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The Household and its Discontents: Ejima Kiseki's *Seken musuko katagi*

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In the 1720s, amid the energetic shōgun Tokugawa Yoshimune's Kyōhō Reforms, Mitsui Takafusa 三井高房, the third-generation head of the Mitsui Echigoya clothier in Edo, set out to document the recollections of his father, Takahira. The result was *Chōnin kōken roku* 町人考見録 (A record of observations on townsmen), a lengthy manuscript consisting of anecdotal histories of major townsman (町人 *chōnin*) households of the seventeenth century. The text narrates in vivid detail and severe tone the rises and falls—mostly the falls—of the old guard of privileged merchant families whom the great patriarch Mitsui Takatoshi 三井高利 had outfoxed to forge the premier merchant household in all of Japan.[1] Though largely lacking in literary pretensions, the document resembles a collection of didactic tales, attempting to account for the laws of karmic-cum-economic causality that had led so many to fail where Mitsui had succeeded. The work is shot through with a unifying anxiety, bordering on religious terror, that the slightest slip into decadent personal comportment would inevitably lead the household into immanent ruination. Like so many didactic works, the collection is much more invested in depictions of failure than prescriptions for success; once the house fortune had been established through the efforts of its founding patriarch, the obligation of each future heir was to act as merely a custodian of the household's estate, preserving it over successive generations and increasing it incrementally through consistent and conservative business practices, rather than growing it in new directions through entrepreneurial endeavors. Indeed, the text shows remarkably little concern for any positive and substantive understanding of what the business of commerce entails as a creative act in itself. As Takafusa remarks at the opening of his preface, regardless of the differences among the various trades, all are in the end "merely a

matter of making money on interest" (*mazu wa kingin no risoku ni kakaru yori hoka nashi*).[2]

The late seventeenth century saw the establishment of the household (家 *ie*), sometimes translated as "stem family," as a nearly universal model of social organization throughout all ranks of Tokugawa society.[3] The institution of the household had of course existed in earlier eras—in slightly different forms, it was the orienting unit of medieval warrior society, and had been adopted by the more elite ranks of urban commoners—but it was not until the explosive economic expansion and social dynamism of the seventeenth century began to settle down that the household became truly universal, the basic unit through which the Tokugawa social order was reproduced from generation to generation.[4] In the case of the "townsman" class of urban merchants and craftsmen, the household was seen as owing its existence to the efforts of a founding patriarch who through heroic entrepreneurial efforts wrought from nothing the three components that defined the household: name, trade, and estate.[5] This definition may seem peculiar for placing the objective externalities of the household above its human members. Of course, the household could not exist without human proxies, and was centered on the atomic collective of husband, wife, and children (though it could also include the older generation as semi-members in a state of retirement or dependence, as well as apprentices, clerks, and servants). But it was the very nature of the household as a corporate entity that it transcended, contained, and to a certain degree dictated the individual subjectivity of any of its members, whose interests were subordinated to the sustained existence of the household and whose energies were thoroughly instrumentalized in service of its reproduction from one generation to the next.[6] This was true of even the household head, who—despite his significant privilege as the male patriarch who held near total authority over his wife, children, and other dependents—was himself ultimately only serving in a temporary and custodial role: he was subordinate to the authority of the household as a corporate entity driven by imperatives that transcended any individual head and that were often enforced by older relatives. To enjoy the security of the household was also to be subject to its stringent demands. And many of the literary heroes of the moment were precisely those who were unable to bear the pressures, obligations, and alienations wrought by the household and its custodians. The heroes of this moment are those who find themselves in secure and stable (if often middling) positions and utterly stultified by them. Chikamatsu Monzaemon's 近松門左衛門

romantic heroes, like Kamiya Jihei of *Shinjū ten no Amijima* 心中天網島 (*Love Suicides at Amijima*, 1721), were those who, despite having achieved (or inherited or married into) a respectable name and estate, and despite enjoying the love of family and regard in the world, choose to throw it away catastrophically in the tragic pursuit of true feeling not constrained or prescribed by familial obligation and social role.

One of the most astute and yet understudied critics of the townsman household was Ejima Kiseki 江島其磧 (1666–1735), a veritable exemplar of the degenerate heir that the patriarchs of the Mitsui house so feared and reviled.[7] Born Murase Gonnojō, Kiseki was the scion of a successful Kyoto rice-cake business that dated to the dawn of the Tokugawa era. The Murase house was of the elite milieu of old families that the Mitsui document decried as undisciplined and decadent: indeed, many of Kiseki's relatives appear in *Chōnin kōken roku* as individuals who led their families to ruin through high living and risky lending.[8] Kiseki assumed the position of household head and the hereditary shop name of Shōzaemon in 1695, but just as he was assuming the responsibilities of a fully-fledged townsman patriarch, he was also beginning to spend his energies on activities that would ultimately come to displace his hereditary trade. A habitué of the theater and a self-styled connoisseur of Kabuki acting, Kiseki began a side career as a writer by penning a series of puppet plays for the chanter Matsumoto Jidayū that were released by the Kyoto publisher Hachimonjiya Hachizaemon (Jishō), who would become Kiseki's ongoing patron.[9] His first great success came with *Yakusha kuchi jamisen* 役者口三味線 (The actor's vocal shamisen, 1699), an innovative and massively influential book of actor reviews, lavishly illustrated by the woodblock artist Nishikawa Sukenobu; the trio of Hachimonjiya, Kiseki, and Sukenobu soon branched into popular fiction with *Keisei iro jamisen* けいせい色三味線 (The courtesan's amorous shamisen, 1701).[10] Over the decade or so that followed, Kiseki dedicated increasing amounts of his time and energy to his literary dalliances with actor reviews and popular fiction before making the fateful decision, in 1714, to abandon his hereditary trade and name, establishing a publishing business under the name of Ejimaya and branding his works with the pen name by which he is still known. The Ejimaya would fold in under a decade, but it represents Kiseki's romantic attempt to trade the strictures of the townsman household—"the constraint on entrepreneurship that follows from the submission of person to lineage and hereditary calling"—for some

combination of the autonomy of the artist and the agency of the entrepreneur.[11]

The centerpiece of Kiseki's quixotic career as a townsman dropout was *Seken musuko katagi* 世間子息気質 (Characters of worldly young men; below, *Musuko katagi*), published as a flagship release for Kiseki's Ejimaya imprint in 1715.[12] A collection of fifteen stories in five volumes, *Musuko katagi* is a comic exploration of the petty vices that lead contemporary young men to disownment and ruination. The work was a major success, prompting the author to follow it with the spiritual sequels *Seken musume katagi* 世間娘気質 (Characters of worldly young women, 1717), *Ukiyo oyaji katagi* 浮世親仁形気 (Characters of old men of the floating world, 1720) and *Seken tedai katagi* 世間手代気質 (Characters of worldly shop clerks, 1730).[13] Later writers would continue to extend the titular trope of "character" to all manner of social types and categories: mothers, mothers-in-law, mistresses, millionaires, maidservants, matchmakers, doctors, Buddhist priests and preachers, linked verse poets, theater enthusiasts, tea practitioners, shogunal bannermen, and so on. Endlessly productive and unabashedly derivative, the so-called "character piece" (気質物 *katagi-mono*) would become the dominant genre of Kamigata popular fiction until the late eighteenth century, and would exert a profound influence on later Edo writers, like Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822), who took its central conceits and expressed them in different literary forms.[14] But Kiseki's works were narrower in focus and more pointed in the target of their satire, centered on familial roles within the domestic unit and on using them to dissect the ideology of the townsman household. This article focuses on the seminal *Musuko katagi*, Kiseki's alienated masterpiece. I argue that the work's seemingly light and occasionally nonsensical humor functions to deconstruct the ideology of the household and to reveal a set of troubling contradictions at the very center of the townsman self.

Prior studies of Kiseki have, nearly without exception, treated the author as an epigone of the great Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693), whose mercurial wit and unflinching humanism captured the urban zeitgeist of the late seventeenth century Genroku era and defined the form of popular comic fiction known to posterity as "floating world booklets" (浮世草子 *ukiyo-zōshi*). This is not merely because Kiseki was writing in the form carved out by Saikaku and was thus perhaps destined to be seen as a follower. Kiseki took the works of Saikaku as an object of self-

conscious study, enthusiastic emulation, and liberal appropriation: his works are littered with passages poached from Saikaku's works, ranging from an apt turn of phrase to an entire story with minor adjustments. Kiseki himself was nothing if not open about these debts, and his readers did not seem to mind: throughout the Tokugawa era, Kiseki was better known and sometimes more highly regarded than Saikaku. Even while recognizing that early modern Japan lacked modern notions of creativity, intellectual property, and thus plagiarism, scholarly discussions of his work still tend to begin and end with the unresolved question of how to take this intertextual practice—whether as a tribute to the writer that Kiseki considered his model, as an elaborately encoded system of "twists" on Saikaku's stories, or as raw opportunistic appropriation.[15] Moreover, even when Kiseki's work has been examined outside of its direct, intertextual relationship to Saikaku's writing, the author is still viewed largely in terms of his significance to literary history, generally as a popularizer: Kiseki did much to broaden the audience for the *ukiyo-zōshi* by simplifying its syntax, replacing Saikaku's poetic and elliptical style with fluid and easy-to-understand prose.[16] Such treatments treat Kiseki as primarily a competent formal innovator and stylist but one whose work lacked originality of content. The *katagi-mono* in particular continues to be apprehended primarily at the level of form: as a set of formal techniques for repackaging familiar tropes and types in a clever form for wider consumption.[17]

This article argues, to the contrary, that Kiseki's work contained an original vision, albeit one often expressed through subtle revisions to borrowed prose. Kiseki's vision was centered on the institution of the household, which between Saikaku's time and his had become all the more deeply entrenched in the values and lifestyles of the townsman class. Saikaku's fiction had captured the optimistic zeitgeist of the Genroku era as the cresting point of half a century of economic expansion, but already during Saikaku's time this climate of opportunity was shifting to one of insecurity and austerity that would culminate in the Kyōhō Reforms. Merchants who had made their fortunes as scrappy entrepreneurs were now aging patriarchs unsure of how to preserve their estates or pass the same on to their heirs, and they responded to this insecurity by embracing a stringent and conservative set of norms that dictated total submission to the economic imperatives of "house trade" (家職 *kashoku* or 家業 *kagyō*)—which, as the Mitsui document artlessly noted, was ultimately little more than preserving and incrementally increasing an inherited estate. The deepening importance placed on the household in townsman society

was in part driven by a rapidly commercializing woodblock print industry, which drove the development of new forms of informational and didactic print directed at the newly propertied and newly literate. The Osaka bookseller Mori Shōtarō's *Kenai chōhōki* 家内重宝記 (A record of great treasures for the home, 1689) spawned the genre of "record of great treasures" (重宝記 *chōhōki*)—wide-ranging reference almanacs that compiled basic, pragmatic information for daily use—and was soon followed by the massively popular *Onna chōhōki* 女重宝記 (A record of great treasures for women, 1692) and *Nan chōhōki* 男重宝記 (A record of great treasures for men, 1693), simple digests of the practical skills and cultural literacies expected of young women and men.[18] Closer to Kiseki's time, these would be followed by the didactic tracts of Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714), including *Wazoku dōjikun* 和俗童子訓 (Vernacular precepts for the instruction of children, 1711), which prescribed best practices for childhood education in the assumed context of the commoner household. This expanding body of didactic print matter drove the dissemination of what might be called "*ie* ideology": the rarely stated and even more rarely questioned assumption that the economic preservation of the household in perpetuity was a categorical good and existential priority.[19] This was the context that Kiseki was writing within and, as we shall see below, against. The product of Kiseki's townsman discontent was the genre of *katagi-mono*, a form of comic narrative that conceived of its protagonists only in relation to their familial roles, and that in so doing deconstructed those roles from the inside out.

The townsman household had of course existed during Saikaku's time, but its ideology had not been so deeply entrenched. Saikaku was more interested in what happened outside of its confines: the entrepreneurial efforts through which households were made and the spectacular displays of degeneracy that precipitated their collapse, in other words, the fascinating but terrifying liminality of the "floating world" that the household could never fully control. For example, Saikaku's *Honchō nijū fukō* 本朝二十不孝 (Twenty unfilial exemplars of Japan, 1686) had presented a series of explorations of contemporary vice, situated within the framework of the household (mostly, though not exclusively, that of the townsman) and its norms.[20] But Saikaku's interest was less in the household as such and more in the fate of the strong-willed individuals whose conduct it failed to constrain; in spite of the title of the work, he was not concerned narrowly with the norms of filial piety but more broadly

with good, evil, and moral causality writ large.[21] Kiseki's *Musuko katagi* was heavily indebted to *Honchō nijū fukō* among other works, but it was much narrower in scope: to Kiseki, the household was the horizon of social existence, a framework outside of which one could barely imagine existing. As leading Kiseki scholar Saeki Takahiro has observed, Kiseki's *katagi-mono* are characterized by a marked narrowness of social vision. In terms of setting, they take place in major cities—most often the three hubs of Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo—but are rarely marked with any sense of geographic specificity; socially speaking, they focus almost exclusively on the mid- to upper strata of townsman society.[22] In proportion to this narrowness and domesticity of vision, however, Kiseki was much more precise than Saikaku in his deconstruction of the household and the consciousness that it produced in its constituent members.

One clarification is necessary concerning the nature of the *katagi-mono*. This genre has often been assumed to be a compilation of "stock types" or familiar tropes. A common comparison is with the genre of Theophrastan "characters"—didactic sketches of common moral vices or character flaws—that saw a brief flourishing in early modern England.[23] But this comparison misrecognizes the nature of Kiseki's writing: the closer one looks at the *katagi-mono*, the less typical they seem. Certainly, Kiseki borrowed elements from Saikaku's writing, but usually these borrowings were either of a smaller scale (short passages of description, scenes of narrative development) or larger (whole stories) than the "character" in the sense of the English word, and very few actually resemble stock character types. Moreover, while Kiseki's characters do transgress a range of social norms, they do so in unexpected ways that lack the conceptual clarity of the Theophrastan characters: boor, bumpkin, sycophant, and so on. Kiseki's characters are not wicked or deficient so much as odd. To a degree that at times verges on the neurotic, Kiseki fixated upon characters who were truly eccentric, who defied expectations both social and literary, flouting norms of urban commoner decorum while also twisting and habitually subverting familiar narrative structures. As a consequence, Kiseki's works have often being criticized for saying very little about the types that they claim or seem to represent.[24] But Kiseki was after all not concerned with *social types* so much as with *social roles* and their failure to constrain individual conduct; his *katagi-mono* act as a house of mirrors, taking the idealized, normalized image of the proper townsman and refracting, inverting, and twisting it to comic effect. Moreover, despite presenting his works in a didactic frame—holding up his characters as

cautionary tales of the fates awaiting children gone wrong—the target of his satirical pen was not the screw-ups and drop-outs of townsman society: it was the ideology of the household itself.

The aim of this article is to reveal the nature of that deconstruction. Out of a concern for scope, I will focus on the seminal *Musuko katagi*, and rather than offering a broad description of the genre and its formal properties will focus on developing an interpretation of this work through close reading. This reading is necessarily selective: despite the apparent conceptual clarity of a genre centered on the norms of social roles, Kiseki's works exhibit a heterogeneity of content that resist reduction to a single interpretive lens. This challenge is shared with the *ukiyo-zōshi* writ large as a compilation of stories with only the most tentative guarantee of thematic unity, but Kiseki in particular had greater ability in iconic branding than he did in conceptual follow-through. Nevertheless, there are consistent themes that run through *Musuko katagi* that distinguish it from the work of Saikaku and that reveal the author's critical apprehension of the household and its values.

In particular, my reading focuses on how this work foregrounds the disruptive potentialities of leisure—the seductive appeal of play, which the ideology of the household persistently, though always incompletely, sought to excise in favor of work. In this regard, Kiseki's stories shared thematic concerns with Saikaku's early erotic pieces and with Chikamatsu's domestic dramas: such works tended to focus on the temptations of the brothel districts and of the culture of licensed prostitution, which were perceived to have an addictive quality that could ensnare otherwise upright townsmen and lead them into moral and (more importantly) financial dissolution. But to an equal and even greater degree, the urban culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was defined by another form of urban leisure, one that existed ubiquitously in all ranks of urban society: the "leisure arts" (遊芸 *yūgei*), sometimes simply the "various arts" (諸芸 *shogei*), consisting of amateur training in various cultural accomplishments. Even more than the brothel districts, the leisure arts were the target of intense anxiety, subject to complex and contradictory discourses that aimed to dictate what type and degree of involvement were appropriate for the proper townsman, and what place they had in the respectable townsman household. They brought the transgressive, liminal, boundary-blurring experience of urban leisure into the private, inner spaces of the townsman household itself; both an essential part of the household and a mode of transgression against that

very institution. *Musuko katagi* was among the first literary works to explore the contradictory place of the arts in the townsman household and their role in the formation, and de-formation, of the townsman self.

For the Honor of the Household and Its Repute in the World

Just as Mitsui attempted to account for the rises and falls of the households of his fellow townsmen, Kiseki opens *Musuko katagi* with his own diagnosis of the degenerate conduct and insolvent finances of his peers. In the opening story, "Tokusa-uri wa kokoro o migaku shōjikina hyakushō katagi" 木賊売は心を磨正直な百姓形気 (Selling scouring rushes to scrub the heart clean: the character of an honest peasant, vol. 1-1), Kiseki begins by citing a time-worn aphorism: "The father strives, the son indulges, and the grandson begs."[25] The remainder of the story serves to ask why: why do heirs tend toward prodigality, and why do they ruin the households that their fathers have worked so hard to build? In answering these questions, Kiseki presents a tongue-in-cheek but provocative and original critique of the townsman household.

The story introduces an anonymous old man, a peasant peddler of scouring rushes from Oku Tanba (to the northwest of Kyoto) and one of an aging couple that possesses neither children nor property and is resigned "to be a couple of but one generation" (that is, not to beget a household). As the old man heads into the city to sell his wares, he encounters a strange child of eleven or twelve, resembling a Buddhist acolyte, who reveals himself to be a supernatural emissary of the local deity, sent to the city to chastise parents for being too lenient with their children—parents who have moved away from their rural hometowns into the city, become townspeople, and raised their children amid urban culture. According to the acolyte, contemporary young men are wicked because their parents spoil them, and thus the parents who disown their sons are, in fact, the ones to blame. By Kiseki's time, such critiques were familiar: similar comments had been made at length by Kaibara Ekiken, whose discussion of commoner education in *Wazoku dōjikun* was likely Kiseki's template for this passage.[26] However, the distinguishing point in Kiseki's diagnosis of this common social ill is the attention that he gives, in the words of the acolyte, to the influence of the polite arts:

> Parents these days, even more than those in earlier times, have become decadent and put on airs beyond their station. They indulge their children in the leisure arts while taking it upon themselves to carry out the house trade.

> Year in and year out, they prod the young ones to practice the *nō* drum, and on the occasion of neighborhood gatherings delight in being told, "I had the pleasure of hearing the young master's drumming the other day during practice at Higashiyama. He made quite the impression—some were even saying that a paid performer-in-residence could hardly compare!" The father comes to be rather puffed up about it, and before long is using his connections to get the child placed in the *nō* retinue of some lord or another, thinking, "For the honor of the household and its repute in the world!"[27]

As the young aesthete associates more and more with the urban elite, he "knows not the toil of the floating world" and, in place of his house trade, immerses himself in the pursuit of refined forms of urban leisure, until his spending gets out of hand, and he faces disownment. Even then, the acolyte narrates with sadistic glee, the prodigal son is unlikely to reform, only to resent his parents all the more. Abandoned by his family, he falls in with unsavory companions, takes on the ruffian demeanor of a street tough, and pursues various schemes of fraud and extortion; as he falls into the morally corrupt depths of urban society, there is not the slightest chance for his reform.

There is a certain malice in the acolyte's tirade, a sneering tone that delights in revealing the vanity, dysfunction, and inter-generational resentment concealed within the image of the household as a harmonious and stable domestic unit. Unlike Saikaku's perspective in *Honchō nijū fukō*, Kiseki's vision is not of honest, hard-working parents and ungrateful, wicked children: it is of successive generations of prideful, petty opportunists who resemble and indeed deserve one another. To Kiseki, the fall of the household was inevitable, not a consequence of any individual failing, but born out of the contradictions of the institution itself. The acolyte's ultimate argument, directed at the "couple of one generation" with neither property nor heir, is that one is in fact better off doing without children in the first place: nothing less than a wholesale renunciation of the townsman household and its existential imperative to reproduce itself over successive generations. At the core of Kiseki's broadside against the household is an acute sensitivity to the role of the arts in townsman society and to their fraught place in the household: it is through training in the arts (here, the *nō* drum) that the vain father wishes to enjoy the fawning admiration of his peers and neighbors, to hobnob with warrior elites, and generally to increase "the honor of the household and its repute in the world" (*ie no menboku yo no gaibun*); and it is through the very same arts that the son falls into moral degradation and social obscurity. If the "house

trade" of the townsman was the symbol of his entrepreneurial will-to-power, then, to Kiseki, the arts contained the seed of his fatal hubris.

The "leisure arts" consisted of a range of aesthetic forms—like the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and *nō* chanting and drumming—that had originated as leisure pastimes among elite warriors and court aristocrats but had spread widely through commoner populations. By Kiseki's time, the arts included diverse leisure practices and forms of cultural training, ranging from Sinitic scholarship, medicine, classical poetry in Chinese and Japanese, calligraphy, and formal etiquette; to elite arts like kickball and incense appreciation; to popular forms like shamisen performance, chanting for the puppet theater (浄瑠璃 *jōruri*), and popular melodies (小唄 *kouta*). In contrast to earlier eras, when formal artistic training was, like literacy, the exclusive purview of elites—high-ranking warriors, the old Kyoto aristocracy, the elite Kyoto townsfolk (町衆 *machishū*), and the clergy—or else a marginal trade practiced by itinerant performers, the seventeenth century saw the popularity of all manner of literary, visual, and performing arts spread widely among commoners, especially among urban commoners of all ranks. As townspeople gained a modicum of surplus income and leisure time, the arts became the object of intense fascination by large circles of aspiring amateurs who used them as an opportunity for cultural finishing, self-expression, and socialization across otherwise rigid social hierarchies. This explosion in the popularity of amateur artistic training was one reflection of the emergence of a commercial marketplace for culture, as established systems of aesthetic practice, which had historically been the exclusive property of families with their own artistic genealogies and systems of direct transmission from teacher to student, became objects of instruction to wide audiences of aspiring amateurs in exchange for tutelage fees.[28]

Cultural historian Moriya Takeshi has observed that the leisure arts served important social functions as a metric of "repute" (外聞 *gaibun*), marking the relative standing of the individual household within the stratified townsman community of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.[29] A modicum of cultural sophistication by way of the arts was the mark of the successful household and the model townsman. Refinement of taste in culture and the arts was most strongly associated with the old families of Kyoto, many of whom had come into wealth and status through privileged relationships with warrior authorities. By the late seventeenth century, the members of this rarified stratum were increasingly thought to be commercially ineffectual but were nevertheless

the paragons of urban sophistication with whom new generations of entrepreneurial merchants sought to associate—indeed who they wished, perhaps despite themselves, to emulate. Ihara Saikaku had often commented on the stratification of townsman society and the cultural anxieties that it entailed. In *Shoen ōkagami* 諸艶大鑑 (The great mirror of myriad elegance, 1684), the writer comments on the "pocket directories" (袖鑑 *sode kagami*) of the capital: lists of the premier merchant households, intended both as a reference for commercial purposes and as a social who's-who of upper-class urban society:

> The pocket directories of the capital make three distinctions: the well-born, the wealthy, and the newly rich. According to popular custom, the well-born are those who have not practiced a trade for generations and simply pass on exquisite antiques from one generation to the next, enjoying tea with the snow and poetry with the flowers, sparing no thought from morning 'til night of worldly affairs. The wealthy are those recognized by local society, who do not cease business but leave the matters of the house up to their clerks and do not involve themselves in the details. The rich are those of recent good fortune, who have profited from the rising price of rice, met with success in speculation, or made money through lending, and still check even the ledgers themselves. But the mere possession of 10,000 *kanme* of silver hardly means that one can enter the company of the pedigreed families.[30]

The category of "well-born" (能衆 *yoishu*, sometimes read *yoishū*) was particularly fraught. The paradigmatic figure for this stratum was the *shimotaya*, sometimes *shimōtaya* 仕舞屋 (literally "closed-up shop"): the long-established, elite townsman family that had ceased business and continued to exist through the strategic lending of its profitable reserves of hereditary capital or through the purchase and rental of urban property. The *shimotaya* households of old Kamigata, especially in the historic neighborhoods of Kyoto and Sakai, were also known for their aesthetic sophistication, as the heads of many had abandoned their "house trades" to dedicate themselves to poetry, kickball, the tea ceremony, antique appreciation, and all the finer arts.[31] Mitsui Takahira lambasts such figures throughout *Chōnin kōken roku* as decadent degenerates. The text reserves particularly stern criticism for Mitsui Toshitsugu (uncle of Takahira and elder brother to the patriarch Takatoshi). In a striking parallel to the opening story of *Musuko katagi*, Toshitsugu, having developed an interest in *nō* theater, built a stage and encouraged his son to perform; in the end,

the son had "nothing of the spirit of the merchant" (*akindo kokoro wa kore naku*) and is described as an aesthete who immersed himself in *nō*, the tea ceremony, and board games and who "mastered all manner of other leisure arts" (*sono hoka yūgei ni yoku tasshite*) to become "a model of the extremes of townsman decadence" (*shigoku no chōnin no eyō-mono nari*).[32] However, despite these anxieties which were surely not unique to the Mitsui household, Saikaku's quote reveals a rarely spoken but widely understood truth running through townsman society: that wealth alone was not the mark of the man. The stigma that an entrepreneurial paragon like Mitsui sought to impose upon the *shimotaya* was merely the neurotic mirror image of this nearly universal aspiration toward the cultural refinement and leisurely existence of the "well-born." Within the upper reaches of urban society, training in a range of leisure arts took on the value of a formally optional but practically obligatory form of cultural finishing, a critical signifier of the public persona of the proper townsman household.

To a degree, the role of the arts as a signifier in service of "the honor of the household and its repute in the world" was a symbolic one, the kind of pecuniary performance of surplus that Thorstein Veblen identified with the leisure class: the conspicuous demonstration of unproductive activity that performs the privileged status of its agent. But the entrepreneurial townsman's concern for "repute" also had pragmatic dimensions, as basic fluency in a wide range of popular arts became a means of polite socialization and thus a key professional qualification.[33] "Repute" was an attribute that placed the merchant among his peers in the community of commerce; the arts became a concrete means of navigating social networks that were also economic networks, acting to connect and establish rapport with potential business partners. If the pursuit of cultural finishing through the leisure arts was in part a reflection of the social posturing of the newly wealthy, it was also colored by the deep pragmatism of a class that had not yet secured a stable position among the urban elite in either economic or cultural terms. Thus the instructional almanac *Nan chōhōki*, which may be considered a schematic textbook of the basic cultural literacies expected of the proper townsman male, dedicates a full two of its five volumes to introductory information on a range of widely popular and respectable leisure arts: volume 2 to calligraphy, Sinitic poetry, classical Japanese verse, linked verse, and *nō* chanting; and volume 3 to the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and board games.[34] The information provided therein is hardly comprehensive,

just enough so that the reader would not get caught out looking like an uncivilized fool should the arts come up as a topic of conversation. The value of the arts as a signifier of status was a manifestation of the symbolic economies of a society in which the hierarchies of money intersected in increasingly complex ways with those of culture, and in which the entrepreneurial merchant was endlessly striving and competing within both fields at once—a context in which, somewhat ironically, the arts hardly had the quality of leisure at all.

This is not to say that the only reason for the townsman's participation in the arts was out of a mercenary lust for cultural capital that could be converted to the social and ultimately to the economic. Eiko Ikegami has argued that the leisure arts drove the formation of "aesthetic publics": spaces in which the categories and hierarchies of the system of hereditary status (身分 *mibun*) could be provisionally suspended or transgressed, and in which individual practitioners of diverse backgrounds felt "their aesthetic enclave identities to be more profoundly rooted to their true selves than were their feudal categorical identities." [35] Similarly, Nishiyama Matsunosuke argues that the leisure arts were a fundamentally autonomous space of aesthetic play that was independent of any social determination or constraint: by pursuing training in a given art and donning an artistic sobriquet (芸名 *geimei*), the amateur practitioner participated in a utopian fantasy of freedom and equality that temporarily upended the feudal strictures of everyday life.[36] To a degree, certainly, the arts held the potential to suspend the status distinctions upon which the Tokugawa polity was built. Thus, in Kiseki's story, the father sponsors his son's training in *nō* drumming, which had been among the arts most prized by elite warriors before being adopted as an object of emulation by urban commoners; he does so partially in the interest of placing the child (and himself) in a position to rub elbows with *daimyō* and their retinues. And yet Kiseki, who was keenly attuned to the petty vanity of his townsman peers, makes clear that the company of warriors and even lords is ultimately incidental to a far more mundane kind of status display: that which takes place among the father's immediate community of townsman neighbors, "on the occasion of neighborhood gatherings" (*chō sankai ni*). Is the goal of such ostentatious display of distinction to transcend the status position of the townsman or to strategically reaffirm it?

If the arts enabled forms of socialization across boundaries of status and emergent forms of identity built on aesthetic experience, then we must nevertheless keep in mind that, as Pierre Bourdieu reminds us, aesthetic

distinction and sensibility are never entirely free from social determinations, whether those of status, class, or gender: that taste "functions as a sort of social orientation, a sense of one's place."[37] One is inclined toward the aesthetic forms and practices that are appropriate or proximal to one's social position and that therefore have come to symbolize legitimate membership in, and exemplary status within, one's given class. Aesthetic taste and cultural expression thus come to both reflect and reify the structures of the social field, legitimating everyday social hierarchies both by rendering them culturally legible and by positing them, through a symbolic sleight of hand, as innate and natural distinctions of personal substance. In other words, aesthetic practice does not transcend the everyday categories of social identity: it is through the aesthetic expressions of taste that distinctions of class and status come to be recognizable and taken for granted. Bourdieu perhaps overstates the deterministic quality of such processes, which may also allow for individual performances to innovate upon or subvert social norms even while citing and reproducing them.[38] If taste is to a degree determined unconsciously by habitus, then it may also be shaped aspirationally and deployed strategically in self-aware processes of performative self-formation, though always at the risk of charges of inauthenticity: pretense, affectation, or "putting on airs." It is this tendency toward strategic self-cultivation and performance, oriented toward the concrete and mundane goal of upward mobility and status prestige, that we see running through the culture of the leisure arts in Kiseki's time, as new generations of upwardly mobile merchants attempted to join the polite ranks of urban society, just as the old families clung to claims of cultural distinction as their economic clout waned in the face of the onslaught of new money.

To the degree that the leisure arts may have allowed a space for free socialization and self-expression unencumbered by status of birth, they were also, like the salaryman's game of golf or the middle-class daughter's classical-music training, a tactic for incremental position-taking within the steadily ossifying strata of townsman society. The arts could suspend social hierarchies, but they could also be used strategically to navigate those hierarchies and in doing so reinscribe them in the space of culture. When the wealthy townsman father boasts to his peers of his son's accomplishments in *nō* drumming, it is hardly out of the belief that such an art is closer to his true self (his son is doing the drumming, after all) than his role as a respected and wealthy townsman; rather, it is through the exemplary performance of proper taste that the status of townsman is

affirmed and reproduced, and by dutifully reproducing such taste, the father seeks to claim for himself "repute" within the community of townsmen. And as Kiseki frankly acknowledges, the subject of this "repute" is neither father nor son but the corporate household, on the behalf of which the father has compelled the son to perform. This is not to deny that the arts provided access to certain forms and degrees of boundary trespass, or that such status transgressions could be experienced as liberating. Many of Kiseki's hapless townsman antiheroes are precisely those who find their leisure personae to be truer than their hereditary status and familial role. But it must be kept in mind that townsman society as a whole was at best ambivalent about the threat that such boundary crossings represented to the everyday status quo. Moreover, the status quo that was threatened by such experiences of ludic liberation was, at least for the wealthy townsman, not that of the hereditary status system writ large, but the ideology of the townsman household itself, which sought to instrumentalize the energies and efforts of its members toward the single imperative to sustain and reproduce the estate established by the founding ancestor.

Indeed, townsman ideologues were intensely anxious about the influence of the arts if not carefully channeled in service of "repute." Warnings against the deleterious influences of the leisure arts can be seen since the earliest piecemeal articulations of urban-commoner values in the merchant house codes of the seventeenth century. The Hakata merchant Shimai Sōshitsu, whose seventeen-article testament to his heir, written in 1610, has perennially been mined for insights into merchant values, strictly forbade all forms of leisure practice, including board games, *nō* chanting and dancing, and the tea ceremony, along with sightseeing, pilgrimage, religious practice, and any kind of spending on ostentatious clothing and household goods.[39] Yamanaka Shinroku, founder of the Kōnoike house of Ōsaka, wrote a similar document in 1614, expounding at exhaustive length on the threats posed by the distractions of training in the leisure arts.[40] The frequent didactic admonitions made against the arts, which were widely seen as unproductive activities with addictive potential, were but one manifestation of the tensions surrounding consumption that were at the heart of late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century townsman culture: the opportunity to profit from the explosive growth of the domestic consumer economy, much of it driven by luxury spending on urban leisure, paired with the imperative to resist active participation in the same and thus avoid temptations and expenditures that might lead one

to financial insolvency and ruin. But even among the various temptations of urban leisure consumption—clothing, home renovations, lavish entertainment in the theater districts or (for men) the prostitution quarters—the leisure arts were the object of a particularly intense and contradictory set of neuroses. The direst warnings were reserved for the prodigal son or degenerate household head who became so lost in his leisure pastimes that they displaced his "house trade" as the focus of his energies. Even the singularly talented artist who knowingly opted out of his "house trade" in an attempt to make a career as a cultural professional would, in all but the most exceptional cases, be viewed by his relatives and peers as little but a failed townsman.[41] Henri Lefebvre's diagnosis of the place of leisure in early modern Europe applies here: "In so far as the man of those times was *genuinely* separated from social practice and devoted to leisure alone—to laziness—he was doomed both in a personal sense and from the point of view of class."[42] Thus goes the aphorism, "the misfortune of being saved by one's arts" (*gei ga mi o tasukeru hodo no fushiawase*).

And yet the townsman could not do without the arts entirely, for they were bound up in his very processes of self-formation. Saikaku had already understood how the identity of the townsman was inextricable from the culture of the arts that formed his taste and thus distinguished him from other classes. In *Nippon eitaigura* 日本永代蔵 (Japan's eternal storehouse, 1688), Saikaku wrote the following:

> By and large, the wealthy of Osaka have not been thus for many generations. For the most part, they are those who were once laborers and servants but worked their way up into wealth with some amount of good luck. Without even meaning to, they became versed in the ways of poetry, kickball, archery, the *koto*, the flute, the drum, incense, and tea, and thus came also into good company, and before long their countrified accents have vanished.[43]

If the old families like those of Kyoto could use their long pedigrees of cultural refinement to distinguish themselves from new money, then for the newly wealthy, the arts served a dual function. On the one hand, pursuing training in the arts, whether for themselves or for their children, was a means of coming into "good company" (*yokihito-zukiai*), with all the benefits both tangible and intangible that such brought. But on the other, it was the means by which the entrepreneurial townsman distinguished himself from his roots in the peasantry and the urban laboring classes. As much as the mobility of money, it was the mobility of

culture that made the townsman who he was, that defined the townsman self by distinguishing him from his others. The constraints and imperatives that the ideology of the townsman household placed onto the arts were reflections of its many class anxieties: both those directed at the classes it wanted to emulate, and those directed at the lesser selves that the upwardly mobile townsman hoped to leave behind.

The Misfortune of Being Saved by One's Arts

To a humorist like Kiseki, the townsman's conflicted fixation on the arts offered a gold mine of rules to be comically broken and neuroses to be antagonized in the course of a relentless lampoon of the household and its values. Kiseki's comic antiheroes are, by and large, those who resist the mandate to engage in leisure cultivation "for the honor of the household and its repute in the world." Indeed, they are the deviant sons who risk bringing shame (or at least disrepute) upon their households through their often willfully bizarre leisure pastimes. Kiseki is concerned with the amusing situations that stem from this eccentric conduct, but he also attends to its social consequences, as the individual deviants run their houses into insolvency or are pushed out by disownment, drifting toward the margins of townsman society and beyond.

In "Dairiki wa mi no kizu shindai nageta sumō-tori katagi" 大力は身の疵身代なげた相撲取形気 (Wounded by his own strength: the character of a sumo wrestler who tossed his own estate, vol. 2-3), Kiseki narrates a father's frustration as he reflects on the unbecoming conduct of his three sons.[44] The father, a fabulously wealthy Kyoto merchant and a leader among the trade association of moneylenders, retires and leaves the household in the hands of his eldest son, Magotarō, who soon begins spending the family fortune on the courtesans of the Shimabara brothel district. Magotarō is promptly disowned, and the position of household head is passed to the second son, Magojirō, who is of a somewhat more eccentric disposition. Unlike his refined, and smooth-talking elder brother, "he was tall and swarthy, his arms and legs strapped with sinews, and had from a young age boasted of his strength." In keeping with his impressive physique and rowdy comportment, he becomes infatuated with sumo wrestling, spending his hours tossing the servants about in a homemade ring, inventing new throws, and competing in charity matches and nearby village festivals. The father soon disowns Magojirō as well and passes the household's duties to his third son, Magosaburō. This son, too, has his own quirks: he has become obsessed with *jōruri* puppetry, has transformed his

room into a miniature stage, and invites the servants of nearby houses over to watch his amateur performances. In the end, the father gives up on all three sons and adopts an heir (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Seken musuko katagi,* vol. 2, 12u-13o. Waseda University Library.

The humor of the story centers on norms of townsman leisure, norms that aimed to regulate not only the degree to which the heir might indulge in leisure activities, but also the kinds of pastimes that were deemed acceptable, fitting, or even advantageous to the interests of the house. The central joke, to which Kiseki returns repeatedly throughout *Musuko katagi*, is that in the end, one could do much worse than spend time in the brothel districts, which, by the early eighteenth century, were deemed a perfectly acceptable form of leisure for the wealthy townsman, if indulged in moderation. In contrast to the run-of-the-mill profligacy of the first son, the hobbies of the second and third sons seem willfully eccentric, as if designed to violate the elite townsman's sense of propriety. Witnessing Magojirō's intransigent attachment to sumo wrestling, the father reprimands him:

> Now, a man might amuse himself with the *koto*, chess, calligraphy, and painting, or even tea, kickball, archery, and *nō* chanting. But stripping down naked and putting your body in harm's way for sport! *Is this the conduct of the son of a pedigreed townsman, one who makes loans even to daimyō? From now on, put a stop to this and find a more appropriate form of recreation.*[45] (Emphasis added)

Much of this is borrowed verbatim from one of the stories in Saikaku's *Nijū fukō*: "Muyō no chikara jiman" 無用の力自慢 (A useless show of strength, vol. 5-3), likewise concerning a townsman son who takes up sumo wrestling.[46] The italicized portion is Kiseki's addition, which serves to highlight the class anxiety at the heart of the adaptation: whereas Saikaku's original was primarily concerned with norms of filial piety (risking injury to the body given to one by one's parents), Kiseki's use of the same tropes centers on the question of social propriety within the elite townsman context. A similar class anxiety extends to the third son, Magosaburō, who is absorbed not in *jōruri* chanting or shamisen playing, both of which were low and marginal arts but not without popular followings among townsmen and even warriors, but with puppetry, a highly specialized art that was strongly associated with the outcast status of its practitioners. In spite of the persistent stigmatization of the leisure arts in didactic discourses of the townsman household, the father's issue is not with the pursuit of leisure as such, which he acknowledges to be acceptable and even laudable for the upper-class townsman son, but with forms of leisure that are out of keeping with that position.

In selecting such eccentric arts, Kiseki pokes fun at a set of anxieties about the role of leisure practice as a fundamental piece of the townsman's processes of self-formation: in particular, a fear that unconventional leisure practices could produce dysfunctional townsman selves—indeed, that they would inevitably produce a movement away from a proper townsman self and toward the townsman's others. As the story moves toward its conclusion, Kiseki's tableau of eccentric leisure practices transmutes into a study of the modes of social existence beyond the margins of townsman society. After the father adopts a respectable heir, the narrator briefly summarizes the fates of all three sons: the eldest becomes the proprietor of a low-grade illicit brothel in the unlicensed brothel district of Miyagawa-machi, the second becomes a cart driver in Shimo-Toba, and the youngest becomes the door-crier for a sideshow. Kiseki refracts the arts of whoring (色遊び *iro-asobi*: the codified mores of the licensed prostitution quarters and etiquette of interacting with high-

ranking courtesans, taught as a leisure art in its own right), sumo wrestling, and puppetry into marginal occupations, tracing a trajectory out of upper townsman society and toward the social periphery. Through these trajectories, Kiseki prods a pervasive anxiety toward the urban others against whom the upwardly mobile townsman had defined himself: the laboring underclass, out of which many now-respectable townsmen had pulled themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps, and the demimonde, which offered the male townsman an idealized experience of refined and unfettered play but always carried the eerie aura of misery and ruination. And yet, along with that apprehension, one detects in Kiseki's humor a parallel fascination with the exotic allure of the alternate forms of social subjectivity that might exist beyond the boundaries of polite society: a desire to see eccentric dispositions cultivated through deviant arts and realized as alternative occupations, even if marginal ones. Rather than moral satire, Kiseki's work expresses a nuanced and unsettling empathy with the household's deviants and drop-outs.

As Kiseki's stories shift from anxieties about the boundaries of townsman identity toward a phantasmal fascination with the townsman's others, they offer hints of an alternative narrative of opting out of proper townsman society: a narrative desire to imagine the possibility of social trajectories that reject the alienations of the townsman household. By and large, Kiseki accomplishes this by inverting the hierarchy of work and play and reconfiguring livelihood as an extension of leisure practice—in short, by transforming leisure into anything other than a hollow signifier of "repute." A telling, if somewhat facile, example may be found in one of Kiseki's later works, *Tedai katagi*. In "Tokuigata o kataritsukeru jōruri wa akinai no motode" 得意方を語り付る浄瑠璃は商の望姓 (Chanting his way into his clients' pockets, *jōruri* becomes business capital, vol. 2-3), two brothers are adopted as clerks for different businesses: the elder, to a seller of Buddhist robes; the younger, to a dealer in sundries.[47] Both are diligent enough, but become absorbed in their preferred leisure arts: the elder, in *jōruri* chanting; the younger, in Buddhist learning. These pastimes cause problems for their respective businesses when the elder brother regales his customers (members of the Buddhist clergy) with *jōruri* gossip, while the younger, selling cosmetics and accessories to the maids of his customers, attempts to lecture them on Buddhist morality. The problems are resolved when the two trade positions, each ending up in a job whose customers share his leisure tastes. When the elder brother subsequently has a falling out with his new master, he sets up his own business in sundries, relying

on the popularity furnished by his amateur *jōruri* ability to steal his master's clients. *Tedai katagi* is a much less cynical work than *Musuko katagi*, using ingenious narrative twists to move toward conclusions that maintain the integrity of the household, albeit through the diligent and clever labors of its clerks rather than the efforts of its head. *Musuko katagi*, in contrast, is deeply skeptical of any handy resolution of the tension between work and play, especially one that would serve and reproduce the interests of the household. Leisure arts reshaped and redirected in accordance with "house trade," play in the service of work: to the contrary, Kiseki's deviant protagonists are unsatisfied until play has displaced work altogether as the very core of the townsman's self.

It goes without saying that this trajectory mirrored Kiseki's career. Whether the author himself believed his fate to be one of misfortune, this was very likely the feeling of his relatives and peers when he established his Ejimaya imprint in 1710, and all the more so when, in 1714, he bequeathed his long-established rice-cake business to a relative, effectively ending his family line. The precise reasons for Kiseki's decision to start this enterprise at the late age of forty-four are open to some degree of conjecture. Later anecdotal accounts would attribute the fall of the house of Murase to Kiseki's individual dissolution, framing Kiseki as the typical degenerate townsman scion who frittered away his inherited fortune in the brothel quarters; although such accounts would form the basis for modern authorial portraits, they should be taken as more hearsay and literary conceit than fact.[48] Rather than prostitution, Kiseki's main pastime as a youth had been the Kabuki theater, a cultural literacy that he ultimately converted into an amateur career as a writer of actor reviews and, in time, into a fraught career as a quasi-professional author of popular fiction.

Fiction, it should be noted, was far from an established leisure art at the time. Modern scholars have often suggested that writing fiction might have been seen as unsavory, but we have little concrete evidence that authorship was explicitly stigmatized.[49] It was simply culturally illegible. Saikaku had come to be celebrated as a popular writer, but his authorial persona had built off his reputation as a celebrated linked-verse poet; Kiseki's grandfather, better known by his retired Buddhist name of Sōkyū, had been a student of classical linked verse, once scolded by the poet Satomura Shōtaku for being too critical of his peers (Shōtaku is said to have remarked, "Let the mochi shop stick to making mochi."), and Kiseki's father likewise was a *haikai* poet who dabbled in other polite

arts.[50] In comparison with such arts, which were recognized (if sometimes contested) as the proper pedigree for the wealthy townsman, the writing of fiction likely appeared to Kiseki's relatives as a nonsensical indulgence, something akin to sumo wrestling or puppeteering.

The Problem with Literacy

Kiseki maintained an ambivalent sympathy for the fools whose deviant dispositions led them out of polite townsman society, but his most wicked humor and most nuanced social commentary were reserved for the exemplary townsman: the well-heeled heir who effortlessly performs the norms of the household. In the house of mirrors that was the *katagi-mono*, not even the most diligent individual would escape a ridiculous and ignominious fate. Kiseki delighted in finding twists and potholes that would send the earnest scion precipitously into straits that were just as unenviable as those of the most unrepentant of degenerates. It was through such exemplary figures that he was able to deconstruct the household on its own terms: to show that its norms were riddled with contradictions and to reveal its ideals as thinly concealed pathologies. Kiseki's prodigal children were not mere deviants. They were, in the proper sense, *enfants terribles*, embodying the ways in which the household, and the townsman's idealized self-image within it, contained the seeds of its own ruination.

One discursive move made to contain the threat represented by the leisure arts was to prioritize a small and relatively practical set of key cultural literacies, centered, above all, on literacy as such: on the skills of reading and writing, along with basic arithmetic. Kaibara Ekiken wrote in *Wazoku dōjikun* that commoner children "should be taught only arithmetic and writing, and should focus on their house trades," and that they should, under no circumstances, be exposed to the "harmful, useless, miscellaneous arts" (*itazura, muyō-naru zatsugei*).[51] But Kiseki, whose highly deviant leisure art of choice was the very act of writing, was aware of the subversive potentialities concealed even within literacy itself: how the basic skills of reading and writing were inextricably linked to higher level literacies that verged into more transgressive forms of leisure and contained the troubling possibility of fashioning alternative selves.

The problem of literacy and its ambivalent status within the townsman household is the topic of "Iken wa kikanu kusuri kokoro o naosanu isha katagi" 異見はきかぬ薬心をなをさぬ医者形気 (Unheeded advice makes for ineffective medicine: the character of a doctor who wouldn't mend his

own ways, vol. 2-1).[52] Like many of the stories in *Musuko katagi*, this one is framed by didactic admonitions against the baleful influence of the arts, but here these warnings are directed specifically against the pursuit of the polite arts in the service of townsman vanity and repute. Kiseki's narrator, echoing the good sense of Ekiken, suggests that the responsible townsman son should instead focus on the skills of writing and "after training in penmanship, take up scholarship." We are then introduced to just such a diligent son, who, upon hearing such sound advice, "promptly ceased the myriad arts that he had begun learning" and sets on a course of Confucian study; as if to underline the juxtaposition with the misbehaving *nō* drummer in the opening story, the illustration shows him having his drumming equipment destroyed (Figure 2). But the young man soon comes to focus on scholarship at the expense of his responsibilities to his own trade, taking on the moralizing posture of a Confucian scholar. His scholarly affectation stands in the way of business when, in response to routine complements from customers, he criticizes them for flattery by quoting from the *Analects*, in literary Sinitic: "It is said that 'Benevolence is seldom found alongside skilled words and an ingratiating countenance.' People like you, who live only by insincerity, miss my true virtue." As long-time customers start to avoid the shop, put off by the son's pedantic rebuffs, the house clerks intervene, complaining to the father that "the young master's learning will be the end of this household.... If he would only spend a bit of time learning the abacus instead, it would do the house a great service!" But the son remains intransigent and begins, as an extension of his new persona as would-be-Confucian scholar, to study and practice medicine, to catastrophic results: offering unsolicited and untested medicines to servants, neighbors, and tenants. The situation soon gets out of hand when one of the family's tenants falls ill due to a quack cure; the father, realizing that the son has crossed a line, finally disowns him.

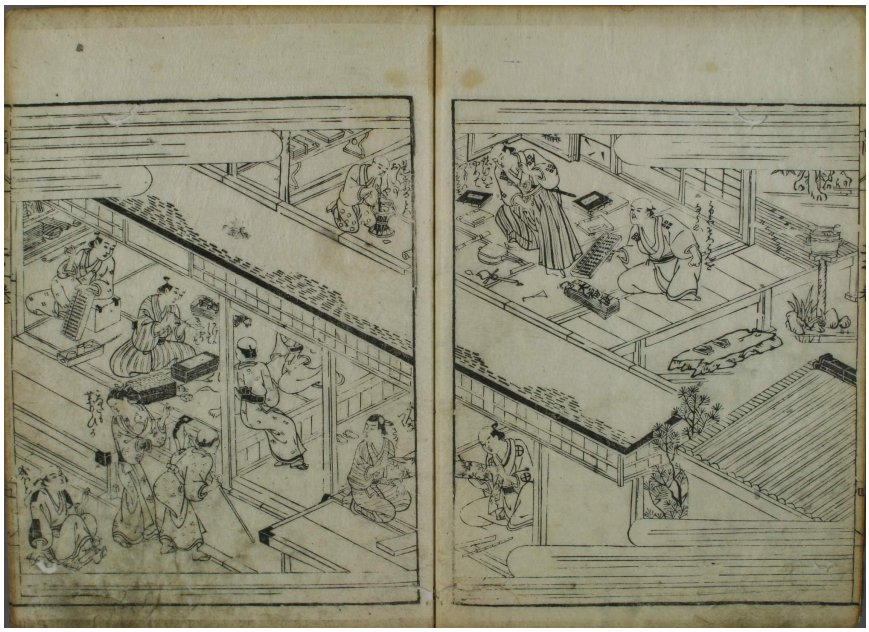

Figure 2. *Seken musuko katagi,* vol. 2, 4u-5o. Waseda University Library.

Though the story opens by criticizing the townsman culture of leisure arts as superficial and positing Confucian scholarship as a more wholesome pastime, scholarship is ultimately shown to be just as harmful and useless as the "harmful, useless, miscellaneous arts." The amusing crux of the story is in witnessing how a path of modest and responsible learning goes immediately awry. But behind this flip comic inversion is Kiseki's close attention to the ideologically problematic gray area between, on the one hand, a modest program of pragmatic study in the interest of the household and, on the other hand, indulgence in scholarship as a leisure art in its own right, one that contains the possibility of displacing "house trade" and throwing the household into disarray.

The boundary between the basic study of literacy and arithmetic and the higher forms of scholarship was, after all, poorly defined. Laura Moretti has observed that popular conceptions of literacy in Tokugawa Japan were based on a distinction between basic literacy (手習い *tenarai*: literally, "learning the hand") and scholarship (学問 *gakumon*): the former essentially reading and writing and the latter referring to "the study of books written in literary Chinese and designed in such a way as to teach correct behavior—in other words, ethical knowledge."[53] Despite the

appearance of a dichotomy between the two that seems to parallel the dichotomy between vernacular Japanese and literary Sinitic, Moretti contends that the two were merely ends of a continuous spectrum. Basic vernacular literacy offered many gateways into higher forms of learning and multiple intersecting literacies, and, even through self-study mediated by printed texts, "some bridging between *tenarai* and *gakumon* was possible."[54] This continuity between pragmatic training in basic literacy and the potentially limitless horizons of *gakumon* caused no small amount of anxiety in the educational philosophy of an educator such as Kaibara Ekiken. Ekiken maintained that children should only learn basic literacy and focus on their "house trades," but his own curriculum for basic education, drawn as it was from the Confucian classics, was itself built on the continuity between the skills of basic *tenarai* and the higher-level literacies and forms of intellectual discourse based on mastery of literary Sinitic and fluency in the Confucian canon. Was such training in advanced literacy and intellectual discourse to be embraced as a natural, desirable, or even obligatory extension of basic literacy, or should it be dismissed as an impractical and potentially distracting form of recreation akin to a leisure art? The problem that Ekiken's didactic works were unable to solve was just this: if any orthodox program of education charted a continuous trajectory from *tenarai* into *gakumon*, and if the mandate of *gakumon* was an unending program of intellectual and moral cultivation through textual study, then did not literacy itself contain the latent potential to subvert, relativize, and transcend the ideological frameworks of the townsman household? This is the threat satirized by Kiseki's deviant townsman scholar.

A further irony of the would-be townsman scholar is that his investment in the scholarly arts is at once both too deep and too shallow: too deep, in that his obsessive interest in learning comes to displace his "house trade," but too shallow, in that his learning is lacking in substance and is a mere dilettantish affectation. The opening narration, which borrows at length from Saikaku's *Shin kashōki* 新可笑記 (A new laughable record, 1688), decries the efforts of townsman amateurs in the tea ceremony, medicine, flower arrangement, and other polite arts as undercooked manifestations of materialist vanity, a reflection less of dedication to aesthetic refinement than to mercenary pursuit of reputation and standing among one's peers.[55] To Saikaku, who was a highly accomplished cultural professional (poet) in his own right, this was an incidental failure of his fellow townsmen, who could be proper artists if

only they would pursue the arts for their own sake. But Kiseki's key insight, the deeper truth that he found within Saikaku's sardonic commentary and that he developed into his own original critique, was that this failure was hardly incidental. It was no accident that townsman practitioners tended to be superficial in their knowledge of the arts because, to the townsman, the arts were merely a vehicle of "the honor of the household and its repute in the world," a medium of social intercourse and shared cultural literacy rather than a means of spiritual cultivation or self-expression. In other words, the arts to the townsman were valued above all as signifiers.

The accepted standard was one of being conversant rather than being a specialist: one only needed to be as competent as one could expect one's peers to be, and by the same token, functional competence in a modest range of arts was more desirable than a very high level of specialization in one. Ekiken gives this stricture a Confucian color: "Even for the useful arts, if you give excessive affection to only one, then your spirit will become biased toward it rather than commuting freely with all things."[56] The standard of broad but shallow cultural literacy is nowhere better exemplified than in the *chōhōki*, which give only the most rudimentary introduction to terminology and entry-level "gist" (*omomuki*) of the arts discussed: just enough to keep up with a conversation on the topic, perhaps, but hardly enough to satisfy a demand for independent self-instruction. Although "Unheeded Advice Makes for Ineffective Medicine" begins with a critique of townsman dilettantism, such dilettantism was precisely the point, as the alternative path of serious "scholarship" was, from the perspective of the household, likely to cause as much harm as good. Once the seemingly diligent son has "mostly gotten through the enunciation of the Four Books," he grandly declares himself to be a scholar, but his failure is neither that of choosing the wrong art nor that of having not studied it deeply enough, but that of not recognizing that *his learning was always supposed to be superficial*: a practical tool set in service of commerce, or else a signifier of a refined self and an instrument of repute, but nothing more.

From Signifiers of Repute to Signifiers of Deviance

Concealed within Kiseki's seemingly satirical stories of the ignominious failures of townsman screw-ups and eccentrics is this deceptively nuanced commentary on the values and norms of the household. Takahashi Akihiko identifies Kiseki's *katagi-mono* as inaugurating a genre of "fool's tales"

(愚人譚 *gujintan*): narratives of comic failure by those who diverge from society's norms. Although the "fool's tale" appears at first glance as satire, with the reader and author residing safely on the side of "common sense" to ridicule and thus police the kinds of conduct that defy it, Takahashi suggests that the form transcends mere didacticism. The "fool's tale," in the form of the *katagi-mono*, is an ironic genre that "harbors as its orienting axis a skepticism toward all values": it twists the satirical form to throw into question the very norms themselves, which exist only to be frustrated and turned on their heads for comic effect. But while questioning the legitimacy of any orthodox or mainstream values, the "fool's tale" also demonstrates the impossibility of imagining a legitimate alternative: the doxa may lack legitimacy, but anyone who should attempt to escape it through anti-heroic transgression is doomed to be a fool and a failure.[57] Takahashi's reading is an insightful one, and one of the few scholarly attempts to grapple with the ideological implications of this genre, but I would suggest that Kiseki's insight was a degree deeper than this. Kiseki perceived that the norms of the household and the modes of their transgression were merely two sides of the same coin, both rooted in a semiotic logic wherein the arts act merely as a set of signifiers lacking in substance. The amateur townsman enthusiast, who has internalized this very logic, is, even in his most deeply felt and passionately pursued leisure arts, unable to escape this logic: if the normative arts of the townsman house were mere signifiers of "repute," then the unbecoming arts of the townsman eccentric were mere signifiers of alternate selves. In attempting to opt out of the household to cultivate a persona as a cultural professional, he is doomed to be inauthentic, for inauthenticity is all he knows.

Even and especially in his most outlandish caricatures, Kiseki finds an unsettling pathos in this condition. In "Seken no hito ni hanage o yomaruru kajin katagi" 世間の人に鼻毛をよまるゝ哥人形気 (Strung along by those better versed in the ways of the world: the character of a poet, vol. 3-1), Suketarō, the bright and diligent adopted heir of an Edo merchant, eschews the usual youthful vices of the pleasure quarters, taking his leisure instead in the study of classical verse.[58] Like the would-be doctor's initial pursuit of Confucian learning, this is presented as a sign of his good sense, propriety, and modest sophistication, and as an exemplary signifier in service of the "repute" of his household. One evening while on a boat outing with his father-in-law, he is moved by the beauty of the moon over the water and composes a verse; his poem is overheard by one of his fellow revelers, a certain Dōtetsu, who senses an opportunity to insinuate himself

into wealthy company. Complimenting the young man on the quality of his verse, Dōtetsu goes on to remark that his wife maintains a correspondence with an aristocratic household in Kyoto in which she had once served, and that he might include the verse in his wife's next letter; if all goes well, the master might offer his evaluation or even include the poem in a future anthology. Suketarō, floored by the possibility, insists that Dōtetsu go himself and offers to pay for his trip and all its attendant expenses. When Dōtetsu returns after several weeks, he reports the aristocrat's supposed response:

> After taking some time reciting it, he responded, saying, "The idea is interesting, but the poetry of a mere commoner after all can hardly be sublime, possessing as it does a natural vulgarity. Townsmen always have their hearts set on how to make a living and are caught up in their own lust for profit; thinking intently on this day and night, their poetry is profoundly vulgar. Fun'ya no Yasuhide's poetry may have been like a merchant wearing silk, but this is like someone in cotton garb trying to judge incense. It's regrettable however you look at it."[59]

The reference is to the *kana* preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, ca. 905), in which Ki no Tsurayuki writes of Fun'ya no Yasuhide that his words are skilled but not fitted to the content, "like a merchant wearing fine silks." The simile of "someone in cotton garb trying to judge incense" comically transposes this sentiment to the Edo period, when merchants were expected to wear cotton and judging incense was seen as an aristocratic pastime, while deftly invoking the concern with authenticity that was part and parcel of the class-specific nature of aesthetic distinction. Dōtetsu has in fact fabricated the story and simply pocketed the money, but the purported response of the aristocrat is revealing, for it shows a stereotypically aristocratic attitude toward the capacity for cultural production: the commoner can compose only vulgar poetry because the social being of the commoner is fundamentally vulgar. Although Dōtetsu intends these remarks to come off as callous and cutting, the oblivious Suketarō receives the response gratefully as earnest advice, interpreting it to mean that he will write better poetry if he distances himself from commerce, and begins dressing and conducting himself like an aristocrat. His sartorial performance of aristocratic mores immediately collapses into travesty, for, in terms of the status distinction between townsman and aristocrat, clothes alone hardly make the man. The grim and terribly precise irony of Kiseki's conclusion

is that Suketarō, having been chastised for writing poetry that is merely elegant signifiers lacking in elegant substance, can only respond with a proliferation of more signifiers, his appearance collapsing into a grotesque cosplay, a kind of hypertrophied fetishism for signifiers of the poetic tradition:

> Thinking that he had no choice but to become an aristocrat in body and soul, he grew out his hair... he abruptly changed his trade, setting up shop as a seller of incense oil and buying up a dealer in face powder to boot. Whenever he wrote a poem, he would sign it with great delight, writing in black ink: "Cheap Verse" Fujiwara, Deputy of Musashi. He was afflicted with the illness known as *waka*, and as soon as his father passed away, his estate fell rapidly into ruin, and he came to live in a pitifully small tenement in Kanasugi. His "mighty paper jacket" in tatters, he became a "vagabond from a distant land," and, spiraling into debt, he wanted for even a "single demon's mouthful" to eat, but even if he furrowed his brow like [poetic immortal] Sarumaru Dayū, he couldn't find a way to get by. In the end, he broke the "ore-red earth" and, carrying a load of thirty scallions on his shoulders, made a living selling his deep-rooted poetic spirit.[60]

As the story concludes, it devolves into nonsense, as Kiseki closes with a series of progressively more far-fetched plays on words. Like most puns, the wordplay is virtually untranslatable. Suketarō switches his business to selling hair oil, known as "incense oil" (*kyara no abura* or *kyara-abura*), simply because the term *kyara* (incense) carries aristocratic connotations. His pen name, "Cheap Verse" Fujiwara (藤原の安文 Fujiwara no Yasubun), alludes to the name of Fun'ya no Yasuhide while suggesting the literal meaning of "cheap verse." The nonsensical "mighty paper jacket" (*chihayafuru kamiko*) and "vagabond from a distant land" (*hisakata no tenjiku rōnin*) are plays on pillow words: "mighty" (*chihayafuru*) a conventional epithet for "god" (*kami*) but here instead *kamiko* (paper jacket) and "distant" (*hisakata no*) conventionally for "India" (*Tenjiku*) but here in the compound *tenjiku rōnin* (vagabond). The reference to a "demon's mouthful" (*oni hitokuchi*) alludes to the Akutagawa episode of *Ise monogatari* (*The Tales of Ise*), and so on and so forth. The coup de grâce is "thirty scallions": a pun on *misojihitomoji* (thirty-one syllables), an elegant term for classical verse that Kiseki breaks into *misoji* (thirty) and *hitomoji*, a feminine word for Japanese scallions (*negi*); "deeply rooted" (*nebukaki*) suggests *nebuka*, another synonym for *negi*. The passage is not intended to make narrative sense or present a coherent

vision of this character and his social prospects: it is simply a pastiche of vocabulary variously linked to the tradition of classical Japanese verse. Narrative collapses into nonsense.

Or perhaps not nonsense, for this language is ordered by a different sort of sense: that of poetic association and other forms of associative linkage that constitute a culture of poetic verbal play with roots in the poetic tradition. But neither is this a terribly authentic evocation of poetic language, for Kiseki, who lacked Saikaku's training in linked-verse poetics and the grasp of the classical vernacular canon mediated through that, invokes only the most commonplace of pillow words, allusions, and classical references, shifting focus from the codified poetic associations of the classical tradition to corny punning. Kiseki's verbal play is a broad aping of the language of the poetic tradition, a clever play of signifiers but one that inevitably comes across, indeed, as lacking in substance. Kiseki was in many ways a pastiche artist who cobbled together textual mosaics through citations drawn widely from the world of popular print, and this ingenious travesty of poetic language, which obliquely and loosely evokes associations of the Kyoto aristocracy, was a showpiece of his writing craft. But along with this technical showpiece and buried just beneath the caricature of poetic language, we are also given the chilling portrait of the fractured consciousness of the lumpen townsman dilettante.

Like many of Kiseki's protagonists, Suketarō is unable either to recognize or to accept the proper limits of townsman leisure, but he is equally unable to recognize the limitations of his own poetic ability and the utter impossibility of his cultural ambitions—he is unable to see that his own language is a travesty, that he is doomed to be both a failed merchant and an inauthentic living parody of an aristocratic poet. In his elaborately costumed pantomime of aristocratic mores, we see the dilettante whose consciousness has been so consumed by fantasy that he has lost his grasp on reality. The very language with which Kiseki closes the episode presents the linguistic trace of a consciousness that, in the absence of both a deep understanding of poetry and a substantive connection to aristocratic culture, has collapsed into a fetishistic attachment to the signifiers that stand in for them. The reader, of course, retains the distance to laugh at what is, to most appearances, a preposterous and absurd fate, and takes the closing sequence as merely a round of amusing wordplay. But lest this be mistaken for a purely didactic laughter, one that functions to police the boundaries of acceptable conduct by singling out Suketarō as the object of scorn and derision, it is worth noting

that Suketarō, as he "delights" in his preposterous aristocratic cosplay, is laughing along with the reader. To the degree that Kiseki uses laughter to mark the boundaries of acceptable townsman conduct, there are also eerie echoes of laughter from the other side of that boundary, from the space of social oblivion that awaits the townsman who abandons his status of birth.

This is not to say that, in reality, it was impossible or unthinkable for a townsman to become a poet, scholar, or any other type of cultural professional. As the Nagasaki merchant-intellectual Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 remarked in the opening to *Chōnin bukuro* 町人嚢 (The townsman's satchel, 1719), "Thanks to the peaceful reign of the past hundred years, it has come to pass that many of our scholars, doctors, poets, tea masters, and practitioners of the various refined arts come from the ranks of townsmen."[61] Joken himself was a scholar of some renown and a successful writer of both scholarly tomes and popular instruction; Saikaku had abandoned his hereditary trade (whatever it may have been) to pursue a career as a professional poet and, ultimately, writer of fiction; and other townsman masters of the arts were not uncommon. Kiseki's failure to imagine the transformation of the wealthy townsman into an independent cultural professional did not represent a clear reflection of the realities of the cultural professional but rather his keen sensitivity to the ideologies of the townsman household. His works refracted what the ideologues of the household imagined the townsman could or should be, a vision that was almost claustrophobic in its reluctance to imagine the possibility of positive outcomes for the townsman who was forced or who opted to live by his arts—such could be seen only as misfortune.

Conclusion

The townsman household offered the promise of security amid the existential uncertainty of the early modern economy and the unpredictable ebbs and flows of the floating world. To the generation of entrepreneurs who had worked their way into wealth and property during the rapid economic growth of the mid-seventeenth century, it represented a mark of success, of having earned a place among the rarified upper strata of urban society; many likely wanted to spare their progeny such tribulations. And the security that it promised likely felt all the more precious as that economic growth slowed and opportunities closed off, resulting in what Berry and Yonemoto aptly describe as a "bunker mentality."[62] But to the younger generation that was born or married into such a position, the household, despite its significant privileges, also brought its share of

alienations. The alienation of inheriting a name rather than making one, of being explicitly forbidden from entrepreneurial creativity in favor of an ideal of passive stewardship of a name and estate made by one's father or grandfather. The alienation of living in a time of stasis and consolidation, when movement outside of one's position of birth was increasingly improbable—as well as a time of intense normalization, when the wealthy ranks of urban society were unified around shared ideals of polite sophistication, and when the obligation of the proper townsman heir was above all to be splendidly normal, just like his peers but hopefully just a little better at it. To be born in this moment was to be born into a role that preceded you, that you were simply born to fill. Kiseki's *katagi-mono*, a genre that was entirely structured by an awareness of social role, was an iconic reflection of this moment, and a rebellion against it.

The more pressing sense of alienation behind Kiseki's work was the predicament of having all of one's energies subordinated to the household, its reputation, and its potential to sustain and incrementally increase its estate in perpetuity. This existential imperative was often articulated in terms of a dedication to the "house trade" and an austere rejection of all forms of leisure—a total prioritization of the sphere of work over that of play—but in practice the situation was more complicated. The irony of the "leisure arts" was that, though intensely stigmatized, the arts were also at the core of the townsman's identity, obligatory as a means of competing in the economy of cultural and social capital that determined the standing of one's household in the upper strata of urban society. Leisure was thus refigured from the sphere of play to that of work, but always still retained the unsettling potential to displace work at the heart of the townsman's identity—especially for the younger generation who were spared the toil of their parents and trained in the arts from a young age. One of the ways in which this tension was resolved and the subversive potential of the arts was contained was by relegating them to mere signifiers of status: by mandating that the townsman amateur always be an amateur, that he know just enough to navigate polite society but not so much that he would lose focus on the demands of his household.

Kiseki's darkly comic deconstruction of the ideology of the household was as unsparing as it was tongue-in-cheek. His characters transgress the ideology of the household in every way imaginable. Some delight in leisure pastimes that the townsman should deem improper, and these oddballs are the most obvious targets of laughter—the sumo wrestlers and puppeteers—but they are also the characters that Kiseki presented the most

affectionately, somehow landing on their feet and taking pleasure in even the most straitened of circumstances. Others transgress precisely by cleaving too closely to the ideology of the house: the diligent sons whose exemplary conduct itself contains the seed of deviance and inevitably pivots into deranged caricature. Kiseki's aim was to reveal that the pathologies and the pitfalls that the house codes and didactic tracts warned against were not the incidental failures of the household's individual members—certainly not the sons and daughters who had simply done what they were raised to do—but rather symptoms of contradictions within the institution of the household itself. The thoroughness and precision of this deconstruction led him to find the greatest pathos in characters who, failing to understand that their grasp of their chosen arts is only surface-level—for that was all it was supposed to be—continue to delight in the play of artistic signifiers. It is here that Kiseki's dark humor cuts deepest. Even as his characters reject the values and strictures of the townsman household, they remain bound by its semiotic logic. Critique of the household becomes critique of the consciousness that the household produces.

At first glance, one might be tempted to take Kiseki's work in a didactic vein, as one dedicated to (to use the Tokugawa cliche) "the promotion of virtue and punishment of vice" (勧善懲悪 *kanzen chōaku*), a gentle promotion of the ideology of the household by revealing the foibles and fates of those who defy it. The readings offered above make clear that a didactic reading misses the spirit of Kiseki's work, but the alternative is less clear. Scholars of Edo-period literature have often made the assumption that popular literature as a rule was either explicitly didactic or else merely entertaining, using didactic framing to justify the depiction of amusingly improper content. Nakano Mitsutoshi famously suggested that all of Tokugawa popular literature be understood through the joint concepts of "didacticism" (*kyōkun*) and "entertainment" (*kokkei*), and further that no work, whether primarily didactic or primarily humorous, should be taken as containing any element of political critique (*seiji hihan*).[63] To the contrary, in *Musuko katagi*, the didactic framework is not merely a facetious pretense: it is there to be deconstructed and through this deconstruction to enable a critique of the townsman household. This critique is itself significant, as many modern scholars have taken the household for the harmonious totality that its ideologues made it out to be—or if not always totally harmonious, then at least universally accepted as a necessity and never meaningfully questioned.[64] Kiseki's work, if read

carefully, reveals an alienation from that institution even by the household heads and heirs who were its most direct beneficiaries, but who were thus also best positioned to understand its problems. Moreover, the nature of this work as one of a fallen townsman's self-critique also suggests a new horizon for understanding the potential for "political critique" within the townsman's literary production: not directed at warrior authority or at the status system writ large but at the townsman's own institutions and ways of being—at the cynical truth that the lot of the townsman was "merely a matter of making money on interest."

The most poignant irony of Kiseki's work is that he accomplished this critique through a patchwork appropriation of passages and tropes from Saikaku, among others. Like so many of his characters, Kiseki was the eccentric townsman dropout who abandoned his trade and household to pursue a middling and ultimately abortive career as a cultural professional. He also seems to have been keenly aware of his debt to the writer whose works he had so assiduously studied and systematically dissected. Later in life, in explaining why his early works for the publisher Hachimonjiya were written anonymously, he remarked: "In the first place, they were not works that I had composed myself, but rather made by borrowing phrases from Saikaku, so it would seem truly impudent to put on airs and declare my own name [as the author]."[65] The mature Kiseki had fewer qualms about such appropriation as he found himself in a position of having to make a living by it, but perhaps it might be said that he traded the alienation of the townsman household for the artist's anxiety of influence, the fear that, just as he was born to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, in opting out of that heritage he was merely copying the legacy of the great progenitor of townsman prose, playing with signifiers without a deep grasp of the realities that they may once have represented. And perhaps it was his visceral awareness of this predicament that allowed him to produce a timely work of townsman self-satire, one that, despite surface level similarities, was unlike anything from Saikaku or his time but a vital commentary on Kiseki's own moment.

NOTES

[1] For an illuminating discussion of this text and other documents of the Mitsui house, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, "Family Trouble: Views from the Stage and a Merchant Archive," in *What Is a Family? Answers from Early Modern Japan*, eds. Mary Elizabeth Berry and Marcia Yonemoto (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 224–229. For a complete English translation, see E. S. Crawcour, "Some Observations on Merchants: A Translation of Mitsui Takafusa's *Chōnin Kōken Roku*, with an Introduction and Notes," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 3rd ser., no. 8 (1962): 1–139.

[2] Nakamura Yukihiko, *Kinsei chōnin shisō*, Nihon shisō taikei 59 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 176.

[3] I opt for "household" (or occasionally "house") as a heuristic translation for *ie* rather than the more technical and comparatively-oriented "stem family," which suggests the existence of a more universal and normative "family." To the average resident of early modern Japan, the *ie* was the family—a normative and universal (though also flexible and diverse) unit of social organization, one that was above all taken for granted. Regarding terminology, see Mary Elizabeth Berry and Marcia Yonemoto, "Introduction," in *What is a Family?*, 4–7.

[4] For a statistical study of the spread of the *ie* as institution in the late seventeenth century, albeit one focused primarily on rural households, see Fabian Drixler, "Imagined Communities of the Living and the Dead: The Spread of the Ancestor-Venerating Stem Family in Tokugawa Japan," in *What is a Family?*, 68–107.

[5] These three components were typically sustained across successive generations by a principle of sole transmission: usually to the eldest son, but often (in the case that the eldest was deemed to lack the proper disposition of heir) to a younger son, or, in the absence of sons, to an adoptive son-in-law; other sons were sent into apprenticeship, married as adoptive son-in-laws to households lacking their own heirs, or, in the case of the most well-off households, placed in charge of branch houses. Regarding the problem of succession and its relationship to the townsman concept of "house trade," see Nakai Nobuhiko, *Chōnin*, Nihon no rekishi 21 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1975), 250–294.

[6] For an accounting of the rationales for such a system, and its costs, see e.g. Berry, "Family Trouble," *What Is a Family?,* 229–233.

[7] The standard biographical treatments in English are Howard Hibbett, *The Floating World in Japanese Fiction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 50–64, and Charles E. Fox, "Old Stories, New Mode: Ejima Kiseki's *Ukiyo Oyaji Katagi*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 43.1 (1988): 63–77.

[8] For detailed biographical background, see Noma Kōshin, "Daibutsu-mochi raiyūsho," and "Ejima Kiseki to sono ichizoku," in *Kinsei sakkaden kō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1985), 259–297.

[9] Kiseki may have written or been involved with Hachimonjiya's illustrated playbooks (*e-iri kyōgen-bon*) prior to undertaking the writing of actor reviews, according to Ishikawa Junjirō, "*Yakusha kuchi jamisen* seiritsu zengo: Ejima Kiseki no shūsaku jidai," *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 20.10 (1960): 33–45.

[10] Regarding the actor-review genre as a training ground for Kiseki's fiction, see Saeki Takahiro, "Kiseki no shūsakuki no yakusha hyōbanki: *Yakusha kuchi jamisen* o chūshin ni," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 954 (2003): 34–46; Kawai Masumi, "Yakusha hyōbanki no kaikōbu: Saikaku sakuhin no riyō o megutte," *Kokugo kokubun* 50 (1981): 27–42; and Kurakazu Masae, "Ejima Kiseki no yakusha hyōbanki to genroku makki no ukiyo-zōshi," *Edo bungaku* 23 (2001): 108–119.

[11] Berry, "Family Trouble," *What Is a Family?,* 218. See also J. Mark Ramseyer, "Thrift and Diligence: House Codes of Tokugawa Merchant Families," *Monumenta Nipponica* 43.2 (1979), 209–220.

[12] Citations for Kiseki's works are taken from Hachimonjiyabon Kenkyūkai, eds., *Hachimonjiyabon zenshū*, 23 vols (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992–2013), and will be indicated by HZS, followed by the volume and page numbers.

[13] None of Kiseki's works have been translated into English in their entirety; translations of excerpts and titles in this article are my own. English translations of select stories may be found in the following sources. Hibbet, *The Floating World* includes translated excerpts from *Seken musuko katagi* (113–151) and *Seken musume katagi* (99–111), but it should be noted that Hibbett, who interpreted the *katagi-mono* through the lens of the Theophrastan "character" (see below), was very free in his translations. Excerpts from *Ukiyo oyaji katagi* are translated in Ejima Kiseki, "Ukiyo Oyaji Katagi," *Monumenta Nipponica* 43.1 (1988): 78–93; and Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600–1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 163–169. Selections from *Seken tedai katagi* may be found Sumie Jones, Adam L. Kern, and Kenji Watanabe, eds., *A Kamigata Anthology: Literature from Japan's Metropolitan Centers, 1600–1750* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), 118–133.

[14] The genre of *katagi-mono* also saw a robust afterlife in its influences on Meiji literary reformers, such as Tsubouchi Shōyō and Aeba Kōson. See Fox, "Old Stories, New Mode," 77; and Hasegawa Tsuyoshi, *Ukiyo-zōshi no kenkyū: Hachimonjiya-bon o chūshin to suru* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1969), 543–547.

[15] For example, see Saeki Takahiro, "Kiseki katagi-mono no hōhō: Saikaku riyō no ito," in *Ejima Kiseki to katagi-mono* (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō, 2004), 54–

96; Emoto Hiroshi. “Ejima Kiseki no hōhō josetsu: Saikaku hyōsetsu o tōshite,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 80.5 (2003): 12–22; Nakajima Takashi, “Saikaku to Kiseki: ‘mohō’ no bigaku,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 80.5 (2003): 23–33; Kurakazu Masae, “Saikaku to Kiseki: ukiyo-zōshi shi no ichi sokumen,” *Kinsei bungei kenkyū to hyōron* 22 (1982): 14–23.

[16] See Hasegawa Tsuyoshi, “Kiseki no hōhō ippan: tsūzoku e no michi,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 80.5 (2003): 1–11; and Saeki Takahiro, “Katagi-mono no bunshō,” in *Ejima Kiseki to katagi-mono*, 153–178.

[17] See the essays compiled in Nishijima Atsuya, *Saikaku to ukiyo-zōshi* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1989).

[18] Regarding the birth and evolution of the *chōhōki*, see Nagatomo Chiyoji, *Chōhōki no chōhōki: seikatsushi hyakka jiten hakkutsu* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2005), 3–27; and “Chōhōki no genryū: *Kenai chōhōki* to *Chūya chōhōki*,” in *Edo jidai no tosho ryūtsū* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2002), 190–229.

[19] Berry and Yonemoto, “Introduction,” *What Is a Family?,* 10. Berry and Yonemoto use the term “*ie* consciousness” to describe the mediation of household values through print and popular culture (12–13), but I favor the designation of “ideology” to emphasize the fact that the primacy of the household was not so much a conscious belief as an unquestioned premise.

[20] For select translations from this text, see Jones et al, *A Kamigata Anthology*, 100–117.

[21] For detailed discussion, see chapter 3 of David Gundry, *Parody, Irony and Ideology in the Fiction of Ihara Saikaku* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[22] Saeki Takahiro, “Katagi-mono no sōshutsu,” in *Ejima Kiseki to katagi-mono*, 23–26.

[23] For comparisons between the *katagi-mono* and the Theophrastan character, see Howard S. Hibbett, “Ejima Kiseki (1667–1736) and His Katagi-Mono,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14.3 (1951), 424; and Takayama Hiroshi, “Zattsu kyarakutarisutikku: katagi bungaku tōzai,” *Bungaku* 10.1 (2009), 204–206.

[24] For characteristic treatments, see Donald Keene, *World Within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era, 1600–1867* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978), 225–226; Tanaka Shin, “Katagi-mono no hōhō to sono genkai,” *Kinsei bungei* 1 (1954): 48–56.

[25] In order to not clutter the text with notes, I will indicate a page range for each story and give citations for extended quotations but omit citation of short passages and phrases; transliterations of Japanese text are given only as necessary. The numbers in parentheses following the translated title indicate the

volume and story: "vol. 1-1" is the 1st story of the 1st volume. The story in question may be found in HZS 6:4–9.

[26] Tsutsumi Kunihiko, "*Seken musuko katagi* to Ekiken kyōkunsho: chōnin rinri no bungeika," in *Edo no kaiitan: chika suimyaku no keifu* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2004), 230–237.

[27] HZS 6:8.

[28] For a concise introduction to the early modern leisure arts and the historical conditions driving their evolution, see Kumakura Isao, "Kinsei ni okeru geinō no tenkai," in *Dentō geinō no tenkai*, Nihon no kinsei 11, ed. Kumakura Isao (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), 9–66.

[29] Moriya Takeshi, *Genroku bunka: yūgei, akusho, shibai* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1987). See also Moriya Takeshi, "Kinsei no chōnin to yūgei," in *Kinsei geinō bunkashi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1992), 59–82; and its English translation as "*Yūgei* and *Chōnin* Society in the Edo Period," *Acta Asiatica* 33 (1977): 32–54.

[30] Fuji Akio, Inoue Toshiyuki, and Satake Akihiro, eds., *Kōshoku nidai otoko, Saikaku shokoku banashi, Honchō nijū fukō*, Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei 76 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), 187. For a detailed analysis of Saikaku's treatments of the leisure arts, see Ku Tefun, "Genroku no chōnin shakai to yūgei: Saikaku no yūgei kan o chūshin to shite," in *Yūgei bunka to dentō,* ed. Kumakura Isao (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 124–147.

[31] Nakai *Chōnin*, 246–249.

[32] Nakamura, *Kinsei chōnin shisō*, 199–200.

[33] Moriya, *Genroku bunka*, 36–42.

[34] For a transcription, see Nagatomo Chiyoji, ed., *Onna chōhōki, Nan chōhōki: Genroku wakamono kokoroeshū* (Tokyo: Shakai Shisōsha, 1993), 233–299. Regarding the place of the leisure arts in this text see Kumakura, "Kinsei ni okeru geinō no tenkai," 42–52.

[35] Eiko Ikegami, *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43.

[36] Nishiyama Matsunosuke, "Edo bunka ni okeru kyozō to jitsuzō," in *Kinsei bunka no kenkyū*, Nishiyama Matsunosuke chosakushū 4 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 20–24.

[37] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 466–467.

[38] Here, I take inspiration from Judith Butler's critique of Bourdieu, in "Performativity's Social Magic," in *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 113–128.

[39] Nakamura, *Kinsei chōnin shisō*, 378–383; Yamamoto Shinkō, *Kakun shū* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001), 236–250. For an English translation, see Ramseyer, "Thrift and Diligence: House Codes of Tokugawa Merchant Families," 221–226.

[40] Nakamura, *Kinsei chōnin shisō*, 383–388; Yamamoto, *Kakun shū*, 254–268.

[41] Moriya, *Genroku bunka*, 38–39.

[42] Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 2008), 30.

[43] Noma Kōshin, ed., *Saikaku shū ge*, Nihon koten bungaku taikei 48 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960), 43. Translated excerpts of this work may be found in Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 131–150. For a full but more liberal translation, see Ihara Saikaku, *The Japanese Family Storehouse, or, The Millionaires' Gospel Modernised. Nippon eitai-gura, or Daifuku shin chōja kyō (1688)*, trans. G. W. Sargent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

[44] HZS 6:28–31. For an English translation, see Howard Hibbett, *Floating World in Japanese Fiction*, 145–151.

[45] HZS 6:30.

[46] Fuji et al, *Kōshoku nidai otoko, Saikaku shokoku banashi, Honchō nijū fukō*, 489–493. For discussion, see Gundry, *Parody, Irony and Ideology*, 190–196.

[47] HZS 11:76–81.

[48] The most influential authorial sketch is in the miscellany *Tōyūshi* (*At the Eastern Window*, 1803), written by the minor Osaka-based scholar Tamiya Nakanobu. For his account of Kiseki, see Nihon Zuihitsu Taisei Henshūbu, eds., *Tōyūshi, Okotarigusa*, Nihon zuihitsu taisei dai 1-ki 19 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1976), 186. More concretely, Noma Kōshin observes that Kiseki likely spent large portions of his fortune in negotiating marriage and adoption arrangements for his many children, and more generally that the Murase line was part of the older milieu that had declined as the economy shifted in favor of entrepreneurs like Mitsui. See Noma Kōshin, "Ejima Kiseki to sono ichizoku," 289–294.

[49] For example, see Hibbett, *Floating World in Japanese Fiction*, 58; Fox, "Old Stories, New Mode," 68.

[50] Noma, "Daibutsu-mochi raiyūsho," 264–272.

[51] Kaibara Ekiken, *Yōjōkun, Wazoku dōjikun*, ed. Ishikawa Ken (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), 237.

[52] HZS 6: 19–22. For an English translation, see Hibbett, *Floating World in Japanese Fiction*, 132–138.

[53] Laura Moretti, *Pleasure in Profit: Popular Prose in Seventeenth-Century Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 51.

[54] Moretti, *Pleasure in Profit*, 64.

[55] For the original, see Fuji Akio and Hiroshima Susumu, eds., *Ihara Saikaku shū 4*, Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 69 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000), 521–527.

[56] Kaibara, *Yōjōkun, Wazoku dōjikun*, 215.

[57] Takahashi Akihiko, "Gujintan o meguru shōsetsu no keifu: katagi-mono no yōshiki to hōhō," *Nihon bungaku* 38.8 (1989): 15–16, 18–19.

[58] HZS 6:33–36.

[59] HZS 6: 34–35.

[60] HZS 6:35–36.

[61] Nakamura, *Kinsei chōnin shisō*, 88.

[62] Berry and Yonemoto, "Introduction," *What is a Family?*, 11.

[63] Nakano Mitsutoshi, "Saikaku gesakusha setsu saikō: Edo no me to gendai no me no motsu imi," *Bungaku* 15.1 (2014): 143–149.

[64] For example, see Berry and Yonemoto, "Introduction," *What is a Family?*, 12–13.

[65] HZS 2:455.

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