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Koch, A.C

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Angelika Koch

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Medicine, Fiction, and Metaphor

The Medical Body, Health, and Disease in Late Eighteenth-Century Japanese Graphic Narratives

ANGELIKA KOCH

ABSTRACT: With a focus on Jippensha Ikku's *Hara no uchi yōjō shuron* (The Essentials of Healthy Living Inside the Abdomen; 1799), this article explores the role of metaphors in the portrayal of the medical body, health, and disease in late Edo-period “yellow-cover” (*kibyōshi*) fiction and popular prints and how the use of metaphor in these works fit within the broader intellectual currents of the times. The study shows how such graphic narratives built on the rich tradition of metaphorical ways of thinking about the body that had been inherent in Sino-Japanese medicine virtually since its inception. I examine how the influx of medical themes and their metaphorical heritage in late-Edo fiction took place against the backdrop of a marked increase in the circulation of medical knowledge for lay audiences in the Edo period—a process in which fiction itself played a part. In this context, I discuss two distinct yet interlinked lines of metaphorical thinking that enjoyed popularity in late-Edo fiction and popular prints, as well as in contemporary educational and health-related texts—namely, the tropes of health in relation to societal harmony on the one hand and moral education on the other. Ultimately, my contention is that when writers of fiction came to use images of the medical body, health, and disease for the purposes of entertainment, they often rendered absurd the medical, political, and moral orthodoxies of their day, presenting visions of “ailing” social and moral bodies quite at odds with the views that educators, scholars, and the authorities had been seeking to promote.

KEYWORDS: Edo-period literature, metaphor, *kibyōshi*, early modern health discourses, *yōjō*, Sino-Japanese medicine, Shingaku

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The Buddha had his evil foil in Devadatta,¹ and the Prince Shōtoku his in the nobleman Mononobe no Moriya;² in the same way, medicines find their antagonists in diseases. Yet evil is never a match for the forces of good. Hence famous medications and moxibustion formulas eradicate illnesses, and people live healthily and happily, just as they do in our current era of the Great Peace. In this print, I have left it to the artist's brush to commit this battle between medicines and diseases to paper. . . .

——The publisher³

It is indeed a glorious fight that the publisher promises the audience in this colorful mid-nineteenth-century woodblock print triptych (see figure 1), vividly executed by Utagawa Yoshitora 歌川芳虎 (active ca. 1830s–1880s), which depicts an anthropomorphized army of medications overpowering demonic diseases. Urged on by the mythical Shinnō 神農 (Ch. Shennong), the bearded sage of pharmacopeia, as their general, the medical warriors advance holding aloft the banners of various popular commercial medicines and wielding the weapons of their profession, including a physician's measuring spoons, well-aimed ladles of herbal concoctions, and knives and mortars commonly used in the preparation of *materia medica*. The anthropomorphized Dried Bear Gallbladder (this substance, *kuma no i* 熊の胆, being a well-known prescription for gastric problems), wrestles a devilish “stomach worm” (*hara mushi* 腹虫) in the center panel,⁴ while on the left the valiant warrior Sanzōen 三臓円 (Three-Organ Concoction) subdues the writhing monster of “depletion-based abdominal cramps” (*kyoshaku* 虚癩)⁵ amid a chaotic tangle of ongoing skirmishes.⁶ In this way, remedies become fearless combatants and medical implements their arms and ammunition as they act as guardians of the body's

¹ Devadatta was Śākyamuni Buddha's cousin who turned his back on the Buddha's teachings and later tried to kill him; thus Devadatta is the archetypal Buddhist villain.

² Mononobe no Moriya 物部守屋 (d. 587) was the head of a clan in the Yamato 大和 state and an opponent of Buddhism. Following the death of Emperor Yōmei 用明 (d. 587), according to the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720) account, he took up arms against the pro-Buddhist Prince Shōtoku 聖德 (574–622) and his supporters in the struggle over succession.

³ From the untitled print provisionally referred to as [*Shobyō shoyaku no tataikai*] 諸病諸薬の戦い (Battle of Medicines and Diseases; ca. 1847–1852). See [*Shobyō shoyaku no tataikai*]; the print is also available online at <https://da.nichibun.ac.jp/item/002153435>.

⁴ The notion of “worms” does not refer to the invasive parasites of modern biomedicine but derives from Daoist beliefs about the body being inhabited by worms that were associated with various diseases in early modern Japan, such as *senki* 疝気 (a type of colic) or *shaku* 癩 (abdominal cramps). See Shirasugi, “Senki to Edo jidai”; Hasegawa et al., “*Hara no mushi*.”

⁵ Rendered in *kana* as きょしゃく in the original. Throughout this article, I have, as appropriate for readability, supplied Chinese characters for terms originally written in *kana*.

⁶ Sanzōen (also known as Ninjin Sanzōen 人參三臓円) was claimed to strengthen the “three organs” (kidneys, spleen, and heart) and to counteract all diseases arising from their depletion.



FIGURE 1. [Shobyō shoyaku no tataikai], untitled woodblock print triptych by Utagawa Yoshitora. International Research Center for Japanese Studies. <https://da.nichibun.ac.jp/item/002153435>.

peace and order in their perpetual conflict with disease—just as, the publisher’s vignette implies, the warrior class protected the Great Peace under the Tokugawa 徳川 shogun.

The technique employed in this print draws on the prolific tradition in Japanese literature and art of the parodic mock battle that pitted personified agents against each other (*irui gassen* 異類合戦); these could range from rice cakes to sake, from Kyoto textiles to popular fiction books, and from vegetables to fish, rats, insects, and more—all the way to medications.⁷ Yoshitora’s print exemplifies this broader literary and visual trend, which became particularly pronounced in the illustrated *kusazōshi* 草双紙 fiction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as the more specific, recurring motif of armed confrontations between various medicines and diseases. Due to popular demand (at least according to the publisher’s account), this print was in fact followed by a similarly conceived sequel, this time brought to life on the page by Ichirentei Kansai 一簾亭閑斎 (active ca. 1848–1854), complete with a different set of pharmaceutical swordsmen and archers firing acupuncture needles (ca. 1850).⁸ Narrative counterparts of these pictorial medical feuds also existed in literature, while advertisers harnessed this trope’s powerful yet

It was produced by the Yoshino 吉野 shop in Osaka; for an advertisement along these lines, see *Ninjin sanzōen*.

⁷ See Itō, *Gijinka to irui gassen* for an overview of the *irui gassen* genre from its origins late in the Muromachi 室町 period until the postwar era.

⁸ *Yoku kiku yakushu* よくきく薬種 (Effective Medicine; 1847–1852). The print is part of the William Sturgis Bigelow Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. A digital reproduction is available online at <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/461846>.

playful message as a potential selling point for commercial medications.⁹ In this way, medicines, diseases, wholesome and unwholesome foods—and also body parts and organs, as we shall see in the present article—fought over the body’s health in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century popular fiction and prints.

Yet despite the culturally specific trappings of such images, the military representational scheme they adhere to may hold a certain familiarity. Humanizing the opaque body and its usually invisible workings, putting a human face on the faceless forces that govern life and death, and enabling people to understand them by relating them to social facts in their surroundings are far from unknown as cognitive and rhetorical strategies today. In early modern Japan, as I will show, there was no shortage of images, associations, and perceptions surrounding the body, health, and disease. This style of thought, which may be described as “metaphorical,” was a common approach in representing the body and its concerns—not merely in popular culture but also in medical writings, where doctors, for example, used the same martially inspired language to explain the role of medications in their healing philosophy.

The present study aims to explore how a set of late eighteenth-century satirical “yellow-cover” graphic narratives (*kibyōshi* 黄表紙)¹⁰ exploited the metaphorically rich possibilities of the medical body as they existed in both expert medical and lay discourses. This article is a companion piece to my previously published translation, fully annotated and with a critical introduction, of Jippensha Ikku’s 十返舎一九 (1765–1831) *Hara no uchi yōjō shuron* 腹内養生主論 (The Essentials of Healthy Living Inside the Abdomen, hereafter, *Essentials*; 1799), where my purpose was to provide readers with a comprehensive, firsthand example of how popular fiction incorporated and deployed medical notions at the time.¹¹ It also seeks to shed light on the ways in which metaphors that envisioned parallels between body and society spread beyond medical writings and came to be employed in various areas of Tokugawa-era intellectual life, which then, again, fed back into parodies and fiction. Medical knowledge became increasingly accessible in print to a wide reading audience in early modern Japan, and it is within this trend toward medical vernacularization and commercialization that we have to place the vogue for medical themes in late-Edo popular fiction and visual culture. The current article argues that *Essentials* together with similar health-related works of fiction that appeared in the 1790s used the body as a metaphor to play upon themes of societal order and moral education.

⁹ As an example of one such narrative, see the late-Edo *Hashika taiheiki* 麻疹太平記, reproduced in Ishii, *Banbutsu kokkei gassenki*, pp. 599–707. An example of this motif in advertising is *Nintaikoku nite yamai to kusuri to gassen no zu* 人体国病薬合戦図, a late-Edo promotional leaflet for a syphilis medication. See *Nintaikoku nite yamai to kusuri to gassen no zu*.

¹⁰ I have adopted the term “graphic narratives” from Laura Moretti and Satō Yukiko 佐藤至子 to describe the verbal-visual medium of *kusazōshi*, which included “yellow-cover” books; see Moretti and Satō, *Graphic Narratives from Early Modern Japan*.

¹¹ Koch, “Dreaming.”

These two distinct but related metaphorical complexes were propounded by, on the one hand, doctors invoking the healthy body as a mirror of a well-ordered society along with those seeking to legitimate the societal status quo and, on the other hand, scholars and educators whose moral teachings were said to constitute a form of medicine that could remedy societal ills. Ultimately, my contention is that when fiction writers came to use images of the medical body, health, and disease as vehicles of entertainment, in the process they often not only rendered absurd the medical, political, and moral orthodoxies of their day but also, as a secondary effect, put forth visions of “ailing” social and moral bodies quite at odds with the views those with more political or cultural authority had been seeking to promote.

Medicine and Metaphor

Throughout this article, the term “medical body” refers to the body as conceptualized specifically through the lens of its medical properties and structures.¹² It should be noted that medicine within the context of the present article mainly refers to the system of “Chinese-style” healing rooted in the East Asian medical tradition, which represented the mainstream paradigm for understanding the body’s workings, health, and disease among the general population in Japan throughout most of its early modern period. Western or more specifically Dutch-style (*ranpō* 蘭方) medicine gained influence in the late eighteenth century with the spread of new anatomical knowledge from dissections and from translations of European books such as *Kaitai shinsho* 解体新書 (New Atlas of Anatomy; 1774), which also triggered a popular craze for “opening the body” in Japanese literature and prints. In previous research, this late eighteenth-century fascination with the body’s inner workings in popular culture has been primarily attributed to the ascendancy of the Western-style scientific gaze and anatomy.¹³ Yet a close reading of *Essentials* and other similar works challenges those views, as these texts reveal little evidence of European medical or anatomical influences in either their lexical or visual idioms; hence, I suggest that other factors may have also contributed to the currency of the medical body as

¹² My focus on works that utilize the framework of the “medical body” excludes some fictional works set inside the body, such as Shikitei Sanba’s 式亭三馬 (1776–1822) *Hara no uchi gesaku tanehon* 腹之内戯作種本 (1811).

¹³ See Screech, *Western Scientific Gaze and Edo no karada o hiraku*; the latter title can be translated as “Opening the Edo Body.” See also the comments in *Edo no parodii ehon*, p. 85. More recent research that develops Screech’s influential argument includes Katafuchi, “Kinsei kōki ni okeru kaibōgaku,” which also briefly discusses *Hara no uchi yōjō shuron*. A more balanced view is presented in Shirasugi, “Envisioning the Inner Body,” which points out Sino-Japanese medical influences on popular depictions of the interior workings of the medical body yet still views this trend as a consequence of the growing popularity of anatomy among the general public. It should also be noted that Sino-Japanese and Dutch-style medical knowledge were not necessarily mutually exclusive in practice, particularly in the early nineteenth century; on this point, see Burns, “Nanayama Jundō”; Nakamura, *Practical Pursuits*.

a topos. For this reason, the primary focus in this article will be on Sino-Japanese medical knowledge and its uses in popular culture.

Needless to say, Sino-Japanese medicine did not represent an intrinsically homogenous set of practices or theories during the Edo period, or even within our more circumscribed time frame of the late eighteenth century; instead, competing views clashed over the precise inner workings of the body and the correct ways to diagnose and cure it. Yet medicohistorical narratives of the rise and fall of dominant schools of thought in expert circles need not concern us here, as our present focus is on the lay imagination of the Sino-Japanese medical body in fiction, which foregrounds the average person's somewhat eclectic understanding of health and disease, unfettered by the specialist's commitment to (or rejection of) certain canonical texts and preference for one school of teaching over another.¹⁴ This does not mean, however, that this understanding was entirely divorced from the medical expert's views; in fact, as is made clear in both the above-cited annotated translation of *Essentials* and in this article, references to notions that circulated via medical literature for householders were abundant in such fiction.

Medicine, taken here in the broadest possible sense as pertaining to healing practices and theories among both experts and the general populace, represented a somewhat pluralistic marketplace in early modern Japan. It involved not only doctors of varying qualifications but by the late eighteenth century also a burgeoning trade in commercial medications and printed self-help literature such as health-cultivation texts, which represented an admixture of moral and medical advice for lay health seekers.¹⁵ This lay-oriented print material encompassed a range of texts, from those written for nonexpert audiences by doctors versed in learned medicine to those authored by dilettantes who had acquired the requisite knowledge. It was within this multifarious world of vernacular medical knowledge—the knowledge “used and reproduced by ordinary people,” as medical historian Mary Fissell has put it¹⁶—that popular fiction primarily operated.

The term “metaphor” as used in the present article refers to, as expressed by Lakoff and Johnson in their seminal work, an “understanding and experiencing [of]

¹⁴ For medicohistorical views on early modern Japan, see, for example, Fujikawa, *Nihon igakushi*; Kosoto, *Kanpō no rekishi*; Hattori, *Edo jidai igakushi*.

¹⁵ Although some health-cultivation texts were more moralistic and philosophical in nature with less focus on physical well-being, a substantial number of manuals were written by doctors, and their practical guidelines harked back to expert medical notions of the body and health. See, for example, Takizawa Toshiyuki's 瀧澤利行 categorization grouping health-cultivation texts by their school of medical thought or other intellectual tradition (Takizawa, *Yōjōron no shisō*, pp. 63–128). Ikku's fictional text at the heart of the discussion in this article also suggests a perception of these works as medical by contemporaries, as do eighteenth-century publisher catalogues listing such manuals in their section for medical books; hence for the current purpose I consider health-cultivation texts to belong among the various registers of medical knowledge that existed in early modern Japan.

¹⁶ Fissell, “Marketplace of Print,” p. 110, and *Vernacular Bodies*, p. 6.

one kind of thing in terms of another.”¹⁷ In other words, metaphors create meaning by connecting two semantic fields and importing notions from one (the “source”) domain to make a statement about another (the “target”) domain.¹⁸ Yoshitora’s figurative scheme, for example, applies military terminology (the source domain) to medical therapy (the target domain) to depict medical therapy as a battle. This metaphor permeates every detail of the print, from its textual vignette and the armor incorporating medicine wrappers as aprons to the war banners that resemble advertisements for ready-made remedies. The pervasiveness of such metaphorical processes is now widely acknowledged by scholars. Lakoff and Johnson, for instance, have argued that metaphor is not merely a decorative, literary trope but rather a common concept that “we live by”; it organizes both our everyday thought and our everyday language—even in scientific and medical communication.

Medicine and metaphor in their prototypical definitions may intuitively seem irreconcilable counterpoles. Medicine as a positivist natural science, which purports to reveal truths and relate hard facts, clashes with the commonsense notion of metaphor as “extraordinary language”—a fanciful flourish more appropriate to literary forms of expression. Yet medical discourse past and present is in fact rife with images and underlying metaphorical styles of thinking about the body.¹⁹ Corpus linguistic studies of present-day medical textbooks and journal articles across various languages have clarified this point in recent decades.²⁰ Historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have begun to explore how such metaphors and images can significantly influence people’s representations, perceptions, and experience of disease—to an extent that they may lead to very real consequences.²¹ Early modern Japanese medical discourse was no exception in this respect, as I will demonstrate below.

This border-crossing quality of metaphor as a characteristic of both ordinary language and specialist scholarly and literary idioms makes it a particularly suitable analytical tool for a study such as this, which aspires to bring together views on

¹⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 5.

¹⁸ Various other terms are used to designate the two sides of a metaphor, but I adhere here to the terminology used in conceptual metaphor theory in the wake of Lakoff and Johnson; see, for example, Lakoff, “Contemporary Theory of Metaphor,” pp. 206–11.

¹⁹ Van Rijn-van Tongeren, *Metaphors in Medical Texts*; Bleakley, *Thinking with Metaphors in Medicine*; Lupton, *Medicine as Culture*, pp. 56–70.

²⁰ Salager-Meyer, “Metaphors in Medical English Prose”; Faber and Linares, “Role of Imagery.”

²¹ Susan Sontag, in her now classic account *Illness as Metaphor*, for example, famously described the fearsome power of metaphors to create associations around certain diseases, particularly cancer; see Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*. For some historical approaches to medical metaphors and images in medicine and literature, see Stolberg, “Metaphors and Images of Cancer”; Byrne, *Tuberculosis and the Victorian Literary Imagination*; and the section on “metaphorizing illnesses” in Rousseau, *Framing and Imagining Disease*. In an East Asian context, see also Wu, *Reproducing Women*; Katafuchi, “Shintai to tatoe” (part 1) and “Shintai to tatoe” (part 2). For some anthropological and sociological perspectives, see Lupton, *Medicine as Culture*, pp. 56–70.

the body, health, and illness as they were expressed in expert medical texts, medical literature for lay audiences, and popular vernacular fiction. It allows us to trace the flow of certain images, thought styles, and knowledge across various genres and audiences—even across various media. After all, metaphors are expressed not only in writing but also in nonverbal modes such as images;²² this makes the notion particularly applicable to the copiously illustrated late eighteenth-century Japanese graphic narratives under consideration here, in which meanings were produced in the close interplay between words and the visual image. As I will show, in early modern Japan metaphors not only enabled medical writers to disseminate their prescriptive ideas about the body but also became a tool in fiction and other popular media for humorously depicting and, incidentally, subverting those very same expert notions, as well as the social and moral order they represented.

Metaphor in the Sino-Japanese Medical Tradition. In premodern Japan, there was nothing that directly corresponded to the term or concept of “metaphor.”²³ Metaphorical strategies, however, had been inherent in Chinese medical imagery since antiquity, particularly given theoretical foundations that emphasized the resonances between the microcosm of the human body and the macrocosm in which it was embedded. Expert discourses on healing were rich in figurative language imported from other fields with the aim of labeling, explaining, and grasping the meaning of the body’s structures and processes. One dominant metaphor inherent in Sino-Japanese medical discourse virtually from its inception was the body as a miniature state or society—which is particularly relevant in view of its Edo representations in fiction. The historian of Chinese medicine Paul Unschuld has previously put forward the claim that Chinese medical thinkers transferred elements of the newly unified Han 漢 state structure, such as depots and storehouses, onto the functions of the body, as is reflected in *The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon* (Ch. *Huangdi nei jing* 黄帝内经, Jp. *Kōtei daikei*), the foundational classic of Chinese medicine compiled roughly between the first and third century CE.²⁴ In this metaphorical line of thinking, the various organ systems in Sino-Japanese medical thought grouped together as the so-called Five Organs (*gozō* 五臟) were, for example, equated with the body’s “storehouses”—a view that in the early eighteenth century was still replicated as standard knowledge in the Japanese encyclopedia *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会 (Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia; 1712), compiled by the physician Terajiima Ryōan 寺島良安 (n.d.), in order to explain

²² Forceville, “Metaphor in Pictures”; El Refaie, *Visual Metaphor and Embodiment*.

²³ On the introduction of Western rhetorical figures and the metaphorical concepts available in classical Japanese poetics before this point, see Yamanaka, “Tradition and Transformation of Metaphor in Japanese.”

²⁴ Unschuld, *Medicine in China*, pp. 73–83, and *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 129–33. I follow the dating of the *Inner Canon* in Unschuld and Tessenow, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, p. 11.

the fundamental understanding of each organ's function.²⁵ Such imagery also did not stop at the state's architectural infrastructure but extended to its sociopolitical structures and hierarchies by, for example, turning some important parts and processes in the medical body into "lords" while relegating others to "ministerial" roles supporting the ruler.²⁶

In early modern Japan, health-cultivation manuals aimed at a general readership made frequent use of metaphorical figures like this as a means of providing accessible illustrations of medical processes for nonexperts. In such texts, "attacks" could be mounted on the sovereignty of this medical body-state by "external enemies" (*gaiteki* 外敵), such as cold, heat, and wind, which needed to be "warded off" and "crushed" by the wise general who ruled over his body and knew how to "defend the castle" using the "tactics" (*heihō* 兵法) of a health regimen, according to the colorful diction of Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekiken (or Ekken) 貝原益軒 (1630–1714). His and other health-related texts advised that the correct way of "governing" the body (and the state) was to prevent "rebellion" in the first place rather than "crushing it with military force." Yet should all else fail, medications and moxibustion could "strike" or "attack" the hostile diseases—not unlike Yoshitora's warriors.²⁷ Significantly, as Takashi Shogimen has demonstrated, the converse notion of the "state as a body" that could be "healthy" or "diseased"—another idea with a venerable history that can once again be traced back to the very beginnings of East Asian political philosophy—was also employed in eighteenth-century political discourses on government, with the Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) claiming, for example, that "ruling the country was like a physician controlling an illness."²⁸ This shows that the conceptual link between state and body had become a metaphorical staple in early modern Japan—and, as we shall see, one that fiction drew on in creating a variety of meanings.

Another common trope employed since Chinese antiquity in both philosophical and medical texts was that of the body as a cosmos *en miniature*. This trope linking physical structures of the body to the macrocosmic natural features around it was once again derived from the classical Sino-Japanese natural philosophy of correspondences, which placed the body as a microcosm within the larger macrocosm of the universe.²⁹ Edo-period versions of this notion circulated, for example,

²⁵ See *maki* 卷 11 (*keirakubu* 経絡部) in Terajima, *Wakan sansai zue*, p. 3.

²⁶ Examples include medical concepts such as "lordly fire" (Ch. *junhuo* 君火, Jp. *kunka*) and "ministerial fire" (Ch. *xianghuo* 相火, Jp. *shōka/sōka*) and the portrayal of the Heart as the body's "lord" and "ruler."

²⁷ For examples of such metaphors, see Kaibara, *Yōjōkun*, pp. 32–33, 41.

²⁸ Yamashita, *Master Sorai's Responsals*, p. 48; Shogimen, "Treating the Body Politic," pp. 96–103. On the idea of the "body politic" in early Chinese political writing, see Twitchett, "Chen gui," pp. 72–73.

²⁹ Various lists of correspondences between body parts and features of the natural world appear, for example, in *Wenzi* 文子 (Jp. *Bunshi*), *Huiananzi* 淮南子 (Jp. *Enanji*), and *Lingshu* 靈樞 (Jp.

in encyclopedias like *Wakan sansai zue* and in health-cultivation texts such as the physician Manase Gensaku's 曲直瀬玄朔 (1549–1631) *Enju satsuyō* 延寿撮要 (Essentials of Longevity; 1599):

The human body is like the cosmos. The round of the head is modeled on heaven, the square of the feet on earth. The eyes are the sun and moon; the hair, bones, and flesh are like mountains, forests, soil, and rocks. One's breath is the wind; one's blood and fluids like rivers and oceans.³⁰

In this way of thinking via correspondences—during the Edo period particularly representative of the dominant school of seventeenth-century Japanese medicine (*goseiha* 後世派, or “latter-day,” medicine)—the body paralleled the natural world around it, inextricably bound to its environs by the all-permeating energy-matter *ki* 気.³¹

Metaphors that related to familiar artifacts and the everyday experience of readers were another way of making a point and impressing on people the mechanisms underlying medical thought. One such oft-invoked image in Edo-period health-cultivation manuals was the lamp filled with oil, already used centuries earlier by the Tang 唐 Chinese physician Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682) to highlight the need for moderation in sexual matters;³² as Manase Gensaku put it in his version: “A person's seminal essence is like the oil in a lamp; preventing this essence from leaking

Reisū) in the *Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon*; see, for example, Unschuld's translation from *Ling-shu* in Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu*, pp. 634–35: “Heaven is round, the earth is rectangular. Man's head is round, his feet are rectangular, thereby corresponding to the [measures of heaven]. Heaven has sun and moon; man has two eyes.”

³⁰ Manase, *Enju satsuyō*, p. 484. A similar list can be found in *maki* 12 (*shitaibu* 支脉部) of *Wakan sansai zue*, in Terajima, *Wakan sansai zue*, p. 219.

³¹ It should be noted that from a medicohistorical perspective most of the Edo-period examples cited in this article would strictly speaking fall within the *goseiha* tradition of medicine, which drew on the theory of correspondences. In its heavily analogical thinking this line of medicine would have lent itself particularly well to metaphorical language, but it would be erroneous to conclude a priori that other currents of Sino-Japanese medical thought entirely lacked figurative language. Instances of metaphor can, for example, also be found in health manuals rooted in other traditions (specifically the so-called *koihō* 古医方 style of Sino-Japanese medicine popular in eighteenth-century Japan), such as Nakagami Kinkei's 中神琴溪 (1744–1833) *Seiseidō yōjōron* 生々堂養生論; see *Nihon eisei bunko*, pp. 113, 120. More in-depth research is required to determine the prevalence and types of metaphors across varying traditions and genres of medical writing, but this is beyond the scope of the present article, which merely aspires to establish the metaphorical potential of the body as it existed in Edo-period medical discourses.

³² For a detailed discussion of the lamp metaphor in early modern Japanese texts and some of the other metaphors mentioned here, see Koch, “Sexual Healing” (2014), chapter 1; on metaphors in early modern health-cultivation texts, see also Katafuchi, “Shintai to tatōe” (part 1) and “Shintai to tatōe” (part 2).

out even once is equal to increasing the oil left in the lamp.”³³ Using a different image, Kaibara Ekiken made a case against overeating in his health manual by likening the body and its life energy (*genki* 元氣) to a plant, which required water and fertilizer for sustenance but would wilt and die if plied with an excess of either.³⁴

It was precisely this kind of metaphor-laden medical discourse on the body in the Sino-Japanese tradition that late eighteenth-century graphic narratives such as Ikku's *kibyōshi* mined for entertainment. Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816), for example, crafted such macrocosm-microcosm analogies from medical thought and natural philosophy into visual puns in the opening folios of his *kibyōshi* titled *Gotai wagō monogatari* 五体和合談 (The Tale of Bodily Harmony; 1799). Depicting the author under the sobriquet of Master of the Red Picture Book (Akahon-sensei 赤本先生), the first image shows him lecturing to a small crowd, the received knowledge of the microcosmic body reproduced in writing at the top of the page in language akin to Manase Gensaku's above. Yet the scripted, conventional metaphors of the text that link parts of the human body to natural features in the macrocosm are offset pictorially by a surreal collection of objects displayed in the background, such as “hair-grass” sprouting in long strands from a plant pot and a “river-pulse” that shows a human hand emerging from the waves (figure 2).³⁵ Possibly reminiscent of exotic exhibits of materia medica and other natural objects in eighteenth-century Japan,³⁶ these displays playfully merge two analogous yet distinct semantic fields, the human body (as the target domain) and the macrocosmic natural world (as the source domain), into one and allow them to occupy the same space—to eye-catching and humorous effect.³⁷ A strategy that originally served in medical texts to make a theoretical point about the body more tangible now, in the hands of Kyōden, confounds, surprises, and reduces accepted knowledge to laughable absurdity.

Medical Knowledge as a Literary Vehicle

What enabled this lively crosscurrent of images between medical discourses and fiction in the first place was the unprecedented dissemination of medical ideas in early modern Japan—a development fueled by a burgeoning commercial publishing industry from the early seventeenth century onward, comparably high and

³³ Manase, *Enju satsuyō*, p. 497.

³⁴ Kaibara, *Yōjōkun*, p. 28.

³⁵ Santō, *Gotai wagō monogatari*, fols. 1b–2a. A transcription of this work can be found in Santō Kyōden *zenshū*, pp. 291–309. Kyōden gives the Chinese natural history collection *Bowuzhi* 博物志 (late third century) as the source for his analogies.

³⁶ On Edo-period exhibitions of materia medica, see Marcon, *Knowledge of Nature*, chapter 10; Fukuoka, *Premise of Fidelity*, chapter 3.

³⁷ Forceville uses the term “hybrid metaphors” to refer to pictorial or multimodal metaphors that merge two normally distinct entities or objects into one. See Forceville, “Metaphor in Pictures,” p. 465.



FIGURE 2. Opening scene from Santō Kyōden's *Gotai wagō monogatari*, fols. 1b–2a. The objects displayed in the background carry labels identifying them using wholly invented terms: “hair-grass” (毛草), “rock-bones” (石骨), “soil-flesh” (土肉), and “river-pulse” (川脈). Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://doi.org/10.11501/9892889>.



FIGURE 3. The body's organs as depicted in *Idō nichiyō kōmoku*, fols. 145b–46a (from right to left: the lungs, the large intestine, the spleen, the stomach, and the heart). This medical household encyclopedia was first printed in the early eighteenth century and republished numerous times until the early Meiji period. Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/2536815/1/139>.

ever-increasing literacy rates, and the new medium of the commercially published book.³⁸ Medical books ranked among the earliest exemplars of print, and the commercial book market subsequently spawned a host of consumer-oriented medical publications for the lay readership that included not only health-cultivation manuals but also compendia of materia medica, prescription books, vernacular translations of the Chinese medical classics, and medical household encyclopedias such as Hongō Masatoyo's 本郷正豊 (n.d.) perennially popular *Idō nichiyō kōmoku* 医道日用綱目 (The Principles of Everyday Medicine, also known as *Idō nichiyō chōhōki* 医道日用重宝記 [Treasury of Everyday Medicine]; preface dated 1709), introduced in figure 3. Seeking to reach a broad spectrum of readers, these texts were written in the vernacular script rather than in literary Sinitic (*kanbun* 漢文)—the latter being the privileged language of scholarship across East Asia that dominated learned medicine.³⁹ Such publications for general readers, which often presented a condensed, basic image of the structure and functions of the Sino-Japanese medical body, were used as a template, both visually and textually, in works of popular fiction.⁴⁰

Medical themes not only proliferated in early modern Japan's well-stocked library of printed reference works, they also became recurring topoi in popular vernacular fiction, which thus formed one end on the spectrum of genres involved in the circulation of medical knowledge. These ranged from the adventurous imaginary journeys into the ailing body discussed in the present article to fictional accounts revolving around the workings of certain diseases: Measles and syphilis were reimagined as warrior tales, for example in Funakoshi Takasuke's 船越敬祐 (n.d.) *Ehon baisō gundan* 絵本黴瘡軍談 (An Illustrated Syphilis War Tale; 1838); smallpox was dramatized in booklets such as Ikku's 1803 *Karukuchibanashi* 軽口噺, which, as shown in figure 4, was printed in red ink as a talismanic charm to ward off the "smallpox god" (*hōsōgami* 瘡瘡神);⁴¹ and erotic books turned the well-trodden path toward sexual exhaustion into a rather pleasurable affair (*Isei-sensei yume makura* 遺精先生夢枕 [Master Wet Dream's Pillow]; 1770s?).

³⁸ On early modern publishing and literacy more generally, see Kornicki, *Book in Japan*; Rubinger, *Popular Literacy*.

³⁹ On vernacularization in East Asia more broadly, see Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts*, especially chapter 1. On the vernacularization of medicine in early modern Japan in particular, see Trambaiolo, "Languages of Medical Knowledge"; Tsukamoto, "Edo jidai hito no seimei iji" and *Ikiru koto no kinseishi*.

⁴⁰ See Hongō, *Idō nichiyō kōmoku*. On the similarities in the descriptions of the body in Ikku's text and this encyclopedia, see the annotated translation in Koch, "Dreaming," pp. 58, 79, 88.

⁴¹ For a discussion of *Karukuchibanashi*, see Tsuda, "Hōsō ehon '(Hōsō ukeai).'" For other examples of such smallpox books printed in red, see Hanasaki, *Hōsō ehonshū*; Tsuda, "Hōsō ehon 'Hinazuru.'" For a more general discussion of smallpox, see Rotermund, "Demoniac Affliction." For a brief introduction to Funakoshi Takasuke and his work, see Tatsukawa, "Seibyō," pp. 150–57; Koch, "Ehon baisō gundan."



FIGURE 4. Jippensha Ikku's smallpox book *Karukuchibanashi*, fols. 6b–7a. The booklet was printed entirely in red ink. Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/2537605/1/9>.

The ubiquity of medical themes in early modern Japanese literature has gained recognition by literary scholars in recent years, a notable example being Fukuda Yasunori's 福田安典 call to bring together the study of fiction (*yomimono* 読み物) and medical texts (*igakusho* 医学書).⁴² Fukuda's seminal work has demonstrated how reading early modern fiction within the context of medical knowledge of the time can enhance our understanding of literary texts and reveal how medical knowledge became a source of wordplay, humor, satire, and didacticism in fiction. His focus, however, is firmly on genres of the early and mid-Edo period up to circa 1770 and thus largely skirts the corpus of late-Edo graphic narrative literature (*kusazōshi*) and multicolor prints that is at the core of the present discussion. *Kusazōshi* fiction established an enduring verbal-visual language for representing the body, health, and disease in popular mass culture that impacted related media, such as advertisements, ukiyo-e prints, and didactic materials until the early twentieth century; thus it is well deserving of our attention.

The present research aspires to contribute to the body of medically informed literary studies in Fukuda's wake by expanding and qualifying his framework from the viewpoint of the cultural history of medicine. Fukuda's research on the intersection of medicine and literature has made little distinction between the different

⁴² Fukuda, *Igakusho no naka no "bungaku."*

registers of medical knowledge in circulation, and many of the literary works he discusses were inspired by expert medical texts written in Sinitic.⁴³ Hence his work projects a rather narrow picture of Edo-period “medicine” as a learned field for the cognoscenti and pays little attention to the potential mediating role played by lay-oriented medical manuals and handbooks. I have demonstrated elsewhere that at least in the case of Ikku’s *Essentials*, citations ostensibly from Chinese medical classics were in fact more likely taken from Kaibara Ekiken’s health-cultivation text *Yōjōkun* 養生訓 (Precepts of Health Cultivation; 1713), which was written in the comparatively accessible vernacular for a nonexpert audience.⁴⁴ Ikku also used similar strategies of intellectual posturing about Chinese medical texts elsewhere in his fiction.⁴⁵ While there is certainly a need to distinguish between different authors in this regard and, wherever possible, to scrutinize their sources, the role of such vernacular manuals and handbooks in disseminating medical knowledge should not be neglected.⁴⁶ In any case, such publications undoubtedly contributed to the creation of a readership capable of appreciating popular literary works inspired by medical themes.

Until now, literary research of this kind has also frequently centered on the satirical figure of the bumbling quack doctor (*yabuisha* 藪医者) as a target of fun, in the vein of the early seventeenth-century prototype Chikusai 竹齋 and his laughably outlandish prescriptions for all kinds of illnesses. The functions of such literary texts can, however, be more complex, and both Fukuda and Alessandro Bianchi have aptly pointed out the “hybrid” potential of some such writings in the mid-eighteenth century to function both as satirical entertainment and as a vehicle for medical knowledge.⁴⁷ As these scholars have amply shown, the dichotomy of “medical texts” and “literature/fiction”—while conceptually useful, if somewhat vague, as an analytical crutch—is not always clear-cut; particularly in the case of early modern Japan these categories need to be understood as integrated parts within a

⁴³ Some of the works of fiction discussed by Fukuda are also penned in literary Sinitic and are aimed at an entirely different reading public from the works of popular fiction taken up in the present study; see, for example, Fukuda, *Igakusho no naka no “bungaku,”* pp. 56–62.

⁴⁴ Koch, “Dreaming,” pp. 71–72, 74, 79, 86.

⁴⁵ Harimoto Shin’ichi 播本眞一 has shown for one of Ikku’s early *yomihon* that supposed references to Chinese medical classics such as the *Compendium of Materia Medica* (Ch. *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目, Jp. *Honzō kōmoku*; 1596) and the *Case Histories of Famous Physicians* (Ch. *Mingyi leian* 名医類案, Jp. *Meii ruian*; 1552) were in fact taken from a 1712 Japanese text; see Harimoto, “‘Kai-butsu yoron.’”

⁴⁶ Alessandro Bianchi in his discussion of the mid-eighteenth-century *Isha dangi* 医者談義 has likewise pointed out the possibility of vernacular medical texts as a source; see Bianchi, “Introduction to Medicine,” pp. 96–97.

⁴⁷ Fukuda, *Igakusho no naka no “bungaku”* and “Igakusho to yomimono to”; Bianchi, “Introduction to Medicine.”

larger medical marketplace and a public “knowledge library” in print.⁴⁸ And as I demonstrate for late eighteenth-century “playful” (*gesaku* 戯作) fiction, commercial publishing produced a community of medical letters, that is, a shared vernacular culture of medical knowledge that brought together medical experts and dilettantes as both producers and consumers of texts. This enabled a blurring of lines between the literary and the medical, the popular and the scholarly, and the layperson and the expert, as all shared not only the medium of the printed book and the same knowledge, but at times also the same providers and commercial spaces.

Within this context, what can Ikku’s work and that of his contemporaries specifically contribute? What some literary scholars have in the past deplored as a symptom of the decline of *kibyōshi* in the 1790s, i.e., their turn to more serious and educational themes in the aftermath of the Kansei 寛政 Reforms (1787–1793) and tightening governing censorship,⁴⁹ makes them, in fact, particularly illuminating for the scholar of cultural studies and historians of early modern book culture, medicine, and education. From such a vantage point, they become yet another expression of the circulation of knowledge in print and, as Suzuki Toshiyuki 鈴木俊幸 has argued, of a new bourgeois readership in the late eighteenth century that actively sought education from books.⁵⁰

At the same time, little attention has been paid to the creative uses of medical knowledge in engendering nonmedical meanings in popular culture or, as this article proposes, to the fact that medical notions could be integrated into fiction (and other texts) to make statements about entirely different social phenomena—what can be termed the “social body” and the “moral body,” that is, the metaphorical complexes that linked the human body and its healthy functioning to social order on the one hand and to morality on the other. As the print by Utagawa Yoshitora referenced at the beginning of this article already hints, it was merely a small conceptual step from the healthy medical body to the sociopolitical body of the Pax Tokugawa, from wrestling medicine soldiers to Tokugawa warriors. And in the

⁴⁸ This term is inspired by Mary Elizabeth Berry’s “library of public information,” which refers to the vast output of printed reference works produced throughout the early modern period; see Berry, *Japan in Print*, p. 13.

⁴⁹ See, for example, the periodization proposed in *Edo no parodii ehon* and that in Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, pp. 9–10, where Kern describes *kibyōshi* as “cut off at the stem” by the Kansei Reforms and “petering out” after 1791.

⁵⁰ Suzuki, *Edo no dokushonetsu*, especially chapter 1. Suzuki considers the 1790s to be a watershed in early modern reading habits; others such as Yokota Fuyuhiko 横田冬彦 have noted signs of the development of “educational reading” (*chiteki dokusho* 知的読書) among the commoner elite as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century (see Yokota, “Ekiken-bon no dokusha” and *Nihon kinsei shomotsu bunkashi*). Ikku’s work in particular has much to offer the researcher in that it provides a rare fictional perspective to counterbalance modern scholarship on health-cultivation discourses that has mainly centered on the textual corpus of health-cultivation manuals itself, its normative standards, and its intellectual and medical underpinnings rather than on its social deployment and responses in other discourses.

same way, as we shall see below, physical disease was only a metaphorical shortcut away from moral “ill.”

Ikku’s “Essentials” and the Metaphorical Medical Body in Fiction

In the late eighteenth-century literature of Japan, a certain subset of works and prints—of which Ikku’s *Essentials* was representative—turned the body and its medical processes into a metaphor, mobilizing the human organism as a fictional setting and body parts as actors driving the plot. This stretch of the imagination was achieved within the fictional world of the narrative by means of anthropomorphization, an extremely common technique used in *kibyōshi*. Identified by wearing their respective body parts or labels on top of their heads or by patches and patterns on their clothing, personified organs and other body parts acted, felt, and thought like human characters and often dramatized stock fictional scenarios for the reader. In the 1790s, at least three *kibyōshi* appeared that used this approach as a primary plot device. The first of these was Shiba Zenkō’s 芝全交 (1750–1793) *Jūshi keisei hara no uchi* 十四傾城腹之内 (Inside the Bellies of Fourteen Courtesans; 1793, published by Tsuruya Kiemon 鶴屋喜右衛門), which used the structures inside a courtesan’s abdomen as its characters.⁵¹ Ikku’s work (published by Nishimuraya Yohachi 西村屋与八) and Kyōden’s *Gotai wagō monogatari* (published by Tsuruya Kiemon) both appeared in the spring of 1799. Several other *kibyōshi* in or just after the 1790s incorporated similar strategies in a more limited way,⁵² and subsequently the trope was revived in works that included the popular *Yōjō kagami* 養生鑑 (Mirror of Health; 1850s) series of *nishiki-e* 錦絵 prints. This persistent recycling and refashioning of the metaphor signify the continuing appeal it must have held for the popular imagination, an appeal that lasted even into the Meiji period.⁵³

At the same time, it is necessary to ask why this use of the metaphorical body appears to have enjoyed its heyday in popular fiction precisely in the 1790s. Although various cultural influences may have favored this trope at this time (as discussed below), one major factor from within the genre was undoubtedly the success

⁵¹ See Shiba, *Jūshi keisei hara no uchi*. A modern annotated version can be found in *Edo no parodii ehon*. For a recent discussion of the work, see Marceau, “Kinsei Nihon no eiri bungaku,” pp. 26–34.

⁵² These include Kyōden’s *Sansai zue osana kōshaku* 三歳図会稚講釈 (1797), Kyokutei Bakin’s 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848) *Hana no shita nagaiki no kusuri* 鼻下長生薬 (1798), and Ranjatei Kaoru’s 蘭奢亭薫 *Gotai fugu dokukeshigusuri* 五臓不具毒解薬 (1800), as well as the earlier work *Fukuchū sōji gozō no yume* 腹中掃除五臓夢 (1786).

⁵³ There exists, for instance, an undated Meiji-period print entitled *Yōjō kokoroegusa* 養生心得草, which depicts the interior body of a young man sporting a short, Western-style haircut and drinking from a chalice reproduced alongside advice for a healthy diet. See *Yōjō kokoroegusa*. To take another example, promoters of the stomach medication Wakamoto わかもと were still making use of the Edo-period *Inshoku yōjō kagami* 飲食養生鑑 (ca. 1850) for an advertisement in the 1930s (reproduced, among other places, in the 1 May 1938 edition of the *Sandē Mainichi* サンデー毎日); see *Inshoku yōjō kagami*.

of Zenkō's work and the publishing industry's tendency to pragmatically replicate a formula that had a proven track record with the reading public.⁵⁴ It may be rare now to cite Zenkō as one of the leading *gesaku* writers in modern canonizations,⁵⁵ but he was a well-respected first-generation writer of *kibyōshi* in his own day—to the extent that Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822) considered adopting the pen name Shiba Zenkō II. *Jūshi keisei hara no uchi* in particular was quickly reissued as a special edition⁵⁶ and received accolades from Zenkō's contemporaries: Sanba rated it among the best works in the genre in his personal list of top picks in *Kusazōshi kojitsuke nendaiki* 稗史億說年代記 (A Popular History of Graphic Narratives; 1802);⁵⁷ Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848) mentions in his retrospective account of the *gesaku* movement that it “proved very fashionable at the time and was widely read”;⁵⁸ and at Zenkō's death the year after *Jūshi keisei*'s publication, a rip-off was published in homage to the deceased as *Shiba Zenkō hara no uchi* 芝全交腹内 (Inside Shiba Zenkō's Abdomen; 1794).⁵⁹

Ikku, who had made his debut as a writer of playful fiction only a few years earlier, was yet to have his biggest career break with the long-running *Hizakurige* 膝栗毛 (Shank's Mare; 1802–1822) series at the time he wrote *Essentials*.⁶⁰ The book itself leaves little room for doubt that he must have been familiar with his predecessor's work, as it resembles Zenkō's not only in its overall plot device but also in some of its visual and textual puns.⁶¹ Kyōden, by contrast, was already well established as a writer and illustrator of *gesaku* fiction by 1799,⁶² and his *Gotai wagō monogatari* makes no obvious reference to *Jūshi keisei hara no uchi*. Instead, both title and plot draw heavily on an earlier moralistic parable (see below) and partly rehash elements from his own oeuvre.⁶³ Moreover, unlike Ikku and Zenkō, who already

⁵⁴ An example of this is Kyōden's *Shingaku hayasomegusa* 心学早染草 (Quick-Dye Mind Learning; 1790), with its personifications of good and bad human traits (*zendama* 善玉, *akudama* 悪玉). Its initial success spawned several sequels but also inspired many imitations in fiction, in prints, and on the stage; see, for example, Moretti and Satō, *Graphic Narratives*, p. 469.

⁵⁵ A translation of Zenkō's *Daihi no senroppon* 大悲の千六本 (Thousand-Armed Goddess of Mercy, Julienned; 1785), by Adam Kern, is, however, included in a recent anthology of Edo literature, together with a short introduction; see Jones, *Edo Anthology*, pp. 124–36.

⁵⁶ Tanahashi, *Kibyōshi sōran*, vol. 2, p. 326.

⁵⁷ Shikitei, *Kusazōshi kojitsuke*, fol. 15b.

⁵⁸ Kyokutei, *Kinsei mono no hon*, p. 32.

⁵⁹ Shibasanjin, *Shiba Zenkō hara no uchi*. For a short introduction to this work, see Tanahashi, *Kibyōshi sōran*, vol. 2, pp. 426–27.

⁶⁰ For a detailed discussion of the (sparse) biographical data available on Ikku, see Tanahashi, *Jippensha Ikku*.

⁶¹ On this point, see in particular Koch, “Dreaming,” pp. 83–84, 90.

⁶² For Kyōden's biography and literary development, see Satō, *Santō Kyōden*.

⁶³ The preface, for example, is taken almost verbatim from the section on the body in his *Sansai zue osana kōshaku*, which appeared two years earlier.

refer to medical concepts more or less obliquely in their titles and base their characters on interior organs, Kyōden mainly features external body parts. Nevertheless, his piece warrants inclusion here for comparative purposes given that it partially drew on concepts related to bodily health and that it appeared at the same time as Ikku's work. This timing may not be coincidental, although there is no proof of mutual influence or common sources of inspiration.

The writers who created these works were not only some of the *crème de la crème* of Edo's playful *gesaku* authors around the turn of the eighteenth century but notably also medical dilettantes. Though they generally had no formal training and did not identify as practitioners, some of them dabbled in the early modern medical marketplace in a variety of ways via their publishing and commercial ventures.⁶⁴ The fact that Kyōden, Sanba, and Bakin's family had sidelines in selling ready-made medications is widely known and well documented in their books and contemporary advertisements. From 1802 onward, Kyōden's fictional works regularly featured advertisements for his "Reading Pill" (Dokushogan 読書丸), and some of these ads showed a remarkable command of bona fide medical knowledge originally derived from the Chinese canon.⁶⁵ According to Bakin, Kyōden's brother and fellow fiction writer Santō Kyōzan 山東京山 (1869–1858) even suspended sales of smoking accessories upon inheriting Kyōden's shop and instead extended its product range to include concoctions akin to medicines for the bedroom (*bōyaku* 房薬), i.e., "medicines to boost fertility or prevent pregnancy."⁶⁶ Kyōzan did, indeed, peddle a medicine called Kainintan 懷妊丹 (Conception Concoction), which claimed to boost sexual stamina in men and fertility in women, according to numerous advertisements both in his fiction and his health-cultivation text *Yōjō tebikigusa* 養生手引草 (Guide to Health Cultivation; 1858). A promotion (see figure 5) from Kyōzan's long-running *Oshiegusa nyōbō katagi* 教草女房形気 (Teachings on Characters of Women; 1847–1868) also suggests that the book's publisher Yamadaya Shōjirō 山田屋庄次郎 may have sold both Kyōzan's fiction and his medicinal products in his bookshop. In such ways, the lively culture of commercial medications and illustrated fiction shared commercial spaces and providers, and the division between the two was blurred—both on and off the pages of printed books. In fact, as Suzuki Toshiyuki

⁶⁴ Bakin briefly studied medicine in his youth but apparently had no taste for it, although his son later became a doctor; see *Nochi no tame no ki* 後の為の記 (1835) in Kyokutei, *Kyokutei ikō*, p. 110.

⁶⁵ In a single-sheet advertising leaflet signed by Kyōden, he liberally cites formulas from Chinese medical classics such as Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (known in Japanese as *Senkinpō* 千金方; ca. 650) and the sixteenth-century *Wanbing huichun* 万病回春 (Jp. *Manbyō kaihshun*; 1587) as precedents for his own product, and these appear to replicate authentic passages from those books in shortened, vernacular versions. The leaflet is held by the medical library of the University of Tokyo, and a transcription of the advertisement can be found in Suzuki, "Dokushogan no kōnō," p. 160. On the medications sold by Kyōden, Sanba, and Bakin's family, see also Yoshioka, *Edo no kigusuriya*, pp. 104–80.

⁶⁶ Kyokutei, *Kinsei mono no hon*, p. 55.



FIGURE 5. Advertisement for the medications Dokushogan and Kainintan at the end of Santō Kyōzan's *Oshiegiusa nyōbō katagi (nijū hen)*, fol. 20b, and unpaginated back matter. Marega Collection, Università Pontificia Salesiana. Reprinted with permission.

has pointed out, Kyōden's medications were probably circulated together via the same national distribution networks of the publishing trade as his books, and, like a host of other remedies, also retailed by publisher-booksellers in their shops.⁶⁷ It is therefore likely that the personal and commercial interests of *gesaku* authors would have stimulated the influx of medical notions into fiction at this time.

In contrast, Ikku's pursuit of medical and disease-related themes was mainly restricted to his writings. These included the abovementioned smallpox book *Karukuchibanashi*, which was printed at the height of an epidemic and depicts a motley crew of children's toys petitioning the smallpox god to spare their young owners; a sequel several years later was probably published during another upsurge of the disease (*Kodakarayama* 子宝山; n.d.).⁶⁸ Ikku's medically inspired writings, however, did not remain confined to the realm of fiction: Ever keen to meet the changing demands of readers, in 1824 he also wrote, under his birth name Shigetata Sadakazu 重田貞一, a short popular medical treatise on simple health measures to combat measles. Published during an outbreak and titled *Hashika yōjō den* 麻疹養生伝

⁶⁷ Suzuki, "Dokushogan no kōnō," pp. 164–66.

⁶⁸ Detailed bibliographic research into *Kodakarayama* can be found in Tanahashi, *Kibyōshi sōran*, vol. 3, pp. 184–90.



FIGURE 6. Jippensha Ikku's *Hashika yōjō den*, inside cover (right) and preface, fol. 1a. The inside cover of this edition features the legendary Shōki 鍾馗, a Tang Chinese hero and expeller of demons, on an auspicious red background. Notably, the preface—written in suitably dignified *kanbun*—is signed with the author's real name (Shigeta Sadakazu), which he appears to have preferred over the playful pen name Jippensha Ikku in some of his more serious writings. Fujikawa Bunko, Kyoto University Library. Reprinted with permission.

(Health Cultivation for Measles), it touched upon areas such as healing spells, prescriptions, and the avoidance of certain types of food and was allegedly based on an unnamed work by the physician Tokuhon 徳本 (see figure 6).⁶⁹ The same epidemic also found its way into Ikku's playful writings in *Jufuku uketori chō* 寿福請取帖 (A Ledger of Receipts for Longevity and Happiness; 1824), which was touted in a promotional book announcement as “the perfect get well gift, being an entertaining picture book on the measles.”⁷⁰ The fact that this advertisement for a fictional

⁶⁹ The claim about Tokuhon is likely specious, since no such work appears to be extant. The reference is to the legendary doctor Nagata Tokuhon 永田徳本 (ca. 1513–1630), who was also featured in *Kinsei kijinden* 近世奇人伝 (1790) and some popular nineteenth-century measles prints (see, for example, *Meii Kai no Tokuhon hashika no raiki* 妙医甲斐徳本麻疹之来記; 1862). At the same time, at least some of the prescriptions listed by Ikku are derived from the Chinese scholarly tradition of formulas; the medication Shōma Kakkontō 升麻葛根湯, which Ikku recommends, was included, for example, in the sixteenth-century Chinese treatise *Manbyō kaishun*, where it was noted as a remedy for epidemic diseases. Both the name and the ingredients of the formula in Ikku's text are virtually identical.

⁷⁰ Back matter in Shigeta, *Hashika yōjō den*. For a transcription of *Jufuku uketori chō*, see Tsuda, “‘Hōsō yoke’ to ‘Jufuku uketorichō,’” pp. 421–33. The back matter of *Hashika yōjō den* in the Fujikawa Bunko 富士川文庫 edition includes another advertisement for a measles-related

work—whose writing was prompted by an actual epidemic—appeared in the back matter of Ikku's treatise *Hashika yōjō den* serves to illustrate the close connection and cross-fertilization that existed between medical knowledge, its literary expression, and the social reality of a life-threatening disease at the time.

In this way, many fiction writers in the late eighteenth century in fact actively participated as producers in a wider community of medical letters made possible by commercial printing. The field was accessible to anyone with the requisite knowledge and the ability to respond to readers' interest in such matters. During this period, amateurs played a crucial role not only as consumers who engaged in intellectual activities and created markets for all kinds of printed knowledge but significantly also as active producers of such knowledge. It has elsewhere been pointed out that cultural clubs and circles of well-off dilettantes with scholarly aspirations made an impact in the field of natural history,⁷¹ but the ascendancy of laymen claiming marketable healing knowledge can also be observed in profit-oriented, more popular medical publications and in commercial pharmaceutical ventures. As information on healing and the body entered the public domain and became no longer the sole privilege of the expert, significant overlaps, hybridisms, and cross-overs between the medical and other spheres were created—spatially, personally, and textually. Bookshops doubled as medicine sellers,⁷² *gesaku* authors acted as purveyors of popular healing advice and as entrepreneurs in commercial medications, and fictional writing packaged medical information. This inevitably influenced the relationship between medicine and literature such that medically themed fiction came to represent but one aspect of a much broader phenomenon.

Bodily Health and Societal Harmony. Ikku's *Essentials* drew inspiration from contemporary discourses on health cultivation (*yōjō* 養生; literally “nurturing life”). These works addressed a lay audience of health seekers and were commonly infused with Confucian didacticism, the arguably best known being *Yōjōkun* by the Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekiken.⁷³ With a fictionalized Ekiken as an expert guide to healthy living, *Essentials* transports the reader inside the author Ikku's ailing body, which is peopled by personified body parts. These colorful protagonists,

narrative work by Ikku titled *Saikoku hashika zōdan* 西邦麻疹難談, described as a book of “strange events that took place during a measles epidemic in olden times”; however, this work appears to have been lost or may never have been produced.

⁷¹ On the role of such clubs and scholarly networks in the field of natural history, see Marcon, *Knowledge of Nature*, especially chapters 8 and 9; Fukuoka, *Premise of Fidelity*.

⁷² The role of publisher-bookshops in these crossovers between medicine—particularly the marketplace for commercial medications—and popular literature cannot be overstated but is impossible to address within the scope of the present study. For a discussion, see Koch, “Picture-Book Medicine” (forthcoming).

⁷³ For a detailed summary and discussion of *Essentials* and its relation to health-cultivation discourses such as *Yōjōkun*, see Koch, “Dreaming,” pp. 49–63.

such as the gluttonous Mouth and the sexually insatiable young lovers, Master Life Energy (*genki* 元氣) and Miss Essence (*seiki* 精氣), recklessly flaunt the core tenet of moderation in regard to diet and sexual activity that was advocated in health-cultivation texts. Their misbehavior throws Ikku's body into the turmoil of ill health, with clogged entrails, flagging energy, and debilitated organs vividly demonstrating the physiological consequences of such transgression. It is only when the miscreants are brought to order and made to mend their ways that health and prosperity are finally realized.

Even though Ikku's work was unique in its use of health cultivation as a trope, it was only one of a number of *kibyōshi* of the 1790s that made the medical body its stage of action. Connecting these works were not only their theme of health and disease but also their use of a cloak of medical propriety in depicting the tumultuous body social of the late eighteenth century. Referring back to centuries-old metaphors of the body-state, they turned the human form into a thoroughly up-to-date social microcosm—be that the hierarchical warrior societies reflected in Ikku's text and Kyōden's *Gotai wagō monogatari* or the urban demimonde of the pleasure quarters in Zenkō's work. In this sense, these texts encapsulate a layered vision of the body, with text and image signifying on both the medical and social levels. To this end, fiction tapped into established imagery and rhetoric from a variety of eighteenth-century discourses—medical, political, and moral—all of which would have in turn inevitably shaped the understanding of the idiosyncratic, topsy-turvy “body worlds” that fiction writers devised in the 1790s. Medicine and the healthy or diseased body, in other words, were already part of a far-reaching metaphorical network that fiction could exploit.

On a medical level, Ikku, Zenkō, and to a lesser degree Kyōden resorted to the Sino-Japanese body and its notion of the Five Organs and Six Viscera (*gozō roppu* 五臟六腑) in populating their fictional worlds with body parts: kidneys as the seat of sexual function (rather than as excretory organs), bowels with precisely thirty-six bends, bodily agents such as *ki* and essence, and regions in the abdomen identified as centers of vital energy such as the gate of life (*meimon* 命門) and the cinnabar field (*tanden* 丹田), which were unknown to Western medicine. It should be noted that by the late eighteenth century many of these medical concepts had come under scrutiny and had partially fallen out of favor with scholarly physicians of the day, who had become increasingly critical of the system of correspondences that underpinned this traditional Sino-Japanese body and were not only turning to Western-style medicine but also seeking out new pathways in Sino-Japanese healing.⁷⁴ Despite the influx of novel anatomical insights culled from Western books and hands-on experiments among physicians, however, the organs' textual and visual representations

⁷⁴ This raises the question of whether fiction writers in the 1790s were specifically satirizing medical ideas about the body that they perceived to be “outdated.” This appears unlikely, as the texts show no definitive or in-depth awareness of ongoing scholarly discussion on the subject.

in the *kibyōshi* are virtually identical to Sino-Japanese medical depictions in contemporary medical household books and general knowledge encyclopedias, such as the earlier-mentioned *Wakan sansai zue* and *Idō nichiyō kōmoku*, as well as others (see figure 7),⁷⁵ where long-standing views of the body continued to circulate.⁷⁶ The same is largely true for single-sheet prints that recycled the leitmotiv of the body as a society *en miniature* in the late Edo period and condensed it into a single image of a transparent body that likened the organs' functions to the four status groups of samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants (figure 8) or occupations (figure 9) while providing simple health advice in the head text.⁷⁷ In their iconography of the body, these prints adhered to the Sino-Japanese medical tradition even down to the conventions that associated each organ system with a certain color according to the medical theory of correspondences—a scheme commonly used for medical models and in treatises on acupuncture (see figure 10 for an example).

The body as envisaged by Chinese-style medicine also provided rich subject matter for the linguistic creativity of authors, as many of its concepts (such as *ki*) had seeped into the bedrock of everyday Japanese language. Humor could thus be created by giving a twist to conventionalized body metaphors and proverbs, which made up the punning fabric of the texts, and authors could breathe fresh life into

⁷⁵ *Wakan sansai zue* represented the traditional view of the organs based on *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon* and its later interpretations, both in text and image. The illustration was originally taken from the Ming 明 medical treatise *Leijing tuyi* 類經圖翼 (1624). *Idō nichiyō kōmoku* was issued in at least ten dated editions between 1709 and the 1870s and addressed “amateurs with medical aspirations.” Hongō, *Idō nichiyō kōmoku*, fol. 1a. Compared to the 105-volume *Wakan sansai zue* in Sinitic *kanbun*, this single volume penned in the vernacular would have been more accessible and affordable. Other examples include (*Tōsho zōho*) *kinmōzui taisei* (頭書増補) 訓蒙図彙大成 (1789), an expanded version of a general knowledge encyclopedia first published in 1666, and *Gozōbanashi* 五臓ばなし, a cheaply produced booklet that reproduced the traditional view of the Five Organs and Six Viscera both visually on the cover and textually in its short descriptions of the body's organs. It was authored and printed most likely in the 1790s by Hananobō Heizō 華房兵藏 (n.d.), who was active as a publisher, author, and seller of medications.

⁷⁶ Medical histories have traditionally identified an epistemic shift in Japan during the eighteenth century from metaphysically rooted (“latter-day” or *goseiha*) medicine to empirical understandings associated with new Sino-Japanese as well as Western paradigms. This shift in learned theory, however, was neither linear nor wholesale, and particularly in lay-oriented medical publications previous notions of the body continued to circulate. Seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century medical household books and health-cultivation texts by authors such as Ekiken and Manase Gensaku were reprinted throughout the early modern period without significant revisions, promoting visions of the body that had dominated learned medicine at the time of their writing. Newly published popular medical titles and handbooks at times still reproduced this traditional view, which clearly persisted in the popular mind. This makes evolutionary medicohistorical accounts of limited usefulness in describing the multilayered universe of vernacular medical knowledge in print to which general readers were exposed by the end of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁷ The exception is the depiction of the female ovaries and mention of chyle in the *Bōji yōjō kagami* 房事養生鑑 (ca. 1850s) print; both ovaries and chyle were unknown to Sino-Japanese medicine. See *Bōji yōjō kagami*.

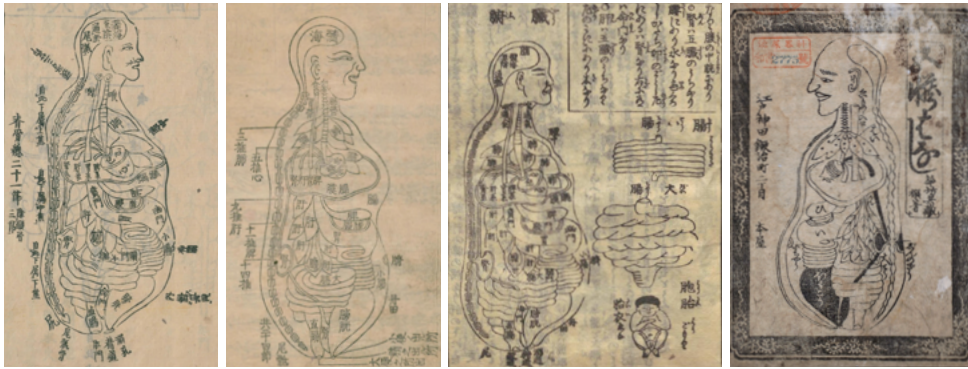


FIGURE 7. Illustrations of the body as Five Organs and Six Viscera. *Left to right: Wakan sansai zue*, fol. 2a (*maki* 11). Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/2596359/1/4>. *Idō nichiyō kōmoku*, fol. 145a (1749 edition). Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/2536815/1/138>. (*Tōsho zōho*) *kinmōzui taisei*, fol. 4a (*maki* 5; 1789 edition). Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/11446229/1/5>. *Gozōbanashi*, cover. Kyushu University Library Collections. <https://hdl.handle.net/2324/1445978>.



FIGURE 8. (*Shi nō kō shō*) *Gozō no nazorae* (死悩効生) 五臟廻准擬. In this single-sheet print, the Five Organs are depicted as the four status groups and the shogun. UCSF Japanese Woodblock Print Collection, <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb7489p2s5/>. Reprinted with permission.



FIGURE 9. *Inshoku yōjō kagami*, color woodblock print. Medical Historical Library, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University. Reprinted with permission.



FIGURE 10. Okamoto Ippō's 岡本一抱 (d. 1716) *Zōfu keiraku shōkai* 臟腑經絡詳解 (1690), fols. 3b and 5b (*maki* 1), illustrating the convention of associating each organ system with a specific color: Here, the lungs and the lung channel are hand colored in white. Fujikawa Bunko, Kyoto University Library. <https://rmda.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/item/rb000000298?page=22> and <https://rmda.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/item/rb000000298?page=24>.

the well-tested stock motifs of popular fiction. In Ikku's *Essentials*, for example, the young Master Life Energy's indiscretion, subsequent disinheritance, and elopement with his paramour Miss Essence represented a well-worn subject of many a tale in Edo popular fiction, but this sequence of events assumes the additional function of illustrating the mechanics of sexual exhaustion and the subsequent health problems caused by aberrant *ki* (fols. 3b–4a, 4b–5a, 6b–7a).⁷⁸ The *michiyuki* 道行 travel scene of the young lovers becomes a depiction of the medical symptoms of “accumulated *ki*” traveling around the body and stagnating in the chest (fols. 8b–9a, 10b), and at the same time it signifies on a social level the destabilization of the household and of society as depicted within the abdomen. In this way, physical and social ailments are constantly overlaid in Ikku's narrative.

The medical body thus also presented a range of metaphorical possibilities in fiction, among others as a site of sociopolitical meanings. The Sino-Japanese medical body was an ideal framework for producing such overtones given that it was imbued with sociopolitical tropes, as noted above, that authors knew how to dexterously manipulate. In Ikku's dream narrative, the reader is thus confronted with the Heart presiding as the Great General over the other four organs as his officials or vassals, in accordance with the ancient saying that “the Heart is the master of the body” (fols. 2b–3a).⁷⁹ This principle ultimately derived from the metaphorical jargon of *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon* and assigned the heart a special position within the body, stressing its importance vis-à-vis the other body parts.⁸⁰ Such sociopolitical metaphors in medical thought (heart as leader, other organs as subordinates) are projected back onto the social plane in Ikku's *Essentials*, where they are applied to Tokugawa hierarchies. The personified Heart becomes a military leader from the ruling warrior class (aptly designated *taishō* 大將, or “Great General,” in the text), surrounded by the Spleen, Lungs, and Stomach as his vassals.⁸¹ Similar strategies can be found in Zenkō's and Kyōden's texts, as well as in the *Yōjō kagami* prints. In a reversal of the metaphorical process, the medical body as the original metaphor's target domain now becomes the source domain and is mapped back onto the body social of early modern Japan.

In a similar vein, Kyōden in his preface to *Gotai wagō monogatari* made explicit reference to the Chinese Tang political work *Chen gui* 臣規 (Guidelines for Imperial Subjects; ca. 685) and its chapter on the “common body politic” (*dōtai* 同体). This

⁷⁸ Here and throughout this article, folio numbers for this work are cited from the copy of *Hara no uchi yōjō shuron* held by the National Diet Library; see Jippensha, *Hara no uchi*. For reproductions and translations of the relevant folios, see Koch, “Dreaming,” pp. 65–96.

⁷⁹ Koch, “Dreaming,” p. 70.

⁸⁰ Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 133–36.

⁸¹ Ikku's text here mentions Spleen, Lungs, Liver, and Kidneys as vassals, which together with the heart formed the Five Organs in Sino-Japanese medical thought, but the accompanying illustration shows Spleen, Lungs, and Stomach.

text conceived of the state as a body with the sovereign as its head and the ministers as its limbs, employing tropes that, as Chinese historian Denis Twitchett has pointed out, had their origins in the earliest Chinese political writings.⁸² The state-sponsored *Guidelines for Imperial Subjects* specifically presented a Confucian-inspired model of appropriate conduct for officials as part of a larger program of prescriptive political texts. This rather particular vision of the state was of an ordained hierarchical order governed by a benevolent ruler, in which everyone knew their proper place and function—just like the parts in the human body. Given that “the human body is a microcosm” of the outside world, Kyōden’s preface draws an analogy to the social macrocosm, with the Heart representing the righteous and virtuous Great General (*taishōgun* 大將軍) and the other body parts his subjects working in unison (fol. 1a).⁸³ Yet the work’s titular promise of this idyllic, Confucian-style social “harmony” remains for the most part elusive in *Gotai wagō monogatari*; instead the whole body is thrown into turmoil by the improper behavior of its ruler the Heart and his wife Ki, which ends in a full-blown revolt by the feet. This serves to illustrate the narrative viewpoint that “because the Heart Lord is lacking the correct way, [the whole body] is in disarray, down to the fingertips” (fols. 14a–15b). The book closes with the moral that just as the body descends into chaos, so will the household if “its master’s heart is not in order” (fol. 15b).⁸⁴ This final figurative twist of the body metaphor represents a moralizing nod to the popular ethics of Shingaku 心学 philosophy (to be discussed in more detail below), which placed the pure “heart” or mind at the epicenter of a harmonious, prosperous household and society.

The sociopolitical chaos fomenting in Kyōden’s body is metaphorically represented as a physical disorder sent by the feet to torment the head, in this case *shibire* 痺, a type of numbness and pain that creeps up the legs and causes a throbbing headache. To dispel the ailment, in yet another anthropomorphized battle the hands fire arrows of mugwort—the herb used in moxibustion treatment—at the *sanri* 三里 moxibustion point below the knee, which was believed to be particularly effective in curing a range of diseases. The accompanying illustration shows the disease villains being chased off by the fingers, who fire a barrage of smoldering moxa cones and also deploy other implements used in moxibustion: an incense stick (to light the cones) and a fan to stoke the fire (see figure 11). In this way, Kyōden uses health-related metaphors to make a statement about the correct social order, paralleling disorders of the physical body and the body social.

Ikku’s work, by comparison, largely lacks such overtly sociopolitical metaphors, yet in his title’s notion of “nurturing life” the writer arguably also references a

⁸² On this point and the *Chen gui* more generally, see Twitchett, “‘Chen gui.’”

⁸³ All folio numbers for this work are cited from Santō, *Gotai wagō monogatari*; see also Santō Kyōden *zenshū*, p. 291.

⁸⁴ Santō, *Gotai wagō monogatari*; see also Santō Kyōden *zenshū*, pp. 308–309.



FIGURE 11. The fingers chasing away the disorder *shibire* with moxibustion implements in *Gotai wagō monogatari*, fols. 13b–14a. Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://doi.org/10.11501/9892889>.

concept that not only had strong associations with medical thought but particularly in Ekiken's Neo-Confucian formulation also evoked normative undertones of social stability as a corollary to physical health. "Nurturing life," Ekiken opined in *Yōjōkun*, for example, entailed "the four classes of people applying themselves to matters appropriate to them." Samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants dedicating themselves to their respective tasks according to their station—"this all formed part of the Way of Nurturing Life."⁸⁵ Similar views of the concept as part of a larger enterprise of cultivating self and society circulated elsewhere; in fact, as Takizawa Toshiyuki 瀧澤利行 has previously argued, "nurturing life" assumed a fairly broad meaning particularly in some late-Edo publications on the subject, shifting in content from a more health-centered notion toward an all-around cultivation of the social self.⁸⁶ In Ikku's version, this body-society is once again anti-thetically presented as a body lacking in cultivation (*fuyōjō* 不養生), a body of social disharmony, disorder, financial straits, and bad advisers: In one scene, the Heart Lord unwisely lends his ear to the machinations of the Mouth (fol. 11a); in another, organs petition their superiors in typically formulaic terms to take action because their businesses are suffering from disruptions to the transportation infrastructure

⁸⁵ Kaibara, *Yōjōkun*, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Takizawa, "Jūkyū seiki zenki yōjōron."

(fols. 7b–8a), metaphorically tying the medical body’s failing health to the population’s financial well-being.

This same strategy of inverting their titular ideals can be discerned in the later *Yōjō kagami* prints, which depict the inner workings of two people who are transgressors of health guidelines: In one, a man gorges himself on a lavish and luxurious meal, and in the other, a pregnant courtesan is portrayed as a symbol of sexual excess. The bellies of both figures are populated by a bustle of hard-working figures representing various bodily functions—as Shigehisa Kuriyama has argued, a symbol of early modern Japan’s “industrious society” that linked hard work, the constant movement of people and goods, and the body’s healthy circulation of *ki*.⁸⁷ Some of the toiling laborers in the first of these two prints (figure 9) vehemently vent their frustration at how the debauched ways of their owner cause this ill-functioning body’s society to suffer. The worker who descends the Kidney Pathway from the Heart shouldering a bucket complains that he has to make this trip daily to ensure that the “water” does not run out—an oblique reference to the excessive sex life of the body’s male owner. The guards at the Kidney Gate plaintively join in, bemoaning the fact that people “do not understand the painful consequences of lacking in circumspection and become ill.”⁸⁸

An undated, presumably late-Edo single-sheet print (figure 8) titled (*Shi nō kō shō*) *Gozō no nazorae* (死悩効生) 五臓廼准擬 (An Imitation of the Five Organs) and signed by Rodonsai 魯鈍斎 (n.d.) makes this link between the interior body and Tokugawa social structures even more explicit. Unlike the *Yōjō kagami* prints, it almost entirely dispenses with medical information and instead emphasizes the body as a sociopolitical analogy, loosely inspired by the medical metaphors for the organs in *The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon*. Transposing them to Tokugawa society, text and image liken the entities inside the abdomen to the shogun and the four status groups—now no longer visually bearing any resemblance to medical structures in the illustration. Medical body and social body are placed on a par with each other in the accompanying main text, which states that “just like the body, [the state] stops functioning (*yō o nasazu* 要をなさず) when even one of the four classes does not play its part.”⁸⁹

Turning the body into a melting pot of (mostly none-too-virtuous) human activity, these fictional works often created body-societies that were to an extent messy, struggling, unruly, and dysfunctional below the surface—a far cry from

⁸⁷ Kuriyama, “Historical Origins” and “When Money Became a Humour.”

⁸⁸ *Inshoku yōjō kagami*.

⁸⁹ (*Shi nō kō shō*) *Gozō no nazorae*. In contrast to the *Yōjō kagami* prints, of which there are various versions and numerous copies, the only extant copy I could identify of this print is held in the UCSF Japanese Woodblock Print Collection at the University of California, San Francisco. Mention is made in the print of a follow-up that will focus on the Six Viscera, but this appears to be no longer extant, or it was never produced.

their eponymous ideals of “harmony” and “healthy living,” which evoked connotations of social order. In other, illegal, media, this identification of the medical body with an ailing social body was taken a step further and became a channel for voicing political dissent. One collection of late-Edo anecdotes, for example, records that during the Tenpō 天保 era (1831–1845), when many posters (*harifuda* 張札) with satirical graffiti (*rakusho* 落書) circulated in Edo, a flyer was pasted to the gate of the villa of Mizuno Tadakuni 水野忠邦 (1794–1851), the shogunate’s top official and architect of the Tenpō Reforms (1841–1843). On it, the word “boil” (*haremono* 腫物) had been written in large letters, with a medicinal plaster (*kōyaku* 膏藥) applied across the top. The text, meanwhile, compared the government’s policies to “merely applying a medicinal plaster to a boil without routinely taking care of the body’s health (*yōjō* 養生),” which made it impossible to eradicate the actual “poison”—thus replicating a basic tenet of health-cultivation discourses to rather striking effect.⁹⁰ Politically subversive graffiti that imitated leaflets for medications also existed as early as the 1780s and continued to be produced until the end of the Tokugawa era.⁹¹

Sociopolitical satire had appeared in some yellow-cover “protest pieces” of the late 1780s and early 1790s, which featured spoofs of the latest government policies and thinly disguised portrayals of their architect, Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1759–1829),⁹² yet by the time Ikku was writing *Essentials*, this was no longer possible in print. The Kansei Reforms had created a repressive climate of intense censorship with crackdowns on popular fiction writers and their publishers, who faced official retribution, including house arrest and confiscation of goods, for literary missteps that fell afoul of the law. The star duo of *gesaku* fiction, Santō Kyōden and the publisher Tsutaya Jūzaburō 蔦屋重三郎 (1750–1797), were famously prosecuted in 1791 for the publication of three fictional pieces on the pleasure quarters (*sharebon* 洒落本), and Shikitei Sanba was charged in 1799 for a *kibyōshi* that featured a contemporary conflict between competing fire brigades in Edo.⁹³ In the aftermath of his brush with the authorities, Kyōden increasingly turned to reworking didactic themes in his fiction, with the result that, according to Bakin’s sharp-tongued

⁹⁰ Yamada, *Sōkoroku*, pp. 154–55.

⁹¹ This is based on a survey of the graffiti contained in Yajima, *Edo jidai rakusho ruijū*; for examples, see pp. 276–77, 334–35.

⁹² Examples of these include *Bunbu nidō mangoku dōshi* 文武二道万石通 (1788), which parodied the government’s promotion of martial and civil arts (*bunbu*), and *Omugaeshi bunbu no futamichi* 鸚鵡返文武二道 (1789), which satirized among other things sumptuary regulations. All of these were subsequently banned by the government, although some similar works evaded censorship. For a discussion, see Satō, *Edo no shuppan tōsei*, pp. 21–67; Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, pp. 202–24.

⁹³ On censorship in the wake of the Kansei Reforms, see Kornicki, “Nishiki no ura”; Satō, *Edo no shuppan tōsei*, pp. 21–67. On Shikitei Sanba’s case, see also Leutner, *Shikitei Sanba and the Comic Tradition*, pp. 29–30.

account, people started to “wonder if he had run out of ideas and said that his recent works were no longer funny (*okashikarazu* おかしからず).”⁹⁴

Kyōden, however, was not alone in turning to serious subject matter. For this reason, the 1790s have traditionally been considered a period in which *kibyōshi* satire lost its bite, its creativity straitjacketed by the authorities. Yet interiorizing the action inside an anthropomorphized human body provided authors with some leeway to portray contemporary society, couched within the well-respected register of medicine. The works by Ikku and Kyōden discussed in the present article explicitly evoke texts and ideas that extol normative Confucian ideals of society and self, but the bodies in merry mayhem depicted in their works also present an antithesis to the vision of social harmony and “healthy living” that saw all classes happily fulfilling their assigned roles. Despite this, the proper order is ultimately restored in the texts, with the inversion of these normative ideals proving temporary and the “lessons” to be learned from the disordered bodies safely addressed at the level of the individual who mismanages his body and household—unlike in political graffiti, whose commentary could be directed at society’s ruler.

Bodily Health and Moral Education. As we have seen, the fictional worlds of the *kibyōshi* demonstrate an intimate connection between the body of the individual and the social body and, thus, the potential for chaos in one sphere to “infect” or unsettle the other. Individual health affects social well-being, and vice versa; thus both were always implicitly (and often explicitly) objects of ethical concern and moral sermonizing. Moralizing discourses that were based on the body-as-society/society-as-body trope and that linked individual and social health had their roots, once again, on the continent. But they came to find new articulations in Tokugawa-era Japan, representing a core belief and common tenet inherent in various medical, educational, and didactic discourses that targeted the body in the eighteenth century, particularly in health cultivation and the popular religious-educational movement Shingaku (Mind Learning).

Fiction writers, too, took part in these discourses. Just as they had playfully subverted the trope of the well-ordered body reflecting a well-ordered society, they also mockingly claimed for themselves the morally superior position of the physician, scholar, or Shingaku teacher by addressing medical subjects and mimicking medical formats. Such fiction therefore formed part of a broad cultural phenomenon and needs to be situated in relation to moral claims on the body; this is also

⁹⁴ This comes from Bakin’s biography of Kyōden, *Iwademonoki* 伊波伝毛乃記 (1819); see *Shin enseki jisshu*, p. 189. Bakin’s retrospective accounts (including also the abovementioned *Kinsei mono no hon*), however, need to be taken with a pinch of salt; not only did he often write them decades after the fact, he also used them to pursue various personal vendettas against some of his fellow writers.

abundantly clear from the intertextual web evoked by the *kibyōshi* in our discussion, which prominently feature didactic works and their ideological, “moral bodies.”⁹⁵

It is worth noting that this linkage of morality and health had a basis in the medical field. Particularly in their notion of “nurturing life,” which Ikku chose to evoke in his work, medical discourses were often deeply intertwined with ethical values. These health regimens were ultimately rooted in Sino-Japanese medicine’s comprehensive understanding of healing, which integrated both body and mind, the physical and the moral. In this system, physical ailments could be traced back to “inner desires” and lack of care in lifestyle matters such as diet, sexual habits, and sleeping schedule. This meant that disease had clear moral implications and reflected a person’s ethical conduct. Health-cultivation texts thus projected moral values such as hard work, frugality, and moderation onto the body as “healthy” and often represented a somaticized form of didacticism that validated such ethical ideals. Rather than being separate concerns, healthy morals and healthy living often coincided—or, as Ekiken succinctly put it, “nurturing life and nurturing virtue are one Way.”⁹⁶ He also opined that conforming to one’s station in life and “working hard at one’s household trade” was an *a priori* form of health cultivation—thus squarely placing the healthy body within a wide-ranging Confucian ideology of society.⁹⁷ In this way, medical notions of “cultivating life” ultimately sought the integrity of body, ethics, and society, while “unwholesomeness” (*fuyōjō*), by contrast, carried undertones of excess and moral degeneracy.⁹⁸

Alongside health-cultivation discourses, in the second half of the eighteenth century Shingaku, too, fashioned the body into a site of self-discipline, at times incorporating and reinforcing ideas about physical cultivation in its program of moral edification. Founded by Ishida Baigan 石田梅岩 (1685–1744) in the Kansai region, Shingaku encompassed an eclectic fusion of Neo-Confucian and popular Zen Buddhist values; it rapidly gained followers in Edo throughout the 1780s and 1790s.⁹⁹ By 1791, the movement had apparently reached such proportions in the eastern capital that new facilities were required to accommodate the stream of devotees who attended lectures.¹⁰⁰ This surge of interest did not go unnoticed in the world of satirical fiction. In 1790, the year before his unfortunate run-in with

⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion of Ikku’s sources, see Koch, “Dreaming,” pp. 58–61.

⁹⁶ Kaibara, *Yōjōkun*, p. 49.

⁹⁷ Kaibara, *Yōjōkun*, p. 35.

⁹⁸ On the moral stance of health cultivation, particularly in relation to sex, see also Koch, “Sexual Healing” (2013) and “Sexual Healing” (2014); in relation to food, see also Niehaus, “They Should be Called Gluttons.”

⁹⁹ On Shingaku in the late eighteenth century, see Sawada, *Confucian Values*, chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ See the comments in *Bukō nenpyō* 武江年表 on the year Kansei 3 (1791), which recount the apparent popular success of the visit to Edo by the prominent Shingaku lecturer Nakazawa Dōni 中沢道二 (1725–1803). Saitō, *Zōtei bukō nenpyō*, p. 163.

government censorship, Kyōden embarked on his immensely popular Shingaku series with the publication of *Shingaku hayasomegusa* 心学早染草 (Quick-Dye Mind Learning), and Ikku made his debut on the *gesaku* stage with *Shingaku tokeigusa* 心学時計草 (Mind Learning Clock-Grass, 1795).¹⁰¹ Several decades later, Bakin mused on the meaning of this fad: “[Such books that] sported ‘Shingaku’ in their titles but revolved around the pleasure quarters . . . adopted this practice because of the popularity of these teachings at the time and also to disguise taboo topics.”¹⁰² Despite not explicitly naming Shingaku as an inspiration, both *Essentials* and *Gotai wagō monogatari* drew upon Shingaku works in creating their microcosmic bodies of (dis)harmony, which openly flouted core values of the religious-educational movement such as harmony, frugality, and purity of heart and mind.

Notwithstanding the fact that Shingaku emphasized the mind, the body was not inconsequential in the movement’s teachings—which made Shingaku also a suitable source of inspiration for fictional works dealing with the physical body. The synergy that existed between physical and moral cultivation in the movement in the late Edo period is evident from the appearance of Shingaku texts that included sections on health cultivation and of health-cultivation texts that had affinity with its milieu, such as *Shingaku kotobukigusa* 心学寿草 (Mind Learning Gleanings for Longevity; 1815).¹⁰³ Another nineteenth-century manual, *Yōjōron* 養生論 (Discussion of Nurturing Life; 1826), carried a preface by a Shingaku scholar and was printed as a work for free distribution (*sein* 施印) by a group of “like-minded individuals” from Kyoto and Osaka, which places it in the proximity of Shingaku circles, although its precise connection to the movement remains unclear.¹⁰⁴

Shingaku’s inclusion of the body in its range of cultivation practices is also evident in one of the typically short, punchy moral adages that it had printed on *sein* handbills for believers, a common strategy it employed to spread its teachings among the general population. In big, bold lettering, this proclaimed “Cultivation of the mind; Cultivation of the body; Cultivation of the household” (*kokoro no yōjō* 心の養生; *mi no yōjō* 身の養生; *ie no yōjō* 家の養生), positing a continuum of disciplining the individual mind, the individual body, and, together with the self, society. In figure 12, we see this maxim accompanied by two didactic *waka* 和歌 poems (*dōka* 道歌) that commended early rising, hard work, moderation in drinking alcohol, frugality in one’s diet, and regular treatments with moxibustion, alongside moral qualities

¹⁰¹ For a discussion of Kyōden’s series, see Tanahashi, *Santō Kyōden no kibiyōshi o yomu*, chapter 3.

¹⁰² Kyokutei, *Kinsei mono no hon*, p. 45. Bakin makes these comments in relation to Ikku’s *Shingaku tokeigusa*.

¹⁰³ Research on the connection between Shingaku and medical notions of health cultivation is sparse, but for some comments see Takizawa, *Yōjōron no shisō*, pp. 101–107. For an example of a Shingaku text carrying a section on *yōjō*, see Tejima, *Kanamegusa*.

¹⁰⁴ A facsimile of the text can be found in *Edo jidai shomin bunko*, vol. 17. On *sein* and their distribution, see van Steenpaal, “Taming the Fire Horse”; on their role in Shingaku specifically, see Ototake, *Nihon kyōikushi no kenkyū*, pp. 64–116.

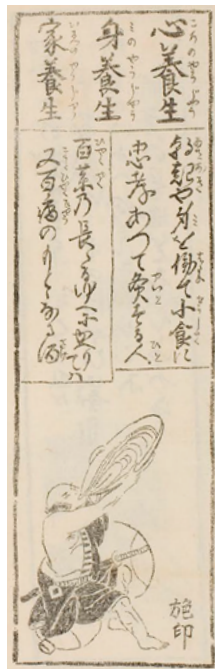


FIGURE 12. Handbill printed for free distribution (*sein*) by the Shingaku movement, reproduced in the compilation *Shingaku kokoroegusa*, unpaginated. Kishū-han Bunko, Wakayama University Library. <https://kokusho.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/300112847/8?ln=ja>.

such as filial piety and loyalty. One of the *waka* warns: “Though it may rank first / Of one hundred medicines / On the other hand / Alcohol is, too, the source / Of one hundred diseases” (*Hyakuyaku no / chō taru yue ni / kaerite wa / mata hyakubyō no / moto to naru sake* 百薬の長たるゆへにかへりては又百病のもととなる酒).¹⁰⁵ The same image and text also appear in Wakisaka Gidō’s 脇坂義堂 (d. 1818) heavily illustrated compilation *Yashinaigusa* やしなひ草 (Gleanings for Self-Cultivation; 1784),¹⁰⁶ which likely served as one of Ikku’s sources for *Essentials*.

What is more, Shingaku’s parable-heavy teaching rhetoric contributed to fueling a rich metaphors of medicine as morality, and some Shingaku lectures and didactic storytelling (*dōwa* 道話) were steeped in the medical tropes of social “ills” and moral “afflictions.”¹⁰⁷ The prototype for Santō Kyōden’s *Gotai wagō monogatari*—which, as outlined earlier in this article, involves a case of numbness, or *shibire*, traveling from the feet

upward—was in fact a Shingaku-inspired work titled (*Gotai wagō*) *Heso inkyō* (五体和合) 臍隱居 (The Harmony of the Body and the Retired Navel; prefaces dated 1765 and 1774), a social parable centered on the metaphor of the human body.¹⁰⁸ Containing a lengthy didactic postscript by Ishida Baigan’s star disciple Tejima Toan 手島堵庵 (1718–1786), this tale sought to impress upon the reader the importance of

¹⁰⁵ This particular version is in the possession of the Wakayama University Library’s Kishū-han Bunko 紀州藩文庫 and is an early twentieth-century reprint included in a compilation of Shingaku *sein* handbills of the Rakuzensha 楽全舎 meeting house in Kishū Province; see *Shingaku kokoroegusa*. Identical images and slogans, however, frequently reoccur in a range of Shingaku publications.

¹⁰⁶ Wakisaka, *Yashinaigusa*, fols. 9b–10a (*maki* 2). A number of texts and images included in this compilation also circulated as free *sein* handbills.

¹⁰⁷ For two such didactic stories, see *Shingaku dōwa zenshū*, pp. 285–88, 369–70. The second of these tales compares being short-tempered with suffering from an “illness” and proposes self-discipline as a “miraculous cure” (*myōzai* 妙劑).

¹⁰⁸ Okada, (*Gotai wagō*) *Heso inkyō*. A printed version of the preface is included in Shibata, *Tejima Toan zenshū*, pp. 515–18.



FIGURE 13. *Gotai wagō shinsai no kyōkun*, single-sheet *nishiki-e* print signed by Utagawa Yoshikatsu. The body is depicted being assaulted by *shibire*, a disorder involving numbness and pain that the feet have inflicted as revenge for their lowly position. Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1312589/1/1> and <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1312589/1/2>.

upholding the social hierarchies of the “Five Relationships”¹⁰⁹ as the basis for a harmonious society. In the parable this takes the form of a conflict between the body and the feet; the latter resent their lowly position and retaliate by inflicting a disease on the head. Kyōden repeatedly borrowed plot elements and images from this amusing narrative in his oeuvre,¹¹⁰ and the tale apparently held such enduring appeal that even in the nineteenth century an “abridged” single-sheet version (combining elements of the original’s preface and parts of the parable) was issued as a colorful *nishiki-e* print (figure 13), titled *Gotai wagō shinsai no kyōkun* 五体和合心臍之教訓 (The Harmony of the Body and the Teachings of the Heart and Navel; 1862) and signed by Utagawa Yoshikatsu 歌川芳勝 (n.d.).¹¹¹ Shingaku was thus instrumental in turning the body into a site for inscribing moral norms in the late Edo period—both on a literal and a metaphorical level.

¹⁰⁹ Gorin 五倫. A Confucian concept that emphasizes the relationships between subject and ruler, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger siblings, and friends as the basis of society.

¹¹⁰ Before *Gotai wagō monogatari*, Kyōden had already used this motif in *Okashi banashi oheso no cha* 笑話於臍茶 (1780). For a discussion of this work’s role in Kyōden’s writings, see Tanahashi, *Kibyōshi no kenkyū*, pp. 29–36.

¹¹¹ See *Gotai wagō shinsai no kyōkun*.

This fusion of the physical, social, and moral was eagerly adopted in other genres and media. The same rhetoric of moral “disease” and the “cures” of virtue found its way, for example, into late-Edo didactic single-sheet prints that imitated medical advertisements and were often distributed as free *sein* broadsheets. Imitating the style and format of promotional leaflets for medicines, these advertised metaphorical miracle cures, such as Patience Pills (Kanningan 堪忍丸), depicted in figures 14 and 15; Pills for Calming Body and Mind (Shintai Anrakugan 心脉安楽丸); and Belief in Heaven, Loyalty, and Filial Piety Concoction (Tenshin Chūkōtan 天信忠孝丹).¹¹² Such “remedies” were the creations of Buddhist monks and Confucian scholars rather than illustrious Chinese doctors of old and claimed efficacy for afflictions such as “short temper and irritability” (*tanki kanshō* 短気癪症) and “depletion of funds and excessive debts” (*kinkyō kadō* 金虚過倒, a play on the medical term *inkyō kadō* 陰虚火動 for sexual exhaustion). Listed ingredients included equal measures of adherence to Buddhist teachings, patience, and avoidance of lying and gossiping; the instructions recommended a daily dose for everyone, regardless of age or gender. The putative “producers” (*honke* 本家) of such “wondrous medicines” (*reiyaku* 霊薬, *myōyaku* 妙薬) had colorful names, such as “Mr. Self-Discipline and Propriety” (Kokkidō Fukurei 克己堂復礼),¹¹³ and equally fantastical addresses, such as “Not-Losing-One’s-Household Place, Town of Thorough Righteousness with No Deception” (Moto Ie Ushinawazu Tokoro, Richigi Amaneku Kagehinata Nashi Machi 本家不失所律義遍無陰陽町).¹¹⁴

Medicine thus became a highly productive metaphor and a fertile source domain for social and moral meanings. *Gesaku* fiction was deeply implicated in this process, spinning such tropes into booklet-length metaphorical extravaganzas, and in fact a range of *kibyōshi* in the 1790s adopted this notion of morality as “medicine.” Bakin’s *Hana no shita nagaiki no kusuri* 鼻下長生薬 (Medicine for Longevity Below

¹¹² Single-sheet prints for these three fictitious cures are held in the Nishigaki Bunko 西垣文庫 at Waseda University Library; see Kanningan; Tenshin chūkōtan; Shintai anrakugan. Various versions of *Shintai anrakugan* also existed in a free booklet format (a late-Edo version is reproduced in *Edo jidai shomin bunko*, vol. 15, pp. 401–12) and as Meiji-period printed booklets; two examples can be found in the collections of the National Diet Library. The same trope appears in late-Edo Shingaku works such as Wakisaka Gidō’s *Nintokukyō* 忍徳教 (Teachings on the Virtue of Endurance; 1809); see Wakisaka, *Nintokukyō*. The earliest use in a printed Shingaku work that I have been able to identify is in Tejima Toan’s *Kanamegusa* かなめぐさ (1789), which includes a “prescription” for Tenmei Honshin’en 天命本心円 (Heaven’s Will Original Mind Concoction); see Tejima, *Kanamegusa*, fols. 7a–b. It has to be noted that this trope per se was not unique to the late Edo period and appeared, for example, in the prescription for “Millionaire’s Pills” (*chōjagan* 長者丸) in Ihara Saikaku’s 井原西鶴 (1642–1693) *Nippon eitagura* 日本永代蔵 (1688) and in Senyōdō Shujin’s 宣揚堂主人 (n.d.) *Kyōkun shūhō kiku* 教訓衆方規矩 (1762); on the latter, see Fukuda, *Igaku-sho no naka no “bungaku,”* pp. 29–36. Further discussion is, however, beyond the scope of this study.

¹¹³ Literally, “Win over the self and return to the rites” (a phrase from the *Analects*).

¹¹⁴ The nonstandard readings are based on the original ruby characters.

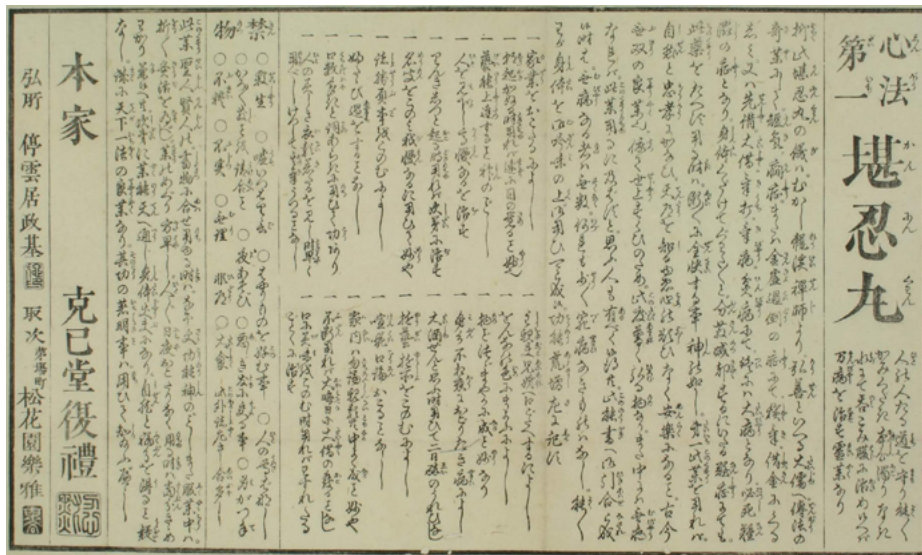


FIGURE 14. Didactic leaflet “advertising” fictitious Kanningan (Patience Pills). The layout, style, and component parts replicate those of bona fide promotional flyers for commercial medications. Nishigaki Bunko, Waseda University Library. https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko10/bunko10_08058_0010/index.html.



FIGURE 15. Kanningan (Patience Pills) featured as a cure-all for “myriad diseases” in Wakisaka Gido’s *Nintokukyō*, fol. 1a. The illustration imitates the lavish signboards for medications seen in the Edo period. Courtesy of the Koizumi Yoshinaga 小泉吉永 Collection.



FIGURE 16. People ensnared by personified desires in Kyokutei Bakin's *Hana no shita nagaiki no kusuri*, fols. 4b–5a. Image from the National Diet Library Digital Collections. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/9892844/1/7>.

the Nose; 1798), published the year before Ikku's and Kyōden's forays into the medical body, graphically mimicked a medical advertisement in its preface, and in a later scene (see figure 16) it depicted "desires" literally ensnaring unsuspecting victims in a world of pleasures; this image was accompanied by the ominous warning that "myriad diseases stem from a heart full of desires" (*manbyō wa yokushin* 万病は欲心).¹¹⁵ Ikku's *Shōjiki sokukōshi* 正直即功帋 (A Medicinal Plaster of Honesty; 1799), issued the following year, contained a preface listing the "efficacy" of honesty in the style of a medical leaflet, which concluded in a didactic *waka* poem: "Not miracle salves / Like Munikō / Or Mannōkō / But a sincere heart should you / Apply to all that you do" (*Munikō ya / Mannōkō no / kidoku yori / shōjikishin wa / nani ni tsukete mo* 無二膏や万能膏のきどくより正直心はなににつけても)—a maxim also captured in the work's title. Kyōden's *Ikkoku atae manryō kaishun* 一刻価万両回春 (A Fleeting Return to Youth Worth Ten Thousand in Gold; 1798) meanwhile contained a preface in glossed *kanbun*, which was penned in bold, angular Chinese characters that visually referenced scholarly medical treatises. It proclaimed that the work would "compare [moral shortcomings] such as greed and sexual desire with diseases" and "was written in the manner of *Manbyō kaishun* 万病回春" (Ch. *Wanbing huichun*; 1587), a sixteenth-century Chinese medical treatise parodied in the title. Its protagonist "Dr. Run-of-the-Mill" (Tsūzoku-sensei 通俗先生) establishes a "Clinic for the

¹¹⁵ Kyokutei, *Hana no shita nagaiki no kusuri*, fols. 1a, 4b–5a.

Grave Diseases of Human Desires” (*jinyoku nanbyō ryōjitokoro* 人欲難病療治所), which attracts a large clientele suffering from afflictions such as love sickness, “poverty disease,” and “lying illness.”¹¹⁶ This fictional bricolage of moral and medical concerns functions as an entertaining metaphor in such texts, yet it also reflects a social reality wherein physicians such as Ekiken rooted a healthy body in healthy ethics and Shingaku preachers positioned themselves as “healers” of popular morals.

Thus fiction writers playfully crafted metaphorical “medicine,” dispensing these beneficial “cures” to their readers. This idea was at times made explicit in the preface or in the narrative framework of *kibyōshi*, in which authors would depict themselves as learned authorities educating the masses. While Ikku in *Essentials* casts himself as the ignorant patient requiring the intervention of an expert, Kyōden assumes the fictional alter ego of Akahon-sensei in several of his *gesaku* works, including, as we saw earlier, *Gotai wagō monogatari*. The prefaces to Bakin’s *Hana no shita nagaiki no kusuri*, Ikku’s *Shōjiki sokukōshi*, and Kyōden’s *Ikkoku atae manryō kaishun* produce a similar effect through verbal and visual pastiche, equating the writers with healing experts by mimicking the format of a medical advertisement in the first two cases and a treatise in the third.¹¹⁷

Kibyōshi, such as Ikku’s *Essentials*, that represented the medical body’s inner workings as a microcosm of society thus have to be interpreted within this larger trend toward using the body as a vehicle for illustrating moral ideology, a trend that came to be parodied in various ways. Fiction writers could draw on the ongoing intermingling of the physical body, morals, and social order as it existed in educational and medical thought to conjure up various levels of metaphorical meanings in their own writings. Not only did centuries-old political and medical discourses support a metaphoric of the body as a society that fiction was free to exploit in various contemporary ways, but in addition 1790s *gesaku* writers co-opted the ongoing conflation of the body’s physical, social, and moral “health” in medical and educational discourses, echoing their rhetoric to a rather different effect. While contemporary notions of health cultivation and Shingaku teachings used the physical body as a “natural” canvas upon which to inscribe rather rigid moral and social norms as conducive to good health, fiction was more ambiguous in the meanings it conveyed and in some cases used the body as a setting for irreverent social commentary. Their situation at the fault line between the social and physical body, however, imbued these works with a veneer of respectability borrowed from medical and educational discourses that kept the threat of censorship at bay, while at the same time opening

¹¹⁶ Santō, *Ikkoku atae manryō kaishun*, fols. 1a–2b. A typeset edition can be found in Santō Kyōden *zenshū*, pp. 191–208.

¹¹⁷ In this way, some *kibyōshi* may be said to represent an underlying rhetoric akin to the “medical mode of satire” that was an important aspect of European literature from the Renaissance into the early modern period, consistently drawing parallels between satirist and physician and between satire and medicine. See Gallagher, “Satire as Medicine,” p. 17.

up space for ridicule and entertainment—including portrayals of less-than-perfect urbanites, profligate courtesans, amorous and unfilial young men, and gluttons and idlers, who openly flouted the “healthy” order of the body-society. Ultimately, various competing readings of the body are interwoven into “double” or “triple” visions across the medical, social, and moral layers of these works.

Conclusion

Timon Screech and others have memorably placed the “opening up” of the body in late-Edo fiction and popular prints within the context of the Western-style scientific and anatomical gaze that began during the eighteenth century.¹¹⁸ Yet while anatomical pursuits fundamentally changed ways of seeing and knowing the body in Japan in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,¹¹⁹ we should not overlook the fact that many fictional and artistic portrayals were still very much beholden to the Sino-Japanese medical tradition and its understanding of the inner workings of the body and its component parts. In fact, the *kibyōshi* and prints discussed in the present article make virtually no direct reference to Western-style medicine. While the increased interest in anatomy may well have also provided an impetus for engaging with the inner workings of the body in popular fiction, other factors, as I have pointed out here, warrant attention.

My contention in this article has been that a certain subset of the “yellow-cover” books, especially those published in the 1790s, represented a response to indigenous medical, moral, and educational discourses in which the body had risen to the forefront of attention and had become a target of regulatory practices. A close reading of Ikku’s text and similar works by his contemporaries, together with an analysis of the sources they drew on, clearly indicates that fiction writers in the 1790s actively engaged with such discourses. Owing to notions of health cultivation and the popular moral teachings of Shingaku in particular, the body became an arena for inscribing social norms—but in fiction it also became a vehicle for tongue-in-cheek entertainment that, deliberately or not, inverted and temporarily suspended these norms. *Gesaku* writers used to their advantage the cultural nexus of medical body, social body, and moral body that dominated contemporary health and moral discourses. Bringing the narrative action inside a fictional body allowed them to portray late-Edo society metaphorically using tropes based on contemporary understandings of the medical body and on health practices then in vogue.

How, specifically, are we meant to read this metaphorical use of the body? In order to make sense of such tropes, this article has sought to unearth layer by layer the episteme within which such metaphors operated. My aim has been to create an archaeology of knowledge, reconstructing the semantic networks that informed contemporary audiences and authors. As we have seen, writers of fiction

¹¹⁸ See Screech, *Edo no karada o hiraku* and *Western Scientific Gaze*.

¹¹⁹ On this point, see also Kuriyama, “Between Mind and Eye.”

participated in the larger community of medical letters in a variety of ways and incorporated various forms of medical knowledge and healing advice into their publications, both as text and paratext. Ikku's *Essentials*, for example, repeatedly invokes Kaibara Ekiken's philosophy of health and turns medical information into narrative building blocks. In this sense, there is a need to place these works within an overarching trend toward the increased circulation of medical knowledge in print and the widening range of audiences for the literate culture of healing. Yet medical, political, and educational discourses and their long-established imagery of the "body-state" also encouraged additional figurative interpretations of the fictional body—all the more so as medicine more generally became a prolific metaphor for moral and social ills across a variety of popular media. Thus, within the cultural context of the late Edo period these works of popular culture would have afforded readers a wide range of metaphorical possibilities; the task of the modern researcher may well be to uncover their range and their reach rather than seek to determine one valid interpretation.

Within this context, metaphors of the body traveled across media, from medical writings to popular fiction and prints, and on the way they acquired new functions and nuances. Images of and rhetoric about the social body in health discourses portrayed the individual as a ruler over his body who had a duty to parents and household to govern it well, thus placing great moral responsibility on the individual's behavior. Hence, a diseased body was one whose master (or mistress) had failed at good governance and was thus a visible sign of a person's moral or social transgression. For fiction writers, these became tropes that also served to "diagnose" societal ills and allowed them to poke fun at idealized notions of social harmony, at Sino-Japanese medical thought, at Shingaku morality—and, in the case of Ikku's *Essentials*, even at their own transgressive fictional selves. A number of economic, political, and social factors converged to create a market for such publications in the 1790s, particularly in the wake of the Kansei Reforms when stringent censorship forced fiction writers to avoid, or at least attempt to disguise, potentially contentious subject matter. At the same time, *kibyōshi* also reflected a set of wider cultural concerns that centered on the body. The latest anatomical discoveries had made the human body a subject of study, and in particular outbreaks of epidemics such as measles created spikes in demand for medical reading matter. Thus the body became an ideological focal point in various ways in the late eighteenth century: It was, for example, a constant topic of discussion in health manuals and educational discourses, and it was commodified in a barrage of medical advertisements. These multiple and sometimes clashing interests and philosophies reflected wider debates over individual and social "health" that were taken up by *kibyōshi* in their fantastical metaphorical worlds.

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