

A Brief History of Kamigata Rakugo up to 1800

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▶ キーワード

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▼ 要 旨

本稿は上方落語の歴史を、その前史から江戸時代後半まで辿ってみようという試みである。落語を含めて日本の語り芸は仏教の説教に端を発する。平曲など節付きのものは声明に、講談や落語など節のないものは地語りの説教に源流を求めることができる。浄土宗の成立とほぼ同時期に安居院流という流派が説教の様式を確立し、後に浄土真宗の節談という形に引き継がれて聴聞の衆を集めた。

今日においても「落語の祖」と言われるのは、元和年間に『醒睡笑』として笑話千余りを集めた安楽庵策伝和尚である。『醒睡笑』には「無筆の犬」や「平林」など現代にまで受け継がれているネタの原型が見られる。元禄期になると、京坂と江戸という三都で同時発生的に噺家が出現した。京の露の五郎兵衛、大坂の米沢彦八、江戸の鹿野武左右衛門である。上方では神社の境内、江戸は座敷で語るという違いがあり、この差は現代においても上方落語と江戸落語の演じ方など違いに残っている。上方落語は笑いを重視するが、江戸は粋を旨とするという差も元禄期から現代にまで一貫して存在すると言えよう。

1. Introduction

This paper tries to show a brief history of Kamigata Rakugo up to 1800. Rakugo is the Japanese traditional narrative art of telling funny stories, and Kamigata refers to the re-

gions of Kyoto and Osaka. The older name of Rakugo was *Otoshi-banashi*, which means stories with punch lines. The starting point of this paper is that not only Rakugo but also other narrative arts such as Koudan or Koushaku, Gidayu-bushi, Saimon-bushi, Chongare (see later sections) are derived from the Buddhism preachings (Sekiyama 2001). Since the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the middle of the sixth century, preaching has been one of the most important ways of conducting religious missions. Prince Shoutoku (574-622) edited books on three sutras: Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, Śrīmālā Sūtra, and Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra. This endorses the fact that soon after the introduction of Buddhism, its doctrines had been well understood in Japan through preachings. After the twelfth century, two major sects led the mission: the Agui sect and the Miidera sect. Among the former sect, Preacher Chouken Houin (1126-1203) and his son Preacher Seikaku Houin (1167-1235) were famous and considered to be the founders of the later narrative arts and entertainments. Around the same era, Honen Shounin (1133-1212) founded the Joudo-shuu Sect and his follower Shinran Shounin (1173-1263) founded the Joudo-Shinshuu Sect. The Joudo-Shinshuu sect has traditionally attached great importance to preaching, and hence the narrative art developed as *Fushidan*, which means the preaching was performed with melodies (*fushi*).

Generally speaking from the viewpoint of the history of Japan, the twelfth century to 1615 was the era of wars. Though the emperor had been in Kyoto, the generals and lords were always changing and the worldly power was unstable. An epoch making event soon after the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603 was the edition of *Seisuishou* in 1628 by a Buddhism priest Anrakuan Sakuden Oshou (1554-1642); Oshou is an honorific title for Buddhist monks. Sakuden Oshou was one of the highest rank priests and good at preaching. He collected more than 1000 short jokes through his life, and edited the selection *Seisuishou*, literally 'laughs to awaken sleepiness.' This edition can be considered as the direct origin of some episodes inherited to the present day, for example *An illiterate dog* shown in the later section.

About 50 years after the compilation of *Seisuishou*, there emerged freelance entertainers almost simultaneously in the three cities of Kyoto, Osaka and Edo: Tsuyuno Gorobee (1643-1703) in Kyoto, Yonezawa Hikohachi (?-1714) in Osaka and Shikano Buzae-mon (1649-1699) in Edo. They started performing of story-telling around 1680, but the styles were different in Kamigata and Edo. In Kamigata, Gorobee and Hikohachi told their stories in temples and shrines where many visitors gathered, while in Edo Buzae-mon performed in the rooms or *o-zashiki* of rich peoples houses. The Kamigata style entailed the musical instruments of shamisen and drums, but the Edo style did not — later in the 1920s, the Edo tellers followed the Kamigata style and adopted the entrance signature tunes (*de-bayashi*).

In the earliest days of 300 years ago, the stories were simply called *Hanashi*, literally 'stories,' or *Otoshi-banashi* (stories with punch lines), or *Shikata-banashi* (stories with

gestures). The performers called themselves *Hanashi-ka* (those who perform story-telling). The term *Rakugo* was invented as early as in the 1750s. The short jokes of the *Seisuishou* type became longer and longer, some of which lasted for 30 minutes or longer. One of these instances is *Oyako-jaya* ('father-son parlor house,' *jaya* comes from *chaya*, where guests play with geisha girls):

- (1) When the father or the master of a big business happened to meet his son in the parlor house, he admonished his son, "My dear, never ever indulge in gambles."

The implication of this punch line lies in a worldly lesson that playing with geisha girls in the *chaya* parlor houses costs much less than gambling; gambling invites the financial destruction of the business. In the current longer version which lasts about 30 minutes, the first scene is the father admonishing his son. But the son never agrees with his father's persuasion. Then the father asks, "Which do you choose, your father or your girlfriend, for whom you spend a lot of money?" expecting the answer to be himself. The son's answer was, however, that he would choose the geisha girl. The father got angry, and the son went out of the house. The father also went out, pretending to go to a temple to listen to the monks' preaching, but actually he also went to a parlor house. The father was in fact a debauchee, which was not told up to this point. Later the son came to the same parlor, and the family reunion — then came the punch line (1). The first scene of the father's admonishment lasts about ten to fifteen minutes, then the second scene is in the *o-chaya* (parlor house), which also lasts about ten minutes.

Historically it seems interesting that Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi (puppet theater) emerged around the same time. The origin of Kabuki is the dance performance by Okuni of Izumo (current Shimane Prefecture) in 1603 in Shijou, Kyoto. The Takemoto-za Theater of Ningyou-joururi was founded in Osaka in 1684. The theatrical elements were imported to Kabuki, which can be verified by the abundance of the Gidayuu-kyougen (Gidayuu plays); *Gidayuu-bushi* is the melodied narration with the accompaniment by *futozao* (larger) shamisen in the Ningyou-joururi plays, named after the founder Takemoto Gidayuu (1651-1714). The Gidayuu-kyougen Kabuki plays were those with the Gidayuu-bushi narration, as well as performances by the actors. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724) wrote scenarios for both Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi. The most famous plays by Monzaemon and Gidayuu were *Sonezaki shinjuu* (double suicide at Sonezaki) and *Shinjuu Ten-no-Amijima* (double suicide at Amijima of the Heaven). The later three major plays were written in around 1750 one after another: *Kana-dehon Chuushin-gura* (a revenge story of 47 loyal samurais), *Yoshitsune Sembon-zakura* (Minamoto Yoshitsune and one thousand cherry trees), and *Sugawara Denju Tenarai-kagami* (Sugawara Michizane and the model of calligraphy). The sources of these three plays were historical events, and hence these are classified as *Jidai-mono* (historical

events). Contrastively, events of double suicide are classified as *Sewa-mono* (worldly events). The protagonists of the Jidai-mono are the historical figures such as Sugawara Michizane and Minamoto Yoshitsune, while in the *Sewa-mono*, Koharu and Jihei of the paper merchant in *Ten-no-Amijima*, Ohatsu and Tokubee in *Sonezaki-shinjuu* were ordinary townspeople.

Though historically Rakugo is closely related to Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi, there is one crucial difference; that is to say, the stories of Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi are complicated with so many *dramatis personae*, whereas in Rakugo the dialogues between two people are the basis. That is to say, Rakugo simplifies the theatrical structures of Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi. Take the seventh act of *Chushin-gura* for example. In the Rakugo version *Hichidan-me*, there are only two protagonists: *waka-dannna* (young master) and an apprentice Sadakichi. They play as Okaru (Sadakichi), who works as a geisha in Gion, and her elder brother Heiemon (young master). In the original script, the main characters Ooboshi Yuranosuke, Ono Kudayuu play more crucial roles than Okaru and Heiemon, at the scene of Gion Ichiriki-jaya. Within the ochaya parlor, there are many room attendants and geisha girls. It is impossible for the hanashi-ka to perform all the characters at one time, so only two of Okaru and Heiemon are featured. It will be possible to conclude tentatively that the three kinds of entertainments of Rakugo, Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi developed hand in hand.

2. Buddhism Preaching as the Origin of the Japanese Narrative Arts

As briefly mentioned in the last section, the preaching of Buddhism has been the origin of all the Japanese narrative arts. Its history began in the middle of the sixth century, together with the introduction of the Buddhism from Korea. The main concern of this paper is the Japanese traditional narrative arts WITHOUT melodies. Those with melodies are derived from another Buddhism tradition of *Shoumyou* — chanting. Various sects such as Tendai, Shingon, Joudo-Shinshuu inherit this way of the *Shoumyou* chanting. The traditional narrative arts with melodies include *Heikyoku* or *Heike-Monogatari* briefly mentioned in section 1, *Saimon* or ritual Shinto prayer, *Bon-odori* or the dances with *Ono* of the musical accompaniment. Ura-bon-e is a Buddhism event held on 15th August, when the souls of ancestors are believed to come back to this world from the heaven (*Gokuraku*). Bon-odori is a side event dedicated to Ura-bon-e. Another narrative art with melodies was *Sekkyou-bushi*, in fashion during the Edo period. Its material, such as *Karukaya* and *Sanshou-dayuu*, are accompanied by shamisen, and with the puppets. This style is close to Ningyou-joururi. In this section, we will look at the history of preaching from the thirteenth century on, based on the content of chapter 2 of Sekiyama (2001).

The Agui sect and the Miidera sect, which arose in the twelfth century, led the reli-

gious mission. Among the former sect, Preacher Chouken Houin (1126–1203) and his son Seikaku Houin (1167–1235) were good at preaching and considered to be the founders of the later narrative arts and entertainments. As observed in this inheritance from father to son, the tradition was succeeded to the pupils as a secret. Chouken Houin was the seventh son of Shounagon (minister) Fujiwara Shinzei Nyuudou Michinori (1106–1160), and first learnt at the Hieizan Enryakuji temple of the Tendai sect. Houin is a high rank of the Buddhist monk. The name Agui was a place in Kyoto and he had a wife. To have a wife for a monk was a severe violation of a commandment at that time, but Chouken Houin argued against the criticism through his preaching. He wrote several books as the texts of preaching. About 100 years later, Kokan Shiren (1278–1346) described the way of Chouken Houin's preachings as follows, in the book *Genkou Shakusho* (compiled in 1322, a history of Buddhism in the era of Genkou (1321–1324)):

- (2) Chouken Houin's speeches were as if water gushing out of his tongue. Once he appeared at the podium, the audience concentrated on his speeches. They felt as if they were purified by his preaching.

In another book of the anthology of genealogy *Sompi Bunmyaku* (literally 'the family trees of the noble and the vulgar,' compiled from 1377 to 1395), it is mentioned "Chouken Houin's speeches are second to none in this country. His group should be considered to be the orthodox of the preaching."

His son Seikaku Houin was regarded as more excellent than his father in Sekiyama (2001 : 47). He also learnt in Hieizan, as his father did so, and succeeded to his father's position of the Agui's resident. He became a pupil of Hounen Shounin, and hence the preaching of the Agui sect and the Joudo sect have been interdependent. The Joudo sect regards Seikaku Houin as 'the founder of Sekkyo Nembutsu (preaching and prayer)' or 'the founder of the preaching.' Consequently, the Joudo sect enlarged its teaching among people and Seikaku Houin's fame spread step by step. The main concern of the Seikaku Houin's writings seems to be focused on the Dharmakara's 48 Vows, which are the most important and fundamental dogma of the Joudo and Joudo-Shinshuu sects in the sutra *Sukhāvatī-vyūha*. I assume that Seikaku Houin's deep understanding of the Dharmakara's 48 Vows has been simultaneous with the development of the Joudo and the Joudo-Shinshuu sects after the thirteenth century on. Particularly, the Fushidan preaching ascribes its origin to the Agui sect. As a fact, Shinran Shounin admired Seikaku Houin so much that he followed one of his main books *Yuishinshou Mon'i* to Seikaku Houin's *Yuishinshou* (literally 'the Book of the Only Belief'). In this respect only, Seikaku Houin must be regarded as the founder of the Fushidan preaching. When he passed away at the age of 69 in 1235, Fujiwara Teika, one of the greatest poet in the history of Japanese literature, wrote in his diary *Meigetsuki* (Book of the Harvest Moon) as follows :

- (3) Seikaku Houin came to this corrupted world in order to save people. He was as eloquent as the Buddha's pupil Saint Furuna. The time came at last such precious person should leave this world. I am too sorrowful and regrettable to assume that this preaching school came to an end. He was 69 this year, but I wished he had lived longer. I am so sorry to think again that I could not hear his preachings any more.

Thus, the presence of Seikaku Houin was endorsed by the great figure in the history of Japan. Seikaku Houin's pedigree was inherited to his son Ryuushou, then to Kenjitsu and then to Kenki. One of the characteristics in the tradition of the Agui sect is that the inheritance must be succeeded as an oral instruction and as a secret. This inheritance entails the learning of reading, chanting, pronunciation and vocalization for a certain number of years for the tutor-pupil training, which is still the tradition. As the preaching became less strict and less formal in the later years, the more entertaining styles were added. In order to be regarded as a first-rate preacher, the certificate of the sect was necessary after learning so many years.

Then, it is significant in the historic perspective that the Agui sect had influenced the Joudo sect and the Joudo-Shinshuu sect, and later inherited the Fushidan preaching. The Miidera sect, on the other hand, had close relations with the Tendai sect of Buddhism. This sect was established by a monk Jouen during the era of Kangen (1243-1247). Though the details of Jouen are not known, the Miidera sect used to be as influential as the Agui sect, its rival. After 1600, the Miidera sect took control of the Sekkyou Joururi or Sekkyou-bushi, and became a vulgar entertainment group. From one point of view, the Miidera sect had been merged by the Agui sect.

To summarize, the foundation of the Agui and the Miidera sects influenced the spread of the Joudo and the Joudo-Shinshuu sects. Kokan Shiren, however, criticized the influence and popularization of the preaching, as in his book *Genkou Shakusho* (vol. 29, *Ongeishi*, or the History of Sound and Arts) :

- (4) Preachers move their bodies and necks on the stage, showing various gestures and singing with their beautiful voices. They are completely entertainers.

Reading this comment, we can assume that Kokan Shiren was not pleased with the preacher' behaving like entertainers.

Though not mentioning when it happened, Sekiyama (2001 : 53) states that those who preach were classified as the preachers, story-tellers and entertainers. Generally speaking, this branching took place between 1300 and 1600. Biwa-houshi, who tell the story of *the Heike Monogatari*, can be regarded as either story-tellers or entertainers, as the telling of *the Heike Monogatari* had both elements. In addition, we can say that the

style of story-telling was one type of preaching. Those who traveled around the countries, such as Biwa Houshi, E-toki Houshi (priests explaining religious pictures), and Kumano Bikuni (nuns from Kumano, Kishu state), were subtypes of the preachers, and later these developed into various types of entertainments.

To conclude this section, the history of the preaching sects of Agui and Miidera began with the foundation of the Joudo Buddhism sect. Together with Hounen Shounin's successor Shinran Shounin, both the Joudo and the Joudo-Shinshuu sects have placed emphasis on preaching and have been accepted by more and more followers.

3. Fushidan Preaching

In this section, we will look at one particular style of preaching, namely the Fushidan in the Joudo-Shinshuu sect. The Joudo-Shinshuu sect has traditionally attached importance to preaching, and hence the narrative art developed as Fushidan, which means the preaching was performed with melodies (*fushi*). The content of this section is also based on that of Sekiyama (2001), chapter 2.

During the Middle age, the Joudo-Shinshuu sect acquired many followers, especially under Ren'nyo Shounin's leadership. He was the eighth generation successor of Shinran Shounin, born in 1415 and passed away in 1499. Archives compiled during the Middle age later became the main text of the preachings. Among them were *Hongwanji Shounin Shinran Den'ne* (Hongwanji's priest Shinran Shounin's chronicle) and *Houon-shiki Kou* (Lectures of the Houon-shiki ceremonies) compiled by the third generation Kakunyo Shounin (1270-1351), *Tantokubun* (Ode to the virtue) and *Joudo Kenbun-shu* (Knowledge of Pure Land) by the fourth generation Zonkaku Shounin (1288-1373). Letters of Ren'nyo Shounin to the pupils have been well known as the texts often cited in occasions such as funeral ceremonies and memorial services. Interesting is that Shounin himself added ingenuity when reciting his own letters and Shinran Shounin's texts.

After the Tokugawa shogunate system had been founded in 1603, the Hongwanji was divided into Nishi (west) and Higashi (east) because the administration had been afraid of the worldly power and the abundance of the followers of the sect. There were two preachers in those days whose fame has been inherited to the present day: Sugawara Chidou and Awadzu Gikei. Sugawara Chidou was born in the Noto state (current Ishikawa Prefecture) in 1728, and studied in Kyoto. He was talented both in preaching and writing texts. His texts are inherited to the later preachers. When he was 36, he returned to his native land, but then he traveled all around Japan. He passed away in 1779 at the age of 52.

Another preacher Awadzu Gikei, it is not known when he was born, but passed away in 1798. He belonged to the Shinshuu-Ootani or Higashi Hongwanji sect. He also wrote many texts, about Shinran Shounin's chronicle, the Dharmākara's 48 Vows, and so on.

These texts became the direct source of the later preachers. Generally speaking, the foundation of the Joudo-Shinshuu preaching owes to these two priests (Sekiyama 2001 : 60).

Now we will turn to the rhetorical structure of the Fushidan preaching. It is ordinary that the preaching consists of the following five sections :

- (5) 1. *Sandai* (doctrine) is the most important element of the preaching. Citation from the sutra, archives is recited with melody and solemnity. It also admires the virtue of the belief.
2. *Housetsu* (interpretation) is to explain the meaning of the doctrine (section 1) with the plain words.
3. *Hiyu* (metaphor) is the expansion. In order for the listeners to understand the doctrine more deeply, worldly metaphors are cited.
4. *In'nen* (literally *fate*), alike metaphors, is to help listeners understand the doctrine, telling the preachers' experiences and ideas.
5. *Kechikan* (conclusion) returns to the doctrine introduced in the first section. As a conclusion of one series of the preach, this section must be solemn again as the beginning and impressive for the listeners.

From the viewpoint of rhetoric, this construction of the five sections seems to be the result of trial and error through hundreds years in the history of the Fushidan preaching. As the bases, the main texts come from the accumulation of the materials from the eras of Chouken Houin, Seikaku Houin, Kakunyo Shounin, Zonkaku Shounin, Ren'nyo Shounin, Sugawara Chidou and Awadzu Gikei. It would be significant at this point to point out that the *Hiyu* and the *In'nen* sections later developed into Otoshi-banashi stories, featuring the funniness.

As for the construction of this five-section preaching, there is an insightful transmission of how to perform the preach more effectively : "first calm and quiet (*hajime shimiri*), and then funny and merrily (*naka okashiku*), finally solemn (*owari toutoku*)."

That is to say, the first two sections of the doctrine and the interpretation must be calm and quiet so that the audience should concentrate on the preach, and then the metaphor and the *In'nen* stories should entertain the audience with humor. The concluding section must again be solemn so that the whole impression be grave, not too light. As a general instruction of how to entertain the audience on the one hand and how to perform the preaching more impressively, this suggestion is precious for the preachers : calm and quiet-funny and merrily-solemnly. During the break time between the preachings, bowls were passed to gather money from the audience as alms.

Sekiyama (2001 : 63) claims that the Fushidan preaching can be classified in two ways of *Yobori* or *Yobawari* (calling) and *In'nen-Hiyu*. The former suggests a way of

reciting that the preacher calls out to the audience, and the latter implies that the content should be emphasized rather than the manner of reciting. The former can be considered to be emotive while the latter content-oriented.

All through the Edo period (1603–1868), the Fushidan preaching flourished tremendously, gathering a large audience. Such a trend, however, invited an extreme entertainment of the preachers. They intended to appeal to the audience so much that the preachings began to deviate from the Buddhism doctrine. This may be one of the reasons that the Fushidan preaching was practically forbidden by the sect authority after the Meiji Restoration. Another possible reason would be that the Fushidan preaching was out of date, and the new way of preaching must be more logical, not emotional.

4. Sakuden Oshou and *Seisuishou*

Sakuden Oshou was a bridge from preachers to Otoshi-banashi performers, as briefly introduced in section 1. He was born in the state of Mino (current Gifu Prefecture) in 1554 as the son of Kanamori Sadachika, who was the lord of Mino. Sakuden Oshou became a priest when he was a child, and went to Kyoto at the age of 11. He founded or reconstructed seven temples in the states of Bingo and Aki (current Hiroshima), Bicchuu and Bizen (Okayama). Financially he was wealthy as he inherited part of the territory in Mino from his father.

When Sakuden Oshou was 20 years old, he learnt tea ceremony from Furuta Oribe, a famous tea master at the time. Later when he moved to Sakai, Izumi state (current Osaka), he became acquainted with an important figure Sen Rikyu, the founder of modern tea ceremony schools. Then he returned to his home state of Mino at the age of 43, until moving back to Kyoto 17 years later. In Kyoto he succeeded the 55th Chief Priest of the Joudo sect. Anrakuan is the name of a humble cottage for tea ceremonies in the site of the Seiganji temple.

Mistakenly, Sakuden Oshou's surname was believed to be Hirabayashi, which is not true. The reason of this misunderstanding was that he himself created the kobanashi story titled Hirabayashi and made it his other name. The story is to show several ways of reading the surname 平林: the right way of reading is Hirabayashi, but other ways Hyourin, Heirin, Tairabayashi, Hirarin, Ichi-hachi-jihu-ni-boku-boku, Hyoubayashi are listed. The complexity of such varieties of reading comes from that one Chinese character has many variations of reading in Japanese: 平 as *taira*, *hira*, *hei*, *hyou*; 林 as *hayashi*, *rin*. Ichi-hachi-jihu-ni-boku-boku is the result of taking the character to pieces: 平 to 一 *ichi* (one), 八 *hachi* (eight) and 十 *jihu* (ten), and 林 to two 木 *s boku* (tree). This kobanashi is included in Volume 6 of *Seisuishou* and inherited as one of the most popular stories to the present day.

Another favorite story of the days of *Seisuishou* and inherited to today is *Muhitsu no*

inu (an illiterate dog) in Volume 2. The modern kobanashi version is a dialogue between two friends, and hence a typical example of the short kobanashi type, goes as follows :

- (6) A : I am so afraid of the dog in the alley. Whenever I pass by that dog, it always fiercely barks at me.
B : Hm, that sounds troublesome. I will show you a charm, which will prevent you from the trouble. Here I will write down a Chinese character signifying a *tiger* on your palm. When the dog barks at you, let it show the character.
A : Oh, thank you so much. I will try that.
A while later ...
A : It was no use ... Though I showed the dog the character, it barked at me, and I was almost bitten by it.
B : Hm... that dog must be illiterate ...

In contrast with the *Hirabayashi* joke shown above, *Muhitsu no inu* can be regarded as the typical dialogue-type joke between two persons. These dialogue-type jokes were prolonged and developed into longer Rakugo stories.

As the prehistory of hanashi-ka or rakugo-ka story-teller, the presence of *O-togi-shuu* (followers who talk to their feudal masters) was important. They were professional story-tellers whose materials included the past records of wars and episodes of generals and lords, from which their name *O-togi-shuu* occurred. It was possible that Sakuden Oshou listened to their talk, as he was brought up in a lord family.

Seisuishou was the collection of more than 1000 short jokes compiled by Sakuden Oshou, completed in 1623 and dedicated to Lord Itakura Shigemune, who was in charge of Kyoto Magistrate. The book consists of eight volumes, and each volume is under the headings such as follows :

- (7) Volume 1 : naming, chronicles of the noble, the fool, stinginess, those who pretend to be smart
Volume 2 : etymology, graffiti, flattered and/or scatterbrain, insensitive accountant priests, ignorant priests, too much celebration
Volume 3 : literacy, illiterate, letters, self-indulgent, priests of high morals
Volume 4 : judgments of the magistrate, unwise judgments, misunderstanding, miscellaneous
Volume 5 : elegant people who compose comical and satirical tanka poems, drinkers, birth is much but breeding is more
Volume 6 : rumors of child priests, male homosexuality, husbands and wives, jealous, unimportant secrets, mistaken speculation, lies

Volume 7 : unexpectedly uttered speeches, slips of the tongue, just right hopes,
laughs coming from upset, songs, dances
Volume 8 : wisdom, the Heike Monogatari, homophonous word plays, skillful
puns, tea ceremonies, laughs of celebration

It is surprising in a sense that more than 1000 jokes are categorized into such minute 42 subclasses. Miyao (2014) contains 311 jokes based on the Keian version of *Seisuishou*. Among them, those which are concerned with the Buddhism are four headings : insensitive accountant priests, ignorant priests, priests of high morals, and rumors of child priests. That is to say, about one tenths are related to the Buddhism, such as daily lives of priests and the manners of preaching.

5. Three Capitals of Kyoto, Osaka and Edo in the 1680s

The current two major Rakugo home places of Kamigata and Edo were the three capitals during the Edo period (1603-1868) : Kyoto was where the emperors lived, Edo was where the shoguns lived, and Osaka was the financial center where main products and materials such as rice, alcohol, tea leaves and all kinds of food were gathered and sold. From the viewpoint of the history of Rakugo, it is meaningful to keep in mind that the freelance Hanashika style performances appeared almost simultaneously in these three capitals. The contents of this section are based on Nakagawa (2014) and Sekiyama (1992).

Tsuyuno Gorobee was born in 1643, one year after the death of Sakuden Oshou. Before beginning his career as a Hanashi-ka, Gorobee was a priest of the Nichiren sect and put preaching into practice. He came to talk his Tsuji-banashi stories in temples and shrines during the Empou and Tenna eras (1673-1684). He also talked on the bank of the Kamo river on summer days, where people cooled themselves. There were two ways of the style of the performance : one is that Gorobee presided over the performance hut and collected the money ; the other is that the guests asked Gorobee to tell some stories. The former is the Kamigata style and the latter is close to the Edo style.

While he acted as a Hanashi-ka, Gorobee returned to secular life. But later he became a priest again and named himself Rokyuu. After his death, his stories were published as *Rokyuu Okimyage* (Rokyuu's legacy) in 1707. Another book, *Tsuyuno Gorobee Shin Hanashi* (new stories) was published in 1701, when the 47 Akoo (current Hyogo Prefecture) samurais revenged Kira Koozuke-no-suke, their master Asano Takumi-no-kami's enemy.

Gorobee left some stories inherited to the present day. One of them is a story of drunken father and his son :

(8) One evening, a drunken father came home to find that his son was not at home. He thought that his son must have been drinking somewhere in the bar. When the son came back home, father said :

“Hey, you fool. Where did you drink that much? I would never transfer family headship to you.”

“I do not need such a house revolving like this.”

“You fool. You have two faces.”

We now call this story *Oyako-zake* (parent-child *sake*), which is one of the most popular stories of the alcoholics. In the modern version, a long dialogue between father and daughter-in-law is added, and then the one between father and son follows before the punch line. Many gags or *kusuguri* were added during the conversion to enlarge the whole story. To mimic the manners of drinkers is one of the techniques that Hanashika must learn. The punch line shows the manners of drinkers : the father is so drunken that he sees his son's face doubly ; the son's sight is rotating so he feels as if the house was rotating.

The next one is a sample of the first half of the modern version inherited from Gorobee's creation (9) and the second half (10) is later added.

(9) There was a quarrel at the Koma-bashi bridge in Osaka, and one person's body was cut into two. Though the doctor tried to join the body, it was no use. Having no choice, the upper body went to Edo to be a fire watcher in a fire tower, and the lower half worked in a wheat gluten factory, stamping on with the two legs.

The name of the current version is *Doo-giri* (body-cutter), and the punch line follows like this :

(10) The one who helped to find works once visited the lower body, then it said :

“Please tell to the upper body not to drink too much water or tea, because I have trouble going to the toilet too often.”

The situation that the upper and the lower bodies were cut into two and still alive is unreal, still the story goes on added with the punch line (10). To review from the modern viewpoint, the idea of living after cut into two parts of the body is eccentric. The added punch line (10) is wackier in that the drinking of the upper body effects the frequent urination of the lower body. It seems marvelous that Gorobee thought of this idea about 330 years ago.

It is unknown when Yonezawa Hikohachi was born. His main works were titled as *Tou-*

sei Karukuchi Otoko (contemporary joke man), five volumes published in 1684, *Karukuchi Gozen Otoko* (jokes front man) published in 1703, and *Karukuchi Oo-yakazu* (consecutive jokes) published during 1704–1716. Hikohachi was contemporary with Gorobee, and the place where Hikohachi told his stories was Osaka, next to Kyoto. The preface to *Karukuchi Gozen Otoko* referring to Tsuyuno Gorobee includes the following :

- (11) Recently, I went to Kyoto and heard one of the youngsters there said,
“Hey, Hikohachi, what is up in Osaka? I would like to know something new.”
“Let us see... in Yodo river last night, the water said something.”
“How strange... Here in Kyoto, *tsuyu* (dewdrops) tells stories.”

Here, *tsuyu* or dewdrops and water are semantically related words. This passage suggests that Hikohachi heard of the Gorobee’s reputation in Kyoto, and thought that Gorobee was his rival. But the year 1703 marked the death of Gorobee, and hence it would be the peak of Gorobee’s fame was around 1700. Hikohachi’s main place of the performance was Ikutama shrine, located south of the Osaka castle. Contemporary narrative arts such as Uta-zaimon, Manzai, Taiheiki-yomi (later developed into *Koushaku* or *Koudan*) made stalls nearby. Their stalls had partitions so that the sounds of the performances did not merge.

Hikohachi’s style of performance was called as ‘Shikata monomane,’ or the mimicry of gesture. The gesture included those of Kabuki actors and the Daimyou lords. Different from the current style of the Rakugo performance sitting on the *zabuton* cushion, Hikohachi stood on the stage and mimicked the gestures. The mimicking of the Kabuki plays later developed into the Rakugo genre of *Shibai-banashi* (theater stories). In those days, both Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi were ripening at the same time ; Chikamatsu Monzaemon, for instance, wrote scripts such as *Shinjuu Ten-no-Amijima* (double suicide in heavenly Amijima), which is played as Kabuki and Ningyou-joururi titles. Hikohachi used various tools such as sedge hats, black hats, tea cups, fans. The modern style of Rakugo uses only a fan and a towel (*tenugui*). Hikohachi’s performances were so popular that the style *Hikohachi banashi* referred to those told by other tellers. Nakagawa (2014 : 76) introduces a kobanashi as follows, from *Karukuchi Gozen Otoko* :

- (12) An elder brother asks his junior :
“Which comes earlier, the first day of the month, or the last day?”
The junior replied : “I do not know because I am too young.”
Their father then said, “It is different from one month to another.”

Certainly, either one month has 29 days or 30 days was dependent on the calendar in the lunar calendar. Similar versions like “Which comes first next year, March or May?”

“It would be impossible to tell such a thing. It would be known when the next year comes.” would be possible. In a sense, this kind of kobanashi can be defined as classic.

Though Hikohachi mainly told his stories in Osaka, there are some whose location was in Kyoto : The following is from Nakagawa (2014 : 78-79) :

- (13) A thoughtless warrior once came across a person in Kiyomizu, Kyoto, and said, “Hey, Sakuza, it has been long since we met last.”

The opponent was perplexed, since it was the first time to see the warrior. So he said : “I am not Sakuza. It would be a mistaken identity.”

“Oh, sorry,” said the warrior and he left. However, just after a few minutes, the warrior came across the same man, and said : “Oh, it was you ... I just came across a man just alike you a few minutes ago, but I thought he was Sakuza, and I lost my face.” Having heard that, the man said, “I am just the man who was before you.” “Oh, sorry, again. It seems that faces like you come into fashion in Kyoto these days.”

In June, 1714, Hikohachi was invited to Nagoya by a promoter Kitarou, but he suddenly passed away. His contribution as the founder of Osaka Rakugo was so enormous that the Kamigata Rakugo Association holds the Hikohachi Matsuri (festival) every year as a commemory.

Shikano Buzaemon was born in 1649. In the preface to *Kouden-banashi*, a collection of the jokes, he wrote himself that he was born in Osaka. When he was young, he came to Edo to work as a lacquer coating craftsman. During the eras of Tenna and Joukyou (1681-1688), he staled a hut in Nakahashi-Hirokouji and collected the money of six Mon (about 200 yen) as an admission fee. With regard to the style of *Shikata-banashi* in those days, Ishikawa Tomonobu stated in his *Shoujiki Hanashi Taikan* (the collection of jokes, honestly) that “the first importance is put on the punch lines, the second on eloquence, and the third on the gesture.” Santou Kyouden referred to the style of Buzaemon’s performance as ‘zashiki-shikata-banashi’ (tatami-room-gesture-stories) in *Kinsei Kiseki Kou* (recent miracles study). This suggests that Buzaemon’s performances were done indoor, different from the Kamigata style which was done in the outdoor environment.

Buzaemon’s main work *Shika-no-makihude* (deer’s rolled brush), published in around 1686, containing of 39 jokes. Another one is *Karukuchi Fuku Okashi* (jokes-luck-funny). The following story is from *Shika-no-makihude* :

- (14) Once there was a stingy man named Gen in Hommachi. He loved the red-light district so much that he often visited there. One night he drank sake with some

women. As they spilt sake, the stingy man thought “What a waste,” so he called a waiter and asked.

“What do you do with the spilt sake?”

“Well, we store the spilt sake in one bottle, and sell it to the merchant.”

“Oh, no, no kidding.”

“Yeah, that is a true story. There are two merchants selling such sake. Please have a look at them.”

On the way home, he found the merchants. The signboard says, “Spilt Sake, High Quality.”

The funniness of this story would be that the spilt sake was sold without hiding the secret. Here we can see the process of the prolongation of Rakugo stories from the *kobanashi*-type short jokes. The prolongation entailed the addition of the dialogue and gags, which is verified by the story of *Oyako-jaya* (1) in section 1.

In April, 1693, there was a serious plague in Edo, killing more than 10,000 people. At that time, a false rumor was told that a horse said that the mixture of a nandina fruit and a pickled *ume* fruit was effective against the disease. Due to the rumor, the prices of nandina and *ume* fruits quickly rose by 20 or 30 times. As the result of the investigation, a grocer Souemon of Kanda-sudachou and a masterless samurai Tsukushi Dan’emon were arrested. Souemon intended to earn a lot by raising the prices of fruits. Sekiyama (1992: 105) says that Buzaemon wrote the statement of virtues of the nandina and *ume* fruits, and hence he was sent into exile to Izu-ooshima for six years. He came back to Edo in April, 1699, but he passed away in August because of the accumulated fatigue during the banishment. Nakagawa (2014: 98), on the other hand, denies the historical fact of the banishment, but suggests the possibility of imprisonment. In any case, Buzaemon’s life ended at the age of 51. His life was shorter than those of Tsuyuno Gorobee and Yonezawa Hikohachi. His achievement as the founder of Edo Rakugo is everlasting, however.

6. After 1700

When we look back the history of the Kamigata and Edo Rakugo, the direct founders can be traced back to Hikohachi (Osaka), Gorobee (Kyoto) and Buzaemon (Edo) in around 1680s. They established the entertainment of ordinary people by performing *hanashi* stories publicly. Some of their stories came from *Seisuishou* by Sakuden Oshou, a half century before the establishment of the *hanashi* style. At the Sakuden Oshou’s time, preachings and the entertainment were not distinguished. After that, the history shows that Rakugo as the entertainment developed on its own way, from the short *kobanashi* stories to longer narrative art.

As a brief history of Kamigata Rakugo after 1700, we will pay attention to Yonezawa Hikohachi the second. As his name shows, he succeeded Hikohachi the first, but it is not certain that the second was the pupil of the first. Kyoto was the stage of the performances of the second, not in Osaka. The most important and characteristic point of his style is the musical accompaniment of shamisen and drums. This style is passed down to the present day. He published *Karukuchi haru-bukuro* (jokes new year bag), a collection of short stories, in 1741.

From 1774 on, amateur hanashikas began to hold gatherings and compete their own stories in Osaka. Attracted by such enthusiasm, Matsuda Yasuke came to Osaka from Kyoto in May, 1792. As a professional performer, Yasuke told his stories in temples and shrines and collected money from the audience. His performance style is described as follows (from *Kouto Gosui* (emperor-capital day-sleep), written by Nishizawa Ippou in 1850) :

- (15) Yasuke sits on a tall stand, front of him is a bookrest. He strikes wooden clappers and laughs the audience.

This lively and cheerful style of Kamigata Rakugo is in good contrast with the Edo style of stylish or tasteful way, in which laughter is put on the second importance.

In Edo, the hanashi performance did not do so well after Buzaemon. It was in 1786 when the meeting was held in a *ryouri-tyaya* restaurant in Mukoujima, water front downtown, and newly told stories were published. Utei Emba (1743–1822) was one of the promoters, and he is evaluated as the second founder of Edo Rakugo after Buzaemon. Emba began to hold gatherings regularly once in a month, and later it became the run of Yose, which is a permanent facility where various entertainment including Rakugo are performed. The entrance fee was collected at the gate. Hayashiya Shouzou (1781–1842) began a regular Yose run in Hirokouji of Nishi-Ryogoku from 1817 on. The regular run of the performances has been called *Jouseki*.

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