

# Kyokutei Bakin's Philological Research and the Writing of Historical Narrative: Study of the Izu Islands in the *Marvelous Story of the Drawn-Bow Moon*

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## Introduction

*Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* 椿説弓張月 (The Marvelous Story of the Drawn-Bow Moon, 1807–1811) enjoys a long-lasting popularity among Kyokutei Bakin's 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848) readership and has also been the subject of numerous scholarly studies and commentaries. Among these, Gotō Tanji's 後藤丹治 edition, published in 1958 and 1962, laid the foundation for contemporary source criticism.<sup>1</sup> Since then the identification of hypotexts has been considerably expanded and refined, ranging from Cui Xianglan's 崔香蘭 excavation of new Chinese sources to Miyake Hiroyuki's 三宅宏幸 focus on Edo-period editions of medieval sources—to name only two recent examples.<sup>2</sup>

But as Glynne Walley has pointed out in his review of the scholarship on *Nansō Satomi hakekenden* 南総里見八犬伝 (The Lives of the Eight Dogs of the Nansō Satomi, 1814–1842), locating sources is an endless and sometimes sterile task, because it does not always answer the hows and whys.<sup>3</sup> Why was a source selected in the first place? How was it adapted, and for what purpose? This process of adaptation or transposition has often been understood within the framework of the *sekai/shukō* aesthetic derived from the dramatic arts.<sup>4</sup> In *kabuki* 歌舞伎 or *jōruri*

<sup>1</sup> *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* 椿説弓張月, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系 (NKBT) 60–61, ed. Goto Tanji 後藤丹治 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958 and 1962).

<sup>2</sup> Cui Xianglan [Jp. Sai Kōran] 崔香蘭, *Bakin yomibon to Chūgoku kodai shōsetsu* 馬琴読本と中国古代小説 (Tokyo: Keisuishisha, 2005), pp. 134–135; Miyake Hiroyuki 三宅宏幸, “*Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* tenkyo shōkō” 『椿説弓張月』 典拠小考, *Dōshisha kokubungaku* 同志社国文学 74 (2011), pp. 45–56.

<sup>3</sup> Glynne Walley, *Good Dogs: Edification, Entertainment and Kyokutei Bakin's Nansō Satomi Hakekenden* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2017), p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> Nakamura Yukihiko 中村幸彦, *Gesakuron* 戯作論 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1966), pp. 170–213. For a discussion in English, see Adam Kern, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp. 123–128.

浄瑠璃 plays, for example, as well as in works of popular fiction, a certain selected “world” (*sekai* 世界) can automatically designate the historical and literary backdrop for the story (determining thereby the era, the place, and even the main characters of its action), in a phenomenon similar to what Western medievalists mean when they talk about the “Matter” of Britain, or of France, or of Rome. His “world” thus chosen, the author is then expected to bring new “variations” (*shukō* 趣向) to this world by giving to it a particular twist (interweaving other different “worlds,” updating an ancient story to a contemporary setting, transposing a Chinese “world” to Japan, and so on). For authors of “reading books” (*yomihon* 読本), and especially of the type known as “historical narratives” (*shiden-mono* 史伝物), the whole challenge, as Takagi Gen 高木元 has argued, lies in knowing how to negotiate this fundamental determinism in historical framework.<sup>5</sup> Working from such an understanding, recent scholarship on Bakin’s philological research has opened up new perspectives.

Generally speaking, the genre of so-called “philological essays” or “antiquarian miscellanies” (*keōshō zuibitsu* 考証隨筆) has long remained an understudied field in scholarship on late Edo-period popular fiction (*gesaku* 戯作).<sup>6</sup> Some researchers, however, such as Miyake Hiroyuki 三宅宏幸 or Ōtaka Yōji 大高洋司, have attempted to understand Bakin’s fictional works in the light of the erudite approach seen in his essay productions.<sup>7</sup> Both have emphasized the structuring role that philological research played in the development of *yomihon*. To summarize their findings in a few words, Bakin harvests, from anecdotes and episodes retrieved over the course of his investigations into historical sources, a veritable corpus of material which he uses to develop subplots and digressions, and to help structure the longer narratives that characterize his later *yomihon*.

While much emphasis has been placed on narrative structure, I would like to explore here another form of transposition that defines Bakin’s relationship to his sources: the use that he makes of “regional geographies” or “gazetteers” (*chishi* 地誌) to give substance to his descriptions of the customs and landscapes of distant and unfamiliar locales. A close comparative reading of the novel alongside its hypotexts will provide a better understanding of how Bakin concretely uses philological reasoning in the context of writing historical fiction.

## 1. The Rise of Historical *yomihon* and Bakin’s Philological Research

*Yumiharizuki* marks a turning point in Bakin’s career as a writer.<sup>8</sup> At the dawn of

<sup>5</sup> Takagi Gen 高木元, *Edo yomihon no kenkyū* 江戸読本の研究 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1995), pp. 13–14.

<sup>6</sup> Satō Satoru 佐藤悟, “Kōshō zuihitsu no imi suru mono: Ryūtei Tanehiko to Kyokutei Bakin” 考証隨筆の意味するもの：柳亭種彦と曲亭馬琴, *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 国語と国文学 70:11 (1993), pp. 118–127.

<sup>7</sup> Miyake Hiroyuki, op. cit. (2011); Ōtaka Yōji 大高洋司, “Chinsetsu yumiharizuki ron: kōshō” 『椿説弓張月』論：構想と考証, *Yomihon kenkyū* 読本研究 6:1 (1992).

<sup>8</sup> Nakamura Yukihiko 中村幸彦, “Chinsetsu yumiharizuki no shiteki ichi” 椿説弓張月の史的位臚, *Bungaku* 文学 36:3 (1968), pp. 10–17; Ōtaka Yōji, op. cit. (1992).

the Bunka 文化 era (1804–1818), he had begun to reinvent himself as a *yomibon* author, gradually giving up the writing of comical pieces that were strongly anchored in the world of the theatre. After a trip to Osaka in 1802, he had grown closer to the literary milieu of the Kamigata 上方 (the region centered on Kyoto and Osaka), and had become much more influenced by Chinese vernacular fiction (*hakuwa shōsetsu* 白話小説) and by collections of Buddhist tales (*setsumashū* 説話集). From then on, following in the footsteps of his rival and former master Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816), he immersed himself in the scholarly research that led him to develop a new genre that would seal his reputation: the historical narrative (*shiden-mono*). In the field of philological essays (*kōshō zuihitsu*), Kyōden had made his reputation with studies on the customs of the city of Edo during the golden age of the Genroku 元禄 era (1688–1704), e.g., in his *Kinsei kiseki-kō* 近世奇跡考 (A Study of Marvels in Modern Times, 1804) and *Kottōshū* 骨董集 (A Collection of Curios, 1814–1815). But Bakin preferred to gather a broader range of more disparate material, with an eye to how he could later reuse it in the writing of his novels. Such material saw publication in a number of different works. One of these, *Enseki zasshi* 燕石雜誌 (A Collection of Fake Gems, 1811), is a collection of 59 short essays—or even notes which he had jotted down while conducting various researches—based on the reading of some 238 titles (thoroughly cited at the end). Publications akin to this include *Nimazē no kei* 烹雜の記 (A Stew of Notes, 1811), which gathers 20 further essays in the same mold, and *Gendō hōgen* 玄同放言 (Ramblings of Primeval Chaos, 1818–1820), a miscellanea of similar reading notes organized in encyclopedic fashion (partially published, it refers already to 190 titles). Slightly preceding the publication of this material, *Yumiharizuki* is Bakin's first novel to bear clear traces of his philological frenzy.

Indeed, Bakin's passion for philological research (*kōshōgaku* 考証学) can be said to permeate every one of his historical novels from then on. But to what exactly does the term *kōshōgaku* refer? And how was the term understood by Bakin? Sometimes translated as “evidential learning,” *kōshōgaku* (Ch. *kaoshengxue*) refers broadly to an intellectual trend in Qing China that consisted of close (re)readings of canonical texts, supported by various philological tools—historical phonology, comparative linguistics, etymology, etc.—whose overarching goal was to retrieve said texts' original meaning. It rejected unfounded speculation and assumed a scientific stance by laying importance on the principle that assertions should be backed up by textual evidence. In Japan, this trend took a more eclectic turn, never giving rise to a structured school of thought. Yet seen in the broader perspective of Tokugawa intellectual history which, with Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705) and Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), emerges from a critique of Song Confucianism, *kōshōgaku* can be linked also to the development of national learning (Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, 1730–1801), to Buddhist studies (Jiun 慈雲, 1718–1805), and even to medicine (Taki Keizan 多紀桂山, 1755–1810).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Rai Tsutomu 頼惟勤, *Kokushi daijiten* 国史大辞典 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1985).

The extent to which the philological investigations of *gesaku* writers partake of this philosophy is subject to debate. Their approach to knowledge can be understood as a further emanation of the generally antiquarian spirit pervading literary circles since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Margarita Winkel's study on Bakin's report of the Tankikai 耽奇会, and Ibi Takashi's 揖斐高 research on literati salons, including Bakin's Tankikai and Toenkai 兔園会, both shed light on the intellectual atmosphere of such circles.<sup>10</sup> This trend involves a serious-minded taste for things of the past, apprehended through classical, popular, or material culture, and can be seen as an extension into the collective sphere of Bakin's earlier taste for philological investigations as expressed in his individual essays. In any case, the quest for origins (whether of a material artefact, a custom, an anecdote, even of a word or an expression) lay at the very core of contemporary interest in such matters. This is why etymologies, or more broadly speaking what are called "spurious origin stories" (*kojitsuke* 故事付け), are so prevalent in *gesaku* writers' philological essays, and hence also permeate their fiction. So much so that Glynne Walley sums up the whole *Hakkenden* as a "mammoth, thousands-of-pages-long" *kojitsuke* aimed at explaining why the eight warriors of the Satomi clan have the character "dog" in their names.<sup>11</sup> If I dare make the analogy, one could say that *Yumiharizuki* is itself an extended commentary on (what was at least assumed to be) a simple "historical fact": the crossing of Minamoto no Tametomo 源為朝 (1139–1170) to the Ryukyu Islands.

## 2. History and Fiction in Bakin's *Yumiharizuki*

The *Yumiharizuki* recounts the adventures of an early medieval warrior, Minamoto no Tametomo, and his involvement in the Ryukyu Islands' royal line. To put the matter simply, the "historical" framework is provided by the *Tale of Hōgen* (*Hōgen monogatari* 保元物語), and also by later developments in that text's reception. Late editions of the *Hōgen monogatari* itself might mention Tametomo's crossing to a certain "Isle of Devils," but it was only around the 16<sup>th</sup> century that erudite monks made the connection between this island and the Ryukyus, giving shape to the legend according to which Tametomo married the daughter of a local lord and had his own son enthroned as the Ryukyus' first king. This legend was included in the official history of the kingdom, first written in 1650, and later repeated and discussed in various Chinese and Japanese sources throughout the Edo period.<sup>12</sup> Bakin's novel further weaves into this basic layer a narrative motif

<sup>10</sup> Margarita Winkel, "Entertainment and Education: An Antiquarian Society in Edo, 1824–25," in *Uncharted Waters: Intellectual Life in the Edo Period*, eds. Anna Beerens and Mark Teeuwen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 13–34; Ibi Takashi 揖斐高, *Edo no bunjin saron: chibikijin to geijutsuka-tachi* 江戸の文人サロン：知識人と芸術家たち (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2009), pp. 128–152.

<sup>11</sup> Glynne Walley (op. cit.), p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> See among recent scholarship: Watanabe Kyōichi 渡辺匡一, "Tametomo toryū-tan no yukue: sogo suru rekishi-ninshiki to kokka, chiiki, soshite hito" 為朝渡琉譚のゆくえ：齟齬する

of restored sovereignty borrowed from the Chinese epic *Water Margin: A Sequel* (*Shuibu bouzhan* 水滸後伝) in particular, though the extended scope he gives it goes beyond anything found in the original model.<sup>13</sup> Finally, Bakin made extensive use of *Chūzan denshin roku* 中山伝信録 (1721), a full account of the Ryukyū kingdom by Chinese vice-ambassador Xu Baoguang 徐葆光 (1671–1723), in addition to regional geographies on the Izu Islands, such as *Izu kaitō fudoki* 伊豆海島風土記 (1782) and *Hachijō hikki* 八丈筆記 (1796), which he used to flesh out his descriptions of remote island settings. Considered from its sources alone, *Yumiharizuki*, like any *yomihon*, is truly a multilayered millefeuille: a confection of history, myths, contemporary accounts, and popular legends.

Referring to itself as a “popular history” (*haishi* 稗史) or “unofficial biography” (*gaiden* 外伝), the text raises thus from the outset the much-debated question of the relationship between history and fiction. The nature of the relationship between the two in Bakin's works is rooted in a vision shared in common by novelists in both Qing China and Edo Japan. According to the form's defenders in this tradition, the *raison d'être* of the novel is two-fold. On the one hand, it bridges the gap between scholarly and popular culture, making the moral lessons of official histories accessible to whole sectors of society through its simple language and entertaining character. On the other hand, the novel is worthy of interest because it supplements the shortcomings of those official histories, filling in the spaces where the annals remain silent. Filling in the blanks involves thus a work of the imagination. This is why the term *xiaoshuo* 小説 (Jp. *shōsetsu*), though originally synonymous with *haishi*, has taken on over time a connotation ever closer to that of “fiction.”<sup>14</sup>

The opening words of the oft-quoted preface to the first part of *Yumiharizuki* clearly shows how deeply Bakin is indebted to this vision of literature:

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歴史認識と国家、地域、そして人, *Nihon bungaku* 日本文学 50:1 (2001), pp. 19–27; Ōta Hideaki 大田英昭, “Kinsei Nihon no Ryūkyū ninshiki no keisei to hensen: Minamoto no Tametomoto ryū densetsu wo megutte” 近世日本の琉球認識の形成と変遷：源為朝渡琉伝説をめぐって, *Shisōshi kenkyū* 思想史研究 1 (2001), pp. 11–22; Itō Yūshi 伊藤雄志, “Ryūkyū/Okinawa-shi to Nihon-shi no setten: Minamoto no Tametomoto ryū densetsu wo meguru ronsō” 琉球・沖縄史と日本史の接点：源為朝渡琉伝説をめぐるとの論争, *Chiiki bunka kenkyū* 地域文化研究 6 (2008), pp. 1–26; Yano Misako 矢野美沙子, “Tametomoto densetsu to Chūzan ōtō” 為朝伝説と中山王統, *Okinawa bunka kenkyū* 沖縄文化研究 36 (2010), pp. 1–48.

<sup>13</sup> The literary motif of restoring to a rightful sovereign the throne usurped from him by malefactors has been studied in comparative perspective between the cases of China, Korea, and Japan by Ellen Widmer, “Island Paradises: Travel and Utopia in Three East Asian Offshoots of *Shuibu zhan*,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 13:1 (2000), pp. 20–33.

<sup>14</sup> See, among many other discussions of this shift, Komori Yōichi 小森陽一, “Kinsei shōsetsu kara kindai shōsetsu e” 近世小説から近代小説へ, in *Iwanami koza: Nihon bungakushi* 岩波講座：日本文学史, eds. Kubota Jun 久保田淳 et al., vol. 11 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), pp. 57–82; Kamei Hideo 亀井秀雄, ‘Shōsetsu’ ron: *Shōsetsu shinzui to kindai* 「小説」論：『小説神髓』と近代 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), pp. 53–88; or, in English, Glynne Walley (op. cit.), pp. 61–74.

This book relates the past deeds of the valiant general Hachirō Tametomo 八郎為朝 during the Hōgen 保元 Era. As in Chinese vernacular historical romances (*engi shōsetsu* 演義小説), this story relies greatly on imaginary constructions, so the reader can wander off into mysterious and fantastic lands.<sup>15</sup>

Or similarly in his prefatory note to the second part:

As I have said previously, my *Yumiharizuki* imitates Chinese romances (*engi*). It is a completely invented story (*tsukuri mōketaru monogatari* 作り設たる物語). The facts I have just mentioned, however [i.e. philological considerations on Tametomo's crossing to the Ryukyus], are not mere fables (*gūgen* 寓言).<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, historical sources appear to provide a mere pretext for unleashing the literary imagination. Nonetheless, and this is Ōtaka Yōji's main thesis, a change seems to be taking place from this second part onward, as Bakin's research into the historical background of Tametomo's whereabouts intensified. Creative imagination seems rather to come under the control now of a philological approach.

### 3. A Shift in Bakin's Attitude towards History and Fiction

In actuality, when he started writing the novel at the end of 1805, Bakin had as of yet only a vague idea of the whole picture. Before getting to work on its second part in the spring of 1807, he had probably had a chance to catch a glimpse of the Ryukyuan mission that reached Edo in late 1806. Each such visit caused quite a stir in the city, stimulated by an ever-growing series of publications on the subject.<sup>17</sup> His editor, Hirabayashi Shōgorō 平林庄五郎, might have smelled a good opportunity in all of this and so urged him to produce more volumes for the work. Owing to Hirabayashi's editorial success, the novel would eventually reach 68 episodes in 5 parts. Yet, as we can infer from the preface to its first part, at the beginning Bakin still knew but little about Tametomo's crossing to the Ryukyu Islands, a subject he would develop at length in Parts 3 to 5 at the cost of a long and impressive work of documentary investigation. The scale of the effort can easily be gauged by this simple fact: in the first part's preface quoted above, he briefly mentions only two sources in addition to the *Hōgen monogatari*—Hayashi Razan's 林羅山 *Honchō jinjakō* 本朝神社考 (*A Study of Shrines in Our Country*, 17<sup>th</sup> c.) and Terajima Ryōan's 寺島良安 *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会 (*A Sino-Japanese Illustrated Compendium of the Universe*, 1712)—but by the beginning of the second part, he gives already a list of 27 references, including Chinese and Ryukyuan sources as well as the Izu Islands

<sup>15</sup> Unless specified otherwise, all quotations from *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* refer to the edition of the *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 60–61 (op. cit.), here NKBT 60, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> NKBT 60, p. 235.

<sup>17</sup> See Yokoyama Manabu 横山学, *Ryukyu-koku shisetsu torai no kenkyū* 琉球国使節渡来の研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), pp. 279–285 in particular.

geographies mentioned above. Ōtaka Yōji summarizes the shift in Bakin's approach to the novel as follows: "from the second part on, [he] began including thorough analysis of his materials in his prefaces and afterwords, and the story came to be driven by 'historical facts' that he had discovered."<sup>18</sup>

He further points to the change in tone in the Chinese preface to Part 4:<sup>19</sup>

An ancient saying goes: "Popular romances (*haiben shōsetsu* 稗編小説) elaborate the words of official histories (*seishi* 正史) in order to make them clear to ordinary people. Unofficial and popular histories (*bōkan yashi* 坊間野史) capture air and shadows [i.e. are fanciful] and thereby confuse the senses of common people. Since both genres are groundless and faulty, do they not mislead people's judgment?" My *Yumiharizuki* is a romance (*shōsetsu*), yet it quotes true historical facts (*kojitsu* 故実) and conforms to official histories (*seishi*) in every way. If sometimes it skillfully borrows a fact or superfluously adds a word, this hardly deceives people. All the ins and outs are based on evidence and testimony.<sup>20</sup>

Bakin seems to have become indeed obsessed by the need to distinguish between historical facts and their literary and fictional elaborations. This obsession, Ōtaka argues, can also be traced in other texts written by Bakin around the time that he published the last parts of *Yumiharizuki* (1810–1811). In *Enseki zasshi* (1811), for example, he examines the origins of popular legends (*setsuwa* 説話), a genre he considers somehow futile and fictional though based on real sources. Likewise in a short work of fiction, *Mukashigatari shichijū no kura* 昔語質屋庫 (Old Tales from a Pawnbroker's Storeroom, 1810), he seeks to distinguish ancient anecdotes (*koji* 故事), which are historical facts, from popular stories (*zokusetsu* 俗説), which he understands as a way to introduce children to the reading of history through the use of fictitious words and literary embellishments. Taking up stories about the Soga brothers, Bakin seems to believe that certain facts can be gleaned from true chronicles (*jitsuroku* 実録), for example *Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡 (Mirror of the East, c. 1300), but that these were later embellished by writers of "fictions" (*tsukuri monogatari* 小説, in Bakin's gloss) such as *Soga monogatari* 曾我物語 (The Tale of the Soga Brothers, 14<sup>th</sup> c.). In his effort to draw a distinction within ancient sources between real facts and literary embellishments, he considers some texts to be more reliable (*Azuma kagami*, warrior genealogies, etc.) than others (the *Taiheiki* 太平記 [Chronicle of Great Peace, c. 1370] in particular). The key to assessing a source's reliability is the critical approach of the philologist.

<sup>18</sup> Ōtaka Yōji, "Development of the late *yomihon*: Santō Kyōden and Kyokutei Bakin," in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, eds. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 545.

<sup>19</sup> Ōtaka Yōji, "Bunka 7–8 nen no Bakin: kōshō to yomihon" 文化七、八年の馬琴：考証と読本, in *Setsuwa ronshū* 説話論集, ed. Setsuwa to setsuwa bungaku no kai 説話と説話文学の会, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Seibundō, 1995), pp. 383–419.

<sup>20</sup> *NKBT* 61, p. 129.

Ōtaka is right to point out Bakin's desire to be more scrupulous than Chinese vernacular historical romances in distinguishing between fact and fiction. Yet, at the same time, as Miyake Hiroyuki has shown in his analysis of *Yumiharizuki's* own sources, Bakin can both reject the *Zen Taiheiki* 前太平記 (A Prequel to the Chronicle of Great Peace, c.1681) as a reliable historical reference (as he does in *Enseki zasshi*), and yet still adapt whole descriptions from it to shape his narrative.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, as Miyake has also demonstrated, in the case of another historical romance, *Asahina shimameguri no ki* 朝夷巡島記 (A Record of Asahina's Travels around the Isles, 1815–27), Bakin deliberately opted for fiction regarding the ancestry of his hero, Asahina Yoshihide 朝比奈義秀, because it was a better fit for his overall scheme, and because it allowed him to drag into the story certain literary motifs taken from the *Kojiki* 古事記 (An Account of Ancient Matters, 712) in particular.<sup>22</sup> For Miyake, philological research is what links the different sources together, what enables Bakin to superimpose, for example, the figure of Asahina Yoshihide—son of “General Rising Sun” (Asahi shōgun 朝日將軍) aka Kiso Yoshinaka 木曾義仲 (1154–1184)—upon that of the mythological Hiruko 日子 (*lit.* “Son of the Sun”), thanks to a similarity in solar imagery. “By making Yoshihide an offspring of Yoshinaka,” Ōtaka concludes, “[Bakin] designs an original plot (*shukō*) that creates associations between a mixture of historical facts, myths, various legends, and philology.”

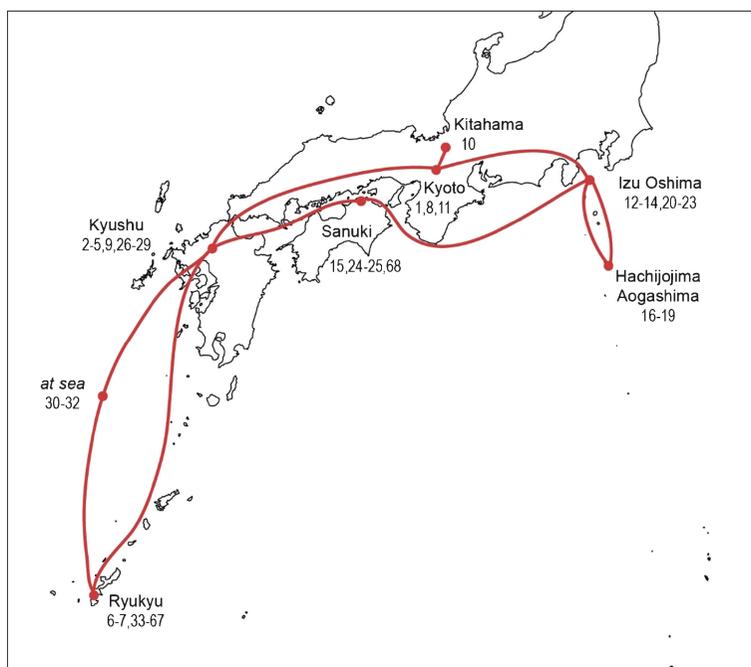
#### 4. The Use of Regional Geographies and the Risk of Anachronism

However, no matter how rigorously Bakin may have intended to stick to what he believed to be historical facts, the blanks in Tametomo's life remain numerous and open to speculation, especially when it comes to time spent on the geographical margins. It is well to remember that the *Tale of Hōgen* focuses on a rebellion whose epicenter is located in Kyoto. Two emperors struggle for power, and Sutoku's 崇徳 (1119–1164, r. 1123–1141) forces, led by Minamoto no Tameyoshi 源為義 (1096–1156) together with his youngest son Tametomo, are defeated in the Capital's suburbs. The story does include episodes of Tametomo's youth in Kyushu and his exile in the Izu Islands, but these remain secondary and quantitatively unimportant. The spatial coverage in Bakin's novel is in contrast extremely wide and varied (**Figure 1**). It is precisely Tametomo's adventures on the borders of Japan that captured the author's imagination. Geographical margins had been poorly documented in pre-Edo-period literature, but in Bakin's time were drawing more and more attention, in part owing to the political situation but also out of sheer curiosity directed towards the outside world.

The possibility of imagining Tametomo's activities in those margins was offered

<sup>21</sup> Miyake Hiroyuki, *op. cit.* (2011).

<sup>22</sup> Miyake Hiroyuki, “Bakin no kōshō to yomihon: *Asahina shima meguri no ki zenden ron*” 馬琴の考証と読本：『朝夷巡島記全傳』論, *Kindai bungei* 近代文藝 102 (2015), pp. 15–29.



**Figure 1.** Map of *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* 椿説弓張月. Shifts in the story's geographical setting are indicated by chapter numbers. (Prepared by author).

by regional geographies (*chishi*), mainly on the Izu and the Ryukyu Islands. In this sense too, *Yumiharizuki* is not a pure work of fiction: though the descriptions of remote islands are not taken from Bakin's first-hand experience, they are based on highly-reliable contemporary reports. But yet another problem lurks here behind the scenes—the spectre of anachronism. It is one that has been repeatedly pointed out by critics. Leon Zolbrod asserted early on that: “Bakin's novels, with few exceptions, are historical romances. Although they are set in pre-Tokugawa Japan, however, they often describe the customs, institutions, and material culture of his own day.”<sup>23</sup> And more recently, Takagi Gen has very astutely identified the problem: “One stance assumed by Edo *yomibon* is that the historical setting is different from the depiction of manners in the story. This is probably not unrelated to the fact that *yomibon* frequently incorporate philological considerations into the story. It is not possible to create a fictional narrative without a thorough investigation of “historical facts.” This is because the device that creates the illusion of reality is none other than philology itself, without the aid of which it would be impossible to create this illusion. Moreover, in supplementing

<sup>23</sup> Leon Zolbrod, *Takizawa Bakin* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967), p. 66.

their own knowledge by means of these philological considerations, readers were able to wander in a fantasy world, even if there were discrepancies between the historical setting and the depiction of manners.”<sup>24</sup>

In order to further understand the role of philology in Bakin’s *yomibon*, how he concretely draws upon a plethora of sources to give substance to his narrative and thus reworks the *Hōgen monogatari* material, I will focus on the chapters in *Yumiharizuki* dedicated to the Izu Islands. I will follow four main lines of investigation: (1) how whole sections of regional geographies about the Izu Islands were lifted and inserted into the story; (2) how certain parts were subtly omitted or rewritten in order to shape Tametomo into a civilizing hero bringing the geographical margins into Japan’s cultural sphere; (3) how philological, and more precisely etymological reasoning was pivotal to articulating mythical and historical time; and (4) how these considerations circulated between different parts of the novel itself and scholarly essays external to it.

### 5. The Izu Islands in the *Hōgen monogatari* Tradition

It might be necessary to present first the broad outlines of the relevant episode. After the civil war known as the Hōgen Rebellion, which resulted in the defeat of Emperor Sutoku’s partisans, Tametomo is captured and banished to the island of Ōshima 大島 in the Izu Archipelago. There he quickly regains influence, subjects the local administrator to his authority, and refuses to pay taxes to the governor of Izu Province. In an episode recounted in texts of the manuscript line that gave birth to the so-called “reference” edition of the *Tale* (*Sankō Hōgen monogatari* 参考保元物語, 1689), which circulated widely during the Edo period and was probably used by Bakin himself,<sup>25</sup> Tametomo also makes his way to the Isle of Devils, where once again he subdues the local inhabitants. The governor, worried about Tametomo’s rise to power, obtains permission from the emperor to lead a punitive expedition. After one last feat of arms (he sinks the lead ship with a single arrow), Tametomo is overwhelmed by these enemy forces and commits suicide after beheading his own son. Here let us add that if the *Hōgen monogatari* has Tametomo dying thus in Ōshima, in his own novel Bakin invents a substitute for the hero, in the guise of a faithful companion, allowing him thereby to continue his adventures further into the Ryukyus.

This is a rough outline of the action. But what do these islands look like? Who inhabits them? How do people make their living there? These questions are of no interest to the *Hōgen monogatari*. It says nothing about Ōshima, nothing about Hachijōjima, and gives hardly any details about the Isle of Devils, which is renamed Ashigashima 葦島 (Reed Island) after being subdued by Tametomo and

<sup>24</sup> Takagi Gen (op. cit.), p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> NKBT 60, *Kaisetsu* 解説, pp. 11–12.

becoming a dependency of Hachijō.<sup>26</sup> Yet despite this clearly established geographical denomination, the depiction of the Isle of Devils does not refer to any specific real place, but coincides rather with the usual tropes found in medieval representations of the geographical margins.<sup>27</sup> The isle is inhospitable in every aspect: its inhabitants are physically monstrous (disproportionate in size, unconventional in hairstyle, with hirsute bodies, dark in pigmentation) as well as being culturally backward (they do not wear the sword on the left, do not cultivate rice or fruits, and while they do catch animals for food they do not really fish or hunt since they have no tools, and dress in coarse fabrics, being unable to produce silk or cotton). They are the very opposite of the Japanese.

## 6. Regional Geographies on the Izu Islands

Bakin fleshed out this frame-narrative using what was in his time the most detailed ethnographic information available on the Izu Islands, an archipelago little known to Edo readership because it was still a land of exile, inaccessible to the common people. Bakin's two primary sources belong to the genre commonly referred to as "regional geographies" or "gazetteers" (*chishi*), whose works are quite often in fact something in the way of administrative reports, written by officials after their inspection tours. Like other examples of the genre, Izu Islands geographies describe daily life on the islands, the customs of their inhabitants, their topography, climate, natural products, local dialects, etc. The earliest of these, *Izu kaitō fudoki* (1782) was written by a shogunate official, Satō Yukinobu 佐藤行信, who sent his attendant to inspect the archipelago. Its thorough description of the islands is accompanied by numerous annotated illustrations of flora and fauna, demonstrating the author's particular interest in the study of *materia medica* (*honzōgaku* 本草学), a field of knowledge which at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was strongly linked to the exploitation of natural resources.<sup>28</sup> The second of these geographies, *Hachijō hikkē* (1796), was a report by Furukawa Koshōken 古川古松軒 (1726–1807) based on the account given to him by the administrator of Izu, Mikawaguchi Tachū 三河口太忠, regarding the latter's inspection tour of the archipelago. Furukawa was a geographer, the son of an herbalist and physician from the province of Bitchū 備中, and is mainly known for his travel diaries and regional geographies.<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that copies of

<sup>26</sup> See the full description in *Hōgen monogatari: Tale of the Disorder in Hōgen*, trans. & annotat. William R. Wilson (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2001 [1971]), pp. 102–104.

<sup>27</sup> Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, *Nihon chusei kyōkai-shi ron* 日本中世境界史論 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2013), part 1 in particular.

<sup>28</sup> Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>29</sup> See for example *Saiyū zakki* 西遊雜記 (1783) and *Tōyū zakki* 東遊雜記 (1788), both partially translated in Herbert Plutschow, *A Reader in Edo Period Travel* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2006), pp. 89–123.

these manuscripts in Bakin's own hand have survived to the present day.<sup>30</sup>

As we will see in detail hereafter, Bakin relied heavily on regional geographies to give substance to his descriptions of the Izu Islands, but his reuse of these sources raises several questions. How could passages lifted wholesale from scholarly sources respond to the reader's horizon of expectations? How did these fit into Bakin's overall scheme, his intent to reshape Tametomo into a civilizing hero in particular? And how was he able to maintain chronological consistency, given that the story itself takes place at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but his ethnographic and geographic knowledge was based mainly on writings of the late 18<sup>th</sup>?

## 7. Depictions of Nature and Plant Culture in Hachijō

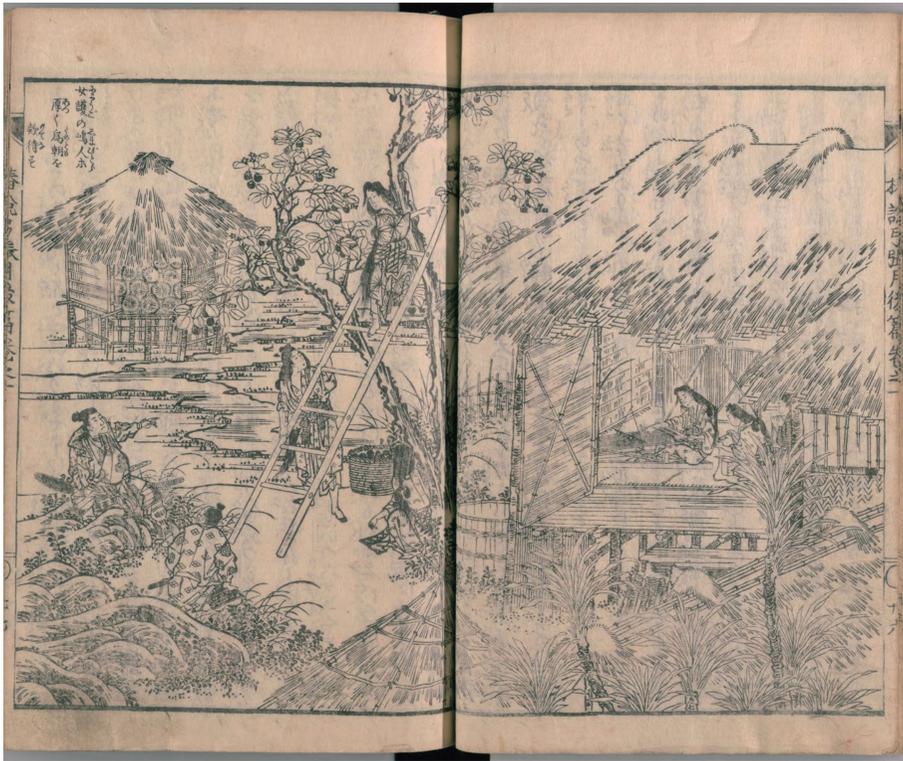
As unorthodox as it may seem for a textual analysis, I would like to start with an illustration (**Figure 2**). *Yumibarizuki* was illustrated by Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849), whose name greatly contributed to its success. Yet it must be remembered that illustrators usually worked on the basis of sketches provided by the authors. Bakin tended to treat images in his *yomihon* as a necessary evil, a concession made to editors in the name of commercial efficacy and greater accessibility for his readership, but he was nonetheless very scrupulous when it came to visual details.<sup>31</sup> Numerous significant elements mentioned in the body of the text were thus carefully integrated into Hokusai's renderings. The scene in question takes place on Hachijō Island, and is entitled “Female islanders entertain Tametomo lavishly,” for the place was then known as the Isle of Women (we will see why later). On the left Tametomo, accompanied by a retainer, is pointing at the three women who are picking some kind of “fruits” from a tree and putting them in a basket. The tree is supposed to be an “eggplant tree!” And these women are preparing a meal for their host.

[The women] spoke in the island dialect: “[. . .] The *dadaka* are now in full bloom. Let's simmer some eggplants in *shiokubari* 塩配<sup>32</sup> for you.” Two or three of them rushed for a ladder, climbed an eggplant tree and plucked several big ones. They simmered them with mountain yams called *tsukune-imo* 薯蕷 and with white radish, and served them, accompanied by rice flavored with angelica, to Tametomo and his party. It is said that angelica, or “tomorrow's leaf,” has branched stems which come out at ground level, roots and leaves that look like a carrot's, and that they taste sweet and bitter. If the seeds are planted in winter, in spring by the equinox buds will appear, the stem will grow during that same

<sup>30</sup> The autograph copy of *Kaitō fudoki* is owned by Okimori Naosaburō 沖森直三郎, and that of *Hachijō bikkei* is housed at Waseda University Library (and accessible there online; see **Figure 4**). See NKBT 60, *Kaisetsu*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>31</sup> Suzuki Jūzō 鈴木重三, “Bakin yomihon shohan shoshi nōto: sashi-e wo chūshin ni” 馬琴読本諸版書誌ノート：挿し絵を中心に, *Bungaku* 文学 36:3 (1968), pp. 48–57, with a sequel in the same journal, 36:5 (1968), pp. 95–103.

<sup>32</sup> A kind of *miso* paste made of salted fish, as explained earlier in the same text.



**Figure 2.** Scene from *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* (II.17). Entitled: “Female islanders entertain Tametomo lavishly.” (National Diet Library).  
<https://doi.org/10.11501/2557124> (image no. 28)

year up to seven or eight inches tall, and in the cold season the leaves will not wither and die. After three years, you can uproot the plant, and eat its roots and leaves. As for the turnip-shaped white radish, if you cut it just above the soil, it will sprout leaves that grow again and again even after spring has come.

Tametomo asked Saori no Nyoko 三郎長女 [the female chief of the island]: “It is rare to find eggplants in late spring, but I have never seen a tree of this size.” She replied: “The winter is so mild on this island that plants don’t wilt and trees never lose their leaves. Eggplants bloom and bear fruit all year round. Some trees are two or three years old. Those are the three-year eggplants. And we call their flowers *dadaka*.” (I think “*dadaka*” is the Chinese name. The proof is in Dupian xinshu 杜騙新書, which says that “*Tuotuobua* 陀々花 [Jp. *dadaka*] is the flower of the three-year eggplant.”)<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> NKBT 60, pp. 256–257. These last two sentences in parentheses are an example of what is called *warichū* 割注 (intralinear commentary), i.e., in-text commentary distinguished from the base text by being written within the main line in its own doubled line of half-size characters. I will come back to this later. *Dupian xinshu* 杜騙新書 (The New Book for Foiling Swindlers, c.1617) is a short-story collection about fraud.

The text gives here the recipe for Tametomo's meal, which is made up of a mixture of eggplants, yams, and radishes, served with angelica rice. Also provided are some botanical details about the angelica (*ashitagusa* 鹹草), a plant endemic to Hachijō, as well as about the turnip-shaped white radish (*kabu daikon* 蕪蘿蔔) and the so-called "three-year eggplant" (*sannen nasu* 三年茄子). All this information is directly taken from the *Kaitō fudoki*, and the author wraps the passage up with an etymological comment.

In the same illustration, on the right, we can observe a woman weaving. Ethnographic descriptions of weaving are not uncommon in regional geographies.<sup>34</sup> Comparing the *Kaitō fudoki* with the text of *Yumiharizuki*, it is quite obvious how Bakin has reused the rather technical description of his model:

*Izu kaitō fudoki*

There are three main colors for dyeing: yellow, bark-brown, and black. The yellow is made between the Seventh and the Ninth Month by dyeing threads thirty-seven or thirty-eight times in a decoction of miscanthus, and fixing the color in a mordant made of camellia ashes. The brown is made in autumn and winter by dyeing threads thirty times in a decoction made from the bark of a tree called *madami* まだみ, and fixing the color in the same mordant of camellia ashes. The black is made at any season of the year by dyeing threads twenty-four, twenty-five, or even more times in a decoction of chinquapin bark and, when appropriate, fixing the color with mud from the fields.<sup>35</sup>

*Yumiharizuki*

As for the craft of weaving and spinning, it is said that, unlike on other islands, they get filaments from silkworms, and twist them into threads between their fingers using a spinning wheel, while some attach the loom to a pillar, passing the other end behind their hips, and start weaving fabrics in a variety of twill patterns, using a method that later generations will call *gotangake* 五反懸 or *battangake* 八反懸. There are three main colors for dyeing: yellow, bark-brown, and black. The yellow is made between the Seventh and the Ninth Month by dyeing threads thirty to forty times in a decoction of miscanthus, and fixing the color in a mordant made of camellia ashes. The brown is made in autumn and winter by dyeing threads thirty times in a decoction made from the bark of a tree called *madami*, and fixing the color in the same manner as above. The black is then made at any season of the year by dyeing threads twenty-four or twenty-five times in a decoction of chinquapin bark and fixing the color with mud from the fields.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See for example the numerous pages dedicated to the production and commerce of *Echigo chijimi* fabric in Suzuki Bokushi's 鈴木牧之 *Hokuetsu seppu* 北越雪譜 (1837), ed. Meicho kankōkai 名著刊行会 (Tokyo: Meicho Kankōkai, 1968), pp. 74–94.

<sup>35</sup> Excerpts are translated from the text of the edition in *Izu kaitō fudoki*, *Izu meguri* 伊豆海島風土記・伊豆めぐり, ed. Shizuoka kyōdo kenkyūkai 静岡郷土研究会, *Tōkai bunko* 東海文庫 12 (Shizuoka: Shizuoka Kyōdo Kenkyūkai, 1929). Here pp. 5–6. Below as *TB* 12.

<sup>36</sup> *NKBT* 60, pp. 259–260.

Another detail can be seen in the illustration: the trees growing at the bottom right-hand corner, which look like palm trees. These might refer to two species described, with accompanying hand-drawn sketches, in both *Kaitō fudoki* and in *Hachijō nikki*: the *soro* そろ (or *shuro*, a kind of windmill palm) and the *shida* しだ (or *begoshida*, a kind of tree fern) (**Figures 3 & 4**). Skeptics might argue that it could just as well be any other plant, but the trunks depicted in another illustration from the same chapter quite clearly show a palm tree-like texture (**Figure 5**), a clear sign of the author's desire to furnish the scene with an exotic touch.

There was a plant, resembling the metal-blade tree [cassia tree], more than ten feet tall and with a very fine grain. He asked its name. "It's a tree called *soro*," she said. There was another one, fifty to sixty feet tall, with leaves hanging in all directions, like ferns but as large as banana-tree leaves. Once again he asked its name and she said, "It's called *shida*." There were also mulberry trees in abundance, upon which grew a kind of mistletoe. This place is truly a Wonderland.<sup>37</sup>

Bakin stages here the provision of botanical information in the form of a dialogue. The islander, not the narrator, gives explanations to Tametomo, who thereby discovers the natural landscape of the island.

The illustration contains yet further significant details: thatched-roof houses, built on chinquapin pillars with woven bamboo walls, and high-raised floors to prevent dampness.<sup>38</sup> Or even the peculiar rice granary in the background, although it does not correspond in all respects to the description in *Kaitō fudoki*. I could go on with many other examples taken from other illustrations and passages, but we have enough to grasp the overall scheme. Bakin's aim here is to give some substance, some sense of reality and exoticness, to imaginary representations of the geographical margins in his readers' minds, drawing on extensive documentary research based for the most part on local geographies—but not solely. Encyclopedias like *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会 (1712), or *materia medica* books like *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (1596), are also frequently used to give scholarly details about some particular aspect of the natural world. In this respect, Bakin's historical novels function effectively as a bridge between scholarly literature and a mass readership. But arousing the reader's curiosity is only one aspect of the issue.

## 8. The General Outlook of Ōshima Island

The integration of very disparate elements (historical, mythological, folkloric, ethnographic, etc.) into the story has the potential to create confusion at times. Bakin had to struggle to hold all these pieces together. Although he could not resolve all contradictions and inconsistencies, by cleverly articulating these elements between different chronological strata, he succeeds in bringing order to

<sup>37</sup> NKBT 60, p. 259.

<sup>38</sup> As explained in the story's previous chapter. See NKBT 60, p. 250.



Figure 3. The *soro* (right) and *shida* (left) trees in *Izu kaitō fudoki* 伊豆海嶋風土記, vol. 2 (right) & vol. 3 (left). (Fuji City Library).

[https://library.fujishi.jp/c1/bib/fuji\\_11698850.pdf](https://library.fujishi.jp/c1/bib/fuji_11698850.pdf) (image no. 20), [ . . . [\\_11698851.pdf](https://library.fujishi.jp/c1/bib/fuji_11698851.pdf)] (image no. 31)



Figure 4. The *soro* (right) and *shida* (left) trees in Bakin's autograph copy of *Hachijo hikki* 八丈筆記. (Waseda University Library).

[https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/i04/i04\\_00600\\_0148](https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/i04/i04_00600_0148) (image no. 16)



**Figure 5.** Scene from *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* (II.17). Entitled: “Nyoko kills a monster in her cousin’s hut.” Note the palm trees in the background. (National Diet Library). <https://doi.org/10.11501/2557124> (image no. 32)

the narrative and even in giving new meaning to Tametomo’s actions. Here again, confronting the *Yumiharizuki* text with its sources will shed light on the matter.

Ōshima Island is not, any more than Hachijō, actually described in the *Hōgen monogatari*. Somewhat paradoxically, it is even characterized as less civilized, less “paradisiacal” than Hachijō itself. Here is a sketch of the general outlook of the island, as presented in the original source and in *Yumiharizuki*’s novelistic adaptation thereof:

*Izu kaitō fudoki*

Ōshima Island is located 18 *ri* 里 [a *ri* being roughly equivalent to 3.9 km] by sea east-southeast from Shimoda 下田 Harbor in the Kamo 賀茂 district of Izu Province, and 7 *ri* away to the south from the very same province. From the city of Edo, that would make 46 *ri* south-southwest. The island is regularly served by boat, which facilitates trade. Its territory extends 2.5 *ri* wide from east to west and some 5 *ri* long from north to south. There are high mountains but they are generally not very steep. The coast is continually battered by waves, exposing

the rocks, and making it hard to access. Now, speaking of the history of its settlement, it is not clear at what point it became a place of exile. Within the islands, it is said that they were colonized during the holy reign of Emperor Kōan 孝安. But since Ōshima is only 7 or 8 *ri* distant from Izu, it must have been colonized at the same time that the province's many coves were occupied. As it has been a land of exile since high antiquity, there must have been many criminals banished to the island since those times. More precisely, En no Ozuno 役小角 [634–701] was sent there in the first year of Emperor Monmu's 文武 reign [697]. The cave where Ozuno lived is still visible at Senzu 泉津 village. It is now called the Hermit's Hall and it has become a place of worship among the islanders. [. . .] Concerning the island's industry, the men from Niijima 新島 and Okada 岡田 villages mainly hunt and fish, using cargo boats to go trade their goods and make a profit for their livelihood; meanwhile the women mainly cultivate fields, weave some fabrics, gather seaweed, and exchange it for food to make their living. In the villages of Sakichi 差木地, Senzu, and Nomashi 野増, people called "open-pan commoners" (*kama-byakushō* 釜百姓) produce salt as a family business. That is why since the Kyōhō 享保 era [1716–1736] the men and women alike have cut firewood. Some collect reeds to weave mats and sell these to buy grain; some cultivate fields and grow fruit trees and vegetables to get food. It appears that this is how they make a living.<sup>39</sup>

*Yumiharizuki*

Originally, Ōshima Island of Izu Province is located 18 *ri* by sea east-southeast of Shimoda Bay in Kamo District. Its territory is said to be 2.5 *ri* wide from east to west and some 5 *ri* long from north to south, but at that time it might have been even smaller. The island has mountains, though not steep ones. The coast is continually battered by waves, exposing the rocks, and making it hard to access. Elders say that this land was colonized at the time of Emperor Kōan, but since it is only 18 *ri* distant from Izu, it must have been colonized at the same time that the province's many coves were occupied. As it has been a land of exile since ancient times, En no Ozuno was exiled there in the first year of Emperor Monmu's reign [697], and this is said to have been the beginning of the island's settlement. Nothing is known before that. The cave where Ozuno lived is still visible in a village called Senzu. Islanders call it the Hermit's Hall and frequently go there to worship. As for the original customs of the island, men go hunting and fishing, while women gather wood and seaweed, and exchange them for food to make a living. The five grains had not been grown there until recently. Even a man used to this life would grow weary, but how could the noble son of the Genji 源氏 clan live there to his end? From the soft-hearted to the heartless, everybody felt the tragedy of his situation. But let us go back to the main story.<sup>40</sup>

Framed by an expression typical of *yomihon* and works of Chinese vernacular fiction (*somosomo . . . kore wa sate oki* 抑 . . . 閑話休題), this piece of description appears as a digression, as an opportunity for the narrator to provide some general

<sup>39</sup> TB 12, pp. 29–30.

<sup>40</sup> NKBT 60, p. 204.

information about the island's characteristics. One can easily spot the parts that are quoted from sources almost without change: the distances, the surface dimensions, the general outlook of the island, its history (En no Ozuno's exile in particular), and even the descriptions of certain customs (men's hunting and fishing, women's wood- and seaweed-gathering). On the other hand, it is equally clear that certain details have been intentionally omitted, especially the fact that the islanders practice agriculture and trade. Indeed, in *Yumiharizuki*, the islanders know nothing about the five grains (*gokoku* 五穀), and there is no clear mention of any commercial activity (harbors, boats, etc.). So why did Bakin want to make his island appear to be such an uncivilized place? Was he simply aiming at historical consistency? A further example will help clarify his intentions.

### 9. The Taming of Wild Animals

A little later on in the story, there is an episode where Tametomo is shown taming wild bulls and horses. This comes from the description of Ōshima's fauna in the *Kaitō fudoki*.

#### *Izu kaitō fudoki*

As for beasts, there are plenty of wild cows and wild horses. When the farms face a shortage of livestock, the men of Nomashi, Sakichi, and Senzu go out for a hunt. One can see them riding horses bareback through the reed plains, valleys, and hills, flying as if they were on familiar ground, chasing after wild cows and horses, catching their tails to immobilize them, throwing some of them down, and when a fierce bull happens to face them, they get off their horses with no fear of the horns ready to gore them, and wrestle the beast to the ground. Thus do they capture the animals with great ease.<sup>41</sup>

#### *Yumiharizuki*

[Islander speaking . . .] “There have been plenty of wild cows and wild horses on this island since old times, but they get so fierce when people come close that nobody ever dares to breed them or to make them carry a burden. Yet in early summer, when the bonito fishing season comes, we use cow horns to make bait. That's why every year, when spring comes to an end, people living near the seashore gather in bands and go through the hills and plains to collect cow horns. [. . .]”

[. . .] The horse was galloping like an arrow, clattering his hoofs in a great turmoil, when Tametomo spotted it. Grabbing the mane as it was passing by, he mounted the horse effortlessly, riding and galloping around the grasslands and high peaks, and then chasing after wild cows, chasing after wild horses, catching some by the tails to immobilize them, throwing others down with a bump, and when a fierce bull faced him, he got off his horse and, without fear of the horns ready to gore him, wrestled the beast to the ground. Soon he had captured with great ease one hundred and fifty or sixty animals.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> TB 12, pp. 31–32.

<sup>42</sup> NKBT 60, pp. 209–211.

Both excerpts share similarities: an island blessed with many wild cows and horses, a detailed and vivid description of their capture. The difference is that in Bakin's work, it is not the islanders but rather Tametomo who distinguishes himself in an epic hunt. However, in reading the original closely, one realizes that Ōshima's inhabitants (in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century) did in fact own domestic cows and horses, and that only when their livestock became too few would they go out hunting to capture animals in the wild. It is now very clear that Bakin, even while integrating whole descriptions taken from the *Kaitō fudoki*, was trying nonetheless to present Ōshima as a primeval wilderness. Such a recasting of Ōshima allows him to redefine Tametomo as a civilizing hero, one who brings culture (farming and stockbreeding) to the islanders.

Bakin's Tametomo is no more the ambivalent figure of the *Hōgen monogatari*, who, while undoubtedly portrayed as a paragon of courage and righteousness, is yet at times also a brutal and cruel troublemaker, perceived by the inhabitants of Kyushu or the Izu Islands more as a tyrant than as a liberator. Within the historical framework of the medieval chronicle, however, Bakin depicts an unambiguously positive hero, a conquering and civilizing adventurer. Moreover, by his mere presence and actions, he marks, as the next example will show, the eruption of these remote islands, veiled before his arrival in the uncertain temporality of myth and popular legend, into the larger history of Japan as a whole.

## 10. Tametomo as a Means to Connect Myth and History

In addition to descriptions of the geography, flora, and fauna of the Izu Islands, Bakin also borrows from his sources some insights on popular legends and beliefs. Take for example the legend of Xu Fu 徐福 the alchemist, which structures the entire episode devoted to Hachijō. The main outlines are mentioned in the *Kaitō fudoki*, with Bakin borrowing further details from Chinese sources, to which he then added various folkloristic motifs, such as the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, the Isle of Women and the Isle of Devils. The episode can be summarized roughly as follows: having failed to discover the elixir of immortality, Xu Fu left the 500 girls and 500 boys of his expedition respectively on two islands in the ocean off Kumano 熊野, namely the Isle of Women (Nyōgo no shima 女護の島) and the Isle of Devils (Onigashima 鬼が嶋), since which time the two groups have lived separately, for fear of angering the Sea God, meeting by custom only once a year. But Tametomo sees in all this nothing but a bunch of primitive superstitions. The Isle of Devils? Well, the name can be explained by the fact that dark-skinned men are commonly referred to as “devils.” This epithet is also found in many popular terms, such as the reddish-orange “devil's lily” (*oni yuri* 鬼百合) or the red chili-based “devil's miso paste” (*oni miso* 鬼味噌). And the name Onigashima may well be a phonetic alteration of O-no-shima 男島, the “Isle of Men.” According to the sailors, the women of the island are inseminated by the spring breeze? “Absolute nonsense,” Tametomo retorts. And as for what he

sees as their “bad customs” (*akushū* 悪習)—which consist of keeping men and women from living together—he proposes to demonstrate their absurdity by setting an example. He will marry Nyoko, the chief of the island, who will give him two male twins, and the whole family will live together for an entire year without being punished by any divine curse. This is how he finally convinces the women of the need to mix with the men. After having reunited the populations of the two islands, Tametomo renames these territories in order to erase all traces of the old superstitions that kept men and women separate. Thanks to this onomastic *tour de force*, Hachijōjima (The Isle of Women) and Aogashima 青か嶋 (The Isle of Devils) have received—so says the text—their current names: Hachijōjima being an alteration of Hachirō (Tametomo's common name), and Aogashima stemming from Ashigashima.

Through the power of naming and rational discourse, Tametomo brings the uncivilized islands into the cultural sphere of Japan. He also functions as a bridge between mythical time (the legend of Xu Fu, the Isle of Devils, etc.) and historical time (which begins with his arrival in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and flows continuously up to Bakin's own present day). In these popular legends and beliefs picked up from regional geographies, Bakin not only finds the opportunity to develop new thrilling subplots, but through philological research into their origins and various etymological considerations, he manages to skillfully navigate the risk of discrepancy between the historical framework and descriptions of contemporary customs.

## 11. Congruency between the Discourse of *Yumiharizuki* and Philological Essays

Before moving to conclusions, I would like to examine one last point and shed some new light on the relationship between various scholarly discourses as developed within different parts of the novel (prefaces, authorial asides, the voices of characters or the narrator) and Bakin's own opinion as expressed in his philological essays.

Take for example Tametomo's statement about the “devils” (*oni*). Here is the passage quoted in full:

It is very doubtful that there could exist any island inhabited by devils (*oni*). That which does not completely disappear after death is called *kami* 神, and that which has not been properly honored after death is called *oni* 鬼. These two elements do not have any material form. Ghosts and apparitions are commonly called *oni*, but people nowadays mistakenly refer to violent and wild things as *oni*. This is why a warrior could have boasted in front of his enemies that he was a Demon God (*onigami*), or that words like *oni yuri* or *oni miso* could have been invented. At any rate, this remote island was not inhabited by real devils. Such a name was given rather because of the hardships involved in reaching the island and the repulsive and mischievous looks of its inhabitants.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> NKBT 60, p. 246.

In fact, the whole passage should be considered in the broader context of the controversy over “devils and gods” or more properly “souls and spirits” (*keishin-ron* 鬼神論) that arose among Edo-period scholars. It refers to a metaphysics of the soul which addresses the question of the existence or non-existence of supernatural phenomena. The supernatural is constitutive of Bakin’s *yomibon* and, as Asakura Rumiko 朝倉瑠嶺子 has pointed out, the whole *Yumibarizuki* can be read in the light of these theories.<sup>44</sup> More specifically, Bakin dedicated two sections of *Enseki zasshi* (chap. 11, vol. 2, and chap. 1, vol. 3) to the question. A look at this text clearly shows how he has taken up his arguments almost word-for-word to place them in the mouth of Tametomo:

*Gui* 鬼 [Jp. *ki/oni*] is the essence of the sun. That is why people always see it as red. According to Wang Chong’s 王充 *Lunheng* 論衡 (Discourses Weighed in the Balance), *gui* and *shen* 神 [Jp. *shin/kami*] are names for *yin* and *yang*. And according to a commentary on the Annals of the Yellow Emperor in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), “That which does not completely disappear after death is called *shen*, and that which has not been properly honored after death is called *gui*.” I think that *shin* 神 stands for *shin* 心 (spirit), and *kei* 鬼 for *kei* 氣 (vital energy). The spirit and vital energy of men do not have material form, neither do *kami* and *oni*. They cannot be seen by human eyes, and that is also why *kami* and *oni* are so difficult to perceive. [. . .]

In ancient times, goblins and thieves were called *oni*, which is an alteration [of the word’s original meaning]. People mistakenly take them for real devils. They refer to anything repulsive and powerful as *oni*. Is this an ancient custom of our country? Among plants’ names, there are the “devil’s lily” (*oni yuri*) and the “devil’s thistle” (*oni azami* 鬼薊), and some rice-wines, tobaccos, and chilis have “devil-killer” (*oni-goroshi* 鬼ごろし) in their names. Some horses are said to have a “devil and deer coat” (*onikage* 鬼鹿毛); swords are called “devil-slayer” (*oni-giri* 鬼切) or simply “devil” (*onimaru* 鬼丸). In a war chronicle, there is a scene where a man boasts about himself in front of his enemies after having killed a certain warrior called the Demon God (*onigami*). From this, we can infer that that Ki no Tomoo 紀朝雄 and Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 did not exterminate real devils. The same goes for the swords—their names do not come from having slain real devils; and likewise for the plants. These are just forced analogies (*fukai* 附会) invented by people afterwards.<sup>45</sup>

The second part of *Yumibarizuki* was published in 1808, and Bakin wrote *Enseki zasshi* at the urging of his publisher in 1809 (it was printed the following year). In addition, Bakin acquired in 1808 a set of works by Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725) in 30 volumes, which he began to study in depth. There he discovered not only primary sources for his novel, such as *Nantōshi* 南島志 (Record of

<sup>44</sup> Asakura Rumiko 朝倉瑠嶺子, *Bakin Chinsetsu yumibarizuki no sekai: hangetsu no kage wo ou* 馬琴椿説弓張月の世界：半月の陰を追う (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> *Nihon zuibitsu taisei* 日本隨筆大成 (2<sup>nd</sup> series), vol. 10 (Tokyo: Nihon Zuihitsu Taisei Kankōkai, 1929), pp. 339–349.

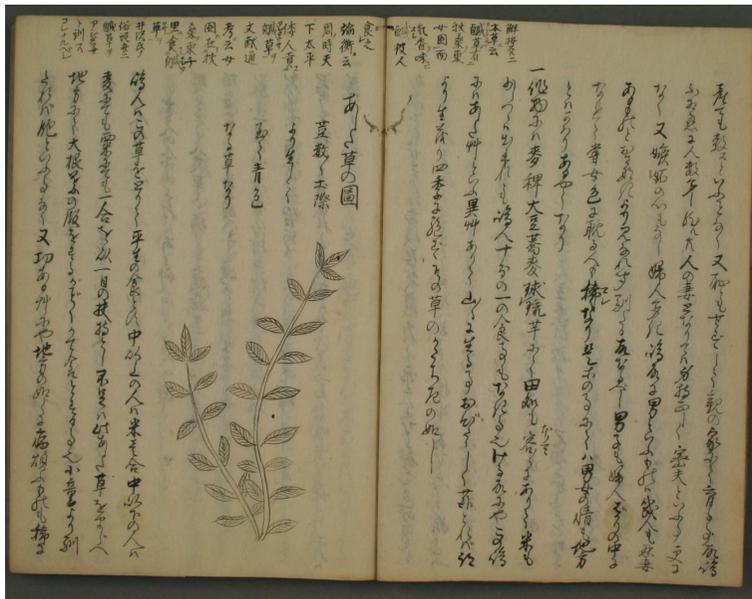
the Southern Islands, 1719), but probably also Hakuseki's *Kishin-ron* 鬼神論 (posthumously published in 1800). It seems to me that the anecdotes about Onigashima, the etymological considerations it inspires in Bakin, and the inscription of all these elements into a general theory of the soul that may originate in Hakuseki's thought—that all of this goes to form an organic whole which pervades both his novels and his essays. Yet the discourse of the novelist is not exactly that of the scholar, for it is obvious from the quotations above that explicit references (to *Lumbeng* and to the *Shiji*) are not found in Tametomo's speech. A sharper distinction is needed here.

## 12. Scholarly Insertion and Philological Commentary Based on Evidence

The distinction appears more clearly in the episode entitled “Female islanders entertain Tametomo lavishly” quoted above. Recall that it ends with a short in-text commentary by the author (*warichū* 割注). This is no longer a matter of simply borrowing information from scholarly sources, but of providing rather a bibliographical reflection that stands as “proof” or “evidence”<sup>46</sup> (*shō to su beshi* 証とすべし) of the connection between the Chinese name of a flower (*tuotuo*hua) and the Japanese name of the plant that produces it (*sannen nasu*). It is rare to find instances of this type of evidence-based reasoning inserted into the body of the text, as they tend rather to be developed at length in prefaces or in afterwords.

The difference in nature between these two ways of integrating sources into a text can be better understood by considering the example of the angelica (*ashitagusa*). As mentioned earlier, angelica is here the subject of a description borrowed from *Kaitō fudoki*, whose interest lies primarily in its botanical and culinary dimension, and this was enough to satisfy the average reader. But the plant must have had some special significance to Bakin, for he discussed it in his prefatory note to Part 2, entitled “Observations” (*bikō* 備考), and then again later in his collection of philological essays, *Gendō hōgen* (1818–1820). Furthermore, his autograph copy of *Hachijō bikki* bears a marginal note on the subject (Figure 6). All this can be summed up as follows. Drawing upon (1) an ancient Chinese source, *Lumbeng* (late 1<sup>st</sup> century), which relates the payment in tribute of “aromatic herbs” (*changcao* 鬯草) by the Japanese in remote antiquity; (2) the great Chinese pharmacopeia, *Bencao gangmu* (1596), which mentions the existence of a “pungent herb” (*xiancao* 鹹草) consumed on the Isle of Women located east of Japan; (3) some local legends reported in the *Hachijō bikki* that identify Hachijō with the Isle of Women; and (4) other Edo-period essays from Izawa Banryū 井沢蟠竜 (1668–1730) and Yuasa Jōzan 湯浅常山 (1708–1781) that recognize in the Chinese herb the Japanese *ashitagusa*, Bakin concludes that “*changcao*, also called *xiancao*, is known by the Japanese name of *ashitagusa*,” and that “it grows

<sup>46</sup> The translation “evidential scholarship” sometimes used to render the term *kōshōgaku* 考証学 (*lit.* “the study of examining evidence”) makes here a good deal of sense.



**Figure 6.** The *ashitagusa* plant (angelica) in Bakin’s autograph copy of *Hachijō bikki*, with marginal notes (top). (Waseda University Library). [https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/i04/i04\\_00600\\_0148](https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/i04/i04_00600_0148) (image no. 9)

only in Hachijōjima,” this being another name for the “Isle of Women” mentioned in the *Bencao gangmu*.<sup>47</sup>

The issue here is not to judge whether Bakin’s conclusion is itself correct or even plausible (in fact it is not convincing), but rather to understand the way he approached his materials. Philological research and etymological reconstruction enable him to formulate hypotheses, and to make new connections between disparate anecdotes that will eventually underlie the narrative structure of his story. Tametomo arrives on an island populated by women only, who eat angelica, and that island is none other than Hachijō, where the same plant is endemic. Nonetheless—and this is my point—the narrative itself is not a legitimate place for the author to display his philological know-how.

If I might venture here a hypothesis on the circulation of Bakin’s philological thought between these different types of texts, I would argue as follows: In his preliminary research for his fiction, Bakin is confronted with all kinds of sources. In a couple of gazetteers on the Izu Islands, for example, he finds not only descriptions of nature and customs, but also descriptions of anecdotes and popular beliefs from which he will derive new narrative possibilities. The appropriation of the source is sometimes accomplished by copying out the

<sup>47</sup> NKBT 60, pp. 227–228.

original text or by taking marginal notes. These hastily-jotted-down ideas can in turn be taken a step further, through scholarly investigations, and gathered into short entries that will ultimately integrate a collection of philological essays. At the same time, these investigations find their way into the novel by taking various forms: introductory remarks, which in themselves are short essays in every respect; metadiegetic intratextual comments; or arguments put into the mouths of the narrator or the characters. The main difference seems to lie in the fact of providing—or not providing—textual evidence, which consists chiefly of explicitly quoted sources.

### Concluding Remarks

Bakin's "philological mania," as it appears in his novels, has often been negatively perceived by his readers. Gotō Tanji considers the "annoying philological and non-literary mentions" to be one of the major flaws of *Yumiharizuki*.<sup>48</sup> He is particularly harsh on the commentary found in prefaces and afterwords, which in his view lacks literary refinement. Even if he concedes that the descriptions of the Izu or Ryukyu Islands based on documentary sources substantially contribute to a realistic effect, he deplores the numerous scholarly digressions that break the rhythm of the plot. I have tried in this paper to consider scholarly digressions and insertions not as something that spoils the pleasure of reading, but rather as an integral part of Bakin's art of the novel; not as marginal considerations that he keeps at a distance in extratextual comments for the knowledgeable reader, or which he collects separately in his philological essays (and which sometimes, unwillingly, reappear in the middle of the story), but rather as fundamental elements of the narrative, much in the same way as monsters and supernatural phenomena, which partake of a certain deliberate baroque aesthetic. In this regard, I have rather followed in the footsteps of Ōtaka Yōji or Miyake Hiroyuki, who have repeatedly argued that Bakin's *yomibon* would benefit from being read in parallel with his scholarly essays.

Three main ideas should be retained from delving into Bakin's art of writing historical narratives based on philological research. First, it seems to me one gets a glimpse therein of the concrete way in which a premodern novelist actually worked, getting closer to the nature of their "evidential learning," which included reading books, copying them when acquisition was not possible, making annotations in their margins, gathering reading notes into essays for publication, and eventually reusing these materials in one's own novels. Secondly, despite the oft-repeated criticism of chronological inconsistencies, which comes from a modern view of historical novels, Bakin does seem to maintain an overall coherence of his own. To be certain, he makes no attempt to make his characters look like actual people of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, either in their dress, their speech, their customs,

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<sup>48</sup> NKBT 60, *Kaisetsu*, p. 28.

or even in their way of thinking. But to make all the pieces hold together, he constantly relies on etymologies, no matter how hazardous they may sometimes be. Through etymology, and more broadly through philological thinking, he reconstructs the origin of things and phenomena, and gives sense and coherence to the articulation of different chronological strata. His reconstructions may not be exact from a modern historical point of view, but they do remain true to a philological mode of thinking. Finally, the textual references used in Bakin's historical novels are incredibly numerous and diverse: Chinese as well as Japanese, some belonged to an uncertain temporality, ancient or even mythological, others were from more reliable historical writings; sometimes they included popular legends or customs whose origins Edo scholars were eager to trace back, sometimes they gave detailed accounts of remote places unknown to an Edo-period readership. From all these different sources, Bakin was able to cull various anecdotes that he used to develop subplots within the historical framework determined by his chosen subject matter. But he also lifts whole passages from contemporary gazetteers or encyclopedias in order to flesh out his depictions of distant lands not covered by primary sources. Two different ways, in other words, of "filling in the blanks" of history.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> I would like to express here my gratitude to Didier Davin for giving me the opportunity to participate in the collaborative research project that ultimately led to this publication. I am also deeply indebted to Jeffrey Knott for his editing of my English, as well as to the reviewers for their insightful comments.