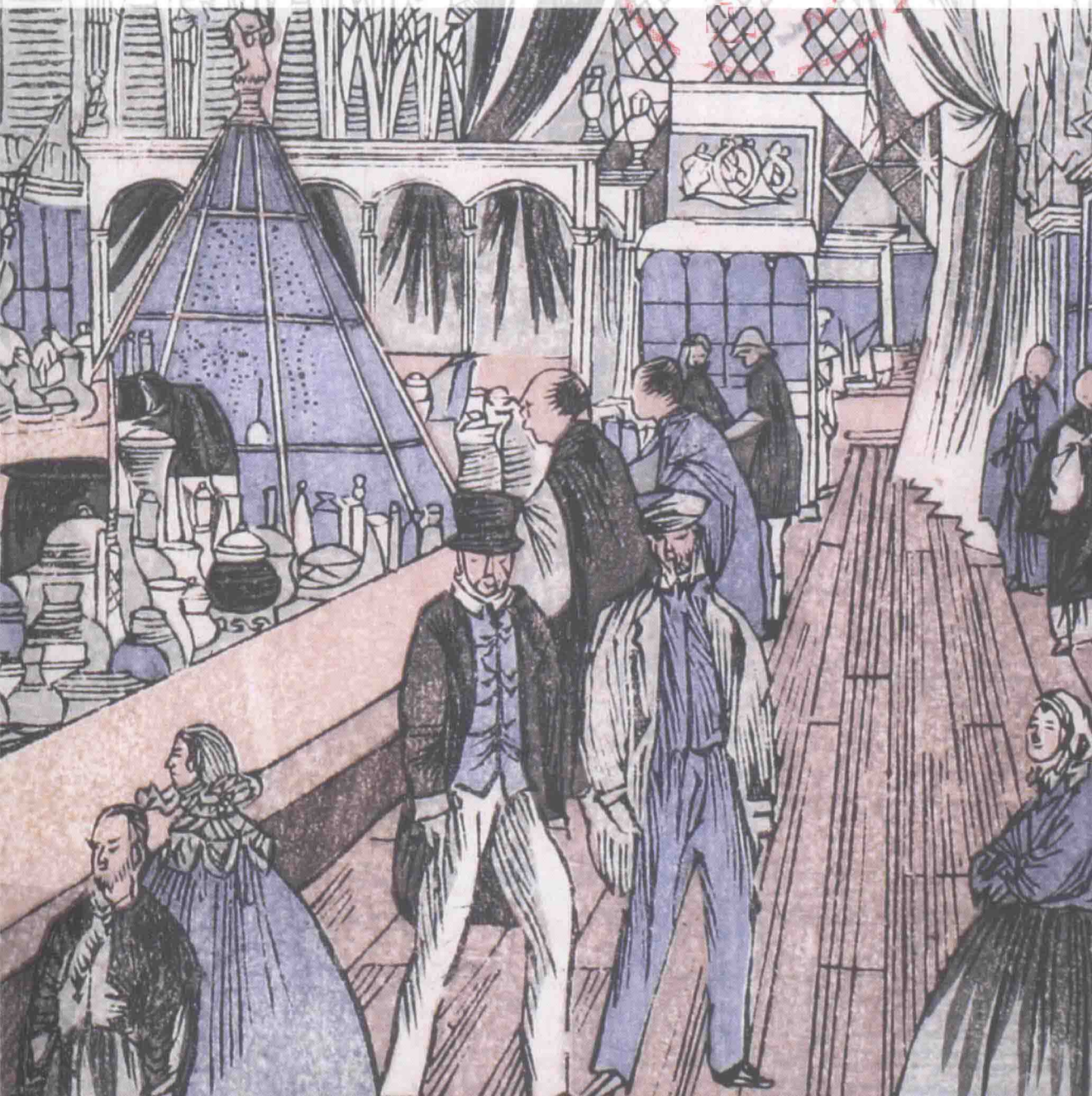


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Imperial Progress to the Muromachi Palace, 1381 A Study and Annotated Translation of *Sakayuku hana*

Matthew STAVROS, with Norika KURIOKA

Sakayuku hana is the official record of Emperor Goen'yū's 1381 visit to the Muromachi Palace, the residential headquarters of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. The document, most likely authored by the elder statesman and former imperial regent Nijō Yoshimoto, is a testament to Yoshimitsu's attainment of sweeping influence at court and mastery of imperial protocol. It is also a rich source of information on elite etiquette, ritual, and the material culture of medieval Japan. This study and full translation marks the first time *Sakayuku hana* has been critically examined in any language.

Keywords: imperial progress, *gyōkō*, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, Nijō Yoshimoto, ritual, protocol, translation, Kyoto, Goen'yū (emperor)

In the spring of 1381, the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358–1408) hosted Emperor Goen'yū 後円融 (1358–93) at the Muromachi Palace.¹ The six-day event was an extravaganza of pageantry, performance, and leisure. It was also unprecedented. Never before had a reigning emperor engaged in a formal imperial progress, a *gyōkō* 行幸, that took him to the residence of a warrior leader. The progress of 1381 was of profound significance to the politics of the day and especially to Yoshimitsu's career. It marked the culmination of an ambitious, multisided campaign that had, over the course of three years, transformed the complexion of capital politics and solidified Yoshimitsu's position as a central player in military, religious, and court affairs. The official record of that visit, *Sakayuku hana* さかゆく<花, is a testament to Yoshimitsu's attainment of sweeping influence and cultural capital. It provides the most detailed account of a famous episode in which the emperor, in a rare display of deference, personally poured and served the shogun a cup of *sake*. The document is also a source of detailed information on elite protocol, ritual, and premodern Japanese material culture. Before entering into an examination of the text, translated in full below, let us briefly review Yoshimitsu's political rise during the several years leading up to the imperial visit.

1 The visit took place between Eitoku 1 (1381) 3/12 and 3/16, however, because drinks extended long into the night of the sixteenth, the emperor's departure took place during the early morning of the seventeenth. See *Gukanki*, vol. 4, p. 348. The Muromachi Palace appears in documents variously as Muromachi-dono 室町殿, Muromachi-tei 室町亭, and Muromachi-dai 室町第. It was also popularly known as the "Palace of Flowers" (Hana no Gosho 花御所), a name associated with the site (not the building) prior to Yoshimitsu's involvement.

The advent of Yoshimitsu's independent political career can be dated to about 1378, a decade after he became shogun at the age of ten. Until then, he and the shogunate had been under the benevolent dictatorship of Hosokawa Yoriyuki 細川頼之 (1329–92), an Ashikaga vassal made regent at the time of Yoshimitsu's youthful appointment. Yoshimitsu took a critical first step toward political autonomy in 1378 when he began building the Muromachi Palace, a residential headquarters located in Kyoto's elite district of Kamigyō 上京.² The move to Kamigyō was dramatic for several reasons. First, it meant a sharp break with the past. Since the establishment of the Ashikaga regime in 1336, shogunal administration had always been based in the capital's southern, "commoner" district of Shimogyō 下京 (see Figure 5).³ Over the course of the preceding four decades, that base, the Sanjō-bōmon Palace (Sanjō-bōmon dono 三条坊門殿), had become the nucleus of a substantial warrior enclave and the primary venue of Ashikaga memorial rituals.⁴ For Yoshimitsu, therefore, leaving Shimogyō meant abandoning his first and most natural political and social milieu.

But just as the move entailed a departure, so too did it signal an arrival. Kamigyō, after all, had been an enclave of the Kyoto elite from as early as the eleventh century. During the Heian period, civil aristocrats gravitated to the area to be close to the imperial palace and other venues of statecraft.⁵ In time, the district's elite character intensified as temporary imperial palaces (known as *sato-dairi* 里内裏) proliferated, and exceedingly wealthy families such as the Fujiwara 藤原 built numerous sprawling palaces of unprecedented size and ostentation. Yoshimitsu's move to Kamigyō was a foray into the realm of high capital politics, a physical infiltration soon matched by formal and increasingly public displays of acceptance. It was just fourteen days after he moved into the still-unfinished palace, for example, when he was promoted, as if on cue, to the imperial post of Gon Dainagon 権大納言 (Acting Grand Counselor), instantly making him a member of the senior nobility.⁶ Five months later he was granted the post of Udaishō 右大将 (Commander of the Right), a title that placed him at the center of court affairs.⁷ These promotions were remarkable not merely for their timing, but also for their precipitousness. Until then, Yoshimitsu had occupied the wholly unremarkable post of Sangisakon no chūjō 参議左近中将 (Council of State Advisor-Captain of the Left Palace Guards) with the rank of Chūnagon 中納言 (Vice Counselor). In one great leap, he had moved into the court's inner circle with as much apparent ease as moving house.⁸

2 On the start of construction, see *Gogumaiiki*, vol. 2, p. 259.

3 Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–58) maintained a residence in Kamigyō from 1344 to 1351, however, that structure did not serve as the headquarters of shogunal administration. See Stavros 2010.

4 For details on the Sanjō-bōmon complex, which included the temple of Tōjiji 等持寺, see Stavros 2010.

5 On the formation of Kamigyō, see Stavros 2014, chapter 3.

6 The promotion to Gon Dainagon took effect on 1378/3/10. See *Kugyō bunin*, vol. 2, p. 726.

7 The appointment was made on 1378/8/27. See *Kugyō bunin*, vol. 2, p. 726. Udaishō, which was the highest court rank attained by Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝, has been translated variously as "Commander of the Inner Palace Guards" and "Head of Palace Guards-Right Division."

8 *Kugyō bunin* (vol. 2, p. 737) uses the word "leap" (*okkai* 越階) to describe Yoshimitsu's promotion from junior third rank to junior first rank on 1380/1/5.

Yoshimitsu was not the first warrior leader to possess formal court ranks and posts, nor would he be the last. He might, however, have been one of only a very few who set out to master—not just mimic—court etiquette and protocol.⁹ To achieve this, he enlisted the tutelage of Nijō Yoshimoto 二条良基 (1320–88), an elder statesman and former imperial regent.¹⁰ Possessing matchless pedigree and a lifetime of experience, Yoshimoto could hardly be considered the shogun's pawn. On the contrary, Yoshimoto may have engineered Yoshimitsu's rise with the aim of tapping the young man's access to wealth and his hereditary control over the military estate.¹¹ This interpretation is particularly plausible in light of the civil war that was raging at the time. Since 1335, the imperial institution had been split into two opposing courts, one located in Kyoto (the “Northern” court) and another in Yoshino 吉野 (the “Southern” court).¹² By enlisting the shogun and emphasizing his role as a ranking member of the Northern Court, Yoshimoto may have sought to bolster Kyoto's viability vis-à-vis its southern rivals.

To instruct the shogun, Yoshimoto authored *Hyakuryō kun'yōshō* 百寮訓要抄, a detailed dissertation on court practices, customs, manners, and etiquette.¹³ This text undoubtedly came in handy when, for example, in the first month of 1379 Yoshimitsu visited the imperial palace to enjoy drinks and an intimate audience with the emperor. Incidentally, the shogun's manners on this occasion were not impeccable. After the third round of *sake* had been poured, he reportedly failed to pause long enough to ensure the sovereign took the first sip. The faux pas, which reportedly scandalized the elite community, is commonly interpreted as insolent disregard for protocol and proof of Yoshimitsu's intent to steamroll traditional bodies of authority amidst a relentless pursuit of power. There is, however, a far less dramatic and eminently more plausible explanation: the gaff might have been a simple mistake.¹⁴ At the time, Yoshimitsu was a newly promoted young man and had only been receiving instruction on court etiquette for several months. Moreover, as we see in *Sakayuku hana*, in other contexts he was obsessively punctilious about protocol. Reviewing his career, it is difficult to sustain an argument that Yoshimitsu disrespected the system he sought so energetically to infiltrate and eventually control.

In 1379, Yoshimitsu engineered a successful coup to dislodge Yoriyuki from his post of shogunal regent, eventually sending him into exile.¹⁵ In the fourth month of that year, he made Shiba Yoshimasa 斯波義将 (1350–1410) the shogunate's administrative officer (Kanrei 管領) and Ise Sadatsugu 伊勢貞継 (1309–91) the chief operations officer (Mandokoro shitsuji 政所執事). Together, the three men set about undoing many of Yoriyuki's unpopular policies and redressing his political missteps. Among the latter was his exacerbation of

9 Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118–81) might be the only other comparable example. Kiyomori's ritual savvy is highlighted in Blair 2013, and much more on this topic will soon be published in Adolphson and Commons 2015.

10 Sanjō Kintada 三条公忠 refers to Nijō Yoshimoto as “the shogun's retainer” (lit. “The Great Tree's ‘man’”) in *Gogumaiki*, entry for Kōryaku 1 (1379) 4/28, vol. 3, p. 14.

11 Usui 1960, p. 39, and Imatani 1990, pp. 38–40.

12 On the era of northern and southern courts (“Nanbokuchō” 南北朝, 1336–92), see Varley 1971 and Satō 2005.

13 *Hyakuryō kun'yōshō* is included in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従, vol. 5, pp. 639–69.

14 Shocked by Yoshimitsu's actions, which he heard of from his daughter, Sanjō Kintada wrote, “[I]t's the first time such a thing has been heard of since the advent of the imperial/warrior diarchy.” See his *Gogumaiki*, entry for Eiwa 5 or Kōryaku 1 (1379) 1/7, vol. 3, p. 3. The details of this encounter could themselves be the topic of a separate article.

15 The coup that ousted Yoriyuki is known as *Kōryaku no seihen* 康暦の政変. For details, see *Kaei sandai-ki* 花營三代記 in *Gunsho ruijū*, vol. 6, p. 102.

tensions between the Zen 禅 and Tendai 天台 Buddhist establishments.¹⁶ Under the new regime, sectarian antagonisms were temporarily mollified amidst an overhaul of the Zen administrative structure. The shakeup entailed a reorganization of the Gozan 五山 temple hierarchy and the creation of the Tenka sōroku 天下僧録 (Register General of Monks), a powerful office charged with superintending the Gozan establishment.¹⁷ Over this, Yoshimitsu exerted direct and virtually absolute control.

At the same time he was reforming the shogunate and the religious establishment, Yoshimitsu began lobbying the emperor for changes to the composition of the court. Most important, he sought to have his tutor and close confidant, Nijō Yoshimoto, reappointed imperial regent. When that was deemed impossible on procedural grounds, the job was instead given to Yoshimoto's son, Nijō Morotsugu 二条師嗣 (1356–1400).¹⁸ A few months later, Yoshimitsu made his first formal appearance at court, during which he underwent the right of passage marking the initial donning of senior nobleman's robes (*nōshi hajime* 直衣始).¹⁹ He was later chosen to co-host the palace's annual review of horses (*aouma no sechie* 白馬節会), a new year's event attended exclusively by the emperor and senior nobility.²⁰ It was the first time someone of warrior pedigree had been given such a responsibility, and Yoshimitsu's reportedly faultless execution of the formalities put on display his growing mastery of court etiquette.

By early 1381, Yoshimitsu had taken over full control of shogunal affairs. He exercised significant influence over the Gozan Zen system and had entered the highest echelon of the imperial hierarchy. It was within this context that he took the dramatic step of inviting the emperor for a six-day visit to the Muromachi Palace. In premodern Japan, an imperial progress to a private residence of any kind was an extremely rare occurrence. For a reigning sovereign to visit the home of someone considered to be of warrior pedigree was even more unusual. In fact, the total number of cases can be counted on one hand, and two of those—the first two—were by invitation of Yoshimitsu himself.²¹ In addition to the Muromachi progress of 1381, he welcomed Emperor Gokomatsu 後小松 to his Kitayama Villa 北山殿 in 1408.²² Yoshimitsu's son, the shogun Yoshinori 義教 (1394–1441), hosted Gohanazono 後花園 at the Muromachi Palace in 1437; Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–98) received Goyōzei 後陽成 (1571–1617) at the Jurakudai Palace 聚楽第 in 1588; and Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604–51) received Gomizunoo 後水尾 (1596–1680) at the newly refurbished Nijō

16 Prior to his ouster, Yoriyuki had become extremely unpopular among both the Gozan and Tendai establishment, in part for his banishment of the eminent patriarch Shun'oku Myōha 春屋妙葩 (1311–88) from Kyoto in 1371. For details, see Collcutt 1981, pp. 119–22.

17 The document in which Yoshimitsu appointed Shun'oku is included in *Rokuō'in monjo* 鹿王院文書, quoted in Imaeda 2001, p. 277. On the establishment of the *Tenka sōroku*, see Collcutt 1981, pp. 119–23.

18 Goen'yū reportedly balked at the appointment on the grounds that there was no precedent for someone of jugō 准后 status serving as regent. See *Gukanki*, vol. 4, p. 279. Jugō is discussed below.

19 This event took place on Kōryaku 2 (1380) 1/20. The official record, *Rokuon-in dono on nōshi hajime ki* 鹿苑院殿御直衣始記, is in *Gunsbo ruijū*, vol. 22, pp. 179–81.

20 Yoshimitsu served in the capacity of *geben* 外弁 on Eitoku 1 (1381) 1/7. See entry for that date in *Gukanki*, vol. 4, pp. 315–18.

21 There were many cases in which an emperor took temporary refuge at a shogunal residence in times of emergency. These, however, were fundamentally different kinds of visits from the ones being discussed here, which were formal, planned, and celebratory. Taira no Kiyomori could, and often did, summon the retired emperor at will. That too, however, is different from the formal *gyōkō* of a sitting emperor.

22 Gokomatsu stayed at Kitayama a staggering twenty days.

Castle 二条城 in 1626. In each of these later cases, Yoshimitsu's 1381 progress served as a formative model and *Sakayuku hana* was the primary reference source.²³

Historians have frequently portrayed Yoshimitsu as an ambitious climber who transcended his warrior roots to infiltrate and eventually dominate the civil aristocracy. While not necessarily inaccurate, the spirit of the prevailing narrative rests on the assumption that there was a clear and (normally) unbridgeable gap separating warriors and aristocrats. In fact, there was not. The dichotomy is false.²⁴ Except for the singular example of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, all great warrior leaders in Japanese history could legitimately claim noble pedigree.²⁵ Taira no Kiyomori and Minamoto no Yoritomo, founders of the first and second military dynasties, owed much of their success to their having blood ties to the imperial family.²⁶ The Ashikaga and Tokugawa were both branch families of the Minamoto. On this topic, it should be noted too that Yoshimitsu was not just Goen'yu's courtier, he was the sovereign's first cousin on his mother's side and, not insignificantly, three months his senior.

Japan's warrior hegemony likewise universally enjoyed formal status within the classical state system. All except for Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–82) not only held court ranks and posts, they coveted them.²⁷ Long after the weakening of public institutions and the rise of temple and warrior influence from about the twelfth century, the traditional imperial hierarchy continued to be the universal benchmark of elite status. Maintaining the integrity of that hierarchy, however imperfect, was a marker of membership in the traditional order, a membership that power-holders of all stripes—including courtiers, monks, and warriors—sought to attain and maintain with unflagging enthusiasm.

The absence of formal or even genetic differences between warriors and civil aristocrats did not stop contemporaries from drawing social or cultural distinctions. They certainly did. And yet it was in this respect that Yoshimitsu was perhaps most remarkable. His apparent sincerity vis-à-vis court engagement set him apart. Others, such as Kiyomori, Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542–1616) notoriously disdained the trappings of traditional authority, accepting formal ranks and posts merely as means to better control the court and emperor.²⁸ In stark contrast, Yoshimitsu became an aristocrat par excellence. Although there were aristocrats who scorned his success, occasionally using the pejorative “warrior” (*buke* 武家) to accentuate his status as other, these same men conceded that Yoshimitsu was a master of protocol and decorum.²⁹ *Sakayuku hana* captures this sentiment unambiguously and in great detail. The image of the shogun that emerges is one of a gifted

23 As we shall see, the impulse to emulate the 1381 progress on the occasion of Emperor Gomizunoo's visit to Nijō Castle in 1626 was what likely led to the creation of this version of *Sakayuku hana*.

24 On this topic, see Farris 1992, esp. chapter 5, and Friday 2004, chapter 2.

25 Born in obscurity, Hideyoshi famously fabricated an aristocratic ancestry, and later, a divine one as well.

26 As a way of culling the pool of possible contenders for the throne, Emperor Kanmu 桓武 (737–806) began the practice of granting imperial princes family names and sending them away from the capital. Although stripped of any hint of divine status, these men could draw on their hereditary ties to the capital (and their wealth) to nurture feudal bonds and establish armies. Taira and Minamoto were the most common family names assigned to these princes and it was the Ise Taira 伊勢平 and the Seiwa Genji 清和源氏 that spawned Kiyomori and Yoritomo respectively. See Shively and McCullough 1999, p. 7.

27 Nobunaga initially eschewed high court appointments, only to eventually relent and accept the post of Minister of the Left (Sadaijin 左大臣).

28 Again, an evolving interpretation of Kiyomori makes it possible to argue that Yoshimitsu was not, in fact, alone in this respect.

29 See, for example, discussion in Ōta 2002, pp. 53–54.

politician who, knowing the rules of courtliness, sought to play by those rules rather than challenge or change them.

Of course, a full consideration of Yoshimitsu's social and political profile would require a book-length examination of his pedigree, his career, life and times. The annotated translation of *Sakayuku hana* presented here is a step toward achieving that larger objective. It provides insights into a critical historical moment, one that at once thrust Yoshimitsu to the forefront of court society and helped propel him toward ultimate domination.³⁰

About the Text

Sakayuku hana, which might be translated as “The Flourishing Flower,” is one of four known accounts of the 1381 imperial progress.³¹ It is by far the most detailed and, based on its content and form, is widely considered an official record. Unfortunately, however, it is incomplete. The portion of the document detailing the last four days of the event is lost and has been so since at least 1626. It was in that year that nobleman Nakanoin Michimura 中院通村 (1588–1653) transcribed the version of the text best known today. The production of Michimura's edition, not coincidentally, corresponded to the year Emperor Gomizunoo visited Nijō Castle. Michimura was a close advisor to Gomizunoo and held the position of Buke densō 武家伝奏, official intermediary between the court and shogunate. Michimura likely sought to use *Sakayuku hana* as the template for planning his own sovereign's progress. In the early nineteenth century, Michimura's text was incorporated into the vast historical compilation *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従, guaranteeing its preservation and broad dissemination. The version used for this translation comes from the 1902 edition of *Gunsho ruijū*, now digitized and made publicly available online through the National Diet Library.³²

Despite being widely known and cited, *Sakayuku hana* has received almost no critical scholarly attention.³³ To be sure, there seems to be a lack of interest in imperial progresses in particular and the significance of pageantry in general. While historians habitually note the cases in which a reigning emperor traveled from one place to another, the style in which he or she did so and the choreography involved tend to be ignored.³⁴ One of the objectives behind preparing this translation is to demonstrate how the material and performative elements of an imperial progress shed light on a broad range of topics, including status, aesthetics, religion, and material culture. Needless to say, much more research is necessary to help reconstruct the complex grammar of performance to which the elite were obviously responding so strongly.

30 Yoshimitsu retired from the post of shogun in 1394. Seven days later, he was appointed prime minister (Dajō daijin 太政大臣), the highest ranking member of the imperial court. He soon relinquished that post, thereby formally withdrawing from public life. His influence, however, remained. In 1404 the Ming emperor called Yoshimitsu Nihon kokuō 日本国王 or “King of Japan,” and prior his death in 1408, arrangements were underway for him to be granted a status equivalent to retired emperor.

31 The other accounts include: Kujō Noritsugu 九条教嗣, *Muromachi-tei gyōkōki* 室町亭行幸記; *Muromachi-dai gyōkōki* 室町第行幸記; and Konoe Michitsugu's *Gukanki*.

32 Access at <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2559079/92>.

33 The only notable exception is Kuwayama 2003.

34 A significant exception is found in the groundbreaking work of Momozaki Yūichirō 桃崎有一郎 (2010) on “road rituals” (*rotō rei* 路頭礼).

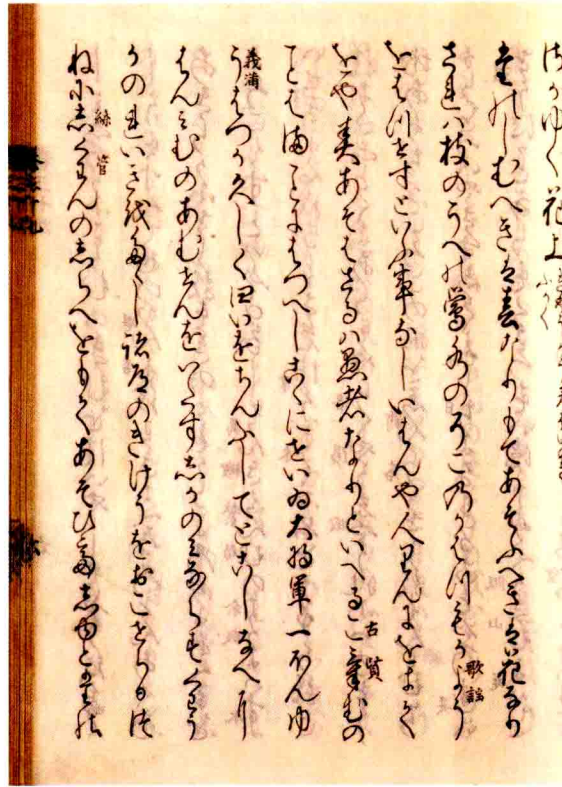


Figure 1. First page of *Sakayuku hana* in *Gunsho ruijū*. National Diet Library.

Sakayuku hana was most likely written by Nijō Yoshimoto. As a celebrated politician and man of letters, few others could have described the setting, people, and activities with such lucidity and obvious knowledge of protocol. A staunch supporter of Yoshimitsu, Yoshimoto would have also possessed a clear motive for creating a record so adulatory of the shogun. As a further clue about authorship, the former regent is known to have often written in a mixed *kana* and *kanji* style similar to that found in *Sakayuku hana*.³⁵ This evidence notwithstanding, there remain many questions about the text because the original has been lost. The version copied in the seventeenth century by Nakanoin Michimura was itself a copy which, as we read in the colophon, was written in the hand of Retired Emperor Gokashiwabara 後柏原 (1464–1526). The compilers of *Gunsho ruijū* copied the text yet again, first by hand then again when it was carved into woodblocks for printing. Annotations and embellishments may have been added at both stages. All these factors make it impossible to be entirely sure about authorship, just as they increase the likelihood of textual mutation.

Some qualifying remarks should be added for readers unfamiliar with the style of records like *Sakayuku hana*. The text is cumbersome in places and its exhaustive lists can

35 *Hyakuryō kun'yōshō*, mentioned above, is itself composed in a mixed script style.

be, frankly, exhausting. Official ranks and titles are spelled out in full, every time, no matter how often they appear, and the level of attention paid to such things as protocol and clothing might strike the uninitiated reader as obsessive. Its ungainliness notwithstanding, *Sakayuku hana*'s content and style reveal much about the values and preoccupations of the medieval elite. As a class, they were exceedingly preoccupied with matters of status and precedent. In fact, they seem to have organized their lives, conduct, and aesthetic choices around these twin pillars with quasi-religious fervor. So important was precedent in particular that texts such as *Sakayuku hana*—with all their extraordinary detail—were likely produced with the primary aim of showing respect for precedents while at the same time establishing new ones.

Format and Conventions

The text of the translation that follows is laid out on verso pages. Corresponding annotations are juxtaposed on recto pages. To facilitate fluid reading, Japanese words have been (mostly) left out of the translation. Because much of the source text is written in *kana*, there is ambiguity about the meanings of some words, and many names cannot be rendered confidently into ideographs (*kanji* 漢字). To maximize the work's usefulness to readers interested in material culture and translation, particular attention has been paid to identifying or otherwise establishing accurate translations of objects and colors. Illustrations have been provided for the same reason.³⁶

Rounded parentheses signify words in the source text written either in superscript (*furigana* ふりがな) or inline split annotations (*warichū* 割註); angular brackets signify a gloss or annotation made by the translators.

A brief epilogue lists the activities that took place on days three through six of the imperial visit. It is based on *Gukanki* 愚管記, the diary of Konoe Michitsugu 近衛道嗣 (1332–87).

Frequently-used Words and Their Translations

Acting Grand Counselor, Gon Dainagon 権大納言
 Advisor, Saishō 宰相
 Chamberlain, Jijū 侍従 and *shikiji* 職事
 Chief Imperial Secretary, Kurōdo no tō 藏人頭
 Commander of the Left, Sadaishō 左大将
 Commander of the Right, Udaishō 右大将
 Grand Counselor, Dainagon 大納言
 Imperial Inspector, Azechi 按察使
 Imperial Regent (or just Regent), Kanpaku 関白
 Imperial Secretary, Kurōdo 藏人
 Intendant of the Right Watch, Uhyōe no kami 右兵衛督

36 Major reference sources include Miner 1985; Tyler 2001; the University of Tokyo Historiographical Institute's "On-line Glossary of Japanese Historical Terms"; "JAANUS, the on-line Dictionary of Japanese Architectural and Art Historical Terminology" (www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/); and the publications of the Costume Museum of Kyoto.

lady in waiting, *naishi* 内侍
 Lord, Ason 朝臣 and the suffix *-kyō* 卿
 Major Controller of the Right, Udaiben 右大弁
 Middle Captain, Chūjō 中将
 Minor Controller of the Right, Ushōben 右小弁
 Minor Counselor, Shōnagon 少納言
 Palace Commissioner, Chūgū Gondaifu 中宮権大夫
 palace guards, *jishō* 次将
 Palace Guard of the Right, Saemonfu 左衛門府
 palanquin, *mikoshi* 御輿
 Secretary Captain, Tō no chūjō 頭中将
 senior noble, *kugyō* 公卿
 Superintendent, Bettō 別当
 Vice Counselor, Chūnagon 中納言

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Sakayuku hana

(Imperial Visit and Bestowal of the Heavenly Cup)

[Preface]

Spring is the season for revelry
Flowers are to be admired
The warbler on branch and the frog in water cannot help but sing
Such is even more so of man

Truly magnificent are the words of the ancients:
“He who does not make merry in the springtime is a fool.”

[The Host]

The Barbarian-quelling Generalissimo, August Lord (Yoshimitsu), long ago pacified the barbarians of the four directions, guaranteeing peace to the people.³⁷ Well versed in noble rights and an exemplar of the gentle arts, he enjoys music and merrymaking as much as calmly reciting Japanese and Chinese verse.³⁸ He has a positive influence on customs, is discerning in all things, and is knowledgeable on the good and bad in art. People of taste cannot help delighting in his presence.³⁹ Busy with the affairs of state, he finds solace in nature, pondering the lakes and forests.⁴⁰ Oh how virtuous he is!

[The Venue and Invitation]

North of the capital, there is an area of the greatest scenic beauty.⁴¹ There, [Lord Yoshimitsu] recently built a new palace. It was finished quickly and without subjecting the people to hardship. Inside, water flows into a pond and meanders around a simulated mountain garden; it is not dissimilar from the retreat garden of King Wen of Zhou.⁴² Surely the grounds are no less scenic than the Ten Islands and Three Sacred Mountains of legend.⁴³ The pond is as big as a whole city block; gazing across it, one feels as though the horizon is visible [see Figure 6].

37 Barbarian-quelling Generalissimo: Seii tai shōgun 征夷大將軍; August Lord: Ippon yūbatsu 一品雄拔; barbarians of the four directions: *shii* 四夷.

38 Gentle arts: *shodō* 諸道.

39 The text refers to “these times” (*konotoki* この時), presumably meaning those occasions when people are in Yoshimitsu’s presence.

40 Literally, “...finds solace in the water and rocks, pondering the greenery.”

41 The text refers literally to an area “north of Rakuyōjō 洛陽城,” a name synonymous with the Chinese capital of Luoyang. The name was applied to Sakyō 左京, the Kyoto’s eastern half, by Emperor Saga 嵯峨 in the ninth century. A site “north of Sakyō” corresponds roughly with Kamigyō.

42 The text mentions a *kazan niwa* かざんにわ in *hiragana* with the ideograph 暇山庭 written in superscript as an annotation. *Kazan-tei* 暇山庭 are also known as *tsukiyama-tei* 築山庭, lit. “built-mountain garden.” 靈沼 (Ch. Lingzhao, Jp. Reijō) is the garden at a legendary Chinese imperial retreat boasting a clear-water pond. It is thought to be the inspiration for the Shinsen’en 神泉苑 garden in early Heian Kyoto.

43 According to Chinese legend, Shizhou 十洲 and Sandao 三島 (two of the “Three Sacred Mountains,” *sanshendao* 三神山) are places of extraordinary beauty and the homes of wizard hermits (仙人).

From the outset it is clear that Yoshimitsu, not the emperor, is the central personality of both the text and the event. He is referred to here, in this singular case, by his hereditary title as head of the military estate, “Seii tai shōgun.” Below and throughout the document, however, he is called by his court title, Udaishō, “Commander of the Right.” Note how the change in signifier parallels a shift in emphasis: after perfunctory mention of his role as pacifier, Yoshimitsu is hailed at length for his status as a man of culture, taste, and courtly refinement.

The area “north of the capital” corresponds to the district of Kamigyō, which straddled Kyoto’s original northern boundary (see Figure 5).⁴⁴ As mentioned in the introduction, Yoshimitsu’s move to Kamigyō in 1379 coincided with an assertion of political independence. It also conveyed his unmistakable impulse to infiltrate elite society, installing himself as a permanent fixture. The specific plot of land where he built the Muromachi Palace had generational ties to the eminent court family of Saionji 西園寺, a locational pedigree that underscored the shogun’s aristocratic ambitions.⁴⁵

Comparing the grounds to several celebrated sites of Chinese legend, while provocative, was probably more conventional than sincere. Indeed, at the time, there would have been nothing unusual about a Kamigyō palace sporting a simulated mountain garden (*kazan-tei*) and a leisure pond. In fact, it would have been typical.⁴⁶ Only the size of that pond might have been remarkable. We know from other sources that the Muromachi Palace covered a total area of about 1.5 blocks (5.25 acres).⁴⁷ A pond of one whole block or 3.5 acres, therefore, was at least possible albeit unlikely. See Figure 6 for a conceptual illustration of the grounds.

⁴⁴ For details on the formation and significance of Kamigyō, see Stavros 2014.

⁴⁵ The locational pedigree of the Muromachi site and Yoshimitsu’s career-long preoccupation with the Saionji family are discussed in Stavros 2009.

⁴⁶ Gorō 2003, pp. 34–37.

⁴⁷ Kawakami 1967. For a revised and updated study on the palace grounds, see Takahashi 2004.

The palace, with its elevated connecting corridors, fishing pavilion, and other structures is dazzling to the eyes. Water drawn from the Kamo River tumbles over rocks and babbles as it flows beneath the corridors. Blending with the wind in the pines, the sound is most elegant. The ridgepoles of the main hall, with their three and four-leaf decorations, are said to be newly crafted of cypress.⁴⁸ It is all so very felicitous; the future indeed looks bright.

It is often said that the present is difficult to evaluate objectively. And yet, surely there can be no other time in the past as brilliant as now.

A decree was issued stating that a reception lasting several days should be arranged so that the sovereign may amuse himself.

[Pre-Departure Assembly at the Imperial Palace]

First Year of Eitoku [1381], Third Month, Eleventh Day

An Imperial Progress.

The format of the imperial progress largely conformed to conventions observed when one travels to avoid directional taboos.⁴⁹ The Commander of the Right [Yoshimitsu] ensured protocol was followed. There were only two departures from custom: the progress took place during the daytime, and most of the senior nobles—from the Imperial Regent ([Nijō] Morotsugu) on down—wore festive costumes.⁵⁰ For generations, these variations have been the rule when a Regent accompanies an imperial progress.

At the hour of the serpent [9–11 a.m.], the senior nobles assumed seats of honor [on the palace's hurdle veranda]. Orchestrated by the Commander of the Right, the program proceeded in the standard fashion. The Emperor [Goen'yū] emerged at the hour of the sheep [1–3 p.m.].⁵¹ A lady in waiting took possession of the sacred sword and the Regent took his place at the sovereign's side [see Figure 3].

48 Cypress: *tomikusa* 富草 (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*).

49 Directional taboo: *katatagai* 方違え.

50 Senior nobles: *shōkyō* 諸卿.

51 The emperor's name never appears in this text and direct reference to his station is rare. Here, the text merely mentions the "august emergence" (*shutsugyo* 出御).