Guts and Tears
Kinpira Jōruri and Its Textual Transformations

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In seventeenth-century Japan, dramatic narratives were being performed under drastically new circumstances. Instead of itinerant performers giving performances at religious venues in accordance with a ritual calendar, professionals staged plays at commercial, secular, and physically fixed venues. Theaters contracted artists to perform monthly programs (that might run shorter or longer than a month, depending on a given program’s popularity and other factors) and operated on revenues earned by charging theatergoers admission fees. A theater’s survival thus hinged on staging hit plays that would draw audiences. And if a particular cast of characters was found to please crowds, producing plays that placed the same characters in a variety of situations was one means of ensuring a full house.

Kinpira jōruri 金平浄瑠璃 enjoyed tremendous though short-lived popularity as a form of puppet theater during the mid-1600s. Though its storylines lack the nuanced sophistication of later theatrical narratives, Kinpira jōruri offers a vivid illustration of how theater interacted with publishing in Japan during the early Tokugawa 徳川 period.

This essay begins with an overview of Kinpira jōruri’s historical background, and then discusses the textualization of puppet theater plays. Although Kinpira jōruri plays were first composed as highly masculinized period pieces revolving around political scandals, they gradually transformed to incorporate more sentimentalism and female protagonists. The final part of this chapter will therefore consider the fundamental characteristics of Kinpira jōruri as a whole, and explore the ways in which the circulation of Kinpira jōruri plays—as printed texts—encouraged a transregional hybridization of this theatrical genre.
EDO-BORN KINPIRA JÔRURI

During the 1650s, a new form of puppet theater emerged in Edo called Kinpira jôruri, named after the valiant but hot-tempered Sakata no Kinpira 坂田金平. In its heyday, Kinpira jôruri drew crowds of avid fans, as vividly depicted in a passage from Kokyôgaeri no Edo banashi 故郷帰江戸啣 (Tales of Edo Told on the Homeward Journey, 1687):

When fools with a fondness for the uncanny, feats of strength, chaos, and spiritual beings hear that Kinpira jôruri will be recited, they go sit nearby, joyfully clenching their fists and gritting their teeth. As a result, even three-year-old infants are familiar with Kinpira, whose fame has spread throughout Japan.

Kinpira jôruri forms a subgenre of ko-jôruri 古浄瑠璃 (old jôruri), which is conventionally distinguished from tôryû-jôruri 当流浄瑠璃 (contemporary-style jôruri) or shin-jôruri 新浄瑠璃 (new jôruri). Japanese theater scholars have long defined contemporary or new jôruri as beginning with Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s 近松門左衛門’s 1685 period piece Shusse Kagekiyo 出世影清 (Kagekiyo Victorious), the playwright’s first work written for the chanter Takemoto Gidayû 竹本義太夫. However, over the last fifty years or so, Japanese scholars of jôruri have questioned this definition, claiming that Shusse Kagekiyo may not have been the first “contemporary-style jôruri,” or asking for a more nuanced definition of “old jôruri.”

Although Chikamatsu’s jôruri pieces came to be perceived as high literature in the Meiji and Taishô eras, Japanese scholars did relatively little research on ko-jôruri during these decades. Moreover, use of the term ko-jôruri has frequently implied that pre-Chikamatsu jôruri is simplistic, underdeveloped jôruri, constituting little more than an aspect of “developmental history.” This attitude grew even more conspicuous from Meiji onward, when the perception of ko-jôruri declined in relation to the growing valorization of Chikamatsu’s works. This perhaps explains why ko-jôruri has been relatively neglected by Japanese scholars and, in turn, by non-Japanese scholars.

Regardless of whether Shusse Kagekiyo can be considered the piece demarcating old from new jôruri, Chikamatsu undoubtedly revolutionized the puppet theater. Even before Chikamatsu’s emergence on the scene, however, Kinpira jôruri had generated a wide-reaching cultural
transformation of its own. Although Charles Dunn categorizes ko-jōruri into the three groups of pre-Kinpira, Kinpira, and post-Kinpira for the sake of chronological convenience, Kinpira jōruri can also be said to have introduced new dramaturgical conventions and encouraged the emergence of an Edo-based publishing industry of theatrical texts. It occupies a unique position in Japan’s cultural history, both because it represents Edo’s contribution to Japan’s puppet-theater legacy, which had mainly flourished in western Japan, and because it interacted with the new medium of print like no other form of theater at that time.

From around the Kan’ei to Jō’ō periods (1624-1655), ko-jōruri made do with narrative hand-me-downs from the late medieval and early Tokugawa periods, sprucing them up with new music (that is, samisen music) and the addition of puppets. New katarimono 語り物 (performed narratives) were being created by rearranging independently existing episodic tales, without significantly changing their plots. Around the Meireki period (1655-1658), however, new generations of chanters emerged both in Kamigata (the Kyoto-Osaka region) and in Edo. These new chanters offered new tales to please audiences tiring of the familiar stories of the past.

In the Meireki and Manji periods (1655-1661), the predecessors of Chikamatsu Monzaemon tried to extend existing performed narratives and jōruri by creating earlier and subsequent episodes in the lives of the same set(s) of characters—a process which Muroki Yatarō calls rensha-kumono 順作物 (linked works)—while also producing a vast quantity of other new works. In today’s lingo, renshakumono would be the equivalent of an existing narrative together with its prequels and sequels. A prequel tells a “back story,” which is an explanatory narrative preceding the main work in time, while featuring the same or related protagonist(s) in the same fictional universe. This renshakumono approach offers a higher likelihood of producing hits, because (as George Lucas and Star Wars have taught us) subsequent works capitalize on the proven popularity of earlier works. During the brief period when Kinpira plays were all the rage, other katarimono were also being performed as plot-linked jōruri sequences, including Gikeiki 義経記 and Soga monogatari 曽我物語. Protagonists of the Seiwa Genji 清和源氏 lineage also dominated these popular sequences of ko-jōruri works, which, with the exception of Jōruri gozen monogatari 浄瑠璃御前物語 (The Tale of Lady Jōruri), all fall into the category of gunki jōruri 軍記浄瑠璃 (jōruri based on war tales).
The successive production of prequels and sequels aptly captures the intense market-driven desire among artists, publishers, and theaters to satisfy the demands of a public that could not hear, see, or read enough about their favorite protagonists. And in the case of Kinpira jōruri, what better choice than Minamoto no Yorimitsu (源頼光 948–1021) as a crowd-drawing protagonist for the puppet theater? Yorimitsu, also called Raikō after the sinified reading of his personal name, was the grandson of Minamoto no Tsunemoto (経基), patriarch of the Seiwa Genji line named after Tsunemoto’s grandfather, the Seiwa Emperor (850–880). This lineage has had special significance for the Tokugawa house since 1566, when the first Tokugawa shogun Ieyasu (家康 1543–1616) changed his surname from Matsudaira 松平 to Tokugawa. Later, in 1600, Ieyasu adopted an official Tokugawa genealogy claiming descent from the illustrious Seiwa Genji.¹²

Originally a Buddhist term, Shitennō 四天王 refers to the four guardian deities dwelling at the four corners of Mount Sumeru who protect the dharma—Jikokuten 持国天 to the east, Zōchōten 増長天 to the south, Kōmokuten 公目天 to the west, and Tamonten 多聞天 (Bishamont 犇沙門) to the north.¹³ Later, the term came to describe a particularly gifted quartet in a particular path, such as warriors, ministers, disciples, and poets. For example, Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経, Oda Nobunaga 織田信長, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉, and Ieyasu each had their own quartet of Guardian Kings skilled in warfare and military strategy.

By the Muromachi period, Raikō and his retainers were being portrayed in the noh plays Ōeyama 大江山 and Tsuchigumo 土蜘蛛 as the valiant slayers of both Shuten Dōji, the notorious demon of Mount Ōe, and a giant man-eating tsuchigumo “earth spider.” In addition, Raikō’s
courageous retainer Watanabe no Tsuna 渡邊綱 was shown slashing off a demon’s arm in the noh play Rashōmon 羅生門. Nevertheless, these works never collectively refer to Raikō’s men as The Four Guardian Kings.\textsuperscript{14} Prior to the Kinpira jōruri plays Kiyowara no Udaishō 清原のう大将 (Right Major Captain Kiyowara, 1657) and Uji no himekiri うちのひめきり (Slaying of the Uji Bridge Lady, 1658), the legend of Raikō and his Four Guardian Kings had not yet appeared in jōruri playbooks.\textsuperscript{15}

During a five-year period from Meireki 3 to Kanbun 2 (1657-1662), the jōruri chanter Izumi dayū 泉太夫 and his playwright Oka Seibei Shigetoshi 岡清兵衛重俊 unveiled a series of ko-jōruri about Heian-period Minamoto generals and the fiercely loyal retainers who fought for them. Kinpira jōruri attributed to these two men begins in narrative sequence with the 1657 Kiyowara no Udaishō, which describes how Raikō met the men who would become his Four Guardian Kings, and ends with Sakata no Kinpira’s death in the 1662 Kinpira no saigo 金平最後 (The Death of Kinpira). It forms a cross-generational series that exclusively features Raikō, his father Mitsunaka 満仲 (912-997, better known by his Buddhist name Manjū), and younger brother Yorinobu 頼信 (968-1048), as well as Raikō’s Four Guardian Kings—Watanabe no Tsuna, Usui Sadamitsu 碓氷貞光, Urabe no Suemune, Sakata no Kintoki 坂田金時—along with their fictional sons and grandsons (see Figs. 1 and 2).\textsuperscript{16} Kinpira jōruri invented these second and third generation Shitennō, referred to respectively as Ko Shitennō 子四天王 and Mago Shitennō 孫四天王 (Children and Grandchildren Shitennō)
in contrast to the original Oya Shitennō (Parent Shitennō), as new and entirely fictitious characters.

Other chanters in Edo and Kamigata also joined in by performing new prequels and sequels featuring these same protagonists, expanding the genealogical range of characters to include Raikō’s grandfather Minamoto no Tsunemoto (?-961), Raikō’s nephew Yoriyoshi 頼義 (955-1082), and Yoriyoshi’s son Hachimantarō Yoshiie 八幡太郎義家 (1041-1108), thus generating a kind of sequelmania. In the broadest sense, Kinpira jōruri plays include all ko-jōruri featuring these five generations of Heian Minamoto generals, along with the three generations of Four Guardian Kings; in the narrowest sense, they include only those in which Sakata no Kinpira appears.

Japanese scholars thus hail Kinpira jōruri as the first step toward a creative, early modern approach to playwriting. Unlike earlier compositions that drew characters and plots from existing (mostly medieval) literary works, Kinpira jōruri plays have been considered the first performed narratives to feature original protagonists in new, imaginary situations. In addition to adding fictional protagonists, Kinpira jōruri re-imagined the Minamoto generals. Historically, these generals did not possess the political clout of the Tokugawa shoguns; in Heian Japan, they served the Fujiwara regents who, through intermarriage, had become every bit as wealthy and powerful as the imperial family. In contrast, the Tokugawa shoguns ruled alongside the imperial sovereign with no aristocratic rivals at court. Kinpira jōruri thus modernizes the Minamoto patriarchs and their Four Guardian Kings as contemporary heroes of the early modern political world—slayers not of demons but of rebels and traitors who threaten the public order of sovereign rule.

PREQUELS, SEQUELS, AND PUBLISHING

Coinciding with the transformations wrought by a second generation of chanters in both Kamigata and Edo, the newly thriving print culture formed a catalyst that affected the orality of Kinpira pieces while also engaging publishers in a process of transmission transcending artistic lineages and space. In seventeenth-century Japan, performed narratives were not only commodified, secularized, and performed in theaters—they were also textualized to a greater degree than ever before through the technology of woodblock printing.
Printing of *jōruribon* 浄瑠璃本, or jōruri libretti, began in Kyoto around the Kan’ei era (1624-1644). In *Imamukashi ayatsuri nen-daiki* 今昔操年代記 (A Chronology of the Puppet Theater, 1727), Nishizawa Ippū 西沢一風 cites the example of Inoue Harima-no-jō 井上播磨掾—whose earliest extant *shōhon* 正本 (true text) is dated 1658—to describe how jōruri texts might have been obtained at a time when *yukahon* 床本 (scripts used by a chanter during his performance) were not printed during the play’s performance run, and *keikobon* 稽古本 (practice books) were not yet available for amateur jōruri practitioners:

Around that time [when Harima-no-jō was active], the chanter kept his *yukahon* tightly shut and not even his disciples were allowed to read them. Of course, no such thing as *keikobon* existed, so one had to memorize a piece line by line, a companion for an evening stroll. There were still no *jōruribon* shops in Osaka. When a new jōruri was staged, one used one’s connections to plead for a copy of the previously staged jōruri, then went to Kyoto to have it blockprinted.\(^{21}\)

Though chanters were not allowing their own *yukahon* to be printed during the Meireki era (1655-1658), publishers—and not the theaters—had already begun taking the initiative in publishing *jōruribon* after a play was performed.\(^{22}\)

During a thirty-year period from the Kan’ei to Jō’ō eras (1624-1655), jōruri performances and *jōruribon* printing were centered in Kyoto. The division of *jōruribon* into four groups—ballad-dramas, fiction, war tales, and religious folktales—suggests that jōruri authors borrowed inspiration from physical texts of different genres and that bookshops, called *sōshiya* 草子屋, acted as hubs to make these source texts readily available.\(^{23}\) When a jōruri playwright borrowed from the plot of a ballad-drama, for example, the process involved transcribing one text to another, rather than an *aural* borrowing, and it was therefore quite unlike the medieval tradition of oral transmission.\(^{24}\) Even though the printed *jōruribon* eliminated some need for a face-to-face vocalized transmission, when a publisher produced a *jōruribon* for recitation purposes, accurate transcription of its text and musical notation still mattered tremendously.

Publishers specializing in *jōruribon* first appeared in the Kan’ei era. *Jōruribon* were selling so well that publishers could operate by selling theatrical libretti alone.\(^{25}\) According to *Imamukashi ayatsuri nen-daiki*,
chanter began including musical notation for recitation in the published plays in response to the demands of audiences and patrons of jöruri. These jöruribon which included musical notation were called shōhon, or “true texts,” because, in theory, the chanter performing the piece certified the authenticity of its text and notation. Shōhon were thus always associated with a chanter (even if one was not always explicitly identified in or on the cover of the text) and not yet with a playwright, demonstrating the deep involvement of theaters in the jöruribon business.

In contrast with Kyoto, publishing in Edo only began to flourish after the Great Meireki Fire in 1657. Several months later, the first Kinpira jöruri play was performed in Edo, triggering a gradual shift in the center of jöruri activities from Kyoto—the birthplace of the puppet theater—to Edo. Around the same time, an Edo publisher released two Kinpira jöruribon, paving the way for a newly independent Edo shōhon publishing business. Edo publishers also began publishing a number of existing plays in the format of jöruribon with illustrations and minimal musical notation, since they were not intended for actual performance; as indicated by their name, yomihon jöruri inherently targeted the reader, not the professional or amateur practitioner.

In Jōkyō 3 (1686), Chikamatsu’s name first appeared in print on the cover of Takemoto Gidayū’s shōhon Sasaki Ōkagami. He has thus been regarded as “the first professional playwright,” because his predecessors and contemporaries whose names appeared on kabuki libretti had also doubled as actors. However, thirty-three years earlier, in Jō’ō 4 (1655), Oka Seibei had already earned that distinction for the inscription “Playwright Oka Seibei” on the cover of Izumi dayū’s shōhon for Nishikido kassen (The Nishikido Battle).

During the following years while Kinpira jöruri was in vogue in Edo, the top Kamigata chanters actively incorporated Edo jöruri into their own repertoires, with help from Kamigata publishers who sometimes published the libretto for an Edo jöruri before it had even been performed in Kamigata. Consequently, the transmission of Kinpira jöruri from Edo to Kamigata consisted of a textualized orality. With access to one or more imported Kinpirabon, Kamigata chanters not only adapted Edo Kinpira pieces for performance, but also wrote their own episodes. In composing a new script, the Kinpira jöruri playwright typically began with a proverbial expression—an opening
passage that metaphorically foreshadows subsequent plot developments (although the link is not often explicit)—followed by a passage that recaps a main event or two of the previous play to establish the time and cast of the current episode. As an example, in its second passage, the 1658 _Uji no himekiri_ presumes familiarity with the plot of the six-act Kinpira jōruri _Kiyowara no Udaišō_, authorship of which has been tentatively attributed to Oka Seibei, and the extant shōbon of which was published by the sōshiya Yamamoto Kyūbei 山本九兵衛 of Kyoto in the first month of Enpō 5 (1677).

Kinpira pieces emerged, then, during a rage for plays describing a variety of incidents in the lives of a multi-generational cast of characters in prequels and sequels, written for the theatergoer, reader, or both, by playwrights with ready access to the texts of earlier narratives. The Meireki to Kanbun eras (1655-1673)—a time when Kinpira jōruri was the unquestionable favorite of puppet theater audiences—was half the length of the preceding Genna to Jō’ō eras (1615-1655), yet produced three to six times the number of printed jōruri bon. In a diary entry for the thirteenth day of the second month of Manji 4 (1661), the daimyo Matsudaira Yamato no Kami Naonori 松平大和守直矩 (1642–1695) records the titles of 158 jōruri bon, revealing that a vast number of works had been published in an extremely short interval.

During the Meireki to Kanbun eras, Kinpira jōruri in its broadest sense (including plays in which any of the five generations of Minamoto generals and their Four Guardian Kings appear) accounted for nearly half of all jōruri produced, whereas even Kinpira jōruri in its narrowest sense (including only those plays in which Sakata no Kinpira appear) made up one third. And some ko-jōruri, like _Yōkihi monogatari_ 楊貴妃物語 (The Tale of Yang Guefei), which combines the Tang Chinese legend of Yang Guefei with the military feats of a dashing hero, transformed earlier romantic aspects by adding elements of _gunki_ jōruri which would appeal to aficionados of Kinpira jōruri, attesting to the great popularity of the genre.

Even after Kinpira jōruri’s popularity on the stage began to decline from the early 1670s, Edo publishers published illustrated _Kinpirabon_ for enjoyment as _yomibon_ jōruri. Wakatsuki Yasuharu’s definition of _Kinpirabon_ refers, in the strictest sense, to _jōruribon_ printed in Edo around the Meireki through Kanbun eras (1655-1673), and to _yomibon_ jōruri either published or re-printed in Edo during the Genroku era (1688-
Fig. 3. Cover page of *Kinpira keshō mondō* (Kinpira and the Cosmetic Shapeshifter Debate). Reproduced in *Seikyoku ruisan* (1839; 1889 edition). Collection of the author.

Fig. 4. Two-page illustration from *Kinpira keshō mondō*. Reproduced in *Seikyoku ruisan* (1839; 1889 edition). Collection of the author.
1704). During the Meireki to Kanbun eras, about twenty-seven Kinpirabon publishers were in existence; by the Enpō period (1673-1681), the inclusion of twelve pages of two-page illustrations had become the norm. Even today, Kinpirabon illustrations are easily recognizable, with their male protagonists—particularly Kinpira himself—typically sporting huge, bulging eyes. Figs. 3 and 4 show the cover page and a two-page illustration from Kinpira keshō mondō 公平化粧問答. In the illustration, Sakata no Kinpira is the largest figure in the upper right.

During the Genroku to Kyōhō eras (1688-1736), publishers must have enjoyed an even livelier business in the publication and reprinting of these illustrated Kinpirabon. Based on Wakatsuki’s examination of 170 extant shōhon titles from this period, Kinpirabon printed from newly carved woodblocks accounted for only 40 works, while the remaining 130 titles consisted of print runs from either revised or recut blocks.

### Plots and Printing

The majority of Kinpira jōruri share five common features. This final section examines these characteristics in order to further consider how print might have transformed this subgenre of the puppet theater. The shared characteristics are: (1) a shift from private conflict to public conflict, and an accompanying shift from the familial group to the political group, (2) a formulaic, cyclical structure, (3) stylistic exchange between Edo and Kamigata, (4) topical contemporaneity within a historical setting, and (5) the inclusion of a formulaic closing passage that celebrates the Minamoto house and the realm it rules.

First of all, in contrast to the majority of ko-jōruri of its time, Kinpira jōruri does not describe the trials and tribulations of a particular individual or family. Instead, its plots revolve around a sociopolitical enmity or conflict—not a private conflict or vendetta as in Soga monogatari, but a public conflict requiring the protection of peace and order in the realm. Rather than taking romantic or familial love as its theme, Kinpira jōruri is only concerned with conflicts in public spaces and the men who struggle to resolve them. As in a typical medieval war tale, men are cast as the main protagonists of Kinpira jōruri.

Accompanying this shifting sociopolitical concern from private to public conflict is a corresponding emphasis on the political over the familial group. In the face of public conflict, strong men must face hard-
ships. They are treated as a political group, consisting of a Minamoto general and his Four Guardian Kings in the context of a master-retainer relationship, rather than as individuals. The Kinpira jōruri protagonist is always a group, though some characters may have larger roles than others, and the Minamoto house is depicted as more of a political unit than a familial one, because its head rules the realm.\(^{43}\) Moreover, Watsuji Tetsurō points out that the playwright Oka Seibei excludes young, weak protagonists from his plays and thus discards the medieval motif of *kishu ryūritan* 貴種流離譚.\(^{44}\) Yet although Kinpira jōruri protagonists are brawny warriors in their physical prime, the plots themselves usually do involve a ban from court attendance due to sociopolitical disempowerment, followed by the recovery of lost social status at the end.

Secondly, all Kinpira jōruri follow a formulaic structure. The plays present a world of dialectical opposites in which Good maintains public order in an ideal state of stability, which is then threatened by the actions of Evil, which must be destroyed. Each play opens with the realm in an ideal state of stability, maintained by a Minamoto general and his retainers.\(^{45}\) The order is subsequently disrupted by a villain who slanders the Minamoto general—or a rebel who incites an uprising—causing the general to suffer. After public order is relatively destabilized, the plot moves toward the anticipated clearing of the general’s name (or the uprising’s utter failure), due mainly to the brains and brawn of the Four Guardian Kings. Finally, the emperor reinstates the general and public order is restored.

In terms of cast, Kinpira jōruri presents only the upper strata of society, with few glimpses of family-centered institutions. The emperor at the top is surrounded by courtiers who provide liaisons between him and an imperially-appointed military commander, who rules the realm as imperial proxy and looks after the men associated with his own house.\(^{46}\) The Minamoto general’s position at court is inherently unstable, because his status and power hinge on the emperor’s will as much as his own proficiency at avoiding slander and quelling rebellions.

Based on this formulaic structure, a Kinpira jōruri typically begins with the Minamoto general enjoying the emperor’s favor in a stable, imperial court, and concludes with the general being reinstated at that same court after clearing his name or quelling the rebellion. Rather than the deity, emperor, or court noble who serves as the protagonist of a
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*kishu ryūritan* tale, the elite warrior protagonist of Kinpira jōruri follows a cyclical, formulaic storyline that begins and ends in a high place and involves two opposing forces.\(^{47}\)

In Kinpira jōruri, slander is the aristocratic villain’s weapon of choice. An enemy at court typically resorts to slander after a failed physical attack, signaling a transition from skill-based military aggression to a status-based political strike.\(^{48}\) In Act I of *Kiyowara no Udaishō*, for example, Right Major Captain Kiyowara slanders Manjū to the emperor after an unsuccessful attempt to have Manjū assassinated. Because the Minamoto general’s social position depends on imperial favor, the slander plunges him into hardship (in accord with the formulaic plot), and he is reinstated only by clearing his name in the emperor’s eyes.

Thirdly, Kinpira jōruri comes to combine the styles of both Edo and Kamigata chanters. Interacting through the medium of *jōruribon*, these chanters initially created entertainment that catered to their respective local audiences, but they eventually integrated the styles of each others’ regions. Because the 1655 *Nishikido kassen*, the first *shōhon* definitively identified with Oka Seibei, does not feature Raikō, his Four Guardian Kings, or any of their relatives, most scholars do not categorize it within the Kinpira jōruri genre. However, at least one scholar considers it to be the first Kinpira jōruri, arguing that it held profound significance because, unlike subsequent Kinpira plays that focus on the suffering of strong, male protagonists, *Nishikido kassen* features a nun as its central character, possibly triggering the more sentimental style that was to become associated with Kamigata chanters.\(^{49}\)

But considering scholars’ lack of familiarity with the entire existing Kinpira jōruri archive, this notion that the Edo (Oka Seibei) style centered on violence and bravado among powerful warriors while the more sentimental Kamigata style featured weak, familial (female) protagonists appears to be an over-generalization. There are significant counter-examples, such as the 1657 *Kiyowara no Udaishō*, considered by Muroki Yatarō to be Oka Seibei’s first Kinpira piece, which includes not only the suicide of Raikō’s wife but also the kidnapping of Watanabe no Tsuna’s mother as the dramatic highlights of their respective acts.\(^{50}\) Compiling synopses of all the extant narratives would provide stronger evidence about regional dramaturgical tendencies, but that work has yet to be done. Although kabuki actors and their regional audiences historically favored different acting styles—the “boisterous vitality” of
aragoto 荒事 (“rough style”) in Edo, and the “gentle refinement” of wagoto 和事 (“soft style”) in Kamigata⁵¹—no real evidence has emerged to prove that Kinpira jōruri chanters and audiences observed similar preferences.

Izumi dayū and Oka Seibei are considered to be the creators of Kinpira jōruri in its birthplace of Edo. And even if Seibei may not have written Shitennō musha shikkō 四天王武者執行 (Military Training of the Four Guardian Kings, 1659), the earliest extant shōbon to feature the second-generation Ko Shitennō, the work bears his undeniable influence, since its portrayal of the Four Guardian Kings presumes familiarity with his 1658 Uji no bimekiri.⁵² Whereas the character Kinpira makes his first appearance in Shitennō musha shikkō in Edo, however, the trademark stubborn and impulsive personality of Sakata no Kintoki’s son does not emerge until three years later in Kamigata, in two shōbon authored by Osaka-based chanters and printed in the third month of Manji 3 (1660).⁵³ At this early stage, the different (unstable) naming of Kintoki’s son and other fictitious characters suggests different artistic lineages among competing Kinpira jōruri chanters, with Dewa-no-jō attempting to establish an alternate genealogy for the Ko Shitennō than that launched by the Edo playwright Oka Seibei.⁵⁴

Besides deepening the characterization of Kintoki’s son (Kinpira or Kin’yoshi), these two Kamigata chanters added new elements to Edo-style Kinpira jōruri. Dewa-no-jō’s Tengu no ha’uchi highlights the extreme suffering of Minamoto general Yoriyoshi’s principal wife who, after being taken prisoner, gives birth in prison and dies a miserable death.⁵⁵ He thereby reintroduces the weak, familial protagonist as a ko-jōruri character. Published simultaneously, Harima-no-jō’s Kinpira Suebaru ikusaron likewise adds to the genre by inserting a comic touch.

Watsuji Tetsurō describes these two elements of tragedy and comedy, introduced by the two Kamigata chanters, as though they were the central elements of Kinpira jōruri:

Kinpira jōruri spawned two types of energy: a comic energy that would be keenly perceived and adroitly expanded by [Ichikawa] Danjūrō in his “roughhouse” (aragoto) style kabuki, and a tragic energy in the European sense that would be enthusiastically incorporated by Inoue Harima-no-jō.⁵⁶

Although the extent of cross-regional influence or Kinpira jōruri’s influence on the development of the aragoto kabuki style cannot be
readily determined without a closer comparison of the plays concerned, the publisher-promoted circulation of Kinpirabon surely enabled artists (both authors and chanters) in Edo and Kamigata to exchange ideas, riff off of each others’ storylines and characters, and experiment in new modes and styles.

The fourth characteristic common to Kinpira jōruri is “topicality within a historical setting.” Prior to the advent of this new theatrical genre, ballad dramas (kōwaka bukyoku) and ko-jōruri also featured Minamoto protagonists of the Heian and Kamakura periods, but their authors did not attempt to parody contemporary people and events to the same extent as Kinpira jōruri. Generally, they retold earlier tales in a way that offered new insights or original plot twists. While viewing these pre-Kinpira works, the audience—including shogunate officials—may have drawn a simple pleasure from regarding the protagonists as shogunal “ancestors.”

In the case of Kinpira jōruri, however, the plot is set in the past but actually concerns the present, transforming a warrior-centered historical backdrop into an early modern context. One scholar credits Kinpira jōruri with being the first performance genre to use a historical “world” to describe the present, transforming characters from the past into contemporary figures. That is, Manjū, Yorimitsu, and other Minamoto generals featured in Kinpira jōruri were historically the heads of a military family serving the imperial regency, but Kinpira jōruri glorifies them as shoguns who rule the realm. Furthermore, in Kinpira hōmon arasoi 金平法門諍 (Kinpira Debates the Dharma, 1663), for example, the protagonists Minamoto no Yoriyoshi and his Four Guardian Kings may allude to the fourth Tokugawa shogun Ietsuna 家綱 (1641-1680) and the regents who ruled in his place until 1663. After becoming the fourth Tokugawa shogun at age eleven, the young Ietsuna overcame a number of political obstacles through the successive support of four regents together with Ietsuna’s uncle and guardian Hoshina Masayuki 保科正之 (1611-1672): five men who governed in his place for the first decade or so of his rule.

The formulaic praising of current prosperity and the celebration of public peace—the fifth common characteristic—first manifests in Kinpira jōruri with its worldview of an absolute, this-worldly public sphere. The dramaturgical convention of closing with such a celebratory passage is later established by jidai jōruri 時代浄瑠璃 (period jōruri), leading one scholar to attribute the very concept of jidai jōruri to Kinpira jōruri.
This laudatory attitude is exemplified by the following passages which conclude the Kinpira pieces *Kiyowara no Udaishō* and *Uji no himekiri*:

The auspicious prosperity of the Genji, lasting as long as the masaki vines until the end of time, defied description.\(^{62}\)

*Kiyowara no Udaishō*, ca. 1657

As for Manjū, he ruled the land in peace as the regent of the realm, and his long and auspicious prosperity defied description.\(^{63}\)

*Uji no himekiri*, 1658

In a society ruled by the Tokugawa shoguns who claimed descent from the Seiwa Genji, plays that ended by saluting the prosperity of the Minamoto house and the larger realm would fall sweetly on the ears of shogunal officials.

Part of the pleasure of viewing or reading Kinpira jōruri surely derives from the infusion of the trendiest present into a familiar historical past. Yet although Kinpira jōruri and later plays for the puppet and kabuki theaters shared a similarly quasi-historical approach, incorporating a creative mix of past and present, Kinpira jōruri never achieved the same degree of contemporaneity as these other theatrical genres, perhaps due to its limited cast of characters, its formulaic structure, and the discernment threshold of both artists and audiences of the time.

In addition to breathing new life into a medieval legacy of performed narratives in seventeenth-century Japan, Kinpira jōruri and publishing interacted in ways that affected the puppet theater’s artistic transmission, narrative continuity, and transition from an essentially aural medium for theatergoers to an illustrated one for readers. The influence of *Kinpirabon* seems to have even leaped genre borders, for illustrated *Kinpirabon* undoubtedly contributed to the birth of both illustrated block-printed *kyōgenbon* (kabuki libretti) and such seventeenth- and eighteenth-century types of illustrated block-printed fiction as the *akahon* (redbook) and *kurobon* (blackbook) subgenres of *kusazōshi* (grass books).\(^{64}\) Despite its simplistic plots and rather crude and cartoonish illustrations, Kinpira jōruri virtually dominated theatrical and print culture in its heyday, and has subsequently left its mark on both the cultures of performance and publishing in early modern Japan.


6. Ibid.


9. The word sequel—defined as “a literary work that, although complete in itself, forms a continuation of a preceding one”—dates to the early sixteenth century. See “sequel, n.,” OED *Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2011), 30 May 2011. However, the word prequel—defined as “a book, film, etc., narrating events which precede those of an already existing work”—first appears in 1958. See “prequel, n.,” OED *Online*, 30 May 2011.

10. This fact is corroborated by extant ko-jōruri shōhon (true text) performance libretti). Akimoto, “Kinpira jōruri seiritsu no kiban,” p. 11.


12. Ieyasu claimed to be the ninth head of a Matsudaira line descended from a branch line of the Seiwa Genji founded by Nitta Yoshishige (1132-1202). See John Whitney Hall, “The Bakuhan System,” in *Early Modern Japan*, vol. 4 of *Cambridge History of Japan*, ed.
John Whitney Hall et al. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 130-34.


15. Watsuji, Nihon geijutsushi kenkyū, p. 196.


17. With the exception of Oka Seibei, all named composers of Kinpira jōruri were also chanters.


23. Akimoto, “Ka’n’ei ki no jōruri,” p. 57. The four groups are (kōwaka) bukyoku (happy) dance-dramas), shōetsu 小説 (fiction), gunki 軍記 (war chronicles), and shūkyō 宗教説話 (religious anecdotal tales).


25. In the colophon of the 1631 Sekkyō Karukaya せっきょうかるかや, the publisher identifies himself as Jōruruya Kiemon しや う る り や喜右衛門. Ibid., p. 59. This suggests that Kiemon dealt in the libretti of both jōruri and other katarimono, including sekkyō-bushi.

26. Gerstle, Circles of Fantasy, p. 16. For more on jōruribon, see pp. 13-17.

27. For an anthology of seventy-nine extant Kinpira jōruri shōhon, see Muroki Yatarō, ed., Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1966-1969). For the only annotated Kinpira piece, see “Kinpira kabuto-ron” in Ko-jōruri sekkyō
30. The earliest recorded use of the term dates to the An’ei 8 (1779) edition of Gedai nenkan, a set of Tokugawa-period chronologies for the performing arts.
31. Gerstle, Circles of Fantasy, p. 18. In Osaka, kabuki playwright Fukui no Yagozaemon performed the roles of older women (kashagata), while in Kyoto, Chikamatsu’s fellow kabuki playwright Kichizaemon performed comic roles. Furthermore, a 1680 kabuki kaomise playbill lists the actor Kan’ei Heibei as a “kabuki playwright” (kyōgen-zukuri). Matsudaira Susumu, “Chikamatsu Monzaemon no tōjō,” in Jōruri no sekai, ed. Sakaguchi Hiroyuki (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 1992), pp. 76-77.
33. Despite the 1677 publication date on the surviving shōhon’s foreword, its recitation and original publication probably took place around 1657. Based on a comparison of plot elements in Kiyowara no Udaishō and Uji no himekiri, which was published in the first month of 1658, Muroki speculates that the former immediately preceded the latter. Muroki, (Zōtei) Katarimono no kenkyū, pp. 581-82 and 585. Also see Muroki Yatarō, ed., “Kiyowara no Udaishō,” in Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1966), pp. 581-82. For the primary text as well as its commentary and illustrations, see pp. 477-503, 580-83, and 622-24.
34. Watsuji, Nihon geijutsushi kenkyū, p. 190.
36. Watsuji, Nihon geijutsushi kenkyū, p. 190.
39. The images in Figs. 3 and 4 are from Saitō Gesshin and Hasegawa Settei (illus.), vol. 4 of Seikyoku ruisan, ed. Hakusetsudō Gesshinshi and Shōsai Settei (Tokyo: Inoue Katsugorō, 1889). The cover page’s title strip ends with the phrase Izumi dayū jiki shōhon (直接伝承) from Izumi dayū. Muroki remarks that this title page differs from that of a ca. 1690s edition of the text that he reproduces in his Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū, and he identifies the chanter mentioned as Izumi dayū II, who is the son of the original Izumi dayū. See Muroki, vol. 3 of Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū.
(Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1968), Fig. 73 and pp. 642-43.
41. Watsuji, Nihon geijutsushi kenkyū, p. 191.
42. Ibid.
44. This structural overview combines ideas from Imao, “Kinpira jōruri shiron,” pp. 305-307; and from Aoki, “Kinpira jōruri no ronri to hōhō,” pp. 40-41.
45. Aoki, “Kinpira jōruri no ronri to hōhō,” p. 49.
46. This formula also seems to prefigure Chikamatsu’s period pieces. For a description of Chikamatsu’s cyclical narratives, see Gerstle, Circles of Fantasy, pp. 68-70.
47. Aoki, “Kinpira jōruri no ronri to hōhō,” pp. 43-44.
50. For the relevant episodes, see Muroki, “Kiyowara no Udaishō,” pp. 485-92.
51. For detailed descriptions of each style, see James R. Brandon, “Form in Kabuki Acting,” in Studies in Kabuki: Its Acting, Music, and Historical Context (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1979), pp. 68-74. Also see Andrew Gerstle’s chapter in the present volume.
52. Watsuji, Nihon geijutsushi kenkyū, p. 203.
53. Kintoki’s son is named Kinpira in Kinpira Sucharu ikusaron 公平末春軍論 (Kinpira and Sueharu Debate Military Strategy) by Kyoto-born chanter Inoue Harimano-jō, but he is named Kin’yoshi 金吉 in Tengu no ba’uchi 天狗羽打 (Cutting Down the Goblin’s Wing) by Itō Dewa-no-jō 伊藤出羽掾. Ibid., p. 213. For the names Kintoki, Kinpira, and Kin’yoshi, Kin may be interchangeably written 公, 金, or きん, even within a single play.
55. Watsuji, Nihon geijutsushi kenkyū, p. 211.
56. Ibid., p. 256. Watsuji’s “tragic energy in the European sense” no doubt refers to Greek tragedy, which had become a popular theoretic vehicle for “nobilizing” the works of Chikamatsu. See, for example, Hirosue Tamotsu, Chikamatsu jōsetsu: Kinsei higeki no kenkyū (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1998 [Kage Shobō, 1957]).
57. This characteristic is not entirely unique to Kinpira jōruri, since the ko-jōruri Jōruri jōzen monogatari (The Tale of Lady Jōruri, ca. 1646) portrays Lady Jōruri’s twelfth-century dwelling as like a house of assignation in a Tokugawa-period licensed


59. Akimoto, “Kinpira jōruri seiritsu no kiban,” p. 25. Nevertheless, the Minamoto generals enjoyed great favor with the Fujiwara regents. Two of Yorimitsu’s daughters married the sons of Fujiwara no Michinaga, one of whom was Michitsuna 道綱, son of the author of Kagerō nikki. See Motoki Yasuo, Minamoto no Mitsunaka, Torimitsu—Sesshō hōitsu chōka no shugo (Tokyo: Minerva Shobō, 2004), pp. 94 and 112.

60. The four regents were Sakai Tadakatsu 酒井忠勝 (1587-1662), Sakai Tadakiyo 酒井忠清 (1624-1681), Inaba Masanori 稲葉正則 (1657-1681), and Matsudaira Nobutsuna 松平信綱 (1596-1662).


