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## **Ha, Made You Look! An Analysis of Medicinal Advertising Strategies and Formats in the Edo Period**

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# “Ha, Made You Look!”

## An Analysis of Medicinal Advertising Strategies and Formats in the Edo Period

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### Abstract

With historical context and the theories of semiotics and advertising, this thesis researches the nation-wide network of commercial distribution for medical products and medicinal advertising that scholars in the research field have concluded existed in the Edo period (1603-1868). This is done via analysis of the shapes and formats of medicinal advertisements in the Edo period, together with the analysis of a case study called the Banpōshū 萬寶集 (Collection of Treasures) of 1810. The analysis of the case study involves transcriptions and translations of the work’s preface, catalogue of medicines, and parts of the first medicine described in the advertising pamphlet.

The analysis of the various shapes and formats of medicinal advertising in the Edo period uncovered a connection between medicinal advertisements and the travel culture trend that emerged from 1780 and onwards via *Meisho zue* 名所図会, “illustrations of famous places”. Furthermore, analysis yielded three distinctive advertising tropes, which are also prevalent in the Banpōshū. The ‘dynasty trope’ involves establishing the advertised medicinal products as an ancient recipe, or the advertised store as part of long-lasting line of practitioners that adhere to core principles in medicinal practice in Japan such as traditional Chinese medicine or Buddhism. The ‘cure-all’ trope stems from traditional Chinese medicine and is a trope where medicines are described as a “cure-all medicine” or a medicine that remedies various ailments. The ‘endorsement’ trope describes the usage of expert, celebrity, or layman endorsers in the advertisement.

The analysis of the case study concludes that the Banpōshū is a long-form advertisement of the Osaka based wholesale store of *Karamono Wamono Yakushu Baibai Donya* 唐物和物薬種売買問屋 and its medicines, targeted at other medicine selling businesses concerned with retail. The advertisements incorporate various advertisement strategies seen in other advertisement formats at the cost of brevity and are influenced by the travel culture trend that strongly related with the Edo medicinal commerce market from 1780 onwards. The Banpōshū’s pages sport various images that portray travel culture-related scenery in the context of medicinal advertising. The author also mentions the diffusing power of travel culture on medicinal products when combined with good advertising.

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## Introduction

How do you get people to buy what you sell? The first step is to make them look. The merchants of the Edo period (1600-1868) seemed to know this all too well. This period of Japanese history is characterized by scholars in the field of Edo studies as “having a bustling economy through emerging metropolises that conducted nation-wide commerce, art, and advertising to mobilize desire present among the populace” (Pollack 2003, 72) with merchants using “for the time cutting-edge advertising technologies” (Yang 2023, 77). Especially the medicine market experienced a growth. Jonas Rüegg tells us in his article *Drugs and the Politics of Consumption in Japan* that the rapidly growing economy of Edo Japan’s metropolises are responsible for creating a nation-wide network of commercial distribution for medical products, medicinal advertising, and advisories that increased health awareness (Rüegg 2023, 26). Medicinal advertisements were prevalent in the Edo period (Cooper 2021, 10) (Koch 2022,93), but for whom were these medicinal advertisements intended?

Advertising became an increasingly applied phenomenon in the Edo period with the power to mass print written sources through woodblock printing, and through it being an era of peace. While hard to determine literacy rates exactly, literacy was prevalent among wealthier individuals from different social strata. Commoners and peasants also had high percentages of literacy, and roughly half of wealthy landowning farmers were literate (Moretti 2020, 30). The usage of reading help written next to *kanji* 漢字 ‘Chinese’ characters was used in various contemporary works. This, and the use of illustrations in written works can help us approximate the degree of literacy. It seems to indicate that authors accommodated the less literate, and that the general base level of literacy was already quite high, meaning that many advertisements reached beyond social class boundaries for the purpose of selling products -medicinal other wares- to whomever needed them.

Our next question would be scale. The three largest cities of Edo Japan had impressive population counts: Edo (modern day Tokyo) had close to one million inhabitants, Osaka 365.000, and Kyoto 300.000 (Moretti 2020, 43). Rising literacy rates among the populace and an increase in urbanization shaped a larger demand for reading materials and thus a publishing industry on a national scale (Ikegami 1989, 176) (Moretti 2020, 43). Due to the high urbanization rates and a spread of foreign diseases from Japanese ports open to the world such as Nagasaki via e.g. pleasure quarters (Koch 2022, 95), there must have been an abundance of various diseases present among the populace. The abundance of disease must have motivated the need for and production of medicine, since Yoshioka suggests the same happened for the medicine production in the capital city of Edo at the turn of the seventeenth century (Yoshioka 1990, 11). This was an opportunity for individuals and businesses in the growing medicine industry to employ creative advertising in all kinds of shapes and in various formats.

To understand the Edo era's medicinal advertising world, I will research in what form and what way advertisement strategies were used in Edo period medicinal advertising, using a case study of an advertising pamphlet called the *Banpōshū* 萬寶集 (Collection of Treasures). In order to analyze medicinal advertising, which is inherently tied to word and image with symbolic meaning attached, I will make use of the theory of semiotics by Sturken & Cartwright's definition in their book *Practices of Looking*, as well as the role of emotion in advertising illustrated *Advertising Theory* by Percy in chapter 5. Adding to emotion are the other two advertising modes listed by Tellis of 'argument' and 'endorsement' in *Effective Advertising: Understanding When, How, and Why Advertising Works*. While the study on the Edo period is a popular one, the study on Edo medicinal advertising seems to be an underrepresented research field in at least English academia. As such, this work incorporates multiple scholarly disciplines and provides an overarching narrative on Edo culture in relation to medicinal advertising to help close this gap in knowledge.

Chapter one first details the theoretical framework necessary for a scholarly analysis in. Subsequent is the historical framework, which briefly describes the social order in Edo Japan, and what kind of Edo medicinal shops there are and how they operate. With the groundwork laid out, Chapter two provides insight in the different shapes and sizes of advertising that were present in Edo Japan, with an emphasis on medicinal advertising. This incorporates the most prevalent advertising types and ranges from billboards to hired promoters to various types of written advertisement. Edo advertising strategies will be the starting point in this chapter, with the base theory providing theoretical context for the Edo advertising strategies. Chapter three presents the chosen case study, which is the primary source called the *Banpōshū*. In this chapter the base theory will provide a hands-on analytical approach to contextualize the *Banpōshū*'s advertising strategies. Chapter four concludes this research.

The *Banpōshū* can best be described as an advertising pamphlet. It was written by *Seisei Shujin* 西成主人 and published in the latter half of the Edo period, the year 1810. It contains several advertisements for medicines, complete with illustrations. The medicines were sold by a medicine selling wholesale store in Osaka, the city where the *Banpōshū* is also from. Osaka boasted an impressive network of medicinal commerce, which is why the *Banpōshū* is a good fit as a case study for this research. I transcribed and translated the preface, the catalogue, and the descriptive text of the first medicine, along with the corresponding illustration at the end of the descriptive passage. By analyzing the text and imagery and applying the theory of advertising and semiotics, I aim to uncover the *Banpōshū*'s approach to advertising and to accurately place the *Banpōshū*'s advertisement type among the other advertising shapes and formats present during the Edo period.

## Chapter 1: On Theory and History

This chapter forms the basis of knowledge through which we will view the advertising sphere of the Edo period. It details the theoretical approach of semiotics and the theories behind persuasion, emotion, and endorsement in advertising. Furthermore, it provides a historical framework of the powers at play regarding the nation-wide network of medicinal commerce, in a political and economical perspective. Lastly, this chapter sheds light on the different medicine types and medicine shop types that existed during the Edo period.

### Theoretical Framework

According to Sturken and Cartwright in *Practices of Looking*, humans exercise the practice of looking daily. They engage in practices of looking at conscious or unconscious levels to communicate, to influence, and be influenced (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, 10). Practices of looking concern visual media, media which are about *representation*: using written language and image to shape the meaning of the things around us. We construct meaning through words by naming things and beings, and referring to them with words, as we do with imagery (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, 12).

Imagery is visual media, but a word or a collection of words is also a type of visual media that invokes associated emotions or images in our minds. We have constructed rules and conventions to adhere to when engaging in visual representation. We call this language and culture. Different schools of painting, or a certain poetry format are also conventions of representation (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, 12). A concrete example regarding medicinal advertising would be the way businesses are expected to present a list of ingredients written on the packaging of their medicine products nowadays. For example, a table listing the different ingredients per dose. Or displaying the appropriate approval logo for e.g. European Union standards. These conventions all serve a certain formal, cultural, and practical purpose.

Humans live in cultures where visual media is increasingly present with varying purposes and effects. These images and words (photographs, film/video, poems, slogans, etc.) can invoke an array of emotions and responses (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, 10-11). Sturken and Cartwright list only the emotions of pleasure, desire, disgust, anger curiosity, shock, and confusion, but there are more emotions such as fear, sadness, happiness, joy, and Humor. Humor is created by the incongruity of two pieces of information brought together, which invokes surprise, and then humor (Tellis 2004, 157-159). If we extend these statements to advertising, we learn from reading chapter 5 in *Advertising Theory* that “all advertising is emotional” (Percy 2012, 74).

Looking at certain things will invoke good or bad emotions in you. A good advertisement requires *emotional appeal*, which can speak to either positive or negative emotions. It elicits positive or negative motivation from the audience. A negative motivation is rooted in the avoidance of the negative emotion the advertisement displays, the product or service in the advertisement obviously “solving” the problem (Percy 2012, 75-76). An

example would be showing an image of badly maintained teeth, invoking the emotion of disgust or the fear that others would feel disgusted when seeing teeth like that. An image next to it shows a brilliant white set of teeth along with the name of the product. The solution is using the product, as it can achieve the alleviation of the invoked image of disgust. A positive motivation stems from the arousal of a positive emotion, and the product or service being the gratification of said emotion (Percy 2012, 75-76). This association of emotion to product can be achieved by a range of different things, say, alluring visuals such as ice cream (Percy 2012, 76-77), an erotic scene described in a novel, facial expressions, or perhaps a list of curing benefits a medication grants the user.

Emotion, explained by Percy, is one of the three other persuasion types in advertising that Tellis lists, the other two being 'argument' and 'endorsement'. Argument is the mode in which an advertisement appeals to reason and provides evidence. The simplest and most common variant of argument is the listing of positive attributes of a brand or product (Tellis 2004, 135, 144). Tellis explains that endorsement has three modes: expert endorsement, celebrity endorsement, and lay endorsers. Expert endorsers are individuals or organizations that are perceived to have specialized knowledge in specific areas, thus providing reassuring authority (Tellis 2004, 180). An ideology would also classify as having specialized knowledge in the context of Japan. Japanese medicine practices were entwined with ideas of medicine from traditional Chinese medicine and Buddhist written sources, where 'bodily worms' were seen as the cause of disease. Thus, many medicines were aimed at purging these invaders from the body (Andrevia 2023, 47-48). Celebrity endorsers are individuals well-known among the populace and offer publicity to the product or brand they endorse (Tellis 2004, 180). Lay endorsers can be unknown individuals or fictional characters, used as spokespersons in an advertisement (Tellis 2004, 180-181). Lastly, Tellis also lists the importance of advertising devices such as familiarity and repetition. Positive familiarity will likely lead to a consumer choosing the brand again (Tellis 2004, 125), while repetition, as proved via a study by Psychologist Zajonc, leads to increased liking for the stimuli to a certain saturation ceiling. Tellis adds to this by stating that repetition can have even more impact with real brand names, tag lines, and slogans instead of the symbols without meaning Zajonc used in his study (Tellis 2004, 118).

Advertising seems to be all about appealing to emotions to make you want to buy. Image and text, and by extension the emotions associated with these visuals are one of the sharpest tools in an advertiser's toolbox. If we are to analyze advertisements, a genre of visual media littered with symbolism and hidden meaning, we require the theory of semiotics, founded by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. We will be using Sturken and Cartwright's definition of semiotics and a definition of the 'signs' that advertisers use to stir the hearts (and wallets) of their potential customers. Sturken and Cartwright identify a 'sign' as containing a signifier; which is an image, sound, or word, and a signified; which is the meaning assigned to them (2009, 29).

The shape and meaning signifier depend greatly on the social, historical, and cultural context when the sign is created, for both the creator and the onlooker (2009, 29). This means that both the audience and the artist have a say in the meaning of a sign or symbol, and that the meaning of an image can change with time or be lost to it. The context within the word or the image is presented also matters, for example whether a text is displayed in a museum or in a magazine changes our mode of interpretation and thus influences how we conceptualize meaning (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, 29). It is also important to repeatedly ask ourselves if there is actual meaning attached to an image and to what extent there is not, considering Elkins alerts us to the fact that there is a tendency art history to overanalyze (Elkins 1998, xi-xii). Lastly, while it seems that semiotics is poorly applicable to a full passage of text, Edo period advertisements - among them the Banpōshū- employ buzzwords, incorporate imagery, and contain short inscriptions and descriptions which have 'signs' that carry significant meaning with them and require the use of semiotics to analyze.

### **The Edo Medicine network**

The Edo period was a time of peace and government control, which allowed trade and commerce to flourish, allowed commoners to be educated and practice cultural pursuits, and compelled the military elite to redefine their roles in society (Vaporis 2021, xvii) (De Bary 2010, 192-193). Merchants became increasingly wealthy and influential despite their position as the lowest class in society and the Tokugawa government's legislative attempts to try and uphold the rigid hierarchical structure of *shinō kōshō* 士農工商, which was from top to bottom warriors, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants respectively (De Bary 2010, 245, 296).

Rüegg states that Edo Japan had a nation-wide network of commercial distribution for medical products, medicinal advertising, and advisories that increased health awareness (2023, 26). This gives us an incentive to dig into how this network came to be and how it operated. Prior to the start of the Edo era, *za* 座 'guilds' consisting of rich patrons, maintained near-monopolistic holds on certain products. The *Tokugawa bakufu* 徳川幕府 (1603-1868), the Edo period government, sought to disband in these *za* in various regions in the first decades of the seventeenth century to gain more control. This proved difficult and prompted informal merchants' groups to form to regulate trade to fill the power vacuum (Cooper 2021, 72, 86). It was not until 1715 and onwards that these informal groups received legal permission from the bakufu to exist, the so-called *nakama* 仲間 'trade associations', centered around certain specialized commercial categories, which included medicine (Cooper 2021, 87-88). These *nakama* set agreed-upon prices and ensured that their members complied with *nakama* and bakufu regulations, shaping a collaborative medicinal marketplace in Japan in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Cooper 2021, 87-88).

Michael Kinski notes that Edo had one million inhabitants by 1820, and that there was one active physician in Edo per 400 to 500 inhabitants (Kinski 2011, 2669) which corresponds to 2000-2500 active physicians. Where Edo takes the crown regarding the amount of medicinal markets, Cooper also distinguishes other major marketplaces in other cities: 200 medicinal merchant shops in Osaka and 150 in Kyoto by the mid-nineteenth century (Cooper 2021, 95). If we look at Osaka, 200 shops are a steep increase in a century, compared to the counted number of 120 shops a century earlier in 1725 (Cooper 2021, 93). These numbers, together with the development of the marketplace regarding government law and trade organizations show the rapid growth of the medicine trading network in Japan, supporting Rüegg's definition.

The cities of Edo, Osaka, Kyoto, Sunpu, and Sakai had large medicinal marketplaces that were overseen by the Japanese government from 1722 onwards to control the quality of medicines, through the Office for the Inspection of Medicines, which was set up in the same year (Cooper 2021, 92-93). The inspection of medicines was done by trusted medicinal merchants instead of government officials, however. This allowed the government to levy the expertise on medicines to root out poisonous and counterfeit medicines, and make sure medicine prices were fair (Cooper 2021, 93).

The city of Osaka in 1725, for example, had a rotating group of three to four apothecaries that performed the duties of the Office for the Inspection of Medicines. This was beneficial for the government since a healthy medicinal market reinforced the trust of citizens in the government system, and beneficial for the merchants since they gained a reputation of being trustworthy via government recognition, and had the ability to self-regulate to an extent (Cooper 2021, 93-94). The government still held the reins, as the apothecaries acting as inspection and *nakama* organisations reported directly to the government and thus still had to adhere to government legislation. The bakufu also had a monopoly on giving out rights for attending medicinal auctions held in Nagasaki (medicines imported from abroad) to merchants (Cooper 2021, 89-90), a license crucial for shops to have so they could obtain certain wares.

## Edo Medicine Shops

The Edo medicine market had a variety of different medicines to sell, and thus a variety of shops selling those medicines. Contemporary sources often differentiate between two types of medicines regarding origins, and Cooper among other sources lists them nicely. These are *wamono* 和物 which are Japanese-produced medicines, and *karamono* 唐物. *Karamono* literally translates to "Chinese goods", but these medicines did not only originate from China. It could mean that the medicine was brought by Chinese merchants, or just as an indication that the medicine was imported (Cooper 2021, 73). Thus, medicines from other parts of the world were probably also counted among *karamono*, such as medicines that originated from India (Yoshioka 1990, 9), or Dutch medicine and medicinal substances brought by the Dutch East India

Company (VOC) to Japan throughout the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (Cooper 2021, 3). These Dutch medicines gained their own term of Ranpō 蘭方 with economic shifts at the turn of the nineteenth century that increased the popularity of Dutch medicine with a stagnation of them on the Japanese market (Cooper 2021, 11).

The next type of *Baiyaku* 売薬 ‘medicine for sale’, also called *seiyaku* 製薬 ‘manufactured medicines’ later in the eighteenth century, were medicines already compounded and ready for consumption. The adoption of the term *baiyaku*, which was in the fourteenth century onward, indicated a clear shift that medicines were no longer identified with their miraculous nature, but instead with the fact that they were commodities for sale to a more general audience. (Cooper 2021, 78, 107). Yang notes that *Baiyaku* were known more for the ways in which they were sold than for the effectiveness of the substances themselves (Yang 2023, 75). Regardless of efficacy, *Baiyaku* could be categorized as *karamono* or *wamono* or both by contemporary sources, depending on the branding of the medicine and what ingredients it used. The last type of medicine is *yakushu* 薬種 ‘medical substance’, also called *shōyaku* 生薬 ‘raw medicine’. This is not a compounded medicine but merely ingredients for compounded medicines or the ‘raw’ types of medicines (Cooper 2021, 224).

These types of medicines were sold by different types of shops that to some degree adhered to these standards of medicine categorization. There is a type of store called *Karamono-ya* 唐物屋, that, instead of compounding the medicines themselves, merely traded in them as they supplied substances to physicians and other medicinal specialists (Cooper 2021, 73). *Donya* 問屋 ‘wholesale stores’, were stores that bought medicine in bulk and sold it to other medicine selling shops. Whether these stores sold *Baiyaku* or *Yakushu*, *Wamono* or *Karamono*, is usually mentioned in the store name. Another store type *baiyaku-ya* 売薬屋, sold ready-made non-prescription medicines. Lastly there are *Yakushu-ya* 薬種屋 ‘medical substance’ shops that sold medicinal substances and thus not the finished product.

However, Yoshioka does mention that ‘*yakushu-ya*’ was a term used in general for medicine stores (Yoshioka 1990, 9). Both Cooper and Yoshioka say that it was relatively common for *yakushu* merchants to dabble in making their own *baiyaku* (Cooper 2021, 94-95) or *yakushu-ya* to be focused on trading *baiyaku* more than *yakushu* (Yoshioka 201, 10). There was also no training or licensing required for merchants to make and sell medicines, apart from meeting the demands of the inspection office in the cities of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka (Cooper 2021, 94). The store categorizations posed by Cooper and by contemporary sources thus should be seen more as guiding terms than fixed categories. Regardless, they will help us to make sense of the medicine business in the much more complicated medicine world of Edo Japan.

## Chapter 2. Shapes and Formats of Edo advertising

‘Making potential customers look’ prompted merchants to make their stores and products stand out. These Edo period advertisements came in many shapes and formats, from literary writing to flyers to artworks. Shops often stood on busy roads or in specially assigned districts. Placing advertisements there would guarantee many looks from pedestrians, and it would simultaneously signify what kind of shop one was running with the right sign or text. While there must have been many vendors selling food and other goods that employed the simple but effective oral advertising strategy of ‘yelling what you are selling’, we will limit ourselves to visual advertisements. The first one that you would have seen in the streets would be *Kanban* 看板 billboards.

### **Kanban street advertisements**

Kanban, an advertising strategy employed as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Ehmcke 2013, 87), were primarily a way of advertising and meant as tools for moneymaking. However, kanban simultaneously functioned as objects for artistic expression, capable of conveying a shop or the seller’s self-image, and its craftsman’s artistry (Pate 2017, 19). As Pate continues, the creation of kanban is a collaborative effort between the merchant and various craftsmen, where the type of kanban and its ornaments would have depended on the craftsmen’s skills and the weight of the merchant’s gold pouch (2017, 19-20). Because the degree of spending money that shops had for kanban varied, there was a range of different Kanban types used on the market to suit every shop’s budget.

There was a cheap and easy practice of using actual objects referring to one’s trade called *Jitsubutsu kanban* 実物看板, or ‘real product kanban’. For example, a raw lacquer seller placing a few large empty lacquer barrels near the shop’s entrance to signify their presence (Pate 2017 20). Another similar and well-implemented type of kanban was *mokei* 模型 kanban, which literally translates to ‘model’. These types of kanban are carved in such a way to resemble an object that closely relates to the service or product the shop provides. A great example that ties into semiotics is the *Daruma* 達磨 *mokei* kanban, a type often used for a tobacco shop in the Edo period. According to the myth of the founder of Zen Buddhism, the monk Daruma sat in a meditational pose for so long that his legs were atrophied. Because portrayals of Daruma feature him as a legless ‘roly poly’ monk in red robes, contemporaries started seeing correlation between Daruma’s shape and the tobacco pouch, which had a similar shape and contained dried tobacco leaves resembling his red robes (Pate 2017, 86). With semiotics, a Daruma *mokei* kanban is the signifier, his shape and red robes resembling a tobacco pouch and tobacco leaves are the signified.

An interesting ‘reverse mokei kanban’ in medicinal advertising is printing one’s kanban text on the paper medicine bags that medicine stores sell their pill-shaped medicines in. With this practice the product has become the kanban that a customer could take with them, while simultaneously being a mokei referring to the medicine store. The book *Ehon Edo Baiyaku Shi* 絵本江戸売薬志 provides numerous illustrations of Edo period baiyaku kanban and corresponding medicine bags. Illustration 1 to the right is a drawn image of the Shinkyōmaru 神教丸 medicine bag. Shinkyōmaru was a pill-shaped medicine with a red hue, which is why it was also referred to as Akatama あか玉 ‘red ball’ as is written directly under the circle in figure 1. Akatama is also a linguistic term, a synonym for patent medicine. It could cure stomach cramps and food poisoning, etc. and was a medicine invented by the Aragawa 有川 family (Hanasaka 1956, 16). The store where this medicine bag came from is in the city Yokoyama.



Figure 1: The drawn print of a medicine bag for Shinkyōmaru 神教丸 (Hanasaka 1956, 16).

Figure 2 is another illustration from *Ehon Edo Baiyaku Shi* that has one of the kanban used to sell this medicine in the background. The kanban has the same layout as the print on the medicine bag shown above, with the circle in the top middle and the medicine name under the circle. This time the kanban uses the common name of Shinkyōmaru written in bold calligraphy, akatama. Like the paper medicine bag, the kanban in the illustration has relevant information written next to it: *Nakasendō* 中山道, and the station name of Toriimoto-Juku 鳥居本宿, the station at the base of Torii pass. Akatama was the local specialty medicine at Toriimoto, the sixty-third of the sixty-nine stations of the Nakasendō (Hanasaka 1956, 16), which was the second most important traveling highway connecting Kyoto with the capital Edo (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 7). These stations were strategically built where natural obstacles on the highways made a resting place necessary, or where towns already existed. The stations also were a place to sell wares and services to weary travelers and religious pilgrims, and for the bakufu to perform customs checks (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 7).



Figure 2: An illustration of two individuals trying out the medicine Akatama, as described in the text in the image. A kanban for Akatama is displayed in the background. (Hanasaka 1956, 16)

Edo Japan had in total five of these great travel routes radiating from the capital Edo, the *Gokaidō* 五街道. These were highways for transporting commerce, no doubt also many medicinal products, as for example busy commercial foot and ox or packhorse traffic existed between Edo and Kyoto and Osaka (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 7). The late eighteenth century also sported a movement in the increasing number of wealthy Japanese of ‘traveling for pleasure’ (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 8), and historians talk of a ‘traveling boom’ (Traganou 2004, 66) that brought about a shift in the perception of cultural geography (Goree 2020, 17). Popular guidebooks and works with illustrations called *Meisho Zue* 名所図会, ‘illustrations of famous places’, were published, which culminated into a ‘travel culture’ where people took to the roads to escape everyday life and experience the popular sights displayed in *Meisho zue* (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 8). *Meisho zue* prints also substituted the need for visiting the sights in person (Goree 2020, 17). This was not possible for every individual, however, as Tokugawa legislation restricted non-official traveling, especially for farmers and women (Traganou 2004, 67).

The importance of travel culture should not be underestimated when it comes to the popularization of medicines. The driving force behind the traveling trend were *Meisho zue*. A contemporary *Ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 ‘Japanese woodblock print art’ artist and samurai stated that ‘a lack of knowledge of *meisho* was needed to enjoy the *meisho zue*. Then the *Ukiyo-e* had the capacity to inspire readers to search out these places on their own’ (Goree 2020, 50-51). Another source that neatly compiles Travel culture and *meisho zue* is *The Sixty-Nine Stations of the Kisokaidō* with commentary by Izzard. Looking at the various illustrations by contemporary artists Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige 歌川広重 (1797-1858) and Keisai (Ikeda) Eisen 溪斎英泉 (1790-1848), we can see a glimpse of the daily life on the roads of the *Nakasendō*. Many of those prints also contain *kanban* of stores and businesses accommodating travelers along the travel highways. Selling medicine for traveling ailments along the roads of the busy travel routes, like the medicine *Akatama* in *Toriimoto-juku*, must have been one way to sell one’s medicinal wares and make people spread the word of your medicine to different cities and villages. This works even better when a traveler that bought your product conveniently has a *kanban* of the medicine with them: the medicine bag the medicine came in, displaying all the relevant information to find the store.

The image on the right (figure 3) shows two more types of kanban. It is an illustration of the *Ebisu-ya* えびす屋 *Dry Goods Store*, a popular shop from the late Edo period. It shows both *noren* 暖簾, ‘shop curtain’ kanban, which is the curtain in the back in figure 2, and a type of living kanban: the girls standing in front of the store called *kanban musume* 看板娘. These pretty girls were employed by shops to serve as kanban as they were seen as public attractions and often portrayed by artists (Pollack 2003, 83), a form of celebrity endorsement. They would have surely reeled in customers, either with their looks or with the attention of artistic reproduction such as figure 3. Simultaneously, they would draw the street peruser’s gaze to the store and what was written and shown behind the kanban musume.



Figure 3: 'The Ebisu-ya Dry Goods Store' by Utagawa Toyohiro (1773-1828), a woodblock printed image from c. 1800. (Pate 2017, 29)

Looking at the *noren*, the calligraphy on the cloth spells out the name of the store in the easier understood hiragana instead of the many variations of kanji characters the name Ebisu can be spelled with. The concept of a ‘store name’ or ‘trademark’ is called *yagō* 屋号. *Yagō* stem from a practice of giving households other names related to the head of the household, or to one’s occupation, or the surroundings of one’s residence (Okano 1982, 1). This was done to prevent confusion about who one is referring to with the abundance of identical names (Okano 1982, 1) and because commoners were banned from using proper surnames, a custom reserved for the warrior class (Vaporis 2021, 30). Using *Yagō* when referring to stores and store owners was common practice and a clever way of distinguishing oneself from the competition. However, I would argue that via an increase in advertising, the concept of *yagō* was not only limited to just the name of a store and became increasingly intertwined with imagery.

As Pate states, *yagō* can be seen as the precursor of modern-day company logos and is important to the development of kanban (2017, 29). A logo shapes the letters of a name in a functional and aesthetically pleasing design that transmits the coded information to onlooker in one instant, which is what some intricate *yagō* do too. Looking at the *noren* of *Ebisu-ya*, this *yagō* has the store name and next to it an image that depicts Ebisu, one of the seven gods of good fortune, the god of fishing and commerce. Seeing as the store shares its name with Ebisu, this image serves as a ‘sign’ as described by Sturken and Cartwright. The *yagō* and its image serve the same purpose of conveying the store name and effectively connects the store with the god Ebisu. It will likely make the audience associate the store with the positively charged aura of this good deity via the signified cultural and religious meaning. This gives *ebisu-ya* positive familiarity via Tellis’ definition (Tellis 2004, 125). Subsequently, with due time and

enough popularity, the name of the god Ebisu perhaps would have also invoked imagery of the store and its products in the minds of commoners that knew the store.

There are also kanban that are placed on roofs or towering above the roofs of shops. Pate mentions *Hata* 旗, or flag kanban billowing in the wind high above the shop with large, readable calligraphy (Pate 2017, 32) or a smaller one strapped to a medicine vendor's back walking in the streets (Hanasaka 1956, 107). There are also *tate* たて 'standing' kanban, which are imposing structures that have a large calligraphy or imagery elevated above the street. This apparently was a sight to see, as these structures are illustrated and written about frequently in Edo, portraying and describing passerby as gaping at its impressive size and intricate ornamentation (Pate 2017, 34-35). Another way merchants added value to their kanban and the words on them was by using gold lacquer or gold leaf (Hanasaka 1956, i). Size and decoration are symbolic to the wealth the shop in question must have possessed, which could convince the potential customer to buy.

The image below (figure 4) is an illustration of the store advertised in the Banpōshū, the *Karamono Wamono Yakushu Baibai Donya* 唐物 和物薬種売買問屋, or "Karamono and Wamono Yakushu-selling wholesale store" in Osaka. I will call this store the Yakushu Donya from now on. This image is on one of the last pages of the Banpōshū and gives us a way to visualize how medicinal advertising appeared from a customer's perspective on the streets. The illustration features two kanban types showing calligraphy, one of them a *tate* kanban in the middle of the image. It reads "*Dōchū ontassha gusuri*" 道中御たっしゃ薬, which is likely one of the more popular medicines the store sells. The *tsuitate* 衝立 'partitioning screen' kanban standing on the raised walkway has two names of medicines written on it. The first one reads *furō chōju en* 不老長寿圓, which translates to 'pill for penial youth and longevity'. The second medicine reads *socchūfū no kusuri* 卒中風の薬 which translates to 'medicine for apoplexy'. Furthermore, one can see workers taking neatly packed medicinal goods from the storehouse and loading them onto a cart in the bottom left, and customers and clerks negotiating trade next to the *tsuitate* kanban on the bottom right. The cart being loaded up with medicines for distribution hints at the larger, Japan-wide network for the distribution of medicine the Yakushu Donya was connected to.

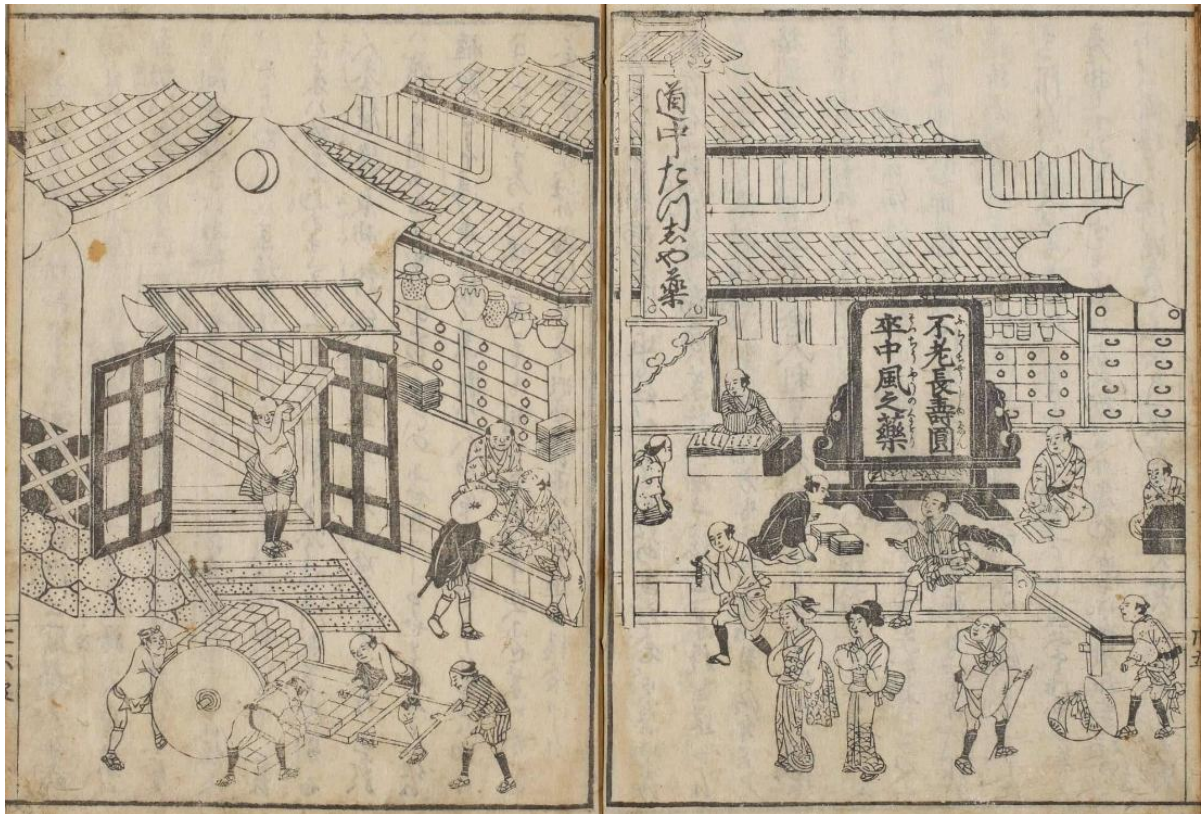


Figure 4: Illustration of the Yakushu Baibai Donya 薬種売買問屋 in Osaka displaying different kanban in front of the store. Image in the back of the Banpōshū (Seisei 1810, 60).

### Kōjō stage advertisements

Another place that was visited by many people and thus the ideal place for advertising was the *Kabuki* 歌舞伎 theater. Kabuki, which started as burlesque female street theater in 1603, became a popular type of entertainment among the Edo populace and a cultural powerhouse shaping conceptions of heroism, beauty, tragedy and morality for the people (Pate 2017, 55). Kabuki was entertainment, simple escapism, a high art with acting lineages boasting unique traditions, and, like many forms of theater, also a form of social commentary (Pate 2017, 55). No wonder that Edo merchants could reach thousands and thousands of people by using commercial advertisement breaks between performances.

Commercial breaks seem to be a phenomenon of history, not at all a recent development in only the digital era. These Edo period ad breaks were called *kōjō* 口上, or stage announcements, and were already in full swing by the year 1715 (Pollack 2003, 83). *Kōjō* was not seen as an ‘interruption’ to the audience as a commercial break is seen nowadays. On the contrary, The *Kōjō*, or at least the well thought out ones, were part of the performance. The most famous example according to Pate is the product insertion by famous actor Danjūrō II 團十郎二代目 (1688-1758). In a 1709 reproduction play of *Keisei Hibari Yama* 傾城雲雀山 (The prostitute’s mountain of swallows), Danjūrō

II introduced the character of a travelling moxa (dried mugwort, a medicinal herb) peddler named Kumehachirō that talked rapidly (Pate 2017, 56). Danjūrō himself owned a moxa shop, and the moxa peddler character he played no doubt brought his store more customers. So much so that the popularity of moxa medicine skyrocketed, leading to the appearance of multiple new shops to meet the growing demand (Pate 2017, 56-57). The character also was re-used in several plays later. Danjūrō II's influence in the moxa selling business became so influential that the moxa shop Mimasu-ya started referring to Danjūrō's character in their yagō by using the same crest as the Danjūrō actor-lineage had. The same store also started using a doll depicting Danjūrō II in their role of the moxa peddler (Pate 2017, 57), making the character part of a larger cultural phenomenon known by contemporaries that is the perfect example of a signifier and a signified by Sturken & Cartwright's definition.

Many actors had their own shops, using their fame and good names to boost their commercial venture and their performance time to shamelessly promote their own goods on stage (Pate 2017, 56). Writing medicinal products or stores into entertaining ad scripts requires clever technique, however. Techniques that seem to have been applied in many other forms of media in the Edo period too. In 1718, Danjūrō II (again) wrote and inserted an ad segment with his moxa character into a larger drama. This segment's plot introduced an Edo-period patent medicine known as Uriō, a medicine that could cure throat-related ailments (Pate 2017, 57) (Uri et al. 2002, 98) (Cooper 2021, 214). This medicine was said to have originated in China some 1,400 years prior and came to Japan in 1368 by a man named Chin Uriō, who's descendant Toraya Fujiemon sold this product still during the time of this play. The plot's narrative was about this antitussive medicine's illustrious history and the effectiveness of the product. Danjūrō claimed to have personally been healed in 1717 using this product and wanted to thank Toraya by writing this scene (Pate 2017, 57) (Uri et al. 2002, 98).

This clever way of advertising is a prime example of celebrity endorsement. Regardless of if Danjūrō II was cured by the medication, his endorsement of this product gave Toraya's product the publicity via Danjūrō II's audience and provided association to the product via Danjūrō himself. Another clever insert is that the advertisement featured a famous 1,600-character long tongue twister that the actor pronounced while slowly accelerating the delivery of the words while remaining coherent. This is adding an entertaining element to the advertisement that Tellis describes as priming, which leads to a memorable experience and a stronger preference (Tellis 2004, 119). Pate states that this gradual acceleration was symbolic, signifying the gradual restoration process the medicine had on your throat, and the coherence of voice was also due to the medicine (Pate 2017, 57). Yet other phenomena are hidden between the lines. The usage of Ancient China, a long history, and 'unbroken lineages', seem to have been extensively used as an effective persuasion tool for medicinal merchants to solidify the position of stores and products. With a narrative that for many years, people had been content with and using a product, the question of medicinal legitimacy was cleverly covered.

## Product placement in Ukiyo-e

According to Pollack, apart from actors, popular Edo artists and writers also had great appeal among merchants for their ability to reach large audiences. He calls the Ukiyo-e prints an integral part of the advertising sphere (Pollack 2003, 73, 85). The Ukiyo-e of Ebisu-ya discussed before is a great example of an Ukiyo-e print that was meant to sell via the popularity of kanban musume on the image, while simultaneously serving as an advertisement via yagō visibility. This practice was also applied to popular actors in their roles as vendors when performing a kōjō, sometimes even with a kanban of the product (Pate 2017, 57-58). But better examples via Ukiyo-e are described again by Pollack.

For example, Ukiyo-e artist Eisen, famous for his portrayals of beautiful women and one of the artists who made *the sixty-nine stations of the Kisokaidō* (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 9). He depicted beautiful women in an erotic setting while they applied well-known cosmetic products. These Ukiyo-e prints were often accompanied by short slogans written on the side praising the product (Pollack 2008, 85). Other popular Ukiyo-e advertisements portrayed famous courtesans wearing kimonos or carrying umbrellas with the yagō of well-known brothels and shops on them, such as our prior example Ebisu-ya, or the stores Daimaru-ya, Matsuzaka-ya, or Echigo-ya (Pollack 2008, 86).

## Hikifuda advertisement leaflets

From around 1683 and onward, woodblock printed advertising leaflets called *hikifuda* 引き札 emerged. These leaflets had announcements on them for newly opened stores, a store's reopening, or for announcing special offers (Ehmcke 2013, 90). Hikifuda came with all manners of writing and imagery on them, as the possibilities are as limitless as the creativity of the advertisement writer. Particularly notable hikifuda from the Edo period were written by popular *gesaku* 戯作 writers, *gesaku* translating to 'cheap literature' or 'writing for amusement'. The format of hikifuda was used for announcements that promoted businesses and products, while also making it possible for the customer to take the advertisement home. Let's look at some interesting examples of hikifuda.

The first hikifuda we look at relates to the *kōjō* advertisement format in kabuki mentioned before. This type of hikifuda makes parody of the in *kōjō* phenomenon by opening their hikifuda with *touzai touzai* (Ladies and gentlemen!) and ending their hikifuda with *kachi kachi* (clap clap) signifying the ending of the leaflet (Pollack 2003, 76). Some hikifuda even opened with the literal word *kōjō*, as seen in figure 5 on the rightmost line. This image is a reproduction made with the original woodblock. It details store owner Jin'emon's name and him announcing that, because he buys and sells hemp in various provinces, he is planning to open a hemp store in exchange for ready money for a 'special bargaining sale'. This venture is separate from his already existing store called *Katayanagi-mise* 片柳店 written on the printed noren at the top of the image, which is a shop that sells salt, sugar, and other wares. There also seems to be a *yagō* of *miguchi* 三□ written on the noren.

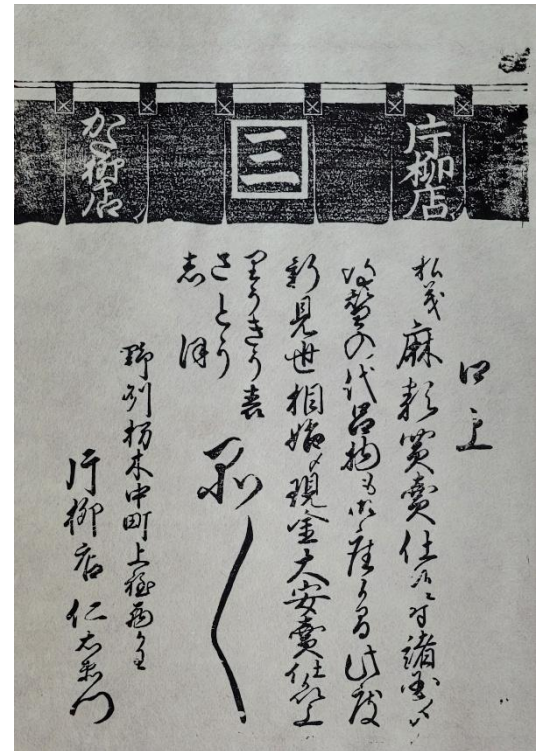


Figure 5: Hikifuda of Katayanagi-mise. The announcement opens with 'kōjō' (Jin'emon n.d.). Personal collection.

This hikifuda thus exemplifies both functions mentioned by Ehmcke and has a bonus 'sign' in the opening remark by using *kōjō*. This sign depends on the kabuki phenomenon for its meaning, it being a reproduction of *kōjō* for the same purpose of advertising via another medium. This is something Sturken and Cartwright highlight in their book (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, 13). While Jin'emon was probably not the first one to use this humorous reference in advertising, the existence of hikifuda with similar references to *kōjō* emphasize that the audience is aware of *kōjō* advertisements and that the phenomenon adapted to paper was in a way amusing enough to grab the attention of the audience.

Pollack mentions a type of hikifuda called a *sugoroku* 双六, which is a flyer with a dice game printed on top. This clever idea employed by gesaku writer Shikitei kosanba 式亭子三馬 (1812-n.d.) for example, who combined the 'happiness' that chance can bring with advertising his and his father's own products in *Hatsu Akinai shusse sugoroku* 初商出世双六 from 1854. This is another example that shows the creative application of the cutting-edge advertising techniques of the time. The top part of the leaflet is visible in figure 6. To play the game you start from the starting image and throw a die. The outcomes (one to six) have a short text that redirects you to another image. In every image there is a short text that explains what your 'life-path' will bring you. Some paths direct you to comedic negative or positive outcomes or the "win" image, while other paths lead to Kosanba's cosmetic and medicinal goods with a short text narrating that your life 'significantly improves' in a way because you used the product. One of these products was the immensely popular *Edo no Mizu* 江戸の水, a makeup foundation

devised by Kosanba's father Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776-1822), a popular Gesaku writer who used humor, puns and wordplay in his literature. Edo no Mizu is displayed in the top right corner square of figure 6.



Figure 6: the top part of the Hatsu Akinai Shusse sugoroku 初商出世双六 by Shikitei Kosanba 式亭子三馬. Japan National Diet Library.

### Gesaku and Literature advertisement

Gesaku started to serve more a moneymaking purpose for both the publisher and the gesaku author after a commercialization of fiction from the 1780's onwards, which changes the audience from 'inner literary circle' to a new 'faceless masses' audience (Leutner 1985, 2-3) (Vaporis 2021, 47). Sanba's main format for gesaku was a book type called *Kusazōshi* 草双紙 'picture books', a medium for adult satire with many illustrations. Sanba was a member of the urban middle class in the capital city of Edo, which was often a model for his fiction and gave him a stronger connection to the audience in his time: the everyday commoner (Leutner 1985, 7-8).

Somewhere around 1806 or 1811, Sanba opened a shop where he dealt in cosmetics such as *Edo no Mizu* and patent medicines for a more reliable second income next to his gesaku writing (Sanba, Jones, and Watanabe 2018, 364) (Leutner 1958, 47). Most of Sanba's works from 1810 onward carry advertisements for his shop and his products, which he does by mentioning his shop's address in the back matter (Leutner 1985, 47). Or, in his fictional work *The Floating World Barbershop*, Sanba

humorously introduces a flamboyantly dressed character who is scrubbing his teeth with tooth powder that had the brand name of “Sanba” written on it, which Sanba sold in his real-world store (Sanba, Jones, and Watanabe 2018, 365). This is product placement and ‘store placement’ in literature. Sanba used these ‘literary product placements’ for his own goods, but also for for example his colleague Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761-1816)’s store and products. Kyōden was a gesaku writer with a similar approach to Sanba, setting up a tobacco shop apart from his literary livelihood (Sanba, Jones, and Watanabe 2018, 364). Kyōden initially used hikifuda to sell his tobacco pouches but also wrote gesaku in kusazōshi with advertisements. For example, promoting a baiyaku called *Dokushogan* 読書丸 in 1802 that “makes one’s mind better”: it supposedly helped to refocus when bored and improved the memory (Yoshioka 1990, 104-107).

There was also literature that contained medicinal advertising on a more intimate scale, where product itself became a character in the fictional work: anthropomorphized medicines. Take for example Wataya Kihei 綿屋喜兵衛, the owner of a bookstore in Osaka who published the work *Ehon medetagusu* 絵本目出度区艸 in 1850 regarding smallpox, a book which Koch calls ‘picture-book medicine’. Wataya sold the medicine called *Kinzuimaru* 金随丸, a medicine meant for combating smallpox, that was simultaneously combating the evil retainer Hōsō Ryūkō 方相柳光 ‘Mighty smallpox’ in the story as an anthropomorphized character with the same name (Koch forthcoming).

Another example is the fictional work from 1838 called *Ehon Baisō Gundan* 絵本 黴瘡軍談. Writer and Osaka-based doctor Funakoshi Kinkai 船越錦海 began specializing in the treatment of syphilis and used the better understood concept of military conflict to educate people on the workings of the disease Syphilis by turning Syphilis into a character: “Evil King Syphilis” (Koch 2022, 93). This evil king wages war on the “lands of the human body” by taking over the “lands of the Female body” first and then moving over to seize the “lands of the male body” like the spread of the disease syphilis (Koch 2022, 94). There, however, King Syphilis meets resistance from no other than *Enjugan* 延寿丸, or General “Long-Life Concoction”, an anthropomorphized figure of Funakoshi’s own patented medicine that defeats king Syphilis, and a medicine he conveniently also promotes in the book’s back matter (Koch 2022, 95-96).

### Chapter 3. The Banpōshū: Advertising Pamphlet

This chapter explores the 萬寶集: Banpōshū advertising pamphlet by analyzing the text in classical Japanese and applying the concepts of semiotics and of advertising theory. The pamphlet itself has sixty pages filled mostly with text with a few illustrations. Looking at the title “collection of treasures”, this pamphlet promotes itself as containing valuable information, as book titles that embody the Neo-Confucian virtue of “self-cultivation via education” (De Bary 2010, 40-42) also tended to do. The Banpōshū has a title page, catalogue, a body describing the catalogued medicines, and contains multiple images. It is written in classical Japanese cursive script and employs reading help next to kanji characters for the reader’s convenience.

#### The Medicine Store of the Banpōshū

The full name of the store described in the Banpōshū on the first page (see figure 7 below) reads *karamono wamono yakushu baibai donya* 唐物 和物 薬種売買問屋. From this we gather that they trade in raw materia medica (*yakushu*) from both foreign origin and from Japanese soil. This is a wholesale store, which means they bought wares in bulk and sold them to other stores concerned with retail, or that profit from buying in bulk. The word *gomen* 御免, or ‘license’, is written on the right. This is most likely a license that represents this store’s approval from the government to participate in the Nagasaki medicine auctions, since store owners based in Nagasaki, Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto were generally the main participants in these auctions (Cooper 2021, 91).



Figure 7: The first page of the Banpōshū. The right column reads *gomen* 御免 ‘license’, the middle column is the store title, and the right column shows additional information about the business.

‘Gomen’ no doubt served as a semiotic ‘sign’ that meant legitimacy to the reader, as owning a license as a medicine shop would signify recognition by the bakufu that your products were not counterfeit nor poisonous (Cooper 2021, 92). If we look at the relevant context, this gomen is placed on the title page at the very front, even before the name of the store is mentioned. It is the first word that one would have read according to reading convention. Surely this license-dropping serves to invoke positive emotion in the potential customer: the alleviation of fear of counterfeit or poisonous medicine via reassurance, and perhaps the curiosity about what store this license belongs to when reading the first lines of this advertising pamphlet. The title of the *Yakushu Donya* is therefore written on the next line and in large characters to highlight this association.

The column on the left of the store first lists the address of the store: *Osaka Doshōmachi, Sakai-suji* 大阪道修町堺筋. Doshōmachi became the center of Osaka’s medicine network when around 1603 the Saitō family started dealing in the handling of medicinal goods from overseas. They had received land and financial support from Toyotomi Hideyoshi for growing medicine for Hideyoshi’s personal use two decades earlier, and the handling of foreign medicinal goods prompted a likewise movement in their business competitors who started moving to and setting up business in the neighboring city districts of Awajimachi and Doshōmachi (Cooper 2021, 89) (Yoshioka 1990, 14). The already existing distribution infrastructure and the city’s central position between east and west Japan made it Osaka the perfect place for distribution of medicinal products (Cooper 2021, 89). By 1666, there already were 108 different apothecaries in Doshōmachi (Yoshioka 1990, 14). *Banpōshū* was published almost one and a half centuries later. One can assume that *Yakushu Donya* had many more competitors by then. In the same column stands the interesting phrase *Narabi ni Myōuyaku chōgō sho* 并二妙薬調合所, which means “as well as the ‘wonder drug compounding site’”. This refers to the store that compounds medicines for the *Yakushu Donya*, which is in the east of Doshōmachi. Lastly, the column lists the publisher’s name, Ōmiya Yasugorō 近江屋安五郎.

## Preface and Medicine Catalogue

After the title page is a short introductory paragraph (See figure 8 on the right) on the Chinese mythological figure Shen Nong, the ‘farmer god’. According to his legend, he took pity on the people who constantly got sick from ‘eating and drinking from the land’ (Fang & Dickenson, 2019, 123). He thus taught them how to farm, and he sacrificed his own body by tasting many different plants to document the poisonous, healing and other characteristics of the plants. He eventually succumbed to the poisoning of one of the plants he ate, and so was documented as the heroic, self-sacrificing inventor of pharmacology (Fang & Dickenson, 2019, 123-125). The introductory paragraph in the Banpōshū briefly describes this same legend of ‘tasting the hundred herbs’ and how his sacrifice led to the ‘birth of medical treatments that are still used in Chinese and Japanese medicine nowadays’. In the latter half of the paragraph the author Seisei professes his respect to the sacred icons in the lineage of doctors and explains that he drew this image of Shen Nong to urge ones that do not revere these icons to do so too. The last four nearly faded characters of the paragraph spike interest and read *Yakushi sairai* 薬師再来, which translates to ‘reincarnation of the Healing Buddha’. It seems that the author is knowledgeable about Buddhism and calls upon its principles for legitimacy.



Figure 8: origin story of medicine via the myth of Shen Nong in the Banpōshū (1810, 3)

The author uses the same narrative of referring to ancient China and using a long-lasting, unbroken lineage in this paragraph to declare the position of the Banpōshū in the medicine world. This ‘dynasty trope’, a cultural device and convention, must have had a certain effectiveness in Edo advertising as we uncovered the same phenomenon when discussing the antitussive medicine Uirō. While not directly stating that the store is part of this lineage of doctors and thus related to Shen Nong, His name, the paying of respects, and the image create a satisfying enough association, which we will see more of in the foreword. Regarding the image, it contains signs and clues that identifies the character as Shen Nong for the reader. These are the herbs in Shen Nong’s mouth and hands, and the two bumps on his head resembling the horns of the ‘head of a bull’ he was presumably born with (Brittanica s.v.). For those who did not make this connection, the short paragraph will notify the ‘ignorant’ reader and simultaneously fulfill its purpose.

After solidifying the store's position with the right myth, the author starts with a foreword that reads the following:

*Clothing, food and housing, those three necessities of life are the foundation of rearing the human body. The same goes for money. If you have enough money, you also have enough clothing, food and housing. In the first place, the body is a vessel of disease. Therefore, I think what you should really treasure is being cured by medicine. If you have an empty stomach, even if you put your money directly in your mouth and stomach, you will not be saved from hunger. Nevertheless, when you exchange that wealth for food, you will be saved from hunger, but this is not the case for sudden illness. In an emergency you would wish to buy a prescription to save yourself from that hardship, but you may not be able to get it. Therefore, if you don't buy and stock up on suitable medicines in exchange for that money, this is not good. For that reason, even if you are in a remote village, because there are houses it is not difficult to find food. But there is no way to acquire miraculous medicine. Therefore, if you do not always keep stock, it will be difficult when you face an emergency to save yourself from that hardship. Moreover, because your body is a vessel for disease, it is the medicine that cleanses that calamity what we again should call the most excellent treasure. Thus, my family manufactures more than ten famous prescriptions passed down from my ancestors, and I recorded the benefits (of these medicines) in this short volume titled Banpōshū. My wish is that this book is widely spread throughout the whole country and that it meets everyone's needs.*

*Written by Seisei Shujin*

Autumn of the year of the horse, *bunka* 文化 7 (1810).

Seisei's reasoning incorporates various, likely widespread concepts for that time, such as stocking up for hard times and 'the necessities of life' (clothing, food, housing, and medicine) according to Buddhism. These necessities are restated in the ascending vows of the Healing Buddha (Suzuki, Klein, and Col 2012, 9, 82), the figure the author connected Shen Nong to at the end of the myth paragraph on the previous page. In the foreword, the author replaces the fourth necessity of medicine with money, however. An interesting mercantile philosophy that fits the time of trade where the merchant class was on the rise quite well. Stocking up on necessities for hard times was a strategy commoners must have practiced every year in winter, an argument that speaks to the audience's sense of reason, and ties neatly in the fact that the Yakushu Donya was a wholesale store: providing bulk for stocking up was their specialty. With emphasizing that "money cannot cure you from disease, but medicine will", Seisei cleverly leads the reader to the understanding that exchanging one's money for medicine is a solid investment. Especially so if the money is exchanged at the Yakushu Donya, of course. The narrative leans on established Buddhist concepts for legitimacy, which were considered to hold authority in Japan (Andreva 2023, 47-48). It also employs a negative motivation of having no medicine in time of need or while living in a remote place, a situation that is solved by Yakushu Donya and its products. Lastly, Seisei employs the 'dynasty trope' by inserting his family into the ancestry line of medicines and placing himself in line with the authorities on medicine.

Following the preface is the catalogue that lists the twelve prescriptions that Seisei claims his ancestors produced. The Banpōshū, being an advertisement for a wholesale store, promotes a wider assortment of baiyaku than most other medicinal advertisements we have discussed. Figure 9 shows the first three listed baiyaku. They are put in a scroll-like cartouche where the names are in larger, bold calligraphy and are surrounded by the product description and price. Let us look at a couple of medicine titles to have an idea of what types of medicines are listed. The title of the first medicine reads: “*Medicine to keep you healthy while traveling*” and is, according to the description next to it, a salve to smear on the soles of your feet. The second medicine reads “*Medicine for sudden illness, Soseisan*” which is a ‘reviving concoction’. The Third medicine bears the title of ‘*Medicine that adds value to your visage*’. The description explains that it is a face-whitening cosmetic product that can cover birthmarks and serves as a remedy that stops sweating, pimples, and eczema.

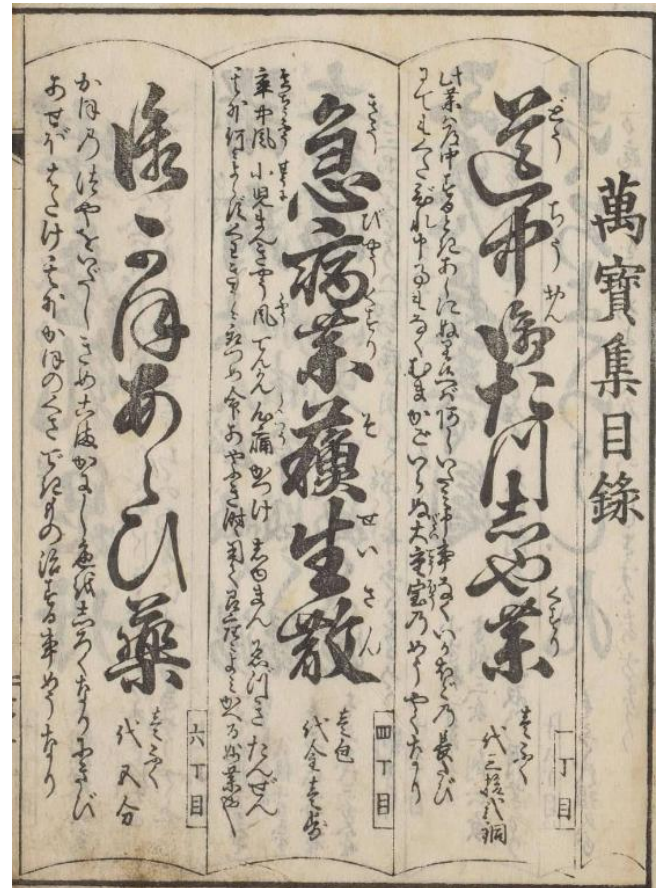


Figure 9: The catalogue of the Banpōshū with the first three listed medicines (Seisei 1810, 6).

It seems these baiyaku are advertised either as a panax, or as remedying multiple ailments. The marketing of one’s medicine as a cure for various diseases or a ‘cure-all’ seems to be a trend in Edo period medicinal commerce. This was also the case with Akatama, which was promoted to cure various bowel issues. Koch translates for us that Wataya’s medicine Kinzuimaru was deemed “highly effective against measles and smallpox... ..expels worms causing colic, bloating, etc., stops children from crying at night, stops them from vomiting breastmilk, prevents stomachache, and brings down every fever” (Koch forthcoming). The influences of traditional Chinese medicine shines through here, where the use of *ninjin* 人参 ‘ginseng’, was considered the panax herb (Potenza, et al. 2023, 360). The advertising strategy also conforms to “supportive argumentation via listing the positive attributes of a product” (Tellis 2004, 144). Let us zoom in on what is written about our focus of this case study: the first medicine of Dōchū Ontassha Gusuri.

## An Analysis of Dōchū Ontassha Gusuri

This baiyaku, which I will call Ontassha Gusuri from now on, also has a short description that explains how to use the listed medicine, what benefits it will give you, and lists the product details at the bottom of the cartouche. It contains the words ‘one dose’ and the price of 32 copper coins. While market prices and the value of money varied across the long timespan of the Edo period, the average estimated price of a watermelon was forty-four copper coins during the bunka 文化 era (1804-1818) (Ōishi, Ozawa, and Yamamoto 2003, 420, 498), which is the same era as the era in which the Banpōshū was published. That makes our baiyaku cheaper than a watermelon. The following is the translation of the descriptive text in the catalogue:

*This wonderful medication is a great treasure that, when applied to your feet while travelling, will keep your feet from hurting. However long the journey is, you will not grow weary, and you do not need a horse or a palanquin.*

The description is an excerpt from the detailed description of the usage and benefits of Ontassha Gusuri later in the Banpōshū. This excerpt, along with the title and other information, was the first thing a customer browsing the Banpōshū for medicines would have read. It clearly states what benefits the medicine gives you and claims that the length of the road does not matter, implying that this medicine will function anyways. Lastly, the excerpt mentions the benefit that you do not need to pay the (no doubt) expensive fees or a horse or a palanquin, making it more attractive to commoners and probably also marketing the product to the common people that cannot afford such luxurious services. This statement works well with the travel culture phenomenon we established earlier. The Banpōshū was published when the travel trend had been going on for thirty years (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 8) and existed in between the publications of two major meisho zue works, the *Miyako meisho zue* in 1780 and the *Edo meisho zue* in 1829-36 that made travel culture reach peak heights (Goree 2020, 304). Thus, we can see the effects of the travel trend on medicinal advertising through works such as the Banpōshū.

We now move on to the full description of Ontassha Gusuri that starts after the catalogue. The title of the medicine is introduced with a complementary image, displayed in figure 10. The image shows a couple of ladies carrying walking canes, ready for travel in front of what seems to be a *hatago-ya* 旅籠屋 ‘Japanese-style inn for travelers’. One particularly cheerful and helpful merchant helps one of the ladies apply Ontassha Gusuri to the soles of her feet while the ladies look on with interest. Another traveler is portrayed walking along the road in the background at the slightly damaged part. The page after the image displays title and product specifications again before the four folio-spanning explanation of the medicine begins. Reading the specifications again, we learn that this medicine’s ‘one dose’ is good for two uses. Whether that is one use for each foot, two uses for both feet, is left to interpretation.



Figure 10: The illustration introducing the medicine *Dōchū Ontassha Gusuri*, together with the product title and product information on the right (Seisei 1810, 14)

For the analysis of the text, I transcribed and translated the first page and the last two pages of the extensive description of *Ontassha Gusuri*. This should give us a splendid impression of how the medicine was advertised. The last two pages also contain an image of a business owned by the author, which will give us insight into how the *Yakushu Donya* related to other businesses, about medicine sales, and distribution. More on that later. Let us now look at the first page of the extensive description that follows figure 10.

*This medicine is a handy prescription that will make your legs not hurt while traveling. When you dissolve (this medicine) to soften it with water every morning at departure, you must smear thoroughly it from the back of your feet to the top of your feet, and all the way between your toes. When you go on a trip, even if you are climbing mountain passes that are perilous and you traverse a road of five ri or seven ri, your legs will not hurt, blistering will not come out, and Kakke disease will not occur. For swollen feet, if you smear them after taking a bath in advance, they will be as good as new the next morning. For gentle readers that experience Kakke disease, before it starts hurting, smear it on the places where you usually feel pain. When you are walking the heat will not come out. Consequently, if it is not Kakke disease but exhaustion we speak of and your legs and hips are tired, all of this is due to the heat that is being produced in the feet. If you use this medicine, you won't suffer from foot pain at all when traveling, and consequently, even on a road of a thousand ri, you will not need a horse or palanquin. It is truly the best treasure for on the road. However, one should use it before the pain starts. Even if it heals within one night, if you walk plenty it will hurt again.*

The Banpōshū sports quite an extensive description of how to use the product and what benefits the medicine will grant the user, employing a negative motivation strategy. Kakke disease is a disease of the feet that makes them go numb and makes the lower legs and feet swell up, leading sufferers to fatigue more easily (Japanknowledge 2001). We now know this disease is caused due to vitamin B deficiency. Ontassha Gusuri is promoted as a medicine that cures kakke disease, removing pain and swelling. It will also combat weariness by stopping heat buildup in the feet, offering alleviation of pain while traveling on foot. With these various ailments the medicine supposedly combats, the author again adheres to the ‘cure-all trope’ that originated from traditional Chinese medicine. Seisei also restates the claim that one does not need a horse or palanquin, this time for “a road of a thousand ri” (1 ri is 3,92 kilometers). A bold claim that is simultaneously a buzzword, a ‘sign’ that lets the reader know this medicine will work regardless of distance and puts the efficacy of Ontassha Gusuri in a good daylight.

However, we cannot forget that the Yakushu Donya was a wholesale store and thus would have marketed towards other medicine selling stores. In the few pages following the medicine description, the author explains why buying Ontassha Gusuri from the Yakushu Donya is beneficial to one’s business with a long story, supposedly a true one of his own experience. Four years ago, in an inn near Sanjō bridge (Kyoto), there was a twenty-six-year-old pilgrim from Edo who had become crippled. The man could not afford a palanquin and tried various methods of recovery for two weeks but couldn’t. That was when the author met the man and offered to help him with Ontassha Gusuri if the man applied it for three consecutive days. The man declined, saying he could not afford three more days of sojourn, on which Seisei responded that he would give the man the medicine for free, pay his costs at the inn, and return in four to five days to give the man more medicine for when he would set out on his way back to Edo.

Seisei narrates that the innkeeper, the ill man, and the guests thought of him to be like a Buddha or kami, but he dismisses this statement by saying to the reader that his motivations stemmed from his greed for profit. He thought that if he gave the man the medicine for free, the word would spread and Seisei would earn many more times his money back. He returned four days later and saw that the ill man was cured and that everyone was very thankful to him. He gave the man more medicine and told him to apply it every morning, and that if he needed money on the road, he should tell the story of how Ontassha Gusuri helped him in this occasion. The guests of the inn were moved and the man received parting gifts, which, according to the author, left the man with more than one ryō 兩, a golden coin that was the value equivalent of enough rice to feed one person for a year. An incredibly high amount of money. with help from our general watermelon price, which one ryō could buy 158 of (Ōishi, Ozawa, and Yamamoto 2003, 420, 498), the man would be able to buy two-hundred-and-seventeen doses of *Ontassha Gusuri*, which makes one think this a tall tale rather than a true story.

Regardless the story's truth, it is an instance of endorsement via a success story and an endorsement via an expert, as Seisei has established his expertise by placing himself in line with authoritative ideologies in the introduction of the Banpōshū. Seisei also tries to portray himself as a good and honest person, as he admits to the reader that his charity also has a self-serving reason. With this endorsement, Seisei creates credibility and trustworthiness that helps with making the reader accept his advertising message as correct (Tellis 2004, 182). Subsequently, this story employs layman endorsement by showcasing instances where *Ontassha Gusuri* has improved individuals' lives, in this case our crippled pilgrim from Edo. The author mentions that after the man left, he received many thank you notes from other cured people the man supposedly had given the medicine to while on his travels, which adds to more laymen to this endorsement. This again brings to our attention the diffusing power travel culture had on medicinal products, especially when paired with good advertising.

The success story is connected to the last two pages of the *Ontassha Gusuri* advertisement. These pages display an illustration of a hatago-ya (written on the kanban out front), with various individuals in and around the building (figure 11 below). The bridge in the illustration has a pillar with calligraphy on it that reads 'Sanjō Bridge'. That makes the city one can see in the back left corner of the illustration Kyoto, which notifies us that our merchant Seisei has expanded his ventures from Osaka to Kyoto, and that he also owned a business that sold more than only medicines as hatago-ya were service oriented ventures. Here, Seisei uses his personal success to advertise *Ontassha Gusuri* by showing the reader that his financial situation improved so much by selling the baiyaku that he could buy this venture in Kyoto. How his hatago-ya insertion relates to *Ontassha Gusuri* is explained in a closing remark on the page after the hatago-ya image. There Seisei assures the reader that at his hatago-ya, "the attendants will help you cleanse your body while taking a bath" and that "They will of course apply the medicine recipe (of *Ontassha Gusuri*) in the right way."



Figure 11: A street view of Seisei Shujin's Hatago-ya near Sanjō bridge, Kyoto. Customers of the hatago-ya express their gratitude (Seisei 1810, 15-16)

The text in figure 11 is dialogue, spoken by the characters that are closest to the text. The dialogue lines below are transcriptions of dialogues one, two, and three from right to left. It reads the following:

*Sell this medicine on the road to travelers and earn your travelling expenses!*

*Because of you I see the faces of my parents (again).*

*Thank you very much for your charity.*

Everyone is grateful to be under your care.

Well, the owner of the inn has helped for a long time.

Please take this money as payment for the hatago-ya.

It is not clear whether line one is said by the hatago-ya employee in the entrance doorway or is just a general statement, but considering the context it is overly transparent that this is an advertising line aimed directly at the target audience of the Banpōshū: other medicine selling stores. The sentence ends in the imperative and its promise is what the target audience came for. This sentence is a sign, charged with the meaning Seisei created when telling his success story. The second line is dialogue said by the first man on the right holding his straw hat in his hands. He professes his gratitude to the employees of the hatago-ya, just like the man behind him that speaks the words in line three. We can categorize these dialogues of praise as lay endorsement of the product and simultaneously of Seisei's hatago-ya.

The character dialogues in the hatago-ya image are in striking similarity with other Edo medicinal advertisements that also contain endorsements from other users of the medicine. Or, in the case of fictional work, from characters in the story. We see this 'endorsement trope' in the story with the crippled man from Edo and the other travelers he helped. Examples in other works are Sanba's flamboyant tooth powder-using character with the "Sanba"-inscribed a tooth powder box (Sanba, Jones, and Watanabe 2018, 370). Or in the picture-book *Ehon Medetagusu* mentioned earlier. A character in *Ehon Medetagusu* called Minamoto no Tametomo was the mouthpiece to utter phrases of praise and explain medicinal effectiveness of the baiyaku Kinzuimaru (Koch forthcoming). Minamoto no Tametomo was a historical figure, a medieval era warrior who was worshipped in Edo-period Japan in belief that he could defeat the smallpox god (Koch forthcoming), used likely with the intent of adding expert authority to the supposed effects of kinzuimaru against smallpox. This concludes the analysis of Ontassha Gusuri.

## Chapter 4. Conclusion

Taking Edo advertisements as a starting point and using modern-day theory for context, this thesis established that the Banpōshū employs various advertisement strategies that existed at the time and were used in other Edo period medicinal advertisements, and that the advertisements within the Banpōshū were influenced by the travel culture trend, which boomed in 1780 and was well-established thirty years later in 1810, when the Banpōshū was published (Traganou 2004, 66) (Goree 2020, 17) (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 8). This influence is visible through imagery used in the Banpōshū that shows similarity with *meisho zue*: displaying people traveling on the *gokaidō* and showing the *hatago-ya*, which was typical for travel culture. The author also explicitly mentions the power of travel culture in spreading knowledge of a medicinal product. The *Gokaidō* traveling highways played an important role for the nation-wide distribution network of medicine in the Edo period that Rüegg (2023, 26) identifies as they were highways for transporting medicinal commerce between Edo, Kyoto, Osaka and other places (Andō and Ikeda 2008, 7). Simultaneously, the increase of travelers on the road due to travel culture prompted a change in medicinal advertising, where advertisers jumped the bandwagon of this new trend to combine the needs of potential customers and the wares their advertisements sold. A change uncovered via the analysis of the Banpōshū, where the author explicitly states the diffusing effect of travel culture on medicine when combined with good advertising.

Regarding format, the Banpōshū is an advertising pamphlet spanning sixty pages that promotes the *Yakushu Donya*, and the medicines listed in the catalogue. The Banpōshū's longer format allows for it to incorporate various advertisement strategies employed in short-form advertisements within the same work, at the cost of losing brevity. For example, the title page serves as a *kanban* for the store that displays the store's *yagō* and incorporates semiotic 'signs' such as *gomen*, which signifies the authority the store received from the government in the eyes of the reader and provides the necessary reassurance against counterfeit and poisonous medicines (Cooper 2021, 92). The illustrations of Seisei's own *hatago-ya* and of the *Yakushu Donya* are literal forms of store placement we also saw in *gesaku* writing by Sanba and Kyōden. Both illustrations also display *kanban*, one that informs the reader of the location of Seisei's *hatago-ya*, and two other *kanban* that promote *baiyaku* products.

The target audience of the Banpōshū are stores concerned with retail of *baiyaku* and other businesses or people that profit from buying in bulk. Considering this, the Banpōshū must convince the audience of both the credibility of Seisei and the *Yakushu Donya*, must guarantee that the medicines have some form of efficacy, and that trading with the *Yakushu Donya* will result in profit for the reader too. The author achieves these points by employing three 'advertising tropes' we uncovered while researching advertising shapes and formats. These are the *dynasty trope*, the *cure-all trope*, and the *endorsement trope*.

Seisei establishes himself and his family line as an authoritative figure regarding medicinal via the 'dynasty trope', an advertising device we also observed in e.g. the

advertising of baiyaku Uirō. The author calls upon the authority of traditional Chinese medicine by explaining the myth of Shen Nong, the farmer god and father pharmacology in the interlude (Fang & Dickenson, 2019, 123-125). He leverages the Buddhist authority by invoking the Buddhist principles of “the four necessities of life” and then adding to these necessities “the need to stock up on medicine”. He does this via argument and emotion. Argument via appealing to reason via common survival practices and providing logical connection between having a supply of medicine to help you in your time of need (Tellis 2004, 135, 144). Emotion through the negative motivation of fearing hardship if one does not have a stock of medicines, the services of Seisei’s store, the Yakushu Donya, being the alleviation of this fear. With this, Seisei establishes himself as part of the authoritative ideologies of Buddhism and traditional Chinese medicine by placing him, his family line, and the medicines passed down from his ancestors in conformity with these ideologies.

For the medicines contained in the catalogue of the Banpōshū, the author employs the ‘cure-all trope’ of mentioning the various curing effects of one’s medicine. This is a practice that originates from the idea of a panax in traditional Chinese medicine (Potenza, et al. 2023, 360). Various other Edo period medicinal advertisements do the same for their products, such as Akatama remedying various stomach related issues and food poisoning (Hanasaka 1956, 16), and Kinzuimaru’s laundry list of remedial effects (Koch forthcoming). Subsequently, mentioning all the ailments one’s medicine can cure adheres to the most common variant of ‘argument’ in advertising: listing positive attributes of a brand or product, which provides evidence for the acceptance of the advertisement (Tellis 2004, 135, 144).

The author employs the endorsement trope via the ideologies of traditional Chinese medicine and Buddhism, which were considered authoritative experts in the field of medicinal practices in medieval Japan and the Edo period (Andreva 2023, 47-48). Seisei also cleverly inserted himself and his medicines in the narrative of these ideological practices via persuasion, establishing himself as an expert endorser too. There are no signs of celebrity endorsement in the Banpōshū, yet layman endorsements are abundant such as the crippled traveler from Edo. Seisei helped this man recover from his illness with *Ontassha Gusuri*, the first listed medicine in the catalogue that cures foot pain and kakke disease and allows the traveler on foot to travel ‘a thousand ri’ without foot pain. The listing of the various positive effects of *Ontassha Gusuri* are part of the ‘cure-all trope’ and simultaneously an endorsement by Seisei, our now established expert. The author further describes that the ill man from Edo, now cured, spread the word on the efficacy of *Ontassha Gusuri* when traveled home, thus becoming a layman endorser. The illustration of the hatago-ya in the Banpōshū also contains several fictional characters that act as layman endorsers for *Ontassha Gusuri* and Seisei’s hatago-ya. They profess gratitude to the service the medicine and the business provided to them.

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