

and on, boring you with the long story of my own.

Well, no matter. Think of it as my sincere confession of all the bad things I've ever done. It's cleared the clouds of attachment from me, and I feel my mind now shining bright as the moon. I hope I've also managed to make this spring night pass more pleasantly for you. I didn't hide anything, you know. With no husband or children, I had no reason to. The lotus flower in my heart<sup>135</sup> opened for you, and before it closed it told everything, from beginning to end. I've certainly worked in some dirty professions, but is my heart not pure?

[*Saikaku shūjō*, NKBT 47: 326–454, translated by Chris Drake]

### ***GREAT MIRROR OF MALE LOVE (NANSHOKU ŌKAGAMI, 1687)***

After the publication of *Life of a Sensuous Woman* in 1686, Saikaku suddenly stopped writing vernacular fiction concerned with male-female love in urban commoner society and began to explore new topics. One of these was male-male love (*nanshoku*) in both chōnin and samurai societies, which he wrote about in 1687 in *Great Mirror of Male Love*, his longest work. Because marriage in Tokugawa society was usually a formal arrangement to ensure heirs for the continuation of the ancestral household, an urban man's "romantic" urges tended to be satisfied outside marriage with female or male prostitutes. Men pursued romantic relations with women in the licensed quarters and, in the manner of a connoisseur cultivating Confucian virtues, called it the "way of loving women" (*nyodō*). Or they pursued romance with male youths in the theater districts, calling it the "way of loving youths" (*wakashudō* or *shudō*). Male-male love in samurai society usually meant a sexual and emotional relationship between an adult man (*nenja*) and an adolescent youth (*wakashu*), who was recognized by his long, glossy forelocks. Then, when he reached manhood, around the age of nineteen, he shaved the crown of his head in the manner of an adult, signaling the end of his status as a *wakashu*. Because of the scandalous mingling of social classes in these places and the spending of money in exchange for sexual access, both the licensed quarters and the theater districts were regarded by the authorities as "bad places" (*akusho*). The fact that a hard-earned fortune could also be dissipated there rather quickly by a profligate son made it a genuinely "bad place" for the merchant class as well.

Reflecting the social division between samurai and merchant in their practice of male-male love, Saikaku divided *Great Mirror of Male Love* into two parts. The first consists of twenty stories focusing on the world of the samurai, and the second contains another twenty stories dwelling on young kabuki actors, boy prostitutes in the theater district. In all probability, Saikaku began *Great Mirror of Male Love* with the intention of depicting kabuki *wakashu* and the world of the theater and chōnin that he knew so well, but in the process he was drawn into the world of the samurai, which had a long tradition of *nanshoku* beginning in the medieval period

when young pages served samurai warriors in battle. The result was a new exploration of the world of the samurai, which Saikaku continued to write about in subsequent years. *Great Mirror of Male Love*, which no doubt appealed to the samurai in Edo as well as the wealthy merchants in Osaka and Kyoto, thus stands between Saikaku's earlier chōnin fiction on male-female love and his later works on the samurai.

In the samurai world, male-male love relationships were bound by the samurai code of loyalty, devotion, and honor in action, in which the relationship between lord and retainer, or samurai and page, was often transferred to that between a man and a youth. In this context, the mature man offered protection, support, or employment, and the youth in turn was expected to be loyal and dedicated to him. A close reading of *Great Mirror of Male Love* shows that Saikaku distinguished between two types of *nenja*. Those called "connoisseurs of boys" (*shōjin-zuki*) were usually married and had sexual relations with women in addition to youths, whereas those called "woman haters" (*onna-girai*) rejected women as sexual partners and loved only young boys. Interestingly, Saikaku chose to structure *Great Mirror of Male Love* around the exclusive viewpoint of the woman haters, who represented the single-minded devotion to "the way of loving youths" that he sought to romanticize for his readers. In a fashion reminiscent of Chikamatsu's puppet plays, the result of Saikaku's efforts often depicts a dramatic conflict, as in the following short story, between duty/obligation (*giri*), which was determined by a strict social code, and human emotion/desire (*ninjō*), which violated that social code.

### Though Bearing an Umbrella (1:2)

How Nagasaka Korin, a filial son, made a living.  
He killed a creature in the cherry-viewing teahouse.  
He traded his life for a secret lover.

The sea at Urano Hatsushima grew rough and the winds blew strong on Mount Muko.<sup>136</sup> Thunderheads billowed up in layers, as if the ghost of Tomomori might appear at any moment.<sup>137</sup> Soon rain began to fall. Travelers on the road found themselves in unforeseen distress.

An envoy named Horikoshi Sakon, who was on his way back to Amagasaki from Akashi, took shelter from the rain under some hackberry trees in a field by Ikuta Shrine. Just then, a handsome boy of twelve or thirteen came running up with an unopened umbrella of the type called "fall foliage" (even though it was summer).

The boy noticed Sakon. "Allow me to lend you this umbrella," he said, and handed it to an attendant.

“I am most grateful,” Sakon responded. “But it strikes me as odd that you let yourself get rained on, even though you have an umbrella.”

At this, the boy began to cry.

“Now, now. There must be some reason for this. Tell me what it is,” Sakon coaxed.

“I am the son of Nagasaka Shuzen,” the boy said. “My name is Korin. My father became a masterless samurai and had to leave Kai for Buzen to take up a new position, but he became sick and died on board ship. My mother and I had no choice but to bury him in this coastal town. The local people were kind enough to help us build a crude hut on the beach. The black bamboo outside our window became our only means of making a living. We watched the artisans making umbrellas and learned to do it ourselves. When I think of my mother doing a man’s work with her own hands, I cannot bring myself to use an umbrella for fear of inviting the wrath of heaven, even if it means getting wet.”

So that was it. Not unlike an old lady selling fans who would rather shade the sun with her hand or the winnow seller who prefers to do his winnowing with a hat! Sakon was much impressed with the boy’s filial sense and sent one of his attendants to accompany the boy back to the village where he lived with his mother.

When Sakon returned to Akashi, he immediately presented himself at the lord’s castle and delivered the other daimyō’s reply. Since the lord seemed to be in a good mood, Sakon mentioned Korin and told him the boy’s story. The lord was very impressed and ordered the boy to be brought to him. It was Sakon’s joyful task to fetch Korin. Obediently, the boy came to the lord’s castle with his mother.

When he appeared before the lord, his lordship was smitten immediately with the boy’s unadorned beauty, like a first glimpse of the moon rising above a distant mountain. The boy’s hair gleamed like the feathers of a raven perched silently on a tree, and his eyes were as lovely as lotus flowers. One by one, his other qualities became apparent, from his nightingale voice to his gentle disposition, as obedient and true as a plum blossom. The lord increasingly had the boy attend to him, and soon Korin was sharing his bed at night.

The night guard stationed next to the lord’s bed chamber listened carefully for signs of trouble, but all he heard were the unrestrained

sounds of the lord amusing himself with the boy. When it was over, the lord could be heard to say, "I would gladly give my life for you."

Korin's response showed none of the gratitude that one would expect from a boy receiving the lord's favor. "Forcing me to yield to your authority is not true love. My heart remains my own, and if one day someone should tell me he truly loves me, I will give my life for him. As a memento of this floating world, I want a lover on whom I can lavish real affection."

The lord was slightly irritated with the boy but dismissed what he said as a joke. Korin insisted, however, that he was serious.

"I swear by the gods of Japan that I meant every word of it."

The lord was astonished, but he could not help but admire even this stubborn streak in the boy.

One evening, the lord assembled a large group of his pages to enjoy the breeze at a teahouse in the garden. There they sampled several varieties of saké from throughout the domain. After several rounds, the party was becoming quite lively. Suddenly, the stars disappeared from the sky and the pines at Hitomaru's shrine<sup>138</sup> began to shake noisily. The air stank of death. Clouds spread swiftly overhead, and out from them leaped a one-eyed goblin. It landed on the eaves nearby and tweaked the noses of everyone there, stretching its hand out more than twenty feet. The boys stopped their amusement and immediately surrounded their lord to protect him. They then rushed him to his chambers. Later, the ground shook violently with the sound of a mountain being rent asunder.

Shortly after midnight, word was sent to the lord that an old badger had broken down a cedar door in the teahouse used for cherry blossom viewing west of the man-made hill in the garden. Even though it had been decapitated, the head was still gnashing its tusks and screeching in an unearthly manner.

"Well then, the quake earlier must have been the badger's doing. Who killed the beast?" the lord asked. Everyone in the household was questioned, but no one came forward to claim merit for the feat.

One night seven days later, at the hour of the ox, around 2 A.M., the voice of a young girl was heard coming from the boxlike ridge of the great assembly hall. "Korin's life is in danger; it is he who murdered my blameless father." The voice screamed the words three times, then disappeared.

So, it was Korin who performed the deed, everyone thought in awe.

Sometime afterward, the magistrate in charge of buildings and grounds spoke to the lord about fixing the door damaged by the badger. The lord had other plans, however.

“Long ago,” he said, “Marquis Wen of Wei got boastful and bragged, ‘No one dares oppose a single word I say.’ But the blind musician Shi Jing struck a wall with his harp and made him realize his arrogance. Marquis Wen left the damaged south wall as a reminder of his faithful subject.<sup>139</sup> I command that the broken door be left as it is so that all may see the evidence of Korin’s brave warrior spirit.”

The lord rewarded Korin generously, and his love for the boy grew even stronger.

A man named Sōhachirō, second son of Captain of the Standard Bearers Kan’o Gyōbu, had for some time recognized Korin’s true feelings. He told Korin of his love by letter, and they were soon in constant communication. They waited for an opportunity to consummate their love, and the year drew to a close.

On the night of the thirteenth of the Twelfth Month, a day set aside for house cleaning, the lord’s presentation of silk for New Year’s garments was to take place. One of Korin’s attendants had the idea of concealing Sōhachirō inside the basket for worn-out clothing to be sent to Korin’s mother for washing and repair. In this way, Sōhachirō was able to make his way to the room next to the lord’s bedchamber.

Toward evening, Korin complained of stomach pains and secluded himself in his room. When the lord retired, he could not sleep at first because of the constant opening and closing of the door and creaking of the wheels,<sup>140</sup> but soon he was snoring. Able to make love at last, Korin embraced Sōhachirō. In their passion, Korin gave himself to the man without even undoing his square-knotted sash. They pledged to love each other in this life and the next.

The sound of their voices woke the lord from his sleep. He removed the sheath from a spear he kept near his pillow and shouted, “I hear voices. Whoever it is, do not let him escape!” As he rushed out in pursuit, Korin clung to the lord’s sleeve.

“There is no need to be alarmed. No one is here. It was merely a

demon that came in the agony of my illness and threatened to kill me. Please forgive me.”

The boy spoke calmly, giving Sōhachirō time to climb an oak tree and jump across the spiked fence surrounding the mansion. The lord spotted him, however, and demanded an explanation, but Korin insisted that he knew nothing.

“Well then,” the lord said, “perhaps it was just another of that badger’s tricks.”

The lord was willing to let the matter rest there, but a secret agent<sup>141</sup> named Kanai Shinpei came up just then with some information.

“The sound of footsteps just now was made by a man with loose hair tied by a headband. That much I could tell for sure. Without a doubt, he was someone’s lover.”

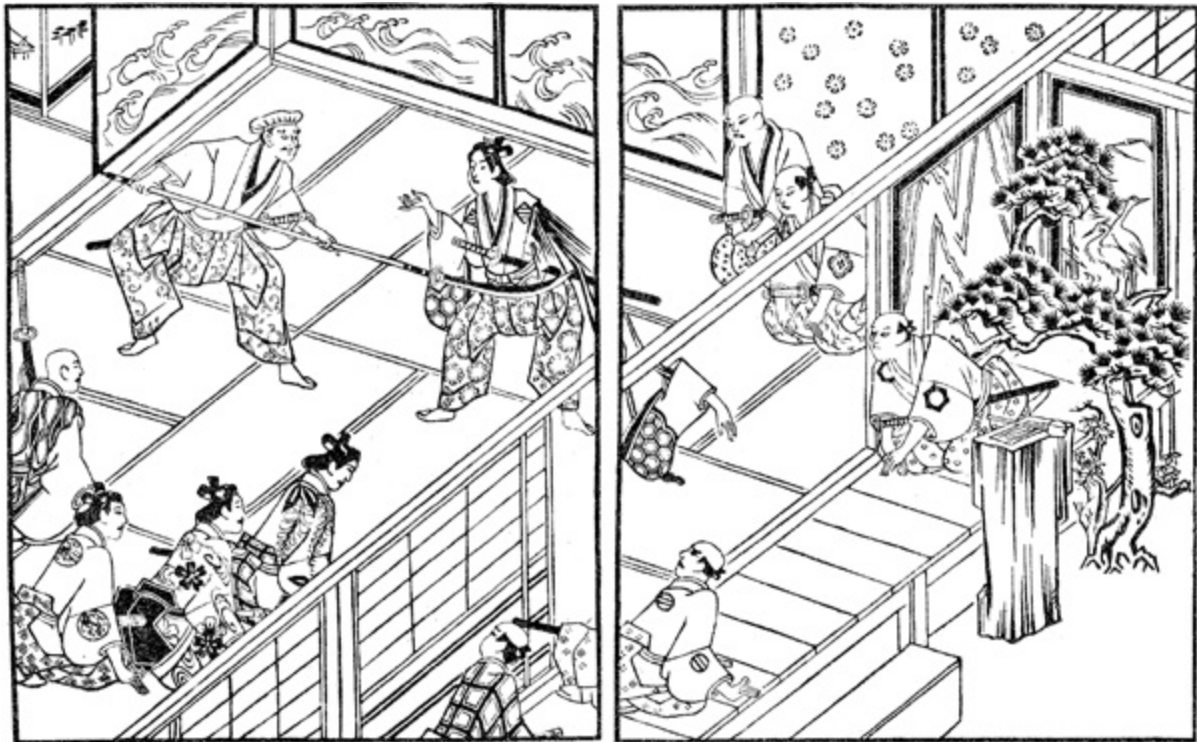
The lord’s interrogation of Korin suddenly changed. Deadly earnest now, he commanded the boy to confess.

The boy said, “He is someone who swore his life to me. I would not identify him even if you tore me limb from limb. I told you from the beginning that you were not the one I loved.” Korin’s expression showed no trace of regret as he spoke.

Three days later, on the morning of the fifteenth, the lord summoned Korin to the hall where martial arts were practiced. He assembled his attendants to watch as a lesson to the entire household. Lifting a halberd, he said to the boy, “Korin, you have reached your end.”

Korin smiled brightly. “I have enjoyed your favor for so long, to die at your hands would be one more honor. I have no regrets.”

As the boy attempted to stand, the lord cut off Korin’s left arm. “Still no regrets?” he taunted.



The lord (*left*) cuts off Korin's arm. Like the other young men (*bottom left*), Korin wears a long-sleeved robe (*furisode*) and has a "boy's hairstyle" (*wakashu mage*), with a partially shaved head, thick topknot, and two protruding folds of hair at the forehead and the nape of the neck. The illustrations are attributed to Yoshida Hanbei (act. 1684–1688). From the 1687 edition. (From NKBZ 39, *Ihara Saikaku shū* 2, by permission of Shōgakukan)

Korin stretched out his right arm. "I stroked my lover's body with this hand. Surely, that must anger you terribly."

Enraged, the lord slashed it off.

Korin spun around and cried out to the people assembled there. "Take one last look at the figure of this handsome youth. The world will never see his likes again."<sup>142</sup> His voice grew weaker and weaker.

The lord then cut off the child's head.

The lord's sleeve became a sea of tears, like the Sea of Akashi visible before him, and the weeping of the assembled retainers echoed like waves upon the shore.

Korin's corpse was sent to Myōfuku-ji for burial. His brief life had evaporated like the dew. At this temple in Akashi is Morning Glory Pond, named for the flower whose life, if it survives the morning frost, lasts but a single day. In ancient times there was a man banished to Suma for his seductive mischief in the capital.<sup>143</sup> He did

not learn his lesson but fell in love with the daughter of a lay priest there. On one of his visits to her, he wrote a poem: “Braving autumn wind and waves, I came each night by the light of the moon on Akashi’s hill: morning glories.” If this poem had been composed for the sake of boy love, it would surely be remembered today. Unfortunately, it was written for a woman and naturally has been forgotten.

Korin’s unknown lover became the subject of severe criticism. “Korin died for his sake, yet he does not come forward and announce himself like a man. He could not possibly be a samurai, just a stray dog who happened to be reincarnated into human form.”

In the New Year, on the night of the fifteenth, Sōhachirō attacked Shinpei and cut off both his arms. He then administered the coup de grâce and made a clean escape. After hiding Korin’s mother where no one would find her, he fled to Morning Glory Temple. In front of Korin’s tomb, he set up a signboard and wrote on it a detailed account of his love for the boy. There, at the age of twenty-one, he ended his life, a dream within a dream; like one gone to sleep, he cut open his belly and died.

At dawn the next day, the morning of the sixteenth, people found the body. The wound was distinctly cut in the shape of a diamond with three crosscuts inside. This was Korin’s family crest. “If one is going to fall that deeply in love,” people said approvingly, “then this is exactly the way to show it.”

Within seven days, the anise branches<sup>144</sup> that people gathered from hills throughout the province filled the entire pond.

[*Ihara Saikaku shū* 2, NKBZ 39: 369–372, translated by Paul Schalow]

### **TALES OF SAMURAI DUTY (BUKEGIRI MONOGATARI, 1688)**

After publishing *Great Mirror of Male Love*, Saikaku published two samurai narratives, *Transmission of Martial Arts (Budō denraiki)* in 1687 and *Tales of Samurai Duty*, in the next year. Saikaku’s shift from stories of love to samurai narratives has been variously attributed to the government ban in 1686 on books dealing with erotic matters, to Saikaku’s personal exhaustion with the topic of love and need for fresh material, and to the crisis that faced the samurai at the time. This was the period in which the “Way of the samurai” (*bushidō*), combining the earlier medieval samurai code with Confucian ethics and values, was being established and promoted, particularly by the Tokugawa bakufu, as a means of preserving the rapidly corroding authority of the samurai. This new samurai ethics

influenced even the urban commoner or chōnin class, leading to the birth of the “samurai plays” (*budō-mono*) in the world of kabuki.

*Transmission of Martial Arts*, with the subtitle *Vendettas in Various Provinces*, is a collection of thirty-two stories about samurai vendettas, vastly expanding a theme that appeared in the first half of *Great Mirror of Male Love*. In the bakufu-domain system, each domain had relative administrative autonomy and its own standing military force. If someone committed an offense and escaped into the neighboring domain, that person was unlikely to be arrested or punished. Consequently, the system permitted a vendetta if the purpose was to compensate the victimized family and if the avenging group received permission in advance from the lord and followed the rules. Although Saikaku tended to idealize the vendetta, in *Transmission of Martial Arts*, he examines both sides, the pursuers and the pursued, and is particularly interested in the suffering caused to both by the vendettas, which were sometimes unjust, often drawn out over months and years, and not always successful. One theme of the book is the strength and brutality of the samurai, who kill or are killed for extremely trivial reasons and who think nothing of taking a life—an ethos and attitude carried over from the Warring States period (1477–1573).

In *Tales of Samurai Duty*, however, which contains twenty-six stories in six volumes, Saikaku focuses on the issue of *giri* (duty, responsibility, obligation), which had become an important value for everybody in Edo society. It was one of the five Confucian principles (humaneness, ritual decorum, rightness, wisdom, and sincerity), but it had a special value for the samurai at this time. In contrast to the older way of the samurai depicted in *Transmission of Martial Arts*, in which the samurai took up the sword for themselves out of their need for revenge, *Tales of Samurai Duty* depicts the new way of the samurai based on the higher principle of *giri* and self-sacrifice, in which *giri* meant sacrificing oneself in the service of the lord or one’s house. A second level of *giri* existed in one’s responsibility toward one’s fellow samurai. In both instances, *giri* implied never breaking a promise and being ready to give up one’s life in order to carry out one’s obligations and duties. *Tales of Samurai Duty* draws on material from as early as the Kamakura period and an incident as recent as eight months before its publication. Saikaku portrays idealized samurai who have, in both distant and recent times, honestly upheld this new ideal of *giri* and managed to overcome the pull of human emotions. In one story (1:2), an older sister who has been promised in marriage to Hidemitsu falls ill and becomes blind in both eyes. Her younger sister is then sent as a substitute, but Hidemitsu, who notices the difference and feels that taking the younger sister would go against *giri*, sends her back and marries the older sister.

Saikaku’s samurai narratives were not handbooks for samurai; rather, they were intended for urban commoners who were interested in and influenced by the customs and psychology of the samurai, who were the ruling elite and their commercial customers. Some of the stories are overconceptualized, perhaps because they look from the outside at idealized samurai, a perspective that may have been a result of Saikaku’s position as an urban commoner. In the following story, it may appear that Saikaku is lamenting the unreasonable, inhumane

demands of duty on the samurai, but the focus instead is on the conflict between Shikibu's determination to carry out his duty toward Tango and his grief over his child, as well as on the sympathy that Tango subsequently shows his fellow samurai.

## In Death They Share the Same Wave Pillow (1:5)

The Ōi River where life is in passage.

Six people enter the religious life suddenly.

Although all human beings are allotted a fixed span of life, the code of the samurai requires them to die, if necessary, before their time, to preserve their honor. No one wants to die, but a samurai is prepared for the moment when it comes and dies with dignity.

There was once a samurai by the name of Kanzaki Shikibu who was in the service of Araki Murashige, lord of Itami Castle in Settsu.<sup>145</sup> Shikibu worked as an inspector, an office that required him to watch over the conduct and affairs of all the retainers. That he possessed the ability and intelligence to manage the affairs of such a distinguished household so long and so well was all due to his impeccable lineage.

One day the lord's second son, a boy named Muramaru, expressed a desire to visit the Chishima Islands far to the northeast,<sup>146</sup> and Shikibu was ordered to accompany him. Shikibu's only son, Katsutarō, was also granted his wish to go along on the journey. After completing all their preparations for departure, father and son traveled with the party along the road to the east.

It was during the rainy season, at the end of the Fourth Month, and they had been traveling for many days. The party was trying to reach the post station at Shimada in Suruga, where arrangements had been made for their lodging. The heavy downpour gave them no respite even as they traversed the high Sayo Pass. White waves broke ceaselessly against the small bridge spanning the Kiku River, and the wind buffeted the pines like breaking waves and blew the servants' sleeved capes inside out. It was only with the greatest difficulty that the travelers managed to cross the mountain.

Reassembling the group at the Kanaya post station directly across the Ōi River from Shimada, young Lord Muramaru prepared to hurry the party across the river. Shikibu had been following in the rear to

make sure that all was well, and he arrived just at that moment. Looking at the roaring torrent and realizing that the river was rising by the minute, Shikibu tried to stop the boy, saying, "My lord, please let us lodge here tonight." But Muramaru was young and high-spirited and refused to listen to reason. He insisted on having his own way and ordered the crossing to commence. As they waded through the raging current, many in the party were swept away and were never seen again. The young man refused to turn back despite all the difficulties, and at long last his bearers brought him to the far bank.

As was his custom Shikibu followed in the rear. Now before Shikibu departed from Itami, a fellow inspector, Morioka Tango, had entrusted him with the safety of his son, sixteen-year-old Tanzaburō, who had never left home before. Concerned for the boy's safety, Shikibu made his own son, Katsutarō, cross the river first and had Tanzaburō follow behind him. He carefully chose a horse and men to take Tanzaburō across, and he himself brought up the rear.

Darkness began to fall as they crossed, and in the dim light, the men leading Tanzaburō's horse stumbled into the deep part of the river. As Tanzaburō's saddle slipped down, a wave hit the boy from the side, and he was swept away by the current to disappear into the water. Shikibu was overcome with confusion and grief, but the boy had been lost and nothing could be done to aid him. The tragedy was all the greater because Tanzaburō had nearly reached the far bank. Shikibu was devastated when he realized that his own son had safely reached shore while his own charge had drowned.

He thought for a while and then summoned his son. "Tanzaburō's father entrusted his son's safety to me," he said, "but I let him die. If you remain alive, I will not be able to fulfill my duty to Lord Tango and preserve my honor as a samurai. And so you yourself must die at once."

Katsutarō, with true samurai spirit, showed not the slightest hesitation. He turned back, dove into the seething waves, and was never seen again. For some time, Shikibu stood by the river and contemplated the way of the world.

"Truly, nothing is so heartbreaking as fulfilling the claims of duty. There were any number of men Tango could have chosen to look after his son. Just because he asked me, just because of my few

words of agreement, I was bound to live up to his trust and see my only son, who had already safely crossed the mighty river, drown in front of my eyes. What a bitter place this world is! Tango has other sons, and they will help him forget his grief. But I have been parted from my only son, and now I have no pleasure or hopes to look forward to in my old age. His mother's grief will be boundless. It breaks my heart to think of this cruel and untimely parting. I too would like to die here, but it would be a terrible thing if I disobeyed my lord's orders to accompany his son."

And so Shikibu devoted himself to his responsibilities, showing nothing of his emotions, but in his heart he was painfully aware of the transience of human existence. After safely bringing the young master back to the castle in good health, Shikibu pleaded illness and confined himself to his quarters. A short time afterward, his request for termination of his services was granted, and he left Itami. Near Kiyomizu, deep in the mountains of Harima, he and his wife turned their backs on the world and devoted themselves to the Way of the Buddha.

Until that time, no one really knew what had happened at the river, but when Tango learned the details of Katsutarō's death, he was deeply moved by Shikibu's resolve. Tango also asked that his service be terminated and entered the religious life. His wife and children put on the black robes as well, and they followed Shikibu to the mountains. There they were awakened from their dreamlike existence in this world of suffering by the sound of the wind sighing in the pines. The tears that they shed together for their sons took the place of the ritual offering of water. Joined by destiny in a most mysterious fashion, Tango and Shikibu worked together toward enlightenment. Like the moon disappearing behind the edge of the mountain,<sup>147</sup> their pure and bright hearts joined in a unique friendship, and they aspired to be born together in paradise. Thus the months and the years passed as they performed their religious austerities.



Katsutarō (*left*) and Tanzaburō (*right*), each on horseback and each assisted by five male carriers and a footman in the back carrying a covered spear, cross the rough waves of the Ōi River. From the 1688 edition. (From SNKBZ 69, *Ihara Saikaku shū* 4, by permission of Shōgakukan)

These people are now gone and nothing of them remains in this world. And those who lingered in this world to tell their tale have also vanished into the great beyond.

[*Ihara Saikaku shū* 4, SNKBZ 69: 340–344, adapted from the translation by Ann Callahan in *Tales of Samurai Honor*, pp. 45–48]

### ***JAPAN'S ETERNAL STOREHOUSE (NIPPON EITAIGURA, 1688)***

In the 1660s, a national network of transportation and communication was formed, and the economy in the Kyoto-Osaka area grew quickly. At the same time, a new type of merchant, who made his fortune in the new currency-based capitalist economy in which capital was invested and circulated, came to the fore, replacing those who had made their fortunes earlier in the century through monopolistic privileges and special connections to domain lords. These enterprising merchants were active not only in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka but also in the smaller cities and in farm villages in the provinces, where they accumulated wealth that far exceeded that held by the samurai. The first of Saikaku's so-called chōnin narratives, *Japan's Eternal Storehouse*, published in 1688, suggests the techniques for achieving wealth in this new economy. The subtitle of *Japan's Eternal Storehouse* is *Fortune, Gospel of the New Millionaire (Daifuku shin chōja kyō)*, indicating that

it is a sequel to *Gospel of the Millionaire* (*Chōjakyō*), a short book published in 1627 describing how three merchants had become millionaires. The word “millionaire” (*chōja*) meant a self-made man, but the term “eternal generations” (*eitai*) also suggests that the objective was to establish a prosperous family line. The book is a “storehouse” (*kura*) of such models.

The virtues that Saikaku advocates here are ingenuity (*saikaku*), thrift, diligence, and honesty. The word *saikaku* (written differently from Saikaku’s name, although he may have chosen his pen name for this association) implies cleverness and quickness of mind, as exemplified in the first selection, “In the Past, on Credit, Now Cash Down” (1:4), in which the draper Mitsui Kurōemon sells goods for cash, eliminating the cost of the usual credit sales. He has each of his clerks specialize in a different cloth and divides the store into departments, thereby inventing the notion of the department store. Mitsui Kurōemon’s real name was Mitsui Hachirōemon, who opened the Echigoya store in 1683, beginning what became the Mitsukoshi Department Store chain.

*Japan’s Eternal Storehouse* is, however, ultimately a contradictory text. The book begins by purporting to reveal the means of amassing a fortune in the new economy, but in the end, Saikaku shows how difficult it is to achieve that objective and even questions its validity as a goal for urban commoners. Many of the stories, in fact, criticize the worship of money and advocate an honest, frugal, and steady lifestyle. Even though only a few people could make a fortune, all merchants could benefit from the virtue of thrift, which Saikaku ends up making one of his central themes. The most famous example is Fuji-ichi in “The Foremost Lodger in the Land” (2:1). Even if one can make a large profit, if it is by dishonest means, it is better to be poor, as demonstrated by “All Goodness Gone from Tea” (4:4). Saikaku also emphasizes diligence and steady work, which can help anyone, rich or poor. There is a strong tendency to think of the Genroku *chōnin* as the pleasure-seeking, spendthrift consumers found in the drama and *ukiyo-zōshi* of the period, particularly Saikaku’s love tales, but the portrait that Saikaku draws here of the honest, steady, and frugal urban commoner is probably more appropriate. Saikaku even provides a number of stories about financial failures, anticipating his more pessimistic view of commoner economic life in *Worldly Mental Calculations*.

*Japan’s Eternal Storehouse* was written as much to entertain as to teach. If Saikaku had simply shown examples of those who had succeeded in accumulating a fortune, he would not have been able to attract the interest of his urban commoner readers. Instead, he placed at the center of *Eternal Storehouse* those who, having broken with normal standards of behavior, enjoyed great success or suffered disastrous failure. As with much of Saikaku’s fiction, the appeal of these stories frequently derives from the humorous twists that he gives to them. (For guidance on currency, see the front matter.)

## In the Past, on Credit, Now Cash Down (1:4)