

1 ☞ *Shizu no odamaki* and Early-Meiji Nostalgia for Samurai *Nanshoku*

Texts by celebrated writers like Ihara Saikaku and Kyokutei Bakin might have shaped Edo-period conventions for portraying and interpreting male-male sexuality, but after the Meiji Restoration their primacy as representatives of *nanshoku* was challenged by a once obscure tale entitled *Shizu no odamaki* (The Humble Man's Bobbin). *Shizu no odamaki*'s rise to prominence in the Meiji period is surprising given its modest origins. In contrast to the texts written by Saikaku and Bakin, which by the standards of the day were mass produced and widely read, *Shizu no odamaki* was for the most part available only to readers in the domain of Satsuma (present-day Kagoshima Prefecture). And yet after the Restoration *Shizu no odamaki* became a foundational *nanshoku* text for Meiji writers and readers. As Maeda Ai documents, the text stood at the center of an early-Meiji sexual subculture that involved male students in Japan's newly established higher schools and universities.¹ Eventually *Shizu no odamaki* achieved such notoriety that direct references and implicit allusions to the tale became a Meiji literary trope signifying a constellation of images revolving around certain constructions of masculinity and male-male sexuality.

Shizu no odamaki began to make inroads into the general Meiji consciousness when young men from Satsuma, mostly members of the former samurai class, flooded Tokyo in the wake of the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance's rise to power in the new Meiji government. This provided an opportunity for devotees of the tale to introduce it to a wider audience. The phenomenon took off in the years following the Satsuma Rebellion (1877), an armed insurrection led by a conservative faction of the Satsuma clique incensed over Meiji policies that stripped former samurai of their hereditary privileges.² Participants in the Satsuma Rebellion took particular umbrage with the 1873 Universal Conscription Law, which required all male citizens to participate in military service, effectively

ending the special status of samurai as the only class allowed to bear arms. The efficient manner in which the Meiji government's new conscript military put down the rebellion, coupled with what was perceived as an ongoing assault on warrior heritage and customary behavior, led many men, who identified with the samurai ethos, to feel that a revered icon of Japanese masculinity was at risk. Adding insult to injury were official and popular condemnations of male-male sexuality, a practice that was inextricably connected to the propagation and maintenance of this masculine identity and for many men had played, and continued to play, a key role in their socialization as males.

In this context it is no wonder that, with its enthusiastic presentation of *nanshoku* as a constructive pedagogical practice that nurtured virility, morality, martial readiness, and gentlemanly cultivation, *Shizu no odamaki* became a precious cultural heirloom. In fact, it was one of the few narratives in the Meiji period that unequivocally affirmed the notion that *nanshoku* was directly linked to the maintenance of an elite, hypermasculine, and socially valuable male identity. This message resonated powerfully with certain segments of the male population in early Meiji, particularly members of the former samurai class, as they endeavored to validate their self-image in the shifting terrain of a modernizing Japan.

Given the nostalgic devotion with which fans embraced the tale, it would be tempting to treat *Shizu no odamaki* as an unadulterated remnant from the Edo canon of *nanshoku* literature. After all, the tale was composed before the Meiji period began. Moreover, Meiji fans circulating the tale, first through hand-copied manuscripts and then through newspaper serialization and commercially printed books, were scrupulous in their efforts to reproduce the narrative as accurately as possible.³ But, as Jerome McGann points out, texts do not generate meaning solely through their content. He argues that in addition to linguistic elements, such as vocabulary, syntax, imagery, allusion, and plot structure, bibliographic elements, such as binding, page layout, typeface, and illustrations, serve as signifying mechanisms for a text. Therefore, when authors, editors, or publishers modify the bibliographic features of a text, they necessarily impact its meaning.⁴

Meiji reprints of *Shizu no odamaki* provide a particularly useful example through which to explore this textual phenomenon. Although the linguistic content of the tale remained essentially unchanged from its original form, the

bibliographic modifications resulted in a subtly different text. Indeed, these bibliographic innovations firmly located *Shizu no odamaki* within the bounds of early-Meiji literary culture, a period when innovations in the production of modern written entertainment involved matters of bibliographic form, such as medium of circulation, print technology, page layout, and style of illustration, to the same degree that they revolved around issues of language and content. Therefore, even though *Shizu no odamaki* conspicuously presented itself as a relic from the days of yore, post-Restoration editions of the text, particularly the version serialized in *Jiyū no tomoshibi* (The Torch of Freedom), a popular political newspaper, and the subsequent commercially published books, employed signifying mechanisms that in the 1880s were clearly perceived as modern innovations. Strategic utilization of these signifying mechanisms enabled the promoters of *Shizu no odamaki* to situate the tale and its nostalgic representation of samurai *nanshoku* prominently within early-Meiji discussions of sexuality, gender, and identity.

The Representation of *Nanshoku* in *Shizu no odamaki*

Shizu no odamaki recounts the romantic adventures and martial accomplishments of two warriors from the domain of Satsuma, a youth named Hirata Sangorō Munetsugu and his mentor/lover Yoshida Daizō Kiyōie, who died together fighting in the Shōnai Rebellion (1599). By the end of the Edo period the legend of their noble love affair and heroic exploits had become an important cultural narrative for members of the warrior class in Satsuma. Early references to Sangorō and Daizō appear in various regional histories, most notably *Shōnai gunki* (Military Record of the Shōnai Rebellion, c. 1700).⁵ This account is fairly concise, offering only a brief description of their deaths on the battlefield.⁶ The passage, however, does acknowledge that the two warriors were lovers and attributes their courageous behavior to this romantic bond. A more detailed treatment of Sangorō and Daizō surfaces in *Katami no sakura* (A Memento of Cherry Blossoms, date of composition unknown), a standard piece from the performance tradition known as *Satsuma biwa*, a lyrical ballad chanted to the musical accompaniment of a lute.⁷ *Katami no sakura* provides a reverential description of the lovers emphasizing the beauty of their bond and the depth of their courage.⁸

The most extensive treatment of the Sangorō-Daizō legend can be found in *Shizu no odamaki*. The identity of the author (or authors) is unclear. The preface in a privately printed edition of the tale, dated March 1884, states, “It is said that the tale was composed by a woman from western Satsuma, who set it down in her spare moments away from the loom.”⁹ Although fascinating, this claim is unsubstantiated, based only on hearsay. Later publishers of the tale gave it little credence, never mentioning the elusive female composer again; although perhaps this is less a commentary on the credibility of the attribution than on the misogyny of the tale’s publishers. The composition history is also extremely vague. But the existence in the Kagoshima Prefectural Library of a hand-copied manuscript from the last years of the Edo period indicates that the tale was composed at an earlier date, probably some time around the middle of the nineteenth century. The narrative is presented in the form of a historical record (*jitsurokumono*), a popular late-Edo literary genre that provided fictionally augmented accounts of historical events, such as pre-Edo domain wars, succession conflicts in warrior households, vendetta murders, and peasant uprisings.¹⁰ The tale thus devotes considerable attention to the specific set of feudal obligations and political circumstances that compelled Sangorō and Daizō to participate in the Shōnai Rebellion.

The main agenda of *Shizu no odamaki*, however, is to represent an idealized samurai *nanshoku* relationship. That is the sole motivation behind the extensive back story that the narrative adds to the older versions of the Sangorō-Daizō legend. Through these new sections, the narrative recounts the progress of Sangorō and Daizō’s courtship, which enters a new phase when Daizō boldly confesses his feelings for the beautiful youth. This declaration culminates in the following love scene.

As the shadows lengthened, the night sky was bathed in a gentle rainstorm and the air became perfumed with the fragrance of spring flowers. No longer able to restrain himself, Daizō clasped Sangorō’s hand and extinguished the lamp. Even darkness could not conceal the scent of plum blossoms clinging to Sangorō’s sleeve. As raindrops pattered outside the window, Daizō pledged his love anew with each caress of Sangorō’s snow-white skin.¹¹

The language in this passage is patterned after Heian-period (794–1160) romantic prose and poetry, much of which was composed by women.¹² This appropriation of Heian stylistic flourishes, despite their exclusive association with

the topic of male-female love, typifies a practice followed by most authors of premodern *nanshoku* literature. It was thought that establishing a link with the revered tradition of romantic poetry and tales composed by members of the Imperial court would elevate the tone of a scene depicting a male-male erotic encounter. We see this process at work in the above passage. For example, the image of Sangorō's sleeves perfumed with the scent of plum blossoms alludes to a poem from the *Kokin wakashū* (A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, c. 987).¹³ The classical tropes of a rain shower and spring flowers perform a comparable function, providing the appropriate aesthetic backdrop for love-making. In this manner, the narrative maintains an air of high-minded romance that matches its reverential treatment of the two lovers.

Although this scene clearly establishes that the relationship between Sangorō and Daizō includes a sexual component, the narrative is far more attentive to the inspirational and moral function of their bond. Immediately after this romantic episode, for instance, the narrator comments approvingly: "From that day forward, the two devoted themselves to the literary and martial arts appropriate for a warrior."¹⁴ Later to offset even further the sensuous overtones and perceived feminine associations of the preceding love scene, with its clear allusions to the tradition of female-authored romantic tales, the narrative has Sangorō and Daizō pledge their troth to each other with a written oath, in which they vow to honor the values of "faith, sincerity, filial piety, and the Way of the Warrior."¹⁵ Significantly, this pledge is composed in Chinese prose (*kanbun*), the language used in the revered intellectual and ethical disciplines of history, philosophy, and Confucian thought, as well as in official documents, such as legal codes, lawsuits, and contracts. Rendering the oath in this language effectively invests Sangorō and Daizō's bond with the significant cultural capital associated with these elite disciplines and documents. Moreover, by appropriating the discourse of academic and public realms dominated by men, the oath provides a representational medium for a statement of the two warriors' mutual esteem that was deemed to be suitably masculine.

The tale thus elevates Sangorō and Daizō's romantic bond by showing how it allows them to fulfill their social responsibilities as men and as warriors. Consequently, the noblest expression of their love occurs not in the bedchamber, but on the battlefield. When the Shōnai Rebellion breaks out, Sangorō and Daizō are among the troops called up for action. Both acquit themselves ad-

mirably in the campaign, ultimately meeting their end in the Battle of Takarabe. The representation of their death draws heavily on earlier versions of the Sangorō-Daizō legend, but supplements them with poetic commentary on the beauty inherent in the life of a warrior.

There is nothing in this world more ephemeral than the life of a warrior. It resembles cherry blossoms scattered by the breeze of a spring morning or crimson maple leaves withered by the frost of an autumn night. Ah, why did one so young as Sangorō devote himself to the way of the warrior, even unto death? As they say, he who consorts with the lowly will himself become low, and he who consorts with the honorable will himself become great. It was because of his association with Daizō that Sangorō embraced the values of loyalty, selflessness, and courage.¹⁶

Through this purple prose, the narrator expresses the fundamental message of *Shizu no odamaki*. As the pair's actions demonstrate, far from being an impediment or a distraction, a *nanshoku* bond between two warriors can inspire the couple to achieve glory on the battlefield.

The narrator segues from this tribute of Sangorō and Daizō to a commentary on the late-Edo present: "It goes without saying that if the young men and youthful warriors of today swore oaths of eternal love, recognized the importance of feudal loyalty and filial piety, and honored their obligations, they would be no less admirable than Daizō and Sangorō. But these days the practitioners of *nanshoku* are only interested in sexual pleasure."¹⁷ With this statement, the narrator underscores that *Shizu no odamaki* is not simply an encomium of two fallen heroes, but it is also a wake-up call for late-Edo warriors, reminding them that *nanshoku* is much more than a diversion. The narrator suggests that in the past romantic attachments between samurai provided the emotional and moral support that made it possible for warriors to cope honorably with the prospect of imminent death. For warriors of the late-Edo period, after more than 200 years of peace, this ideal of death on the battlefield was no longer realistic, although it continued to resonate as a symbol of authentic samurai identity. *Shizu no odamaki's* commendation of male-male sexuality thus exploited this nostalgic reverence for the golden age of samurai manhood by assuring its late-Edo audience that they could still access this ethos if they continued to participate in the tradition of *nanshoku*. *Nanshoku*, in other words, functioned as one of the final links that connected them with the imaginary glories of the bygone past.

Nanshoku and the Edo Warrior

Eiko Ikegami proposes that the political structure of the Tokugawa system presented the warrior class with a conundrum. On the one hand, samurai privilege and position in the Tokugawa official social hierarchy was justified by their status as warriors. But with the establishment of the Tokugawa hegemony and the enforcement of peaceful relations among Japan's domains, samurai had few opportunities to demonstrate their martial skills. Rather they were assigned the role of domain and shogunal administrators. In this new capacity, they were expected to rein in their warlike tendencies and channel their energies into the mundane, but essential, bureaucratic tasks that had become their new responsibility.¹⁸

According to Ikegami, it required creative strategies for samurai to reconcile their bureaucratic role in the Tokugawa system with the memory of their status in an earlier, less structured age.¹⁹ *Nanshoku* proved to be an important touchstone as samurai struggled with the predicament of defining authentic warrior identity in an era when they were no longer allowed to fulfill their historical function on the battlefield. Koderu Masanobu (1682–1754), a warrior from the domain of Dewa (covering most of present-day Yamagata and Akita Prefectures), offered the following passionate endorsement of male-male sexuality.

Nanshoku is prevalent in this land of ours. Lovers pledge their troth against pain of divine punishment. They vow the sincerity of their love before the gods. They declare themselves brothers and even resolve to face death together. Although it might appear to contradict Confucian doctrine, we should not abandon this custom. It is an age-old element of our warrior culture, and therefore should not be attacked with superficial rationalizations. Should we not avail ourselves of this Way passed down from a divine age? I strongly believe that partaking in this Way helps to burnish the martial spirit.²⁰

Koderu defends *nanshoku* as a crucial part of warrior heritage. His argument is predicated on the assumption that *nanshoku* is one of the pillars that supports the cultivation of a proper martial spirit. An adult warrior ensures that his youthful lover masters the requisite martial skills and internalizes the appropriate values, while the youthful lover, through his adoration and encouragement, spurs the adult partner on to ever-greater achievement.

This is precisely the type of relationship that *Shizu no odamaki* presented to

the reader. The tale thus plugged into wider sentiments shared among late-Edo samurai and distilled them into one of the most single-minded affirmations of samurai *nanshoku* ever composed in Japan. With its distinctive warrior culture, Satsuma provided the ideal breeding ground for this apotheosis of samurai *nanshoku* fantasies.

Among the Edo-period domains, Satsuma was distinguished by its demographics. Close to 30 percent of the population belonged to the samurai class. This figure was six times higher than the average for the other domains in Japan.²¹ Moreover, the samurai population was not concentrated in a central castle town, but rather was spread out among 113 garrisons scattered across the countryside.²² As a result, the samurai population in Satsuma was not as urbanized as samurai populations in other domains. Nor was it converted into a class of bureaucrats to the same extent as elsewhere. Indeed, the samurai of Satsuma were renowned for maintaining their military preparedness despite the peaceful conditions that prevailed throughout Japan.²³

One key institution that allowed Satsuma warriors to cultivate this mindset was the district association (*gojū*).²⁴ These district associations were affiliated with local garrisons. All male members of local samurai families joined these associations. The members were divided into three categories, differentiated by age.²⁵ The daily life of a samurai revolved around this all-male institution. Older warriors helped train the younger members in the literary and martial arts. More importantly, the institution encouraged a hypermasculine demeanor among its membership. An Edo-period commentary on Satsuma social customs describes how membership in these associations affected the male inhabitants of the region. "They spur each other on, always correcting any instance of improper behavior. In between lessons they engage in vigorous exercise. Comrades reproach each other for laziness and pledge themselves to one another. Naturally, they despise women, seeing them as no more than vermin. If they encounter a beautiful woman on the road, they avoid her as if she were something unclean."²⁶ The district association thus encouraged the maintenance of a militarized, hypermasculine samurai identity through the creation of an all-male, virulently misogynous environment. Although the system did not explicitly sanction *nanshoku*, it divided its members into different age-based categories and systematically facilitated the establishment of intense mentor-protégé relationships between adult warriors and their junior comrades.²⁷

The main purpose of the district association was to reproduce, as completely as possible, the conditions of warrior life that obtained before the establishment of the Edo great peace (*taihei*). Within the logic of this system, *nanshoku* acquired a positive value because of its linkage with the ethos of the medieval samurai. Indeed, male-male sexuality took on special prominence in the warrior culture of Satsuma because it stood out as one of the few remaining medieval customs still practicable during the Edo period. This accounts for the emergence of *Shizu no odamaki* as a leading cultural narrative for the warriors of Satsuma. The tale presented the properly executed *nanshoku* love affair as a virtuous act comparable to other martial feats. Although warriors of Satsuma could no longer lay claim to many of the privileges accorded to medieval samurai, such as dominion over private estates, freedom to shift allegiance, and liberty to pursue personal vendettas, they could still emulate the rights of courtship and romantic camaraderie depicted in *Shizu no odamaki*. This must have provided considerable solace and inspiration as they struggled to reconcile their actual function in society with their sense of identity. One can only imagine how much more intense the need for solace and inspiration was among certain populations of men, who identified with the warrior ethos, in the first decades of the Meiji period as they witnessed the rapid erosion of the cultural and social institutions upon which they based their sense of worth.

Shizu no odamaki in Meiji

Men who viewed the warrior ethos as a foundation of Japanese masculinity had good reason to feel under attack in the first years of the Meiji period. A quick succession of government policies struck down their most cherished institutions. Foremost among these was the 1873 Universal Conscription Law, which forever ended the illusion, so carefully maintained throughout the Edo period, that military service constituted an elite calling with its own culture of masculine virtue and gentlemanly conduct. Another psychological blow was the criticism heaped upon warrior culture before, during, and after the Satsuma Rebellion. The newly emergent popular press was particularly vicious, portraying historical samurai values as a hindrance to the noble project of modernization.

The well-known penchant of samurai, and those who sought to emulate

them, for male-male sexuality proved to be an especially inviting target for critics in the popular press. Early-Meiji newspapers were filled with articles about former samurai engaging in “uncivilized” sexual behavior: harassing rickshaw drivers, causing scenes during kabuki performances, and frittering away their money on male prostitutes. An article from the September 1, 1879, issue of the *Yomiuri News* was typical. It begins with the statement: “Ihara Saikaku’s *The Great Mirror of Male Love* is a passel of lies.” The article then describes a clandestine affair between two “no good” former samurai. When the wife of one of them uncovered the affair, she reported the couple to the authorities and demanded a divorce. The reporter concludes the story with a final insult: “Men shouldn’t behave like faggots [*okama*].” Aside from its derisive tone and implicit defense of Article 266, this news report must have galled readers who identified themselves with the samurai ethos for the way that it dismisses Saikaku’s *The Great Mirror of Male Love*, one of the more laudatory representations of samurai *nanshoku* from the Edo period.

Although failure of the Satsuma Rebellion foreclosed any hope of staving off government enforced reduction of samurai legal privilege, there was still the possibility of reclaiming important cultural symbols. *Shizu no odamaki* emerged as one point of focalization in this cultural campaign. The ground swell for the movement began in the early 1870s, when students in Japan’s higher schools and universities began to circulate the tale, first passing around copies of the tale brought from Satsuma, then, as interest grew, making new copies by hand, and finally, starting in the early 1880s, producing their own privately printed texts.²⁸ This chain of events suggests a determination on the part of certain student communities to promote a historical sexual culture in the face of mounting criticism. Even though in some cases the texts circulating through the schools were artifacts from the Edo period, the act of reading these texts and introducing them to others had taken on new meaning, shaped by the governing contingencies of early-Meiji cultural politics. In this new context, reading *Shizu no odamaki* constituted an act of resistance against the ideology of Civilization and Enlightenment and its censure of male-male sexuality.

This grassroots campaign to reclaim the representation of samurai *nanshoku* moved to a new level when *Shizu no odamaki* began serialization in *Jiyū no tomoshibi*, a popular political newspaper that was a mouthpiece for Itagaki Taisuke’s Liberal Party.²⁹ The story was submitted to the paper by an any-

mous group of fans. These fans explained their reasons for taking this step in a statement issued along with the first installment of the story: “We have heard that students fond of *Shizu no odamaki* have taken to making copies of the story and then distributing them. But even so, this has produced no more than a few hundred copies. . . . Finding this situation to be lamentable, we are hoping for assistance from your newspaper so that we can better share this tale with other like-minded readers.”³⁰ This anonymous group of promoters hoped that by serializing *Shizu no odamaki* in a newspaper they could introduce the tale to a more extensive audience. Their strategy seems to have worked. Shortly after its successful run in *Jiyū no tomoshibi*, various commercial publishers produced a flurry of *Shizu no odamaki* editions.³¹ Komori Yōichi observes: “The distribution of *Shizu no odamaki*’s discourse thus expanded from the mini-communication sphere of hand-produced copies to a mass-communication realm [of newspapers and commercially published books].”³² Komori’s main intention here is to point out the new scale of the tale’s circulation, but through this observation he calls attention to another crucial issue: these publication strategies transformed *Shizu no odamaki* into a new text.

The most noticeable augmentation of the *Shizu no odamaki* text was the new preface that accompanied the first installment of the tale in the July 19, 1884, issue of *Jiyū no tomoshibi*. *Shizu no odamaki* enthusiasts used this introduction to explain the importance of the tale.

The following piece is called *Shizu no odamaki*. In the past it was a favorite among the stalwart men of Satsuma and other domains. It is a tale about a love affair between a warrior named Yoshida Daizō and his young comrade Hirata Sangorō. *Nan-shoku*, of course, is an affront to both nature and culture and therefore censured by every civilized moral code. In fact, there are places where it is an illegal activity. But this having been said, we can only admire Daizō and Sangorō after comparing their sense of honor, their vitality, their undying loyalty, their patriotism, and their skill in the martial arts to the superficial, self-interested, undependable, unprincipled, weak, and self-indulgent behavior of today’s youth. We believe that there is much to be learned from the character and customs of these heroic warriors from feudal days of yore.³³

These introductory remarks provide a new frame of reference for reading *Shizu no odamaki*. Acknowledging the values of the early-Meiji period, the introduction anticipates the criticism that male-male sexuality is unnatural and im-

moral. Indeed, it appropriates the rhetoric of Civilization and Enlightenment to make this point: referring to the “natural order” (*zōka shizen*) and “civilized morality” (*kaimei dōgaku*) that contravene against male-male sexuality. The preface also acknowledges legal sanctions against the practice.

But these gestures to early-Meiji enlightenment propriety are quickly brushed aside, as the introductory statement moves on to its real point. The value of *Shizu no odamaki*, it asserts, is that the tale provides Meiji readers with a more potent model of masculinity, which, according to the preface, was sorely needed. The underlying implication of this argument is that the policies of Civilization and Enlightenment had emasculated the male population of Japan, robbing them of their warrior heritage and reducing them to modern equivalents of the soft, self-interested Edo-period commoner. To underscore the patriotic spirit behind its promotion of *Shizu no odamaki*, the preface concludes with the set phrase: “We will be grateful if you take this submission in the spirit of strength, honor, and righteous indignation that it was intended.” The phrase, “spirit of strength, honor, and righteous indignation” (*kōbu shōgi kōgai hisō*), is a variation of a rhetorical flourish regularly wielded by early-Meiji political activists when they criticized government policy. Activists relied on variations of this set phrase to convey the sense of patriotic, well-intentioned frustration that lay behind their criticism of wrongs perpetrated by the Meiji government. By incorporating elements of contemporary political rhetoric into its endorsement of *Shizu no odamaki*, the introduction makes the radical leap that a literary representation of medieval samurai *nanshoku* could have positive applications to early-Meiji conversations about issues of national importance.

Further enabling this reading of *Shizu no odamaki* are the paratexts that surround each installment of the tale on the pages of *Jiyū no tomoshibi*.²⁴ The first installment of the story, for instance, shares the page with the forty-fifth chapter of a work entitled *Jiyū enzetsu onna bunshō* (A Woman’s Text for Free Speech), a melodramatic feature in which the heroine bears the allegorical name of Kotami (common person). Also on the page are announcements for a number of political rallies, as well as advertisements for self-help books, shipping companies, and various Western medicinal products. The act of serializing *Shizu no odamaki* in *Jiyū no tomoshibi* thus physically implants the tale into the discursive field of 1884, putting its endorsement of samurai *nanshoku* on more

equal textual footing with contemporaneous attacks on male-male sexuality that regularly appeared in the popular press. Moreover, serialization in this venue, which consists of various textual fragments that collectively question government-initiated policies for modernization, allows *Shizu no odamaki* to assert its relevance to the conditions of Meiji Japan even as it deviates from the parameters of modernity defined by the officially sanctioned ideology of Civilization and Enlightenment.

Yet one should not attribute too progressive an agenda to this new incarnation of *Shizu no odamaki*. Despite its close proximity to a narrative about female politicization and announcements for freedom rallies, the tale advocates profoundly conservative notions of class and gender. According to the tale's new preface, *Shizu no odamaki* is valuable because it offers an example of a more authentic formulation of Japanese masculinity that is grounded on the elite values of samurai culture, not modern mercantile culture, and is untainted by excessive exposure to women. Although it appears on the pages of *Jiyū no tomoshibi*, the content of *Shizu no odamaki* is more in alignment with the reactionary position of former samurai who participated in the Satsuma Rebellion than with the liberal position staked out by the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement.³⁵ Its appearance in *Jiyū no tomoshibi* therefore does not diminish the tale's nostalgic appeal. Rather, inclusion in this new signifying network transforms the tale of *Shizu no odamaki* into a distinctly modern conservative statement, one that urged its audience of male readers to look back toward an imagined medieval past for inspiration as they struggled to construct new models of male camaraderie and masculinity.

The essential modernity of the nostalgic turn in post-Restoration editions of *Shizu no odamaki* is equally pronounced in the commercially published books that appeared after the tale's run in *Jiyū no tomoshibi*. The first edition was published just two months after serialization in the newspaper ended. Sales must have been brisk because other publishers followed suit with their own editions: one more in late 1884, two in 1885, and two in 1887.³⁶

The bibliographic features of these books largely conform to standards for commercial publishing that were established after the Meiji Restoration.³⁷ A survey of the different editions suggests that there must have been some level of cooperation among the publishers. For instance, different editions contain the

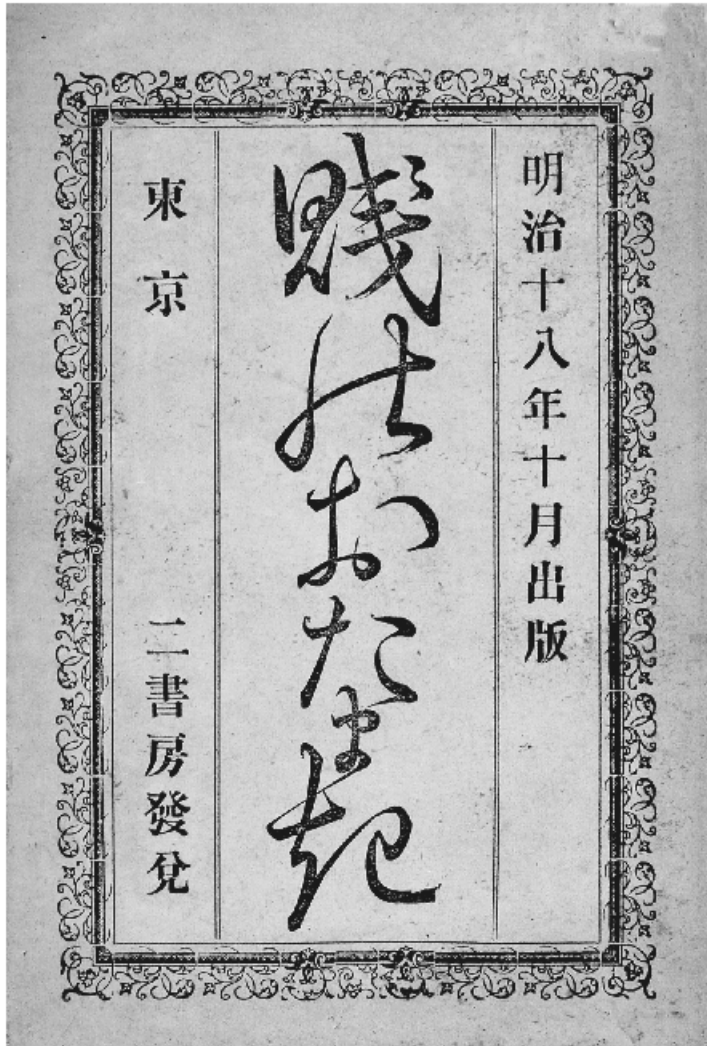


FIG. 1. Cover of the Nomura edition of *Shizu no odamaki*. Monochrome print produced by a combination of block printing and movable-type printing. The design elements and the main title were printed from blocks, while the publication information was printed using standardized movable type. In the 1880s it was common for many publishing companies to utilize a combination of block and movable-type printing techniques to produce book covers, especially for products they wanted to market as modern. Image courtesy of the National Diet Library.

same illustrations, and in some cases were actually printed off the same galley. There are also instances when different editions share the same cover design. I will use the 1885 edition published by Nomura Fukutarō as the representative example, because it seems to be the source text upon which many of the other editions were modeled. This edition's dimensions are nineteen-by-thirteen centimeters, approximately equaling the size of the Edo-era mid-size book (*chūhon*). The Nomura edition also has a soft cover, another standard feature of commercially printed books from the Edo period. As we can see in Figure 1, however, the cover design departs radically from precedents of the Edo publishing industry. For example, rather than follow the practice of printing the title on a title slip (*daisen*), which was then affixed to the cover, the publishers of this edition of *Shizu no odamaki* printed the title in large characters directly on the cover sheet.³⁸ Framing the title is an intricate design incorporating an arabesque border of twining foliage and a pattern of geometric lines, all of which is also printed directly on the cover. In another departure from Edo-period convention, the publisher of the Nomura edition included publication information, sharply rendered in highly uniform typeface and arranged on either side of the main title. This information indicates the place of publication (Tokyo), the date of publication (October 1885), and the name of the printing house (Nishobō). The first two items are especially meaningful, since Tokyo, the post-Restoration name for Japan's capital, and the date, rendered as "the eighteenth year of the Meiji era," both unequivocally situate the text within the historic frame of the Meiji period. The combined effect of these visual and lexical elements thus allowed the book to assert its modernity from its very first impression.

The printing and binding techniques also distinguished this edition as a Meiji product. For aesthetic and economic reasons, Edo commercial publishers relied upon the technique of block printing.³⁹ The Meiji-era publishers of *Shizu no odamaki*, however, utilized movable-type printing presses to produce their editions of the tale. This process resulted in a distinctively modern visual effect, in which the printed characters on the page were more uniform in terms of size and spacing than the cursive-style written text found in most Edo publications printed from blocks.⁴⁰ The binding technique also departed from Edo publishing conventions. As Peter Kornicki explains, during the Edo period commercial publishers generally followed a standard binding formula, known as the *fukuro-*

toji method. "Each page, carrying printed or handwritten text on one side only, is folded with the text on the outside, and placed on top of its predecessor; the assembled pages were then sewn together, with the stitches passing through the blank margins next to the loose edges, so that the sewn edges form the spine and the folds form the edges of the pages."⁴¹ In accordance with new practices in book production, pages of the Meiji editions of *Shizu no odamaki* were printed on both sides. The pages were folded, placed on top of each other in the correct order, and then sewn together with the stitches passing through the blank margins on the folded edges, so that folded edges form the book's spine and the loose edges form the outside edges of the pages.

One should not underestimate the impact of these bibliographic innovations on Meiji readers of *Shizu no odamaki*. In the early 1880s, many commercial publishers continued to rely on publishing practices from the Edo period. This was especially the case with genres of books that were judged to have a more traditional appeal, such as picture books, humorous books, historical adventures, and erotic tales involving the commercial sex industry. In contrast, more modern civilized products, such as books on Western learning, translations, and political novels, tended to accord with the new standards associated with the West. One would assume, given its historical setting, nostalgic atmosphere, and endorsement of samurai *nanshoku*, that the publishers of *Shizu no odamaki* would opt for a more traditional book format. Instead, they utilized conspicuously modern bibliographic conventions. This textual strategy effectively put *Shizu no odamaki* on a par with the civilizing discourse that condemned its content. By appropriating the textual form of early-Meiji modernity, these editions of the tale ensured that their nostalgic invocation of a sexual culture from the Japanese past occurred from within the framework of the modern present.

Nowhere is this dynamic more on display than in the seven illustrations that appear in the commercially published editions of *Shizu no odamaki*. Indeed, the pleasing manner in which they depict Sangorō and Daizō, along with the inviting air of nostalgia they exude, must have considerably enhanced the value of these books. According to Maeda, the illustrations for the commercially published editions of the tale were based on old-fashioned drawings from one of the privately printed texts circulated by students in the early 1880s. Maeda observes, however, that these images were considerably modernized for the com-



FIG. 2. Illustration from the Nomura edition of *Shizu no odamaki*. Monochrome woodblock print. Artist unknown. The image pictures Daizō (on the left) and Sangorō inscribing their names on the column of a Buddhist temple. The text showing through from the other side of the page is a consequence of printing on both sides of the same sheet of paper. Image courtesy of the National Diet Library.

mercially published editions.⁴² Figure 2 typifies the style of the illustrations from the commercially published editions. The woodblock print pictures Sangorō and Daizō visiting a temple of the Healing Buddha (Yakushi Nyorai) before heading off to meet their doom at the Battle of Takarabe. Although produced using the traditional technique of woodblock printing, the illustration incorporates a number of compositional devices introduced during the first years of the Meiji period. For example, the use of perspective in representing the floor of the temple and the horizon in the background results in a spatial orientation that is noticeably horizontal to the picture plane. This contrasts with the more vertical organization of space that one finds in book illustrations

from the Edo period. The bodies of the two warriors, moreover, exhibit a three-dimensional quality that is mostly absent from Edo-era representations of the human figure. And the posture of the bodies, with their contrapposto stance, is more naturalistic and the facial features less stylized than one would find in Edo illustrations.⁴³ By subtly updating the medium of the woodblock print through the infusion of Meiji-era visual idioms, the anonymous artist provided the ideal pictorial complement to the strategic blend of old and new that characterized the nostalgic modernity of the commercially published editions of *Shizu no odamaki*.

The fans of *Shizu no odamaki* thus availed themselves of various modern forms, such as the political newspaper, the modern-style book, and even new conventions for visual representation, to promote the tale and its depiction of *nanshoku* and samurai masculinity. The overtly modern character of the Meiji-era *Shizu no odamaki* texts, both the version serialized in *Jiyū no tomoshibi* and the commercially published books that followed, suggests the elite status of the tale's promoters and their intended audience. Despite their devotion to the practice of *nanshoku* and antagonism toward Civilization and Enlightenment, the promoters of *Shizu no odamaki* had the cultural wherewithal to recognize the power of these new signifying mechanisms, as well as the clout necessary to take advantage of them. One can assume, for example, that personal connections played some part in getting the tale serialized in *Jiyū no tomoshibi*. Moreover, the commercial publishers of the *Shizu no odamaki* books must have had access to significant financial resources to produce such an up-to-date, stylish product. Yet if one recalls that the groundswell of this movement in the 1870s arose in Japan's elite institutions of higher learning, then it is likely that by the mid-1880s some of these young men, who had loved the tale as students, would have attained positions of relative power in the worlds of journalism and commercial publishing.

The old-boy boosterism of *Shizu no odamaki* bore remarkable fruit. Not only did it succeed in publicizing an unapologetic endorsement of warrior masculinity and samurai *nanshoku*, but it also set into motion a literary and cultural phenomenon that continued to resonate throughout the Meiji period. The lasting influence of this phenomenon is evidenced by the fact that writers as varied as Tsubouchi Shōyō, Yamada Bimyō, and Mori Ōgai all felt compelled to revisit the tale in their later writings. Although the reintroduction of *Shizu no*

odamaki failed to topple the homophobic regime of Civilization and Enlightenment, it did reinvigorate and update the vision of male-male sexuality and masculinity endorsed by the tale. This new formulation of samurai *nanshoku* and warrior masculinity went on to assert itself in and around the margins of Japanese literary and cultural modernity for years to come.