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Поэзия Фудзивара Сэйка на литературном китайском языке и его место в истории литературы на *камбуне* раннего нового времени

М.В. Сковоронских

Аннотация. Исследователи часто обращаются к фигуре Фудзивара Сэйка (藤原惺窩, 1561–1619) как одного из основателей неоконфуцианской традиции в Японии. Однако его объёмное литературное наследие, включающее в себя тексты как на литературном китайском (яп. 漢文 *камбун*), так и на собственно японском языке, остаётся практически не изученным. Как и большинство его образованных современников, Сэйка прекрасно владел камбуном и оставил значительное количество стихотворений на этом языке (яп. 漢詩 *канси*), но те немногие учёные, которые высказывались по поводу этих работ, сходятся в довольно критической оценке его литературных способностей. Согласно их мнению, канси Фудзивара Сэйка страдают от ряда серьёзных изъянов, таких как отсутствие оригинальности и вторичность в языке, обезличенный тон и неумение успешно работать с японским поэтическим материалом.

Это исследование обращается к выборке канси Фудзивара Сэйка и ставит под сомнение подобные оценки. Оно начинается с разбора мнения учёных относительно поэзии Сэйка, переходит к изучению поэтических особенностей его канси, уделяя особое внимание их языку, тону и использованию японского поэтического материала, и в заключение кратко раскрывает суть того идеала, который Сэйка называл «живой поэзией» (яп. 活句 *какку*). Исследование доказывает, что этот далеко не «плохой» поэт был способен создавать необычные и личные стихи с эклектичным содержанием на том этапе развития литературы на камбуне, который нередко ассоциируют с безыскусностью, литературной имитацией, и раболепием перед китайской традицией. Таким образом, оно ставит под сомнение укоренившиеся в научных кругах представления о месте Фудзивара Сэйка (а также и других поэтов начала эпохи Токугава) в истории японской литературы и подчёркивает важность изучения корпуса текстов на камбуне на уровне, не уступающем ожидаемому от исследований японоязычного канона.

***Ключевые слова*:** Фудзивара Сэйка, *канси*, *камбун*, литература на *камбуне*, японская литература.

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The Sinitic poetry of Fujiwara Seika and his place in the history of early modern *kanbun* literature

M.V. Skovoronskikh

Abstract. Fujiwara Seika (藤原惺窩, 1561–1619) has often attracted scholarly attention as one of the founders of Neo-Confucianism in Japan. Yet his substantial literary oeuvre, which includes works in both literary Sinitic (Jp. *kanbun* 漢文) and Japanese, remains largely unexplored. Just like most of his educated contemporaries, Seika was well-versed in *kanbun* composition and left us with a considerable number of Sinitic poems (Jp. 漢詩 *kanshi*), but the few modern scholars who have commented on his verse have been quite critical in their evaluation of his poetic prowess. According to such scholars, Seika's *kanshi* suffer from several serious defects, including a derivative and uninventive diction, a lack of individuality, and an inability to fruitfully engage with indigenous poetic material.

This study turns to a selection of Fujiwara Seika's Sinitic poems to cast doubt on such claims. It begins by surveying scholarly opinion on Seika's verse, proceeds to analyze his *kanshi* poetics by focusing on diction, tone, and the use of Japanese poetic material, and concludes with a brief discussion of Seika's ideal of "living verse" (Jp. 活句 *kakku*). The study argues that, far from being a "bad" poet, Seika was capable of producing innovative, personal, and eclectic verse at a stage in the development of *kanbun* literature often described as one of blandness, literary mimicry, and slavish imitation of Chinese precedent. In so doing, this study challenges conventional scholarly narratives of Fujiwara Seika's—and, by extension, other early Tokugawa poets'—place in the history of Japanese *belles-lettres* and points to the importance of treating the *kanbun* corpus as an academic subject no less serious than the vernacular tradition.

***Keywords*:** Fujiwara Seika, *kanshi*, *kanbun*, Sinitic literature, Japanese literature.

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Introduction

The name of Fujiwara Seika (藤原惺窩, 1561–1619) continues to loom large in the study of Tokugawa intellectual history. His contemporaries and later scholars considered Seika to be the founding father of Neo-Confucianism on the archipelago and credited him with rejuvenating the all-but-moribund tradition of Chinese learning in Japan. Modern scholarship has questioned and modified some of these assumptions, yet Seika's role as an important propagator of Song (宋) and Ming (明) Confucianism in the early decades of the Tokugawa period is still recognized and appreciated.

It is not surprising, then, that most scholars, preoccupied as they are with questions of intellectual history, only treat Seika as a "thinker" or "ideologue." For example, Iguchi Atsushi

(猪口篤志） and Matano Taro's (俣野太郎) volume *Fujiwara Seika, Matsunaga Sekigo* (藤原惺窩・松永尺五) inaugurates a series entitled "Japanese Thinkers" (Jp. *Nihon no shisōka* 日本の思想家) [Iguchi & Matano 1982]. Ōta Seikyū's (太田青丘）biography of Seika casts him in a similar light [Ōta 1985].[1] Herman Ooms's *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs* and W.J. Boot's "The Adoption and Adaptation of Neo-Confucianism in Japan: The Role of Fujiwara Seika and Hayashi Razan" are arguably the most important English-language works dealing with Seika, and they, too, are concerned solely with his thought [Ooms 1985; Boot 1983].[2]

Yet to treat early modern figures such as Seika—or, for that matter, Hayashi Razan (林羅山, 1583–1657)—exclusively as "thinkers" or "scholars" is to run the risk of veering into anachronistic interpretations. After all, adherents of Confucianism at the time would have hardly subsumed themselves under such appellations. For most of them, thought and inquiry, teaching and writing, as well as spiritual and meditative exercises were all facets of a single, indivisible practice of the Way—an understanding that began to gain currency in Anglophone academe just a few decades ago. Therefore, it may be fruitful to forgo the discussion of Seika as a thinker for a moment and turn to another facet of his practice of the Way, namely his literary pursuits.

This study is conceived as a first step in this direction. Below I intend to focus on Seika's poetry written in literary Sinitic (Jp. *kanshi* 漢詩) and correct several preconceptions that seem to have become entrenched in English-language scholarship on Seika. I will begin by surveying scholarly opinion on the matter and proceed to pointing out its inconsistencies. I will then propose a new analysis of Seika's *kanshi*, prompting a reevaluation of his place in the canon, and conclude by elucidating Seika's own theory of poetic composition.

Fujiwara Seika and *kanbungaku* (漢文学) scholarship

Among Anglophone scholars of Japanese literature, Burton Watson was one of the first to pay sustained attention to *kanshi*. His greatest contributions to the field are a series of translations of Sinitic poetry covering an expansive period from the earliest times until the end of the nineteenth century.[3] Watson is also responsible for introducing his readers to a periodization scheme of *kanshi* development in the Tokugawa period, which is roughly based on the findings of Japanese scholars, foremost among them being Matsushita Tadashi (松下忠). In his discussion of Tokugawa *kanshi*, Watson notes that the first century of the period produced few works of literary merit and was characterized by their authors' limited facility with literary Sinitic, primarily didactic concerns, and a lack of individuality and distinctively Japanese sensibilities [Watson 1968, pp. 5–6]. It appears that this characterization of early-Tokugawa *kanshi* has become entrenched in English-language

[1] Both works are largely based on Razan's *Seika sensei gyōjō* (惺窩先生行状). While the former is a quintessential biography, the latter includes a brief appendix dealing analytically with Seika's thought and literary heritage.

[2] Ooms's work is largely consistent with the primary concerns of the "Chicago school," a scholarly approach developed by Chicago University scholars and largely based on Neo-Marxist analysis. Boot's dissertation is a masterful study, which has been revised several times by its author. It is most valuable because of its rich selection of sources.

[3] The following translations by Watson should be mentioned: *Japanese Literature in Chinese: Poetry and Prose in Chinese by Japanese Writers of the Later Period*, *Grass Hill: Poems and Prose by the Japanese Monk Gensei*, *Kanshi: The Poetry of Ishikawa Jōzan and Other Edo-Period Poets* [Watson 1975; 1983; 1990]. Watson's theoretical positions can be gleaned from his prefaces to these works as well as from his "Some Remarks on the *kanshi*" in *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* [Watson 1968].

scholarship and accepted by Judith Rabinovitch, another leading specialist on Sinitic poetry in Japan.

Rabinovitch, writing together with her husband-*cum*-sinologist Timothy Bradstock, has significantly advanced the study of *kanshi* in the English-speaking world. Her works include a representative anthology of translations of Tokugawa-period Sinitic poems and a volume dedicated to translation and analysis of a vast collection of *kanshi* inscribed on *tanzaku* (短冊) paper slips [Bradstock & Rabinovitch 1997; 2002]. Rabinovitch adopts a periodization scheme that is largely similar to Whatson's, albeit somewhat more nuanced (summarized in Table 1).

Table 1. The development of Sinitic poetry in the Tokugawa period[4]

Stage	Dates	Major features	Representative poets
First	ca. 1600–1700	– breaks no new ground – derivative, overburdened by references and allusions to Chinese lore – fails to reflect the individuality and times of the poets, not "distinctively Japanese"	Fujiwara Seika and other Confucian scholars
Second	ca. 1700–1760	– emulation of high Tang masters, subscription to *kakuchō* (格調) formalism – rejection of late Tang and Song styles and the idea of "content over form" – often lacks "immediacy, emotional honesty, and a distinctively Japanese aesthetic character"	Ogyū Sorai (荻生徂徠), Hattori Nankaku (服部南郭), Gion Nankai (祇園南海), Dazai Shundai (太宰春台), etc.
Third	ca. 1750–1800	– decline of *kakuchō* formalism, aesthetic distancing from Chinese tradition – expanding the social background of poets and repertoire of acceptable topics – emergence of *seirei* (性霊) spiritualism	Yamamoto Hokuzan (山本北山), Rikunyo (六如), Kan Sazan (菅茶山), Ichikawa Kansai (市河寛斎), Ōkubo Shibutsu (大窪詩仏), etc.
Fourth	ca. 1800–1868	– experimentation, further broadening of topical repertoire, decided "Japanization" of aesthetics – politicization of *kanshi* and poetic nationalism	Rai San'yō (頼山陽), Yanagawa Seigan (梁川星巌), Hirose Tansō (広瀬淡窓), etc.

It is clear that Watson and Rabinovitch share a dim view of *kanshi* produced in the first century of Tokugawa rule. Essentially, both believe them to suffer from three major defects: (a) a derivative and uninventive diction so peppered with allusions to Chinese lore as to border on

[4] Based on Bradstock & Rabinovitch 1997, pp. 16–39. The poets' dates have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

Chinoiserie, (b) a pronounced lack of individuality, and (c) failure to use the medium of *kanshi* to represent distinctively Japanese subject matter. It is these charges that Rabinovitch's *Anthology of Kanshi by Japanese Poets of the Edo Period* brings against Fujiwara Seika while admitting that his poetry has "an appeal of its own" [Bradstock & Rabinovitch 1997, p. 44]. Her volume opens with five quatrains by Seika, which, judging by the notes, seem to have been selected from the NKBT annotated edition *Gozan bungaku shū, Edo kanshi shū* (五山文学集・江戸漢詩集) [Yamagishi 1966, pp. 169–171].[5]

Donald Keene's earlier evaluation of Seika's *kanshi* is even less magnanimous. In *World Within Walls*, he writes:

> Seika's reputation as a poet is dismal. No one has much praise for the many poems he dutifully wrote as a good Confucianist. … Seika and his many spiritual descendants found it far more congenial to write poetry of this impersonal variety than to follow the injunctions of the *Kokinshū* and base their poetry on their emotions [Keene 1976, pp. 537–538].

Keene's position echoes that of Watson and Rabinovitch. On closer inspection, it, too, appears to owe much to Japanese scholarship, particularly Matsushita Tadashi's *Edo jidai no shifū shiron* (江戸時代の詩風詩論) [Matsushita 1969]. I argue, however, that reliance on a very limited number of primary sources and uncritical acceptance of secondary scholarship by Watson, Rabinovitch, and Keene has resulted in a distorted view of Seika's *kanshi* poetics. Below I will demonstrate that it can hardly be said to suffer from the three defects mentioned earlier. I will begin, however, by challenging Keene's conclusion that Seika's reputation as a poet was "dismal" by turning to early modern evaluations of his oeuvre.

One of the most laudatory references to Seika's literary work is found in a preface to *Seika sensei bunshū* (惺窩先生文集) by Retired Emperor Go-Mizunoo (後水尾, 1596–1680).[6] It is not at all surprising to see such paeans in prefaces written in accordance with Chinese literary convention, but it is still meaningful since at the time no praise could surpass that of the sovereign:

> I happened to request this collection and, when I saw it, forgot of food and sleep. With it, I was able to purify my every thought and penetrate all moral principles. My sight and hearing achieved clarity, and my very soul was cleansed. Like a dragon guarding a precious gem and unwilling to release it, I "cleaved to it in moments of haste and in seasons of danger" [*Seika sensei bunshū* 1969–1970 (hereafter abbreviated to "SSB"), p. 43].[7]

A more impartial description of Seika's poetic prowess can be found in the *Nihon shishi* (日本詩史), a history of Japanese *kanshi* by Emura Hokkai (江村北海, 1713–1788). Hokkai begins

[5] It is curious that Yamagishi, in another work entitled *Kinsei kanbungakushi*, opines that Seika's *kanshi* are "prosaic" and that there are "few of them worth examining" [Yamagishi 1987, p. 57].

[6] This collection was compiled by Reizei Tametsune (冷泉為経, 1654–1722), Seika's descendant, preface dated 1651. It was preceded by two less comprehensive collections edited by Razan and his son Gahō (鵞峰, 1618–1680), but it was Tametsune's work that received imperial patronage and was also sponsored by Tokugawa Mitsukuni (徳川光圀, 1628–1701). It was transcribed and collected as part of *Zokuzoku gunsho ruijū* (続々群書類従), and it is to this edition that I will refer throughout this study (consulting, whenever necessary, a manuscript copy held by Waseda University Library).

[7] The closing phrase is an allusion to the *Analects*, IV.5; my rendering is inspired by James Legge's.

by recognizing the superiority of Seika's Sinitic verse when compared with the older poetic tradition of the *gozan* (五山) monks:

> At that time, *gozan* poetry was still in its prime, and some of [its practitioners] were praised for their exceptional talent. Yet whenever they would meet Seika, they would be defeated, unable to resist him [Shimizu 1991, 84].

Having established Seika's position vis-à-vis the *gozan* tradition, Hokkai proceeds to emphasize his ingenuity in extemporaneous composition and his ability to impart deep meaning to even the most trivial verse:

> After Seika's conversion to Confucian learning, people were daunted by the fact that he was upright but at the same time managed to remain elegant and didn't abandon literary pursuits. Once during the blossom season he travelled to Ōhara and composed a poem while visiting Toyotomi Chōshō[shi].[8] … Since it is but a playful improvisation, its form and diction need not even be discussed. Yet its conceit and intricacies are enough to prove Seika's depth [Shimizu 1991, p. 85].

The above is sufficient to cast doubt on Keene's argument that Seika's poetic reputation was "dismal." However, another example may be in order here. It is an oft-quoted passage from *Gakumon genryū* (学問源流), a history of Japanese Confucian learning by Nawa Rodō (那波魯堂, 1727–1789), which states:

> Seika's learning was proper and vast. Yet, among his writings, there are many passages with unclear diction and meaning. In his verse (Jp. *shi* 詩), he relies on both Tang and Song poetry collections. In his prose (Jp. *bun* 文), he falls back on the Four and Eight Greats.[9] Still, his being an imperfect age, here and there he fails to avoid interference from Japanese (Jp. *waki washū* 和気和習) [Nawa 1799, p. 8b].

If cut off here, this passage does appear to proffer a rather unsavory evaluation of Seika's literary prowess. In fact, this is where both Ōta Seikyū and Nagaoka Mariko (長岡麻里子) close their quotations of *Gakumon genryū* [Ōta 1985, p. 171; Nagaoka 1979, p. 54]. However, I believe that a fuller quotation reveals the true import of Rodō's argument:

> Nonetheless, had he continued honing his learning gradually, he would have attained even to the purity of Zhou Dunyi, the Cheng brothers, Zhang Zai, and Zhu Xi.[10] It [i.e., his learning] is blameless in its entirety. As for the famous *kanshi* poets of Seika's time, Ishikawa Jōzan loved Seika's verse and studied poetry under him. He truly exerted his effort to the utmost, but, perhaps owing to the trends of the time, his poetry lacked loftiness and a harmonious diction. … Since even Jōzan was like this, one can know what the style of poetry was like at that time by extrapolation [Nawa 1799, pp. 8b–9a].

Here we learn that, far from being derogatory, Rodō's comments on Seika's poetry are, in fact, quite positive. After all, his verse is considered to be roughly on the same level as that of Ishikawa Jōzan (石川丈山, 1583–1672), the first "professional" *kanshi* poet of Japan admired by

[8] Chōshōshi (長嘯子) was Kinoshita Katsutoshi's (木下勝俊, 1569–1649) pseudonym.
[9] "The Four and Eight greats" refers to famous Tang (唐) and Song literati.
[10] The founding fathers of Neo-Confucianism.

none other than Burton Watson. In sum, the preceding discussion demonstrates that Keene's — and, by extension, Rabinovitch's — characterization of Seika as a poet is inconsistent with the opinion of leading early modern critics. It is, therefore, important to find out whether the accusations of derivativeness, impersonality, and a lack of a genuinely Japanese sensibility often levelled against Seika are in fact true.

Unconventional diction and personal tone in Seika's *kanshi*

When scholars of *kanshi* such as Watson and Rabinovitch speak of "derivative" or "conventional" language, they refer to large-scale borrowing and imitation of Chinese precedent characteristic of some Sinitic verse. Needless to say, the high Tang poets such as Li Bai (李白, 701–762) and Du Fu (杜甫, 712–770) continued to exert immense influence on Japanese *kanshi* writers throughout the Tokugawa period, and it is difficult to ascertain precisely where a line should be drawn between poetic inspiration and outright mimicry. One criterion does come to mind, however: it is a well-known fact that writers of regulated verse (or "new style poetry," Ch. *jintishi* 近体詩) strove to avoid the use of pronouns, auxiliary particles, and other function words in their poems, hoping to say as much as possible within the limited space of the most popular *jintishi* forms, the *jueju* (絶句) and the *lüshi* (律詩). However, Seika's verse, while almost entirely confined to the *jueju* and *lüshi* forms, appears to be relatively unincumbered by such considerations. In fact, my reading of *Seika sensei bunshū* suggests that he often favored the use of function words and pronouns, particularly 与, 又/亦, 哉, 此, 是, and even the highly unexpected and archaizing 兮. The example below demonstrates this quite aptly:

元旦試筆	**"First poem of the year written on New Year's day" (Gantan shihitsu) [SSB, p. 63]**
我性不関間与忙	By nature unaffected by leisure and business,
山林城市又何妨	In mountain groves or amidst city bustle, what is there to restrain me?
春来忽被風光触	With the coming of spring, suddenly spurred by its splendor,
作鳥歌兮作蝶狂	I sing like a bird and dance the mad dance of butterflies!

Function words are found in every line of the poem (including the passive marker 被 in line three); another curious feature of this quatrain is Seika's disregard for the conventional 2-2-3 caesura pattern in the last couplet.[11] This almost prosaic diction is atypical of regulated verse, but Seika uses it in a large number of his poems, and more examples of it can be observed below.

Another technique that is not at all common in the shorter regulated verse forms but which Seika appears to enjoy is repetition and alternation:

逢坂関	**"Ōsaka Barrier" (Ōsaka no seki) [SSB, p. 66]**
天下三関逢坂関	Ōsaka Barrier, one of the Three Barriers of the realm;
往還還往不曾閑	With all the coming and going, it's never seen a moment of peace.
蝉丸去後無人会	Yet, since Semimaro passed away, nobody there has been worth meeting.

[11] In septasyllabic *jueju* the first cesura usually falls between the first two and the middle two syllables, followed by a caesura between the middle two and the final three syllables.

依旧両山囲一湾　Only the two peaks embrace the bay, unchanged from ages past.

次韻紹意子　“With rhymes by Jōishi” (Jōishi ni jiin su) [SSB, p. 71][12]
喜見新功詩思情　I’m glad to witness your new achievement on the path of poetry.
知君勤学歴多程　I know that you’ve been studying hard for a very long time.
秋牕夜諷孤燈淡　On autumn nights, you recite verse by the window, lit by a lone faint lamp,
梧葉声兼書葉声　As the flutter of parasol tree leaves mixes with that of pages.

Repetition and alternation of identical syllables is the primary trope of “Ōsaka Barrier,” which is based on the story of the famous blind lute player and poet Semimaro (fl. early Heian, also Semimaru, 蝉丸). He is said to have resided nearby Ōsaka Barrier and composed the following *waka* [Mostow 1996, p. 171]:[13]

kore ya kono　So this it is! That
yuku mo kaeru mo　going, too, and coming, too,
wakaretsutsu　continually separating,
shiru mo shiranu mo　those known and those unknown,
Ōsaka no seki　meet at the Barrier of Ōsaka.

Seika’s “Ōsaka’s Barrier” is clearly intended as a playful reinterpretation of the syntax of Semimaro’s *waka* and exhibits, to borrow Rabinovitch’s words, “a distinctively Japanese sensibility” (more will be said about this in the following section). Its first couplet contains both repetition (関 … 関) and alternation (往還還往), which are difficult to convey in an English rendering. The same can be said about the concluding line of “With rhymes by Jōishi,” where Seika plays with the polysemanticity of the word “leaf” (葉) by simultaneously applying it to natural phenomena (tree leaves) and manmade physical objects (sheets of paper). Repetition and alternation are among Seika’s favorite tropes, despite being atypical of shorter regulated verse forms.

At this point it has become clear that Seika’s poetics cannot be called “derivative” judging by standard conventions of regulated verse. Moreover, scholars have proven that Seika did not strive to imitate any single poet or style of *kanshi* [Matsushita 1961, pp. 7–14; Wang 2002, p. 95]. But what of charges of “impersonality” often leveled against *kanshi* poets from the first century of the Tokugawa period, Seika included? In this regard, I will confine myself to a single example, which proves that Seika’s poetry can hardly be blamed for such a shortcoming:

[12] I have not been able to establish the identity of Jōishi with absolute certainty. Perhaps, this poem refers to Furuichi Jōi (古市紹意, fl. late sixteenth to early seventeenth century?), a tea ceremony master from Kyoto.

[13] While aptly conveying the syntactic structure of the original, Mostow’s rendering is strikingly artless. My own translation is as follows: “So this is the fabled / Ōsaka Barrier! / Where those who come and go part ways / And the familiar and strange / cross their paths!”

“Mr. Lone Smile” (独笑献笑, Dokushō kenshō) [SSB, p. 83]

Some time ago I got a hold of a small bronze figurine of a Daoist immortal: I bought it for a piece of fine silver. As I recall, Nawa Kassho had told me where to find it.[14]

I placed the figurine in my study as a trinket. When visiting moonlit flower gardens and gorgeous mountain streams, I would take it with me as a poet’s friend and drinking companion.

At one point Tomishima Genko brought me a gift: an old piece of bronze resembling a bamboo hat.[15] When I tried capping the figurine with it, it turned out to be a perfect match and fit snuggly. What a marvelous coincidence!

I gave the figurine a proper name, calling it Mr. Lone Smile. At that time the sky over the spring hills had just cleared up, and it was quiet all around. I decided to write the figurine this poem: as expected, it was smiling at me. And so I smiled too. The hills were also smiling, making three of us.

If Razan had been there to see it, surely he would have composed a piece of poetry criticism…

Now I’ve wiped the dust off my bed and am waiting for my three friends to come over. I also want to show this poem to my student Kyūen to see yet another smiling face![16]

偶得銅仙心快哉	I’ve come across this figurine: my heart is so happy!
傾頭擎手口容開	Its head is tilted, its arms raised, a grin on its face.
命名独笑今非独	I named it Mr. Lone Smile, but he’s lonely no more:
我笑春山献笑来	For I’m smiling too, and so are the spring hills.

Jueju quatrains combined with prosaic prefaces were among Seika’s favorite poetic forms. Moreover, I believe that most of his best compositions can only be appreciated when the preface is taken to form an organic unity with the poem. “Mr. Lone Smile” is a perfect example of this kind of prose-verse symbiosis. When taken in isolation, its closing quatrain strikes the reader with its simplicity, yet when coupled with the preface, it turns into a personal and touching poetic miniature. In a few strokes of the brush, Seika paints a homely yet somewhat melancholic picture of his life in Ichihara (市原), a village north of Kyoto where he resided in semi-reclusion in the latter half of his life. His relationships with students and friends are juxtaposed with his loneliness, while the mentioning of the scholarly and uptight Razan with his “poetry criticism” results in a humorous effect. It is also worth pointing out that the quatrain itself is fully equipped with Seika’s favorite

[14] Nawa Kassho (那波活所, 1595–1648), a prominent student of Seika, one of the “four heavenly kings” of Seika’s school.

[15] Tomishima Genko (富島元古, dates unknown), another friend and, perhaps, student of Seika. Boot identifies him with one Shibue Shunkō (渋江春江) [footnote 50 in Boot 1983, p. 232].

[16] Kyūen (岌淵) was a pseudonym of Takeda Mōan (武田蒙庵, 1561?–1619?), another student of Seika.

poetic devices (repetition and alternation) and utilizes fairly prosaic wordings (note the function word 哉, the auxiliary verb 来, and the plain syntax of 今非独).

"Mr. Lone Smile" is a deeply "personal," albeit lighthearted work. *Seika sensei bunshū* contains many others just like it, some of which will be introduced in the following section. Here one conjecture may be offered as to why scholars such as Watson and Rabinovitch consider Seika's and other early Tokugawa poetry "impersonal." Earlier I have noted that both appear to base their conclusions on a limited number of works. More importantly, following the modernist idea of a poem being, by necessity, an independent and fully complete composition, they pay less attention to pieces that include prefaces and other paratextual elements. At the same time, my reading of *Seika sensei bunshū* suggests that Seika can be called a master of such poetic miniatures. In fact, they bear a striking resemblance to the *shihua* 詩話 (Jp. *shiwa*), a peculiar and somewhat ambiguous premodern genre often combining elements of poetry criticism, storytelling, and versification.[17] It is with such poetic miniatures that the following section is primarily concerned.

Sino-Japanese synthesis in Seika's *kanshi*

One of the most significant faults that Watson and Rabinovitch find with Sinitic poetry written during the first century of Tokugawa rule is its purported inability to deal with native, Japanese subject matter and its lack of a "distinctively Japanese sensibility." In the previous section I have introduced "Ōsaka Barrier," a quatrain by Seika which not only references Japanese literary lore, but goes so far as to play with its source text's (in this case, a *waka* by Semimaro) syntax. This immediately puts to question the assertion that Seika, like other early Tokugawa *kanshi* poets, was incapable of engaging with Japanese topoi in a meaningful way. In this section, I will further argue that Seika often experimented with such topoi on lexical, syntactic, and, most importantly, thematic levels. This experimentation is best revealed in his poetic miniatures (i.e., preface + poem), but not at all absent from stand-alone poems:

贈鶴峯	**"Presented to Hakpong" (Kakuhō ni okuru) [SSB, p. 59]**
貼扇雖軽情豈空	This paper fan is light, but my feelings aren't trivial.
陋邦物産愧贈公	A product of our remote land, I'm ashamed to gift it to you.
寸誠可記朝鮮国	Pray remember my sincerity back in Korea,
一掬猶伝日本風	As this fan's every swing brings a gust of wind from Japan.

富士山	**"Mt. Fuji" (Fujisan) [SSB, p. 67]**
遠為士峯成此遊	I've come on this long journey to see Mt. Fuji.
吟眸処処幾回頭	I turn my head, searching for it here and there, hoping to write a poem.
青天忽見素羅笠	Suddenly a white gauze hat appears in the blue skies,
羅笠檐中十五州	And under its eaves—fifteen provinces.

The first example is a quatrain that Seika presented to Kim Sŏng'il (金誠, 1538–1593, styled Hakpong), a Chosŏn (朝鮮) statesman who was dispatched as an envoy to Japan in 1590. Following contemporary custom, Seika exchanged poems with Kim, and this one seems to have been his

[17] For a brief yet excellent introduction to Japanese *shiwa*, see Ibi Takashi (揖斐高), "Shiwa taigai" (詩話大概), in *Nihon shishi, Gozandō shiwa* [Shimizu 1991, pp. 583–587].

farewell gift. While otherwise conventional, this poem exhibits one curious feature: the word Seika uses to denote a paper fan, 貼扇 **tieshan*, which is not, to the best of my knowledge, attested in Chinese dictionaries. In fact, 貼扇 is the *kanji* spelling of the native Japanese *hariōgi* with the same meaning. One can only speculate as to why Seika, a learned man certainly capable of using appropriate Sinitic vocabulary, chose to incorporate a distinctively Japanese word in his composition. Perhaps he wished to impart to this literary memento a flourish of foreign exoticism or perhaps the fan was fashioned in such a distinctively Japanese way as to warrant lexical innovation. One thing is clear: here and elsewhere Seika does not shy away from such literary experimentation.

The example of "Mt. Fuji" offers a somewhat different insight. It is beyond doubt that in this quatrain Seika works with native poetic material, namely Mt. Fuji, but it is his metaphorical use of the "white gauze hat" that deserves further comment. An earlier quotation from *Gakumon genryū* mentioned the fact that the famous *kanshi* poet Ishikawa Jōzan studied under Seika and enjoyed his verse. Coincidentally, one of his most famous quatrains still admired today and often chanted at *shigin* 詩吟 competitions makes use of a very similar conceit:

"Mt. Fuji" [Bradstock & Rabinovitch 1997, p. 60]

Celestial visitors come to play from the peaks beyond the clouds.

Ancient sacred dragons dwell deep within her cavernous depths.

A pure white fan turned upside-down in the sky above the eastern sea

With snow so like the finest silk and a plume of smoke for a handle.

Whether in composing this verse Jōzan was inspired by his teacher's work is impossible to tell. What is crucial is the fact that while being largely skeptical about Seika and his contemporaries' poetic prowess, both Watson and Rabinovitch treat Jōzan with unusual warmth [Watson 1990, p. 6; Bradstock & Rabinovitch 1997, p. 24]. In my view, both scholars are not justified in drawing such a stark line between the "derivative" Seika and the trailblazer Jōzan given the similarities between the two.

Further evidence for my claim that Seika did in fact successfully engage with Japanese topoi and was able to exhibit a distinctively Japanese sensibility in his verse can be found in Seika's poetic miniatures:

"Mt. Ogura" (小倉山, Ogurayama) [SSB, p. 79]

Among the mountains west of the capital there is one called Mt. Ogura. Secluded and refreshing, it has attracted reclusive gentlemen since ancient times. Some erected their detached villas there; others confined themselves to grass huts. Countless people have done so, just like the Venerable Saigyō or Fujiwara Teika.[18]

[18] Both Saigyō (西行, 1118–1190) and Teika (定家, 1162–1241) were among the most well-known *waka* poets in Japanese history. Teika owned a detached villa on Mt. Ogura.

One day Munetaka—a man of elegance—and I called on Haruyuki in his home library [nearby Mt. Ogura].[19] Enjoying the cool of the evening and treading on moonlight, we went for a stroll and casually chanted poems. Then we saw some reminders of the wise men of the past. A lament by Li Bai kept crossing my mind: "People of today can't see the moon of old, but it is this moon that once shone on the men of antiquity."[20]

Inspired by this, I composed a little poem and offered it to Munetaka and Haruyuki. Let it serve as a promise of another such outing.

小倉山下屡経過	The foot of Mt. Ogura has been oft-trodden;
聞説先賢行楽窩	I hear tell that wise men of old retired here to enjoy themselves.
今夜坐来古時月	Tonight's moon is the same as it was in the distant past:
月揺松竹亦倭歌	Rising over pines and bamboo—just like in a *waka*!

In his preface and quatrain, Seika draws poetic inspiration from two sources: Li Bai's verse and *waka* lore. The closing line of the *kanshi* echoes the following Japanese poem by Saigyō, who is mentioned in the preface [Minemura 1995, p. 185]:

Ogurayama	Mt. Ogura:
Fumoto no sato ni	When leaves scatter
Konoha chireba	In the village by its foot,
Kozue ni haruru	I view the bright moon
Tsuki wo miru kana	That shines over tree branches!

Not only does Seika's "Mt. Ogura" make use of a native location and play with a Japanese sensibility, but it goes further by synthesizing it with Chinese poetic precedent. Seika moves freely between Chinese and Japanese topics, only to further refute a once predominant preconception that Sinitic literature is somehow unworthy of being considered part of the Japanese canon. The same technique is employed in the following work as well:

"The Sumida River, with a preface" (角田川并序, Sumidagawa narabi ni jo) [SSB, p. 69]

Just a few steps to the east from Asakusa there is a river called the Sumida. As I was taking in the view dotted with little boats and singing at the top of my voice, a pretty bird appeared, flapping its little wings. It was that bird "with a red beak and feet," the one so vividly described in *waka* anthologies. And so I didn't need to ask about its name to know that it was a *miyako-dori*, "the bird of the capital."

After all, a thing's name reflects its nature, for in this bird's singing there was something reminiscent of the capital. Without even realizing it, I succumbed to longing

[19] Kako Munetaka (賀古宗隆, dates unknown) was an old friend of Seika's; Haruyuki is the given name of Yoshida [also Suminokura] Soan (吉田[角倉]素庵, 1571–1632), Seika's student.

[20] This refers to Li Bai's "Raising a wine cup and asking the moon" (把酒問月, Ba jiu wen yue).

for my home. When even "the birds of Yue nest on southern branches, and Hu horses neigh facing north," why should people be any different?[21]

A long time ago Bai Juyi was demoted and sent to the shores of the Penshui in Jiangzhou. While in his boat, he overheard the sounds of a *pipa* reminiscent of the capital, and tears soaked his gown. It is a beautiful tale for a thousand years.

In China and in Japan, on the shores of the Penshui in Jiangzhou and the Sumida in Edo, travelers from the capital are similarly moved by familiar sounds. My only shame is that I was unable to compose a ballad about it! Even so, can one say that the singing of this bird is inferior to the *pipa* music played by that merchant's wife? Ah!

飛鳴有鳥角田川	Here, on the Sumida, a bird flies over and sings its song.
名曰京都声自然	It's called "the bird of the capital," and its voice is worthy of its name.
我亦舟中溢浦客	Now I, too, am a traveler in a boat by the shores of the Penshui.
断腸認作琵琶絃	With pain in my heart, I hear in its chirping the strings of the *pipa*.

Seika's "The Sumida River" is similar to "Mt. Ogura" in its attempt to synthesize continental and native poetic themes. Its preface draws on Bai Juyi's (白居易, 772–846) "Ballad of the *pipa*" (琵琶行, Pipa xing), a ballad-style poem that tells the story of Bai's exile to the south in 815. According to the ballad, while travelling by boat on an autumn night, the poet overheard the *pipa* being strummed with great skill by a famous lute player from the capital. Abandoned by her merchant husband, she found herself all alone in an inhospitable environment, and her story and connection to Chang'an greatly touched Bai Juyi. A native of Kyoto, Seika invokes an episode from *The Tales of Ise* (伊勢物語, Ise monogatari, ca. 10th c.), where the travelling protagonists witness "birds of the capital" catching fish in the Sumida and are similarly moved to tears [Mostow & Tyler 2010, p. 36]. It is noteworthy that, at least in this instance, both locations (the "deep south" of imperial China and the "deep east" of Japan where the protagonists of *The Tales of Ise* were headed) are traditionally associated with exile and intense longing for one's home. Seika's skillful juxtaposition of their literary significance is noteworthy.

"The Sumida River" is also a testament to Seika's cosmopolitan disposition most well-known from his "Ship compact" translated in *Sources of Japanese Tradition* [De Bary 2001, pp. 39–40]. Yet the preceding discussion has made it abundantly clear that it did not result in unabashed Chinoiserie or a complete lack of a "distinctively Japanese sensibility." Quite to the contrary, Seika's *kanshi* are examples of an active and conscious attempt to synthesize Chinese and Japanese motifs, nay, to see them as constituents of a unified Sino-Japanese literary continuum. But how do we explain this cosmopolitan poetics of Seika? I will conclude this study with several remarks concerning his views on poetry.

[21] Seika uses a condensed version of two lines originating in the *Selections of Refined Literature* (文選, Wenxuan, 6th c.).

Conclusion: Seika and the ideal of "living verse"

To reiterate: Anglophone scholars suggest that Sinitic poetry from roughly the first century of the Tokugawa period—including poetry by Fujiwara Seika—suffers from three major defects: (a) a derivative and uninventive diction, (b) a significant lack of individuality, and (c) failure to use *kanshi* to represent distinctively Japanese subject matter. However, this argument is not borne out by concrete evidence when applied to Seika's *kanshi*. In particular, Seika's poetic language can hardly be called derivative, his tone is often endearingly personal, and his engagement with native topoi and *wabun* 和文 lore is one of the defining features of his work. I have already conjectured that the opinions of Keene, Watson, and Rabinovitch regarding early Tokugawa *kanshi* and Seika's poetry specifically are a result of their reliance on a limited number of texts contained mostly in modern annotated anthologies, their uncritical acceptance of Japanese secondary scholarship, and their modernist understanding of what "a poem" ought to be.

To gain a better grasp of Seika's poetics, an investigation of his own opinions on the matter is in order. Matsushita Tadashi does just that in his "Fujiwara Seika no shibunron" and comes to the following conclusions [Matsushita 1961, pp. 1–15]:

1. Seika considered literary pursuits to be secondary to the Confucian practice of the Way.
2. While believing that literature was a vehicle for the Way, he did not support the supposedly common Neo-Confucian idea that literature is harmful and considered it essential to self-cultivation.
3. While not trained as a *kanshi* poet, Seika showed a significant interest in the matter and was exceptionally well-read.
4. His tastes in poetry were highly eclectic; there was no single poet or style he strove to imitate.
5. In poetic composition, Seika emphasized spontaneity and truthfulness over formal embellishments.

Points 4 and 5 can be further illustrated by a preface to one of Seika's impromptu quatrains, which reads much like a literary manifesto and deserves to be quoted in full:

"With Rhymes by Ōmura Baian, with a preface" (次韻梅庵由己并序, Baian Yūko ni jiin su narabi ni jo) [SSB, p. 70][22]

> Looking at Japanese *kanshi* of late, I have been perplexed for some time by one thing. What the men of old, in their evaluations of poetry, considered skillful, ornate, and exceptional does not at all agree with the compositions and criticism of today. This is why I became perplexed.
>
> Someone told me, "It's the nature of poetry to change over time and produce different schools. Now you're perplexed because the men of today don't match the men of antiquity, and because the various poets don't conform to a single school. This is like building a boat to traverse land or a chariot to sail on water. Isn't it foolish and deluded?"

[22] Ōmura Yūko (大村由己, 1536?–1596, styled Baian 梅庵) was a prominent monk and Confucian scholar. Seika's collected works contain several exchanges with Yūko, who seems to have influenced Seika's understanding of literature and the arts.

I responded, “Historical change and dissimilar schools are certainly a fact. But as for the reasons why a poem may be considered good or poor, I completely disagree. Can there be a difference between the past and the present, or between Japan and China, when it comes to this?

“Consider hawthorns and pears, or tangerines and pomelos. They all have different flavors, but each is pleasing to the palate. Conversely, that which is not pleasing to the palate is not proper to consume. And so it is with poetry, too: the dissimilar flavors are like historical differences or divergent schools. So that which pleases the palate is good poetry; if it fails to do so, it is poor.”

When I reached this conclusion, my perplexity became even deeper, and my confusion only grew. Yet I had never studied poetry, so how could I dispel my confusion and get rid of perplexity? I could only sigh…

In the summer of the *guisi* year [i.e., 1593], I accompanied Lord Kobayakawa Hideaki on a trip to Nagoya Castle in Hizen.[23] Old master Baian was also present to attend on His Lordship the Chancellor.[24] One day, when he was free from official business, he invited me to have an idle chat. Our talk was far from finished when the scenery behind the window began to grow dark. It was raining, and we were lit by a single lamp standing on Baian’s bed. Just around daybreak, a tiny insect flew into the room flapping its wings and bumped into the burning lamp. Noticing this, master Baian composed a poem and showed it to me. Its final couplet read:

> In my study, we’ve exhausted all talk: ten years of rain.[25]
>
> Now we laugh, watching a summer bug beating against the lamp.

My arms and legs did a little dance without my realizing it. “Master, your poem is so similar to those by men of antiquity!” I exclaimed. “Du Fu’s ‘Gazing at the cold river, I lean against the mountain pavilion,’ Su Shi’s ‘I laugh as I watch a hungry mouse climb my lampstand,’ Huang Tingjian’s ‘I leave my gate and let out a laugh; the Great River stretches before me’ ... all these lines are practically indistinguishable from your couplet.[26] Is it a masterful adaptation or a simple coincidence?

“Now I realize that the words of that man from before were misguided and that my perplexity has been warranted. The knot in my chest has been untangled without anyone’s prompting, and the doubts in my heart have melted away on their own.

“Finally I understand: in its petty ornateness, the poetry of today is shallow. Often it becomes slave to historical allusions and stylistic requirements, only to lose its free and uncontrived form. Some say, however, that the poetry by men of antiquity completely

[23] Kobayakawa Hideaki (小早川英明, 1582–1602) was Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s nephew. Nagoya Castle (名護屋城) in Hizen (肥前) should not be confused with the contemporary city of Nagoya (名古屋).

[24] I.e., Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

[25] In this line, “rain” seems to be a poetic allusion to friendship.

[26] Here Seika is referring to the following poems: “Ballad on binding a chicken” (縛鶏行, Fu ji xing) by Du Fu (杜甫, 712–770), “Sitting down at night with my nephew Anjie travelling from afar” (侄安節遠来夜坐, Zhi Anjie yuanlai yezuo) by Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037–1101), and “Received fifty branches of daffodils from Wang Chongdao” (王充道送水仙花五十支, Wang Chongdao song shuixianhua wushizhi) by Huang Tingjian (黄庭堅, 1045–1105).

> lacks mastery. It seems that they only recognize skill and beauty in useless ornateness—like engravings on ice—and fail to discern the hidden treasure that water holds, which is salt.
>
> "Zhuang Zhou said: 'They dug one orifice in him every day, and at the end of seven days Hundun died.'[27] Is it not the same with poetry? Whether it be in its conceit or its form, its beginning, middle, or end, if someone tries to forcibly shape a poem as though with an ax or a chisel, he will invariably end up with dead verse. Living verse! That's what it's all about! And if someone has been able to preserve Hundun's virtue, it is you, master!
>
> "From now on I wish to join your poetic coterie to study the art and shake off the dust of the world. If you permit this, I will benefit greatly. Please don't reject me because of my old age!"

This preface aptly illustrates Seika's poetic preferences. He opposes the idea that any historical period or any school of poetry should be given priority but insists on the existence of some universal standards of poetic quality. It is important to emphasize that Seika believes these standards to be equally valid in both China and Japan. Moreover, Seika maintains that empty ornamentation and extensive attention to formal elements of verse will invariably result in "dead verse" (Jp. *shiku* 死句). Conversely, Baian's ability to compose good poetry extemporaneously reveals to him the importance of "living verse" (Jp. *kakku* 活句), a product of "naturalness" and spontaneity as opposed to formalism.[28] The poetic ideal of "living verse" helps to explain Seika's frequent use of somewhat prosaic language replete with function words: if one chooses to compose regulated verse extemporaneously, such linguistic elements can be profoundly helpful, lest one make constant recourse to rhyme dictionaries and poetic encyclopedias. Moreover, if verse is to be "living," a Japanese *kanshi* poet is more or less forced to incorporate native poetic topoi in his work to respond to the call of inspiration here and now, which Seika successfully does in his poetic miniatures.

In light of the above, it becomes clear that contemporary scholars need to direct more attention to the Sinitic part of Japan's literary heritage. While the utter disregard that "national literature historiography" (Jp. *kokubungakushi* 国文学史) customarily paid to *kanbungaku* has become a thing of the past, its echoes are still strong in the field, and the mischaracterization of Seika's works by Anglophone scholars is but one example of this. It is my hope that this brief study has demonstrated that many fascinating avenues for further research still lie hidden and that more scholars will seize these opportunities and take the study of Sinitic literature in Japan to a new level.

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[27] A quotation from the *Zhuangzi*, VII.7; my rendering is inspired by James Legge's.

[28] The term *kakku* (lit. "living phrases") also has a Zen connotation. According to Muller's *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, it refers to a "statement or response, usually made in the course of Chan [=Zen] encounter dialogue, which comes forth from genuine and spontaneous personal actualization, and is thus helpful in terms of leading others to self-realization" (see the entry under "活句," http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/, accessed August 23, 2022). The same term was also used prominently in Chinese poetry criticism from the Song dynasty on. Whether Seika's Zen-oriented education plays a role in his choice of this term is, perhaps, an unanswerable question—especially given the fact that by his time *gozan* education had become thoroughly eclectic and some of the monks were "Buddhist" in name only. Yet it makes clear sense when placed within the context of the *Zhuangzi* legend of Hundun.

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