

[2017 Meeting of the Early Modern Japan Network, Toronto, Saturday Mar. 18, 7:30-9:30 p.m.](#)

Discussion published by Philip Brown on Friday, January 27, 2017
Friends and Colleagues,

Once again the Early Modern Japan Network will meet in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies Annual meeting in Toronto. Our **focus this year is on Kanshi** and we will meet in the **HURON ROOM, SHERATON CENTRE**: full panel, assembled by Matthew Fraleigh, follows. See you there!

Phil Brown

Chair

The Local and the Global in Early Modern Japanese Kanshi

Sinitic poetry (*kanshi*) from Japan's early modern period was inextricably rooted in both local and regional contexts. Japanese *kanshi* composers drew their materials, vocabulary, and expressive approaches not only from their lived experience but from a host of textual sources, both domestic and imported. The three papers of this panel examine how *kanshi* poets negotiated this multiplicity of frames, producing poetry that was in dialogue with both local and regional material. Yoshitaka Yamamoto begins by considering Gion Nankai's "Kōnan-ka," a series depicting the lifeways of Wakayama in the form of *chikushishi* (bamboo branch songs), a genre that describes local scenes and customs. Yamamoto shows how Nankai also drew upon poetic images that were far removed from the local landscape to evoke the situations of the women he portrayed. Our second presenter, Rintaro Goyama, offers a re-assessment of the transformation Sinitic poetry underwent in the late eighteenth century. Turning to the work of two Confucian scholars, he shows how a new framework for *kanshi* composition took shape at the time based upon an expanded body of knowledge. Finally, Matthew Fraleigh considers how Japanese *kanshi* composers of the late Edo period theorized and practiced the inclusion of local place-names in their poetry. His examination of how poetic manuals and theoretical treatises discussed the specific issue of Japanese toponyms aims to illuminate how these poets understood the language, audience, and place of Japan's Sinitic poetry. Xiaorong Li of University of California Santa Barbara, a scholar of late imperial Chinese literature, has agreed to serve as discussant.

Sailors' Wives and Palace Laments: Depictions of Japanese Women in Gion Nankai's Kanshi

Yoshitaka Yamamoto, Osaka University

"Kōnan-ka" (Songs from South of the River) by Gion Nankai (1676-1751), an early example of *chikushishi* (Ch. *zhuzhici*; bamboo branch songs) composition in early modern Japan, depicts the

rustic lives of ordinary women on the coast of Wakayama. When describing the women in their milieu, Nankai makes numerous references to Tang-dynasty poems, including not only those by Liu Yuxi and Bai Juyi, the original innovators of the *zhuzhici* form, but also palace lament and boudoir lament poems by Yu Hu, Wang Changling, and Cui Hao. The result is a striking juxtaposition of commoner women in Edo-period Japan with the highly poetic imagery of neglected palace ladies and lonely wives of military servicemen in Han and Tang-dynasty China.

The juxtaposition only makes sense because the women of Wakayama portrayed by Nankai were married to sailors, who were perennially away at sea on commercial shipping routes. Nankai's evocation of Han and Tang Chinese women was not necessarily an attempt to 'Sinicize' the contemporary Japanese women being depicted, but his way of fulfilling the artistic, or even technical, need for "embellishment" (J. *junshoku*, Ch. *runse*) especially when zooming in on worldly subjects in *kanshi*. It was precisely Nankai and his contemporaries' preoccupation with ornate language and Sinitic imagery that allowed them to turn to local, contemporary, and even vulgar materials in their *kanshi*, paving the way, at least in part, for the later emergence of less ornate *kanshi* that featured local and typically Japanese props, such as cherry blossoms and the first bonito.

Vocabulary-Building by *Kanshi* Poets During the Late Edo Period

Rintaro Goyama, Keio University

A major change in the trend of Sinitic Poetry (kanshi) of Edo Japan took place during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The classicist perspective that had been inspired by the thought of the Ming Dynasty Ancient Phraseology School was severely criticized and a new literary vision, influenced mainly by Yuan Hongdao's theory, was introduced. It is generally understood that after this transformation, kanshi poets were freed from archaism and began to focus on depicting genuine feelings with plain words, as well as objects and customs that were distinctively local (i.e., "Japanese"). The truth, however, is much more complicated. The movement opposed to classicism was in fact not only a departure from strict norms, but also a process of building a new framework for kanshi composition based on a different foundation of knowledge.

Compared to previous eras, poets composed on a broader range of themes during this period, which was made possible by conducting an exhaustive study of the history of set theme poetry written by Chinese. The words used in poems were also enlarged not only by reading poetry collections but also by referencing essays of various fields, some of which were newly imported to Japan. The concrete situation of poets' enhancing their knowledge can be analyzed by mainly focusing on the works of Ōta Kinjō (1765-1825) and Ōkubo Shibutsu (1767-1837), Confucian scholars and poets who lived in Edo.

The Place of Japanese *Kanshi*: Toponyms in Early Modern Sinitic Poetry

Matthew Fraleigh, Brandeis University

For Japanese composers of Sinitic poetry (*kanshi*) in the early modern period, the incorporation of

local place-names into poetic works presented linguistic challenges as well as expressive opportunities. The use of distinctly Japanese toponyms might heighten a poem's authenticity by enhancing the specificity of its content, but it also might be seen to lessen it by compromising tone and regional intelligibility. On the other hand, appropriating Sinospheric toponyms enabled allusive analogy, complex forms of polysemy, and multiplied visions, but here, too, the propriety and desirability of such effects were both open to debate. In the wake of Ogyū Sorai's Ken'en school, the mid-eighteenth century saw the appearance of popular manuals that offered specific examples of how Japanese *kanshi* poets might represent Japanese toponyms in their poetry, such as *Daitō shika chimeikō* (Consideration on toponyms for Eastern [i.e., Japanese] poets, 1760) of Nagata Kanga (1738-1792) and *Tōsō Kaii* (A lexicon for Eastern verse, 1767) originally compiled by Hagino Fukudō and then expanded by his son, Kyūroku (1717-1817). This paper begins by examining the guidance provided in these popular Ken'en-school inspired toponym manuals, aiming to clarify in particular underlying assumptions about language, audience, and the nature of Sinitic poetry. It then discusses how Gion Nankai (1676-1751), Emura Hokkai (1713-1788), Tsusaka Tōyō (1757-1825), and Nishijima Rankei (1781-1853) grappled with the toponym issue in their theoretical treatises, shedding light on the question of how these commentators conceptualized the role and purpose of Sinitic poetic expression for Japanese poets.

Early Modern Japan Network

Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel

Date: Saturday, March 18

Time: 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Room: Huron

Philip C. Brown

Brown.113@osu.edu