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The Master in the Clouds: Imagining Li Yu in Early Modern Japan

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Introduction

“Li Yu, or Liweng as he called himself, lived by the West Lake. He was a wicked figure who was good at flattering people. Mingling with patrons, he enjoyed writing plays and novels, but they were extremely pornographic. ... He surely deserved to fall into the Hell of Pulling Tongues.”¹ This exceptionally bitter critique describes the early modern Chinese popular writer and publisher Li Yu (李漁 1611–1680), known also as Liweng (笠翁) in Chinese or Ryūō (笠翁) in Japanese. His works of poetry, fiction, and plays circulated widely during and after his lifetime in the Qing dynasty (1644–1912). Not only within China, Li Yu also enjoyed great fame in Japan since the 1690s when his works were introduced to Japanese readers of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868). This negative comment above on Li Yu’s characteristics is only one of many from the Qing dynasty and even later times, but as Li Yu’s popularity then suggests, he was well-received among his readers nonetheless. His literary works were reproduced in various forms in Japanese and captivated Japanese intellectuals of the time. Li Yu’s impact in Japan extended beyond literary production—his edited work *Jieziyuan huazhuan* (芥子園画伝 The mustard seed garden manual of painting, 1679, Jp. *Kaishien gaden*) was considered by early modern artists to be the first manual to have introduced literati painting (Jp. *bunjinga* 文人画, also known as Southern School painting or *nanga* 南画) to Japan.

In this article, I argue that the reproduction and interpretation of Li Yu’s fictional works as well as *Jieziyuan huazhuan* in Tokugawa Japan played a key role in the imagination of Li Yu as one of the greatest Chinese masters at that time. I do so by revisiting the evolution of Li Yu’s reception in Japan. An array of textual and visual sources reveal that Li Yu was interpreted as the author of *Jieziyuan huazhuan*, a master of literati painting, and furthermore, an expert of various arts; in the meantime, his



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longing for reclusion that was expressed throughout his works resonated with Japanese intellectuals who had for long admired the hermit literati tradition in China while also pursuing fame and profit through commercial publishing. In a broader sense, the worship of Li Yu as a talented hermit was a part of an idealization of Chinese celebrities among newly emerged Japanese intellectuals who sought to establish their own identities in cultural production during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the rise of popular culture defied the long-standing Tokugawa hierarchy in knowledge.² In a twist of irony, it was Li Yu's fame in Japan and the canonization of "classical Chinese literature" during the late nineteenth century in Japan that led to his resurrection in China when his works were reintroduced to Chinese readers in the 1930s.³

Because of Li Yu's current status in Chinese literary studies as an example of a famous author of Qing Chinese classics, there are numerous contemporary studies of Li Yu's literary works in English, Japanese, and Chinese. Since the aim of this paper is to revisit the evolution of Li Yu's reception in Japan, particularly in the literary field of the early modern period (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), I shall focus on how Japanese intellectuals interpreted Li Yu rather than how they were influenced by him. Nonetheless, it is important to note that previous scholarship on Li Yu's reception in Japan, most of which was written in Japanese, tends to inherit a celebratory attitude towards Li Yu's writings, as Li Yu's fiction has had vast influences on early modern Japanese popular writers. More recent twentieth-century studies by Itō Sōhei and Oka Haruo, for instance, are important references for later studies of Li Yu and Japanese popular fiction (Jp. *gesaku* 戯作). In a 1989 article, Oka summarizes the characteristics of Li Yu's writings as "comedic" (Jp. *warai* 滑稽) and "vulgar" (Jp. *iro* 猥褻) and argues that this is what made Li Yu's fiction unique in a time when fiction with a didactic theme was the mainstream.⁴

Other scholars such as Hsiao Hanchen, Nakazatomi Satoshi, and Muramatsu Ei, have studied Li Yu's novels and plays as well as some of their Japanese adaptations. For example, based on Itō Sōhei's studies on the various versions of Li Yu's play *Liancheng bi* (連城璧 Priceless jade, possibly printed in 1661), Hsiao and Nakazatomi discuss Li Yu's writing techniques in his fiction, and more importantly, how they informed Japanese writers such as Santō Kyōden (山東京伝 1761–1816) and Kyokutei Bakin (曲亭馬琴 1767–1848) in their popular fiction during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵

I do not intend to argue against the literary value of Li Yu's works, but I also would like to turn away from interpretations of Li Yu's works or translations, adaptations, as well as parodies of his works in Japan, to focus instead on how the appreciation of him was formed in Tokugawa Japan. As Pierre Bourdieu noted regarding the value of cultural production, "the producer of the value of the work of art is not the artist but the field of production as a universe of belief which produces the value of the work of art as a fetish by producing the belief in the creative power of the artist."⁶ Today, Li Yu is one of the most celebrated intellectuals in China. A huge body of academic and non-academic texts analyzes and promotes not only his writing techniques in his fictional works, but also his concepts of lifestyle.⁷ Some might even consider him a cultural icon, a reputation drastically different from that of his own time, as is suggested in the quote in the beginning of this paper.⁸ These changes in the reception of Li Yu was a reflection of the changing aesthetics, material, and more importantly, the ideological atmosphere throughout the eighteenth to twentieth century in both Japan and China. In a sense, Li Yu's value was created by his admirers and worshippers, as well as the numerous fictional works that were inspired by him.

Tracing the transformation of Li Yu's reputation throughout early modern Japan provides an alternative angle for observing early modern Japanese literary and cultural history. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a time of identity searching for many Tokugawa intellectuals. On the one hand, Nativist thinkers (Jp. *kokugakusha* 国学者) were eager to establish the Japanese identity through literature and knowledge; on the other, as the commercial exchange with China rapidly developed and access to Chinese knowledge became easier, intellectuals were learning from all kinds of Chinese literature and art, from vernacular fiction to poetry, from calligraphy to painting.⁹ Against such a background, Li Yu was not the only Chinese figure to have been turned into a subject of worship by Japanese intellectuals. For instance, in the 1830s, another Chinese popular writer Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 (1334–?, Jp. Ra Kanchū) was admired as the author of numerous vernacular novels that he did not actually write, including the famous *Shuihuzhuan* (水滸伝 Water margin, sixteenth century, Jp. *Suikoden*) and *Sanguozhi* (三国志 Romance of the Three Kingdoms, 1522, Jp. *Sangokushi*).¹⁰ Although commercial ships brought more Chinese books to Japan, there was still a vast information gap that could only be filled with assumption and imagination between Japan and China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

From the standpoints of modern-day literary and cultural history, we can now see the repertoire of texts and images that mentioned and described these Chinese figures (or in some cases, fabricated representation of historical figures) as historical interpretation made by people in the past that was based on what they read and heard. Here I borrow the historicist framework from Frank Ankersmit, who in *Meaning, Truth, and Relevance in Historical Representation* (2012) holds that historical representation is ultimately a matter of aspect and a rational aesthetics. He writes: “Representation takes priority over interpretation in the historical text: there can be interpretation only after there has first been a representation and therefore an either real or imaginary reality represented by the text.”¹¹ In this sense, the Japanese texts and images regarding Li Yu function as self-generative historical representation upon which new interpretations were constantly being created. In reading into these texts and images as the historical representation of Li Yu’s existence in Japan, albeit abstract and distant, I avoid interpreting them as the evidence of Li Yu’s cultural value but focus instead on the changes and developments of early modern Japanese intellectuals’ interpretation of Li Yu and, ultimately, why and how such changes happened.

A Brief Introduction of Li Yu

Born to a rich merchant family in Zhejiang, China in 1611, Li Yu spent his early years studying the Confucian classics to become a bureaucrat-literatus (Ch. *shidafu* 士大夫). He sat for the imperial civil service examinations but failed after several attempts. Constant war between the Ming and Manchurian courts forced him to escape into the mountains with his family in 1644, where he first found his fondness for a reclusive life.¹² After the Qing dynasty began, he did not take any more imperial examinations, but instead sought shelter in literary production. He designed his own residences and gardens where he pursued the dream of a “mountain man” (Ch. *shanren* 山人) wishing to “redefine his own identity apart from the official sphere,” argues S. E. Kile.¹³ Li Yu documented some of his ideas on aesthetics and lifestyle in his *Xianqing ouji* 閑情偶寄 (Casual notes of the mood, 1671) which later became a part of his essay collection *Liweng yijiayan* 笠翁一家言 (Liweng’s own words, print year unknown). During his forties, Li Yu started writing fiction and plays and quickly became a popular name among readers beyond the literati class. His fictional works usually portray didactic and romantic stories between talented young men and beautiful girls, a form that is often

referred to as the scholar-beauty story (Ch. *caizi jiaren* 才子佳人).¹⁴ In 1669, Li Yu built his residence, the Mustard Seed Garden (Ch. *Jieziyuan* 芥子園), in Nanjing, where in the same year he also constructed a garden and opened a publishing house under the same name. “Jieziyuan” later became Li Yu’s persona in Japan, even though this was only his home for a very short period of time.

The critique on Li Yu’s patronage quoted at the beginning of this paper, while seemingly unsparing, is not baseless. Li Yu was not strictly a bureaucrat-official nor a literatus (*wenren* 文人) since he did not take the imperial examinations in the Qing court. Although deeply involved in literary and artistic production, Li Yu was, in reality, a merchant; but he maintained a close relationship with many influential and resourceful bureaucrat-literati. According to a 2006 study by Huang Qiang, Li Yu was an active member of the social circles in the Jiangnan region as well as in Beijing.¹⁵ His abundant letter correspondence with bureaucrat-literati and merchants indicates that his writing career and hobby of garden building were funded mainly by these friends. He would write to them for financial support during difficult times.¹⁶ Li Yu also invited his famous friends and patrons to contribute essays and poems in his collections, then advertised these collections in their names to attract more readers. Because of Li Yu’s efforts in gaining patronage, the Chinese writer and scholar Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) referred to Li Yu as *bangxian* 幫閑, a word that is more than likely taken from the Japanese word 幫間 *hōkan* or *taikomochi* which used to refer to male entertainers in the brothels and restaurants of Yoshiwara.¹⁷ This label indicates that Li Yu’s interest in profiting was still perceived negatively in twentieth-century China. Cashing in on his cultural production, Li Yu’s publications catered to the popular taste during his time and continued to garner readers even after his death. As S. E. Kile well summarizes, Li Yu “combined the innovative production of easily reproducible cultural products with the personal, strategic marketing of those products.”¹⁸

Although deeply involved in commercial production, Li Yu may have maintained a spiritual pursuit as he consistently expressed in his writings his longings for a reclusive life in the mountains. For example, in a story titled “Wenguolou 聞過樓” (Tower of faultfinding) from Li Yu’s anthology 十二樓 (Ch. *Shi’erlou*, Twelve towers, 1658), his protagonist is tricked by his rich bureaucrat friend into moving to a small but elegant home in the mountains where he reads and writes as he pleases, as well as assisting his friend on courtly matters.¹⁹ About this story, literary scholar

Sun Kaidi in “Li Liweng yu Shi’erlou” (1935) wrote that the work bears many parallels with Li Yu’s personal experience. Furthermore, Patrick Hanan in *The Invention of Li Yu* (1988) considers the story Li Yu’s “half-serious plea for patronage.”²⁰ Li Yu’s rich friends funded the construction of his residence and gardens, and his enjoyment of these places is recorded in *Xianqing ouji* in detail. His poems *Yiyuan shibian* (伊園十便 Ten advantages of Yiyuan, 1649) and *Yiyuan shieryi* (伊園十二宜 Twelve pleasures of Yiyuan, 1649) depict the pleasure of country life. These poems eventually became the theme of the famous picture album *Jūbin jūgijō* (十便十宜帖 Ten advantages and ten pleasures, 1771) by the Japanese literati painter Ike Taiga (池大雅 1723–1776).

However, as is equally obvious from his essays and poems, his life was not exactly reclusive. His residence Jieziyuan, for example, was not so far away from the busy city life of Jinling; he trained his own theater troupe that performed for his guests when they gathered at banquets in Jieziyuan.²¹ Such a posturing of reclusion found its parallel among early modern Japanese intellectuals. In fact, since as early as the Japanese medieval period (1185–1603), educated Japanese elites already incorporated themes of reclusion in their poems and paintings.²² The self-presentation of seeking reclusion was one of the key factors that contributed to Li Yu’s popularity in early modern Japan, along with the association between literati painting and a hermit lifestyle.²³

Interpreting Li Yu as a Nanga Master

As introduced above, in Qing China, Li Yu was recognized more as a popular writer, a publisher, and a merchant; but in Japan, Li Yu gained another title—the master of literati painting. Through an examination of the circulation and reproduction of texts related to Li Yu in the middle and late Tokugawa period in Japan, in the following paragraphs I trace the Japanese reinterpretation of Li Yu that remembered him—whether intentionally or not—as the author of *Jieziyuan huazhuan*.

Jieziyuan huazhuan was first printed in Nanjing in 1679 and was officially imported into Japan in 1723.²⁴ The original *Jieziyuan huazhuan* contains altogether three books, each consisting of five to six volumes. According to the preface of *Jieziyuan huazhuan chuji* (芥子園画伝初集 book one) written by Li Yu in 1679, Li Yu’s son-in-law, Shen Xinyou (沈心友 birth and death years unknown), as well as artists Wang Gai (王概 1645–1710) and Wang Shi (王蓍 1649–1737), were the main producers of the manual. When *Jieziyuan huazhuan chuji* was published, Li Yu had

moved to his new garden in Hangzhou and had fallen so ill that he could barely get up from bed.²⁵ The first book was published in the winter of 1679 shortly before Li Yu passed away in the following year. Twenty years later in 1701, Shen and Wang published two sequels, *Huazhuan erji* (画伝二集 book two) and *Huazhuan sanji* (画伝三集 book three), through Shen's own publishing house.²⁶ However, the Japanese interpretation of Li Yu witnessed a drastic transformation in the years to come.

The earliest official records of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* can be found in *Bakufu Shomotsukata Nikki* (幕府書物方日記 Diaries of the Bakufu magistrate of books, 1706–1857). It indicates that in 1723, the Shogun Yoshimune 吉宗 (1716–1751) acquired the first book of *Jieziyuan huazhuan*.²⁷ In this record, *Jieziyuan huazhuan* was referred to both as *Kaishien gaden* and *Ryūō gaden* 笠翁画伝, which is a curious point that I shall return to later. In the same year, a collection of Li Yu's literary works, *Liweng yijia yan*, entered Japan through Nagasaki according to *Shōhaku sairai mokuroku* 商舶載来目録 (Catalog of books brought by trading ships, entry from 1723).²⁸ It consists of Li Yu's poems, essays, prefaces, travel diaries, and letter correspondence with his friends. During the following years, his fiction and dramatic compilations gradually entered Japan as well, such as *Liweng chuanqi shizhong* 笠翁伝奇十種 (Liweng's ten plays) and *Shi'ertou* (*Twelve Towers*), the collection of short stories I referenced earlier.²⁹

There are other sources from early modern Japan that mention when *Jieziyuan huazhuan* was introduced to Japan, but none seems to match the record in *Shomotsukata nikki*. For example, in *Gajō yōryaku* (画乘要略 A brief summary of the history of painting, 1831), the Tokugawa-period painter Shirai Kayō (白井華陽 ?–1836) wrote in an annotation explaining the origin of *nanga* that this style of painting was first introduced to Japan during the Genroku period (1688–1704) when Ogyū Sorai (荻生徂徠 1666–1728) obtained a copy of *Jieziyuan huazhuan*. But another text from the Meiji period, *Un'en ryakuden* (雲煙略伝 A short biography of clouds and smoke, 1874) by Kiyomiya Hidekata (清宮秀堅 1809–1879) claimed that *Jieziyuan huazhuan* was brought to Japan by Ōbaku monks during the Kan'ei period (1624–1644), which was before the manual was even compiled. Another example of such discrepancies occurs in a 1712 painting textbook written by Hayashi Moriatsu (林守篤 birth and death years unknown) where he indicates that he had already read *Jieziyuan huazhuan*.³⁰

After the introduction of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* to Japan in the early 1700s, the reprinted Japanese version was crucial in establishing the image of Li Yu as the author of the manual. First, the Japanese reprint of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* made alterations to the publication and author information in a way that amplified Li Yu's contribution to the making of this manual. In 1748, a publishing house in Kyoto, Kōnamirō (河南楼), made the first Japanese version of *Kaishien gaden*, a print that would later become the most widely circulated version of the manual in Japan.³¹ This print reproduced only a part of the original contents in the Chinese print.³² Major changes were made to the inner cover and publication information of the Kōnamirō print as well. In the Chinese print of Book One, the header of the inner cover writes “Commented and Edited by Master Li Liweng” (李笠翁先生論定), a tribute to Li Yu from his son-in-law and the artists. In book two and book three, however, the header on the inner covers was changed to “Co-edited by famous masters in the universe” (宇内諸名家合訂) in the Chinese print. Since Book Two and Book Three were published twenty years after Li Yu's death, it would only seem natural that the authors mentioned neither Li Yu as the commentator nor Jieziyuan as the publisher, since they were published through Shen Xinyou's publishing house, as mentioned before. This change in the header was reflected in all three editions that were printed throughout the Qing dynasty, and the absence of Li Yu in Books Two and Book Three indicate the lack of connection between Li Yu and the rest of the manual.

But the Japanese reproduction, *Kaishien gaden*, gave all the spotlight to Li Yu. The reprints produced by Kōnamirō only credited Li Yu, where the original “Co-edited by famous masters in the universe” remained “Commented and edited by master Li Liweng.” Although it did not claim Li Yu as the author of the manual, such a header on the inner cover significantly weakens the role of either Shen Xinyou or the other artists, but instead emphasized alone Li Yu's contribution to the manual. The woodblocks made by Kōnamirō were later passed on to another large publishing house in Kyoto.³³ With the manual being reprinted multiple times over the following years, the header (李笠翁先生論定 Commented and edited by master Li Liweng) was reproduced in all the later prints. As a result, more and more Japanese readers became used to associating the painting manual with Li Yu's persona “*Kaishien*” instead of the actual authors of *Jieziyuan huazhuan*.³⁴

Furthermore, accounts from intellectuals and literati painters of the Tokugawa period more than likely reinforced the notion that Li Yu was

the creator of this series of manual. In various texts, *Jieziyuan huazhuan* was referred to as *Ryūō gaden* (笠翁画伝 Liweng's painting manual) and was held as one of the highest authorities of literati painting. For example, in the aforementioned painting textbook *Gasen*, Hayashi Moriatsu uses “立翁画伝” to refer to the manual.³⁵ Moreover, in a 1724 essay collection *Hitorine* (ひとりね Sleeping Alone), Yanagisawa Kien (柳沢淇園 1703–1758), a famous intellectual and literati painter, writes that “the book that people who learn to paint should always read is *Ryūō gaden*.”³⁶ In another section where he discusses a certain shade of yellow, he refers to *Jieziyuan huazhuan* for the use of this color while calling those who mismatched the name and color “illiterate” (Jp. *monmō* 文盲).³⁷ Yanagisawa's comments thus signify the authoritative status of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* at that time.

In the late eighteenth century, Li Yu's reputation further grew. Not only did his Japanese admirers perceive him as the author of *Kaishien gaden*, but they also worshiped him as a true master of literati painting. In *Hōreki shojaku mokuroku* (宝暦書籍目録 Publishing catalog of the Hōreki period, 1754), a catalog of titles published between 1751 and 1754, Li Yu is listed as the only author of all four books of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* while the names of Shen Xinyou and other artists are nowhere to be found.³⁸ Meanwhile, in *Genminshin shoga jinmei roku* (元明清書画人名録 Catalog of Chinese calligraphers and painters of the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, 1777) edited by several renowned literati artists in the middle Tokugawa period, Li Yu is listed among Qing Dynasty painters. The annotation by his name indicates that Li Yu “excelled at painting mountains and rivers, flowers and trees, as well as writing cursive style calligraphy.”³⁹ These are only a few of the many examples that held Li Yu as the author of *Jieziyuan huazhuan*, but his reputation in Japan exceeded far beyond this image.

A more widely known introduction of Li Yu comes from a biography of him in *Morokoshi kidan* (唐土奇談 Peculiar tales from China, 1790) written by Hatanaka Kansai (畠中寛斎 1752–1801). Hatanaka Kansai was a Confucian scholar but was better known as a *kyōka* (狂歌, mad verse) poet. He went by the name *Dōmyaku sensei* (銅脈先生) in most of his *kyōka* poems. While *Morokoshi kidan* introduces several famous Chinese figures and their stories, its focus is actually on theater performance, *shibai* (芝居), as the author explains in the preface. Apart from this biography of Li Yu, the rest of the book is Hatanaka's attempt at rewriting Japanese theater according to a Chinese style. Considering that Li Yu wrote numerous plays and discussed his understanding of theater in some of his

essays, such as *Xianqing ouji*, it is understandable that Hatanaka Kansai would use Li Yu's works as the example for his adaptation of Japanese *kyōgen* plays.

In the beginning of the first volume, next to a portrait and a poem describing Li Yu, Hatanaka writes:

Master Ri Ryūō lived during the Kangxi period of the Qing dynasty; he lived by a lake and called himself “the old man of Yiyuan.” He was originally from a rich family; he had no interest in becoming a bureaucrat. His talents were above all others and his writings had his unique style. He was good at calligraphy and painting, as well as music, rhythm, instruments, and songs—there was nothing he could not do well. The Emperor Kangxi summoned him to the court and offered him a position, but he refused to take it.

李笠翁先生は、清の康熙年中の人にして、湖上に住り、伊園老人と号す。元より家富と、仕官を好まず、天性其才人に勝れ、文章一家の風をなす。書をよくし画をよくし、また音律絃歌に至るまでよくせずといふ事なし。康熙皇帝これを召して、官位を授んとの詔あれど、辞して受ず。⁴⁰

This “biography” was mostly fabricated. Li Yu was quite keen to become a court bureaucrat before his multiple failed attempts at the imperial exams. He was never summoned by any emperor for any position—in fact, some of his works were banned during Kangxi's reign for their erotic and political contents.⁴¹ As for the portrait of Li Yu in this book, it was mostly based on imagination. In a 2000 article, Yoshida Eri identifies the similarities between this portrait and several other ones of famous bureaucrat-literati in the past, such as Su Shi and Sima Qian. As Yoshida argues, most elements in this portrait, such as the hat, the tall chair, and the robe, were common in portraits of bureaucrat-literati but do not fit Li Yu's status since he was a merchant.⁴² The poem on the next page that describes how Li Yu met with the emperor in simple clothing was written by a person who was actually fictional.⁴³ Nonetheless, Li Yu was believed to have been a great master of various arts and a hermit of esteemed characteristics. He even appeared in fictional works as an authority on the arts.

Around 1837, Miki Kussai (三木屈斎, birth and death years unknown) published a work of comedic fiction *Shoka hitsudoku dehōdai* (諸家必読出放題 Mouthing off) that set its stage at an 1836 celebrity banquet where famous literati of the Edo city gathered, a *shogakai* (書画会 gathering of artists and writers).⁴⁴ Little information about Miki Kussai is available, but

he was likely a Confucian scholar from Akita and actively participated in *shogakai* banquets.⁴⁵ This compilation of short stories portrays fictionalized scenes where Chinese masters lectured Japanese literati, the list of whose names takes up quite a few pages, on their horrendous art works. In the stories, three Chinese masters of painting and calligraphy stumble across a banquet and decide to join the Japanese masters, only to find themselves in complete disappointment. Li Yu is consistently referred to as *Kaishien*. In chapter one, he appears as a literati painting master and scolds Tani Bunchō (谷文晁 1763–1841), one of the most prestigious artists of the time, for his dreadful painting skills. In chapter five, Li Yu castigates Japanese intellectuals for their lack of skills in painting and fiction writing and speaks of himself as a dedicated writer and a loyal follower of the ancient saints (Jp. *sentetsu* 先哲). Whether this fictionalized confrontation was purely for fun or the half-serious criticism from the author Kussai as a Confucian scholar, the appearance of Li Yu as the most authoritative master shows evidence of his high status among Japanese intellectuals of the time.

Imagining a Reclusive Writer

The Japanese reprint of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* had a great impact during the Tokugawa period when literati painting became one of the most popular painting styles among Japanese intellectuals, and the close connection between literati painting and living a reclusive life as an artist certainly played an important role in Li Yu's image as a painting master with a hermit spirit.⁴⁶ Moreover, his longing for living a reclusive life that found a voice in his poems and works of fiction was also a key contributor to the reinterpretation of him in Tokugawa Japan as a reclusive writer. This stance of longing for seclusion, besides the didactic moral teachings and extensive use of vernacular Chinese language, attracted Japanese intellectuals, and may have even been the reason that Li Yu was so popular among fiction writers in the late Tokugawa period.

Li Yu's famous fictional works include *Shi'ertou*, *Wusheng xi* (無声戲 Silent opera, 1658), and presumably the classic erotic novel *Rouputuan* (肉蒲團 The carnal prayer mat, Jp. *Nikubuton*, written year unknown).⁴⁷ As popular fiction (*yomihon*) gained increasing readers and attracted more writers to produce them, many works of popular fiction were adapted from Chinese vernacular novels, including Li Yu's works.⁴⁸ By the 1840s, there were at least twenty *yomihon* works adapted from Li Yu's fictional works. Most of them were written by the most popular writers of the time such as

Ishikawa Masamochi (石川雅望 1754–1830), Santō Kyōden, and Kyokutei Bakin.⁴⁹

A glance at Bakin’s accounts of Li Yu reveals his admiration towards Li Yu. Bakin appreciated Li Yu for his lifestyle, his talent, and more importantly, his “hermit” spirit, the evidence of which can be found throughout Bakin’s diaries as well as several of his *yomihon* that drew direct inspiration from Li Yu’s works.⁵⁰ For example, in an 1833 letter to a close friend Tonomura Jōsai (殿村篠齋 1779–1874), Bakin writes:

Ri Ryūō lived in the beginning of the Qing dynasty. He built his house at the West Lake, hence he was called “the old man on the lake.” One might wonder what he did for a living, but he was born into a rich family. He built his study by the lake and built the window [in the shape of a fan]. He sat under this window, at his desk, and enjoyed writing poems, essays, fiction, and plays. As such, one can imagine how refined and elegant he was.

李笠翁は、清の国初の人にて、西湖の頭に家在り。故に湖上の笠翁と称し候。何を渡世にいたし候哉、富家のよしに候。書齋を湖辺に作り、窓を[]如此、あふぎの地がみのごとくして、此窓の下に座し、机に倚り、詩文並に稗史伝奇を作りてたのしみ候よし。これらにても、その風流、想像せられ候。⁵¹

This description of Li Yu is based on his introduction in the aforementioned *Morokoshi kidan*, with additional information that was most likely drawn from Li Yu’s poems and essays. In Bakin’s imagination, Li Yu was the representation of elegance and refinement, *fūryū* 風流, one of the most celebrated characteristics of Japanese intellectuals of the time.⁵²

Furthermore, in a preface of Bakin’s most popular work *Nansō satomi hakkenden* (南総里見八犬伝 Eight dogs, 1814), he praised how Li Yu refused to bend his will to the rich and powerful, but instead chose a reclusive life and only focused on writing freely (Jp. *inkyō hōgen* 隠居放言).⁵³ Ironically, Li Yu’s patronage was mostly the rich and powerful—his merchant and court official friends funded most of his publishing and garden building projects. Nevertheless, Bakin’s admiration for Li Yu was so well known at the time that he was thought to have taken upon Li Yu’s penname as his own.⁵⁴ Bakin’s contemporaries repeatedly compared him to Li Yu for his achievements in popular fiction. One of his closest friends, Kimura Mokurō (木村黙老 1774–1857), a renowned scholar and high-level *bakufu* official, once complimented Bakin as “the Ri Ryūō of our country” (皇朝の李笠翁).⁵⁵

However, it is also worth mentioning that some of Bakin's accounts on Li Yu were self-contradictory. In the same letter written to Jōsai in 1833, Bakin mentioned Li Yu's fictional works *Shi'erylou* and *Rouputuan*.⁵⁶ He states, "Although Li Yu's poems and essays are carefully and well written, in terms of taste, he cannot meet half of that of Luo Guanzhong. I would not put my faith in Li Yu. While he has works with positive intentions such as *Shi'erylou* or *Shizhongqu*, he has also written vulgar works like *Rouputuan*. His works should not be considered proper."⁵⁷ But in a letter written on the same day to another friend Ozu Keisō (小津桂窓 1804 – 1858), Bakin talks about how desperately he wants to read *Liancheng bi* again, the play *Priceless Jade* discussed earlier in this article. Curiously, seven year later in another letter to Jōsai, Bakin compared the erotic Chinese novel *Jin Ping Mei* (金瓶梅 Plum in the golden vase, 1617) to *Rouputuan* and praised that the latter taught about the "karmic punishment for evilness and eroticism" (邪淫の悪報).⁵⁸

As the above texts indicate, Bakin's attitude towards Li Yu's works was mixed. It may be difficult to say for sure that Bakin admired Li Yu completely, but some of his works certainly borrowed elements from Li Yu's fiction and plays.⁵⁹ As William Hedberg observes, Chinese vernacular novels circulated in eighteenth-century Japan for readers without proper philological training in the Chinese language and education about China.⁶⁰ It is safe to argue that Li Yu's fictional works, among many other Chinese vernacular novels imported into Japan around this time, were interpreted into other contexts for other purposes. This does not negate Li Yu's value to his Japanese readers from the perspective of cultural history. For Tokugawa-period fiction writers, Li Yu was so respected a figure that his name was listed alongside other names of great authors. One example is in Mokuurō's catalog of fiction writers, *Gesakushakō hoi* (戯作者考補遺 Appendix to biographies of popular writers, 1845), where Mokuurō listed the two greatest writers of China to be Li Yu and Luo Guanzhong, the author of *Sangokushi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms) which was the most popular Chinese vernacular novel in early modern Japan.⁶¹

Even in the Meiji period, intellectuals still regarded Li Yu as a highly authoritative figure in literary production. The late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji writer Kanagaki Robun (仮名垣魯文 1829–1894) named Li Yu and Murasaki Shikibu the two most sublime authors whose works had continued influence in Japanese culture. In the prologue of *Kana tehon*

chūshingura (仮名手本忠臣蔵 A kana copy of the forty-seven samurai tale, 1871), Robun writes:

The loyalty of the forty-seven ronin shall not decay after a thousand years; the *jōruri* scripts of Gidayūbushi shall not be discarded even in his late years. Ōboshi yuranosuke concentrated his crafts and Takeda Izumo put in all his work. Either Ri Ryūō from China or Princess Murasaki from our country is no different from such. So, generation after generation, authors made hundreds of adaptations based on this story. There have been so many books like this. I only humbly responded to the request of my publisher and wrote down my thoughts overnight into this for children's play.

忠臣の誠功、千載に朽ちず。院本の名文、晩年に廢るることなし。大星が苦心、出雲が意勞。漢土の李笠翁、皇朝の紫姫、いづれ歎異かとせん。故に世々の作者、此の趣向を礎題として、翻案數百種、牛に汗し棟に充。不佞例の梓主の需応して、一夜の中に暗記を筆して、兒童の玩となすことしかり。
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It can be inferred that Robun refers to Li Yu's fictional works here, comparing his high status in fiction writing to the classical *jōruri* works such as *Chūshingura* (忠臣蔵 The treasury of loyal retainers) while also comparing Li Yu to Takeda Izumo, one of the most legendary *jōruri* writers in Japanese history. Also in Robun's *Hyakubyō gafu* (百猫画譜 Illustrations of one hundred cats, 1878) which is a compilation of *kanshi* and *haikai* poems, essays, and illustrations of cats by intellectuals of the early Meiji period, Li Yu's essay *Zhumao wen* (逐猫文 Essay on exiling a cat, written year unknown) was fully cited in the beginning to serve as the prologue.⁶³

Furthermore, in the famous Meiji-era essay on Japanese literary theory, *Shōsetsu shinzui*, (小説神髓 The essence of the novel, 1885), author Tsubouchi Shōyō (坪内逍遙 1859–1935) argues that popular writers of the Tokugawa period only knew how to copy the style of Li Yu and write didactic stories.⁶⁴ Although these references to Li Yu do not directly speak of his writings or his characteristics, the fact that Meiji writers were still familiar with his works and gave them high credit testifies to his influence on the Japanese literary field.

As the above discussion demonstrates, the wide circulation of Li Yu's fiction as well as Japanese adaptations based on his works in the Tokugawa period contributed to his popularity in Japan. The association of him as a hermit certainly fueled such popularity, for living as a recluse, whether literally or metaphorically, was one of the characteristics pursued by intellectuals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Japan.⁶⁵ What

intrigued Li Yu's Japanese readers was his skill in fiction writing and, perhaps, his self-presentation as a hermit.

The Master's Homecoming to Modern China

Due to certain sensitive contents in Li Yu's essays, since the Kangxi period (1654–1722) some of Li Yu's works—such as *Shi'erylou* and *Wusheng xi*—had been banned from being published in China.⁶⁶ While receiving high esteem in Japan, they did not circulate widely in China until the modern period. What revived Li Yu's works in modern China was, ironically, the colonialist expansion of Japan in the early twentieth century.

In 1904 at the start of the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905), Hongan-ji (本願寺), the largest Jōdo Shinshū school of Buddhism, supported the Japanese army. Among its many branches, Nishi Hongan-ji (西本願寺) in Kyoto was the largest and most powerful. Under the leadership of the abbot Ōtani Kōzui (大谷光瑞 1876–1948), Nishi Hongan-ji sent supplies and monks to Dalian to build a branch temple there and to spread Buddhist teachings.⁶⁷ One goal of establishing a branch in Dalian was to further expand Japan's presence in other parts of East Asia. In the following years of the war, Ōtani invested more than ten-million *yen* to build religious institutions such as temples and schools in Dalian and nearby areas.⁶⁸ Until the 1910s, both he and the administration of Hongan-ji became increasingly involved in the colonialist expansion in the area of Manchuria. Both sources invested large sums of money in the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMRC) whose main train line extended from Dalian to Changchun. For this reason, Ōtani was criticized by some intellectuals in Japan in 1918 for “inhumane behaviors that were against Nichiren teachings.”⁶⁹

Ōtani's lavish investment in Central Asia did not receive a satisfying payback, for in 1926 he had to repay the loans that he took from the SMRC with his book collection.⁷⁰ This collection became the Ōtani Collection in the SMRC Dalian Library. In 1931, the Chinese scholar Sun Kaidi started cataloging pre-modern Chinese popular fiction and collecting lost manuscripts from around the world. In the then Dalian Library, he found the *Shi'erylou* (*Twelve Towers*), *Wusheng xi* (*Silent Opera*), and several other of Li Yu's works.⁷¹ In 1931, Sun Kaidi published *Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo shumu* (中国通俗小说书目 Catalog of Chinese vernacular novels) which covered titles from the Song through Qing dynasties (960–1912). For the first time, Li Yu was introduced to modern Chinese readers as a popular writer.

From a despised writer in Qing China to a worshipped master in Tokugawa Japan, and later, a cultural icon in modern China, both the interpretation and misinterpretation of Li Yu shaped his cultural value, the impact of which continues to this day. Li Yu is now celebrated as one of the greatest novelists, playwrights, theater theorists and practitioners, architects, and aesthetic theorists in collections of classical Chinese literature, three and a half centuries after his death.

NOTES

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¹ Translated by the author from *Shuoling* 說鈴 (1794), Vol. 30, 7, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2581727>. Accessed March 2021. This description first appeared in Dong Han's 董含 (1924–?) essay collection *San gang shi lue* 三岡識略 (1693) and was then included in *Shuoling*. For a detailed discussion about the impact of Dong's description of Li Yu, see Wang Jinhua 王金華 and Huang Qiang 黃強, "Dong Han 'San gang shi lue' Li Liweng tiao kaobian 董含《三岡識略》李笠翁條考辨," *Wen xue yi chan* 2 (2006): 142–44. As Huang Qiang argues, however, this critique on Li Yu is not entirely reliable.

² I borrow the term "celebrity" from Jamie Greenbaum's study on Chen Jiru (陳繼儒). In his book *Chen Jiru (1558-1639): The Development and Subsequent Uses of Literary Personae* (Amsterdam: Brill, 2007), Greenbaum uses "celebrity" to describe Chinese writers whose fame extended beyond the audience of their specialty and whose market value was closely tied to certain social and economic conditions. While some scholars also use *wenren* 文人 or *bunjin* 文人 to describe Li Yu, in my attempt to discuss the historical representation (rather than interpretation) of Li Yu's cultural activities, "celebrity" is a more accurate term in summarizing the influence of him in Japan. Meanwhile, studies that referred to Li Yu as a *bunjin* include literary scholars Oka Haruo's "Ri Gyo hyōka ni kansuru kōsatsu" 李漁評價に関する考察, *Geibun kenkyū* 54 (1989): 103–133; art historian Kōno Motoaki's "Nihon bunjinga to chūgoku shōkei 日本文人画と中国憧憬," *Shōbi gaku'en daigaku deijutsu jōhō kenkyū* 12 (November 2007): 9–21.

³ See Sun Kaidi 孫楷第, *Riben dongjing suojian xiaoshuo shumu* 日本東京所見小說書目. (Beijing: Renmin wenzhe chubanshe, 1991).

- ⁴ The words that Oka used are commonly read as “*kokkei*” 滑稽 and “*waisetsu*” 猥褻. The readings of “*warai*” and “*iro*” are based on the gloss of the words in the original Japanese article. See Oka Haruo 岡晴夫, “*Ri Gyo hyōka ni kansuru kōsatsu* 李漁評価に関する考察,” *Geibun kenkyū* 54 (1989): 103–133; and Itō Sōhei 伊藤漱平, *Itō Sōhei chosakushū: Chūgoku kinsei bungakuhen* 伊藤漱平著作集: 中国近世文学篇, Itō Sōhei chosakushū 4 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2009).
- ⁵ See Hsiao Hanchen 蕭涵珍, “*Rigyo no sōsaku to sono juyō* 李漁の創作とその受容” (Ph. D. diss., Tokyo University, 2013); Nakazatomi Satoshi 中里見敬, “*Ri Gyo no shōsetsu: ‘tan chuyu xi li chuan qing, liu maogu qu zhong si jie’ o chūshin ni* 李漁の小説--「譚楚玉戲裡伝情, 劉藐姑曲終死節」を中心に,” *Shūkan tōyōgaku* 58 (November 1987): 43–60; Muramatsu Ei 村松咏, “*Shōsetsuka to shite no Ri Ryūō* 小説家としての李笠翁,” *Geibun kenkyū* 14/15 (1963): 69–77, <https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips>. Accessed March 2021.
- ⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 229.
- ⁷ For example, Li Yu’s *Liweng ciyun* 笠翁詞韻 (Li Weng’s rhymes for poetry, 1671, originally collected in *Liweng yijia yan* 笠翁一家言) is now used as a children’s textbook for learning Chinese writing; his *Xianqing ouji* is commonly cited for teaching about nurturing life. See Shen Xinlin 沈新林, *Li Yu pingzhuan* 李漁評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1998).
- ⁸ See, for example, Li Xiangmin 李向民, “*Li Yu de wenhua jingji shenghuo yanjiu* 李漁的文化經濟生活研究,” *Yishu baijia* 32.6 (2016): 31, in which Li discusses the cultural-economic implications through Li Yu’s commercial activities.
- ⁹ See Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武, *Nihon kinsei shosetsu to Chūgoku shōsetsu* 日本近世小説と中国小説 (Tokyo: Seishōdō, 1987); also Tokuda Takeshi, *Kinsei nitchū bunjin kōryūshi no kenkyū* 近世日中文化交流史の研究 (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2004). The social changes in individuality brought by Nativist thinkers are discussed in Peter Nosco, *Individuality in Early Modern Japan: Thinking for Oneself* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017).
- ¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of how Luo Guanzhong was thought to be the author of *Suikoden*, see Kanda Masayuki 神田正行, “*Suikoden no sakusha to Bakin: kongo doppo no sakusha Ra Kanchū no hakken* 『水滸伝』の作者と馬琴—「今古独歩の作者」羅貫中の発見—,” *Kinsei bungei* 89 (2009): 56–70, https://doi.org/10.20815/kinseibungei.89.0_56. Accessed February 2021.
- ¹¹ See Frank R. Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 2012), 78.
- ¹² This idea was repeatedly expressed in Li Yu’s writings. For example, Shan ju za yong 山居雜詠 (*Li Yu quan ji* 李漁全集, vol. 2), and Mai shan quan 賣山券 (*Li Yu Quan Ji*, vol. 1). Li Yu, *Li Yu quan ji* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2014).

- ¹³ S. E. Kile, “Toward an Extraordinary Everyday: Li Yu’s (1611–1680) Vision, Writing, and Practice” (Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 2013), 40.
- ¹⁴ For a detailed discussion on Li Yu’s fictional works, see Patrick Hanan, *The Invention of Li Yu* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).
- ¹⁵ See Huang Qiang, “Li Yu jiaoyou kaobian 李漁交友考辨,” *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 2 (2006): 168–80.
- ¹⁶ For more information about Li Yu’s fundraising activities, see Kile, “Toward an Extraordinary Everyday,” 1–34.
- ¹⁷ Zhou Shuren 周樹人, “Cong bangmang dao chedan 從幫忙到扯淡,” *Qiejieting zawen ji* 且介亭雜文集 (Shanghai: Sanxian shuwu, 1937), 159. Earlier, in an essay from 1932, Lu Xun mentioned that *bangxian* was the type of person who had some level of skills that could entertain one’s patrons. Although in this 1932 essay “Bangmang wenxue yu bangxian wenxue 幫忙文學與幫閒文學,” Lu Xun expressed much resentment towards the *bangxian* type intellectuals, in the 1937 essay when he mentioned Li Yu as an example of *bangxian*, his tone was generally positive. The 1932 essay is collected in Zhou Shuren 周樹人, *Lu Xun jingdian zuopin xuan* 魯迅經典作品選 (Beijing: Dangdai shijie chubanshe, 2013).
- ¹⁸ Kile, “Toward an Extraordinary Everyday,” 7.
- ¹⁹ *Shi’erlou* is a collection of twelve short stories, with each about a tower 樓. For an English translation of *Shi’erlou*, see Li Yu, and Nathan K. Mao, *Twelve towers: Short Stories* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 1979).
- ²⁰ Sun Kaidi, “Li Liweng yu Shi’erlou 李笠翁与十二楼,” in *Li Yu Quan Ji*, vol. 20 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1992), 59. Also, Patrick Hanan, *The Invention of Li Yu*, 110.
- ²¹ Huang Qiang, *Li Yu yan jiu*, 288–94.
- ²² For example, Ivo Smits discusses *kanshi* poems written in the Heian period where the poets talked of being in the mountains despite the fact that the poems were compiled during banquets in the court. See Ivo Smits, *The Pursuit of Loneliness: Chinese and Japanese Nature Poetry in Medieval Japan, ca. 1050-1150* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1995). Kendall Brown uses the term “aesthetics reclusion” to describe this kind of eremitism in his book discussing the imagery of the hermitage in Momoyama-period (1568–1600) paintings. See Kendall H. Brown, *The Politics of Reclusion: Painting and Power in Momoyama Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997).
- ²³ See Tanaka Kisaku 田中喜作, *Shoki nanga no kenkyū* 初期南画の研究 (Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppansha, 1972), and Melinda Takeuchi, *Taiga’s True Views: The Language of Landscape Painting in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992).

- ²⁴ An English translation and annotation of *Jieziyuan huazhuan* is available. See Michael J. Hiscox and Mai-mai Sze, *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting: A Facsimile of the 1887-1888 Shanghai Edition, Bollingen Series (General)* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- ²⁵ *Jieziyuan huazhuan*, book one, vol. 1, preface. See Michael J. Hiscox and Mai-mai Sze, 12.
- ²⁶ The publishing details about book two and book three can be found in the preface in book two written by Shen Xinyou. <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9981753533506421#view>. Accessed February 2021.
- ²⁷ Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo 東京大学資料編纂所, *Dainihon kinsei shiryō* 大日本近世史料, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1953), 2–6.
- ²⁸ Ōba Osamu 大庭修, *Edo jidai ni okeru tōsen mochiwatarisho no kenkyū* 江戸時代における唐船持渡書の研究, *Kansai daigaku tōzai gakujutsu kenkyūjo kenkyū sōkan* 1 (Osaka: Kansai daigaku tōzai gakujutsu kenkyūjo, 1981), 273.
- ²⁹ Ōba, 254. Mentioning of *Shi'erylou* can be found in Kyokutei Bakin's diaries and letters. See, for example, Bakin's letter to Tonomura Jōsai in 1836. Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴, Kanda Masayuki 神田正行, and Shibata Mitsuhiko 柴田光彦, *Bakin shokan shūsei* 馬琴書簡集成, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2002), 103. It is worth noting here that even though Li Yu's plays were originally meant for stage performance, after they were imported to Japan, Japanese readers mainly read them as fiction literature.
- ³⁰ See Hayashi Moriatsu 林守篤, “Gasen 画筌” (1721), https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko06/bunko06_01296/index.html. Accessed January 2021.
- ³¹ According to Nakamachi Keiko's 仲町啓子 study, more complete prints were produced later over the years. See Nakamachi Keiko, “Kaishien gaden no wakoku o megutte 芥子園画伝の和刻をめぐって,” *Jissen joshidaigaku bessatu nenpō* 10 (March 2006): 6.
- ³² This printing fully reproduced the first book of the 1679 Chinese print but did not include the original book two. Instead, Kōnamirō used the latter half of book three in the Chinese print and changed the title from “Huazhuan sanji” (画伝三集, Third book of the painting manual) to “Kaishien kachō fu” 芥子園花鳥譜 (the Kaishien manual for flowers and birds). Also, the Japanese reprint only kept the two prologues written by Shen Xinyou in the beginning of book two and book three, but deleted the prefaces written by the artists Wang Shi and Wu Xinyu. Sources from the Princeton University Library, see note 26; and from Waseda University library. https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko31/bunko31_e0510/index.html. Accessed January 2021.
- ³³ Nakamachi Keiko, “Kaishien gaden no wakoku o megutte,” 38.

- ³⁴ In China, too, the publishing house Jieziyuan may have been Li Yu's persona for a long time. For scholarship related to Li Yu and Jieziyuan, refer to Shen Xinlin. "Jieziyuan zai tan 芥子園再探." *Ming Qing xiao shuo yan jiu* 1 (1991): 193–204. For a detailed study of Wang Gai and his reputation, see Lü Xiao, "Zailun Wang Gai yu Jieziyuan huazhuan chuji 再論王概与芥子園画伝初集." *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 2 (2010): 48–65, 157, and Liu Yue, "Jieziyuan huazhuan zai zhongguo de yingxiang 《芥子園画伝》在中国的影嚮." *Wenyi pinglun* 5 (2009): 79–80.
- ³⁵ In *Gasen*, vol. 1, Hanrei 凡例 (Explanatory notes) and Jūniki 十二忌 (Twelve points to avoid). https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko06/bunko06_01296/index.html. Accessed January 2021. The characters 立 and 筮 are used interchangeably in these texts mentioning Li Yu.
- ³⁶ Yanagisawa Ki'en 柳沢淇園, *Hitorine* ひとりね (Tokyo: Shogakottō zasshisha, 1907), 153. Also, see Yoshida Eri 吉田恵理, "Note on Japanese literati painting (bunjinga) A consideration of images of Li Yu in eighteen-century Japan 日本文人画研究ノート：江戸中期の李漁(李笠翁)イメージに関する一考察," *Gakushuin University Studies in Humanities* 8 (September 1999): 27–52.
- ³⁷ See *Hitorine*, 97. Yanagisawa writes: "However, even in China, where people used to use both the colors *tō'ō* [gamboge] and *shi'ō* [orpiment], now use *tō'ō* only. As for why, in *The Mustard Seed Manual of Ri Ryūō*, there was only the color *tō'ō* but no *shi'ō*. . . . People who call the color *shi'ō* while actually using *tō'ō* without looking into this are indeed illiterate." Translation by the author. Yanagisawa, *Hitorine*, 153.
- ³⁸ Tokushi Yūshō 禿氏祐祥, *Shomoku shūran* 書目集覽 (Kyoto: Tōrin shobō, 1928), 337.
- ³⁹ The original text reads 李漁、字笠翁、号芥子園、湖上人、山水花木、行草。 See Sakaki Hyakusen 彭城百川, and Ishi Kisō 石希聰, *Gen Min Shin shoga jinmeiroku* 元明清書画人名録 (Osaka: Nakamura Jirōbē, 1777). Transcribed and translated by the author.
- ⁴⁰ Transcribed and translated by the author from *Morokoshi kidan* 唐土奇談, vol. 1. Source from Ehime University Suzuka Bunko. <https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/100297241/viewer/15>. Accessed January 2021.
- ⁴¹ For a list of Li Yu's banned works, see the appendix of *Li Yu quan ji*, vol. 19.
- ⁴² Yoshida Eri, "Note on Japanese Literati Painting (Bunjinga) A Consideration of Images of Li Yu in Eighteen-Century Japan," 44.
- ⁴³ In *Morokoshi kidan*, the author of this poem is indicated to be a 祇園張新炳. The title of the poem is 題笠翁先生肖像 (Poem for the portrait of master Liweng), but since this portrait was completely based on the imagination of the illustrator, it is more than likely that this "author" was also a made-up figure.

For more detailed information on the illustrator of this portrait, see Yoshida's article.

- ⁴⁴ Printing year and place unknown. Sourced from the Gazoku Collection of Kyushu University Library. See also Robert Campbell, "Tenpōki zengo no shogakai 天保期前後の書画会," *Kinsei bungei* (1987): 47–72.
- ⁴⁵ In *Jumyōzuke* 寿命付, an illustrated book published in the mid-nineteenth century that ranked the intellectuals who were living in Edo city at the time, the author Hata Ginkei 畑銀鷄 (1790–1870) listed Miki Kussai in the category of Confucian studies 儒学. In a 1987 article, Robert Campbell briefly mentions Kussai's involvement in *shogakai* banquets. See Campbell, "Tenpōki zengo no shogakai."
- ⁴⁶ Patricia Graham, *Tea of the Sages: The Art of Sencha* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 262. For detailed studies on the association of literati painting, see also Kōno Motoaki 河野元昭, "Nihon bunjinga to chūgoku shōkei 日本文人画と中国憧憬," *Shōbi gaku'en daigaku geijutsu jōhō kenkyū*, 12 (November 2007): 9–21; Melinda Takeuchi, *Taiga's True Views*.
- ⁴⁷ For an English translation of *Wusheng xi*, see Li Yu, and Patrick Hanan, *Silent Operas (Wusheng xi)* (Hong Kong: Research Centre for Translation, 1996).
- ⁴⁸ For a detailed examination on the adaptation of *yomihon* from Chinese vernacular novels, see Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武, *Nihon kinsei shosetsu to Chūgoku shōsetsu* 日本近世小説と中国小説 (Tokyo: Seishōdō, 1987).
- ⁴⁹ For comparisons between Li Yu's fiction and Japanese popular fiction, see Xiao Hanzhen, "Rigyo no sōsaku to sono juyō", and Miyake Hiroyuki 三宅宏幸, "'Kinseisetsu bishōnen roku,' 'Shinkyoku gyokuseki dōjūkun' to 'Niku buton' 『近世説美少年録』 『新局玉石童子訓』 と 『肉蒲団』," *Kinsei bungei* (2013): 41–56.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁵¹ Translated from *Bakin shokan shūsei*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2002), 108. The brackets indicate a fan shape from the original text that represents the shape of the window mentioned in Li Yu's *Xianqing ouji*.
- ⁵² For discussions on literati and the literati characteristics, see Nakamura Yukihiko 中村幸彦, *Kinsei shōsetsushi no kenkyū* 近世小説史の研究 (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1973); Lawrence E. Marceau, *Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan, 2004). For studies on the literati network in the middle Tokugawa period, see Anna Beerens, *Friends, Acquaintances, Pupils and Patrons: Japanese Intellectual Life in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Prosopographical Approach* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2006).

- ⁵³ See Hakkenden, preface of vol. 9, Takizawa Bakin, *Nansō Satomi hakkenden* 南総里見八犬伝 (Tokyo: Kadokawa gakugei shuppan, 2015). Translation by the author.
- ⁵⁴ Bakin was not happy with this reputation, though, as he complained in a letter that such repute was a nuisance. See Takizawa Bakin, Kanda Masayuki, and Shibata Mitsuhiko, *Bakin shokan shūsei*, 4:107.
- ⁵⁵ From Bakin’s memoir, “Nochi no tame no ki 後の為の記,” written around 1835. Translated by the author from Takizawa Bakin, ed. Kimura Miyogo 木村三四吾, *Takizawa Bakin: hito to shokan* 滝沢馬琴：人と書簡, (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 1998), 106. Translation by the author.
- ⁵⁶ Although there are still debates regarding whether or not Li Yu was the actual author of *Rouputuan*, Bakin believed that it was written by Li Yu, as can be observed from his letters and diaries.
- ⁵⁷ *Bakin shokan shūsei*, vol. 3, 107.
- ⁵⁸ *Bakin shokan shūsei*, vol. 5, 171.
- ⁵⁹ Detailed comparison can be found in Hsiao Hanchen’s “*Rigyo no sōsaku to sono juyō*.”
- ⁶⁰ William C. Hedberg, “Reclaiming the Margins: Seitā Tansō’s Suikoden Hihyōkai and the Poetics of Cross-Cultural Influence,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 12.2 (2015): 194; and “Separating the Word and the Way: Suyama Nantō’s Chūgi Suikodenkai and Edo-Period Vernacular Philology,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 41 2 (2015): 370.
- ⁶¹ Kimura Mokurō 木村黙老, *Gesakusha kō hoi* 戯作者考補遺 (Tokyo: Kunimoto shuppansha, 1935), 1, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1119689>. Accessed February 23, 2021.
- ⁶² Transcribed and translated by the author from *Kana tehon chūshingura*, sourced from the National Institute of Japanese Literature. http://dbrec.nijl.ac.jp/BADB_YKHC-00043 Accessed February 2022. Ōboshi Yuranosuke is a main character in the *jōruri* play *Chūshingura* and Takeda Izumo was a famous *jōruri* writer. See also Takagi Gen 高木元, “Robun no ‘Chūshingura’ 魯文の忠臣蔵,” *Ōtsuna joshi daigaku kiyō* 48 (March 1, 2016): 77–92.
- ⁶³ The National Diet Library, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/851533>, accessed July 2021.
- ⁶⁴ Tsubo’uchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙, *Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髓 (Tokyo: Shōgetsudō, 1882), preface. The citation comes from the original Japanese version. There is also an online English translation by Nanette Twine (1981). See “Shōsetsu Shinzui: the Essence of the Novel by Tsubouchi Shōyō,” translated by Nanette Twine, accessed January 4, 2022, <https://archive.nyu.edu/html/2451/14945/shoyo.htm>.

- ⁶⁵ See, for example, William Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness: Eccentricity and Madness in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013). See also *Kinsei bunjin ishiki no seiritsu*, 13.
- ⁶⁶ See notes 19 and 47.
- ⁶⁷ The history about Ōtani's activities in Asia in this section mostly referenced Shibata Mikio 柴田幹夫, "*Ōtani Kōzui no kenkyū: ajia kōiki ni okeru shokatsudō* 大谷光瑞の研究—アジア広域における諸活動" (Ph. D. diss., Hiroshima daigaku, 2013).
- ⁶⁸ Shibata, 37. See also "Yūzu o jitsugen subeku Kōzui-shi no ōki na ketsui," *Tokyo nichinichi shinbun*, May 1, 1920.
- ⁶⁹ Sano Katsuya, "Taisen ni arawaretaru shūkyōkai no shin-keikō 大戦に現れる宗教界の新傾向," *Fukuoka nichinichi shinbun*, January 13–16, 1918.
- ⁷⁰ Shibata, 39.
- ⁷¹ Sun Kaidi, *Zhongguo tongsu xiaoshuo shumu* 中国通俗小说书目 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1982), 165.