

## Literature and Linguistics

### ON THE CHINESE CONCEPT OF “WILD WORDS AND FANCY LANGUAGE” AND ITS INTERPRETATION IN JAPAN

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*The Japanese concept of the term “kyōgen kigo” or “kyōgen kigyo” (狂言綺語), which in English means “wild words and fancy language”, has influenced Japanese literary thought to a considerable degree. The originally Buddhist term that became popular in China and then in Japan was coined by the Tang dynasty’s poet Bai Juyi, who first spoke disapprovingly and then contemptuously about novels or any kind of fiction from both the Buddhist and the Confucian standpoints. This article is a discussion of the metamorphosis in the meaning of this term “kyōgen kigo” in Japan.*

*By kyōgen kigo Bai Juyi meant to criticize secular poetry, particularly for its unforgivable vanity hidden beneath cascades of elaborate words. In Japan waka poetry remained untainted by such pretensions, and the effect of waka verses on its readers has been said to be similar to the effect that dhāraṇī, the mystic verses of India, have on their reader. However, in other Japanese literature, kyōgen kigo flourishes were abundant and expanded from literature to music and to the arts in general. In the course of time the conflict between the duties of Buddhism and the pleasure derived from art was transformed into a justification of the latter and even into promotion of art as a means to religious fulfilment. This paper follows the shift in the connotations of kyōgen kigo in Japan, as represented in Buddhist-influenced medieval literature that in spite of the religious moralizing also reflects kyōgen kigo flourishes.*

The original Chinese interpretation of the Buddhist concept of *kyōgen kigo* stresses the incompatibility between Buddhism and florid literature. In contrast, Japanese writers sought to justify flights of fancy; they even saw the possibility of such literature and art becoming a means of achieving salvation if their manifestations of *kyōgen kigo* were to glorify the Law of Buddha, for truth would always triumph over the manner of its presentation. This article will discuss the differences between the interpretation of “wild words and fancy language” in the context of Chinese and Japanese literary traditions.

#### **The “wild words and fancy language” content in Bai Juyi’s text**

Bai Juyi (白居易; 772–846) was the most prolific author in Tang dynasty China. He was extremely popular and his poems, which were transcribed, copied and recopied, were sold in market places and traded for wine or tea. His verses were inscribed on the walls of Daoist temples, shrines, post kiosks, schools, and guard posts; they were enjoyed by all, from

aristocrat to peasant. Bai Juyi's poetry was also widely read in the Korean kingdoms and in Japan. There is evidence that a Korean Prime Minister asked a trader going to China to purchase a collection of Bai Juyi's poetry. At that time the cost for such a volume was a hundred pieces of gold.

The works of Bai Juyi, whose adult name Letian (乐天) means optimist, reflect the spirit of his times. He was a sociable, talented statesman whose successful bureaucratic career came to an abrupt halt when he was accused of going beyond his duties because he had demanded an investigation of a widely discussed political assassination. He was banished to an insignificant post in the distant province of Jiangzhou. There, the disillusioned poet turned to Daoism and Buddhism for comfort. Buddhism was to become Bai Juyi's chief consolation in his later years when he fell seriously ill.

He settled in a scenic, hilly spot near Luoyang and began referring to himself as the "Hermit of Fragrant Mountain" (香山居士 *xiangshan jushi*) and took up practices of Buddhism at his residence instead of a temple. Here, at Fragrant Mountain, Bai Juyi wrote his memoirs, *Xiangshansi Baishi Luozhong jiji* (香山寺白氏洛中集记); they contained these famous lines, which were destined to influence both Chinese and Japanese literature:

愿以今世俗文学之业狂言绮语之误  
 为当来世世赞佛乘之因转法轮之缘  
 "I wish the sin of *wild words and fancy language*  
 Committed in this world by authors of profane literature  
 Would turn into hymns and psalms  
 Glorifying the Law of Buddha in the ages to come."<sup>1</sup>

By the term *kuangyan-qiyu* (狂言绮语), which has been variously translated into English, e.g., "wild words and fancy language", "floating phrases and fictive utterances", etc., Bai Juyi was referring to the writing of "poetry". Originally, this term expresses two Buddhist sins, and through this poem of Bai Juyi this term found its way to Japan. In Japanese, as has been mentioned, this term "wild words and fancy language" is called *kyōgen kigo*; however, please note that it can also mean "literary fiction".

According to Bai Juyi, authors who utilize *kyōgen kigo* in writing poetry are committing a sin, and as writing poetry was an obsession for him, he confesses to be also guilty of this sin. He repents and promises that instead of indulging in this sinful practice he will glorify Buddha in the ages to come.

This was not an easy decision for Bai Letian, who called himself "a demon of poetry" (诗魔 *shimo*). Both *shimo* and its antonym *shixian* (诗仙 immortal in poetry), the latter word also present in Bai Juyi's vocabulary, show his fluency in the Daoist terminology in addition to his

<sup>1</sup> All translations are the author's, unless otherwise noted.

knowledge of Buddhism. Further, the poet would not have been able to work successfully in the medieval world of China had he also not been familiar with the precepts of Confucianism, the main ideology of the Chinese bureaucracy.

It is of special note that in Bai Juyi’s declining years he gave preference to the values of Buddhism over other doctrines and even above poetry, his true vocation. While Bai Juyi never unconditionally denied the creative processes that elevated his work, he believed that literature can only be justified as expression of one’s vows or sacrifice to a higher truth and should not be a product of one’s literary ambitions.

### New readings of the old concept

Even in modern Japan, popular authors are sometimes described as “persons who make it their profession to play games with wild words and fancy language so as to deceive the reading public”. In ancient times it was believed that writers who inveigled their readers with beautiful lies tempted their own fate. Stories were told that Murasaki Shikibu (紫式部), the eleventh-century author of *The Tale of Genji* (源氏物語 *Genji Monogatari*), had to redeem her sins in hell, a destiny she also shared with her book’s principal character, the Shining prince Genji.

This belief was an outcome of a long-term commitment that prevailed in Japan to Bai Juyi’s idea of the danger of “floating phrases and fictive utterances”. The practice of *kangakue* (勧学会)<sup>2</sup>, reading sessions devoted to the Lotus Sūtra conducted in Japan from 964 to 1122 by the Tendai priests and poets, could also be considered an offspring of the general tendency to resolve the dilemma of the pleasures of literature and the serious duties of religion. Bai Juyi’s entire *kyōgen kigo* poem is found in the episode about *kangakue* in the eleventh-century’s story *Eiga monogatari* (栄花物語 *Tales of Glory*). Other contemporary novels, such as *Sagoromo monogatari* (狭衣物語), also quote this same Bai Juyi poem in full or in part.

However, not all of the interpretations were as faithful to the original meaning of Bai Juyi’s “wild words and fancy language”. *Ryōjinhishō* (梁塵秘抄 *Secret Selection of Dust on the Beams*), a compendium of Japanese popular songs (*imayō*) by the Priestly Retired Emperor Goshirakawa (後白河法皇 *Goshirakawa hōō*; 1127–1192), says:

“Make the error of wild words and fancy language  
A germ of a Buddhist psalm  
And the most violent words and everything you say  
Will come home to the highest justice.”

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<sup>2</sup> A fraternity called the *Kangakue* was dedicated to the study of Chinese poetry and Buddhism. A group of twenty courtiers and twenty Tendai monks agreed to meet twice yearly for one day at a temple at the eastern foot of Mt. Hiei, to listen to lectures on the Lotus Sūtra in the morning, to chant the name of Buddha Amitābha in the evening, and then to compose Chinese poetry on topics from the sūtra throughout the night until dawn the next morning.

The contradiction with the intent of Bai Juyi's poem is discernible but not yet quite so obvious as in the *Ryōjinhishō kudenshū* (梁塵秘抄口伝集), the instruction on the mysteries of the *Ryōjinhishō* text:

“The undertaking of worldly writings is turned into a germ of a Buddhist psalm, then why could it not become a glory of the Law of the Greater Vehicle? My brethren compose Chinese verses or recite native poems or draw paintings and leave them on paper not to decay forever. But sad as it is, the song ceases to be heard after we are gone. Now the time has come to hand down the secrets of folk songs (*imayō*) that have not yet existed in writing so that people might read them after we pass hence.”

Thus, these records of folk poetry, however exceptional the interest that Emperor Goshirakawa may have had in it, are supported by commentaries which appear slightly inadequate from the orthodox view of *kyōgen kigo*. Even so, it is a good example that shows that in Japan the concept of *kyōgen kigo* was applied not only to literature but also to other forms of art, such as singing, painting, etc.

Musician Koma no Chikazane (狛近真; 1177–1242) comments on *kyōgen kigo* in his *Kyōkunshō* (教訓抄 Instruction and Admonishments), the thirteenth-century treatise on Bugaku:

“They call it wild words and fancy language, but there is no better way of convincing people to accept the Three Treasures<sup>3</sup> of the Buddhist faith and tame fierce demons. The delight of wild words will stir people to seek the truth. The amusement of fancy language will assure that vulgar aspirations and worldly affections are forgotten, and that clouds of deep-rooted delusion will be dispelled forever.”

In the preface to *Shasekishū* (沙石集), this title literally meaning a *Collection of Sand and Pebbles*, compiled by the Zen monk Mujū (無住; 1226–1312), Mujū states his purpose:

“Through the wanton sport of wild words and specious phrases (*kyōgen kigo*), I wish to bring people to the marvelous Way of the Buddha's teaching; and with unpretentious examples taken from the ordinary affairs of life I should like to illustrate the profound significance of this splendid doctrine.”<sup>4</sup>

Here we have an excellent example of the *kyōgen kigo* concept as traditionally understood in Japan. Mujū believed that the divine truth can be perceived in tales telling of foolishness, failures and mistakes committed by menials, peasants or warriors. He further felt that colorful language often allows people to painlessly absorb lessons that they otherwise would not understand.

<sup>3</sup> Buddha, the sūtras, and the priesthood.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by Robert E. Morrell in Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*, 774. See also *Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*), trans. Robert E. Morrell, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Therefore, while Bai Juyi, a devout Chinese Buddhist, denounced “wild words and fancy language”, the Japanese literati held the belief that the flourishes of *kyōgen kigo*, though not in themselves of value, could lead the reader to higher truths, and this served as a justification for secular literature, even if these truths remained hidden to naked eye. A reflection of this idea can be seen in Shingon Buddhism, which places a particular reliance on art and accepts literature as a *hōben*, an expedient for gaining salvation.

### The Story of Murasaki Shikibu’s Sin, Punishment and Salvation

In Eleventh Century Japan it was gravely believed that the world had entered the Latter Days of the Law (末法 *mappō*) during which the precepts of Buddhism would fade and the ability of mankind to counter-respond would weaken. In this atmosphere of approaching gloom, Bai Juyi’s poetry became another source for the uncertainties of life, and thus the legend of Murasaki Shikibu’s posthumous ordeal was born.

To the devout Buddhist of the time, it was obvious that by writing Japan’s greatest work of literature Murasaki Shikibu could not help but use *kyōgen kigo* and that this use had led her into the realms of hell. The precise location of her posthumous whereabouts is indicated in Genshin’s *Ōjōyōshū* (往生要集 Essentials of Salvation), which states that those who transgress the interdiction of *kyōgen kigo* are condemned to the Great Inferno of Searing Heat (大焦熱地獄).

The Japanese tried to spare their most famous female writer from this infernal punishment, and they did it in a most literary way. A mission was formed to copy The Lotus Sūtra and offer other special prayers to release Murasaki Shikibu from her fate. This religious practice came to be known as *Genji kuyō* (源氏供養 A Memorial Service for Genji); later, such services were extended to include not only the author but also the readers of her novel who had enjoyed her fables and thus were guilty of an offense against Buddhist Law. The purification ceremonies were held at the imperial palace where prayers were offered and religious poems recited with the chapter titles from the *Genji monogatari* incorporated into the text.

In a curious lapse of logic, the Japanese finally came to believe that Murasaki Shikibu wrote *The Tale of Genji* in order to show the path to salvation and that she herself was an incarnation of Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. Murasaki Shikibu had not been only redeemed from the flames but was declared to be a Bodhisattva! This shows how great a transformation the *kyōgen kigo* concept of Bai Juyi had undergone in Japan.

Murasaki Shikibu and Genji were not chosen at random for literary purification rites. Most likely, Murasaki Shikibu was selected to represent all authors, for from medieval times she had become a symbol of all literary creators, just as her character, Prince Genji, had become a symbol of all other literary characters. Murasaki Shikibu was a court lady in Heian times and while we do not know what she looked like, it is very likely that she had long flowing black hair as contemporary court ladies did. Pictorially, a lady in need of redemption with long hair billowing in the infernal flames would make an excellent subject. Also, her creation Genji,

who possessed divine beauty, often erred and was righteously punished for his transgressions, but his charm and charisma could not help but guarantee him the glory of salvation. Thus the redeeming of both Murasaki Shikibu and Prince Genji can be looked upon as providing a happier ending to *The Tale of Genji*, a sort of Buddhist seal of approval concocted by the novel's medieval fans.

*The Tale of Genji* has had many variations. One example is *Yōhen Genji monogatari* (窯変源氏物語 The Transformed Tale of Genji), a modern translation of *The Tale of Genji* by Hashimoto Osamu (橋本治). Consisting of fourteen books, it is famed for its visual depictions and is a confession-like account of the tale from Genji's point of view. Actually, the complete edition includes two additional volumes of concluding commentaries titled *Genji kuyō*.

### Other Genji kuyō examples

*Ima monogatari* (今物語) by Fujiwara no Nobuzane (藤原信実; 1176–circa 1265) describes the events leading up to a memorial service for Genji. Murasaki Shikibu appears in “someone's” dream and confesses that her tendency to tell falsehood led her to hell where she will have to suffer until “Namu Amida Butsu” is intoned together with the chapter titles of *The Tale of Genji*.

The “someone” whose sleep Murasaki Shikibu disturbed is believed to be Bifukumon'in Kaga (美福門院; 1117–1160), the wife of the celebrated Fujiwara no Shunzei (藤原俊成; 1114–1204) and the grandmother of Fujiwara no Nobuzane, who recorded the details of this incident. She was an avid reader of Shikibu's novel, and her son Fujiwara no Teika (藤原定家; 1162–1241), author of numerous poems and works on the theory of poetry, copied all the fifty-four chapters of the *Genji monogatari*. Tradition has it that Bifukumon'in Kaga was the first person to offer prayers on behalf of Murasaki Shikibu; she also is thought to have sponsored the twelfth-century *Genji ipponkyō* (源氏一品経), composed by the Buddhist prelate Chōken (澄憲; 1126–1203) on the occasion of a memorial service for Murasaki Shikibu and Genji<sup>5</sup>.

One of the most famous works meant to purge Murasaki Shikibu is *Genji hyōbyaku* (源氏表白 Confession of Genji) written by a monk called Seikaku, or Shōkaku (聖覚; 1167–1235), Chōken's son. It is composed from chapter titles of the *Genji monogatari* that are presented in a totally different light.

The anonymous Noh play *Genji kuyō* (源氏供養 Prayer Offering to Genji; A Memorial Service for Genji) quotes directly from the *Genji hyōbyaku*, although the titles of only twenty-six chapters are mentioned, whereas in the *Genji hyōbyaku* all chapter titles are contained. In this play *Genji kuyō*, Lady Murasaki appears in the guise of a peasant woman to a pilgrim

<sup>5</sup> The identity of the sponsor was questioned by Michael Jamentz, Ritsumeikan University, in the paper “On the Sponsorship of the *Genji ipponkyō hyōbyaku*”, Asian Studies Conference Japan, 2002.

monk<sup>6</sup> on his way to Ishiyamadera. She tells the monk that she wrote her *Genji monogatari* at the temple of Ishiyama (legends have Ishiyamadera as the actual place) but repents that she let her main character – Genji – disappear from her tale without a memorial service and appeals for prayers not only for Genji’s soul but for her soul as well before wandering off.

The forty-first chapter of the novel is the last chapter in which Genji appears. There is an eight-year gap between Chapter Forty-One “The Wizard” (幻 *Maboroshi*) and Chapter Forty-Two “His Perfumed Highness” (匂兵部卿 *Niuhyōbukyō*) with a short phrase “hidden by clouds (雲隠 *Kumogakure*)” in between. Murasaki Shikibu’s authorship of this phrase is a subject of continuing speculation. This gap indicates that Murasaki Shikibu resumed her story without describing the last years of Genji as a monk nor gave any details of the purification rites performed on his death. Though mention of any memorial service conducted for Genji is missing from her novel, from medieval times it has been depicted on the Noh stage.

In the second part of this *Genji kuyō* play, Murasaki Shikibu again appears at night before the pilgrim monk, but this time in her true form as a Heian court lady; she repeats her plea for prayers. After a prayer service is conducted for her, she thanks the holy man by performing a dance (a customary scene in Noh plays). The monk concludes that Murasaki Shikibu is the incarnation of the Goddess of Mercy, whose image is worshiped at Ishiyamadera.

The final prayer of the Noh play *Genji kuyō* is written in a long-type form of poetry which interweaves the chapter titles of the *Genji monogatari* in a manner similar to that of *Genji hyōbyaku*. It contains heavy Buddhist overtones but has little in common with the content and characters of *The Tale of Genji*.

To give an instance, in a scene from *The Tale of Genji* known as The Rainy Night Judgment (雨夜の品定め *amayo no shinasadame*) from the chapter called “The Broom Tree” (帚木 *Hahakigi*), the author relates how some noble gentlemen have gathered to discuss different types of women they have known and then compare their merits. The original episode ends with the words: “The talk went on and came to no conclusion, and as the rainy night gave way to dawn the stories became more and more improbable.”<sup>7</sup> But in the *Genji hyōbyaku*, a different finale is given for the same episode; it reads: “The evening smoke in the Paulownia Court quickly reached the sky of Buddhist Laws. The evening conversation of the Broom Tree finally blossomed into a flower of enlightenment...” (花を開かん).

Further, the text of the *Genji kuyō* is exactly the same as for the *Genji hyōbyaku* except for one intended or unintended change, which reads: “The evening smoke in the Paulownia Court quickly reached the sky of Buddhist Laws. The evening conversation of the Broom Tree blossomed into a flower which finally fell in enlightenment...” (花散りぬ).

<sup>6</sup> The monk is named Chief Priest of Agoi (安居院の法印) in the play. In fact, Seikaku, the author of *Genji hyōbyaku*, together with his father Chōken, established Agoi, or Agui, a kind of dormitory that belonged to Mt. Hiei complex of Buddhist temples. The two became known as standardbearers of the celebrated preaching tradition of Agui, and the texts they used had literary quality.

<sup>7</sup> Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker, 2 vols., Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1990, 1:38.

The discrepancies in the two texts do not change the general flavour. First, the conversation of gentlemen is raised to the heights of “enlightenment”. Second, the Japanese mythical “Broom Tree” (Hahakigi) in the province of Shinano, which disappears or changes shape when one approaches and symbolizes false love, functions here as a Buddhist medium, although it has no such Buddhist connection in either the myth or in the text of *The Tale of Genji*.

The Japanese tried to reconcile the disapproving Buddhist attitude towards wild words and fancy language with literary and artistic creativity. So, by rewriting passages to enhance Buddhist doctrine or, later in time, when staging the novel as a play, they would “uncover” new meanings never found in the original text.

Theatre is a form of art, and Noh drama is a product of playwright’s imagination, so that even if the text of a drama is full of Buddhist imagery and quotations from the sūtras, it nevertheless remains a work of belles-lettres. In other words, it is still a form of *kyōgen kigo* and, in the strict Chinese sense, it is something “sinful” to be avoided. Strict Buddhist belief would require that writers lay down their pens so as to avoid creating “clouds of deep-rooted delusion”, but in practice this never happens because true authors have an inner compulsion to write.

Ironically, in this Noh play, Murasaki Shikibu shows her thanks to the monk for his redeeming prayers by performing a dance for him. This she should not have done, for dance is another form of art that Buddhist precepts say should be avoided, as it is considered to be an obstacle on the path to enlightenment.

### **The resolution of Buddhism with Confucianism and Shintō practice**

Why, then, did the Chinese look upon *kyōgen kigo* as a sin, whereas the Japanese saw in it a possibility to express their faith?

Although the poem of Bai Juyi, which speaks out against wild words and fancy language, is based on Buddhist precepts, it also reflects Confucian taste. It was only natural that a Chinese poet like Bai Juyi would condemn the use of flights of fancy when writing, as he was reared in a country where the laconic and concise statements of *The Analects* of Confucius were long revered as the ideal method of expression.

*Wen* (文), a character for “literature”, originally meant “tattoo” and “ornament” (with all of its flamboyance), but the definition gradually narrowed to mean “literature”; it expressed a Confucian outlook and had an educative impact that served to strengthen Confucian morality. Although works of belles-lettres were also being written, only the texts reflecting Confucian ideals were normally credited with the name of *wen*.

In China, “fictive utterances and absurd words” would seem a suitable epithet only for Zhuangzi’s allegories and paradoxes, i.e. Daoist texts, which emphasize the individuality of a human being, free to express himself and free to indulge in fanciful imagery. *Kyōgen kigo* is a behavior that runs counter to Confucian political correctness and it stands out against the Confucian principle of *zhengming*, the “rectification of names”, i.e. if names are not correct, words will be misused, and when words are misused, nothing can be on a sound footing.



Meanwhile in Japan, authors began to associate their native *waka* poetry with the “Buddhist way” (Fujiwara no Shunzei in *Korai fūteishō* 古来風躰抄 “Excerpts from the Poetic Body from the Past to the Present Time”). An example is the legendary Japanese poet Saigyō (西行; 1118–1190), who was born to a warrior clan and named Satō Norikiyo. He studied the martial arts and was taken into court service but suddenly, at the age of twenty-three, his Buddhist fervor became so strong that he left his family, renounced the secular world, and took the Buddhist name Saigyō, “Western Journey” (in the direction of the Pure Land). Why then would this famed poet, having become such a devout Buddhist, dedicate some of his poems to the Ise Shrine, a Shintō site of worship in the east of Japan?

The explanation is found in the combinatory Shintō-Buddhist tradition known as *honji suijaku* (本地垂迹 original and their traces, or Buddhist origin and Shintō manifestation) which enables the Japanese to regard their native Shintō deities as the avatars of the Buddhist divinities. Thus, if buddhas and bodhisattvas are said to enjoy the mystical effects of the dhāraṇī verses which the Japanese chanted in Sanskrit (although rarely aware of their meaning), then it seemed natural that their native Shintō *kami* would similarly take delight in their native *waka* verses.

Further, the Zen Teacher Mujū, who came to believe that the Shintō gods play an intermediary role in bringing the Japanese to Buddhism, wrote: “Had Buddha appeared in Japan, he would have used *waka* for his mystic verses”. Therefore, *waka* poetry, which puts an enormous emphasis on the levels of a word, its sound and its nearly mystical associations, was equated to having the same efficacy of the dhāraṇī chants.

Despite the disapproval of many Buddhists, Saigyō never stopped writing poetry and his literary pursuits took precedence over his religion.

### The wonder of artistry

In *Heike monogatari* we find an example how great a transformation the concept of *kyōgen kigo* had undergone in Japan. In the chapter called “The Death of Atsumori” an old warrior Kumagai Naozane (熊谷直実; 1141–1208) kills a young warrior and powerful nobleman Taira no Atsumori (平敦盛; 1169–1184) in a battle, only to discover that his victim carried a flute with him. This flute is called “Saeda” (小枝 little branch) and Kumagai is deeply moved by the fact that his enemy played this instrument and even brought it with him into battle. To repent for this death, Kumagai becomes a monk. The story concludes with a moral: “Even in the most droll and flippant farce, there is the germ of a Buddhist Psalm.” By “droll and flippant farce” the author meant the use of *kyōgen kigo* in his story and in art in general, but this time it was employed for Buddhist edification.

The Noh drama *Atsumori* (敦盛) by Zeami (世阿弥; 1363?–1443?) is based on this *Heike monogatari* story. In his grief Kumagai becomes a priest, Rensei, who prays for the repose of Atsumori’s soul. He encounters the ghost of Atsumori, disguised as a reaper. After a chanted narrative, which gives the audience details of the battle in which Atsumori perished,

Atsumori's ghost is initially hostile towards his slayer but his anger finally subsides and he asks Rensei to pray for him.

The Buddhist sentiment plays an important part in this *Heike monogatari* chapter and its subsequent dramatization *Atsumori*, but as both are literary creations no Buddhist rigidity is encountered. Moreover, each author appears to enjoy the emotional drama of the situation. The main idea in both creations is that a simple musical instrument – a flute – turns a slayer towards the path of truth, and each is a fine example of the Japanese use of *kyōgen kigo* for an edifying Buddhist end.

Shikitei Sanba (式亭三馬; 1776–1822), a popular writer of Tokugawa era, was a clever entrepreneur who ran a bookshop that he later turned into a pharmacy. To popularize his 'Sanba' trademark, he applied it to lanterns, lotion labels, shop curtains, and even to his novels. Finally, Sanba combined literature and business, the two interests of his life, and published a collection of contemporary ads, naming it *Kyōgenkigyo* (狂言綺語; 1804), an appropriate appellation for such a vain project.

From that time onwards *kyōgen kigo* began to lose its literary association in Japan and came to more often mean "eccentricity" and "comicality". Also of note, the Japanese word "kyōgen", the generic name for a classic farce, is thought to have derived from the same Bai Juyi poem about "floating words and fancy language," giving yet another example of the metamorphosis of a Chinese term into a Japanese word with an entirely different meaning.

## Conclusion

The famed Chinese Tang dynasty poet Bai Juyi, a devout Buddhist, coined the term "wild words and fancy language" to disparage the creation of literature, which he considered sinful as it interferes with the study of Buddhism. On reaching Japan, however, the term *kyōgen kigo*, as it is pronounced in Japanese, underwent a metamorphosis, for it was argued that literature, if properly written, was not an offence but rather a blessing, for it would attract the reader and lead him to the path of Buddhism.

This belief took root and ultimately led to the development of quasi-Buddhist literature during Japan's medieval period. Later, during Japan's Tokugawa period, the term *kyōgen kigo* lost its Buddhist connection whatsoever. Although the current Japanese meaning of *kyōgen kigo* is far removed from the original intent of Bai Juyi, it is inevitable that the meanings of many words change over the passage of time. This shift in the connotations of the term *kyōgen kigo* also demonstrates the Japanese flexibility in accommodating foreign concepts and adapting them to become an integral part of their traditional culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Joseph A. Grace who read the draft of this paper and provided useful comments.

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## „KLIEDESIŲ IR GRAŽBYLIAVIMO“ SAMPRATA IR JOS INTERPRETACIJA JAPONIJOJE

Dalia Švambarytė

S a n t r a u k a

Vienas garsiausių Kinijos poetų Bai Juyi (772–846), laikydamasis budizmo nuostatų, vėlyvojo laikotarpio kūryboje išskėlė mintį apie „kliedesių ir gražbyliavimo“ (*kyōgen kigo*), kurių tipiška forma esanti poezija, ydingumą. Bai Juyi eilėraštis buvo išverstas į japonų kalbą ir padarė didelę įtaką japonų požiūriui į religijos ir literatūros santykį. Pastaroji buvo laikoma tuštybe, verčiančia žmones daryti klaidas, ir atpirkimo reikalinga nuodėme. Intriga buvo sukurta legendomis apie „kliedesių ir gražbyliavimo“ meistrės, garsiausios X–XI amžiaus sandūros japonų prozininkės Murasaki Shikibu likimą. Ilgainiui Japonijoje į *kyōgen kigo* sąrašą buvo įtraukta ne tik literatūra, bet ir kiti menai. Tačiau japonams, negalėjusiems užgniaužti kūrybinio įkvėpimo ir nuo seno linkusiems išvelgti magiškos galios aurą virš poetinio žodžio, pavyko performuluoti pirminę kinišką „kliedesių ir gražbyliavimo“ idėją. Iš esmės ji virto savo pačios priešybe, nors išlaikė terminą, nuorodas į budizmą ir Bai Juyi autorystę. Bai Juyi eilėraštis, užuot tapęs grėsmingu perspėjimu, japonų menininkams virto savotiška indulgencija, nes leido įtikėti, kad kiekvienas kūrinyje galų gale tampa potencialiu Budos šlovinimo įrankiu. Ši mintis straipsnyje grindžiama citatomis iš japonų viduramžių literatūros kūrinių – No teatro pjesių, budistinių novelių ir poezijos rinktinių, karinių epopėjų. Taip pat aptariama konfucianizmo ir šintoizmo įtaka atitinkamai kiniškajai ir japoniškajai „kliedesių ir gražbyliavimo“ versijai, daromos išvados apie asimiliuojantį japonų kultūros pobūdį.

Received 10 May 2004