

Edo Enshō Kobanashi:
Eros, Humor, and Raunch
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Edo Enshō Kobanashi: Eros, Humor, and Raunch

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Abstract

This thesis is comprised of two parts: a literature review of *Edo enshō kobanashi*, short comic tales of an erotic nature, and translations of such texts. The literature review addresses the general context needed to appreciate *enshō kobanashi* as well as the state of modern scholarship on the subject. *Kobanashi*, short comic tales known as a precursor to rakugo, belongs to a larger literary genre of *hanashibon*, which emerged during the Edo period and had its peak during the An'ei and Tenmei periods. Despite its pervasiveness as popular literature throughout the Edo period, *hanashibon* are relatively understudied and academic research is rather scant. Among *kobanashi* are tales of an erotic nature known today as *enshō kobanashi*. *Enshō* is a modern term for a literary mode of erotic humor that was widely popular during the Edo period. While these *enshō* works provide insight into the plebian lives of Edo citizens, due to modern stigmatization, they are obscure and overlooked. This translation features sixty-one representative *enshō kobanashi* from the genre's heyday, the An'ei and Tenmei periods.

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Review of the Literature

Introduction

In the late eighteenth century, a new literary genre known as *Edo kobanashi* 江戸小咄 (humorous tales from Edo) was born out of the ebullient metropolis that was the city of Edo. Originally a spinoff of a booming cultural fad, *kyōka* 狂歌, *Edo kobanashi* soon became an established form in its own right. Among *Edo kobanashi* were humorous tales of erotic nature, known today as *enshō kobanashi* 艶笑, the theme of this paper. The nature of *enshō kobanashi* is best introduced by a translated text:

Nap (*Hirune* ひるね)¹

A mother was taking a nap, exposing her pussy. Her mischievous young son came over and poked it with a bamboo stick. The mother woke up angry and pinched the boy hard, making him cry. The big brother walked in and asked the mother,

“What happened? Why is he crying?”

“I pinched him hard because he poked my pussy.”

The big brother turned to the young boy and said,

“You just got in trouble with a dog the other day. I told you to stay away from things with hair.”

Fukujusō 腹受想 An'ei 7 (1779). (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.114.)

Despite the repetitive use of sexual words, due to the nonchalance, playfulness supersedes potential obscenity in this tale. The realness of the tale averts our attention from such words and gives us a sense that we have traveled back in time to the Edo period, to witness the lives of Edo commoners. These tales offer valuable insight into Edo plebian culture and everyday lives of commoners. Moreover, because these tales are comprised of pure Edo vernacular, we can immerse ourselves in the ordinary dialogues of that time. Nonetheless, *enshō kobanashi* are highly understudied and under-translated. This paper intends to highlight *enshō kobanashi* within the genre of *hanashibon* 噺本, and offer translation of texts that were produced at its peak of

¹ All translations from Japanese are mine unless otherwise specified.

popularity during the An'ei 安永 (1772-1781) and Tenmei 天明 (1781-1788) periods. Since there is little scholarship available in English regarding this literature, the first half of this paper will focus on providing pertinent background information regarding *kobanashi*, the literary mode of *enshō*, and the cultural milieu of the time, as well as a literature review. I will then present some information about the texts I translated, followed by the translations of the texts.

The Brief History and Formation of *Kobanashi*

Kobanashi, or “little stories,” is a blanket term for short, humorous tales ending with a punch line or windup called the “fall” or “drop” (*otoshi* 落とし, *ochi* 落ち, or *sage* さげ). *Kobanashi* is a precursor to *rakugo* 落語, a traditional art of storytelling that emerged during the late Edo period and is still performed today in a vaudeville-type hall called *yose* 寄席. The term *kobanashi* is often used synonymously with *rakugo*, especially in reference to the short pieces performed as a lead-in to the main act. In Japanese literary studies, however, *kobanashi* refers to specific types of comic tales (also known as *Edo kobanashi*), which were produced in the city of Edo during the last decades of the eighteenth century—particularly during the An'ei and Tenmei periods—and which are differentiated from *karukuchi banashi* 軽口咄, or “light-mouthed stories” from the Kamigata region, Kyoto and Osaka. For the purposes of this discussion, *kobanashi* will be used in its narrower, academic sense. *Kobanashi*, along with other *hanashi* such as *karukuchi banashi* 軽口咄 and *otoshi banashi* 落とし噺, belongs to the Edo-period literary genre of *hanashibon*, anthologies of comic tales. *Hanashibon*, in turn, is part of a broader category of humorous stories from all eras, called *shōwa* 笑話. According to the *Edo kobanashi jiten* 江戸小咄事典, authored by the foremost scholar in the field of *hanashibon* and *rakugo*, Mutō Sadao,

the term *kobanashi* is not used in the titles of the more than one thousand *hanashibon* that appear in Edo publishers' catalogues.² Early Edo-period anthologies of humorous stories from Kamigata were called *karukuchi bon* 軽口本, and those from Edo were called *otoshi banashi bon* 落とし咄本 or *hanashi bon* 咄本, all of which fall under the umbrella term of *hanashibon* 噺本. Mutō speculates that the term *kobanashi* emerged in response to the need to distinguish short anecdotes from long ones, *naga banashi* 長咄, particularly in rakugo performances. Its first appearance in a book title was in *Kokkei bungaku kobanashi jisshu* 滑稽文学小咄十種 authored by Asakura Musei in 1917.³ Thereafter, *kobanashi* came to replace other terms like *karukuchi banashi* and *otoshi banashi*, eventually becoming the standard term for short comic tales.⁴

² Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, *Edo kobanashi jiten* 江戸小咄事典 (Tokyo: Tokyo-dō shuppan, 1965), 3.

³ Asakura Musei 朝倉無声 (1877-1927) was a scholar whose research focused on Edo period entertainment, particularly *misemono* 見世物, spectacle/freak show/street performances, etc.

⁴ Mutō, *Edo kobanashi jiten*, 4.

The following chart, based on Mutō’s classification system, has become a benchmark for scholarship and is a useful tool for understanding these terms. As shown below, Mutō uses two methods of classification: the first (the left column) is based on the printing locus and the latter (the right column) is based on the features of the contents.

Classification based on the printing locus		Classification based on the writing style and the book format
Early years of <i>hanashibon</i> 前期噺本 (1615-1772) Kamigata-based	Early <i>hanashibon</i> Gen’na 元和 (1615) - Enpō 延宝 (1681)	<i>Karukuchi bon</i> 軽口本 (Early <i>Hanashibon</i>)
	<i>Karukuchi bon</i> Ten’na 天和 (1781) - Shōtoku 正徳 (1720)	
	Late <i>karukuchi bon</i> Kyōhō 享保 (1720) – Meiwa 明和 (1772)	
Later years of <i>hanashibon</i> 後期噺本 (1772-1868) Edo-based	<i>Edo kobanashi bon</i> An’ei 安永 (1772) – Tenmei 天明 (1789)	<i>Edo Kobanashi bon</i> 江戸小咄本 (Mid- <i>Hanashi-bon</i>)
	<i>Mid-kobanashi bon</i> Kansei 寛政 (1789) – Bunka 文化 (1818)	<i>Rakugo bon</i> 落語本 (Late <i>Hanashi-bon</i>)
	<i>Late kobanashi bon</i> Bunsei 文政 (1818) – Keiō 慶応 (1868)	

No matter which classification system we use, An’ei represents a new era of *hanashibon*. This is when the center of the publishing industry shifted to Edo, bringing about changes not only in literary style (favoring the punchy Edo dialect versus the more verbose Kamigata dialect), but in publication format,⁵ which symbolized the establishment of *hanashibon* as an independent category.

⁵ The book format evolved from *hanshi gosatsu* 半紙五冊—an offshoot of the preceding *sharebon* 洒落本—to *kobon issatsu* 小本一冊.

Humor appears in texts throughout the history of Japanese literature, and people⁶ who were famous for their humor are mentioned in many historical records. For most of history, however, humorous/jocular tales were transmitted from orally and considered a fleeting pleasure to be enjoyed in the moment and forgotten, never taken seriously enough to be preserved in writing, let alone anthologized, until the Edo period. There were occasions in which humorous tales and anecdotes were preserved for aristocrats or those in the higher strata: for example, *setsuwa* 説話 (narrative) literature from the Heian 平安 period (794-1192) features some vigorous and spoken language, not of commoners but of the court nobility and the warriors, and *kōdan* 講談 (storytelling) from the Muromachi 室町 period (1333-1573) were based on secular stories as well as Buddhist sutra explanations given by Buddhist preachers for the entertainment of *daimyo* 大名 (warlords). While these genres contain elements of humor, humor was never their express purpose.

Oral compilation of humorous tales began in the late fifteenth century during the *Sengoku* 戦国 Period, when quasi-professional storytellers and court entertainers—Buddhist preachers, scholars, doctors, retired warriors and other intellectuals—began to render their services to wealthy clients, mostly feudal lords. Their skilled recitation of humorous tales provided entertainment, in addition to much-needed knowledge about the changing world. These men of great learning and worldly experience were called *otogishū* お伽衆 (also *toginomono* 伽の者 or *hanashishū* 話衆). Toyotomi Hideyoshi purportedly had as many as eight hundred *otogishū*.⁷ Based on his plebian background and famously licentious predisposition, it seems likely that he

⁶ These include Tōroku, or Numa no Tōroku 沼の藤六 from the Heian period, Kyōgetsubō 教月房, Ikkyū oshō 一休和尚, Yūchōrō 雄長老, and Sorori Shinzaemon 曾呂利新左衛門 who served Hideyoshi.

⁷ Odaka Toshio 小高敏郎, ed., *Edo shōwa shū* 江戸笑話集, *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文学大系, vol.100 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 4.

enjoyed tales with erotic humor.⁸ Such patronage elevated the status of professional storytellers, who responded to the demand for new material by assembling and archiving tales that would later be compiled in *shōwa* anthologies.

Early *shōwa* anthologies include *Gigen yōkishū* 戲言養氣集 (Anthology of Humorous Remarks that Put One in a Good Mood) compiled by an unknown author in 1615-1624; *Seisuishō* 醒睡笑 (Laughs that Shake Off Sleep) authored by Anrakuan Sakuden 安楽庵策伝 (1554-1642) in 1628; and the two-volume *Kinō wa kyō no monogatari* きのふはけふのものがたり (Stories of Yesterday, Tales of Today) by an unknown author, published in 1636. *Seishuishō*—comprised of 1039 humorous anecdotes in eight volumes—is particularly recognized as epoch-making in the history of Japanese humor. The nature of humor contained in these books is disparate; *Seishuishō* is relatively decorous and benign compared to the other two, as it was composed at the request of Itakura Shigemune 板倉重宗—governor of Kyoto—at the end of Sakuden’s successful career as a preacher. While *Gigen yōkishū* and the first volume of *Kinō wa kyō no monogatari* consist predominantly of anecdotes about heroic deeds and the exceptional wits of warriors,⁹ the second volume clearly leans more towards plebian, even brazenly crass, themes like genital odor and anal penetration, as well as featuring stock characters such as corrupt monks, cuckolds, country bumpkins, braggarts, boors, and penny pinchers. The vulgar humor contained in these books had a significant influence on the subsequent spread of erotically-themed *kobanashi*.

⁸ Historians including Owada Tetsuo 小和田哲男 agree that Hideyoshi’s plebian nature was his charm; he would talk to people of much lower status such as stable boys or maidservants. Sometimes he would invite women on the street to join him in *hanami* 花見, flower viewing. Hideyoshi’s *bijogari* 美女狩り (hunt for beautiful women) is a well-documented historical fact. (Owada Tetsuo 小和田哲男. *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* 豊臣秀吉 [Tokyo: Chūkō shinsho, 1985], 138.)

⁹ *Kinō wa kyō no monogatari* even has stories based on the lives of actual warlords including Oda Nobunaga 織田信長, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉, and Hosokawa Yūsai 細川幽斎.

Concurrently, three professional comedians emerged in three different cities: Tsuyu no Gorobē 露の五郎兵衛 of Kyoto (1643?-1703?),¹⁰ Yonezawa Hikohachi 米沢彦八 of Osaka (?-1714?),¹¹ and Shikano Buzaemon 鹿野武左衛門 of Edo (1649-1699).¹² They attracted throngs of listeners with their comic storytelling, kabuki mimicry, and theatrical narratives on the street, at temples and shrines, or at private parlors and salons. They were followed by *Utei Enba* 鳥亭 焉馬 (1743-1822) of Edo, who hosted a regular *hanashi no kai* 咄の会 (story-telling club), in which the attendees were divided into two groups, storytellers (the performers) and non-storytellers (the audience); this was the nascent form of *yose* 寄席, which would later develop into *rakugo*. Fukai Shidōken 深井志道軒 (1680-1765) was active around the same time in the precincts of the Asakusa Temple, narrating satirical and comical sermon-like lectures with lewd language and a phallus-like stick, pioneering what would become known as *dangi* 談義, sermon-like stories with satirical aspects.¹³

The formation of *Edo kobanashi*, the subgenre of *hanashibon* which emerged at the onset of the An'ei period (1772-1780), was profoundly associated with *kyōka* 狂歌. Literally meaning “mad song,” *kyōka* are 31-syllable poems of a comical and satirical nature. *Kyōka* prospered throughout the Edo period, but particularly during the Tenmei Period. The *kobanashi* boom in

¹⁰ Gorobē was a Buddhist monk who returned to secular life and started *tsuji banashi* 辻咄, or crossroad storytelling, and authored *Karukuchi tsuyugahanashi* 軽口露がはなし and other anthologies.

¹¹ Hikohachi compiled anthologies such as *Karukuchi gozen otoko* 軽口御前男, *Karukuchi ōyakazu* 軽口大矢数, and *Gion Kagekiyo* 祇園景清.

¹² Buzaemon is considered one of the progenitors of *Edo rakugo* who started *zashiki shikata banashi* 座敷仕方咄, or humorous narratives accompanied by gestures and vocal tones. His works include: *Shikano makifude* 鹿の巻筆 and *Shōjikibanashi Ōkagami* 正直咄大鑑.

¹³ Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 worshipped Shidōken for his exceptional narrative talent, which made Shidōken just as popular as Ichikawa Danjūrō. Gennai authored *Fūryū Shidōken den* 風流志道軒伝 (1763) in which he depicts the perilous globetrotting adventure of Shidōken in places such as Nyogogashima 女護が島, an island inhabited only by women.

Edo coincided with the development of what would later be known as *Tenmei kyōka* 天明狂歌, a widespread social phenomenon and a kind of cultural revolution led by multiple *kyōka-ren* 狂歌連, or groups of *kyōka* creators.¹⁴ One of the key players was the young and talented Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝.¹⁵ Nanpo, along with fellow low-ranking samurai Karagoromo Kisshū 唐衣橘洲 and Akera Kankō 朱楽菅江, founded the *Kyōka no kai* 狂歌の会, or *Kyōka* club, and actively participated in the publishing of the first *kyōka* anthology, *Meiwa jūgoban kyōka awase* 明和十五番狂歌合わせ, in 1770. These events ignited the *Tenmei kyōka* boom, the rage of Edo. The inception of *Edo kobanashi* needs to be understood within this cultural context; without the flowering of popular culture represented by the *Tenmei kyōka* phenomenon, *Edo kobanashi* would not have flourished. Nanpo took to writing *Edo kobanashi* and compiled multiple *hanashibon* himself under different pseudonyms. For example, his *Chōtsugai* 蝶夫婦 was published under the pseudonym, Yamate no Bakahito 山手馬鹿人 in 1778, *Shunshō ikkoku* 春笑一刻 as Senkinshi 千金子¹⁶ in 1779, *Tai no misozu* 鯛の味噌津 as Shinba Rōgyo 新場老魚 in 1780, *Man no takara* 万の宝 as Yomono Akara 四方赤良 in 1781, and *Hatsu gatsuo* はつ鯉

¹⁴ Most of the early *kyōka* practitioners were low-ranking samurai and wealthy merchants.

¹⁵ Nanpo published his first anthology of *kyōshi* 狂詩, parodies of Chinese classical poems, *Neboke sensei bunshū* 寝惚先生文集, or *The Literary Works of Master Groggy* on the third year of Meiwa (1767), at the age of nineteen, which made him a central literary figure of his time. During the *Tenmei kyōka* boom, Nanpo published *Manzai kyōkashū* 万載狂歌集, a parody of *Senzai wakashū* 千載和歌集 in 1783. Nanpo is known for his many pseudonyms such as Yomono Akara 四方赤良 and Shokusanjin 蜀山人.

¹⁶ A parody of the well-known Chinese proverb, “Shunshō ikkoku atai senkin 春宵一刻值千金,” a moment of time in spring evening is worth a thousand pieces of gold.

as Shinba Sanjin 新場散人, 1782.¹⁷ An established *bunjin* 文人 (literary artist), Nanpo's involvement in *hanashibon* greatly elevated the literary status of *hanashibon*.¹⁸

The *bunjin* who first paved the way from *kyōka* to *kobanashi* was Hakurikan Bōun 白鯉館卯雲 (1714-1783), a shogunal retainer residing in Edo and a writer of *kyōka* and *gesaku* 戯作, or playful popular fiction.¹⁹ When commissioned to work in Kyoto, Bōun was exposed to the booming *karukuchi banashi* 軽口咄, or Kamigata-style narrative performance. After returning to Edo, Bōun published a *kobanashi* anthology entitled *Kanokomochi* 鹿の子餅 in 1772, the first year of An'ei, featuring crisp Edo vernacular in an elegant little book. The humor in *Kanokomochi* is characteristically short, bold, and punchy—in accordance with the tastes of the rebellious and bellicose Edoites—as opposed to the descriptive and verbose stories of *karukuchi banashi* of the Kamigata. *Kanokomochi*'s phenomenal success established *hanashibon* as a full-fledged literary genre, providing the *bunjin* of Edo with an attractive new outlet for humor writing, and prompting Edo publishers to solicit stories from the general public. Originally a sideline for authors of *kyōka*, *Edo kobanashi* developed symbiotically with *kyōka* with significant overlap of writers and material. In the second year of An'ei (1773), over twenty *hanashibon*, each with forty to eighty anecdotes, were published,²⁰ and thereafter, as many as fifteen anthologies were published each year until *hanashi* was overtaken in popularity by *yose* around the year 1800. The anecdotes gathered throughout the Edo period add up to between seventy and eighty thousand, compiled into over one thousand *hanashibon*. Edo's *kobanashi* boom also spread to other regions, resulting in the publication of local anthologies.

¹⁷ Mutō, *Edo kobanashi jiten*. 39.

¹⁸ Later, established *gesaku* writers such as Jippensha Ikku, Santō Kyōden, and Takizawa Bakin wrote *hanashibon* on the side. Ikku was particularly prolific and published over thirty *hanashibon*. (Mutō, *Edo kobanashi jiten*. 49.)

¹⁹ Hakurikan Bōun 白鯉館卯雲 was known as Kimuro Bōun 木室卯雲.

²⁰ *Edo kobanashi jiten*. Mutō. 32.

What spurred people to engage in such playful and prolific creative endeavors, to mock tradition and make sport out of art? One possible root was dissatisfaction and social conditions borne of the great Pax Tokugawa. The first year of An'ei marked the 170th year of Tokugawa rule; the seemingly stable society was spiritually stagnant, and the strict class system and oppressive Tokugawa rule were suffocating, especially to low-ranking samurai and townspeople. Like the humor in *kyōka* and *senryū*, humor in *kobanashi* was often political, serving as a subversive outlet for Edo commoners, a means by which they caricatured and derided low-ranking provincial samurai²¹ and ridiculed the old nobility of Kyoto for their lack of practical knowledge and common sense. Humor and parody were used as rhetoric to attack the “authentic” and “proper” as defined by the social arbiters of high culture. On the other hand, generally no hostility was displayed towards fellow commoners; in fact, *kobanashi* tend to show compassion for ordinary people with their foibles and peccadillos, and encourage laughing with—not at—people who are worse off, including thieves, beggars, cripples and the like, who strive hard to make their way in life.

The Mode of *Enshō* in Japanese Literature and *Enshō kobanashi*

Enshō 艶笑—a compound of *en* 艶 (eros) and *shō* 笑 (humor)—refers to a literary mode, as in *enshō bungaku* 艶笑文学, “literature with erotic humor,” or *enshō rakugo* 艶笑落語, “rakugo with sexual content.” The consensus among scholars is that this common term,

²¹ Samurai were the most common target for ridicule and contempt as shown in the following tale from *Ryūkō banashi yasuuri sanpen* 流行咄安売三編 (1826):

A failing gambler gets a piece of advice from his friend.

“You have no future in the gambling world, so don’t take any more chances with the money you have left.

Quit gambling and just become a samurai.”

“I see. If you so insist, it would not be such a bad idea. I’ll set aside all my pride, bite the bullet and become a samurai then.” (Komada Shinji 駒田信二. *Edo Kobanashi* 江戸小咄. 99.)

frequently used to refer to pre-modern literature, was not coined until the Shōwa 昭和 era, and thus did not exist during the Edo period. Instead of *enshō*, the term *bare* 破礼, meaning “laid bare,” was used, as in *bare kobanashi* or *bare senryū*.²² The combination of the erotic with the humorous itself, however, has been existent in Japanese literature from ancient times. One of the earliest appearances is in the creation myth in the *Kojiki* 古事記, in which Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大神 is lured out of Amano Iwato 天岩戸 (Celestial Rock Cave), by the roaring laughter of the gods triggered by a performance of a sexual nature. *Enshō* is also frequently seen in many of the classical anthologies of Japanese prose including *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語集, *Ujishūishū* 宇治拾遺集, and *Kokonchomonjū* 古今著聞集. We can infer, from the appearance of erotic humor in classical literature, that the plebian, lowbrow culture of the same periods must have contained such humor, possibly to an even greater degree.

Erotic humor became pervasive in the Edo period, when popular literature flourished as commoners gained financial and cultural strength, and mass printing and wider circulation of books were made possible by improved printing techniques. With the increase in the number of books written by townspeople, published by townspeople, and read by townspeople, the *enshō* mode flourished in multiple genres. *Shunpon* 春本 (erotic stories with *shunga* 春画 illustrations), *kōyōka* 狂歌, *senryū* 川柳, and *kobanashi* 小咄 in particular served as vehicles for the expression of humor and eroticism. As literature became a widely consumed commodity, producing works with *enshō* content came to carry increasing benefits; patrons invested lavishly in such works, and *enshō* texts were sought after in the market.

²² Kojima. *Enshō kobanashi kessakusen*. 298.

If literature and art are reflective of a society and its people, *enshō* was clearly important to Edoites. The times allowed people to indulge themselves in pleasure more freely and invest their surplus energy and resources in avaricious consumption of works derived from sexual pleasure in *akusho* 悪所, “notorious places,” like the Yoshiwara 吉原 pleasure quarter and kabuki theaters. Edoites’ predilection and penchant for pastiche and lampoonery resulted in the emergence of new literary genres—in addition to the aforementioned *shunpon*, *kyōka*, *senryū*, and *kobanashi*—*kokkeibon* 滑稽本, *sharebon* 洒落本, or *ninjōbon* 人情本, all of which contain elements of either *en* 艶, *shō* 笑, or both.

The significance and prevalence of the *enshō* mode both in art and literature are irrefutably demonstrated by the caliber of artists and writers who produced *enshō* works. The most celebrated *ukiyo-e* artists produced *shunga* masterpieces and the most acclaimed writers of *gesaku* unabashedly made use of this mode, either in writing *shunpon*²³ or sexualized spoofs of their own major works.²⁴ Popular guidebooks and Confucian textbooks were subjected to erotic parodies,²⁵ and even the most serious aspects of history and religion did not evade sexual

²³ For example, Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴, Santō Kyōden 山東京伝, Tamenaga Shunsui 為永春水, Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬, Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内, Ryūtei Tanehiko 柳亭種彦, Kanagaki Robun 仮名垣魯文, and Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九 all wrote *shunpon* at some point in their careers.

²⁴ For example, Tamenaga Shunsui 為永春水 wrote *Shunshoku hatsune no ume* 春色初音之六女 (a parody of 春色梅児誉美 *Shunshoku umegoyomi*), Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町 wrote *Isei sensei yumemakura* 遺精先生夢枕 (a parody of *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* 金々先生栄花夢 to name but a few as well as parodies of famous works were produced such as *Haru no akebono* 春の曙, a caricature of the opening line of *Makuranosōshi* 枕草子, *Edomurasaki yoshiwaragenji* 江戸紫吉原源氏, a parody of *Nisemurasaki inakagenji* 偽紫田舎源氏, which was itself a parody, and *Keichū hizakurige* 閨中膝栗毛, a parody of *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* 東海道中膝栗毛, produced by disciples of Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九.

²⁵ *Onna daigaku takarabako* 女大学宝箱 was spoofed as *Onna dairaku takarabeki* 女太楽宝開, *Kinmōzui* 訓蒙図彙 as *Kōshoku kinmōzui* 好色訓蒙図彙, and *Idō nichiyō chōhōki* 医道日用重宝記 as *Bidō nichiya johōki* 艶道日夜女宝記.

lampoonery.²⁶ The so-called *Edo sandai kisho* 江戸三大奇書, or *Three Great Books of Edo*,²⁷ *Anaokashi* 阿奈遠加志 (1822?), *Hakoya no himegoto* 貌姑射秘言 (1817-1837?), and *Itchomonjū* 逸著聞集 (mid-late eighteenth century), were written by distinguished scholars of *kokugaku* 国学, or nativist learning, and yet they all contain base humor.²⁸ As for *hanashibon*, Mutō Sadao contends that out of over one thousand *hanashibon*, roughly eighty to ninety percent of books exhibit some degree of sexuality.²⁹ Even if this ratio is somewhat overstated, the popularity of *enshō kobanashi* within the *hanashibon* genre is indisputable.

Edoites' attitudes towards sex appear to be different from those of subsequent periods; sexuality was much less stigmatized or hidden.³⁰ Discourse on sexuality was equally

²⁶ For example, a renowned Confucian scholar, historian, and Chinese poem writer, Rai Sanyō 頼山陽 purportedly authored a classic *shunpon*, *Dannoura no yoru kassenki* 壇ノ浦夜合戦記, an erotic account of the Battle of Dan-no-ura, in which Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 had a sexual relationship with Kenreimon'in Tokuko 建礼門院徳子 after saving her from drowning.

²⁷ *The Three Great Books of Edo* consist of *Anaokashi* authored by Sawada Natari 沢田名垂 (1775-1845), *Hakoyanohimegoto* authored by Kurosawa Okinamaro 黒沢翁満 (1795-1859), and *Itchomonjū* authored by Yamaoka Shunmei 山岡俊明 (1712-1780). These books are anthologies of *enshō* tales (some are *kobanashi* length, while others are too long to be classified as *kobanashi*) and some tales display contents incorporating particularly vulgar humor.

²⁸ For example, the beginning of *Anaokashi*, written in a highbrow aristocratic tone, is as follows:

A buttohole says to the hole in the front,

“Ms. Front, have you woken up yet? The rare visitor you had last night was rather loud. It kept me up.”

The front embarrassedly answered,

“Yesterday was the anniversary of my husband's death, so I held a small religious ceremony.”

The buttohole nodded and said,

“I understand. No wonder the male member of some unknown large monk was busy entering and exiting.”

Sumie Jones asserts in her article entitled, “*Gabun to porunogurafi—Sawada Natari's Anaokashi* 雅文とポルノグラフィ—沢田名垂の阿奈遠加志,” that it was not particularly outrageous for such renowned scholars to author the kind of books in *The Three Great Books of Edo*. The uniqueness of these books lies not in the contents, but the writing style; *Anaokashi*, for example, is written entirely in the style of high Heian court literature and rendered in the esoteric *manyōgana* 万葉仮名 script, which limited the audience to highly educated specialists. Additionally, Natari employs the persona of a deranged and elderly woman, a figure who is free from the restraints of social acceptability and therefore allowed to broach such sensitive topics and sexual themes.

²⁹ Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, *Aneiki enshō hanasibon rokushu* 安永期艶笑咄本六種 (Tokyo: Taiheishooku, 2000), 3.

³⁰ Listed below are some of the behaviors in which sexuality was more openly displayed than today's Western standard.

unconcealed,³¹ and Edo was teeming with sex guidebooks. Furthermore, Edo sexuality did not exclude any particular demographic; old people were depicted sexually active, and precocious sexuality in childhood was far from being a taboo. In a society with high rates of infant mortality,

Kon'yoku 混浴 (co-ed public bathhouses): Edoites went to public bathhouses almost every day because few private homes had their own bath. All public bathhouses were co-ed until Kansei's edict was issued, banning this practice.

Ōoku 大奥: Within the *ōoku*, or the *shogun's* harem, women not only shared their *harikata* 張形 (dildo) amongst themselves, but tested them on one another (Tanaka Yūko 田中優子, *Edo no koi* 江戸の恋 [Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2002] and Shirakura Yoshihiko 白倉敬彦, *Shunga to edofūzoku* 春画と江戸風俗, [Tokyo: Softbank creative, 2007]).

Yobai 夜這い: *Yobai*, or sneaking into a woman's bedroom at night to have sex, was a culturally sanctioned practice among commoners (Akamatsu Keisuke 赤松啓介, *Yobai no minzokugaku* 夜這いの民俗学 [Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1994]). One of the many Edo sex books written in mid-Edo, *Shoyū keshiganoko* 諸遊芥子麿子, authored by Tōrindō Chōmaro 桃林堂蝶磨 begins as follows: *Yobai to hananusubito wa hotoke mo yurusaretari* 夜這いと花盗人は仏も許されたり, "Even Buddha forgave the act of *yobai* and stealing flowers, also synonymous with stealing someone else's wife." (Nishihara Ryōō 西原涼翁. *Edo enshō kobanashi to senryū*. Tokyo: Taihei shooku, 1999. 269.)

Bon'odori 盆踊り and *zakone* 雑魚寝: In the countryside, annual events such as *bon'odori* 盆踊り, or the *bon* dance festival, and *zakone* 雑魚寝, or sleeping in a group to ward off evil spirits at temples and shrines, actually served to promote free sex (Shimokawa Kōshi 下川歌史. *Bon odori: rankō no minzokugaku* 盆踊り—乱交の民俗学. Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2001).

Marakurabe taikai 摩羅比べ大会 (Phallic contests): At phallic contests, contestants would pay an entry fee of about one hundred *mon* 文, an equivalent of twenty US dollars, and the winners received monetary prizes (Shirakura Yoshihiko 白倉敬彦. *Edo no shunga* 江戸の春画. Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2002. 87).

Marakurabe 摩羅比べ (Phallic comparison): According to *Gaidan bunbunhsūyō* 街談文文集要 by Ishizuka Jūbē 石塚重兵衛 and the eighth volume of *Han'nichi kanwa* 半日閑話 by Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝, Ōta mediated an ongoing scholarly dispute by inviting the two renowned scholars involved, along with other intellectuals, to a carousal at a salon and had them expose their male members for comparison. Afterwards, he wrote a *kyōka* about this incident. (Nishihara Ryōō 西原涼翁. *Edo enshō kobanashi to senryū*, [Tokyo: Taihei shooku, 1999], 319).

Harikata 張り形: Since women in the *ōoku* were prohibited from leaving the grounds, vendors visited with all kinds of goods, including *harikata*, for sale. (Teruoka Yasutaka 暉峻康隆. *Nihonjin no warai : shomin no geijutsu ni tadayou seikankaku* 日本人の笑い・庶民の芸術に漂う性感覚. Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1961).

Misemono-goya 見世物小屋 (Freak shows): According to *Kasshi yawa* 甲子夜話, during the *Tenpō* era, a blind man with a humongous penis made a great spectacle in a freak show in the Tochigi area. (Kojima Teiji 小島貞二. *Enshō kobanashi kessakusen* 艶笑小咄傑作選. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2001. 323).

³¹ Take onanism, for instance. No major discourse prohibiting masturbation has been recognized in the history of Japan except for the mild suggestion made by Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒 in his *Yōjōkun* 養生訓 (1713), regarding modesty for any sexual act. In a sexual guidebook, *Danjo kyōkun hana no arika* 男女狂訓・華のあり香 (1864), Iio Tōsen 飯尾東川 instructs how to give an orgasm to women of different ages up to sixty. (Shirakura, *Shunga to edofūzoku* 春画と江戸風俗, 78).

children's growth to adulthood could not be taken for granted, and childhood displays of sexuality were seen as symbols of health and maturation, worthy of celebration.

Moreover, lack of privacy due to poor housing conditions for commoners contributed to Edoites' open attitude towards sexuality. The concept of privacy was foreign to the *nagaya* 長屋 tenement row houses—with thin walls and sliding paper doors—in which most of them resided. Bringing what one might hope to keep private out into the open is disconcerting, generating a sense of embarrassment. Since these awkward feelings were unavoidable, humor was valuable as a coping mechanism. The pervasiveness of *enshō* was a logical extension of life in a society with much less stigma attached to sexuality and practically no privacy.

The most common *enshō kobanashi* humor hinges on situations in which absurdity arises from simple misunderstandings, or a reversal of expectations results in an unexpected ending. There are also setups that focus on the ludicrous disparity between a sophisticated or highbrow and a vulgar or frivolous punch-line, or the sexual humiliation of people who are arrogant or in positions of authority. Other common comedic motifs include the inability to suppress sexual desire, public embarrassment, or punning and word play in which an expression can be read with a secondary, sexual meaning, as is often the case with *kyōka*.

Other examples of stock themes and characters include the size and function of male sexual organs—this subject comes up in discussions among men or in the context of women expressing their complaints regarding phallic size to their partners—and precocious children who belie their parents' expectations of their innocence by revealing an awareness of exactly what their parents are doing behind closed doors. Another staple of *enshō kobanashi* is sexual episodes involving old people, such as retired old men paying a large amount of money to be the first-ever customer for a young courtesan in Yoshiwara, called *mizuage* 水揚げ (a term

originally referring to hoisting something from out of the water or unloading goods for sale from ships), and wealthy widows being partners for the very first sexual intercourse of up-and-coming young kabuki actors, a practice known as *fudeoroshi* 筆下ろし (a term that originally meant using a brand new calligraphy brush for the first time). People who hailed from outside of Edo, such as low ranking provincial samurai and newcomers from the countryside, were also commonly the butt of erotic jokes for their boorish misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about sexual protocols in Yoshiwara.

The Social and Cultural Milieu of the An'ei and Tenmei Period

The An'ei (1772-1780) and Tenmei (1781-1788) periods marked the beginning of Edo-centrism in which, despite the repressive measures of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, the locus of cultural production and consumption shifted to Edo from the Kamigata region, and Edo became a major cultural and financial center in its own right. During this period, Edo's population grew rapidly, particularly among the *chōnin* (townspeople) class.

At the outset of the An'ei period, the exuberant city of Edo was struggling to recover from the 1772 Great Fire of Meiwa, *Meiwa no taika* 明和の大火, one of the Three Great Fires of Edo.³² The ash from the massive eruption of Mt. Asama in 1782 blocked the sun and precipitated a famine known as the *Tenmei no daikikin* 天明の大飢饉 (Great Tenmei Famine). The accumulation of ash in riverbeds also caused record-breaking floods in Edo known as *Tenmei no daikōzui* 天明の大洪水 (Great Floods of Tenmei). Rampant *uchikowashi* 打ち壊し, riots leading to property destruction, ensued all over the nation.

³² The Meiwa era was displaced by An'ei due to its foreboding and ominous sound (the 9th year of Meiwa reads as *meiwaku nen* 迷惑年, or the year of trouble), and this great fire was regarded as emblematic. This led to the decision to begin a new era, An'ei. (Timon Screech. *The Shogun's Painted Culture* [London: Reaktion Books, 2000], 99).

The implementation of mercantile policies by a *bakufu* senior councilor, Tanuma Okitsugu 田沼意次 (1719-1788), exacerbated the shifts that had already been occurring in the ways in which society valued various means of payment: cash was perceived as more valuable than rice as a means of exchange, subverting the traditional idea of *kikokusenkin* 貴穀賤金, or “worship of grains and abhorrence of money.”

During the An’ei period, in addition to new literary genres, the concept of recreation, including pastimes and hobbies, emerged among commoners, and activities which used to belong only to the upper strata became popular: *sadō* 茶道 (tea ceremony), *kadō* 華道 (flower arrangements), *kōdō* 香道 (the art of appreciating incense), poetry meetings, *igo* 囲碁, *yōkyoku* 謡曲 singing, and seasonal outdoor activities.³³

In sum, the An’ei (1772-1779) and Tenmei (1781-1787) periods were culturally vibrant despite environmental calamities and repressive Tokugawa rule. Edo’s rise as the economic center led to a new era of Edo-centrism, in which the balance of power moved from the polished and rather feminine high court culture of the Kamigata region to the rambunctiously masculine and rebellious counter-culture of Edo. As a result, Edo-mae “made in Edo” came to be privileged over *kudarimono* “imported from Kamigata.” Publishing of the commoner-oriented *hanashibon* and *enshō kobanashi-shū* reached its zenith under such a milieu in Edo.

³³ Such activities are called *monomiyusan* 物見遊山. They mainly took place around the Sumida River, and included flower viewing, firefly catching, summer-evening strolls, fireworks viewing, and river boating (Nishiyama, *Nihon Rekishi*, 187).

State of the Field for the Study of *Enshō*

Until the late twentieth century, research into Edo period *enshō* works such as *shunga*, *shunpon*, and *enshō kobanashi* was not only challenging because of the stigma associated with these texts in academic circles, but was also risky due to the strict censorship of obscene material in any context and the potential for incarceration. This state of marginalization persisted despite the widely accepted fact that humor and eros were crucial to Edo commoner culture. With the removal of bans during the late 1980s and early 1990s on genital exposure in literature and art, however, scholars have finally begun to examine the wealth of material that exists in its original, uncensored state without fear of censure or penalty.

Major mainstream scholars of Edo literature and culture whose research interests address works in the *enshō* mode³⁴ unanimously contend that humor and eros were inseparable in Edo culture, and that Edo cultural studies should widen its scope to include previously excluded works that incorporate the theme of sexuality. Since the stigma surrounding sexuality in scholarship persists, some of the strongest arguments for the inclusion of *enshō* studies have come from scholars outside of the academic establishment. Hayashi Yoshikazu 林美一 (1922-1999),³⁵ the foremost scholar of *shunpon*, whose accomplishments include cataloging some two

³⁴ Scholars of Edo literature incorporating the *enshō* mode include Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, Okada Hajime 岡田甫, Hayashi Yoshikazu 林美一, Oka Masahiko 岡雅彦, Komada Shinji 駒田信二, Kojima Teiji 小島貞二, Miyao Shigeo 宮尾しげを, Hanasaku Kazuo 花咲一男, Satō Yōjin 佐藤要人, Eguchi Takao 江口孝夫, Tanaka Yūko 田中優子, Okitsu Kaname 興津要, Miyao Yoshio 宮尾 與男, Hayakawa Monta 早川聞多, Shirakura Yoshihiko 白倉敬彦, Nobuhiro Shinji 延広真治, Teruoka Yasutaka 暉峻 康隆, Howard Hibbet, Andrew Gerstle, Timon Screech, Timothy Clark, and Sumie Jones.

³⁵ Hayashi Yoshikazu (1922-1999) was a highly respected independent Edo scholar, whose research includes *ukiyo-e*, art history, Edo *gesaku*, and *shunpon*. He was particularly known for his extensive research and collection of *shunpon*. After Hayashi's death, his family donated the massive *shunpon* collection to Ritsumeikan University, which now includes the Hayashi Yoshikazu collection in its Treasured Archive section. Hayashi's publications range from compilation of *shunpon* series to anthologization of unpublished *enshō kobanashi* to studies of *gesaku* writers such as Kyokutei Bakin and Santō Kyōden to Edo period background studies. These include the seventeen volume *Mikan Edo bungaku* 未完江戸文学 series, the thirteen volume *Edo ehon shūsei* from Kawade shobō, the

thousand *shunpon*, argues that just as studies of *ukiyo-e* that ignore *shunga* are deficient, so too are studies of *gesaku* that exclude *shunpon*, and, by the same token, Edo cultural scholarship that fails to give careful examination to its erotic aspects.

Notably, it has been scholars overseas who have begun to address these gaps in Edo studies. Sumie Jones organized a conference in 1995 titled, “Sexuality and Edo Culture 1750-1850”—the first major conference of its kind—the chief goal of which was to correct imbalances in our perception of Edo culture. Jones stated, “Many pornographic works in literature and the arts of the Edo period are ignored by self-respecting scholars . . . Masterful and important Edo works deserve to be included in the canon, and the comic and sexual aspects of Japanese culture ought to be open to scholarly studies.”³⁶ The works presented at this conference provided a foundation for future scholarship, as well as a legitimate endorsement of the study of *enshō*. This interest on the part of foreign scholars has conversely led to a renewed interest within Japan, as evidenced by the 2009 Ritsumeikan University Art Research Center exhibit entitled, “*Kinsei-ki shunpon shunga to sono kontekusuto-ten* 近世期春本・春画とそのコンテクスト展 (Pre-modern *shunpon*, *shunga*, and their context).” Though this project was led by two non-Japanese scholars, Andrew Gerstle, a professor at London University, and Timothy Clark, the head of the Japanese section at the British Museum, the fact that a major Japanese university was willing to host such an exhibit is a sign of changing attitudes toward *enshō* scholarship.

Though the overall acceptance of the mode of *enshō* has progressed, the reception of visual art has been considerably more enthusiastic than the reception of *enshō* texts. *Shunga* has

Ehon kenkyū series from Yūkō shobō, and numerous other books on previously unstudied Edo popular culture. Hayashi was also active in Edo period movies, theatrical productions, and TV dramas as a consultant who ensured the authenticity of these period productions.

³⁶ Sumie Jones, *Imaging reading Eros: Proceedings for the conference, Sexuality and Edo Culture, 1750-1850*, (Bloomington: East Asian Studies Center, 1996).

garnered international acclaim as an essential subgenre of *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵, paintings of the floating world, and has become accepted as a distinguished art form. This has been partly spurred by the unsurprising popular interest in *shunga*. Following the 2009 Ritsumeikan University exhibit, the British Museum had conceivably the most sexually explicit exhibit since its foundation in 1753 with their 2013 *shunga* exhibit *Shunga: Sex and Humor in Japanese Art, 1600-1900*. The risqué exhibit attracted nearly 90,000 visitors in just three months, making it one of the most attended exhibits in the museum's history.³⁷

Many of the key insights uncovered through the study of *shunga* relate to the role of erotic art in Edo culture and society. Hayakawa Monta demonstrates that based on the conditions of the extant *shunpon* copies, they were rigorously circulated through itinerant book lenders, and there is little doubt women were among those customers who enjoyed *shunpon*.³⁸ Moreover, Ujiie Mikito concludes that originally *shunga* were highly prized sexual education materials for the court nobles, then later were used as talismans, wedding presents, New Year greeting gifts, and souvenirs of Edo.³⁹ Some scholars have focused more on what *shunga* can tell us about the role of sex in the everyday life of Edoites. Shirakura Yoshihiko goes so far as to state that sexuality was as natural a part of life as eating, perhaps only slightly more embarrassing,⁴⁰ and Shirakura and Hayakawa assert that there was little taboo surrounding sexuality during the Edo period, to the extent that children and old people were neither excluded from the enjoyment of

³⁷ The British Museum had a record attendance in 2013 with 6.7 million visitors.

³⁸ Hayakawa Monta, "Who Were the Audiences for Shunga?" *Japan Review* (2013): 17-36.

³⁹ Shirakura Yoshihiko. *Edo no seifūzoku: warai to jōshi no erosu* 江戸の性風俗—笑いと情死のエロス (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998), 58-72.

⁴⁰ Shirakura Yoshihiko 白倉敬彦, *Shunga no naka no kodomotachi* 春画の中のこどもたち. (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2000), 113.

shunga, nor from being depicted in them.⁴¹ Andrew Gerstle maintains that *shunga* and *shunpon* are undoubtedly important parts of the Japanese cultural heritage, and research into their nature and role in society is essential in order to have a more accurate understanding of life in early modern Japan.⁴² These scholars unanimously contend that the fundamental purpose of *shunga* is, as its other name *warai-e* 笑い絵 suggests, humor and harmony between the sexes rather than sexual stimulation.⁴³ Research has even shown that the Tokugawa elites viewed *shunga* not as a shameful secret, but as a point of national pride. Despite an official disapproval of the art form, *shunga* paintings were included in the gifts from the shogunate to early foreign ambassadors, including Commodore Perry.⁴⁴

As previously discussed, despite *shunga*'s growing popularity, its literary counterparts like *shunpon* and *enshō kobanashi* are still decidedly undervalued in the academic realm, both in Japan and abroad. There have been *shunpon* anthologies published for a general audience in Japan, but these works fall into a gray area between academic scholarship and popular literature. The few *enshō* texts available in English translation generally accompany erotic illustrations in *shunpon*, and are not literary works in their own right. For example, Kawade shobō published the twenty-four volume *Teihon ukiyoe shunga meihin shūsei* 定本・浮世絵春画名品集成 (1995-2000), for which Hayashi Yoshikazu was the editor-in-chief and Richard Lane was the translator.

⁴¹ Hayakawa Monta 早川聞多, *Shunga no nakano kodomotachi: Edo shomin no seiishiki* 春画のなかの子どもたち—江戸庶民の性意識. Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2000.

Shirakura Yoshihiko 白倉敬彦, *Shunga de yomu Edo no seiai: rōjin/kodomo no shiten kara* 春画で読む江戸の性愛：老人・子供の視線から. Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2006.

⁴² Andrew Gerstle, *Edo onna no shunga-bon: Tsuya to warai no fūfushinan* 江戸をんなの春画本：艶と笑の夫婦指南. (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 2011).

⁴³ An opposing view—that *shunga* is pornography—has been presented by scholars including Timon Screech. (Timon Screech. *Shunga: Katate de yomu edo no e* 春画・片手で読む江戸の絵. translated by Takayama Hiroshi 高山宏, [Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998].) This debate has been complicated by the difficulty of defining pornography.

⁴⁴ Gerstle also mentions that the Tokugawa government included *shunga* paintings as official gifts in the prior interactions with Holland and Russia in the early 19th century. (Gerstle and Clark, *shunga*, 3).

The International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken 日文研)⁴⁵ followed suit and published the five volume *Nichibunken shozō kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei* 日文研所蔵近世艶本資料集成 (2002-2010), a series of *shunpon* for which Hayakawa Monta served as the editor-in-chief and Patricia Fister as the English translator. In these publications, scholarly attention tends to focus on the *shunga* illustrations and not the text. However, the 2013 *Japan Review* issue titled “*Shunga: Sex and Humor in Japanese Art and Literature*” published by Nichibunken altered the trajectory of research by presenting articles whose main focus is *enshō* texts, not images.⁴⁶ The inclusion of such exclusively textual research has opened up new avenues of inquiry in the field.

Andrew Gerstle has been far and away the leading scholar for research and analyses of *enshō* texts. In particular, Gerstle’s textual research has focused on the erotic parodies authored by Tsukioka Settei 月岡雪鼎 of popularly-read didactic texts including: *Onna dairaku takarabeki* 女太楽宝開 (1755), a parody of *Onna daigaku takarabako* 女大学宝箱 (1716); *Bidō nichiya johōki* 艶道日夜女宝記 (around 1760), a parody of *Idō nichiyō chōhōki* 医道日用重宝記 (1762); *Onna shimegawa oeshi-bumi* 女令川趣文 (1768), a parody of *Onna imagawa oshiebumi* 女今川教文 (1768); and *Konrei hiji bukuro* 婚礼秘事袋 (1771), a parody of *Konrei shiyō keshi bukuro* 婚礼仕様罌粟袋 (1750). While the original works inculcate messages of Confucian obedience and sexual purity, Gerstle contends that, under the guise of parody, Settei’s works present polemic discourse on female sexual conduct and advocate for the validity of

⁴⁵ Nichibunken is an abbreviation for Kokusai nihon bunka kenkyū sentā 国際日本文化研究センター.

⁴⁶ These articles include: “Japanese Illustrated Erotic Books in the Context of Commercial Publishing, 1660-1868” by Ellis Tinios, “Affirming the Life Erotic: Yoshida Hanbei’s *Kōshoku kinmō-zui* (1686)” by Alfred Haft, and “Intertextual Divertissement, Sexual Education and Entertaining Humor: The World of *Onna enshi kyōkun kagami*” by Laura Moretti.

female sexuality.⁴⁷ By focusing only on the didactic originals, scholarship has limited itself to the monologue of official Tokugawa moral discourse. However, the parodies give us access to the dialogue about morality in the Edo period, a discussion that by its very nature included sexuality and eroticism.

State of the Field for *Enshō Kobanashi* within the *Hanashibon* Genre

Belonging to both the stigmatized *enshō* mode and the undervalued *hanashibon* genre, *enshō kobanashi* is at a double disadvantage. The state of research on *hanashibon* is remarkably dismal; it is unequivocally one of the most understudied genres in Japanese literary studies, despite its long-lasting and pervasive popularity. The root of this disregard lies in the origin of *hanashibon* as a marginalized oral/narrative art. In fact, *hanashibon* has received more scholarly attention as material for linguistic studies due to its relatively accurate reflection of Edo vernacular; scholarly books and articles abound with exhaustive analyses of the language.⁴⁸ However, because of this very nature, *hanashibon* needs be re-examined as yet another genre—in addition to the only canonized *sharebon*, *dangibon* or *kokkeibon*—participating in the literary shift, which occurred around the beginning of the An'ei era, to vernacular literature that came to represent late Edo literature.

Another factor in the lack of scholarship is the issue of authorship and plagiarism in the Edo period. Although literature was clearly recognized as a commodity during the Edo period,

⁴⁷ Andrew Gerstle, *Edo onna no shunga-bon: Tsuya to warai no fūfushinan*, 14-15.

⁴⁸ For example, a Japanese linguistic scholar, Ikegami Akihiko 池上秋彦 published books and articles on Edo vernacular such as *Edogo shiryō to shite no Edo kobanashi* 江戸語資料としての江戸小咄, *Edo kobanashi* as research material for Edo vernacular (1953). Other scholars including Maeda Keiko 前田桂子, Mihara Yūko 三原裕子, Fujii Fumika 藤木史果, and Terada Hiroe 寺田ひろえ regard *hanashibon* as uniquely suitable for research on vernacular, slang, dialects, and colloquialism, and survey speech patterns based on factors such as gender, class, and period.

the concepts of plagiarism and textual ownership were relatively foreign. Thus, practicing of borrowing, copying, and stealing from previous works did not have the same connotation. The *hanashibon* genre is particularly notorious for rampant plagiarism, obscuring identification of the original authors of tales. In addition, frequent appearances of erotic, vulgar humor posed the risk of censure. Thus, despite the vast potential for research opportunities, the avoidance of scholarly investigation of the *hanashibon* genre persisted.

Today, however, owing to the painstaking efforts of pioneering scholars,⁴⁹ we have access to multiple versions of *kobanashi* anthologies.⁵⁰ The most cited among these is the twenty-volume *Hanashibon taikai* 噺本大系 by Mutō Sadao, also available through the online database of the National Institute of Japanese Literature (*Kokubungaku kenkyū shiryōkan* 国文学研究史料館).⁵¹ Subsequent *kobanashi* anthologies tend to refer back to this source. Although this anthology contains about three hundred and fifty books, it amounts to about one third of the identified works. Such a collection provides an outstanding platform on which to build more advanced theoretical and critical research. Having expertise in rakugo as well, Mutō has also published numerous books including *Edo kobanashi jiten* and anthologies of rakugo and *kobanashi* including those featuring sexual humor for general readers, as well as a number of scholarly articles focused on *enshō kobanashi* in academic journals such as *Kokubungaku:*

⁴⁹ These include Miyao Shigeo 宮尾しげを, Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, Oka Masahiko 岡雅彦, and Odaka Toshio 小高敏郎.

⁵⁰ These anthologies include: *Hanashibon Taikai* 噺本大系 by Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫 and Oka Masahiko 岡雅彦, *Enshō kobanashi kessakusen* 艶笑小咄傑作選 by Kojima Teiji 小島貞二, *Kōshoku edokobanashi* 好色江戸小咄 by Miyao Shigeo 宮尾しげお, *Edo shōwa shū* 江戸笑話集. *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文学大系, vol.100 by Odaka Toshio 小高敏郎, and *Edo enshō kobanashi shūsei* 江戸艶笑小咄集成 by Miyao Yoshio 宮尾 與男.

⁵¹ Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫 and Oka Masahiko 岡雅彦. *Hanashibon Taikai* 噺本大系. Tokyo: Tokyodō shuppan, 1975. “*Kokubungaku kenkyū shiryōkan* 国文学研究史料館 *Taikai honbun dēta bēsu* 大系本文データベース (Database for *Hanashibon* Anthologies),” accessed March 3, 2015, https://base3.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/CsvSearch.cgi

Kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū 国文学 解釈と教材の研究. In most articles, Mutō generally presents examples of *enshō kobanashi* texts, then provides an exegeses of their humor, historical background, and comparison of different versions with the same plot.⁵² In his article entitled, "*Hanashibon no tsukurite ni kansuru ichikōsatsu—taishū sankā ni yoru An'eiki hanashibon* 噺本の作り手に関する一考察—大衆参加による安永期噺本 (A Theory on the Creators of *Hanashibon*: Public Participation in the An'eiki *Hanashibon*), Mutō presents his conjecture that many amateurs participated in the creation of *kobanashi*, particularly at the beginning of the An'ei period. For example, as many as two thousand *kobanashi* were published in different anthologies without overlapping contents in the second year of An'ei alone. Such a feat would have been impossible without mass involvement. Muto presents a strong argument in the article entitled, "*Rakugo to hanashibon* 落語と噺本" that the plethora of high quality *kobanashi* born out of the An'ei *kobanashi* boom contributed greatly to the genre's later evolution into rakugo.⁵³

Edo kobanashi including *enshō kobanashi* have become accessible to the general public.⁵⁴ However, as is true of much Edo popular literature, academic research on the

⁵² Mutō's articles include: "Hanashibon no tsukurite ni kansuru ichikōsatsu—taishū sankā ni yoru An'eiki hanashibon (kinsei bungaku no kenkyū) 噺本の作り手に関する一考察--大衆参加による安永期噺本 (近世文学の研究)." *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 45 (10) (1968): 98-108, "Edo enshō kobanashi shugyokushū 江戸艶笑小咄珠玉集." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 32 (5) (1967): 163-185, "Edo enshō kobanashi sen (shinpen himerareta bungaku) 江戸艶笑小咄選 (新編秘められた文学)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 48 (5): (1983): 233-255, "Enshō kobanashi yonjussen 艶笑小咄40選." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 8 (7) (1963), "Enshō kobanashi to rachigai hanashibon (tokushū: hyōshō toshite no shunpon) 艶笑小咄と埒外噺本 (特集 表象としての春本)." *Bungaku* 10 (3) (1999): 83-93, "Rakugo to hanashibon (koten rakugo no techō: rakugo shi e no shikaku) 落語と噺本 (古典落語の手帖—落語史への視角)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 19 (11) (1974): 97-104, and "Hyōshaku: Enshō kobanashi (enshō bungaku no subete) 評釈・艶笑小咄 (艶笑文学のすべて)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 14 (10) (1969): 68-83.

⁵³ "Rakugo to hanashibon (kotenrakugo no techō: rakugo shi eno shikaku) 落語と噺本 (古典落語の手帖—落語史への視角)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 19 (11) (1974): 101.

⁵⁴ Mutō argues that through the so-called Edo boom in Japan, contemporary readers have become far more familiarized with *Edo kobanashi* and *senryū*—through magazine columns and popular reading material—than other equally pervasive literary genres from the Edo period such as *kibyōshi*, *sharebon*, *ninjōbon* or *kyōka*.

hanashibon genre as a whole, let alone *enshō kobanashi*, has been extremely scant, to even a greater extent than some other neglected aspects of Edo literature. The publications that are partially related to *hanashibon* studies include *Genroku zekkō bungei no kenkyū* 元禄舌耕文芸の研究 (1992) and *Kamigata zekkō bungeishi no kenkyū* 上方舌耕文芸誌の研究 (1999), both authored by Miyao Yoshio 宮尾與男. These books contain extensive research into the artistic aspects of storytelling, including the historical background and the development of the art form. However, the focus is on narrative artists and their material, and not *hanashibon* specifically.

Suzuki Kumi 鈴木久美 is the leading scholar of the *hanashibon* genre today. The most relevant and up-to-date publication on *hanashibon* is her extremely thorough *Kinsei hanashibon no kenkyū* 近世噺本の研究 (2003). In it, Suzuki laments that, despite its pervasiveness, the *hanashibon* genre is considered somewhat enigmatic and has not been given adequate scholarly attention. Suzuki argues that research thus far has neglected the task, admittedly extremely challenging, of identifying the creators, compilers, and publishers of *hanashibon*. However, the conventional approach of studying literati within their particular genres or sub-genres is not only insufficient but also impractical and limiting, as most *kobanashi* writers were amateurs or hobbyists, who often concealed their identities using multiple pseudonyms for different purposes and freely crossed genres like *haikai*, *kyōka*, *senryū* and *kobanashi*. As she explains, the proliferation of pseudonyms helped compartmentalize their lives and segregate their official identities from their playful, artistic ones, promoting egalitarianism among participants regardless of sex, age, or social status. Suzuki suggests that future research should tackle such biographical and bibliographical conundrums by identifying the creators of *hanashibon* along

with the diversity of their literary activities, which will lead to a better understanding of the associations between different yet interrelated genres.⁵⁵

Suzuki makes several arguments that shed new scholarly light on the *hanashibon* genre and introduce fresh research possibilities. In particular, she contends that we need to revisit the assumption that the brevity of *Edo kobanashi* was primarily a result of influence from *senryū* and *kanbun*-style *shōwa*, as well as contemporaneously published translations of Chinese anthologies like *Shōrin kōki* 笑林広記⁵⁶ and *Shōfu* 笑府.⁵⁷ According to her research, elements of what is recognized today as *Edo kobanashi* style were already present in some earlier *Kamigata karukuchibon*. Suzuki's comprehensive research also addresses the use of puns,⁵⁸ the effects of the illustrations contained in *hanashibon* (*e-banashibon* 絵咄本 and *shikata banashi* 仕方咄),⁵⁹ and the gap between oral performance and written transcriptions.⁶⁰ Suzuki's pioneering work certainly has opened up new possibilities in the research of the *hanashibon* field, and it will continue to be an indispensable reference for scholars working in this understudied genre. Suzuki

⁵⁵ Suzuki Kumi 鈴木久美, *Kinsei hanashibon no kenkyū* 近世噺本の研究 (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 2009), 13-109.

⁵⁶ *Shōrin kōki* 笑林広記 was compiled by Yūgishujin 遊戯主人 during the Qing dynasty and the Japanese translation was published in 1780, the seventh year of An'ei.

⁵⁷ *Shōfu* 笑府 was authored by Fū Muryū 馮夢竜 (1574-1646) and the Japanese translation was published in 1768.

⁵⁸ Suzuki concludes that *shōwa* from mid-Edo rely less on puns compared to those from early-Edo and late-Edo. Overuse of puns is criticized by Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴 in his *Kokkeidan* 滑稽談, *Theory on humor*. Suzuki questions the validity of Kōda's criticism on the degradation of humor caused by use of puns with ample examples. (Suzuki, *Kinsei*, 113-139).

⁵⁹ Suzuki presents analyses of novel usage of illustrations in *hanashibon* using *Shikata banashi* 仕方噺 (1773) and *Kotoshi banashi* 今歳咄 (1773) by Shoen Bushi 書苑武子 and later works by Naniwa Ikku 浪花一九 as examples. Suzuki demonstrates that the purposes of illustrations in *hanashibon* vary. Depending on the popularity of live performance, illustrations were intended to substitute the physical performance, or serve as part of characters to be deciphered to create meaning in stories. An'ei period *hanashibon* are particularly unique in that they were intended for reading, and not derivative or recording of oral performances, thus, illustrations functioned as part of main texts, and not supplements. (Suzuki, *Kinsei*, 179-257).

⁶⁰ Suzuki's comparative research focused on the material from the An'ei period, a unique time when professional oral performers were notably scarce, in order to determine whether *hanashibon* could exist as pure reading material. Suzuki concludes, however, that *hanashibon*, with or without the presence of performers, never evaded the idea of being read out loud or performed orally. (Suzuki, *Kinsei*, 140-159).

could potentially become a catalyst for a renovation in the classical Japanese education scene in middle schools and high schools of Japan.⁶¹

As a target for scholarly investigation, the genre of *hanashibon*, including *enshō kobanashi*, is a rich and untapped source. Moreover, the lack of earlier scholarship means that many important questions have yet to be addressed. One such question pertains to readership and the circulation of *enshō kobanashi* books during the Edo period. Mutō suggests that *enshō kobanashi* anthologies were “secret books” and were not circulated through the conventional route of book lending. He bases his argument on the fact that there are few extant texts, which are in fairly good condition, and some of them have rather lavish bindings and covers gilded with gold leaf.⁶² However, as Chinese literary studies suggests, a dearth of extant copies does not necessarily mean that such texts did not once exist and circulate in greater numbers.⁶³ We cannot rule out the possibility that there were once more copies of these anthologies in circulation. Since *enshō kobanashi* seem to have fulfilled a similar function to *shunga* in Edo society, and *shunga*

⁶¹ At the end of the book, Suzuki makes the intriguing suggestion of introducing *hanashibon* and other Edo *gesaku* in middle and high school classical Japanese classes. Suzuki hints that the traditional methods and texts employed in classical Japanese classes are failing to capture the interest of students and contributing to students’ avoidance of anything related to classical literature. For the majority of Japanese people, classical Japanese is a compulsory subject, required for high school and university entrance exams, but which they are unlikely to pursue later. Yet when Suzuki took a poll of university students who had taken her classes on Edo popular literature, students responded with enthusiasm to the class material. As a student who was turned off to classical literature early in my education, but has learned to appreciate classical Japanese through parodies and humor of the Edo period, I hope Suzuki’s idea will be implemented in Japanese high schools and higher education curriculums.

⁶² Some *enshō kobanashibon*, such as *Sashimakura* (1773), have *shunga* illustrations by renowned *ukiyo-e* artists such as Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章. The cost is another factor that might explain why such books are considered to have only circulated among wealthy dilettantes.

⁶³ In the case of the famous Chinese novel *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West) from the 16th century—around the same time as *sashimakura*—there are few extant original printings, such as the *Sanzang chushen quanzhuan* 三藏出身全傳 (The complete account of Sanzang’s career) in Oxford’s Bodleian Library. The fact that publication companies reprinted the work later, for example, the Qing edition *Siyouji zhuan* 西游記傳, suggests that they deemed it profitable to do so, therefore, even though there are few of those original printings in existence today, they were popularly read and widely distributed. (Anthony C. Yu. *Journey to the West*. [London: The University of Chicago Press 2012], 17-18).

were disseminated to commoners by commercial book lenders, it is worth questioning whether *enshō kobanashibon* circulated through the same channels. For example, one of the very early An'ei *enshō kobanashi* anthologies, *Sashimakura*, is a highly erotic collection replete with *shunga* illustrations by the famous *ukiyo-e* artist, Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章. Mutō contends that this was a “secret book” and only circulated among wealthy dilettantes. However, in *Zenshaku Edo sandai kisho*, Okada Hajime states that anecdotes contained in *Itchomonjū*, one of the three great books, were borrowed from *Sashimakura*, which indicates that the text was in circulation.⁶⁴ Also, since *Sashimakura* was the second volume of a three-volume *hanashibon* series, *Tobidango* 飛談語, and we know that the other two, less erotically-themed volumes circulated widely, it seems natural that *Sashimakura* was circulated in the same manner as well. Clearly, it is worthwhile to investigate these previously held assumptions about *enshō kobanashi*.

Another research question yet to be explored is whether *enshō kobanashi* readership included women, who purportedly enjoyed *shunga* alone or with others, including men.⁶⁵ Given the similarity in the treatment of *shunga* and *enshō kobanashi* within Edo sources, it seems likely that *enshō kobanashi* texts were consumed in a way similar to *shunga*, and since it was women who interacted with book lenders by placing orders and receiving books, it would be natural to assume they had access to *enshō kobanashi* books as well. More research on audience consumption of *enshō kobanashi* texts is needed to answer the question of the female readership with certainty. Even if the question cannot be answered conclusively, pursuing this line of

⁶⁴ Okada Hajime 岡田甫, *Zenshaku Edo sandai kisho* 全釈江戸三大奇書 (Tokyo: Yūkō shobō, 1970), 17-19.

⁶⁵ Gerstle, Andrew and Timothy Clark, ed. *Shunga: Sex and Humor in Japanese Art and Literature. Japan Review Nov26/2013 Special Issue*. (Kyoto: Nichibunkan, 2014), 4.

inquiry could reveal new and unexpected insights into the relationship between women and *enshō* works.

Sexuality and eroticism were key elements in Edo culture, considered by many neither obscene nor shameful. Understanding the social context that underpinned the development and propagation of *enshō* humor in literature, and the role this popular and vital mode played in Edo society, will allow us to better understand the drivers of Edo culture, the townspeople of Edo. Excluding *enshō kobanashi* from *hanashibon* research is comparable to having a discussion of *ukiyo-e* without *shunga* on the grounds that *shunga* is too pornographic for serious academic inquiry. Since the Edo public drew no firm distinctions between *enshō* and non-*enshō*, the exclusion of erotic elements of *hanashibon* based on today's standards for literary research is biased and myopic. However, changing attitudes towards both the *enshō* mode and the *hanashibon* genre bode well for the future of *enshō kobanashi* in scholarship.

Enshō Kobanashi Translation

Translation Introduction

This translation features an assortment of *enshō kobanashi* from the An'ei and Tenmei periods, the height of the *Edo kobanashi* boom. Certain *kobanashi* make frequent appearances in different anthologies throughout the Edo period with slight alterations or improvements, and modern anthologies tend to involve the same *kobanashi*, evidence that these were considered exemplary works that could survive multiple rounds of editing and anthologizing. Typically, *enshō kobanashi* were mixed in with other non-*enshō kobanashi* in anthologies; however, they were at times bundled together and tucked away at the end of the book with a warning of *enryo* えんりよ or *sashiai* さしあひ. This was done so that, in case of censorship, the prurient portion could be torn off.⁶⁶ *Enshō kobanashi* were also occasionally published independently with *shunga* illustrations.⁶⁷

The following texts were derived from multiple sources,⁶⁸ and selections were made

⁶⁶ Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Edo enshō kobanashi sen (shinpen himerareta bungaku) 江戸艶笑小咄選 (新編秘められた文学)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 48 (5): (1983): 235.

⁶⁷ *Enshō kobanashi* 艶笑小咄 were also referred to as *fūryū kobanashi* 風流小咄, *rachigai kobanashi* 埒外小咄, or *kōshoku kobanashi* 好色小咄, and *enshō* anthologies were sometimes referred to as *rachigai bon* 埒外本.

⁶⁸ Kojima Teiji 小島貞二. *Enshō kobanashi kessakusen* 艶笑小咄傑作選. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2001.

Komada Shinji 駒田信二. *Edo Kobanashi* 江戸小咄. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1985.

Miyao Shigeo 宮尾しげお. *Kōshoku edokobanashi* 好色江戸小咄. Tokyo: Fujishoten, 1972.

Miyao Shigeo 宮尾しげを. *Kōshoku edo kobanashishū* 好色江戸小咄集. Tokyo: Daiichi Shuppansha, 1952.

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. *Edo kobanashi jiten* 江戸小咄事典. Tokyo: Tokyodō shuppan, 1965.

Okitsu Kaname 興津要. *Edo kobanashi* 江戸小咄. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1973.

Nishihara Ryōō 西原涼翁. *Edo enshō kobanashi to senryū* 江戸艶笑小咄と川柳. Tokyo: Taihei shooku, 1999.

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Edo enshō kobanashi shugyokushū 江戸艶笑小咄珠玉集." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 32 (5) (1967): 163-185.

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Edo enshō kobanashi shugyokushū 江戸艶笑小咄珠玉集." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 32 (5) (1967): 163-185.

based on the frequency of iteration, translatability, and quality of humor. In the case of stories that appear in multiple versions in different anthologies, the selection was made according to the tightness of the punch lines and, again, translatability. Many of the works translated are *kobanashi* that have been reproduced in multiple books and featured in various articles, indicating the representative nature of these particular texts. The selections were made in an attempt to provide a comprehensive representation of the genre. In particular, this collection demonstrates a variety of common tropes, types of humor, and a range of vulgarity from mild to extreme.

All these *kobanashi* originally come from Mutō Sadao's anthologies, the twenty volume *Hanashibon Taikei* 噺本大系 and the special *enshō hanashibon* anthology, *An'eiki enshō hanashibon rokushu* 安永期艶笑噺本六種. To be clear, the texts used for translation often appeared in other editions by other anthologizers, but all cite Mutō's *Taikei* and *enshō* anthology as their ultimate source. While some *kobanashi* only appear in Mutō's *enshō hanashibon* anthology, most of these texts appear also in the *Taikei*, mixed in with other non-*enshō kobanashi*, demonstrating the absence of an *enshō/non-enshō* distinction.

An'eiki enshō hanashibon rokushu, as its name implies, is comprised of six *enshō kobanashi* anthologies: *Sashimakura* さしまくら (An'ei 2, 1774), *Mamedango* 豆談語 (An'ei 4,

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Edo enshō kobanashi sen (shinpen himerareta bungaku) 江戸艶笑小咄選 (新編秘められた文学)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 48 (5): (1983): 233-255.

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Enshō kobanashi yonjussen 艶笑小咄 40 選." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 8 (7) (1963)

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Enshō kobanashi to rachigai hanashibon (tokushū: hyōshō to shite no shunpon) 艶笑小咄と埒外噺本 (特集 表象としての春本)." *Bungaku* 10 (3) (1999): 83-93.

Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫. "Hyōshaku: Enshō kobanashi (enshō bungaku no subete) 評釈・艶笑小咄 (艶笑文学のすべて)." *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 14 (10) (1969): 68-83.

1776), *Mamedarake* 豆だらけ (An'ei 4, 1776), *Mamebatake* 間女畑 (Tenmei 2, 1782), *Fukujusō* 腹受想 (An'ei 7, 1799), and *Karukuchi kaidangi* 軽口開談義 (An'ei 2, 1774). The first five *hanashibon* were published in Edo, and the last in Kamigata. *Kobanashi* contained in the Kamigata-based *Karukuchi Kaidangi* are noticeably more verbose than the ones from Edo, and for such lengthy setups, the punch lines are rather weak. Out of the five anthologies from Edo, *Sashimakura*, *Mamedarake*, and *Fukujusō* are not included in the *Taikei*, whereas *Mamedango* and *Mamebatake* are. *Mamebatake*'s inclusion in the *Taikei* is understandable as the writer and illustrator of this *hanashibon* is none other than the acclaimed *ukiyo-e* artist, Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎, though half the *neta* ネタ (the source or core of the joke) for *kobanashi* are taken from the preceding *hanashibon*, *Kotoshibanashi* 今歳噺 (1774). This is one of Hokusai's early works,⁶⁹ and he uses Katsukawa Shunrō 勝川春朗 as a pseudonym. What is not clear, however, is why *Mamedango* was chosen to be part of the *Taikei*, but the other three works were excluded. This selection could not have been based on the comparative levels of appropriateness, since the works are all equally raunchy in their humor.

Lastly, the enormity of the loss of nuance and tone during the translation process needs to be addressed. In order to demonstrate the gap between the originals and the translations, three *kobanashi* in the original pre-modern Japanese from the *Taikei* and the English are presented below.

⁶⁹ Mutō and Miyao Shigeo both contend that Hokusai was either twenty-two or twenty-three.

松茸

雪隠で五人組寄合を附て、八百やの娘をあてがきのよくなつたとき、こたへられず、アゝ、八百やのむすめと、大きな声をきゝつけ、娘戸を明て、なんだへ。返答にこまり、フゝゝゝ、こんなまつだけハなへか

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2)
Taikei 大系, vol.12. 176.

赤がい

亭主、赤貝を売つかつて来て、スグたらひへ水をくんで、中へ入れて（卅一オ）朝夕ながめています。女ぼうも初手ハふしきに思ひしが、のちにハはらがたつてくる。亭主コレ、かゝア殿。おれがふんどしをあらつて下され△女ぼうエゝ久しいもんだ。赤がいにでもあらつてもらいなサへ

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2)
Taikei 大系, vol.12. 176.

助兵衛

すそつ張の娘を持って、おやぢ、ほふどこまり、工夫して、とかく是ハめかけに出すがよいと相談して、親子づれでふり売と出かけ、むすめハ先に立て、めかけ。ヲヤヂいんらんのつび

Shikata banashi 仕方噺. 1774 (An'ei 安永 2)
Taikei 大系, vol.9. 309.

Matsutake Mushroom (Matsutake 松茸)

A man was masturbating in the public toilet, thinking about the girl from the produce store. When he was about to climax, he couldn't help but yell out,

“Ahh, grocer girl!”

Hearing his loud call, the grocer's daughter opened the toilet door and asked,

“What are you calling me for?”

The man didn't know what to say, so he said,

“Do you carry *matsutake* mushrooms like this one?”

Red Clams (Akagai 赤がい) “Jealousy”

A husband came home with five red clams. He put them in a washtub filled with water and stared at them day and night. The wife found this strange at first, but eventually became jealous. The husband asked his wife,

“Wife, please wash my *fundoshi* loin cloth.”

The wife replied,

“How dare you ask that! Have your clams wash it for you!”

“Itinerant Sales”

A father didn't know what to do with his promiscuous daughter. He and his daughter talked with each other and decided that the best thing for her was to become a mistress. So they went out to sell her as a mistress. Just as vendors of itinerant goods sell their products on the street, the daughter first called out,

“Mistress for sale!”

Then the father followed,

“Dirty cunt for sale!”

Although these works would be considered obscene, the original language does not convey the

eroticism in an obscene manner. Rather, it evokes the secondary definition of *enshō*: slightly embarrassed smiles. If language could have a personality, then the language of *Edo kobanashi* would not be mean, malicious or offensive, nor would it be spoken in the hushed tones of shame. It would likely be described as sanguine, straightforward, and “in the moment.” Unfortunately, however, translating the sense, the tone, and the characteristics of the language is nearly impossible, especially considering the taboo nature of sexual topics in English. For example, the colloquial Edo term *bobo* ぼぼ is inherently playful, but the common English translation “vagina” is more clinical and carries some unpleasant stigma. Perhaps there is no word in English that conveys the nonchalance of *bobo* in the Edo language. Moreover, the translation of humor is intrinsically difficult, in large part due to the culturally specific nature of comedy. In the case of *kobanashi* in particular, the humor often depends on the foiling of expectations – a modern English language reader is not likely to have those same expectations, thus the foil falls flat. Even a translation into modern Japanese would undercut the playful, comedic nature of many of these works.

Enshō Kobanashi Translation

The Bride (*Yome* 新婦) “New Year’s Treat”

On their wedding night, a bride and groom shyly got on to having intercourse for the first time. It was unclear if the bride was a virgin. Once things got rolling, her love juice surged forth. She lifted herself up skillfully, wrapped her legs around her husband, gripped him tightly, and thoroughly enjoyed herself. From the next evening on, though, the husband propped her up or laid her down on her face and only poked her in the rear-end. The wife was puzzled, so she went to the go-between and shared her concerns,

“I wonder what my husband is unhappy about. Why is he only doing me in the ass? It’s really annoying.”

Then the go-between told the husband,

“If you are not happy with your wife, why don’t you divorce her?”

But the husband said,

“No, I am really pleased with her. It’s just that when we did it on our first night, the way she lifted herself up was incredible, and she has an impeccable pussy. It is so precious that I’ve decided to save it as a special treat and only use it on special occasions, like New Year’s Day.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*. 16)

The Floating World (*Ukiyo* 浮世)

A blind servant was masturbating and uttered,

“Ah, the floating world!”

The young master approached him and pricked the tip of his penis with a pine needle. The servant thought he had been stung by a bee and screamed,

“Ouch, that hurts!”

The master burst into laughter, so the blind servant asked,

“Since when have you been here?”

The master answered,

“Since your world started floating away.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*. 24)

Phallic Comparison (*Mara kubabe* まらくらべ)

There were two men who took great pride in their long penises. They heard about a man with an exceptionally long dong, so they went over to his home to have a phallic comparison. The man greeted the two men saying,

“Let me see what you gentlemen have.”

“Sure, I’ll start with mine.”

One of the men opened the front of his kimono. The man could see the tip of his member reaching up to around his navel. He said,

“Well, well, that is a marvelous tool you have. How about you, sir?”

The other man showed his rod, which was visible from the opening of his kimono sleeve.

“I’m very impressed with both of them. I cannot possibly show you mine,”

The man turned down the competition, but both men insisted saying,

“You cannot do that. Please let us see yours.”

“Well, then.”

He started walking towards the kitchen, the tip of his manhood dragging from the bottom of his kimono hem.

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*. 51)

Confession (*Zange* 懺悔)

“We cannot seem to achieve our spiritual goal through *zen* training on this mountain, because of the deep sins committed by some of you. Let us go around and each confess.”

Everyone but one made his confession.

“I have never done anything wrong, except I did it once with a cow. That’s about all and nothing else.”

Everyone was suddenly curious and asked,

“So, what was the cow like?”

“Well, it’s about the same as a dog, actually.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*. 50)

Sleeping Face (*Negao* 寝顔)

“How are you this evening, my lord?”

“Oh, it is you, Doroichi. You came by at the perfect time. My wife went back to her hometown and I’m all by myself and lonely. Stay here with me tonight.”

“As you wish.”

After supper, the lord told Doroichi,

“Don’t sleep in the guest room. Sleep next to me.”

He had two sets of futon ready, and they lay down to sleep. But the lord couldn’t sleep because of Doroichi. His loud snores and the sight of his awful sleeping face, with his dark, pockmarked skin, and protruding eyeballs kept the lord awake.

“Hey, Doroichi,”

He shook him awake and told him,

“Turn the other way”

Doroichi replied,

“Please, lord, do spare me from that kind of act.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*. 44)

Footwear (*Tabi* 足袋)

“If a *tabi* (sock-like footwear) seller comes by while I’m out, buy ten or so pairs,” a man told his wife on his way out. When he came home in the evening, his wife brought over the *tabi*, and said,

“Here are the new *tabi* I bought for you.”

The guy tried on a pair, but said with anger,

“How useless! I can’t even fit my feet into them. Throw them all away!”

His wife muttered as she picked them up,

“How useless! Too bad your dick doesn’t match your feet.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*. 50)

Gatekeeper's Wife (*Monban no kakā* 門番のかかあ)

The gatekeeper's wife moaned loudly night after night, so the lord secretly borrowed her one night, but she wouldn't moan at all with him. Suspicious, the lord summoned the gatekeeper.

“When I slept with your wife, she didn't moan at all. Do you put on some kind of lotion or use a special tool? Or are you just plain good at it? How do you make her moan?”

The gatekeeper answered,

“Sir, it is me who moans.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An'ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.51)

Heavenly King (*Ten'nō* 天王) “*Tengu*”

A young boy went into his big sister's room, but the big sister scolded him and shooed him away. So he went in again at dinnertime while she was eating and found a *harikata* (dildo). He placed it on his forehead, tied the strings around his chin, and came dancing to dinner and said,

“I found a *tengu* nose in sister's room!”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773 (An'ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*. 45)

Urination (*Shōben* 小便)

A father was observing his son take a piss. He complained,

“Young people these days are so weak. When I was young, I didn't have to squeeze my penis like that to pee.”

The son replied,

“Unless I hold it down like this, pee will shoot up my nose.”

Sashimakura さしまくら. An'ei 安永 2 (1773). (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*. 24)

Pattern (*Moyō* 模様)

“I’m thinking of giving a kimono to my favorite courtesan. How do you think I can make it special?”

“I have a great idea. Why don’t you dye words from *utakaruta* 歌かるた, poem cards,⁷⁰ for the bottom half of the kimono?”

“That’s a splendid idea!”

So, the man had the kimono made right away. But the words around the ass read, “*hanazo mukashi no ka ni nioikeru* 花ぞ昔の香に匂ひける (only the blossoms are in glorious bloom with the same lovely scent as ever),”⁷¹ and the words around the front said, “*hitokoso shirane kawaku mamonashi* 人こそしらねかはくまもなし (there is no time for it to dry).”⁷²

“This is too much!”

Sashimakura さしまくら. 1773. (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*.16)

Red Clams (*Akagai* 赤がい) “Jealousy”

A husband came home with five red clams. He put them in a washtub filled with water and stared at them day and night. The wife found this strange at first, but eventually became jealous. The husband asked his wife,

“Wife, please wash my *fundoshi* loin cloth.”

The wife replied,

“How dare you ask that! Have your clams wash it for you!”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 176.

⁷⁰ *Utakaruta* 歌かるた refers to cards that have lyrics of famous songs and poems of the time.

⁷¹ This is an excerpt from a famous poem in *Kokinshū* 古今集 by Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之: *Hito wa isa kokoro mo shirazu furusato wa hanazo mukashi no ka ni nioikeru* 人はいさ心も知らずふるさとは花ぞ昔の香にほひける, Perhaps you have changed your mind, but the plum blossoms are in bloom with the same lovely scent as long ago.

⁷² This is an excerpt from a famous poem from *Senzai shū* 千載集 by Nijōin no Sanuki 二条院讃岐 (1141-1217): *Wagasode wa shiohi ni mienu okinoishi no hitokoso sirane kawaku mamonashi* 我が袖は潮干に見えぬ沖の石の人こそ知らね乾くまもなし, My kimono sleeves are wet with my tears just like a rock in the ocean that does not reveal itself even when the tides are low. He may not remember me, but there is never time for my sleeves to dry as my tears keep flowing.

Mimicry (*Hitomane* 人まね)

A mother was breastfeeding a baby. To amuse the baby, she would pull the baby away from her breast and say,

“Boobie’s gone, boobie’s gone!”

In bed, she got on top of her husband and amused him by moving her ass away from him three or four times and saying,

“*Bobo*’s gone, *bobo*’s gone!”

With this, her husband was overjoyed, so she would repeat the “*bobo*’s gone” a few more times. A lowly servant had witnessed these displays from upstairs and he had become very envious, but he had no way to try them himself. So, he tried out a variation of these when he was masturbating. After stroking a couple of times, he stopped his hands and told himself,

“Hand’s gone, hand’s gone.”

After a few more strokes, he said again,

“Hand is gone, hand is gone.”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 170.

One Person Play (*Hitori gei* ひとりげい)

There was a voice from next door,

“Ah, I’m coming.”

Being astounded at the shameless act in the middle of the day, a man peeked over their door, which was closed shut. He called out,

“What are you two doing in the broad daylight?”

The husband answered from inside,

“Poverty dulls the wit, so we are doing in the middle of the day what people do at night.”

They didn’t give a damn that the man was peeking over the door, and kept at their business.

“I can’t stand it anymore.”

The man rushed home to masturbate. Then his next-door neighbor came by and asked,

“What on earth are you doing?!”

“Well, they say ‘poverty dulls the wit,’ so I’m doing by myself what two people normally do.”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 171.

Phallic Contest (*Kurabe* くらべ)

“Wife, give me one hundred *mon* 文.⁷³ I’m going to go to a phallic contest.”

The wife replied,

“Don’t bother. You’ll lose again.”

The husband pleaded,

“This is the last time. Please!”

The wife handed him the money and said,

“This is it. Come home as soon as you lose.”

The husband left joyfully, but soon he came back and knocked on the door. Thinking he had lost again, the wife reluctantly opened the door.

“No, I won!”

“What? There were smaller ones than yours?”

“No, listen, it was the ball contest tonight.”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12.174.

Rejection (*Furare* ふられ) “Money Hole”

A guy went to a cheap brothel in Shinagawa, but the prostitute gave him the cold shoulder because he was an annoying customer. All by himself, he lay waiting in the room. Finally, around dawn, the prostitute came in, but she said she wasn’t feeling well and went to sleep facing the other way. He tried hard to get her to have sex with him, but nothing worked. Hearing her soft breathing, he got frustrated and erect. He stroked her ass, then wet his finger with saliva and touched her vagina, which was nice and plump. He inserted his fingers into her vagina when the prostitute woke up and screamed,

“What the hell are you doing?! Cut it out!”

“I’m looking for the four hundred *mon*⁷⁴ I dropped into this hole.”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12.177.

⁷³ One hundred *mon* is equivalent to roughly twenty to twenty-five dollars in today’s money.

⁷⁴ The original text does not specify the unit of currency. However, it is likely to be four hundred *mon* 文, equivalent to about one hundred dollars in today’s money. *Umi no shiroku* 海の四六 refers to cheap brothels in the Shinagawa area. *Shiroku* 四六 means customers pay four hundred *mon* for the night play and six hundred *mon* for the daytime play.

Matsutake Mushroom (Matsutake 松茸)

A man was masturbating in the public toilet, thinking about the girl from the produce store. When he was about to climax, he couldn't help but yell out,

“Ahh, grocer girl!”

Hearing his loud call, the grocer's daughter opened the toilet door and asked,

“What are calling me for?”

The man didn't know what to say, so he said,

“Do you carry *matsutake* mushrooms like this one?”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 176.

A Spaniel (*Chin* 狆)

A wealthy man's daughter turned seventeen, and she was quite horny. She had her fancy pet dog, a chin 狆 (Japanese spaniel), lick her pussy, which had barely any pubic hair. The chin enjoyed this very much, putting out his long tongue and licking upward from the bottom of her clitoris. The girl was feeling really good and said,

“This is so good. I'm going crazy.”

The chin stuck his tongue into the entrance, and the girl couldn't take it anymore. With love juice flowing all over, she reached an orgasm, shouting,

“I'm coming!”

A nurse noticed this and said,

“Oh, my! You can't be doing this kind of thing before your wedding. What if the dog bites you down there? I'll let your mother know the next time I catch you.”

The girl fixed her hair, wiped her inner thighs, and went into her room. The nurse wondered,

“It can't be that good, can it?”

She spread her legs and showed her hairy snatch to the chin.

“Woof, Woof!”

The chin got mad at the sight and kept on barking.

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 176.

Stupid Girl (*Baka musume* 馬鹿娘)

There was a beautiful, but extremely stupid young girl. Her next-door neighbor, Tetsu, tricked her into having sex for the first time. Because her body was already mature, it didn't hurt her too much. On the contrary, she learned to have an orgasm. She went home all excited about her joyful experience and told her parents,

“Tetsu did something wonderful to me today. He inserted his large penis into my box and it was so great. Mother, you should learn that, too!”

The mother uncomfortably said,

“So you have finally been damaged, haven't you?”

The daughter replied,

“No, if I'm damaged, blood should come out, but instead, white stuff came out.”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 172.

Butt (*Ketsu* けつ) “Pain in the Butt”

A boy in the neighborhood grew up to be a beautiful *wakashū* 若衆 (young man). A man thought to himself,

“I'm definitely going to do him.”

He followed the young man around and tried to convince him to have sex with him. The young man finally got on his knees and said,

“Make sure it won't hurt. It might be a pain in the butt, but it is my first time.”

The man found this endearing, so he amply moistened his middle finger before inserting it into his anus to widen the path. Then he wet his penis with a lot of saliva and put it in all the way to the base. The young man yelled out,

“Ouch, that hurts!”

Surprised at his voice, the man reached his arm around to the front of the young man's body. He felt the young man's erect penis and said,

“Wow, it penetrated all the way through his body!”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 173.

A Divine Favor (*Gorishō* 御利生)

A whole bunch of horny guys in the neighborhood were eyeing an incredibly beautiful young woman, who was around seventeen or eighteen years of age. They heard that she was going to pay an auspicious July tenth visit to the Sensōji 浅草寺 temple.⁷⁵ After following her around, they captured her, took her deep in the mountains, and surrounded her. Because she was making sounds of protest, they covered her mouth with a hand towel. Taking turns, they were doing quickies with her when her body disappeared. Wondering what had happened, they looked around and noticed a calligraphy scroll. They unrolled it and saw the name of Kannon 観音. Looking closely, where the letter *bo* ぼ should have been in Kanzeon Bosatsu 観世音菩薩, the Bodhisattva of mercy and salvation, was a hole.⁷⁶

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 170.

A Character in the Frame (*Gakumoji* 額文字) “A Wrong Guess”

A landlord invited all his tenants to his house for a New Year celebration. He thanked everyone for coming as they sat down. One of the guests recognized a character, *sake* 酒, in the framed calligraphy on the wall and said,

“Mr. Landlord, I reckon that character signifies something wonderful. One can enjoy it day or night, and it is quite tasteful.”

A buffoon inserted,

“Does that say *bobo* (pussy)?”

Mamebatake 間女畑. 1781 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 174.

⁷⁵ Since around the Kyōhō 享保 era (1716 - 1736), it is believed that one visit to the Sensōji 浅草寺, Sensō temple, on July tenth is worth 46,000 visits. However, no one knows the origin of such belief.

⁷⁶ *Bobo* ぼぼ referred to vagina. According to Mutō, Sawada Natari later depicts the etymology of *bobo* ぼぼ, as originating from this *kobanashi* piece in his elegant Heian style writing. (Mutō Sadao 武藤禎夫, "Enshō kobanashi to rachigai hanashibon [tokushū: hyōshō toshitenō shunpon] 艶笑小咄と埒外噺本 [特集 表象としての春本]," *Bungaku* 10, no.3 [1999], 91)

Vigor (*Kekko* 血気)

A young man was so virile that any little thing could arouse him sexually.

He was upstairs masturbating, but his mojo was really surging, so his sperm shot off all the way across the street. After pondering, he thought to himself,

“What a waste. If this had become a child, he could easily have been an acrobat.”

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 344.

An Illustration (*Ezu* 絵図)

A young woman got hurt in her private parts on the night of her wedding. Her wet nurse heard about this and told her,

“This is such an important part of your body you need to have the doctor take a look.”

The woman resisted,

“I would rather die than show it to the doctor.”

The nurse took out her calligraphy paper and said,

“I have an idea. I'll draw a picture of the part, and you'll mark where it hurts, then we'll bring the picture to the doctor.”

She drew a yonic shape and added brush marks that looked like pubic hair.

“Oh, but mine doesn't have hair yet.”

“But without hair, we couldn't tell top from the bottom.”

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 343.

Binoculars (*Tōmegane* 遠目がね)

From a house atop a mountain, a man was looking East and West using his binoculars and seeing many interesting things. On the North hill was a beautiful room on the second floor of a house, where a beautiful man and a woman were making love. He got into watching their movement, but he couldn't hear their interaction. Irritated, he put his binoculars to his ears.

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 345.

Harikata はりかた

A maidservant was using her *harikata* (dildo) when her master called her in.

“Yes, master, I’ll be right over.”

She hurried in without realizing the *harikata* was tied to the sole of her foot.

“What’s that tied to your foot?”

asked the master.

The maidservant answered,

“Well...I guess I stepped on a penis somewhere on my way here.”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 347.

A Monk (*Oshō* 和尚)

A young widow went to a temple and met with the monk.

“I would like to become a nun. Please shave my hair.”

“You may think that now because you just lost your husband, but you might change your mind as time goes by, and you may regret becoming a nun. I suggest you wait for a year or two.”

“No, my mind will never change.”

“So you think, but how do you feel if a man holds your hand like this?”

The monk held her hand.

“Nothing changes.”

“How about this then?”

The monk groped his hand into her genital area.

“No, not even one bit.”

“How about this then?”

The monk couldn’t stand it anymore, so he pushed her down.

“No, I’m not wavering one bit.”

“You may not be, but now I am.”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 348.

Moxibustion (*Kyūji* 灸治) “Camouflage”

“Wife, I have a sudden urge. Let’s do it.”

“No way, in the middle of the day?”

“I have a great idea. We’ll set up a screen and burn some moxa, so people will think we are having a moxibustion treatment. Now, let’s get it on.”

With the camouflage in place, they started doing it. A neighbor walked by and said,

“Oh, what a nice thing you guys are doing.”

The husband replied,

“Really? You can still see us doing it?”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 350.

Mountain Ascetic (*Yamabushi* 山伏)

A *yamabushi* 山伏, mountain ascetic, was walking in the countryside as part of his training. It was daytime, so in a certain household, everyone was out working and only the wife remained in the house. The *yamabushi* found her incredibly attractive and got horny. There was no one around, so he pushed her down, took advantage of her, and left. The wife was crying out of sadness when her husband came back from working the field. He asked her what had happened and the wife told him. The husband was irate and thought, “That *yamabushi* could not have gone far. I’ll chase him down and beat him up!”

The husband grabbed a big ax near him and ran out of the house to pursue the *yamabushi*. He finally spotted the *yamabushi* walking ahead of him, so he called out,

“You, brazen *yamabushi*, come back and duel with me!”

The *yamabushi* turned around, showing his terrifying face, and said,

“How dare you challenge me?”

and reached over to grab something from around his waist. The husband got frightened and said,

“If you are going to the temple on the mountain, please present this ax as an offering for me.”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 344.

A Fox (*Kitsune* 狐)

A beautiful young woman was walking on a country road. A young man found her and thought to himself,

“What a splendidly beautiful thing!”

He followed her and tried hard to convince her to have sex with him. She agreed and said,

“Okay, okay.”

So they looked around and went into a small wooded area and got it on. However, he couldn't insert his penis no matter what. He thought it strange and asked her,

“Could it be that you are a fox?”

The woman groped his member and said,

“I'm not a fox, but could it be that you are a horse?”

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) Taiki 大系.vol.11. 346.

Archery (*Yōkyū* 楊弓)

A husband came home and heard some noise from inside the house. He peeked through a hole and found out his wife had brought in a secret lover. The lover said,

“Let's do something different. How about archery *bobo*?”

“How do we do that?”

“Well, you'll stand against the wall over there holding up the front of your kimono, and I'll charge from here and try to insert my arrow into the target.”

So the woman walked over to the wall and stood there as she was told, lifting up the front of her kimono. The lover prepared himself mentally, steeled himself, and charged with all his might from the other side of the room. When he successfully hit the target, the husband yelled,

“Bullseye!”

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) Taiki 大系, vol.11. 353.

Going Too Far (*Ikisugi* 行すぎ) “Overthinking”

“Servant, go to the main house and deliver our message. Here is what you are going to say: ‘I heard that the birth last night went smoothly. We would like to extend our congratulations on such an easy birth.’ ”

The servant said,

“No, I dare not”

“Why not?”

“Because saying the birth was easy sounds as if the madam’s hole was really wide.”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 343.

Alive and Kicking (*Tassha* 達者)

“How old are you now, old man?”

“I’ve turned seventy-five.”

“You seem really well. How are your eyes and teeth?”

“Yes, luckily, I can see small things perfectly well and eat hard food. It’s just that somehow I forget things easily. The other day, I went to my wife’s bed, but she told me, ‘you just left and you are back already?’ ”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 352.

A Young Maid (*Koshimoto* こしもと) “A Preliminary Drill”

“Madam is going to the shrine tomorrow. Master, please allow me to accompany her.”

“No. It’ll be so crowded there tomorrow. Young women should not go. If you still insist, then come here.”

The master pinched her behind a few times and said,

“Now it is the same as if you had gone.”

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) 大系, vol.11. 33.

A Carter (*Kurumahiki* 車引)

Men were pulling a carriage up the hill, but the weak one was getting scolded by others,

“You are so weak because of too much *senzuri* (masturbation).”

Overhearing this inside the carriage, the lord asked his servant upon arrival what that word meant.

The servant did not know how to respond, so he said,

“You don’t need to know it, sir.”

“Yes, I do. Tell me what it is.”

“Well, then, it means... sleeping in.”

One day, the lord’s son slept in. When he finally showed up, the lord told him,

“Since when have you become a *senzuri*-practitioner? You will eventually become a big *senzuri*-er!”

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikai 大系, vol.11. 351.

A Palanquin Made of Pearls (*Tamanokoshi* 玉の輿) “A Know-It-All”

A man asked,

“They say women don’t have to have a good *uji* 氏 (a good family name)⁷⁷ to ride on a *tamanokoshi* 玉の輿 (women don’t have to come from a good family to get ahead in society),⁷⁸ but what does that mean?”

A know-it-all stepped out and answered,

“There is deep reasoning behind that saying. A vagina is a really smelly thing. It is so stinky even *uji* 蛆 (worms) avoid it, so that’s the part about women with no *uji*. Now, the *tamanokoshi* part can be explained by the fact that the penis alone goes inside it, leaving the *tama* 玉 (balls) behind. Thus, *tama* (balls), *nokoshi* (remain outside) 玉残し.

Mamedango 豆談語. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) Taikai 大系, vol.11. 351.

⁷⁷ *Uji* 氏 means family name. In this *kobanashi*, having *uji* means coming from a good family.

⁷⁸ *Tama no koshi* literally means a palanquin made out of pearls, thus, *tamanokoshi* implies marrying into a wealthy family.

A Phantom (*Bakemono* 化け物)

A rumor said that there was a phantom in a certain household. Renowned samurai from all around heard about this, found out the address, and went there with their retainers to combat the phantom. However, there was no phantom, and the penises of all the samurai, including the lord, simply disappeared. The lord was deeply shocked, so he summoned a *yamabushi* mountain ascetic to exorcise the phantom. After seventeen days of prayer, in the morning, all the missing male members miraculously appeared displayed on the *tokonoma*⁷⁹ alcove on a decorative tray. The lord rejoiced at this. He chose the largest member and attached it to his empty genital area, then sent the rest to his retainers. The lord's wife was delighted, and, for three days and three nights, they kept doing it. At the end of the third day, a spear holder became *jinkyō* 腎虚 (impotent).⁸⁰

Mamedango 豆談話. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) Taiki 大系.vol.11. 345.

Brand-new Bowl (*Arabachi* 新開) “A Virgin”

A man said to his friend,

“Finally, I get to do it with a virgin. These days, it's so hard find a virgin because as soon as girls mature, they get eaten by some bugs,⁸¹ but the girl across from us is so ugly. I bet no one will ever touch her, so I'm going to break her brand-new bowl.”

He tricked her into coming to his place. With penis erect, he laid her down, wet the area with saliva, and started pushing his way in. To his surprise, though, she had love juice flowing all the way to the base of his penis.

“I thought you were a virgin, but you are kind of wide for that, no?”

“Yeah, everyone says that.”

Mamedarake 豆だらけ. An'ei 安永 4 (1776) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.98)

⁷⁹ *Tokonoma* 床の間 is a small alcove in a traditional Japanese room where decorations are displayed.

⁸⁰ *Jinkyō* 腎虚 means one's energy, both sexual and otherwise, has been depleted.

⁸¹ “Bugs eating girls” is a metaphor for deflowering.

On the Rhythm (*Kyokudori* 曲どり)

A secret lover frequently visited a woman in her husband's absence. The husband found out about their affair and thought,

“I'll catch him next time.”

He told his wife,

“Wife, I'm going to the countryside for the night, so make sure you lock up well before going to sleep.”

He went to the next-door neighbor's house and went upstairs. Then he cut open the connecting wall and moved into the second floor of his own house. He sat there and listened carefully. Without knowing this, the secret lover came in and asked the wife,

“Where is your husband tonight?”

The wife replied,

“He is gone to the countryside and won't be back tonight, so take your time.”

“Then I'll sleep over tonight.”

The lover approached the wife and said,

“Let's do something different for a change. How about using the rhythm of *Gion bayashi* 祇園囃子 (Gion Rhythm)?”

So he rocked his lower body along with the rhythm. Watching from upstairs, the husband found this move extremely amusing.

“Encore, encore!”

Mamedarake 豆だらけ. An'ei 安永 4 (1776) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*. 93)

Eavesdropping (*Tachigiki* 立聞)

An itinerant *soba* noodle vendor was resting under the eaves of a house at night. He heard a female voice coming from inside,

“You don't do it because there is no hair, and you don't do it because there is too much hair.”

It sounded like a quarrel. The *soba* seller peeked through the crack by the door. It was a calligraphy brush shop.

Mamedarake 豆だらけ. 1776 (An'ei 安永 4) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*. 97)

Invective (*Akutai* 悪言)

An impoverished couple was raising a young boy. On a cold night, the three of them were sleeping on the only futon they owned, fighting over the cover. The couple said to each other,

“Since we are so poor and there is so little enjoyment in our lives, let’s do the thing we enjoy.”

The husband pushed the boy aside and moved his hand to the wife’s crotch.

“Oh, we are too old for this,”

The wife scolded him, but her vagina had already started overflowing with love juice. She was already having a great time even before intercourse, moving her ass this way and that. The husband couldn’t wait any longer and put his penis in front of the wife’s mouth. The wife put it in her mouth, made all kinds of noise, and moaned loudly. Somehow, the husband pulled the futon away from the boy. The boy, lying naked and cold, woke up and spat out,

“Here they go again! So annoying every single night!!”

Mamedarake 豆だらけ. 1776 (An’ei 安永 4) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*.83)

Medicine (*Kusuri gui* 薬喰)

There was a sickly husband. His wife wanted to make him strong, so one day she made a stew-like dish with ingredients to make men virile like eggs, eel, burdock root, and lotus root, and made her husband eat it. In the middle of the night, he called out to her,

“Wife, wife!”

The wife thought,

“He’s horny!”

She approached him, but the husband said,

“I just pooped.”

Mamedarake 豆だらけ. An’ei 4 (1776) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*.95)

Tea Master's Bathing (*Chajin no sentō* 茶人の銭湯)

A tea master went to the public bathhouse. He slid open the door for the personal storage unit and started undressing himself. He undid his *obi* and folded all his clothes neatly. Then he took off his loincloth and folded it as if it were the *fukusa* silk cloth from the tea ceremony. Covering his genital area with a neatly folded towel, he headed towards the bathing area, but before entering, he stopped to admire the carvings at the entrance.

“These are marvelous carvings. I am truly impressed.”

Before entering the tub, he stirred the hot water and praised the temperature,

“The hot water is just right.”

In the tub, he again complimented the bath.

“This feels so good. There is no word to describe it.”

When his body had become warm, he got out of the tub and rinsed his body with warm water using a pitcher. Then he wrung his towel tightly, folded it into an intricate *chakin* shape to wipe his body, and put it away. A lowly servant had been observing the whole thing from an opening in the wall. He politely asked the master,

“Now that you are finished, please let me admire your *odōgu* (honorable tool).”

Saisēmochi 再生餅. 1774. (An'ei 安永 2) Taikei 大系, vol.9. 249.

The Pawn Shop Widow (*Shichiya no goke* 質屋の後家)

A man brought a *harikata* to a pawn shop. He tried to convince the manager to let him borrow one *bu* 分,⁸² but the manager wouldn't agree. Their quarrel got louder and louder, and the widow could hear it from the back of the house. She came out and told the manager to lend the customer one *bu* because there must be a good reason for him to insist like that. The manager reluctantly lent one *bu* to the customer. After he left, tears ran down the manager's face. He said,

“If the master were alive, he would not lend him even five hundred *mon* 文⁸³ for a *harikata*.”

Susubarai 寿寿葉羅井. 1780 (An'ei 安永 8) Taikei 大系, vol.11. 202.

⁸² *Bu* 分 is a unit of currency from the Edo period. One *bu* was a quarter of one *ryō* 両, equivalent to about two hundred U.S. dollars in today's money.

⁸³ Five hundred *mon* is equivalent to about one hundred to one hundred twenty five U.S. dollars in today's money.

The Gate to Yoshiwara Pleasure District (*Daimon* 大門)

Just outside the Daimon, the gate to the Yoshiwara Pleasure Quarter, a man was taking a piss, complaining to his own penis,

"Because of you, I lose all my money and go through so much trouble."

He then started to masturbate. The window of the guard house opened, and the guard yelled out,

"Don't abandon a child there!"

Saiseimochi 再生餅. An'ei 安永 2 (1774). Taikei 大系, vol.9. 251.

First Night (*Hatsu awase* 初会)

On the first encounter, a courtesan ripped one in front of her customer. Embarrassed, she said,

"I am sure you are thinking how crude that was, but I made a vow to myself to cure my mother's illness.⁸⁴ My pact is to shame myself in front of a brand new customer once a month. That's why I did the embarrassing thing I did. Please do not tell anyone."

As she said this, she ripped another big one.

"How auspicious! I've just met my quota for next month!"

Gesu no chie 下司の知恵. 1787 (Tenmei 天明 8) Taikei 大系, vol.17. 262.

Piss (*Shōben* 小便)

On a snowy night, a man felt an urge to piss. So he rose from his futon and tried to open the sliding door to go outside, but the railing was frozen and the door wouldn't open no matter how hard he tried. He thought of an idea. He crouched down and pissed on the bottom of the door to melt the ice. He was able to slide the door open, so he went outside. But for what?!

Tonsaku manpachi banashi 頓作万八噺. 1777 (An'ei 安永 5) Taikei 大系, vol.17. 176.

⁸⁴ It is a common practice today for young girls to make a wish and refrain from doing certain activities or eating certain food that they enjoy in exchange for the wish to come true. Perhaps a similar practice existed during the Edo period.

Daughter in Law (*Yome* 嫁) “A Quick Retort”

An old man was enthralled by his son’s young bride and made all sorts of moves. She became sick and tired of his lewd advances, so she complained to her husband. He became irate and said,

“I’ll show him.”

The next morning, the son pretended to be his wife by wearing her kimono. Then covering his head with a cloth, he started making a fire just like his wife always did. His father sneaked over as usual, thinking his daughter-in-law was making the fire and embraced her from behind. The son uncovered his face and confronted him,

“Father, what the hell are you doing?”

Unfazed, the father said,

“Forever endearing is one’s own child.”

Kinmenuki 近目貫. 1774. (An’ei 安永 2) *Taiki* 大系, vol.9. 200.

A Considerate Child (*Kodomo no oyaomoi* 小児の親思)

A child spilled rice by accident. The mother chastised him and tried to pick up the grains from the floor. Her husband came over and grabbed her from behind. She said,

“What are you thinking? It’s the middle of the day!”

But the husband didn’t care and he started humping her. Eventually, the wife went along with it by lifting her behind, saying things like,

“Ha, ha, ha, this is good. I can’t believe we are doing this in broad daylight. Try a bit higher. Oh, no, our boy is watching us.”

After all this, the wife went over to the stove to cook rice, but this time she spilt rice. She had started to pick up the grains when the boy came over, looking all sympathetic. He told her,

“Mother, if you pick up grains in that position, father will come again and poke you from behind.”

Karukuchi kaidangi 軽口開談義. 1774 (An’ei 安永 2) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*.163)

Acupuncture (*Hari-i* 針医) “The Wrong One”

A doctor was giving an acupuncture treatment to a young woman. Her father was there to help out. First, the doctor inserted a few needles in order to soften her belly. When he was feeling down her belly, he accidentally touched her pubic hair. His member suddenly hardened like a wooden stick and he couldn't resist reaching under the cover to hold her hand. She said nothing, so he took it as a go-ahead and made her hold his penis. She was still quiet. He decided to go further, but first he needed to get rid of her father who was still holding the daughter's belly down. The doctor told him,

“You don't have to do that anymore, but instead I need you to go make some hot water for me so I can give your daughter some medicine. Slowly boiled water is better, so take your time.”

The father nodded and said,

“I understand.”

But he hesitated to leave, so the doctor prompted him,

“What are you waiting for?”

“Um, what do I do with this thing I'm holding?”

Kotoshibanashi 今歳咄. 1773 (An'ei 安永 2) Taikei 大系, vol.9. 141.

Pee Pee (*Chinbo* ちんぼ)

“Little one, have you seen your father's pee pee?”

“Yep.”

“What was it like?”

“It was about this long with a massive amount of hair.”

“Good job describing it. How about your mother's?”

“Yep, I've seen it.”

“How was it?”

“Mother's pee pee was covered with hair.”

Shikata banashi 仕方噺. 1774 (An'ei 安永 2) Taikei 大系, vol.9. 309.

A Bumpkin (*Inaka* 田舎)

A country bumpkin paid to sleep with a prostitute. In bed, he stroked her skin and said,

“Your skin is just like snow.”

“Nonsense! Stop flattering me. My skin is rather dark.”

“No, not the color. I meant it’s terribly cold.”

Noriaibune 乗合舟. 1779 (An’ei 安永 7) *Taikei* 大系, vol.11.154.

A Wanton daughter (*Sukebē* 助兵衛) “Itinerant Sales”

A father didn’t know what to do with his promiscuous daughter. He and his daughter talked to each other and decided that the best thing for her was to become a mistress. So they went out to sell her as a mistress. Just as vendors of itinerant goods sell their products on the street, the daughter first called out,

“Mistress for sale!”

Then the father followed,

“Dirty cunt for sale!”

Shikata banashi 仕方噺. 1774 (An’ei 安永 2) *Taikei* 大系, vol.9. 309.

Wives’ Boobs (*Yome no chichi* 嫁の乳)

The new bride was hard-working and good at doing things with her hands. She was shaving her father-in-law’s facial hair. When she tried to shave his pate, her breast accidentally touched his lips. The father-in-law got excited and he was about to lick it when his son saw this and got really mad.

“How dare you try to lick my wife’s boob! What kind of a father are you?”

The father retorted,

“You sucked my wife’s breast for five long years!!”

Kuchibyōshi 口拍子. 1774 (An’ei 安永 2) *Taikei* 大系, vol. 9. 119.

Treatment (*Atsukai* あつかひ) “A Profit”

“I caught an adulterer!”

A husband was about to grab his sword to kill his wife’s secret lover, but because he apologized profusely, the husband agreed to settle the matter with four *ryō*.⁸⁵ The secret lover went home and told his wife,

“I need four *ryō*.”

His wife got suspicious and kept asking what he had done. After he confessed everything, the wife asked,

“So, each encounter is worth four *ryō*, right?”

“Yeah, that’s right.”

The wife told the husband,

“Then you go back to their house and ask your lover’s husband to pay you four *ryō*.”

Shikata banashi 仕形噺. 1774 (An’ei 安永 2) Taikei 大系, vol. 308

Two Husbands (*Muko futari* 婿二人) “Best of Both”

A young woman received marriage proposals from two families. One was from a wealthy family, but the husband-to-be was extremely ugly. The other was from a poor family, but the husband-to-be was a sexy hunk. Her parents did not know what to do, so they asked the daughter what she thought. She told them she would marry both of them. The mother asked,

“What the hell are you thinking? How can you marry two men?”

The daughter replied,

“Well, I’ll spend the daytime in the wealthy household, then go sleep with the hunk at night.”

Egao hajime 笑顔はじめ. 1774 (Tenmei 天明 2) Taikei 大系, vol.12. 23.

⁸⁵ *Ryō* 両 is a unit of currency. One *ryō* was equivalent to about one thousand U.S. dollars in today’s money.

Big Shot (*Ōmono* 大物)

In Yoshiwara, a courtesan was sitting on top of her customer. When she grabbed his member, she was stunned. She dashed out of the room and ordered a male servant,

“Send that customer away!”

A young courtesan overheard this and asked,

“Why?”

“You wouldn’t believe how humongous his thing is!”

“It can’t be that bad. He is only human.”

Feeling bad for the customer, the young courtesan went in to entertain the man. After having *sake* together, it was time to seal the deal. The courtesan grabbed something in her hand and asked,

“Wait, what’s this thing that I’m holding?”

“That’s just a single pube.”

Fukujusō 腹受想. 1779 (An’ei 安永 7) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*.106)

Too Pushy (*Oshitsuke* をしつけ) “Spick and Span”

A maidservant was in love with her master. One night, while his wife was out, she asked him,

“Please fulfill my wish tonight.”

The master said,

“OK, then, go get washed up at the bathhouse.”

When the maid came back, the master had a visitor, and they wouldn’t stop talking. She became impatient and called out to her master,

“Master, I’ve washed it thoroughly.”

After hearing this a few times, the master finally replied,

“Good. Wring out the water and hang it out, then.”

Fukujusō 腹受想. 1779 (An’ei 安永 7) (Mutō. *An’eiki enshō kobanashi*.119)

Nap (*Hirune* ひるね)

A mother was taking a nap, exposing her pussy. Her mischievous young son came over and poked it with a bamboo stick. The mother woke up angry and pinched the boy hard, making him cry. The big brother walked in and asked the mother,

“What happened? Why is he crying?”

“I pinched him hard because he poked my pussy.”

The big brother turned to the young boy and said,

“You just got in trouble with a dog the other day. I told you to stay away from things with hair.”

Fukujusō 腹受想. 1779 (An'ei 安永 7) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.114)

The Lord (*Tonosama* 殿様) “Saliva”

A lord secretly summoned his close attendant and confessed to him,

“I don't know how to do... you know what.”

“I see, my lord, then I shall demonstrate it for you.”

“Yes, do.”

“Please hide behind the screen and peek through it.”

The attendant brought in a maidservant, fourteen or fifteen years of age, and told her,

“It is the lord's wish.”

But because his penis was large, he had a hard time inserting it, so he wet his fingers frequently to smooth his way in. Afterwards, the lord asked him,

“I get it now, but what were you eating every now and then?”

Fukujusō 腹受想. 1779 (An'ei 安永 7) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.111)

Wedding Night (*Nīmakura* 新枕)

A couple had a young daughter. Because she was their only child, they looked everywhere to find her a good husband. The man they finally decided on had a large nose. The wedding ceremony went smoothly and it was time to go to bed. The wife held the husband's rod. She pointed at his nose and said,

“You, liar!”

Fukujusō 腹受想. 1779 (An'ei 安永 7) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.118)

A Quarrel (*Fūfu genka* ふうふげんくハ) “Not There”

A married couple was having a fight. The wife told the husband,

“I won't talk to you anymore.”

The husband replied,

“Me, either, for the rest of my life.”

But that night, the husband had an urge, so he quietly went inside the wife's gown and started poking her. The wife had been quiet, trying to keep her word, but she couldn't hold it in anymore.

“Go a little higher.”

Fukujusō 腹受想. 1779 (An'ei 安永 7) (Mutō. *An'eiki enshō kobanashi*.115)

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