

Recovering Japanese Women 1600-1945

and Faith Lee Bestwick

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The Shingaku Woman: Straight from the Heart

Jennifer Robertson

One of the most distinctive features of the Shingaku (Heart Learning) movement was its timeliness. Founded in Kyoto in 1729 by Ishida Baigan (1685-1744), a farmer-turned-merchant, this movement had as its overall objective the rectification of a social system destabilized by rapid expansion of the market economy. Although merchants were officially at the bottom of the four-class hierarchy, Baigan argued that they, as the de facto managerial class, performed a function in society homologous to that of the samurai; that is, it was incumbent on both groups to conduct their businesses with honesty and in a spirit of selfless service. Thus, by giving moral and spiritual justification to commercial activity, Shingaku sought to rationalize the expedient pursuit of profit.² Baigan translated the "bourgeois tenor of the age"³ into a "national" canon of social morality that amounted to a synthesis of the Way of the samurai and of the merchant.

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1. An alternate reading for *skin* is *kakoro*, one of the most compelling and ubiquitous terms in the Japanese language. This is the "heart-mind," which I have abbreviated for convenience; the locus of feelings, consciousness, and authenticity.
2. See Robert Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957); and Jennifer Robertson, "Rooting the Pine: Shingaku Methods of Organization," *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, no. 3 (1979): 311-32.
3. Ivan Morris, "Introduction," in Ihara Saikaku, *The Life of an Amorous Woman*, ed. and trans. I. Morris (New York: New Directions, 1969), 32.

Throughout the seventeenth century, merchants and artisans (collectively, *chōnin*, or townspeople) in general, and females in particular, had been marginalized within a social system that embodied the androcentric values of the samurai minority. Baigan and his chief disciple, the wealthy merchant Tejima Toan (1718-86), now undertook to convince townspeople that they were actually the social vanguard. At the crux of Shingaku teachings was the discovery and cultivation of "original heart" (*honshin*), which, though good in itself, was subject to corruption because of the deterioration of people's material circumstances.⁴ Whereas male merchants and artisans were encouraged to cultivate a moral, rational approach to commerce, advice to females was not similarly bound by status or occupation. Owing to their anatomy and attendant vices, females of all classes were regarded by Shingaku theorists and their con- temporaries as a problematic constituency in need of moral rehabilitation. Toan, in particular, constructed a canon of "female-likeness" (*onnazashisa*) premised on the strict alignment of sex and gender roles.⁵

TOKUGAWA-PERIOD DISCOURSE ON WOMEN

In Tokugawa times as now, the suffix *-rashi* indicated approximation to an ideal mode or model of existence (*kata*)—for example, the "farmer at regular intervals by the *bakufu* (the shogunal military administration) to define and further refine the parameters of each existential model. The authors of agricultural manuals, for instance, presented their readers with "farmer-like" vocabulary lists, descriptions of "farmer-like" clothing, and recipes for "farmer-like" meals. This hierarchy of ideal social and occupational statuses was further complicated by the coexistent operations of a separate sex-gender system, which effectively bisected each of the four social classes into female and male divisions. Age grades provided additional denominators.

Only the female divisions, according to the male intelligentsia, required specific attention. Consequently, in the writings of men like Kaibara Ekken, Kumazawa Banzan, Uesugi Yozan, Sakuma Shōzan, and

4. Baigan derived this perspective from Mencius; see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 55, 294. Shingaku teachings were culled from Confucian, Shintō, and Buddhist vocabularies.
5. Sex, gender, and sexuality may be related, but they are not the same thing. The degree of their relationship—or the lack thereof—is sociohistorically negotiated and negotiable. Sexuality can thus overlap with gender and sex but remains a separate domain of desire and erotic pleasure. See Carol Vance, "Pleasure and Danger: Toward a Politics of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carol Vance (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 9.

181

Yoshida Shōin one finds both generic models of and for female-likeness, and more specific models of and for particular types of females, such as farmers, brides, or courtesans.⁹ Much of the fiction of the seventeenth-century short story writer and satirist Ihara Saikaku similarly dwelled on female dramatic personae, ranging from "high-ranking courtesans" to "streetwalkers" and other "amorous women." Shingaku theorists likewise devoted a large portion of their lectures and essays to the construction of the "Shingaku Woman"; but whereas Saikaku's interest lay in the formal details of women's dress and hairstyles, the Shingaku literature focused on instructions in social etiquette and deportment. Every amorous woman was a potential Shingaku Woman.

The Japanese had long recognized two sexes and two genders, but female-likeness (*omarashtta*) and male-likeness (*otokorashisa*) were not necessarily viewed as exclusive provinces. During the Tokugawa period (and beyond), the paragons of female-likeness were *omiyagata*: male Kabuki actors who performed "female" roles, sometimes offstage as well as on. Shingaku rhetoricians, however, sought to fuse sex and gender, based on a rationale expressed by Baigan as "the heart that conforms to the model" (*hata ni yoru kokoro*). Sex was perceived as subordinate to gender: females were to approximate—or bring their innermost temperaments in accord with—female-likeness, as defined by Baigan and Toan. According to Shingaku tenets, female sexual being and sexuality were contingent on the prior existence of "female" gender.

That the male intelligentsia's preoccupation with the "woman problem" paralleled the rise of merchants was not fortuitous. The growing market economy, together with the proliferation of performing and fine

6. "Model of" refers to the definition of "female" gender, whereas "model for" refers to *emulation*; see Kakehi Kumiko, "Edo shoki san jusha no jokun shisō ni miru hata to onna," in *Bosai o tou*, ed. Wakita Haruko, vol. 2 (Jinbun Shoin, 1986), 41–70; Kurokawa Masamichi, *Nihon kyōku bunko: jokun hen* (Nihon Zusho Sentā, 1977); Shiba Keiko, *Edo jidai no onnatachi* (Hyōron Shinsha, 1969), 30–49.

Female intellectuals also participated in the discourse on "female" gender, although their writings have yet to be acknowledged and reclaimed by Japanologists. The "daughter of Tamura Yoshio," as she is identified, used a Confucian patriarchal line. In her admonitory text *Onna imagawa nishiki no kadakara*, for example, she proclaims that "husbands, like heaven itself, must be venerated." See Koyama Shizuko, "Ryōsai kenbo shugi no reime'i," *Jōseigaku nenpō* 7 (1986): 13.

Others, such as Tadano Makuzu, joined her male *kokugaku* (nativism) colleagues in positing a morphological basis for "sexual antinomy" (*dampo no shaku no araso*). She derived her argument from the dialogue in the *Kojiki* between Izanami and Izanagi, when the former said that she was incomplete in one part, and the latter that he was overdeveloped. Whereas Makuzu proposed the existence of two essentially incommensurate hearts (*kokoro*) based on sex, her Shingaku contemporaries stressed the singularity of original heart (*honshin*). See Miyazawa Tamiko, "Bakuhansai kaitaiki ni okeru hitori jōsei no shakai hihan," *Rakushingaku kenkyū* 423 (1975): 17–30.

arts, occasioned the possibility of independently employed women. The all-male Kabuki theater in particular stimulated a number of employment opportunities for women, including *shimisen* and song instruction, hairdressing, and *joruri* (ballad drama) performances staged by female troupes at a patron's house.⁷ The *bakufu*, however, prohibited females from theater-related and "nonprescribed" labor—that is, work other than domestic sewing and weaving. Significantly, the government referred to such prohibitions as *fizoku torishimari*: literally, the "supervision and control of traditional manners and customs."⁸ Women working in nontraditional fields were singled out for resocialization into *bakufu*-defined gender roles. Under Toan's leadership, the Shingaku movement became an integral part of this process.

Discourses on female-likeness reflect *bakufu* and private interests in the education (or rather, indoctrination) of girls and women. The enlightenment of a Confucian patriarchy, together with the bureaucratization of the samurai class, effectively indurated the concept of females as "inferior to males." Kaibara Ekken's widely circulated, consulted, and cited *Onna daigaku* (Greater learning for women, 1672) epitomized the misogyny of the Tokugawa social system and its spokespersons.⁹ A leading representative of the "practical school" (*jizyūgaku*) of Confucianism and a self-appointed critic of females, Ekken proclaimed that female genitalia, while necessary for the reproduction of male heirs, were linked to dull-wittedness, laziness, lasciviousness, a hot temper, and a tremendous capacity to bear grudges.¹⁰ Ironically, none of these were female-like (*omarashtai*) traits: Ekken was not alone in suggesting that female sex was contrary to and even precluded "female" gender.

The male critics in the *bakufu* were no less misogynous. Yoshida Shōin, known for his advocacy of the restoration of the emperor, wrote a Confucian-inspired *jokun* (instructions for females) in which he insisted that female subordination was essential to social, and ultimately national, stability.¹¹ Even male intellectuals whose political views clashed shared with Ekken the conviction that for females, anatomy is destiny;

7. Seki Tamiko, *Edo kōki no jōseitachi* (Aki Shobō, 1980), 23, 38.

8. *Ibid.*, 84.

9. *Onna daigaku*, conventionally translated as *Greater Learning for Women*, was intended for both girls and women, that is, for members of the female sex, and is more precisely translated as *Greater Learning for Females*. It was a virtual copy of the "Oshie jōshi hō" (Female education) section in Ekken's earlier work, *Yamato zoku dōjūkun* (Customary precepts for Japanese children, 1710). Some scholars have also entertained the possibility that Ekken's wife wrote *Onna daigaku*; see Okura Seishin Bunka Kenkyūjo, ed., *Nihon shisōshi bunken kaidai* (Kadokawa Shoten, 1965), 287.

10. Kaibara Ekken, *Onna daigaku* (1672), in *Women and Wisdom of Japan*, ed. Takaishi Shingoro (London: John Murray, 1905), 33–46.

11. Kurokawa, *Nihon kyōku bunko*: Shiba, *Edo jidai no onnatachi*, 40–42.

152

that the "great lifelong duty of a woman is obedience"; and that the "five infirmities" (indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness) found in "seven or eight out of every ten women" arise from and exacerbate "the inferiority of women to men."¹²

The importance attached to proper performance of one's gender role is poignantly illustrated by the case of a woman named Take who, in the 1830s, openly defied both the social status and the sex-gender hierarchies. She was arrested, punished, imprisoned, fined, and eventually exiled for, essentially, appropriating "male" gender.

As a girl, Take had played with boys and later found "male work and activities" more exciting than "female work." Cutting off her hair, she created a dramatic persona for herself and, in the guise of a young man, renamed herself Takejirō. This act so provoked the indignation of the male innkeeper who employed her that he raped her, ostensibly to make Take/Takejirō aware of her female sex. She became pregnant and ran away from the inn, but not before stealing an obi and a straw raincoat to hide her pregnancy and to protect her male-like appearance. When the child was born, she suffocated it.¹³

Thievery and infanticide notwithstanding, Take/Takejirō was charged with having committed the newly coined crime of "corrupting public morals" (*jinrin o midashimasu mono*) by dissociating sex from gender. Her second arrest came in 1837 when it was discovered that she was both appropriating "male" gender and impersonating a deputy magistrate, a flagrant violation of both the reigning social hierarchies. She was exposed when she attracted attention by lacking a robber she had caught red-handed.¹⁴ If Take/Takejirō's actions indicated that she was aware of the arbitrary nature of gender attribution and of the sexual and gendered division of labor, her punishment, recorded in the "female section" of the *bakufu* publication *Oshiohi Retnushū* (Representative examples of punishments and executions, 1771-1852), illustrates the tenacity of the official emphasis on the fusion of female sex with "female" gender.

The idea that females, by dint of their anatomy, were inferior and, if not controlled, dangerous not only served to enshrine misogynist discrimination, but also inspired a prolific genre of male-authored *jōkun*. At least three of Toan's twenty-three or so major works were conceived as *jōkun*, and nearly all of his other treatises contain sections devoted

12. Kaibara, *Onna dangaku*, 38, 44-45.

13. Ishii Rosuke, ed., *Oshiohi retnushū: Onna no bu*, 16 vol. (Meicho Shuppan, 1974), 12-13, 142-43. As the Japanese title suggests, this is a collection devoted to the crimes and punishments of females. Seki, *Edo kōki no jōretachi*, 76-79.

14. Seki, *Edo kōki no jōretachi*, 76-79.

exclusively to the "woman problem."¹⁵ Although Shingaku spokespersons challenged the view that any one class was superior to any other, they continued to view sex and gender differences in terms of superiority/dominance and inferiority/subordination.

THE MAKING OF THE SHINGAKU WOMAN

Tejima Toan was particularly active in establishing seminars and public lectures for girls and women. Under his leadership, these educational fora were standardized by the middle of the 1770s, beginning with *Zenkun*, a "preparatory lecture" series inaugurated in 1773. The lectures were designed to socialize girls (and boys) before they fell into delinquent ways, and to resocialize women who had already fallen. Recorded verbatim and published, *Zenkun* became one of the most widely distributed Shingaku textbooks. It consists of four lectures for boys, one for girls, and one for women, but none for men, who evidently did not require resocialization.

The *Zenkun* lectures drew from such Japanese classics as *Tsurezuregusa*, *Ise monogatari*, the *Yamato monogatari*, and the *Nihon shoki*, and from such Chinese classics as the *Four Books*, the *Small Learning*, the *Book of Filial Piety*, the Han-dynasty *Precepts for Women*, and the Sung-dynasty *Explanation of the Six Womanly Virtues*. For some reason Toan chose to cite directly from the classics, interpreting them in light of the movement's aims, rather than make use of the large number of "instructions for females" published throughout the Tokugawa period by male intellectuals who were either familiar or in some way affiliated with the Shingaku movement.¹⁶

The women's lecture in *Zenkun* begins with a promotion of "likeness" (*rashisō*). Most important, intones Toan, is an awareness of the "natural" distinction of females and males. Females must be female-like, and males male-like; any mixup should be quickly corrected. Toan espoused the strict alignment of sex and gender—unlike Sadajin, a character in the eleventh-century tale "Torikabaya Monogatari" who attributed the female-likeness of his male child and the male-likeness of his female child to their respective karmas and simply called the former "daugh-

15. These three works, *Jōji nemurisemachi* (1771), *Zenkun* (1773), and *Onna myōga kai* (1776), are included in *Zōho Tejima Toan zenshū* ed., ed. Shibata Minoru (Osaka: Seibundō, 1973).

16. Kurokawa, *Nihon kyōku bunho*, 7-8; Shiga Tadashi, *Jōsei kyōshūshi* (Fukumura Shuppan, 1968), 253. For example, Yoshida Shōin noted in his *jōkun* that Shingaku teachings for females were most appropriate, and he urged his younger sister to read Shingaku texts on a regular basis.

ter" and the latter "son," raising them accordingly.¹⁷ In Toan's view, by contrast, females who strayed from *omarahai* deportment were mothers disguised as humans. Because of her negatively valued sex, a female who did not discover her original heart (*honshin*) merely accelerated her descent to the level of beasts.¹⁸

The "discovery of original heart" (*honshin hatsuimei*) not only distinguished humans from nonhumans, but also differentiated females from males. Despite Toan's insistence that *honshin* was constant across both sex and gender, a woman's discovery of original heart was tantamount to her achievement of the Confucian "six virtues for women": obedience, purity, goodwill, frugality, modesty, and diligence. Female-likeness was thus best achieved, according to Baigan and his successors, in the context of marriage, for in order to become an effective household manager a woman had to learn how to shrink the "ego" (*ware*) that obscures and pollutes her pristine original heart. Each degree of shrinkage signified an expansion of *honshin*. Marriage, in other words, made more possible a woman's achievement of "female" gender.

On the surface, the Shingaku construction of "female" gender matched that of the Confucian-oriented *bakufu* and the male intelligentsia in general. Echoes of Ekken's *Onna daigaku*, for example, are evident in Toan's assertion in *Zenkun* that the proper conduct for females is to obey their parents, parents-in-law, husband, and, in the case of widows, their children.¹⁹ Unmarried women were considered anomalous and dangerous mavericks, since they were not locked into a sociopsychological framework of overlapping obediences.

The women's lecture in *Zenkun* dwells heavily on the gender role of "wife," with only cursory attention paid to mothering. The virtually exclusive emphasis on wifehood is typical of Tokugawa-period tracts on female-likeness, for the twofold gender role of "good wife, wise mother" was not refined until the Meiji period, when pronatalism was trumpeted by the state in a context of industrialization.²⁰ Rakuhoiku Shōko did make brief mention of a kind of prenatal care in her primer *Shinsen onna Yamato daigaku* (The new greater learning for Japanese women, 1785), warning that the mind and character of an unborn child—whether or not it was smart or stupid, good or bad—was determined by the pregnant mother's attitude and behavior. (She did not dwell at all,

however, on postnatal care.)²¹ Kaibara Ekken, in *Wazoku tojikan* (Traditional Japanese precepts for children, 1710), averred that because females were foolish by nature, and also because a mother's love was detrimental to the development of her child, the task of educating and disciplining children should be the father's responsibility.²² The belief that a mother's love interfered with a father's discipline was not altogether new; indeed, it had been voiced years earlier by the unorthodox Confucianist Yamaga Soko.²³

Shingaku rhetoricians did anticipate the Meiji-period discourse on the "good wife, wise mother" when they treated "reliable mothering" (*tanomoshibi mono*)²⁴—particularly among poor (*shishūta*) urban women—as part of "female work" (*onna no waza*). Nevertheless, that the roles of "wife" and "daughter-in-law" took precedence over mothering was emphasized in *Zenkun* by Toan's inclusion, in the women's lectures, of a story about a Chinese woman who, ignoring the cries of her newborn child, instead offered her breast to her ailing and (fortunately for her) toothless mother-in-law.²⁵ It is likely that poor urban women were singled out for "reliable mothering" because, as mothers, they alone, and not wet/dry nurses or foster mothers, were responsible for child care; not having access to the expertise of such female child-care specialists, they were therefore an ideal target (or test) audience.²⁶

The "female work" central to "reliable mothering" was described in *Zenkun* as splitting hemp for spinning thread, weaving and sewing, and cooking. It was most shameful for a woman to be unskilled in any of these activities—though significantly, she was not encouraged to parlay this sartorial and culinary expertise into an extradomestic career. By the same token, a poor urban woman would be a more "reliable mother" if

21. Koyama, "Ryōsai kenbo shugi no reimei," 12–13.

22. Miyashita Michiko, "Kinsei te ni okeru habaoya zō," in Wakita (ed.), *Bosai o tou* 2:32–33.

23. Shiga, *Josai kyōkushū*, 224.

24. Shingaku rhetoricians posed analogies between the principles of financial management and methods of raising children in terms of the intensity and intimacy required; see Robertson, "Rooting the Pine," 320–21; and Wakizaka Gidō, *Yashinagusa*, in *Shingaku dōwa zenshū*, ed. Shingaku Dōwa Kanōkai (n.p., n.d.), 2094–35. Thus, a savings and loan association based at Keishinsha in Hiroshima was named *tanomoshibiko*; see Ishikawa Ken, *Shimon Shingakushi no kenkyū* (Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 950.

25. Tejima, *Zenkun*, 178.

26. The "samuraiization" of family law under the auspices of the 1898 Civil Code, together with the Meiji state's advocacy of the "good wife, wise mother" gender role for all classes of women, occasioned the eventual hegemony of male "experts" on motherhood; see Koyama Shizuko, "Kindaiteki jōseikan to shite no ryōsai kenbo shisō," *Jōseigaku nempō* 3 (1982): 1–7.

she engaged in no other occupations than these²⁷—a highly unlikely event given her necessary role in the family's livelihood. The Shingaku rhetoric of women, in this case, dwelled on select crafts over childraising and shopkeeping, and was removed from mundane reality, focused as it was on an ideal-type female-likeness and not on individual women.

The space within which "female work" was to be undertaken was similarly categorized by gender. From the age of ten, Toan admonished in his *Zenkun* lectures, females must not venture past the door (*nakado*) dividing the inner living quarters (*oku*) from the outer store (*omote*). Likewise, married women must not become involved in "outward facing" (*omotemuki*), or public, matters: these were their husbands' affair.²⁸ Toan was here addressing girls and women of the merchant and artisan sectors, although the gist of his teachings, like the Shingaku corpus as a whole, was intended for females from every class and status group. Since urban women were actively involved in the running of shops and trading concerns, "outward facing" very likely referred to sales and business trips away from the premises. Gender was thus used as a rationale for setting the spatial parameters of those activities: it was not intended to prohibit women (especially *chōnin*) from shopkeeping altogether.

The architecture of the Shingaku colleges (*kōshō*) symbolically extended the sexism and gender ideals that informed the movement. Virtually all of the 180 colleges founded in forty-four provinces throughout Japan were modeled after Meirinsha (1782), the head college in Kyoto. Meirinsha was divided into eight rooms, including one reserved for women labeled *fujin*. When public lectures were held at a college, the sliding doors separating the rooms were removed to create maximum space and bamboo blinds were installed to separate female from male listeners. This temporary, gendered space was labeled *nyōshi seki*, or "females' place."²⁹

The inspiration for the gendered division of space may have derived from the interior design of both the imperial palace in Kyoto and the castles of the shōgun and his vassals. Just as the strict separation of "female" and "male" work was more typical of samurai than of *chōnin* households, so the architectural representation of gender bore little resemblance to the exigencies of urban life. The innermost quarters (*ōku*) were both the home and workplace of female members of the court and military elite. These castles, with a female staff numbering in the thousands, were targeted by Shingaku leaders in their campaign to recruit female members and disciples. Since females were prohibited from

exiting and males from entering the innermost quarters, the task of educating the wives of male courtiers and daimyō and their attendants fell to the movement's female instructors.

It was in the *fujin* room of a Shingaku college that the women among the disciples and interested listeners received instruction on *onmarashisa*. This room was a laboratory for the creation of the Shingaku Woman. Here women were introduced to the Shingaku texts for female disciples, including Toan's *Zenkun* and *Onna myōga kai* (A treatise on female fate, 1776). They were urged to follow the "four virtues," which were promoted as the basis of household health: wifely words (*fugen*), wifely morality (*futoku*), wifely merit (*fuko*), and wifely etiquette (*fuyō*). The implication was that women must self-consciously strive for these virtues and that the first step toward reaching their goal was marriage; this in turn evoked a special nomenclature in acknowledgment of their success: "wifely morality," as opposed to morality per se. The interface between social morality and the sex-gender hierarchy is evident here.

Whereas in *Zenkun* married women were the linchpins of the household as a body politic, females in general were castigated as having "constricted hearts, making them easily prone to stinginess and vain pride."³⁰ It was an impossible situation: virtuous females were crucial in every sense for household posterity, yet female anatomy precluded virtuous behavior. Toan's solution was the arbitrary separation of sex roles (specifically childbirth) from sexuality (desire) in married women. Sexuality proper was limited to concubines and courtesans.

Marriage effectively was the rite of passage that not only severed a woman from her sexuality but also "killed" her. As Toan expounded in *Zenkun*, "a bride must become like a dead person; she cannot return to her natal household" where as a daughter she had been whole. "To signify her death, she must build a [funeral] bonfire to break her attachment [er] to her parents." The married and consequently dis-membered and "dead" woman could be reconstructed and rejuvenated only "by becoming one with the heart of her husband."³¹ In *Onna myōga kai*, Toan warned that for married women to postpone discovering original heart was tantamount not merely to bestiality, but to "privatizing [their] nature being" (*watakushi suru mi*); moreover, the woman who happened to "regard her privatized being as splendid and wonderful" was warned that she would automatically "break out in filthy, smelly, blood-and-pus-filled sores."³²

A woman who had successfully identified herself with her husband would have "a loving and endearing attitude toward his concubine." Ad-

27. Tejima, *Zenkun*, 173–74.

28. *Ibid.*, 173.

29. For illustrations, see Robertson, "Rooting the Pine."

30. Tejima, *Zenkun*, 173–74.

31. *Ibid.*, 175.

32. Tejima Toan, *Onna myōga kai*, in Shibata (ed.), *Zōho Tejima Toan zenshū*, 194.

163

monished Toan, himself married and a father: "Because a woman's heart is constricted, she is more prone to jealousy, and therefore perceives many shortcomings in her husband. Do not be jealous of your husband's concubine [*mekakeji*]; rather, respect the depth of his attachment to her. This way you will not be seen as a wife ashamed of her husband's behavior. Nor will the concubine dislike or scorn you."³³

Although a male could traverse both of the arbitrarily separated wifely and erotic spheres of female being, a female was limited to one or the other. A wife should refrain from having extramarital affairs of her own and from criticizing those of her husband. She was also instructed to indulge the concubine and, in effect, to perceive the latter's sexuality as her own. The wholeness of males, the posterity of the patriarchal household, and the stability of society, in short, were contingent on the dis-memberment of females: the separation of sex from sexuality, and the separation and isolation of females from each other by intervening males.

Toan's "Lectures for Women" reflect his conviction that females generically were creatures in need of civilizing, and that Japanese women in particular were retrograde. The latter bias is evident in his reference in *Zenkun* to historical Chinese women exclusively as exemplars of female-likeness.³⁴ Toan set about constructing the Shingaku Woman in part by assembling a vocabulary of images of non-Japanese women to meet the ideological needs of Shingaku and, by extension, of the patriarchal and misogynist society in which the movement was embedded. From his androcentric perspective, all females were Others, but Chinese women were "good" Others and Japanese women "bad" Others; among the latter, only the Shingaku Woman was "good." These images acquired the significance of symbols that were used to conceptualize the contrast between females and males, and between females and female-likeness. As in any society, these constructed Others were "perpetuated, resurrected, and shaped through texts containing the fantasy life of the culture, quite independent of the existence or absence of the group in . . . society. . . . Qualities assigned to the Other readily form patterns with little or no relationship to any external reality."³⁵

It was in the space between the "fantasy life" spun around the Shin-

33. Teijima, *Zenkun*, 179.

34. The prevalence of historical Chinese women is due to the fact that Toan based much of his "Lectures for Women" on the Northern Sung statesman-scholar Sina Guang's (1019-86) *Jufan* (Exemplary household), in addition to other Chinese classics and dynastic histories.

35. Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 20-21.

gaku Woman and the "external reality" impacting on Tokugawa-period girls and women that female disciples and teachers operated. Jion-ni Kenka was one woman who actually appropriated that space in her search for a significant life.

FEMALE DISCIPLES: THE EXAMPLE OF JION-NI KENKA

From the outset, girls and women were not only the subjects but also the disseminators of Shingaku teachings. Among Baigan's earliest disciples was Jion-ni Kenka (1716-78), a former Buddhist nun who paved the way for the expansion of Shingaku into the Kantō region. Kenka was born in the village of Tokiwa, Kurita county, Ōmi province, the daughter of Shirai Hanbei, a wealthy sake brewer. Her province is unknown. What little is known about her life and work comes from her partly autobiographical book, which, originally titled *Kenka hasoher heading* *Dōtoku mondō* (Moral dialogues),³⁶ was reprinted in 1774 under the more

thorough upon my mother's death when I was eight years old." Given the invisibility of the "mother" in Tokugawa-period discourses, it is significant that Kenka, who never mentions by name or describes her mother in the book, should have linked the death of her mother with the start of her unorthodox life. Her mother's absence apparently was more important than her presence.

At her mother's funeral, Kenka had been scolded by the Tendai Buddhist priest officiating for misbehaving during the otherwise solemn ritual. He advised the feisty girl to ensure her mother's well-being in the afterworld by chanting the Lotus Sutra. She did, and quickly decided reciting sutras for her dead mother. This episode at the beginning of her book suggests not only the bond between mother and daughter, but also the emotional centrality of a mother—even if deceased—in her daughter's life, despite the fact that a mother's love was not emphasized by the Shingaku rhetoricians and their contemporaries. Kenka's desire to become a priest foreshadowed her rejection of

36. In Akabori Matajirō, ed., *Shingaku sōho* (Hakubunkan, 1905), 165-235. The term *bōzu* (shaved head) applied to both females and males, though it is most tenaciously associated with priests. Since females who shaved their heads were those who had renounced their prescribed gender, it is interesting to note the existence of *obōzu* among the female employees of the various castles. These were women who assumed the "male" gender in order to mediate between the innermost (female) and outermost (male) courts; they shaved their heads and dressed in *haori* and *hakama*, formal attire for males. See Takayanagi Kaneyoshi, *Edojō bōku no seikatsu* (Yūzankaku, 1965), 17.

37. In Akabori Matajirō, ed., *Shingaku sōho* (Hakubunkan, 1905), 165-235. The term *bōzu* (shaved head) applied to both females and males, though it is most tenaciously associated with priests. Since females who shaved their heads were those who had renounced their prescribed gender, it is interesting to note the existence of *obōzu* among the female employees of the various castles. These were women who assumed the "male" gender in order to mediate between the innermost (female) and outermost (male) courts; they shaved their heads and dressed in *haori* and *hakama*, formal attire for males. See Takayanagi Kaneyoshi, *Edojō bōku no seikatsu* (Yūzankaku, 1965), 17.

the conventional gender role(s) allotted females. Yet Kenka's father refused her permission to take holy orders, whereupon she ran away. In between her mother's death and her departure from her father's house at age fourteen, the strong-minded girl pursued a self-styled course of prayer and continued to rebuff her father's attempts to arrange a marriage for her. She even cut off her hair, a symbolic act of defiance marking her withdrawal from the world of mundane, secular affairs.³⁸ "She's not the least bit female-like" (*hiotstu to shite onmarashiki wa nashi*), Kenka's father despaired. "All she does, day and night, is pray to the buddhas and *kami* [Shintō deities], and she roughhouses with the boys. What a terrific monkey she'll become!"³⁹ In preparation for her flight from home, the teen-ager made secret inquiries about accessible nunneries (*amateras*) before stealing off to Ichiyō-an, an Ōbaku temple in Kyoto's western Kamo area. Her father, discovering her absence, set out after her, but she refused to turn back.

Becoming a nun in the Tokugawa period did not necessarily imply that a girl or woman was religiously inclined. Taking holy orders marked a female's rite of passage from an active secular life as a wife, widow, or concubine to an inactive one; or a (hetero)sexually active state; a fertile period to an infertile one; or a (hetero)sexually active period to an inactive one. Girls and women also looked to religious institutions as refuges from marital oppression and male violence, as in the case of the Tokugawa-period "divorce temples" for nonsamurai women.⁴⁰ For Kenka, then, religion offered an alternative to prescribed female gender roles.

The Tokugawa period saw an unprecedented increase in the number and diversity of nuns.⁴¹ This trend has been linked to the entrenchment of a Confucian patriarchy and the concomitant reification of repressive gender roles.⁴² Women from all walks of life—court aristocrats, samurai, merchants, farmers, maidservants, literateurs, poets, artists, Buddhist scholars, publishers—chose to become nuns; many took holy

38. Conventionally, at least since the Heian period (794–1185), women cut their hair to signal their disengagement from the secular world.

39. Jion-ni Kenka, *Shōku Mondo*, in Akabori (ed.), *Shingaku sōho*, 170.

40. Kaneko Sachiko and Robert E. Morrell, "Sanctuary: Kamakura's Tokeiji Convent," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10, nos. 2–3 (1983): 195–228.

41. Many pertinent documents were destroyed by fire. It is estimated that more than two thousand women were granted divorces through the Tokeiji offices from about 1700 to 1870. This figure represents but a minuscule fraction of (unhappily married) women, much less nuns, in the Tokugawa period. See *ibid.*, 214–15.

42. Araki Ryōsen, *Bikunishi* (Shōdō Shoten, 1929; reprint Tōyō Shoin, 1977); Jōdoshū Nisōshi Hensan linkai, ed., *Jūdoshū nisōshi* (Kyoto: Yoshimizu Gakuen Kotō Gakkō, 1961), 24–29; Sōtōshū Nisōshi Hensankai, ed., *Sōtōshū nisōshi* (Sōtōshū Honbu, 1955), 226–34.

orders as an alternative to marriage, often, as they noted in their (auto)biographies, in defiance of their fathers.⁴³ Thus Kenka was not entirely unusual in choosing convent over convention.

During her stay at Ichiyō-an Kenka learned to read the Buddhist sutras, but she felt that this alone was insufficient for enlightenment and sought out other teachers. Eventually she became the disciple of a Sōtō nun, Tōkoku-ni, based at Nansen-an in Hikone, under whom she studied Zen koan. Still dissatisfied with her progress, however, she soon turned to ritual austerities as a means of facilitating enlightenment. She began with all-day fasts and temporarily retired to Ishiyama Temple in Kyoto to conduct a week-long fast. She gave up drinking tea, engrossed herself in prayers of several days' duration, and added cold water ablutions to her spartan regimen. Yet none of the available techniques designed to bring about enlightenment worked for her.

Kenka did succeed, by the age of twenty-four, in destroying her health. Pending consultations with her family, she rented a house in Kyoto for her convalescence. Her father's death shortly before her move exacerbated her ill health, and she became plagued by feelings of remorse for having caused him so much suffering. It was during her convalescence in Kyoto that she met Baigan, who lived and lectured in the area, and became his disciple.⁴⁴

Regardless of the veracity of Kenka's trials and tribulations, the teleology of the account—leading as it does to her eventual discovery of original heart—served well as Shingaku propaganda. Toan likely interpreted Kenka's account of her youthful rebelliousness as the compelling story of a young woman in search of what Shingaku had to offer. Kenka herself praised Baigan profusely, for it was through his eclectic teachings, she insisted, that she regained her mental composure and physical health, and finally experienced enlightenment.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, her book is also a chronicle of an unmarried woman's quest for knowledge and self-sufficiency in late-eighteenth-century Japan. It is two texts in one: a memoir of her unorthodox life and livelihood, and a Shingaku primer. This ambiguity allowed her readers to extract whatever they wished from her words. Jion-ni Kenka was hardly a model Shingaku Woman,

43. See, for example, *Sōtōshū nisōshi*, 235–311.

44. Before Kenka there was another female disciple, twenty-nine-year-old Yamakawa Iun, about whom virtually nothing is known; see Ishikawa, *Seimon Shingakushi no Kenkyū*, 215.

45. Kenka's enlightenment probably was along the lines of Toan's experience. One evening, as Toan was slipping into his *yukata* (robe) after bathing, he suddenly cried out, "Am I wearing my *yukata* or is my *yukata* wearing me?" Bursting with profound joy, he ran to tell a senior disciple about his experience. Without warning, the disciple slapped Iun's cheeks—a shock tactic intended as a final touch to enlightenment. See Iwawuchi *Kenka*, *Kyōshūka to shite no Iwaida Baigan* (Risumekan Shuppanbu, 1934), 257–58.

for she had rebelled against female-likeness, patriarchal authority, marriage, and orthodox Buddhism. She was, to borrow the language of the 1960s, a woman against the Establishment. Yet Kenka found a niche for herself within an essentially misogynist organization.

During her convalescence in Kyoto, Kenka developed a strong interest in Baigan's lecture series and eclectic mode of argumentation. His morning discourses were devoted to an exegesis of the Chinese and Japanese classics, and his evening ones to an interpretation of the Nô play *Yamauba* (Mountain witch). Kenka made a point of noting that Baigan encouraged women as well as men to attend his free lectures, although the sexes were separated by bamboo blinds: thus, until Toan's curriculum designed for females exclusively, women and men apparently listened and responded to the same lecture material. Significantly, part of Kenka's text consists of a running dialogue between herself and Baigan. Among various reasons for her becoming a Shingaku disciple was perhaps the opportunity to debate and lecture publicly, which the *bakufu* discouraged nuns from doing.⁴⁶

Kenka arrived in Edo sometime during 1750, her nun's habit, which she retained, doubtless facilitating her freedom of movement through the many border stations en route.⁴⁷ Following Baigan's precedent, she then hung out a shingle advertising her free lectures for the women and men of Edo. Her talks incorporated the sutras, *Tsurezuregusa*, Nô songs, and Baigan's works. While it is not clear where she lived or how she went about her proselytizing activities, we do know that she wrote *Kenka hogoshû* during the first part of her ten-year residence in Edo. She noted that her morning lectures drew a peak audience of 700-900 women and men, and her afternoon and evening sessions some 1,200 persons. Kenka estimated that over a six-month period she addressed more than 102,500 women and men, many of whom were undoubtedly repeat visitors. The authorities must have been suspicious of the crowds around her, for as another disciple noted thirty years later in a letter to Toan, the potentially antagonistic *bakufu* posed a constant worry to the movement.⁴⁸

Kenka returned to Kyoto in 1760 to participate in the ceremonies for the seventh anniversary of Baigan's death. There she spoke on the sutras, *Tsurezuregusa*, and Baigan's *Tohimondô* (City-country dialogues, 1739). At first, the disciples who had joined the movement in her absence "mistook her for a mountain ascetic or sermonizer before recog-

46. *Satohû masôshi*, 317.

47. Kogure Kikuko, "Kinsei ni okeru josei no sekisho tsuko ni suite," in *Kinsei joseishi*, ed. Kinsei Joseishi Kenkyûkai (Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1986), 44-99.

48. Shiba Keiko, "Jion-ni," in *Shinbô to ai to shi to*, vol. 7 of *Jinbutsu Nihon no joseishi*, ed. Enchi Fumiko (Shûeisha, 1977), 161.

nizing the profundity of her knowledge." It is on this self-affirming note that Kenka ends the autobiographical portion of her book. She remained in Kyoto, never to return to Edo owing to her frail health; her last years were spent in her native village. After sixty-three years, she had come full circle.

The majority of *Kenka hogoshû* is a reiteration of Baigan's teachings; seven of the nineteen chapters were copied directly from *Ishida sensei goroku* (The analects of Teacher Ishida, 1740s). The title of the single chapter aimed explicitly at women, "For Women There Is the Path of the Three Obediences," captures the conventional tenor and content of the nonautobiographical sections of her book. It is ironic that Kenka should have contributed to the construction of the Shingaku Woman when she herself had rejected the Path of Three Obediences. Perhaps the fact that she had, by taking the tonsure, withdrawn from secular and sexual affairs helped disqualify her as a "real" female in need of reform. Also, the movement in its initial stages was still unsystematized and therefore flexible enough both to attract and to accommodate mavericks like herself.

OTHER FEMALE DISCIPLES

Kenka's work to introduce Baigan's teachings to Edo paved the way for Nakazawa Dôni (1725-1803), a male disciple who established in that city one of the most influential Shingaku colleges, Sanzensha (1781). Dôni made friends with the many daimyô temporarily residing in Edo as part of their obligatory attendance upon the shôgun, and, impressed by their initial exposure to Shingaku, many sponsored the establishment of colleges in their domains as well. Thus, as a result of Dôni's efforts, Shingaku permeated a good part of the samurai class; yet his success was contingent on Kenka's pioneering efforts.⁴⁹

Among Dôni's disciples was Asai Kio and her low-ranking samurai husband. In the spring of 1794, Kio was invited to develop a Shingaku curriculum for maidservants at Edo (Chiyoda) Castle, and she lectured there and at other daimyô residences for several years.⁵⁰ "She can go where I cannot tread," Dôni wrote in a letter in 1796. "We are fortunate to have her among us."⁵¹ In an age of censorship and prohibitions, Shingaku lecturers had to take great care that the movement was not mis-

49. Ishikawa, *Sekimon Shingakushi no kenkyû*, 304; Takemura Yasukazu, *Sekimon Shingakushi no keizai shiryô* (Kyoto: Mineroba Shobô, 1972), 541.

50. Ishikawa Ken, *Shingaku kyôku no honshûsu narabi ni hatataku* (Shôkasha, 1951), 290; Ishikawa, *Sekimon Shingaku no kenkyû*, 463.

51. Ishikawa, *Sekimon Shingaku no kenkyû*, 463.

taken for a subversive or heterodox outfit, and here too Dōni praised his disciple for doing a "most difficult, delicate task."⁵²

The three other female lecturers acknowledged in the literature were all based in Hiroshima, where the movement was noted for the large number of women disciples⁵³—though apart from Kenka, none of these is described as coming to Shingaku on her own accord. Yaguchi Nakako (1790–1846) was a particularly active member, evidently owing to the influence of her husband, the lord of Hiroshima, who had become a disciple in 1811. He founded and served as the nominal head of Keishinsha (1819), the first of several Hiroshima colleges;⁵⁴ yet Nakako took over in his absence, conducting on her own the small study groups and meditation seminars convened for the benefit of disciples.⁵⁵ These sessions did not seem to be segregated by sex, though female disciples received additional lectures in the women's room. Nakako often held round-the-clock study sessions with disciples of both sexes at her home or theirs, sometimes for two weeks at a stretch.

Nakako's official role was as a guidance counselor for the female staff in Hiroshima, among whom were two others who achieved renown as Shingaku lecturers as well: Bandai Kumiko (1783–1837) and Tagami Tatsuko (1802–67). Both women—whose husbands were likewise disciples and served as key administrators of Keishinsha—earned teaching permits known as *zendō inkan*, enabling them to give public lectures. Tatsuko also served as a lecturer at Kanshinsha (founded in 1827) in Hiroshima—the only female of eight lecturers. (Her husband was a key administrator there as well.) Toan had established the policy of issuing permits to lecturers, called *kōshi*, both to ensure the quality of the Shingaku staff and to identify *kōshi* as bona fide Shingaku representatives, since they made regular lecture tours to outlying provinces. Female and male disciples were appointed to lectureships on the basis of their exemplary character, oratorical skills, working knowledge of the Chinese and Japanese classics, and enlightenment experience. Toan also set a precedent of awarding certificates (*danshō*) thrice yearly to disciples, such as Kumiko and Tatsuko, who had achieved enlightenment.⁵⁶

Public lectures were held not only at the colleges, but also on a circuit basis, with *kōshi* spending a month or so on the road, lecturing at post

52. Kio continued to supervise new recruits long after Dōni died. Philanthropy was one of the tangible results of her efforts: the contributions of cloth made by seven maid-servants and ladies-in-waiting at Tokugawa Castle amounted to seven hundred bolts between the 1790s and the first two decades of the 1800s. See *ibid.*, 846, 866–67.

53. Okawa Giemon, "Hiroshima Shingaku no hatatsu," in *Shingaku*, ed. Nagasaka Kaneko, vol. 1 (Yuzankaku, 1941), 8.

54. *Ibid.*, 4; Ishikawa, *Seimon Shingaku no kenkyū*, 945–46.

55. For details, see Robertson, "Rooting the Pine."

56. *Ibid.*; Shibata Minoru, *Shingaku* (Shinbundo, 1967), 163.

stations, towns, and villages. Letters from the peripatetic lecturers to their Shingaku colleagues provide some indication of audience attendance. One from 1797 notes that a *Zenkun* class taught by Dōni at Kyōkansa (founded in 1787) in Osaka during the third month was attended by nearly 1,500 women and men, about 70 of whom sought to become members of the movement. Another report dated 1794 notes that a week-long lecture series in a Tanba-province village drew an average of 513 women and men each day, for a total of 6,672 persons.⁵⁷ As for the female disciples discussed above, although they were recognized lecturers,⁵⁸ it is not clear whether—or how often and how far—they conducted lecture tours. Kenka's pioneering efforts in Edo may not have set a precedent for female disciples.

Much of the lecture rhetoric was phrased in the form of parables (*dōwa*), a composite of proverbs, commonsense precepts, Shingaku principles, and local historical incidents. The basic strategy of the parables was to "direct by appearing to clarify," as they enunciated social problems and simultaneously proposed solutions for them.⁵⁹

Females were the featured subject of many Shingaku parables. Unlike the women's lecturers in *Zenkun*, in *dōwa* both the good and bad Others were Japanese commoners inhabiting the here and now. This change reflected the informal nature of both the parables and the context of their recitation, and rendered their didactic content more accessible to untutored listeners. Like Tokugawa-period fiction in general, the narrative structure of *dōwa* was based on the juxtaposition of stock characters: among the stereotypic bad Others were the "evil woman" (*akujō*);⁶⁰ the "jealous wife" (*tofu*), and the "ogre woman" (*kyō*); and among the good Others, the "virtuous woman" (*teppu teijō*) and the "filial woman" (*kōjō*).⁶¹ Maidservants (*jochiū*) were almost always depicted unfavorably in Shingaku parables and other texts—as delinquent, but not evil, women with an incorrigible penchant for expensive clothing and cosmetics, gossip, snickering, and other bad habits. Rare was the portrayal of a loyal, hardworking, practical-minded maidservant.

Good and bad Others came from urban as well as rural areas (though in one parable, Dōni stereotyped Kyoto and Osaka women as small-minded and extravagant in their sartorial and gustatory habits—"they

57. Ishikawa, *Seimon Shingaku no kenkyū*, 169.

58. Kaneko Geijirō, "Dōwa ni mitaru josei," in Nagasaka (ed.), *Shingaku*, vol. 3 (Yuzankaku, 1932), 4–5.

59. Roger Abraham, "Introductory Remarks to a Rhetorical Theory of Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore* 81, no. 3 (1968): 150.

60. The "evil woman" was a particularly prevalent image of women in literature and Kabuki alike during the early nineteenth century, her "evilness" stemming from her self-sufficiency and "privatized being"; see Shiba, *Edo jidai no joseitachi*, 55–58, 75.

61. Kaneko, "Dōwa ni mitaru josei," 35–37.

104

wear expensive clothing, eat [white] rice three times a day, and complain about trivial matters"—while a certain farm woman of Shinano province was cast as the epitome of frugality and diligence).⁶² The urban-rural contrast here paralleled the official four-class hierarchy in which farmers were eulogized and urbanites (merchants) disparaged. Their differences notwithstanding, the *Zenkun* lectures and parables were similar in that the qualities assigned women were gender constructs, and not necessarily behaviors manifested by real women. In keeping with the Tokugawa-period rhetoric of women, "brides," "wives," "daughters," and "daughters-in-law" were the types of females depicted in the Shingaku parables.

CONCLUSION

Female disciples and teachers of Shingaku did not epitomize the Shingaku Woman, even though they participated in her construction. The paradox, however, is only an apparent one. For Kenka, Kio, Nakako, and all female disciples, their sex actually prevented them from representing the Shingaku Woman: female anatomy, after all, precluded female-likeness. The logic of anatomical reductionism virtually assured that females could participate only in the *deconstruction* of female-likeness as it was defined by the patriarchal intelligentsia.

Shingaku discipline did neutralize some of the negative value imposed on female sex, however. Likewise, by participating in the construction of the Shingaku Woman, female disciples compensated for their "natural" misrepresentation of her. Kio, Nakako, Kumiko, and Tatsuko, because they were married, were less maverick than Kenka; moreover, the records (which may be incomplete or partial) indicate that they did not travel widely. Their lives as Shingaku disciples and teachers more or less conformed to the spatial parameters of female-like activities set by Toan. Yet like Kenka, they lectured publicly and enjoyed a legacy beyond their conjugal households.

The paragon of female-likeness in Tokugawa society remained the Kabuki *onnagata*: male actors who modeled gender constructs developed by male intellectuals. In effect, women's hypothetical achievement of "female" gender was tantamount to their impersonation of female-like males, who, in turn, were not impersonating particular females but rather enacting an idealized version (and vision) of female-likeness. *Bakufu* ideology did not and could not accommodate women's control over the construction and representation of "female" gender.

Tokugawa-period discourses on women, and specifically on female-

62. *Ibid.*, 9.

likeness, were articulated in a number of guises, including *jokun*, the coining of crimes, architectural conventions, and Kabuki performances. They were also played out in the conventional and unconventional ways in which females lived their lives. This suggests that the significance of the life and work of individual Japanese girls and women at any particular time and place needs to be reclaimed from the space between the ideal and the real—between discourses on female-likeness and the actual experiences of real females.