of their being in the phenomenal world (Callicott 1989, 186-7).

In his most famous work, *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* 即身成仏義, we find the following sentences:

1. "In the natural world all phenomena naturally manifest their presence as they are";
2. "In the principle of nature there are no artifacts";
3. "Wisdom is naturally present (in all beings)".[13]

On the Tendai side, Ryōgen 良源 (912-985), abbot of Enryakuji, engaged in the discussion about the buddhahood of things within the natural world. He maintained that for inanimate natural objects, buddhahood was only a potentiality, though this potentiality would be actualised in the normal course of the life of their existence. This is a much less radical position if compared to Kūkai's.[14]

However, it was Chūjin 忠尋 (1065-1138), a Tendai monk, who exhaustively dealt with this subject in his work, *Kankō Ruijū* 漢光類聚, where he summarised the debate up to that time and supported the opinion that

> of their own nature, the myriad things are Buddha, and 'Buddha' means Enlightenment. In their inner nature the things of the three thousand worlds are unchangeable, undefiled, unmoved, and pure; this is what is meant by their being called 'Buddha'. As for trees and plants, there is no need for them to show the thirty-two marks (of buddhahood); in their present form […] each in its own way has buddhahood. (La Fleur 1989, 192)

12 In Mahāyāna Buddhism the Dharmakāya, or 'Body of the Law' represents reality in its true and absolute form.

13 See *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [online], 77: 384, 382, 383, respectively.

14 A category of beings, called *icchantika*, according to some Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures, were the most base and spiritually deluded of all types of beings. They were the only ones who could not reach liberation.

These words have much more the meaning of natural phenomena having already reached buddhahood, than just having its potentiality. Plants and trees are considered to be enlightened as they are: they do not need to strive to acquire liberation. In a sense, plants and trees reach Enlightenment in their own way, that is not as human beings do. This may be due the fact that man has the illusion of an ego, a strong ego that leads him towards delusion, while inanimate beings have no illusion and therefore no ego and no mind, and therefore are free from the very beginning.

Chūjin expressed his view on the basis of one of the fundamental doctrines of Tendai, that of *hongaku* 本覚, or "Original Enlightenment", as opposed to *shikaku* 始覚 "Acquired Enlightenment". *Hongaku* means that man, though taken by passions, still has Buddha-nature at the bottom of his heart, which nature remains undefiled and ready to be aroused. Buddha-nature, which is intrinsic, is only obscured by defilement just like a mirror, but its original nature remains pure and, once the mirror is cleaned, it will be bright again.

There is quite a difference between the position of Shingon and Tendai schools and, generally speaking, that of Kūkai and his school is more radical in that nature, as it is considered to be a part of the manifestation of universal buddhahood, without any difference in respect to man (Selin 2003, 168).

6 Dōgen and his View of Nature

As far we have seen that, in the schools of Japanese Buddhism that have developed an elaborated doctrinal thought, the natural phenomena have been treated in the same manner as animate beings. In synthesis, animate and inanimate have both equally the capacity of achieving enlightenment.

The considerations on natural phenomena depend in large part on the conception of Enlightenment and its acquisition. Where the whole universe is intended as the realm of buddhahood, or of Buddha-nature, any element of the universe be it animate or inanimate, having a mind or not, is advancing towards buddhahood naturally.

Both Shingon and Tendai schools shared the view that Buddha-nature is a permanent and eternal substance pervading the universe, immanent in all phenomena, and that beings will attain buddhahood earlier or later by virtue of its possession.

However, at the dawn of the 13th century in Japan, Dōgen introduced a drastic change to this view elaborating a very original conception of buddhahood and, consequently, stimulating a fresh and radical approach to inanimate nature.

The originality of Dōgen is that of considering Buddha-nature not as something possessed, but as the phenomena themselves, just as they are. This non-dualistic attitude rejects the existence of beings on one side and Buddha-nature on the other, which are in some way related, in favour of their complete

identity: phenomena are Buddha-nature and vice versa. As a consequence, Buddha-nature ceases to be permanent and eternal and is considered in the same way as natural phenomena, i.e. impermanent. Buddha-nature, he concludes, is nothing else than the impermanence of the phenomena. In the chapter "Busshō" (Buddha-nature) of the *Shōbōgenzō*, he says:

> The impermanence of countries, lands, mountains and rivers is such because they are Buddha-nature. The supreme and perfect enlightenment is impermanent because it is Buddha-nature. The great *nirvānā* being impermanent is Buddha-nature. (Etō 1986, 3: 325)

For Dōgen, the difference between animate and inanimate is completely rejected since both *are* equally Buddha-nature, and since the whole universe is originally enlightened. Again in the same chapter, he says "therefore, mountains, rivers and the great land all are the 'Ocean of Buddha-nature'". And a few lines after, "things being like that, to see mountains and rivers is to see Buddha-nature, to see Buddha-nature is to see a donkey's jaw and a horse's mouth" (Etō 1986, 3: 319).

Dōgen is unique in Japanese Buddhism for urging to learn buddhahood from nature. He believes that since natural phenomena are the realisation of buddhahood, we can learn from them how to realise ourselves. As a matter of fact, he is convinced that the problem of man is the illusion of his ego. When the individual ego is dropped, the true aspect of reality will be manifested. The natural phenomena being without mind, and without ego, are therefore the true aspect of reality: they are the body of Buddha.

> Take in your hands a blade of grass and make it a golden 6 *jō* high body, or take a grain of dust and with it build an old Buddha, a *stupa*, a sanctuary. (Etō 1986, 2: 402)

Or a poem of his:

> *Mine no iro*
> *Tani no hibiki mo*
> *Mina nagara*
> *Waga Shakyamuni no*
> *Koe to sugata to*
>
> The colours of the mountains
> the echo of the valleys.
> Each one as it is
> is the voice and the form
> of my Shakyamuni.
> (Ōkubo 1970, 411)

He is not saying that nature, mountain and valleys, or else, reminds him of Shakyamuni, or that they manifest Buddha-nature. Rather, he says that they *are* Buddha-nature, just as they are.

Nature – with its impermanence, mutability, the passing of the seasons, life and death – is the realm of religion; in a sense, it is sacred because it is the full realisation of Enlightenment. Therefore, Dōgen does not give nature human sentiments: its caducity is not to be lamented, as other poets do; instead, he just describes nature's Enlightenment.

Nature can transmit its teaching to man: of course, using its own communicative tools, which are not words, still, nature has the ability to teach Enlightenment to those who are able to understand its language.

Haru wa hana
Natsu ototogisu
Aki wa tsuki
Fuyu yuki saete
Suzushikarikeri

In spring the flowers
In summer the cuckoo
Autumn with the moon
Winter with snow is clear
And cold.
(Ōkubo 1970, 412)

Nature here is described just as it is, without any anthropomorphism, or indulgence in sentimentalism. Nature, just as it is, is Enlightenment.

According to Dōgen, nature being 'just as it is', without a deluded mind and without defilements is, 'just as it is', the realm of the realised Enlightenment from which we can learn and have guidance, whether we are able to listen to its voice or not.

Two chapters in *Shōbōgenzō*, in particular, are centred on the description of nature and its manifestation of Enlightenment: "Sansuikyō" (The *sūtra* of Mountains and Streams) and "Keisei sanshoku" (Sound of the Stream, Form of the Mountain).

In "Sansuikyō", Dōgen describes nature as the realm of liberation and realisation:

> These mountains and waters of the present are the expression of the old buddhas. Each, abiding in its own dharma state, fulfils exhaustive virtues. […] they are liberated in their actual occurrence. (Etō 1986, 1: 217)

And he insists on eliminating any distinction between man and nature: "the blue mountains are not sentient; they are not insentient. We ourselves are

not sentient; we are not insentient" (Etō 1986, 1: 218), the whole universe is the land of realisation, without separation and any single phenomenon is manifesting buddhahood: "incalculable buddha lands are realized even within a single drop of water" (Etō 1986, 1: 224).

In "Keisei sanshoku" again he stresses the fact that human beings and nature belong to the same buddha-nature and reach together Enlightenment "because of the virtues of the stream sound and mountain form, 'the earth and sentient beings simultaneously achieve the way'" (Etō 1986, 1: 139).

7 The Ecological Turn of Sōtōshū

The school that evolved from Dōgen's teaching, the Sōtō Zen school 曹洞宗, after the World War 2, in contrast to other Japanese Buddhist schools that remained rather deeply rooted in their traditional teachings, introduced a new approach based mainly on the role of the school in present-day society. The declared three main tenets are clearly and largely stated:

1. 人権,

2. 平和,

3. 環境、省エネルギーへの取り組み[15]

That is "Human rights; Peace; Environment and policy of saving energy". These objectives were not, stated as such, a cultural heritage of the Zen schools, not even of Buddhism at large, at least not in such a clear manner. As a matter of fact, instead, Buddhism has always traditionally had scarce attention to society and its problems and focused mainly on the individual. However, the Sōtō Zen school felt that in our modern society, social issue cannot but be in the front line and strove to adapt and evolve.

As to the third point, "Environment and policy of saving energy", it is of course strongly related to the subject dealt with here, i.e. nature. In the official site of the Sōtō school it is also stated that "the Sōtō school will defend the environment of the earth and develops a movement called 'green plan' in view of living together with nature". And

> There is a meaning in the involvement of religious schools in the problems related to environment, by spreading a religiosity which supports the sensibility of men for an increased preservation of the environment. We, Sōtō school consider the movement for environment a central task

15 See the official website of Sōtōshū. URL http://www.sotozen-net.or.jp/# (2017-06-12).

> that of enlarging the sphere in practical life as to how to spend a life preserving the environment and considering it precious in our everyday behaviour.

The official site also reports a long list of statistics related to pollution in the various districts of Japan as a practical contribution to enhance the sensibility of the population towards environment problems and improving the life standard.

It is evident that this policy that includes a consistent ecological attitude has been devised in order to cope with the challenges that present-day globalised society poses. In a sense, it is a way for finding a meaningful position in modern Japanese society and to enlarge the scope of activity of the Sōtō school also outside Japan, and to partake the problems of common people. In fact, the Sōtō school has, for centuries, developed a strong sensibility towards the problems of common people and has had an active role, especially in the countryside, so as to improve the conditions of the population.

The "ecological turn" may be also considered a reply to the claims that come from the Western world and to its approach to Sino-Japanese thought and in particular to Buddhism. In the West, especially in the USA, Buddhist schools like Zen have received great attention and have been enthusiastically appreciated among the movements that promote ecology, peace and non-violence. The interpretation and approach of those movements to Sino-Japanese thought and religions at large has fostered the idea of a teaching that celebrates the beauty and wisdom of the natural world, and that promotes the defence of naturalness, simplicity and spontaneity, often in contrast to the aggressive attitude towards nature by the Western world.

The 'pure attitude' found in many Zen texts and dialogues towards nature has kindled the idea that the teaching of non-self leads to consider everything, animate and inanimate, as a part of a larger self that should be treated with reverence. In this perspective, nature plays a central role, since it becomes a part of the larger self in a unity where distinction and boundaries cease to exist.

In the West, the idea that Buddhism is a fundamentally 'green' and an environmentally friendly religion has been supported by various reasons, among which, in particular, the fact that human beings are not elevated above the rest of the natural world, but are part of it, or the fact that in Buddhism the anthropocentric attitude found in Christianity and its dominative or exploitative attitude towards nature is replaced by respect and co-participation. Another reason lies in the non-instrumental attitude towards natural beings on the part of Sino-Japanese thought, Buddhism, Daoism and Shinto included. The appreciation of nature has a central place in Zen, partly because of its incorporation of Taoist and Shinto ideas on the spiritual significance of the natural world.

In Zen letting the self and its clench fade away implies the overturn

from an individual-centred perspective to a universal one where man is a part of the interrelated net, as the Indra's Net taught in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Kegonkyō* 華厳経) of the Huāyán school 華厳 (in Japanese Kegon school), where all phenomena in the universe are related to each other and the existence of any single phenomenon depends on the participation of all the others in a system of mutual co-dependence. The image of a net composed of jewels, each of which is reflected in all of the other jewels, is a metaphor to illustrate the concepts of emptiness, dependent origination, and interpenetration.

This is, as evident, the *Weltanschauung* of a true ecologist for whom, reaching self-realisation means a return to an uncontaminated, innocent and engaged vision of nature.

Besides, Buddhist environmentalists assert that the mindful awareness of the universality of suffering produces compassionate empathy for all forms of life, particularly for all sentient species. For them, loving-kindness and compassion extend beyond people and animals to include any inanimate form of existence in the natural world. At the root of the equation between Buddhism, especially Zen, and ecology is the common non-dualistic view of the fundamental identity of subject and its surroundings.

> Buddhism views humanity as an integral part of nature, so that when nature is defiled, people ultimately suffer. Negative consequences arise when cultures alienate themselves from nature, when people feel separate from and become aggressive towards natural systems. When we abuse nature we abuse ourselves. (Kabilsingh 1996, 140)

8 Engaged Buddhism

The social and ecological turn of the Sōtō Zen school can be related to a vast movement that is taking place in recent times in the Buddhist environments, called "Engaged Buddhism" now spread all over the world and exerting a strong influence on the modern view of Buddhism as a leading force in present-day society.

"Engaged Buddhism" is a term that came into use in the Buddhist world in the later part of the 20th century. The term was coined by the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist master Thích Nhất Hạnh, inspired by the "Humanistic Buddhism" reform movement in China led by Tàixū 太虛 and Yìnshùn Dǎoshī 印順導師, who advocated the reform and renewal of Chinese Buddhism in terms of a greater engagement of the Dharma teachings and practice in society in order to respond to the challenge posed by modern society. In Sino-Japanese it is translated as *shakai sankaku bukkyō* 社会参画仏教, *nyūse bukkyō* 入世仏教 or *jinkan bukkyō* 人間仏教.

> The term “Engaged Buddhism” refers to this kind of active involvement by Buddhist in society and its problems. Participants in this nascent movement seek to actualize Buddhism’s traditional ideals of wisdom and compassion in today’s world. (Kraft 1996, 65)

In time, it also developed a sensibility towards the ecological and environmental fields where it became engaged in a renewed interpretation of Buddhism and its teachings as a source of inspiration for a return to nature. Criticising the tendencies within Buddhism towards a withdrawn and passive attitude, they gave nature a central position as a source of inspiration for a renewal of the individual on the basis of a communion with it. According to Engaged Buddhism, the belief in an individual substantial self, which is considered to be the source of illusion and suffering in traditional Buddhism, will vanish in the process of expanding the self to include the whole of natural phenomena. The above-mentioned Indra’s Net has become one of the fundamental Buddhist interpretation of reality for the supporters of “Ecological Buddhism” (or “Deep Ecology” based on Buddhist teachings). The Ecological Buddhists see in this Net the principle of ‘interconnectedness’ and mutual dependence between nature and the individual and derives the idea of a necessity of a return to and a melting with nature derives from it (Kraft 1996, 66).

Ecological Buddhism considers such figures as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Aldo Leopold as pioneers of the fusion between the ecological consciousness and Buddhism. The idea of healing the individual and our society is very strongly posed. Mindfulness and responsibility towards nature, the individuals, and at large towards society, is stressed and becomes the centre of the practice of Dharma so as to reach Enlightenment within nature and together with nature.

It is easily understandable that these positions arouse open criticism on the part of traditional Buddhist schools, which dispute the social attention and insist on asserting that Buddhism is for individual salvation as taught by traditional teachings. Of course, also the ecological attitude is considered outside the scope of Buddhism by them. In this modern view, Buddhism is considered primarily as a redeeming teaching neglecting the emphasis on the development of the spiritual and ethical transformation of the individual, as attested in the traditional sources and its history.

In conclusion, it may be argued that the Western approach to Buddhism, with its insistence on pacifism, human rights and ecology gives Buddhism an alternative interpretation with strong social connotations, and is now influencing also the traditional Buddhist schools of Asia such as, for example, the Japanese Sōtō school.

9 Final Remarks

The traditional view of nature in Japanese Buddhism, based on the teachings of the imported Chinese schools, evolved with an original stand in the Kamakura period (1185-1333) with Dōgen who taught that human beings and nature belong to the same Buddha-nature and reach Enlightenment together, and in recent times with the "ecological turn" of the Sōtō school, which suggests responsibility for the natural environment. This last interpretation is certainly due to the influence of the so-called Engaged Buddhism that has gained popularity especially in the USA. At the same time, the attention of the Sōtō school for social problems is a way of putting forward a new role of Buddhism in the modern world. Japanese Buddhism still largely based on tradition has begun to understand the necessity to re-interpret its role in the changed dimension of present society. Perhaps the "ecological turn" of Sōtō school might be interpreted as a modern evolution of the radical view of Dōgen's teaching.

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Rethinking Nature in Japan
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Without Nature
Thinking about the Environment in Tokugawa Japan

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Abstract The modern Japanese *shizen* 自然 was systematically used for the first time to translate the German *Natur* in 1889, on the occasion of a debate between Mori Ōgai and the critic Iwamoto Yoshiharu. Before the 1880s, *shizen* was mostly employed as an adjective or adverb meaning 'in itself' or 'spontaneously', and no other single term had a semantic capacity equivalent to 'nature'. This does not mean that no conceptualisation of the material environment existed in pre-Meiji Japan. On the contrary, a constellation of different terms – such as *tenchi*, 'heaven and earth'; *sansui*, 'mountains and waters'; *shinrabansho*, 'all things in the universe'; *banbutsu*, 'ten thousand things'; *honzō*, 'the fundamental herbs'; *yakusō*, 'medicinal herbs'; *sanbutsu*, 'resources' etc. – expressed different aspects of the natural environment, material reality, natural objects, and the laws that regulated it. This paper sketches a map of these concepts, their different functions and spheres of influence. Then, it argues that the absence of a term analogous to 'nature' should not be perceived as a *lack* of premodern East Asian cultures, but it rather emphasises that it is the Western 'nature', in its various vernacular declinations, that nurtures troubling semantic and ideological excesses. It finally claims that the adoption and success of the modern *shizen* functioned as an important ideological support to Japanese modernisation.

Summary 1 The Fuzziness of 'Nature'. – 2 The Conceptual Constellations of Tokugawa 'Nature'. – 3 The Invention of '*Shizen*'. – 4 The Ideological Nature of 'Nature'.

Keywords Nature. Shizen. Honzogaku. Tokugawa Japan.

> What is familiarly known is not properly known, just for the reason that it is familiar. When engaged in the process of knowing, it is the commonest form of self-deception, and a deception of other people as well, to assume something to be familiar, and give assent to it on that very account.
>
> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*

In 1889 Mori Ōgai 森鴎外 (1862-1922), physician, author and public intellectual, engaged in a controversy over the nature of literature with the critic and pedagogue Iwamoto Yoshiharu 巌本善治 (1863-1942) in the pages of the literary journals *Kokumin no tomo* 国民の友 and *Jogaku zasshi* 女学雑誌. The dispute, one of the many that punctuated the Meiji period, opposed Iwamoto's view according to which "the best literature is what describes nature the way it is" to Mori's belief that "Art is that which is created from

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the ideal" and "not that which copies the natural and the real" (Yanabu 1977, 9). Art was, for Mori, "something that can produce beauty by burning out the dust attached to nature in the fire of the idea" (11). The debate had a large resonance in the intellectual world of modernising Japan and contributed to the invention and institutionalisation of a modern – and most importantly, national – Japanese literature (Ueda 2007; Usui 1975). At the same time, the debate consolidated the word *shizen* 自然 as the modern Japan equivalent to the German *Natur* once and for all. Mori put it quite clearly in the piece he published on issue no. 50 (May 1889) of *Kokumin no tomo*: "By *shizen* I mean *Natur*" (Yoshida, Asai 1971, 69-75).

From then on, *shizen* as 'nature' became one of the most important concepts in Japanese philosophical texts and one of the fundamental ideas behind many political, ideological, aesthetic and philosophical stances, as Julia Thomas has persuasively demonstrated (Thomas 2001). Today, *shizen* is commonly used in Japanese as an equivalent of the English 'nature' and functions as key heuristic term in the historiography of Japanese premodern conceptualisation of the material environment.[1] But before the 1880s there was no single term that expressed the meanings of 'nature'. This does not mean that in premodern Japan there was no conceptualisation of material reality and of the metabolic relation that human societies had with it. Quite the contrary, in fact: in the Tokugawa period, Japanese scholars had developed not only quite sophisticated metaphysical views, but also protocols of observation, description, understanding, and systematisation of natural knowledge (Marcon 2015).

My claim – not so surprisingly, after all – is that the greatest challenge for us is not to understand the ways in which the material environment was conceptualised in the Tokugawa period, but rather avoid reducing them to a universally shared notion of 'nature'.[2] 'Nature' is indeed a capacious word and its semantic and, as I will claim, ideological power is directly proportional to the complexity and contradictoriness of its meanings. Raymond Williams famously defined 'nature' as "perhaps the most complex word in the language" (Williams 1984, 219).[3] Arthur O. Lovejoy

1 See, for example, the recent collection of essays on "nature and artifice" (Karube 2013), which for the most part reduces the complex conceptual constellations of premodern Japan to the single modern *shizen*.

2 This essay shares therefore the relativization of Western notions of 'nature' of anthropologists and theorists like Philippe Descola, Eduardo Kohn and de Castro, among others. In their work, they also relativize the universalist claims of Western anthropologists and philosophers and propose a "perspectival multinaturalism" that aims to retrieve the various conceptualisations of human metabolic relations with the environment in different sociohistorical contexts. See Descola 2013, Kohn 2013, and De Castro 2004.

3 Every time 'nature' is written between quote marks is to be taken to mean the conception, idea, or trope of nature, the focus being in the word as signifier itself rather than in its signified, i.e. what it refers to.

equated the development of its meanings to the entire history of Western thought (Lovejoy 1997, 447-56). Its semantic capacity is staggering: I can call 'nature' the environment that surrounds me, the incontrollable impulses inside me, the laws that sustain physical reality, all that exists in a metaphysical sense, the inner essence of things, Being, God, and all the above at the same time.

No term with a semantic value equivalent to 'nature' developed in pre-nineteenth century China, Korea and Japan. Before the modern age, no single term had the capacity to signify, like the Italian *natura* and its European cognates, the physical universe as an ordered, self-sustaining totality of things, phenomena and laws. Instead, a constellation of terms, which were not mutually exchangeable, denoted various aspects of the material world. Unlike 'nature', the semantic sphere of terms denoting the essence or the inner characteristics of things had no connections with terms referring to the material environment. Also, the cluster of words referring to notions similar to the English 'human nature' had no semantic relation of causality or affinity with those referring to material reality or totality. Finally, the modern *ziran*/*shizen* 自然 was used in pre-nineteenth century East Asia mainly as an adverb or adjective meaning 'in itself', 'autonomously', 'spontaneously', 'on one's own accord' etc., with only two exceptions.[4]

The issues at stake are clear enough. Is it possible for us to fully understand the world-views of a culture that lacked a term like 'nature', expressing, that is, one of the most fundamental conceptions of reality not only in the European cultural tradition, but in modern East Asia as well – since the modern Chinese *ziran* and the modern Japanese *shizen* developed in the late nineteenth century as translations of the modern European 'nature' in its various senses and has been so used thus far? My answer is yes, but on condition that we get rid of the notion of 'nature' altogether. Does the

4 The first is the *Haruma wage* 厳本善治, a Dutch-Japanese dictionary compiled in 1796 by Inamura Sanpaku (1759-1811) with the collaboration of Udagawa Genzui 厳本善治 (1756-98) and Okada Hosetsu 厳本善治 and on the basis of the second edition of the Dutch-French dictionary by François Halma (1653-1722), *Nieuw Woordenboek der Nederduitsche en Freansche Taalen. Dictionnaire Nouveau Flamand & François*, printed in Amsterdam in 1722. The three translators were all disciples of the *rangaku* scholar and physician Ōtsuki Gentaku 厳本善治 (1757-1827), who was an active participant in *honzōgaku* intellectual circles. The *Haruma wage* is worth mentioning because, contrary to all other dictionaries compiled during the Tokugawa period, it was the only one that translated the Dutch *Natuur* as *shizen*. However, when in 1858 Katsurakawa Hoshū 厳本善治's (1751-1809) new edition of *Haruma wage* was finally printed with the title of *Waran jii* 和蘭字彙, the entry *Natuur* disappeared. The second exception is the works of rural thinker Andō Shōeki 和蘭字彙, whose manuscript *Shizen shin'eidō* 和蘭字彙 treated *shizen* as a fundamental concept. Unfortunately, he remained largely unknown until 1899, when his manuscripts were discovered by Kanō Kōkichi 和蘭字彙 (1865-1942). Shōeki's contribution in the philosophical debate of the Tokugawa period was virtually irrelevant. See Yoshinaka 1992 and Ishiwata 2007.

term 'nature' convey such a universal idea as to justify the assumption that the sum of the Tokugawa expressions pointed to nothing other than the same human experience of reality – justifying therefore their unqualified translation with 'nature'? I do not think so. As I will argue, there is nothing *natural* in our conceptions of 'nature'. Or, as Graham Harman put it, "nature is not natural and can never be naturalized. […] *Nature is unnatural*, if the world 'nature' is supposed to describe the status of extant slabs of inert matter" (Harman 2005, 251; see also Harman 2011). Besides, if we subsume under the semantic umbrella of the modern English 'nature' or the modern *ziren*/*shizen* the historically specific understanding of the relationship between human beings and the environment that the constellation of pre-modern Japanese terms expressed, do we not risk imposing to large chunks of the ideas and practices that defined that society meanings that are alien to it?[5]

1 The Fuzziness of 'Nature'

'What is nature?' is a question that seems impossible to answer. The challenge to fathom, even in the most general and preliminary sense, to what exactly the *what* of the question refers to – a thing? A process? A logic? A field? A concept? A meta-concept? A trope? A condition? Being itself? – is daunting. 'Nature' is one of the most important concepts in the intellectual history of the Western world. And yet, if we were to look at its semantic palimpsest in one glimpse, we would discover it cramming with contradictions. When we talk about 'nature' we conjure up something that is at the same time concrete and abstract, material and conceptual, physical and metaphysical. To the modern person, 'nature' can evoke breathtaking landscapes, the thick of a rainforest, or awe-inspiring natural phenomena.[6] And yet, it stands for those landscapes, particular, material, and tangible, also as a whole, as a totality abstracted from their concrete appearance. 'Nature' encompasses the objects that populate those landscapes as well as the invisible forces that move them. 'Nature' designates the essence of things, the immutable *quid* that makes things what they are, and contains connotations of eternity, changelessness and a-historicity. And, yet, it

5 My focus here is on early modern Japan, but I think the argument stands as well for all those cultural spheres that did not develop as complex a concept as 'nature' – if it is a concept at all. See, for example, how Pierre Hadot (2008) builds an argument with allegedly universalistic claims out of a limited number of European texts and myths. De Castro, Kohn, Descola, and Bruno Latour also criticise similar universalizations of 'nature' and propose instead a more complex and diverse understanding of natural 'ontologies' (cfr. Latour 2013).

6 See, e.g., the photographs in the Wikipedia entry for 'nature' URL `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature` (2016-10-18).

changes: nature evolves, unremittingly producing and extinguishing populations, species, and ecosystems. It is alien and familiar at the same time, a perfect example of that which Sigmund Freud called *das Unheimliche*, "the uncanny" (Freud 2003, 121). 'Nature' loves to hide its secrets – as in Heraclitus' famous aphorism[7] – but it is also a perfectly intelligible "book", "written in mathematical language, and the letters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without which means it is humanly impossible to comprehend a single word".[8] Nature is the mysterious Goddess Isis, Spinoza's God, and benign Mother, but it is also "red in tooth and claw".[9] It is a harmonious, homopoietic and self-healing organism,[10] *and* a field of conflicting and destructive forces. It is both within and without us. It is particular: it defines what kind of human beings we are as individuals, with our peculiar attitudes, vices and virtues; but it is also universal, defining what it means to be a human being, endowed with inalienable rights. Human beings, for some philosophical traditions, are an integral part of nature,[11] while other thinkers – from Aristotle to Heidegger via, needless to say, René Descartes – have struggled to demonstrate our substantial distinction and separateness from it. The state of nature is for human beings at the same time a nightmarish condition of continuous warfare (Hobbes) and a blissful brotherhood of human beings with the surrounding environment (Rousseau). The list of the oxymora of 'nature' can be even longer. They are the symptom of the complex history of this term, passing through successive translations – from the Greek φύσις to the Latin *natura*,[12] and then to the Indo-European vernacular variations – and successive reconfigurations in different philosophical schools, cultural practices, religious traditions and socioeconomic processes. Meanings and connotations added up rather than erasing each other, thus contributing to the semantic stratification of 'nature' into a palimpsest that is difficult to break apart. Such is the vertiginous semantic fuzziness of 'nature'.

7 Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ – *Phýsis krýptesthai philei* – is Fragmentum B 123 in *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. H. Diels, Berlin 1903.

8 Galileo Galilei, *Il Saggiatore*, quoted in Drake 1960, 183-4.

9 Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, Canto 56 (1850): "Who trusted God was love indeed/And love Creation's final law/Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw/With ravine, shriek'd against his creed".

10 As in James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, first mentioned in Lovelock, Giffin 1969.

11 As in Baruch Spinoza's *deus sive natura*. See Sharp 2011.

12 See French 1994, Lloyd 1992; Scott 2002, 3-81; and Bondí, La Vergata 2014, 13-58.

2 The Conceptual Constellations of Tokugawa 'Nature'

In Tokugawa Japan a rich constellation of terms was used to express different aspect of the material environment. Some of them cut through different disciplines, others were field-specific. A large degree of heterogeneity can be detected in the terminology that referred to the material environment, even though the specific uses of each term differed in the various schools of thought. They may be grouped in four main categories: terms that referred to the material reality as a field or container; terms that referred to small-scale, circumscribed ecosystems or territories; terms that referred to the objects that this space contained; and locutions that referred to a principle of order, logic, or coherence inside this space.[13]

Tiandi/*tenchi* 天地 – sometimes read also as *ametsuchi* – was probably the most conventional term. Usually translated as 'heaven and earth', *tenchi* referred to what contained everything existing in the universe. Itō Jinsai defined it in *Gomō jigi* 和蘭字彙 as a "box made of six panel", which "as soon as it is closed the generative principle [*ki* 気] fills it up and eventually produced mold"(Itō 1971, 116). The *Yi jing* 易經 (end of the second millennium BCE) introduced another term that was almost a synonym of *tiandi*/*tenchi*: *gankun*/*kenkon* 乾坤. Its use was in both China and Japan limited to texts specialised in hemerology and divination. In Daoist texts like the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, but also in the Confucian *Xunzi* 荀子 (3rd century BCE) and the syncretic *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (2nd century BCE), there appeared a further term, *yuzhou*/*uchū* 宇宙, which indicated infinity or vastness in space and time. From a Buddhist context came *shijie*/*sekai* 世界. Today *sekai* is used to translate the English 'world' in both physical and social senses, but in Buddhist texts it rendered the Sanskrit *loka-dhātu*, which denoted the world conceived of as the emanation of a Buddha.

Another group of terms referred to the material world, but rather than in an abstract sense of 'container' like *tenchi*, *kenkon* and *uchū*, they were restricted and limited in scope and range. So, *fengtu*/*fūdo* 風土 appeared quite often in Chinese and Japanese texts, especially in gazetteers and records of local histories, rituals, myths and events. It was used since the earliest time to describe a land or a territory, including its geographic features, its climate, its flora and fauna, the customs of the people inhabiting those regions, etc.[14] *Shuishang*/*suijō* 水上, 'waters and lands', enjoyed large popularity in the Tokugawa period and was often used to refer to the geography of a specific territory. Authors as diverse as the eclectic

13 On the semantic of "nature" in premodern Japan, see Yanabu 1977 and Terao 2002.

14 Modern Japanese thinker Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 reconceptualised *fūdo* in terms of geographic or climatological determinism, with often quite nationalistic and conservative nuances, whereby the cultural essence of a nation derived from its embedment in a particular climate and soil. Cfr. Watsuji 1961; Harootunian 2001, 202-92.

Confucian thinker Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619-1691), the physician Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林 (1637-1703), the geographer Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 (1648-1724), the Confucian scholars Matsumiya Kanzan 松宮観山 (1686-1780), and the agriculturalist and Buddhist monk Shaku Jōin 釋乘因 (1730-1804) used the terms to refer to the material features of a territory. In poetic compositions as well as in pictorial arts, terms like *shanhe*/*sanka* 山河 and *shanshui*/*sansui* 山水 were often employed to refer to the natural landscape of a territory. Around 756, Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) famously sang, while prisoner in Changan: "the country is destroyed, but mountains and rivers are still here; in the city in springtime, grasses and trees grow vigorously". In this as in many other poems, *sanka* referred to the landscape of a particular territory and the plants and animals that inhabited it: unlike *tenchi*, it included natural objects, but like *suijō* and *fudō* it tended to be locally circumscribed. Even when used in expressionistic and evocative senses, it lacked the more abstract reach of *uchū* and *tenchi*. The case of *sansui* is quite similar and it is often rendered with the English 'landscape', as it was usually adopted in contexts relating to painting (as in *sansuiga* 山水画) or gardening (as in *karesansui* 枯山水). *Sanka*, *sansui* and the variant *shanchuan*/*sansen* 山川 often appeared in association with *caomu*/*sōmoku* 草木 to reinforce the meaning of a particular landscape.

Of the above terms, however, none had a semantic universe as wide and all-encompassing as the English 'nature', nor was any of them used as consistently. Also, they tended not to include the myriads of things and phenomena – natural, supernatural, and artificial – that populated the universe. A whole set of terms had that function: *banbutsu* 万物, *banji* 万事, *ban'yū* 万有, *banshō* 万象, *shobutsu* 諸物, and others were all terms that, with only slight variations, represented the "myriads of things" that *tenchi* contained. The respective usages differed: *banbutsu*, *banshō* and *ban'yū* were widely used to refer to any kind of object existing, while *banji* and *banshō*, although like the previous ones they appeared in texts of different genres, tended to include also natural events and phenomena.

Interestingly, in the Tokugawa period scholars specialising in the study of plants and animals (*honzōgaku* 本草学) – for itself or for various practical applications (pharmacology, lexicography, agronomy, economics, aesthetics, etc.) – often conceptualised their objects of research in terms of their social function. *Honzōgaku* scholars, without a term encompassing both 'nature' and the various objects it contained, generically conceptualised the minerals, plants and animals that constituted the objects of their research in terms of the social function that their intellectual and manual labour performed. In other words, the generic names of rocks, plants and animals depended on their instrumental utility. Plants and animals for physicians, apothecaries and orthodox *honzōgaku* scholars were therefore *honzō* or *yakusō* 薬草, 'medicinal herbs'. For encyclopedists and lexicographers they were *meibutsu* 名物, 'names of things'. For agronomists and naturalists

engaged in survey projects they were *sanbutsu* 産物, 'products'. Often, *honzōgaku* scholars used the clumsy *sōmokukinjūchūgyokingyokudoseki* 草木禽獣蟲魚金玉石, 'herbs-trees-birds-beasts-insects-fish-metals-jewels-grounds-stones'. And when plants and animals became the focus of popular entertainments and spectacles, they could be referred to as *misemono* 見せ物, 'stuff for exhibitions and sideshows', or *sukimono* 好き物, 'curiosities'.

From this long list of words, we observe that, on the one hand, *tenchi*, *uchū*, *kenkon* and *sekai* were *metaphorical* terms that denoted the field or, more precisely, the spatio-temporal domain that contained, without comprising, particular entities and families of entities such as rocks, minerals, mountains, rivers, oceans, lakes, herbs, plants, trees, insects, birds, beasts, human beings and their artefacts. On the other, *banbutsu*, *banshō*, *chōjūsōmoku* 鳥獣草木, *meibutsu*, *yakusō*, *honzō*, *sanbutsu*, etc. were essentially 'list terms', which *metonymically* stood for the whole set of objects that their names grouped in collections: some consists of general, all-encompassing sets, such as *banbutsu* and *banshō*, which grouped all natural (and often man-made) objects and phenomena; others were smaller, more limited sets, such as *yakusō*, *honzō*, *sanbutsu*, etc., which varied in range and scope in accordance with the epistemological or practical needs of the utterer. In between the two, *suijō*, *fūdo*, *fūsui* 風水, *sansui*, etc. *synecdochically* zoomed in and focused on a specific and circumscribed territory, which was real or imaginary, actual (as in *shinkeizu* 真景図 and topographically specific 'views' like in *meishozue* 名所図絵 albums or *ukiyoe* 浮世絵 prints of famous spots) or mythico-religious (e.g. Lushan 廬山 or Tiantaishan 天台山 as *topoi* of many landscape paintings).

Finally, beside these groups of terms, which stood for the container and the contained, we find locutions and expressions describing the metaphysical relations regulating the myriads of things contained between heaven and earth. For instance, in Zhu Xi's metaphysical speculations, the locution *tiandi ziran zhi li*/*tenchi shizen no ri* 天地自然之理 can be found to express a logic or coherence believed to be immanent in the space included between *ten* 天 and *chi* 地 and that determined the generation, destruction, and behaviour of the 'myriads of things' (*banbutsu* 万物), human beings included. At the same time metaphysical, epistemological, and ethico-political, Zhu Xi 朱熹's system developed as an elaboration of the philosophical speculations of Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-73), Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-85) and his younger brother Yi 程頤 (1033-1107). It conceived of inert matter ('the supreme ultimate', *taiji*/*taikyoku* 対極) as put in motion by two forces or principles it contained – one energetic, *qi*/*ki* 気, the other logical, *li*/*ri* 理 –,which caused matter to separate first into a series of binary relations – *yin* and *yang* – and then into the 'five phases or agents' – *wuxing*/*gogyō* 五行 – which in turn created, by successive permutations, the 'myriads of things'.

3 The Invention of '*Shizen*'

Subtle differences distinguished these terms from one another, together with their usage in Tokugawa texts of various genres – from philosophy and aesthetics, to literary, artistic and pop-cultural commodities, proto-scientific treatises, agronomy manuals, gastronomical guidebooks and political manifestos. On the one hand, all of them could – and indeed often are – translated with the English 'nature': as a matter of fact, that was soon put into practice by Japanese scholars themselves since the late Meiji period. Mori Ōgai understood and encouraged the translation of many of those very terms with *shizen*; Shirai Mitsutarō 白井光太郎, an early twentieth-century biologist and pioneer historian of science, substituted all these terms appearing in *honzōgaku* manuals with *shizen*. Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, during a conference in the seventies, argued that many of the early modern terms introduced before – he mentioned *tendō* 天道, *ten'hō* 天法, *tenchi*, *banbutsu*, and others – were to be understood as expressions of a universal *shizen*, as "everything in the universe grows in *shizen*". On the other hand, this operation betrayed and obfuscated the meanings and functions that these terms had and the world-views that they expressed. Modern *shizen*, like 'nature', follows a logic of binary relations that is absent from the constellations of terms used in the Tokugawa period: container-terms like *tenchi*, circumscribing terms like *suijō* or *fudo*, collective terms for natural objects like *banbutsu*, or expressions of forces like *shizen no ri* or *ki* were all-encompassing categories (or, in mathematical terms, sets): they were all-inclusive, creating a series of macro-micro cosmic relations. They did not, in other words, exclude nor did they neatly separate the human sphere, or the realm of ideas, or even the realm of supernatural beings (from monsters and ghosts to *bodhisattvas*) from matter, from the material, from the environment. Rather, they portrayed a universe where everything played by the same rules. Contrary to this inclusiveness, 'nature' (and the modern *shizen*) has operated throughout its long history following a logic of binary relations. 'Nature' often appears in dialectical relations like 'nature' vs 'nurture', 'nature' vs 'culture', 'natural' vs 'artificial', 'nature' vs 'history', 'nature' vs 'convention', and so on. These relations separate a realm (of things, processes, forces, images, concepts, etc.) that are variously thought of as self-sufficient and self-regulating from another that is the province of human beings, and therefore transient, mundane, contractual, subjective, and so on.

It is important to emphasise this element because otherwise we risk missing the transformative social and intellectual impact that a field like *honzōgaku*, for example, had in the early modern period. *Honzōgaku* is the Japanese reading of the Chinese *bencaoxue*, which designated a field of study usually translated as 'materia medica' or 'pharmacology'. It developed in China as a subfield of medical studies devoted to the pharmaco-

logical properties of minerals, herbs, and animals.[15] The term *bencaoxue*/*honzōgaku* probably dates back to the first century BCE, with a literal meaning of the 'study' of the 'fundamental herbs' (*honzō* 本草) that the mythical emperor Shennong 神農 was said to have touched with his tongue, thus imbuing them with pharmacological properties. Chinese *honzōgaku* manuals circulated since earliest times in Japan among court physicians and Buddhist monks, but it was only in the Tokugawa period that such manuals acquired a wider readership, especially after the introduction in the early 1600s of the single most important encyclopedia of *materia medica*, Li Shizhen 李時珍's *Bencao gangmu*, or *Honzō kōmoku* 本草綱目 in Japanese, which may be translated as "Systematic Materia Medica", published in Nanjing in 1596 (Nappi 2009; Métailié 1988; Qian 1984; Lu 1966).

Honzōgaku scholars tended to examine plants and animals as intellectual commodities in isolation from their ecosystems, to be catalogued as concrete samples of abstract species in encyclopedias, atlases, monographs and collections. These scholars collected, observed, bred, exchanged, analysed, compared, depicted, described, fantasised on and classified the most varied assortments of insects and fish, herbs and mushrooms, trees and flowers, following either theoretical or practical protocols in both solitary and collegial enterprises and for differing purposes. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, a growing number of naturalists started to invade pristine and uncharted forests, mountains and ravines to make complete inventories of the vegetal and animal species they contained. To them, the natural environment ceased to be an element of complex metaphysical apparatuses and was increasingly conceived of as a reservoir of a multitude of objects – 'myriads of things' (*banbutsu* 万物) – to be studied, catalogued and manipulated for economic, aesthetic or entertainment purposes. As a result, these social practices – intellectual, artistic, political, economic, but more often a mixture of them all – secularised nature into a multiplicity of 'objects' that could be grasped, manipulated, owned and exchanged through protocols of observational, descriptive, representational and reproductive techniques. Moreover, this process of reification of nature – the tendency of conceptual knowledge to objectify what it seeks to describe – was coeval with and connected to deep structural transformations in the mode of production that occurred during the early modern period of Japanese history: the commodification of agriculture, the monetization of society and the development of market-oriented mechanisms of commodity exchange. The role of scholars in this process of reification and disenchantment of the natural sphere was central. A revealing example is the work of Satō Nobuhiro 佐藤信淵, an eclectic scholar who played a central role in developing the economic reforms

15 The literature on Chinese *bencao* tradition is vast. For a survey, see Marcon 2015. See also Needham, Lu 1986; Unshuld 1986, 2010; Elman 2005, 2006; Barnes 2005; Hsu 2001; Ishida 1992; Okanishi 1977; Yamada 1989.

that transformed the Satsuma domain in one of the wealthiest and strongest in the early decades of the nineteenth century (Marcon 2014). Nobuhiro conceptualised and developed a system whereby political élites, economic agents, agronomists and *honzōgaku* scholars were all engaged in a political economy that aimed at squeezing the natural environment for more and more resources (sugarcanes, in particular) to be produced and commercialised. In a language similar to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Physiocrats and Cornucopianists, Nobuhiro conceived of nature as endlessly bountiful, and yet requiring human intervention to ensure its fecundity: Nobuhiro, in short, celebrated the natural world's submission to human domination, establishing the paradigm of a political economy that became the model for all of Japan after the Restoration of 1868, so that nature and the scientists who studied it served the purpose of capital accumulation.

4 The Ideological Nature of 'Nature'

It would be an ideological mistake to follow modern Japanese scholars like Mori Ōgai or Nishi Amane 西周 and point out a deficiency of Tokugawa thinkers for not having developed a concept like 'nature'. As a matter of fact, what I want to emphasise is not the *lack* of a term equivalent to 'nature' in traditional East Asia, but rather its semantic and ideological *excesses*. 'Nature', while referring to the material, *physical* environment, also stands, often without us acknowledging it, for the *metaphysical* assumptions that have been associated to it in the course of its history and are now an organic part of its semantic palimpsest. When we say that something is 'natural', in other words, we conceive of it as existing independently from human will; or as standing for what is normal, what cannot be otherwise than what it appears to be; saying that something (an event, an object) is natural is attributing a sense of originality and authenticity to it. In early modern Japan, the terms expressing these connotations of 'nature' did not have any semantic affinity with those that referred to the material environment and its laws. The signifier 'nature' is overloaded with meanings that surreptitiously summon each other up: physical, metaphysical, aesthetic, religious, cognitive, economic, ethical and political. These meanings are not eternal or universal, but historically situated and socially conditioned. Very often, appeals to 'nature' have ideological overtones. It suffices to think, for example, of the idea of nature as an organic, self-regulating and homopoietic totality so common in popular culture and political discourse, from 'deep ecology' environmentalists to New Age pundits.[16]

16 See, for example, the "deep ecology" manifesto, in Devall, Sessions 1985. A harsh critique that is however completely enmeshed with it is Bookchin 1990.

The ideological function of 'nature' in modern discourses are better understood if we conceived of the word 'nature' and the complex conceptual multiplicity that stands behind it as if they worked as a sort of metaphor. Clearly, 'nature' cannot literally be a metaphor; unless we consider it in association with what 'nature' is taken to signify: physical reality, its order, its objects, the essential properties of things, and so on. In that case, when we talk about 'nature' we can refer to different things in different contexts: for instance, the landscape in front of my eyes *and*, by calling it nature, the property I attribute to it of being an instance of physical reality in general, or the essential character of reality itself, in contrast to, for example, a cityscape or a metropolitan area; my collection of shellfish *and* my understanding of their being part of a totality of objects that I call 'natural' insofar as they are not manufactured by other human beings; the hypothesis that the regularities I observe in the results of an experiment I have been performing are part of the inner structure of nature *qua* physical reality; this urge I have to rush to the bathroom *and* the realisation that this bodily feeling, i.e. nature's call (and *this* is properly a metaphor), is part of my biological being; or the feelings of rebellion I nourish because I am unjustly coerced into the will of more powerful human beings in contrast to inalienable rights I believe to be essential *natural* property of me as human being; or, vice versa, the ideological legitimation of a certain social order or of a certain system of economic production and exchange through the ideological belief that it is 'natural' – in the sense of instinctual, genetically embedded – in human beings as social animals. In all these examples, 'nature' stands for a landscape, shellfish (*qua* natural objects), a law of physics, the feeling of a need to go to the toilet, human rights, capitalism, at the same time that it is distinct from them but to them associated as a 'vehicle' that attributes to them properties and qualities that emphasise their autonomy from human volition, construction, or craftsmanship, their constancy and a-historicity, their externality from our mind, and so on. 'Nature' projects those meanings and connotations in a very general way.

To conclude, it seems to me that today's predicament for us living in the warming-up world of the Anthropocene is that the very idea of 'nature' often prevents the development of a deeper understanding of human relationship with the material environment.[17] In order to appropriate the political dimension of the metabolic relation of humans with the environment – to "democratize" nature, in Bruno Latour's jargon (Latour 2004) – we must then emancipate ourselves from the mystifying power of 'nature', as I believe, with Adorno, that "people are themselves dominated

17 Ingold (2000) proposes one of the most complex treatment of the metabolic relations between humans and their environment.

by nature: by that hollow and questionable concept of nature".[18] In that sense, retrieving the complex constellations of concepts and terms of a non-Western tradition like the one of Tokugawa Japan – certainly not with the purpose of proposing a return to a more 'authentic' way of relating with the environment – might have the unintended function of emancipating us from beliefs and practices that have been sustaining and legitimating "an enlightened world that radiates disaster triumphant" (Horkheimer, Adorno 1989, 3). In short, to paraphrase Robespierre, it seems that today 'nature' must die so that the environment can live.[19]

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18 Adorno, Theodor. "Musikpädagogische Musik: Brief an Ernst Krenek". *Adorno und Krenek: Briefwechsel*, 219. English translation in Buck-Morss 1977, 228.

19 Clearly, this is a paraphrase of Maximilien Robespierre's famous passage in the speech of 3 December 1792: "*Louis doit mourir parce qu'il faut que la patrie vive*". See Stolz 2014.

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Rethinking Nature in Japan
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On the Road of the Winds
Folk Stories, Meteorological Knowledge and Nautical Enskilment in Japanese Seafaring Tradition

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Abstract Starting from a series of historical contexts concerning Japanese seafaring tradition, this paper proposes an anthropological analysis on the practices of sailing navigation, focusing on the recursive interaction of traditional meteorological knowledge, nautical material culture and navigational knowledge that are historically grounded in the contexts of practice.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Sailing a Serious Ocean. – 3 Made for the Winds: the *Utase* Boats. – 4 Benevolent Gods and Nautical Virtuosity. – 5 Conclusions.

Keywords Japan. History of Sailing Navigation. Enskilment. Traditional Meteorological Knowledge. Winds. Anthropology of Knowledge.

1 Introduction[1]

Throughout history of navigation, wind universally testifies to an enduring continuity with the qualities of atmospheric phenomenology and production of enskilled knowledge. This is particularly relevant when considering wind in the historical context of Japanese nautical culture, which exhibited a highly nuanced sophistication concerning nautical meteorology due to the characteristic monsoonal environment of the archipelago. The cultural importance of the nautical knowledge – namely its integration in what could be identified nowadays as 'cultural heritage' – has a long history that could be read in the diachronical evolution of the abilities of Japanese navigators. Fishermen, boatmen, merchants and sailors have developed over the centuries complex cultural practices to recognise all the possible meteorological signals in order to avoid passage of frontal systems, hur-

1 I would like to thank the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) for its support the research held in Japan, (15 October 2014-15 October 2015), which constitutes part of this paper. In particular, I would also like to thank the Director Dr. Sudo Ken'ichi, Professor Taku Iida, and Professor Kazunobu Ikea.

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ricanes, strong winds, rough sea, high waves and swell, among others, which belong to a long-established tradition related to the need for an 'easy' understanding of the local maritime environment.

This heterogeneous body of knowledge and practical experiences historically produced a 'traditional meteorological knowledge',[2] which could offer, still nowadays (Nomura 1995; Bulian 2015), a broad interpretative framework on the 'folk epistemology' of local weather. Theorised or experienced, traditional meteorological knowledge is an example of interplay between different factors such as, language, culture, environment and society (Ellen 2016) and appears to be generally related to taxonomic thinking, classifications, bodily practices, rituals, ceremonies and other "summations of what people know" (Ellen 2016, 291). As a result, traditional meteorological knowledge could be interpreted as a sophisticated model of cognitive engagement with the physical environment, which is "actually remarkably fluid, a consequence of a practical and experimental engagement with everyday life" (291). Again, traditional meteorological knowledge gives also meaning to the observation of the environment, becoming a sort of 'cultural support' (Atran, Medin 2008; also quoted in Ellen 2016, 306), which has "enjoined different communities to develop diverse sub-cultures of the atmosphere" (Jankovic, Barboza 2009, 14). In this context, traditional meteorological knowledge in seafaring tradition could ideally offer also some critical looks at the modalities of conceptualising the notion of nature (*shizen* 自然) in Japan (Bruun, Kalland 1995).

To provide a synthetic introductory perspective on these issues, the article focuses on a historical range of the different ways of producing 'meteorological knowledge' related to the practices of sailing navigation, maritime religion and nautical technology that were culturally integrated and practice-oriented. After a brief introduction of the historical role of the meteorological winds in Japanese seafaring tradition (section 2), using a diachronic perspective, this paper examines some examples taken from the 'folk history' of Japanese seafaring culture from Meiji (1852–1912) to Shōwa (1926–1945) periods and mainly located in Ise Bay. Section 3 focuses on nautical technology of the beam trawl boat (*utase bune* うたせ船), in order to give an example of the relationship between the local winds, nautical skills, and material culture of local seafaring tradition. In section 4, two secondary sources are briefly discussed in order to historically

2 This topic is generally related to traditional ecological knowledge or, more specifically, to the so-called 'ethno-meteorology'. According to the general definition of ethno-science, 'ethno-meteorology' is attributable to some recurring themes of ethno-science and anthropology, focusing on the so called "traditional knowledge", which provides a local, qualitative scale of analysis for questions about weather patterns, animal migrations and adaptation strategies (see Ellen, Harris, Bicker 2000). Traditional knowledge is explained as the knowledge of a group or a community from a particular area, based on their environmental understanding, interaction with nature and experiences within their area.

contextualise the navigational strategies and the role of meteorological knowledge in regionalized environments.[3] The article firstly examines the nautical votive offerings (*funa ema* 船絵馬), documents of a disappeared religious tradition that described nautical folk stories of shipwrecks and critical experiences at sea, narrated and illustrated in the vernacular texts or petitions. Secondly, the article focuses on a logbook written by a skipper of an *utase bune*, which could be considered as a sort of 'nautical biography' that offers valuable information on events related to past experiences of wayfinding at sea. Finally, bearing a close relationship to what has been discussed in the previous sections, the paper briefly summarises a holistic perspective on the recursive interaction of traditional meteorological knowledge, nautical material culture and sailing navigational knowledge that are historically grounded in the contexts of practice.

2 Sailing a Serious Ocean

The Japanese archipelago is generally influenced by the western boundary currents in the wind-driven, subtropical and subarctic circulations of the North Pacific Ocean (Karan 2005, 27): the Kuroshio Current (Black Current) that carries warm tropical waters northward from the North Equatorial Current to the east coast of Japan, and the cold Oyashio Current (Parent Current or Okhotsk Current), which flows southward along the northern Pacific, cooling coastal areas. Another major climate factor is the wind regime influenced by monsoonal air masses that dominates the weather conditions through southeastern Asia. During winter, winds in Japan blow prevailingly from northwest, having originated in Siberia; in summer, winds blow from southwest, having originated over tropical seas. The winter and summer monsoons and their air masses are not continuous air streams, but there are several interruptions in the seaward flow of polar continental air during winter and the landward flow of tropical maritime air during summer.[4]

3 Both episodes are documented in a local magazine about the history of Hamaoka-chō, Shizuoka-ken (now Omaezaki-shi; Hamaoka-chō Educational Committee 2004, 75-166). Hamaoka-chō is located at the west side from Omaezaki, which is the east end of Sea of Enshu, and covers the area from the south end of Makinohara Plateau to the coastal plain. This is the coastal area of Sea of Enshu where severe winter wind blows from west and west-north (Hamaoka-chō Educational Committee 2004).

4 According to Yoshino and Kai (1977) the seasonal division is based on the occurrence frequency of pressure patterns over East Asia. The fourteen seasons are distinguished in the following way: early spring (March 1-March 17), spring (March 18-May 4), late spring (May 5-May 21), early summer (May 22-June 10), *Baiu* (June 11-July 16), summer (July 17-August 20), late summer (August 8-August 20), early autumn (August 21-September 11), Akisame (autumnal rain) (September 12-October 9), autumn (October 10-November 3), late

These climatic factors are very important, since the history of Japanese nautical culture had been shaped by frequent non-periodic weather changes during the winter and the summer monsoons (Yoshio 2010). Seasonal winds and ocean currents played a strategic role in the major interchanges in the history of East Asian seas: ships for Kentoshi (Japanese missions to Tang dynasty, 659–838) reached China using different sea routes when northern winds or weak southern winds prevailed (Ueda 1974; Yoshio 2010). Skilled skippers used these routes for Kenmishi (Japanese missions to China during the Ming dynasty 1368–1644), taking advantage of the strong spring winds to reach China and autumn winds to come back to Japan (Sekiguchi 2000). Trading ships between Japan and Sung dynasty (960–1279) sailed to Chinese coasts when prevailing winds blew from northwest or northeast (Kitami 1973), while Mongolian nautical expeditions against Japan were destroyed by adverse southwest winds in 1274, and by 'divine winds' (*kamikaze* 神風, to refer the autumn wind typhoons) in 1281.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, Japanese ships were active in Asian seas, often in the role of *wakō* 倭寇 'pirates' that plundered the coast of the Chinese Empire (Von Verschuer, Lee Hunter 2006). According to Ishihara (1964) the incursions of Japanese pirates in China were directly related to the seasonal winds: from March to May, when southeastern and eastern winds were weak, *wakō* raided Jiangsu and Zhejiang (China), and from November to February, when northeasterly winds blew in these regions, their incursions were directed into Fujian and Guangong (see also Yoshio 2010, 68). The nautical experiences of generations of *wakō* were described in many historical accounts, which offered reliable knowledge of the local wind conditions on the coasts. An example is *Senkō Yōjutsu* 船行要術 (Handbook of Navigation) written in 1456 by Masafusa Murakami, a member of the pirate family Murakami, who provided laws deduced from experiences concerning the wind conditions and described the monsoon as *banfū* or *ban no kaze* ('turn wind', 'main wind' or 'prevailing wind'; Yoshino 1979, 167). From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, several books – such as *Shinan kōgi* (A Wide Sense Interpreting of Teaching) written by Tei (1708) – describe the relationship between sailing methods and favourable or unfavourable wind conditions (Yoshino 1979, 167).

The relationship between the circulation of the wind regimes and the topographic settlements was also an essential aspect of the sailing culture during the Edo period (1603–1868). Many harbours, called *kazemachiko* 風待ち港 (literally 'waiting wind harbour') were strategically located on the Ise Shima coasts of the Kii Penisula and on the southern coasts of Izu

autumn (November 4-November 25), early winter (November 26-December 25), winter (December26-January 31), and late winter (February 1-February 28). See Yoshino, Kai 1977; Yoshino 1979, 161.

Penisula, where ships waited for favourable winds (Aono 1938, 234-49; Yoshino 1979, 167). Seasonal winds were also strategically important for merchant ships, moreover, the development of navigation in the sixteenth century brought an increasing knowledge of trade winds (*bōekifū* 貿易風). During Edo period, merchant ships continued to be the main economical way to transport cargo from Edo to Ōsaka, and three main sea routes were established along the Japanese archipelago: the sea route from Ōsaka to Edo, the west route (along the coastal areas of the Inland Sea or the Sea of Japan) and the east route that connected Edo (the Pacific Ocean coast) to Dewa (now Akita and Yamagata prefectures).

The best known trade winds were *ayunokaze* アユノカゼ and *kudari* クダリ, two seasonal winds strategically important for maritime trades in Edo and Meiji periods. *Ayunokaze* あゆの風 was a favourable wind for merchant ships directed to Ōsaka and *kudari* was a favourable wind to navigate northward from Kyōto in the direction of Matsumae (Hokkaidō). For their strategic role in trade routes, these winds appeared often in popular folk songs: "Thirty days for *ai*, twenty days for *kudari*. How can I wait for all these fifty days? I do not know in which direction *ai* and *kudari* blow. All I can do is wait for my patron, when he has gone to Hokkaidō", "*Kudari* in the Sea of Japan becomes *ai* after *yazaki*" or "*Ai* and *yamase* bring ships back to Ōsaka. All we can do is just wait to see sailors coming again to Hokkaidō" (Sekiguchi 2000, 25-9).[5]

However, according to the historical sources, these commercially important sea routes had a high number of maritime accidents in areas such as the Sea of Japan (*Nihonkai* 日本海) during Edo period. From a climatological perspective, this sea is characterised by warm waters and monsoons and this combination results in strong evaporation, which is especially noticeable between October and March when the strong northwestern monsoon wind brings cold continental air. In summer the wind weakens and reverses its direction, blowing warm air from the North Pacific onto the Asian mainland (Sekiguchi 2000). As a result, the Sea of Japan becomes very rough during winter, with strong seasonal northwest winds, becoming quieter in the Pacific Ocean during the spring and summer periods. The perception of the sailing risk in this maritime area was often related to folk terminology of local meteorology. *Nada* 灘, for example, was a term used often by fishermen and sailors to describe the dangerousness of the sea, which could be roughly translated as 'the sea with high waves where it is difficult to sail'. *Nada* was used to refer to two main areas of the Sea of Japan: Genkainada and Hibikinada, and it was also used to refer to several areas of the Pacific Ocean side: Amakusanada, Hiuganada, Kumanonada, Unshunada, Sagaminada and Kashimanada. Or the Inland Sea: Suonada, Iyonada, Akinada, Itsukinada, Hiuchinada and Harimanada (Sekiguchi 2000).

5 Author's translation from Sekiguchi 2000.

Seasonal winds were also the main protagonists during the period of trade and commerce with Southeast Asia, from roughly the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, which gave birth to a golden age in Ryūkyū, where Japanese and Chinese products were exchanged for Southeast Asian sappan wood and deer hides (Yoshino 1979). These winds used for sea communication were strategically important in Ryūkyū and Okinawa Islands also for local fishermen who created a meteorological calendar based on the frequency of occurrence of certain winds that blew on specific days: *nishi kaze* 西風 (northerly wind, around March 21st and April 5th), *heno kaze* ヘノカゼ (a southerly wind, May 6th, May 21st and June 6th), *kuchi kaze* 口風 (easterly wind, June 21st), *nishi kaze* 西風 (notherly wind, July 7th, around July 20th, August 8th, September 9th, September 23rd and the day with full moon in September), *kuchi kaze* (easterly wind, October 10th) and *nishi kaze* (northerly wind, November 7th and 23rd, December 7th, and December 22nd) (Kitami 1973; Yoshino 1979, 166; Sekiguchi 2000). This complex 'meteorological mosaic' influenced the practice of navigation in the Ryūkyū Islands: during monsoon season northerly winds were dominant, suddenly replaced by southerly winds, which start to blow on Yaeyama Islands at the end of the season. These "ghostly winds" – as they were called by local fishermen because of their dangerousness – still continue to blow from south in early April, announcing the arrival of the spring season (*baka natsu* バカナツ, young summer). However, it was only when a seasonal wind called *kachibai* カチバイ (summer solstice south wind) started to blow that people navigated actively (Kitami 1973).

A mastery of the nautical skill required experience in varying meteorological and sea conditions, and seasonal winds were critical elements for the strategies used for local navigations: *sarudachi bune* サルダチブネ was a boat used during the early summer monsoon when *bōsu* ボス and *kachi* カチ winds blew; *nakadachi bune* ナカダチブネ was another boat used during the summer monsoon when *kachi* wind blew; *sōsen* ソーセン was a boat that sailed during the summer monsoon when *suman* スマン and *bōsu* winds blew and, finally, *hisen* ヒセン allowed instead a temporary sailing (Kitami 1973). The spatial aspects of socio-cultural phenomena, in which a phenomenology of the wind is linked to classificatory models and their linguistic correlates, are an unavoidable guide to understand the historical background of Japanese 'folk meteorology' (see Table 1). In partly arranging the various seasonal and local winds mentioned above in a more or less consistent system, the practices of naming and classifying appear closely interconnected.

From this brief historical overview, one can deduce how cultural heritage is the result of a continuous process and the recursive interaction between maritime environment and "situated environmental practices" (Ingold 2003, 227) of generations of Japanese navigators. As seen, the physical experience of the maritime environment was sustained by the historical accounts and by a wide repertoire of folk traditions that undoubt-

edly shed light on the strategic role of meteorological winds in a broader geopolitical and socio-economic context. However, as maritime history has always taught, the complexity of this heterogeneous body of knowledge could mainly be revealed through the theoretical and practical knowledge of naval architecture, that is, the ship designs, the use of the tools and technical procedures that ensured the efficiency and safety of the ship, and the most iconic element of 'embodying' the winds: the sail. Starting from the general assumption that "making creates knowledge" (see Ingold 2013), the history of the evolution of Japanese sailing ships, so intimately related to meteorological knowledge, cannot be separated from the analysis of some characteristic types of sail boats, which are the real cornerstones of many historical passages in the Japanese maritime tradition. In the next section, in order to give an example of 'knowledge coagulated in the practice', this article focuses on the cultural story of one of the most efficient fishing boats to exploit the strength of the winds during Meiji and Shōwa periods: the *utase* (beam trawl) boats with their characteristic sails.

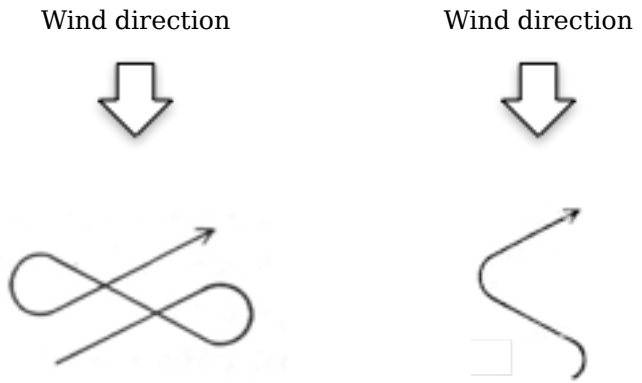
Table 1. Historical wind names (Sekiguchi 2000, 12-3; Handō, Arakawa 2001)

Geographical area	Wind names	Notes
West Japan Sea of Japan	*Kamikaze* and *shimokaze* *Takaikaze* and *hikuikaze* *Kudari* and *nobori*	Wind names used by traders and influenced by local dialects. *Ai*, *ae*, and *ayunokaze* were often used instead of *nobori.*
West Japan	*Anaji* (NW, winter season) *Maji*, *hae* (S, summer season) *Yamaji* (storm)	Wind names used by coastal fishermen
Sea of Japan	*Tamakaze*, *tabakaze* (NW, winter season) *Kudari* (S, summer season) *Hikata*, *isechi* (storm)	
Pacific Ocean East Japan	*Narai*, *saga*, *shimosa*, *betto*, *nishi* (winter season)	
West Japan	*Sagari, tosa*, *yōzu*, *waita*	Wind names used in limited geographical areas
Sea of Japan	*Wakasa*, *yamase*	
Pacific Ocean East Japan	*Akanbonarai*, *saga*, *shimosa*, *nakanishi*	
Japan	*Okikaze*, *urakaze*	Wind from the sea
	Jikaze, *kōyama*, *takanishi, aokita*	Wind from the land or mountain
Lake and river	*Hira*, *ibuki*, *tsukuba oroshi*	Wind names used at lake Biwa and lower areas of Tone river, such as Kasumigaura and Kitaura

3 Made for the Winds: the *Utase* Boats

Throughout the history of sailing ships, the theoretical location of the propulsive force, the direction, the intensity and distribution of the aerodynamic surface force on sails were important for the design and operation of the sails, which were oriented at a right angle to the wind. In the history of the Japanese coastal fishery, one of the most efficient boats exploiting seasonal winds was the beam trawl boat (*utase* 打瀬), which appeared approximately during the end of Edo period. The first *utase* boat was introduced in Aichi prefecture in 1887 and its typical boat design (the so called 'Aichi style *utase* boat') with its characteristic sails was similar to the Atlantic British traditional dragnet fishing boats, operating at that time in the North Sea. The sailing trawl net was similar to an otter trawl, with the only difference that the boat, which draws the net, was moved sideways by the tide or by large sails (Shimagawa 1995). This fishing technique became very popular in the coastal fishing communities of Ise and Mikawa bays. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this type of vessel began to trawl in southeast waters, operating in the shallow inshore waters of the Philippines, extending significantly the frontier of Japanese fisheries (Butcher 2004, 141). During the early Taishō period (1912–1926), *utase* boats began to spread around the coastal areas of Ise Bay, such as Kannonji (Aichi prefecture) where trawling boats were used on the seas of Bingo, Iyo, Suō, Bankara and Ōsaka Bay. Tajima and Yokoshima Islands (Hiroshima prefecture) were also famous for the use of *utase* boat fishing, which replaced in a short time the local traditional boats – the so called "Hiroshima style board bow ships" (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988).

Utase fishing technique required that each vessel was pointed perpendicular to the wind and pushed along by particular sails set directly in line with the midline of the vessel. Before the introduction of the engine, the *utase* boats were initially dependent on the wind for propulsion. The strength of the wind and the area of the sail used to catch the wind obviously played a strategic role for fishery activities. Sails and nets were specially designed for specific local winds and sea conditions (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988, 64-6; Shimagawa 1995). Moreover, small sailing trawlers tow the net over the sea bottom by means of wind or tidal force. For this reason, the shape of the craft was different depending on the locality even if no specific equipment was provided. The shape of the sail and the hull of the *utase* boats were the major factors that allowed these fishing vessels to approach the sailing upwind. This sailing technique required to zigzag across a headwind using a half wind (wind at 90° to the boat), which further increased the *utase* ship's manoeuvring ability. By using a triangular sail design, it was possible to travel against the wind using a technique known as *magiri bashiri* 間切り走り (tacking or sailing windward), which allowed the *utase* boat to ship forward with a wind at right angles to the boat. The boat moved for a



Scheme 1. Adverse wind sailing techniques (beating to windward) with *utase* boats (*Setouchi no gyosen*, 1988, 21)

while at an angle toward its desired course (to the right for instance), then the skipper swung the boom of the sail and tacked back across the desired course at an angle to the left in a zigzag fashion (Scheme 1). In this way, performing a skilful *magiri bashiri* allowed the fishing boat to use prevailing wind from many other angles than in other sailing methods.

This complex technique of navigation and exploitation of local winds was gradually transformed by the advanced developments of the instruments of propulsion.[6] It should also be kept in mind that technological change of *utase* boats took place in different ways depending on geographic region, maritime environment and local weather (Shimagawa 1995). For example, since 1927, Tajima and Yokoshima Islands (Hiroshima prefecture) were both famous places for 'Aichi-style *utase*' fishing technique (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988; Shimagawa 1995). Local fishermen could use four or six 'funnel nets' (*bizenmō* 備前網), according to the number of sails used and, since local winds were necessary for sideways fishing, the force of the wind determined the number of sails during fishing: when the wind was weak, few sails were hoisted on the boat. However, although these boats were created to exploit the wind as much as possible, they were also vul-

6 The technological change from the predominant 'Aichi style *utase* boats' to the 'Aichi style dragnet boat' occurred in three stages: a) since the net was towed by sailing, the number of sails increased as the size of the craft increased (generally from two to seven sails); b) sailing with engine and fishing with a sail as sideways; c) finally, sailing and fishing required electric ignition engine for the offshore fishing. This gradual shift occurred in the early twentieth century redefined the techniques of sailing, affecting not only the fish productivity, but also redefining the 'folk models' of fisheries (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988).

nerable to sudden violent gusts of winds. According to the local historical accounts, at the beginning of Shōwa period (1926–1989) five *utase* boats, each of which was equipped with five sails, fell sideways off the coast of Yokoshima Island due to a gust of wind, causing the death of eleven fishermen (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988; Shimagawa 1995).

If the danger of the gusts of wind could be the weak point of these boats, their widespread use in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the various coastal areas of Japan was motivated by their faster movements, allowing to reach, in a short time, distant fishing spots, ensuring a better conservation of the fish, thanks to the reduction in transportation time. At the end of Taishō period, for example, 'Aichi-style-*utase*' boats was introduced to Kikuma (Ehime prefecture), because this geographical area was very close to Kurushima Channel, a good fishing area where sea currents run from northeast to southwest. Local fishermen, being aware that the local seabed was covered with rocks that impede the use of *bizen* nets, used *utase* boats with one single net until about 1950 (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988).

In conclusion, the *utase* boats are an historical example of "the crystallization of knowledge and practice in the physical structure of artifact" (Hutchins 1995, 96), representing a form of nautical

> technology [that had] a multifaceted life history involving a specific environment with contexts of development and use, and relevant communities of practice and interaction whose member [had] their own systems of meaning and way of transferring knowledge. (Hollenback, Schiffer 2010, 321)

In the next section, how sailing navigation with *utase* boats is grounded in the context of practice will be analysed. In particular, some historical sources regarding pilgrimages by sea made by some groups of fishermen during Meiji period and how they faced challenging maritime routes in adverse sea conditions will be considered.

4 Benevolent Gods and Nautical Virtuosity

Japanese fishermen, merchants and navigators left religious objects and significant documents as part of a network of knowledge and practical experiences, which had obviously a normative claim: that is, they were made expecting to be clear, understandable and self-explanatory of what happened during the navigation. One of the most interesting examples reflecting a dynamic interplay between nautical experience and meteorological knowledge is found in *funa ema* 船絵馬, a particular category of votive wooden plates with image of ships offered to the gods in Shinto shrines,

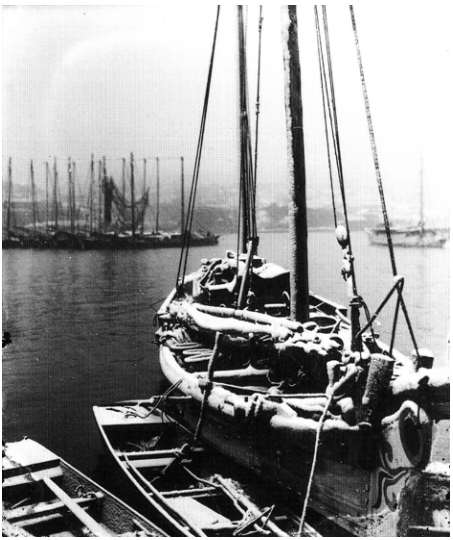


Figure 1. *Utase* boat in the harbour of Toba, early thirties. The particular shape of the bow is in the 'Aichi style' (Okada 1998, 37).

which not only informed about the miraculous events happened at sea, but also offered interesting examples of lived experiences of generations of fishermen through a more or less elaborate narrative form (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988). *Funa ema* were indeed collective votive offerings, created by the desire of the captain and his crew to thank a benevolent god for saving the crew from a stormy journey.

Particularly widespread during the Edo period (1603–1868), these votive tablets (generally called *ema* 絵馬) were one of the main ritual actions as a return on blessings (*hōon* 報恩) and were exposed into *emadō* 絵馬堂 (*ema* halls) within the religious complex (Bellah 1970), where *funa ema* were on view to all visitors, becoming a publicly accessible art form (Ishī 2004). What is particularly important in the *funa ema* is, therefore, the visual representation that had to be immediately comprehensible to the visitors, especially because it had as much value on the social level as in the whole of the offers to the shrine. As for the other types of votive tablets, the private relationship with the deity ended, at least publicly, with the deposition of *funa ema* at the shrine. Then it takes on a public meaning, which was strengthened by the fact of being visible and with the proximity of other similar votive objects. If, over the centuries, the religious practice of *funa ema* remained unchanged, its iconography too underwent a few changes. The technically meticulous representation of the boat helped indeed to cement the need for realism, which was essential and implicit in the concept of votive offerings (*Setouchi no gyosen* 1988).

An example of this religious object that could be also a historical docu-

ment of the nautical experience is a *funa ema* in Shingetsu 心月寺 temple, located at Ryōjin area (Aichi prefecture), which was officially offered to the temple by Yoshida Shingo on 10th February 1895. Yoshida Shingo was a skipper of Myōjinmaru 明神丸, a sailing fishing vessel (*utase bune*) that operated mainly in Ise Bay during the Meiji period. This votive tablet narrates the story of a group of fishermen who, in April 1894, crossed Ise Bay to reach Ise Jingū shrine in order to make a pilgrimage. According to the story described in the caption, a group of fishermen visited Ise Jingū crossing the bay with five or six fishing boats including Myōjinmaru, which was the leader boat. The navigation was quiet and fishermen successfully visited the shrine. Weather was clear even during the return and Myōjinmaru and the other fishing boats took advantage of favourable sea conditions. When the boats were very close to the coast, reaching their village, the weather suddenly changed: the wind took force, and the "sea was almost eating the boats". There were some thousands of villagers on the beach waiting for the return of their relatives, watching the boats being tossed in a violent storm. The fishermen rowed as much as possible to arrive at Omaezaki, finding a safe place near the coast of Nakanoshima, where they could manage to get safely on the land.

As previously mentioned, another written account of nautical experience are the logbooks, written by Japanese fishermen and skippers, which represent another valuable and unexplored historical source that, by its nature, is midway between the public document and private memories. Generally, a logbook shows the essential information concerning navigation and its compilation should cover information related to weather conditions (records relating to observer's weather forecasting), sea conditions, conditions of the boat, navigation plan (for example, the planned and plotted route), surveys navigation (records times and measurements made on the estimated points, with indication of variances, actual routes and any changes incurred by the estimated navigation plan) and, above all, extraordinary events (anything that may have occurred in an unexpected way and that may be relevant).

An example of this 'empirical documentation' is a logbook kept by a skipper of a fishing vessel, called Daishinmaru 大進丸, which operated mainly in the Showa period. According to excerpts of this diary, in 1949 the community of Hamamatsu Nishi located at Iwata-shi (Shizuoka prefecture) had a fishing boat called Daishinmaru. At that time, there were about fifty households in this community and, among them, thirty households shared this boat for fishing. In that year, Daishinmaru was newly built for the last time and a journey by sea to the Ise Shrine was organised to celebrate the new boat (the so called *Isewan meguri* 伊勢湾巡り). The departure date was scheduled for April 16th (Map 1). During this period, the weather was getting warmer; night wind was still strong and west wind also blew strongly during the day. The new Daishinmaru was a drag net fishing boat with five

oars, built in the shipyards of Daitochō. For this occasion, the crew was exceptionally composed by eleven fishermen: one fisherman for the pole at the bows, four men for rowing oars, one skipper at a stern to decide the direction to go. The rest of the crew was for oar rowing replacement. The crew sailed out at 5 p.m. It was early evening and still bright and the crew carefully moved the boat avoiding a shoal, sailing out to open sea alongside a tide flowing to the offing.

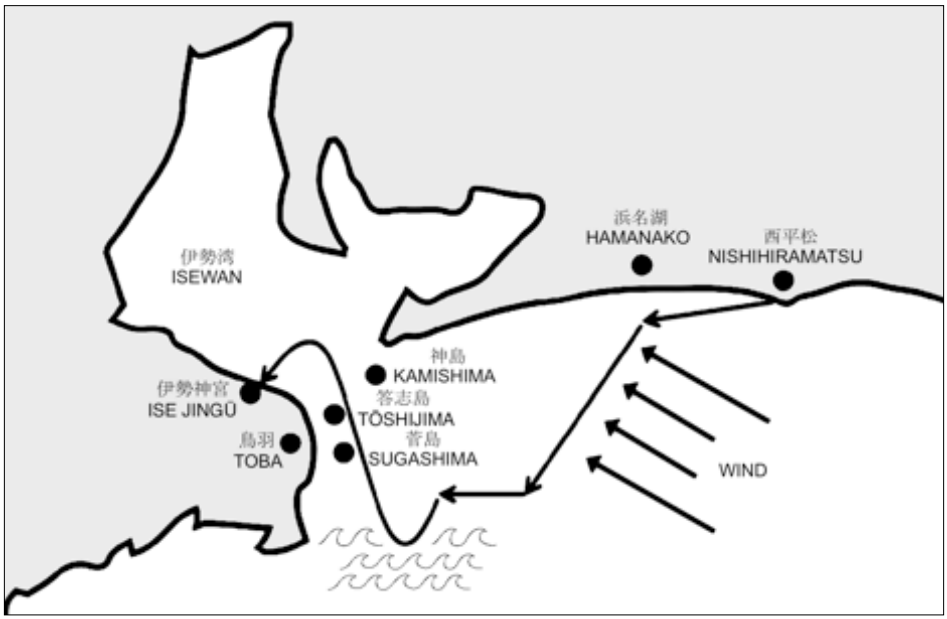
When they were far enough away from the coastline, they changed their direction to west. They rowed to west so that they still could see a pine tree forest from the land. After one hour of sailing, they reached Makiriguchi, which was the mouth of the Lake Hamanaka. By then, night came and they were surrounded by complete darkness and a wind from land started blowing to the sea. This boat had a small sail but it was useful to take advantage of that wind and sail off quickly to southwest.[7] When Daishinmaru was around Shiomizaka area, the wind stopped blowing. Sailors hung off a sail and rowed oars again. Around midnight, they met a strong tide to south. This tide tried to bring the boat to south. They rowed desperately to west, the direction of Toba and Ise, even if the tide was too strong to resist. The bow of the boat was facing north-northwest. They rowed as much as possible for three hours. Finally, the boat reached the lighthouse of the island of Kamishima on their right hand side. Fortunately, the strong tide did not bother them anymore, so that they could row in the quiet sea of Ise Bay. Kamishima disappeared behind and the island of Toshijima appeared in front of Daishinmaru.

The sun was rising when Daishinmaru passed on the north side of the Toshijima Island. Ukishima was on their left hand side. The group of boats passed Futamiura and entered Ōnagisa from the mouth of the Seita River. They eventually arrived at Nikenchaya Port at 7 a.m. on April 17th. The sailors of Daishinmaru went to a *ryokan* and at 10 a.m. visited the Ise Shrine. They came back to the *ryokan* in the evening. The next morning, they sailed out to Toba to go home (Map 2). Afternoon wind from west was still strong in this season. It was a fine day and a west wind started blowing strongly in the afternoon. They left Toba, rowed to east, passed Sugashima on the right and Toshijima on the left, and, when they passed Toshijima, a strong west wind started to blow. They set a sail and tied oars to the boat. At 2 p.m., the boat was moving with the wind. The sail received strong west wind and moved rapidly to east. They arrived at the mouth of the Tenryū River only within two hours. When they saw the river, they approached the land, put off the sail and rowed oars again. At 5 p.m., they safely reached their coast where many villagers were waiting.

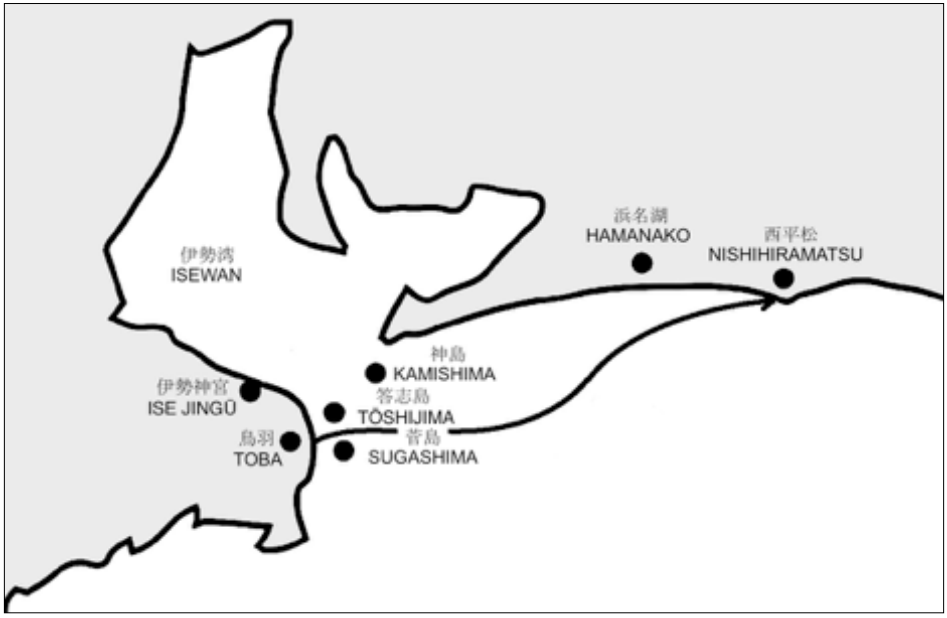
7 The southwest direction is called *Iseoki*, i.e. a word that fishermen of Nishihiramatsu used also to refer to this wind.

Despite the lack of information on the nautical vicissitudes of Myōjinmaru and Daishinmaru *utase* boats – namely, the living experience of the sea and navigation of the crew – these two examples offer two insights related to each other. Firstly, they could be interpreted as a classical example of 'enskilment', that is, a "notion […] that emphasizes immersion in the practical world, being caught up in the incessant flow of everyday life, and not simply, as many cognitive studies have assumed, the mechanistic internalization and application of a mental script, a stock of knowledge or a 'cultural model'" (Pálsson 1994, 901). From this perspective, the pilgrimage by sea to the Ise Shrine was therefore an example of the detailed knowledge of wind speed and direction and the skilful practice of navigation organised by the crew of Daishinmaru exploiting strong night winds to arrive to Ise Shrine and afternoon winds to come back despite the long distance from Nishihiramatsu to Ise Shrine. Similarly, the blessed journey of Myōjinmaru highlights the ability of avoiding a critical situation at sea caused by the adverse weather conditions, thanks to the ability of nautical orientation and thorough geographical knowledge.

Secondly, these two written sources concisely describe the practice of the navigation focusing on the issue of the movement in "a perfect and absolute blank" (Anderson, Peters 2014b, 3) such as the sea, as two examples of the "on-board experience of motion as moving across the space" (Ingold 2000, 237). The little odyssey of Myōjinmaru and Daishinmaru could also be contextualised in what, ideally, Ingold would define as two cases of "the unfolding of a field of relations established through the immersion of the actor-perceiver within a given environmental context" (Ingold 2000, 220). Ingold's reflection seems to be a fruitful starting point to rethink the practices on navigation in a historical context: as Edwin Hutchins has observed, "navigation is a collection of techniques for answering a small number of questions, perhaps the most central of which is 'Where am I?'" (Hutchins 1995, 12; quoted in Ingold 2000, 236). In this regard, Ingold distinguishes the practice of navigation from the practice of wayfinding defining the latter as "a skilled performance in which the traveller, whose powers of perception and action have been fine-tuned through previous experience, 'feels his way' towards his goal, continually adjusting his movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of his surroundings" (2000, 220). Navigation, for Ingold, allows instead to move from a place to another place and in the "non-places in-between", as designated in a map (as could suggest, for examples, Maps 1-2). It follows that such activity is "divorced from any historical narrative of place" as being "strictly synchronic, and divorced from any narrative context" (2000, 237). In a similar perspective, Anderson and Peters extend the discussion also from a geographical point of view: "it is impossible to 'locate' a point at sea as an actual material place. Baudrillard's (2001) observation about the map preceding the territory is as true at sea as it is on land. But in



Map 1. The outward journey of the Daishinmaru (16th April)



Map 2. Return journey (17th April)

the ocean there is a further iteration because the territory subsequently washes away the map. Thus, we can never truly 'locate' ourselves within the ocean. Or, if we must locate ourselves, we require a different kind of 'map" (2014, 15; Baudrillard 2001; Steinberg 2011).

According to this perspective, I suggest that the folk stories of Myōjinmaru and Daishinmaru represent, therefore, two examples of the practice of wayfinding: by means of it, "every place holds within it memories of previous arrivals and departures, as well as expectations of how one may reach it, or reach other places from it" (Ingold 2000, 237). As Ingold explains,

> ordinary movement in a familiar environment lacks the stop-go character of navigation, in which every physical or bodily manoeuvre (displacement in space) is preceded by a mental or calculative one (fixing the course). "Finding one's way" is not a computational operation carried out prior to departure from a place, but is tantamount to one's own movement through the world. (239)

In this context, the previous mentioned nautical skills of 'managing' the dangerous stormy winds, finding safe places, taking advantage of the strength of the local winds, or orienting the *utase* boats in the sea through the observation of the islands and the coastal area of the Ise Bay, so close to the dangerous ocean currents, represent a practice of wayfinding, which "depends upon the attunement of the traveller's movements in response to the movements, in his or her surroundings, of other people, animals, the wind, celestial bodies, and so on" (242).

5 Conclusions

The historical issues set out in the previous sections outline a theoretical framework that could virtually offer many anthropological insights. Starting from the general assumption that wind is culturally construed through practical engagement and cognition, the role of the seasonal, local or monsoon winds in Japanese seafaring tradition provides a common focal point in broader anthropological discourses on the nautical technology and its material culture, cognitive burden of ship navigation, and local nuances of understanding, such as processes of representation, organisation or linguistic classifications, including topographic, meteorological features and other significant human places such as fishing sites, coast mountains or ancient sea routes.

As in many other countries that had developed a sailing tradition, in Japan the wind was therefore associated with the logic of sensible qualities based on nautical experience and practice, and defined in terms of capac-

ity for action in a particular maritime territory. Yet, the ancient maritime routes that connected the Japanese archipelago with the Asian continent evolved with the manipulation of the monsoon winds, developing different forms of cultural practices. Ancient nautical treatises, folk classifications of the local and seasonal winds, the strategic use of different boats according to the seasonal winds and the role played by the *utase* boats in the economy and daily life of Japanese maritime communities represented important historical factors in defining the ways in which generations of Japanese fishermen and sailors produced a "physical experience of weather" (Strauss 2003, 3).

Within this vast field of research, the wind has characteristics not only related to meteorology and geography but also subjective characteristics, as seen in the previous sections, that are elaborated by the interpretative filter of practical experiences and directly connected to other cultural practices: religion, literature, history, economy, technology or the organisation of everyday life. An anthropological and historical discourse on the wind then serves to highlight the 'climate potential' within a culture, to penetrate into the complex system of relationships between society and atmospheric phenomena, and also to better clarify how many factors, of different nature, may contribute and interact in the formation of a 'social-climate complex'. According to this perspective, the history and the social construction of the wind made by generations of Japanese fishermen, sailors or navigators who were deeply rooted in their maritime territory, shed light, in conclusion, on "how wind could serve as the unseable connective medium or the invisible force that drives the action" (Low, Hsu 2008, 10).

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Rethinking Nature in Japan
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Fraternizing with the Spirits in the Noh Plays *Saigyōzakura* and *Yamanba*

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Abstract Not rarely do spirits of trees and plants appear in Noh plays as main characters having lively conversations with human beings. Both – the common belief in medieval Japan that plants, trees and the land itself could possess the spirit of Buddha, and the cults of tree worship existing since ancient times – give some clues to enquire the significance of composing and performing Noh plays grounded on what previously had been described only by words or pictures, the fraternizing with the spirits. This paper aims to examine how Noh plays enacted the 'life force' (*sei*) believed to permeate nature on the stage, and further the effects that such dramatisation had on the audiences. To do so, two Noh plays will be examined: in *Saigyōzakura* (Saigyō's Cherry Tree), the famous monk-poet Saigyō and the spirit of an old cherry tree elegantly debate how this world should be viewed. In *Yamanba* (The Mountain Crone), the spirit (or the phantom) of untamed nature of deep mountains makes its apparition.

Summary General Survey of Non-Sentient Spirit Noh Plays . – Saigyō-zakura. – Yamanba.

Keywords Noh. Non-sentient spirit. Saigyōzakura. Yamanba.

General Survey of Non-Sentient Spirit Noh Plays

When introducing Noh to people who are unfamiliar with it, it is usually explained in the following way. The repertoire of Noh consists of about 240 plays, half of which are regularly staged. The main characters of these plays are deities, spirits, ghosts, or people in tragic situations. While deities on stage express blessings, other characters, such as spirits or ghosts, talk about their memories, and enact their deep emotions – sorrow, resentment, nostalgia, love, etc.

This sort of explanation, however, tends to omit the fact that spirits of trees and plants (and other non-sentient beings) can also be important characters in Noh plays. So, using this opportunity, I would like to start by surveying Noh plays where non-sentient spirits appear, in a first step examining how Noh approaches nature and expresses it on stage.

Typical examples of the personification of non-sentient spirits include the morning glory of *Asagao* 朝顔, the plum of *Ume* 梅, the iris of *Kakitsubata* 杜

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若, the cherry tree of *Sumizome-zakura* 墨染桜, the Japanese banana plant of *Bashō* 芭蕉, the wisteria of *Fuji* 藤, the maple of *Mutsura* 六浦, and the willow of *Yugyō-yanagi* 遊行柳. The cherry tree of *Saigyō-zakura* also belongs to this group. To it, we might add the plays *Akoya no matsu* 阿古屋松, *Oimatsu* 老松, and *Takasago* 高砂, in which deities appear as spirits of old pine trees. These plays are usually explained as 'god Noh', but the main characters are clearly the spirits of old trees. The fact that these old deities are also spirits of old pine trees is not expressed by their costumes, masks or wigs, but is written clearly in their texts. This is a characteristic feature of early 'god Noh'.

In the world of Noh, even the spirits of inanimate substances are sometimes personified on stage. Examples are the snow in *Yuki* 雪 and the "killing stone" in *Sesshōseki* 殺生石; the latter, however, is a condensation of an evil spirit, not the spirit of the stone itself, and I have therefore omitted it from the chart that follows. Another play that should be classified in this group is *Yamanba*. While it is very difficult to define what the character Yamanba is, as far as the Noh play *Yamanba* is concerned it can be considered as the spirit of the deep mountains, or untamed nature itself.

So what ideas are expressed in these plays? As early as the thirties, Sanari Kentarō 佐成謙太郎 (1930-31, 424) argued that the attainment of buddhahood and literary interest are the two main themes of this sort of Noh play.[1]

Besides these two, we can add the theme of blessing expressed in *Oimatsu*, *Takasago* and *Akoya no matsu* as a third. A fourth theme may be the expression on stage of the beauty of flowers, coloured leaves, snow and so on. The central aim of the Noh play *Yuki* (Snow) seems to be to demonstrate the spirit of snow dancing beautifully by whirling its sleeves, in what is both a literal expression as well as a three-dimensional portrayal of the phrase "sleeves of whirling snow" (*kaisetsu no sode* 回廻雪の袖), an idiom used to describe beautifully performed dances. Similarly, while watching the characters dance on stage, the audience can easily imagine beautiful scenes in which the petals of cherry blossoms or wisteria, or even coloured autumn leaves, flutter in the wind.

The chart (fig. 1) presents a summary of the above-mentioned ideas. Needless to say, the themes of the attainment of buddhahood and literary interest are mixed in each play, so the plays are tentatively placed according to which element is relatively stronger in each. Blessing (through the virtue of *waka* 和歌 poetry) and the expression of beauty are considered to be literary rather than religious – especially Buddhist – concerns, and have hence been included in the lower half of the chart. The relative ages of the main characters have been put on the horizontal axis, with younger characters on the left and older on the right.

1 In the introduction to *Ume*, Sanari (1930-31, 424) declares: "two intentions can be seen in these spirit plays, namely, the staging of a lyrical theme associated with a particular plant, or the demonstration of the Buddhist concept that plants, trees and the land itself possess the spirit of Buddha".

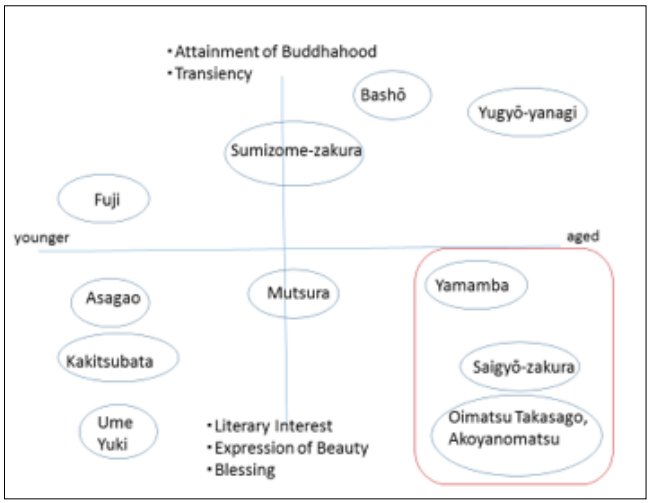

Figure 1. Features of the natural elements in Noh plays

We also need to consider differences that reflect changes in the times. The main characters Zeami 世阿弥 created for his non-sentient spirit Noh plays are all old male characters, while female characters – especially younger ones – become more common in later plays. Paul Atkins points out that it was Konparu Zenchiku 金春善禅竹 who started to associate plant spirits with the form of women, comparing Zenchiku's *Bashō* and *Kakitsubata* to Zeami's *Saigyō-zakura* (Atkins 2006). *Sumizome-zakura*, *Fuji*, *Mutsura*, *Yuki* and *Ume* were all written later, when sophisticated dances performed by beautifully costumed female characters helped audiences appreciate the essence of beauty we find in flowers or coloured leaves.

Within the box in the lower right are plays written by Zeami, which of course are older. Before moving on to *Saigyō-zakura* and *Yamanba*, let us discuss plays featuring main characters who are the spirits of old pine trees.

In his early days, Zeami tried to portray new deities, unlike those that had been depicted previously, who were considered as dreadful as demons. The following is Zeami's famous comment on the difference between the performances of demons and gods, written in *Fūshikaden* 風姿花伝 (Transmitting the Flower Through Effects and Attitudes, 1400):

> Now this role has the look of the demonic. And if an element of wrath is in some way apparent in the portrayal, then depending on the god in question, there should be nothing wrong with that sense of the demonic. There is, however, something very different at the heart of this role. Gods are well suited to the graces of Dance. But demons have no impetus at all to Dance. (Hare 2008, 36)

"Gods suited to the graces of Dance" are gods associated with *waka* poetry and its literary tradition. Such being the case, the spirit of an old pine tree was ideal, because the tree had long been associated with blessing through the long history of *waka* poetry and poetic literature. We should note that Zeami chose the spirits of pine trees, not those of cedars, as the main characters in his new god Noh plays, even though many old cedars had also been worshipped as divine trees. In terms of the historical bond between poetry and blessing, pine trees were much more suitable for the new god Noh than Zeami envisaged. Any further treatment of this issue, however, would require a discussion of how Zeami undertook this creative process, which goes beyond the scope of this paper.

Having surveyed Noh plays featuring non-sentient main characters, we can now move to our main themes, the plays *Saigyō-zakura* and *Yamanba*.

Saigyō-zakura is the earliest Noh play where the spirit of a tree appears just as a spirit rather than as the embodiment of a deity. While it may be incorrect to call Yamanba a spirit, she is clearly neither a ghost nor a deity. We might well call her the essence of the mountains, or the nature of high mountains and deep valleys itself. What, then, is the theme of *Saigyō-zakura* and *Yamanba*? Why do the spirit of the old cherry tree and the spirit of the deep mountains appear in front of us? Anticipating my conclusion somewhat, I would like to suggest that both plays describe the moment when people and nature communicate profoundly, experiencing deep emotional exchange. As I argue below, I believe that this element should be added to the chart above as the fifth element of non-sentient spirit Noh plays.

Saigyō-zakura

In Noh plays, ghosts return to this world to tell stories about the most indelible moments in their lives. They also seek relief from their suffering. However, the reason why the spirit of this old cherry tree appears in front of Saigyō is completely different.

When his peaceful time for pondering is interrupted by cherry blossom viewers, Saigyō expresses his slight irritation in a *waka* poem:

> 'Flowers! Do let's look!'
> and on they come,
> amateurs in droves.
> Ah, lovely blossoms,
> this is all your fault!
> (Tyler 1992, 219)

When night falls, an old man (the spirit of the old cherry tree) appears in front of Saigyō from the hollow of the tree. His long grey hair resem-

bles the weeping branches and white flowers of the old tree. As soon as it appears, the spirit questions Saigyō about the intention of his poem. As the spirit of an old tree, the main character (and the chorus who also represent it) of course refers to its attainment of buddhahood, but it is neither desperately seeking relief nor revealing any literary or religious secret. While saying that it wants to protest what Saigyō has expressed in this poem, the spirit does not seem to have any intention of blaming him. Indeed, the spirit appears in front of Saigyō and the audience just to show that, in possessing feelings and language, it is no different from humankind, with whom it is quite capable of communicating.

Then, the spirit performs a *kusemai* 曲舞/クセ舞 dance while enumerating famous cherry trees in Kyoto capital, with precisely the purpose of admiring beautiful cherry blossoms in Kyoto and sharing with Saigyō the joy of such a beautiful season, or even that very moment of beauty. Of course, Zeami makes good use of the rich imagery of cherry blossoms accumulated through the long history of *waka* poetry in this Noh as well.

An especially interesting point is that such an encounter was prompted by Saigyō's appeal to the cherry tree. It is not only that Saigyō just felt dissatisfied at heart, but that he expressed his emotion in *waka* style. By appealing through poetry to the old tree, which is an embodiment of nature, he was able to gain access to the spirit of both the tree and nature itself. This idea is close to the world view expressed in the *kana* introduction to the ancient *waka* anthology *Kokin Wakashū* 古今和歌集, namely that all creatures, great and small, have their own souls and express themselves in *waka* poetry.

It seems a miracle that a person and the spirit of cherry tree can communicate like this, but our affection for and dwelling on cherry blossoms can easily be compared to the attitude of loving a person. The last scene is at the break of dawn, when Saigyō is left alone and finds the old cherry tree still and silent again. Petals are scattered around like a carpet of snow. The lingering sentiment we feel in this scene after the precious moment of fraternizing is similar to what we feel when seeing cherry blossoms scattering at the end of the cherry season.

One point should be added. While the tree's speech is replete with literary riches, its Buddha-nature is suggested by the *taiko* 太鼓 *Jo-no-mai* 序ノの舞 (slow dance with stick drum) that the old spirit performs. In Zeami's era, this dance was considered to be a copy of a Bodhisattva's dance. It is only natural for the spirit of a plant to perform this dance to show that it has attained buddhahood.

Yamanba

What is a Yamanba? This is a very difficult question and the main theme of this play. The Yamanba is said to be an old woman or a female ogre who lives deep in the mountains. It is also considered to be the embodiment of untamed nature itself, in which case even its gender becomes uncertain. This is a major reason why many different kinds of masks are used to perform the main character of this play.

In Japanese folklore, there are many different kinds of legends about Yamanba, but Zeami largely refrains from adopting those legends for his Noh play. Instead, he seems to have invented new anecdotes about Yamanba's contact with humankind. In the Noh play *Yamanba*, it is said that Yamanba comes to the human world from time to time. These times are when the lives of humans are in tune with the nature that Yamanba represents.

Examples of this interaction with humankind that Yamanba mentions in her *kusemai* are "to lighten the woodcutter's load" and "to speed on the work of the weaver" (Tyler 1992, 313). She explains as follows in the *kuse*:

> And when she tarries in the human realm,
> she may, as on a forest trail
> woodcutters rest beneath the blossoms,
> shoulder their heavy load and, with the moon
> rising, leave the hills to see them home.
> Or she may pass in through the window
> where a weaving maid has stood her loom
> and, nightingale, the willow-weaver,
> seat herself in the spinning room,
> only to help the work along.
> (Tyler 1992, 326-7)

Our ancestors lived in Mother Nature in accordance with the transition of the seasons. They must have known that there were moments when their labour seemed less trying or when it could be done surprisingly well. That might be because they happened to be walking along a path through cherry trees in full bloom or because they were enjoying the beautiful songs of birds as they worked. These experiences of feeling very close to nature, or of feeling nature very close to themselves, may have made them more susceptible to the idea that those miraculous moments were a manifestation of Yamanba. As we said, Yamanba is equivalent to nature.

The identity of Yamanba and nature is expressed more impressively in the last part of the play, where the text describes Yamanba's rounds of

mountains and valleys.[2] While pursuing cherry blossoms in spring, the shining moon in autumn or snow in winters, Yamanba travels all around the mountains. This description can, at the same time, be easily interpreted as the rounds, or transitions, of the seasons too. Or, more precisely, it looks as if Yamanba's rounds corresponded to the transitions of the seasons:

> Now I must be off, back to the mountains,
> in spring to watch, with bated breath,
> every tree for those first signs
> of the blossoms I pursue
> all around the mountains;
> in autumn to seek glorious light
> and the best view of the moon
> all around the mountains;
> in wintertime, to welcome cold,
> the lowering rainclouds,
> then the snow, all around the mountains.
> (Tyler 1992, 328)

The actor's movements also indicate that Yamanba's rounds of mountains overlap the shifting seasons. For example, the actor makes the slow movement of viewing distant mountains to the chorus's "[to watch] every tree for those first signs of the blossoms". With the help of that movement, we can visualise the image of cherry blossoms reaching full bloom from one mountain to another as the 'cherry blossom front' advances, as if watching images filmed with time-lapse photography.

Similar effects can be seen in the winter part. Assisted by the actor's movement called *men wo kiru* 面を切る (turning the face quickly and sharply from right to left or left to right), the audience can imagine the moment in which the drizzle of late autumn suddenly changes to snow.

In other words, the Yamanba portrayed in this way is as huge as nature itself. Yamanba – a life force equivalent to the essence of the deep mountains – watches the large-scale transitions of the seasons, as well as the moment-to-moment changes in the weather of a particular place.

Noh makes it possible for a character on stage to represent the spirit of nature, which is both merciful and fearful showing through that character's words the deep relationship between nature and people. Furthermore, the restrained and sophisticated movements in performances of today's Noh are even capable of expressing, somewhat paradoxically, the vastness of nature as well.

2 Tyler (1992, 313) says: "her rounds of the mountain become pure poetry, as she pursues blossoms and the moon. The fusion of her labour with the beauty of the seasons, in the closing lines of the play, sums up the aim and nature of classical poetry".

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The Idea of *Tsukuri yama*
Reimagining Mountains through *Aragoto*, the Style of Superhuman Strength in Kabuki

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Abstract This paper reports the most fundamental ideas of mountains in Japanese tradition from *aragoto* in Edo period Kabuki. Created and pioneered by Ichikawa Danjūrō I 初代市川団十郎 in the late seventeenth century, the rough style of Kabuki known as *aragoto* is characteristic of Kabuki in the Edo region (modern-day Tōkyō), contrasting the *wagoto* or soft style of the Kyōto-Ōsaka region. Many of the 18 best plays of the Ichikawa family are *aragoto* style performances and are still performed nowadays as specialities of the Ichikawa school. The style of *aragoto* during the Genroku era (1688-1704) – with its origin in performances of *oni*, or ogres, in local festival grounds – was mostly set in the mountainous areas where these ogres were believed to have dwelled. Setups for festivals, *yama*, which literally means 'mountain' in Japanese, or *tsukuri yama* つくり山 (reimagining mountains), serve as scenography representing the mountains. These *yama* have been created in various forms as places for Japanese *kami*, spirits or phenomena worshipped in folk beliefs, as far back as the tenth century. The stages for the ancient performing art called *kagura* and *yama* such as the Yamaboko float of the Kyōto Gion Festival and the Yamagasa float in Hakata are considered to be central to festivals. This paper aims to point out the folkloric mind-set behind *yama*, that is mountains as the manifestation of *kami*, using images of *aragoto*, *oni* and *yama*.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Staging of *aragoto*. – 3 Settings of *aragoto*. Typically in Mountains or with a Mountain as a Backdrop. – 4 Unruly Kinpira Dolls. Predecessors of *aragoto*. – 5 *Oni* in Festival Grounds. A Particular Focus on *oni* in *kagura*. – 6 *Yama*. Japanese Festival Floats at Festival Grounds. – 7 The Idea of *yama*. – 8 Conclusion.

Keywords Yama. Aragoto. Kinpira jōruri. Oni. Tsukuri yama. Kagura. Furyū. Mitate.

1 Introduction

The offer for this conference from Professor Ruperti instantly reminded me of mountains. Japan experienced a terrible disaster on 11th March 2011. In Fukushima, the whole population of many villages and towns had to be evacuated at that time, and 130,000 of them have yet to return. Mountains have become desolated at an alarming rate in those areas. Although mountains could be a cause of disaster, closely related to our daily lives, they have brought us blessings as well. Japan is a mountain-

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ous country. For instance, in Kōchi prefecture, where I live, mountains occupy nearly 90% of the land. This paper reports the most fundamental ideas of mountains in Japanese tradition from *aragoto* 荒事 in Kabuki of Edo period (1603-1867).[1]

2 The Staging of *aragoto*

Aragoto 荒事 is an artistic performance to show prodigious strength or rough action. Satō (2002a) shows that generally there are two types of typical staging of *aragoto*. In the first type, an evil spirit is subjugated and peace is restored. In this case, the evil spirit represented as *oni* is driven away by *kami* or a demon who can overpower *oni*. In the second, an incarnated *kami* goes on a wild rampage and, when his wishes are realised after the rampage, he promises to restore peace. In this case, the *kami* is incarnated in the form of a thunderbolt or the god of thunder.

The following examples show the first type of evil spirits' emergence as *oni*. Figure 1 is from an illustrated Kabuki script and depicts a scene of *Onigajō onna yamairi* 鬼城女山入 (First performed in July 1702, at the Yamamura Theatre in Edo). Fudō 不動 and Shuten dōji 酒呑童子 are fighting for a temple bell by pulling it like a tug-of-war. The figure on the right at the centre labelled as "Shuten dōji no reikon" 酒呑童子の霊魂 (The Spirit of Shuten Dōji) is depicted as *oni* having horns on his head.

In Figure 2 from *Sankai Nagoya* 参会名護屋 (First performed in January 1697, at the Nakamura Theatre in Edo) the biggest figure on the left, Shōki 鍾馗 performed by Danjūrō I, is subjugating the *oni* under his feet, who has horns as symbols of evil and is labelled as "Kusunoki Masashige no shūshin" 楠木正成の執心 (The Spirit of Kusunoki Masashige).

Figure 3 is from *Dōjōji* 道成寺 and shows a scene in which a she-demon comes out from a temple bell and confronts with a role called *oshi modoshi* 押戻し (literally 'pushing back'). "Oshi modoshi" is also a performance title among the 18 best plays by the Ichikawa family, the *Kabuki Jūhachiban* 歌舞伎十八番, in which play the starring role subjugates a demoness.

Figure 4 depicts the character of *oshi modoshi*, in its typical costume, wearing a straw lampshade hat and raincoat with a stalk of green bamboo with roots in one hand. Hat and coat mean *oni* or *kami* in disguise and the green bamboo is a symbol of unusual strength. *Oshi modoshi* is capable of subjugating a she-devil, which allows the interpretation that *Oshi modoshi* is a demon god.

1 All images described in the text are inserted in accordance with the number in the parentheses.

Figure 1 (Top). Onigajo onna yamairi. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1: 502-3

Figure 2 (Bottom left). Sankai Nagoya. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1: 52-3

Figure 3 (Bottom right). Dōjōji. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 52

The following examples are the second type of incarnated *kami*'s emergence as *oni.* Incarnated *kami* is realised as a god of thunder and appears as *oni* or *oni*-likened figure.

Figure 5 is from *Narukami* 鳴神, one of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*. It is a scene called "Narukami ōare" 鳴神大荒れ (The Rampage of Narukami). He puts the Dragon God (or the Water God) under containment by curse, causing a drought as a result. A princess named "Kumo no taema hime" 雲の絶間姫 seduces him to solve the problem. When he finds that he is deceived by her, he is in such a rage that he makes the corporal transformation from human to the god of thunder during the furious rampage. *Genpei narukami denki* 源平雷伝記, (first performed in August 1698 at the Nakamura Theatre in Edo) created by Danjūrō I, is the oldest Narukami play ever known. In the script, the transformation scene is expressed as "Is he Narukami or an incarnated god?". Special makeup, standing hair, and flame patterns on the kimono prove that he is an incarnated god or a human transformed into thunder.

At the centre of Figure 6 is Tenjin sama 天神様 (the deified spirit of Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真), the predecessor of an incarnated god of thunder such as Narukami. In the scene from *Kitano tenjin engi emaki* 北野天神縁起絵巻 (1503), Michizane, who made a corporal transformation into a god of thunder, has just flown to the mansion of Fujiwara no Shihei 藤原時平 in Kyōto for vengeance. As seen in this case, the god of thunder appears as *oni*, which is red all over.

In brief, staging of *aragoto* is realised either in a form of weaker *oni* and stronger *oni* or in a demon god. Therefore, *oni* is a key word of *aragoto*.

3 Settings of *aragoto*. Typically in Mountains or with a Mountain as a Backdrop

When we focus on the setting of *aragoto*, it is notably in mountains or has a mountain as a backdrop as seen in the following examples.

Figure 7 is *Yanone* 矢の根, one of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*, which was first created and performed by Danjūrō II 市川団十郎 (二世). The main character Soga no Gorō 曽我の五郎 is an incarnated god, venerated by people in Edo throughout the Edo period. Until the mid-nineteenth century, a Kabuki play on the Soga story had been staged every New Year. In this picture Soga no Gorō is sharpening a large arrowhead with Mount Fuji behind him.

Figure 8 is a scene from *Kusazuribiki* 草摺引き (tasset pulling). As previously shown in Figure 1 with a temple bell version, two people pulling an object from each side is one of *aragoto* stage effects: for example, *zō hiki* 像引き(elephant pulling) and *sotoba hiki* 卒塔婆引き (grave tablet pulling). In this picture, Soga no Gorō and Kobayashi no Asahina 小林の朝比奈 are performing an 'armor-tasset pulling' on a mobile stage representing *yama* with a Mount Fuji backdrop.

Figure 4 (Top). *Oshi modoshi*. Reproduced from *The National Diet Library Digital Collection*. URL `http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1308780?tocOpened=1` (2017-06-12)

Figure 5 (Centre). *Narukami*. Reproduced from the *Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum Digital Archives Collection*

Figure 6 (Bottom). *Kitano tenjin engi emaki*. Reproduced from *Izutsuya no bunka kigo*. URL `http://izucul.cocolog-nifty.com/balance/2009/08/vs-3a8a.html` (2017-06-12)

Figure 7 (Top). Yanone. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 16.

Figure 8 (Left). Kusazuribiki. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 69

Figure 9 (Right). Shoki. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 53

Setting in mountains is illustrated in the following examples.

Figure 9 is Shōki 鍾馗 whose *oni* subjugation is performed in a rocky mountain.

Figure 10 is from one of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*, *Fudō* 不動 (The God Of Fire). As usually seen in Fudō statues in temples, *Fudō* is expressed as a figure sitting on a rock in this scene. This rock throne is thought to represent the top of the mountain.

Figure 11 is from *Kagekiyo* 景清, another of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*. Taira no Kagekiyo is imprisoned for having made an attempt on the life of Minamoto no Yoritomo but he breaks out of a sturdy prison. The prison is set in a cave in Mount Kamakura.

The setting of *Dōjōji* is in the mountains in the first place. In addition, going back to Figure 3, the picture of *oshi modoshi* scene from *Dōjōji* provides an example of *yamadai* 山台 (mountain platform), the high stage on which a demoness stands, representing *yama*.

Figure 12 is Gorō's rampage scene from a Kabuki script of *Tsuwamono kongen Soga* 兵根元曽我 (first performed in July 1697, at the Nakamura Theatre in Edo). Danjūrō I as Soga no Gorō has just transformed himself into a god after a three-week rigorous ascetic praying to become *oni* or *kami* to avenge on Kudō Suketsune 工藤祐経 for killing his father. He has broken an iron hoe and is now uprooting a large bamboo stalk.

Figure 13, *Take nuki Gorō* 竹抜五郎 (Bamboo-uprooting Gorō) by Torii Kiyomasu 鳥居清倍, is a coloured version of Gorō's rampage (fig. 12), and Gorō's body is all red. Danjūrō I played Goro's role with his body painted all over. This red is also the colour of Michizane who turned into *oni*, the god of thunder, in Figure 6.

Figure 14 from *Tsuwamono kongen Soga* shows Gorō before turning into the incarnation of a *kami*. He is in his adolescence, looking charming in the costume of a young man and sitting face to face with his enemy Kudō. This shows that the rigorous mountain asceticism enabled him to transform from human into a *kami*.

Figure 15 is another example of mountain setting, a scene called "Narukami ōare" 鳴神大荒れ (The Rampage of Narukami). The setting is *Kitayama iwaya* 北山岩屋 (Kitayama mountain cave).

Figure 16 is a scene named "Tenpaizan" 天拝山 (Mount Tenpai) from the Kabuki play *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑. On the summit of a high mountain called Tenpaizan, Michizane undertakes a transformation from human into *kami*. He has just split a large pine tree in two with his power. This Tenpaizan scene stems from neither Kabuki nor Jōruri.

According to Kasai (1973), Michizane's story, namely the story of the foundation of Kitano Tenjin Shrine, came into existence between the late twelfth century and the thirteenth century and this Tenpaizan scene is in both the oldest book about Tenjin foundation, written in the Kenkyū 建久 era (1190-1198), and the oldest Tenjin foundation picture scroll painted in the Jōkyū 承久 era (1219-1222).

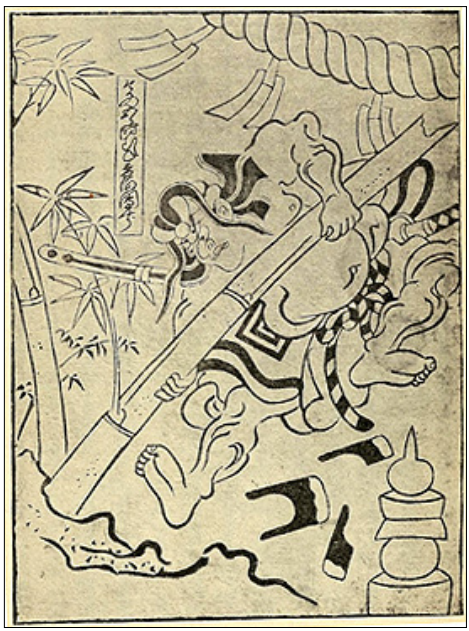


Figure 10 (Top-left). Fudō. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 29.

Figure 11 (Top-right). Kagekiyo. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 61.

Figure 12 (Bottom-left). Tsuwamono kongen Soga. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1: 72.

Figure 13 (Bottom-right). Takenuki Gorō by Kiyomasu Torii . Reproduced from *Ichikawa Danjurō Edo kabuki jūichidai no keifu* (1978).

Figure 14 (Top). Tsuwamono kongen Soga. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten , 1: 68-9.

Figure 15 (Bottom). Narukami. Reproduced from *Shashinshū kabuki jūhachiban* (1985). Tōkyō: Gyōsei, 60: 57.

Figure 16 (Right). Tenpaizan. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 78.

Figure 17 (Bottom). *Kitano tenjin engi emaki*. Reproduced from *Kyūshū Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan* website. URL http://collection.kyuhaku.jp/advanced/2194.html (2017-06-06).

Figure 17 is the picture scroll of the foundation of Kitano Tenjin from the early sixteenth century and depicts the scene in which Michizane, during his exile in Chikushi after praying seven days and seven nights, transforms into the Thunder God, Tenjin.

In Jōruri chant of the Kabuki, *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑,[2] the words that describe the Tenpaizan scene are these: "On top of the mountain so high up, I make a vow to three great gods: Brahma, Sakra Devanam Indra and the Great Enma. I persevere to remain standing and practice rigorous austerity for three days and three nights. My spirit changes into thunder inside clouds".[3]

In act 7 of stage direction of this Kabuki play, the Tenpaizan scene is explained as follows: "Clear the centre of the stage then lift up a papermache rock placed onto the stage by a stage elevator. The pine tree on top of the rock splits into two by a trick. Michizane strikes a pose holding a Japanese apricot branch in his hand".[4] As seen in the above examples, Michizane undergoes a process of asceticism just like Soga no Gorō did, which implies that he and the previously cited Gorō are similar beings.

To sum up, as the examples show, superhuman power emerges with mountains as a background and transformation is realised in or on top of the mountains, showing how *aragoto* requires *yama*. As a consequence, *oni* and *yama* are keywords in *aragoto*.

4 Unruly Kinpira Dolls. Predecessors of *aragoto*

Having seen features of *aragoto* so far, I will now examine how Kinpira dolls are realised in Kinpira jōruri 金平浄瑠璃 as the predecessors of *aragoto*. Kinpira dolls influenced *aragoto* created by Danjūrō and others (Watsuji 1971; Mizutani 1974).

The main character of Kinpira jōruri, Sakata no Kinpira 坂田金平, is the heir of Sakata no Kintoki 坂田金時. In other words, Kinpira is the second generation of Kintoki whose father is the god of thunder and mother is a mountain witch. In addition, Kinpira's mother is in fact a serpent and he grows up in the mountains, exactly like his father, after having spent five years in his mother's womb.

2 The author is unknown. The Jōruri play "Sugawara denju tenarai kagami" (co-written by Takeda Izumo, Takeda Koizumo, Miyoshi Shōraku and Namiki Senryū and first performed in 1746, at the Takemoto Theatre in Ōsaka) was so popular that the story was adapted for a Kabuki in the same year. Since then, "Sugawara denju tenarai kagami" has been repeatedly performed in both Jōruri and Kabuki in the Edo and Ōsaka regions.

3 See "Sugawara denju tenarai kagami", *Meisaku kabuki zenshū* (1968). Tōkyō: Tōkyō Sōgen shinsha, 2: 211. Author's translation.

4 See "Sugawara denju tenarai kagami", *Meisaku kabuki zenshū* (1968). Tōkyō: Tōkyō Sōgen shinsha, 2: 211. Author's translation.

How are these father and son represented in the art of Jōruri chant? When Jōruri words are examined to seek this answer, the two are described as "red all over", "tall", and like the demon called Yasharasetsu 夜叉羅刹. In short, they are explained as though they were savage *oni*. Other expressions used for them are "rowdy", "the son of *oni*", "the grandson of *oni*", "*oni* subjugator" (Satō 2002b). That is to say both Kintoki and Kinpira are deeply related to *oni* and *yama.*

Figures 18 and 19 are scenes from a Jōruri text, *Kinpira tanjōki* 公平たんじやうき (Kinpira's Birth Story) published around the beginning of the Kanbun era (1661-1672). Figure 18 portrays the moment when Kinpira was born. Since he was in the womb for as long as five years, he already has plenty of hair and even fangs. Surprised to see his son, Kintoki abandons him in a mountain. However, as Figure 19 reveals, another surprise comes when later Kintoki finds Kinpira far from being dead, but safe and sound. Cherished by beasts, he has fully grown up and now is sitting stately in a mountain cave.

The father Kintoki, also known as Kintarō 金太郎, was an ideal figure of a healthy and strong child throughout early modern times. Figure 20 is one of the many examples by the eighteenth century artist Kitagawa Utamaro 喜多川歌麿 of the mother, a beautiful mountain witch, and her charming child, Kintoki. Kintoki is red painted all over. Figure 21 by the nineteenth century painter Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 shows a scene from Kintoki's childhood, while he is playing the role of sumō wrestling referee with the *oni* as his underlings.

Figure 22, another Kintoki's portrait by Kuniyoshi, is entitled "Kaidōmaru" 怪童丸, which is another childhood name of Kintoki. He is holding up an *oni* in one hand. This is *oni* subjugation by Kintoki.

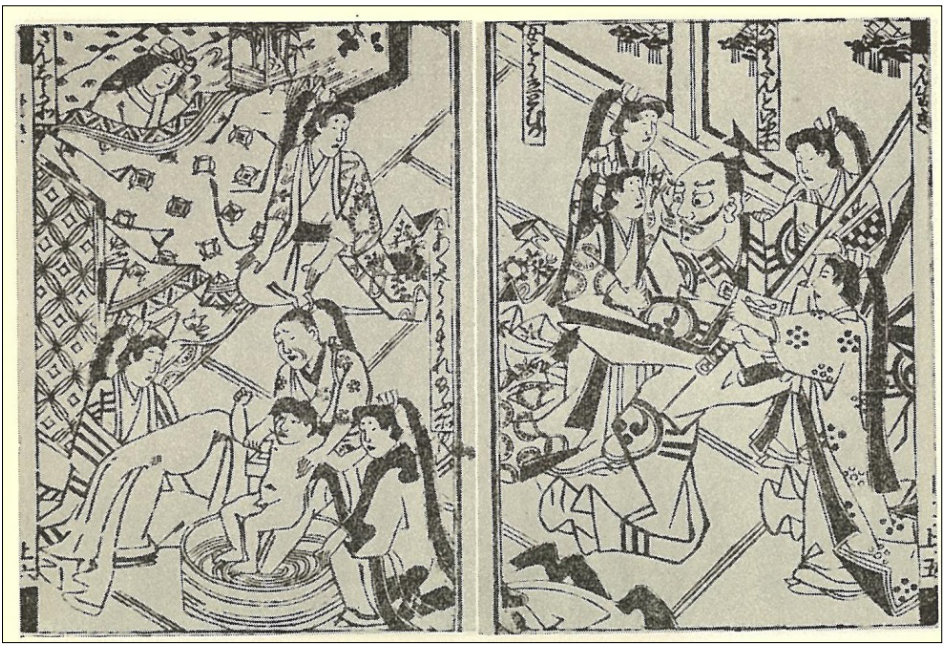
The examples provided here show that Kinpira and Kintoki are represented as *oni* and their superhuman strength emerge with mountains as backgrounds. Therefore, in Kinpira dolls in Kinpira jōruri, again key words are *oni* and *yama*.

5 *Oni* in Festival Grounds. A Particular Focus on *oni* in *kagura*

Oni 鬼 has been a key word in this paper but what is *oni* in the first place?

According to Orikuchi (1975), in ancient times *oni* and *kami* had the same meaning. By early modern times around the Edo period, *oni* were represented by various images in theatrical performance and literature.

Baba (1988) categorised *oni* into five types. Among them she defined that the origin of the oldest prototype of *oni* in Japan were the spirits of ancestors and local regions that appeared to give blessing in folklore. *Oni* of this type remain in *kagura* and in many *oni*-related festivals such as Oni-oi 鬼追い (*oni* chasing) and Shushō-e 修正会.



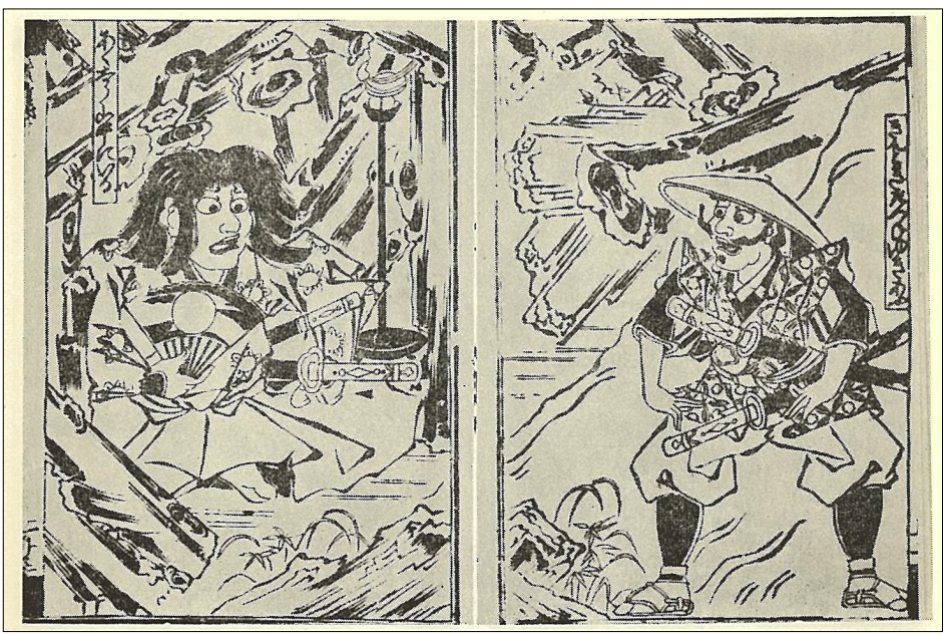


Figure 18 (Top). Kinpira tanjōki. Reproduced from *Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū* (1966). Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 1: 601.

Figure 19 (Bottom). Kinpira tanjōki. Reproduced from *Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū* (1966). Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 1: 602.

Figure 20 (Top-left). *Yamauba to Kintoki* by Utamaro (1753-1806). Reproduced from *Wikipedia* at the voice "Yamauba". URL `https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/山姥` (2017-06-12).

Figure 21 (Top-right). *Kintarō sumō no zu* by Kuniyoshi (1797-1861). Reproduced from *Ukiyo e no naka no kodomo tachi* (1993). Tōkyō: Kumon Shuppan, 146.

Figure 22 (Right). *Honchō musha kagami Kaidōmaru* by Kuniyoshi. URL `http://ameblo.jp/giantlimited/entry-11157393421.html` (2017-06-12).

Among examples of such prototypes, my analysis will focus on *oni* in *kagura*. *Kagura* is performed mostly at festivals all over Japan from Hokkaidō in the north to Kyūshū in the south. *Kagura* is sometimes explained as an ancient theatrical art, in which people politely welcome and entertain *kami* and also perform as *kami* to act out the promise that people will worship them in order to receive protection in return.

First, I will draw some examples from Kōchi prefecture. *Oni* called Yamanushi and Daiban appear in *kagura* in Tosa (Kōchi) performed in villages and towns mostly during the month of November.

Yamanushi 山主 (literally 'mountain owner') in Figure 23 dances with a big red cloth. Local people believe that Yamanushi is a *kami* or a Demon-God that lives nearby and rules the mountains. Yamanushi chants a spell to promise the locals peace then dances wildly.

Figures 24-27 are photographs of Daiban ダイバン and, as seen in 24 and 25, he wears a big red *oni* mask. Daiban is the most popular character in Tosa *kagura* and is playfully called "warikotoshi" わりことし (scam) by the people of the district. Daiban dances holding a baby and, if the baby cries during the dance, he or she is said to grow up healthy.

Daiban also has sumo bouts with the locals as shown in Figure 26 and always wins. Daiban has enormous physical strength and goes on rampages but, after being subjugated by *kami*, he hands seven treasures over, with the promise of peace to the people, which is depicted in Figure 27. Daiban's performance is an easy version of Yamanushi.

The second example is the *oni* appearing during Hana Matsuri 花祭り held in mountainous villages in the boundary area called Sanshintō 三信遠 between Aichi, Nagano and Shizuoka prefectures in central Japan in December and January.

Among many *oni* appearing in Hana Matsuri, Yamamioni 山見鬼 and Sakakioni 榊鬼 are leader-like figures as they are thought to be the most powerful. Yamamioni (literally 'mountain looking *oni*') dances all in red with red attire and a red mask twice as big as Dainban's, holding a broadaxe, like the one Kintarō has. Figure 28 shows Yamamioni who takes an action to split a caldron that represents *yama* during *kagura* performance.

Figure 29 represents Sakakioni (Cleyera japonica *oni*). He fights for a *sakaki* branch, which is considered to be holy in Shintō, with a Shintō priest. After he loses he hands his treasures over. The scenario is basically the same as the one of Daiban in Tosa. Both Yamamioni and Sakakioni dance, swinging a broadaxe high up in the air and stepping heavily on the ground. These movements are said to appease evil spirits.

Figure 30 is by the painter and folklorist Hayakawa Kōtarō, and portrays a *sakaki* branch being pulled, which is considered to be the origin of pulling stage performance of Kabuki such as *kane hiki* 鐘引き and *kusazuri biki* 草摺引き. Hayakawa has studied his hometown's festival, Hana Matsuri, and made it widely known. His study enables us to interpret to some extent

Figure 23 (Top-right). *Yama nushi*. Courtesy of Eri Sato

Figures 24-25 (Right and Top-left). *Daiban*. Courtesy of Okuda Shono

Figures 26-27. *Daiban*.
Courtesy of Okuda Shono

the meaning of people's actions in the festival. The *sakaki* branch in the festival is a symbol of mountains that the God of the Mountain owns and rules. In short, a *sakaki* branch represents *yama,* thus to hand over the branch entails a promise of peace and blessing from mountains filled with mysterious power.

Oni in Hana Matsuri are called *onisama* 鬼さま, with the honorific title *sama*, and warmly cheered during the dance by local people. Similarly to the case of Daiban in Tosa, people feel close to *oni*. In folklore, *oni* in *kagura* such as Daiban and *oni* in Hana Matsuri are considered to represent spirits of mountains or unruly gods. Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, however, says that "*oni* originally have an auspicious nature", citing an example of *oni* that hands over treasures in a Kyōgen farce, *Setsubun* 節分 (Orikuchi 1976, 141). Daiban and *oni* in Hana Matsuri have this nature as well. *Aragoto* in kabuki may also belong to this line of performing art.

6 *Yama*. Japanese Festival Floats at Festival Grounds

Finally, I will examine *tsukuri yama*, which is a stage or setting for *aragoto* and *oni* in *kagura*. Representing mountains to reflect nature in the human world, *tsukuri yama* are a basic requirement for traditional festivals. There are two types of *tsukuri yama*, namely *yama* in *kagura* and *yama* in local festivals. They are usually collectively referred to as *furyū no yama* 風流の山 in research environment. This paper also deals with both as *furyū no yama*. There are quite a few examples referring to *kagura* dancing stages as *yama* but here I will specifically refer to two examples, Hana Matsuri and Ōmoto Kagura.

In Hana Matsuri, the stage where *kagura* is performed is *yama*. In an event called "Yama tate" 山立て (mountain setting up), a *sakaki* tree is placed upright at each corner of a square *kagura* stage. Hayakawa Kōtarō (1971, 111) claims that "this setting enables a stage to be assumed as a mountain". In Figure 31 there is a *kagura* stage called *maido* 舞処, or *yama*, seen from above. This setting is made in an earthen floored room of a private house. A kitchen stove is placed at the centre of the room, above which a cubic object called *byakke* びゃっけ hung from the ceiling. Then, each corner of the *byakke* and the nearest *sakaki* tree at every corner are connected with a rope, making *kami michi* 神道,or roads for gods. Then, each *sakaki* tree is also connected to the next one with a sacred straw festoon, completing the setup of *yama* for *kagura*. Only after this *tsukuri yama* is prepared can *oni* appear on the stage.

Another example is Figure 32, representing *shira yama* 白山 (white mountain). In the area where Hana Matsuri is held, a large-scale festival called "Kagura" is performed every seven years. In the festival, a significant event named "Umare Kiyomari" 生まれ清まり (literally 'reborn to be purified') is carried out. *Shira yama* is a kind of *yama* especially made for this event. People retreat inside *shira yama* and they are revitalised when *oni* appears and cuts it through. Hayakawa

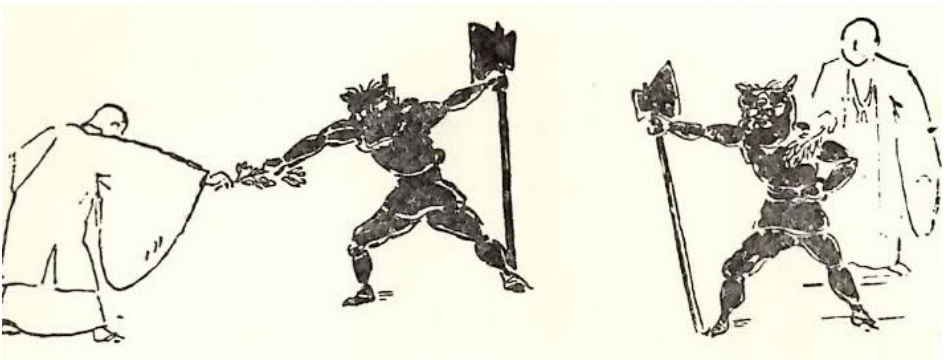


Figure 28 (Top-left). Hana Matsuri, *Yamamioni*. Reproduced from *Mikawa no yamazato dayori* website. URL `http://hana.toyone.org/Windows-Live-Writer/2016_11D7B/DSC08469.jpg` (2017-07-07)

Figure 29 (Top-right). Hana matsuri, *Sakakioni*. Reproduced from website. URL `http://folk-entertainment.sblo.jp/category/150064-1.html` (2017-06-12)

Figure 30 (Bottom). Sakakibiki. Reproduced from *Hayakawa Kōtarō zenshū* (1971), vol. 1, *Hana Matsuri zenpen*. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 215

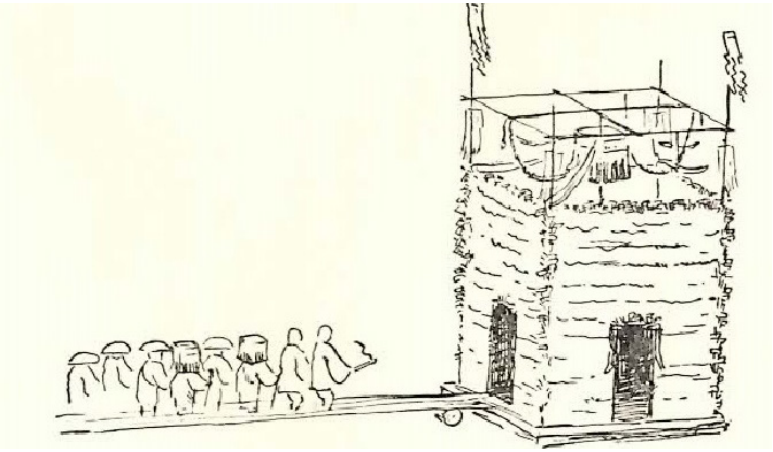


Figure 31 (Right). Yama(maido). Reproduced from *Hayakawa Kōtarō zenshū* (1971), vol. 1, *Hana Matsuri zenpen*. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 78.

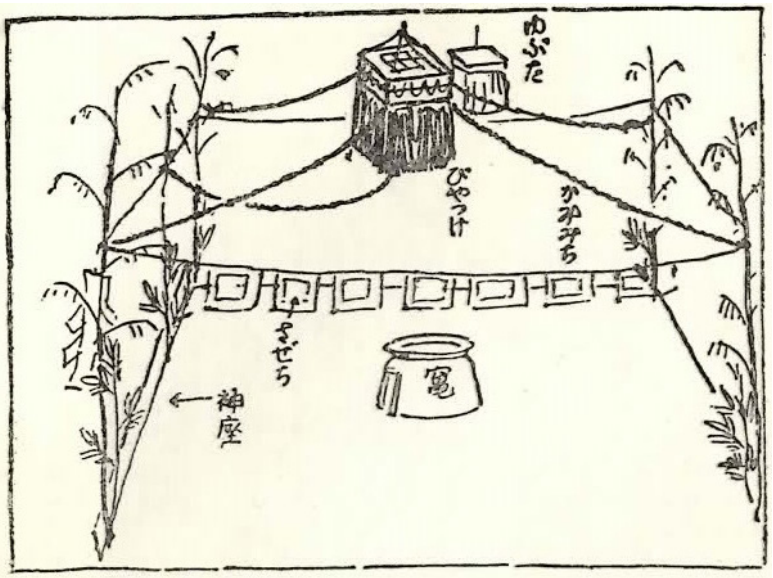


Figure 32 (Centre). Shirayama (a drawing based on supposition). Reproduced from *Hayakawa Kōtarō zenshū* (1972), vol. 2, *Hana Matsuri zenpen*. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 78.

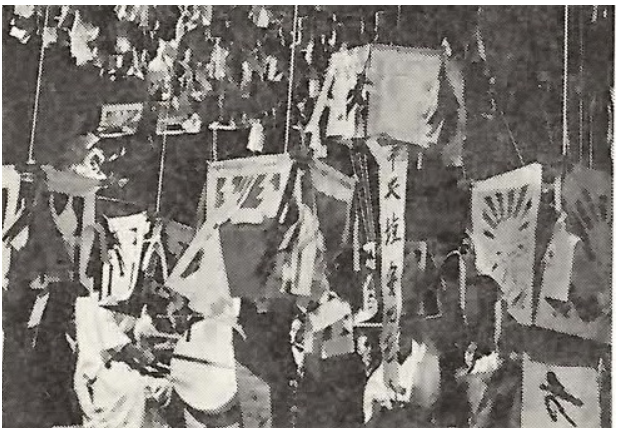


Figure 33 (Top). Yama kanjō. Reproduced from *Ushio Michio chosakushū* (1985), vol. 1, *Kagura to kami gakari*. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan.

Figure 34 (Centre-left). Motoyama. Reproduced from *Ushio Michio chosakushū* (1985), vol. 1, *Kagura to kami gakari*. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan, 41.

Figure 35 (Centre-right). Tengai. Reproduced from *Ushio Michio chosakushū* (1985), vol. 1, *Kagura to kami gakari*. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan, 40.

(1972) argues that *shira yama* and *maido kagura* stage are of the same kind since tradition and style are similar. They share some features, for instance, the size of the site (3.6m×3.6m and 5.4m high) and decorations with *byakke*, *hakuhei* 白弊 (bunches of sacred white paper strips) and green brush-wood walls.

In Ōmoto Kagura 大元神楽, which is held in a mountainous region including Ōchi-gun 邑智郡, Shimane Prefecture, *maido kagura* stage is called *yama*. Held every six years to receive their Ancestor God, Ōmotogami 大元神, Ōmoto Kagura has a long tradition. A role called "Taku Tayū" performs a medium who listens to oracles from Ōmotogami and this divine spiritual possession is given the utmost importance.

Ushio Michio is a Shintō priest and a folklorist in this area, who has studied *kagura* deeply. In Figure 33 he is carrying out Yama Kanjō 山勧請 ritual. According to Ushio (1985) the ritual is explained as follows.

Figure 34 represents *moto yama*, a straw bag with many sacred staffs with plaited paper streamers, which is also referred to *yama no tawara* 山の俵 (straw bag of the mountain). It is the place to receive Ōmotogami and other *kami* are received at a place called *hayama* 端山. As names with '*-yama*' indicate *yama* is a seat for *kami* and *maido* stage as a whole. Without this *tsukuri yama*, Ōmotogami cannot appear in front of people.

In the ritual, many *tengai* 天蓋 (canopies) seen in Figure 35 are hanging and priests underneath shake them with hanging ropes attached to them. *Tengai* are places for *kami* to come to.

These *tengai* are also included in *yama*. Consequently, *yama* in Ōmoto Kagura is the same as *yama* in Hana Matsuri, which uses *byakke*. *Tengai* represents the firmament, linking *yama* and heaven.

The next examples are of *furyū no yama*. These *yama* appear in some 1,100 festivals all over Japan. They come in various forms, such as ornamental structures, festival floats, dancing cars, scaffolds and sacred palanquins. The following four points are characteristics of *yama*:

1. *Yama* is moved, carried or drawn along by many people;
2. *Yama* is the central feature and highlight of festivals;
3. *Yama* is a mobile seat for *kami* and a movable stage;
4. *Yama* is a place to decorate dolls and for people to dance and perform plays such as Kabuki. Interestingly, those dolls are usually mostly from stories of *aragoto* or heroic legends.

When we follow back the history of *furyū no yama*, the oldest *yama* seen in documents is the one in Daijōsai 大嘗祭, the Great Thanksgiving. This is the origin of *yamaboko* 山鉾 that took root in the Kyoto Gion Festival 祇園祭 in the late Kamakura period, in the early fourteenth century. Then, throughout the Edo period (1603-1867), various *yama* were developed in many places. The *yamaboko* float of Kyoto Gion Festival was used as a model.

An example is seen in Yamaage Matsuri 山あげ祭り, or Yakumo Shrine 八

Figure 36. Yamaage Matsuri. Reproduced from Dai 5 kai *Yamaage matsuri shashin kontesuto jushō sakuhinshū*. URL http://park18.wakwak.com/~omotenashi/yamaage/fotokon2013.pdf (2017-06-12).

雲神社 Festival, held in July in Karasuyama 烏山, Tochigi Prefecture. In this festival, three *yama*, namely *maeyama* 前山, *nakayama* 中山 and *ōyama* 大山 are made by pasting paper on lattice frames, on which Kabuki is performed. Figure 36 shows local young men rushing to the performing site drawing along a platform car that carries parts for *yama*.

Arriving at the roadside site, they set up a ten-metre high *ōyama*, as in Figure 37. This work is expressed as '*yama wo ageru*', which means to raise a mountain.

In the same manner three *yama* are raised as in Figure 38, and Kabuki is performed with them as a background. Performances often shown are those with a demoness in the mountains, such as *Modoribashi* 戻橋 and *Masakado* 将門.

The next example is from *Hitachi furyū mono* 日立風流物 in Hitachi Sakura Matsuri 日立さくらまつり held in April in Hitachi City, Ibaraki Prefecture. As in Figure 39, a gigantic festival float is proceeding along between rows of cherry trees in full bloom.

Figure 40 is a close-up of the festival float in Figure 39. With puppeteers and musicians inside, this huge festival float, 15-metre high and weigh-

Figure 37 (Right). *Yamaage Matsuri*. Reproduced from *Dai 5 kai Yamaage matsuri shashin kontesuto jushō sakuhinshū*. URL `http://park18.wakwak.com/~omotenashi/yamaage/fotokon2013.pdf` (2017-06-12)

Figure 38 (Centre-right). *Yamaage Matsuri*. Reproduced from *Dai 5 kai Yamaage matsuri shashin kontesuto jushō sakuhinshū*. URL `http://park18.wakwak.com/~omotenashi/yamaage/fotokon2013.pdf` (2017-06-12)

Figure 39 (Bottom-right). *Hitachi furyū mono*. Reproduced from *Hitachi Media Club* homepage. URL `http://www.maroon.dti.ne.jp/hmc/hakubutu.htm` (2017-06-12)

ing five tons, has a five-story castle back to back with a mountain and is drawn along the festival route by over 200 people. Similar to *yama* raising in Karasuyama, this is an outburst of extraordinary passion. The sight of this huge *yama* moving along leaves strong impression on people.

The castle side (front) and the mountain side (back) host different performances. It is customary to exhibit performances from war tales on the front stage and *oni* subjugation stories relating to mountains, for instance *Momotarō* 桃太郎 and *Tawara no Tōta mukade taiji* 俵藤太百足退治 on the back stage.

The next example is from Hakata Gion Yamagasa 博多祇園山笠 Festival, held in July at Kushida Shrine 櫛田神社, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City, in Fukuoka Prefecture. At the climax of the festival called *oiyama* 追い山, festival floats from seven towns appear and, as shown in Figure 41, people dash a distance of four kilometres shouldering festival floats, thus creating a feverish atmosphere.

These festival floats are newly created every year. Like the example in Figure 42, a doll mounted on a float is usually from a character of war tales or *aragoto* in Kabuki. The base is covered with green bush-wood following the traditional style, which is similar to *yama* in Ise Kagura.

Figure 43 is an example of *kazari yama* that stands 11-metre high. The idea for the design is taken from an *aragoto* performance, called *Shibaraku* 暫. Before electric power lines appeared on city streets, people used to run while pulling a festival float of this size. Here also we can see another demonstration of incredible passion.

Yama and *hoko* festival floats from the Kyoto Gion Festival are seen in Figure 44, which is from the picture scroll *Gion sairei emaki* 祇園祭礼絵巻 appeared in 1660. In this festival, as well as Hakata Yamagasa and *Hitachi furyū mono*, bamboo and a pine tree on a float are a symbol of a seat for *kami.* The plants play the same role as *sakaki* trees of *yama* in *maido kagura* stage.

Figure 45, a reconstruction based on old documents, depicts a *hyō no yama* 標の山 made in the Imperial Court in ancient times. These two *yama* are mobile seats for *kami*. They were moved from Shinzen'en 神泉苑, a festival ground, to a courtyard of the Imperial Palace for Daijōsai, which is the first Thanksgiving Festival after the Enthronement of an Emperor. With a pine tree on top, the sun, the moon and hermit-like dolls are decorated, expressing idealised mountains. These *yama* were beautifully made to praise mountains.

7 The Idea of *yama*

Orikuchi Shinobu and Gunji Masakatsu 郡司正勝 were scholars who focused on *yama*, or *tsukuri yama* in their studies. Based on their major papers, Orikuchi's (1971) and Gunji's (1989) visions of *yama* were confirmed through examining *aragoto* and *oni* in *kagura*, and are summarised as follows. *Yama* is a place to receive *kami,* a place to revitalise in seclusion and a place where spiritual transformation occurs. The life of a festival depends on how *yama* is realised.

Figure 40 (Top-left). *Hitachi furyū mono*. Reproduced from website. URL `http://suriganenohibiki.web.fc2.com/kamine.html` (2017-06-12).

Figure 41 (Top-right). *Hitachi furyū mono*. Reproduced from website. URL `http://suriganenohibiki.web.fc2.com/kamine.html` (2017-06-12).

Figure 42 (Centre-right). *Hakata Gion Yamagasa*, Kaki yama. Reproduced from official site. URL `http://www.hakatayamakasa.com/62746.html` (2017-07-07).

Figure 43 (Centre-left). *Hakata Gion Yamagasa*, Kazari yama. Reproduced from website. URL `http://www.hakata-kasaya.co.jp/kotobuki/` (2017-06-12).

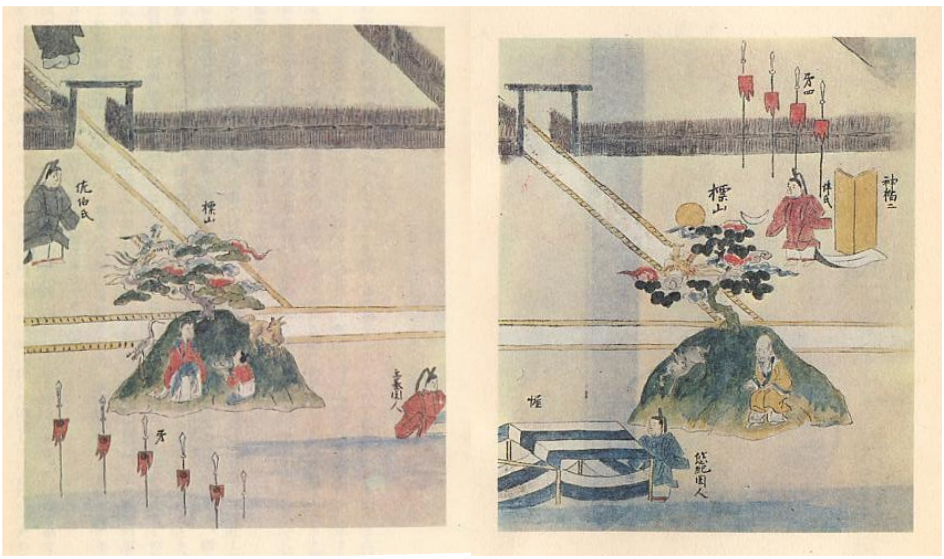


Figure 44 (Top). Gion sairei emaki. Reproduced from *Kinsei sairei: Tsukinami fūzoku emaki* (2005). Ōsaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 65.

Figure 45 (Bottom). Hyō no yama in ancient Imperial Court. Reproduced from *Daijōsai-zu* (appeared in 17th century). Honda Yasuji (1970), *Katarimono-furyū 2*. Tōkyō: Mokuji sha.

8 Conclusion

The *tsukuri yama* seen in this paper allow the interpretation that the idea of *yama* reflects people's fundamental notion towards mountains in Japan. That is to say mountains are the place where *kami*, *oni*, and supernatural beings live or come to. In other words, mountains create *kami*, *oni*, and supernatural beings in Japan. It can be said that the performance of *aragoto* and *oni* in *kagura* was determined by this notion. Mountains have power beyond human knowledge and are objects of awe. They are more similar to a sacred being than just to a natural creation. They are the manifestation of *kami*.

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Rethinking Nature in Japan
From Tradition to Modernity
edited by Bonaventura Ruperti, Silvia Vesco and Carolina Negri

The Struggle with Nature in Kubo Sakae's *Land of Volcanic Ash*
The Relation Between Fertilizer and Soil

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Abstract It is said that no work has had ever greater impact than one of Kubo Sakae's plays, Land of Volcanic Ash (Kazanbaichi) in modern Japanese drama. The play was published in the literary magazine, Shinchō, from 1937 to 1938 and first staged by the Shinkyō Gekidan, a Shingeki Troup in those days, in the year when it was completed. Kubo Sakae was born in Sapporo on 28 December 1900 and died in Tokyo on 15 March 1958. Land of Volcanic Ash describes people's lives in an agricultural community in Obihiro, Hokkaido, where they have harsh and inhospitable climates in Japan. The climates could resemble more that of southern Canada or northern Europe, than that of the rest of Japan.

Keywords Kubo Sakae. Kazanbaichi. Hokkaido. N. P. K. Tsukiji little theatre.

Discussion of Japanese theatre in the West tends to centre on premodern Noh and Kabuki. Since the modern period, theatre and drama have developed at a great rate; however, maybe due to *japonisme*, the traditional is still preferred abroad. I hope that this discussion of the modern play *Kazanbaichi* 火山灰地 (Land of Volcanic Ash, year of publication) will provide an incentive for readers to focus on the modern.

Kubo Sakae 久保栄,[1] the author of *Land of Volcanic Ash*, debuted as a playwright in the early thirties and died in 1958. During that time he was at the centre of the *shingeki*[2] movement. Kubo addresses two major themes in this play: the struggle between humans and nature and the relations

1 Kubo Sakae was born in Sapporo on the northern island of Japan, Hokkaidō, in December 1900. His father managed a brick factory and served as president of the Sapporo Chamber of Commerce. Kubo was raised in Tōkyō and joined the elitist educational system from the First Middle School, to the First High School, to the prestigious Tōkyō Imperial University. At college he majored in German and later joined the literary division of the Tsukiji Little Theatre co-founded by Osanai Kaoru and Hijikata Yoshi. His first play was *Shinsetsu Kokusen'ya kassen* 新説国姓爺合戦 (The Battle of Coxinga New Version, 1930).

2 Shingeki refers to the new modern theatre movement that began in the early twentieth century.

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between workers and capitalism. This paper will focus on the aspect of his way to deal with nature.

Land of Volcanic Ash is a large-scale play in two parts and seven acts. Even with contemporary stage technology, staging the complete play would require about seven hours, so understandably it is rarely produced. The most recent full production was in January and March 2005 by the Gekidan Mingei 劇団民藝 (People's Art Theatre).

Sixty characters appear. They include agricultural scientists, workers and their families, landowners, farmers, charcoal makers, women and children. Of this large number, the agricultural scientist Amamiya Akira, his wife Teruko, her father and agricultural scientist Dr. Takimoto and his disciple and manager of the cable company Karasawa are the main characters involved in the scientists-nature-farmers issue.

Modern Japanese literary arts, particularly drama and fiction, have pursued realism since the Meiji period (1868-1912). It is commonly accepted among critics that the play *Land of Volcanic Ash* brought that search to completion.

The play is certainly naturalistic and is considered to be a major example of 'realistic theatre' (*riarizumu engeki* リアリズム演劇). At the same time, it is a new kind of drama that deconstructs naturalistic expression, especially in the poetic sections concerning nature.

Land of Volcanic Ash features all social classes and, for instance, in the prelude to Part 1, in which farmers appear, a farmer recites a 'poem'. Such a lyrical method would have been unthinkable in Ibsen's or Chekhov's time. Five poems are inserted – before the first and third acts, the opening of the second act, and in the afternoon and evening of the sixth act. They depict how nature brings both joy and sadness to the people of Hokkaidō.[3]

This lyrical method is a major characteristic of this play. By including poetry, Kubo deconstructs the naturalistic style dominant at that time and brings a new expressivity to drama. He is a good example of the avant-garde artist ahead of his times forging new experimental works.

In addition, Kubo claims to have aimed at the "unification of scientific and poetic form" (Kubo 1989, 9) in this particular work. Scientific form refers to a Marxist analysis of capitalism and poetic form to the artistic formulation of 'living language' by characters situated in society and based on Aristotelian dramaturgy.

This play is about the struggles of people who lived in the northern island of Hokkaidō in the thirties. Specifically the social issues are about fertilizers, poverty, labour and exploitation, love and the collapse of the family. Due to the constraints of space, I will focus on what has direct connection with nature, i.e. the problem of fertilizer and soil, which leads to the tragedy of scientist Amamiya Akira and his theory.

3 For further discussion on Kubo's poetry, see Inoue 2009.

Japan comprises five major islands. The main islands are, from the south, Okinawa, Kyūshū, Shikoku, Honshū, and Hokkaidō. Honshū, the central elongated island, is referred to as "inland Japan" and it is where Tōkyō, the capital, is located.

The setting of the play is the Tokachi Plain in Hokkaidō, where the city of Obihiro is located. Here the events of the play unfold. Many settlers moved to the new land of Hokkaidō after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. They cleared the primeval forest and made the land arable. Fifty years after that is the period during which *Land of Volcanic Ash* takes place.

Japan in general has four seasons, which rotate every three months or so. But unlike the other parts of Japan, Hokkaidō has three seasons – spring, summer and autumn – that take up half the year, and a long, cold and snowy winter that lasts for the rest of the year. Instead of rice, beans were the main crop and the farmers were poverty-stricken. In this play the relation between the flax crop, land and fertilizer is questioned.

Kubo's literary style, which draws from a deep knowledge of traditional literature, has received critical recognition for its expressive quality from Murayama Tomoyoshi and others. The first example is from the prologue of Part 1, in which the land is described in the following way:

> The original inhabitants called this town | "The place where the rivers part" | It lies nestled in the acute angle | At the confluence of Japan's sixth largest river and its tributary | Which flow together at the tip of the town | Like a sparrow's severed tail.| An agricultural town in the northernmost part of Japan, | It lies in a plain | Where the snow thaws later | And the frost falls earlier than anywhere else; | A town small as a kernel of grain | In a peasant's wrinkled palm. (Kubo 1989, 27)

The second example is from Act 3.

> But even as they are ravaged by cold, famine, crop failures, and floods | All the menaces contrived by nature and man to dissuade them | The people who live on this land persevere like the nameless grass | That springs from rocks in desolate terrain. (Kubo 1989, 28)

The opening verse recited by a farmer provides an overview of the relations between humans and nature. The "original inhabitants" refer to the Ainu people.

The poem in Act 3 portrays the charcoal burners, their terrible working conditions out in raw nature and their ferocious attachment to their livelihood:

> Above these huts grown thick with pigweed, | Oh terraces carved into the mountainside, | Stand charcoal kilns of hardened limbs lashed

> numb by an unseen whip, | Crouch the burners who will fire the kilns today and again tomorrow, | *The joy of their work and the curse of their life* | Bound up with the kindling they cut down from the peaks. (Kubo 1989, 87; emphasis added)

The italicised line above has become a famous quotation.

The agricultural policy of this district has been based on Dr. Takimoto's theory. Restated in Amamiya's own words: "the soil of Japan is rich in potassium…There is no particular need to apply fertilizers containing potassium" (Kubo 1989, 70). He continues to explain that, as long as anybody can remember, they have been using alfalfa and Chinese milk vetch in paddy fields in Japan (Kubo 1989, 137).

In the rest of Japan, there are large quantities of potassium contained in night soil, compost and ashes. Inland Japan has traditionally used organic materials like Chinese milk vetch and clover. Chemical fertilizers were introduced and were established in the Taishō period (1912-1926).

According to Amamiya, the growth of agricultural products is affected in the following way:

> Three basic nutrients are […] N (nitrogen), P (phosphorous), K (potassium) […] in order to preserve the soil […] it is necessary to replenish [the soil] constantly by supplying three elements in precise amounts to the predetermined ratio. (Kubo 1989, 70)

Dr. Takimoto's contention is that there is no need to use potassium-rich fertilizer as Japanese soil already contains ample amounts of it. Dr. Takimoto is Amamiya's academic advisor and father-in-law. However, Amamiya's stance is that the resultant deficiency in an appropriate fertilizer simply serves to reinforce the primitive agricultural methods that have been practiced since settlers arrived on the island. Primitive agricultural methods refer to the Meiji period bureaucratic agricultural policy that was not based on scientific analysis. A constant use of the same fertilizer makes the land less productive.

Ignorant of such knowledge, farmers continued to grow flax with fertilizer provided by the fertilizer companies; consequently, they were unable to rise out of poverty. Herein lies the trickery of capitalism. By using fertilizer recommended by the agricultural union, farmers enjoyed various benefits. The major one was that they could buy fertilizer without cash at hand; furthermore, what they purchased would be delivered to them. Today most farmers own cars or trucks, but back in 1930 people pulled carts and trucks were available only at special outlets.

Amamiya noticed at a flax competition that almost all the entries had been grown with only pure phosphorous fertilizer and realised that the long-term use of the single fertilizer had damaged the soil and led to low-

grade flax crops. This compound fertilizer was produced by Karasawa's company and distributed to farmers through the agricultural union. Flax was thus grown in phosphorous enriched land with no other supplementary nutrients.

The vicious cycle of gradual soil degradation, decreasing yield and farmers' persistent poverty continued. To raise the yield, supplementing potassium fertilizer is important. As a matter fact the solution is to supply the elements of N, P, K at a constant ratio. Then the farmers could climb out of poverty.

Amamiya announced his theory for the first time to the public at a special radio broadcast on New Year's Day:

> […] no matter how diligently they [farmers] labor, plagued by frosts and […] floods and […] crop failures […] the majority of farmers languish in the depths of inescapable poverty, and even though I am a man of meager talents, I would like to do something, anything to ensure that the power of knowledge is applied to bring happiness to these farmers, all of them. (Kubo 1989, 72)

Amamiya thought that, by applying academic knowledge to the development of agricultural productivity, farmers could be saved from impoverishment. He published an article on combining fertilizer in a major scientific journal and tried to present his ideas over the radio. However the radio broadcast was interrupted due to objections to his lecture as negating agricultural policy.

Listening to her husband's radio lecture, Teruko discovered for the first time that he had been conducting research that refuted the agricultural theory of Dr. Takimoto, her father. Teruko then asked her husband to give up such research. She also revealed to him that her father was providing funding for his research. Amamiya was taken aback by this, but insisted that conflict of opinion in academia was inevitable. He told Teruko that he could not afford to lie to the farmers.

From this point, the tragedy of the Amamiya household began. Teruko had to decide whether to take her husband's side or not and Amamiya whether to confront Dr. Takimoto and his theory or not. Their marriage and family were forced onto the road to destruction.

Amamiya pondered over how to save poor farmers from having to invest in fertilizer. Even in the face of a serious lack of potassium, poor farmers could not afford to buy potassium fertilizer, for it was the most expensive of fertilizers. Of the three chemicals needed to be balanced at a particular ratio, Amamiya proposed to decrease the investment in nitrogen. Nitrogen stimulates the growth of plants and a deficiency has the serious effect of stunting growth. As a fertilizer, it is also expensive.

Amamiya's plan was to encourage the growth of red clover as a green fertilizer, decrease the need for nitrogen fertilizer and spend the sav-

ing in costs on increasing the potassium ratio in the compound fertilizer. Amamiya's contention was that the issue was not only a matter of raping the land, but of also sacrificing the farmers themselves. Dr. Takimoto, who believed that he had always served the interests of agriculture, was greatly angered by the accusation of being the farmers' enemy. After that incident, the two were no longer on speaking terms.

Fortunately, a farmer called Shōsaku had listened to Amamiya's radio lecture and tested the idea of using compound fertilizer for flax. As flax does not tolerate continuous cropping, Shōsaku planted flax in a used pea field. As the soil was already depleted of nutrients, simply adding some potassium was insufficient to grow the kind of flax that would pass the quality assessment test. Both Shōsaku and Amamiya were extremely discouraged. In addition, Shōsaku found himself saddled with large debts.

As a result, Amamiya hesitated over whether to announce his theory or not. Teruko, caught between her husband and her father, begged her husband to cancel his formal announcement.

In this way, new research led to the dissolution of the family and, at the same time, Amamiya experienced difficulty conducting research in a nation at war. In spite of everything, Amamiya chose to brave the storm and present his paper at the scientific research association's conference in Sapporo. His action was said to have raised a glimmer of hope for intellectuals in difficult political times.

Land of Volcanic Ash was written in 1937, when Japan had just become a wartime regime: anti-war protest was forbidden, moderate liberals were arrested, and citizens did not feel free in such censorious times. Kubo used Amamiya's conflict with authority as a pretext for raising hope in a dark age.

In the twenty-first century we have a developed awareness of the immense damage chemical fertilizers harbour. Takimoto and Amamiya's research could be dismissed as the limited understanding of the thirties with their trust in chemicals. Nonetheless, Amamiya's research was cutting-edge science at those times. It was advanced to extricate farmers from poverty and free them from the exploitation of capitalism.

Forty years later, well into the seventies, chemical fertilizers were still considered all-powerful and central to agricultural policy. As they are used in farming even today, they cannot be rejected as obsolete. Together with pesticides, we will have to continue questioning the effects of chemical fertilizers.

Furthermore, this play addresses the reality of a large company with capital manipulating poverty-stricken farmers. Such a problem is not unknown in our society today. The joy and sadness that the difficult relations of nature, labour and capital engender have not ended. This play also teaches us that the freedom and happiness of each of us who must live in nature is not unrelated to the above problem.

It is exactly because art is born from society that it can vividly portray how we live.

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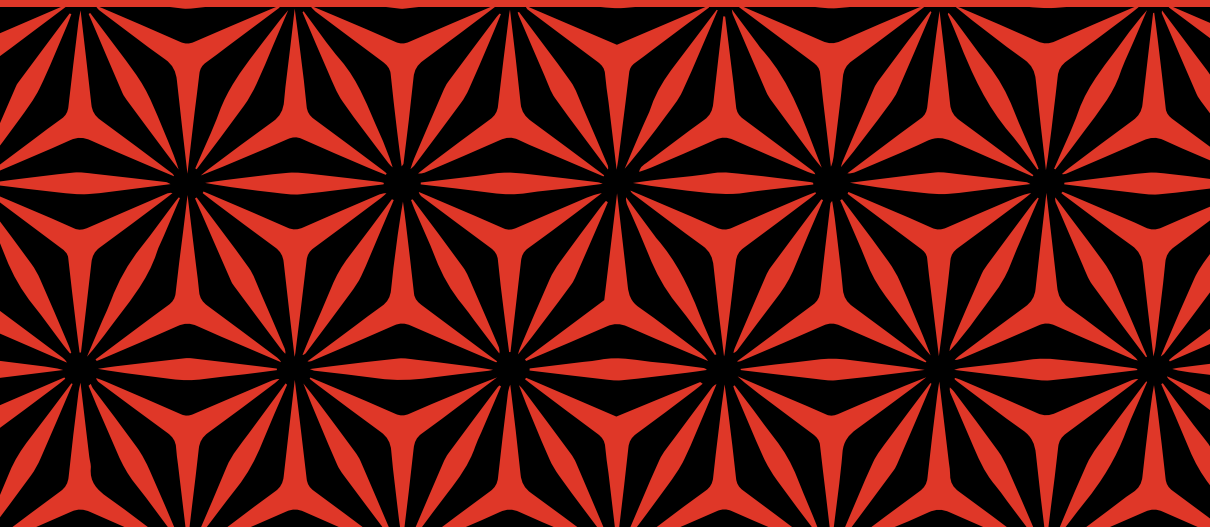
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