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# Masturbation and Discourse on Female Sexual Practices in Early Modern Japan

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Talk about sex dominated popular culture in early modern Japan (1600–1868). Whether in novels, woodblock prints or the kabuki theatre, erotic desire, often though not always in conflict with duty, explained much of human motivation. Despite growth in the publishing industry that generated a plethora of texts, we cannot know what people did. We only know what they talked about, and they talked at length across a variety of genres. With one or two exceptions, men produced the texts that constructed sex; their assumptions and preoccupations filter almost everything said about women.

Beginning in the late seventeenth century, compendia sought to encompass sexual practices in their manifold forms, one example of a general tendency to impose system on the heterogeneity of human behaviour. Mary Elizabeth Berry argues that maps, novels and encyclopedias that organised the information needed to become a civilised and conversant member of urban society distinguish Japan's early modern society from its medieval predecessor. With the creation of a military regime under the aegis of the Tokugawa shoguns and some 260 daimyo (lords of domains), the political elite and book publishers converted specialised data previously monopolised by discrete sectors in society into public knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Berry does not discuss sex manuals or pornographic prints, but their goal of encyclopedic completeness fits within her paradigm.

Given the ubiquity of the urban writer's male gaze, analysing the discourse on female sexual practices runs the risk of replicating either early modern Japan's dominant categorisation of women according to their sexual function or an orientalist fantasy of sexual licentiousness unfettered by the strictures of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In his important work on the history of male–male sexuality, Gregory Pflugfelder demonstrates how much we can learn about the way people think about sex by building the inherent limitations on knowledge about past practice into his analysis. Whether the discourse deals with men and boys or men and women, in the hierarchy of values, men are always the subject of desire and action – neither boys nor women enjoyed agency beyond their ability to feel compassion nor did sex between women matter.<sup>2</sup> Examining texts that focus on women adds nuance to this picture. William R. Lindsey has tackled the dichotomy between married women deemed responsible for procreation and courtesans charged with providing recreation for men by analysing the rituals and social values that sustained both in a dynamic, complementary relationship. He is the first to analyse discourses on female sexuality, but always in

terms of how it served male purposes, either in the home (fertility) or the bordello (pleasure).<sup>3</sup>

Given a society premised on gender inequality, in which the male gaze mediates what we today can perceive of women's actions and attitudes, it is difficult but not impossible to go beyond what men thought of women. I do not challenge the assumption that this was an androcentric world. Instead, I seek to complicate our understanding of the male-centred discourses, analysed so ably by the scholars mentioned above, by examining margins where women described female sexual practices apart from male pleasure or procreation. I then want to posit a shift in male attitudes regarding male-female practices performed within the bonds of marriage that enabled the co-existence of competing notions regarding relations between men and women. Helen Horowitz has argued that nineteenth-century Americans might hold 'multiple understandings about sex and be divided within themselves'.<sup>4</sup> I think the same held true for Japan. Several texts suggest that men saw female sexual satisfaction as important for women's physical and mental health; through my analysis of a sex manual said to have been written by a nun, I want to raise the possibility that women too made this claim.

In early modern Japanese discourse, female (and male) sexual practices varied depending on status and position in the life cycle. Masturbation ('consolation' – *o-nagusami* in its physical rather than spiritual dimension; euphemisms abounded) was associated with servants and widows. Along with same-sex relations, it was said to flourish in the female-dominated inner quarters of shogun and daimyo. The discourse of the day placed female same-sex relations on a continuum with masturbation. Both constituted discursively inferior sexual practices in that they did not engage the penis. Married commoner women were expected to have sex with their husbands. The dominant discourse dismissed conjugal sex as uninteresting, but a comparison of writers from the commoner class who described how to pleasure their wives with a text written for a daimyo's wife on how to please her husband discloses a multiplicity of assumptions – to a certain extent status specific – regarding women's needs and behaviour.

My sources come less from popular fiction than from the profusion of sex manuals, often illustrated, that taught step by step how to masturbate and how to behave in bed. Any line drawn between fiction and sex manuals has to be arbitrary – Saikaku's famous novel about a seventeenth-century equivalent to Don Juan, *Life of an Amorous Man*, can be read as a sex manual. Nakano Setsuko has argued that seventeenth-century erotic literature functioned as instruction books for women.<sup>5</sup> I supplement sex manuals with woodblock prints, material objects and epigrammatic haiku known as *senryū*. Given the dominance of men, we have to analyse texts on female sexual practices in ways that incorporate male assumptions regarding women's needs and desires but, by reading across the grain, it is possible to catch glimpses of alternative and competing views as well.

### **Masturbation for the good of body and soul**

It is easy to stress the difference between Japanese notions regarding masturbation and those in the west. Timon Screech did just that in his survey of eighteenth-century pornographic prints, attributing their popularity to the male need for masturbatory aids.<sup>6</sup> In *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation*, Thomas Laqueur places

the blame for our current conflicted attitudes regarding masturbation more on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment than on Judeo-Christian medieval theology.<sup>7</sup> The distance between self-help manuals that promote guilt-free masturbation, such as *Sex for One: The Joy of Self-Loving*,<sup>8</sup> and the 1994 forced resignation of Joycelyn Elders, the United States' Surgeon General, for having said that masturbation is an appropriate subject for sex education classes, indicates that people in the United States today continue to hold divergent views. Examining Japanese texts for what they say about masturbation provides proof for the constructedness of sexuality within the context of a specific cultural environment, but that is not the only goal of this study.<sup>9</sup> I present the texts below not simply for their comparative value but because they suggest that knowledge about sex took diverse forms.

In early modern Japanese discourse, female masturbatory practice centres on the dildo with subsidiary attention given to fingers. Although the dildo has a long history, evidence for its use is fragmentary until we arrive at the long eighteenth century. Archaeologists have uncovered what appear to be wooden dildos dating from the Nara period, and there is brief reference to them in a text of 807 CE.<sup>10</sup> But the circumstances for their use are unclear.<sup>11</sup> Phallic symbols shaped like dildos have long played an important role in fertility rituals, and the irony of the contrast between a dildo's connection to fertility in the religious sphere and its use by women with no access to men would not have been lost on early modern audiences. Hitomi Tonomura has found no mention of masturbation (or virginity) in texts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> After 1600, illustrated books about sex often featured masturbation. I agree with Pflugfelder and Screech that depictions of women using dildos or fingering themselves appealed to a male audience. Yet more can be said than that the pictures aimed at titillation. While they indeed point to the power of the male imagination, they also demarcate spaces in which masturbation was appropriately practised and expose assumptions regarding the relationship between masturbation, same-sex practices and preference for the male member and the male body.

Pictures of practices surrounding masturbation conformed to male assumptions regarding female desire. In the 1680s, the famous woodblock print artist Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694) designed a thirteen-page pamphlet titled 'Treasures of the Alcove' (*Toko no okimono*). The introduction recalls the lessons of the past, specifically the story of one Sakuzō who, to console his wife during his absence, had a wooden copy made of his penis. The illustrations begin with a peddler selling dildos to women of the ruling class who lived secluded in the inner quarters. Shown in anatomically correct detail, the dildos are huge. In subsequent images, women display their genitals to each other and the viewer, with clitoris, labia and vagina clearly differentiated and outsized. In contrast to most western art, pornography of this period makes up for lightly sketching secondary sexual characteristics such as breasts and nipples by lavishing detail on the genitals. Other scenes depict women masturbating, sometimes using their fingers, or with a dildo, in one case with the dildo tied to a heel. The women assist each other, either with a dildo tied around their waist or by holding it in their hands. Never does a woman touch another woman's genitals without a dildo's mediation. In the last scene, a male servant hidden beneath a veranda has shoved his penis up through the floor while maids-in-waiting vie to use it. Their preference for the 'real thing' is reflected in the smaller prints running along the top of the series that show masturbation fantasies of men and women engaged in sexual

intercourse.<sup>13</sup> The message is clear: masturbation is a poor substitute for sex with a man.

Depictions of female masturbation show it only for women who lack access to men. For this reason, the subjects tend to be widows, servants or women of the inner quarters whose lord – shogun or daimyo – restricted their opportunities to have sex with men. Some prints multiply the voyeuristic titillation of their subject matter by showing women so aroused by watching daughter with son-in-law or master with mistress that they use their fingers to masturbate. As in the prints by Moronobu, most imagine the lives of women confined to inner quarters off-limits to all men except the lord.<sup>14</sup> Whether in the shogun's great interior (*ōoku*) surrounded by high walls in the centre of Edo (present-day Tokyo) or in the hundreds of daimyo's compounds that dotted the city, mothers, wives, concubines and staff of female functionaries plus their female retainers lived in a female-dominated space about which little was known. By affording their viewer an imagined glimpse of a woman's world otherwise off limits, these images gave men the satisfaction of knowing that women were never safe from their gaze.

The male assumption that widows, maids and women of the inner quarters found sexual release through masturbation figured not only in woodblock prints, but also in epigrammatic short poems (*senryū*). As Nakano Eizō points out, it cannot be said that these epigrams reported on the reality of contemporary practice; rather they reflect the way people thought about social issues.<sup>15</sup> First published in 1776, 'Haiku style of not yet picked flowers' (*Haifū suetsumuhana*) is the most famous anthology devoted to sex, but all refereed poetry collections in this epigrammatic mode from 1757 to 1838 include sections on body parts and their uses.<sup>16</sup> Composed in the homosocial setting of a monthly poetry meeting by townsmen and low-ranking samurai, and submitted for evaluation and publication to Karai Senryū (1718–1790) or his successors, the epigrams depict women as sexual beings, whether they work in the bordello or as servants, attendants, concubines and wives in the houses of the great. Widows expected to remain in the 'dry' world of chastity figure in these verses because of popular assumptions that, having experienced sex in married life, they continued to long for it.<sup>17</sup> Off limits were respectable women – the authors' wives and daughters.<sup>18</sup> By alluding to the same practices but in a different medium than woodblock prints, epigrams suggest that men enjoyed depicting female sexual practices not just because it helped them to masturbate. Whether an epigram pitied or mocked women for having sexual needs, it reinforced the male writer's discursively, socially and sexually superior position.

Epigrams describe a variety of tools said to have been used by women to attain sexual satisfaction. 'A woman alone at a place for five uses her two fingers'. (A typical stem family contained five people – the reference here is to a widow without progeny.) 'A two person group/two fingers is all that is required at a nunnery'. (This epigram repeats the pun on *kumi* meaning set, team or the fingers on a hand.) 'The servant cleverly wraps strips of *konnyaku* around her finger'. (*Konnyaku*, a gelatinous food, swells when wet). Other implements included a wooden mixing spoon, squash, long radish and potato, all suitable for inserting into the vagina.<sup>19</sup>

Epigrams poked fun at women who worked in the inner quarters for relying on peddlers to acquire the tools they needed for masturbation. '[The peddler] brings out hairpins and combs and penis to show'. Or, 'women in the inner quarters buy combs, they also buy dildos'.<sup>20</sup> 'If they're the same price, I'll take the thick one says

the attendant'.<sup>21</sup> According to another epigram, most women did more looking than buying: 'with the money you make as a servant, you can't possibly afford a dildo.' These couplets provide one perspective on consumption as a cultural practice that links the military regime's hidden world to lowly tradesmen, reminds us of the tight connection between money and sex in popular culture, and forecloses the possibility that women might prefer masturbation without dildos.

Most epigrams that allude to women in the inner quarters focus on dildos and their uses. For example, 'women who serve the shogun have one prick (*henoko*) apiece.' Some epigrams suggest that women used dildos alone, and a woman who spent her life in service was likely to get a callus on her heel from the many times she had tied a dildo to it. Others propose that women used them together, taking turns, using a double-headed dildo, or conforming to the same unequal relations of dominance and subservience found in male-centred sexual relations. 'The chief attendant has the young servant do it to her'.<sup>22</sup> These epigrams remind us that, in the writer's eyes, mediation by the male member predicated sexual relations between women. Reading these epigrams against the grain can also lead to another conclusion: possessing the phallus in the form of a dildo enabled women in the inner quarters to isolate a male-signified piece of equipment that freed them from dependence on the human male.

Sex tools in early modern Japan took a variety of forms. One illustration in 'Lascivious Travelling Phallus' (*Koshoku tabimara*) first published in 1695 shows a knobby penis ring with attachments, a dildo, a funnel (*azumagata*) used as a masturbatory aid for men, a small penis-shaped object called a *seserigata* that fit over the finger to insert in small orifices, cylinders to slide over the penis, caps for the glans penis, a cage to support an aging penis and a double-headed dildo.<sup>23</sup> In an 1821 text celebrating the gods of harmony and good fortune (*Manpuku wagōjin*), author and illustrator Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) depicted similar objects sold at Yotsumeya, a sex shop whose advertisements occasionally surface in sex manuals and pornographic pamphlets.<sup>24</sup> New in the nineteenth century were cloisonné balls. 'If these are inserted in the vagina before intercourse, they will increase pleasure by a factor of ten'.<sup>25</sup> Left unspecified is whose pleasure will be enhanced. Whether or not Yotsumeya sold other objects suitable as a masturbatory aid for women, the only one depicted in illustrations and advertisements took the shape of a phallus.

Dildos feature in prints, epigrams and advertisements; they also turn up as objects. Excavations begun in 1999 at a former daimyo compound turned up six wooden dildos, each carved in the shape of a penis with glans, notch beneath and textured trunk.<sup>26</sup> At the end of her book on dildos, Tanaka Yūko has a photograph of a similarly carved dildo made from tortoiseshell.<sup>27</sup> The Kinsey Institute at Indiana University owns a dark brown dildo with string attached (Figure 1). The most expensive commercially produced dildos were made from either water buffalo horn or tortoiseshell. Tanaka argues that, in their materiality, these objects offer proof of a recognition that a woman's need for sexual release had to be taken seriously. Even though woodblock prints and epigrams offer nothing more than a male interpretation of women's needs, they too denote acceptance of the notion that women needed to satisfy their sexual desire. In contradiction to western assumptions and values that a respectable woman had few sexual urges and ought to suppress those she did have (at least outside marriage), women in early modern Japan who had no access to the real thing (sex with a man) were encouraged to masturbate for good mental and physical health, to console the



**Figure 1:** Dildo with string attached in the Kinsey Institute collection, reproduced by kind permission of the Kinsey Institute.

heart and calm the spirit.<sup>28</sup> Thus, by their very existence, dildos speak to an approved sexual practice for women.

A number of sex manuals purport to teach women how to masturbate, often in ways that strain credulity. A text from around 1710, 'Love and Lust in Soft Spring Rains' (*Bishoku iro shigure*), contains instructions for both men and women on how to use sex tools. Its illustrations by Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671–1756) demonstrate how to coordinate foot and body by tying a dildo to the ankle and tying a sash from neck to foot or how to suspend a bow from a crossbeam and then tie the bowstring to a bolster equipped with a dildo for a full body sensation.<sup>29</sup> Published in Osaka in the 1770s, 'A Treasury for Women Day and Night on the Way of Love' (*Endō nichiya johōki*)



**Figure 2:** An early nineteenth-century woodblock print from the Kinsey Institute showing one woman preparing to service another, reproduced by kind permission of the Kinsey Institute.

begins with a series of illustrated instructions on how to masturbate. ‘Coming in from the side’ (*waki tsukai*) by raising one leg to permit the arm access under it was said to be particularly good for reaching not deep into the vagina, but the spot just inside it. Other techniques included tying the dildo to the ankle and then either having the leg to do all the work or using a hand to assist it. According to Takahashi Tetsu, new in this text is a focus on individual variation in genitalia and posture and an attempt at accuracy. It begins by castigating Chinese-style prohibitions: ‘Although it is said that rubbing oneself is bad for both men and women, not to have blood and spirit circulate gives rise to illness. If they circulate freely through the five organs, bodily fluids will not spoil’.<sup>30</sup> In these manuals, the sections on masturbation serve as an introduction to techniques for enhancing male–female relations, an appetiser, if you will, before the main course.

One sex manual offers a different emphasis. ‘Secret Techniques’ (*Hiji sahō*) contains no illustrations, nor does it place masturbation in the context of male–female relations. Unlike other sex manuals, the author claims to be a woman, the nun Shūrei, who offers the text in the late seventeenth century to women who served a lifetime in the inner quarters for the Okayama daimyo.<sup>31</sup> Lest the manual fall into profane hands, she uses euphemisms to refer to the genitalia. She also demonstrates a remarkable understanding of female physiology. The first section provides instructions on how to raise a young daimyo to enjoy a healthy sex life, not with the women of the inner quarters, but with his wife. The third section describes female ailments and prescribes treatment.<sup>32</sup> The middle section details regimens for preserving health through proper care of the genitalia and the measured practice of masturbation.

As with any self-help manual, 'Secret Techniques' begins with the basics and then adds refinements and variations. The first regimen is aimed at the novice and describes stroke by hundred strokes how to massage clitoris and labia, punctuated by finger thrusts into the vagina with particular attention to the sensitive areas just inside. Upon advancement to the second regimen, the practitioner is told to caress her nipples. Shūrei does not name orgasm per se; instead she describes the floor of the uterus pulsating and a loss of consciousness. At the end of each exercise, the practitioner is to examine the fluid she has exuded. If it is thin, she needs more practice; if it is thick, she has done well. 'This fluid is produced by a body in good health, and it is important that it be retained. The greater part is to be licked off the fingers for it to return to the five organs for their proper nourishment and hygiene. Thin fluid is unhygienic; it is to be discarded'.<sup>33</sup>

Shūrei places her regimens within the etiquette that ruled the inner quarters. Since women generally shared apartments, the only place for a novice to obtain privacy was the toilet. Even there she should clench her teeth on a piece of cloth lest her cries disclose her deeds. Once she had perfected her technique, it was all right to practise in bed in darkness. Shūrei teaches how to masturbate without disarranging one's clothing or making a sound while sitting all night in a corridor: 'if you contract your anus while the labia are in spasm, a sense of euphoria will spread throughout the body'.<sup>34</sup> Before lengthy periods of standing on guard, the attendant should place a walnut in the vagina and take turns with her fellows in utilising an unfrequented spot where they could neither be seen nor disturbed. Although masturbation under such circumstances helped pass the time, because the fluids excreted could not be returned to the organs, women should use this technique sparingly. Shūrei explains how to make dildos using a variety of materials and calls them 'a device for concentrating ecstasy' to be kept hidden from others. 'Even though each of the chamber's inhabitants has her own dildo and her own preferred method for using it, and even though each may be employed at the same task at the same time, each keeps it a secret. Not to say anything about one's own practice is considered to be correct etiquette'.<sup>35</sup>

Whether 'Secret Techniques' was written by a nun or by an individual pretending to be a nun, it makes a number of points germane to a discussion of female sexual practice. First, it claims that women required the consolation afforded by masturbation if they lacked opportunities to have sex with men. This assertion fits within mainstream sex manuals that similarly highlight the importance of sexual fulfilment lest a woman fall into melancholy or contract lung disease. Second, unlike texts written by men for men, it values privacy over public display and silence over theatrical abandon. Third, even though it fits within the parameters of early modern discourse on female sexual practice by giving pride of place to the dildo, it also presents a unique perspective on female anatomy by focusing on sensitive points such as nipples, labia and clitoris, and downplaying orgasm per se.

For the nun Shūrei, orgasm is but one step on the way to the final goal – ejecting fluid. By emphasising its wonderful purity, she asserts that, unlike menstrual blood, no pollution attaches to it. Whether with her lord, a woman, a dildo or her fingers, a woman should strive to produce a thick fluid to be ingested by herself or her partner. This emphasis on bodily fluids resembles Taoist teachings, except that Taoist teachings held that women's secretions nourished the male yang. An early nineteenth-century Japanese text urges men to ingest a woman's vital fluid because it constitutes wonderful

1  
2 medicine.<sup>36</sup> Many references to imbibing a woman's fluid ascribe this practice to  
3 Chinese or European men, with the implication that this is one of those strange things  
4 foreigners do,<sup>37</sup> but a few pornographic prints depict Japanese men licking a woman's  
5 vulva.<sup>38</sup> Focusing on 'pure drinking' stretches the boundaries of female sexual practice  
6 far beyond mainstream discourse in either China or Japan.<sup>39</sup> Situated on the margin,  
7 'Secret Techniques' thus provides a unique perspective on the sexual imaginary of its  
8 time.

### 11 Same-sex relations

12  
13 The final point raised by 'Secret Techniques' concerns same-sex relations. Pflugfelder  
14 separates early modern Japanese discourse on female–female sexuality from that for  
15 males while pointing out that neither is akin to what we mean by homosexuality or  
16 lesbianism today. For men, anal intercourse was the only practice discussed; the scant  
17 mention of fellatio deems it obsolete.<sup>40</sup> For the most part, 'Secret Techniques' and  
18 other sex manuals contain a similarly limited repertoire of techniques, with mouth to  
19 genital contact appearing only rarely in the discourse. Cunnilingus figures in 'Secret  
20 Techniques' not as a regimen but as a signal. If a woman has difficulty releasing vital  
21 fluids using a dildo, she should ask for help. 'In that case you should of necessity take  
22 the other person's genitals in your mouth, and when you have completed your regimen,  
23 you should lightly bite her clitoris to let her know'.<sup>41</sup>

24 'Secret Techniques' makes same-sex relations the final step in mastering the  
25 technology of masturbation. Once a woman has internalised introductory practices,  
26 she needs a mentor, an older woman, to ensure that no harm befall either woman in  
27 masturbating together and to guide her to a more profound understanding than she  
28 could achieve on her own. In this way, knowledge previously accrued by inhabitants  
29 of the inner quarters would pass to their successors. This age disparity calls to mind  
30 the age inequality that structured male–male relations, not to mention the epigram  
31 about how a senior woman had her servant pleasure her. In this case, however, the  
32 women take turns being on top and performing various exercises with a home-made  
33 double-headed dildo. At the moment of climax, 'the heart and liver shake, the whole  
34 body goes numb for six or seven breaths and the vagina contracts strongly against  
35 the dildo . . . The two should put their mouths together and exchange saliva with their  
36 tongues. In this way they will not lose consciousness, and they will conform to the law  
37 of pure and wonderful (*jōmyō*) drinking'. As in the exercises performed alone, the goal  
38 is to cause thick liquid to erupt from the vagina; it is then to be exchanged between the  
39 two partners and licked off the dildo. 'This is the very flower of human feeling'.<sup>42</sup>

40 Other sex manuals take various perspectives on where female–female sex occurred  
41 and what it meant. Later cited in other texts, 'Lascivious Travelling Phallus' states: 'a  
42 female employee in the prime of youth has nothing on a cat in heat. Without anyone  
43 to teach her, she naturally turns to her own hand . . . When the evening's work is done,  
44 one of her co-workers agreeably straps on a dildo. There is nothing better for clearing  
45 away congested feelings'.<sup>43</sup> 'Love and Lust in Soft Spring Rains' describes women  
46 who take turns helping each other attain sexual satisfaction and an experienced woman  
47 who shows a novice what to do. Once finished, they exchange places.<sup>44</sup> 'Things Seen  
48 and Recorded in the Bedroom' (*Keichū kibun*) from 'Pillow Book Library' (*Makura*

*bunko*) compiled between 1823 and 1833 by Eisen claims that, for the women who used a double-headed dildo, it was no different from a man and a woman having sex.<sup>45</sup> In another sex manual from 1834, 'Miscellany of Secret and Forbidden Sexual Practices' (*Shikidō kinbi shō*), the author claims to have encountered a woman who at age eleven had started work in the great interior where she played the man for her superiors. 'I strapped a dildo around my waist and worked at it every night for four years'.<sup>46</sup> Mediated by the male gaze, these depictions are predicated on the assumption that masturbation and same-sex relations are roughly equivalent. In both cases the purpose is to provide sexual release for women (euphemistically defined as consolation, producing a thick fluid, or clearing away congestion) when no man is available.

All of these sex manuals, including 'Secret Techniques', value female–female relations strictly in terms of achieving sexual release, not emotional commitment. Perhaps this is because by taking instruction in sex as their focus, they consider feelings to fall outside their purview. The only place in the social imaginary where female same-sex relations were possible was in the inner quarters for the ruling class, yet there women were discouraged from forming close personal bonds for two reasons. Horizontal connections might distract them from their duty to their superiors; they might also lead to jealousy and conflict among women who had to live together for a lifetime.

A single indication that female–female relations might go beyond the sexual encounters taught in sex manuals comes from a letter addressed to Fujinami, a woman who worked in the shogun's great interior in the early nineteenth century. Since it presents a rare glimpse of emotional commitment, it is worth quoting at length:

I was really delighted to have the chance to see you after such a long time. Even now after we parted I still yearn for you, and I am obsessed with you. I pay no attention to what I'm doing, I think about you night and day, and I never forget you for an instant. Even though I love you, you've probably forgotten all about me. I've been keeping the robe that you gave me next to my skin and I've been sleeping with it because it gives me the sensation that I'm lying down with you. Please tear up this letter once you've read it lest others learn about it and it leave a bad impression.

To my beloved mistress from one who loves you.<sup>47</sup>

Was this the equivalent of a schoolgirl crush on an admired teacher, or was the relationship more physical? As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg pointed out in her study of women's correspondence in nineteenth-century America, just because women waxed passionate in their language does not mean that they engaged in sexual intercourse.<sup>48</sup> In early modern Japan, love poetry proclaiming unfulfilled desire for the absent object served as the model for expressions of friendship.<sup>49</sup> Fujinami's letter suggests that women might exchange protestations of desire but, in contrast to the enormous volume of text praising intense emotional bonds between men, their statements remained in a private space separate from the public discourse on sex that proliferated in early modern Japan.

Owing to a paucity of sources, we have scant way of knowing how women saw their sexual practices and relations with other women. The letter to Fujinami hints at a hidden world in which desires found physical as well as lyrical expression and the possibility of forming long-term attachments, but without additional evidence, it is risky to say more. That makes it all too easy to read the descriptions of female masturbation and same-sex relations in woodblock prints, epigrams and sex manuals

as representing nothing more than a male fantasy. This is especially true given that the male member objectified in a dildo conjoined masturbation with female–female sex. Even if ‘Secret Techniques’ found its intended audience, it is doubtful that it, or its message of ‘pure drinking’, became widely known.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, by claiming that women needed men or a male substitute for good health, these various constructions of sexual practice took women’s needs into account, even though saying women’s sexual desires mattered does not mean that they were interpreted in the same ways that sex is evaluated today.

### **Male–female sexual relations**

Early modern Japan permitted few exceptions to the rule that everyone should marry. After their contracts expired, courtesans and prostitutes married. Most nuns were widows or the servants of widows. Aside from excess sons without independent means and women who made a career of service, individuals were expected to find partners of the opposite sex at some point during their lives. Even the majority of women who worked as servants in the inner quarters left to marry. According to eighteenth-century texts, for a woman to waste her life in the shogun’s great interior not only removed her from the breeding pool, but also endangered her health.<sup>51</sup> Any woman above the age of twenty who had never had sex with a man risked suffering from tuberculosis.<sup>52</sup> That sexual satisfaction promoted women’s mental and physical health is one theme that links sex manuals describing male–female relations with those on masturbation and same-sex relations.

Some sex manuals covered everything from masturbation to marriage. Unfortunately, guides to bordellos have attracted so much attention by literary scholars and historians that they have completely overshadowed texts that address conjugal relations. Even those that raise issues related to female sexual satisfaction pose problems. Authors in early modern Japan borrowed liberally from one another, combining sections from various sources as it suited their interests and collecting previous writings into compendia. There are so many versions of ‘Lascivious Travelling Phallus’ for example, that it is impossible to determine which should be considered variants and which a different text altogether. This was a great age for parody, and some manuals appear to have been written with the aim of spoofing didactic texts aimed at teaching respectable subjects such as the martial arts or popular textbooks for women.<sup>53</sup> Compared to the quantities published in early modern Japan, few remain, and none in their original form. The editors who compiled the collections published today complain that many texts disappeared in the fires of the Second World War.<sup>54</sup> They seldom reprint an entire treatise, more often simply providing a table of contents. Owing to post-war censorship and modern prudery, they bowdlerise images and text.<sup>55</sup> Given these limitations, my emphasis will be on themes that indicate the formation of new knowledge regarding the role of sexual intercourse in promoting harmony between husband and wife.<sup>56</sup> But first, a look at the bordello.

Most sex manuals aimed at teaching men how to enhance their experience, but some also provided instructions on how to please women in order to gain respect in the bordello. As ‘Lascivious Travelling Phallus’ points out, it behoved the connoisseur of women to be cognisant of medicines that promised to intensify a woman’s pleasure as well as the positions and techniques handed down from the ninth-century poet and

ideal lover, Ariwara no Narihira.<sup>57</sup> Another text with many variants from the mid-eighteenth century has a title that makes a pun on a famous didactic text for women, 'A Treasury of Important Teachings for Women' (Onna *daigaku takarabako*), only in this case the characters can be read as 'Great Pleasures for Women and their Treasure Boxes'. The last chapter contains techniques for exciting women.<sup>58</sup> Although the early nineteenth-century text 'Miscellany of Secret and Forbidden Sexual Practices' teaches men how to enjoy sex with women and boys, it devotes several chapters to topics such as 'women who never in their life reach climax (*myōkyō*; lit. wonderful divide), women who quickly reach climax, how to tell whether you're having sex with a virgin, and how to know if a woman has a sexy cunt and is skilled in technique'.<sup>59</sup> This list of topics suggests that men paid some attention to women's sexual arousal but, by categorising women according to their genitals, it treats the topic with clinical detachment.

Texts that place female sexuality at the service of male pleasure dominate the discourse about sex from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, but they do not monopolise it. Starting in the eighteenth century, authors focus not just on sex for recreation, but also sex for procreation. Given the value placed on fertility, discussion of birth control is notably absent. In his 1715 'Comprehensive Mirror on the Way of Love' (*Endō tsugan*), Matsuho Zankō emphasises the importance of harmony in the household founded on the sexual intercourse of husband and wife that balances yang and yin. Couples whose agricultural work is complementary (women transplanting rice while men encourage them with drum and song) shared equally in the demands of the bedroom. William Lindsey summarises Zankō's message as follows: 'Mutual love between a man and a woman was fundamental to the creation of a husband and a wife; it underlay the rites of marriage'.<sup>60</sup> According to Kurachi Katsunao, the notion that husband and wife were inherently equal as people constitutes one strand in the sex consciousness of ordinary people in the eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup> Zankō notably claims that conjugal affection constituted a 'way' (*dō* or *michi*), a heavily laden term in early modern Japan that encompassed the discourse, technique and aestheticised practice of everything from men pursuing boys (*shudō*) to the tea ceremony (*chadō*). If we accept Pflugfelder's argument that sex within marriage was generally considered 'too pedestrian to deserve the status of a "way"',<sup>62</sup> then Zankō's text represents a variant voice in the discourse on sex.

Although the relationship of husband to wife seldom attained the status of a 'way', it occasionally appears in sex manuals that circulated in both published and manuscript form. Even 'Lascivious Travelling Phallus' admits that, when men and women fall out of harmony, they cannot produce descendants.<sup>63</sup> Zankō's essay also appeared in a 1760 compendium that includes treatises on the psychology of coitus, women's feelings, how to act in the bordello and how to achieve love in marriage. The introduction stresses conjugal relations because, while youths are beautiful, they lack a certain something whereas prostitutes are all technique and no substance.<sup>64</sup> Author of 'Wise Learning for Women' (Onna *saigaku*), Keisai Eisen, argued that harmony of husband and wife is the way of lifelong pleasure for human beings but, unlike Zankō, he emphasised the inherent inequality in their relationship. 'The usual case is for man to be heaven and woman to be the earth that receives his tool. The most important thing is for her to do everything for him'.<sup>65</sup> In 1815, Takai Shimei urged marital fidelity for both husband and wife. 'The man should always take the lead in sex acts while the woman takes the subordinate and passive role as taught by the creator deities'.<sup>66</sup>

2           These authors represent the dominant view that husband and wife had to cooperate  
3 for the sake of the house as a corporate entity enduring from one generation to the next.  
4 Their concern is mirrored in an illustration for a comic book titled ‘Brocade of Spring’  
5 (*Haru no nishiki*): the husband is shown holding a dildo and on the floor is a packet  
6 labelled ‘aphrodisiac for long life’. According to the narrative, ‘if husband and wife  
7 get along well together, the house will prosper and the descendants will enjoy long  
8 life . . . Every night they take pleasure in sexual intercourse – ahh, yes, I’m coming –  
9 together we will have good children, how auspicious’.<sup>67</sup>

10           One sex manual suggests that a wife’s climax mattered to her husband. ‘Things  
11 Heard and Recorded in the Bedroom’ includes a segment arguing that the dildo was  
12 not just for women to use when they slept alone:

13           Even when men and women have sex together, because man is yang, his feelings arise quickly and  
14 he may finish ahead of his wife . . . Because a woman is yin, she is slow to get aroused. It is truly  
15 regrettable that a man will thoughtlessly ejaculate without waiting for a woman’s beautiful joy. In  
16 such cases, before sexual intercourse begins, warm a dildo to body temperature and place it in the  
17 sacred gate, moving it around as you please until fluid is emitted. When the woman is completely  
18 filled with passion and desiring the real thing, the dildo should be removed and replaced with the  
19 sacred member down to the hilt. If intercourse is done in this way, the man’s energy will not flag,  
20 the woman’s passions will be satisfied, and they will conform to the principle of harmony between  
21 man and woman.<sup>68</sup>

22           This treatise is unusual in that it makes the husband responsible for his wife’s sexual  
23 satisfaction. Yet it is important to consider the context. These instructions are buried  
24 in a collection that includes a pseudo-scientific analysis of the vagina, a ranking  
25 and categorisation of vaginas based on anatomical drawings, a description of the  
26 uterus and the stages of pregnancy based on Dutch-derived medical knowledge, a  
27 discussion of male–male sexual practice and a mocking look at how servants made  
28 dildos out of vegetables. Given that so many volumes in this compendium seek to  
29 provide entertainment for men, it is dangerous to read the quotation above as an  
30 unalloyed recognition of women’s needs.

31           Let me summarise trends in the early modern discourse on male–female relations.  
32 First, although playful suggestions for *savoir-faire* in the bordello never disappeared,  
33 they increasingly had to compete with texts that emphasised the importance of sexual  
34 satisfaction in the conjugal setting. Second, although a healthy sex life was important  
35 for both partners, authors disagreed over whether moderation was also important. Some  
36 scholars, such as Kaibara Ekiken, trained in the Confucian tradition, argued that it was;  
37 others in the nativist tradition thought that what was necessary in China did not apply  
38 in Japan.<sup>69</sup> Finally, texts that accepted the importance of marital harmony divided over  
39 whether men and women were equal (like two wheels to a cart) or whether a wife took  
40 second place to her husband.

### 41           **Sex in service to the domain**

42           The texts that explicate conjugal relations placed female sexual desire in the gaze of  
43 townsmen and lower-ranking samurai; the last text to be discussed returns us to the inner  
44 quarters, albeit at a higher level than the servants, where wives and concubines competed  
45 for the lord’s favour. Like the texts discussed above, it exists in multiple versions, but  
46 it remained unpublished in manuscript scrolls until modern times. It has various titles,  
47  
48

ranging from simply 'Instructions for Women' (*Nyokun*) appended by a modern editor, to 'Instructions for Women in the Bedroom' (*Nyokeikun*) to 'Sacred Instructions for When You Marry' (*O-kago ire no tamazusa*). According to some sources, a wet nurse from a domain in Kyushu composed it in the Genroku years (1688–1704) for a daimyo's daughter being married to a far-away lord.<sup>70</sup> Nakae Katsumi claims that the version he excerpts was originally the gift from a house elder to a daughter of the Kii Tokugawa daimyo upon her marriage in 1825.<sup>71</sup> The texts are divided into three parts: 'Hints for Everyday', 'Decorum in the Bedroom' and 'Hints for Morning and Night'. Although each version differs in details (and some have been censored by modern editors), they share a general understanding of the issues surrounding a high-born woman's sexual practice.

Unlike in the monogamous marriages of commoners and low-ranking samurai, every shogun or daimyo wife faced competition from concubines. In speculating on the reasons for the rise in foot-binding in China, Patricia Ebrey pointed out that a respectable wife had to maintain the distinction between herself and concubines by remaining circumspect in her dress and demeanour; only in the smallness of her feet could she outshine her rivals.<sup>72</sup> Women in Japan did not bind their feet. The wife of a daimyo possessed a dignity deemed lacking in concubines yet, if she stood too much on ceremony, she would lack human feeling (*nasake*). As 'Instructions for Women' points out, 'without womanly virtues, even a princess is no different than a menial . . . it has occasionally happened that a base woman who practised the womanly virtues granted by heaven became the lord's wife'.<sup>73</sup> Although men differed according to their status – no-one would ever put a foot soldier and a daimyo on the same plane, the same was not true for women.<sup>74</sup> For this reason, a wife had to act with more refinement than concubines, never compete with them erotically and yet remain alluring.

'Instructions for Women' urges the wife to find the right balance between passion and lewdness. Without passion, there could be no harmony between husband and wife (as the commoner writers quoted above would agree). But too lusty a display could lead to uncouth behaviour, bringing shame to the woman and causing the loss of her husband's affection. Therefore:

When the lord is about his business, you should place your face against his chest and hold him tightly, but do not move your hips too much. No matter how excited you become in reaching that point where you cannot restrain yourself, you should not speak rubbish, suck his mouth of your own accord, or cry out. As for entering climax, you should either enter before the lord or at the same time. When the lord reaches climax first, no matter how much his semen comes flooding out, you should restrain yourself and stop when he does.<sup>75</sup>

'Instructions for Women' tells a wife to do whatever her husband requires of her, even looking at pornographic prints or allowing him to 'stick his hand in a secret place and poke around'. But she should never remove all her clothing, nor should she ever suggest a variation in sexual practices herself. 'Sexiness is attractive when it includes bashfulness and gentleness'. Once the lord had satisfied his lust, the wife should dispose of the fluids quietly and bring him a warm hand towel to clean himself up. 'You should present it to him while kneeling and averting your face'.<sup>76</sup>

These instructions place the wife's sexual needs at the service of her lord. She is to conform to his desires gracefully and with restraint whether at night or during the

day, with no thought for her own convenience. She can assert herself only by insisting that the couple sleep under separate bedding, because sleeping together could cost her his affection, keeping at least one garment on and making sure that he sees her only when she is at her most beautiful. Consistently behaving in such fashion will enable her to compete with concubines.

Unlike the texts that focus on monogamous relationships between commoners, 'Instructions for Women' places the entire responsibility for the conjugal harmony achieved through sexual intercourse on the wife. If she is successful, the lord will remain healthy, he will have the confidence to deal with the day's crises, and he will 'think of his wife as his tutelary deity'. A wife who resents her lord will become a curse to him and bring bad luck to both.<sup>77</sup> Securing a lord's affections thus has a larger purpose than a wife's rivalry with other women for the honour it brings the house will last for generations.

Although often found, at least in fragments, in modern compendia of sex manuals, 'Instructions for Women' did not circulate widely. Like the regimen for masturbation laid down in 'Secret Techniques', its audience lived in the inner quarters, a world governed by strict standards of etiquette and decorum. It shared with texts for commoners the notion that the pleasure obtained by husband and wife in sexual intercourse constituted the basis for conjugal harmony and acquiesced in the line of thought that a wife should remain subordinate to her husband. But it also reflected the particular circumstances of life as a daimyo's wife. She should forego climax if her lord finished before she did because only his pleasure mattered. Although teaching her how to behave in the bedroom had as one aim for her husband to leave his vestiges (*nagori* – relics or keepsakes) there, the text discusses neither conception nor fertility. In the houses of the great, paternity alone mattered, as in the saying, 'the womb is a borrowed thing'. For that reason, perhaps, the wife in 'Instructions for Women' was not a receptacle for children. Instead she should do her best to keep her lord's interest lest he bestow favours in addition to sperm on concubines in ways that might lead to factional disputes and the ruination of his house.

## Conclusion

In a world so clearly dominated by the male gaze of urban writers as that of early modern Japan, it is dangerous to assert that any voice represents that of a female subject. Further, to the extent that men discussed female sexual desire, it has long been understood that they did so in terms of its function according to their needs – procreation and recreation. I think it is possible to complicate this picture. First, while the dominant discourse created in the seventeenth century focused on acquiring the sophistication necessary to successfully pursue courtesans, a few eighteenth-century writers believed so strongly in conjugal harmony that they were willing to take female physiology into account. Second, most images and texts on female masturbation simply assume that penetration of the vagina by a penis substitute would lead naturally to orgasm, but 'Secret Techniques' teaches that nipples, clitoris, labia and vagina all figure in female arousal. Finally, 'Instructions for Women' demonstrates how the symbolic, social and political meanings associated with sex differed according to status in this highly stratified society. Texts that discuss female sexual practice operated at the margin of discourse in early modern Japan; by offering perspectives that supplement without

supplanting the dominant discourse, they suggest that the space for talk about sex contained multiple understandings and contrasting viewpoints.

Although I have followed conventional practice in referring to the period between 1600 and 1868 in Japan as 'early modern', my topic provides a clear example of why this term is problematic. Early modern implies that the modern comes next, but discourses concerning female sexual practice before the mid-nineteenth century (or male sexual practice for that matter) cannot be presumed to foretell the modern, nor do they celebrate women as post-modern sexual beings. Instead they allow only limited room for female pleasures and almost always in conjunction with the male member. Graphic descriptions of sex acts come to be defined as obscene under the impact of western ideas in the late nineteenth century, especially in the field of legal thought that for the first time also deemed female–female sexuality an area of concern. The terms used for masturbation come to imply less self-consolation than self-pollution. Following in the wake of western sexology, masturbation is invoked as a cause of insanity. In many ways, then, the early modern discourse on female sexual practice constitutes a historical dead end.

### Notes

I presented portions of this essay at the Second International Conference of Asian Scholars, Berlin (2001), the Annual Irvine History Conference (2002), and the Conference on Female Sexualities, Indiana University (2003). In addition to the suggestions I received from discussants and participants at these venues, I would like to thank Robert G. Moeller for his careful reading of an earlier draft and his support for this project.

1. Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Information and Society in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).
2. Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male–Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 25, 56.
3. William R. Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure: Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 1, 27.
4. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), p. 8.
5. Nakano Setsuko, *Kangaeru onnatachi: Kanazōshi kara 'Onnadaigaku'* (Tokyo: Ōsorasha, 1997), pp. 300–01.
6. Timon Screech, *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan 1700–1820* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), p. 7.
7. Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2003).
8. Betty Dobson, *Sex for One: The Joy of Self-Loving* (New York: Harmony Books, 1987). Originally published by the author as *Liberating Masturbation* in 1974.
9. Paul Rakita Goldin has argued that, if the scholar accepts the notion that sexualities are constructed within the context of their cultural environment, then comparing sexual discourses across cultures can 'gain far more insight into our own sexualities', *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), p. 3.
10. Takahashi Tetsu, *Zoku Takahashi korekushon: Gentei: shikaban* (Tokyo: Takahashi Korekushon Kankō Kai, 1963), p. 243.
11. Watanabe Shin'ichirō, *Hiyaku, higu jiten: Edo no seiai bunka* (Tokyo: Miki Shobō, 2003), p. 155. Watanabe also mentions an early modern copy of a 1322 print showing palace women using dildos, but the provenance is obscure enough to make this attribution doubtful.
12. Hitomi Tonomura, 'Women and Sexuality in Premodern Japan', in William Tsutsui (ed.), *Companion to Japanese History* (London: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 351–71, here p. 358.
13. Hayakawa Monta (ed.), *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei*, 1: *Hishikawa Moronobu*, 2: *Toko no okimono* (Kyoto: International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 2002).
14. There were exceptions to the rules excluding men: senior officials met with their female counterparts; doctors were allowed to visit the sick and the heavy cleaning at the end of the year required male assistance.
15. Nakano Eizō, *Chingu nyūmon* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1969), p. 70.

- 2 16. The table of contents for *Haifū suetsumuhana* is: 1) penis; 2) vagina; 3) intercourse – divided into sections  
 3 on foreplay, the act itself, positions, climax and conclusion; 4) different types of sexual practices – included  
 4 here is masturbation and same sex relations; 5) intercourse outside marriage; 6) people of the household,  
 5 including marriage ceremony, the married couple; 7) different statuses; 8) prostitution; 9) sex tools; 10)  
 6 medicine and disease, including menstruation and pregnancy; 11) historical personages; 12) myths, legends,  
 7 ballads, kabuki; 13) superstitions, customs, yearly round of ceremonies, including pollution from menses.  
 8 See Yamamoto Seinosuke, *Senryū seifuzoku jiten* (Tokyo: Makino Shuppan, 1982), pp. 4, 8–13.
- 9 17. Nakano Eizō, ‘Senryū ni awareta seifūzoku’, in *Kōza Nihon fūzokushi bekkān*, 3: *Seifūsoku* (Tokyo:  
 10 Yūzankaku, 1959), p. 313.
- 11 18. Shimoyama Hiroshi, *Senryū no eroteishizumu* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1995), p. 208; Nagano Hiroko, ‘*Haifū*  
 12 *Yanagidaru no deisukūru: Jendaa, kaikyū, mibun*’, in Kuroda Hiroko and Nagano Hiroko (eds), *Nihon no*  
 13 *rekishi: Esunishitei, jendaa kara miru* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002), pp. 246, 248.
- 14 19. Yamamoto, *Senryū seifuzoku jiten*, p. 67.
- 15 20. Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, p. 163.
- 16 21. Yamamoto, *Senryū seifuzoku jiten*, p. 144.
- 17 22. Kitamura Sakehiko, ‘Senryū ōoku hanashi’, *Rekishi dokuhon* 492 (1989), pp. 106–7.
- 18 23. Takahashi, *Zoku Takahashi korekushon*, p. 125.
- 19 24. ‘Manpuku wagōjin’, <<http://www.ebookbank.jp/mitekakaku/ep/item/1-2448>>.
- 20 25. Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, p. 4.
- 21 26. Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, p. 159; Nakano, *Chingu nyūmon*, 3rd frontispiece, p. 80.
- 22 27. Tanaka Yūko, *Harigata: Edo onna no sei* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1999), p. 84.
- 23 28. Tanaka, *Harigata*, p. 2.
- 24 29. Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, p. 187; Nakano Eizō, *Chingu nyūmon* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1969), p. 150.
- 25 30. Takahashi Tetsu, *Tokugawa seiten taikan* (Tokyo: Tokugawa Seiten Taikan Fukyūkai, 1953), p. 48.
- 26 31. Shunroan Shujin, *Edo no bidō wo tanoshimu: Seiai bunka no tankyū* (Tokyo: Miki Shobō, 1995) p. 124.  
 27 I thank Yuki Terazawa for introducing me to this text. Shunroan Shujin is the pseudonym for Watanabe  
 28 Shin’ichirō, a former high school principal who died in 2004.
- 29 32. Watanabe Shin’ichirō, *Edo no keibō jutsu* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2005), pp. 185–6; 199.
- 30 33. Shunroan, *Edo no bidō*, p. 131.
- 31 34. Shunroan, *Edo no bidō*, p. 134.
- 32 35. Shunroan, *Edo no bidō*, p. 139. See also p. 145.
- 33 36. ‘In order to ingest the pure secretions as they flow, you should suck for a long time on the upper part  
 34 [clitoris?], and the secretions will gradually drip out just like mother’s milk’. Enpon Kenkyū Kankūkai  
 35 (ed.), *Nihon Enpon daishūsei* (Tokyo: Uozumi Shoten, 1960), pp. 336–7. Large sections of this text are not  
 36 included in this publication because the editors deemed them obscene.
- 37 37. See e.g., the images reproduced in Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, p. 285; for further discussion, see  
 38 Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, pp. 215–17.
- 39 38. See e.g., a print by Keisai Eisen (1790–1848) in his *Hanagoyomi* (flower calendar) series done around  
 40 1830.
- 41 39. Charlotte Furth claims that texts calling for nourishing the male essence through provoking the female  
 42 partner’s orgasms while withholding one’s own went underground early in the Song dynasty. Nour-  
 43 ishment came through genital-to-genital contact, not through the mouth. *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in*  
 44 *China’s Medical History, 960–1665* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999),  
 45 p. 200.
- 46 40. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies*, pp. 41 n. 50, 176 n. 88.
- 47 41. Shunroan, *Edo no bidō*, p. 145.
- 48 42. Shunroan, *Edo no bidō*, pp. 146–50.
- 49 43. Takahashi Tetsu, *Nihon seiten taikan*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ginza Shokan, 1990), p. 39; Watanabe, *Hiyaku*,  
 p. 189.
- 44 44. Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, p. 187.
- 45 45. Takahashi, *Tokugawa seiten taikan*, p. 81.
- 46 46. Watanabe, *Hiyaku*, p. 192.
- 47 47. Hata Hisako, *Edo oku jochū monogatari* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2001), pp. 101–2.
- 48 48. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf,  
 1985).
- 49 49. For a passionate declaration of love between two married women, see Anne Walthall, *The Weak Body of a*  
*Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998),  
 p. 80.

50. I know of only one copy of this text; that published by Shunroan. According to Nakano Mitsutoshi, woodblock print books could easily be published in limited quantity; a publisher might print just a single copy in compliance with his customer's preference. *Shoshigaku kōgi Edo no hanpon* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), p. 11.
51. Takahashi, *Tokugawa seiten*, p. 7.
52. Takahashi, *Nihon seiten*, vol. 1, p. 86.
53. For a close comparison of an erotic text based on the premise that a wife can expect sexual satisfaction from her husband, and the textbook for women that it parodies, see Andrew Gerstle, *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei IV: Tsukioka Settei 1: Onna shimegawa oeshi-bumi (Collected Erotic Texts of the Early Modern Period IV: Tsukioka Settei 1: 'Love Letters and a River of Erect Precepts for Women')* (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2007).
54. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 357, 556 and *passim*.
55. See e.g., the description of *Inyō tegoto no maki* in Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, pp. 338–9, which leaves lines blank that possibly refer to female masturbation.
56. Recent compilations of books for women such as *Edo jidai bunko* or *Onna daigaku shūsei* include few if any sex manuals. Most secondary literature subsumes female sexual desires to those of males. Two works that treat the female body do so from a medical perspective. One is Yuki Terazawa, 'Gender, Knowledge, and Power: Reproductive Medicine in Japan, 1660–1930', (unpublished doctoral thesis, UCLA, 2001); the other is Kanatsu Hidemi, 'Jūhasseki Nihon no shintaizu ni miru onna to otoko', in *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai* (ed.), *Sei to kenryoku kankei no rekishi* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2004), pp. 4–29.
57. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 158.
58. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 162.
59. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, pp. 160–61.
60. Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure*, pp. 29–32, here p. 30.
61. Kurachi Katsunao, *Sei to karada no kinseishi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1998), p. 180.
62. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies*, p. 27.
63. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 159.
64. Takahashi, *Tokugawa seiten*, pp. 11–13. The text is titled *Shinsen kokin makura taizen* (A Newly Selected Compilation of Pillow Books from Ancient and Modern Times).
65. Takahashi, *Tokugawa seiten*, p. 82.
66. Tanobe Tomizō, *Isha mitate Edo no seiten* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1996), p. 15.
67. Takahashi, *Zoku Takahashi korekushon*, p. 128.
68. Takahashi, *Nihon seiten*, vol. 1, pp. 102–3. *Kodane maki* (Planting the Seed for Children) also describes how the dildo can be used as a supplement in conjugal sex. Nakano, *Chingu nyūmon*, p. 144.
69. Enpon, *Nihon Enpon*, p. 355; Kurachi, *Sei to karada*, pp. 144–9; 215.
70. *Kōza Nihon fūsokushi*, bekkān 2: *Seifūzoku* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1959), p. 253. Fukuda Kazuhiko found one version of the text at the house of a woodblock print collector in Wakayama. *Edo no seiaigaku* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1988), p. 27. The most complete version of the text can be found in Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, pp. 351–3.
71. Nakae Katsumi, *Sei no Nihonshi* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1995), p. 213. Takahashi Tetsu also mentions having seen a copy of this text: *Nihon seiten taikan*, vol. 2, p. 89.
72. Patricia B. Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).
73. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 351.
74. As the late eighteenth-century female intellectual Tadano Makuzu said, no women should think herself superior to a man, no matter how much higher she was in terms of status. See Janet R. Goodwin, Bettina Gramlich-Oka, Elizabeth A. Leicester, Yuki Terazawa and Anne Walthall, 'Solitary Thoughts: A Translation of Tadano Makuzu's *Hitori Kangae*', *Monumenta Nipponica* 56 (2001), pp. 21–38, 173–95.
75. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 352.
76. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 352.
77. Enpon, *Nihon enpon*, p. 353.