Women and Eccentricity in Early Modern Kyoto

A case study of Tokuyama Gyokuran and Otagaki Rengetsu

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Introduction

The shift into the Edo period (1603-1868) brought many changes. The *sakoku* decree limited people going in and out of Japan, thus limiting resources from outside the country.[1] Turning the world outside the borders into an unreachable, idealized fantasy.[2] It was from 1644 that Chinese intellectuals and religious teachers were allowed to travel to Japan.[1] In addition, frequent trade with China through the port of Nagasaki gave way for Chinese literati culture to spread throughout Japan.[3] Chinese literati culture is closely tied to the main topic of this paper: 'Eccentricity,' a heterodox genre in the art world, and a descriptor of social and anti-social behavior.

To discuss 'eccentricity' it's important to contextualize the term. The definition of the term is fluid, and changes depending on area and time period. 'Eccentricity' in this paper will be examined on a cultural and social level, which are intertwined. Within the cultural narrative, it's a genre of art and an important part of Japanese historical narrative. On a social level, in scholarship 'eccentrics' could be described with several qualities that qualifies them to name them as such. One cannot call themselves 'eccentric' and be true to its meaning, which will be explained in chapter 2.

In Japan, there were several ways to refer to 'eccentrics' that differ in the understanding of 'eccentricity' that would apply to non-Japanese countries. The terms '*kyo*'(畸) and '*ki*' (奇), will be discussed in chapter 2.1, which is a discussion on eccentricity. To elaborate on the discussion, chapter 2.2 will be on 'Kinsei kijinden' (Eccentrics of our times, 1790) by Ban Kokei. A book published at the height of eccentricity, after which I argue the meaning had changed due to the commercialization of it. The grouping of *kijin* from 'Kinsei kijinden' exist outside of the common collective identity of the time,[4] but could also be seen as their own collective identity, as all *kijin* are equally part of the collective, without identically sharing its qualities. Something rather contrary to the qualities *kijin* should possess. This paper will show that not all *kijin* are the same, but belong under the same umbrella term.

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[1] John T Carpenter, Midori Oka, and host institution Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Poetry of Nature : Edo Paintings from the Fishbein-Bender Collection*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018), 81.
[2] Patricia J. Graham, "Lifestyles of Scholar-Painters in Edo Japan," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 77, no. 7 (1990): 268.
[3] Tomi Suzuki, "Splendid Japanese Women Artists of the Edo Period," *Early Modern Women* 10, no. 2 (2016): 158-159, https://doi.org/10.1353/emw.2016.0013.
[4] Peter Nosco, *Individuality in Early Modern Japan : Thinking for Oneself*, First edition. (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 19-21, http://www.tandfebooks.com/isbn/9781315143125.

Within the cultural context of Japanese eccentricity, women have mostly been left out of the discussion due to the male-centric narrative of past scholarship. Even though sources such as the 'Kinsei kijinden' show that this wasn't the case during the Edo period itself. In this paper, the focus will be on two women: Tokuyama Gyokuran and Otagaki Rengetsu. Tokuyama Gyokuran has been discussed in the context of eccentricity, she is mentioned in 'Kinsei kijinden', and was a top pick whenever a list of top female artists were made. She was even often highly ranked among the literati artists.[5] The reason for choosing Otagaki Rengetsu is due to her possibly non-conforming behavior and similar background as Gyokuran. They were both illegitimate daughters of a samurai father and a 'courtesan' mother, both low-ranking samurai women in terms of social status, and both earned an income by producing art in Kyoto. Gyokuran died in 1784, just before the 'Kinsei kijinden' was published and Rengetsu was born in 1791 and was active after the publication.

The question this paper attempts to answer is: What kind of eccentrics were Tokuyama Gyokuran and Otagaki Rengetsu? With the 'Kinsei kijinden' as the point where a shift took place with 'eccentricity', the purpose is to examine these women and determine what kind of eccentrics they were for their respective period and circumstances.

[5] Felice Fischer et al., *Ike Taiga and Tokuyama Gyokuran : Japanese Masters of the Brush*, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2007), 33.

Chapter 1 : Edo period Kyoto

1.1 Art scene in Kyoto

With the start of the Edo period, as the Shogun took power from the imperial court, the popular genre of art commissioned by the higher class shifted towards military and Chinese themes to reflect the military and Chinese derived past of the Shogunate.[6] The capital changed from Kyoto to Edo, and artists like the Kano school, rooted in Chinese southern Song academy[7] together with the lacquerware industry followed the new government (*bakufu*) to Edo (present day Tokyo).[8] There were two official art schools left in Kyoto: Tosa and Kyo Kano (the Kano in Kyoto). But the Tosa school was patronaged under the imperial court who lost financial stability, rendering the painting school inactive. Kyo Kano declined by mid-eighteenth century due to the lack of masters.[9]

When all four branches of the Kano school had left Kyoto, so did the associated rigidness of the style where skills that can be taught and learned instead of relying on natural talent.[10] An opposite notion to popular Kyoto artists in the Edo period, who disregarded traditional norms and "pursued new styles, techniques, and modes of representation, expressing themselves in startling new images".[11] For example: Ike Taiga (1723-1776) and Yosa Buson (1716-1783) who combined *nanga*, Chinese inspired Japanese art, with "Japanese sensitivity toward nature and colors, producing warm, textured, and lyrical paintings".[11]

In the mid-seventeenth century the book publishing and woodblock printing industry flourished throughout the Edo period.[12] The literacy rate was on the rise as well. Literacy came in different degrees; functional literacy could be limited to being able to write one's name, and full literacy can include being able to read government documents written in epistolary-style hybrid Sino-Japanese.[13] The measure of a man's literacy rate was based on his

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[6] Elizabeth Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting, 1600-1700*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 169, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824862046.
[7] Graham, "Lifestyles of Scholar-Painters," 263-264.
[8] Puck W. Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness : Eccentricity and Madness in Early Modern Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), 24-27, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824839123.
[9] Matthew Philip MacKelway et al., *Traditions Unbound : Groundbreaking Painters of Eighteenth Century Kyoto*, (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, Chong-Moon Lee Center, 2005), 16.
[10] MacKelway et al., *Traditions Unbound*, 17-18.
[11] MacKelway et al., *Traditions Unbound*, 15.
[12] Melia Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art in Asia*, (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 230; Suzuki, "Splendid Japanese Women Artists," 156.
[13] Rebecca Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity : Women and Tea Culture in Edo and Meiji Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 40.

ability to engage in Chinese studies, which included poetry, history and the Confucian classics. While Women's literacy was focused on *waka* poetry and classical Japanese tales such as the 'The Tale of Genji'.[14] However, the type of literacy associated with women shifts during the Edo period which will be explained In the following chapter. Class, geography and money were considerable barriers to learning and literacy,[15] but literacy created access to elite culture and arts, and that included the Chinese inspired literati style painting.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the political and social demands had resulted in the emergence of 'an aesthetics of eccentricity'. Puck Brecher argues that this was a "consciously adopted taste, a set of conventions that established strangeness as a recognized style".[16] The *bakufu* focused on morals based in neo-Confucianism, where the moral obligation was to service the collective while anti-social non-conformity was considered as moral corruption or eccentricity. Strangeness was a soft dissent against the mainstream. If eccentricity was socio-political benign, then it was tolerated or even watched with amusement or admiration.[17] The rise of eccentricity in the eighteenth century didn't occur out of nowhere, but was the consequence of a trend that had started 100 years ago.[16]

By the early eighteenth century the enthusiasm towards things Chinese among Japanese intellectuals, writers and artists was renewed[18] fueled by the spread of literacy and education that gave prestige to China studies. Furthermore, due to frequent trade with China through the port of Nagasaki, it was possible for Chinese literati culture to spread throughout Japan.[3] The assimilation of Chinese aesthetics and poetic sensibilities by Japanese artist participating in the *nanga* style, happened in different economic, social and cultural contexts than those in China. There, a civil service system fostered the rise of a class of well-educated poets and artists,[19] where one took a test on the competency regarding their familiarity with Chinese learning and culture.[20] Japanese *nanga* artists on the other hand, took no test, and had mixed backgrounds from the educated samurai class familiar with Confucian classics and Chinese poetry, to those born in less privilege. Regardless of these class differences, these Japanese artists were called *bunjin*[19] or literati, and their works fall under the term of *bunjinga*, or

[14] Suzuki, "Splendid Japanese Women Artists," 156.
[15] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 41.
[16] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 52.
[17] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 24-27.
[18] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 81.
[19] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 82.
[20] Graham, "Lifestyles of Scholar-Painters," 262; Rachel Saunders and Yukio Lippit, *Painting Edo: Selections from the Feinberg Collection of Japanese Art*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Art Museums, 2020), 51-52.

literati-school painting. A fundamental part of this style, besides knowledge on Chinese culture, was the knowledge of calligraphy, ink brushwork and the manifesting of personal expression or revelation of the individual's *qi* (spirit).[19] It was a style associated with visual amateurism.[21] Another word for their work is *Nanshuga* which was abbreviated from the school of *nanga*.[22]

After 1736, *bunjin* found autonomy that provided them the opportunity to create independent aesthetic realms for individual pleasure and cultural practice. These spaces existed outside of social structures like gender, status and occupation.[23] Thus the literati culture offered an escape from the strictness of Tokugawa society, a space where people from all classes could interact with each other as equals.[24] While both literati and Kano school paintings had respect for Chinese literary and legendary themes and skills, literati sacrificed precision to make use of a new array of brushstrokes, compared to their Kano predecessors.[22] Literati painters became an orthodox group,[25] but from there also emerged the heterodoxy of aesthetic strangeness developed by first- and second generation *bunjin*. They created a cultural sphere that was common by the end of the century in which *ki* and *kyo*, two terms used interchangeably in the Edo period to refer to acting upon one's own principles with intentions that hold potentiality for virtue.[26] The discussion on *ki* and *kyo* will continue in chapter 2.1.

The first literati were samurai intellectuals with deep knowledge on Chinese poetry and prose while being amateur painters. And the second generation included many commoners from urban areas who were professional painters.[3] Tokuyama Gyokuran belongs to the latter category and will be discussed in chapter 3. These literati skilled in painting techniques were not taught by earlier Chinese masters, but were learned from woodblock printed manuals.[21]

An ideal that *bunjin* strove for,[27] that was legitimized by Ogyu Sorai, is the concept of 'art for art's sake'. It took until the eighteenth century for 'amateurism' in art to be commercially supported and thus be a possible career.[28] Ogyu Sorai was also part of the rising positivity

[21] Saunders and Lippit, *Painting Edo*, 51-52.
[22] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 15.
[23] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 90-91.
[24] Akiko Yano et al., *Salon Culture in Japan : Making Art, 1750-1900*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2024), 171.
[25] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 34.
[26] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 12, 96-99.
[27] Yano et al., *Salon Culture*, 40.
[28] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 44.

towards the diversity of humanity in the mid- eighteenth century.[29] Which is why he will return in the discussion on eccentricity.

An art form related to *bunjin* was the practice of tea. Tea culture in the Edo period can be separated into two categories: Elite tea practice through the head of tea schools which is structured according to strict conventions. And tea practice that was part of the popular art world, where it's just one cultural pursuit among many for the people who had the time and means to engage in it.[30] The former followed the *iemoto* system, where the head of the school had a role akin to a family patriarch. They controlled the taste, connoisseurship, and licensing system that was taught through a structured curriculum for the school. It had a pyramid style of teaching where the head had high ranking disciples, who in turn had students, and those students had students. A fee was paid based on the position one had within the pyramid, which created financial stability and growth for the school. Tea practitioners and connoisseurs existing outside of these schools were often supported by the availability of books on tea and created their own niche outside of the top-down teaching of a school. They often combined tea with other art activities to partake in the social, cultural, and literary milieux of their time. This also occurred even if the practitioner had connection to a tea school.[31] While practicing a wide variety of arts, it wasn't uncommon to adopt or receive an artistic name, that could differ for each field of art, to hide an artist's real identity and status.[32]

And lastly, a genre of art in Japan that has a long history, and will be mentioned in chapter 2.2 is *mono no aware*. This term refers to the ability to be moved by emotional events and wonders of nature.[33] It has a complex definition "where something weak, beautiful, poignant, or awe-inspiring elicits a spontaneous emotional response"[34] and to summarize it roughly two terms can be used; 'empathy' and 'straightness'. The latter is the "ability to write exactly as one feels rather than according to literary conventions".[34] It could be referred to as 'straightforward empathy expressed through poetry'. Traditionally this concept was only accessible through learning, and was only available to people with the privilege of

[29] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 96-98.
[30] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 25.
[31] Rebecca Corbett, "Crafting Identity as a Tea Practitioner in Early Modern Japan: Ōtagaki Rengetsu and Tagami Kikusha," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 47, no. 1 (2015): 7, https://doi.org/10.1353/jwj.2015.0003.
[32] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 47; Yano et al., *Salon Culture*, 48-49.
[33] Patti H. Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons: Eccentricity as Virtue in "Kinsei Kijinden" ("Eccentrics of Our Times", 1790)," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2006), 173.
[34] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 158.

education.[34] This means that in the Edo period with the rising literacy rates, so was the access to *mono no aware*.

To summarize, in Kyoto there was a popular trend of art born outside of institutions, people across status could partake in cultural activities if they had the means and the time. Within these activities spaces existed where people across status groups could interact with each other. And while Japanese art based on native sources remained popular, there was an increased interest in Chinese related arts during the Edo period.

1.2 Women in the Edo period

In the Edo period, 'Instructional texts for women' (*Joshiyo orai*) were aimed at a female readership to teach them what was expected of women. To read a woman's handbook, one would need to be able to read phonetic *kana* and *kanji*. But commercially published moral guides would only require the ability to read phonetic *kana*, as the *kanji* had *kana* subtitles.[35] It was the mid- eighteenth century that brought the change of adding *kanji* to the previously only written in *kana Joshiyo orai*. This provided an opportunity for women to cultivate their literacy in Chinese. An example of such guide is: Treasure Box of Women's Great Learning.[3] However, as early as the Heian period (794-1185) there were women with literacy in Chinese. Back then some women could translate Chinese documents into Japanese. Rebecca Copeland likens female literacy in Chinese with the rules applied to property at that time: Women were allowed to receive and transmit property, but not amass or acquire new. As such, women could read, transmit and translate Chinese script, but not compose new documents.[36]

The changes in women's guidebooks show the everchanging moral landscape. These changes often occurred through social forces like the rise of commercialism, popular literacy, and changes in the family structure. Risako Doi shows that *Joshiyo orai* are a tool we can use to learn about the moral landscape of the Tokugawa period.[37] The illustrated literature in this genre was a product of the flourishing print culture. And from recent scholarship it is found that besides stimulating moral values, it also had the purpose of entertaining consumers, and supporting patriarchal ideology and an emerging nationalism.[38] To examine these instructional texts from a historiographical perspective, we should look at the morals that the stories are trying to teach and not at the truthfulness.[39] From the censoring of commercial publishers by the *bakufu*, we can assume that although these morals weren't enforced, they were quietly endorsed by the regime.[40] In addition Melia Belli Bose argues that recent scholarship on *Joshiyo orai* has shown multilayered connections between ideology, education,

[35] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 41.
[36] Rebecca L Copeland and Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, *The Father-Daughter Plot: Japanese Literary Women and the Law of the Father*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 119, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824864712.
[37] Risako Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning for Women': Instructional Texts (Joshiyō ōRai) and Norms for Women in Early Modern Japan," (ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2011), 3-4.
[38] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 230.
[39] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 20-30.
[40] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 232.

employment, consumption, and amusement.[41] This relationship shows the importance of these texts to sketch the situation of a woman in the Edo period.

In the early years of the Edo period, there were *Joshiyo orai* that encouraged women to learn math, which was likely caused by the nuclearization of families where women took charge of household finances.[42] During the eighteenth century there was an association between Classical Japanese culture developed by the Heian court aristocrats, women's cultivation, and the spread of Confucian texts. These helped to shift the negative image of women that was based on earlier medieval, Buddhist worldview.[3] The popular Neo-Confucianism ideology is not of the mindset that men are seen as superior to women, but that women and men each have their own, differing human qualities, while sharing the same goal of bringing about a peaceful, self-governing society. In this ideology women need men as much as men need women, even if women may still be seen as inferior. Furthermore, women weren't confined to their home, instead they could exert moral influence that extended outside the domestic sphere, through managing their home.[43]

Confucianism taught that upon marriage, the parents-in-law would become the woman's genuine parents. But in Tokugawa Japan, women did not sever their ties to their natal families, which deviates from Chinese Confucian social practices. Another deviation is the absence of the cult of chastity. In Chinese Confucianism during the Qing period (1616-1912) women from all statuses were expected to conform to their gender roles defined in terms of marriage, and there was no place for prostitution in that. In Japan however, prostitution was tolerated, and prostitutes could be seen as upholding chastity and being exemplary under certain conditions.[44]

By the early eighteenth century, most *Joshiyo orai* were focused on filial piety. This is probably a consequence of the rising commercialism that followed popular demands of the general populace.[45] Filial piety, a value encouraged by the Tokugawa Shogunate,[46] and the contribution to the continuation of a household became an important social norm. This could have been caused by the unstable well-being of commoner families. Diseases, death of

[41] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 231.
[42] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 71.
[43] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 12-13.
[44] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 15-17.
[45] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 32.
[46] Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R Piggott, *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, 1st edition. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 171, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520927827.

parents, fire, failure in business were all cases where children and wives provided important manpower to the survival of a household.[47] These morals support the culture of maintenance. It's a culture where the individual is held responsible for maintaining household wealth for prosperity. To achieve this goal, it's expected by Tokugawa society to act with moderation to maintain resources. This includes avoiding luxuries and maintaining health.[48] This shows that the culture of maintenance is part of the mainstream in the Edo period.

In addition, many *Joshiyo orai* encouraged following the will of heaven instead of acting on your own will. Women who didn't know the will of Heaven would still be praised for acting selflessly and altruistic for the sake of harmony. The importance of chastity and filial piety are expressed in some exemplary stories, where the latter would prioritize the natal parents instead of the in-laws.[39] In the later Edo period these values shifted as 'unwomanly' practices like taking up weapons came to be accepted and justified if it was to demonstrate virtue.[49]

Other values in the examples Melia Belli Bose examines show disapproval of excessively indulging in luxuries and care for one's own appearance, while one's servants look shabby.[50] However, it's important to note that written ideologies may not reflect everyday behavior. While *Joshiyo orai* encouraged frugality and modesty according to Tokugawa ideologies and censors, "their publishers and audiences participated in a thriving consumer culture that casually overlooked, or overtly rejected, long venerated principles of Confucian morality".[51]

As the Edo period progressed *Joshiyo orai* moved away from original Chinese works and incorporated native Japanese elements.[52] A *Joshiyo orai* published in 1847 praised the ability in poetry and encouraged female readers to be literate like the women in the exemplary stories. This work was an indication of the rise and popularization of education in general, but in particular women's education had become widespread in the eighteenth century.[53] A women's literacy and skill in *waka* was closely related to their norms and morality in Tokugawa Japan.[54]

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[47] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 34.
[48] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 113.
[49] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 17; Marcia Yonemoto, *The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan*, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), 21, http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=4456466.
[50] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 247.
[51] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 246.
[52] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 256.
[53] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 51-52.
[54] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 61.

Besides learning from *Joshiyo orai*, it was also possible, depending on status and wealth, for women to receive education. In seventeenth and eighteenth century Kyoto, tonsured and non-tonsured imperial daughters received education in classical poetry, literature and writing with a brush. They dabbled in cultural past-times like flower arranging, incense connoisseurship and painting. And when talent was shown in the latter, a professional painter was arranged as a teacher.[55] The interest in poetry of Imperial nuns extended to classical Chinese verse.[56] Imperial convents where tonsured imperial daughters resided also functioned as cultural salons, with large amounts of books and scrolls that are still present, showing evidence of its literary environment.[57]

Waka has long been a part of the learning curriculum of aristocratic women. And in the same manner, painting was also regarded as a "suitable feminine accomplishment".[57] These paintings often had religious subjects, but also "secular themes such as birds and flowers, often with poetic inscriptions".[57] By the early eighteenth century, women were accepted, and even encouraged to learn *kanji*, while it was previously reserved for men. This was also the time when the female literacy overall became higher, and the nuclearization of families made it necessary for women to be able to use *kanji*.[58] From the mid Edo period there was a rise in female writers and poets who also made use of Chinese script instead of *kana*.[59]

Going down the ladder of status, noble and samurai households created education opportunities for the lower classes in the form of educating servants. The immediate noble family members were served by samurai women, who in turn had lower ranking samurai and commoner women in their service. Age of the attendants varied depending on their position and personal circumstances. Being in service meant that they would learn how to run a large household, elite manners and tastes, and gained practice in the skills and accomplishments of elite women.[60]

While men had status in their own right, women's status was assigned by their affiliation, which allowed some flexibility. Marriage, for example, was an opportunity to move upward in status. And although men could be adopted, this wasn't as readily available to them as marriage was to women. This flexibility for women was a reason for parents to invest in their

[55] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 148.
[56] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 164.
[57] Belli Bose, *Women, Gender and Art*, 161.
[58] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 70-72.
[59] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 74.
[60] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 76.

daughter's education, so she can move up the social ladder and give indirect benefits to her natal household.[61]

Based on their gender and status, women had certain obligations. Due to the alternate attendance system, wives and children of domain lords (*daimyo*) needed to stay at the capital city of Edo, while their husbands returned to their domains. Effectively forming a hostage situation to ensure the *daimyo*'s loyalty to the Shogun. For this reason, female travelers were being restricted.[62] Being a nun gave women a way to work around this restriction. Pilgrimages were a socially acceptable reason for women to go out on the road. Furthermore, travel with religious motivation was more readily sanctioned than travel for leisure or other reasons. Nuns were easily recognizable by their short hair, and thus moved more easily through checkpoints and domain barriers.[62]

By the nineteenth century, there were large numbers of educational institutions across urban and rural Japan. People could study at private academies, temple schools and at home. The latter was either taught by a family member, or a hired tutor. And from at least the seventeenth century, female tutors were hired to educate girls in their homes if the families had the financial means. Education for women was not only important in preparation of becoming managers of their future household, but also for many occupations women took. These occupations could come from their family business, like merchant families.[63]

In the nineteenth century there were many active female painters partaking in the literati networks. And although social and familial background continued to be important factors in women's education, or path to literati painting, female painters spread beyond the three major cities of Edo, Osaka and Kyoto, and beyond the families of Confucian scholars or elite samurai intellectuals. Prosperous farmers and merchants in the provinces had women who practiced a literati lifestyle. They were often tutored by male Confucian scholars, who their families did business with. And while earlier paintings done by women were accompanied by *waka* poetry, a number of paintings in the nineteenth century were inscribed with Chinese style prose and poetry.[64]

Throughout the Edo period the rates of female literacy remained on the lower side. Scholars estimate that in late Tokugawa Japan, when literacy rates were at the height of the pre-modern

[61] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 79-80.
[62] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 12-13, 75.
[63] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 39-40.
[64] Suzuki, "Splendid Japanese Women Artists," 160-163.

period, about 10 percent of girls were receiving academic instruction, while 40 percent of boys were being schooled, which is a significant difference. And although *Joshiyo orai* was intended for a female readership, it's likely that they were just as often read by a male audience.[40]

Within tea culture of the Edo period, female practitioners were generally presented as an exception of the norm. These women were usually of high status.[65] Only until later in the eighteenth century commoner women joined in the audience for writings on tea practice.[66] In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, tea culture was presented to commoner women as a way of learning to be graceful. At that time, the educational guides for women's morals encouraged women to learn the basics of tea culture, such as the procedures of making thin tea, how to be a guest for thick tea service, but added that women didn't need to dive deeper into the learning of tea.[65] They needed a reason to study tea, instead of studying tea for tea's sake like men. This suggests that a woman too immersed in tea culture was not the norm.[67] This value is corroborated by 'A Woman's Handbook' written by Oguchi Shoo (1689-1764) in 1721, a handbook dedicated to tea practice for women. It attempted to establish a framework for elite women's tea practice, while also addressing potential criticism of a woman partaking in the craft. Shoo advocates that women have the same capacity as men to practice tea culture, but should adhere to rules within tea culture.[68] The practice of tea shown in this book were the same as other literature on tea aimed at men. Thus the instruction itself didn't differ between genders, but for women it portrays a somewhat altered procedure shown by the concern for elegance and propriety, emphasising the practice of femininity within tea culture.[66] The acquisition of knowledge and practice of tea seems to be akin to Rebecca Copelands comparison of Chinese literacy and property rules for women: They could use it, but not amass it.

In the 'New Brocade of Women's Manners', the author favours norms for women rather than their pursuit in arts. In this book women who were respectful to their parents, faithful to her husband without knowledge on arts was not inferior to a woman who had learned many arts.[69] Femininity was a quality to be acquired and cultivated, and was not of one single standard.

[65] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 3-4.
[66] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 72.
[67] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 109-112.
[68] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 56-66.
[69] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 113.

The femininity associated with the elite was genteel femininity, a type that gradually became a model that wealthy commoner women aspired to be.[70]

Lastly, in the nineteenth century there was an increase in female *bunjin*. One of the primary reasons for that was that scholars encouraged talented women to join their ranks. That, together with the risen literacy rate and more freedom within the constraints of expectations allowed the number of female *bunjin* to rise.[71]

[70] Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, 118.
[71] Pat Fister and Fumiko Y. Yamamoto, *Japanese women artists, 1600-1900*, (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1988), 97.

Chapter 2: Eccentricity in the Edo period

2.1 Eccentricity; a discussion

The 'eccentricity' of this paper will be within the confines of Edo period Japan. By the Meiji period (1868-1912) the potentialities for individual strangeness were stopped, because of the deployment of the compulsory school system. It will also not be focused on the psychological aspect of it, as aost eccentrics didn't write diaries or works discussing their thoughts or status as outsiders. We study them through source material written by other people who have their own background, biases and preconceptions.[72] Thus for the purpose of this paper we will mainly look at it as a cultural and social phenomenon.

To examine 'eccentricity', it's important to take 'strangeness' into account. A term that helps with identifying eccentricity. Puck Brecher recognizes 4 types of strangeness: 1. *Hijiri* (Itinerant ascetics) 'strangers' who travel from place to place and may be associated with the supernatural. 2. *Shugenja* (Mountain ascetic) who practice severe self-discipline, learn magic and healing spells and could be able to harmonize the human and supernatural realms. 3. Physical abnormalities, handicaps, or deformities which are often paired with magical or religious abilities such as divination, exorcism, and the placation of spirits. 4. Detachment, this could be practiced through religious reclusion by 'mad' monks, or practiced by amateur literati as an ideal of secular aesthetic reclusion.[73] All 4 of these types can be encompassed with a distance from the normative, either through physical appearance or mental state.

To indicate a state of emotional abandon, '*Kyo*' was used. This term had associations with the supernatural and madness, and thus also *Shugenja* and 'Detachment'.[74] The intense experience of *kyo* helped the mind escape normal ways of thinking, making it more receptive to Buddhist thought, indicating an indirect approval of Buddhism because *kyo* speeds up the path to enlightenment.[75] Puck Brecher explains that the aesthetic term of *kyo* advanced under Confucianism as it makes up a person's character, potential, and how close they are to "the ideal Middle Way" of the Confucian gentleman. A gentleman following this middle way should act upon their own principles and cannot conform to the orderliness of society. Their intentions should support a potentiality for virtue. Brecher adds that *ki*, also an aesthetic term,

[72] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 7-9.
[73] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 28-31.
[74] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 45.
[75] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 46.

advanced under Daoism.[76] These two terms are often used interchangeably.[77] Which means that this explanation of *kyo* and thus *ki* by Brecher supports the argument that Patti Kameya makes that she ascribes individual potency to *ki* through her evaluation of 'Kinsei kijinden'.

The Edo period Japanese usage of *kijin* was inspired by Zhuangzi (ca. 4th c. B.C.E.) which is a Taoist classic. Taoism promotes individualism and intuitive action instead of socially prescribed action. It could be seen as a counterpart of Confucianism. Whereas, in relation to society, Taoism favors the spontaneous, free and natural, Confucianism favors the deliberate, dictated, and proper.[78] Taoist thought was inspiring for Japanese scholars who were weary of worldly ways. Literati or *bunjin* saw immersion in the creative arts as a good alternative for pursuing wealth, following values of Taoism and Buddhism. These literati aspired to become like the scholar ideal that was transmitted from China, and such people created pen names with words relating to the Taoist classics Laozi and Zhuangzi.[79]

Kijin could be written in two ways that have different connotations: 畸人 and 奇人. 畸人 was to be distinctive and superior in inherent quality to 奇人. Melinda Takeuchi states that originally 畸 carried a negative connotation and instead of amusing, it was associated with sinister overtones of nonconforming behavior. Kokei did not provide a clear distinction between 畸 and 奇, but the preface by Rikunyo (1734-1801) does note an essential difference. Rikunyo states that the location of natural talent is not discernable with 畸人 and "possesses an inherent endowment that cannot be studied or learned".[80] While across history there have been 奇人 among Confucians, Zen Buddhists, samurai, physicians, poets, writers, painters and various other arts.[80] This shows that someone can be 畸人 regardless of their social context.

Brecher argues that 畸 is created by adding the field radical '田' to the character of strange/eccentric/different '奇'. The field radical was added to show the comparison of

[76] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 98-99.
[77] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 12.
[78] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 9-10.
[79] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 12-13.
[80] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 133.

eccentrics to leftover scraps from agricultural land. Too misshapen or useless to fit within the ideals of Confucian proper, fairness and social harmony. The character came to associated with something left over, neither used nor usable, and later something odd.[81] Ban Kokei on the other hand, explained that 畸 should be considered a derivative of two characters: '奇' (strange, eccentric, different) and 異 (wrong, different). The mixture signifying something a bit more notorious and beyond the safety of the normative.[81] Ban Kokei was responsible for the literary debut of 畸人, but was not the first to create a work on 'extraordinary or outstanding personalities', as earlier literature on individuals with similar qualities used different names. 畸人 incorporated talent, reclusive, the strange and the mad from generations earlier.[82]

According to Koto Yuho, *kijin* has 6 conditions:[83]

1. *Kijin* are loved and feared, but not necessarily respected.
2. They must hold the label throughout their lives.
3. Their everyday behavior must be eccentric.
4. They must be dreamers.
5. Their behavior must exert a strong impact on society.
6. They must not strive for eccentricity, it must come naturally from within.

To build on the first condition, Puck Brecher mentions that quite a few *kijin* were well received in their day. The lack of censure on *kijin* was often because their reputations were beyond reproach. Undesired social behavior could be written off as benign pretence of strangeness or play.[84]

Brecher combines condition three with six as he says that individual peculiar behavior is not something that can be taught to a disciple, the isolated cases of strangeness in *kijin* lose their potency in the process of transmission.[85] Everyday behavior may seem eccentric if an individual copies an established eccentric. However the fact that it doesn't come natural to the

[81] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 11.
[82] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 117.
[83] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 13.
[84] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 92.
[85] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 58.

person, and is probably copied with intent, the 'eccentricity' of the copier loses its significance.

Regarding condition 5, Puck Brecher argues that *ki* could be threatening to a political structure, but is more of an apolitical space in which arts could be cultivated and enjoyed.[76] This statement disagrees with the 5th condition. He adds that most eccentric art stay around the existing conventions.[86]

Peter Nosco makes an elaboration on the 6th condition as he states that *kijin* should not refer to themselves as a *kijin*, since that would undermine its meaning. Only others could designate a persona as a *kijin*, it wasn't earned, it was an accorded privilege.[87] This statement also relates to the downfall of eccentricity as it is defined by 'Kinsei kijinden', because the moment *kijin* market themselves as *kijin* to gain money or fame, they have disqualified themselves as a *kijin*. I will discuss more of this later in this chapter.

In contrast to Koto Yuho, Patti Kameya argues for 3 groups of *kijin*: *Tokko* (Virtuous deeds 徳行), *Hoto* (Abandon 放蕩), and *Furyu* (Elegance 風流). *Tokko* is based on a pre-Confucian concept where *toku* signifies 'potency' rather than moral virtue. Thus the virtue is not based on fixed moral ideas, but on individual potency that allows one to understand and act upon their own values and have multiple ways of living. Kameya argues that this attribute applies to all *kijin*.[88] According to her, in 'Kinsei kijinden' *tokko* is the enactment of potency, which shows itself as an extreme commitments to one's individual values, which may go against common practice. This definition exists unrelated of class, profession or educational background. Instead it's based on how people act and what they do in relation to their power or station, and the expectations that are associated with them. Deeds that could be seen as excessive are a product of *tokko* or personal potency.[89]

Ban Kokei created his definition of *tokko* through two sources: Ito Jinsai (1627-1705) and Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) who was mentioned in chapter 1.1. Jinsai understood it as "the root of all behavior, where many behavior constituted virtuous living".[90] Sorai states that the path for *tokko* is different for each person. One must nurture their own particular 'virtue' in order

[86] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 17-19.
[87] Peter Nosco, "Values," in *Individuality in Early Modern Japan*, 1st edition. (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2018), 121.
[88] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 62-65.
[89] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 92-93.
[90] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 83-90.

to live correctly, instead of following a single idea of virtue that doesn't come naturally. This explanation comes closer to the pre-Confucian interpretation of virtue, where it's not a moral standard, but a power found in an individual thing.[90] Virtue corresponds with action, and excessive actions that don't make sense in ordinary society are a result of excessive commitment to one's own principles.[91] Puck Brecher notes a quality to eccentricity that could be brought under *Tokko*: *Muyo*, or 'uselessness'. This could be displayed by excessive indulgence into pleasures. For example alcohol consumption which should have been enjoyed in communal settings, making solo drinking a compliment to one's identity as an eccentric.[92]

Ban Kokei couples *furyu* with *fukyo*. *Fukyo* combined ideographs for 'wind' and 'madness' resulting in the meaning of 'strong wind'. In Ban Kokei's time *fukyo* came to mean an extreme version of *furyu*, or 'poetic elegance'. The idea of the former is associated with the notion of craziness, an affinity with wild nature while turning away from ordinary human activity. It favours spontaneity and fleetingness.[93] The spontaneity of *fukyo* aligns with the artistic excellence that was the core of literati arts: connect spiritually with the object, and capture it spontaneously.[94] *Furyu* was originally exclusive to the elite who had access to education and the time to practice arts of leisure. Shortly before the Edo period it was associated with the gaudy attire and wild dancing of commoners,[95] showing it's connection to *fukyo*. During the Edo period, the line between *furyu* and the commoners blurred when topics of art incorporated everyday images, speech and people. This caused that the sense of self became favoured over poetic conventions and class wasn't a hindrance to enter the realm of poetry.[95]

Hoto can be paired with *furyu* and thus *fukyo* to describe 'self-indulgence'. *Hoto* refers to the bodily indulgence, which includes alcohol and sex. It goes against the societal expectation of 'maintenance', in favour of expressing one's sense of self.[96] *Fukyo* refers to the aesthetic indulgence; spending time and resources as one pleases.[97] An example is the spending time on the appreciation of nature and the drive to express it in poetry.[96] And while *hoto* can be understood as 'living as one pleases', and an outgrowth of *tokko*.[98] *Fukyo* on the other hand

[91] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 95.
[92] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 51.
[93] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 137.
[94] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 33.
[95] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 165-166.
[96] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 111-123.
[97] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 136.
[98] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 119.

was a difficult ideal to follow as not all *kijin* in the 'Kinsei kijinden' fall into that category. It was a struggle between staying alive and be self-indulgent.[99] To negotiate the tension of *fukyo*, Ban Kokei gives self-indulgence as a viable alternative to wealth preservation or self-interest. Kameya illustrates this point by diving into the excess of things of the *kijin* in 'Kinsei kijinden'. This excess includes consumption, starvation, drunkenness, not working, or working for no monetary benefit. They allocate their time and resources, and do their activities 'as they please'.[100] This self-indulgence that goes against the culture of maintenance is linked to present-oriented spontaneity of *kijin* in Taoist tradition. Behavior of *kijin* appeared strange to the general world because of their focus on the present, and their lack of preparing for the future.[101]

The conditions of Koto Yuho are phrased in a way that it's based on an outside perspective. Whereas Kameya's three types are based, not on what the outside perceives and how it interacts with *kijin*, but based on their behavior from inside out. For example, excessive solo alcohol consumption would elicit reactions from outside that would determine if one passes one of the conditions of Yuho. While excessive alcohol consumption in itself takes part in *hoto*, and although in meaning it goes against the societal norm, it shows a more detailed definition than 'their everyday behavior must be eccentric'. Koto Yuho's conditions also emanate the distance from the normative like the types of strangeness of Puck Brecher.

With this sense of self, independent from societal norm and expectations, Kameya argues that Ban Kokei portrays *kijin* as individuals who can assess a situation and act virtuously, which is especially important in times of crisis. Therefore when someone turns towards a *kijin* for advice, it is a sign of troubled times.[102]

In regards to type 4, 'detachment' of Brecher's 'strangeness': Reclusion was an imported notion from practice of Chinese literati, who were either active or retired bureaucrats. In Japan, however, the qualification of the use of the term changed. Japanese people of various status groups, possessing the requisite training and aesthetic accomplishments partook in

[99] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 143-145.
[100] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 19, 114.
[101] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 115.
[102] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 14.

reclusion.[103] Reclusion needed to be a personal choice, a forced withdrawal results in disqualification of successful reclusion.[104]

Bunjin performed a lifestyle of less protest than their Chinese literati counterparts, who openly rejected social, political and aesthetic norms to express dissent. With *bunjin* there was a distinction between on-duty and off-duty activities. The participation in the space of aesthetic reclusion did not interact with, or act as representatives of public authorities. According to Puck Brecher, the paintings, poetry, prints and literature made in reclusion, where the public persona was cloaked, have largely been apolitical. At most they could be placed in Chinese discourse on artistic theory and practice, defending a detachment from status, wealth, commercialism, and public life by creating 'art for art's sake'.[105] The sentiment that was legitimized by Ogyu Sorai.

The strangeness cultivated by *bunjin* was done on two levels: artistic style, and daily practice. Chinese scholar-bureaucrats offered a way for samurai to practice strangeness without failing their obligations of living in a city, serving a lord and receiving monetary compensation. *Taijin* (Great reclusion) suggested officialdom as a form of utopian detachment in itself. Or the concept used by Nanpo, *riin* (recluse in government) who existed between dream and reality to fulfil his official obligations while pursuing culture. These two ways rendered aestheticism as a state of mind, freeing it from geographical and class constraints.[106]

Amateur literati practiced secular reclusion filled with contradictions; While arts were inspired by the connection with nature in isolation, it was generally enjoyed in a group context. And secondly, while reclusion is a sign of aesthetic authenticity, it also tended to garner fame.[107] The latter is especially something that could problematize the judgement that an individual is eccentric, as Peter Nosco states: non-conformity, such as eccentricity, can be a popular value, but if everyone is eccentric then, in the end, no one is.[87] In that same mind of contradiction, Nosco identifies *kijin* as an individual with such strong individual identity that pushes them to the outskirts of social norm and understanding, outside of the collective identity.[4] Which on one hand pushes them away from the norm to follow the ideal of

[103] Puck W. Brecher, "Down and out in Negishi: Reclusion and Struggle in an Edo Suburb," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 5, https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.0.0047.
[104] Brecher, "Down and out," 25-26.
[105] Brecher, "Down and out," 4-5.
[106] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 63-66.
[107] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 32-33.

reclusion, but on the other hand, what Brecher mentions, are connected with each other through the enjoyment of arts.

While people in the Edo period went through self-discovery and self-invention through social roles like family background, status, job and where they lived, eccentrics on the other hand created their own identities outside of these spaces. They invented their own separate, imagined spaces through mental distance created by posting madness. Based on the distance from the normative they created, eccentrics became condemned, ostracized, celebrated and venerated.[108] Showing that they elicited both negative and positive reaction from outside of their sphere. Which is in accordance with condition 1 of Koto Yuho: '*Kijin* are loved and feared, but not necessarily respected'.

John Carpenter describes *kijin* or 'eccentrics' as people who didn't observe social or artistic norms, and showed it through behavior such as acting antisocial, reclusion (religious or otherwise), or outright rejecting traditional values and beliefs.[109] Which is in agreement with the previously mentioned types and conditions. It is however a broad descriptor. Furthermore, Carpenter states that eccentric painters broke away from the orthodoxy of the Kano ateliers, asserting their independence.[110] Limiting eccentricity to an aesthetic art value. Carpenter also does not include Ike Taiga within his scope of eccentrics. Instead, he evaluates him as one of the pioneers of *nanga* artists, who earned enough renown and financial stability to live a literati lifestyle.[111] A statement in contradiction with Okura Ryuzan (1785-1850), who criticizes Taiga and Yosa Buson as men who lick the brush and dilute the ink, and have called their own work *bunjinga* without adhering to true Chinese literati values.[112] Carpenter does agree however, that Taiga wasn't bound by preexisting Chinese theories of painting, or the weight of the accompanying history.[111]

In the most simple form of translation, *kijin* can be translated as 'eccentric' in English. However, it can also mean 'marvellous, extraordinary person'. Kameya argues that '*kijin*' differs from 'eccentric' "in its subjective positioning, and its aesthetic".[113] Unlike the English term of 'eccentrics', *kijin* have an ideal of reclusive purity rooted in Taoist and Buddhist traditions, where physical and mental separation from worldly concerns are central.[113] This is

[108] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 9-10.
[109] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 117.
[110] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 19.
[111] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 85.
[112] Graham, "Lifestyles of Scholar-Painters," 278-279.
[113] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 8.

in agreement with the 4th type of strangeness Puck Brecher mentioned. '*Kijin*' could be used in cases where the person elicits awed reactions from outside, and is or isn't fully in control of their faculties.[113] Puck Brecher shows that *kijin* were commonly associated with Zhuangzian values like detachment, playfulness, and useful uselessness. For example, a deformity disabled one's social utility, and enabled one as a sagely eccentric.[108] In the native Japanese religion of Shinto, Izanami and Izanagi discarded their crippled child, and in Buddhism a deformity or handicap were seen as karmic retribution. While Shinto and Buddhism have negative connotations surrounding physical disabilities, Edo had created a way to profit off this negativity to make deformity into a spectacle. And the rationale of that was that experiencing shame from the public was a way of atonement of past transgressions. The early modern *kijin* with such deformities were often spared the stigma. As within *ki* that is attached to them, is a paradox of 'heavenly' and 'defiled' that enhanced the power and mystique attached to it.[81]

Risako Dio shows that social norms for women are complex and fluid, affected by changing social and political conditions.[114] The social norms in the Edo period were continuedly defined and redefined by multiple agents like the *bakufu*, *daimyo*, publishers, popular writers and the reading audience.[115] Puck Brecher gives an example that female haikai poets were less restricted within haikai school and networks than their male counterparts, and the most accomplished would be dubbed as *kijin*. They devoted themselves to their arts instead of following the conventional path of good wives and wise mothers, deviating from the social norm.[116]

To refer to the earlier statement of Kameya that people turn to *kijin* in troubled times. There were two trends in the context of *kijin* that relate to the anxiety over changing times, and the first appeared almost immediately after the publication of 'Kinsei kijinden': 1. The meaning of *kijin* shifted from a figure to seek unconventional wisdom from, to a figure whose difference is a source of amusement. 2. The idea of strangeness came to be linked with Japanese tradition as it helped articulate a part of the past of Japan. *Kijin* and works about them became a large part of Japan's biographical heritage.[117] A result of the first trend can be seen towards the end of the Edo period, where the word *kijin* came to describe a deformed

[114] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 89.
[115] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 90.
[116] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 90.
[117] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 197-201.

person in a freak show. Reducing the *kijin* to a spectacle for entertainment, and to be commercialized.[117]

At the end of the Edo period the literacy gained through following the encouragement of Chinese learning enabled some women to learn and write Chinese poems. And the rise of female writers and Chinese poets happened alongside the shifting female literacy culture, which encouraged women to learn *kanji* for practical reasons. Thus female writers and Chinese poets were not considered as eccentric from the mid- to late Edo period.[118] This, and Kameya's statement about the changing meaning of *kijin* coincides with Puck Brecher's statement that signifiers lose their original relevance across time. And in the case of eccentricity across the seventeenth till nineteenth century. He emphasises that the terms he uses are only to provide a measure of structure, and not fix a fluid phenomenon into one place.[119] However, where Brecher differs is that he states that by the late eighteenth century there were still eccentrics. For example Chikuden, Gyokudo and Kageki. But by then the definition of 'eccentricity' had shifted as commercialization made strangeness a familiar phenomenon and less artistically significant. *Bunjin* had codified and institutionalized literati arts, abolishing their tolerance towards strangeness. And lastly, the popularization brought strange aesthetics (*ki*, *kyo*) into broader sociopolitical contexts where late Edo society saw intellectual eccentricity as dissent and thus something to be exterminated.[120] Thus losing the toleration and admiration.

[118] Doi, "Beyond 'The Greater Learning," 75.
[119] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 15.
[120] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 171.

2.2 ‘Kinsei Kijinden’ by Ban Kokei

1790 was the year in which Matsudaira Sadanobu who was at the head of the Kansei reforms (1787-793) put a prohibition on Heterodoxy in the Shoheizaka academy, sponsored by the *bakufu*. And the ‘Kinsei kijinden’ by Ban Kokei was published. This book was not the first to be a biographies collection of *kijin*, but it set a standard for later collections.[121] It had found a way to domesticate ‘eccentricity’ by incorporating native ethics, while before the framework or defining aesthetics were Chinese.[122] These contrasting events in the same year is a significant occurrence. Eccentricity in general does not carry a political quality other than the disillusionment and disappointment with the mainstream. And it is that apolitical stance that allowed this non-conformity to have a place besides mainstream culture.[121] ‘Kinsei kijiden’ was aimed towards a general audience, and emerged from continued interaction with moral, intellectual and artistic debate of the times.[123]

‘Kinsei kijinden’ had considerable commercial success after its release in 1790. Before the end of the Edo period it was even reprinted three more times. This book was simultaneously published in Edo and Osaka, and while these were pressed, the sequel was already in progress. This sequel, ‘Zoku kinsei kijinden’ (More eccentrics of our times, 1798), was penned by Mikuma Katen (1730-1794) and finished by Kokei after Katen’s death. Furthermore, ‘Kinsei kijinden’ inspired others to write books related to *kijin*, which Kameya broadly terms as “eccentric literature”.[124] It was a rather large book for the period, as in the time of its publication, smaller books were more common among people of the lower socioeconomic classes. The book cost 14 momme (unit of currency), a good price as most books of the publishers were sold for 10 momme or less.[125] The commercial success this book enjoyed points towards recognition of seemingly useless individuals as moral exemplars, and a general interest in deviance. Some eccentrics were omitted in Edo history, or are represented as contributing little to historical records, which in itself is historical. *Kijin* were seen as a liability from the perspective of the utilitarian Meiji and Imperial era of Japan.[126] This way of writing history also shows in the predominant patriarchal views that occur in early

[121] Nosco, “Values,” 121-122.
[122] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 21.
[123] Kameya, “Paupers, Poets, and Paragons,” 24.
[124] Kameya, “Paupers, Poets, and Paragons,” 6.
[125] Kameya, “Paupers, Poets, and Paragons,” 52-53.
[126] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 16.

scholarship, and is still present today. The culture encourages a certain point of view, and through that perspective, scholarship and debate is created that emulate it further.

Ban Kokei was a merchant scholar, studying the 'Man'yoshu' and native Japanese poetry and prose.[127] In the present day he could be considered as a scholar of nativist studies. He didn't reject Chinese literature and studies, as among his friends were not only Japanese-style poets and painters, but also Chinese style artists.[128] Born at the end of the Kyoho period (1716-1736), meant he grew up in a society of anxiety over management of wealth on one side, and increased participation on the other. He was the first son and would have inherited the business from his father, but instead, at 8 years old he was adopted by the head family of his clan based in Omi Hachiman, suggesting that he may have shown talent. He studied poetry under Ariga Chohaku (1662-1751) and later Mushanokoji Saneoka (1721-1760) when he was young, and at 18, when his adoptive father passed, he took over the family business of purveying tatami straw floor mats, umbrellas, and other goods. There remains dispute about his opinion on merchant life. While some accounts claim he did not take well to it, other accounts argue that he may not have enjoyed it, he made an effort to expand the store. At 34 when his adopted daughter got married and could run the store, Ban Kokei retired and pursued a live of poetry and the literary arts and moved fluidly in intellectual circles in terms of class. He was active in literary circles and gained renown as a prose writer after his publication of 'Kinsei kijinden'. Before that publication was in the works, he wrote a story of himself as he wished to be, a *kijin*. In that story, and one he published in 1803 he distorted some facts to make himself appear more eccentric, lying about being a country person, being orphaned at a young age and losing all his assets. While he did lose his biological parents young, by that time he was already adopted. He embellished his stories with other things to portray himself as a *kijin*.[129] To add to his desire to connect himself to *kijin*, he blended his personal circle with the *kijin* he wrote about in 'Kinsei kijinden'. By doing this, he links the ideals, to which him and his literati friends aspired, with the *kijin* in his book.[128]

Ban Kokei shows through his writing that those who struggle may qualify as *kijin*. A reason as to why officials or others with 'easy lives' were not included in the stories where people of all types, women, the poor, social outsiders, are made into heroes. He does however include a

[127] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 124-127.
[128] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 43.
[129] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 40-44.

few members of the warrior class who were engaged in struggle. And these *kijin* respond to the world with their personal potency instead of following the norms and values of society.[130]

Ban Kokei's literary friendship circles had considerable influence on the final product of 'Kinsei kijinden'. To gather accounts, Kokei put up '*kijin* Wanted' posters at inns around Kyoto and took care to verify these accounts, while producing a completed work with his personal touch. For example, he excluded Shohaku, who was widely known to fulfill the demands of aesthetic eccentricity, likely due to his friendship with Maruyama Okyo (1733-1795) who was Shohaku's rival. He also didn't include Matsuo Basho and Yosu Buson who were important individuals in eccentric *bunjin* culture.[131] In addition, he was known to have been friends with Ike Taiga,[132] someone he mentions together with Baisao (1675- 1763) as prime examples of *kijin* and embody Zhuangzi's original use of 'eccentric'.[133] Puck Brecher echoes Patti Kameya that it was clear that Kokei and his colleagues who worked on 'Kinsei kijinden', saw the book as a commercial product. Works following after 'Kinsei kijinden' often included *kijin* in the title to enhance its marketability, even if the content downplayed strangeness, and the genre of *kijin* had spread to theatre. Brecher concludes that following 'Kinsei kijinden', a culmination of trends had turned eccentricity into capital.[134] Which shows that 'Kinsei kijinden' was the peak in the trend of 'eccentricity' before it became a trend and, what is shown in the previous chapter, eccentricity declined.

The stories in the 'Kinsei kijinden' are not autobiographies, but written through second hand accounts. It is overall reliable and the usage of this work as reference in other works of that time shows its status as a reference tool. But using it purely as a reference tool does pose some problems; 'Kinsei kijinden' focuses on the virtues of the individual instead of comprehensive accounts of a person's life or work, which would be the case in biographies. It focuses on what is believed about the written about person, and what makes them special. The second hand accounts have their own biases and beliefs, making it hard to say whether a story actually happened. Secondly, using 'Kinsei kijinden' only as a reference work, takes away from its value as a historical document. Instead, if we approach the book as intellectual history, showing scholars, literary and intellectual history on how this work came to be, we

[130] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 7-8.
[131] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 130-131.
[132] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 122.
[133] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 14.
[134] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 142-145.

can gain insight in the issues and ideas of that time.[135] We will and already have used 'Kinsei kijinden' to establish 'eccentricity', with which we will examine female artists in the following chapter.

'Kinsei kijinden' sparked controversy as it didn't start with the earlier mentioned 'eccentrics' who are 'insane', and instead showed people known for their virtuous deeds such as Confucian scholars. By dubbing these people as *kijin*¸ he turns the conforming into the non-conforming. And as a result Ban Kokei appears to criticize society on not honoring its own codes of good behavior. This doesn't mean that the 'people of virtuous deeds' are compliant conformists, the portrayed people have various ways of being virtuous that calls for neither conformity or conservatism, nor an overthrow of sociopolitical order. Kokei portrays equal virtue in creativity, chaos and moral virtue. He focusses on the power of the individual to inspire awe by using 'wondrous' as descriptor, instead of focusing on the difference of the individual.[136] "Like a sober person in a drunken world, the virtuous people inspire awe with their individuality".[137] Kokei draws upon the pre-Confucian conception of virtue (*toku*) to indicate the power of the individual, and with that, showing that individuality isn't simply wondrous, but also virtuous.[137] Puck Brecher shows that Kokei never intended to make a countercultural statement, or challenge the ideological mainstream through *kijin*. By placing individuals from all types of classes and occupations side by side, he dismisses the association between virtue and class. It replaces class with a new view where people are equals, and individual worth is dependent on accomplishment, ability and natural endowment. This notion was cynic in the sense that virtue was so uncommon that it warranted the signifier of *ki*. And it was idealistic in the sense of making eccentricity a vehicle for social merit instead of eccentricity for its own sake.[138]

Ban Kokei mixes the moral and the odd in his writings on *kijin*, implying that *kijin* of any kind possessed intrinsic virtue. This in turn lowered them to a human level and placed them within social context. By suggesting that strangeness was part of human nature and society, 'Kinsei kijinden' reassessed what it means to be a human being, and reinvented the social role assigned to *kijin*.[139] The story of Nakae Toju in 'Kinsei kijinden' puts some important concepts forwards that return in other stories in 'Kinsei kijinden'. It makes a distinction of

[135] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 15-17.
[136] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 60-61.
[137] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 61-62.
[138] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 135.
[139] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 136-137.

appearances and inside reality, it states that those who follow the rules for the sake of following them become get stuck in details and lose sight of the purpose, that is doing good. And lastly, the story emphasizes that goodness doesn't start from the outside, but from the self.[140]

In the foreword of 'Kinsei kijinden', Rikunyo, a close friend of Kokei, declared it a "model for the world, correcting roughness", showing the intention of the book is not merely to entertain, but to teach. Ban Kokei presents multiple figures belonging under the principle of *ki* or 'strangeness', presenting not a single way, "but a singular spirit of commitment". Kameya states that Kokei, with this, says that *kijin* share a commitment to their own ideals, pursuing them for their own sake and not because society rewards them for their behavior, or share their ideals. Kameya concludes that *ki* represents a commitment the *kijin* have towards their ideals, rather than a single standard that could encompass 'strangeness'.[141]

'Kinsei kijinden' has a *tokko* section where a lot of poor people and women appear. Kameya speculates that this may be because of their lack of physical or political power that draw out their power in moral virtue. She also points out that it may be from the perspective that to judge the moral direction of a society, one must look at the moral direction of the lowliest members. And thus the inclusion of the lower socioeconomic class people serves to control all people from high and low. It may also hint that true virtue is rare among those who do hold political or physical power,[142] showing indirect dissent towards the elite.

After the chapter on *kijin* who portray excessive virtuous behavior, it shifts to excessive self-indulgent behavior, such as drunkenness, idleness, or extravagant spendings. All this excessive behavior isn't a rebellion against controlling norms, but rather understood as a socioeconomic problem. Ban Kokei and his contemporaries don't view this as an approval to act selfishly, but as a socioeconomic critique. He places value on self-fulfillment instead of worldly success. Patti Kameya argues that "Kokei promotes self-indulgence in the lives of *kijin*, namely the power to allocate one's time and resources as one pleases".[143]

Ban Kokei complicates the idea of a role model, by incorporating a diverse range of people with both negative and positive characteristics in his sketches of *kijin*.[144] He made the book

[140] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 73.
[141] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 4-5.
[142] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 66.
[143] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 110-111.
[144] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 79-80.

with the goal of creating change. The portrayed *kijin* are examples of leaving social convention, reject wealth and reputation, all to struggle to remain part of human society while following the ideal of being separated from it. Instead of prescribing long ideologies, Kokei and his contemporaries turned towards wisdom residing within the individual for solutions to their times.[145] Kokei encourages the emotional reserves of an individual instead of adhering to tradition, class or education. While the debates on these eccentrics don't inspire violent uprisings against the status quo, it does show discontent, and an awareness of a crisis in Tokugawa Japan. As Kokei shows stories of peasants alongside those of Confucian scholars, it shows a belief in human potential outside of class and conformity.[146]

Furthermore, the path of virtue, that is most true to the self and elicits wonder through the excessive behavior without practical use, is not a single path to walk, but many. Virtue is not only found within the boundaries of societal norms, nor does it come from power. All *kijin* have various virtues, but they come together in the strong commitment to their individual ideals.[147] Ban Kokei does admit that many of his *kijin* act selfishly, but doesn't mention people who act out of self-interest to gain something material or worldly social. This includes people who act unfilial and unloving, or seek fame or profit.[148] Making a clear distinction between self-indulgence and self-interest. He does avoid writing about sex in his stories about self-indulgence of *kijin*. Even for the *kijin* who were known for their sexual indulgence, he barely mentions it. However, he does portray non-*kijin* with all of their lewdness. Kameya argues that this is because of the commercialization that hides behind sex, or rather, the pleasure quarters.[149] Which, for portraying an ideal picture of a *kijin* that isn't partaking in market-driven society, isn't unbelievable. The courtesans which Ban Kokei does write about are portrayed as saintly people who self-indulge through poetry or leaving their domestic roles to become nuns.[150] Temples do participate in the culture of maintenance through their aim of preserving teachings and resources for prosperity, but the monks in 'Kinsei kijinden' choose their altruism over the needs of their institution, and thus don't partake in that culture, just like other *kijin*.[151]

[145] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 13-14.
[146] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 20-21.
[147] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 109.
[148] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 112.
[149] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 125-126.
[150] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 127.
[151] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 133.

Women appear a lot in the *tokko* chapter of 'Kinsei kijinden'. They demonstrate personal potency, which in surface level look like Confucian ideals of moral virtue, but upon closer examination it reveals that these women have agency, demonstrating personal commitment, wisdom, and courage. Most carry out their virtue according to their rank of profession to an extreme degree.[152] Their personal potency is most often seen when facing a crisis. Some women in the chapter were involved in dramatic physical struggles where they risked their own lives. Others exceeded the expectations of women by taking action on behalf of their man.[153]

Hoto and *fukyo* spark discourse on economic behavior instead of one about morally correct or incorrect behavior. Given the market driven reality in which Kokei lived, the ideal of joy and spontaneity against wealth and preparation for the future, shows a wish against reality and an ideal realized by *kijin*.[154] In terms of *fukyo*, which was difficult to maintain as mentioned in the previous chapter, there are stories in 'Kinsei kijinden' where *kijin* refuse to work at all, even if there is a demand for their services. Even if the demander has a lot of power. They do not partake in the market-driven society and thus live freely outside of societal expectations.[155] The stories of these *kijin* present an idealized solution to their societal situation by presenting an economy that runs on trust, joy, and ideals instead of money. Kokei proposes that rather than undermining the community for one's individual future, indulge in one's sense of self and maintain a sense of personal integrity.[156]

To return to the previous discussion of *mono no aware* from chapter 1.1. Ban Kokei uses this term to express 'empathy', "where people act morally based on their personal understanding of others, rather than on moral conventions".[157] By connecting morality and the sensibility of the self, Kokei shows its reader that the ideal is to use one's individual thought and expression as basis for moral action, instead of prescribed norms. The definition of *mono no aware* had shifted from an aesthetic emotional response, to an aesthetic moral response.[158] According to Kokei all members of one's family must practice empathy towards one another for the sake of household harmony. That means that the self is not pitted against the social world, but a

[152] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 98.
[153] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 100-101.
[154] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 118.
[155] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 151.
[156] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 153.
[157] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 158.
[158] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 173-174.

participant.[159] This notion of empathy shows itself in 'Kinsei kijinden' through the *kijin*'s poetry. They can appeal to others through poetry, creating a connection within their reclusion to the outside world. Kokei often writes of appeals to understand another individual, even if he doesn't always directly use *mono no aware*.[160] The type of poetry of *kijin* favours spontaneity of one's expression of emotions, over the skilful usage of beautiful language, which was a way to express personal potency.[161] Thus, through the medium of poetry, *kijin* are connecting to themselves and the world, showing that Kokei's vision of *kijin* also includes and requires them to interact with others.[160]

In the comparison with Ochiguri monogatari (Fallen chestnut tales), Brecher shows that 'Kinsei kijinden' expresses neither the interest in associating or denying the association between eccentricity and Chinese learning. Its objective is to "celebrate worthy individuals for the ways in which they connected an aesthetics of strangeness with moral uprightness".[162] In addition, when comparing the story of Baisao in both books, it shows that Ban Kokei had a tendency to downplay Sinophilia that pervaded *bunjin* culture. Biographical data from both texts are fairly consistent with each other, but Kokei often makes an extra effort to convert it into evidence of eccentricity.[163]

After 'Kinsei kijinden' there were many other works to incorporate *kijin*, but many did not share Ban Kokei's desire of encouraging potency of the self. Examples of such works are: 'Hyakka kikoden' (One hundred eccentrics' deeds, 1846), 'Hyakunin isshu' (One hundred comical haiku of eccentrics, 1852), and 'Katakiuchi sencha no hajimari' (Revenge plot: the start of steeped tea, 1805).[164]

[159] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 177.
[160] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 156, 178.
[161] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 157-158.
[162] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 121-124.
[163] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 124-127.
[164] Kameya, "Paupers, Poets, and Paragons," 196.

Chapter 3: Women Eccentrics

3.1 Tokuyama Gyokuran (1727-1784)

Tokuyama Gyokuran's birthname was Machi[165] and she was a well versed *nanga* painter and the third generation of women who ran the famous Matsuya teahouse situated in Kyoto's Gion entertainment district. She, her mother and grandmother were accomplished poets.[166] Her mother, Yuri and grandmother, Kaji never married and all three of them remained devoted to their teahouse and art.[167] Their teahouse was frequented by poets and literati.[168] Her father was the younger son of the Tokuyama samurai family from Edo, who was penniless and while living in Kyoto, he depended on Yuri's support. When he learned of the passing of his elder brother he wanted to return to Edo and take Yuri with him. But Yuri refused to go with him, despite her love for him.[165]

Gyokuran was tutored by Yuri and later by the aristocratic poet Reizei Tamemura.[172] Gyokuran already possessed skills in painting before getting married, and after marriage she also learned from her husband. She was one of the few women with a husband that encouraged her pursuit of art, and didn't have children.[169] She studied *nanga* with Yanagisawa Kien,[168] but Taiga became a larger influence on her painting style after their betrothal in 1750. Despite his influence, Gyokuran established her own style and experimented with her brushstrokes. She even added *waka* poems on literati paintings where Chinese poems should have been.[170] Her creative *nanga* style painting with her *waka* poems resulted in an unique blend of style that placed her in the art history of Japan.[171] Her unique style perhaps a testament to her individual potency.

Gyokuran never achieved the same literary fame as her mother and grandmother, but she did gain fame. Whereas Yuri and Kaji were solely poets, Gyokuran also painted and often inscribed her own smaller paintings with *waka* poems.[172] However, it's only in recent scholarship that her art had been recognized in *nanga* history in its own right, instead of in

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[165] Stephen Addiss, "The three Women of Gion," in *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*, ed. Marsha Haufler (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 244.
[166] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 91-92; Suzuki, "Splendid Japanese Women Artists," 160.
[167] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 91-92.
[168] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 88.
[169] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 85.
[170] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 86.
[171] Addiss, "The three Women," 257.
[172] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 81-82.

relation to her husband.[173] Another way Gyokuran differed from Yuri and Kaji, was that she did marry, but did not adopt or conceive a child. Furthermore her verses were almost exclusively on nature studies instead of love poems that appeared in Kaji and Yuri's repertoire.[174] Gyokuran collaborated with Yuri where Yuri inscribed Gyokuran's paintings. In her lifetime, Gyokuran had established a reputation as one of Japan's leading female artists, independent from her famous husband, Ike Taiga.[168]

Ike Taiga and his generation of literati painters established traditions that lasted into the early nineteenth century.[175] He was from the peasant class, but was fairly financially stable as he earned from his renowned painting and calligraphy. His mother owned a fan shop where, by the age of 15, he sold his own Chinese style fan paintings. He had a degree of financial success while living the Literati lifestyle. He studied the Chinese classics and Ming and Qing paintings that were imported into Japan at that the time.[111] During his lifetime, his literati style art was not acknowledged, but he found personal contentment in it. Taiga's fame rose after his death.[176] Furthermore, other than being a literati, he was also a *waka* and haikai poet, a lutist and herbalist. He was friends with other well-known *kijin* that also appeared in 'Kinsei kijinden'. In that book he was said to abstain from alcohol, showed oddly strict observance of certain customs while utterly disregarding others, and although he was generally reclusive, he was well-mannered, with a sociable nature and enjoyed guests.[177]

Tokuyama Gyokuran's eccentricity matched her husband's. She was strongly independent and had a disinterest in money. Before she married, she aspired to become a Chinese-style painter, which was non-conforming for a woman at that time. After marriage she kept her own surname, and by some accounts even a separate residence. She didn't shave her eyebrows, wore makeup or fine clothes, which was expected of her, and smoked. An account of Ueda Akinari notes that their home was "so disheveled that he was unable to sit down in it".[178] There are anecdotes of Gyokuran acting in a way that would be considered inappropriate, but was charming. She, just like her husband, cared little for money and was indifferent to social conventions and status.[179] At the end of her life, Tokuyama Gyokuran chose to be buried at

[173] Saunders and Lippit, *Painting Edo*, 54.
[174] Addiss, "The three Women," 247.
[175] Carpenter, Oka, and host, *The Poetry of Nature*, 15.
[176] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 73-74.
[177] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 70-71.
[178] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 72.
[179] Addiss, "The three Women," 251-252.

the gravesite of her natal family, instead of with her husband with whom she had lived with for several decades.[180]

The couple was not only written about in 'Kinsei kijinden', but also mentioned in 'More accounts of eccentric haikai poets' of 1833. In there the account of them noted that they wore each other's clothes, were carefree, openhearted and famous for being so, and Gyokuran played music instruments in the nude.[181] They were both part of Iwagaki Ryukei's (1741-1806) poetry circle, which also included Maruyama Okyo and Akutagawa Tankyu, among others. This poetry circle is also known to have interacted with Ban Kokei, Mikuma Katen, and Rikuyo; the three collaborators of 'Kinsei kijinden'.[182]

To further examine Tokuyama Gyokuran, I will compare the illustration of her from 'Kinsei kijinden' (Figure 1.1), and the image upon which it's likely based on, made by Kimura Kenkado (1736-1802) (Figure 1.2). The latter being more historically accurate.[183] Figure 1.1 from Kenkado shows Tokuyama Gyokuran and Ike Taiga surrounded by clutter. Writing utensils and books are scattered around Ike Taiga while he plays a samisen. Gyokuran is behind him painting fans, while the kettle is on the fire in the cooking pit. Behind Gyokuran a low table with an open and a closed book on it, and in-between them is a koto, standing upright. To the right we see painted screen parts and scrolls laying underneath. The paintings on the screen seem to be landscapes in the style of *nanga*. The screen furthest back seems to have randomly placed strokes, perhaps an unfinished painting. My impression from this image is that there is a lot of unfinished activities and projects surrounding the couple while they are busy with their own thing. Figure 1.2 from 'Kinsei kijinden' has quite a few differences. Ike Taiga's kimono is draped loosely, opening up his collar down to his middle. In this image he seems to be playing a biwa instead of a samisen. Tokuyama Gyokuran is behind him and instead of painting fans, she is accompanying him with the koto. The surroundings also seem less haphazardly, with writing utensils neatly in a cup, and seeming finished painted screens behind them. A long piece of paper, presumably a scroll, is open on the table with calligraphy on it and books are neatly stacked next to it. The stack does however have a statue of Kannon, a deity, on it.[183] The normal place for that would be on a family altar, thus being obviously out of place. Puck Brecher argues that the reason Ban

[180] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 91-92.
[181] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 73-74; Addiss, "The three Women," 251-252.
[182] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 121-122.
[183] Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness*, 128.

Kokei may have chosen for the differing activity of Gyokuran, would be that fan painting is related to income and thus the market-driven society he doesn't approve of.[183]

To conclude Tokuyama Gyokuran is considered a *kijin* as she embodies individual potency, and excessive behavior. She doesn't show care for propriety expected from a woman, and partakes in literati art which was uncommon for a woman of her time. She does however contribute to household wealth with the selling of fan paintings, which is probably why Ban Kokei portrayed her differently in 'Kinsei kijinden'. But as many *kijin* struggled with the pursuit of *fukyo*, she should indeed be called a *kijin*.

Figure 1.1: Kenkado, Kimura. *Taiga, and Gyokuran*. In Puck Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness : Eccentricity and Madness in Early Modern Japan*, 130. 2013

Figure 1.2: Katen, Mikuma. *Taiga and Gyokuran*. In Puck Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness : Eccentricity and Madness in Early Modern Japan*, 129. 2013

3.2 Otagaki Rengetsu (1791-1875)

Otagaki Rengetsu's given name was Nobu, and she was born in 1791. Her parentage is unclear, but it is thought that her mother was either a courtesan or a geisha,[184] and based on a quote from her wetnurse, her father was someone from the Todo clan from the Tsu domain (present day Mie prefecture).[185] Shortly after her birth she was adopted into the Otagaki family, where the head of the family served at Chion'in, the head temple of Pure Land Buddhism in Kyoto.[184] She followed a common path for women in her youth by serving as an attendant at the Matsudaira *daimyo* family where she learned various arts expected of women from a high class, and she received training in swordsmanship and jujutsu. During her service, her stepbrother and stepmother passed away, leaving no male heir to their family. To remedy that, her stepfather adopted a son as inheritor of the family.[186]

At seventeen Rengetsu returned home and married her first husband, the son her stepfather adopted. She lost three children to illness and they separated in 1819. Shortly after their separation, her first husband passed away at the age of 26. Her adoptive father adopted a third son to take over the family and Rengetsu remarried through his arrangement as well.[186] However her new husband died in 1823. It was after his death that she became a Buddhist nun at 33, and moved into the residence of the Chion'in temple complex. There she took the name of Rengetsu ("Lotus Moon").[186] It was rare at that time for a young woman to become a nun and live the rest of her life in a nunnery. Usually women went into the path of nun-hood after going through the expectations of a woman's life. There were different styles of nun-hood, but all have in common that it was a socially acceptable way for women to relinquish their normal social roles and responsibilities as wives, mothers, and daughters.[184] The Chion'in temple was the one where her stepfather was in service, and they took their vows at the same time. They lived in the temple compound together with her daughter from her second marriage, who died at the age of 7. She stayed in the temple complex with her stepfather until his passing. Even for the age where infant deaths weren't uncommon, Rengetsu's life where she lost all her children and two husbands is unusually tragic.[186]

After his death in 1832 Rengetsu lost her financial support and moved to the eastern part of Kyoto, Okazaki.[186] This area was known for its artistic, literary and intellectual atmosphere.

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[184] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 8-9.
[185] Michifumi Isoda, *Unsung Heroes of Old Japan*, First edition. (Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2017), 148.
[186] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 144.

She had studied under Kagawa Kageki (1768-1843) who was one of the most prominent *waka* teachers of the nineteenth century. And in 1849 she studied with Mutobe Yoshika (1806-1863). She may also have studied as a teenager under Ueda Akinari (1734-1809).[187] Rengetsu had a reclusive nature and was popular by men. So much so that she pulled out all her teeth in her 40s to have men leave her alone.[188] Despite her reclusive nature she still associated, and treasured relationships with other artists.[189]

In the mid-nineteenth century there was a rise in female *waka* poets as more women received education end encouragement from male poets. This was the time Rengetsu was a well-known active *waka* poet. She had been listed 3 times in 'Heian jinbutsu shi' (who's who in Kyoto), and attracted a large number of patrons. Some of her other talents include painting, calligraphy and pottery. She often used a combination of her skills in her art.[184] She was best known for her hand-made ceramics where she used her skill in calligraphy to inscribe or incise her poems. She began selling pottery after moving to Okazaki to support herself.[190] Otagaki Rengetsu was one of the poets in the Edo period who also wrote in Chinese.[59] And her style in poetry was most influenced by Kagawa Kageki and the Keien school, using more of ordinary language to express genuine feeling instead of "allusions or archaisms found in other styles of poetry".[190] In the time she was alive, she was one of the few female artists that experienced such popularity that she had difficulty fulfilling all of the requests she received. She even moved more than 30 times around the Okazaki area between her 40s and 60s to avoid the amount of customers who found their way to her door.[191]

During her lifetime, Rengetsu cared little for money and sold her art for very low prices. She dressed plainly and avoided meat in her diet consisting of simple foods. She spend time and money on those less fortunate, showing compassion throughout her life.[192]

Otagaki Rengetsu was a maker of tea utensils and is used as an example by Corbett to discuss that female tea practitioners in the Edo period could occur within the realm of aesthetic connoisseurship, knowledge and display.[193] Here she showed a deeper knowledge than was advised for women through guidebooks at that time. Although she had a relationship with the

[187] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 7-10.
[188] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 145; Isoda, *Unsung Heroes*, 179-181.
[189] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 145.
[190] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 10.
[191] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 144-145.
[192] Fister and Yamamoto, *Japanese Women artists*, 146.
[193] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 4.

iemoto style tea school approved ateliers, she didn't rely on the head of the tea schools to set her standards of taste or procedures.[31] Rebecca Corbett argues that Rengetsu is an example of a woman partaking in a supposedly male sphere of connoisseurship and utensil production within the world of tea.[194]

Rengetsu's potential classification as *kijin* can be evaluated through several criteria. First, the reasons she could be considered a *kijin* is due to her 'excessive' participation in tea culture, her literati style poetry and art, and after the deaths of her husbands and children she became a nun at a young age, effectively against the culture of maintenance. Second, although she was reclusive in nature, she did have contact with other artists. A duality that was brought up in the discussion on eccentricity. Furthermore, she, like Tokuyama Gyokuran, had a disinterest in money, shown in the cheap prices for her art that were in high demand. Rengetsu also avoided the beauty standard by pulling out her teeth, a method different from Gyokuran, but a similar result of rejecting normative femininity. In addition, the pulling of the teeth can be seen as unhealthy and thus against the culture of maintenance.

The reasons why she isn't considered a *kijin* could be because of the changing times, eliminating the 'strangeness' of her participation in literati culture. Second is that she became a nun, and although she became one young, she took her vow with her father and lived together with him, serving the moral of filial piety. However, it can be argued that her living with, and perhaps taking care of, her father does not conform to the culture of maintenance, as she could continue the bloodline while her father didn't. Showing filial piety in excess, which would be considered as eccentric.

Therefore Otagaki Rengetsu could be seen as a *kijin* from the standards of which Tokuyama Gyokuran is judged with. Due to the changing times it's less visible within her art. However, her lifestyle shows the qualities of a *kijin*. She did live in a time past the publication of 'Kinsei kijinden', and eccentricity became a way to market oneself. The combination of the different meaning of eccentricity and her popularity may be why she is not considered as an eccentric.

[194] Corbett, "Crafting Identity," 8.

Conclusion

Kyoto had been a cultural capital where there was a trend of art born outside of institutions. Art culture had spaces in which status were hidden, and people could interact without the attached social conventions. In this sphere, within the discussion on ‘eccentricity’ in relation to Tokuyama Gyokuran and Otagaki Rengetsu, I have found that both women can be considered eccentric. However, due to the changing times and fluid nature of the meaning of ‘eccentricity’ it is difficult to include Otagaki Rengetsu in the definition of ‘eccentricity’ of her time. But she could have been included if she is judged by the standards of ‘Kinsei kijinden’.

By including women into the definition of eccentricity, it does not necessary change the perspective on ‘eccentricity’ based on the discussion of this paper. I do realize, however, that there are lacking examples in sources for female artists that are considered as eccentric. This is highly likely due to the male-centric nature of the discourse on ‘eccentricity’ and if we include more Edo period women into the discussion, and more primary sources from the Edo period, we may find a new appreciation for female artists.

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