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**BREWING SPIRITS, BREWING SONGS:  
SAKÉ, *HAIKAI*, AND THE AESTHETICIZATION OF  
SUBURBAN SPACE IN EDO PERIOD ITAMI**

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**Itami** [伊丹]: City on the eastern edge of Hyōgo Prefecture; satellite town of Osaka; formerly famous for saké brewing. **–zaké** [伊丹酒]: Saké brewed in the Settsu Itami region; the best saké of the Edo period. **–fū** [伊丹風]: A school of *haikai* from the time of Genroku. Itami residents, following Ikeda Sōtan, freely expressed original concepts in colloquial language. Sōtan's pupil Uejima Onitsura took this poetic style in his own direction.

*Kōjien*<sup>1</sup>

Alcohol has always been a muse for literary and artistic inspiration in Japan, but never had saké's musings proved as socially transformative as in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Itami, where it converted a community of townsmen into a village-wide poetry salon that remained devoted to the study and production of *haikai* for over a century. Through the concerted efforts of local saké brewers, Itami became widely regarded as a repository of uncorrupted amateur aestheticism at a time when *haikai* in Osaka and elsewhere languished under the bane of commercialization. As a suburban community that used Japan's thirst for alcohol to gratify its own thirst for cultural refinement, Itami's example forces a reconsideration of suburban cultural practice in early modern Japan.

**Introduction**

In pre-modern (pre-1600) Japan, claim to cultural sophistication was directly contingent upon demonstrable association with the capital, Kyoto, and the imperial court specifically. Cultural practice filtered into the countryside via wandering ascetics or the efforts of warriors wishing to bring sophistication to their provincial outposts, but access to "high culture"

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<sup>1</sup> Shinmura Izuru, ed., *Kōjien*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1986), p. 132.

was availed primarily to courtiers, clerics, and, by association, wealthy townspeople (*machishū*) in and around the capital.<sup>2</sup> This urban-rural divide was meaningfully bridged only in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century when a proliferation of popular culture created opportunities for cultural custodianship that could be shared by urban and rural commoners alike. The fact that expanding cultural spheres at this time fundamentally changed relationships between city and countryside, however, has been overlooked by historiographical devotion to the truism that outlying areas subsequently remained culturally dependent on cities.

Admittedly, some evidence supports the notion of continuing dependence within many rural areas. The popularity of *tentori* (point-garnering) *haikai* in the provinces – the practice of paying urban-based *haikai* masters to appraise one's compositions, for instance – indicates an inability within outlying communities to secure local access to quality *haikai* training. As Cheryl Crowley notes, *tentori haikai*'s prevalence among provincial students as a means of recreation and social advancement proved lucrative for urban verse markers (*tenja*) and go-betweens.<sup>3</sup> This commoditization of popular culture in rural areas offers further testimony to the notion that *haikai*, in addition to fiction, *kabuki*, and *bunraku*, mounted no real aesthetic or philosophical challenge to the edifice of elite urban high culture. Popular culture, defined by Peter Nosco as “culture that pays for itself,” did indeed emerge within urban centers as forms of commerce, for despite objections by purists like Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) and Itami native Uejima Onitsura (1661-1738) who defended the aesthetic principles of amateurism, cultural practice unsullied by commercialism was not a viable option for most.<sup>4</sup> If many provincial communities relied on the leadership of urban culture that needed to “pay for itself,” it is argued, then by what means could they possibly develop independent, “purer” cultural practices? The proposition that *haikai* poetics, or any form of commercial culture, was born in urban coteries from where it filtered into other areas

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<sup>2</sup> For an extended discussion of *machishū* and cultural custodianship, see Sandy Kita, *The Last Tosa: Iwasa katsumochi matabei, Bridge to Ukiyo-e* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Cheryl Crowley, “Depopularizing the Popular: *Tentori haikai* and the Bashō Revival,” *Japan Studies Review* 9 (2005): 5.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 16.

would seem a foregone conclusion. Rural dependence, moreover, would seem to deny any possibility of localities claiming *haikai* as a source of constructing independent identities.

Taking Itami as a case study, this paper challenges such arguments by detailing how one local identity was transformed from mercantile center to cultural *meisho* (celebrated spot). It offers evidence that select rural and suburban communities possessed sufficient independent cultural energies to reverse their reputations as provincial bumpkins and elevate themselves socially. Itami's example demonstrates that villages found utility in popular culture to recreate themselves as bastions of cultural refinement. Indeed, as a suburban community that used detached aestheticism and cultural accomplishment to forge a strong local identity, Itami was not unique,<sup>5</sup> but as a secular and commercial area its engagement with *haikai* poetics merits special attention. First, its example constitutes an exception to the belief that plebian culture must be – or eventually becomes – generated or motivated by commercial concerns. It also demonstrates that acculturation within non-urban spaces could occur concurrently with, not subsequent to, that in urban spaces. Finally, it proposes that peripheral areas not only developed potentials for qualified cultural independence from the center, but that they established local identities that helped sustain the center. First we will consider how spatial designations informed the development of Itami's dual identity as a suburb and a cultural *meisho*.

### **Everything in its Place: City, Suburb, Inaka**

Due to the interpenetration of space, power, and cultural custodianship in early-modern Japan, proximity to the urban and political centers validated greater claims to cultural sophistication. Spatial delineations were important for this reason, and amidst rapid centrifugal urban expansion during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, efforts were made to preserve boundaries between city and countryside. Roughly three-quarters of early modern Japan was governed by *daimyō*, about fifteen percent by

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<sup>5</sup> The nearby towns of Ikeda and Minō, for example, were also *meisho* that self-represented as bucolic, culturally active suburbs. For studies of aesthetic and cultural pursuits within other suburban spaces during the Edo period, see my “Down and Out in Negishi: Reclusion and Struggle in an Edo Suburb,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 35/1 (2009): 1-35; and “Kōetsumura: Of Rhythms and Reminiscence in Hon'ami Kōetsu's Commune,” *Japan Review* 22 (2010): 1-27.

the Tokugawa *bakufu*, and an additional ten percent by vassals loyal to the Tokugawa. Land held by the imperial family, temples, and shrines amounted to approximately two percent of the land, or roughly 500,000 *koku*.<sup>6</sup> These power ratios shifted constantly, however, and the ongoing territorial and jurisdictional adjustments led to confusion, disputes, and multiple layers of concurrent governance. In the 1840s, for instance, the 150 square miles surrounding Osaka was controlled by as many as 165 separate authorities.<sup>7</sup>

Historically, the word *inaka* (countryside; provinces) was not a neutral term, but rather a delineation defined by what it was not – the city. The earliest dictionaries defined it as “outside towns and cities” and “removed from the capital.”<sup>8</sup> If cities were specific places, *inaka* was everywhere else. It was a non-place where the urbanite ventured only under punishment of exile, or the virtual exile of an appointment to a provincial administrative post. The city and country, then, were complementary but unequal opposites. While they may have been economically and politically interdependent, culturally they were irreconcilable. The rustic was unilaterally inferior to the refined, making *inaka* a pejorative term (the “stinking provinces”), and in most cases provincial residents resigned themselves to this inferiority. The so-called female shogun Hōjō Masako (1157-1225) put it most concisely: “In the countryside, only one person in a thousand, no, in ten thousand is sensible...The countryside is full of idiots.”<sup>9</sup> This attitude was qualified only by the emergence of suburbs during explosive urbanization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when pervasive crowding, noise, and environmental disruption caused newly arrived urbanites to long for rustic getaways beyond city borders.<sup>10</sup> Demands for urbanization and economic expansion thus generated parallel demands for suburban spots that offered opportunities for nature appreciation, recreation, and worship at temples and shrines. “Life in [the city] only became viable,” Sonoda notes,

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<sup>6</sup> Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Ravina, *Land and Lordship*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Hidehiro Sonoda, *The Transformation of Miyako and the Emergence of Urbanity in Japan* (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2003), p. 117.

<sup>9</sup> Sonoda, *The Transformation of Miyako*, p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> Sonoda asserts that by 1700 the population density of Japanese cities had become comparable to that of Japan’s modern cities.

“when balanced by excursions to [the outskirts] and the amusements provided there.”<sup>11</sup>

Suburban space was recognized neither administratively nor within the Japanese vernacular, however. Municipal boundaries severed cities from provinces, and the grid of administrative jurisdictions allowed for no overlap or buffer zones between the two. Existing terminology for suburbs (*shigai*; *kōgai*), moreover, signified spaces beyond municipal boundaries but did not include any acknowledgement of independent functionality. It was this official nonexistence of suburbs that in part contributed to their emergence as aesthetic refuges or tourist sites, for although most remained under provincial jurisdiction, some were administratively ambiguous and therefore more conducive to unofficial activities and recreation. The emergence of *meisho* in suburbs, then, was particularly instrumental for several reasons: suburbs were within striking distance of cities; they often possessed the requisite aesthetic, cultural, and religious attractions; and they afforded a degree of egalitarian release from official obligations.

The growing cultural importance of suburbs in early modern Japan corresponded to growing interest in asserting local solidarity and constructing local identities that could be situated within a national context. For Itami, popular culture was a vehicle of doing so. Popular culture paralleled an exploding print culture that had transformational effects on what we call “early modern Japan” for expediency but what more accurately resembled the sort of imagined community articulated by Benedict Anderson, wherein individuals of all social strata share perceptions of their society as a “deep, horizontal comradeship.”<sup>12</sup> By expanding knowledge outside one’s immediate locale and enabling one to situate oneself within a larger geopolitical sphere vis-à-vis a constellation of urban centers, this corpus of publications became instrumental to the formation of local identities, be they real or imagined.<sup>13</sup> It was with the

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<sup>11</sup> Sonoda, *The Transformation of Miyako*, p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), p. 7. I am indebted to Peter Nosco for this insight.

<sup>13</sup> This explosion of printed materials allowed members of all social classes to lay hands on catalogues of books in print; maps; travelogues of various scopes and foci; guidebooks with daily itineraries; guidebooks with illustrations of famous places; and indexes of temples, shrines, shops, and pleasure quarters. For more on print culture during this period, see Mary

view of establishing for themselves conspicuous membership within this horizontal comradeship that Itami's poets inserted themselves into print culture as active participants.

### Brewing Spirits: From Castles to Casks

#### *Itami County*

Itami County<sup>14</sup> (*Itami gōchō*, Figure 1) overlooked the Ina River about nine miles northwest of central Osaka, but by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century it functioned as a suburb well within Osaka's commercial and cultural orbit. In spite of the imminent writer Ihara Saikaku's (1642-1693) affectionate depiction of Itami as a "hidden village" (*kakurezato*), its importance as a suburb drew largely from its accessibility. The town lay just a short leg upriver from the port of Denbō in Osaka Bay, a convenience that would be crucial to its exportation of saké. It also occupied the intersection of two important arteries that connected Kyoto and Osaka with points north and west. One, the *Arima-michi*, linked Osaka with provinces to the north, thereby making the town strategically relevant to Momoyama period warlords Oda Nobunaga (1543-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598). The other, the *Saigoku kaidō* (Saigoku highway), connected Kyoto with Shimonoseki at the western end of Honshu. In 1617, Itami became the fifth relay station from Kyoto along this thoroughfare, assuring its lasting commercial relevance. Itami also lay a short detour north of the *Chūgoku kaidō*, the highway connecting Osaka with Shimonoseki. Although the town eventually acquired notoriety as a center of saké and poetry, since the late 16<sup>th</sup> century its utility as a gateway to Osaka and a station for regional transportation had furnished it with tangible geopolitical significance.

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Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 2-7.

<sup>14</sup> Itami-mura formed the urban nucleus of Itami County, an aggregate of satellite villages (*mura*) and consisted of several clustered neighborhoods (*machi*) and several temples and shrines. Originally these *machi*, numbering fifteen in the 1590s, were occupationally determined, distinguishable as collectives of fishermen, wood sellers, landless samurai, metal workers, rice merchants, or saké brewers. This number had expanded to twenty-seven by the 1730s, Itami-shi hakubutsukan, ed., *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko: Ōchō bunka 1200 nen no meihō* (Itami: Itami-shi hakubutsukan, 1994), p. 21.

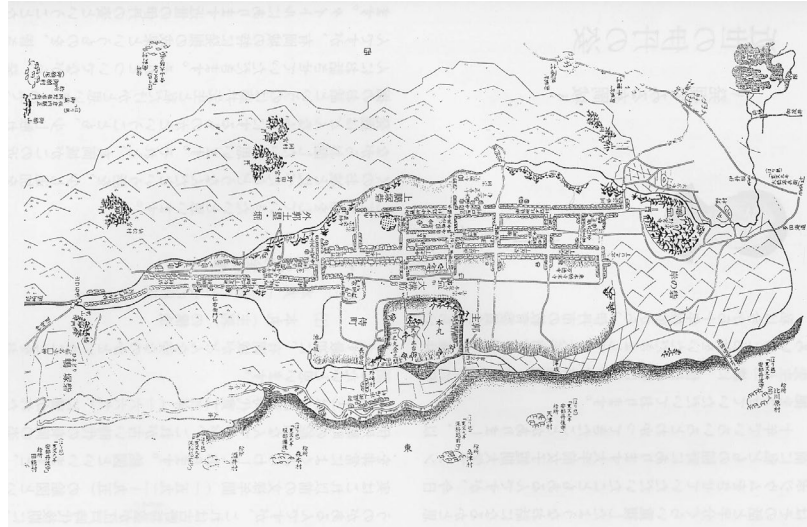


Figure 1. *Itami gōchō-ezu* (Map of Itami County, 1669).

Land apportionment and governance would seem irrelevant to *haikai* and the saké industry, the foci of this paper. In Itami's case, however, the dynamics of governance helped create the conditions that enabled the concurrent growth of mercantilism and aestheticism. Formerly a castle town ruled by Araki Murashige (d. 1579), one of Nobunaga's generals in Settsu, following Nobunaga's death in 1582 it was placed under the direct control of the imperial court. Thereafter, the region was designated a *musoku-chō*, land outside warrior jurisdiction and therefore off limits to samurai.<sup>15</sup> In accordance with Hideyoshi's initiatives to limit castle building and eliminate potential for further militarization within the provinces, the remnants of Arioka's castle were dismantled.<sup>16</sup> Under its new governance, resident samurai (and former samurai) became agriculturists or townsmen, and Itami was transformed from a castle town to a demilitarized

<sup>15</sup> Fumiaki Adachi, *Itami: shiro to saké to haikai to* (Tokyo: Kindai bungeisha, 1983), p. 276.

<sup>16</sup> Sections of the castle's ramparts have been preserved and are still visible adjacent to Itami station.



protectorate.<sup>17</sup> Though Itami County was reappropriated by the *bakufu* during Ieyasu's 1615 siege of Osaka, it was released in 1661. At that time, the monk Ingen (1592-1673), founder of the Ōbaku sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan, had recently arrived from China and the *bakufu* was searching for a suitable site on which to construct Manpukuji, the sect's head temple. It settled on Gokanoshō in Uji, which happened to be under control of the Konoe clan. In exchange for Gokanoshō, the Konoe agreed to accept the Itami region, which it retained until 1871.<sup>18</sup>

The Konoe were one of the *gosekke*, the five regent houses descended from the Fujiwara clan that occupied the highest rank of court nobility and that had alternately served as Imperial Regents (*kanpaku*) since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> They also served as occasional Ministers of State (*daijōdaijin*), the highest courtly position under the emperor. For Itami's saké brewers, authority availed the Konoe through proximity to the throne resulted in a degree of protection from Tokugawa interference.

Itami's independence from *bakufu* and *daimyō* control proved beneficial on several levels. The Konoe's responsibilities to undertake social welfare initiatives when necessary, to open its storehouses during famines, and to undertake periodic public works projects such as river bank maintenance were similar to those born by the *bakufu* and *daimyō*. When fires consumed breweries and sections of the city in 1688, 1699, 1702, and 1729 the Konoe provided relief. Konoe governance also proved advantageous from the perspective of taxation. Although lack of population data from 17<sup>th</sup> century Itami forces speculation about per capita tax burdens, collectively townsmen paid the equivalent of about 1,000 *koku* annually in land taxes to the Konoe.<sup>20</sup> *Kansei hachi-nen Itami saiken-zu* (Detailed map of Itami from 1796) from a century later shows the town consisting of

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<sup>17</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, p. 280.

<sup>18</sup> Itami-shi hensanshitsu, ed., *Itami-shiwa* (Itami: Itami shiyakusho, 1972), p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> In addition to the Konoe, the *gosekke* include the Ichijō, Nijō, Kujō, and Takatsukasa clans.

<sup>20</sup> Shūhei Imai, "Kinsei toshi Itami to chōnin jichi: sono keizai kino to chiiki no un'ei," in *Itami rekishi tanbō*, ed. Konishi Shintarō (Itami: Konishi shuzō, 2000), p. 407.

roughly 2,500 households and 9,500 residents.<sup>21</sup> Even allowing for a modest population growth during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the annual tax burden divided among this number of households would have constituted no more than a trifle compared with tax rates under warrior control, which varied widely but generally amounted to thirty to forty percent of a village's *kokudaka*, or assessed land productivity.<sup>22</sup>

The most extraordinary dynamic of the relationship between Itami and the Konoe lay at the level of local administration. Itami's town office was not staffed by a Konoe representative, meaning not only that the town was spared from bearing these administrative costs, but that it was allowed to function as a semi-independent civil government. The Konoe formalized this arrangement in 1697 by placing the administrative and judicial affairs of Itami County in the hands of an appointed council of twenty-four elders (*sōshukurō*) – selected from the major brewing houses – which met periodically at the town office, the *Konoe kaisho* (Konoe assembly hall), and members' administrative and ceremonial responsibilities alternated annually.<sup>23</sup> The financial officer was responsible for collecting and remitting taxes to Kyoto; others were placed in charge of planning city affairs such as the annual festival at the Nonomiya shrine where the town's tutelary deity was enshrined. The council determined the dates of brewing seasons, shipping seasons, as well as exacted penalties on non-compliant brewers.<sup>24</sup> It also dispatched to Kyoto monthly reports of the town's political, administrative, and judicial affairs. Council membership, in other words, formalized a pseudo-aristocratic status that variously enjoyed more prestige and authority than village headmen, their counterparts in villages under *bakufu* or *daimyō* governance. *Sōshukurō* were given permission to learn swordsmanship and wear swords as markers of their responsibility as

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<sup>21</sup> Michiko Ishikawa, “*Arioka-jō kara Itami Gōchō e: shuzō no machi Itamigō no seiritsu*,” in *Itami rekishi tanbō*, ed. Konishi Shintarō (Itami: Konishi shuzō, 2000), p. 448.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Smitka ed., *The Japanese Economy in the Tokugawa Era, 1600-1868* (New York: Garland, 1998), p. 51.

<sup>23</sup> Evidently anticipating truancy from the outset, the official minutes of the initial assembly from the 10<sup>th</sup> month of 1697 stipulated that council members must put aside personal affairs and convene when administrative matters so required, Imai, “*Kinsei toshi Itami*,” pp. 417-419.

<sup>24</sup> Michiko Ishikawa, “*Itami shuzōgyō to Konishi-ke*,” in *Itami rekishi tanbō*, ed. Konishi Shintarō (Itami: Konishi shuzō, 2000), p. 309.

peacekeepers and protectors of the village.<sup>25</sup> This de facto samurai class was further legitimated as such in 1768 when head councilman Konishi Shinuemon (7<sup>th</sup> generation) received permission from the Konoe to open a fencing school, the Shūbukan. Training *rōnin* and townsmen to defend the county constituted an additional step toward securing local independence. This combination of economic protection and administrative freedom helped create conditions favorable for Itami's saké industry.

#### *Itami saké*

Itami was one of twelve towns that formed Settsu's saké brewing belt, and at the start of the Edo period its brewers were already well known as having acquired a high level of technical knowledge. Enterprising brewers transported small quantities to Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo, expanding Itami's name recognition.<sup>26</sup> *Seishu* (clear saké) was invented in Kōnoike-mura, a northern section of Itami, and Yamanaka Shinroku (1571-1650) from Kōnoike is cited by history books as the first to commercialize it.<sup>27</sup> Exhibiting extraordinary foresight, Shinroku first took his saké to Edo in 1599 when Tokugawa Ieyasu was still a regent to Toyotomi Hideyori and Edo was little more than a military outpost. When he established a system for transporting saké from Osaka to Edo by ship in 1619, which he determined to be faster and cheaper than land transport, other brewers followed suit.<sup>28</sup>

After 1661 Itami shifted to large-scale saké production under the promotion and protection of the Konoe family. Brewers had always operated alongside artisanry and agriculture, and by the Genroku period (1688-1704) they steered the county's administration and dominated its economy.<sup>29</sup> The industry stimulated supporting industries like barrel-

<sup>25</sup> Itami shiritsu hakubutsukan, ed., *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko*, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> From the Kyoto shop curtain advertising *Itami-zaké* depicted in the *Miyako mandayū-za byōbu* (1670s) folding screen, it is evident that Itami saké had established itself early in the Kyoto market, Kakimori bunko, ed., *Morohaku no haikai: genroku no shuto itami no bunka* (Itami: Kakimori bunko, 2004), p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Shinroku was the son of the samurai commander Yamanaka Shikanosuke (d. 1578) but as a merchant changed his surname to Kōnoike and dubbed his shop, Kōnoike-ya, Adachi, *Itami*, p. 284.

<sup>28</sup> Ishikawa, "*Itami shuzōgyō to Konishi-ke*," pp. 308-310.

<sup>29</sup> Ishikawa, "*Arioka-jō kara Itami Gōchō e*," p. 435.

makers, carpenters, and weavers, all licensed by the Konoe, as well as the supply and transport infrastructure for raw materials and finished products.<sup>30</sup> In 1697, the town claimed thirty-six breweries and double that number in 1715, most of which were clustered together in rows of two-story buildings west of the castle ruins. From Itami, casks were transported by horse to Kanzaki, by boat to the port of Denbō, and then loaded onto “barrel barges” (*tarukaisen*) bound for Edo and other northern ports.

An array of brands and labels were exported to suppliers active in Edo. In the 1730s, Itami’s *kudari-zake* (saké bound for Edo) exceeded 180,000 casks valued at about 64,800 *koku*, and demand pushed this quantity progressively higher. Shipping was expedited in 1784 when Itami brewers finally received permission to use boats on the Ina River, ostensibly enabling door-to-door water transport that delivered saké to its destination in a week or less.<sup>31</sup> Because of problems resulting from the flood of saké into Edo, between 1792 and 1794 imports were limited to 50,000 barrels. Pre-restriction levels recovered immediately, however. In 1804 exports to Edo peaked at 277,704 barrels valued at roughly 99,970 *koku*, which yielded brewers about 30,000 *koku* in profit.<sup>32</sup> Each subsequent year saw Itami’s exports exceed 200,000 barrels, about 31 percent of Edo’s total saké imports.<sup>33</sup>

All breweries, Itami’s included, were subject to taxes and production limits set by the *bakufu*, but Konoe involvement provided Itami’s saké industry with occasional protection. In 1657, the *bakufu* promulgated a system requiring brewers to purchase *shuzō kabu* (brewing stocks), which functioned as brewing licenses and stipulated whether the saké was to be exported to Edo or sold locally. Brewing taxes were exacted on production rather than profits and varied depending on the type of saké and the type of stocks. Some types were taxed more than others, and some were tax exempt. Those possessed by most Itami brewers were so-called

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<sup>30</sup> Itami-shi hakubutsukan, ed., *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko*, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Ishikawa, “*Itami shuzōgyō to Konishi-ke*,” p. 309.

<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that money lending to *daimyō* provided the town with an additional source of income. Itami regularly lent large sums to over twenty *daimyō* around the country, loans that were repaid with rice from domainial storehouses that brewers then used to produce sake, Itami-shi hensanshitsu, ed., *Itami-shiwa*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>33</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, pp. 90-91, 286.

*hakumai* (white rice) *kabu* that were exempt from *bakufu* taxation.<sup>34</sup> In order to assure an adequate food supply, this system also imposed production limits by balancing the ratio of rice allocated for saké production with the annual or seasonal availability of rice.<sup>35</sup> Though such regulations applied to Itami brewers as well, occasionally the Konoe were able to acquire exemption from this regulation.<sup>36</sup> In 1806, for example, when unprecedented supplies of saké triggered restrictions on production in order to prevent a drastic drop in prices, Itami breweries responded with intense opposition. Exercising its political leverage, the Konoe dispatched a delegation to intercede, securing for itself the authority to set saké prices and manage productivity.<sup>37</sup> As a rule, however, the Konoe backed *bakufu* regulations by imposing production limits. Noting that prices fluctuated according to supply and demand, and citing challenges from competitors in other regions, the Konoe proclaimed that Itami brewers should pursue quality over quantity and ship only their highest grade saké to Edo.<sup>38</sup>

This strategy yielded extraordinary success. Itami-zaké's popularity derived from its quality, not from its production volume. It was dry, relatively high in alcohol content, and acquired a distinctive bouquet from fermentation in casks made of fragrant *sugi* (Japanese cedar). In *Saikaku oridome*<sup>39</sup> (Saikaku's tail end, 1694), periodic visitor Ihara Saikaku praised Itami's breweries for the care they took during the brewing process. He noted the meticulousness with which they inspected the water and rice, that male workers duly changed their sandals when entering the warehouses, and that women, considered defiled, were banned from the premises altogether.<sup>40</sup> In 1740, *Itami-zaké* was awarded top honors by the Tokugawa family, an honor that thereafter enabled it to lay claim as the country's superior brew.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ishikawa, "Itami shuzōgyō to Konishi-ke," pp. 306-308.

<sup>35</sup> Falling rice prices hurt samurai, paid in rice; rising prices hurt townspeople, who purchased rice.

<sup>36</sup> Imai, "Kinsei toshi Itami," p. 408.

<sup>37</sup> Itami-shi hakubutsukan, ed., *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko*, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Ishikawa, "Itami shuzōgyō to Konishi-ke," p. 305.

<sup>39</sup> *Saikaku oridome* has been translated by Peter Nosco in *Some Final Words of Advice* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1980).

<sup>40</sup> Ishikawa, "Itami shuzōgyō to Konishi-ke," p. 302.

<sup>41</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, pp. 90-91, 286.

By the 1670s, as saké was converting Itami into a commercial landmark, affluence and qualified administrative independence were creating fertile ground for aesthetic pursuits that would transform it into a cultural *meisho*. The town's nascent *haikai* salon, its accessibility, and its reputation as a community willing and able to host imminent visitors made it attractive as a suburban getaway among poets from Kyoto and Osaka. Such was Itami's situation when *haikai* master Ikeda Sōtan (1636-1693) came to town.

### **Brewing Songs: Aestheticism and *Itami-fū haikai***

#### *Itami-fū haikai*

Sōtan arrived in Itami in the spring of 1674 and, it is claimed locally, became so enchanted with the saké there that he decided to stay indefinitely. The guest of honor during that visit was not Sōtan but his master Matsue Shigeyori (1602-1680), a leading representative of the Teimon School, who had been invited by Itami brewer Kawaji Nobufusa.<sup>42</sup> After about ten days, Shigeyori returned to Kyoto and Sōtan settled into a house, the Yaunken, which thereafter functioned as the town's *haikai* academy. Devoted more to saké and poetry than to family, Sōtan lived in Itami for the next twenty years without marrying. Throughout, his Yaunken stood as a beacon marking *Itami-fū haikai* upon the cultural landscape.<sup>43</sup>

Shigeyori was one of the more liberal and rebellious leaders of the Teimon School and Sōtan's poetics took his master's irreverent style a step further. Said to be a thick, sturdy man, blunt, and a heavy drinker – descriptors similar to those attributed to *Itami-fū haikai* itself – Sōtan was energized rather than turned off by the rough, provincial poetry he encountered there. After settling in Itami, his poetry gravitated toward

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<sup>42</sup> Interest in *haikai* as an alternative to *renga* fueled the formation of the Teimon (or Teitoku) School around Matsunaga Teitoku (1571-1653) in the first half of the seventeenth century. Teitoku's desire to justify the genre's existence as a viable poetic form yielded a somewhat codified, conservative poetics that were later rejected by more recreational poets. In 1673, Nishiyama Sōin (1605-1682) initiated the Danrin School in Osaka, whose playful, witty verses made *haikai* practice more conducive to widespread participation.

<sup>43</sup> Okada Rihei, *Saikaku, Chikamatsu, Itami* (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 1997), p. 78.

boldness, puns, and clever language usage – an unrestrained approach that proved well suited to his brewer colleagues. Finding *haikai* and drinking complementary pastimes, Sōtan made saké part of *haikai* practice by instilling the boisterousness of intoxication within the poetry itself. Weighing semantic content over form, he did not shy away from adding extra syllables in order to complete a worthy witticism. Here Sōtan needs nineteen rather than the customary seventeen syllables, and so reverses the standard 5-7-5 sequence to 7-5-7:

<i>fumarekeri hana</i>	trodden blossoms
<i>guchi oshika</i>	open your drunken mouths and
<i>ima ichi-do sake</i> <sup>44</sup>	bloom just once more

In addition to the heterodoxical line progression, the verse derives humor from Sōtan's play on *saké*, which, as above, could be read as the imperative "bloom again," or as "more saké please!" Sōtan was so celebrated locally that he could enjoy a free drink at any brewery in town. His ode to saké:

<i>ka no ichi mo</i>	in this mosquito-ville
<i>tsuboiri shite ya</i>	one can get a drink anywhere
<i>saké no yō</i> <sup>45</sup>	sweet intoxication of wine

*Itami-fū haikai* was bold, heterodoxical, cheerfully direct, indiscreet, and made use of Chinese words and colloquialisms. Commonly described by secondary sources as "frank and open-hearted" (*gōhō rairaku*), it was an unapologetic poetry that, during Sōtan's lifetime, was content with its recreational function. Not aspiring to the depth or loftiness that *haikai* acquired later under Uejima Onitsura (1661-1738) and Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), its objective was a momentary cleverness that did not rely on extensive knowledge of classical poetry. This verse composed by Itami brewer Konishi Bayō (1653-1732) is representative:

<i>ushi no tsuno ya</i>	a bull's horn
<i>tanishi no kara no</i>	perfect place to hang
<i>oku tokoro</i> <sup>46</sup>	a snail's shell

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<sup>44</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, p. 149.

<sup>45</sup> Sōtan's pun on *ka* (mosquito) and *kano* (this) provides the humor.

Here, interest is generated by the poem's juxtaposition of the two animals, not only of their scale but of a perfect union achieved by the menacing and pointed with the round and fragile. Such an offhanded incorporation of the two is unexpected, absurd, and thus, humorous. The first line's extra syllable only enhances its eccentricity.

Such characteristics, it is noted, appear consistent with the wordplay typical of Danrin School poetry, ascendant in Osaka from about the time Sōtan arrived in Itami. For some commentators aiming to locate *Itami-fū haikai* within the cultural field, this fact, combined with Itami's proximity to Osaka, has constituted sufficient evidence to indicate Osaka's dominant cultural impact on Itami. It is true that proximity to Osaka facilitated the absorption of newer plebian cultural influences and enabled visits by Danrin founder Nishiyama Sōin (1605-1682) and literary superstar Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693). It is also the case, however, that Sōtan had originally claimed affiliation with Kyoto's Teimon School and that commercial and administrative alliances with Kyoto had continually exposed Itami to the capital's aristocratic elegance. Evidence of a hybrid cultural identity derived from these dual cultural loyalties has generated discussion about whom to credit with the development of *Itami-fū haikai*.

Ishikawa Shinkō has suggested that while the Danrin style of Sōin and Saikaku did influence Itami's *haikai* establishment, it did so only after the more classical poetic practices typical of Kyoto culture had become established there. The affinity for *kyōka* (comic verse) among Itami brewers mirrors the same affinity among Teitoku school poets from Kyoto. Custom dictated that when a Teitoku master critiqued and returned a student's verse he attached a *kyōka*. Itami poets imitated this practice, and their *kyōka* are included in works like *Kokon ikyokushū* (Collection of old and new comic verses, 1665). As *kyōka* was much less popular among Osaka Danrin poets, this aspect of Itami's cultural practice indicates influence from Kyoto.<sup>46</sup>

Records of *renga* and *waka* gatherings in Itami dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, moreover, testify to cultural activities predating Sōin's

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<sup>46</sup> Teruko Segawa, "Onitsura to Itami-fū haikai: Itami no bungei katsudō," in *Itami rekishi tanbō*, ed. Konishi Shintarō (Itami: Konishi shuzō, 2000), p. 140.

<sup>47</sup> Ishikawa Shinkō, "Morohaku no haikai," in *Morohaku no haikai: genroku no shuto itami no bunka*, ed. Kakimori bunko (Itami: Kakimori bunko, 2004), pp. 66-68.



popularization of culture from Osaka in the 1670s.<sup>48</sup> The lasting impact of Kyoto culture is also suggested by the enduring popularity of tea ceremony (*chanoyu*) in Itami. As an aristocratic form of leisure for Momoyama courtiers, clergy, and warriors, the aesthetics of *chanoyu* were subsequently popularized among townspeople in Kyoto and Itami. Arioka Dōtan (1662-1730s), for example, modeled his *Chanoyu hyakutei hyakkai no ki* (Record of a Hundred Tea Ceremonies at a Hundred Cottages) after Kyoto-based Sen no Rikyū's *Hyakkaiki* (1590-91). Compiled between 1681 and 1720, Dōtan's compendium reveals that in form and style, tea ceremonies around Itami were conducted as they were by Rikyū School devotees in Kyoto.

Through poetry and tea, then, Kyoto was a continuing fountain of aesthetic inspiration for Itami's cultural salon. Roughly twenty-five miles distant via the *Saigoku kaidō*, the capital was well within striking distance for determined pleasure-seekers. Reference in Saikaku's story "*Tsu no kuni no kakurezato*" (A Hidden Village of Settsu, from *Saikaku oridome*), to a wayward prodigal son from Itami commuting to Kyoto's Shimabara pleasure quarters, therefore, is entirely plausible.

Here, the province of Tsu [Settsu], is the place where long ago a family first started brewing *Itami morohaku*.<sup>49</sup> It is said that the inherent happiness of the head of this family, a petty man, was earning his five *kanme*<sup>50</sup> of silver each and every year. As time passed his children grew into adults. The oldest, who stood to inherit the family fortune, was clever, but rejected the archaic ways of his parents. Infatuated with prostitutes, he would dress himself in the newest fashions and covertly hurry back and forth in his palanquin to the Shimabara [pleasure quarters in Kyoto].<sup>51</sup>

Chastisement of moral corruption among the wealthy and powerful is a hallmark of Genroku fiction, and it is indeed likely that Itami's suddenly acquired wealth ignited the scorn of less fortunate urbanites. The above

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<sup>48</sup> Shinkō, "*Morohaku no haikai*," p. 66.

<sup>49</sup> *Morohaku*, produced from polished white rice, was Itami's highest quality saké.

<sup>50</sup> One *kanme* (1,000 *monme*) was a unit of weight equaling about 8.3 pounds. Five *kanme*, about 83 *ryō*, would be a middling sum for a townsman of this period.

<sup>51</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, p. 150.

statement, certainly associates the town's affluence with a culture of hedonism and indulgence by depicting Itami saké brewers as a clique of *nouveau riche* yokels living in dissipation.

Itami's reputation as a town of wealthy playboys is also showcased in Chikamatsu Monzaemon's hit *bunraku* play *Shinjūten no Amijima* (Love Suicides at Amijima, 1721). Tragic paper merchant Kamiya Jihei and the prostitute Koharu plot their love suicide as Jihei's rival, the wealthy bully Tahei, competes for Koharu's affection. In the opening scene a fellow prostitute encounters Koharu and inquires about her relationship with Jihei.

Prostitute: I've also heard that you're to be ransomed by Tahei and go live with him in the country – Itami, was it? Is it true?

Koharu: I'd be much obliged if you'd please stop talking about Itami!<sup>52</sup> The close relations between Jihei and myself, I'm sorry to say, are not as close as people suppose.<sup>53</sup>

Later, Tahei's villainy, and Itami's by extension, are reiterated by Jihei:

The other day, as my brother can tell you, Tahei – they call him the Lone Wolf because he hasn't any family or relations – started a fight and was trampled on. He gets all the money he needs from his home town [Itami], and he's been trying for a long time to redeem Koharu.<sup>54</sup>

Chikamatsu vilifies the injustice of the leverage afforded to the wealthy, and his specific reference to Itami in this context suggests that the town's wealth had already earned it an unfavorable reputation around Osaka. Itami and *Itami-fū haikai*, therefore, endured an ambivalent image in the region. Though buoyed by the celebrity of its saké and of the cultural capital held by figures like Sōtan and Onitsura, it also attracted the resentment of the less fortunate.

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<sup>52</sup> Chikamatsu's pun on the word *itami* (pain) allows us to hear Koharu's exhortation as a plea to stop exacerbating her anguish.

<sup>53</sup> Donald Keene, trans., *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 172.

<sup>54</sup> Keene, *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, p. 189. Here, Itami appears in Chikamatsu's original but is omitted from Keene's translation.

*Onitsura*

*Haikai* held great promise as an equalizer in Edo period society, for its lexicon and language usage were shared by men and women of all classes. As this poetic form afforded all with opportunities for cultivation, salons and poetry circles (*za*; *zashiki*) also afforded relatively equal opportunity for participation. Individuals like Uejima Onitsura, from Itami, and Matsuo Bashō, headquartered in Edo, however, felt that this potential was blocked by the rowdiness and coarse humor that permeated much of contemporary *haikai* practice. The continued relevance of the maxim, “In the east there’s Bashō; in the west there’s Onitsura,” is due not only to the enduring fame of both men, but also to the legacy of their mutual efforts to raise *haikai* poetics from vulgarity (*zoku*) to aesthetic mindfulness and elegance (*ga*).<sup>55</sup>

By the end of Sōtan’s life (1693), the jocular irreverence that had characterized *Itami-fū haikai* since his arrival was no longer universally appreciated. Some purists did not recognize it as poetry, referring to it as “Itami’s mad style” (*Itami no kyōran-tai*).<sup>56</sup> Such criticisms resonated first with Onitsura, who became the town’s most celebrated native son precisely because he endeavored to elevate its *haikai* to respectability, and later among others within the salon. It was in direct response to such concerns that residents like Onitsura’s kinsman Uejima Aondo (d. 1740) came to describe *Itami-fū* as first-rate (*ichiryū*) *haikai* and compare it to bamboo shoots from Saga, known for growing thick and sturdy.<sup>57</sup>

Onitsura encapsulated his mission in the term *makoto* (sincerity) and the conviction that “there is no *haikai* without sincerity” (*makoto no hoka ni haikai nashi*). *Makoto* legitimated *haikai* as a serious poetic form while simultaneously rejecting the artificial humor and strangeness that had dominated *haikai* practice in Itami. In his treatise *Hitorigoto* (“Soliloquy,” 1718), Onitsura avers that acquiring *makoto* required training and self-cultivation.<sup>58</sup> He also asserted that it was “a quality more important to the

<sup>55</sup> Kakimori bunko, ed., *Hokusetsu no fūkō: bunjintachi no Itami, Ikeda, Minō* (Itami: Kakimori bunko, 2000), p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> Segawa, “Onitsura to Itami-fū haikai,” p. 140.

<sup>57</sup> Itami-shishi hensan senmon iinkai (ed.), *Itami-shishi*, vol. 2 (Itami: Itami-shi, 1968), p. 668.

<sup>58</sup> For a translation, with commentary, of *Hitorigoto*, see Cheryl Crowley, “Putting *Makoto* into Practice: Onitsura’s *Hitorigoto*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 50/1 (1995): 1-46.

*kokoro* [heart/mind] rather than the *kotoba* [wording] of the poem.”<sup>59</sup> For the aspiring poet, bringing *makoto* into one’s heart/mind and living according to it enabled one’s *haikai* to be a true reflection of oneself and of nature.

The details of Onitsura’s life and poetry fill many books and so will be limited here to only those that illuminate how his personal patterns of identity construction and representation pertained to the town’s own such endeavors. Onitsura was a self-made man both poetically and professionally, and he elucidated these dual identities as poet and samurai in his autobiographical writings. *Fujiwara Munechikaden* (Biography of Fujiwara Munechika, 1724)<sup>60</sup>, appropriately written in *kanbun*, resurrects a distant genealogical connection between the Uejima clan and the Fujiwara family.<sup>61</sup> The theme indicates that he did not readily accept the decline of the Uejima clan, now saké brewers, to townsmen status and wished to elevate its standing to the level of his warrior ancestors. The text recounts how, at age twenty-six (1687), he traveled to Edo for an audience with the *daimyō* of Tanba and, after being turned away, how he was finally accepted into service as a samurai retainer. He returned to Itami in 1695 to care for his mother and then resumed samurai service between 1708-1718. Though hired for his knowledge of medicine, the autobiography claims that he was employed for possessing a samurai’s honor.<sup>62</sup> It also relates that he neither earned money from *haikai* nor took pupils, but enjoyed it only as a hobby. Living as a samurai, it would not be fitting that he engage in a pastime that aspired only to play and comedy.

While not in service, of course, Onitsura lived and self-identified as a poet. The statement, “In Itami, the place of my birth, people have long loved *renga* and *haikai*,” from the autobiographical *haikai* collection *Satoe nana kuruma*<sup>63</sup> (Satoe’s Seven Vehicles, 1727), embraces both his common status and replaces his part-time samurai identity with pride in his town’s

<sup>59</sup> Crowley, “Putting *Makoto* into Practice,” p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Other genealogies cite Onitsura’s given name as Hidenori; this text is the only known record of the name Munechika.

<sup>61</sup> The Uejima clan originated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as a branch of the Fujiwara family. Onitsura’s grandfather Naomune had moved to Itami in the mid-1590s and become a saké brewer.

<sup>62</sup> Okada Rihei, *Kinsei ni okeru itami bungaku no tenkai* (Itami: Kakimori bunko, 1990), p. 140.

<sup>63</sup> Satoe was one of Onitsura’s pseudonyms.

local culture.<sup>64</sup> Though Onitsura travelled widely and opted to live outside of Itami for much of his life, he did not abandon the local pride manifested in this statement. In no way was his pride in Itami's affinity for poetry, moreover, meant to camouflage its local industry. For Onitsura, as for Itami residents, no antagonism or contradiction divided saké-making and *haikai*; the two were equally integrated components of the town's identity. Industry both enabled and complemented the town's image as a *meisho*. *Nihon sankai meisanzue* (Illustrations of Specialties from Japan's Mountains and Seas, 1799) notes that workers washing their saké mashing sacks in the Ina River after completing a new brew was the sight typical of life in Itami.<sup>65</sup> Apparently Onitsura had the identical thought:

<i>shizu no me ya</i>	a humble maid
<i>fukuro arahi no</i>	washing her sacks
<i>mizu no iro</i>	the color of water <sup>66</sup>

In the following description of Itami, similarly, Onitsura views saké breweries and natural beauty as complementary to one another.

*mae ni shuka arite kiku no shitatari wo nagashi*  
*ushiro ni matsu takō shite kojō no mukashi wo misu*  
*tsukihana wo wagamono gao no makura ka na*<sup>67</sup>

before me a row of wine shops dispensing spirits  
 behind, pines grow thickly and an old castle invokes antiquity  
 the moon and blossoms – pillows that I make my own

#### *The Itami salon*

Onitsura's era corresponds to a period that Okada Rihei calls Itami's "golden age," for it was at this time that the town's saké brewers functioned collectively as a vibrant salon.<sup>68</sup> This period falls roughly between Sōtan's establishment of the Yaunken in 1674, the pillar of Itami's

<sup>64</sup> Segawa, "Onitsura to *Itami-fū haikai*," p. 137.

<sup>65</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, p. 124.

<sup>66</sup> This verse is engraved on a memorial tablet in front of the Itami saké brewing hall, Adachi, *Itami*, p. 125.

<sup>67</sup> Kakimori bunko, *Hokusetsu no fūkō*, p. 60.

<sup>68</sup> Okada, *Kinsei ni okeru*, p. 76.

salon during his lifetime, and the completion of *Arioka haikai isshiden* (Reclusive *haikai* poets of Itami, 1723). This text by Morimoto Hyakumaru (1655-1727) is the most comprehensive effort to record and honor the membership of Itami's salon from the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century through the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The seventy-seven *haikai* poets included in the work cannot be considered an exhaustive list, for this number corresponds roughly to the number of Itami's operating breweries, nearly all of which complemented their commercial affairs with poetic pursuits. As the text omits the names of several dozen poets known to have been active during this period, certainly the salon's actual number exceeded one hundred.

About half of the seventy-seven poets included in *Isshiden* are noted in the text as accomplished in several from a remarkable spectrum of artistic forms. Those mentioned include: *waka*, *haikai*, *renga*, *kyōka*, calligraphy, Zen sutra-copying, *nō* recitation and performance, wind instruments, string instruments, *kemari* football, flower arrangement, *go*, painting, and tea ceremony.<sup>69</sup> This cultural eclecticism is probably not exaggerated, for Saikaku had made a similar observation thirty years earlier. Again in “*Tsu no kuni no kakurezato*,” Saikaku wrote of the extraordinary aesthetic accomplishments of a middle son from Itami – one who, like Onitsura, would inherit neither the fortunes nor the responsibilities of the family business:

The middle-born son escaped the attentions of his parents, and being bright did not adhere to the trails blazed by those before him. In general he learned musical instruments and the four styles of *Nō* chanting directly from the masters. For *renga*, he went to stand before Shinzaike (head of the *renga* school) and for *haikai* went to Baiō (Saikaku's teacher, Nishiyama Sōin) in Naniwa [Osaka]. For flower arrangement he went to learn at Ikenobō [at the Rokkakudō in Kyoto]. In the case of *kemari* football, he received the highest honor of wearing the purple *hakama*; he learned the Way of tea from Kanamori (a school of tea ceremony developed by Kanamori Sōwa [1584-1656]); in reading the classics, he received the Way of (the Confucian scholar) Utsunomiya. At the Go board he earned high ranks, and with the short bow he (painted the bull's-eye with gold leaf) under the tutelage of [Imai] Itchū. As for incense, he

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<sup>69</sup> Okada, *Kinsei ni okeru*, p. 77.

learned to teachings of Yamaguchi Enkyū and became a knowledgeable master. In addition to these, he learned *biwa* and *koto* under Hayama, *kouta* from Iwai, the Gidayū style of *jōruri* chanting, comic improvisation from Yasuichi, and imitations from Kichihyoe....He was widely known and admired as a multi-skilled individual.<sup>70</sup>

The Itami's salon's cultural diversity is more noteworthy, perhaps, than its establishment of *Itami-fū haikai*, which was praised by some and snubbed by others. It suggests an artistic independence that recalls an important aspect of *Itami-fū haikai*: its non-allegiance to any particular poetic school or philosophy. The salon did not seek to define or codify its *haikai*, and members trained at and maintained interest in competing *haikai* schools. At least one member of the salon, Kitagawahara Zashin (dates unknown but a contemporary of Onitsura), professed a strong inclination for Shōmon (Bashō) School *haikai*. He cited Bashō's writings in his *Fūkōshū* (Collection of beautiful scenes, 1704) and the following year invited the prominent Shōmon leader Kagami Shikō (1665-1731) to Itami.<sup>71</sup> A verse composed by Zashin on that occasion reveals an affinity for Bashō's style *haikai*:

<i>sakatsuki mo</i>	hearing saké cups
<i>kakkō kiku</i>	and cuckoos
<i>asa no koto</i>	morning things

This poem evokes Bashō's style of creativity and penchant for nature appreciation. Zashin's surprising grouping of saké cups and cuckoos produces a light, fresh, and heightened sense of attention that is then further elevated by their designation as morning sounds. The alliteration of 'k' syllables also creates aural appreciation by mimicking a cuckoo's call. Finally, *sakatsuki* (saké cup) and *kakkō* (cuckoo), references to Itami and summer, duly mark the place and season of the composition. The verse, then, celebrates Itami as a place where saké and bird songs are so endemic as to be commonly enjoyed, even in the morning.

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<sup>70</sup> Okada, *Saikaku, Chikamatsu, Itami*, p. 6; parentheses indicate Okada's notations.

<sup>71</sup> Okada, *Kinsei ni okeru*, p. 49.

In the ninth month of 1701, the *rōnin* Ōtaka Gengo (1672-1703) arrived in Itami disguised as a townsman. Gengo was one of the forty-seven samurai who swore to avenge an injustice suffered by their lord Asano Naganori (1667-1701), the *daimyō* of nearby Ako domain (present-day Hyōgo prefecture).<sup>72</sup> Six months earlier Lord Asano had attacked his superior, Kira Yoshinaka (1641-1702) who had insulted him, and was subsequently ordered to commit ritual suicide. Expecting retaliation, Kira put Asano's retainers, now *rōnin*, under surveillance. By the time of his covert appearance in Itami, Gengo was already well known as a poet and a tea adept, and earlier had published a volume of his poetry under the sobriquet Shiyō. Once in town, he joined a poetry gathering at Onitsura's house.

<i>kaku yama wo</i>	tugging upward	
<i>hittatete saku</i>	on every mountain	
<i>shioni ka na</i>	asters in bloom!	Shiyō

Onitsura echoes Shiyō's *shioni* (asters) with *shiore* (bow; droop), both of which alliterate with Gengo's sobriquet.

<i>tsuki wa nashi</i>	moonless night	
<i>ame nite hagi wa</i>	bush clover bowing	
<i>shioretari</i>	under the rain	Onitsura <sup>73</sup>

Bush clover, a pink or purple flower that blooms in later summer and autumn, the season of Gengo's visit, links with asters, which also have pink blossoms and bloom in the same season. The following year, Gengo and the forty-six other loyal retainers carried out their vendetta, for which they also received orders to commit *seppuku*.

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<sup>72</sup> Itami and Ako are both in present-day Hyogo Prefecture. Itami's independence from warrior governance may well have enhanced its attraction as a place of political asylum. In the final years of the Edo period, Itami attracted bands of imperial loyalists (*shishi*) supporting the restoration movement. Controlled by the courtier Konoe family, Itami represented both a rare swath of territory retaining administrative allegiance to the imperial court and theoretical immunity from *bakufu* scrutiny, Itami shiritsu hakubutsukan, *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko*, p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> Adachi, *Itami*, pp. 154-155.



The salon's succession of prominent guests<sup>74</sup> reveals it as an important consumer of culture within the Kansai region. Successfully hosting a succession of prominent cultural icons, attending poetry gatherings, drinking tea and saké while exchanging verses with these celebrities, as well as keeping published records of those experiences, all greatly reinforced the town's self image as a legitimate and independent community with a distinct cultural identity. It was also due to such communities that popular culture in early modern Japan was able to "pay for itself." Itami's brewers brought masters of the myriad arts to their houses to interact with and learn from, and were delighted to extend lodging to celebrity *bunjin bokkyaku* ("ink guests") who financed their travels with poems or instruction. Itami's appetite for the arts reveals how prominent *bunjin* carved out livelihoods by taking advantage of demand for their celebrity.

Not only was Itami a voracious consumer of culture, it was also a prolific producer, as is clear from its publishing activities. Many of the *haikai* collections produced during this "golden age" are not extant, but accounts of at least thirty survive from the years 1678-1737.<sup>75</sup> In addition to these, *haikai* collections that announced the New Year were produced nearly every year beginning in 1678. Publishing immortalized individual and collective talents, but it also afforded opportunities for greater

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<sup>74</sup> In addition to Sōin, Saikaku, and those already mentioned, these included Sōin's disciples Konishi Raizan (1654-1716), Ikenishi Gonzui (1650-1722), and Hōjō Dansui (1663-1711); Matsuo Bashō's disciple Kagami Shikō; and the painter Ōoka Shunboku (1680-1763). Although certain promotional documents from Itami claim that Matsuo Bashō also visited Itami, Bashō only skirted the town as he traveled along the *Saigoku kaidō* to Kyoto in the fourth month of 1688 (Itami-shi hensanshitsu, *Itami-shiwa*, pp. 112-113). Promotional documents also overstate the town's relationship with prominent playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724), who never visited Itami but did correspond several times with the affluent brewer Konishi Shin'ueemon. Only a dozen or so of Chikamatsu's letters survive, and two of these pertain somehow to Shin'ueemon. Though details are omitted in these documents, Chikamatsu had acted as an intermediary in a negotiation for Konishi, for which he received a cask of *saké* as compensation. The letters are reports about the negotiation and a thank-you note, Adachi, *Itami*, p. 153.

<sup>75</sup> Kakimori bunko, *Morohaku no haikai*, p. 80.

participation and advancement within the salon. Those selected to edit volumes and pen prefaces reveal the salon's changing leadership. When Onitsura and salon leader Morimoto Hyakumaru both left Itami for Kyoto in 1703, Shiinomoto Saimaro (1656-1738), a pupil of Saikaku and Sōin and friends with Bashō, stepped in to help unite the group. In that year he wrote the preface to *Chiri no kaori* (The Fragrance of Dust), and the fact that the volume was produced without a single verse by Onitsura, Okada asserts, had a revitalizing effect on the group's collective work.<sup>76</sup> Although originally a devotee of the Danrin style, long associations with Onitsura and Bashō compelled Saimaro to adopt their cause of elevating the sophistication and elegance of Itami poetry.<sup>77</sup> Saimaro remained a central presence in subsequent publications. In 1718 he compiled, edited and penned the preface to *Senyōshū* (One Thousand Leaves), which, as he explains in the preface, was meant to honor the highly regarded *Manyōshū* (Ten Thousand Leaves). Saimarō also edited a sequel to this volume in 1730.

Another who rose within Itami's cultural circles was Arioka Dōtan (1662-1730s), remembered primarily for his *Chanoyu hyakutei hyakkai no ki* (Record of a hundred tea ceremonies at a hundred cottages, preface 1699) compiled between 1681 and 1720. Dōtan was an established presence in tea circles in the Kansai region and his volume chronicles one hundred of the over one thousand tea ceremonies he attended between the ages of 19 and 65. An imitation of Sen no Rikyū's *Hyakkaiki* (1590-91), the text records the host, guests, and tea utensils used at each event. From these records emerges evidence of a core membership – individuals like the perennial participant Morimoto Ranshō who owned a large collection of valuable tea utensils – and in many cases this tea coterie overlapped with the membership of the town's *haikai* circle.<sup>78</sup> Though Dōtan does not mention his own role in popularizing tea within Itami, the fact that in 1720 he handed this work over to his students, the second and third sons of Onitsura's kinsman Uejima Aondo, indicates that he had been teaching it in

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<sup>76</sup> Okada Rihei, ed., *Itami bungei shiryō: itami shiryō sōsho* vol. 1 (Itami: Itami shiyakusho, 1975), p. 404.

<sup>77</sup> Rihei, *Itami bungei shiryō: itami shiryō sōsho*, p. 408.

<sup>78</sup> Itami-shi hensanshitsu, *Itami-shiwa*, p. 111.

town. Clearly, saké, *haikai*, and tea were enjoyed together as complementary components of the Itami salon.<sup>79</sup>

It is important, finally, not to understate the perceived value of training in *haikai*, tea, and the myriad arts. As noted, cultural pursuits offered both recreation as well as a venue for self-improvement. But among salon members, they also carried sufficient promise for self-advancement to eclipse the perceived necessity for a formal education. For, in interesting contrast to the considerable energies Itami directed toward nurturing a community of literati, the town recognized no need for an educational institution until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Children were either educated at home or in informal groups by parents, siblings, or tutors, learning enough to conduct business affairs and enjoy contemporary literature.<sup>80</sup> Some of the residents acquired sufficient education to experiment with Chinese poetry (*kanshi*) and prose (*kanbun*), and a select few boasted sufficient training in *kanshi* to publish their compositions in poetry collections. *Arioka isshiden*, itself written in *kanbun*, notes that a number of its entrants had studied Chinese. Several Itami residents also enrolled at the Kaitokudō, an academy for commoners established in 1724 in nearby Amagasaki, where they learned classical Confucian texts.<sup>81</sup> It is also likely that Sōtan taught classical literature at the Yaunken. Such options existed, in part, because Itami possessed no *hangaku* (domain schools for samurai children) and no other private academies until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It finally established two *terakoya* (temple schools) in 1804 and 1818, which continued operating into the Meiji period. It was only in 1838 that Konoe Tadahiro received and acted on a petition from Itami residents to open the town's first *gō-gakkō* (school for commoners). This school, the Meirindo, brought in an outside schoolmaster but operated through donations from breweries and townsmen.<sup>82</sup> For all but the final decades of the Edo period, therefore, the cultural capital garnered from *haikai* was deemed more useful and desirable

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<sup>79</sup> Okada Rihei, “*Chanoyu hyakutei hyakkai no ki*, in *Morohaku no haikai: genroku no shuto itami no bunka*, ed. Kakimori bunko (Itami: Kakimori bunko, 2004), pp. 69-70.

<sup>80</sup> Uchibori Mutsuo, “*Enoki no ki no shita ni: terakoya kara shogakkō he,*” in *Itami rekishi tanbō*, ed. Konishi Shintarō (Itami: Konishi shuzō, 2000), pp. 370-371.

<sup>81</sup> Okada, *Kinsei ni okeru*, p. 75

<sup>82</sup> Itami-shi hakubutsukan, *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko*, p. 22.

than that of institutional education, a fact that underscores the importance placed on cultural accomplishment within commoner society.

The above casts light on the emergence of suburban aesthetic space in early modern Japan, particularly its relationship with cities and its engagement with plebian culture. Itami's example demonstrates that although suburbs, being neither urban nor provincial, were spatially ambiguous, functionally they played a number of conspicuous roles. It reveals, first, that acculturation within non-urban spaces could occur concurrently with, not subsequent to, that in urban spaces. Indeed, not only did Itami occupy the leading edge of the *haikai* boom, its practice of *renga*, *kyōka*, and tea ceremony either predated or accompanied their popularization in Osaka. This indicates, second, that acculturation in Itami enjoyed a degree of cultural independence from neighboring urban centers. Not content to follow, Itami capitalized on poetry's popularity to develop a native strain of *haikai* and then to reinvent itself as an industrial and cultural *meisho*. Finally, as both a consumer and producer, Itami contributed to the expansion of popular culture in the region by helping it "pay for itself." Within the salon, however, Itami residents adhered to the mandate of amateur aestheticism by rejecting any comingling of consumerism and art. Never was the practice or publication of *haikai* in Itami motivated by commercial concerns. Commercial saké brewing and the staunch anti-commercialism required by *bunjin* aesthetics were by no means an unlikely partnership, of course. A longstanding relationship between alcohol and art in East Asia made this phenomenon natural, even predictable, for local brewers.<sup>83</sup>

Itami's successful transformation is atypical, for it was achieved only through a convergence of specific conditions. Collective participation in cultural activities required the sort of surplus wealth afforded by the town's lucrative saké industry. Communal devotion to such activities also required qualified and charismatic leadership. Ikeda Sōtan supplied the cultural prestige and charisma necessary to mobilize a local following and

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<sup>83</sup> Itami's turn to *haikai* was also natural given its service to the Konoe, who, occupying the highest rung of court society, were among the circle of companions that practiced *waka*, *renga*, tea ceremony and other cultural activities together with the emperor. The Itami City Museum, for example, possesses a *waka* scroll penned by the Fushimi Emperor (1265-1317) that was given to Konoe Iehiro (1667-1736) in 1690 to use as a writing model, Itami-shi hakubutsukan, *Konoe-ke yōmei bunko*, p. 26.

focus its collective energy on *haikai*. Onitsura's fame further enhanced Itami's cultural currency. The extraordinary synergy that coalesced between Sōtan, Onitsura, and *Itami-zaké* strengthened the town's name recognition enough to position it as an important *meisho* within the region.

Although Saikaku's complimentary description of Itami as "the hidden village of Tsu" was largely metaphorical, it did hold great aesthetic appeal for town residents. Their gravitation toward the *bunjin* ideals of amateurism and detachment demonstrated a clear intention to connect alcohol, aesthetic reclusion, nature appreciation, and free living with the purpose of recasting Itami as a community of cultivated hermits. This confluence of circumstances engendered a dynamic *haikai* salon that, through publishing and vigorous involvement within regional cultural spheres, was able to sustain its identity as a suburban aesthetic space for the next century.