

Gerald GROEMER

Who Benefits?

Religious Practice, Blind Women (*Goze*), *Harugoma*, and *Manzai*

It is often pointed out that Japanese religion centers on “worldly benefits” (*genze riyaku*) and on practices allowing a petitioner to attain divine boons. Since high and low, rich and poor, young and old have always pined for such benefits, religious practice is easily viewed as a force unifying all social classes and strata. This article questions such a notion by examining the religious activities and performances of blind women (*goze*) of Echigo province (present-day Niigata prefecture). Like other itinerant performers, *goze* often performed songs linked to the procurement of this-worldly or practical benefits. One favorite was called *harugoma*, and was intimately linked to silk production; another was *manzai*, which ushered in good luck, health, and wealth during the New Year’s season. This article presents annotated translations of these two *goze* songs and analyzes the social meanings of performances, both for performers and listeners. It demonstrates that the pursuit of this-worldly benefits through religious practice contributed just as much to the identification, maintenance, and reproduction of social differences as to social harmony and unification.

KEYWORDS: *Goze*—*manzai*—*harugoma*—folk religion—folk music—*genze riyaku*—blind women

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IT HAS OFTEN been remarked that Japanese religious life concerns itself far more with sacred practice than with dogma, belief, and theological orthodoxy. Throughout history countless Japanese turned to local and imported gods to supply themselves with material or immaterial “worldly benefits” (*genze riyaku* 現世利益).¹ Since even the shogun could not fully control the will of heaven, he prayed just as fervently for good luck and superior health as the ruined merchant. In the countryside, the village head and the village outcaste alike took talismans to be useful and effective. Both rich and poor offered what support they could afford to local temples, shrines, and festivals. Men and women appealed together to the tutelary god protecting kith and kin. Such evidence suggests that Japanese religious practice transcended barriers of political status, economic class, gender, age, and other social differences.

The seeming homogeneity and harmony fostered by Japanese religious practice led Yanagita Kunio to spend his life arguing for a unique religiosity of the “Japanese people.” In the 1970s the same notions motivated folklorists, including Miyata Noboru and others, to find in “folk beliefs” (*minkan shinkō*) a “traditional religion cultivated from the time of the birth of an ethnic group” (MIYATA 1970). More recently, the universality of the pursuit of “worldly benefits” has inspired descriptions of Japanese religion as “common to all classes and groups in society, including the elites (aristocratic, economic, religious) and ordinary people” (READER and TANABE 1998, 29). To many observers the practices defining much of Japanese religion exemplify a national or ethnic spirit transcending time and place and the “wisdom of everyday life that emerged from the sincere activities of the Japanese people” (MIYAKE 2001, 213). Despite their dissimilar perspectives and arguments, such writers share the view that Japanese religious practice has served primarily as a force generating social unity, community, and harmony.

Religious practice, particularly forms of it generating “worldly benefits,” has, however, also served to establish and reinforce qualitative social differences since ancient times. Japanese women, for example, were more likely to pray for safe birth than men and usually played smaller public roles in *matsuri*. The villager engaging in silkworm rearing commissioned the local priest or traveling

1. The Japanese-language literature on *genze riyaku* is vast. For an important multi-authored compendium of the concept from ancient to modern times see the NIHON BUKKYŌ KENKYŪKAI 1970; for a more recent general discussion see IPEGAMI 2004. For Anglophone studies and debates see SWANGER and TAKAYAMA 1981; HARDACRE 1986, 134–62; READER 1991a and 1991b; ANDERSON 1991; READER and TANABE 1998; MIYAKE 2001, 199–215.

religionist to enact different rituals from those desired by the tenant who grew only rice. The landowner who thrived on saké brewing contributed lavishly to the local temple, while the “water-drinking” peasant could afford to donate but a penny. Even the fears, needs, and aspirations inspiring appeals, prayers, donations, purchases, commissions, or other sorts of ritual practice were conditioned by social disparities. One was more prone to be injured as a coolie than a courtier, more likely to be buried by an earthquake if one lived in a rickety hovel than a well-built palace, and more exposed to malnutrition if one subsisted on boiled weeds rather than on fish, tofu, and rice. For good reason, some people were motivated to beg for one kind of windfall or turned to one class of deities for succor, while others asked for different sorts of practical benefits and even pleaded to different gods and spirits. What held true for petitioners or other receivers of secular or sacred benefits was of course also the case for the providers of holy services. Social differences, not degrees of divine efficacy in bringing about desired ends, determined that the child of a bankrupt farmer would end up a mendicant religious itinerant performing exorcisms or benedictions at doorsteps, while the local intendant’s son who had “forsaken the world” would busy himself reading sutras and climbing the ladder of the Buddhist ecclesiastical order.

Once these simple insights are taken seriously, new strategies for studying Japanese religion begin to emerge. Rather than turning “practice” into a bland abstraction that permits “the Japanese people” to be mashed into a homogeneous unity, practice becomes a means for highlighting difference and multiplicity. When thought and practice turn out to exhibit performative contradictions, analysis may reveal how ideals become ideology. The performance of a holy song, the mumbling of a prayer, or the purchase of a talisman can then be interpreted as products of differentiated, often antagonistic social realities rather than the embodiment of the unities in which religion trucks.

As a model of such an analysis, I shall examine the religious activities of Japanese women commonly known as *goze* 瞽女. *Goze* were visually disabled (usually fully blind), usually rural, and more often than not impoverished itinerant performers of secular and sacred songs. From at least the start of the Edo period (1600–1868) *goze* in various areas of Japan banded together to aid one another in daily life, pursue their vocation as roving bards, and transmit literary and musical traditions to the students who would support them in old age. The best known *goze* were those of Echigo (Niigata prefecture), a handful of whom remained active until the prewar era. The Echigo *goze* repertory included “folk religious” songs called *harugoma* and *manzai*. These songs, I shall argue, cannot be properly understood so long as one insists that Japanese religious practice is simply “common to all classes and groups in society.”



FIGURE 1. Nagaoka *goze* praying before a stone image, probably of Jizō, in the 1970s. Sekiya Hana (guide), Nakashizu Misao, Kaneko Seki. Photograph by Aiba Kōichi.

Goze Religious Life

Most Echigo *goze* households comprised a fictive family of women in which a teacher (often called the “mother”) surrounded herself with pupils, guides, and other auxiliaries. Ritualized religious observances structured the day, the year, and even the life span of the inhabitants. Sugimoto Kikue 杉本キクエ (1898–1983), a *goze* from Takada (present-day Jōetsu-shi in Niigata prefecture) who faithfully transmitted habits and modes of thought dating from a far earlier age, never forgot to articulate a brief entreaty to the Buddha immediately after rising at six o’clock in the morning.² On most days she sought only the most quo-

2. I give her name as Kikue because she insisted that this is correct (see SUZUKI 1999, 121) and because this is how it appears on her grave marker. Her household register, however, gives it as “Kikui” and many scholars prefer the latter spelling. The sounds “e” and “i” are often reversed in Echigo dialect, and the household register may well be based on an oral transmission to a clerk who wrote down the name as he heard it.

tidian “worldly benefits”: a day’s worth of safety and well-being. On memorial days, however, she intoned more prolix sutra-like invocations associated with the death of a teacher or a family member (ŌYAMA 1977, 216–17).

Even on tour *goze* strove to fulfill their devotions. They never missed an opportunity to pay their respects to roadside stone statues of divinities, especially of Jizō (地藏; Skt. Kṣitigarbha), a bodhisattva who saved the suffering, cured eye diseases, protected travelers, and lurked behind some of the plots of the long Echigo *goze* songs known as *saimon matsuzaka* 祭文松坂.³ When encountering images of this deity, *goze* always halted, folded their hands, and uttered a concise orison to prevent them from going astray (FUKUSHIMA 1976, 26; see FIGURE 1).

Many other gods and spirits were also judged by *goze* to embody a broad range of apotropaic powers. Among the most revered ranked Fudō Myō-ō (不動明王; Skt. Acalanātha), believed to heal eye diseases and restore visual abilities. *Goze* from central and northern Niigata, as well as blind men and visually impaired shamans of the region, repeatedly pilgrimaged to the Fudō enshrined at the Kankokuji 菅谷寺 (popularly known as Sugatani Fudōson 菅谷不動尊), a famous Shingon-sect temple supposedly established in 1185 and located in the countryside near Shibata (SUZUKI 1996, 27–28).⁴

The variety of divinities worshiped in a typical *goze* household is revealed by Sugimoto Kikue and her pupil Sugimoto Shizu 杉本シズ (1916–2000). These two women shared the same domicile for decades:

Sugimoto Shizu: “We take our Benten 弁天 (a short name for Benzaiten 弁財天 or Myōon-Benzaiten 妙音弁財天; Skt. Sarasvatī) out at New Year’s. At the start of the year we hang a scroll with her image over there. Then, when February comes around we roll it up again and store it. The deity (*kami-sama*) over there now, she who’s up there, above the dresser, on the left, that’s the Sugitsubo Yakushi 杉壺薬師 (Skt. Vaiduryanirbhasa, the god of healing and medicine) from East Kubiki County. [Sugimoto] Kikue put it up. And then, the one over there is the Kannon 観音 (short for Kanzeon 観世音; Skt. Avalokiteśvara) from Bessho in Nagano prefecture, who drives out misfortune. Kikue went to worship the Yakushi, the god of eyes, from the time she was a child.”

Sugimoto Kikue: “Since Benten is the [tutelary] god of our profession, we set her up at the turn of the year, at New Year’s, and make oblations and serve

3. On literary elements of such songs see ITAGAKI 2009, 42–43; on musical characteristics see GROEMER 2007, *kenkyū-hen*, 407–38. In Kyoto, for example, the “eye disease Jizō” (“meyami [no] Jizō”) at the Keikyōji 桂橋寺, a Kannon temple, was visited by many blind people. See *Kyō warabe* (pub. 1658), 10–11. Today this Jizō is housed at the nearby Pure Land sect temple Chūgenji 仲源寺. In Edo the “Nabekaburi jizō” (Jizō who wears a pot on his head), moved several times but located today at the Shukugenji 祝言寺 at Matsugaya, was believed to cure eye diseases.

4. This temple is one of the “three great Fudō” temples of Japan.

her—until the end of the New Year’s season. Whenever we eat something ourselves, three times a day, we serve her too.⁵ But it would be unkind to leave her out all year long, so we do that only at New Year’s. Nevertheless, secretly, on days when, for instance, there is a festival, we say, ‘Please, Benten, protect us today.’ Benten is in the dresser on the second floor. That’s where we keep the scroll, but if she is in the dresser she can’t eat anything, so we open the dresser and carry offerings up to the second floor, and give them to her. And when I boil rice in the morning for our three daily meals, I think that disabled people (*fujiyū na mono*) [like us] might have an accident or something, so when I get up in the morning and cook, I make offerings of rice and saké to Konnichisama 今日様, (the sun or “god of the day”) and Daijingū-sama 大神宮様 (god of the great shrine), and then to the spirits of the dead (*hotoke-sama*), even though I’m not a special supporter of those deities (*kami-san*). Because everything that happens is a blessing of our teachers. So I make offerings.”

(SUZUKI 1997, 44–45)

As these assertions indicate, *goze* practiced a good deal of ecumenical liberality. Every divinity was good for something, though some deities were assessed as more precious than others in supplying specific benefits. Even on her deathbed a *goze* might derive comfort from the notion that after her demise she would turn into a star in the firmament, though this was hardly a matter of Shinto or Buddhist orthodoxy (SAITŌ 1978, 67).⁶

Religious fervor was also displayed when *goze*, despite their poverty, contributed to the established Buddhist order or to the poor. Either act was taken to increase one’s stock of beneficial karma and perhaps even lead to “worldly benefits” for the donor. A “mountain *goze*” named Tae from the village of Urada (today Tōkamachi), for instance, was remembered years after her death not just for possessing a fine voice, but also for making regular donations to the village temple. She also practiced munificence toward locals experiencing hardship, and generously funded a priest to discharge an edifying lecture once a week (SAITŌ 1972, 164). In provinces girdling Edo, names of local *goze* studded lists of donors to temple projects, a fact not lost on the other contributors or the priest who circulated the list (*Shimōsa-machi shi* 1987, 284, 286; ENOMOTO 1992, 185–86).

5. As a sign of reverence she was always served first, though what she did not partake was later reverentially devoured by *goze*. See SUZUKI 1998, 51.

6. This belief was evidently held by Takada *goze*. Most others probably placed more faith in more orthodox Buddhist notions of life after death. Surprisingly, in the *Timaeus* (41d) Plato argues that God divided the whole into souls equal in number to the stars, and each soul is assigned a star.

Collective Practices and Benefits

In appealing to a pantheon of gods and spirits for the purpose of securing worldly advantages *goze* differed little from a typical farmer. On the surface of it, religious practice unified or harmonized *goze* with the rest of the Japanese populace.

Yet *goze* religious practice was based on meanings and functions of which the farmer knew nothing. The significance of *goze* appeals to the Buddhas or kami was not exhausted in the desire for individual blessings. Instead, religion served as a powerful means for combating the discrimination suffered by those with disabilities, by artists exposed to the jeopardy of earning a living on the road, and by women who audaciously sought to achieve a modicum of economic autonomy in a highly patriarchal, unequal society. Devout, orderly, and even ascetic practices steeled *goze* to what awaited them in the outside world. If *goze* wished to consolidate their organizations and fortify solidarity within their ranks they had little choice but to cultivate piety and orthopractical rigidity. Every time *goze* prayed before a Jizō on the road or uncurtained some other public display of religious zeal this projected an image at odds with the dubious morality so often imputed to itinerant women earning a living from singing songs and playing musical instruments. A reputation of spotless integrity was the *sine qua non* for *goze*, for no self-respecting farmer, not to mention his wife, would lodge a woman suspected of moonlighting as a hooker or associating with debauched riffraff. Any hint of impiety or immodesty would have ended a *goze*'s career on the spot. Far from establishing a bland unity with the "Japanese people," *goze* religious practice permitted *goze* to differentiate themselves from social groups with which they, for right or wrong, wished not to be associated.

Judging from historical illustrations and literary works, late medieval *goze* of western Japan established ties to ecclesiastical institutions for much the same purpose. *Goze* organizations in eastern Japan soon followed suit. The *goze* association of Sunpu (Shizuoka-shi), for example, was firmly bound to the Hōdai'in 宝台院, a local Pure Land temple closely related to the Tokugawa family (*Sunkoku zasshi* 1: 245). In what is today Gifu prefecture, *goze* living near the redoubtable Tendai-sect Gankōji 願興寺 were even dubbed the "great temple *goze*" (*ōdera goze* 大寺瞽女; MIYOSHI 1978). *Goze* from Takada in Echigo turned to the Sōtō-sect Tenrinji 天林寺 at Teramachi, which during the first half of the Edo period had been brought here from nearby Naoetsu. At Tenrinji, *goze* celebrated their annual general meeting (*myōon-kō*) in honor of Benzaiten, whom the temple enshrined. At this ceremony a priest read out loud a document relating the origins of the *goze* (*goze engi* 瞽女縁起) and a list of rules (*shikimoku* 式目) that Benzaiten had commanded *goze* to follow to the letter.⁷

7. For details on foundation legends see FRITSCH 1991.

That Benzaiten, who also spread her shielding wings over the guild of blind men (*tōdō* 当道), was the favored object of worship among *goze* was no accident.⁸ As the “deity of mysterious tones” and one of the “seven lucky gods” of popular religion, she was swathed in an aura of benevolence, not unlike St. Cecilia, whose name, if Chaucer is to be awarded credence, happened to mean “the way for the blind.”⁹ Yet Benzaiten was neither a god of blindness nor of sight. Instead of offering the “worldly benefit” of restored vision, she supported *goze* by bequeathing them a valuable art. Even the musical instruments, strings, canes, and other items used by *goze* were saturated with her power. As Sugimoto Kikue relates in the interview cited above, Echigo *goze* worshiped her regularly at home. They also paid obeisance to her every time they returned home from their long tours (SAKUMA 1973, 23). When they did so, they drew a line between themselves and those rural and urban residents on whom Benzaiten did not confer her favors. Benzaiten worship reinforced the notion that *goze* were different from fully sighted Japanese because *goze* relied more on the support of others.

Customs supported by the Buddhist virtue of charity and a belief in karma aided *goze* in gaining such support while touring far and wide. As Sekine Yasu 関根ヤス (1893–?) from Nagaoka once explained,

In many areas people thought that if they let *goze* stay overnight, this was a Buddhist merit (*kudoku* 功德). They'd beg you to stay if a dear child had died, or if the day was a memorial day for a grandfather or grandmother who had passed away. People in many parts thought that way, though in Middle Uonuma and South Uonuma counties they didn't. But in Gunma prefecture people believed that too. They thought that letting *goze* spend the night profited the spirit of the deceased. When they let you stay for free, this became a virtue for them. And when we sang our songs on a memorial day, this pleased everyone. They said the performances were for the sake of the deceased.

(SUZUKI 1996, 239)

Supplying a room to wayfaring strangers was generally taken as a virtue with religious implications, but it also separated the “insider” from the “outsider.” *Goze* and other wayfarers were usually welcomed in villages, but only so long as they remained guests. Even here religion encouraged social concord only while marking salient differences. Community and exclusion defined and depended on each other.

8. For a German-language book-length study of Benzaiten see FRITSCH 1996.

9. This etymology is today regarded as spurious. It counts as one of five explanations of the word found in the “The Seconde Nonne’s Tale” from *The Canterbury Tales*.

“Worldly Benefits” and Magical Efficacy

Imputed magical powers attributed to *goze* accoutrements, songs, *shamisen* strings, and the very person of a *goze* starkly differentiated *goze* from other residents of the countryside. Ihira Take remembered that her listeners desired the pouch of her *shamisen*: “They’d make clothing for a newborn child out of it, so that the baby would get strong and not hurt itself” (SUZUKI et al. 1976, 41–42).¹⁰ Even the rice that *goze* collected from “one-hundred people” (*hyakunin-gome* or *hyakunin-mai*) contained a mysterious spirit endowing it with a higher monetary value than more humdrum variety of the grain (SUZUKI et al., 1976, 40; SAKUMA 1973, 23; SUZUKI 1996, 107–8).

Distinctions between *goze* and their audiences also became glaringly evident in the mysterious efficacy attributed to *goze* performances. Some farmers implored *goze* to play before the box of seed-rice for the ensuing year’s crop. Other cultivators brought such seed rice along with them when they went to hear a *goze* performance at someone’s house, or importuned *goze* to stay at their home on the first day of the rice-planting season (SUZUKI 1996, 103–4). Sekine Yasu well remembered when she was asked to sing for a variety of crops:

We were also asked to sing to the hemp—what were the words? It must have been around the *bon* season (that is, mid-summer), after the hemp was harvested. They’d take the hemp, strip the skin, and boil it in a kettle or something. That’s when we went there. I didn’t go regularly, but two or three of my younger colleagues came from hemp-growing areas. So they went to those villages. When you made the rounds from door to door the inhabitants would give you hemp. It didn’t have anything to do with religion. But others would say, ‘Can’t we have someone like you sing, someone with nice white skin, young and healthy?’ You didn’t know if it was a joke or if they were serious. They’d say that if you sang, it was simpler to strip off the skin, or that it would turn more white, or whatever....

I also went to cotton-producing areas. But the people there didn’t ask us to sing for the cotton. Or, come to think of it, some actually did, in the cotton areas. They’d ask us to sing so that next year’s cotton crop would be better. People say what they will. Cotton has seeds. They’d dry it in the arcades before the houses, under the snow. And they’d say, “Won’t you sing a song so that we’ll have a good harvest?”

Then there was wheat. In the Kanto area they grew lots of wheat. When we arrived there from October or November they were planting the wheat. They called that “wheat stamping” (*mugifumi*). We’d be commissioned to sing

10. Since the pouch contained an instrument with magical powers and had heard the music of the *shamisen* for months or years, it had absorbed its strength. This efficacy could be transferred to a child wrapped with such material (see SUZUKI 1996, 105).

“wheat-sowing songs” (*mugimaki-uta*) and we’d sing some kind of wheat-related song, even if we hadn’t properly learned it. Come to think of it, on one occasion two people put the wheat in a bag—it was funny—they had a cloth bag and they put the wheat in it. Several quarts of it. They said that cloth lets the sound through! And then they held it up and said, “Hey you, can you sing for it a bit? This is the wheat we use for seeds!” That happened twice. To me, and some of my friends, too.... In Kanto nobody asked us to sing for the rice seedlings, though. But oftentimes we were told, “Sing a song with all your might to make the wheat come up strong.” Lots of similar things happened.

I didn’t go much to areas by the ocean. But you could count on fishermen begging you to sing for a more bountiful catch. It was just that I didn’t go to areas with fishermen regularly. Only to Izumosaki. I did go to Izumosaki once and was told to sing so that they’d catch more fish. That happened once in a while. For what reasons, I don’t know. (SUZUKI 1996, 232–34)

By catering to the demands of the farmers to have their rice serenaded or their houses blessed by an auspicious song, *goze* supplied “worldly benefits” to others while gaining certain advantages, particularly pecuniary ones, for themselves. As Sekine Yasu’s incredulous attitude regarding the efficacy of her song for producing better hemp suggests, not all *goze* were fully convinced of their own thaumaturgical powers. It did not much matter. A definitive judgment on such questions could be left to others or to the gods themselves. For *goze* the point was to use an ascribed social difference—that of possessing or lacking magical powers—into a useful resource for gaining specific advantages here and now.

Harugoma: Social Status and Religious Differences

The performance of Buddhist songs, behind which stood the authority of a religion whose fundamental tenets and sociopolitical legitimacy hardly anyone questioned, enveloped all performers, *goze* included, with a sacred aura. Singers harnessed this power to establish a useful distance or difference between themselves and their audiences, usually for the sake of earning some extra cash. Sugimoto Kikue, for example, could reproduce a Buddhist hymn in praise of Jizō (*Jizō wasan* 地藏和讃) and had learned two *kudoki* ballads (“Go-honzan *kudoki*” 御本山口説 and “Goshō *kudoki*” 後生口説) strongly tinged with Jōdo-shinshū Buddhism (ITAGAKI 2009, 171–72). Both were performed mostly on commission and for a set fee.

Larger and more secure rewards could be reaped from the far more popular genres of *harugoma* (春駒 “Spring pony”) and *manzai* (万歳 “Ten-thousand years [of good fortune]”). These pieces, which Echigo *goze* had borrowed from specialists of the respective genres, thrived on the perception of a significant dif-

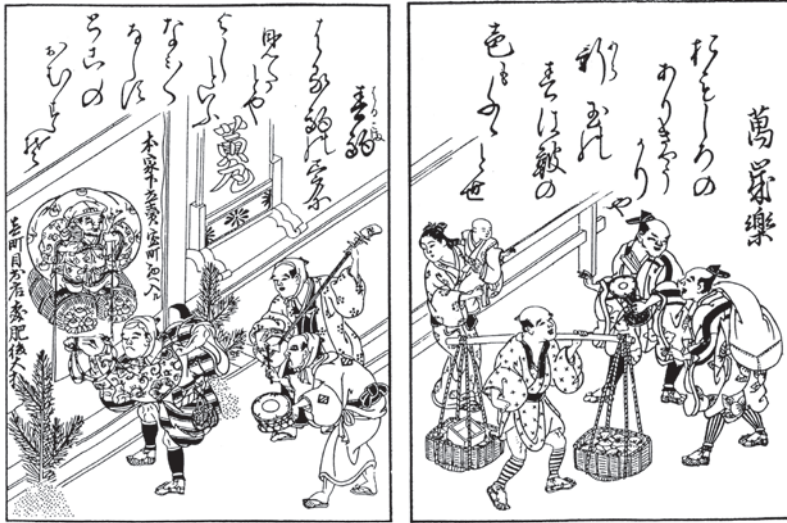


FIGURE 2. *Harugoma* (left) and *manzai tayū* and *saizō* (right) before a domestic entryway on the streets of Osaka. Note the pine branch decorations before the door, signifying the New Year's season. From *Ehon otogi shina-kagami*, Osaka, 1730.

ference between the “sacred” performer who embodied “folk religious” or magical energies and the less spiritually endowed “lay” listener or secular performer.

During the Edo period the best known form of *harugoma* featured performers cavorting about with a diminutive figure of a horse (see FIGURE 2, left panel). The dancers intoned a text connecting the auspicious pony to the raising of silkworms.¹¹ The roots of this odd relationship were ancient. The same connection informed the *o-shirasama saimon* おしら様祭文, a genre often performed in the Japanese north by female shamans.¹² In the *saimon* narrative a horse and a girl marry and the latter eventually descends from heaven in the shape of a silkworm. *Harugoma*, too, endows the silk industry and those participating in it, particularly the women, with a religious significance.

By the late Muromachi period *harugoma* performers appear in screen paintings of sights in and around Kyoto. In one such screen two men wearing white headbands stand on a thoroughfare before shops and houses during what is plainly the New Year's season. The neck and head of a brown horse-figure are strapped to each performer's waist; the tail of a horse tail is attached in back. Since one player is dressed in red and one in white, the two may be representing

11. For a book-length study of *harugoma* see KAWAMOTO 1998.

12. On shamans, silkworms, and the *o-shirasama saimon*, see MILLER 1993. On the meaning of horses in Japanese folk culture see NAUMANN 1959.

male and female equine specimens.¹³ During this era such performers, probably classified as outcasts (*hinin*, literally “non-humans”) still commonly served as temple and shrine menials.

During the Edo period *harugoma* was still routinely performed by *hinin*, who were gradually forced to accept a caste-like social status from which escape was nearly impossible (*Kokkei zōdan* 1: 112). Early nineteenth-century records speak of well-dressed “beggar” girls of twelve to thirteen years old, probably of *hinin* status, presenting the art at Kyoto doorsteps. These children accompanied their songs on *shamisen*, *kokyū* (a bowed fiddle), and drums (*Nenjū gyōji taisai*, 17 [1806]). As late as 1867, when an official mourning period was declared for the court, *hinin* were still witnessed illegally continuing their *harugoma* performances (town officials did not arrest them for this offense but later suffered reprimands) (*Kyōto machibure shūsei* 13: 127, no. 300). In some areas of the land outcastes of *eta* status also performed *harugoma*, an act soon interdicted by the authorities.¹⁴ In Kanazawa, nighttime *harugoma* performances by similar pariahs known as *tōnai* were banned in 1826, but continued to be seen until at least the Meiji period (1868–1912) (*Iburaku ikkan*, 541; ISHIKAWA-KEN KANAZAWA SHIYAKUSHO 1929, 543). Again in Shizuoka prefecture the genre was associated with *hinin*-like outcastes locally known as *banta*.¹⁵

Since Edo-period Echigo *goze* did not number among outcastes—indeed they did not even permit the latter to join their associations and shunned *hinin* houses when touring—they could not exploit the officially authorized monopolies maintained by such status groups. Echigo *goze* probably did not perform *harugoma* until the Meiji era, after *hinin* status and outcaste monopolies had been abolished. When they did sing this song, they transformed what had been a clear difference in social status into a more subtle one of magical or religious power. This difference could, in turn, be grafted onto the social distinction of *goze* vs. non-*goze*. *Harugoma* did not simply unite *goze* and audiences in a pursuit of identical “worldly benefits,” but rather also set the two sides apart so that they might pursue dissimilar aims.

The text of *harugoma* transmitted by Echigo *goze*, considerably shorter than many other versions, is reproduced and translated in full below.¹⁶

13. See *Uesugi-hon rakuchū rakugai zu byōbu* (1574, in the possession of Yonezawa City), left panel, second screen from the right, reproduced in OZAWA and KAWASHIMA 1994, 19–21 (detail on page 103). For a discussion see YAMAJI 1989, 53–54 and KAWAMOTO 1998, 78–80.

14. See for example the 1799 ban in *Hanpō-shū* 2: 319 (law no. 302), which prohibits *eta* both from performing *harugoma* and playing the *shamisen* in the Tottori domain. The law was repealed in 1858.

15. For texts, illustrations, and explanations see *Sunkoku zasshi* 2: 241 (fascicle 15); and the illustration in supplement (*fuzu* 附図) vol. 1, n.p. (no. 59).

16. For a far longer text recorded in 1713 see *Kokkei zōdan* 1: 112–13.

Harugoma text. Based on a performance by Sugimoto Kikue (song), Sugimoto Shizu, and Nanba Kotomi (vocables) recorded on *Echigo goze no uta*, Columbia FZ-7011-14 (1975). See also *Echigo goze uta* and *Mukei bunka-zai: Echigo Takada goze-uta*. *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei* 17: 586, presents a slightly abbreviated printed version of the text. For several versions by various performers see *Taishū geinō shiryō shūsei* 3: 237–48. Early twentieth-century texts collected in Niigata prefecture (Sado County) can also be found in *Riyōshū* (92). Vocables, not included in the translation, are indicated below by underlined italics in the Japanese text. For grammatical reasons some lines are translated in reverse order. The English-language order has been indicated by numbers preceding the Japanese original. For a transcription of the music see GROEMER 2007, *kenkyū-hen*, 222–23.¹⁷

A “spring pony” at the start of spring:

1. *haru no hajime ni harugoma nanzo sorya*

It’s lucky just to dream of it!

2. *yume ni mite sae yoi to wa mōsu*

Twelve ponies, borne and brought here.

3. *mushite¹⁸ utsusu wa jūni no koma yo a haido haido*

This month is lucky, this day is lucky,

4. *tsuki mo yoshi hi mo yoshi kogai mo yoshi sorya*

The province of Mino is for silkworms!

5. *kogai ni torite wa Mino no kuni yo*

The provinces of Mino and Owari!

6. *Mino no kuni ya Owari no kuni yo a haido haido*

Onoyama county and Owari province!

7. *Owari no kuni ya Onoyama-gōri¹⁹ sorya*

17. Immediately before and after line 12, and again before line 37 the pitch of the performance suddenly changes, probably the result of electronic manipulation (splicing of different takes?). This has also altered the normal three-line pattern of vocables: the first line ending with the vocables “*a haido haido*,” the second concluding with “*sorya*,” and the third terminating with no vocables. Thus line 13 should correctly probably end with “*sorya*.”

18. Meaning unclear. ŌTAKI 1973 (389), 13 (Echigo goze song) gives *mitsu de*, “from six,” which also makes little sense. TAKANO 1942, 499–500 (*harugoma* from Shinano province) gives *mashite utsutsui jōba no koma ni* (“an even more beautiful pony for riding”), which is easiest to understand. *Kokkei zōdan* contains no similar line of text. Texts reproduced in KAWAMOTO 1998 supply yet other possibilities: *mawashite* (move around), *mōshite mawaseba* (to say and move around), and the like. None of these alternatives appear any better than the others.

19. *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei* 17: 586, gives *ono ya gōri*, perhaps “sickles and baskets,” which, assuming that *gōri* signifies *kōri*, may make more sense than “Onoyama county,” which seems not to have existed. ŌTAKI 1973 (389), 13, gives the most unlikely *kono yo no owari*, “the end

Put together the eggs from the three areas:

8. *midoko*²⁰ *no tane o ba ichido ni awase*

hand them to girls who raise them!

9. *kaime no joroshū ni owatashi mōsu a haido haido*

The girls who raise them will receive them

10. *kaime no joroshū ga uketorimashite sorya*

and praise them happily, saying “what wonderful eggs!”

11. *sate mo yoi tane da to home yorokonde*

On the left, give them three days and nights,

12. *hidari no kowaki ni sannichi san'ya a haido haido*

on the right, give them three days and nights,

13. *migiri no kowaki ni sannichi san'ya a haido haido*

add it up for six days and nights!

14. *ryōhō awasete rokunichi rokuya*

On the third day sprinkle water, on the fourth let it stand²¹

15. *mikka ni mizuhiki yokka ni yodome a haido haido*

on the fifth day line them up, oh so gently,

16. *itsuka ni sorori to mina irisoroe sorya*

feeling as tense as a bird perched for flight.

17. *kokoro wa kinchō no kyō tatsu tori yo*

Eighth, place flight feathers on both sides

18. *yatsu wa kazakiri-bana ryōte ni suete*²² *a haido haido*

sweep them once, a thousand silkworms!²³

19. *hitohaki haite wa sengo ga kaiko sorya*

of the world.” TAKANO 1942, 499–500, gives *Kuwana-gōri ya Onoyama-goshi* (“Kuwana province and Onoyama waist”) which also makes no sense (perhaps “waist” should be the homophonous “beyond”). KAWAMOTO 1998, 24, gives *Kuwana no kōri ya Onoyama-sato* (“the town of Kuwana and the village of Onoyama”); KAWAMOTO 1998, 41, *Kuwa no gōri no ano yamagoshi* (“the town of mulberries and beyond that mountain”); KAWAMOTO 1998, 50, *Kuwana gōri no O-no-yama koete* (“crossing Mt. O of Kuwana county”); KAWAMOTO 1998, 60, *Owari kōri wa Onoyama-koshi no Toyahara tane tote* (“so-called Toyahara eggs from beyond Onoyama [Mt. One?] in Owari town”).

20. *Midoko* is sometimes taken to mean “honorable growing-bed” rather than “three areas.”

21. TAKANO 1942, 500, gives *mikka ni yodomu*.

22. Sugimoto Kikue also sings the same line in other performances. TAKANO 1942, 499–500, gives *yatsu no kazakiri te ni mochi-soroete* (hold together eight flight-feathers). Perhaps Sugimoto’s *kazakiri-bana* (literally “wind-cutting flower”) should be *kazakiri-bane* (flight-feathers of a bird’s wing), which would relate the meaning to that of the previous line, *Kokkei zōdan* gives *kazakiri te de nuki-motte*, an abbreviation for *kazakiri-bane*. In some versions of the song more feathers are then enumerated.

23. This means to sweep the just-hatched silkworms from the egg cards into the silkworm basket.

sweep them twice, ten-thousand silkworms!

20. *futahaki haite wa mango ga kaiko*

sweep them three and four times, all of them!

21. *mihaki yohaki to mina haki-otoshi a haido haido*

And now what shall we feed them?

22. *saraba kono ko ni nani ka o kuwasho sorya*

There's a hill to the south,

23. *kore yori minami ni koyama ga gozaru*

a hill with mulberry fields on all sides.

24. *koyama gururi wa mina kuwa-batake a haido haido*

Let the young girl of the inn wear small clogs,

25. *yado no komusume ni koashida o hakase sorya*

dress her in a gold apron, brocade sleeve cords,

26. *kin no maekake nishiki no tasuki*

let her dangle a flower basket from her hand

27. *hana no mikago o te ni burasagete a haido haido*

and collect budding banches from the northwest side!

28. *inui no hō e to saitaru eda o sorya*

Take off the new leaves, strip them all,

29. *shinba otoshite²⁴ mina koki-oroshi*

stuff them all into a lucky floral basket

30. *hana no mikago ni mina tsumekonde a haido haido*

and cover it lightly with a bellflower towel!

31. *kikyō no tenugui fuwari to kakete sorya*

Now let's feed the silkworms mulberry leaves!

32. *saraba kono ko ni kuwa kuremasho to*

A little for this one, a little for that one,

33. *kono ko ni chirari kono ko ni barari a haido haido*

here and there, the same for all.

34. *chirari barari to mina kure-soroe sorya*

The sound of the silkworms eating

35. *ano ko kono ko no kuwa mesu oto wa*

resembles Genji's pony-stables of yore,

36. *mukashi Genji no umaya no gotoku a haido haido*

24. Some versions give *nokoshite*, "retaining the new leaves."

a thousand stones being stacked on the bank

38. *sen tsumu ishi ni mo otori wa senai*

no less impressive than the sound of a thousand stones,

37. *Sai no kawara no sen tsumu ishi no*²⁵ *sorya*

of the River of Three Fords.

Owari people are good at making thread,

39. *Owari no kuni no ito tori jōzu a haido haido*

Mino people are good at carding cotton,

40. *Mino no kuni no wata muki jōzu sorya*

the good and the good harmonize:

41. *jōzu to jōzu ga chōshi o soroe*

Seventy-five layers loaded into a ship!²⁶

42. *fune ni tsukete mo nanajūgo-sō a haido haido*

Seventy-five tiers loaded on a horse!

43. *uma ni tsukete mo nanajūgo-dan sorya*

The tortoise lives for a thousand years,

the crane for ten-thousand!

44. *tsuru wa sennen kame wa mannen.*

That Echigo *goze*, who lacked *hinin* credentials and had played no role in the establishment of the *harugoma* tradition, were nevertheless granted spiritual authority to turn the song into a religiously charged, auspicious performance, relied on the common perception that nearly anything related to *goze* advanced the cultivation of silkworms. Even the mere presence of a *goze* in a house was taken to impart a favorable effect on the growth of the worms. The leader of a *goze* group might even be asked to sleep among the silkworm cases for maximum effect (SAKUMA 1973, 22). Worm-handling chopsticks, too, went up in value if blessed by *goze*. On the day of their *myōon-kō* Nagaoka *goze* procured chopsticks at booths appearing on the road leading to the *goze* headquarters. These utensils were treated to a summary benediction by Benzaiten and distributed to supporters who awarded *goze* lunch or snacks while on tour. When handled with such chopsticks, the worms supposedly produced better cocoons (SAKUMA 1973, 22; SUZUKI 1996, 101–2).

Residents of the silk-producing regions of Gunma, Nagano, Niigata, and the Yonezawa area of Yamagata prefecture believed that silken *shamisen* strings

25. “Sai no kawara” is the bank of the “River of Three Fords” in the underworld. Here the souls of children who have died are condemned to build small towers of rocks as a holy memorial that will save their parents. These towers are destroyed by the devil, but the god Jizō steps in to save children from their endless ordeal.

26. These quantities evidently refer to the amount of silk to be transported to the capital. *Dan* in the following line may be *tan*, a measure of cloth.

sounded by *goze* delighted the worms.²⁷ Sugimoto Shizu and Kikue, too, were quite sure of the fact:

Sugimoto Shizu: “In Nagano prefecture the precious silkworms loved the tones of the *shamisen*.²⁸ When we went from door to door, the silkworms stopped chewing their mulberry leaves, even if they were busy eating them, as soon as they heard the sound of the *shamisen*. They’d raise their heads to listen. When you went to Nagano you’d be told, ‘Please give us your broken strings when you have some. If you gave people your broken strings they’d attach them to the silkworm cases, tie them there. That made the silkworms happy, they said.’”

Sugimoto Kikue: “Lots of people did that.”

Sugimoto Shizu: “If you had a broken third string (that is, the uppermost string) or second (middle) string, they’d ask if they could have it.”

Sugimoto Kikue: “Silkworms are happy about broken strings, the ones you’ve worn out.”

(SUZUKI 1999, 124–25)

Just as in Noh plays beating a fox-skin drum summoned foxes from the forest, vibrating silk strings resonated with the spirit of the silkworm and caused the worms or even their eggs to flourish. Growers beseeched Nagaoka *goze* touring the relatively balmy Kanto region from December to March to perform in the room used for storing egg cards. At New Year’s, growers often set up a silkworm case in the alcove in the main room of the house. Egg cards were placed on this case, and *goze* entertained the nascent creatures (SUZUKI 1996, 101).

Even when not vibrating, silken *shamisen* strings allegedly harbored beneficial magical properties. Itō Fusae 伊藤フサエ (1891–?), the last of the *goze* from Iida in Nagano prefecture, was so persistently pestered for broken *shamisen* strings that she resorted to buying new ones, cutting them into short segments with a scissors, and handing them out to those who craved them. *Goze* smitten with a bad conscience over such a godless ruse hacked strings to pieces with the edge of their plectrum (*bachi*, 撥 or バチ, a large implement made of wood, tortoise shell, or ivory; MIZUNO 1960, 21; SUZUKI 1996, 123).

Silkworm growers rarely purchased strings from non-*goze*. *Shamisen* sounds produced by performers of other social groups were seldom offered to silkworms. Peasants did not perform *harugoma* on their own, and did not sing to their worms. Had religious practice only supplied a “common religious denominator” (READER and TANABE 1998, 23) for *goze* and their listenership, *harugoma* would have lost nearly all of its meaning besides a purely aesthetic one. It would have turned into nothing more than a quaint poem and bouncy tune relating

27. On *goze* and silkworm culture see also FRITSCH 1996, 225–28.

28. Sugimoto Shizu uses a highly deferential form for silkworms (*o-kaiko-san*).

to silk production. Precisely the gap separating *goze* and non-*goze*, a difference mediated by notions of magical or religious efficacy, allowed *goze harugoma* performances to function as something more than musical entertainment in Echigo society.

Manzai: Social Differences and the Structure of a Performance

Much like *harugoma*, *manzai* symbolized New Year's and the start of spring. Extant recordings of Echigo *goze manzai* represent a tradition dating at least to the sunset years of the Edo period. The pedigree of *manzai* in general stretched to Chinese antiquity, but by the ninth or tenth centuries the art had already become thoroughly Japanized. Thereafter the genre developed further, but archaic features stubbornly persisted. Thus in recordings by *goze* in the 1970s the first two lines sung continue to replicate the declarations (*kotodate* 言立て) launching some of the oldest recorded medieval performances of Japanese court *manzai*.²⁹

During the Edo period the best-known *manzai* performers were specialists stemming from the provinces of Mikawa and Owari (both today in Aichi prefecture). These professionals were closely linked to yin-yang diviners. Pairs of Mikawa *manzai*, consisting of a “master” (*tayū* 太夫) and a “wit” (*saizō* 才藏), roamed throughout eastern and northern Japan, spreading their art wherever they went. By the late Edo period they had reached distant northern provinces, where local auditors described their appearance and art as follows:

The *tayū* wears a courtier's hat [*eboshi* 烏帽子] and robe [*suikan* 水干] dyed with the pattern of a lucky pine, bamboo, crane, and tortoise. The *saizō* cleverest in speech is chosen from those available and accompanies the *tayū*. The former usually wears a broad-sleeved garment thickly lined with cotton and a blue headcloth. The two enter the lord's castle together and utter auspicious words. Then they make the rounds to warrior homes in town. Their recitations contain twelve pieces [*dan* 段]. The following six are known as the “six outer pieces”: “house-building *manzai*”; “religious-text *manzai*”; “divine-power *manzai*”; “entering-the-mountain *manzai*”; “the-lord's-province *manzai*”; and

29. On early *manzai* see YAMAJI 1988. For translations of ancient blessings of a dwelling that resemble what *goze* sing (see below) see PHILIPPI 1990, 80; and ASTON 1972, book 1, 380–81 (from *Nihon shoki*, Kenzō Tennō, that is, late fifth century). During the Edo period the practice of praising a home or a building in song was also commonly found in *manzai* from other areas, as well as other genres of door-to-door performance, especially around New Year's. For the *kotodate* and text of court *manzai* recorded during the Edo period see *Kinchū senzu manzai uta* (398). For examples of *manzai* from Aizu (Fukushima prefecture), Sendai (Miyagi prefecture), and Bungo (Fukuoka prefecture) see *Taishū geinō shiryō shūsei* 3: 169–219. *Kotodate* are sometimes called *iitate* and may feature long listings. See for example ORIKUCHI 1954, 152.

sugoroku [a board game] *manzai*.” The following six are known as the “six inner pieces”: “fan *manzai*”; “O-Edo *manzai*”; “priest-prince (*monzeki*) *manzai*”; “Yoshiwara *manzai*”; “cherry-blossom *manzai*”; and “list-of-puns *manzai*.” These verses, cast in sections, were created long ago and have not been revised since. The *saizō* sounds a small laced drum [*ko-tsuzumi* 小鼓]. At first the performers intone their words seated, but from the middle they perform standing up and dance.³⁰

(*Dewa no kuni Akita-ryō fūzoku toijō kotae*, 495–96)

In 1803 a chronicler living in what is today Nakajō in Niigata prefecture also observed *manzai* duos from Mikawa and Owari touring the locale (*Nakajō-machi shi, shiryō-hen* 2: 318–19).³¹ Again in 1817 Mikawa *manzai* were spotted wandering about the Nagaoka domain, the *tayū* strumming a *shamisen* and the *saizō* banging on a small drum. As usual, happy locutions rolled from their tongues as they collected donations from charmed listeners (*Echigo no kuni Nagaoka-ryō fūzoku toijō kotae*, 544–45). *Goze* may have been taught by such itinerants; or else they assimilated their lines from cheap *manzai* texts printed and sold in Edo and the countryside.³²

Takada *goze* apparently reproduced only the first “outer” number delivered by the *tayū* of Mikawa *manzai*. Sekine Yasu once explained that she and others performed *manzai*, apparently an abbreviated version, on their “spring tours” immediately after New Year’s. Since it was still chilly outside, *goze* usually clad themselves in a formal undergarment, long-sleeved kimono, and a cape; on their feet they wore leggings and straw sandals or special high “snow clogs” with metal fittings on the bottom to prevent slippage. Each *goze* bedecked herself

30. An illustration is provided on page 512 and the text reproduces a “house-building” *manzai* that in its general form resembles what *goze* performed. The interjections of the *saizō* are not reproduced (perhaps they were improvised or variable).

31. For a detailed study of Owari *manzai* see OKADA 1978–1982.

32. The *manzai* text entitled “Hatsu-haru Mikawa *manzai*” (初春三河万ざい, author’s possession) and published in chapbook form by Yoshidaya [Kokichi] of Edo (probably during the last decades of the Edo period) contains a text whose first half reproduces almost exactly the *goze* version translated below. Another booklet, entitled *Shinpan go-manzai* 新ばんごまんざへ, penned (in *hiragana*) and published by one Maruyama Kōzō 丸山広蔵 in 1891 of Shinmachi in Koshi County of Niigata prefecture (see *Nihon kinsei kayō shiryō-shū*, reel 26) also includes sections virtually identical to lines 1–13, 72–81, 91–107, 129–59, and 182–86 transcribed below. It also contains vocabularies such as *kora kora koi* and insertions of a *saizō* (though different texts than those below), suggesting that it was taken from oral sources. For another booklet of *manzai* from Niigata prefecture thematizing famed items of the locale (by *Manzai Kinsui* 万歳錦水; the date 1893 is mentioned), which also includes sections similar to those of *goze* versions, see “Jugen-shū,” 40–42. The role of written sources in *goze* renditions is suggested by the fact that the same Chinese characters were pronounced in different ways by different *goze* (for example, 年取 as either *nen-toru* or *toshi-toru*).

with a square cap-like head cloth. Performances tended to take place indoors and required considerable time to accomplish, so the number of houses a *goze* could visit in a day was limited (SAKUMA 1973, 11; SUZUKI 1996, 216). The *goze* taking the part of the *tayū* first recited a felicitous invocation (lines 1–13, 31–57, and 72–89 of the text below). This was followed by the blessing of a building (lines 90–108, 129–65, 178–93) in which pillars were counted and auspiciously described. Between segments of the *tayū*'s singing, the *saizō* (lines 14–30, and so on) inserted comic banter known as *hayashi kotoba* or *chari*, often silly or racy, and normally entirely unrelated to the *tayū*'s more sober verbiage. The *saizō* also spurred on the *tayū* by interleaving approbatory vocables such as “*a icha icha*.”

Goze manzai text, based on the performance recorded in *Goze-uta (Jōetsu-shi hossoku ni-jusshūnen kinen)*.³³ Performed by Sugimoto Kikue (*tayū*) and Sugimoto Shizu (*saizō*), 1979. *Tayū* and *saizō* alternate sections. The singer is indicated in the italicized text in parentheses at the start of a section. Vocal insertions in the *tayū*'s text by the *saizō* have also been placed in parentheses.

(*tayū*)

Ever young, for ten-thousand years,

1. *on-tokowaka ni wa go-manzai to wa*

shall you flourish!

2. *kimi mo sakaete owashimasu*

(*a icha icha*)

3. (*a icha icha*)

New and ever pleasing

4. *aikyō arikeru aratama no*

the tomorrow that follows the change of year.

5. *toshi toru sono hi no ashita ni wa*

All-renewing water, newly budding branches!

6. *mizu mo wakayuru ki no me mo sasu*

(*a icha icha*)

7. (*a icha icha*)

Lord Chiisō³⁴ wears a crown on his head

8. *Chiisō-kō wa atama no kanmuri kōbe ni mesu*

33. For another version by the same performers see *Echigo goze no uta*. The text transcribed below resembles the one reproduced in ŌYAMA 1977, 296–98. For other transcriptions of texts see the liner notes of *Echigo goze no uta*; SUZUKI 1979, 151–52; SAKUMA 1986, 273–80; SUZUKI et al. 1976, 112–16; *Nihon shōmin seikatsu shiryō shūsei* 17: 584–86. For a performance of *manzai* by Ihira Take from 1973 see *Shikatanashi no gokuraku*.

34. Probably Kisō (徽宗, Chi., Hui-Zong, 1082–1135), a Chinese emperor, the eighth of the Northern Sung dynasty. The Edo period chapbook gives Risō-kō; the 1891 one, Chiisō-kō.

And has a magic sword forged by Gakuya.³⁵

9. *Gakuya ga uttaru tsurugi o ba*

With his mouth he holds evergreen branches,³⁶

10. *yuzuri-ha o kuchi ni fukumase*

in his hands, five-branched pine sprigs.³⁷

11. *goyō no matsu o ba on-te ni mochi*

That all makes him auspicious!

12. *kore nite medetō sōraikeru*

And now it's *saizō*'s turn!

13. *mazu wa kokora de saizō ga ban da*

(*saizō*)

I say, *saa sa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi*,

14. *saa sa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi teba*

What's this, hey, it's really something!

15. *nanjai na kora nanjai dokoro ka taihen da*

This year's harvest is bountiful, *kora*!

16. *kotoshiya hōnen da kora*

So bountiful! What a great harvest, *kora*!

17. *hōnen datteba mansaku da kora*

The wife's secret fields hit it big!

18. *okamisan no shingeesaku attatta*

Hey, *tayū*, *kora*, be quiet! be quiet!

19. *ōsa tayū-san kora danmari danmari*

Listen to this, *kora*!

20. *kiite kure kora*

Not just the secret fields, *kora*,

21. *shingeesaku to iute kora*

but everything hit it big, oh so big!

22. *nani ga nanbo attatta ōatta*

35. Probably Bakuya 莫耶, as in the 1891 chapbook. In ancient China the sword smith Ganjiang (干将, Jp. Kanshō) was asked by the emperor to forge two magic swords (yin and yang). To make the yin sword he stoked the furnace with the hair of his wife Bakuya. In Japan *kanshō-bakuya* has come to mean a great sword. The Edo-period chapbook gives *ayan ga tachi. Chūko zōshō-shū*, providing what is apparently an archaic *manzai* text, gives *aya ga tachi*.

36. These are *daphniphyllum macropodum*, commonly used as New Year's decorations.

37. This is an auspicious Japanese white pine, *Pinus pentaphylla* var. *himekomatsu*.

Carrots, burdock, eggplant, kidney beans,

23. *nenjin gonbo nasu ni ingen*

sixteen-seed beans, yams, you name it, *kora!*

24. *jūroku sasage imo nanzo attatta kora*

Yams and all, wonderful things!

25. *imo nanzo yoi mon de*

Mom and dad eat them, kids eat them, *kora!*

26. *oya kutte ko kutte kora*

Eat the stalks of the taro, eat the leaves,

27. *zuiki kutte ha kutte*

the only thing left is

28. *ato ni nokoru no wa*

the shiny tiny little hairs, that's it!

29. *kinkirakin no ke bakari da to iuta no ga*

And what do you say to that, *tayū?*

30. *tayū-san ga dō ja*

(*tayū*)

Yonder at the Imperial Palace

31. *Seiryōden no konata ni wa*

if you stand straight and take a look

32. *tatase tamō mite yareba*

you'll see it is built so

33. *tsukuri no kekkō*

(*a icha icha*) beautifully, oh so beautifully!

34. (*a icha icha*) *kirei ya kirei ya*

The twill borders of the floor mats cost 500 *ryō*,

35. *aya no heri mo gohyaku-ryō yo*

the brocade borders cost 500 *ryō*,

36. *nishiki no heri mo gohyaku-ryō yo*

the white figured borders cost 500 *ryō*:

37. *kōrai-beri mo gohyaku-ryō yo*

(*a icha icha*)

38. (*a icha icha*)

add it up and it comes to 1500 *ryō!*

39. *awashite sen to gohyaku-ryō no*

Floor mats, deftly put in place, *kora!*

40. *tatami sara sara sara to shikawase tamaikeru kora*

People in the south are granted

41. *minami no kata de wa shirokane no*

(*a icha icha*)

42. (*a icha icha*)

a mountain of silver, *kora!*

43. *yama o tsukawase tamaikeru kora*

The Phoenix-bird dances in the sky!

44. *hōō ga mai-asobu*

Those in the west are granted

45. *nishi e atatte sanjū-jū no*

a thirty-tiered mountain of gold!

46. *kogane no yama o tsukawase tamaikeru*

The crane and tortoise dance together!

47. *tsuru to kame to ga mai-asobu*

(*a icha icha*)

48. (*a icha icha*)

Pavilions and towers built in a row, *kora!*

49. *fūten dōkaku³⁸ tatenarabe kora*

From the thousand volumes of the Hannya sutra

50. *Dai-hannya wa issen-kan³⁹*

six-hundred volumes

51. *awashite roppyaku-kan wa*

(*a icha icha*)

52. (*a icha icha*)

are taken to Osaka castle,⁴⁰ *kora,*

53. *naga no jū ni torare tamaikeru kora*

the remaining four-hundred are put

54. *nokori shihyaku-kan wa*

(*a icha icha*) into this temple hall.

55. (*a icha icha*) *kono dō e*

38. This is probably *kūden rōkaku* 宮殿楼閣.

39. Perhaps something here has been forgotten. In the 1891 chapbook and the version presented in SAKUMA 1986, 275, various other sutras are listed.

40. The meaning of *naga no jū* is unclear. The text of the Edo-period chapbook gives “Nanba no jō” 難波の城, Osaka castle.

Let heaven come to earth!

56. *ama kudarase tamaikeru*

And now it's *saizō*'s turn!

57. *mazu wa kokora de saizō no ban*

(*saizō*)

I say, *saa sa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi*,

58. *saa sa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi teba*

What's this, hey, it's really something!

59. *nanjai na kora nanjai dokoro ka taihen da*

There's a girl sitting next to my neighbor, *kora*

60. *ora wa tonari kora*

an innocent, unspoiled girl, *kora*!

61. *sono mata tonari no hakoiri musume kora*

Her face is like the crescent moon,

62. *mikazuki-san yo*

like a snow-white egg with eyes and a nose!

63. *tamago ni me-hana*

Her eyes are beautiful, *kora*!

64. *metsukya yokaro kora*

Her nose is beautiful, *kora*!

65. *hanatsukya yokaro kora*

Her mouth is beautiful, *kora*!

66. *kuchitsukya yokaro kora*

And again below that the twelve body parts!

67. *sono mata shita no jū-ni no kikai⁴¹ de*

A silly seventy-year-old man

68. *shichijū baka no ojisan ni*

embraces her and beds her,

69. *dakashite nekashite*

and is transported to heaven.

70. *sue ni gokuraku e mairimasho*

And what do you say to that, *tayū*?

71. *to iutta no wa tayū-san ga dō ja*

41. The exact meaning of *kikai* here is unclear.

(*tayū*)

Ha! The ancient capital was Nara
72. *ha mukashi no kyō Nara no kyō yo*
thereafter it was Nanba.

73. *nakahodo wa Nanba no kyō yo*

Today the capital is Kyōto!
74. *ima naru kyō wa Miyako no kyō yo*

(*a icha icha*)
75. (*a icha icha*)

How many words exist in the sutras?
76. *okyō no mon wa to naraba*

A million and six-thousand, and perhaps more!
77. *ichioku ichiman rokusen yo mon to yara*

There are eighty-thousand spirits,
78. *kami no kazu wa happyaku banze*

(*a icha icha*)
79. (*a icha icha*)

and thirty-three thousand three-hundred
80. *hotoke no kazu wa sanman*

thirty-three Buddhist deities.
81. *sanzen sanbyaku sanjū san tai*

In the earth ritual [ensuring building safety]
82. *korera wa ji-matsuri nanzo*

Abe no Seimei and likewise Dōman⁴²
83. *Abe no Seimei onajiku Dōman*

invoke these gods.
84. *nasashime tamaikeru*

Takeza the carpenter makes Hida-no-Takumi⁴³
85. *daiku no Takeza wa Hida no Takumi o*

sprinkle about some sacred water.
86. *mizu o morase tamaikeru*

(*a icha icha*)

42. Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 is the renowned yin-yang diviner who also figures in the famous goze song “Kuzu no kowakare” (葛の葉子別れ, “The Arrowroot Princess Parts with her Child”). His rival was Ashiya Dōman 芦屋道満.

43. Hida no Takumi 飛騨匠 was a legendary carpenter mentioned in the medieval *Konjaku monogatari*.

87. (*a icha icha*)

The adze is displayed and a pile of earth

88. *chōna-date ya chigyō mori mo*

is well made!

89. *ai-sumimashite*

Now let us begin to bless the building:

90. *mazu wa kore yori hashiradate*

If you look at this pillar, you'll see

91. *kono hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

92. (*a icha icha*)

it's the one Buddha, the god of health,

93. *ichibutsu Yakushi ya*

gold and silver like a fountain:

94. *izumi no kingin*

a protector god never to be exhausted!

95. *tsukaedo tsukisenu mamorigami*

If you look at the second pillar, you'll see

96. *nihon no hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

97. (*a icha icha*)

the two Niō avatars,⁴⁴ and scrolls of brocade:

98. *Nii no gongen nishiki no makimono*

protector gods never to be cut off!

99. *kiredo tsukisenu mamorigami*

If you look at the third pillar, you'll see

100. *sanbon no hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

101. (*a icha icha*)

the mountain king,⁴⁵ and fountains of wine:

102. *Sannō gongen sake wa izumi de*

44. Following the Edo-period chapbook I take Nii to be Niō 仁王, a pair of powerful gods usually guarding the left and right sides of a temple gate.

45. Sannō Gongen 山王権現, a god enshrined at the Hie Shrine in Ōtsu (Shiga prefecture) and in numberless other places.

protector gods never to be consumed!

103. *namedo tsukisenu mamorigami*

If you look at the fourth pillar, you'll see,

104. *shihon no hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

105. (*a icha icha*)

the four heavenly gods and the four ranks of people:⁴⁶

106. *Shomizuten*⁴⁷ *no shi-nō-kō-shō*

protector gods for your flourishing progeny!

107. *shison*⁴⁸ *hanjō no mamorigami*

And now it's the *saizō*'s turn!

108. *mazu wa kokora de saizō no ban da*

(*saizō*)

I say, *saasa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi*,

109. *saasa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi teba*

What's this, hey, it's really something!

110. *nanjai na kora nanjai tokoro wa taihen da*

Oh! Skip the first house and the second—

111. *a ikken oite niken oite*

the daughter of Genbee in the third house

112. *sangenme no Genbee-san no musume*

turned thirteen this year, *kora*!

113. *kotoshya jūsan da kora*

Her breasts began to bud

114. *chichi ya tsukkuri tsubonda*

but her stupid parents

115. *oya no baka-me ga*

thought it was a tapeworm,

46. That is, warriors, peasants, artisans, and merchants.

47. There is no god named Shomizuten. The Edo-period chapbook gives *Shumi no shi-tennō* 四天王 (the four gods of Mt. Shumi who protect the four directions). SAKUMA 1986, 277, relying on a Nagaoka performer, gives *shimeshi shiten* しめし四天, perhaps “four gods who elucidate.” SUZUKI et al. 1976, 114, relying on Ihira Take, gives *Sumiyoshi tennō* 住吉天皇, the god at the Osaka Sumiyoshi shrine. *Dewa no kuni Akita-ryō fūzoku toijō kotae* (1814) gives “Amaterasu ōmikami” (天照大神, the sun goddess).

48. The 1891 chapbook gives *shimin hanjō*, prosperity to the four social classes—status groups that had by 1891 long been abolished.

116. *sunbako da to omotte*

spent thirty-five cents on “five-vapor medicine”

117. *sanjūgo mon de gokō katte*

made her drink it, *kora!* And when the drug

118. *nomashite kora gokō made nonde mo*

didn’t work, they wondered

119. *naoranu toki wa*

“should we call a doctor? or a vet?”

120. *isha o yobō ka hakuraku o yobō ka*

But they didn’t need a doctor or a vet!

121. *isha mo irankerya hakuraku mo iran*

A boy from the village had snuck to her side at night, *kora*

122. *mura no wakaisho no yobai kokiirete kora!*

That’s why her breasts began to bud!

123. *sonde chichi ya tsukkuri tsubonda*

a few months after they had “pounded miso”

124. *atogetsu tōka no miso tsuita ban kara*

her belly was swollen up,

125. *onaka wa fukuramete*

she wanted to eat only sour things,

126. *sukkai mon ga kuitaku natta*

Oh my, isn’t she big!—

127. *oyama dekkai ne*

and what do you say to that, *tayū?*

128. *to iutta no wa tayū-san ga dō ja*

(*tayū*)

Ah! If you look at the fifth pillar, you’ll see,

129. *a gohon no hashira o nagamureba*

the Gozu King,⁴⁹ and that five grains ripen:

130. *Gozu tennō gokoku jōju no*

protector gods, never to be consumed!

131. *kuraedo tsukisenu mamorigami*

If you look at the sixth pillar, you’ll see

132. *roppon no hashira o nagamureba*

49. Gozu Tennō, with the head of a bull, is a god of the underworld who torments the dead.

(*a icha icha*)

133. (*a icha icha*)

the six Jizō:

134. *roku Jizō roku o*

protector gods who solidify the ground!

135. *katame mamorigami*

If you look at the seventh pillar, you'll see

136. *shichihon no hashira o nagamureba*

the seven Buddhas,

137. *shichibutsu daishite*⁵⁰

and the "seven lucky gods":⁵¹

138. *shichi-fukujin no*

(*a icha icha*)

139. (*a icha icha*)

protector gods who bringing us fortune!

140. *fuku o sazakeru mamorigami*

If you look at the eighth pillar, you'll see

141. *hachihon no hashira o nagamureba*

the Kannon at the Hase Temple:⁵²

142. *Hase no Kannon*

For the people it means endless flourishing,

143. *tami ni totte wa ippiyaku banzei*⁵³

the protector god of nuptial bliss!

144. *fūfu yomose*⁵⁴ *no mamorigami*

If you look at the ninth pillar, you'll see

145. *kyūhon no hashira o nagamureba*

50. *Daishite* is of unclear meaning. The "seven Buddhas" usually refers to the seven Yakushi (the "Buddhas of healing"). *Dewa no kuni Akita-ryō fūzoku toijō kotae* (1814) gives *Shichisha dai-shi* 七社大師, the "Great holy masters of the Seven shrines," perhaps the "seven Sannō shrines." The Edo-period chapbook gives *shichibutsu Yakushi*, the seven Buddhas of healing.

51. There are "seven Buddhas" of the past and seven Yakushi Buddhas of healing, but the popular "seven lucky gods" (*shichi fukujin* 七福神) are a boatload of gods of Buddhist, Shinto, and Daoist origins. The Edo-period chapbook gives "seven Yakushi and seven lucky gods." The 1891 chapbook gives only *shichi fukujin*. SAKUMA 1986, 278, relying on another performer from Niigata prefecture, gives "Yakushi" instead of *daishite*.

52. Hasedera 長谷寺 is a famous Shingon-sect temple in Nara.

53. This is perhaps *kami* instead of *tami* and *happyaku-man jin* (= *yaoyorozu kami*) both as given in *kanji* in the Edo chapbook).

54. This is probably *imose* in standard speech.

(*a icha icha*)

146. (*a icha icha*)

the Kumano⁵⁵ avatar and freight moved to storehouses:

147. *Kumano no gongen kura e o-nibutsu*⁵⁶

the protector god of ships coming and going!

148. *irifune defune no mamorigami*

If you look at the tenth pillar, you'll see

149. *juppon no hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

150. (*a icha icha*)

the ten demons:

151. *jū-rasetsu*⁵⁷ *mono o jūbun ni*

protector gods that endow us with plenty!

152. *osazuke kudasaru mamorigami*

If you look at this pillar, you'll see

153. *kono hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

154. (*a icha icha*)

the Kannon of eleven faces:

155. *jūichimen no Kanzeon*

the protector god who bestows fertility!

156. *kodane o sazakeru mamorigami*

If you look at the twelfth pillar, you'll see

157. *jūnihon no hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

158. (*a icha icha*)

twelve horary signs, the twelve months:

159. *jūni-shi jūni-ka-tsuki no*

protector gods that exorcise evil spirits!

160. *akuma o oharai kudasaru mamorigami*

55. Kumano, in what is today Wakayama prefecture, is the site of three holy mountains with many temples and shrines.

56. This is more likely *o-nimotsu* (お荷物, “freight” or “cargo”), as in the Edo-period chap-book. This relates to ships coming and going, and wealth in general. The liner notes to *Echigo goze no uta* give *kuroi oni-butsu*, (黒い鬼仏, “black devil-Buddha”), which makes little sense.

57. This is usually *jū-rasetsu-nyo*, (*rasetsu* 羅刹; Skt. *rākṣasa*), ten feminine demon-deities, who protect believers of the *Lotus Sutra*.

If you look at the thirteenth pillar, you'll see

161. *jūsanbon no hashira o nagamureba*

(*a icha icha*)

162. (*a icha icha*)

the great heavenly god and imperial shrine:

163. *tenshō-kōdai-jingū*

protector god who makes our houses flourish!

164. *kanai hanjō no mamorigami*

And now here it's the *saizō*'s turn

165. *mazu wa kokora de saizō no ban da*

(*saizō*)

I say *saasa kora kora koi kora kora kora koi*

166. *saasa kora kora koi kora kora koi-tteba*

What's this, hey, it's really something!

167. *nanjaina kora nanjai tokoro wa taihen da-a*

Shall I recite a "list of impossibles?", *kora*

168. *nainai-zukushi de mōsō ka kora*

Here goes a "list of impossibles":

169. *nainai-zukushi mōsō nara*

A long-sleeved daytime kimono worn at night,

170. *sakuya no furisode*

or a triangular futon, there's nothing like that!

171. *futon no sankaku koitsu mo nai*

The mute who recites *jōruri*, the handleless one who plays the *shamisen*,

172. *oshi no jōruri, tenbo no shamisen*

the deaf one who listen to it, there's nothing like that, *kora!*

173. *tsunbo no kikite mo koitsu mo nai kora*

You can't dig for clams in a field!

174. *hatake ni hamaguri hotte mo nai*

Nobody preaches to an earthworm!

175. *mimizu ni sekkyō mo koitsu mo nai*

There's no lid on a cunt!

176. *chanko ni futa aru tameshi ga nai*

And what do you say to that, *tayū?*

177. *to iu ta no wa tayū-san ga dōja*

(*tayū*)

A thousand and ten-thousand pillars,

178. *senbon manbon no hashira o ba*

set them up right and ready!

179. *kiririn-shan to tate osame*

The Buddha of the future assures that in ten years

180. *Miroku jūnen tatsu no toshi*

(*a icha icha*)

181. (*a icha icha*)

the house the master has built

182. *shujin no tateta ie nareba*

will not leak no matter how much it rains.

183. *ame wa furedomo amamori sezu*

If the sun burns down on it, it won't warp.

184. *hiyori yokeredo hiyori mo sezu*

(*a icha icha*)

185. (*a icha icha*)

When the wind blows, it will be a lucky wind!

186. *kaze wa fukedomo takarakaze*

Snow won't sheet the roof no matter how much falls.

187. *yuki wa furedomo tsumori mo sezu*

Celebrate for eight-hundred years!

188. *oyoso happyaku-nen no go-iwai ni*

(*a icha icha*)

189. (*a icha icha*)

Up above, the crane; down below, the tortoise!

190. *ue ni wa tsuru shita ni wa kame*

Crane and tortoise dance and play,

191. *tsuru to kame to ga mai-asobu*

whilst *manzai* drive out demons.

192. *akuma hakidasu go-manzai*

How truly auspicious!

193. *makoto ni medetō sōraikeru*

The capacity of *goze* to bless or exorcise households through a performance of *manzai* relied chiefly on the authority cultivated over centuries by their predecessors, the Mikawa *manzai*. Unlike outcaste *harugoma*, Mikawa *manzai* counted as licensed religious practitioners authorized by the aristocratic Tsuchimikado

house.⁵⁸ Despite their official recognition, Mikawa *manzai*, in this regard resembling *goze* and *hinin*-class performers of *harugoma*, were positioned on the margins of the hegemonic sociopolitical order. Echigo *goze* could not simply take over the social status accorded to Mikawa *manzai*, but they could take over the religious distinction that allowed Mikawa *manzai* to bless a household. This distinction in turn could be used to fortify a new social difference: that of the *goze* professional and the non-*goze* layperson.

In this regard the social meanings of *goze manzai* resembled those of *goze harugoma*. But in *manzai* the meaning of social differences did not stop at the level of separating performers from listeners. It pervaded and shaped the form and content of the genre itself. In order to present universal utopian bounty—beneficent gods, revered traditions, mountains of food, rivers of saké, magnificent edifices, limitless wealth, health, and laughter for everyone—in a manner that resonated with the public, *manzai* could not resort to the sort of simple sanctification of labor that characterized *harugoma*. Instead, *manzai* drew its energy from the very impossibility of unifying wildly divergent discourses. To the *tayū*, clearly a representative of dominant religious and political ideologies, paradise on earth meant exquisite temples, Buddhist scriptures, Chinese brocade, and rare metals heaped to the firmament. To the *saizō*, who represented the commoner, sutras and ostentatious religious trappings were best sidelined in favor of the pleasures of the flesh. The former's high-minded invocations, optimistic and temporally vague, were answered by the latter with unbounded jocularity and profanity referring to the here and now. Whereas the *tayū* set the standard far too high to be taken entirely seriously, the *saizō* placed the bar a good deal too low. Like their *harugoma* peers, both excelled in the practice of blessing, but the *saizō* was somebody to laugh with, while the *tayū*, with his overbearing gravity, was more likely to be laughed at. Musically speaking, too, heterogeneity prevailed. The *tayū* chanted through-composed melodies in a speech-like meter, while the *saizō* answered with sharply contoured rhythms and no melody at all. The former preferred sparse *shamisen* accompaniment inserted here and there; the latter simply repeated quasi-ostinato phrases from start to finish.⁵⁹

Manzai refused to paper over such oppositions in favor of a spurious otherworldly harmony. Instead, when the vulgar clashed with the elevated, the listener was presented with a picture of a thoroughly bifurcated whole. Everyone not soundly asleep saw that the *tayū*'s mountains of gold, heaps of brocade, imposing pavilions, and soaring towers faithfully reflected the conspicuous consumption

58. *Senjakō*, 518, mentions that *hinin* performed *manzai* in what is today Wakayama prefecture during the late Edo period.

59. For a transcription of the music see GROEMER 2007, *kenkyū-hen*, 210–13 (numbered from the back).

of a social class whose boundless craving for material goods was counterbalanced only by its insistence on the “proper” frugality of others. Contrariwise, the *saizō*’s apparently liberated sexual promiscuity represented little more than a sarcastic inversion of the hegemonic morality, one that turned the “proper” relation of the sexes into a matter of strategic domestic calculation. Even the *saizō*’s invocation of a bountiful harvest received its full significance only when interpreted against the background of the famines the gods had inexplicably allowed to occur and that the upper-class luxury extolled by the *tayū* only exacerbated.

Thus the holy harmony of the two players caricatured true social solidarity. No amount of religious practice could unite the two so long as society was based on rigid, status-based, economically fortified social distinctions. It would take until the twentieth century, when the legal guarantee of nominal social equality of every citizen finally became a reality, for *tayū* and *saizō* to see the world in the same way. Unity in modern *manzai*, a genre sharing almost nothing with its Edo-period or *goze* variant, was only achieved by turning both performers into de-facto *saizō*.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Social differences, often antagonistic in nature, informed every dimension of Echigo *goze* religious practice, from the most private to the most public. Without such differences *goze* could have neither conferred nor reaped “worldly benefits” through religious practice. But were Echigo *goze* perhaps exceptional? After all, *goze*, unlike the average farmer, both begged for “worldly benefits” and supplied such advantages to others.

The attribute of serving both as a recipient and supplier of “worldly benefits” was, however, far more common in Japan than is usually assumed. Every time people bought a “sacred lot” (*o-mikuji*) for someone else, set up a domestic shrine for family use, taught a child or friend a prayer, commissioned a priest to offer a blessing, helped stage a festival, or engaged in any number of other religious practices not entirely solitary in nature, they supplied others with the possibility of harvesting “worldly benefits.”

Efforts to furnish fellow human beings with “worldly benefits” accruing from religious practice extended to the highest levels of the political elite. Besides engaging in personal prayers and private rituals the Tokugawa bakufu, daimyō, and other warrior class functionaries supplied their subjects with ample opportunities for pursuing “worldly benefits.” The main difference between the shogun and the *goze* was that the former funded impressive temples and paid choruses to

60. On the commercialization and other developments of twentieth-century *manzai*, see STOCKER 2006. As usual, various “preservation societies” seek to keep alive the original form of the genre. Some older forms of *manzai* are also occasionally presented in variety halls. Neither type is today well known to the Japanese public.

howl Buddhist chants into the cosmos, whereas the latter only fabricated blessed *shamisen* strings and offered benedictions and incantations to small audiences.

When the mere presentation of an opportunity to secure religious benefits proved insufficiently inspiring, the political elite might intervene more directly and forcefully in social reality. In 1839, for example, the law-enforcement bureau of the Kanto region resolved to promote Buddhist and Confucian virtue by distributing a “Buddhist hymn of filial piety” (“Kōkō wasan” 孝行和讃) to the public. This text was to be duly copied by village headmen, circulated throughout each hamlet, and driven into the skulls of children by their schoolmasters (see *Takahashi-ke “goyō-dome”* 1995, 134–35). Readers, singers, or audiences of this text were catechized to respect parents, officials, and elders, refrain from gambling, whoring, or consorting with outlaws, to obey all laws of the land, and to content themselves with clothing, housing, and furnishings “proper” to their social station. Needless to say, the social meaning of such injunctions remains incomprehensible if the interests of the warrior class and the impoverished farmer are considered to be at one from the start, thanks to the universality of “Japanese religious practice.”

Even if a lord and his subjects worshiped a god by the same name and patronized the same institutions, “religious practice” for the sake of “worldly benefits” did not ensure unity any more than “economic practice” for the purpose of “material benefits” guaranteed the harmony of masters and slaves. If generalizations concerning Japanese religion are not to conceal the heterogeneous interests structuring the society in which certain forms of homogenizing religious practice took hold and were reproduced, the notion of a universal pursuit of “worldly benefits” through religious practice must be treated with great care. The emphasis on practice can no doubt serve as a wholesome antidote to forms of mentalism seeking to derive practice from concepts, intentions, beliefs, or rules. But just as the meaning of hammering depends on whether one is speaking of a mallet in the hands of a Black Forest peasant or a gavel in the hand of a judge at the *Volksgerechtshof*, the meaning of practice, religious or otherwise, never represents a primordial unity transcending all social differences and antagonisms. Forms of practice, just like forms of thought, foster both social unity and social difference, and each side of this dyad cannot be understood without reference to the other. Neither the practice of performing *harugoma* and *manzai*, nor even the content of what was performed, can properly be grasped unless one takes into account both the power of religious practice to forge harmony and solidarity, as well as its capacity to create distinctions, reinforce discrimination, and mark the fault lines of class tensions and antagonisms. The question to be asked is thus not merely how Buddhas, kami, and other divinities inspired princes and paupers alike to seek “worldly benefits,” but how certain forms of religious practice were used by various social groups or classes, who benefitted to what degree from what sort of practice, and why it was so.

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